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10 Celebs Open Up About Their Personal Struggles With Endometriosis

It's crucial to keep talking about it.

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 **Kate Bratskeir**
Food and Health Editor, The Huffington Post 

[Endometriosis](#) is way more common than you'd think, considering how little we talk about the condition. One in every 10 women in the U.S. is affected by endometriosis, and [176 million women worldwide have the disorder](#).

[The disorder](#), in which the tissue that normally lines the inside of the uterus grows outside of it, is often extremely painful. Endometriosis can make having sex and using the bathroom uncomfortable or agonizing, cause painful periods and [may even lead to fertility problems](#), according to the Mayo Clinic.

In recent months, a series of prominent women, including Padma Lakshmi and Lena Dunham, have spoken publicly about their personal battles with the disorder. Their voices are important because, as Lakshmi put it, "If I don't talk about it — or women like me don't talk about it — [what hope does the next generation of young girls have?](#)"

In other words, in order to de-stigmatize and raise awareness about endometriosis, we have to keep talking about it. Below, find 10 powerful women who used their voices and spoke bravely about their battles living with the condition.

1 Padma Lakshmi

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Lakshmi, who was diagnosed at 36, is an outspoken advocate for education about the disease. She is also the co-founder of the [Endometriosis Foundation of America](#).

Lakshmi recently told Entertainment Weekly that the condition may have contributed to her divorce from author Salman Rushie. “I think, yes, endometriosis was definitely a major reason that my marriage failed,” she said.

“I don’t think either of us understood it at the time – for as smart and intelligent as Salman is. I think that’s also because I hid it to a certain degree. Not intentionally, but [it’s weird to talk about your period all the time](#). It’s the least sexy thing in the world to do.”

2 Halsey



Gus Stewart via Getty Images

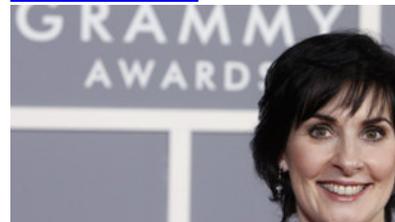
The 21-year-old “[New Americana](#)“ singer recently opened up about her battle with endometriosis with a [very inspiring Twitter message](#). She wrote:

“Emo moment; but if any of you suffer from Endometriosis please know you aren’t



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alone. I know how excruciatingly painful it can be and how discouraging the disease can be. To feel like it's gonna limit you because of how debilitating it is. To miss school and work, or even worse to GO and suffer through it anyway feeling like a prisoner in your own body. To maybe be worried about 'never having kids,' or dealing with crazy treatment suggestions. I was recently diagnosed after years of suffering and finding myself doubled over backstage in the middle of my sets, or fighting back tears on an airplane, or even being in so much pain I would vomit or faint. With doctors essentially telling me I was being a big baby about my period, or misdiagnosing PCOS, etc etc. Finding out that I have endo was the most bittersweet moment because it meant I wasn't crazy! I wasn't a 'baby'! I had every right to be feeling like the world was caving in. But it was terrifying to find out. Just know I'm here if you want to vent. I have managed to live a wild, incredible, and unpredictable life with Endo, and I'm here for you! x"

3 Whoopi Goldberg



Matthew Eisman via Getty Images

Goldberg has known about her endometriosis for a long time, and was surprised to learn that so many women lacked knowledge about the condition.

"It never occurred to me that [somehow women didn't know about it](#)," she said at the Endo Foundation's 2009 Blossom Ball.

"You have to take whatever stigma people think that is there," she said the same evening. "You have to take it. It's not male or female. It has nothing to do with that. It has to do with, here's a disease you don't know about and you need to know about it. It's that simple. It's not rocket science."

She continues to be an advocate for raising awareness.

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4 Lena Dunham



Nicholas Hunt via Getty Images

The “Girls” star announced she’ll be [skipping the press tour](#) for the newest season of the HBO series because of endometriosis.

“[I am currently going through a rough patch with the illness and my body](#) (along with my amazing doctors) let me know, in no uncertain terms, that it’s time to rest,” Dunham wrote in an Instagram post.

Soon after the post, Dunham was [hospitalized for a ruptured ovarian cyst](#).

She wrote of her condition earlier in her 2014 memoir *Not That Kind Of Girl*, describing the pain as feeling like “someone had poured a drop of vinegar inside of me, followed by a sprinkle of baking soda. It bubbled and fizzed and went where it would.”

5 Tia Mowry-Hardict



Michael Tran via Getty Images

Because of her endometriosis, Mowry underwent two surgeries and changed her lifestyle in order to conceive.

“Despite my diagnosis [I still wanted to try and have a baby](#), but not being able to have kids was an immediate fear,” she told Parents. “It made me feel out of control.”

The famous twin now has [positively adorable](#) four-year-old son, Cree.

