

# What You Need to Know About Endometrial Cancer - It's Your Life, Live It!



## What is Endometrial Cancer?

Endometrial cancer is a type of cancer that originates in the lining of the uterus, the endometrium. It is often referred to as uterine cancer or womb cancer. Endometrial cancer is the most common type of female reproductive cancer, constituting approximately 6% of all cancers in women.

## Risk Factors

Certain factors have been identified as increasing the risk of developing endometrial cancer:



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★★★★☆ 4.7 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 489 KB

Text-to-Speech : Enabled

Screen Reader : Supported

Enhanced typesetting : Enabled



- **Obesity:** Elevated levels of estrogen, which can occur due to obesity, promote endometrial cell growth and increase the risk of endometrial cancer.
- **Estrogen Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT):** Long-term and unopposed estrogen HRT, particularly without the addition of progestin, increases the risk of endometrial cancer.
- **Tamoxifen Use:** Tamoxifen, a drug commonly used in the treatment of breast cancer, has been associated with an increased risk of endometrial cancer.
- **Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS):** PCOS, a condition characterized by hormonal imbalances, insulin resistance, and elevated estrogen levels, has been linked to an increased risk of endometrial cancer.
- **Type 2 Diabetes:** Women with type 2 diabetes, a condition characterized by elevated insulin levels, are at an increased risk of developing endometrial cancer.
- **Family History:** Having a family history of endometrial cancer increases the risk of developing the disease.
- **Age:** Endometrial cancer is most commonly diagnosed in postmenopausal women over age 50.

## Symptoms

The most common symptom of endometrial cancer is abnormal vaginal bleeding, which may include:

- Bleeding after menopause
- Unusually heavy or prolonged menstrual bleeding
- Bleeding between periods
- Spotting or discharge after sex

Other symptoms of endometrial cancer may include:

- Pelvic pain or pressure
- Pain during sex
- Weight loss
- Fatigue
- Abdominal bloating

## **Diagnosis**

Endometrial cancer is diagnosed through a biopsy, which involves removing a small sample of tissue from the lining of the uterus. The sample is then examined under a microscope by a pathologist to determine the presence of cancerous cells.

There are several methods for obtaining a biopsy:

- **Transvaginal Ultrasound Biopsy:** A thin, wand-like device is inserted into the vagina to obtain a tissue sample.

- **Endometrial Biopsy:** A thin, flexible tube is inserted through the cervix into the uterus to obtain a tissue sample.
- **Hysteroscopy:** A small camera is inserted into the uterus to visualize and obtain a tissue sample.

## Staging

Once endometrial cancer is diagnosed, it is staged to determine the extent of the disease:

- **Stage I:** The cancer is confined to the uterus.
- **Stage II:** The cancer has spread to the cervix but not beyond.
- **Stage III:** The cancer has spread to other pelvic organs, such as the fallopian tubes or ovaries.
- **Stage IV:** The cancer has spread to distant organs, such as the lungs or liver.

## Treatment

The treatment for endometrial cancer depends on the stage of the disease and individual patient factors. Common treatment options include:

- **Surgery:** The primary treatment for endometrial cancer is surgery to remove the uterus and cervix. In some cases, the ovaries and fallopian tubes may also be removed.
- **Radiation Therapy:** Radiation therapy may be used to kill cancer cells after surgery or for patients who are not candidates for surgery.

- **Chemotherapy:** Chemotherapy involves the use of drugs to kill cancer cells throughout the body.
- **Hormonal Therapy:** Hormonal therapy may be used to prevent endometrial cancer recurrence in women who are at high risk or have a history of estrogen-receptor positive endometrial cancer.

## Prevention

While there is no surefire way to prevent endometrial cancer, certain lifestyle factors and medical interventions may reduce the risk:

- **Maintain a Healthy Weight:** Maintaining a healthy weight helps keep estrogen levels in balance.
- **Limit Estrogen HRT:** If HRT is necessary, use it for the shortest time possible and always in combination with progestin.
- **Exercise Regularly:** Regular exercise helps maintain a healthy weight and reduce estrogen levels.
- **Eat a Healthy Diet:** A diet rich in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains promotes a healthy weight and may reduce the risk of endometrial cancer.
- **Consider Taking Progesterone:** Progesterone is a hormone that opposes the effects of estrogen and may reduce the risk of endometrial cancer.

## Prognosis

The prognosis for endometrial cancer depends on the stage of the disease at the time of diagnosis. The majority of endometrial cancers are diagnosed at an early stage and can be successfully treated with surgery alone.

However, the prognosis is less favorable for cancers that have spread beyond the uterus.

Endometrial cancer is the most common type of cancer of the female reproductive system. It is often diagnosed in postmenopausal women and is linked to certain risk factors such as obesity, estrogen HRT, and genetic factors. Abnormal vaginal bleeding is the most common symptom of endometrial cancer. Diagnosis requires a biopsy, and treatment may include surgery, radiation therapy, chemotherapy, and hormonal therapy. Maintaining a healthy weight, limiting estrogen HRT, exercising regularly, and eating a healthy diet may help reduce the risk of endometrial cancer.

If you are experiencing any of the symptoms of endometrial cancer, such as abnormal vaginal bleeding, it is important to consult your doctor for further evaluation. Early diagnosis and treatment can improve the prognosis for endometrial cancer.



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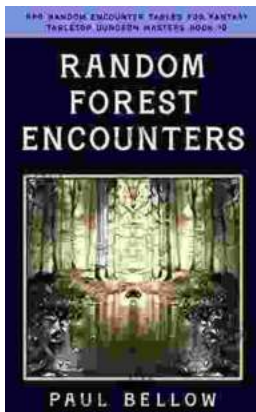
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