



PCOS Awareness Month Newsletter

SEPTEMBER 2026 • KNOW THE SIGNS • PROTECT YOUR WHOLE HEALTH

Polycystic ovary syndrome, or PCOS, is a lifelong hormonal and metabolic condition that can affect periods, fertility, blood sugar, heart health, emotional well-being, and the lining of the uterus. Knowing the signs and getting consistent care can help you protect your health now and over time. [1–4]

What PCOS Is

NIH describes PCOS as a set of symptoms related to hormonal imbalance. A person with PCOS usually has at least two of three features: irregular or absent ovulation, higher androgen levels or signs of higher androgens, and ovarian follicles that have stopped developing. Not everyone with PCOS has ovarian cysts. NIH also uses the name Polyendocrine Metabolic Ovary Syndrome, or PMOS. [1]

Signs Worth Discussing With Your Healthcare Provider

- Irregular, skipped, absent, or very heavy periods
- Difficulty becoming pregnant because ovulation is irregular or absent
- Increased facial or body hair, scalp hair thinning, persistent acne, or oily skin
- Weight gain or difficulty losing weight, especially around the waist
- Dark, thickened, velvety skin patches, which may be associated with insulin resistance
- Pelvic pain or other symptoms that concern you

PCOS Can Affect More Than the Ovaries

Health area	Why ongoing care matters
Blood sugar	Insulin resistance is common. CDC reports that more than half of women with PCOS develop type 2 diabetes by age 40. Ask whether and how often you should be tested. [3]
Heart and circulation	PCOS is associated with higher risks of high blood pressure, unhealthy cholesterol levels, heart disease, and stroke. [2,3]
Mental health and sleep	Depression, anxiety, and obstructive sleep apnea occur more often among people with PCOS. These concerns deserve care too. [2,3]
Uterine health	Irregular or absent ovulation may allow the uterine lining to build up. NIH and NCI identify PCOS as being associated with endometrial hyperplasia and increased endometrial cancer risk. [2,4]

Important: Having PCOS does not mean you will develop every associated condition or that you will develop cancer. Risk is not a diagnosis. Regular care helps identify concerns early. [2,4]



Protect Your Uterine Health

NCI identifies PCOS as a risk factor for endometrial cancer and lists unusual vaginal bleeding or pelvic pain among possible symptoms. Endometrial cancer begins in the endometrium, the inner lining of the uterus. A Pap test checks the cervix and does not usually detect endometrial cancer. [4]

Contact a healthcare professional promptly if you experience:

- Bleeding or discharge that is unusual for you or not related to your period
- Very heavy, prolonged, or repeatedly irregular bleeding
- Any vaginal bleeding after menopause
- New or persistent pelvic pain, pain during sex, or painful urination

These symptoms can have many causes, but they should not be ignored. Depending on your history and symptoms, a clinician may recommend an examination, imaging, or an endometrial biopsy. [4]

Your PCOS Health Visit Checklist

- ☐ Track your periods, bleeding pattern, pain, and symptoms before the appointment.
- ☐ Ask how PCOS was diagnosed and whether other possible causes were ruled out.
- ☐ Ask about blood pressure, cholesterol, and type 2 diabetes testing.
- ☐ Discuss how to protect the uterine lining if your periods are infrequent or absent.
- ☐ Share your pregnancy goals before choosing treatment.
- ☐ Mention depression, anxiety, poor sleep, snoring, or daytime fatigue.
- ☐ Ask what changes should prompt an urgent visit or additional evaluation.

PCOS Care Is Individual

PCOS treatment may include lifestyle support, medicines for menstrual cycles or insulin response, symptom care, and fertility treatment. Choices depend on your health and pregnancy goals. Do not change medication without guidance from a qualified healthcare professional. [5]

She Thrives Foundation reminder: You deserve to be heard. Track changes, ask questions, and seek another medical opinion when your concerns are not fully addressed.

References and Source Attribution

Health information was independently written and paraphrased from the sources below; source wording is not presented as original She Thrives Foundation content.

- [1 NIH NICHD About Polycystic Ovary Syndrome](#)
- [2 NIH NICHD Symptoms and associated health conditions](#)
- [3 CDC Diabetes and Polycystic Ovary Syndrome](#)
- [4 NCI Endometrial Cancer Treatment Patient Version](#)
- [5 NIH NICHD Treatments for PCOS](#)
- [6 NCCN Guidelines for Patients Uterine Cancer](#)

Educational information only; not a substitute for medical advice. Seek prompt care for urgent or severe symptoms. Sources accessed September 15, 2026.