



Polyendocrine metabolic ovarian syndrome (PMOS)

Formerly known as polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS)

Acknowledgements

Jean Hailes acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and recognises their continued connection to land, waters and culture. We pay respect to Elders past and present.

This is an updated version of the resource developed in partnership between Jean Hailes for Women's Health and Alukura Women's Health Service on behalf of Central Australian Aboriginal Congress (Congress), on the land of the Central Arrernte people.

We acknowledge the support and involvement of NT Health – Primary and Public Health, Central Australia.

We would also like to acknowledge the women of Mparntwe (Alice Springs) and surrounding communities who participated in consultations to help shape these resources.

Jean Hailes for Women's Health gratefully acknowledges the support of the Australian Government.

Feedback

We welcome all feedback and suggestions on how to improve this toolkit.

Send your feedback to contact@jeanhailes.org.au



About us

About Jean Hailes

Jean Hailes for Women's Health is a national not-for-profit organisation committed to improving women's health across Australia through every life stage. We use the latest research to develop our website and resources on a range of topics, including polyendocrine metabolic ovarian syndrome (PMOS), periods, sex and sexual health, menopause, endometriosis, and vulva, vagina, ovaries and uterus.

We write health information for people with diverse backgrounds, experiences and identities. We use the term 'women', but we recognise that people who identify differently may use our content



About Alukura

Alukura Women's Health Service is an Aboriginal women-only place in Alice Springs caring for the health of Aboriginal women and infants. The name 'Alukura' is a Central Arrernte word meaning women's camp or women's place. The service is provided in a comfortable and culturally safe place for clients.

Alukura provides specialised women's health and midwifery case-managed maternity care. It is guided by traditional Aboriginal grandmother's law to preserve and recognise Aboriginal women's law, culture and languages, as they relate to pregnancy, childbirth and the care of Aboriginal women and babies. With a multi-disciplinary team approach, Alukura ensures Aboriginal women and babies have access to best practice comprehensive primary health care.

Alukura is part of Central Australian Aboriginal Congress, which is the largest Aboriginal community-controlled health organisation in the Northern Territory.



How to use this toolkit

This toolkit has been designed to help health professionals and other health workers deliver education about periods and the menstrual cycle and Polyendocrine metabolic ovarian syndrome (PMOS) to Aboriginal women.

It includes two presentations:

- Periods and the menstrual cycle
- Polyendocrine metabolic ovarian syndrome (PMOS).

These are available as hard-copy flipcharts or can be downloaded electronically from

www.jeanhailes.org.au

Using this toolkit

Before using the presentations, we recommend you read through them in full and ensure you understand them.

The presentations have been developed to use with Aboriginal women and girls in Central Australia and might not be appropriate for use with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in other parts of Australia. We recommend always consulting with knowledgeable people in the local community, such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers, Liaison Officers or Community Engagement Workers, before using this toolkit to ensure it is relevant and culturally appropriate.

Remember that much of the information in the presentations is considered Women's Business and is regarded as sensitive and private to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women. It should not be shared with or made available to men.

The presentations can be used in group sessions and one-on-one consultations. You may choose to deliver the full presentation, or just a few slides, depending on the type of session and the needs of the audience. The time required to deliver a presentation depends on the topic and the needs of the audience. Allow around 30 minutes to deliver *Periods and the menstrual cycle* and around 45 minutes to deliver *Polyendocrine metabolic ovarian syndrome (PMOS)*. When delivering the presentations in a group setting, a private space should be provided for the participants to attend. If you are using an iPad or tablet to deliver the presentation, we recommend printing the facilitator notes to refer to.

Further information

You can view and download additional resources for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and girls from our website www.jeanhailes.org.au

For example:

- booklets
- videos
- lived experience stories.

