

POLYCYSTIC OVARIAN SYNDROME

(Stein-Leventhal Syndrome)



BASIC INFORMATION

DESCRIPTION

Ovary enlargement from many small cysts. The hormonal regulation of the ovary malfunctions resulting in a reduction or absence of ovulation (the monthly release of the egg from the ovary). Women with this problem are often infertile.

FREQUENT SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- Irregular menstrual bleeding resulting in periods of light flow along with heavy flow.
- Increased time between periods, often up to several months.
- Increased hair growth on the face, arms, legs and from pubic area to navel.
- Higher energy level.
- Obesity.
- Acne.

CAUSES

An imbalance between the pituitary gonadotropin luteinizing hormone (LH) and follicle-stimulating hormone (FSH), resulting in a lack of ovulation and an increased testosterone production.

RISK INCREASES WITH

- Endometrial hyperplasia or carcinoma.
- Obesity.
- High blood pressure.
- Diabetes mellitus.
- Breast cancer.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

Cannot be prevented at present. Women should receive appropriate cancer screening tests to reduce the risk factors of uterine cancer and breast cancer.

EXPECTED OUTCOME

Hormone therapy can be used to decrease masculine characteristics and other hormonal therapy can be used to restore fertility. Some signs and symptoms may never disappear completely.

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

- Permanent hormone imbalance.
- Infertility.
- Increased likelihood of uterine cancer and breast cancer.



TREATMENT

GENERAL MEASURES

- Diagnostic tests may include laboratory studies of blood hormone levels and pelvic ultrasound or endometrial biopsy to rule out hyperplasia or cancer.
- No ideal medical treatment exists; drugs prescribed for the disorder will be determined by severity of symptoms and whether there is a desire for pregnancy.
- You may need professional help if you want to remove excess hair from your face, arms and legs. Drugs may be prescribed, or other methods can include bleaching, electrolysis, plucking, waxing, and depilation.

MEDICATION

- Progestin or oral contraceptives for patients not desiring pregnancy.
- Clomiphene citrate, or other drugs for those patients who desire pregnancy.
- A few drugs have been tried for the excess hair (hirsutism), but the success rate is not high, and side effects are numerous.

ACTIVITY

No restrictions on activity, including sexual intercourse.

DIET

No special diet. Weight loss recommended if you are overweight.



NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IF

- You or a family member has symptoms of polycystic ovarian syndrome.
- Your periods become profuse or more frequent than usual.
- You develop a lump or swelling in the breast.
- Symptoms recur after treatment or surgery.
- You want a referral to remove excess body hair.
- New, unexplained symptoms develop. Drugs used in treatment may produce side effects.