

Testing Endometrial Cancer Patients for Lynch Syndrome

You have been diagnosed with endometrial (uterine) cancer. If you are having surgery for your cancer or if a biopsy is obtained, two screening tests may be done to see if you may have an inherited condition called Lynch syndrome. This condition is also known as hereditary nonpolyposis colorectal cancer syndrome (HNPCC for short). Screening you for Lynch syndrome is important and can help us plan and personalize your cancer care.

Although most endometrial cancer does not run in families, about 3 percent (%) is inherited. Of those, Lynch syndrome is the most common cause. People with Lynch syndrome have a much higher chance of developing endometrial, colorectal and other cancers than people who do not have this condition. If a woman with endometrial cancer is found to have Lynch syndrome, she has a much higher chance of developing colorectal cancer. Because Lynch syndrome is inherited, this information is important for family members as well.

Tests

The following tests may be done on your cancer (tumor) after surgery or biopsy:

- **Microsatellite instability (MSI).** This test compares the DNA of normal tissue to the DNA of tumor tissue.
- **Immunohistochemistry (IHC).** This test uses special staining to look for four specific proteins found in certain tumors. If one or more of these proteins are missing, then you may have Lynch syndrome

Results

Test results are usually available about three weeks after your surgery. If there is an increased chance that you have Lynch syndrome, then results from one or both of these tests will usually show it. Sometimes, test results are unclear and more tests may be needed. These tests are screening tests, meaning they do not provide a definitive diagnosis.

If results show that you may have Lynch syndrome, we will contact you to set up an appointment with a genetic counselor. The genetic counselor will talk with you about getting a diagnostic genetic blood test to confirm whether you have Lynch syndrome and what that would mean for you and your family.

Please talk with your care team in the Gynecologic Oncology Center if you have questions or concerns about these tests. Also, you can ask to speak with a genetics counselor to learn more about Lynch syndrome or these tests.