

INFORMATION SHEET

TALKING ABOUT YOUR ENDOMETRIOSIS WITH YOUR PLACE OF EDUCATION



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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.

It can be hard to know what to share with your teachers and place of education, but to make the most of your studies it's important to explain the impact of endometriosis and the support you need.

Try meeting with key staff at your place of education along with a support person who can help with your self-advocacy. If they need to know what endometriosis is, advise them of reputable websites including our own.

If you are comfortable about sharing your symptoms and frequency of these this can give an understanding of what you experience on a regular basis. Also consider sharing relevant aspects of your treatment and management plan.

Be clear that symptoms are different for each person and that at times of pain and fatigue keeping up with classwork, homework and assignments can be challenging and you want to establish good communication to ensure you get the support you need.

To make a plan to address absences and missed work, here are some ideas that you can consider discussing with key people at your place of education:

- Have a person in each class who will be responsible for contacting you with homework and assignments if you miss class
- Ask that assignments are given out in advance of any upcoming medical appointments so that work can be completed ahead of time
- If needed, request extensions for when assignments are due
- Ask your teachers to email you notes and what was done in class for the day, so you don't fall behind.
- Request a folder of homework and assignments to be kept in a central place such as a school office so someone could pick it up at the end of the day on your behalf
- Understand the requirements to request an aegrotat consideration for an exam if needed

Also discuss what may happen when you are experiencing symptoms such as needing toilet and rest breaks, being able to heat a wheatpack, having access to medical care, taking medication on a timely basis, and opportunities to study at home

You may also want to consider asking your doctor or endometriosis specialist to write your place of education a letter explaining how the condition can affect you and your life.

There are going to be some days that you feel unable to attend your place of education due to pelvic pain, fatigue or other endometriosis symptoms. Establish with your parent / guardian the criteria for staying home and what is tolerable and intolerable for you. Make sure you are getting good quality sleep and getting up early enough to get ready for school, have a sustaining breakfast and take your medication.

Here are some other ideas to support you:

- A home tutor may help you keep up with missed work and ensure you are not overwhelmed
- Keep an extra set of books at home to reduce your daily backpack load
- If the distance between rooms is impacting, request extra time to get to class
- Adjust your schedule to give you study or rest periods during the day and still meet academic requirements
- Connect with Disability Support, Stress Counselling or other services at your place of study. They can help to co-ordinate support across your studies and help with your self-advocacy..
- For Secondary Studies, Te Kura offer quality distance education through to NCEA level 3. Find out more on their website: <https://www.tekura.school.nz/>
- Consider completing studies on a part-time basis: it might be better to complete studies over a longer period than to have to drop out and risk not completing them at all.

For further information:

- Insight Endometriosis: Endo 101 Factsheet
- Insight Endometriosis: Endometriosis Symptoms Factsheet
- Insight Endometriosis: Talking about your endometriosis with your family and friends
- Insight Endometriosis: Talking about your endometriosis with your partner
- Insight Endometriosis: Talking about your endometriosis with your employer
- Insight Endometriosis : Advocating for Yourself Information Sheet

References:

- The Centre for Young Women's Health: <https://youngwomenshealth.org/parents/endometriosis-school-concerns/>

Visit: www.insightendometriosis.org.nz

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