

Table 3. Medical therapies for endometriosis and side effect profile

Medications	Doses	Side Effects	Comments
NSAIDS	Variable	GI irritation	
COCPs	20–35 µg ethinyl estradiol	Breakthrough bleeding, nausea, fluid retention	~60-70% of women report satisfaction with this treatment.
Progestins • MPA oral or depot injection • Levonorgestrel-releasing intrauterine system (Mirena®)	• 30–100 mg/day • 150 mg/3 months	For MPA: breakthrough or heavy/prolonged bleeding (1-2%), nausea (4%), breast swelling/tenderness (3%), headache (17%) and depression (2%)	Other adverse effects include fluid retention, acne, weight gain. Levonorgestrel-releasing IUS has low side-effect profile.
Danazol	600-800 mg/day	Weight gain, hirsutism, acne, irregular menses, edema, decreased breast size, oily skin	Abnormal lipid profile and deepening of the voice may also occur.
GnRH agonists • Leuprolide acetate (Lupron®) • goserelin acetate (Zoladex®) • Nafarelin (Synarel®)	(depot injection) 3.75 mg (Q 1 month) 11.25 mg (Q 3 mos) 3.6 mg (Q 28 days) (depot implant) 1 puff (200 Fg) intranasally bid	Hot flushes, vaginal dryness, irritability, myalgia, decreased bone density	Very expensive. Cost for a 3 month course ranges from about \$800 - \$1100.

Adapted from: Attaran M, Falcone T, Goldberg J. Endometriosis: still tough to diagnose and treat. *Cleve Clin J Med* 2002; 69(8):647-653. PM:12184473; ACOG Practice Bulletin No. 51. Chronic pelvic pain. *Obstet Gynecol* 2004;103(3):589-605. PM:14990428; Olive DL, Pritts EA. Treatment of endometriosis. *N Engl J Med* 2001;345(4):266-275. PM:11474666; *Compendium of Pharmaceuticals and Specialties*, 35th ed. Ottawa: Canadian Pharmacists Association, 2000.