

# Peace WITH ENDO PODCAST

## **PWE62: Living with Endometriosis & Managing Surgery with Antonella**

**Aubree:** Hi, love. This is episode 62 of the *Peace with Endo Podcast*. I'm your host, Aubree Deimler. I am an author, wellness coach and energy healer who helps women with endometriosis naturally manage pain, increase energy, and find Peace with Endo.

On the show today I chatted with fellow endo sister, Antonella Rodriguez. She shared some of her story with endometriosis, along with tips to prep for before and after endometriosis surgery. She shared what has helped her feel better, physically and mentally, including healing modalities that she's tried. I hope you enjoy our conversation, now on to the show.

Hey, Antonella. Thanks so much for being on the show today.

**Antonella:** Thank you. Thank you so much. Thank you for having me.

**Aubree:** So, will you share a bit of your story with endo and how it has impacted your life and lead you to where you are now?

**Antonella:** Sure, so I would say it all really started about three years... from that time on till like now I just had like the worst cramps ever and I didn't really find a solution. I kept going to the hospital for my cramps. I kept going to like my doctors. They were like no, we'll just put you on birth control and my body did not like birth control, I was really only on it for like a week and it was just... it was bad. I didn't like think to be on it and...

Then I started taking natural remedies and doing that, but it still wasn't really helping, and it wasn't till like February that I really got like diagnosed with endometriosis because they would mention it to me, but they were like you know maybe you have endometriosis. We don't know because you need to have the surgery to find out, and it wasn't really till like that time to this year that I really found out I have endometriosis.

And it's a little crazy the story, but I got diagnosed with stage four endometriosis when I went to... there was a day around March, I believe that I went to the hospital, because I was just in so much pain. I'd never had like cramps this bad. I couldn't even walk. I lost the feeling in my leg and my mom had to even pick me up. I could not walk at all and they did the sonogram and everything and they said that I had like a... like a blood filled cyst. They were like oh it's just a blood filled cyst. It's nothing. It'll probably rupture on its own. You already... they said that I had like some inflammation on like my pelvic area, and they said that I probably had a cyst that ruptured.

Because also during this time I was having... in between bleedings. I was... I would get my... like my period every two to three times a month and that lasted around five months, me getting my period like in between, but it was also because I was taking like a Chinese herb supplement and that was causing way too much like blood circulation, and it was just too strong for my womb.

So after that hospital appointment I... well, it was when I went to the ER, but then I went to see a gynecologist but my gynecologist wasn't in, she went to like another clinic, so I had to see a new one, and she was basically saying like Oh what you have is an endometrioma, and I was like well that's interesting because nobody ever told me that and then for the past few years I've... I think I've been having like so many sonograms, even CAT scans, I think I've gotten over like 30 sonograms in the last three years, you know, like vaginal, stomach and CAT scans and she was like yeah it's definitely an endometrioma.

She was like what we can do is, you know, try and put you on birth control, give it a little more time to see what happens with the endometrioma, but she was like most likely it might not, like rupture on its own or anything like that, because it's really difficult for endometriomas to do that, so that's pretty much what she told me so then I contacted some friends who were really into natural stuff.

I started seeing a naturopathic doctor. I started doing yoni steaming. I started getting supplements, a ton of supplements, a ton of herbs, started taking a glutathione, vitamin C, NAC, like liver detox teas... I don't even remember what else... just a ton of stuff, and when I went back to see her, she was like... which was like three weeks later she said that the cyst is really intertwined in the ovary and for her to do surgery, it would cause such major damage to my ovary that she will have to remove that ovary.

And then she said that my other ovary had an endometrioma, like a smaller one, so she said we will most likely... and that it was intertwined too, in the right ovary, so she said we're going to have to basically remove both ovaries and, you know, I went like crazy, because I was like oh my gosh, how can this be? I'm only 22 years old, that's when I was 22, I'm 23 now, and I don't have any children yet. She was like you can go and like see a fertility doctor.

And you can see about like freezing your eggs, or you can try and get pregnant now, and I did look into that stuff, into freezing my eggs and that was super expensive, I think like \$12,000 and then \$500 annually to have the eggs stored.

