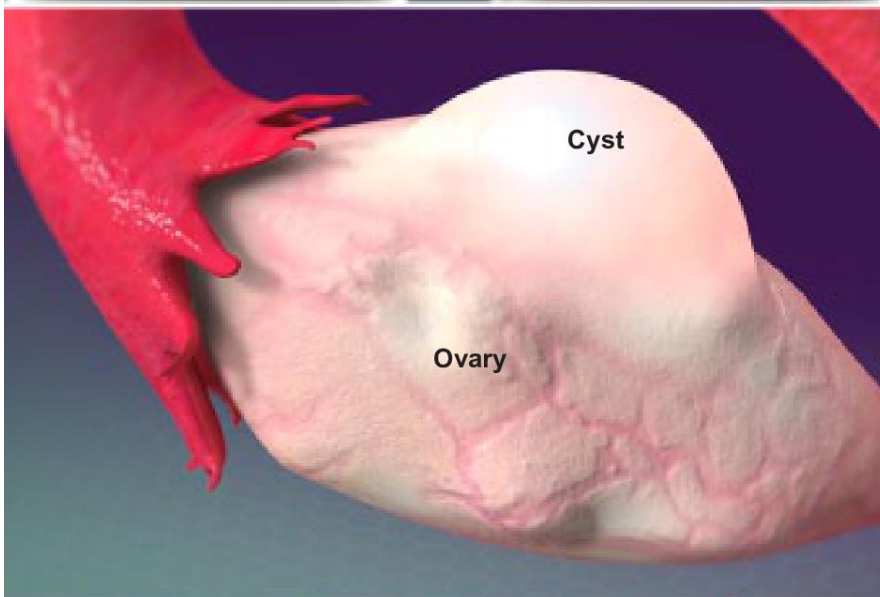




Ovarian Cysts



Overview

These are sacs filled with fluid. They can form on or in the ovaries (the reproductive organs that produce a woman's egg cells). Ovarian cysts are common. Most women have them at some time during their lives. In most cases they are not cancerous and aren't harmful.

Causes

Most commonly, cysts are caused by a problem with a follicle. Follicles are tiny sacs on and in the ovaries. They hold the growing egg cells. Normally, a follicle bursts open to release an egg, and then it shrinks back into the tissue of the ovary. But if a follicle doesn't break open to release its egg, or if it releases an egg and then doesn't shrink, a cyst may form.

Symptoms

You can have a cyst and not realize it. Small ones often don't cause any symptoms. But if your cyst is large, it may cause pressure and pain in your lower abdomen. You may feel bloated and swollen. In some cases a cyst can cause an ovary to twist. That can cause pain, nausea and vomiting. And, a cyst can rupture. If that happens, you may feel sudden, severe pain. Ovarian cysts can cause a wide range of other, less common symptoms, including pain during sex, weight gain, breast tenderness and other problems.

Treatment

Most ovarian cysts go away by themselves without treatment. But if you have a problematic cyst, your doctor may need to remove it. You may benefit from birth control pills to keep new cysts from forming. Your healthcare provider can create a plan that's right for you.