

# OVARIAN CANCER “THE SILENT KILLER” SPEAKS EARLY – IF WE LISTEN

**Strict embargo to Monday March 1, 2010**

Today, (March 1 2010) the ovarian cancer support network charity Ovacome launches its BEAT Ovarian Cancer awareness campaign – which for the first time, is an international initiative, actively engaging GPs.

BEAT is based on an easy-to-remember checklist for women and GPs:

**B - is for Bloating** - it's persistent and doesn't come and go  
**E - is for Eating less** - difficulty eating and feeling full more quickly than you used to  
**A - is for Abdominal** and pelvic pain you feel most days  
**T - is for Talking** - Tell your GP

As a rule of thumb, if women regularly experience any of the three BEAT signs of ovarian cancer most days – and that this is not normal for her – she should see her GP. **It is unlikely that these symptoms are caused by the disease, but it is important to get ovarian cancer ruled out.**

If there are two or more cases of ovarian or breast cancer in a woman's close family, she should also tell her GP, as ovarian cancer can sometimes run in families.

It's important that women aren't overly worried by the symptoms list, as ovarian cancer is rare. But they should monitor their body, be aware of any changes and don't automatically rule out cancer – whatever their age.

The three symptoms of BEAT are the ones which were identified as being the key indicators of the disease in a Consensus Statement published in October 2008 by ovarian cancer charities, scientists and doctors. Link to DoH statement:

[http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Healthcare/Cancer/DH\\_095624](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Healthcare/Cancer/DH_095624).

The BEAT checklist will be available as a downloadable poster for GP's surgeries. We plan to distribute this by working with the Royal College of GPs and urging women to take the poster into their own surgeries.

The poster is available at [www.ovacome.org.uk/beat](http://www.ovacome.org.uk/beat)

For the first time, Ovacome aims to actively engage GPs in the campaign by asking them to sign their practices up to being a 'BEAT Ovarian Cancer surgery', to display the poster and take

part in other awareness raising initiatives currently being discussed by Ovacome and the Royal College of GPs. We will post updates on the development of the campaign at [www.ovacome.org.uk/beat](http://www.ovacome.org.uk/beat)

There is also a film about the campaign posted at the above link and downloadable from YouTube and from Ovacome's Facebook page.

**Louise Bayne, chief executive of Ovacome, says:**

“Even though most women, at some point, experience bloating for a variety of benign reasons – we think that the specific message of persistent bloating, (which is defined as bloating that doesn't come and go; and is present on at least 12 days a month), is a sign that you need to go to see your GP and get ovarian cancer ruled out.

“According to a recent study reported in the BMJ in August, abdominal distension - being permanently bloated - was more frequently associated with a diagnosis and was a symptom present even in the earlier stages of disease.

“We have joined forces with groups across the English-speaking world to launch the BEAT acronym to help women recognise and remember the signs and symptoms of ovarian cancer. We're looking forward to working with our international colleagues throughout 2010 sharing our expertise and ideas to help all women affected by ovarian cancer.”

The other charities Ovacome is working with, are:

Ovarian Cancer National Alliance, (US)

Ovarian Cancer Canada

Silver Ribbon Foundation, New Zealand

Ovarian Cancer Australia.

These charities will use the BEAT checklist to develop their own national campaigns.

The BEAT acronym is based on the work of the UK Consensus Group, led by Professor Mike Richards, National Clinical Director for Cancer.

Professor Richards says: “I warmly welcome Ovacome's BEAT symptoms awareness campaign. We know that public awareness of the symptoms of ovarian cancer is currently low. I very much hope that this campaign will lead to earlier diagnosis of ovarian cancer thereby saving women's lives.”

**Donate to BEAT at [www.ovacome.org.uk/BEAT](http://www.ovacome.org.uk/BEAT)**

## Editor's Notes

Ovacome, the ovarian cancer support and information network, which has over 5,500 members, is working to support both women and health professionals to improve the diagnosis of the disease. The charity is leading the way in building a greater understanding of the disease's symptoms with the launch of its BEAT campaign in March 2010 to mark next year's Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month. As part of this GP involved initiative, Ovacome aims to introduce an innovative web based risk and symptoms diary project for women who suspect that they may have the disease.

Ovacome, which has its own nurse-led support service, has an unrivalled understanding of ovarian cancer and the clinical trial process, with access to the UK's top clinicians.

It prides itself on being the authority on the disease and the one stop shop for journalists wanting the latest information and statistics on ovarian cancer, as well media friendly case studies and photos.

**For more information, please contact Ovacome PR For more information: Amanda Hayhurst or Holly Brace on 020-8 973 2630, [ahayhurst@schwartz-pr.co.uk](mailto:ahayhurst@schwartz-pr.co.uk) [hbrace@schwartz-pr.co.uk](mailto:hbrace@schwartz-pr.co.uk) or Juliet Morrison on 01273 206912 or 0778 4652520; [julietmorrison@btconnect.com](mailto:julietmorrison@btconnect.com) or Louise Bayne, Chief Executive, on [l.bayne@ovacome.org.uk](mailto:l.bayne@ovacome.org.uk)**

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