And I just looked up like a ton of endometriosis specialists and I saw one that caught me eye. His name is Doctor Andrea Vidali and I emailed him and his... his team. I also called and asked them, you know, like what exactly do they do? And I was so glad that they worked with like endometriomas and he's an endometriosis specialist and adenomyosis. I don't really know how to pronounce it well.

And the first consultation was free and when I saw him he was like yeah you have stage four endometriosis. Nobody else told me that my endometriosis was at stage four. He was the first one to ever tell me it was. He was like it's definitely an endometrioma, but I can definitely save your ovaries, you know, your OBGYN that you have seen... after that, I forgot to mention after I saw that OBGYN, I went to another OBGYN, which told me the same thing, and my insurance could only cover like two OBGYNs, so then I had to like start looking for out of network doctors.

And I saw him, and I wasn't really sure if, you know, to do the surgery if it would be worth it, if it was really like 100% that he could... he would be able to save my ovaries, just because the surgery was so expensive, but I did have the surgery about two weeks ago and thankfully he did save both my ovaries, which was amazing. It was so many like little details I can think of, but yeah.

**Aubree:** Nice. So that's good you found somebody who was skilled enough to do that, so I think that's a lesson for anybody who might be listening. I know a lot of those OBGYNs just aren't equipped.

**Antonella:** Not at all.

**Aubree:** So, for those who are having surgery for endometriosis, what tips do you have for things that you can do like before and after to help stimulate the healing process?

**Antonella:** During this time I... I actually had to stop working because my pain was just so bad. I stopped working like around like April. I had to stop working because like my pain was just so bad that I was literally bed ridden, like a few days out of the week I would be able Ok, and then I wouldn't get, you know, the pain because I was on my period for, you know, like three... like two to three times a month I also had to like...

I also was super weak, so I started doing acupuncture and thankfully my acupuncturist is amazing and that helped me a lot. Doing acupuncture helped me so much before the surgery just to calm down and with the pain I didn't have to be on heavy pain meds... what else before surgery?

I didn't do too much before the surgery only because, you know, you can't like really do too much because of these adhesions and stuff, but definitely did meditation, acupuncture to help like calm me down because I was super nervous.

After the surgery... so I did have to buy like ginger, GasX, just because after the surgery the gas that's pumped into your stomach creates like such an annoying kind of pain and that goes up to your shoulders and everything, so definitely peppermint tea helped a lot, peppermint tea, ginger tea, GasX and walking around after my surgery. I had to walk the next day. I didn't want to at all, but I had to walk. They made me walk.

And I drank some ginger, like carbonated ginger ale drinks, but I also read that that's not the best. I did find it helped me just to like release the gas, so those things really helped. I started doing... I have like a infrared light, like an LED infrared light, so I put that like not super close to my... to my stomach, and that also helped like with inflammation, healing, heating packs, but when you put a heating pack just if you put a towel on top of your stomach, not directly on the scars, just because when I did the surgery he put... it was with a robot, with the Da Vinci robot and I... he used dermabond to close out like the incisions and it can like melt the glue, if you put a heating pad on like directly.

So, and also after my surgery, my appendix was removed, so I feel like that caused a little bit more pain as well and my endometriosis was bad. I actually saw him last week, I think. Yeah, like last week and my endometriosis was just very severe. It was in like 15 different areas of my body and my surgery was pretty long. It was around like five hours and a half or something like that. My appendix was basically like wrapped in like endometriosis and it was just like super inflamed and everything, which I was really mad about.

I mean the whole time I was mad about like how is it that I've done so many, you know, sonograms and so many CAT scans, it seems like, you know 4 – 5 different OBGYNs in the past three years and nobody was able to tell me anything, and this doctor literally did a sonogram and within ten minutes he was able to tell me like everything and diagnose me. Yeah, you have stage four, because they didn't even tell me a stage. I didn't, you know...

I never really took endometriosis too seriously, because I didn't know that it was in stages and I didn't know that it could get that bad... the pain and just... you know...my certain organs to stick together in different regions and all of that. It's crazy. My cyst was pretty big also, so I'm really glad that he... he said it was a little bit difficult for him to remove it, because it was... it was big and then it was like... there were like cysts on top of it so it was... it was crazy. Super thankful.

I wish there was more OBGYNs that were... that they would try to learn more about endometriosis because it can get like super... like really serious.

