

ENDOMETRIOSIS

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What is endometriosis?

Endometriosis is a condition when cells similar to the ones in the lining of the womb grow elsewhere in the body. These cells react to the menstrual cycle each month and also bleed. However, there is no way for this blood to leave the body. This can cause inflammation, pain and the formation of scar tissue.

1 in 10

women are
affected by
endometriosis

Symptoms

Symptoms can vary in intensity with endometriosis, and the amount of endometriosis does not always correspond to the amount of pain and discomfort experienced.

The classic endometriosis symptoms include:

- Painful periods
- Pain during or after sex
- Infertility
- Painful bowel movements
- Fatigue

For more information on endometriosis go to [Endometriosis UK](#)

Diagnosis

It takes on average eight years to get a diagnosis of endometriosis in the UK. This lengthy time to diagnosis means someone could be suffering the symptoms of endometriosis for many years before having a definitive diagnosis.

It can sometimes be difficult to diagnose because the symptoms can vary considerably, and many other conditions can cause similar symptoms.



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Diagnosis

A healthcare practitioner will ask about your symptoms and may ask to check your stomach and perform an internal examination.

- They may recommend treatments if they think you have endometriosis.
- If these do not help, they might refer you to a specialist called a gynaecologist for some further tests, such as an ultrasound scan, MRI or laparoscopy.
- A laparoscopy is where a surgeon passes a thin tube through a small cut in your stomach so they can see any patches of endometriosis tissue.

This is the only way to be certain you have endometriosis. It may help to write down your symptoms before seeing a doctor. [Endometriosis UK has a pain and symptoms diary](#) you can use.

Treatment

Although there is no cure - there are ways of managing the symptoms and the condition. Types of treatment include:

- painkillers such as ibuprofen and paracetamol (always follow manufacturer instructions)
- hormone medicines and contraceptives, including the combined pill, contraceptive patch, intrauterine system (IUS) and contraceptive implant, and medicines called gonadotrophin-releasing hormone (GnRH) analogues
- surgery to cut away patches of endometriosis tissue
- surgery to remove part or all of the organs affected by endometriosis, such as surgery to remove part of your colon, or your appendix or womb (hysterectomy)

Your doctor will discuss the options with you. Sometimes they may suggest not starting treatment immediately, to see if your symptoms improve on their own.

