



Weight Inclusive Care for PCOS

PCOS is linked to insulin resistance and most likely results from a combination of genetics and peri-natal environmental factors. There is no evidence that weight loss improves long term health outcomes in people living with PCOS, but there is evidence that it causes harm.

Research suggests that insulin resistance **causes** weight gain, not the other way round as most health professionals have been led to believe. It is therefore **significantly harder** for people with underlying insulin resistance to lose weight, forcing them to consider more drastic and dangerous measures in order to achieve their weight loss goals.



A weight-centered approach to PCOS care is based on outdated beliefs that are not supported by good quality evidence. Treatment should focus on symptom control, managing insulin resistance, and addressing the increased risk of endometrial cancer. According to NICE, the latter can be managed with either the Combined Hormonal Contraceptive, Cyclical Progesterone or an IUS.

Weight stigma is the manifestation of weight bias through harmful social stereotypes that we associate with people with larger bodies. People living with PCOS often feel stigmatized by their health professionals and this is an independent risk factor for poor health outcomes. It may also explain low adherence, reluctance to engage with services and/or medical avoidance.



Weight management programs have little to no long term benefits since up to 95% of dieters regain the weight. Yet they remain the first line management for PCOS. They predispose people to eating disorders and long term weight cycling (which is another independent risk factor for poor health outcomes), and perpetuate weight stigma.



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