

# IMPROVING WOMEN'S WITH STATE-OF-THE-ART BREAST CANCER OVARIAN CANCER CARE



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**Advances in prevention and treatment** have significantly improved the lives of women with breast and ovarian cancers. More women diagnosed with these cancers today are living longer lives than ever before.

The multidisciplinary team of cancer specialists at Summit Medical Group (SMG) Cancer Center provides patients with the latest advances in cancer care. “We treat each patient as an individual,” says Darlene Gibbon, MD, FACOG, Medical Director of Gynecologic Oncology. “We ensure they get the most innovative therapies possible.”

## INNOVATIONS IN OVARIAN CANCER CARE

“Thanks to recent treatment advances, we are now looking at 10-year survival times for ovarian cancer,” says Dr. Gibbon.

Researchers discovered that mutations in genes called BRCA1 and BRCA2 raise the risk of

developing ovarian cancer. These genes were already known to drive some breast cancers. Today, genetic testing looks for BRCA mutations and a growing list of other gene mutations.

“Since there are no reliable screening tests for ovarian cancer, women need to know if they have an increased risk of disease based on family history or an inherited genetic predisposition,” says Dr. Gibbon. “They also need to be aware of the signs and symptoms, especially if they persist for more than two weeks, and speak to their doctor.”

Symptoms of ovarian cancer often include feeling the need to urinate urgently or frequently, trouble eating or feeling full quickly, abdominal pain, and bloating. Since these symptoms are vague and usually occur as a tumor grows larger, most ovarian cancers are diagnosed at advanced stages.

Genetic test results may guide approaches to prevention in women at risk. “Women with inherited gene mutations may decide to reduce their lifetime risk of developing ovarian cancer by having their ovaries removed after their childbearing years are complete,” says Roshini George, DO, who specializes in treating breast and gynecologic cancers.

Surgery is the first treatment for ovarian cancer, followed by a growing range of other therapies to help prevent disease recurrence. Previously, most women with newly diagnosed ovarian cancer were treated with standard surgery and chemotherapy, but most relapsed within three years. Today, drugs called PARP inhibitors target BRCA

mutations by preventing cancer cells from repairing damaged DNA. The PARP inhibitor olaparib, first approved only for women with BRCA mutations, was recently approved for women who relapsed after standard therapy, and in combination with bevacizumab as maintenance therapy for patients with specific gene mutations and advanced disease.

## INNOVATIONS IN BREAST CANCER CARE

“Mammograms save lives. They can find tiny, early cancers that are easily curable,” says breast surgeon Alison Price, MD. “A common misconception by women without a family history of breast cancer is that they don’t need screening. But only 10% of breast cancers are caused by inherited gene mutations.”

3-D mammography can detect breast cancer better than traditional 2-D technology, especially in women with dense breasts. Breast cancer that is detected earlier usually requires less surgery, which means faster recoveries and better outcomes for patients.

Today, many women diagnosed with breast cancer do not need to lose their breasts. Less extensive options include lumpectomy, nipple-sparing surgery, and partial mastectomy with reconstruction. “Some tumors can be shrunk in advance of surgery with chemotherapy, allowing us to conserve the breast instead of a mastectomy,” says Dr. Price. “But there’s no one right answer. We provide patients with a ‘menu’ of effective options based on their cancer. Our goal is to do the safest,

# LIVES AND



BREAST  
CARE  
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## 10 YEARS OF PATIENT-CENTERED CARE

Formed in 2010, SMG's comprehensive Breast Care Center opened its first facility at the flagship campus in Berkeley Heights, followed by two other centers in Florham Park and Livingston. Since its inception, the Breast Care Center has provided a multidisciplinary approach to the evaluation, treatment, and support of benign **breast health** conditions and all stages of **breast cancer**.

Personalized treatment plans help ensure the best possible outcomes for each patient, and a nurse navigation program facilitates a seamless experience to help patients move beyond the initial diagnosis through each stage of their recovery and survivorship.

SMG Breast Care Center is one of only two centers in New Jersey designated a National Consortium of Breast Centers Certified Quality Breast Center of Excellence.

Additionally, our Breast Care Center has been NAPBC Accredited since 2015. Together, these two designations put our center among the top breast care centers in the nation.



most cosmetically appealing surgery and empower patients in the decision-making process.”

Less extensive surgery also applies to lymph nodes, the “stations” in the immune system’s network that drain fluid away from the breast. “Instead of removing all nodes, we test the sentinel nodes first,” says Dr. Price. “If they are cancer-free, we can leave the remaining nodes in place.” This advancement significantly reduces the risk of lymphedema, a condition that involves fluid buildup and swelling that can occur after lymph node removal.

Today, most breast surgeries do not require an overnight stay in the hospital. Even with a mastectomy,

many patients can go home the same day comfortably thanks to nerve block anesthesia. This provides long-lasting pain control and minimizes the need for narcotic pain relievers, allowing patients to return to normal activities sooner.

### COORDINATED CARE

“At SMG, specialized oncologists, surgeons, and nurses collaborate to provide cancer care in a nurturing environment,” Dr. George says. “We also have a multidisciplinary team of social workers, nutritionists, and genetic counselors. We care about each patient’s well-being throughout their cancer journey.”

## MANAGE YOUR CANCER RISK

Here are three tips to manage risk. Remember:

- ▶ Tell your provider if you have a family history of breast or ovarian cancer.
- ▶ SMG offers genetic testing and counseling for women with a family history of cancer.
- ▶ Ask your provider about the right time and frequency for cervical cancer screenings and mammograms.