

Are you a teenager?

The Endometriosis Association is a non-profit organization of women, girls, and families affected by endo, as well as interested doctors; and researchers. Together we provide education and support to those affected by endo and conduct research to identify a cause and cure for the disease. We need your support to continue this important work. Please consider making a tax deductible contribution today.



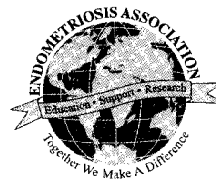
Contact the Endometriosis Association:

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**Is your
period
causing
problems in
your life?**



**Have you ever
missed school,
work, sporting
events, or social
activities because
of menstrual
cramps?**



Have you experienced any of the following symptoms with your cycle?

Certainly, not all teenagers are sexually active. But if you are sexually active, is sexual activity a physically painful experience for you?

cramps
heavy or irregular bleeding
nausea
diarrhea
constipation

stomach problems
yeast infections
allergies
asthma



These symptoms could be a signal from your body!

If you have experienced any or all of the symptoms listed here, you could be suffering from endometriosis.

You are not alone!

In fact, so many women and teens have endometriosis that they formed the Endometriosis Association to help those living with the pain and problems of the disease. The Association serves women and girls around the world.

If you think that you might have endometriosis, you must take action. There are some important things that YOU can do to protect your health. But first, let's get some basic questions answered.

Endo-what? How do you pronounce that word?

The correct pronunciation is end-oh-me-tree-oh-sis...but many women and medical professionals simply refer to the disease as "endo."

What is endometriosis?

Endometriosis is a puzzling disease that affects our hormones, our immune system (the system that fights germs and cancer), and the digestive tract (the system involved in the breakdown and absorption of our food). It is an equal opportunity disease affecting women and girls of all races and colors.

The name comes from the word "endometrium" which is the tissue that lines the inside of the uterus. Each month, or cycle, this tissue builds up and sheds, causing the normal bleeding experienced during the period. With endometriosis, tissue like this is found outside of the uterus in other areas of the body, such as the abdomen, intestines, bladder, and other places. In these other locations, the tissue develops into what are called "growths" or "implants."

Like the lining of the uterus, endo growths usually respond to the hormones of the menstrual cycle. They can build up tissue and shed each cycle causing bleeding.

The result of this bleeding and the immune problems that are part of endo are formation of scar tissue, pain, and other complications.

"...if somebody's going through pain...you shouldn't let it go...Let people know if you're in pain. Don't keep it inside."

- Jennie, 15

Isn't it normal to have menstrual cramps?

Pain that keeps you from participating in your usual activities is **not normal**. Some women never experience menstrual cramps. Others have only mild, occasional pain. If your cramps are severe and/or frequent, it is a sign of a problem.

What causes those terrible menstrual cramps?

An imbalance of substances called prostaglandins could be the problem. Prostaglandins regulate the smooth muscles in uterus, the intestines, and other tissues. An imbalance of prostaglandins in your body can cause the uterus to contract too strongly and cause a lot of pain.

Can I have endometriosis if I am not sexually active?

Endometriosis is NOT a sexually transmitted disease. Many teens and women who are not sexually active have endo.

Can I die from endometriosis?

No. Endometriosis does not seem to be a life threatening illness. However, if ignored and left untreated, endo can lead to increased pain, possible infertility, and serious disability. That is why it is so important for teenagers to listen to their bodies, learn

to understand the signals, and take charge of their personal health. By taking action now, teens can prevent more serious problems in the future.

Is there a cure for endometriosis?

Unfortunately, there is no cure yet for endo. But the Endometriosis Association, through its ongoing support of medical research around the world, is leading the way toward a cure and an end to endo suffering.

Are there any treatments for endo?

The good news is that there are treatments for endo. There are even things that you can do on your own, starting today, that may help you feel better. By making some basic lifestyle changes, many teens have learned to better care for their health.

Exercise

Studies seem to show that exercise might help with some menstrual problems. A regular routine of running, biking, swimming, walking, or other aerobic activity when you are feeling well may help to reduce pain during the period. Try to exercise at least three times a week when you are able to.

Nutrition

Many teens have found that by changing their diets they can reduce the symptoms of endo. Fast foods are usually loaded with the bad fats that contribute to the imbalance of prostaglandins in your body so they should be avoided. Try eating more fresh fruit, vegetables and fish. Certain oils, like safflower and sunflower oils (good fats), have been found to have a healing effect. These oils are especially nutritious if they are not heated — used in salad dressing for instance. They provide nutrients your body needs to naturally correct an imbalance in prostaglandins.

Build a healthy immune system

Many teens and women with endo have health problems (allergies, asthma, eczema, etc.) which indicate an unbalanced immune system. Avoiding foods and chemicals which can cause these problems can allow your immune system to heal. Many with endo, with or without known reactions, avoid chemicals linked to endo, such as dioxins and PCBs found in some foods, pesticides and herbicides, and near incinerators. See the Association's book *Endometriosis: The Complete Reference for Taking Charge of Your Health* for more information.

