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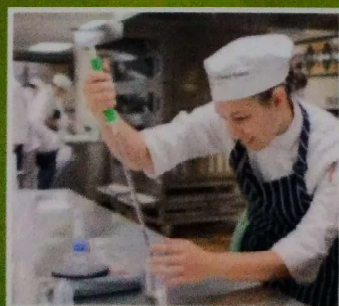
# RESEARCH TRENDS IN HOME SCIENCE AND EXTENSION

Volume - 12

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# Chapter - 6

## Role of Diet in Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome (PCOS)

Dr. Deshmukh Kanchan Samish

### Abstract

Polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS) is the most common endocrine disorder in females of reproductive age; PCOS is a condition that affects women's ovaries. It is caused by an imbalance of a woman's sex hormones which may lead to menstrual cycle change, overweight unwanted hair growth, Infertility etc. PCOS is affecting young girls in their reproductive age due to the adoption of unhealthy eating habits and a sedentary lifestyle, therefore there is need to evoke awareness in the society on the ways to combat this disease. Women with PCOS are at a higher risk for a number of illnesses, including high blood pressure, diabetes, heart disease, and cancer of the uterus (endometrial cancer) and breast cancer. Knowing the right foods to eat as well as the kinds of food to limit can improve PCOS symptoms, therefore the main object for presenting this article is to evoke awareness in the society about PCOS and provide clear guideline for what to eat or not to eat.

**Keywords:** Polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS), diet, lifestyle disorder

### Introduction

As per World Health Organization (WHO), it is estimated that 116 million women (3.4%) are affected by PCOS worldwide, with its prevalence in our country being estimated to range from 3.7 to 22.5 per cent, i.e. 2 out of 10 women in India suffer from PCOS (Ganie, M.A. *et al.* 2019, Bulsara, J. *et al.* 2021). According to a study conducted in Southern India and Maharashtra, about 9.13% of menstruating women in those regions suffer from PCOS, while 22.5% have PCOD (UNICEF). Though globally it has an alarming incidence, its diagnosis is difficult as it manifests as a spectrum of symptoms than a specific one. It is primarily characterized by an extremely irregular menstrual cycle in which ovulation may not occur (Azziz R *et al.* 2004).

PCOS is on a rise among the adolescent girls now days, due to unhealthy lifestyle practices, therefore there is need to evoke awareness in

the society on the ways to combat this disease. Women with PCOS are at a higher risk for a number of illnesses, including high blood pressure, diabetes, heart disease and cancer of the uterus (endometrial cancer) and breast cancer (Stöppler, 2010).

Nearly 50% of women with PCOS are overweight or obese. Improving your diet and exercise program by making lifestyle changes may reduce your risk for developing chronic diseases associated with PCOS such as diabetes, heart disease and endometrial cancer ([www.mckinley.illinois](http://www.mckinley.illinois)).

According to Dr. G Ganguly Mukherjee (2007) there are two main reasons for the increase of PCOS diagnoses in Indian women: the adoption of unhealthy eating habits and a sedentary lifestyle. Whereas older generations of Indian women eat traditional, lower calorie foods with less sugar, many young Indian girls today eat a steady diet of junk food. When these bad habits are combined with an extremely aggressive academic load, young girls simply cannot burn off the increased calories to maintain a healthy weight.

Diet and exercise are important parts of managing PCOS. This is because young women with PCOS often have higher levels of insulin (a hormone) in their blood, and many have trouble maintaining a healthy weight. Knowing the right foods to eat as well as the kinds of food to limit can improve the way you feel. It will also help you lose weight. Eating well, staying active and maintaining a healthy weight (or losing even a small amount of weight if you're overweight) can improve PCOS symptoms (Phaedra Thomas *et al.*).

Considering above researcher's reviews eating well can help manage some of the long-term complications of Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS), therefore the main object for presenting this article is to evoke awareness in the society about PCOS and provide clear guideline for what to eat or not to eat.

#### What is PCOS?

PCOS is a condition that affects women's ovaries. It is caused by an imbalance of a woman's sex hormones which may lead to:

- Menstrual cycle changes.
- Skin problems such as acne.
- Increased hair growth on the face and body.
- Cysts in the ovaries.

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- Trouble getting pregnant.
- Ovaries in an ultrasound may look enlarged and contain many "small cysts" located.

On the outer edge of each ovary.

- Failure in the release of eggs from the ovary.
- Higher level of male hormones than normal or male hormones that are more active than normal.

