



Ovarian cancer symptoms easily missed

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INDIANAPOLIS - This month, Checkup 13 is focusing on ovarian cancer. Often called the silent killer, ovarian cancer's symptoms can be similar to less serious conditions - and for that reason it's frequently diagnosed in the later stages, which decrease a woman's long-term chances for survival.

It took a while but Becky Lundberg is back from bald.

"This is my cranial prosthesis or wig that became my new 'do' through, let's see, January through June," said Lundberg.

She's grateful the wig effectively hid the battle with ovarian cancer she faced most of this year.

"This is a treatable cancer but not a curable cancer which is kind of a tough message to hear," she said.

Lundberg says she was amazed to learn such a deadly illness was present when her symptoms were so slight.

"I literally had a stomach - kind of like I ate too much Halloween candy kind of stomach ache. Not all the time and nothing to just really put me down but just a lingering stomach ache," she said.

Ultimately her ovaries were removed and Becky didn't think to dread the post-op call from her doctor.

"She called and said the pathology report is in and unfortunately they are both full of cancer and it was like, 'Wow, I remember exactly when I was standing in the house one of those moments like - ugh.'"



Becky Lundberg

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Lundberg now sees a gynecologic oncologist, had chemotherapy and enrolled in a drug trial. Dr. Michael Callahan says often patients are not well educated about gynecologic issues.

"The important thing for a women to understand is that a pap smear is not a test for ovarian cancer. That is a test for a different type of cancer called cervical cancer," he explained.

"There are symptoms and signs that women with ovarian cancer present with and those are abdominal pains, feelings of bloating, problems with appetite, urinary problems," said Dr. Callahan.

Becky Lundberg is now in remission and wants other women to be aware, knowing the earlier it's detected, the better the outcome.

Register here for a St. Vincent Girls' Night Out to discuss ovarian cancer. (Offer good until midnight Sept. 13th.)

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