

PCOS – Dietary Guidelines



Introduction

PCOS is a genetic, hormonal, metabolic and reproductive disorder. It is characterized by infrequent or absence of menstrual cycles, increase in male sex hormones, hyperinsulinemia etc.

Healthy eating habits and regular physical activity helps to manage PCOS. Dietary Goals should be targeted in managing insulin resistance.

Diet for managing PCOS should include whole grain cereals and legumes, fruits, vegetables, lean meats and fat free dairy products. They need to be limited in fat and trans fats as it reduces insulin sensitivity and increases the risk of type-II diabetes.

Cereals

Whole grain cereals like brown rice, oats, millets, wheat products, can be chosen. Refined and processed cereals like maida products, pasta, white bread, noodles (made from all purpose flour) can be avoided.

Pulses

Pulses are low GI foods and have a good amount of fibre in them. Include chickpeas, Cow peas, kidney beans, lentils, Green gram, Soya beans. Soya beans have isoflavones in them, which are scientifically validated for their beneficial actions on many hormone dependent conditions.

Dairy Products

Skimmed milk and milk products have to be chosen. Processed cheese and full cream milk need to be restricted.

Fruits and Vegetables

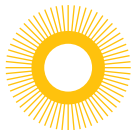
Include good amounts of low calorie fruits and vegetables. They have fiber which also helps in weight management and gives satiety. Include 2 servings of fruits in a day. Include a bowl of vegetable salad in snacks or before meals. The type of fruits to be included needs to be customized as per nutritionist advice.

Poultry and Non-veg

Choose lean meat like chicken and fish. Avoid red meat and processed meat.

Fats and Oils

Avoid Saturated fats and trans fats (found in processed foods) and include more monounsaturated (MUFA) and polyunsaturated fatty acids (PUFA). PUFA regulates the hormonal and lipid profiles. Sources of PUFA and MUFA are sunflower oil, sesame oil, flaxseed oil, canola oil and rice bran oil.



Sugars

Carbohydrate intake regulates insulin secretion and insulin initiates fatty acid, cholesterol and triglyceride formation. Hence, it's advised:

- Use of sugar must be limited to 2 tsp/d. This is inclusive of jaggery and honey.
- Avoid bakery foods (cookies, cakes, pies, puffs, biscuits, pastries etc), chocolates, halwas, jams or jellies
- Avoid beverages like soft drinks, fruit juices, nectars, squash, sugarcane juice, flavored milk, fruit smoothies and milkshakes.
- Read labels of all packaged foods.

Fluids

Need to include plenty of fluids, the minimum intake should be 2½ – 3 lit/day.

Physical Activity

Lifestyle intervention, including exercise, is first line therapy in the majority of women with PCOS. Exercise training and physical activity in PCOS have shown to have a good impact on body mass index, waist circumference, and metabolic parameters thus reducing metabolic syndrome and other risk factors associated with PCOS. The addition of exercise to dietary caloric restriction also results in more rapid decreases in weight.

Recommendation of exercise training in PCOS:

- **Aerobic exercise** for 60 minutes.
Type of exercise: Running/Treadmill/Bicycle
- **Resistance training** for 45 minutes
Example: Squats