This leaflet has been written to help you understand about cancer of the Uterus (Endometrial Cancer), its diagnosis, treatment and support available. You may wish to discuss some aspects with your doctor or Clinical Nurse Specialist.

**What is Cancer?**

The organs of the body are made up of cells. Cancer is a disease of these cells. The cells normally divide in an orderly manner. Sometimes the cells divide out of control - developing into a lump/tumour. A tumour which is malignant consists of cancer cells which have the ability to spread beyond the original site, destroying surrounding tissue. Sometimes they can break away and spread to other parts of the body.

**The Uterus**

The uterus is a muscular organ, usually about the size and shape of a pear, sits in the pelvis. It is here that a baby develops during pregnancy. The lining of the uterus is called the endometrium. This thickens during the menstrual cycle, in preparation for a fertilised egg and is shed during a period if the egg is not fertilised.

**How does Cancer of the Uterus develop?**

We may not know the exact cause of your cancer, but of the 9324 (ONS 2014) cases in England each year, 80% of women are post-menopausal. Therefore, the changes in your hormones at this time are an important factor in the development of this type of cancer.

**What are the signs and symptoms?**

The most common early presentation is unusual vaginal bleeding, post-menopausal bleeding or vaginal discharge (RCN 2014). Other symptoms include:

- Bleeding in between periods
- Heavier periods than usual
- A watery or bloody vaginal discharge
- Pain/discomfort in pelvic area
- Pain during sex

(Macmillan.org.uk, 2017)

These symptoms may also be due to other conditions, you should seek medical advice.
Diagnosing Cancer of the Uterus

A full medical history will be undertaken and a number of other tests may be carried out before a definite diagnosis can be made. This may include:

- Vaginal examination
- An ultrasound scan to look at the lining of the womb
- Hysteroscopy/pipelle biopsy - whereby a tiny telescope is passed through the vagina and cervix to look inside the womb and allow biopsies (samples) to be taken of the endometrium and examined.

Other investigations (e.g. a MRI scan) may be added to this to allow the doctor to determine the site and stage of the cancer, in order to plan your treatment. (See hospital information leaflets).

Stages of Cancer

Staging is a process of investigations which may be used to determine type/size of the tumour and if there is any spread. Staging is important to help decide treatment options.

If the cancer is diagnosed at an early stage, the treatment for cancer of the uterus may be more successful.

Stages of Cancer of the Endometrium

The following stages are used for cancer of the endometrium.

**Stage 1** - Cancer found only in the main part of the uterus.

**Stage 2** - Cancer cells have spread to the cervix.

**Stage 3** - Cancer cells have spread outside the Uterus but have not spread outside the pelvis.

**Stage 4** - Cancer cells have spread beyond the pelvis to other body parts or into the lining of the bladder (the sac that holds urine) or rectum.

**Recurrent Disease** - Recurrent disease means the cancer has come back (recurred) after it has been treated.

Treatment Options

There are four main treatment options for cancer of the Endometrium including:

- Surgery
- Radiotherapy
- Chemotherapy
- Hormone Therapy

The type of treatment that is best for you will be decided by your consultant in discussion with yourself.
**Clinical Trials**

Research into new methods of treating cancer of the uterus, are going on all the time. You may be asked to consider taking part in a clinical trial.

Clinical trials are research studies involving patients which compare a different type of medical care with the best treatment currently available. You may be approached regarding a clinical trial which your consultant or specialist nurse will be able to discuss with you.

Macmillan cancer support, produce a booklet which may be helpful to you. The type of treatment will be decided by the consultant in discussion with you.

**Surgery**

Surgical treatment involves the removal of the uterus (Hysterectomy) the ovaries and the fallopian tubes will also be removed if possible. This is called a Total Laparoscopic Hysterectomy and Bilateral Salpingo Oophorectomy, (TLH & BSO). You may require a Total Abdominal Hysterectomy and Bilateral Salpingo Oopherectomy. (TAH BSO) (see hospital information leaflet for specific information).

**Radiotherapy**

Radiotherapy is the use of high energy X Rays (like having an X- Ray) to destroy cancer cells. Radiation may come from a machine outside the body (external beam radiotherapy) or inside the body (internal beam radiotherapy). This involves a radioactive substance being inserted (under anaesthetic or sedation) into your body for a period of time (similar to a large tampon being inserted into the vagina). The type of radiotherapy and length of time will be planned and decided individually between the doctor and yourself (see Clatterbridge Cancer Centre radiotherapy booklet for more information).

**Chemotherapy**

Depending on the type and stage of your cancer, your doctor may suggest chemotherapy treatment (see CCC booklet & specific information sheets).

**Hormone Therapy**

In some cases your doctor might want to give you hormone therapy as some cancers of the uterus can be sensitive to hormones such as progesterone.

