

# FACT SHEET

## STAGES AND CLASSIFICATIONS OF ENDOMETRIOSIS

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### ENDOMETRIOSIS AT A GLANCE

Endometriosis is a condition where tissue similar to the endometrium (the lining of the uterus) grows elsewhere in the body. This tissue responds to reproductive hormones where oestrogen stimulates patches forming superficial, lesions or endometrioma (ovarian cysts). Inflammation is generally present, and adhesions (scar tissue) can also form in response. Endometriosis within the muscle tissue of the uterus is known as adenomyosis, typically characterised by an enlarged uterus and heavy menstrual flow as well as pain at time of period.

Endometriosis appears in many different forms with a wide variety of clinical presentations depending on the extension of the disease, organs affected and individual circumstances. Therefore a unified consensus classification system for the stages of the disease is not a simple task. The most used and best-known system was developed by the American Society for Reproductive Medicine (ASRM – formerly ASF).

The ASRM classification system is divided into four stages or grades according to the number of lesions and depth of infiltration. The classification also uses a point system to try to quantify endometriotic lesions. This point system allows for a way to numerically scale the disease. A score of 15 or less indicates minimal or mild disease. A score of 16 or higher may indicate moderate or severe disease. As mentioned before, the severity or the score of the disease does not necessarily correlate to the level of pain or presence of other symptoms.

This points system has its limitations and doesn't always accurately match the patient's symptoms or likelihood to be able to fall pregnant.

The Endometriosis Foundation of America (Endofound.org) has therefore proposed a different classification using more descriptive categories. It uses the anatomical location and level of infiltration.

For further information:

- Insight Endometriosis: Endometriosis Factsheet
- Insight Endometriosis: Endometriosis Symptoms Factsheet
- Insight Endometriosis: Symptom Diary Information Sheet
- Insight Endometriosis: Diagnosing Endometriosis Factsheet

References:

- The Endometriosis Foundation of America  
<https://www.endofound.org/stages-of-endometriosis>

## AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR REPRODUCTIVE MEDICINE (ASRM) SYSTEM

Endometriosis Stage / Grade	Depth of Infiltration
Stage I 1-5 points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimal</li> <li>• Few superficial implants</li> </ul>
Stage II 6 – 15 points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mild</li> <li>• More and deeper implants</li> </ul>
Stage III 16-40 points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moderate</li> <li>• Many deep implants</li> <li>• Small cysts on one or both ovaries</li> <li>• Presence of filmy adhesions</li> </ul>
Stage IV 40+ points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Severe</li> <li>• Many deep implants</li> <li>• Large cysts on one or both ovaries</li> <li>• Many dense adhesion</li> </ul>

## ENDOFOUND ENDOMETRIOSIS CLASSIFICATION

Category	Anatomical Location and Level of Infiltration
Category I Peritoneal endometriosis	The most minimal form of endometriosis in which the peritoneum, the membrane that lines the abdomen, is infiltrated with endometriosis tissue.
Category II Ovarian Endometriomas (Chocolate Cysts)	Endometriosis forming a cyst within the ovary can cause many problems with fertility, torsion (twisting), and risks of rupture which can cause severe pain, internal bleeding and spreading endometriosis within the pelvic area.
Category III Deep Infiltrating Endometriosis I (DIE I)	The first form of deep infiltrating endometriosis involves organs within the pelvic area. This can include the ovaries, rectum, uterus, and can significantly distort the anatomy of the pelvic organs.
Category IV Deep Infiltrating Endometriosis II (DIE II)	The other more extreme form of DIE involves organs both within and outside the pelvic area. This can include the bowels, appendix, diaphragm, heart, lungs and other organs.