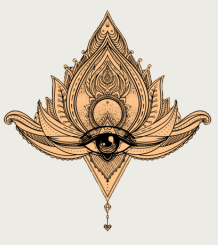




# Endometriosis: how to combine holistic and traditional medicine for your healing

By Carolina Norville





# Disclaimer

**The information, including but not limited to, text, graphics, images and other material contained on this E-book and my website are for informational purposes only. No material on this book or site is intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis or treatment.**

**The World Health Organization (WHO) states “There is currently no known cure for endometriosis and treatment is usually aimed at controlling symptoms.”<sup>1</sup> My goal with this e-book is to provide resources and information to help you make the best decisions for your own care. I encourage you to consider medical professionals’ advice, internet resources and research. But above all I urge you to listen to your intuition and practice self-awareness to make the decisions that are best aligned with your individual and unique path of healing.**

**Throughout this e-book I will provide links to references that have helped me navigate this health condition. I hope they help you as well.**

1. World Health Organization. (2023, March 24). Endometriosis Fact Sheet. WHO. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/endometriosis#:~:text=It%20is%20a%20chronic%20disease,depression%2C%20anxiety%2C%20and%20infertility>.



# **Contents**

<b>My Story</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>What is endometriosis?</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Do I have endometriosis?</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Holistic approach to endo</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>References</b>	<b>11</b>

# Hi, I'm Carolina Norville.

My name is Carolina Lamartine Norville. I am originally from Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and moved to the USA in 2018 to work in construction. I am currently a Project Manager in a large general contractor in Las Vegas, NV. I was missing doing something more outside of work, and throughout lots of therapy and different experiences, decided to take level 1 of Sound Healing Academy's Sound Healing certification. I also am currently enrolled in my 200-hour Yoga Teacher Training with a focus on Integrative and Trauma Therapy Yoga.

My journey into learning and sharing really got put in motion in a quest to self-heal. In 2021 I was diagnosed with endometriosis and ovarian cysts. In 2022 I went through surgery to remove a large cyst and lost my left tube and ovary. I did all the things doctors tell you to do and beyond. Improved my diet, although I already ate pretty clean, increased exercise frequency and started removing toxins from my daily life. I also did traditional psychoanalytical therapy once a week.

Finally at the end of 2022 when a new cyst appeared on my remaining ovary, I knew I needed to dig deeper. Why wasn't I healing? I started acupuncture which was a game changer in my treatment of endometriosis and slowed down the growth of cysts. I started going deeper into myself, my traumas, and what I needed to do to release stored emotions. I realized traditional therapy gave me answers, but I felt like I was left holding a hot potato in my hands, wondering "what do I do with this"?

So I started seeing an amazing therapist that introduced me to cacao and breathwork ceremonies. I started going to sound baths and meditations, even having a 1-on-1 session with an incredible healer. I started researching and understanding more about nutrition's role in hormonal balance, but how at the end of the day you are the only one capable of deciding what is best for your body.

I realized then that there is a gap between Western medicine and all the holistic treatment options. And that no one should be forced to choose one or the other - these medicines can work side by side to bring health and wellness to all.

My mission is to help women going through endometriosis or other illnesses, and people in general, find the best comprehensive, holistic care for themselves. My responsibilities will be sharing my story, providing guidance, and in the near future facilitating sound healing and other modalities of health support.

Get in touch if you want to know more or have any questions for me!





WHAT IS ENDOMETRIOSIS?

# Understanding Endometriosis

According to the Mayo Clinic <sup>2</sup>, endometriosis is an often-painful condition in which tissue that is similar to the inner lining of the uterus grows outside the uterus. It often affects the ovaries, fallopian tubes and the tissue lining the pelvis. Rarely, endometriosis growths may be found beyond the area where pelvic organs are located.

Endometriosis tissue acts as the lining inside the uterus would – it thickens, breaks down and bleeds with each menstrual cycle. But it grows in places where it doesn't belong, and it doesn't leave the body. When endometriosis involves the ovaries, cysts called endometriomas may form. Surrounding tissue can become irritated and form scar tissue. Bands of fibrous tissue called adhesions also may form. These can cause pelvic tissues and organs to stick to each other.

It causes a chronic inflammatory reaction that may result in the formation of scar tissue (adhesions, fibrosis) within the pelvis and other parts of the body.

