



LIVING WELL WITH PCOS

If you're a young woman who's put on a bit of weight and are finding it difficult to lose, or if you're struggling with facial hair, acne, or irregular periods, chances are you have polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS). If so, intensive lifestyle treatment can reverse the underlying process before it wreaks havoc in your body.

what is PCOS?

PCOS is a common hormone disorder that affects 5 to 10 percent of women of reproductive age. Recent research shows that a root cause is insulin resistance. This means your body doesn't respond to the normal levels of insulin, so your body pumps out excessive amounts as it tries to control your blood sugar. Unfortunately, over time, high levels of insulin are linked to infertility, type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and even cancer.

lifestyle medicines

- ▶ If you are overweight, lose just 5 to 10 percent of your current weight for symptom relief and enhanced fertility. This will also help to lower the risk of long-term health problems.
- ▶ Switch to whole-grains and low-GI carbs from grainy breads, traditional rolled

oats, and barley. Avoid sugary foods and refined starches like white rice. This will help tame your blood sugar and keep you feeling full longer.

- ▶ Include some protein with your meals, especially from legumes. But avoid high-protein diets, particularly from red meat, as these can increase insulin resistance.
- ▶ Use monounsaturated fats and oils from nuts, seeds, avocados, and olives. Avoid high-fat animal products and highly processed vegetable fats hiding in cakes, cookies, and fast foods, which supply saturated and trans fats and make you more insulin resistant.
- ▶ Enjoy a colorful array of fruits and vegetables at each meal to boost the antioxidant supply in your diet.
- ▶ Drink pure water throughout the day rather than soda drinks or juices.
- ▶ Be physically active every day, and include some resistance training.

Nutritionist Sue Radd is the award-winning author of *The Breakfast Book* and coauthor of *Eat To Live*, internationally acclaimed for showing how savvy eating can combat cancer and heart disease and improve well-being. See www.sueradd.com for more nutrition information.

