



Understanding Polycystic Ovary Syndrome

Polycystic ovary syndrome affects up to 15% of women ages 15 to 50.

1. Introduction

Polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) is a common condition where the ovaries create abnormally high levels of hormones, called androgens, causing reproductive hormones to become imbalanced. This condition usually starts during adolescence and is a common cause of female infertility.

2. Causes and Symptoms

The exact cause of PCOS is still undetermined. Healthcare providers can diagnose PCOS after identifying symptoms and conducting a comprehensive examination, which may involve blood tests and ultrasounds.

Some symptoms of PCOS include:

- + Irregular menstrual cycles
- + Abnormal hair growth on the face, arms, chest or abdomen
- + Weight gain around the abdomen
- + Cysts developing around the edge of the ovaries
- + Excessive acne
- + High levels of the hormone androgen

3. Risk Factors

Certain factors may increase a person's chances of developing PCOS. Some risk factors associated with PCOS are:

- + A family history of PCOS
- + Insulin resistance
- + Obesity
- + Irregular levels of reproductive hormones

4. Treatment

PCOS treatments focus on managing symptoms. Treatment will differ for those wanting to get pregnant. Treatments can include medications, lifestyle changes, or a combination of both. Some include:

- + Hormonal birth control
- + Insulin-sensitizing medicine
- + Medication to block androgens
- + Eating a nutritious diet and maintaining a healthy body weight
- + Medication to induce ovulation for those trying to get pregnant

The effects of PCOS may change over time. Healthcare providers can help people with PCOS determine which treatments may provide the most relief from symptoms.

Did you know?

People with PCOS are more likely to have other health conditions like type 2 diabetes and high cholesterol.

For more information on polycystic ovary syndrome and supportive resources, please visit my.clevelandclinic.org.

References:

<https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/8316-polycystic-ovary-syndrome-pcos#overview>

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/pcos/symptoms-causes/syc-20353439>

<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/polycystic-ovary-syndrome>