

# Counseling Patients Regarding Endometriosis & Uterine Fibroids



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Endometriosis and fibroids are two of the most common gynecologic diseases, affecting approximately 10 and 25% of women, respectively. Both lead to severe disability and are often under-recognized and inadequately treated. Endometriosis is most commonly associated with pelvic pain and infertility; however, we have recently

identified multiple systemic effects of endometriosis. Early recognition of endometriosis and validation of the myriad symptoms will alleviate patient suffering and lead to more rapid recognition of the disease. Clinical diagnosis rather than relying on surgery will lead to earlier diagnosis and treatment. Fibroids can cause heavy and prolonged menstrual bleeding. Diagnosis can be rapidly determined with a physical exam and/or ultrasound. For both conditions medical and surgical treatments are available. Medical therapies should be the initial treatment for most women. First and second line medical therapies are similar for both diseases. Typically, treatment begins with an oral contraceptive; the recent availability of GnRH antagonist have allowed for efficacious and well tolerated second line therapies. Surgical therapies include minimally invasive options and more definitive therapies including hysterectomy. Treatment decisions should be based on severity of symptoms, long-term patient goals and desires, as well as prior experience with various medical therapies.