JESSICA OPOKU-ANANE: But what causes endometriosis? So I told you Sampson's theory, which is the most common mechanism that we describe for endometriosis, the retrograde menstruation of the endometrial cells through the fallopian tube into the pelvis. But there are a lot of other theories about how endometriosis is caused.

We think that there is some spread through the blood supply, some spread through our immune system. We think that some early cells kind of turn into these endometrial cells later. But we do know that there-- and a lot of times when we have so many mechanisms from one disease, it's because we don't really have an answer. So endometriosis, unfortunately, is one of the more underfunded diseases. And we're actively working to try to get a better understanding of what truly causes endometriosis.

But we do know there are some risk factors for it. It does tend to run in families. Now, I don't think we know for sure whether that is because there's a genetic connection or because women who have had endometriosis are more likely to advocate for their children and nieces and aunts who start developing symptoms of endometriosis.

And the other risk factors are related to how often you're menstruating. So if we think of that theory, the first theory I talked about, the more often that you menstruate, the more likely that you are to spill those cells into the pelvis and the more likely you are to develop endometriosis. And so women who start their periods early, have longer cycles, heavier cycles, or women who are obstructed-- meaning they can't get the menstrual cells out because of a congenital abnormality-- are at higher risk for endometriosis.