



### **Montreal woman looks to clear up misconceptions about ovarian cancer**

On her first visit to a new GP, Cathy Di Fruscia underwent a routine physical exam. The last thing she expected her to find was ovarian cancer.

“She was feeling around my abdomen area when she said she noticed a mass and asked to do an internal,” says Ms. Di Fruscia “It was then I figured something could be very wrong.”

Ms. Di Fruscia was referred to a specialist for an ultrasound, where a 15 cm mass on her right ovary was discovered.

“I was told I needed to make an appointment at a hospital to get the mass further looked at and discuss removal. I wanted to go to a specific hospital, The Montreal Jewish, and I got the next available appointment, which was in a few months,” Ms. Di Fruscia says.



*Cathy & her daughters*

But when she developed severe pain in her abdomen her daughter took her to the emergency room.

The doctors informed her that the mass had already grown another 5 cm. “I was booked for emergency surgery to get it removed about a month before my original appointment was supposed to take place,” Ms. Di Fruscia says.

Afterwards, Ms. Di Fruscia went through 18 rounds of chemotherapy and began to question why she didn’t realize that something was wrong sooner.

“My symptoms were minor, I felt tired a lot but I took it to mean I was working too much, I had felt bloated, but never took it as a cause for concern,” she says. “When my stomach began to get tender I actually told my husband I thought I was getting abs because I was trying a new workout. I didn’t want to think of what it could be; I just thought I could wait for my next checkup.”



*Cathy & her husband*

Symptoms of ovarian cancer can be subtle and they are usually confused with those of other conditions. The disease is notoriously difficult to detect.

Ms. Di Fruscia is now facing recurrence. When discussing her diagnosis, she was surprised to hear misconceptions about the disease.

“I had so many people ask me “well didn’t you get your annual Pap tests?” without them even realizing that that would not have caught it,” she says.

Ovarian cancer is the most fatal women’s cancer. Yet there is no reliable screening test for this disease. The Pap smear only checks for cervical cancer.

“My daughter began to research the disease to find out more information and she came across Ovarian Cancer Canada and immediately contacted them,” Ms. Di Fruscia says. “She began to volunteer with them and it was then that she learned about the Walk of Hope.”

Since starting in 2002, the Ovarian Cancer Canada Walk of Hope has raised more than \$23-million to provide support, raise awareness, and fund research. This year’s Walk takes place in over 35 locations across Canada.

“My daughters and I love to be active and have walked for other charities in the past,” Ms. Di Fruscia says. “So we figured, why not walk and support something that has touched us personally?”

On September 10<sup>th</sup> Ms. Di Fruscia will be participating in the **Ovarian Cancer Canada Walk of Hope** with her three daughters, husband, and her team The Invincibles in **Montreal** at **Parc Angrignon**. She will also be addressing fellow participants from the podium. For more information and to register, visit [ovariancancerwalkofhope.ca](http://ovariancancerwalkofhope.ca)



*Cathy & her family*