

Images of Miriam O’Callaghan and members of the INGO taking a Dip on World GO Day, Tuesday 20th September will be syndicated by Maxwell Photography on Tuesday, 20<sup>th</sup> September at 10.30am

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## 60% of Irish women unaware of signs or symptoms of Uterine cancer<sup>1</sup>

RTÉ Broadcaster Miriam O’Callaghan leads a group swim at Seapoint, Dublin to encourage women to *Dip or Dance* this World GO Day and raise awareness of gynaecological cancers with 30 swims taking place across Ireland.

On the 20<sup>th</sup> of September the Irish Network of Gynaecological Oncology (INGO) which includes thirty of Ireland’s foremost gynaecological cancer campaigners, researchers, and patient advocates, come together to highlight how to reduce the risk of uterine cancer, encouraging women to take a ‘Dip or Dance’ this World Gynaecology Oncology Day - World GO Day

- A survey of 511 women commissioned by the INGO highlights the lack of awareness of symptoms of Uterine Cancer
- The INGO highlight the importance of increasing awareness amongst women that maintaining a healthier body weight and being physically active can reduce the risk of Uterine Cancer.
- Gynaecological Cancer Clinicians stress the importance of acting on early signs and symptoms

**Tuesday, 20<sup>th</sup> September 2022** – Today, September 20<sup>th</sup> is World GO Day – an international awareness day to raise awareness around gynaecological cancers, the Irish Network for Gynaecological Oncology (INGO) is encouraging women across Ireland to take a “Dip or

<sup>1</sup> Also referred to as endometrial or womb cancer

Dance” to raise awareness of how to reduce the risk of uterine cancer and the importance of acting on potential early signs or symptoms.

The recent average annual incidence of **Uterine** cancers diagnosed in Ireland is 540, making it the most common gynaecological cancer (NCRI Annual Report, 2021) and the 5<sup>th</sup> most common cancer in women in Ireland (excluding non-melanoma skin cancer). Symptoms for uterine cancer include abnormal vaginal bleeding or discharge and pelvic pain or pressure. Uterine cancer is often diagnosed early, and the recent 5-year survival rates are 78% (NCRI Annual Report, 2021).

Uterine cancer is a type of cancer that begins in the uterus/womb. The uterus is the hollow, pear-shaped pelvic organ where a baby develops before birth. The majority of uterine cancers arise from the lining of the uterus/womb known as the endometrium. The term endometrial cancer is often used in these cases. Risk factors for this cancer type can include age, and genetics (- uterine cancer may run in families where colon cancer is hereditary or in families with Lynch syndrome). Woman can reduce the risk of uterine cancer by being active and maintaining a healthier body weight. A 5-10% weight reduction can reduce the chances of **uterine/endometrial** cancers and the recurrence of the disease<sup>2</sup>.

New research commissioned by the Irish Network for Gynaecological Oncology (INGO) has highlighted that three in five women in Ireland admit that they cannot name any of the signs or symptoms of this type of cancer. The research conducted by *iReach* looked at the awareness levels of uterine cancer, awareness levels around the symptoms, and awareness of ways to reduce the risk of developing uterine cancer with a nationally representative sample of 511 women.

The research highlights that of 511 interviewed:

- **One in four women are not aware of Uterine Cancer<sup>1</sup>**
- Three in five women in Ireland cannot name any of the signs or symptoms
- Three in ten women do not make the link between being a healthy weight and reducing the risk of Uterine Cancer
- One in three women do not make the link between physical activity and reducing the risk of Uterine Cancer

The INGO has developed the **World GO Day ‘Dip or Dance’ campaign** to remind women to maintain a healthier weight and stay active to reduce the risk of developing Uterine Cancer.

- **Dip on World GO Day** - 750 swimming hats, kindly sponsored by the HSE’s National Cancer Control Programme, have been distributed to swimming groups across Ireland encouraging women to get out and get active and to raise awareness of how to reduce the risk of uterine cancer and the importance of acting on potential early signs or symptoms. RTÉ Broadcaster Miriam O’Callaghan started a group swim at Seapoint, Dublin to encourage women to Dip or Dance this World GO Day with 30 swims taking place across Ireland.

- **Dance on World GO Day** - Choreographer Jane Shortall has choreographed a routine to best-selling Boyzone track – *I'll be working my way back to you* for all to celebrate World GO Day. Dancers are encouraged to learn the World GO Day Dance routine and share on social media. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xXE6\\_whRTBQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xXE6_whRTBQ)

**Professor Carel le Roux**, obesity specialist from St Vincent's Hospital said, *"Over 2000 gynaecological cancers are diagnosed across the Island of Ireland annually. However, we are delivering a positive message this World GO Day that being a healthier weight and physically active can reduce the risk of developing uterine cancer. Currently between 70 – 80% of uterine cancer patients live with obesity which is why we are encouraging women to seek help to treat obesity while also incorporating physical activity into their daily routine. We know that intentional weight loss in postmenopausal women is associated with a lower endometrial cancer risk, especially among women living with obesity. It is worth checking out the Irish Cancer Society funded Women's Health Initiative platform; [thisisGO.ie](http://thisisGO.ie) as there is lots of information and very helpful resources there."*

