



## **Endometrial Cancer Fact Sheet**

### **What is Endometrial Cancer?**

Endometrial cancer (sometimes called uterine cancer) begins in the layer of cells that form the lining (endometrium) of the uterus.

### **What causes Endometrial Cancer?**

Doctors don't know what causes endometrial cancer. What's known is that something occurs to create a genetic mutation within cells in the lining of the uterus.

### **What are the signs and symptoms?**

- Vaginal bleeding after menopause
- Bleeding between periods
- An abnormal, watery or blood-tinged discharge from your vagina
- Pelvic pain

Make an appointment with your doctor if you experience any of these signs or symptoms.

### **What factors increase the risk of endometrial cancer?**

- Changes in the balance of your female hormones - estrogen and progesterone - cause changes in your endometrium.
- Starting menstruation before age 12 or beginning menopause later increases the risk because the more periods you had, the more exposure your endometrium has to estrogen.
- Women who have never been pregnant have a higher risk of endometrial cancer than do women who have had at least one pregnancy.
- As you get older, your risk of endometrial cancer increases. Endometrial cancer occurs most often in women who have undergone menopause.
- Being overweight increases your risk because excess body fat alters your body's balance of hormones.
- Women with breast cancer who take the hormone therapy drug tamoxifen have an increased risk but the benefits of tamoxifen usually outweigh that risk.

### **How can you reduce your risks?**

- Talk to your doctor about the risks of hormone therapy after menopause.
- Talk to your doctor about the benefits of taking birth control pills.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Be physically active most days of the week.

**Source:** American Cancer Society

*This project is conducted in partnership with the Black Women's Health Imperative through a cooperative agreement with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention or the Department of Health and Human Services.*