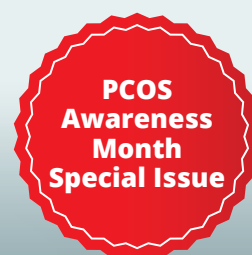


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BettHer Health

Care begins with you – a women's initiative by Motherhood Hospitals



COVER STORY

**Pratibha's PCOS Story: From
depression to the joys of motherhood**

All About Polycystic Ovary
Syndrome (PCOS)

FAQs on PCOS



Women's Health in the Spotlight

The popular opinion is that women are excellent multitaskers and can balance the responsibilities of life with ease – from running a home to finding success in their careers. However, this balance often comes at the price of neglecting their own health. Women are so occupied with the welfare of their loved ones that they forget their own well-being. Caring for themselves is not a priority for most women who are inclined to put off important health checks or appointments, thus ignoring any signs of health conditions.

The first step in self-care is awareness and education. At different stages of a woman's life, her body goes through changes and has certain requirements. It is crucial that these requirements are understood. For instance, studies show that women in India are unaware of calcium and iron depletion during natural processes such as menstruation and childbirth. Due to lack of awareness, they rarely take calcium and iron supplements, which thereby results in anaemia and calcium deficiency in most women. This can have a detrimental impact on their overall health.

Providing access to such information and awareness is integral for healthier living for women in India and across the world. With this goal in mind, Motherhood has launched this initiative – for all women to have better health and a better living.

At one time, a woman's traditional role was confined to managing the household, but today's woman is multi-faceted in her responsibilities, from conducting

early morning business meetings to picking up her children from school, and organizing social events – a woman does it all.

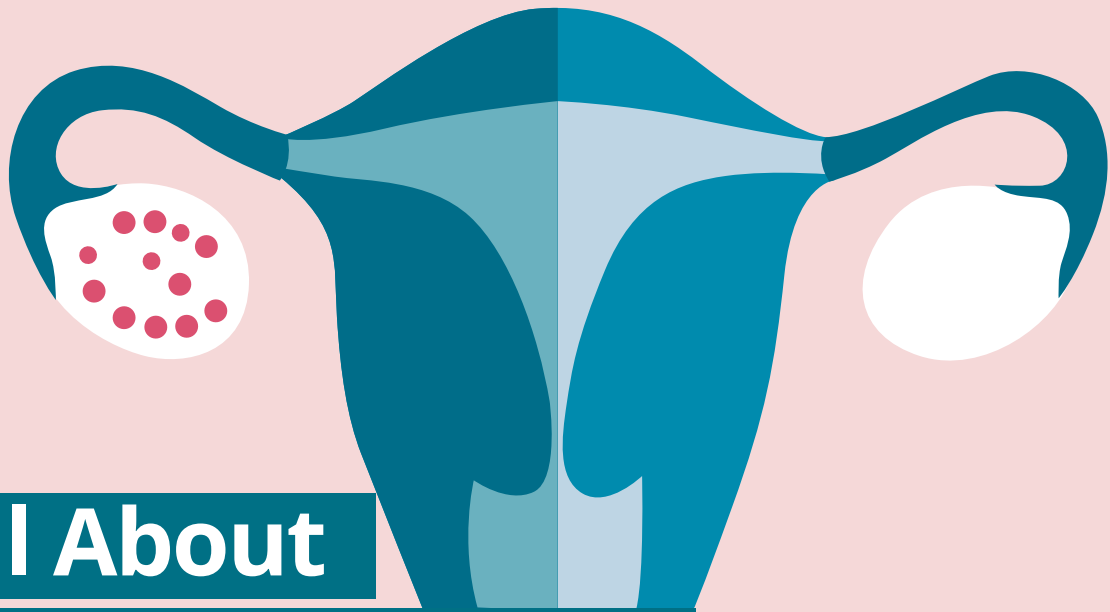
At Motherhood, we know exactly what a woman's schedule looks like and understand the pressures of day-to-day life women face, with seemingly never-ending checklists. In this race to get things done, women rarely take time out to even consider the implications of neglecting their health. In many cases, women may even have minimal or no say in the decision-making about their own health. According to an analysis of women's healthcare in India, published in the International Research Journal of Social Sciences, only 51% of women in India make informed decisions about their health, and many lack autonomy in the sphere of healthcare due to a severe lack of awareness. This is the motivation behind Motherhood's newsletter initiative – to facilitate women's involvement and inclusion in their health care, and to empower them to have a voice, so better health becomes a reality for every woman.

