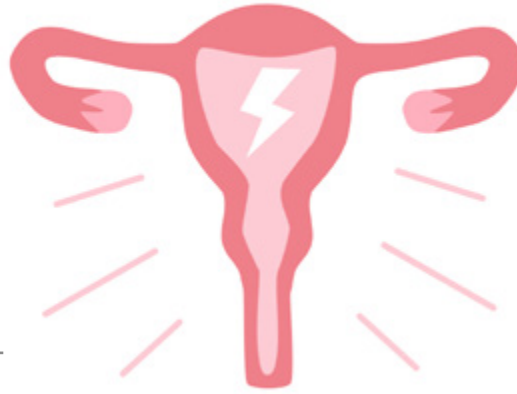


Painful periods (Dysmenorrhea)



During their menstrual cycle, while most women feel some form of discomfort, some experience severe pain that affects their daily activities. Such severe pain is known as dysmenorrhea. It is a common condition affecting 10 to 15 women out of 100.

If you have dysmenorrhea, you will feel a sharp cramping pain in the lower abdomen which can come and go. Sometimes the pain will spread toward your upper abdomen, back, and thighs. You may also experience other symptoms, such as

- Nausea
- Diarrhea
- Premenstrual syndrome (PMS)

Dysmenorrhea

There are two types of dysmenorrhea:

1. Primary dysmenorrhea

Primary dysmenorrhea occurs within the first few years of starting your period and is not caused by any underlying problems in the uterus. Prostaglandin levels tend to be high in women with primary dysmenorrhea. The increased levels of these substances cause the muscles in the uterus to contract, in turn causing pain.

If you have primary dysmenorrhea, the pain usually starts at the beginning of your period and can last up to three days.

In many cases, the pain often subsides as you get older and after you have a baby.

Primary dysmenorrhea is common in women who:

- Have started their period at a very young age.
- Have not given birth.
- Have heavy or prolonged periods.
- Smoke.
- Have a family history of dysmenorrhea

2. Secondary dysmenorrhea

Underlying gynecological conditions that affect the uterus are the cause of Secondary dysmenorrhea. Such conditions can include:

- Endometriosis
- Fibroids
- Pelvic inflammatory disease
- Adenomyosis

Diagnosing dysmenorrhea

If you have painful periods, your doctor will first check for any underlying conditions causing the pain. During your consultation, Dr Kothari will ask about your medical history and symptoms and carry out an examination of your pelvis, abdomen, and vagina.

IMPORTANT

Please let Dr Kothari know your full medical history, including any medication or herbal remedies you are taking or have recently taken.

Should Dr Kothari suspect an underlying condition to be the cause of the pain, he will order further tests, including:

- Urine test
- Blood tests
- Tests for sexually transmitted diseases (STD)
- A pap smear

Furthermore, Dr Kothari will carry out the following if required.

An ultrasound scan

To check for an ectopic pregnancy, fibroids, cysts, endometriosis and a dislodged IUD (if you have one).

Hysteroscopy

Dr Kothari will carry out a hysteroscopy to examine the inside of your uterus to detect any signs of abnormalities.

Laparoscopy

A laparoscopy is a keyhole surgery that allows your doctor to look directly into the abdomen and pelvic region. Dr Kothari may suggest a laparoscopy to investigate if you have endometriosis or other conditions requiring a closer look.

IMPORTANT

While a laparoscopy is a minor surgery, there are a few potential risks, such as bleeding, infection, and damage to the bowel, bladder, blood vessels, or other organs.

Treatment options

Depending on the cause of your pain, a few treatment options are available. These include the following.

Non-medical

You may find the following simple measures may help reduce severe period pains.

- Gentle exercise
- A warm bath or shower
- A hot water bottle or heat pack
- Relaxation meditation
- Eating whole grains, fruits, and vegetables
- Dietary supplements such as vitamins and fish oils (please consult your doctor before doing so)

Medical

Depending on the severity of your pain, Dr Kothari may suggest a few medical treatment options, such as:

- Painkillers such as paracetamol
- Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) such as ibuprofen
- Contraceptive pills and devices such as an Intrauterine Device (IUD)
- Antibiotics
- Transcutaneous Electrical Nerve Stimulation (TENS)

Next Steps

More information
Contact our advice team on
02 4225 1999

Diagnosis and treatment
Contact us to book an appointment
with Dr Kothari
02 4225 1999

When to see a doctor

If you are experiencing severe period pain that affects your day-to-day life and is causing you to stay home from work or school, you should book an appointment with Dr Kothari to discuss your treatment options.

Treatment costs

Depending on the level of treatment and care you require, the cost of diagnosis and treatment will vary from patient to patient. The exact structure of the cost and what you can claim on Medicare and private health insurance can be discussed with your doctor before you undergo any form of treatment.

Wollongong Day Surgery
Suite 5, Level 3, 354-358 Crown Street
Wollongong, NSW 2500

PH. 02 4225 1999
wollongongobgy.com.au
admin@wollongongObGy.com.au