

## Why learn more?

Learning about the body and the experiences of women helps to create a more supportive, informed, and equal world for us all, and gives girls the tools to stay healthy throughout life.

There's a lot more to know about women's health. And it doesn't have to be embarrassing or scary.



Learn more about endometriosis and how it affects the women in your life

Scan or search



What's women's health Wales?



## What's

# endometriosis?



Around 155,000 women in Wales have endometriosis, so you might know someone who has it.

## What's endometriosis?

Endometriosis is when tissue similar to the lining of the womb is found in other parts of the body, which can cause painful periods, pelvic pain, and sometimes difficulty getting pregnant in the future.

Endometriosis can affect daily life, school, work, and relationships, so it's important to understand what it is, whether that's for your own health or to support someone you know. Because we're all stronger together.

It mostly affects girls and women aged between 11 and 45 years, but people who haven't started their periods (puberty) or those whose periods have stopped (menopause) could also have it.

We don't yet know the exact cause of endometriosis, but research has shown that people are more likely to have the disease if there's a history of it in their family.



## How is it diagnosed?

Endometriosis can be tricky to diagnose as the disease appears differently in different people.

If you think you have endometriosis, it's useful to track your symptoms in your diary to share with a doctor. From there, doctors will review the patient's symptoms and may order more tests to know for sure.



## What are the symptoms?

Symptoms of endometriosis change from person to person, but some common symptoms of endometriosis are:

- Pain in the lower belly or back (pelvic pain), which is usually worse during a period
- Period pain that stops someone from doing their normal activities
- Heavy periods where you need to change pads or tampons every 1-2 hours or bleed through clothes
- Pain during or after sex
- Pain when peeing or pooing during a period
- Feeling sick, having constipation, diarrhoea, or blood in pee during a period
- Aching legs
- Difficulty getting pregnant (infertility)
- Feeling tired (fatigue)

Mental health problems aren't direct symptoms of endometriosis, but people living with painful conditions, and conditions which can't be seen on the outside, often report feelings of low mood and anxiety. So, it's important to understand what people may be going through and listen to their experiences.



## How is it treated?

Currently, there's no cure for endometriosis, but there are treatments that can help manage the symptoms and reduce the impact of the disease on a person's life.

This includes:

- Painkillers
- Antidepressants
- Physiotherapy
- Hormonal medicines
- Surgery

If you're worried that something isn't normal, speak to a school nurse, doctor, or trusted adult.

