

## PCOS Resources, Treatments, Supplements, and Some General Research from a Fellow Cyster.

**There are more answers than birth control: you are not alone! <3**

*This resource arose from my own journey and desire to document all the possible resources, treatments, supplements, and medicines out there to figure out what might be best for me before making a decision. I hope this will help others out there to do the same. Please do your research and consult with medical professionals. This is NOT an exhaustive list of resources. This is a labor of love for myself and others, and I will try to update with my own research and your suggestions as I am able! If you have suggestions or feedback, feel free to email me at [erikaohep@gmail.com](mailto:erikaohep@gmail.com).*

### Overviews of PCOS

- **Video:** [PCOS: Understanding Symptoms and Treatment](#)
  - *This is from a very traditional medical perspective and what a doctor will tell you if they don't just throw you on birth control and hand you a pamphlet. Take with a grain of salt.*
- **Article:** [Thorough overview of PCOS with more resources](#) for those recently diagnosed

### UNDERSTAND WHAT TYPE OF PCOS YOU HAVE:

- [A Flowchart of the Four Type of PCOS](#)
- [Which Type of PCOS Are You?](#) Julie Duffy Dillon's Research
- Different research categorizes PCOS differently. It may be hard for you to know what type you are and use these links, if your doctors haven't given you access to the right tests and results. **Advocate for yourself and for the labs/tests you need!**

### Some Basic Info about PCOS I've Gleaned from these Resources

- People with PCOS are in a constant proinflammatory state
- Can lead to brain fog, insulin resistance, irregular periods, acne, hirsutism, anxiety, hormone imbalances, and much more...
- PCOS frequently comes from a resistance to insulin, which is usually genetic and can eventually cause type 2 diabetes. NOT ALL PCOS HAS INSULIN RESISTANCE THOUGH -- Check your type in the links above!!
  - Most doctors will check for glucose and A1C and not look into the issue further if these levels are normal, but if possible have your doc check insulin levels or refer you to an endocrinologist.
- Does NOT just impact your menstrual cycle!! When you have PCOS, you must be aware that this disorder is not only hormonal. It can have many metabolic

influences on weight, blood sugar disturbance, excess male hormones etc. This is a complex systemic disorder that requires a comprehensive approach ([Source](#)).

- This means you may have PCOS/PCOS-like abnormalities even before puberty or after menopause.
- You cannot cure PCOS. It is chronic and will be something you always have to watch, get labs, and manage symptoms, supplements, etc.
- Traditional treatment is typically just **birth control**. This may work for some, but not for those who wish to conceive, those with risk factors, those who are uncomfortable with birth control, or those who react negatively to birth control
- Other treatments from traditional doctors include **metformin**, anxiety meds, or simply telling a patient to “**lose weight**”, “stop stressing” “exercise less” (if you are the “lean type” of PCOS), etc. ← *IMO, these are ways for healthcare providers to shift the blame to the patient and keep from having to do the hard and time-consuming work of “getting in the trenches” with you for a long-term care plan!*
  - Because this is a metabolic condition that can cause things like insulin resistance and hormone imbalances “losing weight” is not so simple. “Stressing less” is impossible. Hopping on birth control can help some, but to others doesn’t help, feels like masking the symptoms, or can make things worse.
  - Metformin can have a lot of side effects (mainly diarrhea) and this combined with excessive efforts to try and lose weight along with birth control can cause many to feel miserable. It does work for some. Work with your doctor and do your research to see what options there are.
    - Metformin is a medication to help with insulin resistance but depending how resistant you are, higher doses might be needed or adding supplemental medications (such as Invokamet).

