

Uterine Cancer Rates Projected to Rise by 2050, Especially Among Black Women

Black women will be three times more likely to die of uterine cancer compared with white women by 2050.

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Uterine cancer incidence and mortality rates are projected to increase significantly by 2050, and Black women will face disproportionately higher rates of [diagnosis](#) and [death](#), according to a [Columbia University news release](#).

Unlike many other cancers, uterine incidence and mortality are on the rise. In fact, between 2010 and 2020, newly diagnosed uterine cancers increased by more than 50% in the United States, from about 43,000 to over 65,000 cases.

A study published in Cancer Epidemiology, Biomarkers & Prevention predicts that over the next 30 years, Black women will be three times [more likely](#) to die of [uterine cancer](#).

According to the study, incidence was projected to increase from 57.7 cases per 100,000 in 2018 to 74.2 cases per 100,000 in 2050 for white women and from 56.8 cases per 100,000 to 86.9 cases per 100,000 for Black women.

Incidence-based mortality was projected to increase from 6.1 per 100,000 to 11.2 per 100,000 among white women and from 14.1 per 100,000 to 27.9 per 100,000 among Black women.

“Our model predicts that current trends in uterine cancer incidence and mortality will continue for the foreseeable future. From 2018 to 2050, we expect uterine cancer cases to rise by over 50% in Black women versus about 29% in white women,” said study first author Jason Wright, MD, chief of the Division of Gynecologic Oncology at Columbia University, in the release.

There are two main types of cancer of the uterus, or womb. [Endometrial cancer](#) affects the inner lining of the uterus, while uterine sarcoma develops in the muscle and support structures of the uterus. Endometrial cancer is the fourth most common cancer among women in the United States, according to the [American Cancer Society](#) (ACS).

About 69,120 new cases of cancer of the uterus, which includes endometrial cancers and uterine sarcomas, will be diagnosed in the United States this year, according to the ACS.

Black women face a higher burden of uterine cancer compared with other racial groups for several reasons. For example, some studies have linked [chemical hair relaxers](#), which are popular among Black women, to uterine cancer.

In fact, [one study found](#) that women who used hair straightening products more than four times in the previous year were more than twice as likely to be diagnosed with uterine cancer compared with those who did not use such products.

What's more, [early detection](#) and [treatment](#) of uterine cancer increases the likelihood of long-term [survival](#), but Black women tend to [get diagnosed later](#), when the cancer is more advanced and harder to treat.

"Our findings underscore the urgent need to develop new strategies to prevent and screen for uterine cancer in high-risk women," Wright said.

[Screening](#) for endometrial and uterine cancer is not recommended for women at average risk. However, women who are at increased risk due to certain genetic mutations may receive regular endometrial biopsies, which involve removing a small tissue sample from the uterine lining to examine in a laboratory, or they may get a preventive hysterectomy (uterus removal).

"Our simulation showed that screening with an effective test starting at age 55 would result in a significant reduction in uterine cancer cases, reinforcing the need to develop new screening and prevention methods," Wright said.

[Cancer Health's Uterine and Endometrial Cancer Basics](#) offers more information on this type of cancer and those at risk. The Basics further explains:

Estrogen is a major risk factor for uterine cancer. Higher estrogen levels over a lifetime—due to early menstruation, late menopause or few or no pregnancies—raise the risk, while use of birth control pills lowers the risk. Women who use hormone replacement therapy after menopause should take a combination of estrogen and progesterone to prevent uterine cancer.

Other risk factors for uterine cancer include family history, genetic factors, obesity, diabetes and a high-fat diet. Using certain types of intrauterine devices for birth control appears to be protective. Certain genetic mutations and pelvic radiation therapy to treat other cancers raise the risk of uterine sarcomas.

Endometrial cancer and uterine sarcoma cancer often have few or no symptoms during early stages, so they are often detected later, when they are harder to treat. Some women have signs and symptoms that are similar to those caused by other conditions, which may include:

- Abnormal vaginal bleeding between periods;
- Vaginal bleeding after menopause;
- Pain or bleeding during or after sex;
- Unusual vaginal discharge;
- Lumps in the pelvic area or lower abdomen;
- Pain in the pelvic area or abdomen;
- Unexplained weight loss