

# Uterus (Endometrial) Cancer - Patient Education

Uterus cancer is a cancer that starts in the uterus. This condition is also referred to as endometrial cancer. Endometrial (Uterus) cancer begins from the cells of uterus inner lining.

## Symptoms:

Most women have experienced abnormal vaginal bleeding. Hence, uterus (endometrial) cancer is often detected at in early stage. If endometrial (uterus) cancer is detected in early stage, then cure is possible by removing the uterus. Other symptoms are vaginal bleeding after menopause, bleeding between periods, and pelvic pain.

## When to see Doctor?

Make an appointment with your doctor if you have any signs or symptoms.

## Causes & Risk factors:

Till date, we don't know what causes uterus cancer (endometrial cancer).

- The most likely risk factor is genetic mutations. The genetic mutation change normal healthy cells into abnormal cell. The abnormal cells grow & multiply without any control. Additionally, they don't die at a set time. The accumulating abnormal cells form a mass (tumor). Later on, Cancer cells invade nearby tissue and spread elsewhere in the body. This is called a metastasis of the tumor.

Risk factors are the conditions that increase the chances for development of the uterus (endometrial) cancer.

- Conditions that increase the level of estrogen in your body.
- PCOS (polycystic ovary syndrome)
- Obesity
- Diabetes
- Taking hormones after menopause that contain estrogen but not progesterone.
- Menstruation starts at an early age
- Never having been pregnant

- Older age
- Hormone therapy for breast cancer (Tamoxifen)
- Hereditary nonpolyposis colorectal cancer (HNPCC) syndrome

### Prevention:

- If you have not undergone a hysterectomy and you are postmenopausal – taking a combination of estrogen and progesterone can reduce the risk.
- Oral contraceptive pills for atleast one year may reduce risk of uterus (endometrial) cancer.
- Healthy lifestyle and maintaining a healthy weight.

### Diagnosis:

**Pelvis Examination:** Your doctor carefully inspects the outer and inner portion of your genitals. He/she also inserts a instrument called a speculum into your vagina.

**USG (Ultrasonography):** This is noninvasive technique to see texture of endometrium . This will help in detection of uterus (endometrial) cancer.

**Hysteroscopy:** Hysteroscope is thin, flexible, lighted tube that doctor insert into the vagina. This allow doctor to see inside of the uterus.

**Pipelle:** It is an OPD procedure with very minimal pain. This include collection of cells from inside of the uterus.

**Dilatation and Curettage:** This procedure includes removal of tissue from inner lining of the uterus.

### Treatment:

Different approaches are: Surgery, Radiation, Chemotherapy, Hormonal Therapy, Targeted Therapy, Immunotherapy, Supportive (Palliative) care, Sexual health and rehabilitation

**Surgery:** Treatment for uterine (endometrial) cancer is usually with surgery. Treatment for uterus cancer usually involves an operation to remove the uterus (Hysterectomy), fallopian tubes and ovaries (salphingo-oophorectomy). If you have not achieved the menopause, you will

experience menopause once your ovaries are removed. You will not be able to become pregnant in the future once uterus is removed.

**Radiation Therapy:** It is another option. This therapy uses powerful energy beams, like X-rays and protons to kill cancer cells. Radiation therapy may also be recommended even after surgery as per final pathology report. Radiation therapy involves

- Radiation from a machine outside your body.
- Radiation placed inside your body.

Some patients require taking drug treatment for endometrial cancer. These treatments include Chemotherapy, Targeted therapy, Immunotherapy and Hormonal therapy.

**Chemotherapy:** Chemotherapy is a treatment that uses drugs to kill cancer cells. You may receive one or two drugs in combination. Chemotherapy is sometimes recommended after surgery if there are high risk factors. It can be used before surgery in advance stage to shrink the cancer.

**Targeted therapy:** Targeted therapy are drugs that attack specific weakness of the cancer cells.

**Immunotherapy:** Immunotherapy helps Immune cells to fight with cancer cells. Cancer cells produce proteins that blind the immune system cells. Hence, Immune cells do not attack cancer. Immunotherapy works by interfering with protein so that they cannot bind with immune system cells. For uterus (endometrial) cancer, immunotherapy might be considered in advanced and recurrent cases.

**Hormone therapy:** It involves taking medication to lower the hormone levels in the body. As a result, cancer cells that depend on hormone might die.

**Supportive (palliative) Care:** Palliative care is specialized medical care that aims to provide relief from pain and other symptoms of illness. Palliative care is used while cancer treatment such as surgery, chemotherapy and radiation therapy. Palliative care team focuses to improve the quality of life for people with cancer and their families.