

Endometriosis

What every woman should know

by Dr Dharshini Gopalakrishnakone



Felicity is a 35-year-old patient who came in to our clinic last year with complaints of very painful periods for the past seven years. She also noted that the painkillers she previously took to relieve the discomfort was no longer adequate. Felicity had also been trying to get pregnant with no success over the past four years. After a thorough examination and investigation, she was diagnosed with moderate endometriosis. She successfully underwent treatment, conceived naturally without any fertility drugs, and is now a proud mother of a 3-month-old infant.

What is endometriosis and what causes it?

Every month, a woman's ovaries produce hormones that tell the lining of the womb to get thicker. The womb (uterus) then sheds these cells (called endometrial cells) along with blood and tissue through the vagina when a woman has her period.

Endometriosis occurs when these endometrial cells grow outside the uterus in other parts of your body.

The cause is actually unknown but several theories have been put forward and the most widely accepted theory is that of 'retrograde menstruation'. According to this theory, during menses some of the menstrual blood flows backwards into the pelvis through the fallopian tubes. This menstrual blood contains endometrial cells from the womb lining which proceed to implant over areas and organs within the pelvis.

This sticky chocolate-looking tissue may attach on the inner lining of the pelvis, ovaries, bowel, rectum, bladder and many other areas.