

Grove House Practice & Heath Road Surgery

Women's Health Information



Grove House Opening times

8am to 6.30pm Monday & Tuesday
7am to 6.30pm Wednesday & Friday
7am to 8pm Thursday

Heath Road Opening Times

8.30am to 6pm Monday to Friday

Reception is open for telephone contact:

8.30am to 6.30pm Monday to Friday

We are closed on Saturdays, Sundays
and Bank Holidays

Women's Health



There are some health problems that are more common in women than in men, such as cervical cancer, breast cancer, gynaecology issues, contraception and menopause.

This booklet is aimed at giving our female patients advice about these types of medical conditions along with guidance on where to go for further information.

We have also included information on NHS Screening services that are available to women along with links to other websites that may give you further information and guidance if you should need it.

If you do have any concerns regarding any aspect of your health please do not hesitate to contact the Practice to make an appointment with a GP or Practice Nurse.



Breast Cancer

Breast cancer is the most common type of cancer in the UK.

Back in 2011, just under 50,000 women were diagnosed with invasive breast cancer. The majority of women who get it (8 out of 10) are over 50, but younger women can also get breast cancer.

Symptoms of breast cancer

Breast cancer can have a number of symptoms, but the first noticeable symptom is usually a lump or area of thickened breast tissue.

Most [breast lumps](#) are not cancerous, but it's always best to have them checked by your doctor. **If it's treated early enough, breast cancer can be prevented from spreading to other parts of the body.**

Symptoms include:

- a change in the size or shape of one or both breasts
[discharge from either of your nipples](#) (which may be streaked with blood)
- a lump or swelling in either of your armpits
- dimpling on the skin of your breasts
- a rash on or around your nipple
- a change in the appearance of your nipple, such as becoming sunken into your breast

Breast pain is not usually a symptom of breast cancer.

Self Breast Examination

Begin by lying on your back. It is easier to examine all breast tissue if you are lying down. Place your right hand behind your head. With the middle fingers of your left hand, gently yet firmly press down using small motions to examine the entire right breast.

Next, sit or stand. Feel your armpit, because breast tissue goes into that area. Gently squeeze the nipple, checking for discharge. Repeat the process on the left breast.



While lying down, use the three middle fingers and apply three levels of pressure in a circular motion. Follow an up and down pattern.



Check for changes with hands on hips and chest muscles flexed.



Examine underarm while upright, with arm slightly raised.

Stand in front of a mirror with your arms by your side. Look at your breasts directly and in the mirror. Look for changes in skin texture, such as dimpling, puckering, indentations, or skin that looks like an orange peel. Also note the shape and outline of each breast. Check to see if the nipple turns inward.

Do the same with your arms raised above your head.

Most women have some lumps. Your goal is to find anything new or different.

Breast cancer screening

Mammographic screening (where [X-ray](#) images of the breast are taken) is the best available method of detecting an early breast lesion. However, you should be aware that a mammogram might fail to detect some breast cancers. Women with a higher-than-average risk of developing breast cancer may be offered screening and genetic testing for the condition.

As the risk of breast cancer increases with age, all women who are 50-70 years old are invited for breast cancer screening every three years. Women over 70 are also entitled to screening and can arrange an appointment through their GP or local screening unit.

The main treatments for breast cancer are:

- Surgery
- Radiotherapy
- Chemotherapy
- Hormone Therapy
- Biological therapy (targeted therapy)



You may have one of these treatments, or a combination. The type or combination of treatments you have will depend on how the cancer was diagnosed and the stage it's at.

If you have any concerns please phone us to make an appointment with your GP.



You may find the following website useful for further information:

<https://www.breastcancercare.org.uk/>

Cervical Cancer



Cervical cancer is a type of cancer that develops in a woman's cervix (the entrance to the womb from the vagina).

Following the success of the NHS Cervical Screening Programme and the early detection of cell changes, the number of cervical cancer cases in the UK has reduced. Around 3,000 cases of cervical cancer are diagnosed in the UK each year.

It's possible for women of all ages to develop cervical cancer, but the condition mainly affects sexually active women aged between 30 and 45. Cervical cancer is very rare in women under 25.

Symptoms of cervical cancer:

- Vaginal Bleeding In most cases, this is the first noticeable symptom of cervical cancer. It usually occurs after having sex. Bleeding at any other time, other than your expected monthly period, is also considered unusual. This includes bleeding after the menopause (when a woman's monthly periods stop).
- Pain and discomfort during sex
- An unpleasant smelling vaginal discharge

You should contact your GP if you experience:

- bleeding after sex (postcoital bleeding)
- Bleeding outside of your normal periods
- New bleeding after the menopause

Vaginal bleeding is very common and can have a wide range of causes, so it doesn't necessarily mean you have cervical cancer. However, unusual vaginal bleeding is a symptom that needs to be investigated by your GP.

