Exercise Study for Ovarian Cancer Survivors

Who can participate in the study?

Women with stage II-IV ovarian, fallopian tube, or peritoneal cancer who have undergone surgery and completed chemotherapy within six months and who are in clinical remission.

Our study

We will compare the effects of moderate aerobic ("cardio") exercise versus a waitlist control group (no exercise program) on distress, quality of life, cortisol and norepinephrine (hormones that can be elevated when people feel "stressed") and biomarkers (specific proteins in the blood) associated with decreased cancer survival.

What we are hoping to learn

Women with ovarian cancer often experience high levels of distress and multiple side effects such as fatigue, weakness, anxiety, and other symptoms that decrease their quality of life. These symptoms often persist even after treatment is finished. Studies have shown that distress and chronic stress can make cancers grow and spread. We need to develop and study interventions that can both improve quality of life in ovarian cancer survivors, and lengthen survival time.

Studies have proven that exercising after completing treatment for other types of cancer can improve quality of life. However, there have been very few studies on the effects of exercise on women's quality of life or their experiences of distress specifically for women with ovarian cancer. In addition, we do not know whether physical activity can improve the likelihood of ovarian cancer patients living longer. While studying the effects of exercise on cancer survival would need to enroll many patients, we can examine the effects of exercise on levels of specific proteins in the blood (biomarkers) in smaller studies. We know that levels of these biomarkers are higher in patients who have poor cancer survival. If we can demonstrate that exercise can lower these biomarkers, it might indicate that exercise can improve survival. Studying how exercise changes these biomarkers can also help us to understand the biological effects of exercise and the specific ways that exercise can improve survival.

If you decide to volunteer for the study, you will receive a 6-month home-based exercise program shortly after joining the study ***or*** be wait-listed for the exercise program and receive it after the 6 month time point. Women in the home-based exercise arm will meet with an exercise trainer to learn how to exercise safely and how to gradually increase their activity level each week to reach the goal of moderate intensity exercise for 150 minutes per week. They will receive weekly telephone calls to help with motivation and to help address any barriers or challenges they are experiencing with exercise.

Women in the waitlist group will be instructed to not increase their exercise level, but after 6 months, they will be offered the exercise program, including meeting with the exercise trainer and support calls.

Frequently Asked Questions

Will participating in the study benefit me?

You could benefit from participation in this study by learning how to exercise in a safe and effective way. You may also benefit by increasing your fitness level.

If you take part in the study, you will be helping thousands of women who get ovarian cancer in the future by actively contributing to a common goal of identifying lifestyle behaviors that may improve quality of life and may decrease the risk of recurrent ovarian cancer.

Frequently Asked Questions

What would I need to do if I participated in the study?

If you choose to participate in this study, you will be asked to:

1) Come for two clinic visits (at study start and 6 months) at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center (FHCRC) Prevention Center clinic. These clinic visits will include:

- **A brief physical exam**
- **A review of current medications**
- **A blood sample** of 30ml (approximately 5 teaspoons)

2) Complete a series of questionnaires at home (study start, 3 months, and 6 months)

3) Provide saliva samples (study start and 6 months). Saliva collection kits and instructions will be mailed to your home prior to the clinic visit, and you will bring your collected samples with you to your scheduled visit. The saliva samples will be used to assess cortisol levels, a hormone associated with stress.

4) Provide a 24-hour urine sample (study start and 6 months). 24-hour urine collection kits and instructions will be mailed to your home prior to the clinic visit, and you will bring your collected sample with you to your scheduled visit. The urine samples will be used to assess norepinephrine levels, a hormone associated with stress.

5) Wear a physical activity monitor (study start and 6 months). For one week, at the beginning and end of the study, you will wear a physical activity monitor (like a Fitbit). The monitor should be worn throughout the day and at night for one week, except when showering/bathing or swimming.

If you are randomized to the exercise program, you will also:

1) Meet with the exercise trainer for one hour to learn how to safely exercise
2) Exercise at home, with an ultimate goal of 150 minutes of exercise per week
2) Have weekly telephone calls with the exercise trainer
3) Keep a log of physical activity
4) Wear a physical activity monitor for one week at additional time points (2, 3, and 4 months)

If you are randomized to the waitlist group:

1) You will continue your usual activities. At the end of 6 months, you will be offered the exercise program, including the meeting with the exercise trainer and weekly telephone call support.

What if I have more questions?

For more information about this study, please contact our study manager: (206) 221-8247| ocexercise@uw.edu.*

*We cannot guarantee the confidentiality of communication sent via email.