

HORMONES IN HARMONY

CONQUER PCOS NATURALLY
WITH THE RIGHT DIET,
EXERCISE & WELLNESS
RITUALS





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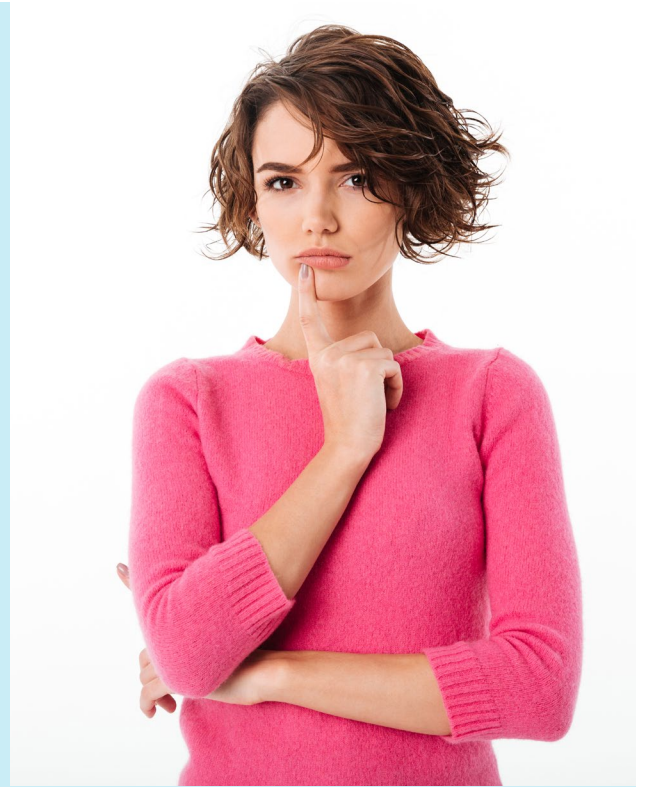
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MAKING PEACE WITH PCOS

When it comes to fighting Polycystic Ovary Syndrome – the endocrine disorder that affects around 10 percent of women of reproductive age – knowledge is the real power.

The symptoms are as complex and confusing as the condition itself, which is why it goes undiagnosed for a long time. Often dismissed as 'a normal part of being a woman', the symptoms range from the irregular menstrual cycle and acne to [weight gain](#) and difficulty in conceiving. And probably, that's why hundreds of thousands of women suffer without knowing what's going on in their body! They think it is all part of growing up, getting into adolescence, and also getting initiated into womanhood. [PCOS](#) or Polycystic Ovary Syndrome is an endocrine disorder that affects around 10 percent of women of reproductive age, which means one in five women is fighting this hormonal disease. A disorder so common yet so less talked about.



Often described as a 'thief of womanhood', PCOS is a complex hormonal condition in which the ovaries produce an abnormal amount of androgens (the male hormones), particularly testosterone, that are normally present in women in small amounts. The word 'Polycystic' literally translates into 'many cysts'. It refers to the many partially formed follicles around the ovaries, which obstruct the eggs (produced by ovaries) from maturing. As a result, the menstrual cycle goes for a toss. But it is also possible that some women with this disorder may not have cysts, while some women without this disorder may develop cysts.



A diagnosis requires only two of the following three criteria to be met:

1. Elevated levels of male hormones (androgens)
2. Irregular or absent periods, and/or
3. At least 12 follicular cysts on one or both ovaries.

According to several studies, women with [PCOS](#) are at a higher risk of developing heart disease, diabetes (due to insulin resistance), mental health conditions (anxiety and depression), reproductive disorders (infertility), and cancer of the uterine lining in the long run if the condition goes undiagnosed or untreated.

Fear and confusion comprise the first response of every girl or woman who is diagnosed with PCOS. A common perception that 'the condition would render you infertile' is one of the major causes of fear for PCOS among women. As the doubts about the health and validity of your ovaries cloud your mind, the fear of the unknown puts you under tremendous stress, which is known to worsen the symptoms. Often women find themselves struggling with questions such as -

Why did this happen to me?
Or where did I go wrong?
And that's exactly not how you should approach this condition. Researchers are yet to find out the exact causes of PCOS. However, heredity/genes and environment play a significant role. PCOS tends to run in families and in some circumstances, can be related to being overweight. Many recent research studies have also established a strong association with insulin resistance and diabetes.

