



CREPCOS

Centre for Research Excellence
in Polycystic Ovary Syndrome

Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS)

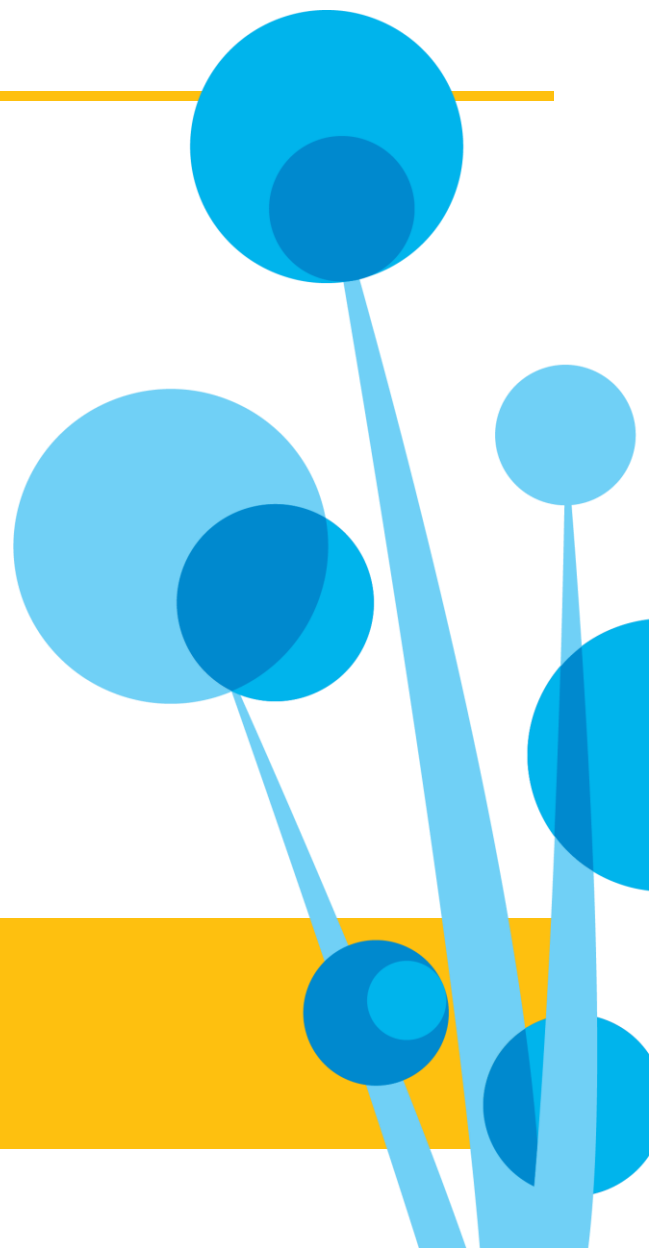
QUESTION PROMPT LIST

This question prompt list (QPL) is for women with PCOS. These are all questions that are OK to ask your doctor or health professional. You may have been diagnosed recently or a long time ago. It is for women of all ages, weights and backgrounds.

You can use this QPL to ask a few questions that are important to you now. You don't have to ask the questions exactly the way they are written here, you can adapt them. Some of the questions may not apply to you as PCOS affects different women in different ways.

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The PCOS Question Prompt List is intended to help you obtain professional medical advice. It does not constitute and is not a substitute for professional medical advice and should be used only in connection with a discussion with a doctor or other healthcare professional. MCHRI should not be taken to endorse or recommend any test, treatment or medication by reason of it being referred to in the PCOS Question Prompt List. Do not disregard professional medical advice or delay seeking it because of something you have read in the PCOS Question Prompt List.

How do I use the QPL?

- 1 The following websites have general information about PCOS. We suggest you look at one or more of these sites first. Then think about the questions that are most important to you right now. Also, if you read something on the internet that you don't understand then you can ask your doctor about it.