**Juliette Casey from the Emer Casey Foundation and a member of the INGO**, said, *"When Emer passed away in 2006 aged only 28 from uterine/ovarian cancer we did not know a great deal about any of the gynaecological cancers. We now know that, in some uterine cancers, something occurs to create a genetic mutation within cells in the endometrium. The Emer Casey Foundation looks forward to working with scientists to help our understanding of genetic pathways to uterine cancer."*

**Dr. Sharon O'Toole, Senior Research Fellow in Trinity College Dublin, and Coordinator of the World GO Day campaign at INGO**, said, *"Today is all about elevating the public's understanding of gynaecological cancers and highlighting the risk factors, symptoms, the importance and benefits of early diagnosis and risk reduction strategies related to the main types of gynaecological cancers that impact women: cervical, ovarian, uterine, vaginal, and vulval. The Irish Network for Gynaecologic Oncology believes in the power of working together to improve women's lives. So GO for it this World GO Day and Dip or Dance!"*

The Irish Network for Gynaecological Oncology is a voluntary coordination body and consists of thirty of Ireland's foremost gynaecological cancer campaigners, researchers, and patient advocates, listed below. The aim of the group is to raise awareness of gynaecological cancers across the island of Ireland. The group participates in two major international events annually: World Ovarian Cancer Day on May 8<sup>th</sup> and World Gynaecological Cancer Day on September 20<sup>th</sup>.

### **Risk factors and what to do**

Several factors may increase the chance that you will get uterine cancer, including if you—

- Are older than 50.
- Are overweight/obese
- Take estrogen by itself (without progesterone) for hormone replacement during menopause.
- Have had trouble getting pregnant or have had fewer than five periods in a year before starting menopause.
- Take tamoxifen, a drug used to prevent and treat certain types of breast cancer.
- Have close family members who have had uterine, colon, or ovarian cancer.

If one or more of the above is true for you, it does not mean you will get uterine cancer, but you should be more aware and should speak to your doctor.

To mark World GO Day 17 buildings across Ireland will light up in purple, the international campaign colour including Áras Chontae an Chláir - Clare County Council; Convention Centre Dublin; Coombe Women and Infants University Hospital, Dublin; Cork County Hall; East Galway and Midlands Cancer Support Centre, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway; Iveagh House Dublin (Department of Foreign Affairs); Kilkenny Castle; Mansion House, Dublin; National Concert Hall, Dublin; National University of Ireland, Galway; Pearse Lyons Distillery, Dublin; Purple House Cancer Support, Wicklow; Rock of Cashel, Tipperary; St James's Hospital, Dublin; The Shakey Bridge (Daly's Bridge), Cork; Titanic Belfast; University College Cork.

The INGO acknowledges the support of the HSE NCCP, the Karen Fenton Fund, Breakthrough Cancer Research, and the Irish Cancer Society for the 2022 awareness campaigns. The Emer Casey Foundation, East Galway, and Midlands Cancer support and OvaCare are grateful for the support received from GlaxoSmithKline, MSD, Abbott, AstraZeneca, and Roche towards the 2022 awareness campaigns.

**Spread the message using the hashtags #Swim4GODay #Dance4GODay #GOFORPrevention #WorldGODay**

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2. Luo J, Chlebowski RT, Hendryx M, Rohan T, Wactawski-Wende J, Thomson CA, Felix AS, Chen C, Barrington W, Coday M, Stefanick M, LeBlanc E, Margolis KL. Intentional Weight Loss and Endometrial Cancer Risk. *J Clin Oncol*. 2017 Apr 10;35(11):1189-1193. doi: 10.1200/JCO.2016.70.5822. Epub 2017 Feb 6. PMID: 28165909; PMCID: PMC5455602.

### **The Irish Network for Gynaecological Oncology (INGO) Members**

ARC Cancer Support Centres, Dublin; Answers for Cancer Podcast team; Breakthrough Cancer Research; Cancer Care West; Cancer Trials Ireland; CERVIVA; Circle of Friends Cancer Support Centre; Coombe Women & Infants University Hospital, Dublin; Cork ARC Cancer Support; Cork Cancer Care Centre; East Galway and Midlands Cancer Support Centre; Emer Casey Foundation; Irish Cancer Society; Irish Society of Gynaecological Oncology; Karen Fenton Ovarian Cancer Fund; Lynch Syndrome Ireland; Marie Keating Foundation; Mater Hospital Dublin; HSE National Cancer Control Programme; National Immunisation Office; National Women's Council of Ireland; OvaCare; Pink Ladies Cancer Charity; Purple House Cancer Support; Queens, Belfast; Sláinte an Chláir; Sligo Cancer Support; SOCK; Swell Fermanagh Cancer Survivorship Group; St. James's Hospital Foundation (GynaeCancerCare); Trinity College Dublin; Trinity St. James's Cancer Institute; University College Dublin School of Medicine; and 221+ CervicalCheck Patient Support Group.

### **iReach Consumer Decisions Omnibus Methodology**

The iReach Multibus is a unique Omnibus survey delivering a nationally representative sample of 1,000 adult Consumers in Ireland twice each month. The dates of the INGO/iReach research were between 25<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> August.

**For more information, please visit:**

[www.thisisGO.ie](http://www.thisisGO.ie)

### **For further information and interview requests please contact**

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## CAPTION

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