BettHer Health enables women to take charge of their own health and happiness. It is an evolving space that provides women with answers to their health and lifestyle queries. Women deserve the same care they constantly give, and Motherhood is here to provide that.

As September is the month for Polycystic Ovary Syndrome awareness, this Volume will focus on the questions and answers revolving around a common concern plaguing women's health – PCOS.

This initiative lays the power of personal healthcare in the hands of women because after all, good health begins with her.

Dr. Vijay Aggarwal,
Group Head - Medical Services, Motherhood Hospitals



All About Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS)

Introduction

Polycystic Ovary Syndrome is a common metabolic condition in women. Some women struggle to get pregnant and are at high risk of developing certain complications during pregnancy. However, by managing the symptoms, many women with PCOS can get pregnant and have a healthy baby.

PCOS in pregnancy is a condition where ovaries produce higher levels of androgens (male hormones). This can affect women's menstrual cycle, fertility, and appearance. Symptoms include:



Cysts in ovaries



Infertility



Weight gain



Insulin resistance

Diagnosis

It often takes a while for women with PCOS to get a firm diagnosis, as the condition can mimic other problems. Sometimes, women having trouble getting pregnant find that they have PCOS.

If a woman faces symptoms of PCOS, it is important that she sees a gynaecologist to find the cause of the symptoms. With early diagnosis, the symptoms can be treated early. This reduces the risk of complications, if the woman decides to get pregnant.

At her appointment, the important things to do are:

- Talk to her about the condition and examine her
- Suggest a blood test in order to check for male hormones
- Arrange ultrasound scans to look for cysts in the ovaries

PCOS and Infertility

If a woman has PCOS, she might also struggle to get pregnant. This is because of male hormones, which prevents the release of egg, called as 'ovulation'. Losing as little as 5% of excess weight can help women ovulate better and lessen other effects of PCOS. Woman can increase the chances of getting pregnant by:



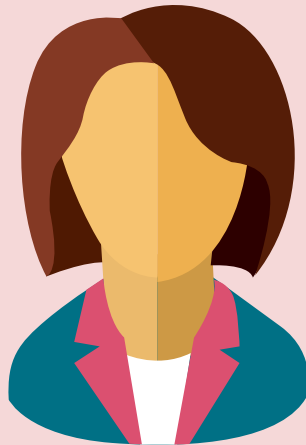
Healthy diet



Regular
Exercise



Maintaining a
healthy body
weight



Monitoring the
ovulation and
timing sexual
intercourse
around ovulation

If the woman has made some changes and that still hasn't worked, we might suggest her to go for fertility tests and medications to help her ovulate. Another option is IVF, which offers the best chance of ovulation. However, we understand this can be expensive and is usually considered when all options have been unsuccessful. Fortunately, with lifestyle changes or infertility treatment, a majority of women get pregnant.

PCOS and Pregnancy


Having PCOS increases some complications during pregnancy like:

- Miscarriage
- High BP induced by pregnancy
- Premature birth
- Gestational diabetes
- Higher likelihood of needing a C-section delivery because babies might be larger than expected, in case of gestational diabetes

The risks of these complications can be reduced by monitoring PCOS symptoms, taking care of diet, and doing exercises during pregnancy.

Did You Know?

- 1 The first test-tube baby was born to Louise Joy Brown on July 25, 1978, in Oldham, England.
- 2 Tobacco use among younger females in developing countries is rising rapidly. Women generally have less success in quitting the habit and have more relapses than men.
- 3 The cellular differences between men and women may influence the amount and type of medicine needed to treat a disease.
- 4 During pregnancy, the uterus grows from the size of an orange to the size of a watermelon in 9 months.
- 5 Female muscles and tendons contain more elastin, the protein which gives their muscles, organs, and skin the ability to stretch. That's how women have great flexibility overall.

A photograph of a pregnant woman from the side, wearing a white tank top, with her hands resting on her belly. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light blue.