Useful websites

Australian Guide to Healthy Eating
www.eatforhealth.gov.au

Australian Indigenous Health *InfoNet*
www.healthinfonet.ecu.edu.au

Baker Heart & Diabetes Institute – Portion Plate Guide
www.baker.edu.au/health-hub/fact-sheets/the-portion-guide

Jean Hailes for Women's Health
www.jeanhailes.org.au

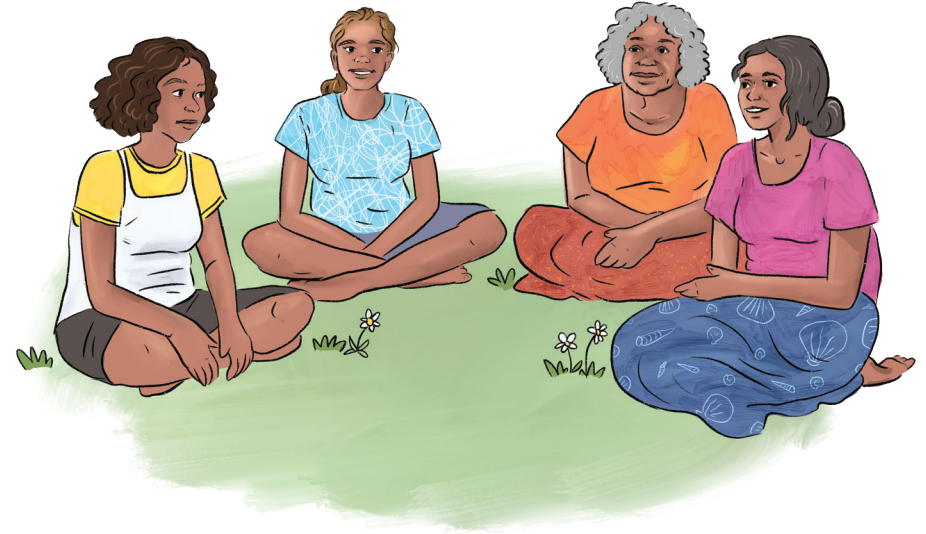
Central Australian Aboriginal Congress
www.caac.org.au

About the artwork



The cover artwork is **Arelhe Areye** by Amunda Gorey. “This image is to represent different types of ladies who develop PCOS [now known as PMOS] and they’re all different, for some it’s genetics and for some it’s lifestyle.”

Amunda Gorey is an Arrernte artist who grew up in the remote community of Santa Teresa, an hour south-east of Alice Springs.



Illustrations by Coolamon Creative.

Coolamon Creative is a 100% Aboriginal owned and operated creative services agency operating out of Darwin and Alice Springs.

What's polyendocrine metabolic ovarian syndrome (PMOS)?

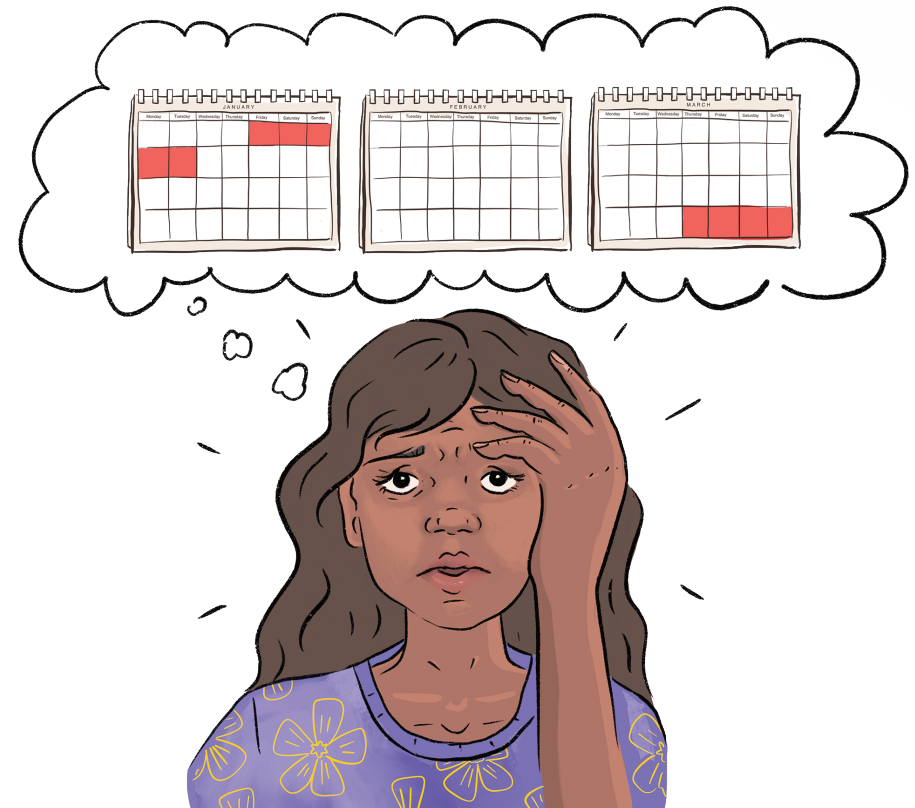
Polyendocrine metabolic ovarian syndrome (PMOS) used to be called polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS). The new name shows that the condition affects the whole body.

