

What businesses need to know about endometriosis

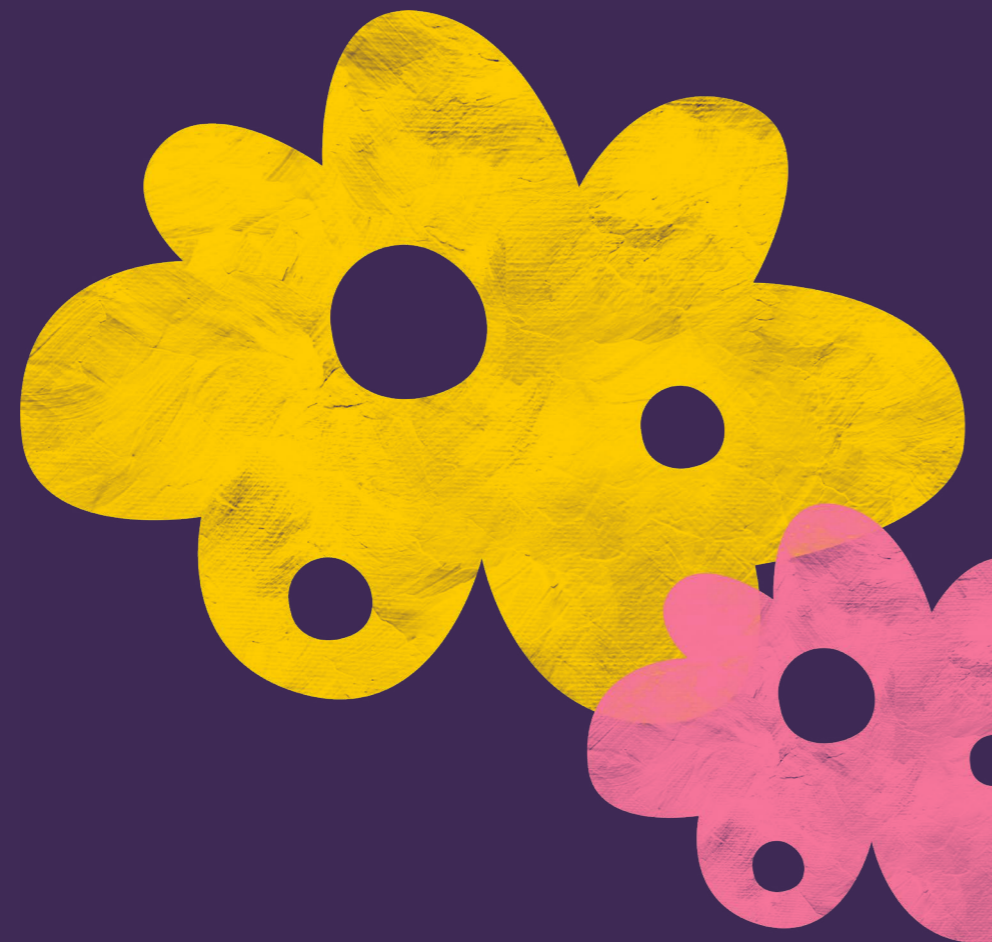


By **Dr. Anne Moore**

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About the author

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Your endometriosis questions answered

What is endometriosis?

Endometriosis is a condition where the endometrial tissue that is present inside the uterus is found outside the uterus. It causes inflammation, pain, and often heavy and irregular periods.

What are the most common symptoms of endometriosis?

- very painful and heavy periods
- painful sex (during or after)
- pain with bowel movements
- pain between periods

Does endometriosis cause infertility?

Thankfully, many women with endometriosis are able to get pregnant without medications or fertility treatments. That said, some women with endometriosis will need more assistance with their fertility. Early diagnosis and treatment can help prevent some of the challenges to fertility that are associated with endometriosis.

Can endometriosis be treated?

Many women find significant pain relief by using the birth control pill and other medications. Others might consider surgery to remove endometrial tissue. Every woman's situation is unique, which is why it's important to be aware of your employees' symptoms and why they should seek personalized recommendations from an expert.

How common is endometriosis?

It affects about 1 in 10 women of reproductive age.

How is endometriosis diagnosed?

There are two ways to diagnose endometriosis. One, which is known as a presumptive diagnosis, is to take a careful history of how pain impacts periods, sexuality, and everyday activities like exercise and having bowel movements. The other way is to have the endometrial tissue directly visualized during surgery. In either case, treatments can be started, while a personalized plan for management is developed.

Isn't some period pain normal?

Pain is never okay. And with endometriosis, there can be chronic pain that can disrupt your employees' life, both during and between periods. It's important not to minimize your employees' pain and encourage them to talk to a women's health specialist if their pain is worsening.