According to the World Health Organization <sup>3</sup>, there is no known way to prevent endometriosis. There is no cure, but its symptoms can be treated with medicines or, in some cases, surgery. The cause of endometriosis is unknown, but below are some possible causes:

- Retrograde menstruation is when menstrual blood containing endometrial cells flows back through the fallopian tubes and into the pelvic cavity at the time that blood is flowing out of the body through the cervix and vagina during periods. Retrograde menstruation can result in endometrial-like cells being deposited outside the uterus where they can implant and grow.
- Cellular metaplasia is when cells change from one form to another. Cells outside the uterus change into endometrial-like cells and start to grow.
- Stem cells can give rise to the disease, which then spreads through the body via blood and lymphatic vessels.

Other factors may also contribute to the growth or persistence of ectopic endometrial tissue. For example, endometriosis is known to be dependent on estrogen, which increases the inflammation, growth and pain associated with the disease. However, the relationship between estrogen and endometriosis is complex since the absence of estrogen does not always mean the absence of endometriosis.

2. Mayo Clinic. (2023, October 12). Endometriosis. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/endometriosis/symptoms-causes/syc-20354656>

3. World Health Organization. (2023, March 24). Endometriosis Fact Sheet. WHO. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/endometriosis#:~:text=It%20is%20a%20chronic%20disease,depression%2C%20anxiety%2C%20and%20infertility.>



DO I HAVE ENDOMETRIOSIS?

# My Symptoms and Common Symptoms

## My Symptoms

Some of my symptoms started when I was really young. It took over 10 years to get diagnosed with this condition. My most frequent symptoms were:

- Pelvic pain
- Very heavy bleeding (would commonly get leaks)
- Ovarian cyst filled with blood (chocolate cyst, or endometrioma)
- Episodes (or flare-ups): outside of menstruation, moments where my pressure would drop and I'd have excruciating pelvic and abdominal pain, accompanied by vomit and diarrhea. For the days following up the episode, I'd have tenderness in my pelvis and abdomen. These happened 3 times.
- Pain during intercourse
- Abdominal bloating
- Headaches
- Strong emotional PMS symptoms

## Other Common Endo Symptoms

- Pelvic pain even outside of menstrual period
- Urination problems
- Bleeding between periods
- Periods longer than 7 days
- Constipation or other bowel issues
- Digestive issues
- Nausea
- Chronic fatigue
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Infertility

.4

## Getting a Diagnosis

Diagnosing endometriosis is not an easy endeavor. It takes an average of 8 years of symptoms and investigations for a woman to be diagnosed. For example, I went to a gastroenterologist thinking maybe I had leaky gut, IBS (irritable bowel syndrome), celiac disease or another digestive tract illness. Then I went through several ultrasounds and MRIs until getting to the point of deciding to have laparoscopic surgery to remove the large cyst on my ovary. That was the first time I was officially diagnosed with endometriosis.

This is commonly what happens to women with these symptoms. Surgery is the most definitive way to diagnose endometriosis. However, there are specialists starting to diagnose endo via ultrasound. This requires special attention to each woman's case, so unfortunately it is rare to find doctors and radiologists that take the time to do this. Brazil and Canada are two countries with advanced diagnostic tools. Dr. Ana Luisa Alencar de Nicola .5 and Dr. Mathew Leonardi .6 are two doctors exploring this resource.

4. Mayo Clinic. (2023, October 12). Endometriosis. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/endometriosis/symptoms-causes/syc-20354656>

5. CURA (n.d.). Cura Medicina Diagnostica. <https://cura.com.br/com-protocolo-exclusivo-cura-oferece-precisao-no-mapeamento-da-endometriose-por-ultrassom/>

6. Langereis, K. (2021, March 25). Imaging for Endometriosis: An Interview with Dr. Mathew Leonardi (Part I). <https://endometriosisnetwork.com/blog/imaging-for-endometriosis-leonardi-part-i>



## DO I HAVE ENDOMETRIOSIS?

Going through invasive surgery for a diagnosis might not sound like the best idea. However, if endometriosis is found, during surgery the doctor can work on removing focus points, excising cysts, and removing adhesions.

**Finding the right surgeon for endometriosis surgery is CRITICAL. A regular obstetrician/gynecologist with little to no experience in endometriosis will probably not give you as good of care as a doctor specialized in this health condition.**

Another thing to keep in mind is there are two processes to remove endo focus points: ablation and excision. Research has shown that excision is preferable over ablation. <sup>7</sup> <sup>8</sup>. Since ablation consists of burning the lesions, leaving behind damaged tissue that rarely recovers. Meanwhile, excision is the cut and removal of endometrial growth, be it tissue or endometriomas (cysts), and provides a better healing chance for ovarian or other organs' tissue. Excision surgery can be more invasive and requires the surgeon to have further training. Make sure to discuss with your potential surgeon and find the option that feels best for you and your needs.

