



POLYCYSTIC OVARIAN SYNDROME (PCOS)

Polycystic ovary syndrome is a disorder in which the ovaries become enlarged and develop many small, fluid-filled cysts. This condition is a health problem that can affect a woman's menstrual cycle, fertility, hormones, insulin production, blood vessels, and appearance. PCOS is estimated to impact 5 to 10% of women of childbearing age and is the most common hormonal reproductive problem in women.

Everyone has both male and female hormones. PCOS occurs as a result of an increase in the production of male hormones, androgens, by the ovaries and adrenal glands. This increase in androgen production may cause menstrual periods to become irregular and may stop ovulation. Because of this, women continue to make estrogen, but they do not produce progesterone.

No one knows the exact cause of PCOS. There is not enough evidence to determine a genetic link to this disorder. Researchers are looking at the relationship between PCOS and the body's ability to make insulin. Insulin is a hormone that regulates the change of sugar, starches, and other food into energy for the body's use or for storage. Since some women with PCOS make too much insulin, it's possible that the ovaries react by making too many androgens.

Symptoms of PCOS usually include:

1. Irregular or absence of menstrual periods
2. Excess of facial and body hair
3. Acne, oily skin, or dandruff
4. Infertility or inability to get pregnant because of not ovulating
5. Obesity or weight gain
6. Pelvic pain
7. Type 2 diabetes
8. Male-pattern baldness or thinning hair