Natural Remedies for PCOS

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PCOS infertility is the most common cause of infertility today. If you were wondering how to solve PCOS, while there is no known way to completely overcome PCOS, the symptoms can be successfully managed naturally. In this article, you’ll learn what is PCOS and how you can treat PCOS infertility naturally.

What Is PCOS?

PCOS is considered as the most common endocrine disorder in women of childbearing age (15-44 years) and it affects 5 to 10% of women in the United States and 6 to 8% of women worldwide. Women with PCOS tend to produce more male hormones (androgens) than normal, which leads to a host of symptoms leading to infertility.

Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome aka Polycystic Ovarian Disease manifests in multiple cysts covering the ovaries, filled with immature follicles (eggs) accompanied by hormonal abnormalities and irregularities in ovulation and menstruation. This is a metabolic condition associated with insulin resistance and glucose intolerance.

What Are The Symptoms Of PCOS?

Most women with PCOS don't know they have it. In one study involving women with PCOS, 68 to 69% of the participants did not have a pre-existing diagnosis. In most cases, women only find out they have PCOS after they find it difficult to conceive or after they have gained some weight.

The three main features of PCOS are the following:

- irregular periods (or amenorrhea)
- polycystic ovaries (ovaries with cysts)
- excess androgens (male hormones) in the body

Women with two or three of the above symptoms are given a definitive PCOS diagnosis by their doctors. Until now doctors can't pinpoint what causes PCOS, although the condition is usually linked to genetics, poor lifestyle choices, inflammation, insulin resistance and glucose intolerance.

Some of the most common symptoms of PCOS are:

- failure to ovulate (leading to irregular periods and infertility)
- acne due to excess male hormones and hormonal imbalance
- obesity (up to 80% of women with PCOS are obese)
Natural Remedies for PCOS - 11-04-2009

- hirsutism or excess hair growth in the face (under the chin) and body (on the belly, chest or back)
- alopecia/male pattern baldness/hair loss
- heavy bleeding during periods
- headaches

Severe cases manifest with all of the symptoms while mild and moderate cases only have some.

What Causes PCOS Infertility

In women with PCOS, infertility is caused by the inability to ovulate due to excess production of male hormones – androgens (testosterone) and insufficient oestrogen and progesterone production by the ovary. Due to an insufficient amount of FSH (follicle stimulating hormone) androgens cannot be converted to oestrogen, and follicles cannot mature and ovulate. And without ovulation, there won't be an egg for the sperm to fertilize, which makes it difficult for women with PCOS to conceive.

Getting Pregnant Naturally With PCOS

Many of my clients with PCOS often ask me how to overcome PCOS naturally. While PCOS falls into a group of conditions which don’t have a solution as such, there are natural ways to manage this condition so you don’t experience any symptoms and can get pregnant if you choose to.

What this means is that if you stick to a certain dietary and lifestyle regime you will keep the condition under control, but if you revert to the old way of eating and living you will most likely develop PCOS symptoms again.

Natural Remedies For PCOS

Studies have found that the majority of cases of infertility due to ovulatory disorders may be prevented with dietary and lifestyle modifications. Therefore that’s where you should start.

There are several key factors that play a role in PCOS Infertility. Depending on which one is most characteristic for you will determine the first line of treatment.

1. Balancing Insulin

Insulin resistance means that the cells are not reacting to insulin when it knocks with a new batch of glucose. This is usually due to the saturation of insulin at the receptor sites of the cells from a diet high in refined and simple carbohydrates. This leads to excess glucose in the bloodstream and not enough in the cells. This, in turn, leads to fatigue and lethargy and increased risk of bacterial infections (due to excess glucose outside the cells) and diabetes.

Insulin resistance has been found to contribute to excess production of androgens by the ovaries. Insulin resistance goes hand in hand with obesity or being overweight especially around the middle (visceral fat = fat around the organs). However, insulin resistance can also be found among people who are not obese or
overweight. If you are overweight and have PCOS infertility it is advisable that you lose weight and correct insulin resistance.

2. Addressing Testosterone & Promoting Ovulation and Menstruation

Excess androgens (testosterone) stem from too much LH (luteinizing hormone) being produced by the body over FSH (follicle stimulating hormone). This, in turn, results in immature eggs which never reach the ovulation stage and end up forming small cysts on the ovaries. A type of estrogen can be converted to testosterone in fat tissue which is another reason for making sure you lose weight if you are overweight.

Normalizing your hormones and getting your body to produce a sufficient amount of hormones to ovulate and maintain pregnancy is the key and the end result of all the treatment strategies for PCOS infertility.

