

What is PCOS? Why is it so Common Now?

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Polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) is a hormonal disorder involving infrequent or irregular menstrual periods and often excess male hormone (androgen) levels which causes acne, hirsutism (excessive hair growth on face, back, chest etc), male pattern hair loss. Some patients complain of increasing obesity and infertility as well.

Exact cause of PCOS is not clearly understood. Its normally thought to be due to genetic involvement, hormonal imbalances, insulin resistance, obesity and lifestyle changes.

In India, the prevalence of PCOS are between 8.2% and 22.5% which has drastically increased in past 15-20 years. Our lives have become very fast-paced and all of us are always chasing some goals. While all this makes us more successful and accomplished, this often leads to an unhealthy lifestyle. We do not eat well, we do not get the time to exercise adequately, and we more often than not live in long periods of stress. These are the reason why PCOS is so common these days.

So to manage PCOS you need to start by visiting your Gynaecologist. They will recommend you blood tests for various hormones, ask you to get an ultrasonography etc matching to your profile.

Recommended lifestyle changes are :

- Eating a well-balanced diet about 1200-1500 kcal (high protein, low glycaemic index food)
- Yoga and Medication.
- Exercise is important part in weight loss regime; aim for >30 min/day.

Pharmacologically, treatments are oral contraceptive pills, antiandrogens, insulin sensitizing agents, inositol and its isomers, topical acne and hair removal agents. For infertile women with PCOS we recommend ovulation induction, insulin sensitizing agents and sometimes Laparoscopic ovarian drilling.

Some long term sequelae of PCOS can be diabetes, hypertension, high cholesterol, endometrial cancer and many more.

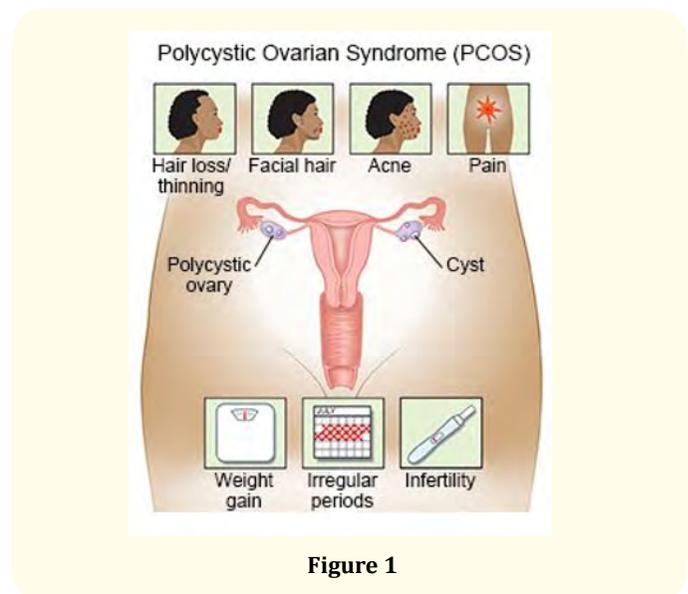


Figure 1

MYTHS about PCOS

- PCOS and PCOD are different diseases.
- PCOS can only occur in overweight women.
- You can't get pregnant if you have PCOS.
- You have to have polycystic ovaries in Ultrasound to have PCOS.