Cervical Screening

The NHS offers a cervical screening programme to all women from the age of 25. During cervical screening (previously known as a "smear test"), a small sample of cells is taken from the cervix and checked under a microscope for abnormalities. An abnormal cervical screening test doesn't mean you definitely have cancer. Most abnormal results are caused by an infection or the presence of treatable precancerous cells, rather than cancer itself.

Women aged 25 to 49 years of age are offered screening every three years, and women aged 50 to 64 are offered screening every five years. For women who are 65 or older, only those who haven't been screened since they were 50, or those who have had recent abnormal tests, are offered screening.

Treatment of cervical cancer

Where cervical cancer is diagnosed at an early stage, it is usually possible to treat it using surgery. The surgical procedure used to remove the womb is called a hysterectomy. In some cases, it's possible to leave the womb in place, but it may need to be removed.

Radiotherapy is an alternative to surgery for some women with early stage cervical cancer. In some cases, it's used alongside surgery. More advanced cases of cervical cancer are usually treated using a combination of chemotherapy and radiotherapy.

CANCER RESEARCH UK Let's beat cancer sooner [Donate](#)

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[Home](#) [About cancer](#) [Your experience](#) [Ovarian cancer](#)

CERVICAL CANCER **Cervical cancer**

About cervical cancer
Treatment for abnormal cervical cells
Diagnosing cervical cancer
Treating cervical cancer
Living with cervical cancer
About the website
Organisations
Reading list

All about cervical cancer including symptoms and causes, cervical screening, treatment for abnormal cervical cells, tests to diagnose cervical cancer, treatment (including surgery, radiotherapy and chemotherapy) and current research. The link with cervical cancer section covers coping with your diagnosis, fertility and how cancer and treatment can affect your sex life.

About cervical cancer

- The cervix
- Causes
- Screening
- Symptoms
- Types
- See a specialist

Treatment for abnormal cervical cells

- Treatment and surgery
- After treatment
- Pregnancy and sexual activity
- What to do

[View a summary of this section](#) [View a summary of this section](#)

[Contact us](#) [Support us](#) [Print booklet](#)

For further information regarding Cervical Cancer and Cervical Screening you may find the following site useful:

<http://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/type/cervical-cancer/>

Bowel Cancer

Bowel cancer, also known as colorectal cancer, is the third most common cancer in the UK. You can get it at any age, but you're more likely to get it if you're over 50. A lump is created by an abnormal and uncontrolled growth of cells that starts in your bowel.

The earlier bowel cancer is diagnosed, the better your chance of a cure.

The symptoms of bowel cancer include the following.

- Pain, or a lump or swelling in your abdomen (tummy).
- Tiredness or breathlessness for no apparent reason. This may be caused by the small amount of blood loss from your bowel, which can result in anaemia.
- Blood in your faeces. This may be mixed into your faeces or flecks on the surface, or you may see it in the toilet or on toilet paper. It's a good idea to get into the habit of checking in the toilet before you flush.
- Persistent changes in your bowel habit that last for longer than several weeks. This could be going to the toilet more often or having diarrhoea.
- Weight loss without any obvious reason and/or losing your appetite.

If you get any of these symptoms please make an appointment with your GP.



For more information please see:

<http://www.bowelcanceruk.org/uk/>

Lung Cancer



Lung cancer is one of the most common and serious types of cancer with over 41,000 people being diagnosed every year in the UK.

Lung cancer mainly affects older people and is rare in people younger than 40, the rates of lung cancer rise sharply with age. Lung cancer is most commonly diagnosed in people aged 70-74 years.

Although people who have never smoked can develop lung cancer, smoking is the main cause (about 90% of cases). This is because smoking involves regularly inhaling a number of different toxic substances.

There are usually no signs or symptoms in the early stages of lung cancer, but many people with the condition will eventually develop symptoms including:

- A persistent cough
- Coughing up blood
- Persistent breathlessness
- Unexplained tiredness and weight loss
- An ache or pain when breathing or coughing

If you get any of these symptoms please make an appointment with your GP.



For further information please see:

<http://www.cancer.gov/types/lung>

Ovarian Cancer

Ovarian cancer is most common in women who have been through the menopause (usually over the age of 50), although it can affect women of any age. Due to the symptoms of ovarian cancer can be similar to those of other conditions, it can be difficult to recognise.