Endometriosis myths



✗ It's normal for periods to be very heavy and painful

Some people without endometriosis, do have naturally heavy, painful periods, but if period pain gets in the way of their normal life, they should talk to a women's health specialist.

✗ Pregnancy is a cure for endometriosis

Pregnancy is not a cure. The unique hormonal environment in pregnancy suppresses the growth and pain of endometriosis temporarily, but symptoms tend to return after pregnancy when periods start again.

✗ There is no treatment for endometriosis

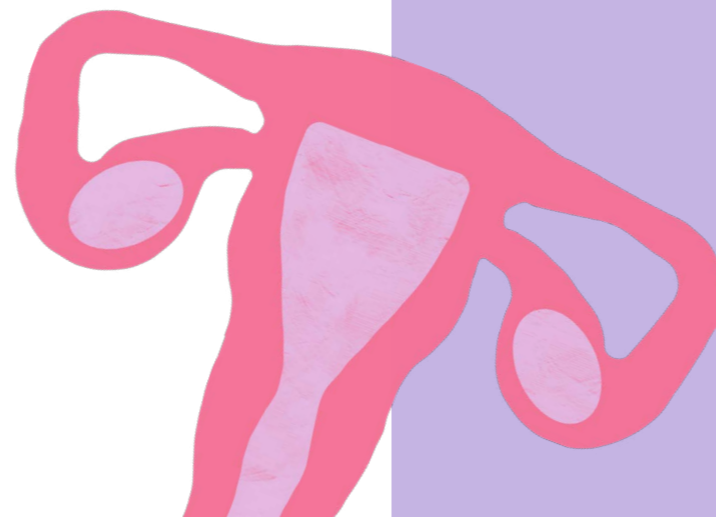
There are many effective treatments available that reduce pain and allow people to get on with their lives. This includes over the counter pain medications and hormones. Another effective option, using minimally invasive techniques, is surgery.

✗ Only women can have endometriosis

Any person who was born with a uterus can have endometriosis. It's important to remember that trans men and non-binary people can also have endometriosis.

✗ People with endometriosis always have symptoms

Endometriosis symptoms can range from mild to severe. Some people with mild endometriosis may not have significant symptoms or pain.



Helpful tips to share with colleagues who think they may have endometriosis

- **Start by tracking your symptoms.**
Jot down when you have pain and how severe it is.
- **Record whether there is pain with urinating and/or bowel movements.**
- **Try using an over the counter pain reliever.**
Such as Ibuprofen or Naproxen and record whether it works. (Be sure to take these with food, as they can cause stomach upset).
- **Reach out to a qualified clinical expert in endometriosis.**





The impact of endometriosis on the workplace

1 in 10

women in your organization have endometriosis

55%

often or very often take time off work due to their endometriosis

31%

have reduced their working hours as a result of having endometriosis

27%

have had to change or leave their job

95%

say endometriosis has negatively impacted their wellbeing

81%

say endometriosis has had a negative impact on their mental health



What can workplaces do to support their employees?



Education and training

Train your team (not just your female employees) about the symptoms of endometriosis so that supervisors, HR managers, and direct reports feel more comfortable talking about it and know the pathway to support.



Appoint Women's Health Champions

A Women's Health Champion is someone who can offer support to others and start the conversation around women's health issues at work. This is a simple way to break down stigma and encourage openness.



Offer personalized support

Give your colleagues free access to support from endometriosis specialists. Ideally, choose an easy-to-access, confidential digital solution, like the Peppy app.



Encourage flexible working

Flexible working can enable colleagues to manage their symptoms in the comfort of their own homes and take breaks when needed, with no questions asked. If flexible working isn't an option for colleagues, make sure they are taking their full break allowance.



Start an endometriosis group

Self-help groups or wellbeing groups can offer colleagues a safe, judgment-free space to open up and connect with others going through a similar experience. These can be done in person as coffee mornings or virtually as a Zoom or WhatsApp group.



About Peppy



Peppy is a health app that supports underserved areas of healthcare by connecting employees to human experts.

These include menopause and period conditions like PCOS and endometriosis.

Through Peppy, employees can access one-to-one private chat and consultations with experts, plus a wealth of expert-created content including events, articles, videos, and audio toolkits.

With Peppy, over 250 employers are transforming their business by giving their people the information and personalized support they need.



Find out how Peppy can support your people and transform your business



Leading employers support their people with Peppy



“The best employees are going to go where the best benefits and support are. With Peppy, we’re able to reach employees who would not otherwise get that support.”



Anna Cotgreave

Reward and Employee Benefits Manager
Clifford Chance