<https://www.monash.edu/medicine/sphpm/mchri/pcos/resources/resources-for-women-with-pcos>

<https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/conditionsandtreatments/polycystic-ovarian-%20syndrome-pcos>

<https://jeanhailes.org.au/health-a-z/pcos>

<https://www.acog.org/Patients/FAQs/Polycystic-Ovary-Syndrome-PCOS>

<https://www.hormone.org/diseases-and-conditions/polycystic-ovary-syndrome>

<https://www.uptodate.com/contents/polycystic-ovary-syndrome-pcos-beyond-the-basics>
- 2 There still needs to be time for your doctor or health professional to do any physical checks, ask questions also, and talk with you about the management plan that's best for you. So even if you have lots of questions, try 1-3 to start with. Talk with your doctor about other options for having your questions answered. Sometimes you can book a longer appointment or you can see someone else at the clinic like the practice nurse. Your doctor might give you a referral to a different type of health professional (like a dietitian or a PCOS specialist) depending on your questions.
- 3 Keep your QPL with your other health documents. Look at it before any PCOS-related appointment. Different questions might be important to you at different times, so you can use the QPL again and again. You might want to give a copy of your QPL to your health professional to keep in your record too.

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Causes, diagnosis, symptoms

https://www.monash.edu/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/1429772/ASK-PCOS-Evidence-based-information-for-women-with-Polycystic-ovary-syndrome.pdf

<https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/conditionsandtreatments/polycystic-ovarian-syndrome-pcos>

<https://www.hormone.org/diseases-and-conditions/womens-health/polycystic-ovary-syndrome>

<https://www.jeanhailes.org.au/health-a-z/pcos/symptoms-causes>

General questions covered by the websites

- What is PCOS?
- What are the signs of PCOS?
- What parts of the body are affected by PCOS?
- How is PCOS diagnosed (what are the tests for PCOS)?
- What causes PCOS?
- Is PCOS inherited (run in families)?
- What is the difference between having polycystic ovaries and having PCOS?
- How common is PCOS and how common are polycystic ovaries?
- If I do not have polycystic ovaries can I still have PCOS?
- What other health conditions can occur with PCOS?

Questions you might like to ask your doctor or health professional

- What are cysts and do I have cysts on my ovaries?
- If I have polycystic ovaries does that mean I have PCOS?
- Do polycystic ovaries need to be treated?
- I have a particular symptom that worries me, is it related to PCOS?
- What do my test results mean?
- Does PCOS cause pain?
- Can PCOS be cured?
- Will other people be able to tell I have PCOS?

Every woman is different

https://www.monash.edu/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/1429772/ASK-PCOS-Evidence-based-information-for-women-with-Polycystic-ovary-syndrome.pdf

https://assets.jeanhailes.org.au/Booklets/understanding-pcos.pdf?_ga=2.166195966.1132984664.1598071633-113124747.1598071633

<https://www.hormone.org/diseases-and-conditions/womens-health/polycystic-ovary-syndrome>

General questions covered by the websites

- Does PCOS differ between women?
- Is PCOS different in women of different ethnic backgrounds?
- Is PCOS different for women of different ages?

Questions you might like to ask your doctor or health professional

- I'm not overweight, can I still have PCOS?
- I'm an adolescent or teenager, how is PCOS likely to affect me now?
- I'm going through menopause or have finished menopause, how is PCOS likely to affect me?
- I'm newly diagnosed with PCOS, what do I need to know right now?
- I've had PCOS a long time, what do I need to know now?

Hormones

https://assets.jeanhailes.org.au/Booklets/understanding-pcos.pdf?_ga=2.166195966.1132984664.1598071633-113124747.1598071633

<https://www.hormone.org/diseases-and-conditions/womens-health/polycystic-ovary-syndrome>

General questions covered by the websites

- What are hormones and what do they do?
- What hormones are different in PCOS?
- What is hyperandrogenism (high levels of 'male-type hormones') and how does it affect PCOS?
- What is insulin resistance and how does it affect PCOS?
- What does it mean to be diagnosed with insulin resistance?
- How is insulin resistance treated?

