



Pelvic Pain

Information for patients

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What is pelvic pain?

Women and girls often experience pain or discomfort as part of the normal cycle of menstruation (periods). This can occur before a girl's periods have started. Some people experience pain in the pelvic area (from the waist down) that cannot be easily understood. When this happens the assessment can involve a detailed discussion of the problem as well as some tests.

There are lots of different causes of pelvic pain and it can take a long time for doctors and patients to work out why a particular young person is suffering.

Do I need any tests?

- You may be asked to keep a diary of the pain for a number of weeks.
- Sometimes an ultrasound scan will be done to form a picture of the inside of the pelvis.
- If necessary, laparoscopy may be offered. This test is an operation using a small camera inserted into the

abdominal cavity (lower tummy/pelvic area) via a small cut near the navel (belly button).

What Treatments are available?

The treatment of pelvic pain depends upon the particular cause of the pain and what effect the pain has on the person's life.

- Sometimes a doctor will recommend or prescribe pain relief medication (either nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs such as Ibuprofen or short term narcotic pain medication such as Codeine).
- Hormone therapy such as oral contraceptive pills (birth control pills) can be used to limit the production of ovarian hormones.
- The Mirena (hormone) coil can be very useful for pelvic pain, especially if it is related to the periods. This can be inserted under a general anaesthetic in young girls who have never been sexually active. It can reduce or even stop the periods, and it stays in for 5 years.

- In some cases the doctor will need to stop your menstrual cycle for a length of time using an injection (such as GnRH agonists).
- Sometimes pain can be reduced via nerve block injections.
- Often young persons can be helped to manage their own pain using a combination of techniques and activities. Some aspects of pain management are focussed on reducing the pain and others are used to limit the amount of effect that the pain has on everyday life.
- For some causes of pelvic pain surgery may be necessary.
- Antidepressant therapy can sometimes help and may be offered along with psychological (talking) therapy or counselling.

Because there are many causes of pelvic pain women and girls may have to see a number of doctors and other health care professionals who will work together to do the necessary “detective work”. Sometimes certain treatments will be tried as part of this detection process. There are times when no treatment, including surgery, can fully remove the pain for the

patient but in these cases patients can usually be helped to manage their pain.

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