6 Susan Sarandon



AFP via Getty Images

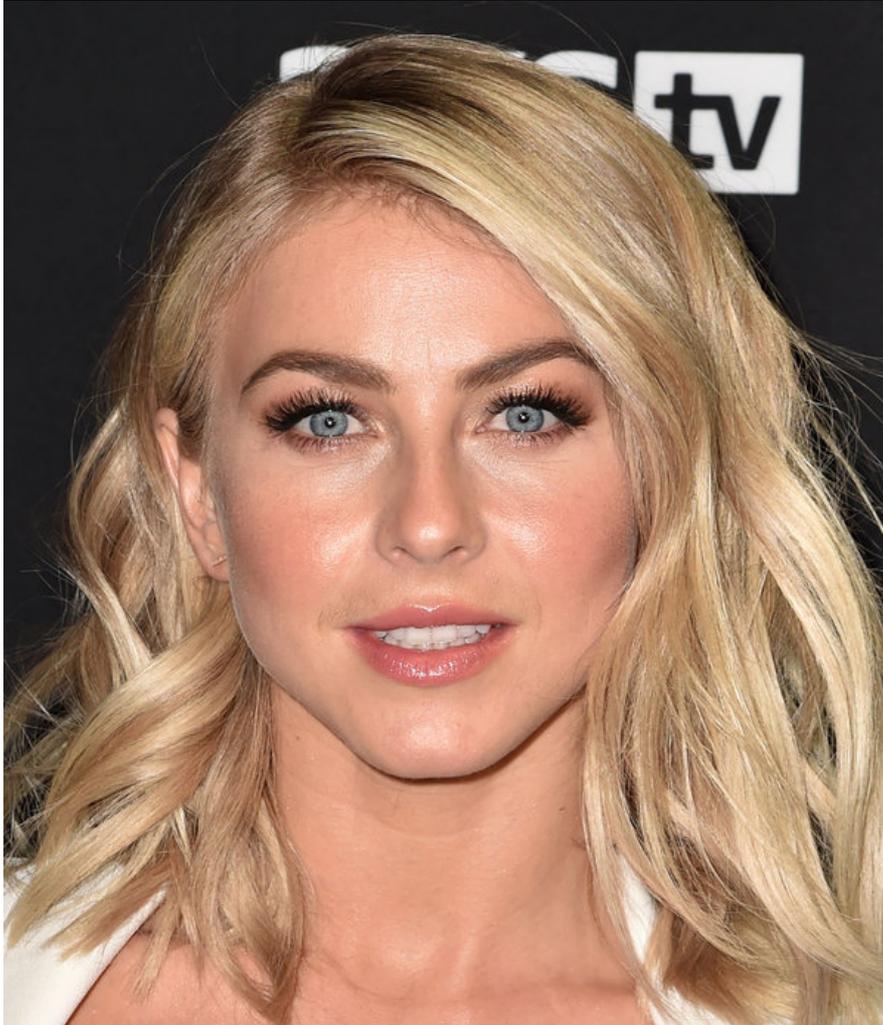
“When all you know is pain [you don’t know that that is not normal](#),” said Sarandon, who became aware of her condition in 1983 and has given advice for men on how they can help.

Sarandon suffered from irregular bleeding and fainting. Though doctors [told her she wouldn’t be able to bear children](#), the acclaimed actress beat the odds and has given birth to three.

[“It is not a woman’s lot to suffer,”](#) even if we’ve been raised that way,” she said at the 2011 Blossom Ball, adding, “Suffering should not define you as a woman. And just because you’re a man it doesn’t mean that it doesn’t affect you.

“Help [the woman in your life] to remove the taboos and the loneliness surrounding this disease; be understanding, show empathy, and don’t accuse her of being sensitive, delicate, or overly dramatic – this is a big opportunity for you guys to show that you care and to be a real man.”

7 Julianne Hough



C Flanigan via Getty Images

When Hough’s intense stomach pains turned out to be endometriosis, she was surprised. “It felt like [a knife was being stabbed in me.](#)” she told People.

“I know more than anything I want to be a mom and have kids,” she said. “That’s so important to me.” The star underwent laparoscopic surgery in the middle of the 2008 season of “Dancing with the Stars.”

Hough wrote about the event on her blog the same month. [“Last week was more than just a tummy ache,”](#) she wrote. “It turned out I ruptured a cyst that was on my ovary. I didn’t know, but I have endometriosis. I’ve apparently had it for a long time because I’ve had this pain for about the last five years. It hasn’t been as bad. Up till last week, I let it go and I was always too busy to get it checked out.”

8 Dolly Parton



Rick Diamond via Getty Images

During a 35-date tour in 1982, the country star was taken to the hospital to have a partial hysterectomy related to her endometriosis. She says she suffered from depression after learning she would not be able to have children.

“It was an awful time for me,” she said. “Every day I thought, ‘I wish I had the nerve to kill myself.’”

9 Meg Cabot



Johnny Louis via Getty Images

In 2007, the author wrote that she was shocked to discover she had endometriosis. “[It] came as a shocking blow, of course, because I never even knew I had endometriosis. As a cybercondriac, it kills me that I’ve apparently had a disease for *twenty-eight* years and never even knew it. That is just so wrong.”

10 Jillian Michaels



Maarten de Boer via Getty Images

This strong lady was diagnosed with endometriosis at age 28. She told Mom Logic that she learned early on pregnancy was going to be difficult for her.

“I was always told that fertility would/could be a problem for me. Why do I have this? I’ve heard everything from “You have too much caffeine in your body” to “It’s genetic” to “You need to be put on birth control pill” — and I don’t believe in using synthetic hormones. In order to get pregnant, I know it would require surgery. For me, it becomes a sort of ‘I can’t handle doing that.’”

Michaels became the mom of two children in 2012: A daughter adopted from Haiti and a son carried by partner Heidi Rhoades.

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