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Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS)

What is PCOS?

PCOS is a hormonal imbalance that is the most common endocrine disorder in reproductive-age women. It is typically characterized by high androgen levels, which may cause irregular ovulation or anovulation. Excessive weight gain and/or insulin resistance are also common with PCOS.

You may be diagnosed with PCOS if you meet at least 2 of the 3 following criteria:

- Irregular periods or lack of menstrual periods
- High androgen levels on lab work and/or high androgen symptoms like cystic acne and excessive hair growth
- Polycystic appearance of ovaries on ultrasound.

How is PCOS Treated?

There are many treatment options for PCOS. The goals of treatment may depend on your particular symptoms and whether or not you are trying to conceive.

- Lifestyle Interventions - will help with weight loss, gut regulation, and vitamin deficiencies
 - Diet
 - Exercise
 - Supplements
- Hormonal Contraceptives - will help regulate the menstrual cycle and provide endometrial protection
 - Combined estrogen-progestin oral contraceptive pills
 - Cyclic or continuous progesterone
 - Progestin-only intrauterine devices (IUDs)
- Metformin - a medication typically used for diabetes management, this can help regulate insulin and blood sugar levels
- Spironolactone - a medication used to lower androgen levels, this can help patients with acne and/or excessive hair growth

Can I Get Pregnant with PCOS?

PCOS is a common cause of infertility, as many women with PCOS will ovulate irregularly or not ovulate at all. Treating PCOS with some of the above options may help to restore normal ovulation. Patients desiring pregnancy may also benefit from doing a timed cycle by using ovulation induction medications like Letrozole or Clomid.