

## **Help is Available at Atrium Health Navicent for Women Suffering from Painful Endometriosis** *This painful condition affects 6.5 million women*

**MACON, Ga., March 28, 2024** – March is National Endometriosis Awareness Month and doctors at Atrium Health Navicent want women to know that treatment is available for painful periods.

Endometriosis is a condition affecting a woman's uterus. The uterus is lined with tissue (endometrium), and endometriosis occurs when the kind of tissue that normally lines the uterus grows somewhere else. It can grow on the ovaries, behind the uterus, on the bowels or on the bladder. These cells swell and bleed under hormonal influence, causing scarring and pain.

It is estimated that 6.5 million women (about 1 in 10) in the United States have endometriosis. While the cause of endometriosis is unknown, risk factors include having a mother, sister or daughter with endometriosis; starting your period before age 11; monthly cycles that are less than 27 days; never giving birth; going through menopause at an older age; and menstrual cycles that are heavy and last more than seven days.

Symptoms of endometriosis may sound familiar to many women. They include pelvic pain, infertility, painful menstrual cramps, pain during or after sex, spotting or bleeding between periods and pain with bowel movement or urination, especially during your period.

"Many symptoms of endometriosis are similar to other issues women face, and therefore can sometimes be difficult to diagnose," said Dr. R. Edward Betcher, OB-GYN department chair for Atrium Health Navicent and a specialist in minimally invasive gynecological surgery. "There's also a hereditary component and some women think that what they are experiencing is normal because that's what their mother or aunts experience. This may lead to hesitation to talk to their doctors about it."

Physicians urge women to speak to their provider if they are experiencing these symptoms.

"We encourage women experiencing any endometriosis symptoms to speak up and tell their health care provider. Just because you may know other women with these symptoms, it doesn't mean that it's normal. You don't have to suffer through painful periods. There are things we can do to help," Betcher said.

With a complete exam and imaging of the affected area, a gynecologist can help develop a treatment plan. While there is no cure for endometriosis, successful treatment options include pain relievers and hormone therapy. If a patient's condition is not responding well to treatment, laparoscopy or surgery may be performed.

"The important thing to know is that we believe you. If you tell us you're having these issues, we will evaluate you and treat the issues," Betcher said. "Atrium Health Navicent is invested in women's health, and there are many ways to improve quality of life for women with endometriosis, and that all starts by talking to your doctor."

[Atrium Health Navicent Women's Care](#) is now seeing patients in Macon and Forsyth. To schedule an appointment, call 478-633-1821.

### **About Atrium Health Navicent**

Atrium Health Navicent is the leading provider of health care in central and south Georgia and is committed to its mission of elevating health and well-being through compassionate care. Atrium Health Navicent is part of [Advocate Health](#), which is headquartered in Charlotte, North Carolina, and is the third-largest nonprofit health system in the United States, created from the combination of Atrium Health and Advocate Aurora Health. Atrium Health Navicent provides high-quality, personalized care in 53 specialties at more than 50 facilities throughout the region. As part of the largest, integrated, nonprofit health system in the Southeast, it is also able to tap into some of the nation's leading medical experts and specialists with Atrium Health, allowing it to provide the best care close to home – including advanced innovations in virtual medicine and care. Throughout its 125-year history in the community, Atrium Health Navicent has remained dedicated to enhancing health and wellness for individuals throughout the region through nationally

recognized quality care, community health initiatives and collaborative partnerships. It is also one of the leading teaching hospitals in the region, helping to ensure viability for rural health care for the next generation. For more information, please visit [www.NavicentHealth.org](http://www.NavicentHealth.org).

**About Advocate Health**

[Advocate Health](#) is the third-largest nonprofit integrated health system in the United States – created from the combination of Advocate Aurora Health and [Atrium Health](#). Providing care under the names [Advocate Health Care](#) in Illinois, Atrium Health in the Carolinas, Georgia and Alabama, and [Aurora Health Care](#) in Wisconsin, Advocate Health is a national leader in clinical innovation, health outcomes, consumer experience and value-based care, with [Wake Forest University School of Medicine](#) serving as the academic core of the enterprise. Headquartered in Charlotte, North Carolina, Advocate Health serves nearly 6 million patients and is engaged in hundreds of clinical trials and research studies. It is nationally recognized for its expertise in cardiology, neurosciences, oncology, pediatrics and rehabilitation, as well as organ transplants, burn treatments and specialized musculoskeletal programs. Advocate Health employs nearly 155,000 team members across 68 hospitals and over 1,000 care locations and offers one of the nation’s largest graduate medical education programs with over 2,000 residents and fellows across more than 200 programs. Committed to equitable care for all, Advocate Health provides nearly \$6 billion in annual community benefits.

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