Hysterectomy for Endometrial Cancer

Overview

Approximately 7500 women in the UK develop endometrial (womb) cancer each year. It most commonly occurs in women between the ages of 50 and 69 and rarely affects women under 40.

Causes of endometrial cancer

The exact cause of endometrial cancer is not known. Some risk factors include:

- taking HRT for longer than five years
- taking oestrogen only HRT
- some women have a hereditary risk
- obesity is an important risk factor: we know that obesity is associated with higher circulating oestrogen blood levels
- taking tamoxifen over a long period
- not having had children or been pregnant

What treatment will I have for endometrial cancer?

You have been found to have an early cancer of the womb on MRI scan. This means that on imaging, your cancer appears to be completely contained to the inner half of the muscle of the womb. Treatment is a total hysterectomy with removal of both fallopian tubes and ovaries. This may be performed using keyhole or open surgery and this will be discussed with you in clinic. You will be given written information on the operation, your care during the operation and your aftercare.

Staging and grading cancer of the uterus

The **stage** of a cancer is a term used to describe its size and whether it has spread beyond the original area where it started.
The grade refers to the appearance of the cancer cells under the microscope. The grade gives an idea of how quickly the cancer may develop.

At West Suffolk Hospital we are part of the Anglia Cancer Network and work within regional guidelines. We work in collaboration with the team of specialists at Addenbrooke’s Hospital. They will give us a second opinion regarding the stage and grade of your cancer. If you are found to have an early stage and low grade cell type, your treatment will take place at the West Suffolk Hospital.

**Your confirmed diagnosis**

It is important to remember that the final diagnosis is confirmed by the pathologist after the hysterectomy. The pathologist is the doctor who will examine your womb in the laboratory. If the pathologist confirms that your cancer was contained to the inner half of the womb, you will not require any further treatment.

However, if the pathologist finds that the cancer has spread to the outer half of the womb or down into the cervical (birth) canal, we will need to speak to our colleagues at Addenbrooke’s Hospital. The doctors there will review your case and may wish to see you to consider radiotherapy.

If necessary, the treatment options will be discussed with you. The aim of the treatment is to minimize any risk of the cancer coming back.

**What happens now?**

After visiting the pre-assessment unit, you will be booked for your operation. In line with cancer care targets, your operation will be in the next few weeks. Please do not hesitate to phone your Key Worker, if you have any questions during this time.

**Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT)**

If you are taking HRT we recommend that you stop. If you suffer extreme symptoms after stopping, your GP can prescribe non-hormonal tablets to help.

If you have been found to have endometrial cancer during the early stages towards reaching your menopause, the hysterectomy will put you into a ‘surgical menopause’ within weeks post operatively. This is because the operation removes your ovaries, which have been producing hormones. If you are struggling with menopausal symptoms (commonly night sweats, vaginal dryness) please see your GP for advice or contact your Key Worker. HRT is not generally advised but there are other treatments which might help.
Emotions

Most women feel overwhelmed when they are told they have cancer. Many different emotions arise which can cause confusion and mood changes. Reactions differ from person to person and there is no right or wrong way to feel.

Key worker

Your key worker is ……………………………………………………………………
Gynaecology Nurse Specialist.

They will co-ordinate your care and provide advice and support to you and your family.

They can be contacted Monday – Thursday on 01284 713154.

There is an answerphone available. Messages are listened to daily (Monday to Friday). If your Key Worker is not available, one of the nurses from clinic will be able to help.

Holistic Needs Assessment (HNA)

This is a care planning process to ensure that your needs are met. In your pack you have a self-assessment checklist looking at physical, practical, family, emotional, spiritual and lifestyle aspects of your life which may be affected by your cancer journey. If you identify any concerns, please telephone your Key Worker.

West Suffolk Hospital Cancer Services User Group

You will find a leaflet about this group in your pack. The group is committed to the improvement of cancer services in at West Suffolk Hospital. If you feel that you would like to get involved in the future, please contact Karen McKinnon on 01284 713212 or email Karen.mckinnon@wsh.nhs.uk.

Further help / useful links

Gynaecology Ward F10 01284 713235 / 6

Macmillan Information Centre at West Suffolk Hospital – leaflet supplied in your pack. Telephone 01284 713023

Consultant secretaries

Miss Prior’s secretary 01284 713151
Websites

Macmillan  www.macmillan.org.uk
General  www.cancerhelp.org.uk
Ovarian Cancer  www.ovarian.org.uk or  www.ovacome.org.uk
Cervical Cancer  www.jotrust.org.uk
Vulval Cancer  www.vaco.co.uk
Anglia Cancer Network  www.angliacancernetwork.nhs.uk

If you would like any information regarding access to the West Suffolk Hospital and its facilities please visit the website for AccessAble (the new name for DisabledGo) https://www.accessable.co.uk/organisations/west-suffolk-nhs-foundation-trust

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