



**YOU
NEED
TO
KNOW**

**Bleeding after the
menopause is *not* normal**

All the information you need to know inside

You Need to Know is a campaign to raise awareness of the signs and symptoms of womb cancer. This leaflet will help you recognise possible symptoms and explain the importance of getting checked by a doctor if you experience any. These symptoms may be nothing serious, but it is always best to speak to a doctor.

What is womb cancer?

Womb cancer (sometimes known as endometrial or uterine cancer) is a cancer that affects the womb. The womb is where a baby grows during pregnancy.

Womb cancer is the 4th most common cancer in women.ⁱ Over 9,000 people are diagnosed with womb cancer each year in the UK, and cases of womb cancer are rising.ⁱ

If caught early, womb cancer is very treatable; 90% of women who are diagnosed at Stage 1 (early) survive the disease.ⁱⁱ There are also more treatment options available, some of which are considered kinder, if the cancer is diagnosed early.ⁱⁱⁱ

What are the symptoms of womb cancer?

The main symptom of womb cancer is bleeding after the menopause.^{iv} Other symptoms of womb cancer include:^{iv}

- 👁️ **Bleeding after sex**
- 👁️ **'Blood-stained' vaginal discharge which can be pink, red or brown**
- 👁️ **Bleeding between your periods (before the menopause)**
- 👁️ **Periods that are heavier than normal for you (before the menopause)**
- 👁️ **It is important that any new or different bleeding, at any age, is checked by a doctor**

What is menopause?

Menopause is a natural stage of life when your periods stop due to hormone levels decreasing, and your ovaries stop producing eggs.^v In the UK, the menopause normally happens between the ages of 45 and 55 (but it can happen earlier or later).^v Symptoms of the menopause will be different for every woman, but they can include: hot flushes, problems with memory and concentration, low mood, weight gain, vaginal dryness, and difficulty sleeping.^{vi}

Once it has been 12 months since your last period, you will be considered to have been through the menopause.^v

How do I know if I have bleeding after the menopause?

If you have been through the menopause, any amount of blood is not normal and needs to be checked, whether a one-off bleed, ongoing bleeding, spotting, or even pink, brown or red discharge.^{iv} There is no such thing as 'one last period' after the menopause, no matter what age you are.

Bleeding after the menopause must be checked by a doctor. While it might not be anything serious, it could be a sign of cancer. The earlier cancer is found, the easier it is to treat.

What should I do if I experience bleeding after the menopause?

Contact your GP and make it clear that you have 'bleeding after the menopause'. Your GP surgery will know this is a symptom that could be caused by womb cancer and should arrange an appointment for you quickly.

It can be uncomfortable to visit the GP about a women's health concern, but there are things you can do to help make the experience a bit easier. While these options may not always be possible due to staffing, you can request:

- 👍 **A female GP**
- 👍 **A GP that specialises in women's health**
- 👍 **Someone who can speak your language**
- 👍 **An interpreter**

It's a good idea to keep a diary of your symptoms (when they occur, how bad they are, how long they last and how they affect you), to help you explain them to the GP during the appointment.



What happens at the appointment?

Many GP appointments are done over the phone or online, but you can ask for a face to face one. You will discuss your symptoms and your medical history (including your periods).

After the appointment, continue keeping a diary of your symptoms. With bleeding after the menopause, you should be referred to see a specialist within two weeks.

The specialist appointment is usually in-person at a clinic or hospital. These doctors are specialists with more expert knowledge related to your symptoms. They will do further investigations to understand what is causing your symptoms and help decide if you need any treatment.

Where can I go for more information?

Talk to your GP if you have any bleeding after the menopause.

For more information about the 'You Need to Know' campaign, visit: **<https://www.nelcanceralliance.nhs.uk/youneedtoknow>**

For more information on Womb Cancer, visit gynaecological cancer charity The Eve Appeal: **eveappeal.org.uk/wombcancer**

The Eve Appeal has a service called Ask Eve, where you can speak to a gynae specialist nurse about gynaecological cancers, their symptoms, and any concerns you may have. Ask Eve has an interpretation service available in over 250 languages.

Call The Eve Appeal on 0808 802 0019 or email nurse@eveappeal.org.uk

References

- i Cancer Research UK. Uterine Cancer Incidence. [Last Accessed: 17.01.23]
- ii Cancer Research UK. Uterine Cancer Survival Statistics. [Last Accessed: 17.01.2023]
- iii Cancer Research UK. Uterine Cancer Treatment Statistics. [Last Accessed: 17.01.2023]
- iv The Eve Appeal. Womb Cancer. [Last Accessed: 17.01.2023]
- v NHS. Menopause Overview. [Last Accessed: 17.01.2023]
- vi NHS. Menopause Symptoms. [Last Accessed: 17.01.2023]