

## WHAT TO EXPECT AT INITIAL CONSULTATION

Your GP will refer you to a gynaecologist if he or she suspects that you have endometriosis based on the symptoms you have described. Make sure you are referred to a gynaecologist that has experience in treating patients with endometriosis.

At your initial consultation you will be asked to complete a form that will ask questions about your symptoms:-

- Are your periods painful
- Is intercourse painful
- Do you have pelvic pain at other times
- Do you have pain when you open your bowels/pass urine
- When was your last period
- How often do you have periods and are they regular
- How long do your periods last
- Do you have bleeding at any other time of the cycle
- Do you bleed when you open your bowels or pass urine

Your gynaecologist will take a full medical and gynaecological history. The purpose of asking the questions is to try to make a diagnosis. However, if endometriosis has already been diagnosed the answers to these questions may help to determine whether treatment has been effective or whether the condition is getting worse in terms of new symptoms. Some patients write down their gynaecological history beforehand so as not to forget anything.

You will have an abdominal examination, a vaginal examination and sometimes a rectal examination. An abdominal examination involves placing a hand on the abdomen to feel for tenderness and any masses e.g. an ovarian cyst although this has to be large to be felt on abdominal examination.

A vaginal examination involves the insertion of a speculum into the vagina to look at the cervix and the posterior fornix because this can occasionally be the site of an endometriotic nodule. This is typically done with the patient lying on her back and her knees apart but can also be done with the patient on her left side and her knees drawn up to her chest

A bimanual examination involves two fingers being placed in the vagina whilst the other hand is placed on the abdominal wall. The doctor then pushes upwards with his fingers and downwards with the other hand feeling the uterus.

A Transvaginal Ultrasound Examination (TVS) will be done either by your doctor or by a radiographer.

Following all these examinations you and your doctor will discuss the findings and decide on what action to take.

