

## **What Causes Painful Periods?**

**Menstruation - is a fact of every woman's life, beginning in her early teens until menopause sets in, usually in her 50s. Some women barely notice their periods, but then there are others who experience very painful and sometimes crippling periods. So what exactly causes this severe pain that only afflicts some women? There are several possible causes- all fall under the condition known as dysmenorrhea.**

- 1. Fibroids - these are benign tumors that attach to the wall of the uterus. It is a very common condition. Estrogen, however, is known to stimulate their growth.**

**They can cause painful and heavy periods as well as severe cramping. There are several surgical options for removing the fibroids in the event they cause debilitating pain. They can also cause problems with fertility if they block the fallopian tubes. While it may not be necessary to do anything about uterine fibroids, they need to be followed closely. Other symptoms that indicate fibroids is a full feeling or pressure in the abdominal area, gas, bleeding in between periods, heavy periods and severe cramps.**

- 2. Endometriosis - The lining of the uterus is called the endometrium. The condition endometriosis occurs when this lining tissue implants outside the uterus and grows. It can occur on the ovaries, the bladder, the pelvic lining and other areas of the pelvic region. During ovulation, the uterine lining thickens by adding cells, making it easier for the egg to attach itself for fertilization. The implanted cells that are growing outside the uterus also thicken. These implanted cells that are growing outside the uterus do not get expelled during menstruation like the extra cells inside the uterus thus causing pain and other problems.**

**This is a common condition, particularly if there is a family history of it. Endometriosis can cause severely painful periods and other discomfort in the lower abdominal area and lower back. Scarring and adhesion (a condition where scar tissue connects two organs or body parts) of the ovaries and fallopian tubes can occur. Infertility can be a result of this condition if left untreated. Estrogen and progestin can help relieve the symptoms, but for serious cases, surgery is necessary to remove the damaged tissue and adhesions.**

- 3. Ovarian Cysts - These cysts are formed at the time of ovulation. A follicle containing the egg grows and prepares to eject the egg for fertilization. If the follicle doesn't open to release the egg, it remains filled with fluid**

**and becomes a cyst on the ovary. They can cause painful periods, bloating, pain during intercourse and other pelvic pain. It can also be quite painful if it suddenly bursts or causes the fallopian tubes to twist. If this is a chronic problem, becoming pregnant can be difficult. The cysts should be removed through surgery.**

**It is important to see a physician about painful periods and any other problems experienced in the pelvic region to determine the cause. If left alone, any one of these conditions has the potential to cause serious and irreversible damage to the reproductive organs. Of course, painful periods could also be indicative of something more serious such as cancer. Always consult your physician if you have any unusual pain.**