Pratibha's PCOS Story: From depression to the joys of motherhood

Pratibha (name changed) was diagnosed with Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) at the age of 22. She had irregular periods, unbearable cramps, excessive weight gain, and acne – all of which brought her morale down and led her into depression. After a couple of years of getting married, Pratibha wanted to have a baby. Her dreams came crashing when she was told that she will have difficulty conceiving due to PCOS. Not only did this news make her slip further into depression but it also started affecting her overall health.

Her main motivation to beat PCOS was wanting to get pregnant – and this drove her journey.

During her initial days after diagnosis, Pratibha was put on birth control pills which led to side effects like sudden weight gain. She tried exercising, followed diet programs like Keto and GM but nothing would change her condition.

Pratibha had, for a long time, consulted multiple doctors, had a series of investigations, and even tried counseling sessions. It was only much later that she met Dr. Sireesha Reddy at Motherhood – who gave her a real understanding of PCOS and helped kickstart her journey of fighting it.

"After years of being stressed and depressed about my inability to conceive, I had almost given up hope. I had also tried fertility treatment, which deteriorated my mental health. It was during these difficult times that Dr. Sireesha Reddy gave me a completely new perspective of dealing with PCOS. I made a 360-degree change in my lifestyle starting with healthy eating habits, routine exercises, and most importantly – dealing with stress".

Pratibha's fertility journey has been full of surprises – the goal was to lose weight, avoid unhealthy food, and have a healthy, naturally occurring pregnancy.

In the course of time, Pratibha realized that with a disciplined lifestyle and dedication to achieve good health, she triumphed her milestones of making her menstrual health better. Her periods became normal and regular, and other conditions like weight gain and acne were under control. With the help of her gynaecologist, Pratibha gained new knowledge on keeping her hormone levels in check and maintaining a track of her menstrual cycle. This support and confidence empowered Pratibha and gave her new reasons to stay positive about her future.

Within a year of her treatment, Pratibha could conceive successfully and gave birth to a healthy baby boy. "Today, Pratibha is in a much better shape – physically and mentally," said Dr. Sireesha Reddy.





FAQs on PCOS by Dr. Sireesha Reddy

Consultant Obstetrician and Gynaecologist, Laparoscopic Surgeon,
and Infertility Specialist, Motherhood Hospital, Hebbal, Bengaluru

1

Is it difficult for us to lose weight during PCOS? Or will it go away with weight loss?

Women think they are gaining weight rapidly due to PCOS. Weight loss may help improve PCOS symptoms but won't make them go away. By following a healthy diet and a regular exercise routine, they can help the body respond to insulin, and possibly decrease androgen production.

2

Is it a lifelong disease? Will I get cured immediately?

Again, I would say, PCOS is a hormonal imbalance that happens to women. And it requires lifelong modification. It will get cured if you maintain your lifestyle correctly, exercise well, and maintain a proper diet.

3

Can I take contraceptive pills to cure PCOS?

Women think contraceptive pills will help them with PCOS. It isn't a correction to get regular cycles. The underlying hormonal imbalance must be corrected with lifestyle modifications.

4

Can PCOS affect my fertility badly?

This is one of the most common questions asked by patients. When a woman has PCOS, her ovaries are larger than normal. The enlarged ovaries can have tiny cysts that contain immature eggs. High levels of androgens interfere with the development of eggs and regular release of eggs. If the healthy egg isn't released, it can't be fertilized by sperm, meaning the woman can't get pregnant.

5

Is my pregnancy safe with PCOS? Will it complicate my baby's health?

It is completely safe if a woman can make positive lifestyle choices like having a healthy diet and exercise, which can increase the chances of getting pregnant.

For such cases, we suggest the patient see a fertility specialist, who will help make sure with the check-ups and ultrasounds to see how she is doing.





Our Locations

Bengaluru

- Indiranagar
- Sarjapur Road
- Hebbal
- HRBR Layout
- Banashankari
- Horamavu - Clinic
- Kadubeesanahalli - Clinic
- Sarjapur Road - Clinic
- Electronic City - Clinic

Chennai

- Alwarpet

Pune

- Kharadi
- Wagholi - Clinic

Navi Mumbai

- Kharghar

Coimbatore

- Mettupalayam Road

Indore

- Mechanic Nagar

Noida

- Sector 48

For more information and appointments,
call **1800 108 8008** or
visit **www.motherhoodindia.com**