

Polycystic Ovary Syndrome

Gynaecology

Introduction

This leaflet has been designed to provide information to women who may possibly have polycystic ovary syndrome. The aim of the leaflet is to provide information about "polycystic ovary syndrome".

If you have any queries, do not hesitate to speak to your medical or nursing team.

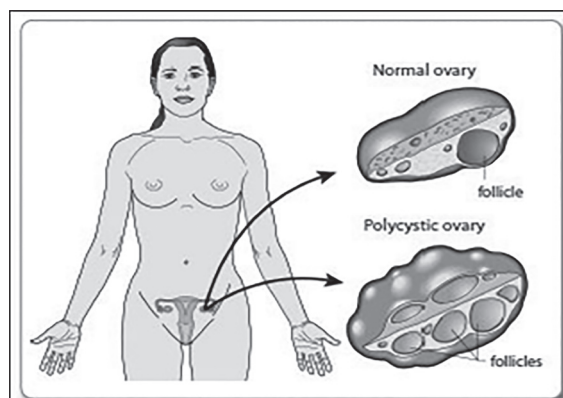
What are Polycystic Ovaries?

Polycystic ovaries contain double the number of cysts than a normal ovary. These tiny cysts are fluid-filled sacs that contain eggs. In Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome (PCOS) due to the hormonal imbalances, these cysts do not develop properly and cause problems with your periods.

What is Polycystic Ovary Syndrome?

Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) is a condition which can affect a woman's periods, fertility, hormones and hair growth. It is also normal to have many harmless small cysts in the ovaries (polycystic ovaries).

Having polycystic ovaries does not mean that you have PCOS. Many women have polycystic ovaries without having the syndrome. Some have the syndrome but have normal ovaries.



How common is it?

This is a very common condition that affects millions of women in the UK.

About one in five women in the UK have polycystic ovaries and one in ten have PCOS.

The prevention of infection is a major priority in all healthcare and everyone has a part to play.

- Please decontaminate your hands frequently for 20 seconds using soap and water or alcohol gel if available
- If you have symptoms of diarrhoea and/or vomiting, cough or other respiratory symptoms, a temperature or any loss of taste or smell please do not visit the hospital or any other care facility and seek advice from 111
- Keep the environment clean and tidy
- Let's work together to keep infections out of our hospitals and care homes.

What causes PCOS?

The cause is not precisely known. It sometimes tends to run in families.

The symptoms of PCOS can be due to hormonal imbalances. Women with PCOS may produce more than the normal amount of testosterone from their ovaries which is associated with some of the symptoms.

In PCOS, the body may respond poorly to a hormone called insulin. Insulin helps to maintain a normal glucose level in the body. As a result, women with PCOS have a high level of glucose in the body. In order to try and keep the glucose level normal, the body produces more insulin. Having high levels of insulin increases the amount of testosterone produced by the ovaries and causes symptoms.

What are the symptoms of PCOS?

- Irregular or absent periods
- Difficulty becoming pregnant
- Having more facial hair than usual for you
- Being overweight, putting on weight quickly, difficulty losing weight
- Greasy skin and acne
- Low mood and mood swings

Polycystic ovaries do not cause pain by themselves.

You may not have all these symptoms. Symptoms vary between women.

Will I need any tests done?

You may need an ultrasound scan to detect polycystic ovaries and a blood test to look at your hormone levels. The blood test may show a high level of testosterone and some other hormonal imbalances.

How does it affect my long term health?

Poor control of blood glucose levels, obesity and abnormal hormone levels increase your risk of developing diabetes, high blood pressure and high cholesterol levels. These can cause heart disease and stroke in later life.

Absent or irregular periods over a long period of time can increase the risk of womb cancer. This is very rare periods can be regulated with treatment.

What is the treatment for PCOS?

Although PCOS cannot be cured, symptoms can be effectively controlled.

Lifestyle Changes

Many women manage their symptoms without any medications by maintaining a healthy lifestyle with a healthy diet and regular exercise.

If you are overweight, your symptoms can be improved significantly by losing weight. Losing weight will reduce the high levels of insulin and testosterone level in your body and regulate your periods. This will also improve symptoms associated with fertility and hair growth.

If you need help with adapting to a healthy diet, you can request to be referred to one of our qualified dieticians who will guide you through.

Treating hair growth

You can remove hair by shaving, waxing, hair-removal creams, and electrolysis and laser treatment.

A cream called **eflornithine** can be applied to the affected area to stop the chemical in the skin that is involved in making hair. This will slow down the growth of unwanted hair.

The **oral contraceptive pill** can also treat hair growth by reducing the high levels of male hormones.

Treating period problems

1. Oral contraceptive pill

This can cause a regular withdrawal bleed like your monthly period

2. Mirena Intrauterine system

This is a hormone-releasing device that is placed in your womb. This hormone stops the lining of your womb from becoming too thick. The treatment is effective for five years and can be performed in an outpatient setting

Are there any treatments if I have difficulty becoming pregnant?

Clomiphene

This medication is used if you are trying to become pregnant. It works by stimulating the ovaries to release eggs and, thereby, improving your fertility.

Metformin

This is a medication that is used to treat diabetes.

Metformin can help to regulate your periods. It also helps to improve the action of clomiphene taken for fertility.

If you become pregnant

There is a slightly increased risk of diabetes during pregnancy in women with PCOS. You will be tested for this during antenatal monitoring.

Unfortunately, there is also an increased risk of miscarriages in PCOS.

What is the role of surgery in PCOS?

Surgery is recommended for women who do not respond to clomiphene for fertility problems.

Laparoscopy and ovarian drilling

This surgery is a minor keyhole operation performed under general anaesthetic. If ovarian drilling is done, heat is used to treat the tissue producing excess male hormones in the ovaries.

Where can I get further help and advice?

Contact your local General Practitioner (GP) or the Gynaecology Department at New Cross Hospital.

Gynaecology secretaries

Tel: 01902 695166

Verity

A UK charity for women affected by PCOS

New Bond House

124, New Bond street

London. W1S 1DX

web: www.verity-pcos.org.uk

Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome Association

web: www.pcosupport.org

English

If you need information in another way like easy read or a different language please let us know.

If you need an interpreter or assistance please let us know.

Lithuanian

Jeigu norėtumėte, kad informacija jums būtų pateikta kitu būdu, pavyzdžiui, supaprastinta forma ar kita kalba, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Jeigu jums reikia vertėjo ar kitos pagalbos, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Polish

Jeżeli chcieliby Państwo otrzymać te informacje w innej postaci, na przykład w wersji łatwej do czytania lub w innym języku, prosimy powiedzieć nam o tym.

Prosimy poinformować nas również, jeżeli potrzebowaliby Państwo usługi tłumaczenia ustnego lub innej pomocy.

Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ, ਜਿਵੇਂ ਪੜ੍ਹਨ ਵਿਚ ਆਸਾਨ ਰੂਪ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੂਜੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ, ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਦੁਭਾਸ਼ੀਏ ਦੀ ਜਾਂ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

Romanian

Dacă aveți nevoie de informații în alt format, ca de exemplu caractere ușor de citit sau altă limbă, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Dacă aveți nevoie de un interpret sau de asistență, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Traditional Chinese

如果您需要以其他方式了解信息，如易读或其他语种，请告诉我们。

如果您需要口译人员或帮助，请告诉我们。