



# PCOS Plan of Attack!

**A One Page Cheat Sheet to Help You Get On Track to Managing the Symptoms of PCOS**

For those who want the abridged version and are tired of drowning in the myriad of information out there I have put together a condensed 'cheat sheet' of quick tips to positively affect PCOS. It's a good place to start to quickly and effectively get your health back on track, however, please do take the time to read up on the reasons behind each item.

## **GET AS MUCH AEROBIC EXERCISE AS YOU CAN**

- Before each meal, do at least 3 minutes of high intensity exercise - quickly running up stairs, sprinting, star-jumps/jumping jacks etc. Make sure you walk briskly for a minute before and after to warm-up/warm-down and keep within your level of ability and fitness to ensure you don't do yourself any damage.
- At least once a day spend at least 20 minutes taking a walk for you health. Not to get errands done, but for exercise, pleasure and recharging your battery.

## **EAT A HEALTHY DIET BY INCREASING FOODS WHICH HELP AND AVOIDING SUBSTANCES WHICH HARM**

- Eat small quantities as often as possible - eating frequently helps to recalibrate your metabolism to a faster level, in the opposite way as dieting can slow your metabolism down. Eating frequently will also help you avoid becoming hungry, which can result in over-eating. Small frequent meals will help to ensure you blood sugar and insulin levels remain even rather than spiking in response to a large amount of carbohydrates ingested at the same time.
- Eliminate or decrease significantly all refined carbohydrates from your diet. This includes white flour, white bread, white rice, sugar of all forms, cakes, biscuits, pasta.
- Limit your total carbohydrate intake to absolutely no more than 150 g a day. Many women with PCOS find that they need to limit carbohydrates to as little as 20 g a day to achieve the results that they want. Make sure that the carbohydrates you eat are from low glycaemic index foods.
- Increase your fibre intake - it helps to slow the absorption of sugar into your blood stream. Increasing the amount of fresh fruit and vegetables you eat is the best way to increase your fibre intake. Taking half a teaspoon of psyllium fibre or wheat germ with each meal is another way you can easily increase your fibre intake.
- Limit your intake of fruit to no more than 2 servings a day.
- Reduce your intake of all processed foods and increase the amount of pure, unprocessed food. As a general rule, the closer a food looks to the way it did when it was grown and picked the better it will be for you. Fresh vegetables and fruits have higher levels of vitamins in them as well as enzymes which can be destroyed by heating or freezing.

Eliminate or significantly reduce the amount of caffeine you consume. It has a negative effect on blood sugar and insulin levels.

- Eliminate or significantly reduce the amount of alcohol you consume. Alcohol is a highly refined form of sugar and also keeps the liver busy detoxifying the alcohol metabolites when it could be getting rid of excess hormones which cause some of the most distressing symptoms of PCOS. Excessive consumption of alcohol can also damage the lining of the intestines and reduce the ability to absorb nutrients from food.
- Eat foods and herbs which support liver function such as: dandelion (*taraxicum officinale*), st mary's thistle (*Silybum marianum*), burdock (*arctium lappa*), cabbage-family vegetables, broccoli, cauliflower, Brussel's sprouts, beetroot, carrots, onions, artichokes and lemons.
- Eliminate or significantly reduce the amount of unhealthy fats and increase healthy fats in your diet. Unhealthy fats include trans-fats (contained in almost all processed foods), too much saturated fat especially from non-organically raised meat, polyunsaturated oils such as canola, corn, sunflower, vegetable, soybean oils, hydrogenated and partially hydrogenated oils. Healthy oils include cold pressed coconut, olive, avocado or rice bran oil, egg yolks, fatty fish, butter and the fat from organic, pasture-raised, grass fed meat and poultry in moderate amounts only. All oil is 100% fat so needs to be limited to a reasonable percentage of a healthy diet.
- Be aware of potential chemicals which can interfere with hormone regulation. Pesticides and plastics are two very common sources of hormone-affecting chemicals in the modern age. Store your food in glass containers and avoid pesticide exposure as much as possible.

### **SUPPLEMENT WITH HERBS & NUTRIENTS WHICH CAN SUPPORT CARBOHYDRATE METABOLISM & BALANCE HORMONES**

- The most important nutrient to supplement with for women with PCOS is D Chiro Inositol. Studies have consistently shown a deficit of this nutrient in women with PCOS and significant improvement in symptoms and fertility in those who supplement with it for as little as 6 weeks. Ideally all women with PCOS should take DCI on a long term basis to reduce the risk of chronic cardiovascular disease.
- Vitamin D deficiency is also most common in women with PCOS. The best way to ensure you have adequate Vitamin D levels is through regular sensible sun exposure without sunscreen. By sensible, I mean 10 minutes or less at a time. If your skin is getting pink from sun exposure then is too much and can cause damage. Please have your Vitamin D levels checked by your doctor as soon as possible.
- Other vitamins which either help improve insulin sensitivity or have been implicated in PCOS include Magnesium, Zinc, B Complex Vitamins, Vitamins C & E, Vanadium, Chromium, Co-Enzyme Q10 and Alpha Lipoic Acid.
- Herbs which have been shown to increase insulin sensitivity include Gymnema (*gymnema sylvestre*), Bitter Melon (*momordica charantia*), Cinnamon (*cinnamomum zeylanicum*), Green Tea (decaffeinated only - *camellia sinensis*).
- Herbs which can help to regulate hormonal imbalance include Vitex (*vitex agnus castus*), Dong Quai (*angelica sinensis*), Paeony (*paeonia lactiflora*) and Liquorice (*glycyrrhiza glabra*), Saw Palmetto (*serenoa repens*) and Blue Cohosh (*caulophyllum thalictroides*).

[www.sparkpeople.com](http://www.sparkpeople.com) can help you to track your carbohydrates, however be wary of much of their advice - whilst it is suitable for the general population, it is not tailored towards those with insulin resistance or polycystic ovarian syndrome and some of the advice may do us more harm than good.

[www.glycemicindex.com](http://www.glycemicindex.com) is an excellent resource for learning about the glycaemic index and glycaemic load of foods and educating yourself to make the best choices when it comes to carbohydrate containing foods.