

Quick Tip #1: Medsafe

Scenario - Your GP has recommended a medication to help your pain symptoms. Your gynaecologist has recommended a hormone treatment. You've heard women at endometriosis meetings sharing their experiences of Mirena IUD. You have many questions - how do these medicines work? what are the common side effects? are there any likely interactions with medications you are taking for another condition? You need more information to make decisions about treatment options.

Medsafe - www.medsafe.govt.nz - is a government-run website which has 'Medicine Data Sheets' and 'Consumer Medicine Information' giving concise information on medications, including brand names, active ingredients, drug interactions and side effects.

Ideas! – Health professionals make treatment recommendations based on their assessment of risks and benefits for you as an individual. Being clear about issues of importance to you will best enable them to recommend appropriate care – are painful periods your main concern? do you want to start a family soon? Health professionals *recommend*, patients *make informed decisions* about treatment options. Health professionals will appreciate your clear expression of need and your independent research into treatment options. Consider seeking a second opinion if you feel your health concerns are not being taken seriously.

Quick Tip #2: Pain Relief Medications

Medicines designed to relieve pain are commonly prescribed for women with endometriosis. Everyone is different and there is no magic pill that suits all; be prepared to try different types to find the best combination for you - enlist the help of a good GP. To work effectively they need to be taken correctly - the right dose at regular times - even if it means setting alarms to wake in the middle of the night. The best pain management strategy is to stay on top of pain. Always follow instructions (eg "take with food") to maximise effectiveness and minimise side effects.

Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatories (NSAID's) - These medicines reduce pain-causing inflammation, by interfering with the body's production of prostaglandins, some of which cause inflammation and swelling. To work effectively, they need to be taken *before* prostaglandins are made. Ideally start taking NSAID's *the day prior* to expected pain. This is where a symptom diary comes in very useful!

Ideas! – To find out more about pain management and treatment options, consider coming to our education seminars. See our Fact Sheet about symptom diaries.

Quick Tip #3 Webhealth

Scenario – You are looking for a local GP, a counsellor or a gynaecologist who specialises in endometriosis.

Webhealth – waikato.webhealth.co.nz is a searchable website designed to link people to local health and social services. They also have quality information about a number of topics.

Ideas! – The Waikato region has many good GP's and counsellors, and several gynaecologists specialising in endometriosis. Consider seeking a second opinion if you feel your health concerns are not being taken seriously.
