

# How do I become pregnant and have a healthy pregnancy with PCOS?



Most people with PCOS are able to have the number of kids they want, but they often need some help from their healthcare team.

## Why is getting pregnant harder with PCOS?

**PCOS can disrupt ovulation.** Ovulation is when your ovaries release an egg that can be fertilized by sperm. Fertilization begins a pregnancy. You must release an egg to get pregnant. Some people with PCOS don't release an egg at all. Some people with PCOS do release an egg, but are still less likely to get pregnant. There are things that you and your healthcare team can do to help your body release an egg and improve your ovulation so you are more likely to get pregnant.

*One out of 6 people have problems getting pregnant at some point in their lives. If you want to learn more or connect with others who are having a similar experience, visit [Resolve.org](https://www.resolve.org)*



What can I do to increase my chances of becoming pregnant?



### Start planning early

If you know you want a family, talk to your healthcare provider as soon as possible. Your chances of getting pregnant go down at age 35.



### Lifestyle changes

Doing more exercise and following your healthcare team's advice for food choices can make ovulation more likely. Being more active makes you more likely to ovulate, even if you don't lose any weight!



### Weight maintenance or loss

Staying at your current weight, or losing weight if you are overweight, can increase your chances. People see the best results when they lose 5-10% of their body weight.

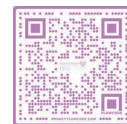
(If you weigh 200 lbs., you'd aim to lose 10-20 lbs.)



### Know your cycle

Cycles with PCOS can vary outside of the typical 21-35 days. Tracking your cycle is important to help you know when you may ovulate. If you know when you are likely to release an egg, you can plan for sex in the days before and during ovulation.

### Want to learn more about cycle tracking?



## What can my healthcare team do to help me get pregnant?

- Provide guidance on diet and exercise to help you lower your androgens and possibly lose weight.
- Your primary care provider can prescribe medicines that help your ovaries release an egg.

Medication	How does it work?	Other Information
Metformin	Reduces androgens Helps reverse insulin resistance Triggers release of an egg	Your healthcare provider might increase your dose based on your body's response. Stomach pain, diarrhea and nausea are common side effects Taking it with a meal can help with side effects Safe to use during pregnancy
Letrozole	Triggers release of an egg – at least 3 out of every 5 people taking this medicine will ovulate!	Your healthcare provider might increase the dose of this medicine based on your body's response. Your odds of getting pregnant are as much as 27% per cycle*. There is a slightly higher risk of twins or other multiples.
Clomiphene citrate	Triggers release of an egg – at least half of people taking this medicine will ovulate!	Your healthcare provider might increase your dose based on your body's response. Your odds of getting pregnant are as much as 22% per cycle*. There is a slightly higher risk of twins or other multiples

\*People without PCOS under age 35 have about a 25% chance of becoming pregnant each cycle

**Ovulation problems are not the only reason it can be hard to get pregnant.** It takes healthy sperm and an egg to make a baby. There could be a blockage that keeps sperm from getting to your egg, or there could be an issue with the sperm. Ask your partner to talk to their doctor to make sure that everything is working well.

### How long should I try before thinking about other options?

For most people, it takes more than one cycle of taking the medicine to get pregnant. Your healthcare provider will help you know if the medicine is helping you release an egg. Your next steps depend on your age.

#### Under 35 and ovulating

If you're not pregnant after **12 months** of trying, your healthcare provider will suggest that you see a specialist

#### Over 35 and ovulating

If you're not pregnant after **6 months** of trying, your healthcare provider will suggest that you see a specialist

**Remember, you can ask for a referral any time!**

## When I become pregnant, is there anything I should know?

You can have a healthy pregnancy with PCOS, but PCOS does increase your risk for some pregnancy-related health problems:

High Blood Pressure

Pre-term Birth

Miscarriage

Gestational Diabetes

It is very important to start your prenatal care as soon as you know you are pregnant. Go to all of your prenatal appointments, and follow the advice of your healthcare team.



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

[www.showyourlovetoday.com/navigate-pcos/](http://www.showyourlovetoday.com/navigate-pcos/)