When it comes to [PCOS](#) symptoms, one size doesn't fit all. The symptoms vary from woman to woman. For some women, symptoms such as unwanted excessive hair growth and acne emerge shortly after their first period. On the other hand, some women may not show signs of the disorder until later in life, or after considerable weight gain. In fact, many women do not get a diagnosis until they are struggling to get pregnant. This sudden revelation often confuses and scares women. Since the definitive cause of PCOS is still largely unknown, it makes the situation all the more complex and distressing for them. Lack of information

SYMPTOMS

- Oligo-ovulation (irregular ovulation) and ano-ovulation (absence of ovulation)
- Polycystic ovaries (20-39 %)
- Insulin resistance
- Obesity
- [Fertility](#) Issues
- Acne
- Cardiovascular issues
- Type 2 [diabetes](#)
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Eating disorders
- Sexual dysfunction
- [Thyroid](#) disorders
- High levels of androgens
- Irregular menstruation
- Male pattern hair growth
- Sleep apnea
- Scalp [hair loss](#)
- Darkening [skin](#) area particularly on the nape of the neck
- Pelvic pain
- Non-alcoholic fatty liver

and proper guidance also adds to the problem. The first line of intervention in order to manage [PCOS](#) should be 'educating oneself' about it. The second step should be lifestyle modification. Simple measures such as diet and exercise can help women with PCOS lose more [bodyweight](#), achieve lower blood sugar and improve the menstruation cycle. One of the best ways to help oneself is to be proactive, take things in your control, and try to understand how this disorder manifests itself. PCOS may feel frustrating at times, but it is definitely not uncontrollable. With the [right diet](#), exercise, and a dash of positivity, you can feel your best and get the better of it.

WHAT ARE THE LONG-TERM HEALTH IMPLICATIONS OF PCOS?

As an endocrine disorder, PCOS disrupts hormone balance, negatively impacting bodily functions including insulin levels, cell and tissue growth, and development, metabolism, and cognition. Women with PCOS face four to seven times higher risk of a heart attack. It is believed that 50 percent of women with PCOS will develop pre-diabetes or diabetes before the age of forty. They are also more likely to develop endometrial cancer.

ARE PCOS & PCOD SAME?

These are related conditions with similar symptoms. But definitely different!

PCOD: Reversible, less severe, less number of cysts, and generally doesn't affect fertility.

PCOS: Severe, difficult to reverse, ovarian cysts > 10, fertility issues and severe hormonal imbalance.

CAUSES AND TRIGGERS

The main causes are not clearly known but there is an increased risk with :

- Hereditary
- Childhood obesity
- Stress
- Insulin resistance
- Environmental factors: poor dietary habits, inactivity



When Hormones Go Haywire

PCOS is typically defined as a condition caused due to hormonal imbalance in the body that prevents ovulation. So if you want to get to the crux of this condition, you need to understand the role of each hormone that has a cascading effect on PCOS. Let's get to know them better...





ESTROGEN: THE FEMALE HORMONE

One of the two primary female hormones that a woman's ovaries produce is estrogen.

Besides ovaries, it is also produced, though in small quantities, in the adrenal glands and fat tissues. It is required for the development of sexual organs, regulation of the menstrual cycle and the maintenance of pregnancy. It supports the production of fluid in the reproductive tract that enhances the survival of sperm. High levels of estrogen are known as estrogen dominance and it is common in women with [PCOS](#).

If a lack of ovulation leads to a low level of progesterone, here it leads to high levels of estrogen. Constant estrogen exposure may lead to heavy and/or irregular bleeding. There are endocrine disruptors such as chemicals in the environment known as xenoestrogens, pesticides, Bisphenol A (BPA) and phthalates (found in plastic), and parabens (found in skin & hair care products), which often cause estrogen dominance in the body. Some studies have revealed that BPA levels are usually higher in women with PCOS.

SYMPTOMS:

PMS, migraines, fluid retention, painful periods, anxiety, depression, hypothyroidism, breast tenderness, and infertility.