### **Options for treating PCOS Naturally**

- **Video:** [Treating PCOS Naturally: Supplements](#)
- **Video:** [PCOS Diet, Supplements, Herbs & Lifestyle Recommendations + Do You NEED to Lose Weight?](#)
- Naturopaths, Fertility Specialists, Dietitians
  - Work with a naturopathic doctor or fertility specialist in your local area, along with a registered dietitian and your PCP/OBGYN. They will likely be more patient with you and can help with figuring out supplements, alternative treatments, figuring out other kinds of tests and labs to order.
- [Creighton Fertility Model](#) (Natural Family Planning)

- This is a Catholic/faith-based model but they will **NOT** put you on birth control and are dedicated to helping you naturally regulate your hormones—and their model is rooted in science and research.
- Chinese Medicine - Will add more research on this as I find it
  - Acupuncture
- Reduce stress on your adrenal glands
- Exercise/regular movement
  - Do not torture your body with exercise
  - Move your body in a way that feels good for you, even just a 10-minute walk after every meal or doing some cleaning around the house after each meal will help with digestion, insulin sensitivity, energy levels, etc.
- [Quit smoking](#): puts at risk for [metabolic syndrome](#)
  - Easier said than done. [Slowly decrease](#), do what you can to be kind to yourself. [Meditate](#). [Lean on others for support](#). Start therapy. [Be proud of yourself](#) for decreasing the amount smoked, even if you can't fully quit.
- **DIET: Particularly Important for Insulin-Resistant PCOS**
- **Whole-food, low-glycemic diet**, low-carb (*do not need to fully cut carbs!*)
- Keto, Whole30, Paleo tend to fall into this low glycemic diet above
  - Pair whole grain carbs with lean proteins and healthy fats to aid in digestion and insulin sensitivity.
  - Chia, flax, hempseed, almonds, walnut, refined oil fats (coconut, olive, avocado), salmon are good foods to incorporate into your diet
  - Some individuals may want to try to avoid conventional dairy products or eating them more sparingly: ***figure out what works for you***
  - Make sure you are eating enough so cravings are not so primal, don't starve yourself because this increases insulin resistance/carb cravings
  - Eat more protein and include a protein at every snack and meal
  - EAT PROTEIN FIRST when you eat your meals, this will help with digestion and insulin sensitivity
  - When you feel yourself getting hungry: EAT.
  - Keep a protein bar in your purse to keep from food emergencies and turning to quick processed food.
    - [The Perfect Bar](#): Low-GI Index, will satisfy your sweet tooth, won't give you a migraine, will fill you up, give you energy, full of superfoods and come in kid size, too.
    - Red Lentil Pasta is a great low GI alternative to traditional pasta if you don't want to give up pasta like me. :)

- **Other Diet Options to blend/look into for all types of PCOS**
  - Intermittent Fasting: some have reported success with this, limited research. Link to [nih.gov abstract here](#).
  - Intuitive Eating/Health at Every Size (Hayes)
- Avoid exposure to endocrine disruptors
  - Xenoestrogens do this and are found in household cleaners, beauty products, plastics (BPAs), and pesticides
  - Use organic products, glass not plastic if able to
- Reduce physical and psychological stress
  - [Set healthy boundaries](#) at work and in your personal life
- **Treat yourself and your body with care and compassion. You deserve love.**
  - *I have heard this across the board from my dietitian, my therapist, my PCP, my OBGYN, hormone specialist,: self-compassion and mental health are important to your hormones, adrenals, cortisol levels, etc.*
- Make sure you are treating your mental health and addressing the mind-body connection. Meditate/pray. Go to therapy if you have insurance and are able.

