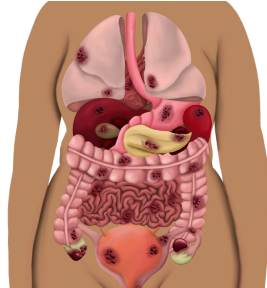


# Thoracic Endometriosis



# What is thoracic endometriosis?

**Thoracic endometriosis** is where endometriosis is found in or around the chest cavity. It most commonly affects the diaphragm but can also affect the lungs or pleura (the lining of the lungs).



## What are the symptoms?

Common symptoms of thoracic endometriosis include:

- Shoulder tip pain - often on the right side
- Chest pain or tightness
- Shortness of breath (dyspnea) and difficulty breathing
- Coughing up blood (hemoptysis)
- Collapsed lung (catamenial pneumothorax)

Symptoms of thoracic endometriosis are often cyclical, meaning they can become more intense around the menstrual cycle.

**If you are experiencing severe or sudden chest pain and shortness of breath that does not go away, please seek immediate medical attention.**

# Tracking your symptoms

Thoracic endometriosis symptoms can overlap with other conditions and vary from person to person, so keeping a symptom diary can help track your symptoms over time.

Tracking the timing, severity, and nature of your symptoms can help provide a clearer picture for your GP or healthcare professional.

You might include:

- Dates of your menstrual cycle
- Type and location of pain
- Energy levels and fatigue
- Emotional wellbeing
- Other symptoms of endometriosis



# How is thoracic endometriosis diagnosed?

In the UK, it takes an average of 8 years and 10 months to receive a diagnosis of endometriosis.<sup>1</sup>

Thoracic endometriosis is difficult to diagnose due to a lack of research and understanding.

The process usually begins with a visit to your GP, who will assess your symptoms, medical history, and family history.

Keeping a symptom diary can help you track your symptoms over time and provide your GP with useful information.

Your GP cannot diagnose thoracic endometriosis, but they will refer you for additional tests to help understand the cause of your symptoms.

A CT scan or MRI may be recommended to look for physical signs of thoracic endometriosis and rule out other possible causes for your symptoms.<sup>2</sup>

Your doctor may also recommend a laparoscopy or video-assisted thoracoscopic surgery (VATS).<sup>2</sup> These are types of keyhole surgery used both to diagnose and treat conditions like thoracic endometriosis.

<sup>1</sup> ["Dismissed, ignored and belittled": The long road to endometriosis diagnosis in the UK.](#) Endometriosis UK, 2024.  
<sup>2</sup> [Thoracic Endometriosis Syndrome: A Review of Diagnosis and Management.](#) Nezhad *et al.* (2019)

# Treatment of thoracic endometriosis

While there is no cure for endometriosis, there are different treatment options available.

## Surgical treatment

Surgical treatment for thoracic endometriosis involves a laparoscopy or video-assisted thoracoscopic surgery (VATS), a type of keyhole surgery used to both diagnose and treat the condition.<sup>2</sup>

## Pain management

As pain is a common symptom of thoracic endometriosis, effective pain management can help relieve these symptoms.

Deciding on the right pain management depends on many factors, and you will need to speak with your doctor to find what works for you.

## Hormonal treatment

Hormonal treatments are commonly recommended to manage symptoms associated with thoracic endometriosis.

Deciding on the right hormonal treatment depends on many factors, and you will need to speak with your doctor to find what works for you.

## Alternative treatment options

Non-surgical and non-medical treatment options can also help to reduce symptoms and improve your quality of life.

For example:

- Diet and nutrition
- Mental health support
- Physical exercise
- Sleep hygiene and rest

We recommend speaking to your doctor before implementing any alternative treatment options into your existing treatment plan.

### Reminder

Each person's treatment journey is individual to them, and what works for one person may not work for you.

The approach that is best for you will depend on different factors, such as your age, medical history, the severity of your symptoms, whether you plan to have children, and the potential risks of side effects and complications.





# Living with thoracic endometriosis

Symptoms of thoracic endometriosis can affect many areas of life, including school, work, relationships, and emotional wellbeing.

Seeking medical help, joining support groups, and talking openly about the condition can help manage these challenges.

---

## When to seek help

Thoracic endometriosis can significantly affect your physical and emotional health and wellbeing.

If you're experiencing pain that interferes with your everyday life, noticing unusual changes related to your menstrual cycle, or struggling with low mood or anxiety, it's important to talk to your GP as soon as possible.

**If you are experiencing severe or sudden chest pain and shortness of breath that does not go away, please seek immediate medical attention.**



# We're here to support you



[www.endometriosisouthcoast.com](http://www.endometriosisouthcoast.com)



[admin@endometriosisouthcoast.com](mailto:admin@endometriosisouthcoast.com)



@endosouthcoast



@endometriosisouthcoast



[Facebook Support Group](#)



## Help Us Keep Going

We're a volunteer-led organisation working to improve lives through education, advocacy, and community support.

If you'd like to support our work:

- Share this resource
- Donate or get involved
- Invite us to speak at your school, university, workplace, or event
- Follow us on social media

Every small action helps create a big change.

### Legal & Accessibility Notes

This resource is for educational purposes and should not replace medical advice. If you're concerned about symptoms, please consult a healthcare professional.

Large print and accessible formats are available upon request — [just get in touch](#).

Endometriosis South Coast is a registered charity in England and Wales (1186203). Registered office: The Hive Hub, 22 Edinburgh Road, Portsmouth, PO1 1DH