

Endometriosis, Body Image and Eating Disorders



What is endometriosis?

Endometriosis is a common condition that affects about 1 in 7 women and those who identify as gender diverse¹. It is a condition where tissue similar to the endometrium, which normally lines the uterus, is found in other sites around the body. While symptoms can be different for everyone, endometriosis can cause symptoms such as pelvic pain, heavy bleeding, fatigue and infertility.

How does it affect body image and eating disorders?

Research shows that people who experience endometriosis are 38% more likely to experience body image issues and 2.5 times more likely to experience Anorexia Nervosa compared to the general female population².

Of women with endometriosis²



40%

experience body image issues

13%

experience Binge Eating Disorder

5%

experience Anorexia Nervosa

Endometriosis and its treatment can cause a range of physical side effects, from bloating to surgery scars, that can impact body image, as well as psychological impacts, like feeling a lack of control over your body. In an effort to regain this sense of control, or in response to health advice, some people will change their eating habits to cope with their symptoms which can lead to disordered eating and potentially an eating disorder.

Tips to help support your body image:

Communicate with your care team

Tell your healthcare professional about any previous history or concerns around body image, disordered eating or eating disorders so they can offer personalised guidance and refer you to professionals that can address your concerns.

Be aware of health and diet advice

If you are considering a diet to manage your endometriosis symptoms, it's important to engage with dietitians, therapists or psychologists with experience working with eating disorders and body image concerns so you can ensure your mental health is also looked after.

Establish healthy coping mechanisms

Make self-care a priority to manage anxiety and encourage self-compassion. This could include doing activities that bring you joy or unfollowing accounts on social media that make you feel bad about your body image.

Embrace a body-neutral perspective

Research³ suggests that acknowledging and viewing your body's unique features with compassion and kindness, even during moments of discomfort, may contribute to a more positive perception of body image.

Connect with others

Reading blogs, listening to podcasts or following people on social media with a lived experience of endometriosis can help you feel empowered, supported and not alone.

Reach out for help

Whether it's letting friends and family know how you're feeling, finding a support person to attend appointments with you, requesting personal leave from work or seeking psychological support – talking helps.

“ With all the bloating, weight changes, scars, and shifts in body shape that come with endo, it can be hard to be kind to your body.” - Deanna

Get support



Call Butterfly National Helpline

1800 ED HOPE (1800 33 4673)

or visit [Butterfly.org.au](https://butterfly.org.au)
to chat online or email,

7 days a week, 8am-midnight
(AEST/AEDT).



Learn More

Visit Endometriosis
Australia to learn more
about Endometriosis
and access support.

[Endometriosisaustralia.org](https://endometriosisaustralia.org)



Resources

Read stories of lived
experience and find
useful resources at

[Butterfly.org.au/women](https://butterfly.org.au/women)



References

- 1 Endometriosis Australia, 2023. Endometriosis in Australia, AIHW Report 2023.
- 2 Liptember Foundation, 2024. Uncovering the reality: examining multi-dimensional aspects of women's mental health in Australia, 2024.
- 3 Pehlivan, M. et al. 2022. Body image and depression in endometriosis: examining self-esteem and rumination as mediators. Body Image. Vol 43, pp.463-473