

Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome

Why POS is linked to stress and how it can be diagnosed and treated

Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome is a big issue for women struggling with their weight. If you've been diagnosed with polycystic ovary syndrome, or PCOS, it may feel like the numbers on the scale tick up no matter what you do—almost like just looking at food makes you gain weight. PCOS is known to be a metabolic disorder, wreaking havoc on your body's ability to burn calories, while at the same time creating an insulin resistant-fat storage environment. With PCOS, the problems women experience can stem from cysts in the ovaries or adrenal (stress induced) dysfunction, both of which are most likely connected to the delicate balance between brain, adrenal, and ovarian hormones being ransacked with stress. This leads to overproduction or insensitivity of insulin, which then starts a cascade of massive hormone disruption. Women with PCOS will typically produce higher levels of testosterone, DHEA, insulin, and estrogen, and under-produce progesterone from a lack of ovulation.

Excess testosterone is linked to higher rates of insulin resistance, acne, facial hair growth, irregular bleeding, and male-pattern baldness. When fat percentages rise, this can further increase your insulin resistance and production (since fat cells produce insulin.) It's a vicious cycle that can lead to diabetes and infertility, as the high insulin impairs women's ability to ovulate and produce progesterone. Lack of progesterone creates depression, anxiety and mood changes linked to PMS, painful periods or missed periods, and insomnia. Estrogen dominance creates a fat storage state and leads to PMS, menstrual problems, and mood swings.

The worst part is that this entire complex of hormone imbalance often goes undetected and can make you pack on weight like never before. Excess insulin production leads to insulin resistance, which in turn decreases your ability to use insulin effectively. When the body cannot use insulin properly, it secretes more insulin to make glucose available to cells. The resulting excess insulin is thought to additionally boost androgen production by the ovaries, truly bringing the hormone imbalances full circle.

How to Diagnose and Treat PCOS:

PCOS is diagnosed through blood testing of the hormone levels, evaluation of the current symptoms, and ultrasound to look for possible cysts lining the periphery of the ovaries. The treatment of PCOS is often a combination of treatments including massive overhaul of the diet to one very low on the glycemic index. Hormonal changes include lowering testosterone with medications,

herbs, and in some cases birth control pills, or the use of a mild diuretic called Spironolactone. Insulin is lowered through a strict low sugar/carbohydrate diet, exercise (cardio), the use of a medication called Metformin and/or a supplement called chromium picolinate. Progesterone is optimized with the use of bio-identical progesterone, which immediately supports the mood, lowers anxiety, reduces stress, and helps regulate menstrual cycles and periods while promoting weight loss. OnePeak Medical can help with blood testing, detection, and treatment of PCOS – www.onepeakmedical.com. If we can diagnose and treat PCOS early, we can reduce the risk of long-term complications.

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