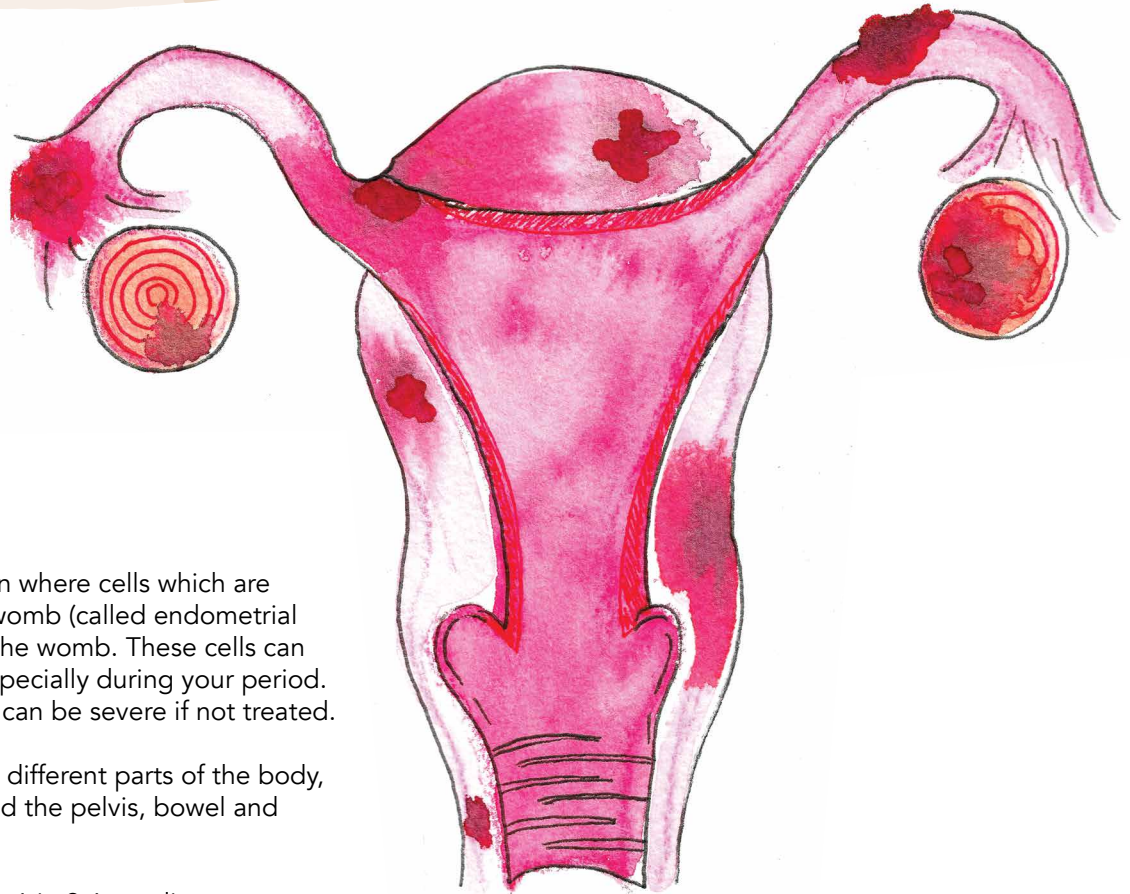


Endometriosis



What is Endometriosis?

Endometriosis is a condition where cells which are similar to the lining of the womb (called endometrial cells) are found outside of the womb. These cells can cause pain and swelling, especially during your period. For some women, the pain can be severe if not treated.

These cells can be found in different parts of the body, but are usually found around the pelvis, bowel and ovaries.

Endometriosis affects about 1 in 9 Australian women, but this number is likely higher in reality.

What causes Endometriosis?

We don't fully know why some women have Endometriosis.

Some doctors think that genes, hormones, inflammation and the immune system might play a part.

How did I get Endometriosis?

Endometriosis is not something you can catch from other people. It develops over time, usually starting from when a woman gets her first period.

There are a few things doctors think may increase the chance of having Endometriosis.

These include:

- Getting your first period before the age of 12.
- Having heavy periods.
- Having a slim body.
- Never having kids.
- Having other women in your family with Endometriosis.

The symptoms of Endometriosis are different for everyone. It depends on how many patches of cells there are and where they are found in the body.

How do I look / How do I feel with Endometriosis?

The symptoms of Endometriosis are different for everyone. It depends on how many patches of cells there are and where they are found in the body.

Some of the common symptoms include:

- Painful periods.
- Constant lower belly pain.
- Pain when having a bowel motion.
- Pain when weeing.
- Pain during sex.
- Having trouble getting pregnant.

If you have any of these symptoms, it's a good idea to yarn with your doctor or healthcare worker. You can always ask to speak with a female doctor if that makes you feel more comfortable.

How does the doctor know I have Endometriosis?

If your doctor or healthcare worker suspects you may have Endometriosis, they may:

- Ask you about your symptoms and general health.
- Do a pelvic exam (you can ask for a female doctor or have a support person with you).
- Send you to get an ultrasound done, to take a closer look inside your body.

Your GP may also refer you to a gynaecologist (women's medicine specialist). They may consider other tests or treatments, including surgery to remove the patches of cells.

How can we fix Endometriosis?

There are two main ways to treat Endometriosis: non-surgical and surgical.

- Non-surgical treatment - focuses on medicines to help manage pain and regulate your periods. Holistic therapies like the pelvic floor physiotherapist, acupuncture, psychological therapies, yoga and the Mediterranean diet can also be used.
- Surgical treatment – involves a surgery called a laparoscopy, where a doctor makes small cuts in your belly and looks inside with a camera to find and remove the patches of endometrial cells.

Surgery is most effective way to diagnose and treat Endometriosis.

It is very good at removing visible patches, but smaller patches can still be missed. Some women may need more than one surgery or a combination of medicine and surgery to manage their symptoms.

'We recognise that individuals in the transgender and non-binary communities who live with endometriosis may not identify as women. We have made efforts to use inclusive language. When the term 'woman' is used, it refers to all people with a uterus.'

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