#### Why PCOS happens?

The cause is not yet known, but mostly it may be genetic since women with PCOS are likely to have a mother or sister with PCOS. Or seen in families where members are suffering from diabetes, high cholesterol and obesity. PCOS affects up to 10 percent of women.

#### How can PCOS be diagnosed?

No single test can show that you have polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS). Your doctor will talk to you about your medical history, do a physical exam and run some tests.

**Physical exam:** During your physical exam, your doctor will note several key pieces of information and ask you a lot of questions about your menstrual cycle and your general health including your height, weight and blood pressure.

**Pelvic exam:** During a pelvic exam, your doctor visually and manually inspects your reproductive organs for signs of masses, growths or other abnormalities.

**Blood tests:** You will most likely need to have a blood test to check your hormone levels, blood sugar, and lipids (including cholesterol).

**Ultrasound:** You may have a pelvic ultrasound, which might show enlarged ovaries with small cysts. These are signs of PCOS. But many women with PCOS don't have these signs.

#### Symptoms of PCOS

- Irregular periods.
- Excessive facial and body hair (hirsutism).
- Weight gain.
- Problems in getting pregnant.
- Acne.

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- Hair fall and hair thinning.
- Insulin resistance-means the inability of body to use insulin effectively. This will result in high blood insulin levels causing PCOS.

### PCOS and weight gain

If you have PCOS, your body makes too much androgen. Androgen is often called the "male hormone", but small amounts are made in women's bodies too. If your body makes too much androgen, it can lead to weight gain, especially around the belly area.

This type of weight gain can increase the risk of:

- High cholesterol
- High blood pressure
- High blood sugar
- High triglycerides
- Heart disease
- Diabetes

### Tips for maintaining a healthy weight with PCOS

Nearly 50% of women with PCOS are overweight or obese. Improving your diet and exercise program by making lifestyle changes may reduce your risk for developing chronic diseases associated with PCOS such as diabetes, heart disease and endometrial cancer.

Currently there is no scientific evidence to support one particular diet for PCOS. Evidence-based recommendations suggest that women with PCOS should focus on balance and moderation.

### Recommended lifestyle changes include

- Weight loss of 5-10% if overweight or obese in 3 months.
- Decreased caloric intake if weight loss is desired.
- Decreased intake of enriched carbohydrates.
- Increased fiber intake including fruits, vegetables, and beans.
- Decreased fat intake, particularly saturated fat.
- Smaller, more frequent meals (every 3-4 hours) to help control blood glucose levels.
- Balanced meals including carbohydrates, protein and fat.

- At least 150 minutes of moderate or vigorous activity per week for diabetes prevention.

### Diet for Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS)

PCOS is a complex constellation of endocrine and metabolic interactions that create an unbalanced hormone profile resulting in ovarian hyper stimulation. Fortunately, it has been shown that improving baseline nutrition and losing weight (if needed) can do a lot to improve both the symptoms and the underlying disorder. Focusing on a higher protein and lower carbohydrate nutrition profile is important. Making primarily plant-based food choices and changing your eating patterns to regular small meals with healthy snacks between can re-establish a balanced blood sugar and hormonal response leading to improved fertility.

### Important changes

#### Reduce sweets and sweeteners

- Foods containing too much sugar cause rapid spike in your blood sugar levels, placing unnecessary stress on your body. Over time this leads to the development of insulin resistance syndrome. Insulin Resistance Syndrome is condition marked by poor blood sugar control. Insulin resistance is a major factor that drives PCOS. This blood sugar control problem affects most women suffering PCOS, even when they are not overweight.
- Hence avoid refined carbohydrates such as soft drinks (soda), ice cream, cookies, cakes, chocolate, sweets and processed breakfast.
- Avoid foods containing sugar compounds such as high-fructose corn syrup, sorbitol, fructose, mannitol, maltitol, isomalt & glycerol.
- Avoid foods containing harmful artificial sweeteners.
- Stevia is a natural sweetener that can be used freely. Small amounts (1-2 tsp) of raw honey or maple syrup are also ok 2-3 times a week.

#### Eliminate processed grain products

- Avoid Chinese food, pasta, crackers, breads, wheat, white rice, and all other processed flour products.
- Potatoes are also best mostly eliminated as their starch is converted to sugar very quickly in the body.



- After 3 weeks on this diet, high fiber non-wheat crackers, gluten free (sugar free) breads or whole grain rice cakes can be used 1-2 times a week.

