

Polycystic ovarian syndrome



Issue or Problem	Options	Benefits	Serious Harms and Side Effects
Overweight or obese (BMI 30+) Ask your doctor to rule out sleep apnoea	Regular exercise and weight control (At least 30 minutes per day on average) healthy diets for those with raised BMI	Reducing weight can be to return of ovulation, improves fertility (other options Clomifene and IVF) and hirsutism protects against diabetes  Reduces chances of developing type 2 diabetes mellitus	No harm
	Metformin	More regular menstrual cycles Protects against type 2 diabetes and heart attacks also helps hairiness	If the dose is increased too quickly: looser stools, nausea and abdominal cramping. Not proven to improve fertility.
Risk of endometrial cancer 9% lifetime risk if not having at least 4 periods per year	12 to 14 days of medroxyprogesterone or micronised progesterone	Normal (3%) risk of endometrial cancer 	Fluid retention, skin changes including acne, breast tenderness or emotional changes
	oral contraceptive	Normal (3%) risk of endometrial cancer 	Combined pill increases risk of deep vein thrombosis and pulmonary embolism to 15 per 10,000 women years
	Intrauterine System e.g. Mirena	Normal (3%) risk of endometrial cancer 	Irregular periods or periods stop (20%)
Hairiness (Hirsutism)	Cosmetic measures bleaching (Lemon juice all hydrogen peroxide) and plucking and waxing	Low cost.	No serious harm. Very occasional infection of hair follicle
	Topical eflornithine an option for facial hirsutism	Temporary benefit with facial hairiness	Temporary benefit Many clinical commissioning groups will not allow this to be prescribed
	Metformin	19% benefit after 6 months also helps with periods, weight and protects against diabetes and heart attacks	If the dose is increased too quickly: looser stools, nausea and abdominal cramping. Not proven to improve fertility.
	Other options can include Yasmin or Dianette,	Yasmin - 27%, Dianette - 36% benefit after 6 months 	Increases risk of deep vein thrombosis and pulmonary embolism to 35 per 10,000 years
	Spirolactone	38% benefit after 6 months 	Confusion, cramps, dizziness, dangerous potassium levels. Regular blood tests.
	Finasteride (after menopause)	32% benefit after 6 months 	Fatigue, weight gain, loss of libido with oral preparations