

# Polycystic Ovary Syndrome

*Patient Information Series – What you should know, what you should ask.*

## What is Polycystic ovary syndrome?

Polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) is a hormonal disorder common among women of reproductive age. Women with PCOS may have infrequent menstrual periods, excess male hormone (androgen) levels, and ovaries with numerous small collections of fluid (follicles).

## Which are symptoms of PCOS?

The most frequent clinical symptoms are irregular periods (infrequent, irregular or prolonged menstrual cycles), excess facial and body hair (hirsutism), and occasionally severe acne and male-pattern baldness.

## Should I have more tests done?

**Blood tests** to measure hormone levels. This testing can exclude possible causes of menstrual abnormalities or androgen excess that mimics PCOS.

**Ultrasound examination (transvaginal or transabdominal)** to check the appearance of the ovaries and to count the number of follicles in the ovary. The presence of 12 or more follicles measuring 2–9 mm in diameter in each ovary and/or increased ovarian volume (>10 mL) is indicative of PCOS

## Which is the best treatment?

Treatments can help you manage the symptoms of PCOS and lower your odds for long-term health problems such as diabetes. Women need a combination of lifestyle changes and medications to treat PCOS.

## Which is the prognosis?

PCOS patients present a risk to develop obesity, hyperinsulinemia and diabetes. Therefore, all women with PCOS diagnosis should perform an oral glucose tolerance test in order to evaluate and treat the patients with hyperinsulinemia.

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## What other questions should I ask?

- What is the best treatment for my condition?
- Will I be able to get pregnant?
- What are the problems that can happen after diagnosis?
- Where is the best place for me to receive diagnosis?
- Which follow-up will I need during treatment?

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