

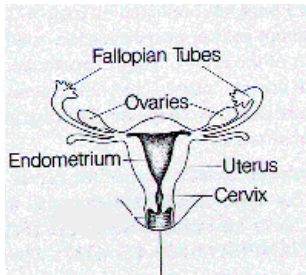
51 Tips for Dealing with Endometriosis

Endometriosis is a painful condition that affects a lot of women. This ebook is designed to make you more aware of endometriosis, and some things that you can do to treat it.

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OVERVIEW

This first set of tips will give an overview of endometriosis, and give some statistics.

1. What is Endometriosis?

Endometriosis is where the lining of the uterus grows *outside* of the uterus in other areas. Other words for these areas can be called lesions, growths, implants, or nodules.

2. Statistics

In North America, about 5.5 million women have endometriosis, and about 30-40 percent of these women are infertile. Endometriosis is also one of the top three causes for female infertility.

3. Where is it Found?

Endometriosis is found in these places:

- On the ovaries
- On the bladder
- Behind the uterus
- On the uterus tissues

4. Symptoms

Some of the symptoms of endometriosis are:

- Painful menstrual cramps with periods that gets worse over time
- Pain during or after sex
- Infertility
- Intestinal pain
- Chronic pain in the lower back and pelvis
- Fatigue
- Painful urination during menstrual periods
- Painful bowel movements
- Heavy menstrual periods
- Spotting or bleeding between periods

5. Emotional Symptoms

Endometriosis affects women emotionally as well. It's important to get help from psychologists or counselors to help women cope with their feelings. Some common ones are:

- Confusion
- Disbelief
- Frustration

6. Who is Affected?

General, the women who get endometriosis:

- Have had their symptoms for two to five years before finding out they have the disease
- Have already started getting their monthly period
- Are on average about 27 years-old

7. What Raises the Risk?

Women have a higher risk of developing endometriosis if they:

- Began getting their period at an early age
- Have periods that last more than seven days
- Have heavy periods
- Have a relative with endometriosis
- Have a short menstrual cycle

8. What Reduces the Risk

There are a few studies show that you may lower your chances getting endometriosis if you:

- Avoid caffeine and alcohol
- Exercise regularly

9. Cancer Risk

There is a mild risk of ovarian cancer for women with endometriosis. One theory for this is that the endometriosis nodules themselves transform into cancer. Another theory states that endometriosis can be related to other genetic or environmental factors, and can cause ovarian cancer.



DIAGNOSING

This next set of tips will go over the importance of diagnosing endometriosis, and how it's done.

10. Why Diagnosing is Important

Endometriosis can make it hard for you to get pregnant. Finding out that you have endometriosis can be important because of this. There are many treatments can control the pain, and even help you to get pregnant. These will be discussed a bit later in this ebook.

11. How Endometriosis is Diagnosed

There are several tests that doctors can run to see if you have endometriosis. A few of them are:

- Ultrasound
- MRI
- Laparoscopy (discussed later in this ebook)

12. Tests

These are the tests your doctor may perform in order to diagnose endometriosis:

- A biopsy (by laparoscopy)
- Laparotomy

Again, we will discuss these tests further in this ebook.

13. Healthcare Professionals

There are many healthcare professionals that can work together to help with endometriosis. Here are a few:

- Gynecologists
- Surgeons
- Nutritionists and dieticians
- Psychologists
- Counselors
- Pain specialists



TREATMENTS

This next set of tips will discuss some of the treatments available for people with endometriosis.

14. Pain Medication

Here are some of the over-the-counter medications that can treat the pain of endometriosis

- Ibuprofen
- Naproxen
- Tylenol
- Midol

15. Hormone Treatment

Doctors often recommend hormone medication to treat endometriosis. These medications help most for women who have small growths and not bad have bad pain. Keep in mind that women on hormone medications can't become pregnant.

16. Nutritional Therapy

Woman with endometriosis may want to consider nutritional therapy to help with their symptoms. Having a healthier diet can increase your ability to tolerate medical treatments and their side effects, increase your energy, and help you to think more clearly. Nutritionists are great at assisting you put together a plan that will help.

17. **Alternative Therapy**

Some women look to alternative therapies to help with their endometriosis. Here are some of these therapies:

- Homeopathy
- Osteopathy
- Herbs
- Yoga
- Pilates



SUPPORT

This next set of tips will discuss the importance of having support, and give you some resources.

18. Support Groups

Endometriosis comes with a variety of emotions. It's a good idea to find a support group, so that you can talk to other women who have endometriosis. There are live support groups, and also Internet communities that you can join.

19. Research

Researchers are working hard to find new medical treatments for pain related to endometriosis. There are almost always clinical studies and trial going on. Call 1-800-411-1222 for more information, or visit the NIH Clinical Trials Web site, at <http://clinicaltrials.gov>.

20. Resources

Here are some endometriosis resources:

- National Women's Health Information Center
1-800-994-9662
- Endometriosis Association
414-355-2200
www.endometriosisassn.org
- The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
www.acog.org
- Endometriosis Research Center
800-239-7280
www.endocenter.org



CAUSES

Though there are no proven causes for endometriosis, this next set of tips will go over some of the theories of what these causes may be.

21. Blockage

Every day, Blood and tissue is shed into the body. Over time, this can cause inflammation and pain. As this tissue grows, it can cover the ovaries and fallopian tubes. This can also hurt the chances of getting pregnant.

22. Faulty Immune System

Some scientists believe that many women with endometriosis have certain immunologic defects or dysfunctions. What scientists *don't* know is whether this faulty immune system is a *cause* or *effect* of endometriosis.

23. Metaplasia

Metaplasia happens when one normal type of tissue changes into another normal type of tissue. Some researchers believe that endometrial tissue has the ability in some cases to replace other types of tissues outside the uterus.

