

Endometriosis- What You Need to Know for Yourself and Others

It's [Endometriosis Awareness Month](#), a time in which we work to increase knowledge and understanding of this vastly misunderstood disease. In case you haven't heard of it -which, chances are, you haven't- endometriosis is a condition developed when a tissue similar to the lining of the uterus grows, and stays, in another area of the body. Join the Women's Health Resource Center and Women's Health Specialist Dr. Gregory Moore this week in improving your understanding of this condition. Here is a starting point for what you should know:

What is endometriosis? Endometriosis occurs when the [new tissue grows in other parts of the body, typically the abdominal cavity, and can't escape through shedding](#). It bleeds, which can form adhesions, lesions, and cysts. This can cause extreme, and even debilitating, pain in the people who have it. Endometriosis can often take years to diagnose due to a number of factors. For one, there is a lack of societal and medical awareness of the condition. There is also the fact that the degree of pain experienced does not correlate with what is visible, and the problem of doctors often not taking female patients' pain as seriously. In order to combat this issue, it can help to learn the basics of this disease and share your knowledge with others.

What are its symptoms? Endometriosis affects [1 in 10](#) females of reproductive age and can strike at any point during this time, so being able to notice and recognize its indicators is important. [Some prominent ones](#) to look out for are fatigue, nausea, constipation, or bloating. Intense pain as a whole is also a symptom, and it can occur anywhere, including the lungs (which can result in coughing up blood during menstruation). The most common manifestations of this pain, however, are unusually heavy or painful menstruation, pain during bowel movements, during or after sex, and pelvic, lower back and abdominal pain. If left untreated, some people may also experience a suppressed immune system or infertility.

What treatments are available? The treatments for endometriosis can vary in levels of intensity. Some are more aimed at treating its painful symptoms, while some address the actual tissue. One common treatment is the prescription of birth control pills, which decrease the stimulation of the endometriotic tissue just as they can decrease the length and flow of menstruation. Another prescription might assign drugs that put the body into a temporary menopause. In other cases, [pain medication or hormone therapy](#) can be used. In extreme cases, the patient may need to have a procedure called a hysterectomy in which the endometriotic implants are surgically removed.

What resources are available for students at Georgia Tech? The [Women's Health Clinic](#) at Stamps Health Services is available for anyone to schedule an appointment. If you or someone you know are experiencing any of the above symptoms, please come in and discuss

them. According to Dr. Moore, it is encouraged that anyone who is experiencing pain to the point of distress be seen, whether or not this pain is ultimately related to endometriosis. Many people are used to being told that their period pain is “normal,” but in truth, if it is causing you routine distress, then it should likely be looked into, and there is no shame in seeking treatment.

This Endometriosis Awareness Month, keep in mind your health and the health of others. Remember that the best way we can combat misinformation is to equip ourselves with knowledge. For more information, visit healthinitiatives.gatech.edu.