PMOS is a complex health condition with different symptoms, including irregular or absent periods.

What's polyendocrine metabolic ovarian syndrome (PMOS)?

PMOS is a complex health condition with different symptoms.

For example, irregular or absent periods.



How common is PMOS?

PMOS is common.

In Australia, PMOS affects 1 in 8 women and may be more common in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.

How common is PMOS?

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In Australia, PMOS affects 1 in 8 women and may be more common in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.



What causes PMOS?

PMOS is a complex condition with many likely causes involving women's:

- genes
- environment
- lifestyle.

Hormonal changes and ovarian changes influence each other, and it's not clear which comes first.

Risk factors for PMOS

Some risk factors for PMOS can't be changed, such as genetics.

Risk factors that can be changed include:

- smoking
- exposure to pollution
- an unhealthy diet
- not exercising enough
- obesity.

But having these risk factors doesn't mean you will develop PMOS.

What causes PMOS?

PMOS is a complex condition with many likely causes, such as:

- genes
- environment
- lifestyle.



PMOS symptoms

If you have PMOS, you might notice symptoms such as:

- irregular or absent periods
- thick hair on your face and body
- hair loss around your scalp
- pimples.

PMOS symptoms

If you have PMOS, you might notice things like:

- irregular periods
- thick hair on your face or body
- hair loss around your scalp
- pimples.



PMOS symptoms (continued)

With PMOS, you might also have:

- anxiety and depression
- difficulty losing weight
- fertility and pregnancy issues.

PMOS symptoms

With PMOS, you might also have:

- anxiety and depression
- difficulty losing weight
- fertility and pregnancy issues.



How do you know if you have PMOS?

If you have symptoms, talk to your health carer. They will:

- ask how often you get your periods. It is a good idea to keep track of your periods using a diary, calendar or smartphone app so that you have this information ready for your health carer
- ask about your symptoms, like pimples or extra hair on your face or back.

Your health carer might be a doctor, nurse or health worker.

How do you know if you have PMOS?

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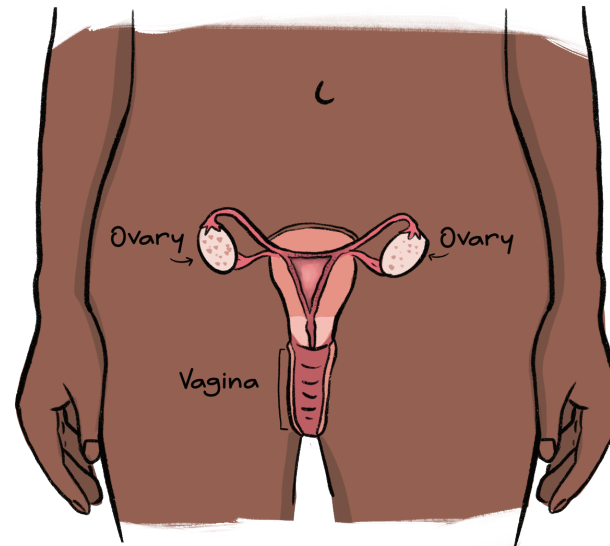
How do you know if you have PMOS? (continued)

A doctor might also organise an ultrasound to check the number of little sacs of fluid (follicles) in the ovaries. Having 20 or more follicles in each ovary is a sign of PMOS.

