



# CULTIVATING COMMUNITY

## How to cultivate community and show your support for OCRF

Anyone can be a supporter of the OCRF and an advocate for ovarian cancer research. It doesn't cost a thing to add your voice to the passionate community seeking better outcomes for women affected by this insidious disease.

Below are just some of the ways you can get involved beyond making a donation or holding a fundraising event. Every person, every action and every conversation counts toward a louder voice for women living with ovarian cancer.

### TELL YOUR STORY

One of the easiest ways to create interest within your personal network is to share your story. You or someone you know might be affected by ovarian cancer, or perhaps you were moved to action by something you read about or saw on TV.

We encourage you to share your connection to ovarian cancer and the OCRF via Facebook and Instagram, using the hashtag #ocrfcommunity. If you're not sure where to start, these questions might help get some ideas flowing for your first post:

- Why is ovarian cancer research important to you?
- How did you first learn about ovarian cancer?
- Did you have any misunderstandings about ovarian cancer? (For example, many women believe a pap smear will detect ovarian cancer, but it won't.)

If you prefer not to share an image of yourself, you can use one of ours [here](#).

### SHARE INFORMATION AND BUST MYTHS

There are many misconceptions about ovarian cancer in the general community, as well as a lack of knowledge about signs and symptoms. Communicating the facts about ovarian cancer and busting common myths is crucial for building awareness and support.

We've put together some of the most important facts about ovarian cancer for you to share in a conversation or via social media. Remember to tag @ocrf on Instagram when sharing the posts.

**Fact #1:** A pap smear does not diagnose ovarian cancer.

**Fact #2:** Unlike breast cancer and cervical cancer, there is currently no early detection test for ovarian cancer.

**Fact #3:** When diagnosed in the later stages, only 20-25% of women with ovarian cancer will survive beyond five years.

**Fact #4:** There are many types of ovarian cancer, which determine the risk, treatment options and survival rates for affected women. Generally, ovarian cancer can be divided into four categories: epithelial, germ cell, sex-cord stromal and borderline. To learn more about the different types of ovarian cancer, [click here](#).

**Fact #5:** Symptoms of ovarian cancer are vague and can often be mistaken for common female complaints. However, it is important to listen to your body and speak to a doctor if you experience a combination of these symptoms beyond what is usual for you, or that persist for an extended period of time:

- Vague abdominal pain or pressure
- Feeling of abdominal fullness, gas, nausea, indigestion (different to your normal sensations)
- Sudden abdominal swelling, weight gain or bloating
- Persistent changes in bowel or bladder patterns
- Low backache or cramps
- Abnormal vaginal bleeding
- Pain during intercourse
- Unexplained weight loss

**Fact #6:** In Australia, one woman dies every eight hours from ovarian cancer.

**Fact #7:** Did you know, the HPV vaccine does not protect against ovarian cancer?

**Fact #8:** Every year, an estimated 1600 Australian women will receive an ovarian cancer diagnosis. For many of these women, remission is not possible. This is because symptoms are often attributed to other, less serious issues such as irritable bowel syndrome, menopause or food allergies, or do not present at all until the cancer is in the advanced stages. This is why an early detection test is so important.

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## SPREAD MESSAGES OF HOPE

It is important to maintain and foster hope in the ovarian cancer community, especially when so many women are not diagnosed until they're already in the advanced stages of the disease and research, by nature, takes time that these women may not have.

We encourage you to share messages of hope for women living with ovarian cancer and keep up to date with the good news stories and research updates we share on social media.

Suggested topics:

- My hope for the future of ovarian cancer is...
- I will raise the voice of women with ovarian cancer by...
- I support ovarian cancer research so that no woman is left in the dark.

Remember to hashtag **#ocrfcommunity** or mention us using the handle **@ocrf** in your social media posts.

## STAY CONNECTED

It might sound simple, but one of the most meaningful things you can do is reach out to someone you know who is affected by ovarian cancer. Whether it's a text message, a phone call or an offer to send some groceries and essentials to their house – a seemingly small gesture can mean a lot.

While every woman's experience of ovarian cancer is different, it's important that they know there is an army of friends, family and colleagues to support them through the ups and downs.