### **Other potential treatments, procedures, etc, to discuss with your PCP/OBGYN:**

- **Laparoscopic Ovarian Drilling for PCOS**
  - **Article:** [UW Health Overview of Procedure](#)
  - **Video:** [Video of actual procedure](#)
- **Dilation and Curettage (D&C) Procedure**
  - **Article:** [Johns Hopkins Overview](#)
  - **Article:** [Someone's personal journey with D&C and PCOS](#)
  - **Video:** [Video animation of procedure](#)
- **Bioidentical Hormone Replacement Therapy**
  - **Article:** [Healthline article overview](#)
  - **Article:** [Bioidentical Hormones: Can They Treat My PCOS Symptoms?](#)
- Endometrial Ablation for Heavy Bleeding
  - **Article:** [Healthline General Overview](#)
  - **Article:** [Risks of Endometrial Ablation](#)
- **Research Clinical Trials for Treatments [here](#)**
- **Can a hysterectomy cure your PCOS? [Read more](#).**
  - Definitely get a 2nd opinion and do your research if a physician is advising this to you, even if you are post-menopausal.
  - Someone's [personal positive experience](#) with a hysterectomy.
- **For those with excessive bleeding ensure your doctor refers you to a hematologist to check for blood/blood clotting disorders**

## **Supplements to Research and Discuss with your PCP/OBGYN:**

[This study on the nih.gov website](#) gives a run-down of nearly every supplement I list below with more details of results and reasonings for why certain supplements are used to treat individuals with PCOS.

[This NIH study concludes](#) that a good option for the treatment of PCOS is the combined administration of myo-inositol + gymnemic acid + l-methyl-folate, especially for overweight/obese patients with marked insulin resistance and with associated hyperhomocysteinemia.

- **[Myo & D-Chiro Inositol with B8](#)**
  - Inositol is backed up by reliable research and seems to help many women with PCOS in the same way metformin does but without the miserable side effects of metformin. [Link to NIH Government study here.](#)
  - Helps with insulin resistance
- **Omega-3 Fatty Acids/Fish Oil Supplements: DHA and EPA (fatty acid)**
  - Helps with insulin resistance and inflammation/Omega-3 Fatty Acids
- **[LES Labs Cortisol Health, Adrenal Support Supplement for Stress Relief, Balanced Cortisol Response & Adrenal Fatigue with Phosphatidylserine & Ashwagandha](#)**
- **Chromium**
  - Helps with insulin resistance. [Link to NIH Government study here.](#)
- **Magnesium**
  - Info on PCOS and Magnesium [here.](#)
  - Link to NIH Government study [here.](#)
- **Zinc**
  - If you have been taking birth control, you may be deficient in zinc
- **Vitamin B Complex**
- **Iron**
  - Just take during your periods, if you are not having many periods/not anemic. If you have PCOS with heavy bleeding, consult with doctor on how much iron you should be taking to ensure you keep your iron/hemoglobin levels regulated
- **Manganese**
  - Helps with insulin resistance/increase insulin sensitivity
- **Berberine or Vitamin B3**
  - Helps with regulating glucose
  - Berberine to not be used if trying to get pregnant, Vitamin B3 instead
- **Green Tea**
  - Extract or drank as green tea: **not to be used if trying to get pregnant**

- **Vitamin D3**
  - Most people are at least a little vitamin D deficient since it is difficult to get naturally and it is important for antibodies, immune system, etc
- **Prebiotics and probiotics**
  - Gut health is important for everyone and impacts mental and physical health in all parts of body
- **Methyl Folate**
  - Some with PCOS have a gene issue with processing nutrients in food. Taking methyl-folate can help to increase the production of getting those nutrients. It's like a boost. It's often taken with B12
  - If you think you might have this gene mutation, you can [read more about it here!](#)
- **Biotin**
  - Used for hair health and growth
  - There are a LOT of mixed reviews on this DEFINITELY do your research
- **Ashwaganda, Holy Basil, and Maca Root**
  - These are said to potentially help with stress/anxiety
- **Matcha Tea/EGCg**
  - Inflammation/used in Chinese Medicine
- **Goldenseal Root/Shepherd's Purse**
  - Natural remedy to lighten/stop heavy menstrual bleeding