Questions you might like to ask your doctor or health professional

- How are my hormones related to my PCOS symptoms?
- Do I need to be tested or treated for insulin resistance?
- How does stress affect hormones?

Menstrual cycles (periods, menses, monthlies)

<https://jeanhailes.org.au/health-a-z/pcos/irregular-periods-management-treatment>

<https://www.uptodate.com/contents/polycystic-ovary-syndrome-pcos-beyond-the-basics#H4>

General questions covered by the websites

- How often do women usually get their period?
- What do the ovaries do?
- What is ovulation?
- What do missed periods or irregular periods mean is happening in my body?

Questions you might like to ask your doctor or health professional

- How often should I have my period and what are the signs that something is wrong?
- Are irregular periods bad for me?
- Do missed or irregular periods affect my chances of getting pregnant?
- What is the best treatment for my irregular periods?

Fertility

https://www.monash.edu/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/1410854/PCOS-and-Fertility.pdf

<https://jeanhailes.org.au/health-a-z/pcos/fertility-management-treatment>

<https://www.uptodate.com/contents/polycystic-ovary-syndrome-pcos-beyond-the-basics>

General questions covered by the websites

- Does PCOS make it more difficult to get pregnant?
- Does PCOS make it impossible to get pregnant?
- How is infertility treated in PCOS?

Questions you might like to ask your doctor or health professional

- What do I need to do to increase my chances of getting pregnant?
- Will I need IVF or fertility treatment to get pregnant?
- What should I tell my partner about fertility and PCOS?
- How long should I try to get pregnant before seeing a fertility doctor?
- Do I need to try to get pregnant now or can I wait until I am ready?
- What is the best treatment for my infertility?
- Are there tests to see if I'm fertile and who should I see about them?

Hair and skin

https://www.monash.edu/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/1429772/ASK-PCOS-Evidence-based-information-for-women-with-Polycystic-ovary-syndrome.pdf

<https://www.acog.org/Patients/FAQs/Polycystic-Ovary-Syndrome-PCOS>

General questions covered by the websites

- I have acne and oily skin, are these related to PCOS?
- Why do I have more hair on my face or body than other women?
- I'm losing hair from my head, is that related to PCOS?
- I have patches of skin that are a different colour and texture. Are these related to PCOS?

Questions you might like to ask your doctor or health professional

- What is the best treatment for my acne?
- What is the best treatment for my excess hair?
- What is the best treatment for my hair loss?
- Are there over-the-counter treatment options for my hair or skin problems?
- How well does this medication work?
- I have other skin problems, like boils on some parts of my body. Are these related to PCOS and what is the best treatment for them?

Health care

https://www.monash.edu/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/1429772/ASK-PCOS-Evidence-based-information-for-women-with-Polycystic-ovary-syndrome.pdf

<https://jeanhailes.org.au/health-a-z/pcos/how-is-pcos-diagnosed>

General questions covered by the websites

- Which other health professionals can help me manage my PCOS?

Questions you might like to ask your doctor or health professional

- Do I need any regular tests or checks (e.g. scans of the ovaries or blood tests) because I have PCOS?
- Do you have experience and expertise in PCOS?
- How often should I see my GP about PCOS?
- Should I see a specialist doctor (e.g. endocrinologist, gynaecologist, dermatologist) and if so what kind?
- Should I see a dietitian or exercise physiologist?
- Should I see a psychologist or psychiatrist?
- Do I need to go to a fertility clinic?
- How much does it cost (to see other health professionals or to go to a fertility clinic)?
- Are there ways to make it cheaper to see health professionals for PCOS (e.g. Chronic Disease Management items, GP Management Plan, Team Care Arrangement, Mental Health Care Plan)?

Management and treatment (lifestyle management, medication, surgery and complementary and alternative treatment)

Questions you might like to ask your doctor or health professional

- The one thing that bothers me most about PCOS is....
What is the best way to treat that?
- My main goal related to PCOS is.... What is the best
way to achieve that?
- Can you help me set myself a goal related to PCOS?
- Is there anything else you think I should focus on to
manage PCOS?
- What can happen if I don't manage my PCOS?

