DECISION CHECKLIST: CONSIDERING RISK-REDUCING SURGERY FOR OVARIAN OR ENDOMETRIAL CANCER

If you're considering surgery for ovarian or endometrial cancer prevention, you probably have lots of questions for your healthcare team. We've compiled several key questions so you can select and build your own surgery checklist. Most experts recommend consulting with a gynecologic oncologist for risk-reducing surgery. If a gynecologic oncologist is unavailable, it's important to ensure that your surgeon is familiar with the surgical and pathology protocols for high-risk women.

A checklist from FORCE: FacingOurRisk.Org

Notes:

Questions for your gynecologic surgeon before surgery

- [ ] How can I get a copy of my pathology report?
- [ ] What is my risk for primary peritoneal cancer after surgery? Is there any way to monitor me? (For people undergoing removal of their ovaries and fallopian tubes.)
- [ ] What is my risk for uterine cancer after surgery? (for For people not undergoing hysterectomy.) How will you monitor me for it?
- [ ] Will the procedure be laparoscopic, robotic (small incisions) or laparotomy (a large incision)? If a laparotomy, why?
- [ ] How will my uterus be removed? Will it be removed intact or in pieces? How will the pieces be contained? (For people undergoing hysterectomy.)
- [ ] Will you test to check for cancer before surgery?
- [ ] What happens if you find cancer during surgery?
- [ ] If you find cancer, will a gynecologic oncologist be included in the surgery, or would I need a second surgery for staging? (If your surgeon is an ob/gynecologist.)
- [ ] Will your pathologist do special sectioning of my fallopian tubes to look for hidden cancers?
- [ ] What will happen if your pathologist finds a precancerous STIC lesion?
- [ ] Where will my scars be? What will they look like?
- [ ] How long after surgery can I resume activities?
- [ ] What are the risks for surgery? What are the risks for anesthesia?
- [ ] Will I need to stay in the hospital overnight after surgery?
- [ ] Which of my medications should I take or avoid before the surgery? What supplements should I begin taking, continue to take or avoid?

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Questions for people with a mutation in BRCA1, BRCA2 or other gene linked to ovarian cancer risk

- [ ] What is my lifetime risk for ovarian or fallopian tube cancer?
- [ ] What is the average age of onset for ovarian or fallopian tube cancer in people with my gene mutation?
- [ ] What is the recommended age range for risk-reducing surgery in people with my gene mutation?
- [ ] Is any screening effective for ovarian cancer? Is screening an option for me if I?m not ready to remove my ovaries? If I do not have surgery, what is the chance of detecting ovarian cancer at an early stage?
- [ ] If I remove my ovaries and tubes, will I still be at risk for primary peritoneal cancer? If so, how high is that risk? Is there any way to screen for it after surgery?
- [ ] I do not plan to have more children. When should I have this surgery?
- [ ] I would still like to have children. When should I have this surgery?
- [ ] I would like to have children after surgery. Is fertility preservation an option for me?
- [ ] What are the possible complications from surgery to remove my ovaries and tubes?
- [ ] What is my lifetime risk for endometrial cancer?
- [ ] Do you recommend removal of my uterus (hysterectomy)? Why or why not?
- [ ] What are the possible complications from hysterectomy?
- [ ] How would a hysterectomy at the time of ovary and fallopian tube removal affect my surgical recovery? How might it affect my risk for short-term and long-term complications?
- [ ] Would removing my uterus at the time of ovary and fallopian tube removal affect decisions about menopause management?
- [ ] Would removing my uterus at the time of ovary and fallopian tube removal affect decisions about taking medications like tamoxifen to treat or to lower my risk for breast cancer?
- [ ] Is having surgery to remove only my fallopian tubes an option for me? Will this surgery lower my risk for cancer? If I have tubes-only surgery, do you recommend that I have my ovaries removed later?
- [ ] If I have surgery to remove just my fallopian tubes and then have my ovaries removed at a later date, will insurance likely cover both surgeries?
- [ ] Am I a candidate for hormone replacement therapy? If not, why not? If not, are there other options for managing my menopause symptoms?

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Questions for people with Lynch syndrome or another mutation linked to endometrial cancer

- [ ] What is my lifetime risk for endometrial cancer?
- [ ] What is the average age of onset for endometrial cancer in people with my gene mutation?
- [ ] What is the recommended age range for risk-reducing surgery in people with my gene mutation?
- [ ] Do you recommend that I have a hysterectomy?
- [ ] What are the possible complications from hysterectomy?
- [ ] Is any screening effective for endometrial cancer? If I do not have surgery, what is the chance of detecting endometrial cancer at an early stage?
- [ ] What is my lifetime risk for ovarian or fallopian tube cancer?
- [ ] What is the average age of onset for ovarian or fallopian tube cancer in people with my gene mutation?
- [ ] Do you recommend that I have my ovaries removed at the time of hysterectomy? Why or why not?
- [ ] How would removing my ovaries at the time of hysterectomy affect my surgical recovery? How might it affect my risk for short-term and long-term complications?
- [ ] If my ovaries are removed, am I a candidate for hormone replacement therapy? If not, why not? If not, are there other options for managing menopause symptoms?
- [ ] Is any screening effective for ovarian cancer? If my ovaries are not removed, what are the chances of detecting ovarian cancer at an early stage?
- [ ] If my ovaries are not removed, will you remove my fallopian tubes at the time of hysterectomy?
- [ ] I would like to have children. When should I have this surgery?
- [ ] I would like to have children after surgery. Is fertility preservation an option for me?
- [ ] I do not plan to have more children. When should I have this surgery?

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Questions about menopause symptoms and how to manage them

- [ ] What symptoms am I likely to experience after removal of my ovaries? How long after surgery are they likely to develop?
- [ ] How will you manage my menopausal symptoms?
- [ ] Am I a candidate for hormone replacement? If not, why not?
- [ ] Which hormone replacement regimen do you recommend for me?
- [ ] Should I have a bone density test? If so, when? How frequently do you recommend repeating it?
- [ ] Can you refer me to a menopause expert?

Questions about insurance coverage

- [ ] Will my insurance cover the cost for surgery? What are my estimated out-of-pocket costs?
- [ ] What resources can help cover my out-of-pocket surgery costs?
- [ ] Will my insurance cover fertility preservation options?
- [ ] What resources can help cover my costs for fertility preservation?

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