



Endometriosis

Endometriosis is caused by uterine cells forming outside of the uterus. These cells band together to form uterine lining. The cells feed on oestrogen (among other things) and they grow in size to prepare for a fertilised egg. If you are not pregnant the thickened lining bleeds away during a period. However, cells that are outside of the uterus are not able to bleed away in quite the same way so this causes excess inflammation and pain, especially around the time of the period but there can be pain at other times too.

In Chinese Medicine, Endometriosis is caused by a build up of Phlegm and Stagnation in the Uterus. This can either be through a poor diet/eating disorder, emotional trauma and stress, physical (sexual) trauma, overwork, over exercise, competitive swimming before and during puberty, or being exposed to prolonged bouts of cold temperatures.

Diagnosis

It's important to note that only an explorative laparoscopy procedure can diagnose Endometriosis. Anyone who has received just an ultrasound and told they do not have Endometriosis but are still displaying symptoms needs to speak to their GP about being referred for further testing.

Lifestyle

In clinic there tends to be a certain 'type' of person that will have Endometriosis. These women often enjoy running (either long distances or sprints) and have done so for many years. They have competed in swimming galas as children, and manage their lives fuelled largely on adrenaline. Because of this, they tend to be workaholics and gym goers. It can seem odd that personality types can dictate disease but for Chinese Medical practitioners it makes perfect sense.

These types of people tend to be the Yin deficient type. Yin in Chinese Medicine pertains to body fluids, so blood and mucous, etc. People who have hectic lifestyles and are always on the go fail to nourish themselves properly as they will often need more

calories than the person is prepared to give. The blood is not enriched enough to cope with the demand and the body has to produce adrenaline to deal with the shortfall. With a lack of enriched blood to cool the system down, the body heats up. This heats the mucous which generates more Phlegm. So it becomes a vicious cycle. Therefore, the absolute key for Endometriosis patients is to SLOW DOWN. Take time to rest. It really is very important. Unfortunately, resting will often be the thing that Endometriosis sufferers struggle with the most and so devising a meditative practice can prove to be an essential part of your new lifestyle.

Exercise

Try to switch up the running to a more gentler form of exercise such as yoga or pilates. I know that this is probably the type of exercise that turns you off completely but you want to stop your adrenaline fuelled exercise regime.

Swimming is ok but you need to ensure that you swim in warm water and change out of your swimming costume quickly afterwards. Sitting around in wet swimming costumes as a child can cause terrible menstrual problems later down the line.

Diet

Through fairly recent research, we now know that Endometriosis is caused by the peritoneal fluid in the gut being inflamed and leaking into the uterus. Therefore, maintaining a healthy gut is important.

Endometriosis patients need to stay away from inflammatory foods. This includes gluten, alcohol, fried foods, sugar and smoking.

Due also to the fact that Endometriosis is borne out of excess oestrogen, attention must also be paid to foods containing hormones, such as red meat, dairy and soy. Limiting these products and ensuring that meat and dairy are organic is useful in minimising the amount of oestrogen-laden foods you're consuming as organic animals are not subjected to synthetic hormones. >



Supplements

I recommend a supplement called Saccharomyces Boulardii which aims to reduce inflammation in the uterus. It's a probiotic and fairly inexpensive as far as probiotics go! I always have them in stock as lots of my patients take them so please ask me if you'd like to try them.

It's also important that Endometriosis patients who are heavy bleeders need to stay on top of their iron and B12 intake as they can be prone to anaemia. Please get a blood test from your GP if you are concerned about this.

Sleep

Please make sure you are getting at least eight hours of sleep but preferably 10. We need to retrain your adrenals to stop them flooding Cortisol into your system. If you have trouble switching off then download the Calm app as it has dozens of really great sleep stories guaranteed to put you into a coma!

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