

# Causes and Complications of Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome

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PCOS, short for polycystic ovarian syndrome, is a common condition related to hormones in which the ovaries do not always release an egg at the end of the menstrual cycle (the beginning of a period to the start of the succeeding one). It can lead to difficulty getting pregnant.

## Hormone Differences

PCOS causes a woman's body to produce advanced-than-normal situations of androgens. These are hormones that are generally thought of as male hormones, because men have much high levels of androgens than women.

Androgens are important in the development of male sex organs and other male traits.

In women, androgens are generally converted into the hormone estrogen.

Women with PCOS are three times more likely to have a miscarriage, as compared to women who do not have PCOS. They're also more likely to develop preeclampsia, gestational diabetes, and have a larger baby and premature delivery. This could lead to difficulty during delivery or a cesarean delivery.

Women with PCOS have an increased threat of developing several medical complications throughout life, including

- Insulin resistance
- Type 2 diabetes
- High cholesterol
- High blood pressure
- Heart disease
- Stroke
- Sleep apnea
- Possibly an increased threat of endometrial cancer

For pregnant women, PCOS brings an increased threat of complications. This includes preeclampsia, a dangerous condition for both mother and baby-to-be. The recommended treatment to

resolve symptoms is delivery of the baby and placenta. Your doctor will discuss the hazards and benefits regarding timing of delivery based on the severity of your symptoms and your baby's gestational age. However, you'll have to be monitored extremely closely, if you develop preeclampsia during your gestation. Other concerns include pregnancy-induced hypertension (high blood pressure) and gestational diabetes.

Having gestational diabetes could lead to you having a larger-than-average baby. This could lead to problems during delivery. For example, larger babies are more at threat for shoulder dystocia (when the baby's shoulder gets stuck during labor).

Utmost PCOS symptoms during gestation can be treated with careful monitoring. However, insulin may be needed to keep your blood sugar levels stable, if you develop gestational diabetes.

## Causes of PCOS

Doctors are not sure what causes PCOS, but there are some factors that have been linked to the condition, including

**Genetics:** PCOS appears to run in families, so if your mom or a close female relation has PCOS, your chances of also having it are high.

**More androgens:** Women with polycystic ovary pattern tend to have higher levels of androgen hormones, which can interfere with ovulation. Androgens are occasionally called "male hormones" because they control traits similar as male-pattern baldness, but women naturally produce androgens too.

**Excess insulin:** Researchers have found that women with PCOS tend to have high levels of insulin (the hormone that regulates how your body breaks down sugar) because their bodies have a hard time using it properly. Insulin also controls ovarian function, and too much insulin in the body can cause irregular or absent ovulation.

**Being fat or obese:** While overweight women are at greater threat for PCOS and women with PCOS are at greater threat of getting fat, the jury is out on whether excess weight causes PCOS or vice versa. Indeed so, if you are trying to conceive, it's a good idea to start eating healthy foods and exercising if you are not already.

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Received: October 05, 2021; Accepted: October 22, 2021; Published: October 29, 2021

Citation: Rita N (2021) Causes and Complications of Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome. *Matern Pediatr Nutr* 6:144. doi: 10.35248/2472-1182.21.6.144

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