



# Polycystic Ovary Syndrome

## HEALTHY CHOICES FOR PCOS

**PCOS** (Polycystic Ovary Syndrome) is a complex metabolic condition that is thought to affect 5-10 % of all women. In PCOS, you may have insulin resistance which puts you at risk for heart disease and diabetes. Insulin resistance means that the process of getting the sugar out of the blood and into the cells is defective or the cells are “resistant” to insulin. Healthy eating and losing weight, if you are overweight, can improve insulin resistance, and decrease your risk of diabetes and heart disease.

Symptoms of PCOS can vary from woman to woman. Common symptoms may include irregular periods, infertility, pelvic pain, and unexplained weight gain. Women may also have fatigue, acne or oily skin, skin pigmentation or skin tags, high testosterone levels, unwanted hair growth on face or body, male-patterned baldness, high blood pressure, and high blood sugar levels. You may also have a family history of diabetes.

### Lifestyle Treatment of PCOS

#### Tips to get you started

- **The good news is that a healthy lifestyle can positively impact PCOS.** The plan is targeted at treating the insulin resistance to calm down the cascade of reactions that occur in PCOS.
- **Eat smaller amounts of food throughout the day.** Eat every 3-4 hours. Do not skip meals.
- **Include a moderate amount of carbohydrate.** Carbohydrate intake has the most power over the insulin response. Learn which foods have carbs but do not severely limit your carbohydrate intake. Spread carb foods throughout the day. Eating less carbohydrate (about 40% of your calories) may be helpful. This is about 120-150 g of carbohydrate each day or about 30 g carb at main meals and 10-20 g carb at snacks. A dietitian can help you plan a healthy diet and teach you how to count carbohydrates.
- **Choose high fiber foods and healthy carbohydrates.** Choose whole fruit instead of juice. Select whole grains, beans, peas, lentils and plenty of vegetables. Choose grain foods with at least 3 grams fiber/serving (check labels).
- **Balance the carbs with lean proteins, healthy fats and vegetables.** Ex: nut butter with whole wheat crackers.
- **Go Mediterranean.** Focus on healthy fats, like olive oil, nuts, seeds, avocado and olives.
- **Losing just 10 pounds can help decrease insulin resistance.**

#### How do I know if the diet is working?

You may have symptom improvement, less cravings and overall increased energy. You may also lose weight and your periods may normalize.

#### Exercise

**Include exercise that raises your heart rate**, such as brisk walking, bicycling and swimming. Using equipment such as an elliptical machine or treadmill is great, too. Aim for moderate intensity exercise that gets your heart pumping. Do it most days of the week. Aim for a goal of 60 minutes/day if you desire weight loss. Exercise can be done in short blocks throughout the day.

## Healthy Eating Guidelines with PCOS- meal by meal suggestions

### Choose whole grains and low sugar foods

- **Breakfast**—oatmeal, high fiber cereals (more than 5 g fiber/serving) and 100% whole grain bread.
- **Lunch and Dinner**—whole wheat or corn tortillas, brown rice, whole wheat pasta, peas, corn, bulgur, quinoa, barley, beans, peas, lentils and sweet potatoes.
- **Snacks**—light popcorn, whole grain crackers, edamame, soy nuts, hummus spread, brown rice cakes, fresh fruits and vegetables. Avoid sugary desserts and baked goods.
- No sugar beverages are best—water, unsweetened tea and unsweetened seltzer water.

### Choose lean protein and healthy fats

- **Breakfast and Lunch**—Omega -3 enriched eggs or egg whites, Canadian bacon, nut/soy butter, low fat cheese, cottage or ricotta(less than 5 g fat), lean sliced poultry, tofu or soy meat alternatives, like veggie burgers or soy crumbles.
- **Dinner**—chicken or turkey breast, lean beef or pork (loin or round cuts), 93-96% lean hamburger and fish.
- **Cook without fat**—bake, broil, or grill. Avoid high fat meats, whole milk, cheese, butter and solid fats.
- **Add small amounts of healthy fat**, such as canola oil or olive oil, soft tub margarine, peanut or nut butter, avocado, seeds and nuts.

### Example of a Healthy Menu

<p><b>Breakfast</b> 1 cup oatmeal with 1 T. sunflower seeds 1 hard boiled or scrambled omega-3 egg Hot tea or coffee- no sugar 30g carb (2 carb choices)</p>	<p><b>Lunch</b> 1 cup salad greens with ½ cup kidney beans 1 slice whole wheat bread 2 ounces lean turkey 1 tsp. olive oil salad dressing Unsweetened tea 30 g carb (2 carb choices)</p>
<p><b>A.M Snack</b> 1 cup berries or melon with 10 almonds 15 g carb (1 carb choice)</p>	<p><b>P.M. Snack</b> 1 small orange and 1 oz low fat cheese 15 g carb (1 carb choice)</p>
<p><b>Dinner</b> 3 ounces grilled salmon Spinach salad- 1-2 cups spinach with raw vegetables and 5 black olives 2/3 cup brown rice with steamed broccoli or other non-starchy vegetable 1 tsp. olive oil salad dressing Water with lemon 30 g carb (2 carb choices)</p>	<p><b>Evening Snack</b> 1 carton Greek yogurt with 10 peanuts 15 g carb (1 carb choice )</p>

You can schedule an appointment with a dietitian in your clinic by calling **303-338-4545**.

If you would like to learn more about our nutrition resources go to [www.kphealthyme.com](http://www.kphealthyme.com) or call **303-614-1070**.

#### Resources:

PCOS Workbook by Angela Grassi, 2009

[www.PCOSnutrition.com](http://www.PCOSnutrition.com)

[www.womenshealth.gov](http://www.womenshealth.gov)