What to do: 10 Natural Remedies for PCOS

While presently there is no specific cure for PCOS, here are 10 natural remedies for PCOS you can try at home:

1. Avoid food or drinks that can make your PCOS worse

Skip foods that can make PCOS worse, like coffee, alcohol, soft drinks, sugar and juices containing sugar, refined carbs (white bread, biscuits, chocolate, lollies etc…).

2. Eat small protein rich meals

To balance your blood sugar, do this every 3 hours.

3. Exercise regularly and maintain a healthy weight.

Do more cardio and weight training to help build muscle—the more muscles you have the more fat you’ll burn.

4. Add cinnamon to your cooking.

Cinnamon has been found to improve insulin sensitivity in women with PCOS. Porridge is a great way to get some cinnamon into your diet as well as apples baked in the oven sprinkled with some cinnamon and crushed nuts.

5. Minimize your intake of dairy and animal products

Even if they are organic, minimize dairy and meat altogether. This is due to the high content of hormones, pesticides and herbicides which are known endocrine disruptors (they play havoc with your hormones and this can lead to anovulation). Vegetarian diets and diets rich in fiber have been shown to be very beneficial in conditions where hormonal balance is disturbed such as PCOS. Even though the animal was
not given synthetic hormones it produced its own hormones which will still be reflected in the dairy or meat.

6. Take licorice.

Excess androgen production has been shown to favourably react to the intake of licorice, so find some dried licorice root in your organic store and drink it as a herbal tea.

7. Eat more of the following PCOS superfoods:

- adzuki beans
- basil, chives, leek, rosemary, spearmint
- cayenne, nutmeg, pepper, turmeric
- chestnut
- eggplant
- garlic, ginger
- kohlrabi
- rice

8. Reduce stress

Try these stress relievers to improve PCOS: yoga, meditation, breathing exercises, 8 hours of sleep, regular exercise, lavender, lemon balm and chamomile tea.

9. See a naturopath or a herbalist

For professional advice on many herbal treatments that have been shown to address PCOS successfully, consult your naturopath.

10. Take a good quality multivitamin and fish oil

Make sure that your fish oil has been tested for mercury and stabilized with vitamin E.

Fertility Tea For PCOS

Herbal tea can be an excellent addition to managing your PCOS.

The PCOS fertility tea can help:

- balance your blood sugar (cinnamon),
- balance your hormones (licorice),
- stimulate your metabolism and help fat burning (cayenne),
- reduce inflammation (turmeric & ginger) and
- increase circulation (ginger)
Spicy fertility tea for PCOS

You can have the fertility tea for PCOS all year round, warm or cold. We’ve made these PCOS fertility tea recipes especially for you:

**Dried**

- Cinnamon powder ½ tsp
- Licorice root ¼ tsp
- Turmeric powder 1 tsp
- Ground Ginger ¼ tsp
- Cayenne pinch
- 2 cups of your favourite non-dairy milk (i.e. oats, almond, coconut)

Combine the herbs and spices in a little bowl or cup and stir until combined

Pour enough hot water to cover the mix and let steep for 5 minutes

Heat the milk in a saucepan on the stove

Strain the water and spice; Mix evenly into 2 cups

Add the warm milk and enjoy!

**Fresh**

- Cinnamon powder ½ tsp
- Licorice root ¼ tsp
- Fresh Turmeric 1 tsp – Peeled and finely chopped
- Fresh Ginger 1 tsp – Peel and roughly chopped
- Cayenne pinch
- 1 or 2 cups of your favourite milk ie. Organic cow’s milk, almond, coconut

Place all the ingredients in the blender (use 1 or 2 cups of nut milk, depending on how strong you like it)

Blend for 30 seconds or until smooth

Heat the mix in a small saucepan on the stove until warm

Strain and drink!

*Another option is to place all of these ingredients in a saucepan with 2 cups of water and simmer for 20 mins. Strain then add your favourite warm nut milk.

Is this a turmeric latte, I hear you ask? Well yes, pretty much! It contains roughly the same ingredients, so if your barista is down with the Turmeric/Golden latte, make the most of this new healthy fad.

**Takeaway**

PCOS is the most common endocrine disorder affecting women of reproductive age and affects a significant percentage of women globally. Most women suffering from PCOS don't know they have it and
only discover they have PCOS after they've gained so much weight or if their cycles are irregular or if they're finding it difficult to get pregnant.

There is no pinpoint cause of PCOS, but this condition is usually related to genetics, poor lifestyle choices, insulin resistance and glucose intolerance. While there is no known cure for PCOS, there are ways to manage the condition naturally, like avoiding certain food and drinks that can exacerbate your PCOS, incorporating exercise into your lifestyle, eating healthier food choices and consulting a naturopath for non-pharmaceutical and herbal treatments that can help address PCOS.