Immunohistochemistry (IHC) testing is done on all surgically removed endometrial cancers at Huntsman Cancer Institute. IHC testing helps find out if you may have a hereditary condition called Lynch syndrome. This factsheet is about IHC testing and what the results could mean for you and your family.

What Is IHC Testing?
IHC testing looks for four proteins in your tumor. These proteins help your body’s cells work properly. About 80% of IHC tests are normal, which means that all four proteins are present in the cancer cells. IHC tests are abnormal about 20% of the time. In these cases, one or more of the proteins are missing.

Why Is Endometrial IHC Testing Important?
Most endometrial cancers occur due to chance. However, 5 to 10% of endometrial cancers occur because of an inherited cancer risk. It is important to identify people with an inherited cancer risk because they and their families can greatly benefit from increased cancer screening and prevention.

The most common cause of inherited endometrial cancer is a condition called Lynch syndrome. IHC testing can help identify people with this condition. IHC testing cannot confirm a diagnosis, but having an abnormal IHC test result may mean that a person has Lynch syndrome, and further testing is recommended to know for sure.

What Is Lynch Syndrome?
Lynch syndrome is a genetic condition that runs in families. This means that close family members may also have it. A person with Lynch syndrome has a high risk of developing more than one cancer in his or her lifetime. Lynch syndrome also raises the risk of developing cancer at a younger age.

Families with Lynch syndrome have a higher risk of several types of cancer, including colon, rectal, endometrial, ovarian, stomach, and urinary tract cancers. Frequent screening is recommended for people with Lynch syndrome in order to detect cancer as early as possible, when it can be treated most effectively. Screening may also help find precancerous changes, and if they are treated, cancer can even be prevented.

How Will I Receive My Results?
If your results show you are not at high risk for Lynch syndrome:
You will receive a letter informing you of this result. However, IHC testing does not give information about all forms of hereditary endometrial cancer. If your personal or family history raises concerns of an inherited cancer risk, your doctor may refer you to a genetic counselor.

If your results show you are at high risk for Lynch syndrome:
The Family Cancer Assessment Clinic will call you to schedule a visit. It is very important that you attend this appointment. A genetic counselor and doctor will discuss further testing options to find out if you have Lynch syndrome and can answer any questions you may have.

If you have questions about IHC testing or wish to schedule an appointment with the Family Cancer Assessment Clinic, please call 801-587-9555.