Hormonal therapy, such as the use of contraceptive pills, are another popular option to treat endometriosis that doesn't require a diagnosis. However, pills are not guaranteed effective, and their effects might only last while you're taking them, meaning if you want to get off hormones or get pregnant, endometriosis symptoms might come back. I personally chose to not get treated with hormones, but know of women that had success with such treatments. It all depends on your comfort level and what feels right for your body. This is why it is so important to always seek the care of an ob/gyn.

### WHERE TO START?



If you believe you might have endometriosis, start by finding an endometriosis specialist near you. I have found that more and more doctors are specializing in this disease, which is no surprise since it is found to affect 1 in 10 women according to the WHO <sup>9</sup>, and about 25 to 50% of infertile women turn out to have endometriosis <sup>10</sup>. There are also a lot of doctors seeing patients online, and they might be able to help you get situated, diagnosed, or even set up with a recommended surgeon in your area. If time and finances permit, you might be able to travel to have surgery with a doctor that fits what you are looking for.

You can also start seeing a health, nutrition, or holistic coach or practitioner that helps women with endometriosis. This is my goal when I establish my coaching practice.

There are a lot of naturopathic doctors and practitioners that believe another cause of endometriosis is the lack of balance in our current lives. Sleep, nutrition, mental and emotional health, mindfulness and physical activity are fundamental to our well-being, but are often put aside in favor of more demanding needs such as work, family, bills, and other daily responsibilities.

Let's dive more into the holistic approach to endometriosis.

7. Pundir, J., Omanwa, K., Kooor, E., Pundir, V., Lancaster, G., & Barton-Smith, P. (2017). Laparoscopic Excision Versus Ablation for Endometriosis-associated Pain: An Updated Systematic Review and Meta-analysis. *Journal of minimally invasive gynecology*, 24(5), 747–756. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jmig.2017.04.008>

8. Fogelson, MD, N. (n.d.). Excision vs Ablation for Endometriosis. <https://www.nwendometriosis.com/excision-vs-ablation>

9. World Health Organization. (2023, March 24). Endometriosis Fact Sheet. WHO. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/endometriosis#:~:text=It%20is%20a%20chronic%20disease,depression%2C%20anxiety%2C%20and%20infertility.>

10. Bulletti, C., Coccia, M. E., Battistoni, S., & Borini, A. (2010). Endometriosis and infertility. *Journal of assisted reproduction and genetics*, 27(8), 441–447. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10815-010-9436-1>



HOLISTIC APPROACH TO ENDOMETRIOSIS

# Body - Mind - Spirit

## Creating your treatment plan

When it comes to body, mind, and spirit, there is no one-size-fits-all approach. Even with all our similarities and if we're dealing with the same health condition, each woman will have their own unique needs and areas to work on.

There is no separation between our body, mind, and spirit. If the body is ill, that means the mind and/or the spirit are also involved. Our activity levels, emotions, stress responses, diet, mindfulness, spiritual practice - it all ties together to either bring upon balance and well-being, or unbalance and illness to ourselves. To treat and control endometriosis, these are some tips to focus on to rebalance body, mind & spirit:



### Nutrition

Endometriosis is an inflammatory disease. Cutting out inflammatory oils and foods such as gluten, dairy, and poor quality meat can drastically improve symptoms. An elimination diet is recommended to start with.

### Mindfulness

Journaling, meditation, and other self-awareness and self-knowledge practices can help so much with endometriosis. Managing stress response is a huge part of treating any illness, so your body can focus on recovery.



### Physical Activity

Yoga is an amazing exercise to incorporate into your routine. It is also a philosophy that can help further than the body. Syncing your physical activity with your menstrual cycle can be very helpful. Doing a mix of high intensity, cardio, and gentle exercise can be beneficial to endo.



## Sound Healing

Sound Healing is a powerful therapy that combines different healing sounds, music, and sound healing instruments to improve our multidimensional well-being .11. An ancient medicine used by many civilizations, sound healing is a powerful way to move energy and rebalance yourself.



## Therapy

Talk therapy and other forms of therapy can help bring awareness to traumas and release them. It is known that our body holds on to emotions .12, and talking about them can help release them. Movement and sound also help.

## Sleep

Getting enough and good quality sleep is fundamental for our health. Sleeping in dark environments, free of noise and distractions, helps us get better quality sleep .13.



## Acupuncture

Acupuncture is an ancient treatment used to stimulate movement and move stagnant blood. It is practiced as part of Traditional Chinese Medicine, but can be combined with modern treatments.

## Much more ...

Cacao ceremonies, herbs, plants, florals, breathwork, support groups, drum circles, aromatherapy, crystals, astrology, and so much more can be useful resources on your path to healing, discovery, and more self-love than you could ever imagine.



