

What Is Endometriosis?



Endometriosis is a common, chronic gynecological disease in which tissue that resembles the lining of the uterus (the **endometrium**) grows outside the uterus where it doesn't belong, leading to lesions, pelvic pain, and other symptoms.

These endometrial **lesions**, or **implants**, are usually found in the pelvic cavity – on the ovaries, fallopian tubes, bowel, or outer surface of the uterus. In some rare cases, endometriosis can spread beyond the pelvic organs. Like endometrial tissue, these lesions may thicken and bleed during the monthly **menstrual cycle**, which can cause swelling and pain, as the tissue has no way to leave the body and irritates the healthy tissue around it.

Women with endometriosis may also have bands of fibrous scar tissue inside the body called **adhesions**. Adhesions can cause pain that is distinct from the pain related to endometrial lesions. Adhesions are often formed after surgery but may also form as a result of local inflammation related to endometriosis.

Common Symptoms

- Pelvic pain and pain between periods
- Lower back pain
- Pain during sex
- Infertility

Other Associated Symptoms

- Heavy menstrual bleeding and bleeding between periods
- Rectal bleeding
- Gastrointestinal issues (constipation, diarrhea, nausea, and vomiting)
- Pain with bowel movements or urination
- Fatigue
- Nerve pain

DISEASE BURDEN

6.3 HRS

lost in work productivity per week



4.9 HRS

lost in home productivity per week

There are physical, emotional, and financial burdens associated with endometriosis. SWHR's Endometriosis Toolkit is designed to help you overcome these challenges, so that you can advocate for your health and live well with endometriosis.

Who Does Endometriosis Affect?

Endometriosis can develop in any girl or woman after the onset of their menstrual cycle. Although it is most commonly diagnosed in women in their 30s and 40s, endometriosis can begin in adolescence and can also affect women over 50 and postmenopausal women. Statistics about endometriosis are often underestimated because many women are not getting accurately diagnosed. The exact cause of endometriosis is still unknown, though researchers are studying many possible explanations.

Endometriosis tends to occur in women who have:

- Relatives (mother, aunt, or sister) with endometriosis
- A medical condition that prevents menstrual blood flow from the body

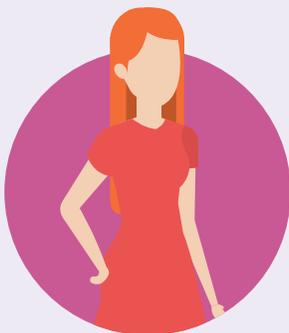
Other indicators to look for:

- Your period started at an early age (11 or younger)
- Short monthly menstrual cycles (less than 27 days)
- Heavy periods that last more than 7 days

 Society for Women's Health Research



200 MILLION WOMEN WORLDWIDE



17% OF ADOLESCENTS
WITH PERIODS



10% OF REPRODUCTIVE-
AGE WOMEN



5% OF ENDO PATIENTS
ARE POSTMENOPAUSAL