Anti-prostaglandin medicine

Over-the-counter drugs like Advil, Aleve, Nuprin, Medipren, or Midol 200 can help to control menstrual pain. These drugs are not narcotics and are not addictive.

Hormonal therapy or surgery

Hormonal drugs which stop the period can sometimes be helpful. Surgery can also be done to remove the endo growths. Thanks to new technology, you can usually go home the same day as the surgery and you recover rather quickly.

What should I do if I am experiencing the symptoms of endo?

♦ Please do not ignore the symptoms!

Talk to your mother, father, guardian, school nurse, guidance counselor, or other trusted adult. Tell her or him about the problem with your period and share this brochure.

♦ Ask to have an appointment made with a doctor who specializes in endo.

The Endometriosis Association can help you find a specialist. Before you see the doctor, look for a book that can tell you what to expect during the physical exam given by the doctor. Or ask the nurse when you make your appointment. A good book to read is *Changing Bodies, Changing Lives* by Ruth Bell and other co-authors of *Our Bodies, Ourselves*.

♦ Tell your doctor exactly how you feel before, during, and after your period.

You should tell her or him about anything that seems wrong, or even if it doesn't seem like it should have anything to do with your period. This will help the doctor to diagnose your condition.

♦ Contact the Endometriosis Association.

The Association offers special support to teens with endo, including, our teen DVD, and a teen mentor if you wish. You can also order a diagnostic kit from the Association.

"I had to keep a diary for my doctor when I was ten...Just to explain the cramping and the amount of blood."

- Alexandra, 20

Are you interested in more help or information?

Consider membership in the Endometriosis Association. The Association offers special family memberships to support teens with endo. Membership will ensure that you and your family receive up-to-date information.

Benefits include:

- ♦ Regular bi-monthly newsletter packed with useful information for teens and their families.
- ♦ Crisis call help

Members may call trained crisis call counselors for help with decisions related to endo, information on other resources, or for support in times of pain or anxiety.

- ♦ Chapters, support groups, healthcare provider list, correspondence networks, local contacts, email contacts.

Where chapters and affiliated groups exist, membership provides the opportunity to be part of local activities. You may network with other women and teens near you for support and understanding, doctor information, and tips for coping with this disease.

- ♦ Accurate, useful literature, DVDs, and CDs

Our material has been highly praised for the direct way it answers the questions most families have in the course of coping with endo. You can't find better materials on endo

anywhere.

- ♦ Prescription drug discount program

Provides savings to members by offering discounts on prescriptions filled at any of the hundreds of participating pharmacies. On average, discounts will be 20% below retail prices.

- ♦ Plus additional benefits:

- free literature from time to time
- volunteer opportunities so you can get involved and make a difference for all affected by endometriosis.

You can also contact the Endometriosis Association for a copy of our teen DVD, *Teens Speak Out on Endometriosis*, and many other helpful and informative materials. Diagnostic kits are also available through the Association. To receive a kit called "How can I tell if I have endometriosis?" send \$4.75, to the:

**Endometriosis Association
International Headquarters
8585 N. 76th Place
Milwaukee, WI 53223 USA**



To join the Endometriosis Association, please fill out this information, detach, and return with your \$50 annual membership fee. This is a family membership.

Name:	I want to:	Please send me:	Prices
Parent's Name(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Have a "Mentor," a young woman with endo with a little more experience to talk to.	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Teens Speak Out on Endo</i> . DVD	\$24.95
Address:	<input type="checkbox"/> Take brochures to doctors' offices, schools, clubs, other places.	<input type="checkbox"/> DVD. Schools and organizations ONLY . Send request on letterhead.	FREE
City: State/Province:	<input type="checkbox"/> Launch a teen project in my area. Contact me!	<input type="checkbox"/> EA Family Membership	\$50.00
Country:	<input type="checkbox"/> Show the teen DVD at school, meetings, wherever teens are.	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Endometriosis: The Complete Reference for Taking Charge of Your Health</i> , EA's latest book, with a section for teens with endo and another section for their parents and doctors.	\$17.95
Zip/Postal Code:	<input type="checkbox"/> Write for the <i>TeenSource</i> newsletter.	<input type="checkbox"/> Diagnostic Kit	\$4.75
Phone:	<input type="checkbox"/> Help other teens online.	<input type="checkbox"/> Donation (optional).	\$ _____
E-Mail Address:			
Method of Payment: <input type="checkbox"/> Check <input type="checkbox"/> VISA <input type="checkbox"/> MasterCard			Total: \$ _____
Credit Card #:	Exp. Date:	Signature:	