Ultrasounds are not usually recommended for women aged under 20.

How do you know if you have PMOS?

A doctor might also organise an ultrasound to check your ovaries.



PMOS can lead to other health issues

PMOS can affect different systems in the body.

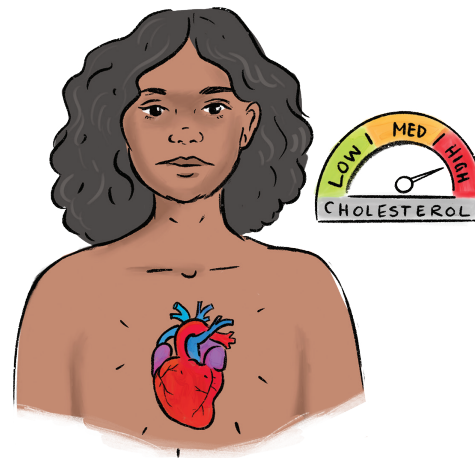
Women with PMOS have a higher risk of developing conditions relating to:

- the heart
- metabolism (how the body converts food and drink into energy)
- fertility
- mental health.

PMOS can lead to other health issues

PMOS can increase the risk of developing health conditions relating to:

- the heart
- metabolism
- fertility
- mental health.



Looking after yourself

Having a healthy lifestyle is the best way to manage PMOS.

A healthy lifestyle means:

- a healthy diet
- regular physical activity
- losing some weight if you need to
- taking medicine if you need to.

Possible questions for discussion:

- *What does a healthy diet mean to you?*
- *How do we find balance in the way we eat?*
- *What are some nutritious foods you know of?*
- *How can we build more physical activity into our lives?*

Looking after yourself

Having a healthy lifestyle is the best way to manage PMOS.

This might mean:

- eating healthy food
- doing physical activity
- losing weight if you need to
- taking medicine if you need to.



Managing PMOS – healthy diet

Eating a healthy diet is important if you have PMOS.

To eat a healthy diet, eat foods from the 5 food groups every day. The diagram shows foods from each of the 5 food groups.

Food group 1: Grains

4 to 6 serves every day

1 serve of grains is equal to 1 slice of bread or half a cup of cooked rice, pasta, noodles or quinoa.

Choose whole grains. For example, wholemeal bread instead of white bread.

Food group 2: Vegetables

5 serves every day

1 serve of vegetables is equal to half a cup of cooked vegetables or 1 cup of salad.

Frozen or tinned vegetables are also cheap and nutritious options.

Food group 3: Fruit

2 serves every day

1 serve of fruit is equal to 1 medium apple, banana, orange or pear, or 1 cup of tinned fruit with no added sugar.

Dried fruit, frozen fruit and tinned fruits are all good options.

Food group 4: Dairy and dairy alternatives

3 serves every day

1 serve of dairy is equal to 1 cup of milk, 2 slices of hard cheese, or 1 small tub of yoghurt.

