

Dietary advice to help manage symptoms of Endometriosis

Patient information factsheet

Overview

Endometriosis is a condition where tissue, similar to the lining inside the uterus (where a baby grows), starts to grow in the wrong places, for example the ovaries, fallopian tubes, or other parts inside the stomach.

- People living with endometriosis may get uncomfortable gut and digestive symptoms.
- Everyone can experience symptoms differently.

Guidance to help with gut symptoms

These should be done alongside other lifestyle changes, including stress management, getting enough sleep and regular exercise.

- Make sure you eat regularly and try to eat three times a day
- Eating smaller meals might reduce your symptoms.
- Try not to eat late at night or skip meals.
- Aim to have 8 cups (around 200ml each) of non-caffeinated drinks per day, this includes water, cordial/squash and herbal tea.
- Caffeine: Do not drink more than two mugs of black tea or coffee a day.
- Reduce drinking fizzy drinks.
- Alcohol: Do not drink more than 2 units of alcohol per day and have at least 2 alcohol free days a week. A 750ml bottle of wine usually contains around 10 units. A 330ml bottle of beer usually contains 1.7 units.
- Do not eat more than three portions of fresh fruit a day – one portion is 80g.
- Limit processed foods, especially those high in fat. For example, biscuits, cakes, chocolate, crisps, shop bought sev, bhajis, pakoras, ready meals and takeaways.

If you are experiencing symptoms of wind and bloating:

- Eating oats can help, such as porridge, or an oat-based breakfast cereal.
- Add 1 tablespoon of ground or whole linseeds (also called flaxseed) to your daily diet. Make sure that you take these with at least 150ml of drink without caffeine.
- Avoid chewing gum and sugar-free mints.
- Reduce your intake of gas producing foods, such as cauliflower, beans, pulses and brussels sprouts.

If you are experiencing diarrhoea:

- Make sure that you are drinking plenty of non-caffeinated drinks, to replace lost fluids.
- Limit your intake of caffeinated drinks to two drinks a day. Caffeine can be found in black tea, coffee and some fizzy drinks. Most herbal teas do not have caffeine.
- Avoid artificial sweeteners, such as sorbitol, mannitol, and xylitol. These are found in sugar-free sweets, mints, gum and drinks.
- Reduce your intake of high fibre foods, for example wholemeal varieties of bread, cereals chapattis and flatbreads.

If you are experiencing constipation:

- Aim to have 8 cups (around 200ml each) of non-caffeinated drink a day.
- Try adding up to 1 tablespoon of ground or whole linseeds (also called flaxseeds) to your daily diet. Make sure that you take these with at least 150ml of non-caffeinated drink.
- Try adding yoghurt to your breakfast cereal or to a salad.
- Avoid eating extra wheat bran.
- Try to increase your fibre intake slowly. A sudden increase may worsen your symptoms. Foods high in fibre includes fruits, vegetables, wholegrains and oats.
- Try eating two kiwis every day. Research evidence suggests that this can improve stool consistency (the texture and form of your poo) and reduce straining.

Probiotics

- Probiotics may help to reduce your gut symptoms, particularly if you are experiencing bloating.
- If you want to try using probiotics, use them for four weeks. If they do not work after four weeks, try another brand or stop them. Probiotics may not work for everybody.
- Examples of probiotics include Alflorex, Optibac, Bio-Kult and Symprove. You can buy these at supermarkets and over the counter at local pharmacies.

The Low FODMAP diet

- The Low FODMAP diet is a treatment used to reduce gut symptoms.
- This diet restricts specific foods which are often poorly absorbed by the gut.
- These can include types of milk, wheat products and some fruits and vegetables.
- Many people with endometriosis have reported that this diet has helped improve their gut symptoms.
- The low FODMAP diet should only be started with the guidance of a Dietitian.

Vitamin D

- Vitamin D helps your body take in calcium, which makes your bones strong and healthy.
- Women are at more of a risk of developing weaker and more fragile bones, due to hormone changes.
- To reduce this risk, along with having a healthy and balanced diet, it is recommended that everyone in the UK should take a daily Vitamin D supplement containing 10 micrograms, especially during the autumn and winter.
- Vitamin D supplements are available to buy at supermarkets and over the counter at local pharmacies.

If the dietary information above has not helped to improve your symptoms, please contact your Doctor to request referral to a Dietitian.

This resource is based on that produced by the British Dietetic Association, for those patients experiencing symptoms of Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS):

<https://www.bda.uk.com/resource/irritable-bowel-syndrome-diet.html>. Both IBS and endometriosis share similar symptoms, resulting in similar dietary advice.

Contact our service

Nutrition and Dietetics (Hospital Service)
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Contact our Trust

If you have a compliment, complaint or concern, please contact our Patient advice and liaison service (PALS) on **020 7288 5551** or whh-tr.PALS@nhs.net.

If you need a large print, audio or translated copy of this leaflet, please email whh-tr.patient-information@nhs.net. We will try our best to meet your needs.

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