

Endometriosis In Teens



17% OF ADOLESCENTS WITH PERIODS EXPERIENCE ENDOMETRIOSIS

Endometriosis is not uncommon in adolescents, ages 10–19 years old, and is the leading cause of severe pelvic pain during a girl's period. At least two-thirds of adolescent girls with chronic pelvic pain unresponsive to hormonal therapies and pain relievers will eventually be diagnosed with endometriosis.

In the first two years after a girl gets her period, it is normal for her cycles to be irregular. After that, her cycle will usually become more regular, about every four to five weeks.

Tracking your periods will help you know if they are regular. You can use a calendar, write it down in a notebook, or use an app. More information on **Keeping a Period Diary** and a list of health apps are provided in the **Discussing Menstrual Health** section of SWHR's Endometriosis Toolkit.

When to Talk to Your Parents or Doctor

Many girls have cramps during the first few days of their periods. Mild discomfort can be normal, but if your periods are so painful that you are missing school and social events, and/or constantly taking pain medication with little to no relief, you may want to discuss the possibility of endometriosis with your doctor.

Common symptoms in teens with endometriosis:

- Painful periods
- Abnormal or irregular menstrual bleeding
- Urinary frequency and urgency
- Nausea
- Gastrointestinal pain and bloating
- Constipation and/or diarrhea
- Trouble sleeping

A pediatrician may not be familiar with adolescent-onset endometriosis, so you may have to visit a gynecologist or other specialist to help you with diagnosing your condition. **A Doctor's Visit Worksheet** is provided in SWHR's Endometriosis Toolkit for you to fill out and take with you when you visit your health care provider.

It is always good to discuss your experience and feelings with a trusted friend or family member. You don't have to manage your endometriosis alone.

71% OF TEENS FEEL SELF-CONSCIOUS DURING THEIR PERIOD

Some girls find it difficult explaining to friends and teachers why they miss school, sports, or other activities. If you feel embarrassed talking about your endometriosis or are concerned your condition is not being understood by teachers or coaches, ask your doctor to write a note so you don't have to explain yourself. You can then work with them to be sure you don't miss out on key assignments – or fun!