

September Is Gynecologic Cancer Awareness Month

Know the signs. Speak up about changes. Make your health a priority.

This month, She Thrives Foundation invites every woman and every person with a uterus to learn the warning signs of uterine cancer and talk openly with a health care professional about unusual bleeding, pelvic symptoms, and personal risk. Early attention to symptoms can lead to earlier evaluation and care.

What is uterine cancer?

Uterine cancer begins when cells in the uterus grow out of control. Endometrial cancer—the type that starts in the uterine lining, or endometrium—is the most common type of uterine cancer.

A vital screening fact

There is no routine screening test for uterine cancer for people who do not have signs or symptoms. A Pap test screens for cervical cancer; it does not screen for uterine cancer. Knowing what is normal for your body is essential.

Know the signs

Contact a health care professional if you notice any of the following—especially bleeding after menopause or bleeding that is not normal for you:

- Vaginal bleeding or discharge that is unusual for you
- Bleeding between periods or periods that are unusually heavy or prolonged
- Any vaginal bleeding after menopause
- Pain or pressure in the pelvis
- Pain during sexual intercourse or difficult or painful urination

Do not wait for a routine appointment if you have abnormal bleeding. These symptoms can have causes other than cancer, but only a medical evaluation can determine the cause.

Regular checkups and self advocacy

Regular primary care and gynecologic visits are opportunities to review your menstrual and menopause history, medications, family history, and risk factors. At your appointment:

- Keep a simple record of bleeding, discharge, pelvic pain, and changes in your cycle.
- Tell your clinician exactly what changed, when it began, and how it affects your daily life.
- Ask whether your symptoms or risk factors call for diagnostic testing, such as a transvaginal ultrasound or endometrial biopsy.
- Continue follow-up if symptoms persist, even when an earlier test was inconclusive.

Understand Your Risk and Take Action

Having a risk factor does not mean you will develop cancer, and some people develop uterine cancer without known risk factors.

Factors linked with increased risk

Health and hormone factors	Personal and family factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Obesity or metabolic syndrome• Type 2 diabetes• PCOS or very infrequent periods before menopause• Estrogen-only menopausal hormone therapy• Tamoxifen use	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increasing age, particularly after age 50• Endometrial hyperplasia• A first-degree relative with endometrial cancer• Family history of uterine, colon, or ovarian cancer• Lynch syndrome or another relevant inherited condition

Your September health checklist

- ☐ Schedule a routine primary care or gynecologic checkup if you are due.
- ☐ Write down your menstrual, bleeding, and menopause history before your visit.
- ☐ Share any abnormal bleeding or discharge promptly—especially after menopause.
- ☐ Ask how PCOS, diabetes, body weight, medications, or family history may affect your risk.
- ☐ Ask whether genetic counseling may be appropriate if uterine, colon, or ovarian cancers run in your family.
- ☐ Encourage someone you love to learn the signs and make a health appointment.

Trusted information

This educational newsletter was prepared using patient-facing information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Cancer Institute, and the National Comprehensive Cancer Network. Clinical recommendations can change; use the current linked resources and consult a qualified health care professional for individual guidance.

CDC Basics: cdc.gov/uterine-cancer/about

CDC Screening: cdc.gov/uterine-cancer/screening

NCI Patient Information:
cancer.gov/types/uterine/patient/endometrial-treatment-pdq

CDC Symptoms: cdc.gov/uterine-cancer/symptoms

CDC Risk Factors: cdc.gov/uterine-cancer/risk-factors

NCCN Patient Guidelines:
nccn.org/patients/guidelines/content/PDF/uterine-patient.pdf

Medical disclaimer: This newsletter is for education and awareness only. It is not a diagnosis or a substitute for medical advice. Seek urgent medical care for severe bleeding, fainting, shortness of breath, chest pain, or other emergency symptoms.