

Clinical presentation: Suspected chronic pelvic pain

Refer to: Gynaecologist ± multidisciplinary pain service (Consider urogynaecology, gastroenterology or pelvic physiotherapy as appropriate)

Urgency: Routine referral (expedite if severe symptoms or functional impact)

Chronic pelvic pain is persistent or recurrent pelvic pain lasting ≥6 months, which can significantly impact quality of life and mental health. It may arise from gynaecological, urological, gastrointestinal, musculoskeletal or neuropathic causes. It is complex and often requires a multidisciplinary approach in management. Early referral supports diagnosis, restores quality of life and may prevent central sensitisation.

When to refer

- Pelvic pain persisting ≥6 months
- Pain not responding to initial GP management (e.g. simple analgesia, hormonal therapy)
- Suspected endometriosis (cyclical pain, dysmenorrhoea, dyspareunia)
- Deep dyspareunia or pain with bowel/bladder function
- Associated infertility or subfertility
- Significant impact on daily function, work, or mental health
- Unclear diagnosis after initial assessment

Initial GP work up

Where clinically appropriate and without delaying referral:

- Pregnancy test (to exclude pregnancy-related causes)
- STI screening ± urine culture as indicated
- Pelvic ultrasound (transvaginal preferred)
- Trial of simple analgesia ± hormonal therapy (e.g. COCP)
- Consider screening for mental health comorbidity

When to refer urgently

- New or rapidly worsening pelvic pain
- Suspicion of malignancy (e.g. unexplained weight loss, pelvic mass, postmenopausal bleeding)
- Systemic symptoms (fever, sepsis concern)
- Severe pain requiring escalation beyond primary care
- Red flags for non-gynaecological causes (e.g. acute abdomen features)

Information to include in referral

- Duration, nature, and pattern of pain (cyclical vs non-cyclical)
- Associated symptoms (bowel, bladder, sexual, menstrual)
- Impact on function and quality of life
- Examination findings
- Investigation results (imaging, pathology)
- Treatments trialed and response
- Obstetric and gynaecological history
- Relevant medical, surgical, and psychosocial history
- Cross referral to other practitioners (pain specialists, physiotherapist, psychologist)

Your referral is
always welcome.

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