

4. Diagnosis of PCOS

Diagnosis of PCOS requires the presence of two of the following signs/symptoms:

- a) Irregular menstrual cycle or stopping of menstruation (amenorrhea)
- b) Hirsutism- Male pattern hair on the face, chest, and back
- c) Multiple cysts in the ovaries on ultrasound examination

When PCOS is suspected, the doctor checks history, performs the physical evaluation, and orders specific laboratory tests. The workup for PCOS includes:

- Studying for the history of irregular or stopping of the menstrual cycle (monthly periods)
- Checking for the history of Infertility if applicable
- Measurement of weight and waistline at the level of naval- Almost 50-60% of PCOS patients are overweight or obese. Abdominal Obesity is more frequent with a wider waist. The waist measured at the level of naval usually is half the height in inches minus 2 inches. For example:

In a five-foot, 2 inches tall female, the waist ideally should be 29 inches (half of 62 inches is 31 inches, and minus two will be 29 inches). However, even 31 inches is acceptable as being the upper limit of normal. Waist measurement over 35 inches would certainly be abnormal.

- Checking for Hirsutism and other signs of the excess male hormones such as male pattern hair on the face, chest, and back, male pattern baldness of the hairline, and heaviness of the voice.
- Checking for external signs of Insulin resistance- pigmentation of the skin of the neck and back (acanthosis nigricans), and presence of skin tags
- Checking for high Blood pressure
- Checking for high fasting blood sugar
- Evaluation of thyroid function test
- Evaluation for abnormality in blood Cholesterol (Lipid) profile
- Vitamin D levels –PCOS is associated with lower levels of vitamin D.

- Hormone levels -Prolactin, FSH, and LH, and male hormones- testosterone blood levels are measured when there is a rapid onset of Obesity with menstrual irregularity and Hirsutism.
- Ultrasonography for checking ovarian cysts- Vaginal ultrasonography is better for diagnosis but not indicated for young girls who are not sexually active