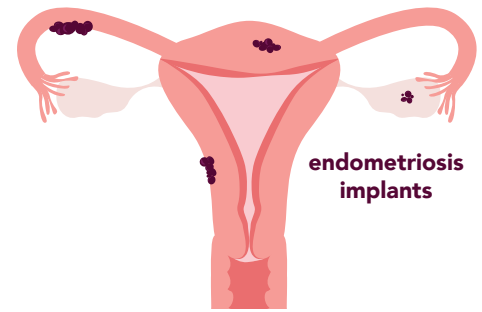


Endometriosis occurs when tissue that resembles the inner lining of the uterus (i.e. endometrium) is **found outside of the uterus**.

Estrogen plays an important role in endometriosis growth. During each menstrual cycle, there is an increase in estrogen within the body. **Implants of endometriosis may swell, grow and bleed, just like the endometrial lining inside the uterus.** This swelling and bleeding at endometriosis sites causes pain through local inflammation, new blood vessel formation (*angiogenesis*), and nerve cell formation (*neurogenesis*).



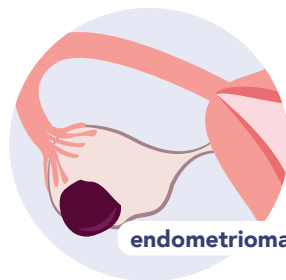
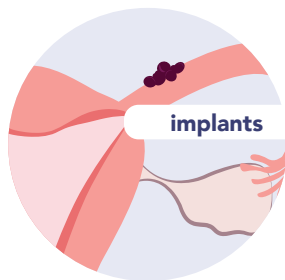
Endometriosis is a common condition that affects 1 in 10 women in Canada

Symptoms of Endometriosis

The symptoms of endometriosis vary from person to person. Endometriosis implants can be found on ovaries, causing cysts called **endometriomas** (also called *chocolate cysts*). They can also be found on the uterus, vagina, bowels, urinary bladder, pelvic muscles, and nerves. Various symptoms can be associated with endometriosis and sometimes depend on the location of implants in the pelvis or abdomen.

Symptoms of endometriosis can include:

- Dysmenorrhea (*painful periods*)
- Dyspareunia (*painful intercourse*)
- Dyschezia (*painful bowel movements*)
- Dysuria (*painful or frequent urination*)
- Infertility
- Chronic pelvic pain



Diagnosis of Endometriosis

Endometriosis can be challenging to diagnose and manage. **The most common age at diagnosis of endometriosis is between ages 35 and 44 years.**

- Frequently, endometriosis is diagnosed based on a combination of presenting symptoms, physical exam findings, and history. There is no single test or imaging modality that can diagnose endometriosis.
- If endometriosis is advanced, ultrasound will sometimes show ovarian cysts (**endometriomas**) and MRI can sometimes show **deeply infiltrating endometriosis**.
- The most reliable way to arrive at the diagnosis is to perform a surgery, allowing a gynaecologist to visualize and biopsy/resect endometriosis implants. Final diagnosis is made by a pathologist.

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