**Aubree:** So, I agree. I think that, you know, the... there needs to be more education about endometriosis.

**Antonella:** Yeah. So much more education.

**Aubree:** And again, it's really worth it to see somebody's who's specialized in endometriosis, rather than just your normal OBGYN.

**Antonella:** Yeah. Yeah because unfortunately a lot of these doctors don't... don't really know much and during this time I... you know I wish they could have at least recommended supplements and stuff.

I did try to go the natural way, but it didn't really work for me, only because endometriomas are just really resistant, like my... they're just there and I didn't... I also did not know that I had the endometriomas there for like a year and they just kept telling me that it was like a blood cyst. They didn't say like it... like it's an endometrioma, chocolate cyst. They didn't tell me it was that type, so I'm like Ok, you know.

And I didn't have all the full-blown symptoms of endometriosis until very later on basically like until April and stuff is when things really started to get worse, because when I started to get like the full on symptoms of the endometriosis and unfortunately mine was just really, really severe and just at the stage where I was also told that it was... you know even I was like Oh I'm really trying to avoid the surgery, because I... I had plenty of other surgeries before in my past just because of an accident that I had and I'm just... you know... I guess anybody would be... you know a little bit nervous because of the anesthesia and there's always like a risk.

**Aubree:** So, how have you been feeling since the surgery?

**Antonella:** I've been feeling good. I've been feeling really good.

**Aubree:** One thing that you had mentioned that you tried was the steaming, is that one thing you said you tried? The...

**Antonella:** Yeah the yoni steaming.

**Aubree:** The yoni steaming, so can you share a little bit more about that, like what that entailed? And how that helps?

**Antonella:** Sure, so the yoni steaming actually... spoke to... I was recommended to a doula, who was actually familiar with endometriosis and basically yoni steaming is known, you know, also as vaginal steaming and it's like a practice in which you... like a woman allows the warmth of like the herbal steam to... to like penetrate the exterior of her vagina and that helps with like reconnecting with your body, your cycle. It can also help significantly to reduce pain. It helps with the flow of... of just

your periods and stuff and that actually, surprisingly it helped. I didn't do it long enough because during... you're not... you can't do yoni steaming when you're on... when you're on your cycle and you're menstruating, so during this time I would get my period two to three times a month but it wasn't...I can't say that it was really my period, it was just bleeding from the... from the endometrioma and I couldn't really do the yoni steaming like that because I would just get my period so much. I was literally on my period for like three weeks of... of... like you know, a whole month. Two to three, like the whole month.

But it helps with just detoxifying the womb, releasing toxins from the body. There's certain... there's certain, specific blends. I would say if you do yoni steaming and you have endometriosis try to look for a specific blend that says endometriosis, someone that is knowledgeable with that, because I heard that other... you know you can't just use any herbs for endometriosis and it might make it worse, but it might just cause too much blood flow, so the specific blend that I... that I got had I think motherwort, rose, like I don't know if it had lavender, I think it did, oregano and some other herbs, I can't remember right now. And you can get like a... they sell special chairs, or you can get a... like one of those like toilet chairs that they have on Amazon.

**Aubree:** And you just sit over the steam?

**Antonella:** Yeah, but well the way that I did it, like I bought the toilet seat, like one of those plastic toilet seats and I have a special pot just for that. I put a box on top of like the pot, well no, I put a pot on the floor, like underneath like the toilet seat area and then I put the pot on top of the box and I would put like a row bar and like extra towels, just in case, and trapping the heat, because we want to trap it in the heat, like you have to be careful if you want to steam, because I actually read on Google a woman who like she burnt like her... like her whole vagina doing yoni steaming.

You have to, you know, be really careful and let it like cool a little bit before you actually sit down, and just know your limits. If it feels too hot, then just get up and wait for it to cool, but you got to be careful, so.

**Aubree:** So, this is something then you do on your own? Or was there a place that you actually can go to?

**Antonella:** No. You do it on your own.

**Aubree:** Ok.

**Antonella:** No. You do it on your own, and you place the herbs, that's the... you place the herbs obviously in the pot, you know, like a tea, it's basically like a tea (laughs) for your vagina.

