

LGSOC Glossary for Patients and Caregivers

Use this glossary of commonly used words and phrases associated with LGSOC to help you feel more prepared when talking to your care team.

What is LGSOC?

LGSOC (low-grade serous ovarian cancer) is a type of ovarian cancer that starts in the thin layer of tissue around the ovaries (also known as the epithelium). Unlike the more common high-grade serous ovarian cancer (HGSOC), LGSOC may be resistant to chemotherapy.

- **Low-grade:** A cancer's grade describes how abnormal the cancer cells look under a microscope. Low-grade cancers look fairly normal and tend to grow slowly but persistently relative to high-grade cancers.
- **Serous:** Refers to the serous membrane, or serosa—a thin layer of tissue that lines certain body cavities and covers organs within them. In ovarian cancer, the term describes a type of epithelial tumor associated with this tissue.

Terms you may hear when discussing LGSOC

- **Advanced practice provider:** A healthcare provider with advanced medical training who works with doctors to help diagnose, treat, and support patients throughout their care.
- **CA 125 test:** A test to determine the amount of CA 125 (cancer antigen 125) present in the blood. For ovarian cancer patients, this test can be used to monitor cancer treatment and check for cancer that has come back (cancer recurrence).
- **Genetic testing:** A type of medical test that screens for changes in a patient's genes (mutations) that may be related to disease. Genetic testing, specifically germline and somatic testing, is recommended for all patients with ovarian cancer, including LGSOC.
- **Gynecologic oncologist:** A surgeon who has specialized training in diagnosing and treating cancers of the female reproductive organs.
- **Medical oncologist:** A doctor who has specialized training in diagnosing and treating cancer in adults who may coordinate treatment given by other specialists.
- **Pathologist:** A type of medical doctor who analyzes samples collected during biopsies to provide a diagnosis that helps guide patient care.
- **Recurrent cancer:** When cancer returns, or recurs, either after initial treatment or after a time period during which the cancer is no longer detectable.

Terms you may hear when discussing treatment

- **Angiogenesis inhibitor:** A cancer medicine that blocks the growth of blood vessels that help tumors grow rather than blocking the growth of tumor cells themselves.

- **Aromatase inhibitor:** A hormone therapy that lowers the amount of estrogen in the body to help slow or stop the cancer.
- **Chemotherapy:** Treatment that uses drugs to kill cancer cells in the body, including normal cells and cancer cells.
- **Clinical trial:** A research study on a new medicine or treatment to assess its safety and/or how well it works. Clinical trials study different aspects of medicines and how they interact with the body.
- **Endocrine therapy:** A cancer treatment that blocks the production or action of estrogen. Also called hormone therapy.
- **Germline testing:** A type of genetic testing that identifies inherited changes in an individual's DNA that may indicate an increased risk of developing a disease.
- **Medically induced menopause:** When medical treatments, such as chemotherapy or hormone therapy, slow or stop the functioning of ovaries, causing menopause to occur earlier than normal. Medical menopause can be temporary or permanent, depending on the treatment. Menopause side effects can be very disorienting, especially for younger women, and include hot flashes, mood swings, and infertility.
- **MEK inhibitor:** A targeted cancer medicine that blocks the signals cancer cells use to grow and survive, helping slow or stop cancer growth.
- **Somatic testing:** A type of genetic testing that identifies genetic changes that were acquired during a person's lifetime and are not inherited from a parent. Somatic testing is typically performed on tumor tissue to identify tumor-specific changes in DNA that may then help guide treatment selection, predict treatment response, and inform prognosis.
- **Surgical menopause:** Permanent menopause caused by the surgical removal of the ovaries.
- **Targeted therapy:** A cancer treatment that selectively targets specific molecules or pathways in your cells that drive the growth and survival of cancer cells.

Terms you may hear when discussing surgery

- **Debulking surgery:** Also known as cytoreductive surgery, the goal of this type of surgery is to remove as much of the tumor as possible. It is commonly used to treat advanced malignant tumors, including ovarian cancers.
- **Hysterectomy:** A surgical procedure to remove all or part of the uterus. It may also involve removal of the cervix, ovaries, fallopian tubes, and other surrounding structures.
- **Laparoscopy:** A surgical procedure that is an alternative to open surgery and works by inserting a laparoscope, a tiny lighted camera, through a small "keyhole" incision in your abdomen. It is an exploratory surgery, similar to a laparotomy.
- **Laparotomy:** A surgical procedure used to access the abdominal cavity and examine the organs within it. A laparotomy is often used to diagnose and stage ovarian cancer, remove cancerous tissue, and perform other necessary surgeries.

- **Omentectomy:** A surgical procedure to remove the omentum, which is a tissue layer surrounding the stomach and other organs in the abdomen.
- **Oophorectomy:** A surgical procedure to remove one or both of the ovaries.

Terms you may hear related to the science of LGSOC

- **KRAS:** A gene that is a member of the RAS gene family. It makes protein that is involved in cell signaling pathways that control cell growth and maturation. Changes in this gene may cause cancer cells to grow and spread in the body.
- **Mutation:** A change in the DNA sequence, also known as a variant. Some variants can cause a disease, like cancer, to occur or increase the risk of occurrence. Mutations in BRCA1 and BRCA2 are associated with breast and ovarian cancers but are relatively uncommon in LGSOC.
- **NRAS:** A gene that gives instructions to make the N-Ras protein. This protein acts like an on/off switch controlling cell growth, division, and maturation. Changes in the *NRAS* gene may cause normal cells to become cancerous.
- **RAS:** RAS is a commonly-mutated gene in cancer. RAS gene mutations result in overactivation of the RAS protein, which activates signaling pathways that promote cancer growth and survival, such as the MAPK and PI3K pathways. RAS/MAPK pathway associated mutations are common in LGSOC.
- **Wild-Type:** A wild-type gene is the normal version of a gene that has not been changed or mutated in any form.