24. Retrograde Menstruation

There is a theory that states that menstrual tissue flows backwards through the fallopian tubes. This is called "retrograde flow." While the tissue is flowing, it leaves deposits on the pelvic organs where it seeds and grows. This is currently not a working theory, because researchers have found that 90% of women have retrograde flow, but since most don't develop endometriosis.

25. Genetics

Some studies show that first-degree relatives of women with this disease are more likely to have endometriosis as well.

26. Lymphatic Distribution

Some researchers believe that fragments from endometriosis travel through the blood or the lymphatic system to other parts of the body. This could explain how endometriosis ends up in other body parts.

27. Environmental

There is currently a controversial study that states that environmental factors can contribute to endometriosis. This same study says that toxins especially have an effect on the reproductive hormones and immune system.



HORMONE TREATMENT

There are many hormone treatments available to women suffering from endometriosis. This next set of tips will discuss these treatments.

28. Birth Control Pills

Birth control pills can make endometriosis less painful. They prevent the monthly build-up, and breakdown any growths that you may get.

29. Progestins

Progestins work a lot like birth control pills. They made this treatment specifically for women who can't take estrogen. They can also make periods lighter and shorter.

30. GnRH Agonists

Gonadotropin Releasing Hormone Agonists (GnRH Agonists) slow down the growth of endometriosis, thus relieving the symptoms. They work by reducing the amount of estrogen in your body, which stops your monthly cycle.

31. Danazol

Danazol is a weak male hormone. It's not used very much these days, however. Danazol works much like GnRH Agonists, but it often causes side effects like weight gain, oily skin, smaller breasts, tiredness, and hot flashes.

32. Mirena

Mirena is a Progestin Intrauterine Device (IUD). It works by preventing ovulation. If fertilization *does* occur, it alters the lining of the uterus to prevent implantation.

33. Aromatase Inhibitors

Aromatase inhibitors are a newer treatment for women with endometriosis. Studies have shown that aromatase inhibitors are effective, however, a total of only 65 patients were included in these studies. Needless to say that research and treatment of endometriosis with aromatase inhibitors is still in its early days.



SURGERY

This next set of tips will go over some of the surgeries available to diagnose and treat endometriosis.

34. Laparoscopy

Laparoscopy is a surgery where doctors remove growths and scar tissue that causes the pain in endometriosis. A tiny cut is made in your abdomen, and a thin tube with a light is placed inside. The doctors can then see the growths, make a diagnosis.

35. Laparotomy

Laparotomy requires a much bigger cut in the abdomen than with laparoscopy. The doctor then can reach inside and remove growths of endometriosis in the pelvis or abdomen. Recovery can take up to two months.

36. Hysterectomy

Hysterectomy is a permanent surgery and should only be done on women who don't want to get pregnant. This surgery involves the doctor removing the uterus. She might take out the ovaries and fallopian tubes as well.

37. Presacral Neurectomy

During a presacral neurectomy, the doctor cuts nerve fibers connected to the uterus. This surgery is very effective, however it can cause long-term side effects, such as constipation and urinary urgency.



FAQ'S

This last section will answer some frequently asked questions about endometriosis.

38. Is There a Cure?

No, but it can be treated. As shown in this ebook, it's possible to manage their symptoms through many different available treatments.

39. Does Endometriosis Go Away?

No, but in most cases, the symptoms of endometriosis lessen after menopause because the growths gradually get smaller.

40. Is Endometriosis Contagious?

No, it can't be transferred from one human to another. The cause of endometriosis is not yet known, but doctors are sure that it's not an infectious disease.

41. Is it Hereditary?

As discussed earlier in this ebook, some researchers have theories about endometriosis being hereditary. This research shows that first-degree relatives with endometriosis are more likely to be as well.

42. Can I Have Kids?

30-40% of women with endometriosis have difficulties getting pregnant. If you're worried about this, discuss it with your doctor, and you can develop a treatment plan.

43. Is Endometriosis Cancer?

No, endometriosis is *not* cancer. Endometriosis cysts are sometimes referred to as "benign tumors," because they behave like cancer. But endometriosis is not a different disease.

44. Does Tubal Ligation Affect Endometriosis?

In theory, tubal ligation should protect against the further production of endometriosis. Researchers don't agree on the subject, however.

45. What About Using Tampons?

Research shows that using tampons most likely has no effect on increasing the risk of endometriosis. Douching after the menstrual period also most likely has no effect on risks either.

46. What is a Chocolate Cyst?

As endometriosis starts growing in the ovarian tissue, debris starts collecting in the ovaries. Cysts are then formed that are filled with chocolate-colored liquid. These are commonly chocolate cysts, or endometrioma.

47. What Are Pelvic Adhesions?

Pelvic adhesions are basically scarring of the peritoneum. During each period, the blood irritates the peritoneal surface, and eventually leaves scars. These are the pelvic adhesions.

48. Do I Have to Have Symptoms?

Some women may have endometriosis and don't have any symptoms. They may have the disease for years, and only find out when a symptom surfaces.

49. What is CA-125?

CA-125 is a membrane antigen. Brand new research shows that levels of CA-125 are elevated in women with endometriosis. It's possible that in the near future, this simple test could be used to diagnose endometriosis.

50. What is Hydrosalpinx?

Hydro means fluid and salpinx means tube. Hydrosalpinx is a collection of fluid in the fallopian tube that has been blocked.

51. What is Hematosalpinx?

Hematosalpinx is the next step after hydrosalpinx. After the blood is blocked in the tubes, that blocked blood in the tube causes hematosalpinx. It can look a lot like a tubal pregnancy except that hematosalpinx it is a chronic condition.