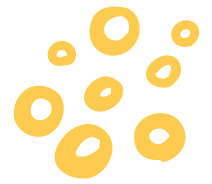
INSULIN RESISTANCE: BLOOD SUGAR BOSS

There is a close link between insulin resistance and PCOS. Insulin resistance is considered to be at the root of one's PCOS, playing a significant role in causing the condition in the first place as well as aggravating its symptoms. A powerful hormone, it is released by the pancreas after a meal. Then it goes straightaway to the bloodstream to transport glucose to cells throughout the body, which is later used for energy. When there is excess glucose, insulin delivers glucose to muscles, fat, and liver, which helps to lower the blood glucose levels. But when someone has insulin resistance, the body does not respond to insulin as efficiently as it should. Basically in insulin resistance, your muscle and liver cells do not respond well to insulin and cannot uptake glucose leading to increased glucose levels in the blood. This signals the pancreas to up insulin production. As a result, insulin levels increases in the blood. Experts believe that elevated insulin levels may be a contributing factor to inflammation and other metabolic complications associated with PCOS.

SYMPTOMS:

Change in appetite, [weight gain](#), sugar cravings, Hyperglycemia, and dark [skin](#) patches on the neck, knees, elbows, chest, or groin.





ANDROGENS: THE MALE HORMONE

You must be thinking - what exactly are 'male hormones' doing in a woman's body? One of the main purposes of androgens in a woman's body is to be converted into female hormones called estrogens. Androgens also help women to maintain muscle mass, regulate weight, and keep the libido humming. They are produced in the ovaries, adrenal glands, and fat cells. You first experience their powerful presence in the body during puberty. They are responsible for stimulating hair growth in the pubic and underarm areas. They also play a key role in the prevention of bone loss and sexual desire. In the case of [PCOS](#), the androgens are produced in excess in the body, which further leads to problems such as acne and excess hair growth in inappropriate places (chin or upper lip). Androgen excess is also called hyperandrogenism and can be caused by ovarian dysfunction, insulin resistance, stress, obesity, genetics, and artificial hormones in the birth control pills



SYMPTOMS:

[Hair loss](#), infertility, acne, and hirsutism (excess hair growth on the chin or upper lip).

PROGESTERONE: THE FERTILITY HORMONE

This is the one defining hormone that separates women from men. Progesterone is the other primary female hormone that ovaries produce. The first one, which we already discussed above, is Estrogen. Progesterone plays an important role in regulating the menstrual cycle and in maintaining the early stages of pregnancy. The ovaries produce it when ovulation occurs. Small amounts of progesterone are also produced by the adrenal glands. Women with PCOS have absent ovulation so their bodies are not able to make progesterone in every cycle. This lack of progesterone leads to an imbalance in the ovary, causing the stimulation of higher male hormones (remember, androgens!) and thus, leads to irregular periods and difficulty in conceiving. Women with PCOS always have low progesterone and thus experience a luteal phase defect (progesterone helps to thicken the uterine lining in preparation for a fertilized egg). It plays a critical role in early pregnancy as it helps maintain the embryo. Women with PCOS are more prone to a miscarriage due to low levels of progesterone.

SYMPTOMS:

Anxiety, waking up at night, fibrocystic breast, bone loss, low libido and irregular periods.

CORTISOL: THE STRESS HORMONE

It is often referred to as the 'stress hormone' because stress triggers a combination of signals from hormones and nerves that cause your adrenal gland to release hormones, including cortisol. This further pushes your body into the 'fight-or-flight' response. So is it a downright bad hormone? Not at all. In fact, it is a crucial hormone that helps control blood sugar levels, regulate metabolism, reduce inflammation, assist with memory formulation, and support developing fetus during pregnancy. It is basically the timing and higher levels of cortisol, which causes trouble. Blood levels of cortisol vary throughout the day but generally are higher in the morning when we wake up and then fall throughout the day. However, this pattern is reversed in people who work at night. Women with PCOS generally have high cortisol levels irrespective of their weight. Higher levels of cortisol are known to disrupt the menstrual cycle, increase appetite, and weaken the [immune system](#). Overproduction of cortisol can also overwork the adrenals to the point of adrenal fatigue. It makes things more critical and can put one at a higher risk of insulin resistance, anxiety, depression, and [thyroid dysfunction](#).

SYMPTOMS:

[Weight gain](#), muscle weakness, anxiety, depression or irritability.