However, there are early symptoms to look out for, such as :

- persistent bloating,
- pain in the pelvis and lower stomach,
- difficulty eating.



Treating ovarian cancer

The treatment you receive for ovarian cancer will depend on several things, including the stage of your cancer and your general health. Chemotherapy is the main treatment for ovarian cancer, but your treatment will usually involve a combination of surgery and chemotherapy.

It is important to see your GP if you experience these symptoms, particularly over a long period of time.

For further information go to:

<http://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/type/ovarian-cancer/>



The screenshot shows the Cancer Research UK website. At the top, there is a logo for Cancer Research UK and the slogan "Let's beat cancer sooner". A "Donate" button is visible. The main navigation menu includes "HOME", "ABOUT CANCER", "SUPPORT US", "OUR RESEARCH", "FUNDING FOR RESEARCHERS", and "ABOUT US". The page is titled "Ovarian cancer" and features a "Donate" button. The content area includes a section for "About ovarian cancer" with sub-sections for "The signs", "Symptoms", "Causes", "Seeing a specialist", "Screening", and "Types". There is also a "Diagnosing ovarian cancer" section with sub-sections for "Early", "What to ask your doctor", and "Further tests". A "View a summary of this section" link is provided for both sections. The page also includes a "Contact us" button, a "Support us" button, and a "Print basket" link.

Womb Cancer

Cancer of the womb (uterus) is a common cancer that affects the female reproductive system. It's also called uterine cancer and endometrial cancer.

Abnormal vaginal bleeding is the most common symptom of womb cancer. If you have been through the menopause, any vaginal bleeding is considered abnormal. If you have not yet been through the menopause, unusual bleeding may include bleeding between your periods.

Less common womb cancer symptoms include pain in the lower abdomen (tummy) and pain during sex.

Treating womb cancer

Surgery is the main treatment for womb cancer, although different methods can be used depending on your personal circumstances.

You should see your GP as soon as possible if you experience any unusual vaginal bleeding. While it's unlikely to be caused by womb cancer, it's best to be sure.



The screenshot shows the Cancer Research UK website. At the top left is the Cancer Research UK logo with the tagline 'Let's beat cancer sooner'. A 'Donate' button is visible in the top right. The main navigation bar includes links for HOME, ABOUT CANCER, SUPPORT US, OUR RESEARCH, FUNDING FOR RESEARCHERS, and ABOUT US. The breadcrumb trail reads: Home > About cancer > Your cancer life > Womb cancer > About womb cancer. The page title is 'About womb cancer'. The main content area includes a description: 'This section tells you about cancer of the womb, including information about the causes of womb cancer, types of womb cancer, symptoms and screening.' Below this are several links: 'The womb', 'Causes', 'Screening', 'Symptoms', 'Types', 'Seeing a specialist', and 'What to ask'. There are also links for 'Types of womb cancer', 'Should I see a specialist?', and 'What to ask your doctor'. A 'Submit rating' button is at the bottom of the main content area. On the right side, there are utility links: 'Increase text size', 'Decrease text size', 'Print page', 'Glossary', 'Newsletter', 'Help', 'Contact us', 'Support us', and 'Print basket'.

For further information go to:

<http://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/type/womb-cancer/>

Endometriosis

Endometriosis is a common condition where tissue that behaves like the lining of the womb (the endometrium) is found outside the womb.

The condition is estimated to affect around two million women in the UK. Most of them are diagnosed between the ages of 25 and 40.

Endometriosis is a long-term (chronic) condition that causes painful periods or heavy periods. It often also causes pain in the lower abdomen (tummy), pelvis or lower back, as well as fertility problems. It may also contribute towards a lack of energy and depression.

One of the main complications of endometriosis is difficulty getting pregnant or not being able to get pregnant (infertility).

If you have endometriosis and you do become pregnant, the condition is unlikely to put your pregnancy at risk.

Treatment of endometriosis

There is no known cure for endometriosis. However, the symptoms can often be managed with painkillers or hormone medication, which help prevent the condition from interfering with your daily life.

Surgery to remove patches of endometriosis tissue can sometimes be used to improve symptoms and fertility.

You should see your GP if you have symptoms of endometriosis so they can try to identify a cause and refer you to a specialist for a diagnosis if necessary.



For further information please see the following site:

<https://www.endometriosis-uk.org/>

Menopause

The menopause, sometimes referred to as the "change of life", is when a woman's ovaries stop producing an egg every four weeks. A woman no longer has monthly periods and is unlikely to get pregnant. In the UK, 51 is the average age for a woman to reach the menopause. If you experience the menopause before the age of 40, it's known as a premature menopause.

