

ENDOMETRIOSIS TREATMENT OPTIONS

Several therapies are available to manage symptoms of endometriosis, although there is no cure. Many women endure menstrual pain, but if your period pain makes it hard to do everyday things or lasts a long time every month, it's time to get help.

Your provider can offer a range of options from medications to advanced surgical procedures. Your provider will work with you to decide which treatment plan would be best for you. Generally, depending on your age and fertility wishes, endometriosis is managed with several treatment options at once. Treatment options include:

- **Pain medications:** Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) are often used to treat menstrual and endometriosis pain. NSAIDs include ibuprofen or naproxen and are available over the counter. If these do not give you enough relief, talk to your provider to see if you need stronger prescription pain medication.
- **Hormone therapy:** Some medications suppress the production of hormones in the ovaries, preventing ovulation, menstruation, endometriosis pain flares.
- **Surgery** can be used to diagnose, and remove or destroy endometriosis tissue. The most common surgery is laparoscopy (with or without robotic assistance) where small incisions and a camera is used to diagnose and if needed, remove endometriosis while saving the uterus and ovaries. A hysterectomy is another surgical alternative for those who are no longer interested in childbearing.

If you think you have endometriosis symptoms, talk to your health care team. Endometriosis can be tough to manage but finding it early can help control the symptoms.



Women Veterans Call Center

Call or text us at 855-VA-WOMEN (855-829-6636).
WVCC representatives are available Monday - Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. ET, and Saturday, 8:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. ET.

The Women Veterans Call Center (WVCC) is your first step to navigating VA care, answering your questions about VA services and benefits available to you, and connecting you with either the Women Veterans Program Manager or your Primary Care Provider (PCP) at your local VA medical center.

You can also chat with us online and learn more by visiting womenshealth.va.gov



WOMEN VETERANS CALL CENTER
855.VA.WOMEN

Am I Eligible for VA Health Care?

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Visit the nearest VA medical center or clinic. You can locate your nearest VA health facility at va.gov/find-locations

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To apply for VA benefits you may have earned—such as preventative care, inpatient and urgent care services—call 1-877-222-8387

Monday–Friday, 8 a.m.–8 p.m. ET.
Veterans Benefits Administration 1-800-827-1000
benefits.va.gov

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WOMEN VETERANS HEALTH CARE

ENDOMETRIOSIS



VA



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MENSTRUAL & PELVIC PAIN & TREATMENT OPTIONS



WHAT IS ENDOMETRIOSIS?

Endometriosis is a condition where tissue that is similar to the inner lining of the uterus grows outside the uterus. These cells respond to changes in your body's hormones and cause inflammation, pain, and sometimes irregular bleeding. Often, one of the first signs of endometriosis is severe pain in your abdomen and pelvis during your period.

Endometriosis is especially common among women in their 30s and 40s and may make it harder to get pregnant. There are several different treatment options available.

WHO GETS ENDOMETRIOSIS?

Endometriosis can happen to anyone who has menstrual periods. About 11% of women have this condition. Endometriosis may be more common in women who:

- Never had children
- Menstrual periods that last more than seven days
- Short menstrual cycles (27 days or fewer)
- A family member (mother, aunt, sister) with endometriosis

MENSTRUAL AND PELVIC PAIN (DYSMENORRHEA)

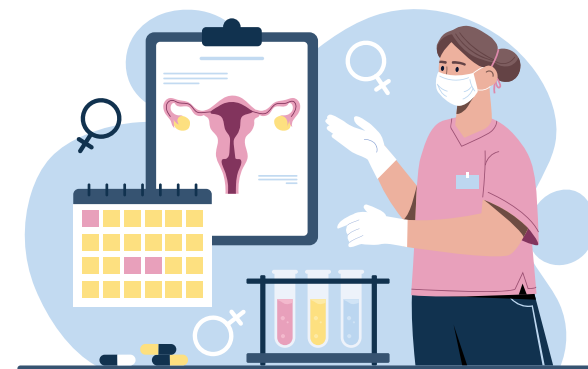
Many women get cramps during their menstrual period, and usually the pain is mild. But for some women, the pain is so severe that it keeps them from doing normal things for several days every month. This is called dysmenorrhea, and there are treatment options available. It's important to know that severe pain during your period is not normal, and you don't have to live with it.

IDENTIFYING SYMPTOMS OF ENDOMETRIOSIS

Symptoms of endometriosis can include:

- Pain in your abdomen, especially during your period
- Difficulty getting pregnant
- Strong cramps during periods, which may get worse over time
- Pain during or after sex
- Pain or discomfort when you use the bathroom, usually during your period
- Heavy periods
- Bleeding between periods
- Digestive issues like bloating, constipation, or diarrhea
- Feeling tired or low on energy

If you're having any of these symptoms, talk to your VA health care team. They may refer you to see a gynecology specialist. They can help you find out what's causing your pain and how to treat it.



ENDOMETRIOSIS AND INFERTILITY

While many women with endometriosis can conceive, some may have a harder time getting pregnant. Experts believe that about half of women struggling to get pregnant may have endometriosis. However, the exact way endometriosis leads to infertility is not fully understood. Some possible reasons could be:

- Patches of endometriosis block off or change the shape of the pelvis and reproductive organs. This can make it harder for the sperm to find the egg.
- The immune system, which normally helps defend the body against disease, attacks the embryo.
- The endometrium (the layer of the uterine lining where implantation happens) may not develop properly.

