Prophylactic Gastrectomy for CDH1 Mutation Carriers

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Gastric cancer is difficult to diagnose at an early stage. Signs and symptoms of the disease often only occur when advanced or metastatic disease is present. A very small number of gastric cancers are hereditary. The mutation to the E-cadherin gene has high penetrance and confers a lifetime risk of gastric cancer of 80% for carriers. Because of the high penetrance of the mutation and the difficulty of diagnosing gastric cancer at an early stage, carriers of the mutation may be candidates for prophylactic gastrectomy. Although limited data are available about the complications and outcomes associated with prophylactic gastrectomy, nurses should be knowledgeable about prophylactic surgery for hereditary cancers and prepared to answer patients’ questions about their prevention.