



ENDOMETRIOSIS : KNOW THE DISEASE



A brief overview

Hello! What are the chances that you have heard of endometriosis? Slim, right? Well let's enlighten you. If you or someone you know has been dealing with intense period pain, have been facing difficulty getting pregnant or suffering from unexplained fatigue, endometriosis might be the reason. Let's take a detailed look at what this disease entails - what it is, why it happens and what can be done about it.

What is Endometriosis?

Before we proceed further, let's find out what endometriosis actually is. This disease is a condition where tissue similar to the lining of the uterus (endometrium) starts growing outside the uterus. It can cause severe pain in the pelvis and make it harder to get pregnant. This misplaced tissue can be found on the ovaries, fallopian tubes and even the intestines. The problem gets compounded as it behaves just like normal uterine lining - thickening, breaking down and bleeding during your menstrual cycle. But unlike regular periods, this blood has nowhere to go and so causes pain, inflammation and sometimes scarring. Endometriosis can start at a person's first menstrual period and last until menopause.

The causes of Endometriosis

While the exact causes of endometriosis are difficult to pinpoint, a few theories exist which are as follows:

- **Retrograde Menstruation** - This happens when menstrual blood flows backward into the pelvic cavity instead of leaving the body.
- **Hormonal Imbalance** - Estrogen stimulates the growth of endometrial-like tissue outside the uterus.
- **Genetics** - If your mom or sister has it, your chances of developing it are higher.
- **Immune System Dysfunction** - A weak immune system may fail to detect and destroy misplaced tissue.

Some of the common symptoms

Endometriosis has a variety of symptoms which include:

- Severe menstrual cramps
- Chronic pelvic pain, even outside of periods
- Pain during or after sex
- Heavy or irregular bleeding
- Digestive issues like bloating, diarrhoea or constipation
- Difficulty getting pregnant



Is prevention possible?

While prevention cannot be ruled out, there is no surefire solution, However, managing hormone levels may help. To reduce your risk you can:

- Exercise regularly to balance hormones
- Eat a healthy diet rich in anti-inflammatory foods
- Avoid excessive alcohol and caffeine, which can increase estrogen levels
- Use birth control pills to regulate periods

The treatment protocol

Endometriosis, unfortunately can be rather difficult to cure. In fact, there is no permanent cure. However, there are treatments to manage symptoms which include:

- **Pain management** - Over-the-counter painkillers or prescription medications
- **Hormone therapy** - Birth control pills, IUDs or hormone-blocking drugs to slow tissue growth
- **Surgery** - Laparoscopy to remove excess tissue, and in severe cases, hysterectomy
- **Lifestyle changes** - A balanced diet, stress management and regular exercise can improve symptoms

To sum it up, **Endometriosis is not a disease to be taken lightly, but with the right treatment, it can still be managed.** It's important to not ignore the signs and reach out to a doctor at the earliest.