#### Choose better fats

- Too much saturated and trans fat in the diet can lead to weight gain, high blood pressure and high cholesterol.
- Limit foods that contain saturated and trans fats. Instead of these bad fats, choose smaller amounts of healthy unsaturated fats, which are found in vegetable oils like canola and olive oil, avocado and nuts.
- A healthy diet includes a small amount-30 to 45 mL (2 to 3 tbsp.) of unsaturated oil and fat each day.
- Corn, soy, cottonseed and grape seed oils should be avoided.

#### Reduce unhealthy fats

- Eliminate packaged baked goods, deep fried foods, high fat dairy products like cream and sour cream and margarine.

#### Eating more fiber

- Eating more fiber can help maintain blood sugar levels and lower your cholesterol.
- Plus, fiber helps make you feel full, so you tend to eat less. This can help with weight control. Aim for 21 to 25 grams per day. Here are some high fiber foods to try:
- Fruit-especially consume vitamin C-rich food by eating plenty of fruits like orange, lemon, sweet lime, grape fruit, and grapes. Eat whole fruit instead of fruit juice will maintain insulin and blood sugar levels.
- Vegetables-especially green vegetables as it contains a lot of folic acid in them. Folic acid is often advised by gynecologists to women who are planning to conceive or who are pregnant.
- Whole grains-Eat wholegrain foods instead of processed, refined foods such as wheat flour (Maida).
- Legumes-Eat such as lentils, chickpeas, soybeans and kidney beans

#### Enjoy protein

- Similar to fiber, protein also helps you feel full for longer, so you will eat less. This is a great way to help control your weight.

- Make sure that you have some protein at every meal and snack.

- Instead of always choosing meat, you can also try chicken or fish or try vegetarian options such as legumes, raw seeds and nuts, Pinger Millet (Nachani), Soya paneer and other soy products, lentils, chickpeas, black beans and all other beans.
- Milk and low-fat yogurt are also good sources of protein.

#### Optimal habits

**Make breakfast:** Avoid the breads and coffee, and eat a cooked, warm breakfast that includes some fruit or vegetable and protein. If you are rushed, prepare breakfast the night before and heat it in the morning.

**Eat substantial snacks:** Plan ahead with humus with raw vegetables, rice cakes with nut butter, raw almonds, fresh fruit, raw nuts and seeds, spelt flatbreads. Eliminate chips, breadly treats, sugar, coffees and cold drinks.

**Don't go hungry:** Eat every 2-4 hours. Getting over-hungry leads to poor food choices and wrecks havoc with insulin control. Start with breakfast and schedule small snacks between moderate meals for best blood sugar regulation.

**Sit down and eat.** Eat consistently, quietly and chew a lot (35 times per bite is recommended by macrobiotics.) Eat comfortably and enjoy your meal. Don't walk, read, stand or do other activities while eating. Give yourself at least 15 minutes down-time to relax and enjoy your meal.

#### Be active

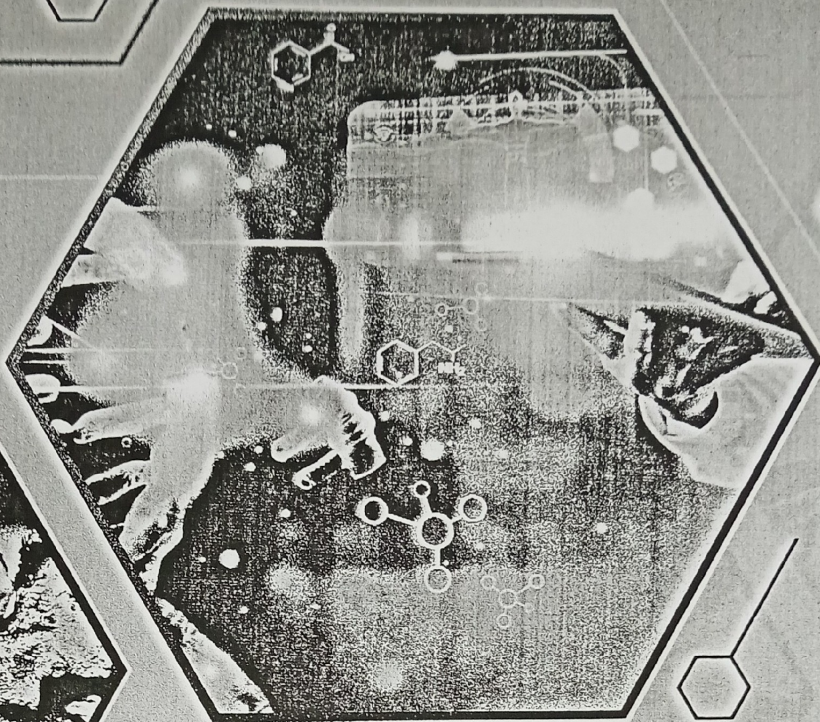
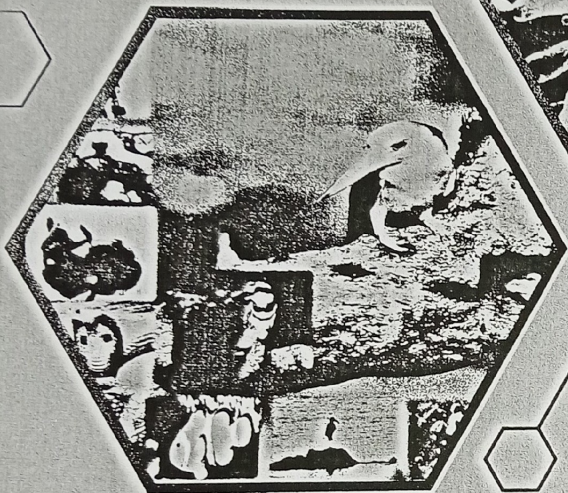
Try to get at least 2 ½ hours of exercise each week. Start with 10 minutes of activity and work up to longer times as your body adjusts. Even if you don't lose weight, exercise can help control your blood sugar and cholesterol levels and lower your risk for heart disease and diabetes.

