M任何女性都会有经期痛，而且有一部分原因就是患了子宫内膜异位症。在该疾病中，子宫内膜的一些细胞被牵连到卵巢、肠道、膀胱或其它地方。而且，这些细胞的生长会让子宫内膜产生可怕的疼痛，并且在月经期间，细胞会起泡，甚至会导致不孕。

子宫内膜异位症的诊断方法是将小切口，然后用一个叫做腹腔镜的管状物将子宫内膜检查出来。从小区可以检查到子宫内膜的情况，如果有异常，检查出来的细胞会和正常细胞一样。

如果女性在月经期间感到疼痛，但没有明显的症状，那么可能的诊断是子宫内膜异位症。这种疾病通常是在女性的生育期后，子宫内膜细胞会转移到身体的其它地方，尤其是腹部。

一个被诊断为子宫内膜异位症的女性，她可能身体的其它地方也有子宫内膜细胞。当她来月经时，这些细胞会起泡，可能会导致疼痛。而且，如果细胞在腹部，可能会导致不孕。

通常，医生会建议女性进行腹腔镜手术，来检查子宫内膜细胞的情况。如果医生发现子宫内膜细胞转移到其它地方，可能会建议女性进行手术，来移除这些细胞。

食物会导致子宫内膜异位症吗？

某些食物可能会导致子宫内膜异位症。根据哈佛公共卫生学院的研究，常年喝咖啡或吃红肉的女性患子宫内膜异位症的风险会增加。

除了咖啡和红肉，其它的食物也可能导致子宫内膜异位症。例如，人们可能担心某些食物可能会导致子宫内膜细胞在腹部生长。

一些研究也显示，一些食物可能会导致子宫内膜异位症。例如，某些研究显示，咖啡和红肉可能会导致子宫内膜细胞在腹部生长。而且，某些研究也显示，咖啡和红肉可能会导致子宫内膜细胞在腹部生长。

食物中的一些化学物质可能会导致子宫内膜异位症。这些化学物质可能会导致子宫内膜细胞在腹部生长，而且，这些化学物质可能会导致子宫内膜细胞在腹部生长。

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recipient of these chemicals is the nursing baby.\textsuperscript{12}

Lipid-rich foods such as fish and meat are major sources of organochlorines and PCBs, while plants have considerably lower levels of these contaminants. Therefore, a vegetarian diet has obvious advantages. By avoiding fish, other meats, and dairy products, women avoid the foods that harbor most organochlorines. Evidence suggests that vegetarian women have much lower levels of pollutants in their breast milk compared with other women. These chemicals have a very long half-life and can remain in the body for up to 15 years; therefore, the earlier in life that one begins a plant-based diet, the better.\textsuperscript{13}

Happily, bans on some of these compounds have caused exposures to decrease since the 1970s, although the amount in the body drops very slowly.

**Foods as a Treatment for Endometriosis**

Some women with endometriosis improve spontaneously, although most find that their symptoms continue or gradually worsen. Medical treatments rely on anti-inflammatory painkillers such as aspirin, acetaminophen, ibuprofen, and naproxen. Hormone treatments such as danazol, gestrinone, GnRH agonist analogs, progesterone derivatives, and progesterone-estrogen combinations are designed to shrink endometrial tissues.

Surgical treatments include removing cell clumps, severing pain nerves, and even hysterectomy, sometimes with removal of the ovaries. In the past, surgery to remove endometrial cells was considered a temporary measure and did not reliably eliminate all of the troublesome cells. Laparoscopy has replaced open surgery as the preferred method in the treatment of endometriosis.\textsuperscript{14,15}

Dietary treatment of endometriosis is based on the fact that, whatever causes endometriosis to start, it is estrogen that keeps it going. Without estrogen, the clumps of cells do not grow each month; they soon wither away.

That means that the dietary approach that reduces estrogens can also be used for endometriosis. In discussions with gynecologists who have tried this approach, it is clear that, for some patients at least, it can make a big difference.

Ronald Burmeister, M.D., a gynecologist in Rockford, Ill., describes the case of a 24-year-old woman who had terrible menstrual pain every month since her periods began. She had laparoscopic surgery twice, but her pain continued. She tried birth control pills, but they caused depression and other side effects. Hormone-blocking medications were helpful, but the medicine was very expensive and, in any case, could be prescribed for only six months without an increased risk of osteoporosis. After the prescription ran out, her pain returned. A progesterone derivative helped some but did not abolish the pain. One of her doctors recommended hysterectomy, but she wanted to avoid such a drastic solution.

Dr. Burmeister suggested trying a hormone-balancing diet. Using low-fat, purely vegetarian foods, which are known to reduce estrogen levels in the blood, she could reduce her hormone shifts, and, unlike medicines or a hysterectomy, it would not interfere with her efforts to get pregnant. He gave her a set of recipes and recommended several books for further information.

Within three months she was noticeably better, and at six months, her pain was gone.

Based on this success, Dr. Burmeister made the same recommendation in three other cases, and found that it was helpful in reducing pain. One patient reported that if she deviated at all from the diet, by having some dairy products or a bit of chicken, her pain came right back, just as skipping one or two pills can make a prescription fail.

No one has yet done a clinical study on the use of a low-fat, vegetarian diet for endometriosis. However, the demonstrable health benefits indicate one should be done. Unlike hormone treatments, a diet does not interfere with efforts to conceive. It is also inexpensive and safe.

In addition to changing their diets, women who exercise have a much lower risk for endometriosis, and those who engage in frequent strenuous exercise have at least 75 percent lower risk for endometriosis, compared with those who do not engage in high-intensity activity.\textsuperscript{16} The reason, presumably, is the well-established ability of exercise to reduce hormone activity. Exercise also strengthens the immune system.

**References**


