



Patient & Family Guide
2019

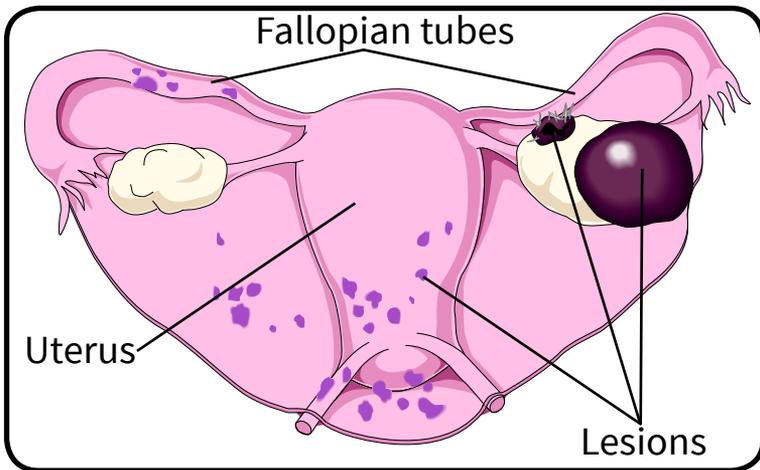
Endometriosis



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Endometriosis

When tissue that normally lines the inside of your uterus grows outside of the uterus, it is called endometriosis. This tissue may grow behind the uterus, on the ovaries or fallopian tubes, or on the bowels or bladder. Endometriosis can be painful.



The tissue still acts like it is inside your uterus – it thickens, breaks down, and bleeds with each menstrual cycle (period).

The cause of endometriosis is not known. Research has shown that women with a close relative with endometriosis are more likely to develop it than those without affected close relatives (e.g., mother, sister). Endometriosis affects 1 in 10 women.

Endometriosis can develop at any time during a woman's reproductive years (while they are still having a period) and goes away with menopause (after periods stop, usually between age 45-55).

What are the symptoms of endometriosis?

Symptoms may include:

- Pelvic pain — it is usually described as being far worse than normal and happens during your period. You may also have pain at other times in your cycle, such as during ovulation, or during sex or when going to the bathroom.
- Difficulty getting pregnant — this happens in up to half of women with endometriosis. Talk with your family health care provider if you have any questions.
- Other symptoms include:
 - › feeling dizzy or very tired
 - › stomach pain
 - › feeling sick to your stomach
 - › vomiting (throwing up) before or during your period

How is endometriosis diagnosed?

The only way to be sure of a diagnosis of endometriosis is through a surgical procedure called a laparoscopy. This is where a small telescope-like instrument is inserted into your abdomen (stomach area) through tiny incisions (cuts) so a surgeon can see inside.

How is endometriosis treated?

Treatment starts with hormones or medication to help with the pain. If symptoms continue, tissue that is growing in the wrong places can be removed with surgery. Unfortunately there is no guarantee the pain will go away.

There is no cure for endometriosis, but there is research taking place around possible treatments.

Resources

The Endometriosis Network Canada

› <https://endometriosisnetwork.com>

The Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada

› www.yourperiod.ca/endometriosis

Looking for more health information?

Find this pamphlet and all our patient resources here: <http://library.nshealth.ca/PatientGuides>

Contact your local public library for books, videos, magazines, and other resources.

For more information, go to <http://library.novascotia.ca>

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time: call 811 or visit <https://811.novascotia.ca>

Learn about other programs and services in your community: call 211 or visit <http://ns.211.ca>

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The information in this pamphlet is to be updated every 3 years or as needed.