# Dietary changes may alleviate endometriosis symptoms, study finds



A recent study conducted by researchers at Edinburgh University has revealed significant findings regarding the impact of dietary changes on the symptoms of endometriosis, a condition affecting approximately 1.5 million women of reproductive age in the UK. The study, which included 2,599 participants from 51 countries, found that cutting out specific foods and beverages can lead to noticeable reductions in pain for sufferers.

Endometriosis is characterised by the presence of tissue similar to the lining of the womb growing in areas outside the uterus, leading to various symptoms including severe period pain, excessive bleeding, and discomfort during bowel movements or urination. According to Endometriosis UK, the average time taken for a diagnosis is over eight years from the initial doctor's appointment, and currently, there is no cure for the condition, although available treatments can manage symptoms.

The key findings from the Edinburgh University study indicate that participants who eliminated gluten and dairy from their diet saw a pain reduction in 45% of cases. Moreover, 53% of those who reduced their alcohol intake reported similar improvements, while 43% experienced decreased pain by cutting out coffee or caffeine. The research suggests that dietary modifications might optimise gut health, which can play a role in relieving symptoms. Philippa Saunders, the senior author of the study and a professor of reproductive steroids at the University of Edinburgh, stated, "It really feels like we are on the cusp of something pretty big with understanding how diet affects endometriosis symptoms."

The findings, published in JAMA Network Open, a journal of the American Medical Association, further indicate that the reduction of alcohol could alleviate pain due to its oestrogen-like effects, which may exacerbate symptoms. Additionally, a focus on gut health by avoiding certain food items could particularly help diminish inflammation in the body, potentially reducing pain levels.

Jo Hanley, a specialist adviser for Endometriosis UK, shared insights on the study’s implications, noting the importance of ongoing research into the intersection of diet and endometriosis management. "We follow with interest studies on the potential impact and role of diet and nutrition in the management of endometriosis. There is a need for more high-quality evidence, but I've heard many a success story from individuals where dietary changes have led to improved pain,” she remarked.

Researchers also noted that 40% of participants reported less pain when they avoided processed foods, and approximately a third experienced relief by eliminating garlic and onion from their diets. However, these findings are based on self-reported data, and experts highlight the need for larger studies to establish a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between dietary habits and endometriosis.

For individuals experiencing symptoms associated with endometriosis or other menstruation-related issues, consulting a GP is recommended for proper diagnosis and management recommendations.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.womenshealthmag.com/uk/food/a64404804/endometriosis-foods-to-avoid/> - This article supports the claim that dietary changes, such as eliminating gluten and dairy, can alleviate pain in individuals with endometriosis. It highlights that about 45% of participants who removed these items reported pain relief.
* <https://conexiant.com/endocrinology/articles/can-diet-changes-reduce-endometriosis-pain/> - This article corroborates that dietary modifications like reducing alcohol, gluten, dairy, and caffeine can lead to significant reductions in pain for endometriosis sufferers. It also notes the importance of further research into the effects of diet on endometriosis symptoms.
* <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC11959439/> - This study publication provides evidence that dietary changes and supplement use are commonly attempted by individuals with endometriosis to manage chronic pain. It focuses on the reduction of substances like alcohol, gluten, and caffeine as potentially beneficial strategies.
* <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2961033> - This link would direct to the JAMA Network Open publication, which includes the study by Edinburgh University researchers on the impact of dietary changes on endometriosis symptoms, although the specific URL isn't directly available from the provided search results.
* <https://www.endometriosis-uk.org/get-involved/news-and-campaigns/stories-and-case-studies> - Endometriosis UK provides general information and personal stories related to managing endometriosis, including the role of diet in symptom management. However, this URL does not directly support the specific findings mentioned in the article.