



### **What can be done to change the effect of PCOS on Fertility?**

Polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS) is a complex disorder in which patients experience few, and in extreme cases, no menstrual periods. This is due to the fact that the menstrual cycle is “out of order” and the patient is not ovulating. Often this is accompanied by hormone irregularities, including increased androgen (testosterone) levels and insulin resistance (prediabetes). Some patients may also have unusual hair growth on the upper lip, chin or arms, as well as abdominal obesity. On a pelvic ultrasound, ovaries often show multiple small follicles surrounding the ovary in a “string of pearls” arrangement.

Achieving pregnancy can be very frustrating for PCOS patients. If ovulation is not occurring, there is no viable egg to be fertilized. If ovulation is few and far between, it is difficult to track “fertile times” and predict the best time to attempt pregnancy. The challenge then is changing or overriding the patient’s biology in order to enable the ovaries to ovulate. First line therapy (if the patient is overweight or obese) should include diet and exercise. In many cases, just losing 20 or more pounds can help regulate menstrual cycles. Patients with insulin resistance may benefit from medication such as Metformin to help overcome this condition and as well as help lose weight.

The conventional fertility treatment includes the medication, Clomiphene Citrate (Clomid). This is an oral pill that is taken for five days of the menstrual cycle to induce ovulation. As with most medications, there are certain risks. Therefore, this is only done under close monitoring by your physician.

The alternative treatment options include biphasic tinctures, acupuncture, herbal supplements and massage. These alternative treatments help treat the cause of the imbalance in the body, thus combating PCOS and any fertility challenge. Biphasic tinctures help regulate the menstrual cycle; herbal supplements, acupuncture and massage therapy help treat the stress on the body and bring balance to the many bodily systems. Acupuncture in conjunction with other more conventional fertility treatments can increase the success rate of the treatments.

Here at True Harmony we are fortunate to be able to offer alternative therapies for PCOS and fertility, as well as conventional. We have had great success in treating patients with acupuncture and naturopathic alternatives such as biphasic tinctures and other herbal supplements. We are also able to offer supportive therapies to help reduce stress, including massage, reflexology and reiki therapy.

When you are ready to start a family, consult with your provider about your PCOS symptoms and decide together which type of treatment or therapy is right for you. With the right guidance, you can overcome PCOS and become pregnant! We have many happy patients who will testify to that!

This article was written by **Dr. Christine Brass-Jones, D.O.** and Stasia Minkowsky, as a patient education resource for The Center for True Harmony Wellness & Medicine.

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