AMH - AMH is a hormone secreted by developing follicles, which are the egg sacs containing immature eggs. When it comes to PCOS and fertility treatments such as IVF, AMH plays a crucial role. In fact, it can help diagnose PCOS in women who may not have obvious signs of the condition. AMH levels are an important diagnostic measure as they are directly associated with the number of antral follicles found on the ovary every month. Also known as 'resting follicles' each of the antral follicles has the potential to release an egg when fully mature. Evaluating AMH levels can give doctors an idea about the actual number of follicles (ovarian reserve) and how successful IVF may be. Women with PCOS will often have elevated AMH levels due to the high levels of follicles they have in the early stage of development. So where is the problem? Too much AMH can actually stop ovulation from occurring. AMH works by preventing the release of an immature egg during ovulation by putting brakes on premature development of ovulation. But when AMH levels are too high, it will halt the maturation of an egg midstream. According to experts, elevated AMH levels correspond to an increase in the severity of PCOS symptoms, making it all the more important in monitoring PCOS. AMH naturally declines with age as the number of follicles drops. So doctors always compare the level of your AMH with your age to make a proper diagnosis. This method is extremely useful in the case of women over 35.

SYMPTOMS:

There are no symptoms as such. If your ovaries have cyst, AMH value increases.

LH & FSH: OVULATION'S CHEERLEADERS

Luteinizing Hormone (LH) and Follicle Stimulating Hormone (FSH) are the two hormones that encourage ovulation. Both are secreted by the pituitary gland in the brain. Two weeks into a woman's cycle, a surge in LH causes the ovaries to release an egg during ovulation. If fertilization or [pregnancy](#) occurs, LH will stimulate the corpus luteum, which produces progesterone to sustain the pregnancy. During the follicular phase of the menstrual cycle, FSH stimulates the maturation of ovarian follicles. When a dominant follicle takes over and secretes estradiol and inhibin, FSH secretion is suppressed. Women with PCOS often have high levels of LH secretion. High levels of LH contribute to the high levels of androgens (male hormone), and this along with low levels of FSH contributes to poor egg development and an inability to ovulate. Abnormally high LH/FSH ratios are 2:1 or 3:1 on Day 3 of the menstrual cycle.

SYMPTOMS:

Irregular cycle





Stay Healthy With These Supplements



Omega 3

You can call it the [PCOS](#) Superfood! It helps to improve fertility, regulate hormones, improves insulin sensitivity, reduce hirsutism, and lowers inflammation. It is advisable to take 500 mg, which should come from EPA and DHA each. Dosage requirements will change according to the individual body needs.

Natural sources: Fish, walnuts, chia seeds and flax seeds.



Vitamin D

PCOS women are found to be most deficient in [Vitamin D](#), which can make the PCOS symptoms worse. Vitamin D works to inhibit inflammation and helps in better absorption of calcium. It is crucial for hormonal balance as well.

Natural sources: Egg yolk, mushrooms, and sunlight.



B Vitamins

B Vitamins can help your liver get rid of excess estrogen, which is usually high in women with PCOS. One of the many functions of the liver is to process substances such as hormones and toxins and metabolize them. B Vitamins aid the [liver](#) in this. B Vitamins are also needed for metabolizing carbohydrates, fats, and proteins.

Natural sources: Lentils, dark leafy vegetables, eggs, whole grains, etc.

Zinc

It is necessary for regulating the menstrual cycle and fertility. It helps in correcting the PCOS symptoms such as irregular ovulation, [weight management](#), and acne. It also reduces the effects of high testosterone, including hirsutism and hair loss. If zinc levels are low then you can supplement it with zinc acetate, zinc gluconate, zinc sulfate, zinc citrate, or zinc monomethionine. Do not use zinc oxide or zinc picolinate as these are not absorbed well by the body.

Natural sources: Pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds, [cashews](#), almonds, and whole grains.



Achieve Hormonal Balance With Herbs

Mulethi:



Regulating the levels of 'male' hormones is one of the most challenging tasks when you are trying to manage PCOS. Mulethi helps you do it as it has natural anti-androgen and anti-inflammatory properties. Offering hormonal balancing benefits, it acts as a potent anti-adrenergic compound. It also reduces inflammation, insulin resistance, and stress. It aids in [liver](#) detoxification and improves [immunity](#) and [gut](#) health, which helps in improving the symptoms of PCOS.

How to have it: Boil 3'inch long bark in water and have this water on the morning empty stomach.

