



Options for Managing Periods with PCOS

Polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) is a common condition caused by a combination of genetic and environmental factors. The ovaries of someone with PCOS are very sensitive to insulin levels, and this can cause the ovaries to work differently than they do in people without PCOS. When someone has PCOS, the ovaries do not release an egg (ovulate) each month. Without regular ovulation, there may be no periods, skipped periods, irregular periods, or very heavy and long bleeding. For people who have irregular periods, treatment can help stop excessive bleeding and keep the lining of the uterus healthy.

There are many options for managing periods with PCOS. These treatments have progestin, which keeps the lining of the uterus thin and protects it from future problems. The one you choose will depend on what is important to you.

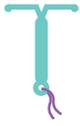
To help you decide, consider these questions:

- Do you have acne that bothers you, and do you want an option that helps with this?
- Do you have concerns about extra hair on your face and body? Is the hair on your head thinning? Do you want an option that helps with these symptoms?
- How do you feel about taking medicine every day? Would you rather use something that is longer acting?
- Do you want an option that can help you safely have fewer or no periods?
- What else is important to you?

Comparing regular and irregular menstrual periods

	Regular menstrual periods	Irregular menstrual periods
How often?	Every 21-45 days	More often than every 21 days or less often than every 45-90 days
How long?	4-7 days of bleeding	8 or more days of bleeding or 1-2 days of only spotting
What causes bleeding?	With both regular and irregular periods, estrogen is made by the ovaries. Estrogen causes the lining of the uterus to grow thicker.	
	Each month, the ovary releases an egg (ovulation) that makes the hormone progesterone. If you don't get pregnant in that cycle, the hormone levels drop, the lining of the uterus sheds and you will have a regular period.	If the ovary doesn't release an egg during the month, then the body doesn't make any progesterone, and the lining of the uterus can become too thick. Irregular bleeding happens when only some of the lining of the uterus sheds, while other parts grow thicker. Skipped periods happen because there is no ovulation during that month.

Treatment options for managing periods

	Treatment choice	How do I use it?	What happens to period bleeding?	Does it help with cramps?	Does it work as birth control?
Helps with acne, extra hair on face/body, loss of head hair	Pill 	Take 1 pill every day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When used in the traditional way, will have a regular period every month Usually lighter and less painful Can use in extended or continuous dosing to have fewer or no scheduled periods 	Yes	Yes Take every day and do not miss any pills
	Skin patch 	Change patch every week			Yes Does not work as well if you weigh more than 198 pounds
	Vaginal ring 	Insert ring into vagina every month			Yes Avoid oil-based lube and anti-yeast creams
Take every 3 months	Progestin withdrawal 	Take 1 pill each day for 10 days in a row	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uterine lining will shed 1-2 weeks after the last pill 	No	No
Long-acting options	Implant 	Clinic visit to have inserted under skin in upper arm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May have no bleeding or irregular bleeding 		Yes Most reliable forms of birth control
	Progestin IUD 	Clinic visit to have inserted into uterus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No periods or lighter periods No cramps or less cramps 		
Other oral pill options	Norethindrone acetate (NETA) 	Take 1 pill every day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use in extended or continuous dosing to have fewer or no scheduled periods 	Yes	No
	Drospirenone progestin-only pill 	Take 1 pill every day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Period each month Can use in extended or continuous dosing 		Yes Take every day and do not miss any pills
	Progestin-only pill 	Take 1 pill every day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May have no bleeding or irregular bleeding 		Yes Take at the same time every day and do not miss any pills
Injection	Depo-Provera 	Injection in office or at home every 3 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May have irregular bleeding at first, but then likely no bleeding 		Yes Get injection every 11-13 weeks

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