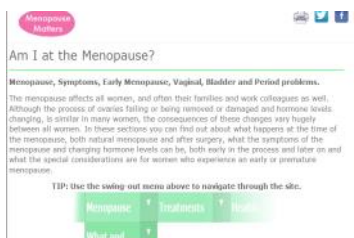


Symptoms of Menopause

The start of the menopause is known as the perimenopausal stage, during which you may have light or heavy periods (menorrhagia).

- The frequency of your periods may also be affected. You may have one every two or three weeks, or you may not have one for months at a time.
- Hot Flashes and night sweats
- Loss of libido (sex drive)
- Vaginal dryness and pain, itching or discomfort during sex
- Palpitations (heartbeats that suddenly become more noticeable)
- Headaches
- Mood changes, such as depression, anxiety or tiredness
- Sleeping problems such as insomnia
- Urinary tract infections (UTIs)

If you feel that symptoms of menopause are affecting your day to day life please make an appointment with your GP.



For further information on the menopause and treatments available please go to the following website:

<http://www.menopausematters.co.uk/>

Vaginal Thrush

Most women experience occasional bouts of a common yeast infection known as vaginal thrush which causes itching, irritation and swelling of the vagina and surrounding area, sometimes with a creamy white cottage cheese-like discharge. Vaginal thrush is fairly harmless, but it can be uncomfortable. It can also keep returning – this is known as recurrent (or complicated) thrush.

Symptoms include:

- itching and soreness around the entrance of the vagina
- pain during sex
- a stinging sensation when you urinate
- vaginal discharge, although this isn't always present; the discharge is usually odourless and it can be thin and watery, or thick and white like cottage cheese

You don't always need to make an appointment with your GP, you can go to your Pharmacist to seek advice and medical help.

When to seek medical advice from a Pharmacist or GP:

- this is the first time you've had thrush
- you're pregnant or may be pregnant
- you're breastfeeding
- you have abnormal menstrual bleeding or blood-stained discharge
- you have lower abdominal pain
- you have vulval or vaginal sores
- your symptoms don't improve after 7-14 days



For further information on thrush please go to the following website:

<http://patient.info/health/vaginal-thrush>

Urinary Tract Infection (UTI)

UTIs are more common in women than in men. It's estimated half of all women in the UK will have a UTI at least once in their life.

Symptoms of UTIs

- pain or a burning sensation when urinating (doctors refer to this as dysuria)
- a need to urinate often
- pain in the lower abdomen (tummy)
- cloudy urine or blood in your urine (haematuria)



You can get an infection in the lower (bladder and urethra) or upper (kidney and ureters) part of the urinary tract, and doctors often describe them as lower or upper UTIs.

Upper UTIs are potentially more serious than lower UTIs because there is a risk of kidney damage.

An infection of the bladder is called cystitis, while an infection of the urethra is known as urethritis.

For further information on UTIs please see the following website:

Although many lower UTIs are mild and get better within a few days, speak to your GP if your symptoms are causing you a lot of pain and discomfort or if they last more than five days. There is a higher risk of complications with an upper UTI, so see your GP if you notice any of the symptoms.

Urinary tract infections in adults <http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/Urinary-tract-infection-adults/Pages/Introduction.aspx>

Overview **Urinary tract**

Urinary tract infections in adults Symptoms Causes Diagnosis Treatment Complications Prevention

Introduction

Urinary tract infections (UTIs) are very common. They can be painful and uncomfortable, but they usually go away within a few days or can be easily treated with a course of antibiotics.

UTIs are more common in women than in men. It's estimated half of all women in the UK will have a UTI at least once in their life, and 1 in 2,000 healthy men will develop one each year.

Children can also get UTIs, although this is less common. Read more about UTIs in children.

If you develop a UTI, you're likely to feel:

- pain or a burning sensation when urinating (doctors refer to this as dysuria)

Linked items

- MSU Checklist (MSU)
- Cystitis
- Keep your kidneys healthy
- Urinary infection
- UTI in children
- Antibiotics (MSU)
- Non-antibiotic UTI
- Non-antibiotic UTI

Sexual health



Chlamydia

Chlamydia is one of the most common sexually transmitted infections (STIs) in the UK that is passed on from one person to another through unprotected sex (sex without a condom) and is particularly common in sexually active teenagers and young adults.

Most people with chlamydia don't notice any symptoms and don't know they have it. If you do develop symptoms, you may experience:

- pain when urinating
- unusual discharge from the vagina, penis or rectum (back passage)
- in women, pain in the tummy, bleeding during or after sex, and bleeding between periods

Testing for chlamydia is done with a urine test or a swab test. Anyone can get a free and confidential chlamydia test at a sexual health clinic, a genitourinary medicine (GUM) clinic or a GP surgery.

