



After an Endometrial Cancer Diagnosis



Endometrial cancer is a type of cancer that starts in the lining of the uterus. You might hear it called uterine cancer. If you have been told you have endometrial cancer, you've probably already had exams, scans, and an endometrial biopsy (a test that takes some tissue from the uterus lining to check for cancer). Other tests might have been done on the cancer cells to check for certain proteins and gene changes called biomarkers. You might also have other procedures to find out if the cancer has spread. These tests help your doctor know what type of endometrial cancer you have, what stage it is, and what treatment might help.

Treatment for endometrial cancer

Your treatment will depend on the type and stage of your endometrial cancer. Your treatment options will also depend on the results of tests on the cancer cells, your health, and your personal preferences.

Surgery is the main treatment for most types of endometrial cancer. This often involves removing the uterus. Surgery to remove the uterus is called a hysterectomy. Other organs might also be removed, such as the ovaries.

Other treatment can include radiation, hormone therapy, and medicines such as chemo, targeted drug therapy, or immunotherapy. In some cases, more than one type of treatment is needed. Your doctor will help you decide which treatments are best for you.

Surgery and some other treatments can cause changes in your menstrual periods. Your periods might stop, even if you haven't gone through menopause. These treatments could also affect your ability to get pregnant, but there may be ways to protect this. It's important to talk to your doctor early, before your treatment starts. They can help you understand what to expect.

Be sure to ask:

- What is the goal of treatment?
- What type of endometrial cancer do I have?
- What stage is my endometrial cancer, and what does that mean?
- What else have you learned from my test results?
- Will I need more tests?
- Will I need surgery? Will my uterus be removed?

What to expect before and during treatment

Your cancer care team will explain your treatment plan. This team may include different doctors, nurses, and other health care workers, depending on the type of treatment you need. For example, if you need radiation therapy, you will work with a radiation oncologist. They will tell you what to expect before, during, and after radiation treatment. If you need other types of treatment, your cancer care team will explain how it is given, help you get ready for it, keep track of how you're doing, and help you manage any side effects. You might also get blood tests, scans, or other tests at certain times to see how well your treatment is working.

Not everyone going through treatment for endometrial cancer has the same side effects. For example, the side effects of having your uterus removed are different from the side effects of chemo, targeted drug therapy, immunotherapy, or radiation. And people getting the same treatment might have different side effects.

Be sure to ask:

- Do I need treatment other than surgery? What do you think is best for me and why?
- Are there any clinical trials for my type of cancer?
- What side effects might I have, and what can I do about them?
- How will we know if the treatment is working?
- How often will I get treatment? How long will it last?
- Where will I go to get treatment? Can I drive myself?
- Will I be able to keep doing my usual activities, like work and exercise?
- Will I be able to have children after treatment?
- Will treatment affect my sex life? If so, how and for how long? What can I do to help this?

What to expect after treatment

After treatment, ask your cancer doctor for a treatment summary and follow-up plan. This is called a survivorship care plan. Your cancer doctor will work with your family or primary care doctor to help manage side effects from treatment and check your general health. You will have regular tests and pelvic exams to check if your cancer has come back or if a new cancer has started in a different part of your body.

For some people, the cancer might not go away completely. They might continue to get treatment, and tests will still be needed to see how well it's working.

You might be faced with changes to your body after treatment. If you had menstrual periods before surgery, you'll stop having them after your uterus is removed. Your ability to get pregnant will change, too. Treatment might also make your vagina dry. This can cause bleeding or pain during or after sex. Ask your doctor what to expect and let them know if you have any problems.

People who have had endometrial cancer are at risk of having it again or getting certain other types of cancer. Even if you feel fine after finishing treatment, it's important to ask your cancer care team about a regular schedule for follow-up tests to check if your endometrial cancer has come back.

Be sure to ask:

- Where do I get a copy of my treatment summary and follow-up plan?
- How often do I need to see my cancer care team?
- When and how should I contact them?
- Will I need tests to see if my cancer has come back, or to check for problems from my treatment?
- Do I need any screening tests, like a mammogram or colonoscopy, to find other cancers early?
- Are there late or long-term side effects from treatment that I should watch for?
- Where can I find my medical records after treatment?



For more information and support, visit the American Cancer Society website online at cancer.org/endometrialcancer or call us at **1-800-227-2345**. We're here when you need us.

Staying healthy

Be sure to tell your doctor or cancer care team if any treatment side effects don't go away or if you have any new symptoms.

There are things you can do to keep yourself healthy during and after treatment. Not smoking may help reduce your chances of endometrial cancer. Getting to and staying at a healthy weight, eating well, and being active can also help you stay healthy and lower your risk of getting a new endometrial cancer or other cancers.

Dealing with your feelings

Having endometrial cancer might make you feel scared, sad, or nervous. It's normal to have these feelings, and there are ways to help you cope with them.

- Don't try to deal with your feelings by yourself. Talk about them, no matter what they are.
- It's OK to feel sad or down once in a while, but let your cancer care team know if you have these feelings for more than a few days.
- If your doctor says it's OK, continue doing things you enjoy like spending time outdoors, going to a movie or sporting event, or going out to dinner.
- Get help with tasks like cooking and cleaning.

You might want to reach out to friends, family, or religious leaders or groups. Counseling can also help. Some people find it helpful to talk with others who've been through the same things. A support group can offer that. Tell your cancer care team how you're feeling. They can help you find the right support.