

PCOS

POLYCYSTIC OVARY SYNDROME

THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW

ABOUT PCOS

What Is Polycystic Ovary Syndrome?

PCOS is a serious genetic, endocrine (hormone), metabolic, and reproductive disorder that affects up to 15% of women.

What Are the Health Risks?

People with PCOS are at increased risk for infertility, pregnancy complications, type 2 diabetes, endometrial cancer, nonalcoholic fatty liver disease, anxiety and depression, sleep disorders, and other serious conditions.

PCOS is the most common endocrine disorder and cause of infertility in women.

Many health risks associated with PCOS can be mitigated or avoided with proper screening, treatment, management, and lifestyle changes. However, early detection, intervention, and appropriate self-management are key.

PCOS Common Signs and Symptoms

- Irregular or absent periods
- Excess facial or body hair (Hirsutism)
- Hair loss or thinning
- Small cysts in ovaries (follicles)
- Infertility
- Weight gain or obesity
- Severe Acne
- Skin tags
- Skin darkening
- Mood changes

How Is PCOS Diagnosed?

PCOS is diagnosed if a patient has two or three of the following:

1. Blood work showing high androgens (such as testosterone), or symptoms such as excessive facial or body hair, acne, or hair loss.
2. Irregular ovulation/menstruation.
3. Polycystic ovaries on ultrasound.

Disorders with similar symptoms must also be ruled out.

SCREENING - A gynecologist, endocrinologist, or primary care physician can screen for PCOS.

PCOS TREATMENT & MANAGEMENT

There is currently no cure for PCOS, however, its symptoms and severity can be managed with early detection and intervention.

Depending on the patient's goals and symptoms, there are lifestyle changes one can make and medications that can help. Lifestyle modifications may include dietary changes for better nutrition, supplementation, regular physical activity, getting sufficient sleep, stress reduction, and counseling for psychological distress. Medications can be helpful for some patients in combination with lifestyle changes.

Benefits of Multidisciplinary Care for PCOS

PCOS is a complex disorder that needs multidisciplinary guidance to address health concerns and reduce the associated health risks.

Roles of Healthcare Providers



Endocrinologists

Check for hormone disturbances, conduct liver function test, and glucose tolerance test.



Gynecologist

Check for clinical signs of excessive male hormones, discuss reproductive health.



Health Psychologist

Provide behavioral counseling, and set goals for lifestyle modification. Discuss mental health symptoms (i.e., anxiety, depression)



Nutritionist

Provide education regarding healthy eating habits. Discuss regular exercise routine.



Dermatologist

Help treat and manage common PCOS-related hair and skin issues such as excess facial and body hair growth (hirsutism), scalp hair loss, and dark discoloration of the skin (acanthosis nigricans).