

QUESTIONS TO ASK
IF You Think you May have Endometriosis (#43)

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Endometriosis affects between 10-15% of women ages 25-44. It is estimated that 25-50% of women with infertility experience endometriosis. Early diagnosis and treatment is important. If you think you may have this disease, consider the following questions.

Do you have painful, heavy menstrual cycles?

Do you experience back pain or pelvic pain during menstrual bleeding that is only relieved by non-steroidal anti-inflammatories like Motrin™, Advil™, etc., and not by aspirin alone?

Do you have bowel or bladder symptoms (constipation, diarrhea or frequent urination) around the time of ovulation or just before you start your period?

Is intercourse painful in certain positions or with deep penetration?

Do you have a family history of endometriosis, i.e., your mother, grandmother or sisters have endometriosis?

Questions to Ask Your Doctor if you have Endometriosis and are Considering Treatment:

- Discuss laparoscopy and/or medications to treat endometriosis.
- Discuss a treatment plan for the first 6 months after surgery or drug treatment to optimize chances of conception.
- Ask if your ovarian reserve is normal, especially if you are over age 35: this is tested by assessing blood samples on cycle day 3 for FSH and estradiol levels. If either are elevated, your doctor may not want to use long-acting Lupron™, but may use a surgical approach and then either fertility drugs or in vitro fertilization to optimize chances for conception.
- Ask your doctor to evaluate your luteal phase (the 12-14 days after ovulation) as women with endometriosis may need medications to improve the luteal phase.
- If you are on long-acting, once a month injections of Lupron™, ask about using calcium, magnesium and vitamin D or whether "estrogen add-back" therapy would be helpful to prevent osteoporosis. In "add-back" therapy, small doses of estrogen are given simultaneously with the Lupron™.

Contact the Endometriosis Association 800-492-ENDO or www.endometriosisassn.org. For valuable information on dietary as well as medical management of endometriosis.

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