**Aubree:** (laughs) Gotcha, and just the steam, of course.

**Antonella:** Yeah, just the steam. (laughs) And that was also really relaxing. I noticed that it helped me sleep better, that along with the acupuncture was just amazing, like I... I came off like... like I was on Ibuprofen like almost every day and those two things really helped me with the pain and I was also taking certain supplements. I started taking like an estrogen supplement just to help, you know, like calm down... I was making too much estrogen, just to help calm that down and drinking certain teas. Ginger helped a lot with pain and inflammation, certain, like a lot...

I never knew how important the liver is and how important detoxing the liver is with endometriosis, you can...I've learned a lot from you and your blog and other ladies out there who are just doing amazing work for those who have endometriosis, because it's unfortunately not... not super known, and you've definitely helped me a lot, your blog, for sure, for sure, and I downloaded like certain stuff from you and thank you for that and to the other ladies out there who are just putting out information to help us who are suffering with endometriosis.

**Aubree:** Awesome, well I'm glad that's helping you, and the liver, like you said is super important with chronic illness, but definitely endometriosis.

**Antonella:** Yeah. Right.

**Aubree:** So, what then, what has endo taught you?

**Antonella:** Endometriosis has taught me to be more patient, you know, nothing lasts forever and that there is hope out there. I can definitely say that during this time I've been in just such chronic pain and I've even had days like when I'm like had depression and I was like oh my gosh I don't even want... I can't anymore. I don't know if I can like... you know... I don't know what else to do. I don't know if I can go to work. I don't know how my life is going to be, and just certain things like that and it's just taught me to be strong and it's... it's definitely even taught me that I'm stronger than I think, because during this time I was very insure because I was like oh my gosh, I don't know, maybe the pain is not... is not bad like that, because people are telling me like oh it's nothing.

But I had a cyst that actually before surgery, a week before surgery I had a cyst that ruptured. It was a big cyst. It was a... a blood filled one, not an endometrioma, the hemorrhagic one and I literally, like I think in the hospital I felt before like three to four times, it's bad. The pain was so bad, I mean from looking up on Google I heard it's worse than child birth pain. I don't know how true that was but it was so, so bad that I even asked the doctor if he could even like get something to put me to sleep because I couldn't take the pain anymore, and I have a high tolerance for pain, and I just, I couldn't take it anymore.

It's definitely pushed me... pushed me past limits that I didn't even think I could like be there. It has definitely made me more confident and stronger, for sure.

**Aubree:** Yeah the... I've experienced that as well that's the worst pain I've ever experienced as well, the... when your cyst bursts. That's horrible.

**Antonella:** Oh my gosh, especially the blood filled one, because in the beginning when I was getting cysts they were just like regular ones and those would hurt. Those would hurt a lot, but it wasn't as bad as the blood filled ones, and I asked the doctor and he said just... he said it's because, you know, you have blood in an area that's really not supposed to be there and it's just the inflammation and those cysts, when they rupture, those are the... bad. Those are really bad.

**Aubree:** Mhmm. So, it's made you stronger, or made you realize how strong you are.

**Antonella:** Yeah, for sure, for sure. It's taught me patience for sure. It's also just... it's also taught me, you know, how like **I used to think that endometriosis was more rare, but after finding out more about endometriosis and talking to others, I see that I'm not alone, that there's a lot of other women who have this. I can't believe that, you know, that it's still kind of like unknown.** That its kind of like rare in a way.

**Aubree:** Right and I think it's more that, I think that there's still some shame that's associated with the menstruation topic and I still meet a lot of endo sisters who still are... have some of that shame and don't want to talk about it. So, I think, like you said there are a lot of people who have it, but there needs to be more talking about it.

**Antonella:** Right, right, and I also, you know, unfortunately it sucks because I also went through doctors telling me like oh no, you know, your pain is not that bad, so for the longest time I was like oh my gosh, you know, I'm acting like a... like a little child or something. I'm, you know, you're exaggerating and then it was a lot of mental... it also affected me like mentally because I just couldn't deal with the pain. I couldn't work anymore.

Thankfully my parents have been super helpful for me to, you know, super helpful to me in helping me, taking care of me and just being... just supporting me so much throughout all of this doctors over here telling you like no your pain is not that bad, or like no you just have cramps, no you just have cramps, and for the longest time I feel like that's also another reason why I didn't take... you know my endometriosis got that deep over the years because they were like no you just have cramps. You just have cramps, even... you know... you don't even have all of the symptoms of endometriosis. You have nothing.

