Diagnostic Options for Post-Menopausal Bleeding

It is important to tell your doctor if you have vaginal bleeding after menopause. For this purpose, menopause is not having your period for 12 months or more. Vaginal bleeding in women who have gone through menopause has many causes. A rare but serious cause of bleeding is cancer of the endometrium, or the lining of the uterus. There are two ways your doctor can tell if this is the cause of the bleeding: ultrasound and biopsy.

An ultrasound is a quick and easy test. A trained ultrasound tech will put a small amount of gel on your abdomen and use a device called a transducer to see a picture of your uterus. If the lining of your uterus is less than 5mm thick, it is very unlikely that you have cancer. If the lining is thicker, you will need to have a biopsy.

A biopsy can be done by your doctor. It is similar to a pap smear but the doctor will take a sample of cells from inside your uterus. You may feel some cramping. This is normal. The whole test takes only a few minutes. Your doctor will then send the cells to the lab to be looked at with a microscope. It will take up to a week for the results of the test to come back.

Both ultrasound and biopsy are good options to rule out cancer. Women who want to avoid the pain of biopsy may want to choose ultrasound. The major drawback of ultrasound is that the results may not be clear and a biopsy may be needed anyway. Women who want to be absolutely sure they do not have cancer should choose biopsy. Both tests can provide women with the answers they need.

For more information:

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