



The Center for Women

Obstetrics & Gynecology

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Dysmenorrhea

Dysmenorrhea is occasional painful menstrual cramps that have no other recognized physical cause. This may cause a woman to seek medical attention if they can not be controlled with over the counter medications. This pain can be from mild to severe and can be pain in the lower abdomen, back or upper legs. There are other symptoms that may occur with dysmenorrhea which are headaches, nausea, dizziness, fainting, diarrhea or constipation.

Dysmenorrhea is when the uterus contracts due to a hormone that is produced during the menstrual cycle. Some women produce more of the hormone while other may just be more sensitive to the pain.

Dysmenorrhea is seen most commonly in females between the ages of 20 and 24. After the hormones are balanced in the uterus, the pain usually goes away but may take 1 to 2 years.

There is a secondary dysmenorrhea which is a painful menstrual cramping caused by a physical problem other than menstruation. Physical problems that can cause this type of cramping include:

- Endometriosis
- Ovarian cysts, polyps or fibroids
- Infections of the pelvic area
- Intrauterine devices
- Pregnancy
- Congenital problems
- Post-operative from cauterly, cryotherapy, conization, radiation, biopsy or IUD insertion

Consult a physician for proper diagnosis if the pain is not controlled with over the counter medications.