Ashwagandha:

Popularly known as Indian ginseng, it helps reduce the cortisol levels in the body. As excess cortisol stores in the belly as fat, which further increases weight and the risk of other clinical issues such as obesity, type 2 diabetes. Ashwagandha is the anti-anxiety herb, which helps to reduce stress and anxiety naturally in the body. It also balances blood sugar, cholesterol, and sex hormones – just to name a few.

How to have it: 1/2 teaspoon of Ashwagandha with soaked nuts before bedtime or after a workout.



Turmeric:

The famed yellow pigment found in turmeric known as 'Curcumin' has become the 'holy grail' of the wellness world. Thanks to its anti-inflammatory and anti-depressant effects, Turmeric Latte is all the rage in the West right now. Studies have shown that Curcumin also helps combat inflammation in the body. However, don't miss a pinch of black pepper with [turmeric](#) because black pepper increases the absorption of turmeric.

How to have it: Turmeric in coconut oil and black pepper on an empty stomach.



Moringa:



Moringa oleifera could lower the insulin levels, subsequently decreasing the androgen levels. It also helps improve the process of aromatization from androgen hormones to estrogens that finally improve folliculogenesis (maturation of ovarian follicle) in PCOS.

How to have it: 1 teaspoon with a glass of water on waking up or before bedtime.

Saffron:

Several studies have shown that [saffron](#) is a powerful treatment option for depression, which is one of the PCOS symptoms. It calms anxiety as well as boosts mood and libido. It also helps reduce testosterone levels in women with [PCOS](#).

How to have it: Saffron tea in the evening.



WORST FOODS FOR PCOS

Sugar

It increases inflammation in the body and spikes blood glucose and insulin levels.

Dairy

It really depends upon symptoms. In case your testosterone and endogen levels are high, you should avoid dairy completely. Non-fat milk, in particular, can increase insulin and androgen levels. If you are not allergic or intolerant to dairy, you can have full-fat yogurt or paneer from A2 cow milk. It helps improve your gut health and hormonal balance. Avoid dairy completely if there is acne.

Refined flours

Devoid of fiber and nutrients, refined flours immediately spike insulin levels. Instead, switch to whole grains, which are high in fiber and antioxidants, fight inflammation and also aid in hormonal balance.

PROGESTERONE-BOOSTING FOODS	PERIODS-REGULATING FOODS	FERTILITY FOODS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Banana ■ Walnuts ■ Okra ■ Almonds ■ Pumpkin Seeds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Aloe Vera ■ Cinnamon ■ Jaggery ■ Carom seeds ■ Papaya ■ Pineapple 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Fig ■ Walnuts ■ Pomegranate ■ <u>Cashews</u> ■ Coconut Oil

EAT OUT OPTIONS FOR PCOS

- Veg Stew + Appam
- [Thai Curry](#) + Rice
- Burrito Bowl
- Sambhar + Idli + Coconut Chutney

5 ENERGIZING PCOS SNACKS

1. Sprouts Tikki With Coriander Mint Dip
2. Amaranth Jhal Muri
3. Chia Mango Coconut Milk Pudding
4. Hummus + Cucumber + Carrots

5 REFRESHING PCOS DRINKS

1. Coconut Banana Smoothie
2. Beetroot Celery Juice
3. Fig Kokum Cooler
4. Coconut Mint Chia Cooler
5. Jal Jeera

SAMPLE DIET PLAN

On waking up (9:00am)	(Within 30 Minutes): 1 Lt. Water + Moringa Powder (1 Tsp) + 8 Almonds (Soaked) + 4 Walnuts (Soaked)
Breakfast	Moong Dal Cheela + Mint Chutney
Mid-Morning	Pomegranate (1 Bowl) + Sabja Seeds
Lunch	2 Bowls Sabzi (Seasonal) + Amaranth Roti
4:00 pm	1 Tbsp. Pumpkin Seeds + 1 Apple
6:00 pm	(Beetroot + Tomato + Cucumber) Salad
Dinner	Vegetable Khichdi
Bedtime	Ashwagandha (1/2 Tsp.) + 1/2 Tsp. Coconut Oil + Warm Water

PCOS SOUP

Sattu And Green Peas Soup

Serves: 2

Serving Size: 1 bowl

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cooking Time: 10 minutes

Ingredients :

1/2 Cup green peas (semi boiled)
1 Tbsp channa sattu
2 Cups of water
1/4 Tsp black pepper powder
1/2 Tsp cumin seeds
1/4 Tsp ginger garlic pas
1 Tbsp lime juice
Salt according to taste
1 Tsp white butter

Method :

Blend the semi-boiled peas into a puree. Heat a pan, add ghee then add and saute the pureed peas, a pinch of turmeric powder, ginger-garlic paste. Mix sattu flour in 2 cups of water and stir well. Add the Sattu mix, pepper powder, salt and cumin powder to the pan and mix well. Let it cook on medium flame and stir occasionally. Just before serving add lime juice. Serve hot.

