



**Press Release**  
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Ovarian Cancer Often Treatable If Detected Early**

*Castro County Healthcare urges women to talk with their medical provider screenings.*

DIMMITT, TX (May 13, 2024) – Ovarian cancer remains one of the deadliest forms of cancer among women, causing more deaths than any other cancer of the female reproductive system. Fortunately, regular exams can help physicians detect the disease early and improve treatment outcomes.

“If it is detected early, survival rates for women with ovarian cancer are relatively high,” said Kimberly Smith, MD at Medical Center of Dimmitt, a service of Castro County Healthcare. “Regular pelvic exams are an important way for physicians to detect the disease before it progresses and becomes difficult to treat.”

Many women with ovarian cancer experience only mild symptoms that don’t lead to treatment until it is too late. Often referred to as a “silent killer” by medical professionals, ovarian cancer is typically difficult to detect, as the symptoms are often believed to be caused by other common illnesses. Symptoms of ovarian cancer sometimes include bloating of the abdominal area, a constant need to urinate, pelvic or abdominal pain, and unusual vaginal discharges.

To help healthcare providers detect ovarian cancer and other female reproductive-system diseases early, Dr. Smith recommends an annual rectovaginal pelvic exam.

“While rectovaginal pelvic exams are commonly confused with PAP smears, it’s important for women to understand that the two exams are actually different Dr. Smith explained. “PAP smears only check for cervical abnormalities and can easily overlook signs of ovarian cancer. PAP smears won’t necessarily help in detecting ovarian cancer, which is why a pelvic exam is also important for women.”

In addition to comprehensive pelvic exams, a transvaginal ultrasound and a CA-125 blood test measure the amount of a certain protein that can become elevated when women have ovarian cancer.

Like many forms of reproductive cancers, the risk of developing ovarian cancer typically increases with age. However, it is not unheard of for women in their late 20s and early 30s to develop the disease. Risks include a family history of ovarian cancer or a history of cancer involving the breast, the uterus or the colorectal area.

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There are several options for treatment, including surgery, radiation and chemotherapy. Gynecologic oncologists, who have special training in the cancers of a woman's reproductive system, work with each patient to determine the best treatment option, based on age, health and cancer stage.

"The signs of ovarian cancer aren't always obvious," Dr. Smith said. "Sadly, more than half of the women diagnosed will die from the disease because it is typically not caught until it has progressed to an advanced stage. That is why it is important to discuss your family medical history with your medical provider. Yearly screenings are critical and can help save your life."

In Castro County many residents choose to take advantage of the local healthcare services offered at Medical Center of Dimmitt. Healthcare at home is a convenient choice for families with busy schedules and provide a wide variety of essential services, including women's services, wellness exams, immunizations and more.

To learn more about local healthcare services or to schedule your ovarian cancer screening call Medical Center of Dimmitt at 647-2194.

### **About Castro County Healthcare**

Founded in 1963, Castro County Healthcare provides healthcare for residents of Castro County, Texas, and the surrounding region. Anchored by Plains Memorial Hospital, the healthcare system offers many medical services, including 24-hour emergency care, advanced radiology services, including CT scanning and MRIs, outpatient lab, physical and occupational therapy, swing bed services, patient education, assisted living facility and more. For additional information, please visit [www.plainsmemorial.com](http://www.plainsmemorial.com).

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