



Nutrition for those living with endometriosis



WHAT IS ENDOMETRIOSIS?

Endometriosis, often called 'endo', is a condition where tissue that normally lines the uterus grows in other sites. This can happen in places like the ovaries, fallopian tubes, bladder and bowel, and blood-filled cysts may form on the ovaries. These patches of tissue respond to hormones just like your uterine lining does, which means they build up and shed each cycle. But because they're outside the uterus, this can cause pain, inflammation, and in some cases, trouble getting pregnant.

WHAT SHOULD I EAT IF I HAVE ENDOMETRIOSIS?

There's no one-size-fits-all "Endo Diet". Everyone's experience with endometriosis is different, so nutrition advice needs to be tailored to your personal symptoms, medical history, lifestyle and endometriosis treatment plan (if applicable).

This guide gives a general overview of how food can support your health when you're living with endometriosis. If you'd like more personalised advice, we recommend speaking with our Repromed dietitian – see contact details at the bottom of this sheet.

In general, nutrition advice for endometriosis focuses on two main areas:

- Easing symptoms – by cutting down on common gut irritants, which may help with bloating, pain and changes in bowel habits
- Reducing inflammation – since endometriosis is an inflammatory condition, an anti-inflammatory approach to food and lifestyle can support your overall health and may even help improve fertility

TIPS TO HELP MANAGE SYMPTOMS

These strategies may help promote bowel health in order to improve symptoms such as bloating, pain and changes to your bowel movements:

- Eat regular meals – this can help prevent reducing speed of eating and portion sizes, both helpful in managing pain and bloating
- Aim for 30g of fibre a day – it helps keep things moving and supports estrogen balance (excretion of estrogen from the body)
- Include high fibre – great fibre sources include vegetables and fruit (with skin on), legumes, oats, wholegrains, seeds and nuts
- Cut back on caffeine – it can trigger loose bowel motions. Caffeine is found in coffee, tea, chocolate and fizzy drinks like cola
- Limit carbonated drinks – including soda water, soft drinks, cider and beer, as they can lead to bloating



WHAT IS THE LOW FODMAP DIET?

The low FODMAP (Fermentable Oligosaccharides Disaccharides Monosaccharides and Polyols) diet is a short-term eating plan designed to help people who have both endometriosis and IBS (irritable bowel syndrome).

Women with endometriosis are more than twice as likely to also have IBS. Research suggests that the low FODMAP diet may work even better for women with both conditions than for those with IBS alone.

A low FODMAP diet trial involves temporarily reducing certain carbohydrates (called FODMAPs) that aren't well digested, then slowly reintroducing them to see which ones trigger symptoms.

This isn't a long-term diet, staying on it too long can negatively affect the good bacteria in your gut. For the best results with symptom improvement, it's important to work with a dietitian who has experience in the low FODMAP diet.

ANTI-INFLAMMATORY DIET & LIFESTYLE TIPS

To support your body and reduce inflammation, try the following:

- Eat oily fish (like salmon, sardines or mackerel) at least twice a week – they're rich in omega-3 fatty acids, which helps fight inflammation
- Add more colourful vegetables and fruits to your meals – they're packed with antioxidants that help protect your body. Could you add an extra handful of vegetables to your lunch and dinner?
- Wash fruits and veggies well, especially if you're eating the skin
- Use extra virgin olive oil as your main cooking oil
- Include a handful of nuts and seeds in your diet every day
- Look after your sleep and manage stress – ongoing high levels of stress can lead to hormonal changes which can increase inflammation and impact your gut

WHAT ABOUT OTHER ELIMINATION DIETS?

There's no strong evidence that cutting out dairy, soy or wheat is necessary for those with endometriosis. Consider the following:

- Dairy, soy and wheat are not considered "inflammatory" based on scientific research, although some people do experience improvement in their symptoms with a reduced intake
- If you cut out dairy, make sure you replace it with calcium-fortified alternatives to protect your bones (especially if you're on medications like Zoladex, which can increase the risk of osteoporosis if used long term)
- If you remove wheat, be sure to include other fibre-rich foods to avoid constipation or worsening bowel symptoms



Most private health insurance policies contribute to the cost of a dietitian appointment.

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

Working with a qualified dietitian who understands endometriosis can make a difference in your fertility journey.

For tailored advice, book an appointment with our Repromed dietitian via reception.