

## **Atrium Health Navicent Physicians Offer Help for Women with Endometriosis**

*This painful condition affects 1 in 10 women*

**MACON, Ga., March 9, 2023** – 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 problem 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 1 in 10 women 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; 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.

"There is good data that most women see anywhere from three to five physicians before a diagnosis is made. It has to do with the fact that symptoms can be similar to other issues that they face," said Dr. R. Edward Betcher, OB-GYN department chair for Atrium Health Navicent and a specialist in minimally invasive gynecological surgery. "There's a hereditary component and so a lot of women think that what they experience is normal and are reluctant to discuss it. Studies say a third of women find it difficult to discuss it with a provider."

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

"You are not alone. Just because you may know other women with these symptoms, it doesn't mean that it's normal. Not too many folks are thrilled about having a period, but if it's difficult to manage, that's not something women have to put up with," Betcher said. "If it's an impact to their lives, they need to talk with their provider."

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. "We take the approach that this is a long-term condition that needs to be managed throughout a woman's life, not just something we treat once and that's it. Atrium Health Navicent is invested in women's health, and there's a lot of ways to improve quality of life for women with endometriosis."

Atrium Health Navicent Women's Care OBGYN is now seeing patient in Macon and Forsyth. To schedule an appointment, call 478-633-1821. To find a doctor, visit [www.NavicentHealth.org](http://www.NavicentHealth.org) and click "Find A Doctor."

### **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](http://Advocate Health), which is headquartered in Charlotte, North Carolina, and is the fifth-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).

###