

## Are you ignoring endometriosis?

May 25 2018, by Len Canter, Healthday Reporter

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(HealthDay)—Endometriosis is a painful condition affecting many women, yet often years pass before it's diagnosed.

Tissue that normally lines the inside of the uterus starts growing outside it, often affecting the ovaries, the bowel or [tissue](#) lining your pelvis. Cysts or [scar tissue](#) can form.

Beyond intense physical [pain](#), endometriosis can affect everything from your mood and self-esteem to your relationships, especially when it disrupts your sex life.

The most serious complication is infertility. Up to half of all women with endometriosis have difficulty getting pregnant, which is often what first brings it to your doctor's attention.

One reason for the delay in getting medical care is thinking the pain is normal menstrual discomfort and not taking symptoms seriously. The chief clue is intense [pelvic pain](#), often during different circumstances. But keep in mind that the degree of pain doesn't always correlate with the severity of the endometriosis.

Here are some warning signs of endometriosis:

- Pelvic pain that begins before and lasts a few days longer than your period.
- Menstrual cramping that's worse than it used to be and increases over time.
- Menstrual bleeding that's gotten heavier over time.
- You have pain when going to the bathroom, especially when you have your period.
- You experience pain during or after sex.

Treatment may start with medication to ease discomfort. Taking hormones may slow the growths and prevent new ones, but it's not a permanent solution.

If you're trying to get pregnant, you might first need surgery to remove the growths. While up to 70 percent of [women](#) with [endometriosis](#) are able to get pregnant, new research suggests that they may have a higher risk of complications and should have careful monitoring during and after pregnancy.

**More information:** The Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development has detailed information on [endometriosis](#), from ways to relieve pain to surgical options.

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