

## Endometriosis and Adolescents

### *Guidance for parents with teens*

#### WHAT IS ENDOMETRIOSIS?

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- A highly damaging disease of the female reproductive system.<sup>1</sup>
- Occurs when the endometrial cells implants in areas outside of the uterus.<sup>1</sup>
- Implants become inflamed resulting in symptoms.<sup>1</sup>
- Endometriosis can cause daily pelvic pain, painful periods, and pain during bowel movements or sex.<sup>7</sup>
- Endometriosis is the third leading cause of gynecologic hospitalization in the United States. This disease impacts both a woman's physical and mental well-being.<sup>5</sup>

#### WHO HAS ENDOMETRIOSIS?

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- Women and girls of childbearing age are affected by endometriosis.<sup>1</sup>
- Approximately *1 out of every 10* women of childbearing age live with endometriosis in the United States.<sup>5</sup>
- 176 million women worldwide live with endometriosis.<sup>4</sup>
- Girls whose mothers or close family members have endometriosis are 5-7 times more likely to have endometriosis.<sup>5</sup>

#### HOW DO I KNOW IF MY TEEN HAS ENDOMETRIOSIS?

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- Endometriosis symptoms can mimic those of other diseases, often leading to multiple misdiagnoses.<sup>2</sup>
- Your child may miss multiple days of school or extracurricular activities during and around the time of her period.<sup>6</sup>

#### HOW DO I HELP MY TEEN GET DIAGNOSED?

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- A biopsy is required to confirm endometriosis.<sup>4</sup>
- Take her to a gynecologist to discuss her symptoms. “Killer cramps” are not normal!<sup>4</sup>
- Using a personal pain profile, you can help her monitor the symptoms that she is experiencing at different times during her cycle. This will help advocate for her health at the gynecologist. These can be found at [www.endofound.org](http://www.endofound.org).<sup>4</sup>
- If the gynecologist is not listening, get a second opinion.<sup>4</sup>

#### HOW CAN I TREAT ENDOMETRIOSIS?

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- Over the counter pain meds such as NSAIDs or Tylenol can help. Your doctor can also prescribe something stronger.<sup>5</sup>
- Birth control pills can help to alleviate symptoms by bringing your hormones into balance.<sup>5</sup>
- *Laparoscopic excision surgery* spares the reproductive organs and is considered the best treatment option for endometriosis. By removing the scar tissue and lesions you temporarily alleviate the pain.<sup>7</sup>
- Using laparoscopic excision surgery in conjunction with hormone treatment is effective in managing pain symptoms.<sup>7</sup>
- Changes in diet and increased exercise can help control symptoms.<sup>4</sup>
- Alternative therapies such as acupuncture or herbal teas can be effective in some instances.<sup>4</sup>

## HOW CAN I HELP MY TEEN WITH HER ENDOMETRIOSIS?

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- Encourage her to be healthy. Exercising even 15 minutes a day will help, as will eating healthy and getting a full night of sleep each night.<sup>3</sup>
- Advocate for her. Talk to her teachers to help facilitate learning even on days when she cannot attend school.<sup>3</sup>

## REFERENCES

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