PCOS DRINK

Kanji

Serves: 6

Serving Size: 1 cup

Prep Time: 7 minutes

Cooking Time: 0 minutes

Ingredients :

1 Tbsp brown mustard seed (crushed)
4 Large carrots (peeled)
1 Large beet (peeled)
6 Cups filtered water
1 Tbsp salt

Method :

Crush the mustard seeds in a mortar pestle.

Chop the carrots and beet into long pieces.

Combine all the ingredients in a glass jar and cover with a lid. Let the jar sit in a sunny spot for at least one week – stirring with a wooden spoon daily. Strain the drink. Put the drink in the refrigerator to chill.

For more delicious & healing PCOS [food recipes](https://www.nutritionbylovneet.com) log onto www.nutritionbylovneet.com

PCOS & OTHER HEALTH ISSUES



Women with PCOS are at a higher risk of developing other medical conditions later in life. Let's have a look at some and how food can help with the same.

PCOS & OBESITY + INSULIN RESISTANCE

In obesity, your body starts storing more fat than considered normal and healthy as per a person's height and body type. Besides hormonal imbalance, one of the main causes of obesity is a higher level of insulin. Insulin is a hormone responsible for transporting glucose (body's main source of fuel) from the bloodstream into your cells where it can be used as energy. PCOS affects the body's secretion and use of insulin. Cells become resistant to insulin signals and this prompts your pancreas to

produce even more insulin. Many women with PCOS produce too much insulin or the insulin they do produce doesn't work correctly. Too much insulin promotes fat storage or weight gain, mostly around the belly. This is one reason why women with PCOS tend to gain weight or have a hard time losing weight. High Estrogen and androgen levels are also a reason behind excess fat on the belly, which further creates a problem of insulin resistance.

How food can help:

- Take a low glycemic diet.
- Include more pseudo cereals like amaranth, ragi, and quinoa in your diet to complete the requirements of protein and other micronutrients.
- Inflammatory foods such as wheat, refined flour and sugar should be avoided.
- Bring variety in your protein sources by adding nuts and seeds and lentils.
- Trust Good Fats such as ghee, coconut oil and mustard oil, nuts, seeds, avocado, and coconut meat.
- Add more fiber to your diet as it helps to maintain the blood glucose levels by slowing down glucose absorption.



PCOS & SKIN + HAIR

PCOS throws some unique hair and skin issues, which appear as symptoms of these conditions. These skin and hair problems often cause considerable distress for women with PCOS and puncture their sense of self-worth. Most women find themselves fighting a fierce battle on two fronts – PCOS and skin & hair issues. Here are a few:

- 1.** PCOS causes Hirsutism, which is excessive hair growth on the beard area, chest, stomach, thigh and armpits.
- 2.** Acne is also one of the most common skin problems that women with PCOS face. High insulin and androgens can increase sebum production causing acne.
- 3.** Hair fall and hair thinning due to excessive TSH levels
- 4.** Androgenetic Alopecia, which occurs due to excessive androgens.
- 5.** Acanthosis nigrocans, which often occurs in women who have disorders such as ovarian cysts, underactive thyroids or problems with the adrenal glands. These are unsightly, dark and velvety skin patches, which appear on the neck, underarms, inner thighs and on the face - under eyes, forehead, and around lips.

PCOS & IRREGULAR PERIODS + INFERTILITY

In the case of polycystic ovary, the eggs don't come out regularly. Why? This happens because there are many follicles but they do not mature and as a result, an egg is not released. Since eggs are not released, progesterone levels take a free fall, whereas the androgen and estrogen levels shoot up. This may further lead to irregular periods and other PCOS symptoms. This high level of estrogen and androgen creates a problem of anovulation or irregular ovulation.

healthy female is 28 days with one ovulation when eggs are released. However, this may vary from person to person. So anywhere between 21 and 35 days is considered 'normal'. An 'irregular' period cycle is defined as either:

- Eight or less menstrual cycles per year.
- Menstrual cycles longer than 35 days.

