

# Endometriosis

TCM Anti-Cancer Centre  
Zhao Cheng R.TCMP, R.Ac., Ph.D.

Endometriosis is the condition in which the tissue that normally lines the uterus (endometrium) grows on other areas of the body causing pain and irregular bleeding .

**Definition:** Endometriosis is a condition in which the tissue that normally lines the uterus (endometrium) grows in other areas of the body, causing pain, irregular bleeding , and frequently infertility.

The tissue growth typically occurs in the pelvic area, outside of the uterus, on the ovaries, bowel, rectum, bladder, and the delicate lining of the pelvis, but it can occur in other areas of the body as well.

## **Causes, incidence, and risk factors:**

The cause of endometriosis is unknown. However, a number of theories have been proposed . The retrograde-menstruation theory proposes that endometrial cells (loosened during menstruation) may "back up" through the fallopian tubes into the pelvis, where they implant and grow in the pelvic and/or abdominal cavities.

The immune-system theory suggests that a deficiency in the immune system allows menstrual tissue to implant and grow in areas other than the uterine lining.

Another theory suggests that the cells lining the abdominal cavity may spontaneously develop endometriosis. A genetic theory proposes that certain families may exhibit predisposing factors that lead to endometriosis. Once the endometrial cells implant in tissue outside of the uterus, they may become a problem.

## **Symptoms:**

- Increasingly painful periods
- Lower abdominal pain or pelvic cramps that can be felt for a week or two before menstruation and/or during menstruation (the pain and cramps may be steady and dull or quite severe).
- Pelvic or low back pain, that may occur at any time during the menstrual cycle,
- Pain during or following sexual intercourse
- Pain with bowel movements
- Premenstrual spotting
- Infertility

**Note:** Frequently, symptoms may not be present. In fact, some women with severe cases of endometriosis have no pain at all, while some women with only a few small adhesions have severe discomfort.

## **Signs and tests:**

A pelvic examination may reveal the presence of tender nodules, with a lumpy consistency. These are often found in the posterior vaginal wall or adnexa (ovary regions), and they may sometimes be felt in healed wound scars (especially those from episiotomy and C-section ). There may be pain with uterine motion. The uterus may be fixed or retroverted.

A pelvic ultrasound test may detect an endometrioma on an ovary. A laparoscopy is necessary for a definite diagnosis, but most patients can start treatment without this.

#### **Treatment:**

Treatment depends on the the degree of symptoms experienced, the extent of the disease (determined through laparoscopy), the woman's desire for future childbearing, and the woman's age.

Treatment with medications may focus on several strategies. Analgesic therapy, treating the discomfort of the disease only, may be indicated for women with mild to moderate premenstrual pain, with no pelvic examination abnormalities, and with no immediate desire to become pregnant.

**Expectations** (prognosis) Fertility rates in women with mild endometriosis are very high, even without therapy. Enhanced fertility after surgery for endometriosis depends on the extent of the endometriosis..

**TCM's evaluation of healing effect** on such disease. Many Painful periods are successfully treated by TCM's treatment, it is more effective than other kind of treatments. Generally, it takes about two or three months to treat Painful periods completely; however, the acupuncture may release the pain immidetely.

#### **TCM Treatment approach:**

1. Herbal medicine/Formula
2. Acupuncture and Moxibustion
3. Qigong and other therapies
4. Medicated diet
5. Life style

#### **Differentiation of common syndromes**

**I. Blood stasis due to stagnation of Qi** Distending pain and tenderness in the lower abdomen one or two days prior to or during menstruation accompanied with fullness sensation in the chest, hypochondrium and breast, deep-purple blood with clots, relief of pain after discharge of clots, ecchymoses on the tongue edges, string-like pulse.

**Herbal medicine treatment Therapeutic principle:** Regulating the flow of Qi and removing blood stasis to alleviate the pain.

**Recipe:** Modified decoction for Taohong siwu Tang. Chinese angelica root (Dang gui), Chuanxiong rhizome (Chuan xiong), Red peony root (Chi shao), Peach kernel (Tao ren), Safflower (hong hua), Bitter orange (zhi qiao), Trogopteris dung (wu ling zi) at 10 g each; Corydalis tuber (Yan hu suo), Sichuan chinaberry (Chuan lian zi), Lindera root (Wu yao), Nutgrass flatsedge rhizome (Xiang fu) at 12 g each.

