

7 Foods to Support Endometriosis

Endometriosis affects 1 in 10 women through their reproductive years. It is a complex chronic inflammatory disease with a myriad of symptoms ranging from mild to severe, often even debilitating.

Common Symptoms

- Painful periods, severe enough to disrupt your life: missing work, school etc.
- Long periods (longer than 7 days)
- Heavy periods
- Nausea or vomiting, often from the severe pain
- Painful bowel movements
- Painful sex
- Constant pelvic pain/pelvic floor dysfunction
- Vaginal or bladder pain, simultaneous with other symptoms
- Digestive problems, ranging from food sensitivities, leaky gut and IBS to SIBO
- Bloating
- Fatigue
- Brain fog
- Depression and/or anxiety
- Infertility

Lifestyle & Diet

Even though we are not entirely sure what causes endometriosis, there are a few triggers that have been strongly associated with this condition, namely, environmental toxins, estrogen dominance, leaky gut and impaired immune system function.

Endometriosis and many other inflammatory diseases that have been associated with hormone imbalance benefit from a holistic approach involving dietary and lifestyle changes along with medical treatment.

Getting to the root causes and reducing/eliminating environmental toxins such as xenoestrogens will balance hormones and lower inflammation. Learning stress reducing techniques and starting gentle regular movements like walking, swimming, and yoga are important tools to manage this condition.

An anti-inflammatory diet rich in vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants can be helpful in reducing pain, bloating, period problems, and strengthening the immune system.

Anti-Inflammatory Foods

- **Dark Leafy Greens**

Cooked into soups, stews and curries or raw in a salad these vegetables are loaded with vital phytonutrients for our health. Dark leafy greens are rich in fertility supporting nutrients such as folate, vitamin B6, K, calcium, iron, and potassium. Together with cruciferous veggies, they are high in fiber which binds to excess estrogen, helping with its elimination from the body.

Food sources: kale, spinach, chard, arugula, dandelion greens, and collard greens.

- **Cruciferous Vegetables**

These vegetables are rich in sulfur-containing compounds that are known to support detoxification in the body. They are also high in many essential vitamins, minerals, such as vitamin C, E, K, folate, calcium, iron, potassium, zinc. and carotenoids that are strong antioxidants.

Food sources: broccoli, brussels sprouts, kale, cabbage, bok choy. Eat more cooked and less raw vegetables if you experience digestive problems such as bloating.



- **Berries**

Berries are rich in vitamin C and great sources of antioxidants which protects our cells from oxidative damage. They are low in sugar, supporting blood sugar regulation, and high in fiber, therefore an important part of an anti-inflammatory diet.

Food sources: blackberry, blueberry, raspberry, strawberry, currants

- **Omega-3 Rich Foods**

Both saturated and unsaturated fats have important roles in our bodies. Consumption of both is vital for healthy cell walls, nervous systems, hormone production, and the development of babies. Essential fatty acids such as Omega-3 and Omega-6 cannot be made by our body, therefore it must be obtained through diet. Omega 3 is known for its strong anti-inflammatory properties. It works by keeping our cell membranes healthy and by reducing the production of inflammatory cytokines.

Food sources: flax, hemp, chia seeds, walnuts, eggs, salmon

Supplements: cod liver oil or omega 3 extract such as EPA/DHA

- **Turmeric**

Curcumin, the yellow pigment in turmeric, has excellent anti-inflammatory power and preventative strength against inflammatory diseases. Use it fresh as a powder in cooking, baking, or as a tea.

Food sources: fresh turmeric root or powder

Supplements: 95% curcuminoids

- **Ginger**

Ginger is one of the most commonly consumed dietary condiments in the world. The oily resin in the roots of ginger contains many bioactive components that are known for their remarkable pharmaceutical and physiological activities. Studies show that ginger and its metabolites are mostly accumulated inside the gastrointestinal tract where they exert anti-inflammatory, anti-nausea, antioxidant, and soothing effects.

Food sources: fresh ginger or dried, pickled, preserved, crystallized and candied

Supplements: Ginger extract

- **Probiotic Foods**

Probiotic a.k.a. beneficial bacteria that inhabits our gut performs many functions that are important for our health. It manufactures vitamins such as K and B vitamins and turns fibers into short chain fatty acids to stimulate the immune system. These nutrients help strengthen the gut wall to prevent unwanted substances from entering. Probiotics combat digestive system problems by reducing inflammation, gas, bloating, constipation, and diarrhea. Good quality probiotics contain strains of various bacteria and adequate viability of those.

Food sources: lacto-fermented foods such as sauerkraut, kimchi, pickles, yogurt and kefir

Supplementation: look for Lactobacillus, Bifidobacterium and Saccharomyces in over 40 billion CFUs

Avoid: refined flours, sugars, red meats, coffee, alcohol, processed foods and agricultural toxins.