

Gynaecology- Endometriosis

Introduction

The Covid pandemic has had a significant impact on the NHS ability to provide routine elective services. We recognise that patients are waiting longer than we would all like and it is not always possible to identify when treatment will take place. This document provides you with information on how you can support yourself while waiting to attend the hospital.

Endometriosis is a condition where tissue similar to the lining of the womb starts to grow in other places, such as the ovaries and fallopian tubes. It can affect women of any age and is a long-term condition that can have a significant impact on your life, but there are treatments that can help.

Symptoms of endometriosis

The symptoms of endometriosis can vary. Some women are badly affected, while others might not have any noticeable symptoms. The main symptoms of endometriosis are:

- pain in your lower tummy or back (pelvic pain) – usually worse during your period
- period pain that stops you doing your normal activities
- pain during or after sex
- pain when peeing or pooing during your period
- feeling sick, constipation, diarrhoea, or blood in your pee during your period
- difficulty getting pregnant

You may also have heavy periods. You might use lots of pads or tampons, or you may bleed through your clothes. For some women, endometriosis can have a big impact on their life and may sometimes lead to feelings of depression.

Causes of endometriosis

The cause of endometriosis is not known but several theories have been suggested, including:

- genetics – the condition tends to run in families, and affects people of certain ethnic groups more than others
- retrograde menstruation – when some of the womb lining flows up through the fallopian tubes and embeds itself on the organs of the pelvis, rather than leaving the body as a period
- a problem with the immune system, the body's natural defence against illness and infection

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- endometrium cells spreading through the body in the bloodstream or lymphatic system, a series of tubes and glands that form part of the immune system

When to see a GP

- See a GP if you have symptoms of endometriosis, especially if they're having a big impact on your life. It may help to write down your symptoms before seeing a doctor. It can be difficult to diagnose endometriosis because the symptoms can vary considerably, and many other conditions can cause similar symptoms.
- A GP will ask about your symptoms and may ask to examine your tummy and vagina. They may recommend treatments if they think you have endometriosis. If these do not help, they might refer you to a specialist called a gynaecologist for some further tests, such as an ultrasound scan or laparoscopy.

Treatments for endometriosis

There is currently no cure for endometriosis, but there are treatments that can help ease the symptoms.

- hormone medicines and contraceptives – including the combined pill, the contraceptive patch, an intrauterine system (IUS), and medicines called gonadotrophin-releasing hormone (GnRH) analogues
- **Surgery can be used to remove or destroy areas of endometriosis tissue, which can help improve symptoms and fertility.**
- **Hysterectomy** is one of the surgical options available to remove the womb to eliminate the organs affected by endometriosis.
- Your doctor will discuss all treatment options with you.

Health and Wellbeing Guidance for Patients - Useful Website links

Whilst you are waiting for any procedure, it is important to maintain a healthy lifestyle and be as medically fit as possible. If you have any long-standing conditions such as high blood pressure you should get this reviewed at your Doctor's surgery to make sure it remains well controlled. This will also help prevent any unnecessary delays when you come for your pre-operative assessment.

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- **Living with endometriosis.** Information on a range of **Gynaecological** conditions including **Endometriosis** can be found on the following website:
 - Endometriosis can be a difficult condition to deal with, both physically and emotionally. As well as support from your GP, you may find it helpful to contact a support group, such as **Endometriosis UK**, for information and advice.

General **health and wellbeing information** to support our local residents to stop smoking or with weight management **Healthy Surrey** has been commissioned to provide free stop smoking and weight management support our community.

- **National Stop Smoking and weight management support is also available via**
 - **Quit smoking - Better Health - NHS (www.nhs.uk)** The NHS stop smoking service provides a range of options to help you quit including support from an advisor, stop smoking medications, e-cigarettes and a digital offer for those who wish to quit by themselves. If you are not ready to quit smoking, but would like more information on how to protect your family, **Smoke free Homes**, advises on how to make your home and car smoke free.
 - **Live Well - NHS (www.nhs.uk)** are here to help you and offer different levels of support to maintain a healthy weight and to stop smoking, alcohol support and eating well etc.

- **Healthy eating and being active**

Information and advice on healthy eating and becoming more active is available from:

- **Eat well - NHS (www.nhs.uk)** (website) - includes easy to prepare meals for healthy meals and the **NHS Food Scanner app - Healthier Families - NHS (www.nhs.uk)** to help reduce levels of sugar in your diet.
 - **Weight Management Service** The service supports adults aged 18 years or over who want to lose weight and have been identified as obese.
 - **Lose weight - Better Health - NHS (www.nhs.uk)** (website) - includes tips on getting active for all, including the downloadable active apps, as well as tailored advice for those living with a long-term conditions.
- **Find out your BMI**
You can get help to lead a healthier lifestyle if you're an adult (18 years or over) living on the Isle of Wight and your body mass index (BMI) is above average. Use this tool to **BMI calculator | Check your BMI - NHS | Please fill in your details (www.nhs.uk)** if it's too high, sign up for a programme that will help you lose weight BMI of 30+
 - **BMI of 28+**
You can get support from the 'Live Well' website, if your BMI is 28 or over if at least one of the following applies:
 - you have Type 1 and 2 Diabetes or Metabolic Syndrome
 - you have problems with your heart, circulation, hypertension or high blood pressure

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- you have been diagnosed with anxiety/depression
- you need to lose weight before receiving another medical treatment or surgery
- you have a serious long-term health condition that is adversely affected by your weight such as muscular skeletal disorders (back pain, mobility issues) and asthma
- you're from a black or ethnic minority background.

○ **BMI of 25+**

If you have a Body Mass Index of 25 or higher [Eat well - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk) provides online support to help you lose weight and includes access to the NHS 12-week weight loss plan.

The NHS 12-week fitness plan will support your weight loss plan as well as improve your health. This is aimed at beginners and will help get you into the habit of regular exercise over the course of the programme. It is structured but flexible enough to allow you to fit the exercise sessions around your other weekly commitments.

What should I do if my health is deteriorating?

If you are experiencing any worsening signs or symptoms of any gynaecological problems, you should first consult your General Practitioner (GP).

a. Urgent Health Advice

For urgent health advice about physical or mental health, when it's not an emergency, please call 111 from any landline or mobile phone. You can also visit www.nhs.uk. The NHS 111 service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

b. Life Threatening Emergencies

For something life threatening – severe bleeding, breathing difficulties or chest pains – please dial 999.

Contact Us:

<p>Call: Surrey & Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust ☎ 01737 231958</p>	<p>Email: sash.pals@nhs.net For My Planned Care enquiries</p>	<p>Website: https://www.surreyandsussex.nhs.uk/</p>
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