Some women with PCOS also experience heavier or lighter bleeding during their menstrual cycle. How regular period is a marker of healthy reproductive system? Regular periods help to prevent excess thickening of the lining of the uterus (womb). If there is a long-standing thickening of the lining of the womb, it can become the cause of endometrial cancer.





PCOS

POSITIVITY

Losing weight is not the only way to manage unruly hormones. From oil pulling, good sleep to some 'me-time', a little self-care can help you achieve hormonal balance and feel your best once again.



OIL PULLING

It is an Ayurvedic practice that involves swishing cold-pressed oil around your mouth first thing in the morning for about 20 minutes. It is known to purify and strengthen the body. Use of cold-pressed sesame oil is traditionally recommended for this practice. It has antiviral and anti-inflammatory properties. One can use cold-pressed coconut oil also. Never use refined oils.

CUT CAFFEINE INTAKE

Everything in moderation is good, even tea and coffee. Overindulging in caffeine when you're feeling low or stressed can make your PCOS symptoms worse. Caffeine addiction is a downward spiral as it leads to adrenal fatigue and hormonal imbalance. To stabilize sleep and combat anxiety switch to green tea if you really need a pick-me-up drink. Do not exceed two cups a day.



INVEST IN GOOD SLEEP

When it comes to healthy living, the benefits of a good night's sleep are highly underestimated. Sleep deprivation deeply impacts the hormones, insulin sensitivity, and carb cravings. Those who do not get enough sleep are more prone to overeating, which can lead to weight gain. On the other hand, good sleep helps to concentrate better, strengthen the immune system, and stay determined towards achieving health goals. Sleep also helps in stabilizing cortisol (stress hormones) levels.

INDULGE IN 'ME' TIME

From following your hobbies and passion to practicing mindful eating there are so many ways in which you can truly indulge yourself. The 'me-time' doesn't necessarily mean 'alone' time or cutting off from the world. It is about making an investment of time in yourself in order to feel better about yourself. It's about allowing yourself an opportunity to reconnect to your inner self and see the world in a different light. This 'me-time' helps you acknowledge your fears and doubts, and also possibly find the answers within that you are otherwise seeking outside. The stronger you feel on the inside, the more confident you feel on the outside. And when that happens, PCOS would look like just any other obstacle that you can conquer by just being happily strong.

UNWIND & DE-STRESS

Stress can intensify PCOS. Chronic stress, in particular, can create a number of problems such as adrenal fatigue, cortisol imbalance, and sleeplessness. Stress increases insulin resistance. This means your body responds to stress by increasing your blood glucose level and releasing hormones that make the cells even less sensitive to insulin. Hence, less glucose can enter the cells. Reducing stress can help reduce your risk of developing many PCOS related co-morbidities such as high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, and depression, which are associated with the body's stronger response to stress. Try relaxation techniques such as yoga, meditation, and chanting. You can also go for herbs like ashwagandha, licorice root, or maca root. Light lavender candles or some camphor in a diffuser, switch off screen/s and curl up with a book before bedtime to de-stress after a long day.

ACUPUNCTURE

As you know by now, how bad stress is for PCOS and your overall health. Studies have shown that acupuncture is effective in relieving stress as well as chronic tension. It also helps calm the body and mind as well as rebalance the body's energy. Besides this, the therapy helps stimulate specific acupuncture points, which further help and support all the vital organs and glands to balance the secretion of hormones so that hormonal imbalance (PCOS) can be taken care of.



PCOS WORKOUT

Here's a combination of asanas and weight training that is good for the waistline as well as hormonal balance.

