

Endometrial Cancer

What Is Endometrial Cancer?

Endometrial cancer is a type of cancer that begins in the lining of the womb (uterus), known as the endometrium. It is the most common type of gynaecological cancer in the UK and primarily affects postmenopausal women, although it can occur in younger women as well. Early detection and treatment are crucial for a better prognosis.

What Causes Endometrial Cancer?

The exact cause of endometrial cancer is not always clear, but several risk factors can increase the likelihood of developing the condition. These include:

- **Hormonal imbalance:** High levels of oestrogen without enough progesterone can increase the risk. This is often seen in conditions like polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) or in women taking hormone replacement therapy (HRT) without progesterone.
- **Obesity:** Being overweight increases oestrogen production, which can stimulate the endometrium.
- **Age:** Most cases occur in women over the age of 50, particularly after menopause.
- **Diabetes:** Women with diabetes are at a higher risk.
- **Family history:** A family history of endometrial or colon cancer may increase your risk.
- **Never having been pregnant:** Women who have never had children are at a slightly higher risk.

It is important to note that not all women with these risk factors will develop endometrial cancer.

Symptoms Of Endometrial Cancer

The most common symptom of endometrial cancer is abnormal vaginal bleeding, particularly in postmenopausal women. For younger women, irregular or heavy periods may be a sign. Other symptoms to watch for include:

- Bleeding between periods
- Pelvic pain or discomfort
- Unexplained weight loss
- Pain during sex
- Difficulty urinating or a frequent urge to urinate

If you experience any of these symptoms, it is essential to seek medical advice, as early diagnosis improves

treatment outcomes.

Diagnosing Endometrial Cancer

If your GP suspects endometrial cancer, you may be referred to a gynaecology specialist for further investigation. The following tests may be used to diagnose the condition:

- **Pelvic examination:** A physical exam of the uterus, ovaries, and other reproductive organs.
- **Ultrasound scan:** A transvaginal ultrasound can help visualise the thickness of the endometrium and identify any abnormalities.
- **Endometrial biopsy:** A small sample of tissue from the lining of the womb is taken for testing.
- **Hysteroscopy:** A small camera is inserted into the womb to inspect the endometrium and take biopsies.

These tests can help confirm a diagnosis and determine the stage of the cancer.

Treatment For Endometrial Cancer

The treatment plan for endometrial cancer depends on the stage of the cancer and your overall health. Common treatments include:

- **Surgery:** Most women with endometrial cancer will have surgery to remove the womb (hysterectomy). The ovaries and fallopian tubes may also be removed to reduce the risk of cancer spreading.
- **Radiotherapy:** Radiation may be used to kill cancer cells, either alone or in combination with surgery.
- **Chemotherapy:** Chemotherapy drugs may be used in cases where the cancer has spread beyond the womb.
- **Hormone therapy:** This treatment may be used if the cancer is sensitive to hormones, especially in cases where surgery is not an option.

Early-stage endometrial cancer is often successfully treated with surgery alone, while more advanced cases may require additional treatments.

Preventing Endometrial Cancer

While it is not always possible to prevent endometrial cancer, there are steps you can take to reduce your risk:

- **Maintain a healthy weight:** Obesity is a major risk factor, so maintaining a healthy body weight

can lower your risk.

- **Consider contraceptives:** Taking combined oral contraceptives (containing both oestrogen and progesterone) can reduce your risk.
- **Manage your health conditions:** Conditions like diabetes and hypertension should be managed to lower your overall risk.
- **Report any unusual symptoms:** If you experience abnormal vaginal bleeding or any other symptoms, seek medical attention promptly.

Living With Endometrial Cancer

A diagnosis of endometrial cancer can be challenging, but many women are successfully treated and go on to live full, healthy lives. After treatment, regular follow-up appointments are important to monitor for any signs of recurrence. Emotional support is also crucial, and many women find it helpful to join a support group or talk to a counsellor.

Why Choose Birmingham Gynaecology Clinic?

At Birmingham Gynaecology Clinic, we specialise in providing expert care for endometrial cancer. Our highly experienced team offers personalised treatment plans using the latest medical advancements, ensuring the best possible outcomes in a compassionate, supportive environment.

Contact Us

To learn more or to book an appointment regarding endometrial cancer treatment. We're here to help you every step of the way.