



OBSTETRICS &
GYNAECOLOGY
PATIENT & FAMILY
EDUCATION



PAINFUL PERIODS? IT COULD BE ENDOMETRIOSIS

Endometriosis can be treated
to relieve recurring pain

ENDOMETRIOSIS MAY BE CAUSING YOUR PAINFUL PERIODS

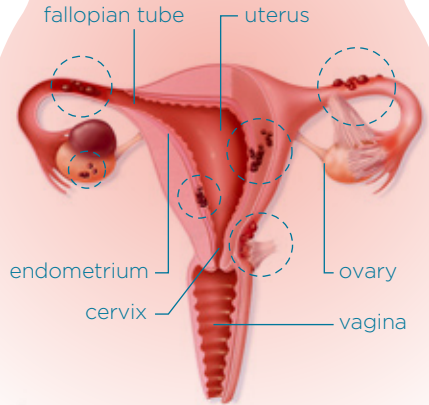
For many women, menstrual cramps are a part of life, but normal period pain should not stop them from carrying on with school, work, or social activities. If the pain is severe enough to disrupt your daily activities, it may be endometriosis.

Endometriosis is a condition where tissue similar to the lining of the uterus (endometrium) grows outside of it, and on organs such as the ovaries and around the pelvis.

When this layer of tissue growth builds up, it gets inflamed and causes severe pain during periods and sexual intercourse. It can also make it difficult for some women to get pregnant.

Often, endometriosis is only discovered when women seek help for fertility issues.

However, with knowledge, you can spot the signs early and ease the pain with treatment from a gynaecologist.



Endometriosis locations

From the onset of symptoms, it takes an average of

7 years

for women to receive a proper endometriosis diagnosis.

Contributing factors for endometriosis

The exact cause of endometriosis may not be definitive, but doctors believe these factors play a significant role:

- ! Retrograde menstruation** - Menstrual blood flows backwards along the fallopian tubes into the pelvis.
- ! Cell transformation** - Changes in the behaviour of the body's cells, where they function like endometrial cells, growing and bleeding in response to the menstrual cycle.
- ! Haematogenous/lymphatic spread** - Endometrial cells travel through blood vessels or the lymphatic system to other parts of the body.
- ! Surgery** - Scarring after procedures such as Caesarean section where endometrial cells attach themselves to the surgical incision resulting in scar endometriosis.
- ! Immune disorders** - The body is unable to recognise and destroy endometrial-like tissue growing outside the uterus.

Other risk factors for endometriosis

Other risk factors that increase the chances of developing endometriosis include:



Early start of menstruation before the age of 11



Short menstrual cycles of less than 25 days



Low body mass index (below 18.5)



Family history of endometriosis

Complications of endometriosis

When left untreated, endometriosis can cause long-term pain and stress. It can also lead to other medical issues such as:

Anxiety or depression, as symptoms can negatively affect one's well-being



Difficulty in conceiving, and even infertility, as fallopian tubes may get blocked



Cysts in the ovaries which can negatively affect fertility



Higher risk of ovarian cancer



SYMPTOM CHECKER: IS IT ENDOMETRIOSIS?

Endometriosis can only be diagnosed and treated by a doctor. This self-assessment checklist helps you determine if you need a check for endometriosis.*

Do you have:

- ? Severe menstrual cramps that keep you from school, work or social activities
- ? Pelvic pain that worsens during menstruation or ovulation
- ? Painful urination or bowel movement before or during menstruation
- ? Diarrhoea, constipation, bloating or nausea, especially during menstruation
- ? Pain during, or after, sexual intercourse
- ? Heavy menstrual bleeding requiring you to change your sanitary pad within 2 hours
- ? Bleeding in between periods
- ? Difficulty conceiving



Endometriosis could be a cause of your symptoms if you answered "Yes" to any of these questions. Do not suffer in silence. Speak to your gynaecologist about these symptoms so you can start your treatment plan early if diagnosed with endometriosis.

*Please note: This self-assessment is designed as an educational tool to promote awareness of endometriosis. It should not be treated as an official diagnosis nor is it intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice.



Gleneagles Hospital Singapore, Mount Elizabeth Hospital, Mount Elizabeth Novena Hospital and Parkway East Hospital are accredited by the Joint Commission International (JCI).

Have more questions?

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