Baddhakonasana or Butterfly Pose

Regulates the functioning of ovaries





2
Bhujangasan or Cobra Pose Ensures better functionality of ovaries



3
Malasan or Garland Pose Regulates irregular cycle



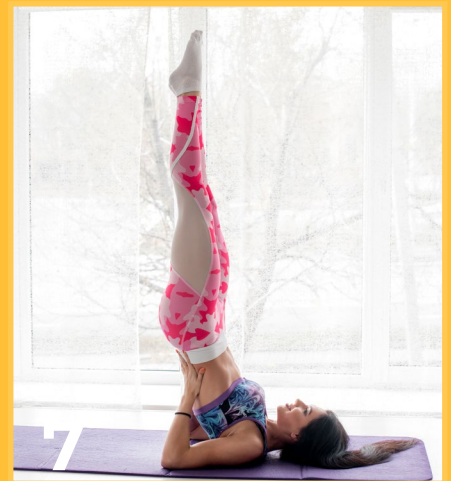
4
Shalabhasana or Locust Pose Supports the ovaries



5
Padmasan or Lotus Pose Controls menstrual cramps



6
Setu Bandha Sarvangasana or Bridge Pose Regulates thyroid function



7
Sarvangasan Balances hormones



8
Hal Aasan Stimulates the abdominal organs & the thyroid gland



9
Weight training 3 times a week Increases muscle mass and insulin sensitivity



10
Walk at least 45 mins a day - Good cardio that offers better oxygenation to your cells

CRACK THE PCOS PUZZLE WITH THE RIGHT DIET

There is no need to suffer in silence with PCOS. You can overcome the condition with a strong will to fight and the right diet that puts you on a path to recovery. One such PCOS slayer and Lean Menu reader shares her experience of going off medication with a plant-based & gluten-free diet.

When & how did you come to know about PCOS?

I was diagnosed with **PCOS** when I was about 22-23 years old by my gynecologist. I noticed certain changes in my monthly cycle and body. I had heard of the condition before but was not aware of the complications and intricacies of the condition.

How did you tackle the condition?

My gynecologist recommended a healthy diet, consisting of fresh fruits, vegetables, good fats, and also regular exercise. Recently, I got diagnosed with endometriosis and discussed my condition with Lovneet, who is my nutritionist for years now. I decided to go down the path of a plant-based, gluten-free diet. It was a life-changing decision and one that I am eternally grateful to Lovneet for helping me make. I was on medication for my condition until 2 years ago, and it was this dietary change along with exercise that led to a complete turnaround in my condition, so much so that I was taken off my medication by my gynecologist. Even my gynecologist was impressed with the turnaround I made.

What challenges did you face due to PCOS?

The most challenging part was the PCOS symptoms. I noticed certain changes in my body such as heavy periods, acne, facial hair growth, and unexplained weight gain especially in the abdominal area which just refused to budge, and drastic hair fall.

What kind of changes did you make in your diet to tackle PCOS?

I am now on an entirely plant-based, and gluten-free diet with plenty of fresh fruits, and vegetables, but more importantly seasonal produce. I eat right, and also start the day with the correct foods. I continue to follow the regimen that Lovneet had introduced me to more than 2 years ago.

One myth that you would like to bust about PCOS?

You do NOT have to live with it. You can definitely get better with the right diet.

How do you define living with PCOS?

As long as you understand your condition, and the difficulties that come with it, you can easily manage it and live an entirely normal life. Basically, it is up to you to get better and make the decisions that may be difficult but are the best for you in the long run. I could not imagine eating a meal without yogurt, and I am not going to lie, it was difficult initially, but the minute I started feeling better, I realized it was worth giving up for that feeling. I no longer crave yogurt, paneer, and cheese for that matter.

What is the most significant lesson/s you have learned from your path of healthy eating?

I used to read all these articles, quotes, and advice from people who were eating healthy and I always thought to myself if it was a life of deprivation, and if it was really worth it. Today I am one of those people and I can tell you with a great amount of conviction, that it is not deprivation, but setting yourself free – your body will thank you, and the way you will begin to feel is a reward big enough to give up anything. Also thankfully, there are plenty of alternatives available now such as vegan cheese, non-dairy milk and yogurt, gluten-free snacks, ice creams and desserts to name a few, so I have hardly ever felt like I was missing out on anything!

What advice would you like to give to those struggling with PCOS?

Consult a good doctor – one who is willing to work with you to overcome **PCOS** and is not adamant on relying solely on medication to treat your condition. And then, most importantly, book an appointment with Lovneet – I can guarantee you will not regret it, and your body will thank you every day for it.

(The name of the client is withheld on request)

**You Are Not Alone In This,
Never Give Up On Nurturing Your Body.**

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This information is not meant or intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis or treatment, and should never be taken as specific medical advice. Always consult your doctor/dietitian before changing, stopping, or starting any medication/diet plan.