

PCOS Management Guidelines

What is PCOS?

Polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) is a common hormonal condition in women of reproductive age, typically beginning in adolescence and affecting the ovaries and other body systems. It manifests as a set of symptoms and affects 8-13% of women of reproductive age, with up to 70% undiagnosed globally (World Health Organization, 2023).

Managing PCOS

PCOS is a chronic condition with no cure, but effective management can mitigate symptoms and reduce the risk of serious health complications such as endometrial cancer. Lifestyle modifications, medication, and regular check-ups are some of the ways to reduce the symptoms (Dason et al., 2024; Jean Hailes for Women's Health, 2023; Rasquin & Mayrin 2022; World Health Organization, 2023).

Healthy diet

Diet and nutrition matter. Advise patients to adopt a balanced diet rich in whole foods like fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, and whole grains. Emphasize the importance of low-glycemic-index foods to help stabilize blood sugar levels and improve insulin sensitivity. Recommend reducing the intake of processed foods and sugary snacks to minimize insulin resistance and inflammation.

Exercise

Encourage patients to engage in regular physical activity as a vital component of managing PCOS. Physical exercise helps regulate blood glucose levels, enhances insulin sensitivity, and supports weight management. At least 150 minutes of weekly exercise is recommended.

Weight loss

This, along with the first two methods, falls under lifestyle modification. PCOS patients also have a risk for obesity, impaired glucose tolerance, and diabetes. Weight loss can significantly improve PCOS symptoms and hormonal balance, which can reduce symptoms such as irregular menstrual cycles and hirsutism. Monitoring body mass index (BMI) is essential in supporting patients in creating personalized, safe, and effective weight loss plans, emphasizing gradual and sustainable changes.

Medication

Medications play a key role in managing PCOS symptoms. Prescribe oral contraceptives to regulate menstrual cycles and lower androgen levels, and consider metformin to improve insulin sensitivity and glucose metabolism. For patients with hirsutism and acne, anti-androgen medications can be effective.

Regular monitoring

Regular monitoring is essential to manage PCOS and prevent long-term complications. Schedule periodic check-ups to monitor metabolic risk factors, such as blood glucose and lipid levels, and screen for comorbidities like diabetes and cardiovascular disease. Adjust treatment plans based on the patient's progress and emerging health needs.

Disclaimer: The management methods outlined here for polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) are in general and may not be suitable for everyone. While an International evidence-based guideline for the assessment and management of polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) exists, Carepatron did not utilize it due to copyright.

Additional notes

References

Dason, E. S., Koshkina, O., Chan, C., & Sobel, M. (2024). Diagnosis and management of polycystic ovarian syndrome. *CMAJ*, 196(3), E85–E94. <https://doi.org/10.1503/cmaj.231251>

Jean Hailes for Women's Health. (2023, May 29). *Management of PCOS*. <https://www.jeanhailes.org.au/health-a-z/pcos/management-treatment>

Rasquin, L., & Mayrin, J. V. (2022). *Polycystic ovarian disease*. [Nih.gov](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK459251/); StatPearls Publishing. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK459251/>

World Health Organization. (2023, June 28). *Polycystic ovary syndrome*. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/polycystic-ovary-syndrome>