

Facts about Gynecologic Cancers

- According to the American Cancer Society, nearly 80,000 women in the USA are diagnosed annually with a gynecologic cancer.
- The three most common gynecologic cancers are uterine, cervical and ovarian.

Symptoms and Diagnosis of Gynecologic Cancer

Gynecologic cancers can present without any symptoms. However, common symptoms can include gynecologic pain, bleeding, redness, or recurrent infections. Seek medical care if you have any of the above.

The diagnosis of gynecologic cancers depends on tissue biopsy and can sometimes be assisted by imaging such as CT scans and specific blood tests which are biochemical markers of cancer.

Treatment

Treatment for gynecologic cancers depends on several factors, including the exact type of cancer, the patient's performance status, stage and precise location of disease. Your doctors can guide you on the appropriate type of therapy for you. Such therapy can include surgery by a gynecologic oncologist, radiation by a radiation oncologist, and chemotherapy by a medical oncologist. Some individuals will not require chemotherapy or radiation. Radiation therapy can be delivered externally and internally.

External Beam Radiation Therapy

We deliver external beam radiation therapy via 3-dimensional conformal radiotherapy (3D-CRT) which combines multiple radiation treatment fields which deliver CT guided photons and electrons precisely to the tumor while sparing healthy tissue. We utilize Intensity Modulated Techniques (IMRT) for many patients with gynecologic cancer. Treatment planning for radiation therapy is performed using a 16 slice Philips Brilliance™ CT equipped with respiratory gating which enables 4-Dimensional planning for superior radiation treatment delivery. Radiation is delivered on week days in sessions usually lasting under 30 minutes. Your radiation oncologist, physicist, and dosimetrist will calculate the exact number of weeks of therapy. Side effects can include but are not limited to fatigue, dry skin, diarrhea, pain, infection, and bleeding. radiation oncologist or nurse about any symptoms you may have and how best to address them.

Internal Radiation Therapy

Internal radiation therapy (brachytherapy) involves placing radiation devices in or next to the cancer. This is usually done at the same time or immediately after external beam radiation therapy for optimal outcome. Brachytherapy can be important in the treatment of vaginal, cervical and uterine cancers.