Food group 5: Meat and other protein

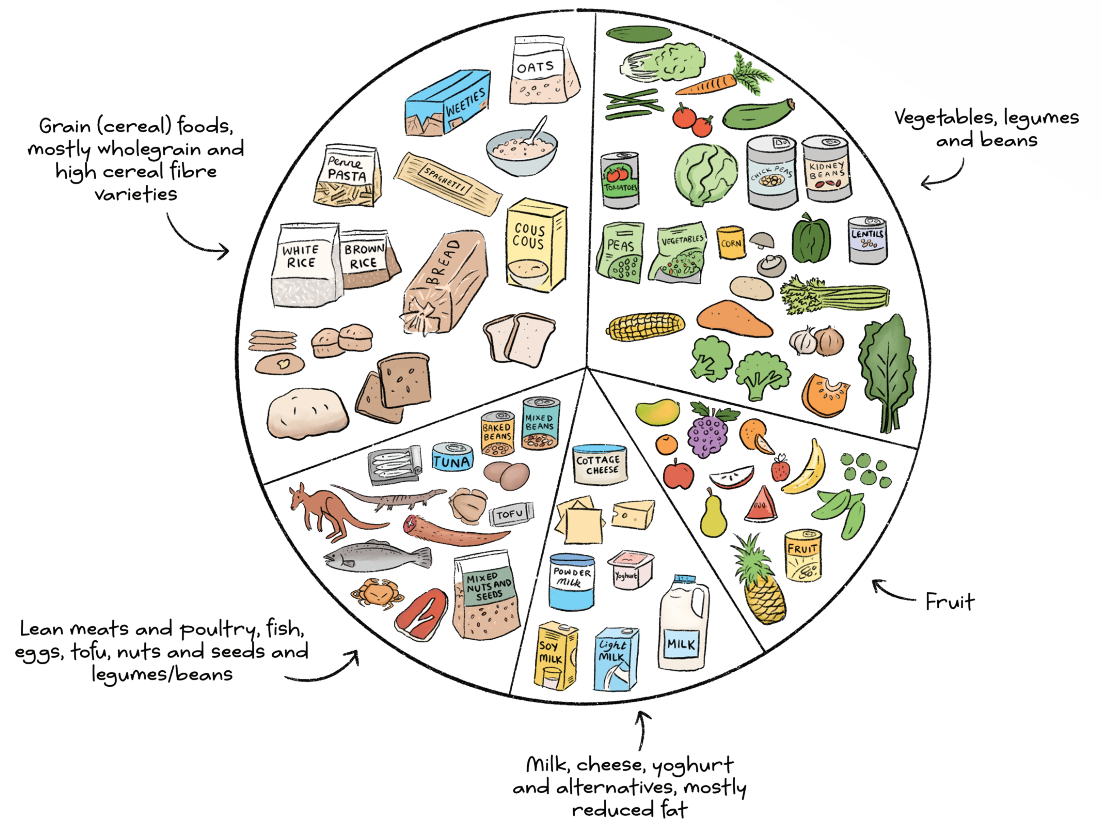
2 to 3 serves every day

1 serve of protein is equal to 65g of cooked lean red meat, such as beef, lamb or kangaroo (about the size of the palm of your hand), one small can of fish, or 2 large eggs.

For more information about serving sizes go to www.eatforhealth.gov.au/food-essentials/five-food-groups

Healthy diet

Eat foods from the
5 food groups every day.



Based on material provided by the National Health and Medical Research Council

Managing PMOS – healthy diet (continued)

Eat regular meals and snacks when you feel hungry.

Eat less and stop eating when you feel full.

Healthy foods are better at making you feel full as they have protein and fibre.

Drink mostly water, or other low-sugar or sugar-free drinks like:

- diet soft drink
- kombucha
- flavoured sparkling water
- diet cordial.

Avoid sugary drinks like soft drink and flavoured milk.

Healthy diet

- Eat regular meals and snacks when you feel hungry.
- Eat less and stop eating when you feel full.
- Drink more water and less sugary drinks.



Managing PMOS – healthy diet (continued)

Include healthy fats in your diet.

Healthy fats are important for lots of things like maintaining good cholesterol and heart health.

Healthy fats include:

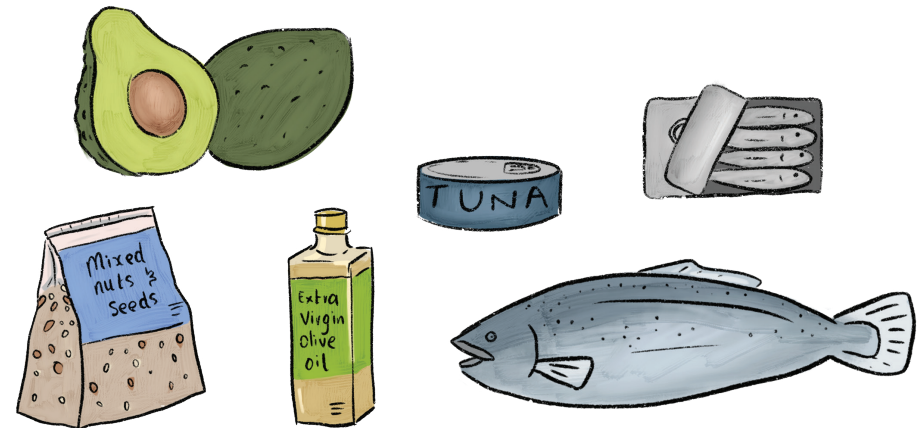
- fatty fish like salmon, tuna and sardines
- nuts and seeds
- avocado
- extra virgin olive oil.

Healthy diet

Include healthy fats in your diet.

For example:

- fatty fish like salmon, tuna and sardines
- nuts and seeds
- avocado
- extra virgin olive oil.



Managing PMOS – healthy diet (continued)

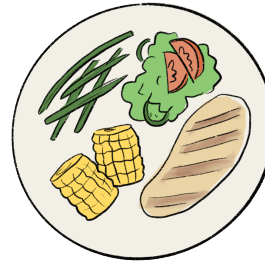
A healthy meal should be half vegetables, with some protein and some grains or other starchy foods (carbohydrates) like pasta or sweet potato. To make a healthy meal:

- fill half your plate with vegetables
- add some protein – for example, meat, eggs, fish, tofu or legumes like chickpeas or lentils
- add some grains or other starchy foods – for example, rice, noodles, quinoa, pasta, potato, sweet potato or bread
- eat fruit or dairy as a snack or for dessert.

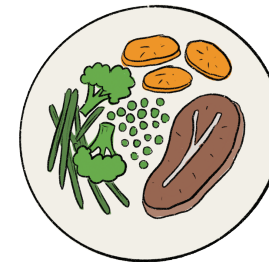
Healthy diet

A healthy meal should be half vegetables, with some protein and some grains.