**Acupuncture and Moxibustion Therapeutic principle:** Regulating the Circulation Of Qi, activate blood, resolve blood stasis and relieve pain by using points mainly from the Ren meridian and the Liver meridian of Foot Jueyin. Prescription: Taichong (LR3), Sanyinjiao (SP6), Hegu (LI4).

**2. Stagnancy of cold and dampness** Distending pain in the lower abdomen several days prior to or during menstruation, which can be relieved by warmth, menstrual flow scanty in amount, dark in colour and with clots, pale tongue with white and greasy fur, deep and tense pulse.

**Herbal medicine treatment Therapeutic principle:** Warming the channels and expelling dampness to arrest pain.

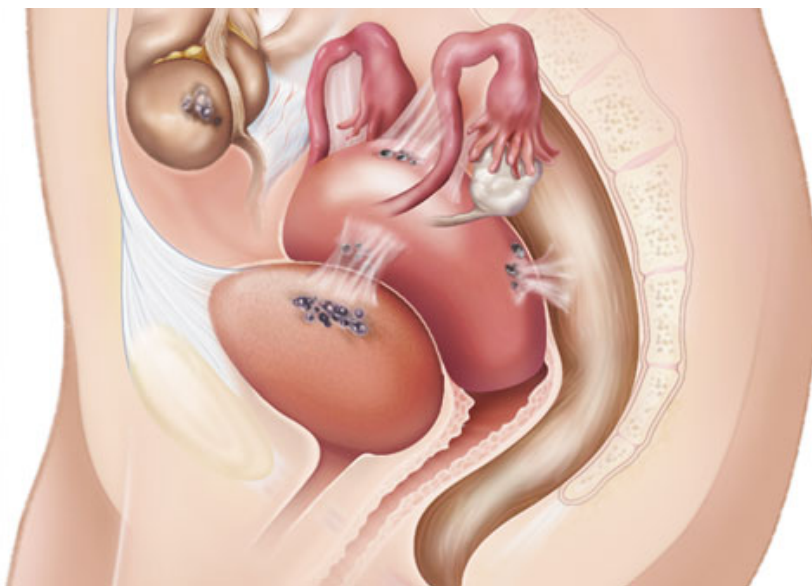
**Recipe:** Modified decoction for Removing blood stagnation in the lower abdomen. Common fennel fruit (Xiao hui xiang), Cinnamon bark (Rou gui) at 6 g each; Chinese angelica root (Dang gui), Chuanxiong rhizome (Chuan xiong), Red peony root (Chi shao), Corydalis tuber (Yan hu suo), Myrrh (mo yao), Cat-tail pollen (Pu huang) at 10 g each; Troglodytes dung (wu ling zi), Poria (Fu ling) at 12 g each.

**Acupuncture and Moxibustion Therapeutic principle:** Expel pathogenic Cold by Warming, the meridians and collaterals and resolve dampness and blood stasis by using points mainly from the Ren meridian and the Spleen meridian of Foot Taiyin. Prescription: Qihai (RN 6), Tianshu (ST 25), Mingmen (DU 4), Sanyinjiao (SP 6) Ciliao (BL 32)

**3. Deficiency of both Qi and Blood** Vague pain in the lower abdomen during or 1-2 days after menstruation which can be relieved by pressing, scanty menstruation with reddish and thin blood, accompanied with lack of vitality and asthenia, pale tongue with white and thin fur, thready and weak pulse.

**Herbal medicine treatment Therapeutic principle:** Invigorating Qi and enriching Blood to alleviate pain. Recipe: Modified Dysmenorrhea-curing decoction. Ginseng (Ren shen) 3 g; Astragalus root (Huang qi) 15 g; Chinese angelica root (Dang gui), Chuanxiong rhizome (Chuan xiong), Prepared rehmannia root (Shu di) at 10 g each; White peony root (Bai shao), Nutgrass flatsedge rhizome (Xiang fu), Corydalis tuber (Yan hu suo) at 12 g each.

**Acupuncture and Moxibustion Therapeutic principle:** Replenish Qi and blood by using points, mainly from the Ren meridian and the Stomach meridian of Foot Yangming. Prescription: Guanyuan (RN 4), Shenshu (BL 23), Zusanli (ST 36), Sanyinjiao (SP 6).



**Endometriosis** Symptoms. **Pain** just before, during, or after menstruation is the most common symptom. For some women, this **pain** may be disabling and may happen during or after sex, or during bowel movements or urination. It sometimes causes ongoing **pain** in the pelvis and lower back.