

Jennifer Phy, D.O.

What is PCOS?

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Polycystic ovary syndrome, it's a syndrome. So this is part of what makes the diagnosis confusing because no two women have to be exactly alike to meet the diagnostic criteria. So typically, women are going to have irregular menstrual cycles where the cycles are usually farther apart, like maybe they'll say, I'm always a week or two late or they might not get their cycles at all. They typically have unwanted hair growth, so a little bit darker, coarser hair, in the midline of their body. And another criteria is the appearance of a polycystic ovary by ultrasound which the patient can't know about herself unless she's had an ultrasound exam. But polycystic ovaries have a very classic appearance with follicles which are actually little egg sacs distributed in a circle. They look just like a string of black pearls by ultrasound, so they aren't really cysts at all these are our eggs that aren't developing and ovulating as they should. So this makes the diagnosis tricky and is part of the problem that both patients aren't aware that they have the syndrome and many physicians have a difficult time making the diagnosis too.

How effective has this diet been for patients with PCOS?

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In the patients that we've had that many have conceived rapidly within months of switching to this nutrition plan. So I think the great majority, I think, because fertility has a lot of different circumstances. There can be other factors involved besides just the ovulation and the PCOS. But the greatest majority I would say at least 80% will conceive and have the conception happen much quicker and with much less medication once they've switched to this diet plan.

What should patients avoid with the diet?

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The food groups that we asked the women to avoid are grains and that's all grains so even grains that we thought were healthy like whole wheat, or quinoa or brown rice, oatmeal, so no grains and we have very limited dairy that's permitted on the diet we limit it to one ounce of cheese a day, and they can use butter to cook foods but otherwise no dairy products. The foods that are permitted without limitation are meats. So especially lean meats we say eat all you want all day every day till you're full. The protein is so healthy and vegetables, there are very few vegetables that aren't permitted. But there's a very long list of vegetables that can be eaten without limitation. Fruits, this is one of the perks of our diet as opposed to Atkins or ketogenic diets where they really limit fruits, we encourage the fruits so low sugar fruits can be eaten, eaten without limitation. So it's really a different way of thinking about food. And that's why we like to call it the science of food, because these women will typically say I am eating two to three times as much as I used to, I'm consuming so many more calories than I used to, but I'm finally losing the weight.

What should patients avoid with the diet?

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So in the women with PCOS, when they ate a grain or a dairy product, instead of their body, raising its metabolism and burning those calories off as energy, their body stored it as fat, it had the opposite effect. And so by correcting that, by allowing these women to have normal insulin levels, all of their

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other labs improved their glucose, insulin, triglycerides, testosterone, their ovulation improved, their weight went down. So we feel that we've discovered this key element where it all begins and that's with insulin. So it would be very difficult to overcome all the symptoms with PCOS without addressing the insulin because I really feel that's the factor that makes PCOS happen.

What did you discover while researching this diet?

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What's happening is that the metabolism is so impaired, that even though the women have not had anything to eat or drink but water for eight to 12 hours, they are still storing fat from what they ate yesterday. And then when we when we gave them a protein shake that contained whey protein, it's spelled whey that's the liquid component of milk. Whey Protein is in nearly every weight loss shake or every meal replacement shake. And they drank that shake and rather than their metabolism going up It went down and they stored the calories from that shake as fat. So, when this data came out at the end of the study, many of the study participants cried when they heard this because first of all, they were very happy that someone believed them that they were trying and you know, if you haven't had nothing but water and you're storing fat, that's not fair. And then they also cried because they had spent so much money on meal replacement shakes. So, you know, all these whey protein powders, they work for other people. I'm not saying whey protein is bad for everyone. But for women with PCOS, it is going to backfire. And the whey protein from dairy is going to store fat it usually doesn't work for women with PCOS.

How can people learn more about the diet?

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We began a website pcos-diet.com that is providing this nutritional information and an 11 minute video. of me explaining the diet so that is now available to the public. On the same website, there is a video for healthcare providers where we have a lecture prepared to help them make the diagnosis of polycystic ovary syndrome easier. Because it is tricky of many times healthcare providers will call and say I'm just not sure if this patient has PCOS. I'm just not sure what labs I should draw or what the criteria are to make the diagnosis. And there is a free provider video on our website to make that easier for the healthcare providers. The app will apply the same information in a way that the patient can use the information on a daily basis. They will have recipes, motivational videos, they will have a goal to shoot for. They will have a weight tracker and they will have a grocery lists so that when they go to the grocery store, they have a list of every single food that they can have all that they want. And what I'm hoping is that they'll stick to that food list and not go down the aisles with the food that they can't have.