



POLYCYSTIC OVARY SYNDROME PROFILE

The Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) is one of the most common hormonal disturbances affecting women. An estimated 5 to 10% of women of childbearing age have PCOS and at least 30% of women have some symptoms of PCOS. This health condition is linked to hormonal imbalances and insulin resistance and can bring about a wide variety of symptoms.

'Polycystic' literally means 'many cysts', and polycystic ovaries are those with a string of cysts around their outside. Not every woman with PCOS suffers from all the related symptoms: either you can have any combination of them to any degree of severity, or have no obvious symptoms at all, except the cysts on your ovaries that give the condition its name. This is then known as polycystic ovaries (PCO); however patients with PCO are considered to be at risk of PCOS and should especially monitor their health because stress or weight gain may result in the symptoms developing. Even 60 years after its discovery, causes of PCOS are still being discovered, though the treatments options are now well developed. So far, causes known to play a contributory role include genetic predisposition, stress, pollution and poor dietary habits.

Signs and symptoms

- Overweight – particularly around the waist and difficulty losing weight
- Fatigue, depression and mood swings
- Infrequent or absent periods
- Breast and abdominal pain
- Dizziness and increased tendency to faint
- Tendency to grow hair excessively in male distribution areas and loss of hair typically seen in male pattern baldness
- Prone to acne
- Problems with fertility and miscarriages
- Patches of thickened and dark brown or black skin on the neck, groin and underarms
- Skin 'tags' (tiny excess flaps of skin in the armpits or neck area)

Nationwide Test Kit Service

Most of the tests involve simple kits that can be used in your own home. Some may require the help of a nurse or GP. If you cannot visit the laboratory, you can phone and arrange for your kit to be sent in the post. Once samples have been taken, you simply post the test kit back to the laboratory. We would encourage you to use guaranteed delivery and not to send kits over the weekend.

For further information consult your practitioner, or call us today on 020 8336 7750

