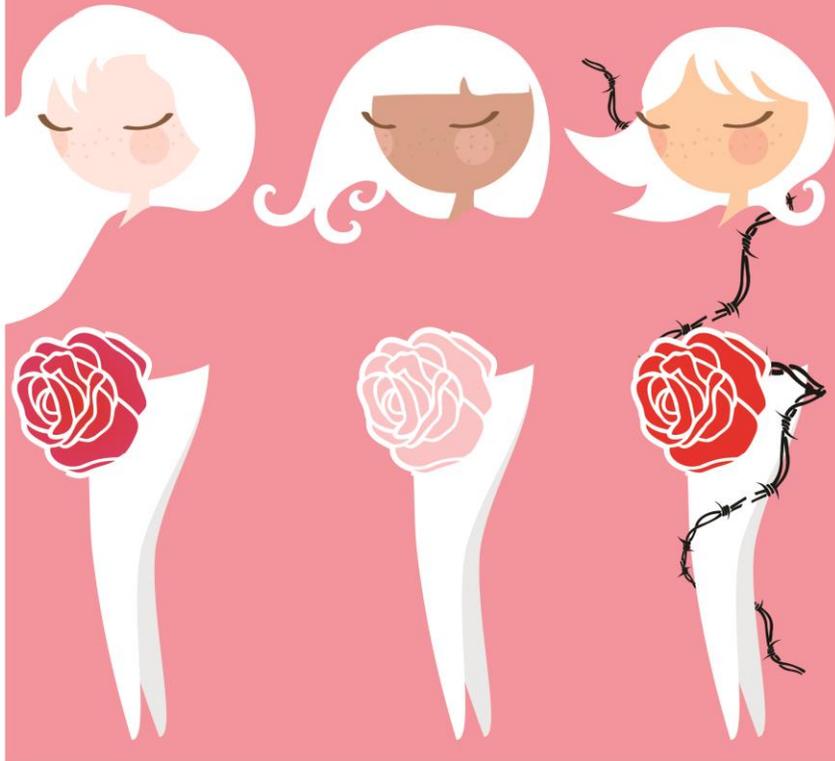


is this normal?

About endometriosis:
what every girl needs to know



www.endometriosis-uk.org

If you suffer from:

- Painful, heavy or irregular periods;
- Pain when going to the toilet;
- Tiredness all the time;
- Severe pelvic pain between periods;

then you might have endometriosis.

Oh no! I think I might have endo...

Most girls can't pronounce endometriosis, let alone know what it is.

Firstly, it's pronounced en-do-mee-tree-oh-sis!

Secondly...Don't panic! It is not as scary as it sounds. 1 in 10 women in the UK have got it. And most live a happy, active and healthy lifestyle.

Endometriosis is when what happens in your womb during your period happens in other parts of the body.

Ok... what's the science stuff?

When you have your period, cells in your womb build up (the endometrium). If you don't get pregnant these cells then break down and are dispelled from the body through your vagina as a period. This menstrual cycle is controlled by your hormones.

Endometriosis is when these cells build up outside of the womb in other places.

The tissue responds to the hormonal cycle as if they were in the womb: they grow and then break down ready to be flushed out. But, unlike a normal period, the blood has no way of leaving the body.

Because of this, it can cause girls a lot of pain, cause inflammation and means that scar tissue forms inside. Sometimes cysts can develop which can also cause pain.

This might explain why you are in so much pain during your periods.

Endometriosis can happen anywhere in the body but is usually found in the area around your womb – your ovaries, in your pelvis and around your bladder and bowels.

So I think I have endometriosis... What does this mean?

It means that you are just one of around 1.5million women in the UK who have it. It can affect **all** girls and women who are at an age where they are able to have babies. You are not alone. As many women have endometriosis as have diabetes... it's just that people don't talk about it.

There is a horrible mistruth about endometriosis that says that anybody with it can't have children. THIS IS NOT TRUE.

70% of women with endometriosis go on to have children with very few problems. 30% of women with endo do find they may need some help but most should still be able to have children.

Do I need to see a doctor?

If you think you might have endo, book an appointment with your doctor. It is sometimes difficult to get diagnosed with endo so before you go, be prepared. The more information you can give your doctor, the more chance they have to recognise it. You might want to keep a diary of all your symptoms.

Things you might want to include in your symptom diary are:

- When do you experience pain?
- When is it most painful? (before, during, after your period?)
- How long does the pain last for?
- How do you feel? (Tired? Moody? Tearful? Down?)
- Does it hurt anywhere else?
- Do you have any problems when you're going to the loo?

Information is king! So take as much with you as you can!

How will they know if I do have endo?

There is only one way to tell for definite if you do have endometriosis - a surgical procedure called a laparoscopy. This is an operation where a camera is inserted via your belly button. This means the doctor can see inside to look for 'cysts' (the build up of the cells), patches of endo or scar tissue.

Unfortunately, scans and blood tests can only give a hint that you might have endometriosis. Having said that, experienced consultants may be able to give a suspected diagnosis based on the scans, tests and your symptoms. When this happens they may want to start you on some medication before any surgical treatment. If this doesn't work after a few months then make sure you go back.

The doctor says I have endometriosis... HELP!!

Even though there is no cure for endometriosis there are a number of ways to treat it. Some of the treatments include hormonal medications such as oral contraceptives (the 'Pill'). This is usually the first option and can work well for many women. Other treatments include laparoscopic surgery and sometimes diagnosis and treatment can happen at the same time. What treatment you decide to try will depend on your personal circumstances so make sure you ask lots of questions before you go ahead.

Can I help myself?

There are also lots of things you can do to make living with endometriosis easier. As most people don't know what endometriosis is, you might want to explain what it is to your closest friends and family. There is nothing to be embarrassed about, you can't 'catch' endometriosis and nothing you did made you get it.

By telling people about your endometriosis they will be able to better understand what you're going through. They will know why you're in so much pain, or why you are sleeping so much or why you just don't want to do something.

Friends and family love you and want to help you... let them.

It's also important that you tell your school / college / workplace. Your endometriosis might make it difficult for you to function normally... if they are aware of your condition; they might be able to make it easier for you and will be more understanding. Take this leaflet to help explain or get more information from our website to take with you.

We are a charity called Endometriosis UK set up to help those living with endometriosis. Donations to maintain our services are always needed.

Visit our website at: www.endometriosis-uk.org

Or our discussion group: <https://healthunlocked.com/endometriosis-uk>

Facebook page: www.facebook.com/endometriosis.uk.org

Twitter: @EndometriosisUK

If you are really worried and want to talk to someone, then use our free

*Helpline: **0808 808 2227***

Please note: We aim to open our Helpline every day. Volunteers give their time when they can so if no-one is available when you call please listen to the message and ring back another time.

This information has been written by Endometriosis UK. Thanks must be given to the following people for their help:

Sarah Creighton, Paediatric Gynaecology Consultant, UCLH London

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