

# Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) and Metabolic Syndrome (MBS)

PCOS is recognized to be one of the most common hormonal problems in women. PCOS is a common cause of infertility, menstrual irregularity, and hirsutism (excessive hair growth).

The diagnosis of PCOS is made by meeting two of three criteria and excluding other diagnoses.

1. Ovulating sporadically or not at all;
2. Clinical signs of elevated male hormone levels (such as male pattern hair growth, male pattern balding, and/or acne), OR elevated blood levels of male hormones
3. Polycystic appearance to the ovaries on pelvic ultrasound.

Women with PCOS may be at increased risk for developing the metabolic syndrome, which is characterized by abdominal obesity, cholesterol abnormalities, hypertension, and insulin resistance that impairs blood sugar regulation. Women with PCOS have an increased risk for developing long-term health consequences such as diabetes, obesity, hypercholesterolemia, hypertension, endometrial cancer (if left untreated for prolonged periods of time) and possibly heart disease.

Obesity is common in women with PCOS. Lifestyle changes in diet and exercise are the cornerstone of PCOS treatment. Diet and exercise that result in weight loss improves the frequency of ovulation, improves fertility, lowers the risk of diabetes, and lowers androgen levels in many women with PCOS.

Fitness level has been shown to be better indicator of health status than weight alone, therefore the emphasis is on improving health, fitness, and metabolism. We encourage a consultation with a nutritionist and learn how to balance carbohydrates, healthy fats, and lean proteins. For some, even small changes can reap big rewards.

PCOS is a complex disorder and can be emotionally difficult. It is important to adopt healthy lifestyles to delay or reverse development of more serious diseases.