**Life and Relationships**

- Most people feel overwhelmed when they are told they have cancer.
- Many different emotions arise which can cause confusion.
- Reactions differ from one person to another.
- There is no right or wrong way to feel.
- You may experience the whole range of personal emotions and reactions both similar and different from family and friends.
- Support and guidance is available in coping with these feelings.
- Many people find great comfort in their faith and/or religious and spiritual beliefs.
Following the diagnosis of cancer and your subsequent treatment, you may experience physical changes. There may be some issues/concerns you wish to raise/explore, i.e.

- Body Image
- Weight Gain/loss
- Sexual Health
- Menopause Symptoms
- Others

Your Clinical Nurse Specialist will be able to support you by explaining about the issue/concern and provide advice and information if required. This may help you adjust/cope with these changes. This may include involvement of other members of the Health Care Team (HCT) i.e.

- Dietician
- Lymphoedema Practitioner
- Geneticist
- Physiotherapist
- Occupational Therapist via the GP, Primary Health Care Team (PHCT), General Practitioner (GP), District Nurse (DN), Community Specialist Palliative Care CNS.

You may not be aware of who can help with changes in social and financial matters, but your support nurse can put you in touch with the relevant people who can provide guidance and advice in these and other aspects, including childcare, how to tell the children and practical day to day issues. i.e. Macmillan/Welfare Benefits advice.

You may wish to explore information and coping methods to help yourself. Therefore, the following booklets may be helpful, (there are many others) from Macmillan Cancer Support.

- Adjusting to life after cancer
- Close relationships & cancer
- Life with cancer
- Sexuality & Cancer
- Body image and sexuality

**Complementary Therapies**

Complementary therapies may be helpful to you and your family. There are many different types i.e.

- Reflexology
- Massage
- Relaxation

Plus many others. Your Clinical Nurse Specialist can advise you by providing information regarding the appropriateness for you and how to access them.

**Your Follow up Care**

This will be tailored to your specific needs. Your Clinical Nurse Specialist will also be able to offer you and your family advice, information and support, regarding your cancer, subsequent treatment and associated health issues.
Equal Opportunities

The hospital is committed to promoting an environment which provides equal opportunities for all patients, visitors and staff. If you have special requirements such as dietary needs, interpreter services, disability needs or a preference for a female doctor, please do not hesitate to discuss this with a member of staff who will try to help you.

Support Networks Available Locally

Further information, advice and support is available for you/partner family from:

Knowsley
Lyndale Cancer Support Centre
Tel: 0151 489 3538

Sefton Cancer Support Group
Tel: 01704 879352
www.seftoncancersupport.org.uk

St Helens Cancer Support Group
Tel: 01744 21831

Warrington & District Cancer Self-Help Group
Tel: 01925 453139

The Wirral Holistic Care Services
Tel: 0151 652 9313
www.wirralholistic.org.uk

Widnes & Runcorn Cancer Support Group
Tel: 0151 423 5730

Isle of Man
Manx Cancer Help Association
Tel: 01624 679554
www.manxcancerhelp.org

Liverpool Sunflowers
Liverpool Cancer Support
Tel: 0151 726 8934

E.V.O.C.
Gynaecological Support Group
0151 702 4186

Website information may be obtained from your hospital (www.lwh.nhs.uk), local and national support networks above.

National Resource Organisations for Gynae Oncology Patients

Macmillan Cancer Support
89 Albert Embankment London SE1 7UQ
Cancerline: 0808 8080000
Mon-Fri 9am-8pm
www.macmillan.org.uk

A National Organisation providing support and written information for anyone affected by any cancer type.
The Daisy Chain Network
For additional information send an SAE to: The Daisy Chain Network, PO Box 183, Rossendale, Lancashire, BB4 6WZ
Email: membership@media@daisynetwork.org.uk  www.daisynetwork.org.uk

The Daisy network is a premature menopause support group which offers advice, information and support for women throughout the UK.

Menopause Matters
www.menopausematters.co.uk

For accurate up to date information about the menopause and its treatment options “An easy to use, independent, clinician-led website”.

Gynae C
1 Bollingbroke Road, Swindon 5N2 2L8
Tel: 01793 302005
www.communicate.co.uk/wilts.gynaec

A support group/helpline run by Helen Jackson for women (and their family or friends) who have any gynaecological cancer.

Womb Cancer Support UK
www.facebook.com/womb-cancer-support.uk

References

Office for National Statistics


Royal College of Nursing (2014) Gynaecological Cancer
Publication code 002 S18

Macmillan (2014) Symptoms of womb cancer
Ask your support nurse for your free copy of the Cancer Guide, which can guide, support and inform you through your cancer experience.

This leaflet can be made available in different formats on request. If you would like to make any suggestions or comments about the content of this leaflet, then please contact the Patient Experience Team on 0151 702 4353 or by email at pals@lwh.nhs.uk