11. Sound Healing Academy. (n.d.). *What is Sound Healing?* <https://www.academyofsoundhealing.com/what-is-sound-healing>

12. Nummenmaa, L., Glerean, E., Hari, R., & Hietanen, J. K. (2014). Bodily maps of emotions. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, 111(2), 646–651. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1321664111>

13. News In Health (n.d.). Good Sleep for Good Health. NIH. <https://newsinhealth.nih.gov/2021/04/good-sleep-good-health>



## CONCLUSION

# Seek what you wish for

I am proud to say that today I have my endometriosis under control. And it is the result of the combination of everything I've done and continue to do, both in traditional Western medicine and holistic approaches to my body, mind, and spirit. I hope that this e-book has given you enough information to start your own research and look for the treatment approach that best fits your specific needs.

My hunger for knowledge continues to grow, and I am currently pursuing my Sound Healing Certification, as well as my Integrative Yoga teacher training. In the future for me is a health and nutrition coach certification, as well as to increase my Sound Healing practice. I am passionate about the turn my life has taken to work in this space. I know this might sound weird, but in some ways I am grateful that endometriosis sent me on the path to seek healing and knowledge. I wish it hadn't been so hard and painful to get here, but I am happy with this version of me and am excited and curious about what is still to come.

If you like this material, I invite you to give me a follow on Instagram at @seekingcarol and take a look at my website [www.seekingcarol.com](http://www.seekingcarol.com). I am going to share a lot more in these two platforms! I also welcome your feedback and any content ideas.

I do not wish endometriosis or any health condition on anyone. But if you're here and faced with an illness, I invite you to ask yourself not "why is this happening to me?" but "what is this trying to show me?". You might be surprised with what comes.

My hope for you is that you find balance and health in your life. And I welcome you to live life seeking for what you wish for. Seeking for more than what we can see, and seeking for yourself beyond your physical body.

Thank you for reading this. Please reach out if you feel I can help you on your journey.

With love,

**- CAROLINA NORVILLE**



# References

1. World Health Organization. (2023, March 24). Endometriosis Fact Sheet. WHO. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/endometriosis#:~:text=It%20is%20a%20chronic%20disease,depression%2C%20anxiety%2C%20and%20infertility.>
2. Mayo Clinic. (2023, October 12). Endometriosis. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/endometriosis/symptoms-causes/syc-20354656>
3. World Health Organization. (2023, March 24). Endometriosis Fact Sheet. WHO. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/endometriosis#:~:text=It%20is%20a%20chronic%20disease,depression%2C%20anxiety%2C%20and%20infertility.>
4. Mayo Clinic. (2023, October 12). Endometriosis. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/endometriosis/symptoms-causes/syc-20354656>
5. CURA (n.d.). Cura Medicina Diagnostica. <https://cura.com.br/com-protocolo-exclusivo-cura-oferece-precisao-no-mapeamento-da-endometriose-por-ultrassom/>
6. Langereis, K. (2021, March 25). Imaging for Endometriosis: An Interview with Dr. Mathew Leonardi (Part I). <https://endometriosisnetwork.com/blog/imaging-for-endometriosis-leonardi-part-i>
7. Pundir, J., Omanwa, K., Kovoov, E., Pundir, V., Lancaster, G., & Barton-Smith, P. (2017). Laparoscopic Excision Versus Ablation for Endometriosis-associated Pain: An Updated Systematic Review and Meta-analysis. *Journal of minimally invasive gynecology*, 24(5), 747–756. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jmig.2017.04.008>
8. Fogelson, MD, N. (n.d.). Excision vs Ablation for Endometriosis. <https://www.nwendometriosis.com/excision-vs-ablation>
9. World Health Organization. (2023, March 24). Endometriosis Fact Sheet. WHO. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/endometriosis#:~:text=It%20is%20a%20chronic%20disease,depression%2C%20anxiety%2C%20and%20infertility.>
10. Bulletti, C., Coccia, M. E., Battistoni, S., & Borini, A. (2010). Endometriosis and infertility. *Journal of assisted reproduction and genetics*, 27(8), 441–447. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10815-010-9436-1>
11. Sound Healing Academy. (n.d.). *What is Sound Healing?* <https://www.academyofsoundhealing.com/what-is-sound-healing>
12. Nummenmaa, L., Glerean, E., Hari, R., & Hietanen, J. K. (2014). Bodily maps of emotions. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, 111(2), 646–651. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1321664111>
13. News In Health (n.d.). Good Sleep for Good Health. NIH. <https://newsinhealth.nih.gov/2021/04/good-sleep-good-health>