



OCTOBER 2026 | WOMEN'S HEALTH NEWSLETTER

Understanding PCOS and breast and endometrial cancer

From teal and peach to pink, our awareness continues.

September's awareness efforts continue into October's Breast Cancer Awareness Month. At She Thrives Foundation, Inc., we want women to understand how these conditions can connect and what to discuss with their healthcare team. PCOS is not cancer. Its link to endometrial cancer is established; its relationship with breast cancer remains less certain. [1, 2]

PCOS and the uterine lining

Polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) can disrupt ovulation. When ovulation happens infrequently, the uterine lining may be exposed to estrogen without enough progesterone to balance its effects. This can contribute to abnormal thickening and a higher risk of endometrial cancer, which begins in the lining of the uterus. [1, 8]

Having PCOS does not mean you will develop cancer. The 2023 international PCOS guideline emphasizes that the overall chance remains low and routine endometrial cancer screening is not recommended solely because someone has PCOS. Ask your clinician about long gaps between periods, cycle regulation and whether progestogen treatment is appropriate for you. [1]

What researchers know about breast cancer

Studies have not consistently found an increased breast cancer risk with PCOS. A 2024 Danish study by Clarissa L. B. Frandsen and colleagues in gynecology and cancer research found an association, particularly after menopause. The researchers called for confirmation in other large studies. This finding does not establish that PCOS causes breast cancer. [2, 8]

Shared risks and a treatment connection

Obesity is associated with uterine cancer and with breast cancer after menopause. Hormone exposure can also influence risk, but its effects differ by tissue and treatment. Discuss your individual history rather than assuming all hormones have the same effect. [3, 4]

Tamoxifen, used to prevent or treat some breast cancers, can increase uterine cancer risk. If you take it, report unusual bleeding to your care team and discuss the benefits and risks. Do not stop prescribed treatment on your own. [3]

Turn awareness into action

Report unusual bleeding. Contact a healthcare provider promptly about bleeding between periods, bleeding that is unusually heavy, or any bleeding after menopause. Symptoms can have causes other than cancer, but they still need evaluation. [5]

Know what screening can tell you. A Pap test does not screen for endometrial cancer. If you have symptoms, your clinician may recommend an endometrial biopsy or ultrasound. Discuss when and how often to have mammograms based on your personal risk. [4, 6]

Share your family history. Tell your care team about cancers on both sides of your family and the ages at diagnosis. NCCN guidance helps clinicians identify people who may benefit from hereditary cancer risk assessment, genetic counseling and testing. [4, 7]

Questions to take to your next appointment

- My periods are far apart. How can I protect my uterine lining?
- Does my personal or family history change my mammogram plan or suggest genetic counseling?
- If bleeding continues after a normal test, what is the next step?

You deserve to be heard

She Thrives Foundation advocates for women impacted by PCOS and endometrial cancer, with a special commitment to Black women. Bring a symptom record, ask for clear explanations and request a follow-up plan. If your concerns remain unresolved, seek another medical opinion. We stand for compassionate care, education and sisterhood.

Share this newsletter with someone you love and visit shethrivesfoundation.org to learn more about our work. Your voice, your story, our movement.

Sources and further reading

1. 2023 international PCOS guideline, Teede and colleagues, ASRM.
2. Frandsen et al. PCOS and breast cancer risk. *Breast Cancer Research and Treatment*, 2024.
3. CDC. Uterine Cancer Risk Factors.
4. CDC. Breast Cancer Risk Factors.
5. CDC. Symptoms of Uterine Cancer.
6. CDC. Screening for Uterine Cancer.
7. NCCN Guidelines Insights. Genetic/Familial High-Risk Assessment, Version 2.2026.
8. Risk of endometrial, ovarian, and breast cancers in women with PCOS: systematic review and meta-analysis.

Sources checked October 8, 2026. Educational information, not a substitute for individual medical care.