



# Live Well, Work Well

Health and wellness tips for your work, home and life—brought to you by the insurance specialists at The Reschini Group

## WOMEN'S HEALTH: ENDOMETRIOSIS

Endometriosis affects nearly 6 million women in the United States, making it one of the most common health problems in women.

### What is It?

Endometriosis is a condition where endometrium, the tissue that lines the uterus, grows in other places in the body besides the uterus. It develops into small growths or lesions which respond to the menstrual cycle in the same way uterine lining does. Most endometriosis is found on or under the ovaries, behind the uterus, on the tissues that hold the uterus in place, on the bowels or on the bladder. Endometrial growths cannot leave the body, resulting in inflammation, internal bleeding and scar tissue. Sometimes the growths also form cysts in the ovaries.

### Causes and Risk Factors

There is no known cause for endometriosis, but a few risk factors have been identified:

- Never had children
- Periods that last more than seven days
- A short monthly cycle (27 days or less)
- A family history
- Damage from an infection in the pelvis

### Signs and Symptoms

The most common symptom of endometriosis is pain in the abdomen, lower back and pelvis. Other indicators of the disease may be:

- Intensely painful menstrual cramps
- Pain during or after sex
- Painful bowel movements or painful urination during menstrual periods
- Heavy and/or long menstrual periods
- Spotting and/or bleeding between periods
- Infertility
- Fatigue

### Treatment

There is no cure for endometriosis, but several treatments are available for the pain and the infertility it may cause:

- Pain medication
- Hormone therapy such as birth control pills or progestins
- Surgery

### Prevention

Since its cause is not known, it is difficult to know what can prevent endometriosis. However, some studies have shown that exercising regularly and avoiding large amounts of alcohol and caffeine can lower the chances of its onset.

For more information, visit the Endometriosis Association at [www.endometriosisassn.org](http://www.endometriosisassn.org).

*Source: The Office of Women's Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services*

If you think you may have this disease, talk with your OB/GYN, who has special training to diagnose and treat this condition.

Your doctor will perform a pelvic exam and an ultrasound to look for cysts. But the only way to know for sure if you have endometriosis is to have surgery to view the pelvic organs.