### **Some Medications You Might be Prescribed/want to discuss with PCP/OBGYN:**

- Birth Control
  - Usually treats: Hormone imbalances/period regulation/other symptoms of PCOS
  - If you respond poorly to traditional birth control, you may want to look into bioidentical/biosynthetic hormones.
- Metformin
  - Usually treats: weight loss/Insulin resistance
  - If you are looking for something more natural, Myo-Inositol is the more natural alternative to Metformin, with a lot of research to back it up.
  - Metformin impacts B12 absorption, so check your B12 levels annually and take a B12 supplement recommended by your PCP
- Spirolactone
  - Usually treats: Acne
- LDN: Low-Dose Naltrexone
  - Limited research, new approach to reducing symptoms associated with a number of chronic diseases (such as PCOS and PTSD).

## **Practice Mindfulness, Meditation, Self-Compassion-Find Support!!!!!!!!!!!!**

*These meditation channels, podcasts, and blogs are some of my favorites places for recharging and doing that.*

### **SUPPORT**

- [PCOS Challenge Organization](#)
  - They have grants available to help women with treatment and IVF
  - They also have support groups, educational materials, etc.
- [PCOS Facebook Group](#)
- [Subreddit PCOS](#)
- [PCOS Diva](#)

### **MEDITATIONS**

- [The Mindful Movement](#)
- [The Honest Guys](#)
- Do a search for “guided mindfulness meditation” or “guided meditation for self-love” or “self-compassion” “guided meditation for healing” “guided meditation for pcos/fertility” there are great ones out there for whatever your needs are!

### **DIET**

- **Course/Support:** [PCOS and Food Peace with Julie Duffy Dillon](#)
  - She has a course focused on PCOS diets
- **Blog:** [The Toasted Pine Nut](#) - Low GI/Gluten-Free Recipes
  - [The Kitchn](#): 5 Low-GI Comfort Foods with Lindsey Grimes
- **Blog:** [The Defined Dish](#)
  - Mostly Whole30/Paleo compliant recipes (sugar-free, dairy-free, gluten-free)
- **Book:** [PCOS Diet for the Newly Diagnosed](#): Your All-in-One Guide to Eliminating PCOS Symptoms with the Insulin Resistance Diet
- **Book:** [Health at every size](#) by Lindo Bacon

### **BOOKS - Mental Health and Fertility Related**

- [The Body Keeps the Score](#): Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma
  - By Bessel van der Kolk, M.D.
- [When the Body Says No](#): Understanding the Stress-Disease Connection

- By Gabor Maté, M.D.
- **Pleasure Activism**: The Politics of Feeling Good
  - By adrienne maree brown
- **Self-Therapy**: A Step-By-Step Guide to Creating Wholeness and Healing Your Inner Child Using IFS, A New, Cutting-Edge Psychotherapy, 2nd Edition
  - By Jay Earley
- **Period Repair Manual**: Natural Treatment for Better Hormones and Better Periods
  - By Laura Briden, MD
- **It Starts with the Egg**: How the Science of Egg Quality Can Help You Get Pregnant Naturally, Prevent Miscarriage, and Improve Your Odds in IVF
  - By Rebecca Fett
- **WomanCode**: Perfect Your Cycle, Amplify Your Fertility, Supercharge Your Sex Drive, and Become a Power Source
  - By Alisa Vitti

## PODCASTS/YOUTUBE CHANNELS FOR PCOS, MENTAL HEALTH, DIET

- **Food Psych Podcast, Health at Any Size, with Christy Harrison**
  - **Episode on Food Peace with PCOS**
- **Unlocking Us**: Brené Brown
  - Great for mental health
- **Fertility Homeopath**
  - Tips on natural fertility management and balance, a few episodes that are PCOS specific
- **The Hormone Genius**
  - *"This is a generation of women who deserve a holistic approach to women's healthcare. Jamie and Teresa want to inspire, inform, and empower their listeners, and to make women the genius of their own hormones!"*
  - Religious undertones: very passionate about fertility and hormone regulation