#### Bottom line

There is no specific diet that can prevent or treat PCOS. However, eating well and being active can help manage some of the long-term complications of PCOS. An eating plan that is high in fiber and low in saturated and trans fat can help lower the risk of heart disease and diabetes.

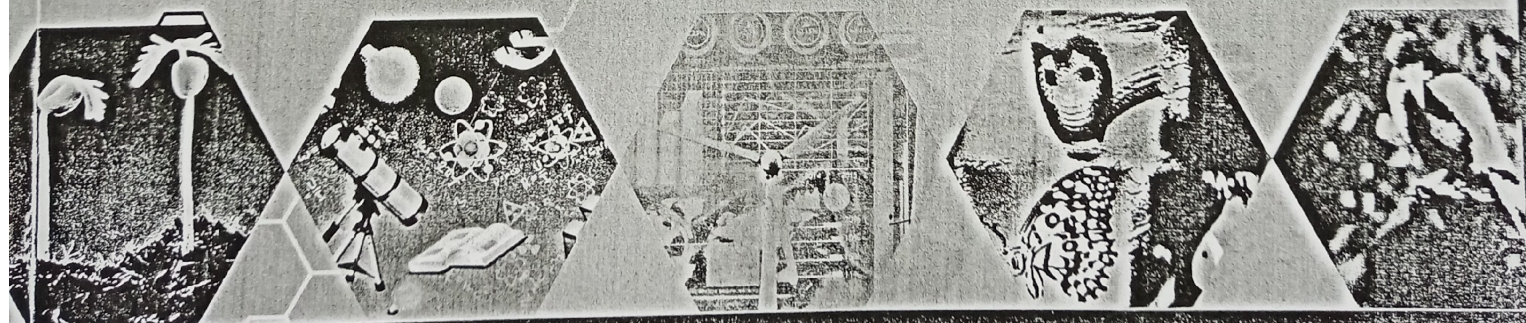
#### Conclusion

Overall, diet and regular physical activity help to improving fertility and reproductive health in women with PCOS.



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## The Indian Concepts of Lifestyle and Mental Health in Old Age

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### ABSTRACT

Lifestyle is a healthier life can boost both the physical and mental state. Healthy eating and regular physical activities are the primary solutions for good health at any age. But with more refined tips and a little more care, older adults can improve their living, leading a healthier lifestyle. *Indian lifestyle is not about eating curry or doing yoga everyday nor is it about getting a regular Ayurvedic massage. In fact, this lifestyle is talked about as a sophisticated way of living a fulfilled life. It is quite a time-tested lifestyle and has been around for at least 10,000 years.* Yoga, in such cases, is a great way to activate your mind and body, consciously steering clear of any negative thoughts or feelings and relaxing the body. The rich heritage of India, one of the world's oldest civilizations, is an all-embracing confluence of religions, traditions and customs. The highlights of Indian heritage lie in the treasure of its art, architecture, classical dance, music, flora and fauna, and the innate secular philosophy of its people. The Indian model of the society has excellent concepts regarding the all-round development of an individual with proper stress on the importance of caring for the ageing members of the family.

