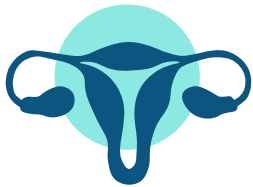


Endometriosis: Staying Aware & Knowing My Options



Endometriosis can be really tough and painful. It's when tissue like the lining of your uterus grows outside the uterus. Eventually, it can even affect other nearby organs like the ovaries and fallopian tubes. Essentially, the tissue is growing where it's not supposed to, and that can cause a number of symptoms and health concerns.

How Dangerous is Endometriosis?

Endometriosis is a long-term condition and can get more serious as it progresses. When the tissue starts affecting other organs, it can create cysts known as endometriomas. This can cause inflammation to the surrounding tissue, leading to the formation of scar tissue and fibrous bands called adhesions. These adhesions can make the pelvic tissues and organs stick together. All of this leads to painful symptoms that affect your everyday life.

Common Risk Factors for Endometriosis

- **Genetics.** If your mom or sister has endometriosis, you might have a higher chance of getting it, too. Especially, a family history of endometriosis.
- **Age.** Endometriosis can begin at any age, but it is usually found most often in people between 30 - 40 years old.
- **Starting menstruation at an early age.** If your period started at an earlier age, you have more chances for endometriosis to develop because the hormonal fluctuations of each period gives it a chance for tissue to grow outside the uterus.
- **Never giving birth.** Pregnancy gives your body a break from certain hormones that contribute to endometriosis. Without this break, the risk of developing endometriosis might go up. **Note: Giving birth does not mean you won't develop the disease later on.**

Symptoms of Endometriosis

Having endometriosis comes with frustrating symptoms that can start to affect your daily life. Some common symptoms are:

- Pain during menstrual periods
- Pain during or after sex
- Difficulty getting pregnant
- Pain in your lower stomach or back (pelvic pain)
- Pain when urinating or pooping



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Treatment for Endometriosis

While there is no cure for endometriosis, there are treatments to manage it and they vary depending on the severity of your symptoms and whether or not you are planning to get pregnant.

- Pills (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs and painkillers)
- Hormonal intrauterine devices (IUDs)
- Vaginal rings
- Injections
- Patches



Surgery is sometimes considered to remove endometriosis lesions, adhesions, and scar tissues.

Remember, if your family has endometriosis in their history, keep an eye out for symptoms. Talk to your doctor if you are worried. While you can't prevent it, there are ways to lower your chances and treatments to help manage it.