



Request a visit  
in your Center of  
Sexual and  
Reproductive Health  
Care or in  
your CAP

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If you have severe abdominal or pelvic pain during your period or at any time during your menstrual cycle (it may also be outside your cycle) which means you are unable to do your usual activities (going to school, work, etc.), you may have a condition called endometriosis. You may also have it if you feel this severe pain during bowel movements and urination (more common during menstruation) or during penetrative sex.

The main symptom of endometriosis is pelvic or abdominal pain, especially severe during or after menstruation or sex.

If this is your case, ask for an appointment at your Sexual and Reproductive Health Centre (ASSIR) or Primary Healthcare Centre (CAP).

You need to go to the gynecologist, to the reference midwife or the family doctor.

Endometriosis is a chronic disease which affects the endometrium, the tissue that lines your uterus. It causes this tissue to grow in places outside the uterus (for example, in the ovaries, the fallopian tubes, in the intestine, urinary bladder or rectum).

As in the uterus, this misplaced endometrial tissue is the result of the hormones produced by the ovaries during the menstrual cycle: in other words, it grows, thickens and breaks down during menstruation. This tissue that has broken down cannot be removed from the body and leads to ovarian cysts, nodules, and adhesions.

Other symptoms of the disease include:

- Bleeding between periods.
- Heavy menstrual bleeding.
- Intestinal problems (cramps, diarrhoea, constipation, etc.).
- Urinary complaints and related disorders.
- Exhaustion, asthenia (weakness) or fatigue.

Between 30 % and 50 % of women with endometriosis are sterile and between 50 % and 60 % of sterile women have endometriosis.

Endometriosis may affect  
**1 in 10 women** between  
the ages of **15 and 50**.



It is the most common gynaecological disease and diagnosis is often delayed (it takes about five to nine years to diagnose it) because it can be asymptomatic, because of misdiagnosis due to unfamiliarity with the disease or because the symptoms are not considered significant due to the false belief that a period should be painful.

It is a benign, non-cancerous disease which can have a major impact on the quality of life of women who suffer from it.

## Causes

The cause of the disease is unknown, although there are several scientific theories about its origin. Retrograde menstruation is the most accepted. This happens when the endometrium moves backward through the fallopian tubes rather than forward to be expelled in menstrual blood.

Some risk factors have been identified connected with genetics, reproduction and menstruation:

### PREDISPOSING FACTORS

- Family history.
- Early onset or late disappearance menstruation.
- Short menstrual cycles (less than 27 days).
- Longer periods (7 days or more).
- Any anatomical change that makes it difficult for menstrual blood to leave the body.

## Diagnosis

The diagnosis of endometriosis may include several tests which can detect the presence of lesions resulting from the disease:

Physical examination.  
Transvaginal ultrasound.  
MRI scan.

If it is suspected that endometriosis has spread to other organs or special locations or needs more information, your doctor may order other tests.

## Treatment

Treatment should be individualised based on the symptoms, wanting to have children and personal needs. The goals of endometriosis treatment are to:

- Curb its symptoms (especially pelvic and abdominal pain)
- Improve fertility
- Prevent progression of the disease

## Living with endometriosis

The symptoms of the disease can have a significant impact on the quality of life of women who suffer from it. This is because it can affect a number of areas:

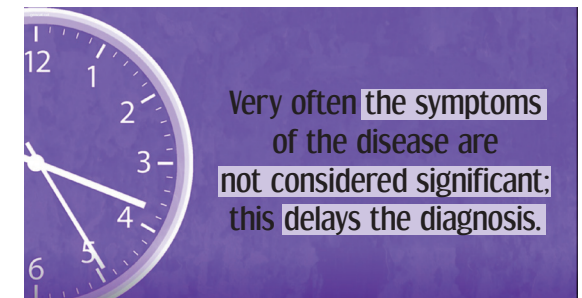
- **Psychological.** Suffering caused by insufficient information, lack of awareness in broader society, prolonged pain in the most serious forms, slowness in getting a diagnosis, reproductive problems or the consequences of treatment mean that some women are unable to carry out their daily activities normally. It is common for the disease to be accompanied by disorders such as depression and anxiety.

- **Sexual.** The disease often causes pain during penetrative sex. This can make it difficult to enjoy a full sex life, can lower self-esteem, and can damage relationships.
- **Family, social and work.** Endometriosis can disrupt family relationships, adversely impact social skills, and lessen the ability to work.

Ask for an appointment at your  
**Sexual and Reproductive Health  
Centre (ASSIR)**

or

**Primary Healthcare Centre (CAP)**



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de Catalunya**