



Ovarian cancer

Reported by: Dr. Deanna Lites

More than 15,000 women are expected to die from ovarian cancer this year. We probably all know someone who has dealt with this cancer. September is ovarian cancer awareness month, and one local organization is doing something about it.

Almost nine years ago, Patty Franchi Flaherty found out she had ovarian cancer.

"I had lost my mother to ovarian cancer 33 years ago as of this year, and had lost two sisters to non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, so of course the first thing I thought was, now it's my turn," she said.

Patty got treatment, but after living with the disease for seven years, she relapsed. That's when she decided she didn't want to just help herself beat ovarian cancer; she wanted to help others too.

"It frustrated me," she said. "My mother had died so many years ago and to think that in this day and age there hadn't been much progress and the reason being there wasn't a lot of money for research. So that really bothered me."

So Patty founded Ovarians for the Cure, a foundation that raises awareness and money for ovarian cancer research. One reason the disease is often deadly is because it's hard to diagnose in the early stages.

"It's hard to catch early probably for a couple of different reasons, one is because we don't have a good screening test, but also because as the ovarian cancer grows in the ovary, almost immediately it starts to spread," said Dr. Ursula Matulonis of the Dana Farber Cancer Institute.

Symptoms of ovarian cancer include abdominal pain and bloating, difficulty eating and digesting, and problems urinating.

For Patty, Ovarians is her passion to help in the fight against ovarian cancer.

"I would love to save somebody from going through what I've gone through," she said. "I would love to save a life."

Women experiencing any symptoms daily for two or three weeks should see their doctor.

(Copyright (c) 2007 Sunbeam Television Corp. All Rights Reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.)

