

# HER HEALTH

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PAGES 33 - 39



## Ovarian cysts & pelvic pain

By DR. CHRISTY KENKEL

When it comes to pelvic pain, there are several potential causes to consider. Besides a gynecologic source, pelvic pain can also originate from gastrointestinal and urologic origins.

Potential gynecologic origins to pelvic pain include pregnancy or pregnancy complications (such as ectopic pregnancy or miscarriage), benign ovarian cysts, ovarian torsion, uterine fibroids, endometriosis, adenomyosis, fallopian tube inflammation, pelvic infection including pelvic inflammatory disease, and more rarely, malignancies of the ovaries, fallopian tubes, uterus, or cervix.

Ovarian Cysts can be asymptomatic, or they can cause pelvic pain, pelvic pressure, and painful intercourse. Up to 15% of women will be found to have an ovarian cyst at one time or another in their lives. Ovarian cysts are more commonly benign than malignant, especially in a premenopausal woman. Despite being benign, they can still rupture, causing pain (sometimes severe pain), and they can also twist the ovary, causing an ovarian torsion, which is generally a surgical emergency.

Most cases of benign ovarian cysts in a premenopausal woman occur due to a disruption in the ovulation process, and can be filled with clear or bloody fluid; these are typically what we refer to as functional cysts. Many times, functional cysts will resolve within 6 months and don't require surgery. However, if detected, the patient should be monitored for signs of cyst rupture or ovarian torsion. Other types of benign ovarian cysts included endometriomas (cysts that are filled with fluid from endometriosis), benign dermoid cysts, or more rarely tubo-ovarian abscesses caused by pelvic inflammatory disease. These conditions may more readily need surgery depending on other factors at hand and their management should involve thorough discussion with a physician.

Postmenopausal women can also develop cysts. Cysts in a postmenopausal woman are carefully screened for certain criteria to determine if malignancy is of concern.

Please contact your doctor's office if you experience severe pelvic pain or chronic pelvic pain. It can be crucial to your health and well being to find the source of your pain. Obtaining a visit with your doctor could help alleviate painful symptoms!

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