

What are the usual symptoms?

- ∂ Pain with periods (dysmenorrhoea)
- ∂ Pain during intercourse (dyspareunia)
- ∂ Fertility problems
- ∂ Problems with the bowel such as painful bowel movements, a bloated abdomen, constipation, or diarrhoea – often cyclical
- ∂ Constant tiredness or fatigue
- ∂ Pain at other times (eg ovulation)
- ∂ Pain in other places such as lower back (often cyclical)
- ∂ Painful urination
- ∂ Abnormal menstrual bleeding such as premenstrual spotting
- ∂ Immune symptom issues

Symptoms can be similar to Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) or Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID), but are often cyclical.

You do not need to have all of these symptoms. While pain at time of period is the most common symptom, many women with endometriosis have other symptoms, many of which seem vague and unconnected.

Endometriosis may be discovered while investigating fertility problems, but most women had symptoms at much younger age.

There is a checklist below which can help determine if endometriosis should be suspected, and if so you should seek medical advice – ask your GP for referral to a gynaecologist or consider self-referring.

Period pain and pelvic pain is not normal

It is common for women to think their painful symptoms are normal, and so delay seeking treatment. Many diagnosed women had symptoms as teenagers. The oral contraceptive pill can mask symptoms while the condition continues to progress.

If pain affects your lifestyle, seek help from a gynaecologist with specialist knowledge of endometriosis, either in private practice or through a referral by your GP to your local public hospital.

Use this quiz to help you decide if you need to seek medical advice:

- Do you take medication for period pain every month?
- Do you need to take time off work or studies when you have your period?
- Do you need bed rest when you have your period?
- Do you experience heavy bleeding or long periods?
- Do you have pain midway through your cycle?
- Do you have pain during or after sex?
- Are your bowel motions painful?
- Do you have diarrhoea or constipation related to your periods?
- Do you experience pain when you have a full bladder or when urinating?
- Do you have a mother, sister or aunt who has had similar symptoms or been diagnosed with endometriosis?

If you answer 'yes' to a few of these symptoms there is a possibility you may have endometriosis.

Adapted from Andrea Molloy's excellent book "Endometriosis: A New Zealand guide"

What should I do if I think I have Endometriosis?

Take this checklist to your GP to discuss your symptoms. Ask for a referral to a gynaecologist specialising in endometriosis. You can also self-refer to many gynaecologists in private practice.

Contact Insight Endometriosis for information and community support.

Never be afraid to seek a second opinion.

Suggested reading:

Fact Sheet #2 Symptom Diaries (*Insight Endometriosis – available on the website*)

"Endometriosis: A New Zealand Guide" by Andrea Molloy (2006)

– *Insight Endometriosis have copies in the lending library*

For more information: visit www.insightendometriosis.org.nz or [www.Facebook.com/InsightEndometriosis](https://www.facebook.com/InsightEndometriosis) or contact our Educator, Annette ph 07 8555 123 email info@insightendometriosis.org.nz or FB message.
