

What is it?

Endometriosis is a health problem that affects women. It happens when tissue like the lining of the uterus grows in other places, usually in the pelvis and around the reproductive organs. It affects women differently.

Symptoms are often related to the location of your endometriosis. Pelvic pain is a common symptom. Other symptoms include heavy periods, pain during sex and bleeding between periods. Some women have no symptoms and don't need treatment.

What will my GP do?

Your GP will talk to you about your symptoms, look into your medical history and do some tests to confirm your diagnosis. They may also look at ways to help you manage your symptoms. Common treatments to manage symptoms include:

- Pain relief - heat packs, acupuncture, medicine and supplements
- Lifestyle changes - sleep well, avoid doing things that make the pain worse, quit smoking
- Allied health services - counselling, women's physiotherapy
- Contraceptive pill
- Hormone therapy

If you are finding it hard to get pregnant, or need more support, your GP may refer you to a gynaecologist or fertility specialist. If your conditions worsen, your GP may refer you to a pain specialist or for surgery.

What questions could I ask my doctor?

- What symptoms should I be aware of?*
- Do I need medication?*
- What if I am trying to get pregnant?*



What can I do?

Follow the treatment plan and advice of your GP.

To help ease your pain and symptoms, you could make some lifestyle changes. It is important to maintain a healthy weight, keep physically active and eat well. Avoid caffeine, alcohol and try to quit smoking. Avoid movements that cause you pain. Aim to get eight hours of sleep. Stretching and breathing exercises can also help you relax.

Keep a diary of your symptoms. Let your GP know if your symptoms change or get worse.

What supports are available?

View this factsheet on the Health Resource Directory website (healthresourcedirectory.org.au) to find the right local supports and services for you.

Where can I learn more?

- **EndoActive** – Video series about endometriosis: endoactive.org.au
- **Health Translations** – Translated factsheets about endometriosis: healthtranslations.vic.gov.au
- **Pelvic Pain Foundation of Australia** – Easy stretches to relieve pelvic pain: pelvicexercises.com.au