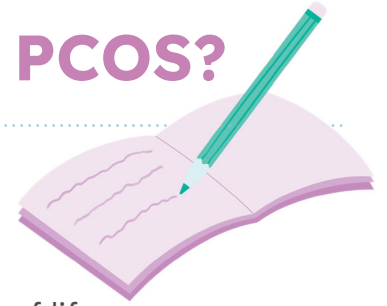


How do I improve my mental health and wellbeing with PCOS?



What is Mental Health?

When you have good mental health, you can:

- ✓ Name your abilities
- ✓ Learn/work well
- ✓ Cope with the normal stresses of life
- ✓ Contribute to your community



Your mental health can affect your daily life, relationships and physical health. These things can also impact your mental health.

Special challenges for people with PCOS

While many people experience depression or anxiety during their life, it is **4x more likely** for people with PCOS. There are many reasons why:

PCOS can cause weight gain, and can make it harder to lose weight. PCOS makes it easier to gain weight and harder to lose weight. This can be extremely stressful in a society that values being thin.

People with PCOS are more likely to have eating disorders as they try to lose weight.

PCOS symptoms like acne, unwanted hair growth, and weight gain can lead to people feeling embarrassed or self-conscious.

PCOS can make it harder to get pregnant, and this can lead to feelings of grief and sadness.

PCOS impacts hormones and hormones can affect mood.

People with PCOS feel tired more often than others. Not having enough energy to do the things you want or need to can feel hard.



Want to learn more about mental health and wellbeing? Check out the information and resources at [ShowYourLoveToday.com](https://www.showyourlovetoday.com)

How do I know if I need help with my mental health?

It can be hard to know if you need help with your mental health. Talk to your provider about how you are feeling if any of the following statements are true for you:

I have felt nervous, anxious or on edge for 3 or more days in the past 2 weeks.

I have not been able to stop worrying or control my worrying for 3 or more days in the past 2 weeks.

I eat food in secret.

I am not satisfied with my eating patterns.

My weight affects the way I feel about myself.

I have felt down, depressed or hopeless for 3 or more days in the past 2 weeks.

I have had little interest or pleasure in doing things I usually enjoy for 3 or more days in the past 2 weeks.

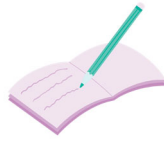


What can I do to improve my mental wellbeing?

There are many things that you can do to have better mental health. The good news is that these actions can also help improve your other PCOS symptoms!



Eat well – try to eat foods that are nutritious and fuel your body and brain, including healthy fats (fish, olive oil, nuts), fruits, vegetables and whole grains.



Try different ways to **manage stress** like meditation, breathing exercises, journaling, physical activity or connecting with friends or family



Find ways to **move your body** every day that are enjoyable and fun. Studies show that moving your body helps to boost your mood and cope with stress.



Create a supportive sleep environment to get the best rest possible. Good sleep improves your health and makes you less likely to feel stressed – find tips at the end of this handout!



Work with your healthcare provider to improve PCOS symptoms that make you feel embarrassed

What can my healthcare provider do to help my mental health?

If anxiety or depression are getting in your way, talk to your healthcare provider. They can:



Help you find a counselor or therapist who can help you manage your depression or anxiety



Prescribe medications that can help you manage your depression or anxiety

If you are thinking about suicide, you need to get help immediately.

Call 9-8-8


To reach the US National Suicide and Crisis Lifeline and get free support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.


What is a supportive sleep environment?


Your bed and bedroom should be a space for sleeping. Watching tv or using your computer, phone or other screens can tell your brain to stay awake. Try keeping those activities in other rooms. A calming bedtime ritual can also help your brain get ready for sleep.

Things that work for others include drinking a warm cup of herbal tea (make sure there is no caffeine!), using a scented lotion on your hands, doing some gentle stretches and deep breathing, or petting your cat or dog. Try to avoid drinking alcohol for 4 hours before bedtime – alcohol can make it seem easier to fall asleep, but reduces your sleep quality and can leave you feeling tired in the morning.

Tips for a making a better sleeping space:

 **Cool** – turn your thermostat down at night time, or use a fan to keep you cool.

 **Dark** – black out curtains that block light from outside or an eye mask can help give you a dark space

 **Quiet** – use earplugs or a white noise machine if you live in a noisy space



For more information about PCOS and how this sheet was created, visit:

www.showyourlovetoday.com/navigate-pcos/