



## BODY SYSTEMS AFFECTED BY ENDOMETRIOSIS & THE SYMPTOMS THEY CAUSE

### NEUROLOGICAL NEUROLOGIST

- Lower Back & Neck Pain
- Sciatica
- Anxiety & Depression
- Migraine Headaches
- Brain Fog
- Unhealthy Microbiome

### ENDOCRINE ENDOCRINOLOGIST

- Fatigue
- Fainting
- Hormonal Imbalances
- Weight Gain
- Thyroid Disease/Dysfunction

### CARDIOVASCULAR CARDIOLOGIST

- High Heart Rates
- Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome (POTS)
- 20% Greater Risk of Heart Attack
- Increased Risk of Heart Disease

### DIGESTIVE GASTROENTEROLOGIST

- Daily Abdominal Pain
- IBS (Constipation & Diarrhea)
- Intestinal/Stomach Issues
- Liver Problems
- Bloating/Nausea/Vomiting
- Rectal Bleeding
- Unhealthy Microbiome

### URINARY/EXCRETORY UROLOGIST

- Kidney Failure or Dysfunction
- Ureter Issues
- Bladder Problems  
(Repeated UTI's)

### IMMUNE INTERNAL MEDICINE & INFECTIOUS DISEASES

- A Previously Strong Immune System Becomes Very Weak
- EXCESSIVE Fatigue
- Higher Autoimmune Rates

### SKELETAL ORTHOPEDIST

- Attaches to Ribs & Bones
- Reduced Mobility Due to Adhesions
- Back Pain
- Joint Pain
- Leg Pain

### PULMONARY PULMONOLOGIST

- Lesions on the Lungs
- Difficulty Breathing
- Possible Repeated Collapsed Lung Issues

### REPRODUCTIVE GYNECOLOGIST

- Loss of Fertility
- Pain During Intercourse
- Pain During Menses & Ovulation
- Abnormal Bleeding
- Pelvic Floor Dysfunction
- Damage to Ovaries & Tubes Including Cysts
- Getting Pregnant & Staying Pregnant
- Possible Adverse Obstetrical Outcomes

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## **Endometriosis: A School Nurse's Guide**

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# What is Endometriosis?

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- A chronic and painful condition where tissue similar to the uterine lining grows outside the uterus.
- It's a common condition, affecting approximately 1 in 10 individuals with a uterus (some say it could be 1 in 7).
- This misplaced tissue responds to hormonal cycles, causing inflammation, pain, and scar tissue.

## **Key Symptoms to Recognize:**

- Severe and debilitating period pain (dysmenorrhea).
- Chronic pain that can be all over, often not related to the menstrual cycle.
- Pain during bowel movements or urination, especially during a period.
- Fatigue

# Challenging Common Misconceptions

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**Myth:** Severe period pain is normal.

- **Reality:** While some discomfort is common, debilitating pain that prevents a student from attending school or participating in activities is NOT normal and is a primary sign of a potential issue like endometriosis.

**Myth:** Endometriosis is a psychological issue.

- **Reality:** Endometriosis is a real, physical disease. The pain is not "all in their head."

**Myth:** Pregnancy cures endometriosis.

- **Reality:** Pregnancy may offer a temporary reprieve from symptoms, but it is not a cure.

# The School Nurse's Critical Role

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- **You are a trusted point of contact:** Students may not feel comfortable talking to parents or teachers about this.
- **Listen to students' concerns without judgment.** Don't dismiss their pain as "normal."
- **Recognize the patterns:** Pay attention to students who frequently miss school or visit the health office with pelvic pain, cramps, or stomach aches.

# How to Support Students at School

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- **Provide a Safe Space**
- **Symptom Management:** heating pads, pain relievers (with parental permission), and a quiet place to lie down.
- **Communicate with Care:** Gently encourage the student to talk to a parent or guardian. Help them find the right words to describe their pain.
- **Advocate for their needs:** Work with teachers and administrators to ensure the student has necessary accommodations.

# Resources and Next Steps

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## For Students & Parents:

- Encourage parents/students to research for appropriate health care - [Greater Boston Endo Support Group](#)
- Direct them to reputable organizations for more information – [TEAM](#)

## For Teachers & Staff:

- Provide them with a brief overview of the condition and a list of signs to look for.
- Emphasize the importance of flexibility and understanding for students dealing with chronic pain.
- Advocate for accommodations/504 if appropriate – This is a chronic condition that has impact in multiple systems and Daily Life activities.