# Study reveals dietary changes may alleviate endometriosis symptoms in women



A significant study conducted by researchers at the University of Edinburgh has revealed noteworthy findings regarding dietary changes and their effects on women suffering from endometriosis. Endometriosis is a complex medical condition characterised by the growth of cells resembling those found in the uterine lining in other parts of the body. In the UK, it is estimated that approximately 1.5 million women of reproductive age live with this condition. According to Endometriosis UK, women often endure an extensive wait for a diagnosis, taking on average eight years and ten months from their first appointment with a general practitioner.

Published in JAMA Network Open, the study involved 2,599 participants who reported variations in their pain levels after altering their diets. Specifically, the researchers found that 45% of those who eliminated gluten and the same percentage of those who removed dairy from their diets noted a reduction in pain. Additionally, 53% of participants who consumed less alcohol experienced a decline in discomfort, while 43% reported similar benefits from discontinuing coffee or caffeine intake.

Professor Philippa Saunders, the senior author of the study and a professor of reproductive steroids at the University of Edinburgh, commented on the implications of the findings, stating, "It really feels like we are on the cusp of something pretty big with understanding how diet affects endometriosis symptoms. It is so important for women if they feel they can do something for themselves to tackle the pain of endometriosis – that is tremendously empowering," in an interview with The Guardian.

Researchers posit that the positive outcomes associated with cutting gluten and dairy may stem from fluctuations in gut bacteria composition. Furthermore, reducing caffeine could potentially improve sleep quality, enabling individuals better equipped to manage pain. The study also suggests that alcohol consumption might exacerbate symptoms, as it has effects similar to oestrogen—hormones that can promote the growth and development of endometrial-like cells outside the uterus.

The NHS outlines various symptoms associated with endometriosis, including severe menstrual pain that disrupts normal activities, heavy bleeding, pain during bowel movements or urination, and discomfort during or after sexual intercourse. Additionally, those affected may experience extreme fatigue, pain in the pelvic region, and mood-related issues.

The study also reported that cutting out processed foods was beneficial for 40% of participants, while one-third noted reductions in pain and bloating by eliminating garlic and onion from their diets. Jo Hanley, a specialist adviser for Endometriosis UK, acknowledged the interest in the impact of diet on endometriosis management, stating, "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, although unfortunately, others have reported no improvements."

Despite these promising findings, the study relied on self-reported data from women in 51 countries, including over 1,000 participants from the UK. As such, researchers indicate that further large-scale studies are essential for establishing a more definitive link between dietary habits and endometriosis symptoms. Women experiencing symptoms associated with endometriosis or other menstrual difficulties are advised to consult their healthcare providers.

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

## References

* <https://www.womenshealthmag.com/uk/food/a64404804/endometriosis-foods-to-avoid/> - This article highlights the findings from a study published in JAMA Network Open, indicating that dietary changes such as eliminating gluten, dairy, caffeine, and alcohol can reduce pain experienced by women with endometriosis.
* <https://conexiant.com/endocrinology/articles/can-diet-changes-reduce-endometriosis-pain/> - This article discusses the results of a large international survey on dietary modifications and supplements used by individuals with endometriosis to manage symptoms, including the benefits seen from reducing gluten, dairy, caffeine, and alcohol.
* <https://www.endometriosis-uk.org/about-endometriosis/diagnosis-and-referral> - This webpage provides information on endometriosis diagnosis and the average delay in receiving a diagnosis, which supports the claim that women often wait extensively for a diagnosis.
* <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/endometriosis/symptoms/> - This NHS webpage describes the common symptoms of endometriosis, including severe menstrual pain and dissatisfaction with normal activities, which aligns with the symptoms mentioned in the article.
* <https://www.research.ed.ac.uk/files/489722770/Survey_letter_JAMA_REV_accepted_Philippa_Saunders.pdf> - This PDF document provides detailed information on the study conducted by the University of Edinburgh regarding dietary modifications for endometriosis symptoms, supporting the specific findings mentioned in the article.