



Options for Managing Periods with PCOS

Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) is a common condition caused by a combination of genetic and environmental factors. The ovaries of someone with PCOS are very sensitive to levels of insulin, and this sensitivity can cause the ovaries to work differently than people without PCOS. When someone has PCOS, the ovaries do not release an egg (ovulate) each month. Without regular ovulation, there may be no periods, skipped periods, irregular periods, or very heavy and long bleeding. For people who have irregular periods, treatment is recommended to prevent excessive bleeding and to keep the lining of the uterus healthy.

There are many options for managing periods with PCOS.

All of the treatments contain progestin, which keeps the lining of the uterus thin and protects it from future problems. The one you choose will depend on what is important to you.

Some things to consider in making this decision are:

- + Do you have bothersome acne, and do you want an option that helps with this?
- + Do you have concerns about extra hair on your face and body, or thinning of your hair on your head, and do you want an option that helps with this?
- + How do you feel about taking a medication each day, or would you rather use something that is longer acting?
- + When someone is using hormonal therapy, the lining of the uterus stays thin and healthy. Unlike when not on hormonal therapy, it is very safe to have fewer periods or none at all. Do you want an option that can help you safely have fewer or no menstrual periods?
- + What else is important to you about your option to keep the uterus healthy?

COMPARING REGULAR AND IRREGULAR MENSTRUAL PERIODS

	REGULAR MENSTRUAL PERIODS	IRREGULAR MENSTRUAL PERIODS
HOW OFTEN?	Every 21-45 days	More often than every 21 days or Less often than every 45-90 days
HOW LONG?	4-7 days of bleeding	8 or more days of bleeding or 1-2 days of only spotting
WHAT CAUSES BLEEDING?	With both regular and irregular periods, estrogen is made by the ovaries. Estrogen causes the lining of the uterus to grow thicker.	
	Each month, the ovary releases an egg (ovulation) that makes the hormone progesterone. If no pregnancy occurs in that cycle, the hormone levels drop and the entire lining of the uterus sheds. This means there will be a regular and predictable period.	If there is no monthly ovulation, then there is no hormone progesterone, and the lining of the uterus can become too thick. Irregular bleeding happens because only some of the lining of the uterus starts to shed, while other parts continue to grow thicker. Skipped periods happen because there is no ovulation during that month.













Pediatric and Adolescent Gynecology
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO ANSCHUTZ MEDICAL CAMPUS

Find out more at: cupag.org/pcos

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	Treatment Choice	How do I use it?	What happens to period bleeding?	Helps with cramps?	Works as birth control?
HELPS WITH ACNE AND HELPS WITH EXTRA HAIR ON FACE/BODY, LOSS OF HAIR ON HEAD	The Pill 	Take 1 pill each day.	When used in the traditional way, will have a regular period every month.		Yes Make sure to take every day, no missed pills.
	The Patch 	Change patch each week.	Usually lighter and less painful. Can use in extended or continuous dosing to have fewer or no scheduled periods.	Yes	Yes Does not work as well if you weigh more than 198 pounds.
	The Ring 	Insert ring into vagina every month.			Yes Avoid oil-based lube and anti-yeast creams.
TAKE EVERY 3 MONTHS	Progestin Withdrawal 	Take 1 pill each day for 10 days in a row.	Uterine lining will shed 1-2 weeks after the last pill.	No	No
LONG ACTING	Implant  3 YEARS ↗	Clinic visit to have inserted under skin in upper arm.	May have no bleeding or irregular bleeding.		Yes The implant and IUDs are the most reliable forms of birth control.
	Progestin IUD  7 YEARS ↗	Clinic visit to have inserted into uterus.	No periods or lighter periods. No or less cramps.		
OTHER ORAL PILL OPTIONS	Norethindrone Acetate (NETA) 		Use in extended or continuous dosing to have fewer or no scheduled periods.		No
	Drospirenone POP 	Take 1 pill every day.	Period each month. Can use in extended or continuous dosing.	Yes	Yes Make sure to take every day, no missed pills.
	Progestin-Only Pill 		May have no bleeding or irregular bleeding.		Yes Take same time each day, no missed pills.
INJECTION	Depo-Provera 	Injection in office or at home every 3 months.	May have irregular bleeding at first but then likely no bleeding.		Yes Get injection every 11-13 weeks.



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