



# Uterine cancer

The uterus (womb) is a hollow, pear-shaped organ in a female's lower abdomen between the bladder and the rectum. Cancer of the uterus most often affects the endometrium, the lining of the uterus, so is also called endometrial cancer. It is the most common reproductive cancer in women. Most women diagnosed with uterine cancer are between the ages of 50 and 70. When found and treated early, though, more than 90% of cases can be cured.

## SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

- Abnormal bleeding, spotting, or discharge from the vagina is the most common symptom.
- Any vaginal bleeding or spotting after menopause. The bleeding can begin as a watery, blood-streaked discharge. Later it can contain more blood.

{**Note:** Some cases of uterine cancer can be detected by a Pap test, but this is used to detect cervical cancer. Even if you have had a recent normal Pap test, see your doctor if you have post menopausal vaginal bleeding.}

Cancer of the uterus does not often occur before menopause. It can occur around the time menopause begins, though. When bleeding stops and starts up again, let your doctor know. If you are on hormone therapy, you may have regular cyclic bleeding.



## CAUSES & RISK FACTORS

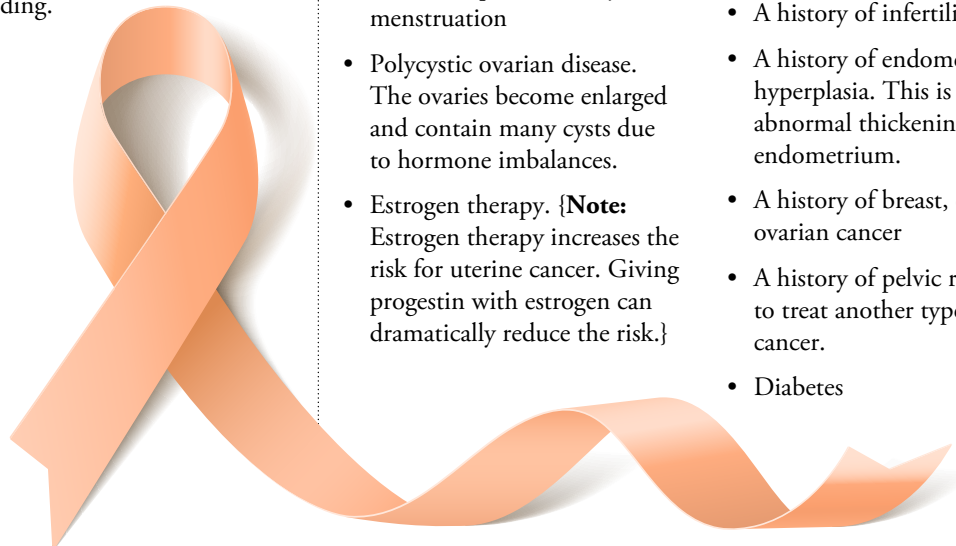
The risk for uterine cancer is greater if you have had increased exposure to estrogen from one or more of the following:

- Late menopause or early menstruation
- Polycystic ovarian disease. The ovaries become enlarged and contain many cysts due to hormone imbalances.
- Estrogen therapy. {**Note:** Estrogen therapy increases the risk for uterine cancer. Giving progestin with estrogen can dramatically reduce the risk.}

- Irregular periods or ovulation
- Obesity. Women who are obese make more estrogen.

### Other risk factors include:

- A history of infertility
- A history of endometrial hyperplasia. This is abnormal thickening of the endometrium.
- A history of breast, colon, or ovarian cancer
- A history of pelvic radiation to treat another type of cancer.
- Diabetes





## TREATMENT

Treatment includes one or more of the following:

- Surgery. Most women have a total hysterectomy. This removes the uterus, cervix, fallopian tubes, and ovaries.
- Radiation therapy
- Chemotherapy
- Hormonal therapy
- Clinical trials

## SELF-CARE

Medical care, not self-care, is needed for uterine cancer.

## CONTACT DOCTOR:

- If you have any signs and symptoms of uterine cancer.
- You need to schedule your yearly pelvic exam.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION:

National Cancer Institute  
800.4.CANCER (422.6237)  
[cancer.gov/types/uterine](https://cancer.gov/types/uterine)

