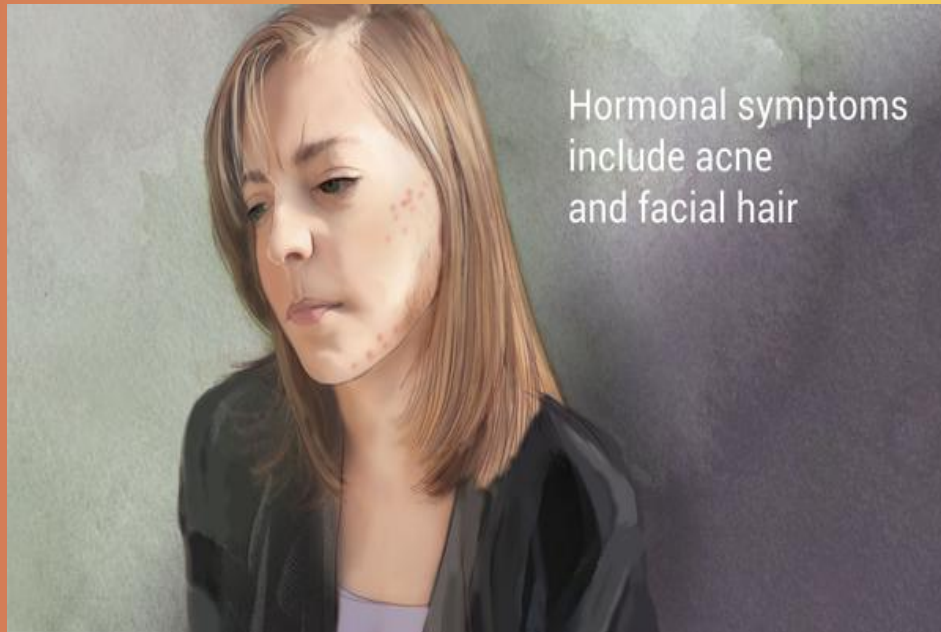


# POLYCYSTIC OVARIAN SYNDROME



(PCOS)

# What is the medical definition of polycystic ovarian syndrome?



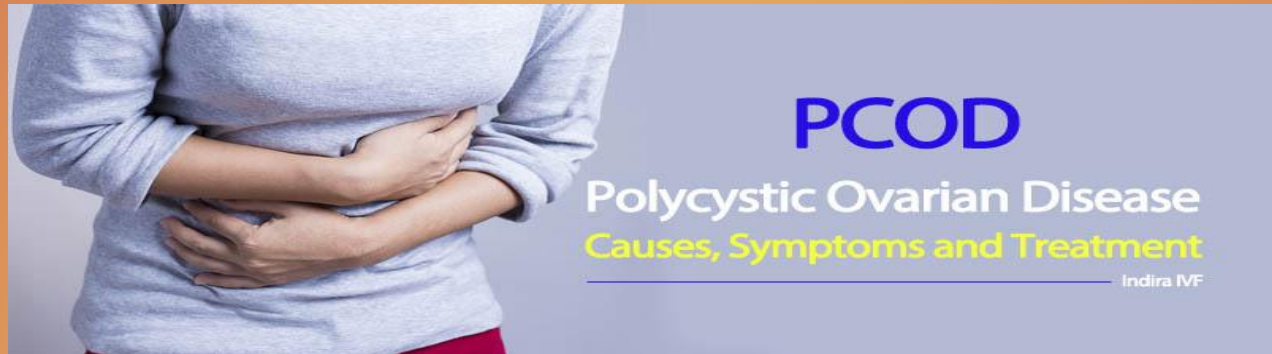
Polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS, polycystic ovary syndrome) is a relatively common hormonal disorder that causes a number of different symptoms in women of reproductive age. Common to all women with PCOS is an irregularity in the menstrual cycle and the presence of excess male hormones (androgens)

# What happens when you have polycystic ovaries?

- The condition was named because of the finding of enlarged ovaries containing multiple small cysts (polycystic ovaries). Although most women with PCOS have polycystic ovaries, some affected women do not. PCOS has also been referred to as Stein-Leventhal syndrome and polycystic ovarian disease (PCOD).

