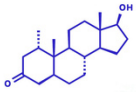
UCLA College | Life Sciences Center for Reproductive Science, Health & Education

Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS)

Continue reading for more details about this reproductive disorder and what resources are available to support you.

What is PCOS?

Polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) is a chronic hormonal disorder in reproductive-aged individuals with ovaries



Involves excessive production of sex hormones known as androgens

Risk factors include a family history of PCOS, obesity, diabetes, other reproductive hormone imbalances, environmental pollutants, etc.

Did You Know?

About 8-13% of reproductive-aged people with ovaries have PCOS

Up to 70% of people affected by PCOS remain undiagnosed globally

World Health Organization, 2023

Common PCOS Symptoms

Symptoms include, but are not limited to:

- Irregular menstrual cycles
- Larger ovaries with many egg sac cysts
- Irregular hair growth
- Acne & oily skin
- Insulin resistance
- Increased weight gain & weight loss difficulty
- Emotional and mental health changes
- Infertility due to dysfunctional ovulation

How is PCOS Diagnosed?

Typically, healthcare providers diagnose PCOS based on results from 2 or more tests below:

1. Risk assessment to identify symptoms of PCOS
2. Blood tests to assess hormone levels & proper ovarian function
3. Glucose tolerance test to predict the risk of insulin resistance
4. Ovarian ultrasound to identify ovarian cysts

Cleveland Clinic, 2024

PCOS can be tricky to diagnose since it affects everyone differently!

Available Treatments

There is no cure for PCOS, but treatments can help balance the hormone disruptions & improve symptoms:

Lifestyle changes (diet and exercise)

Birth control medication or progesterone supplements to regulate menstrual cycle

Acne medication and hair growth therapy

Medications to block the effects or production of androgens

Impact on Fertility

PCOS is a common cause of infertility, but people with PCOS can still become pregnant with proper symptom management!

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People with PCOS typically visit reproductive endocrinologists for personalized care plans to manage symptoms and support safe pregnancy outcomes

Local Resources

If you are concerned that you may be suffering from PCOS, contact a healthcare provider to form a personalized care plan!

UCLA Health for PCOS Care
Non-UCLA Affiliated Women's Health Clinics