So, if you have the opportunity to see an endometriosis specialist, for sure go to one

**Aubree:** So, what words of wisdom can you share with people who may be listening, who are struggling and feel like there's just no hope.

**Antonella:** There is hope. There's more information now. There's a lot of support groups on Facebook. I've joined two or three, where people have had, you know, give great advice, give great tips. There's... there are doctors out there who do know what they're doing and unfortunately they're not that many, but there are doctors out there who do know what they're doing.

Nothing lasts forever. There's definitely... you know relief to this. There is hope for sure.

**Aubree:** So has helped you then with some of like the emotional stuff that comes with this? You said it impacted you mentally, obviously as well the pain. Do you have any tips for what helped you through some of that?

**Antonella:** Meditating, praying, praying to God, you know, trying to be to write, you know having a... I have a journal where I write what I'm grateful for that day as well as it helps me distract me a bit from the pain. I would say that acupuncture also helps me a lot mentally. Acupuncture also helps mentally... a lot mentally.

At first, the first two times that I did acupuncture I actually had like an emotional release. Basically I just felt like really like sad and emotional and crying and my acupuncture therapist told me that it's just like moving energies and everything flowing out, and the body preparing for receiving all the good energy and acupuncture is definitely, I would say, if you have endometriosis, try looking into it. It definitely helped me a ton mentally and physically.

**Aubree:** Nice.

**Antonella:** Even with bloating, because during this time I looked like I was pregnant. I looked like I was like five months pregnant, like throughout the day I would just get the craziest bloating and it was because I had just so much endometriosis in my bladder, in my pelvic area, so much like lesions in that whole area that I was just super bloated, super, super bloated.

I even felt like embarrassed to wear certain crop tops, or like certain tight fitting dresses or shirts, only because my stomach was just... you know... very bloated and I actually did have someone ask me if I was pregnant and that made me feel like oh my gosh, but yeah.

**Aubree:** Yeah, for sure the joys of endo (laughs)

**Antonella:** Yeah.

**Aubree:** Antonella, I appreciate you coming on and sharing a little bit of your story with us. Do you have any final words of inspiration for our listeners?

**Antonella:** You know everything is falling together, even though it doesn't look... something's are falling part, or you know, there is hope to this. There are... there is information, you know, you're capable of handling far more than you think. I also learned that women are really strong.

Because I've also linked up with other ladies who are suffering with endometriosis and they've told me that like how many surgeries they've gotten and just how much stuff they go through, and I'm just like wow, like we are so strong, we... you know, we are just amazing.

**Aubree:** Absolutely.

**Antonella:** We are amazing, just how much we can deal with and you know how much pain we can deal with and how much endometriosis can affect us physically and emotionally. It's just like wow we are super strong.

**Aubree:** Well thank you again for coming on and sharing with us today. How can our listeners connect with you further?

**Antonella:** Sure. They can connect with me on my IG, which is @my\_minireviews. I haven't talked there a lot about endometriosis, but I have mentioned a little bit on my posts and I do have like an endometriosis highlight, where I share about my favorite books and they can connect with me on there. I'll be talking more about it on my page and sharing, you know, details from my surgery, even sharing my doctor, his information and other doctors as well, so you guys can definitely find me on there.

I have my blog, but I need to... I'm working on it... and I think I'm going to just like re-do everything.

**Aubree:** Well thanks again for coming on today. I appreciate it.

**Antonella:** Thank you. Thank you so much. I really appreciate you and what you have been doing just... what you have been doing is amazing, helping so many, so many ladies with endometriosis, having so much knowledge, so much information, it's just amazing. I truly appreciate what you're doing.

**Aubree:** Well thank you for that.

If you enjoyed this conversation, I invite you to subscribe to continue on the journey. Please leave us a positive review and share with your friends so more endo sisters can find the show and get on track to finding peace with endo.

If you want to connect with me further and see how we can work together you can find me over at [peacewithendo.com](http://peacewithendo.com). I do share more tips on how you can feel better

with endometriosis in my books, *From Pain to Peace with Endo* and *Energetics of Endo*, both available at [peacewithendo.com](http://peacewithendo.com) and on Amazon.

You can also find me over on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram @peacewithendo. Pop on over and share your thoughts on the show, or simply say hello. Thanks so much for tuning in. I hope you find some peace in your day today. Sending you so much love. Bye for now.

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