Lifestyle management (diet and physical activity)

https://www.monash.edu/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/1429772/ASK-PCOS-Evidence-based-information-for-women-with-Polycystic-ovary-syndrome.pdf

<https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/conditionsandtreatments/polycystic-ovarian-syndrome-pcos>

<https://www.uptodate.com/contents/polycystic-ovary-syndrome-pcos-beyond-the-basics#H18>

General questions covered by the websites

- What is lifestyle management?
- Is lifestyle management a treatment for PCOS?
- Why does lifestyle management matter for PCOS?
- Does PCOS make it more difficult to lose weight? Why?
- Does PCOS mean I can't lose weight?
- Do I gain weight because of PCOS?
- Where can I get more information about how to have a
healthy lifestyle or lose weight?

Questions you might like to ask your doctor or health professional

- Is lifestyle management better for my PCOS than medication or surgery?
- Do I need to follow lifestyle management as well as medication or surgery?
- Why is lifestyle management a good option or not a good option for me?
- Do I need to maintain my current weight?
- Do I need to lose weight?
- How much weight should I aim to lose?
- How long will it take to lose this amount of weight?

Diet

- Can a better diet improve my PCOS?
- Is there one best diet for PCOS?
- What is a low GI diet?
- Should I avoid certain foods (like sugar) completely?
- Which health professional should I see for more support about how to have a healthy diet?

Physical activity

- Do I need to be more active or exercise more?
- Is there one best type of physical activity or exercise for PCOS?
- I don't like gyms (or exercise classes or weight training), are there other activities I can do?
- Which health professional should I see for more support about physical activity or exercise?

Medications

https://www.monash.edu/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/1429772/ASK-PCOS-Evidence-based-information-for-women-with-Polycystic-ovary-syndrome.pdf

<https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/conditionsandtreatments/polycystic-ovarian-syndrome-pcos>

<https://www.uptodate.com/contents/polycystic-ovary-syndrome-pcos-beyond-the-basics>

General questions covered by the websites

- What medications are there for PCOS?
- What does the oral contraceptive pill do and why is it used for PCOS?
- Is there an oral contraceptive pill that is best for PCOS?
- What are insulin-sensitising medications (e.g. metformin) and why are they used for PCOS?
- What are anti-androgens medications (e.g. spironolactone, cyproterone acetate) and why are they used for PCOS?
- What is clomiphene citrate and why is it used for PCOS?
- What are gonadotrophins and why are they used for PCOS?

Questions you might like to ask your doctor or health professional

- Is medication a better option for my PCOS than lifestyle management or surgery?
- What medication is best for my PCOS?
- Why is this medication a good option or not a good option for me?
- What are the side effects of this medication?

Surgery

https://www.monash.edu/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/1429772/ASK-PCOS-Evidence-based-information-for-women-with-Polycystic-ovary-syndrome.pdf

<https://www.uptodate.com/contents/polycystic-ovary-syndrome-pcos-beyond-the-basics>

General questions covered by the websites

- Why is bariatric (weight loss) surgery used for PCOS?
- What is ovarian surgery and when is it used for PCOS?
- How does surgery affect fertility?
- How does surgery affect other symptoms of PCOS?

Questions you might like to ask your doctor or health professional

- Is surgery a treatment option for managing my PCOS?

Hair and skin

https://www.monash.edu/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/1429772/ASK-PCOS-Evidence-based-information-for-women-with-Polycystic-ovary-syndrome.pdf

General questions covered by the websites

- What are the treatment options for excess hair?
- What are the treatment options for acne or oily skin?

Questions you might like to ask your doctor or health professional

- What treatment is best for my skin problems?
- What treatment is best for my hair problems?
- Are there any risks or side effects associated with this treatment?

Complementary and alternative treatments

Questions you might like to ask your doctor or health professional

- Are there over-the-counter products available for PCOS?
- Do complementary or alternative therapies (such as naturopathy, traditional Chinese medicine, herbal remedies or acupuncture) help PCOS?
- Are complementary or alternative therapies safe?
- Should I take a vitamin pill or supplement of some kind?