People under 25 years old can also get tested by the National Chlamydia Screening Programme (NCSP). For further information please see: <http://www.chlamydiaSCREENING.nhs.uk/>

Chlamydia can usually be treated easily with antibiotics. You may be given some tablets to take all on one day, or a longer course of capsules to take for a week. You shouldn't have sex until you and your current sexual partner have finished your treatment. If you had the one-day course of treatment, you should avoid having sex for a week afterwards.

You may also seek help and guidance at the GUM Clinic at Halton Hospital:01928 753488



For further information please visit:

<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Chlamydia/Pages/Introduction.aspx>

Contraception

Women in their 20s, 30s and 40s may at some point need contraception. There are about 15 methods that are available on the NHS, it is just about finding which method might work best for you.



For advice on the different types of contraception please visit the following website: <http://www.fpa.org.uk/>

You may make an appointment to see one of our Practice Nurses who can give you advice and guidance on contraception.

Alternatively, you can contact the Sexual Health Clinic at Halton Hospital.

Axess Sexual Health—01928 753217

Morning After Pill

Emergency contraception can prevent pregnancy after unprotected sex or if your contraceptive method has failed – for example, a condom has split or you've missed a pill. There are two kinds of emergency contraceptive pill. Levonelle has to be taken within **72 hours** (three days) of sex, and ellaOne has to be taken within **120 hours** (five days) of sex. Both pills work by preventing or delaying ovulation (release of an egg).

There are several pharmacies that will prescribe the morning after pill for free, these are: *St Pauls Pharmacy, Asda Pharmacy, Wise (Halton Brook) Pharmacy* And *Murdishaw Pharmacy*

All other pharmacies will charge).

For advice on the morning after pill please go to the following website: <http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/contraception-guide/Pages/emergency-contraception.aspx>

Cardiovascular disease (diseases of the heart and circulation)



Women are three times more likely to die of heart disease than breast cancer. In the years following the menopause (see page 13), your risk of getting heart disease rises significantly.

There are lots of things you can do to help prevent cardiovascular disease such as:

- Stop Smoking
- Regular Exercise
- Eating Healthy and having a balanced diet including your five a day (for further information on healthy eating please see: www.nhs.uk/Livewell/healthy-eating/Pages/Healthyeating.aspx)
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Do not drink any more than the recommended amount of alcohol

If you do have any pain or tightness in your chest that feels worse when you do physical activity then please make an appointment to see your GP or Practice Nurse.

If you have sudden crushing pain or heaviness in your chest that does not go away, this could be a sign of a heart attack and you need to phone 999 immediately.



For further information please see the following site:

<https://www.bhf.org.uk/heart-health/conditions/cardiovascular-disease.aspx>

Diabetes



The symptoms of diabetes include feeling very thirsty, passing more urine than usual and feeling tired all the time. They occur because some or all of the glucose stays in your blood and isn't used as fuel for energy. Your body will try to get rid of the excess glucose in your urine.

Symptoms common to both type 1 diabetes and type 2 diabetes, are:

- Urinating more often than unusual, particularly at night
- Feeling very thirsty
- Feeling very tired
- Itching around the vagina, or frequently having thrush
- Cuts or wounds that heal slowly
- Blurred vision (caused by the lens of the eye becoming dry)

The signs and symptoms of type 1 diabetes are usually obvious and develop very quickly, often over a few weeks.

The signs and symptoms of type 2 diabetes aren't always as obvious, and it's often diagnosed during a routine check-up. This is because the symptoms are often mild and develop gradually over a number of years. **This means that you may have type 2 diabetes for many years without realising it.**

Early diagnosis and treatment for type 2 diabetes is very important because it may reduce your risk of developing complications later on, so please see your GP or Practice Nurse if you have any concerns.



For further information please go to:

<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Diabetes/Pages/Diabetes.aspx>

Contacting us

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Cancellation Line Tel : 01928 842577
(message service only)

Website www.grovehouse.co.uk

**If you need urgent medical advice or
treatment when the Practice is closed,
or, for general health advice and information you can contact
111**

or, you may wish to go to the Urgent Care Centre in Runcorn at
Halton General Hospital, Entrance 2, Hospital Way, Runcorn,
WA7 2DA
Open 7am—10pm, 7 days a week

or, you may wish to go to the walk-in centre in Widnes at the Health
Care Resource Centre, Oaks Place,
Caldwell Road WA8 7GD