



Katrina Ridout

— NUTRITION —

UNDERSTANDING PCOS AND FERTILITY

A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE

A person with long dark hair tied back, wearing a light-colored t-shirt and dark pants, is sitting on a wooden bench. They are viewed from behind, looking out over a vast valley with rolling hills and mountains under a warm, golden sunset sky. The scene is peaceful and contemplative.

PCOS

Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) is a complex condition that can present unique challenges for individuals trying to conceive. This guide explores how PCOS affects fertility and offers guidance on managing these challenges.

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A close-up photograph of a pregnant woman wearing a light-colored, possibly beige or cream, dress. Her hands are resting on her belly. Another person's hands are visible, gently touching her belly from the side. The background is softly blurred, showing what appears to be an indoor setting with some greenery.

Introduction to PCOS and Fertility

What is PCOS?

Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) is a common hormonal disorder that affects people with ovaries. It is characterised by various symptoms, including irregular menstrual cycles, excess hair growth, and cysts on the ovaries. PCOS can have a significant impact on a person's physical and emotional well-being.

The Prevalence of PCOS in Individuals Trying to Get Pregnant

PCOS is one of the most common endocrine disorders in people of reproductive age, affecting approximately 5–10% of individuals. It can occur in adolescents and adults. PCOS is also a common condition among those facing fertility issues, impacting a significant number of individuals attempting to conceive.

Causes and Risk Factors

The exact cause of PCOS is not fully understood, but it is believed to involve a combination of genetic and environmental factors. Common risk factors include family history, insulin resistance, and obesity.

The Impact of PCOS on Fertility

PCOS disrupts the hormonal balance in the body, leading to irregular menstrual cycles, anovulation, and other factors that can hinder fertility.



Symptoms of PCOS

Irregular Menstrual Cycles

One of the hallmark symptoms of PCOS is irregular or absent menstrual periods. This is due to hormonal imbalances that disrupt the normal ovulation process.

Excessive Hair Growth

PCOS may cause hirsutism, which is the growth of excess hair on the face, chest, back, or other areas. This is often related to elevated levels of androgens (male hormones).

Acne and Oily Skin

High androgen levels can lead to acne and excessively oily skin.

Weight Gain

Many individuals with PCOS struggle with weight gain or obesity, which can exacerbate other symptoms.

Fertility Issues

PCOS can make it more challenging to conceive due to irregular ovulation. However, with proper treatment, many people with PCOS can have successful pregnancies.

Mood Changes

Some individuals with PCOS may experience mood swings, anxiety, or depression, possibly

Diagnosis and Evaluation

Medical History and Fertility Assessment

A comprehensive medical history and fertility evaluation help determine the extent of fertility challenges.

Hormonal Profiling

Hormone testing is a crucial part of diagnosing PCOS and assessing its impact on fertility.

Ultrasound and Follicle Monitoring

Ultrasound scans and follicle monitoring aid in understanding ovarian function and the development of eggs.

Ovulatory Dysfunction and PCOS

Identifying and managing ovulatory dysfunction is central to addressing fertility issues associated with PCOS.





Complications of PCOS and Fertility Challenges

Insulin Resistance and Diabetes

Many individuals with PCOS have insulin resistance, increasing their risk of type 2 diabetes.

Cardiovascular Problems

PCOS is associated with an increased risk of high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and heart disease.

Sleep Apnoea

Sleep apnoea is more common in people with PCOS, potentially due to weight gain and hormonal imbalances.

Endometrial Cancer

Long-term irregular periods can increase the risk of endometrial cancer. Regular medical check-ups are essential.

Fertility Challenges

Anovulation and Infertility

Anovulation, or the absence of ovulation, is a primary cause of infertility in individuals with PCOS.

Impact on Ovarian Reserve

PCOS can affect the quantity and quality of eggs, potentially reducing the chances of successful conception.

Recurrent Pregnancy Loss

PCOS increases the risk of recurrent pregnancy loss, emphasising the importance of proper management and support.

Increased Risk of Gestational Diabetes

Pregnant individuals with PCOS are at a higher risk of developing gestational diabetes.

Management and Treatment

Lifestyle Modifications for Fertility

Healthy lifestyle changes, including diet, exercise, and stress management, can improve fertility in individuals with PCOS.

Medications and Ovulation Induction

Medications may be prescribed to induce ovulation and improve fertility.

In Vitro Fertilisation (IVF)

IVF can be a successful fertility treatment option for individuals with PCOS.

Emotional Support and Coping Strategies

Dealing with fertility challenges often requires emotional support and coping strategies



A close-up photograph of a person's hands holding a white ceramic bowl filled with a healthy meal. The bowl contains white yogurt, golden-brown granola, sliced dried fruit (possibly figs or plums), and a fresh green leaf. A wooden spoon is held in the person's right hand, resting in the yogurt. The background is softly blurred, showing a white curtain and a patterned sleeve.

Living with PCOS and Fertility

Diet and Nutrition

A balanced diet with whole foods, adequate fibre, and controlled carbohydrates can help manage weight and hormonal imbalances.

Exercise

Regular physical activity can improve insulin sensitivity and help with weight management.

Mental Health and Stress Management

Mindfulness, stress reduction techniques, and therapy can help manage mood-related symptoms.

Weight Management and Fertility

Achieving a healthy weight can positively impact fertility in individuals with PCOS.

Supplements and Fertility

Certain supplements may aid in regulating hormones and improving fertility outcomes.

Support Networks

Engaging with support groups, friends, and family can provide valuable emotional support and information.



Katridout Support

Kat Ridout understands the profound uniqueness of each individual's body, influenced by diverse factors such as diets, medical histories, genetics, lifestyles, and personal preferences. It is this recognition of individuality that forms the foundation of her approach. Kat's commitment to tailoring nutrition advice to meet your specific needs sets her apart as a dedicated expert in the field of fertility, pregnancy, and early life nutrition.

With more than fifteen years of experience in private practice and high-level research, Kat possesses specialised knowledge to help women and couples achieve successful conception and minimise the risk of miscarriage. Her expertise extends to managing a wide range of health conditions, including but not limited to PCOS, endometriosis, diabetes, IBD, disordered eating, autoimmune conditions, and other rare genetic conditions. She is well-versed in addressing factors such as egg and sperm quality and quantity, thin uterine lining, and recurrent miscarriages.

Kat Ridout's unwavering commitment to individualised care and her wealth of experience make her a valuable resource for those seeking to enhance their fertility and increase their chances of achieving a successful pregnancy.



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