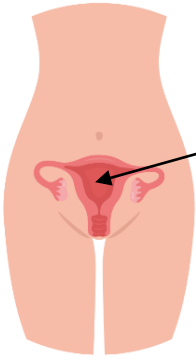


Endometriosis



Endometriosis



Endometriosis is a long-term health condition where tissue like the lining of the **womb** is found elsewhere in the body.

Your **womb** is the part of your body where a baby grows if you are pregnant.



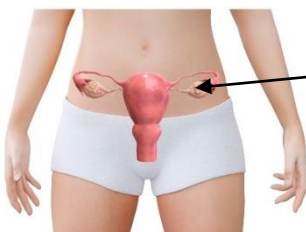
Endometriosis affects around 1 in 10 people who have periods.

For some people, it can have a big effect on their physical health, [emotional wellbeing](#) and daily routine.



Speak to your doctor if you are experiencing:

- pain in your tummy, pelvis, lower back or legs
- painful periods which affect your day to day life – for example, you cannot go to school or work or take part in activities that you enjoy
- pain during **ovulation** - when an egg is released from your ovary and travels to your womb





- heavy periods



- periods that last for a long time
- spotting or bleeding between periods



- pain during and after sex



- bleeding when going to the toilet
- bleeding from your bottom when you do a poo



- blood in your poo - usually at the same time as your period

- feeling tired all the time



- difficulty getting pregnant

Causes



We do not know exactly what causes endometriosis.

If someone in your family has endometriosis it is more likely you may have it too.

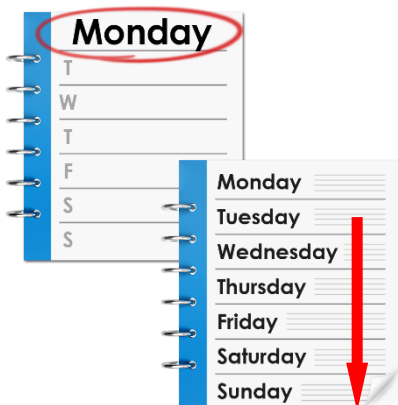


It can be helpful to keep a note of your **symptoms** and the dates your periods start and end.

A **symptom** is a sign that you have an illness or health condition.

You can keep a note of this information using a calendar, a diary or an app.

If you think you have symptoms of endometriosis, it is important that you speak to your doctor.



There are some useful things to think about before your appointment like:

- the day your last period started
- how many days your period usually lasts



- what was the shortest time between your periods (from the first day of one period to the first day of the next)



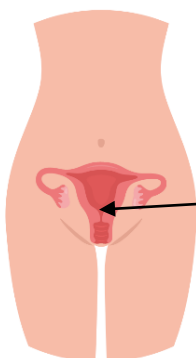
- what was the longest time between your periods (from the first day of one period to the first day of the next)



- how often you need to change your period products on a heavy day

- if you are over 25, when you had your last **smear test**

A **smear test** checks the health of your **cervix**.



The **cervix** is the opening to your womb from your vagina



Sometimes other tests might be needed.

Your doctor will discuss this with you and you can ask questions.

When you see your doctor about your symptoms, they will do a pelvic examination.

They will look at your vulva, vagina and cervix.



As this is an intimate examination, the doctor will have another person there.

You can ask for a female doctor or a female health professional to do the examination.



If symptoms continue, your doctor may refer you to a specialist called a gynaecologist.

This is said like this:
g-eye-na-col-o-jist.

Coping with endometriosis



There is no cure for endometriosis but there are treatments that can help to make your symptoms easier to cope with.

Heat and comfort

A hot water bottle or hot bath may help you feel a bit better.



Pain relief

Paracetamol, ibuprofen and naproxen, can help reduce your pain.

Hormone treatment

Hormone treatment can make periods shorter and lighter.

Hormone treatments include:

- [contraceptive pill \('the pill'\)](#)
- [contraceptive patch](#)
- [contraceptive injection](#)
- [intrauterine system \(IUS\)](#)





Surgery

Not everyone who has endometriosis will need surgery.

Some people will have surgery to help treat or remove areas of endometriosis.

Your doctor will discuss this with you and you can ask any questions that you might have.



Laparoscopy

A **laparoscopy** is an operation when a camera is put into the pelvis through a small cut near the belly button.

After the laparoscopy, the doctor will be able to:

- tell you if you have endometriosis
- talk about any treatment you might need



If you have a type of endometriosis that needs more treatment, you might be referred to a specialist centre.

These are in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen.

You can look at the [Recovering well patient information leaflet](#) for more information.





Laparotomy

During a laparotomy, the surgeon makes a cut in the tummy so that endometriosis can be removed.

[More information about endometriosis treatment](#)

Adhesions and ovarian cysts

Endometriosis can also cause:

- adhesions – scar tissue that can stick organs together
- [ovarian cysts](#) – fluid-filled cysts in the ovaries that can sometimes become very large and painful



Both of these complications can be treated with surgery but may come back if the endometriosis returns.

[Read information about treating ovarian cysts](#)

Endometriosis and fertility



Many people with endometriosis can get pregnant naturally.

Very bad cases of endometriosis can make it more difficult to get pregnant.

If you are finding it difficult to get pregnant, your doctor or specialist may suggest extra support or treatments that can help.

Your doctor will discuss these with you and you can ask questions.



Help and support

It can feel hard to talk about endometriosis and the symptoms you are experiencing.

Hearing from other women in Scotland, discussing their experiences with endometriosis in [online Support Networks](#) or in real life can really help.



There might be peer support groups near you or other local groups where you can hear other women's stories, and share your own.