

## Symptoms Women Should Not Ignore

Women tend to brush off aches and pains, discomfort, and fatigue. A woman usually puts other’s needs before her own. Too distracted to notice what is really going on with your own body or things around you? Family members need to be aware of unspoken health cues.

Who has the time or [energy](#) to get to the bottom of all those annoying symptoms anyway? Here’s who: **You** — it’s crucial for all women to pay attention to their bodies so they can tune in to any potential problems. From reoccurring headaches to sleepless nights, take note of these potentially serious [women’s health](#) symptoms.

### EXTREME FATIGUE

Even if you have an overwhelming number of responsibilities on your plate, exhaustion is one symptom women just shouldn’t ignore. Why? Extreme [fatigue](#) can signal an array of different issues, including depression, thyroid conditions, diabetes — even congestive heart failure, cancer, and many other causes. If you find that you’re exhausted and can’t get your energy back with rest, exercise, and a healthy diet, schedule an exam with your doctor.



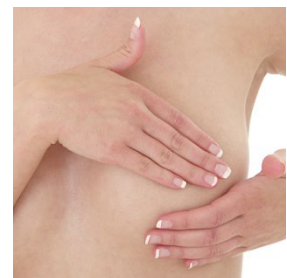
### ABDOMINAL PAIN/ BLOATING

A little tummy ache every now and then probably isn’t a big deal — but constant bloating and stomach discomfort could be. While abdominal pain could be just painful gas, it could also be a symptom of colitis, a [stomach ulcer](#), or a problem with the gallbladder. If you find that you can’t get relief from abdominal pain (particularly if it seems to be persistent and located in one specific area in your stomach), call your doctor to discuss your symptoms. You may need an office visit or immediate medical attention to identify the problem.



### BREAST CHANGES

Lumps that feel harder or different from the rest of your breast should be examined by a doctor. Normal breast tissue should have a bumpy texture throughout and feel almost identical to your other breast. Aside from cancer, breast lumps can also be caused by injuries, infections, and non-cancerous growths. Changes in hormones during a woman’s monthly menstrual cycle can also cause changes in your breasts.



## PAIN OR DISCOMFORT IN THE CHEST OR A COUGH THAT WON'T QUIT

Lung cancer may produce pain in the chest, shoulders, or back, or a stubborn cough that won't go away. If you notice any type of chest pain, whether it is sharp, dull, or constant, or if you have a cough that lingers, tell your doctor. Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer death in the United States with about 220,000 Americans diagnosed and 150,000 dying from the disease each year. When found at an early stage, lung cancer survival rates are much higher. Although only about one percent of screenings find lung cancer, early detection can positively affect a patient's prognosis.



## TROUBLE SWALLOWING OR FEELING LIKE THERE IS FOOD STUCK IN YOUR THROAT OR CHEST

These problems associated with swallowing may get worse over time and result in a change in eating habits without you even noticing. Though having some of the symptoms below does not always indicate esophageal cancer (and can often be attributed to other health concerns), it is important to discuss any symptoms or changes to your health with your doctor, especially if you are having difficulty swallowing. Some of the main symptoms of esophageal cancer include difficulty swallowing, unexplained weight loss, chest pain, pressure or burning, worsening heartburn or indigestion, coughing or hoarseness.



## A NEW SPOT ON YOUR SKIN OR A SPOT THAT LOOKS DIFFERENT FROM OTHERS

New spots that have changed in size, shape, and color may be a sign of skin cancer. During a self-exam, look for moles by following the [ABCDE](#) rule and check for asymmetry, border color, diameter, and evolution of the mole.



## IRREGULAR OR ABNORMAL VAGINAL BLEEDING

Abnormal vaginal bleeding is the most common symptom of invasive cervical cancer. If you notice bleeding between menstrual periods or after intercourse, schedule a visit with your physician. Other reasons may be your birth control method (the pill or IUDs), a pregnancy, an STI, or another kind of infection. Spotting before your menstrual flow begins could be a sign of an underlying issue or disease, such as uterine fibroids, polyps, or hormonal issues, and even possibly endometriosis.

## UNEXPLAINED WEIGHT LOSS

Unexplained weight loss means you are losing weight without trying or for no explainable reason. An unexplained weight loss of 10 pounds or more may be the first sign of cancer. A life-changing stressful event can also lead to weight loss. So not all unexplained weight loss is serious. Loss of muscle, overactive thyroid, and a mental health condition such as depression can also be the reason behind unexplained weight loss.



## BLOOD IN YOUR URINE

Blood in the urine is often one of the first signs of bladder cancer, although it can also be caused by an infection or kidney stones. According to the American Cancer Society, sometimes blood in the urine is enough to change the color of urine to orange, pink, or a darker red. It may be present one day and absent the next. Your doctor will be able to help figure out the cause and treat it.



## SHORTNESS OF BREATH

If your breathing is uncomfortable or if you find it hard to catch your breath, you may be suffering from dyspnea. Dyspnea may occasionally be caused by a tumor, or another condition related to cancer. It can also be caused by anxiety, stress, a blood clot, asthma, or pneumonia.



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When your body is speaking to you, don't ignore the signs and symptoms. Contact your doctor to detect a health problem early before it becomes a more serious issue.

## RESOURCES

[www.eehealth.org/blog/2022/03/10-symptoms-women-should-know](http://www.eehealth.org/blog/2022/03/10-symptoms-women-should-know)

[www.americancancersociety.org](http://www.americancancersociety.org)

[www.mayoclinic.org](http://www.mayoclinic.org)