

# Your Journey with Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS)



For more information scan this QR code or go to [myhealth.alberta.ca/pcos-pathway](https://myhealth.alberta.ca/pcos-pathway)

**PCOS is a condition that is caused by a hormonal imbalance that impacts health across the lifespan. People with PCOS may have irregular periods and have higher levels of the hormone testosterone. The ovaries may develop enlarged follicles that are often referred to as 'cysts'.**

You are the most important part of your healthcare team. This guide will help you to know what to expect as you work with your team to manage and treat PCOS. If you have any questions along the way, please ask your healthcare team.

## Before your appointment

- Write down how you feel, your symptoms, and any questions or concerns.
- Symptoms may include missed or irregular periods, acne, extra hair on the face and body, scalp hair loss, difficulty managing weight, and difficulty in getting pregnant.



## Visit your healthcare provider

- Consider bringing a family member or friend to support you. You may need more than one visit with your healthcare provider.
- Your health includes physical, emotional, spiritual, financial, and social elements.
- To better manage your health condition, your healthcare provider needs to hear from you and understand who you are and what matters to you. They will need to ask questions about your past health, family history, and menstrual cycles.



## Get your tests

- Your healthcare provider will do a physical exam to look for signs of PCOS, such as extra body hair, and signs of insulin resistance. They may measure your blood pressure, weight, and height.
- You will need lab tests to help with the diagnosis.
- Some people may need an internal ultrasound to view the ovaries.



## Review your test results

- Find your test results on MyHealth Records or MyAHS Connect ([myhealth.alberta.ca/myhealthrecords](https://myhealth.alberta.ca/myhealthrecords)) or ask your healthcare provider to print them for you.
- Talk with your healthcare provider so you know what your test results mean.



## Review your treatment, management & prevention options

- Your healthcare provider will help you better understand your condition and offer you important strategies to manage your condition. This includes:
  - having a healthy eating pattern with nourishing foods
  - exercising regularly
  - having healthy mental health practices
  - getting restful sleep
  - reducing or quitting smoking
- Some people may benefit from having medication to help with their irregular periods, extra hair growth, body weight, acne, pre-diabetes, and infertility.
- Your symptoms will need specific management such as hair removal, acne treatment, diet, sleep, or mental health supports.
- Discuss the options and decide with your healthcare provider what will work best for you.



## Talk with your healthcare provider about a referral

- Not all patients need a referral to see a specialist. You may benefit from a referral to a different healthcare provider based on your symptoms, test results, and your history.



## Start your treatment & watch your symptoms

- Visit your healthcare provider if you have:
  - sudden onset of new and unusual facial and body hair growth
  - development of new wide purple stretch marks



## Keep taking care of yourself

- Keep taking care of your overall health. Look for other healthy lifestyle resources and supports.



Whole-person health

### Important Tips:

#### Need a family doctor?

[ahs.ca/findadoctor](https://ahs.ca/findadoctor)

#### Need a translator?

Let your healthcare provider know

#### Need health advice?

Call Health Link at 811

#### Need to find programs and services in your community?

Call 211 or visit [ab.211.ca](https://ab.211.ca)