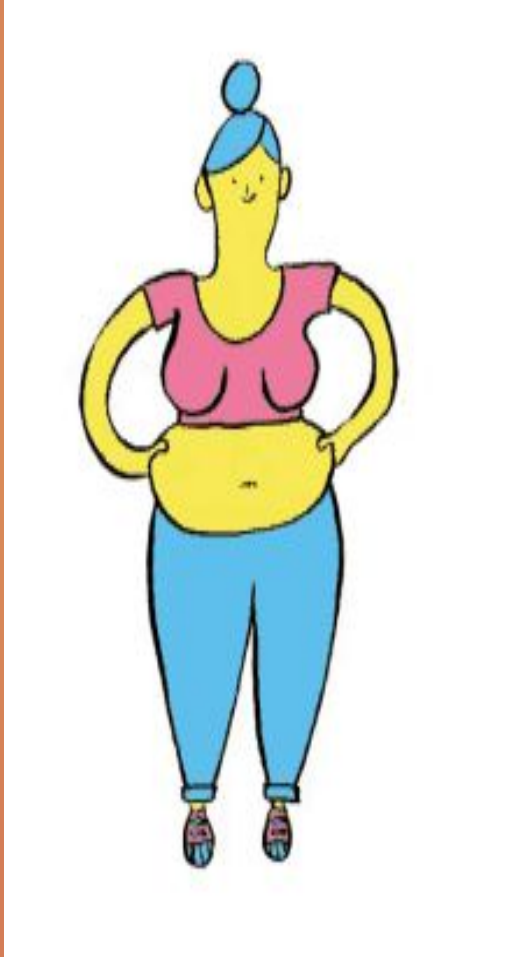


# Common symptoms of PCOS



- ❑ **Irregular periods** A lack of ovulation prevents the uterine lining from shedding every month. Some women with PCOS get fewer than eight periods a year .
- ❑ **Hair growth.** More than 70 percent of women with this condition grow hair on their face and body — including on their back, belly, and chest .
- ❑ **Acne** Male hormones can make the skin oilier than usual and cause breakouts on areas like the face, chest, and upper back.
- ❑ **Weight gain** Up to 80 percent of women with PCOS are overweight or obese .
- ❑ **Male-pattern baldness.** Hair on the scalp gets thinner and fall out.
- ❑ **Darkening of the skin.** Dark patches of skin can form in body creases like those on the neck, in the groin, and under the breasts.
- ❑ **• Headaches.** Hormone changes can trigger headaches in some women.

# How PCOS affects your body



## ❑ Infertility

- ❑ To get pregnant, you have to ovulate. Women who don't ovulate regularly don't release as many eggs to be fertilized. PCOS is one of the leading causes of infertility in women .

## ❑ Sleep apnea

- ❑ This condition causes repeated pauses in breathing during the night, which interrupt sleep.
- ❑ Sleep apnea is more common in women who are overweight — especially if they also have PCOS. The risk for sleep apnea is 5 to 10 times higher in obese women with PCOS than in those without PCOS.

## ❑ Endometrial cancer

- ❑ During ovulation, the uterine lining sheds. If you don't ovulate every month, the lining can build up.

## ❑ Depression

- ❑ Both hormonal changes and symptoms like unwanted hair growth can negatively affect your emotions. Many with PCOS end up experiencing depression and anxiety



# Pregnancy and PCOS



- ❑ PCOS
- ❑ interrupts the normal menstrual cycle and makes it harder to get pregnant. Between 70 and 80 percent of women with PCOS have fertility problems .
- ❑ This condition can also increase the risk for pregnancy complications. Women with PCOS are twice as likely as women without the condition to deliver their baby prematurely. They're also at greater risk for miscarriage, high blood pressure, and gestational diabetes.
- ❑ However, women with PCOS can get pregnant using fertility treatments that improve ovulation. Losing weight and lowering blood sugar levels can improve your odds of having a healthy pregnancy.

# Common medical treatments

## **Birth control**

Taking estrogen and progestin daily can restore a normal hormone balance, regulate ovulation, relieve symptoms like excess hair growth, and protect against endometrial cancer. These hormones come in a pill, patch, or vaginal ring.

## **Metformin**

Metformin (Glucophage, Fortamet) is a drug used to treat type 2 diabetes. It also treats PCOS by improving insulin levels.

One study found that taking metformin while making changes to diet and exercise improves weight loss, lowers blood sugar, and restores a normal menstrual cycle better than changes to diet and exercise alone .

the risk for twins and other multiple births

## **Hair removal medicines**

A few treatments can help get rid of unwanted hair or stop it from growing. Eflornithine (Vaniqa) cream is a prescription drug that slows hair growth. Laser hair removal and electrolysis can get rid of unwanted hair on your face and body.

## **Surgery**

Surgery can be an option to improve fertility if other treatments don't work.

# Diet and lifestyle tips to treat PCOS



- Treatment for PCOS usually starts with lifestyle changes like weight loss, Studies comparing diets for PCOS have found that low-carbohydrate diets are effective for both weight loss and lowering insulin levels. A low [glycemic index](#) (low-GI) diet that gets most carbohydrates from fruits, vegetables, and whole grains helps regulate the menstrual cycle better than a regular weight loss diet .
- A few studies have found that 30 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise at least three days a week can help women with PCOS lose weight. Losing weight with exercise also improves ovulation and insulin levels
- Exercise is even more beneficial when combined with a healthy diet. Diet plus exercise helps you lose more weight than either intervention alone, and it lowers your risks for diabetes and heart disease (23Trus.





## SUMMARY

- ❑ PCOS can disrupt a woman's menstrual cycles and make it harder to get pregnant. High levels of male hormones also lead to unwanted symptoms like hair growth on the face and body.
- ❑ Lifestyle interventions are the first treatments doctors recommend for PCOS, and they often work well. Weight loss can treat PCOS symptoms and improve the odds of getting pregnant. Diet and aerobic exercise are two effective ways to lose weight.
- ❑ Medicines are an option if lifestyle changes don't work. Birth control pills and metformin can both restore more normal menstrual cycles and relieve PCOS symptoms.