

ADENOMYOSIS

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What is adenomyosis?

Adenomyosis is a condition where endometrial tissue grows into the muscular wall of the uterus (womb). It's similar to endometriosis in a way as this tissue continues to respond to the hormonal changes in the menstrual cycle and thickens, breaks down and bleeds but endometrial tissues don't grow outside the uterus.

10-20%

women are
affected by
adenomyosis

What are the symptoms?

It's possible to have adenomyosis and have no symptoms, but some of the common symptoms you might experience include:

- heavy periods that last for a long time
- severe period pain
- a feeling of pressure in your tummy
- bloating (your tummy sticks out more than normal)

Diagnosis

According to the NHS you should see a GP if:

- your periods become more painful, heavier or irregular
- you have pain during sex
- heavy periods are affecting your life or you've had them for some time
- you've been feeling bloated for a while (about 3 weeks)
- you bleed between periods or after sex



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Diagnosis

The GP may ask about your periods if you have symptoms of adenomyosis. They may feel your stomach to see if there's any swelling or bloating.

The doctor might also ask to do an internal examination, to check your vagina and cervix.

You might be referred to a specialist who'll carry out more tests which might include an ultrasound or an MRI, which will allow a doctor to look at your womb. This can also help rule out any other health conditions, which is really helpful.

Treatment

If you're diagnosed with adenomyosis, there are treatments that can help ease your symptoms. Treatments include:

- the IUS (intrauterine system, also called the hormonal coil), which thins the womb lining, making your periods lighter and less painful
- other types of hormonal contraception if you cannot or do not want to have an IUS, such as the progesterone-only pill, the combined pill or the contraceptive patch
- medicines such as tranexamic acid or NSAIDs

How to ease symptoms of adenomyosis

- use a heat pad or hot water bottle wrapped in a tea towel on your tummy
- try a TENS machine – a small device that uses mild electrical impulses to reduce pain
- take painkillers like paracetamol or ibuprofen (always follow manufacturer instructions)

If these treatments do not work, there is sometimes the need to have a discussion about surgery or other medical procedures. This could be a hysterectomy, or a procedure to remove the lining of your womb (endometrial ablation).