

FACT SHEET

COMPLEMENTARY THERAPIES FOR 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.

Complementary therapies are provided by therapists from a wide variety of disciplines and are often used in conjunction with conventional medicine and treatments. Below are complementary therapies that have helped people with endometriosis.

TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE (TCM)

Acupuncture, acupressure, Chinese herbal medicine and tui na (types of bodywork including massage and acupressure) are the most well-known forms of TCM in many Western countries.

ACUPUNCTURE

Acupuncture may be beneficial for the treatment of pain. An acupuncturist inserts needles into certain points on your body to stimulate nerve endings and release endorphins (that have pain relieving qualities).

PHYSIOTHERAPY

Physiotherapists can develop a programme of exercise and relaxation techniques designed to help strengthen pelvic floor muscles, reduce pain, and manage stress and anxiety. After surgery, rehabilitation in the form of gentle exercises, yoga, or Pilates can help the body get back into shape by strengthening compromised abdominal and back muscles.

OSTEOPATHY

Osteopathy is a holistic treatment that focuses on realigning elements of the musculo-skeletal system and aims to remove any stress or strain thorough the fascia, muscles, ligaments and joints. This stress or strain may be loading your central nervous system and your therapist will use a range of osteopathic techniques and manipulation to promote pelvic drainage, relieve uterine congestion and provide relief from the pain associated with the menstrual cycle and endometriosis. Techniques utilised in treatment can include stretching, massage, manipulation and mobilisation of joints, resistance movements and deep pressure techniques.

MASSAGE

Massage therapy can relieve pain or tightness in soft tissues by helping circulation (blood flow), ease tension (loosen tight muscles) and lower stress. A massage therapist presses, rubs and strokes the tissue with light to deep pressure, depending on what is needed to bring relief. Massage can be combined with aromatherapy through use of essential oils.

Studies have shown that regular massage give short-term and long-term relief from pelvic pain and muscle spasms of endometriosis.

For further information:

- Insight Endometriosis: Endometriosis Factsheet
- Insight Endometriosis: Endometriosis Symptoms Factsheet
- Insight Endometriosis: Symptom Diary Information Sheet
- Insight Endometriosis: Analgesic (Pain Relief) Treatment for Endometriosis Factsheet
- Insight Endometriosis: Hormonal Treatment for Endometriosis Factsheet
- Insight Endometriosis: Surgical Treatment for Endometriosis Factsheet
- Insight Endometriosis: Pacing for Pain Management
- Insight Endometriosis: Pacing Plan Template

References:


- Health Navigator
<http://www.healthnavigator.org.nz/>
- The effects of massage therapy on dysmenorrhea caused by endometriosis
[Valiani M, Ghasemi N, Bahadoran P, Heshmat R. The effects of massage therapy on dysmenorrhea caused by endometriosis. Iran J Nurs Midwifery Res. 2010;15\(4\):167-171](#)

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