**Keywords:** Mental Health, Lifestyle, Healthier Life, Indian Heritage

### INTRODUCTION

India, one of the oldest civilizations around the world, is the country with a long history of almost 5000 years and extremely complex social structure. Leading a healthier life can boost both the physical and mental state. Healthy eating and regular physical activities are the primary solutions for good health at any age. But with more refined tips and a little more care, older adults can improve their living, leading a healthier lifestyle.

### INDIAN CONCEPTS OF LIFESTYLE

Everybody wants to live a life that makes them happy. Most people would agree that having a little more happiness in their life would be amazing. Being fulfilled is an awesome feeling, but unfortunately, it is a feeling that many have trouble finding. Fulfillment is an easy concept on the surface, yet it is so elusive.

Indian lifestyle is not about eating curry or doing yoga everyday nor is it about getting a regular Ayurvedic massage. In fact, this lifestyle is talked about as a sophisticated way of living a fulfilled life. It is quite a time-tested lifestyle and has been around for at least 10,000 years. Though it is ancient, it is said to be relevant for any era, applies to anybody, living anywhere - be it the USA, India, the UK, Australia or New Zealand. It is essentially a model for desire management. Want to know more about this great Indian lifestyle?

In fact, if happiness is what we seek in life, India suggests a time-tested lifestyle that has helped many in achieving lasting happiness. This model continues from ancient times, when India left no stone unturned in the quest to achieving joy, completeness and balance in life. It also serves as a self-help-life-coach that helps with the objectives of human life.

### THE INDIAN LIFESTYLE AND ITS BASIS

Indian culture is the heritage of social norms, ethical values, traditional customs, belief systems, political systems, artifacts and technologies that originated in or are associated with the ethno-linguistically diverse Indian subcontinent. The term also applies beyond India to countries and cultures whose histories are strongly connected to India by immigration, colonization or influence, particularly in South Asia.

Reducing stress and depression  
Improving bone health  
Relaxing the body and delivering peace of mind  
Regulating the blood flow  
Improving flexibility and strength

We point out myriad health benefits of practicing Yoga on a regular basis: **Physical health benefits:** Yoga encompasses various poses/asanas which involve a gradual stretch of muscles that helps to improve flexibility of the various muscle groups of our body. Most Yoga postures are meant to strengthen one's body from the inside out. Apart from enhancing your muscle flexibility, strength and toning your body, Yoga can also help you in weight loss, protection from injuries, improving your body posture, vitality and metabolism. Various studies conducted across the world have shown that regular Yoga practice drastically optimizes body functions like respiration, heart rate, etc., lowers blood pressure, keeps cardiovascular health problems at bay and helps in reducing chronic back pain or joint pain, among other key physical benefits.

**Mental health benefits:** Practicing Yoga can positively affect your mood, behavior and overall mental health in various ways. For students or working professionals, daily Yoga practice brings increased concentration, relaxation and peace of mind, helps to relieve symptoms of anxiety, stress, and so on. One can get amazing levels of mental clarity and calmness only by doing a combination of meditation and Yoga consistently. In the long run, Yoga can even aid anyone to fight depression, maintain a positive self-image and positive outlook towards life in general, and help in developing high willpower and tolerance (towards self and others).

**Psychological health benefits:** Yoga is a psychology in itself. Regular Yoga practice makes us feel better and enhances our sense of gratitude and well-being. Besides, Yoga is becoming increasingly accepted as an adjacent therapy to improve quality of life for individuals, as it offers an excellent opportunity to enter into the 'flow state'. Doing regular yoga helps people in achieving mindfulness, develops greater self awareness and tranquility, and catapults our ability to focus and remain happy throughout the day. Needless to say, Yoga is the gateway to better spiritual and emotional health as well!

## CONCLUSION

The rich heritage of India, one of the world's oldest civilizations, is an all-embracing confluence of religions, traditions and customs. The highlights of Indian heritage lie in the treasure of its art, architecture, classical dance, music, flora and fauna, and the innate secular philosophy of its people. A visit to the heritage sites is like a walk through history, changing lanes with every dynasty that ruled Indian soils. The finesse of Indian handiwork, the richness of silk and cotton textiles, the ethnicity of jewellery, everything has come down as a heritage from ancient times and is being kept alive generation after generation. Even food in India is a legacy and part of Indian heritage, differing in look and taste in every state of India.

The Indian model of the society has excellent concepts regarding the all round development of an individual with proper stress on the importance of caring for the ageing members of the family. Wisdom through the ages and ancient concepts has survived because of their sheer practicality and because they are capable of transforming society into something it should ideally be. The old age deserves the recognition and attention they have been deprived of. And going back to our Indian roots is the only way, which goes down deep enough to tackle every single issue regarding elderly.

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