Endometriosis is a chronic and painful disease that affects an estimated one in 10 women of reproductive age.\(^1\)

Women with endometriosis can suffer for up to six to 10 years and visit multiple physicians before receiving a proper diagnosis.\(^2,3\)

Symptoms related to endometriosis vary\(^4\) and some symptoms are associated with pain that can be debilitating\(^4,5\) and may interfere with day-to-day activities.\(^5\)

There is no known cure\(^6\) for endometriosis, but treatment options are available.\(^1\)

Endometriosis occurs when tissue similar to that normally found in the uterus begins to grow outside of the uterus where it doesn’t belong.\(^1\) These growths are called lesions and can occur on the ovaries, the fallopian tubes, or other areas near the uterus, such as the bowel or bladder.\(^1\) Endometriosis is an estrogen dependent disease, meaning estrogen fuels the growth of the lesions.\(^3\)

## Symptoms

Women with endometriosis may experience a range of symptoms that can be unpredictable and change over time; while others may experience no symptoms at all.\(^7\)

There are many symptoms of endometriosis, but the most common symptoms are:\(^7\)

- Painful periods
- Pelvic pain in between periods
- Pain with sex

## Diagnosis

The diagnosis experience may be prolonged because of the variety of pain symptoms.\(^4\) Women with endometriosis may go through one or more of these diagnostic steps:\(^7\)

- Doctor’s appointment to discuss symptoms
- Pelvic exam
- Ultrasound
- Blood test (to rule out other conditions)
- Laparoscopy (surgery can help confirm the diagnosis of endometriosis)
TREATMENT

There is no known cure for endometriosis. It’s important for women to be specific about their symptoms when speaking to a healthcare provider. Available treatment options include:

- Oral contraceptives/hormonal birth control
- Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs)
- GnRH analogs
- Surgical interventions (e.g., laparotomy, laparoscopy, hysterectomy)

CLINICAL GUIDELINES

The American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) guidelines recommend the use of a variety of medical options as initial treatment for women with endometriosis-associated pain.

The Practice Committee of the American Society for Reproductive Medicine (ASRM) recommends viewing endometriosis as a chronic disease that requires lifelong management with the goal of maximizing the use of medical treatment to avoid repeated surgical procedures.