



PCOS and Pregnancy: What You Need to Know Katie McKenney, MD

Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) is common and many people with PCOS have healthy pregnancies. Still, PCOS can increase certain risks, so it's helpful to know what to expect and how to take care of yourself before, during, and after pregnancy.

Before Pregnancy

- **Plan Ahead:** PCOS can make it harder to get pregnant, but many people conceive with or without help.
- **Health Check:** Screening for diabetes, blood pressure, cholesterol, sleep issues (including obstructive sleep apnea), and mental health before pregnancy is recommended.
- **Lifestyle Matters:** Nutritious eating, regular physical activity, and managing stress can improve fertility and pregnancy health. Even small changes can make a difference.
- **Medications:** Metformin may be used before pregnancy to improve metabolic health, but it is not recommended to prevent pregnancy complications once pregnant and is usually stopped by the end of the first trimester. GLP-1 receptor agonists (semaglutide, tirzepatide, etc.) should be stopped well in advance of conception.

During Pregnancy	What This Means for You:
Women with PCOS have a higher chance of certain complications, even if they are young and healthy. These include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gestational diabetes (GDM)• High blood pressure or preeclampsia• Preterm birth (baby born early)• Small or large baby size for gestational age• Cesarean delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• You may need earlier and more frequent blood sugar and blood pressure checks.• Your doctor may recommend extra ultrasounds to monitor your baby's growth.• Mental health and sleep: Anxiety, depression, and sleep apnea are more common with PCOS—let your care team know if you have symptoms.

After Delivery

- **Postpartum Care:** PCOS raises your lifetime risk for type 2 diabetes and heart disease. Make sure to attend your postpartum visits and transition from OB care back to routine primary care.
- **Metformin:** Can be restarted right after delivery if recommended; it is safe while breastfeeding.
- **Weight & Health:** Retaining pregnancy weight after birth increases long-term risks. Continuing healthy habits postpartum is key.
- **Breastfeeding:** Some people with PCOS face challenges, but support and guidance can help. Breastfeeding may also reduce your risk of diabetes later.
- **Mental Health:** Postpartum depression is common. Stay alert to mood changes and seek help if needed.

For Your Baby

Most babies do well, but babies of parents with PCOS may be more likely to need extra care at birth or have a higher risk of weight and metabolic problems later in life. A healthy pregnancy, breastfeeding if possible, and long-term healthy habits may lower these risks.

Key Takeaway: Having PCOS means it's important to pay closer attention to your health before, during, and after pregnancy. With good prenatal care and healthy habits, most people with PCOS have safe pregnancies and healthy babies.