

Uterine Cancer

There are five main types of cancer that affect a woman's reproductive organs: cervical, ovarian, uterine, vaginal, and vulvar. As a group, they are referred to as gynecologic (GY-neh-kuh-LAH-jik) cancer. (A sixth type of gynecologic cancer is the very rare fallopian tube cancer.)

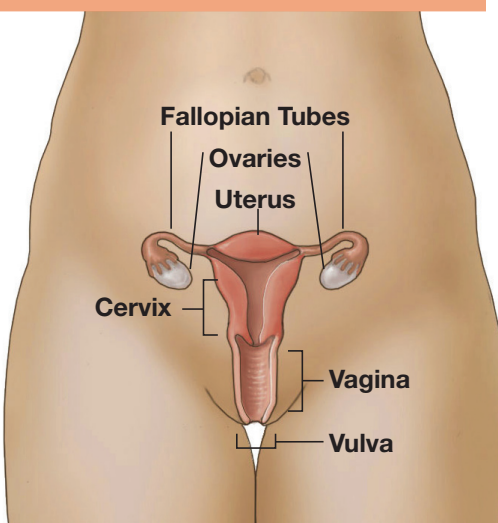
This fact sheet about uterine cancer is part of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) *Inside Knowledge: Get the Facts About Gynecologic Cancer* campaign. The campaign helps women get the facts about gynecologic cancer, providing important "inside knowledge" about their bodies and health.



What is uterine cancer?

Cancer is a disease in which cells in the body grow out of control. Cancer is always named for the part of the body where it starts, even if it spreads to other body parts later.

When cancer starts in the uterus, it is called uterine cancer. The uterus is the pear-shaped organ in a woman's pelvis (the area below your stomach and in between your hip bones). The uterus, also called the womb, is where the baby grows when a woman is pregnant.



The most common type of uterine cancer is also called endometrial cancer because it forms in the lining of your uterus, called the endometrium.

When uterine cancer is found early, treatment is most effective.

What are the signs and symptoms of uterine cancer?

Signs and symptoms of uterine cancer include:

- Vaginal discharge that is not normal for you.
- Abnormal vaginal bleeding. The bleeding may be abnormal because of how heavy it is or when it happens, such as bleeding after you have gone through menopause; bleeding between periods; or any other bleeding that is longer or heavier than normal for you.
- Pain or pressure in your pelvis.

Pay attention to your body, and know what is normal for you. If you have vaginal bleeding that is not normal for you, see a doctor right away. If you have any of the other signs and they last for two weeks or longer, see a doctor. These symptoms may be caused by something other than cancer, but the only way to know is to see your doctor.

Who gets uterine cancer?

All women are at risk for uterine cancer, and the risk increases with age. Most uterine cancers are found in women who are going through, or who have gone through menopause—the time of life when your menstrual periods stop.

Each year, approximately 35,000 women in the United States get uterine cancer. It is the fourth most common cancer in women in the United States and it is the most commonly diagnosed gynecologic cancer.

Inside Knowledge is an initiative that supports the Gynecologic Cancer Education and Awareness Act of 2005, or Johanna's Law, which was unanimously passed by the U.S. House and Senate in December of 2006, and signed into law in January 2007.

