



## ENDOMETRIOSIS



### WHAT IS IT?

Endometriosis is the abnormal growth of cells (endometrial cells) similar to those that form the inside of the uterus, but in a location outside of the uterus. Endometriosis is most commonly found on other organs of the pelvis and can be a painful, recurrent, and often debilitating condition that has no known cause or cure.

1. It is not a sexually transmitted disease nor is it life threatening or contagious.
2. 1 in 10 women are estimated to have endometriosis.
3. Teenagers are not too young to have endometriosis.
4. Any person with a uterus, regardless of age, who presents with period pain that impairs their quality of life should be referred to a specialist.



### WHAT ARE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS?

A certain amount of discomfort with periods may be normal; however, pain that stops you from living your everyday life or impacting your sport is not normal. If you have repeated bouts of any of the following symptoms, you may have endometriosis.

- > Heavy bleeding
- > Irregular bleeding
- > Backache
- > Cramping
- > Lower abdominal aching
- > Painful intercourse
- > Nausea and/or vomiting
- > Pain during/after a bowel motion
- > Fatigue
- > Painful periods



### HOW IS IT DIAGNOSED AND TREATED?

Endometriosis can be suspected on ultrasound or MRI but can only be definitively diagnosed through surgery as it is often mistaken for other conditions that have similar symptoms. As a result, many women often have a delayed diagnosis of seven to ten years if they do not seek a medical referral.

Types of treatment	Treatment is aimed at relieving, reducing and eradicating symptoms to improve patient wellbeing.
<b>Drug therapy</b>	Used to manage endometriosis symptoms and minimise pain. This may include hormone therapy. If incorporating these therapies, you need to ensure you adhere to the World Anti-Doping Authority (WADA) Prohibited List of Substances and Methods.
<b>Surgery</b>	Used to remove the tissue from your body. This has higher success than drug therapy and can usually be performed at the time of diagnosis.
<b>Supportive treatment</b>	Includes dietary changes, acupuncture, reducing external stressors, meditation/ mindfulness practices and incorporating exercise such as yoga to reduce the pain.

**Endometriosis is not curable but is treatable and can recur after treatment. A hysterectomy or becoming pregnant is not a cure for endometriosis.**



### WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?

If you repeatedly suffer ANY of the symptoms listed above, you should seek a referral to a specialist gynaecologist for an accurate diagnosis.



### WHERE CAN I GET FURTHER INFORMATION?

QENDO provides education, and support, to women affected by endometriosis, adenomyosis, PCOS or infertility, across Australia. You can download the free QENDO app and track symptoms, activities, report and share with your support team. A number of resources can be found at the QENDO webpage or via the 24/7 QENDO support line – 1800 ASK QENDO.

For more information visit [ais.gov.au/fphi](http://ais.gov.au/fphi)