

POLYCYSTIC OVARY SYNDROME (PCOS)



WHAT IS POLYCYSTIC OVARY SYNDROME (PCOS)?

Polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) is a complex and common hormone condition affecting around 1 in 7 girls and women. Androgens and insulin are the two hormones responsible for the symptoms related to PCOS.

The known causes of PCOS include heredity and some environmental factors. A healthy diet and regular physical activity can improve the symptoms of PCOS. The signs and symptoms of PCOS vary between women and can occur at different life stages.

HOW DOES EXERCISE HELP WITH POLYCYSTIC OVARY SYNDROME (PCOS)?

Evidence shows that lifestyle changes, including regular physical activity and a healthy diet are the most effective ways to reduce the severity of PCOS symptoms.

Exercise has many important benefits for women with PCOS including improved:

- » Insulin action, reducing the risk of diabetes
- » Weight gain prevention
- » Emotional wellbeing
- » Energy levels, motivation and self-confidence
- » Period regularity
- » Fertility
- » Fitness, muscle endurance and strength

WHAT TYPE OF EXERCISE IS BEST FOR POLYCYSTIC OVARY SYNDROME (PCOS)?

Any exercise or activity that is enjoyable is recommended as this is likely to be more sustainable over time.

To achieve the best results exercise should include:

- » Aerobic exercise – which helps improve heart health and metabolism
- » Weight/resistance training – which helps to build muscle strength and tone
- » Or a combination of both

Try to be physically active or exercise on most, if not all, days of the week for 30 to 60 minutes by:

- » Using every opportunity to walk whenever possible
- » Taking the stairs instead of the elevator
- » Parking further away
- » Take up a sport or activity that you enjoy (swimming, team sports, hiking)
- » Invite friends and family to participate in exercise/activities