Emotional wellbeing, anxiety and depression

https://www.monash.edu/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/1410853/PCOS-and-Emotional-Well-being.pdf

<https://jeanhailes.org.au/health-a-z/pcos/emotions>

General questions covered by the websites

- Is PCOS linked to anxiety or depression?
- How do I know if I have depression or anxiety?
- Are there effective treatment options for depression and anxiety?
- Is PCOS linked to unhealthy eating patterns, disordered eating or eating disorders?
- How do I know if I have an eating disorder or disordered eating?
- Are there effective treatment options for eating disorders/disordered eating?
- Can PCOS affect body image?

Questions you might like to ask your doctor or health professional

- I don't like my body because of PCOS, what can I do?
- I am worried about my eating, what can I do?
- I feel tired and worried a lot of the time, what can I do?
- I don't enjoy the things that I used to, what can I do?
- Where can I get more information about emotional wellbeing?
- Where can I get more support for emotional wellbeing?

Daily life

<https://www.monash.edu/medicine/sphpm/mchri/pcos/resources/resources-for-women-with-pcos>

<https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/conditionsandtreatments/polycystic-ovarian-syndrome-pcos>

<https://www.jeanhailes.org.au/health-a-z/pcos/resources>

<https://jeanhailes.org.au/health-a-z/pcos/sex-relationships>

<https://www.uptodate.com/contents/polycystic-ovary-syndrome-pcos-beyond-the-basics>

www.facebook.com/PCOSAustralia/

www.pcoschallenge.org

www.verity-pcos.org.uk

General questions covered by the websites

- Where can I get more information about PCOS for myself?
- Where can I get more information about PCOS for other people in my life?
- Which websites have good quality information about PCOS?
- Is there a PCOS support group?
- Does PCOS affect sleep?
- How does PCOS affect sex and relationships?

Questions you might like to ask your doctor or health professional

- How can I explain PCOS to other people in my life (friends, family, partners, colleagues)?
- How is PCOS likely to affect other people in my life?
- How can other people in my life support me?
- Is it possible to lead a normal life with PCOS?
- I have low self-esteem or confidence because of PCOS, what can I do?
- I don't want to leave the house because of PCOS, what can I do?

Pregnancy

https://www.monash.edu/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/1410854/PCOS-and-Fertility.pdf

General questions covered by the websites

- Is PCOS linked to diabetes in pregnancy (gestational diabetes)?

Questions you might like to ask your doctor or health professional

- Do I need any special health care in pregnancy because I have PCOS?
- Is PCOS linked to any problems for me or my baby during pregnancy?
- Is PCOS linked to miscarriage?
- Is PCOS linked to any problems for me or my baby during the birth?
- How should my PCOS be managed during pregnancy or while breastfeeding?

Long-term

<https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/conditionsandtreatments/polycystic-ovarian-%20syndrome-pcos>

<https://www.acog.org/Patients/FAQs/Polycystic-Ovary-Syndrome-PCOS>

<https://www.hormone.org/diseases-and-conditions/polycystic-ovary-syndrome>

<https://www.uptodate.com/contents/polycystic-ovary-syndrome-pcos-beyond-the-basics>

General questions covered by the websites

- Is PCOS linked to cancer?
- Is PCOS linked to diabetes?
- Is PCOS linked to high cholesterol?
- Is PCOS linked to heart disease?
- Is PCOS linked to stroke?
- Is PCOS linked to high blood pressure?
- What is pre-diabetes?
- What is metabolic syndrome and is PCOS linked to it?

Questions you might like to ask your doctor or health professional

- Will I have PCOS forever?
- What can I do to prevent long-term complications?
- What regular checks should I have and how often?
- What do my test results mean?

My questions

You can use this section to write down the questions you want to ask. They may be from the QPL or you may think of other questions. Sometimes writing down your questions helps you to remember what to ask in your appointment. Sometimes it also helps to write down the answers as well.

