While breast cancer seems to get more exposure, women — especially those who wish to have children — should pay attention to gynaecological cancers too.

Gynaecological cancers affect a woman’s reproductive organs. They include cervical, ovarian, uterine, vaginal and vulvar cancers. Each has its own characteristics, symptoms, risk factors and screening methods.

**Ovarian cancer**
Ovarian cancer is the fifth most common cancer in Singapore, and the second most common gynaecological cancer. If discovered early, 95% of cases can be easily cured. However, seven in 10 of these cancers are diagnosed in advanced stages. Risk factors include a family history of the disease, late pregnancy, early onset of menstruation, late menopause, and endometriosis. Women who have not had children or had breast cancer also have an increased risk.

There is no standard screening test. However, if there is a family history of breast or ovarian cancer, see a doctor to assess your risk and schedule regular pelvic exams. This is important to spot the cancer early. Many of the signs may be mistaken for irritable bowel syndrome, Crohn’s disease or a malfunctioning gall bladder. In its later stages, ovarian cancer may result, with symptoms such as chronic irregular bleeding, abdominal pain or swelling, and discomfort or changes in bowel habits.

**Uterine cancer**
Uterine or endometrial cancer affects the lining of the uterus. This type of cancer is the fourth most common female cancer in Singapore. One of the biggest risk factors
Ovarian cancer is the fifth most common cancer in Singapore, and the second most common gynaecological cancer. If discovered early, 95% of cases can be easily cured.