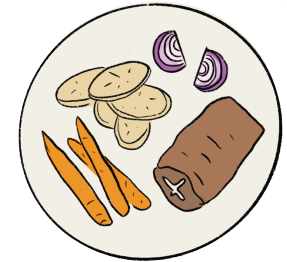
Grilled chicken, beans and salad



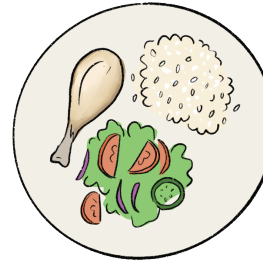
Meat and vegetables



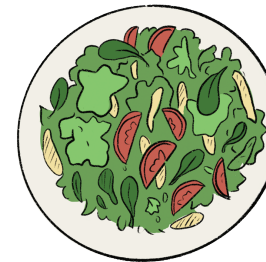
Kangaroo tail and roast vegetables



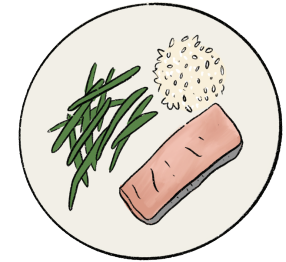
Drumstick with rice and salad



Chicken salad



Salmon, rice and beans



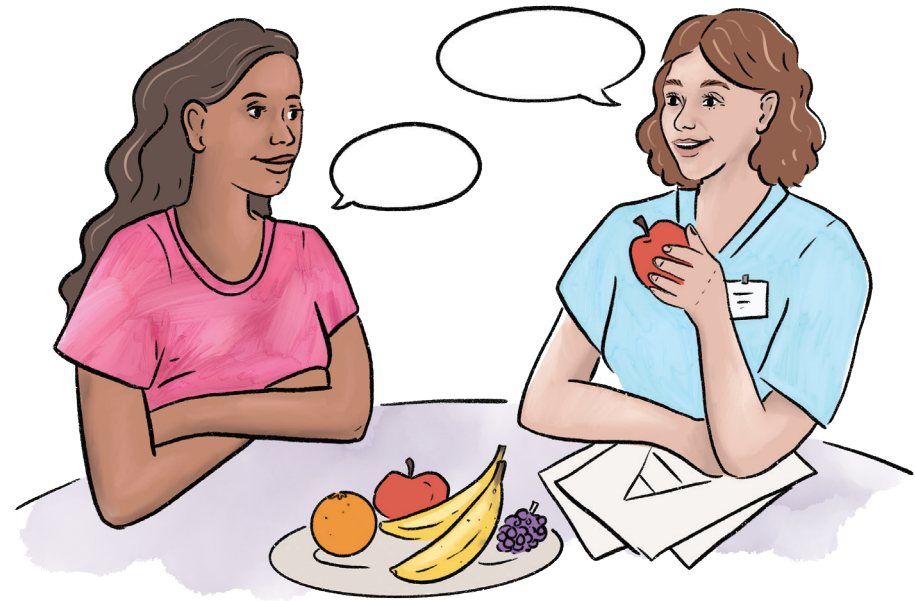
Managing PMOS – healthy diet (continued)

A dietitian is a health professional who can help you learn more about healthy eating.

Your health carer can refer you to a dietitian.

Healthy diet

- A dietitian can help you learn more about healthy eating.
- Your health carer can refer you to a dietitian.



Managing PMOS – physical activity

Physical activity means moving your body.

Regular physical activity is an important part of managing your PMOS symptoms.

It can also reduce your risk of having other health issues.

Find ways to build movement and exercise into your daily life.

Physical activity includes moving at home.

For example:

- gardening
- housework
- playing with your children if you have them
- walking to the shops instead of driving.

It also includes moving out bush.

For example:

- hunting
- collecting bush tucker.

Physical activity also includes moving at work.

For example:

- walking to work instead of driving
- lifting or walking as a part of your job.

It also includes moving through sport and exercise.

For example:

- football
- netball
- basketball
- yoga
- jogging
- dancing
- hiking.

Physical activity

If you have PMOS, it's important to move your body every day.

For example:

- go for a walk
- do some gardening
- collect bush tucker
- dance
- play football.



Managing PMOS – physical activity (continued)

Try to:

- move your body for at least 30 minutes every day – you can break this up into 3 blocks of 10 minutes
- ask your health carer if you need to do more physical activity to stay healthy.

Exercise recommendations

Facilitator note: you may want to present the relevant information only.

What activity should you do?

Try to do a mixture of moderate activity where you feel puffed but you can still have a conversation, and vigorous activity where you feel puffed and can't have a conversation.

To stay a healthy weight

Adults should do:

- 150 minutes (2.5 hours) of moderate physical activity or 75 minutes of vigorous physical activity per week
- muscle-strengthening activities on 2 non-consecutive days.

Adolescents should do:

- 1 hour of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity per day
- muscle- and bone-strengthening activities at least 3 times per week.

Physical activity

Try to:

- move your body for at least 30 minutes every day
- ask your health carer if you need to do more physical activity to stay healthy.



Managing PMOS – healthy weight

If you have PMOS, it's important to be a healthy weight.

Your health carer might measure your waist and check your body mass index (BMI) to see if you are a healthy weight.

They can help you make goals to reach a healthy weight.

Healthy weight

If you have PMOS, it's important to be a healthy weight.

Your health carer might:

- measure your waist
- check your body mass index (BMI).

They can help you make goals to reach a healthy weight.



Managing PMOS – medicine

Some people with PMOS will also need medicine to help manage symptoms.

Medicine can help with:

- weight loss
- mental health
- irregular periods
- infertility.

Medicine

Medicine can help with:

- weight loss
- mental health
- irregular periods
- infertility.



Managing PMOS – over-the-counter products

You can manage your PMOS symptoms with over-the-counter products.

- For pimples, try topical creams or gels.
- For excess hair growth, try plucking, waxing or shaving.
- For hair loss, try minoxidil (foam or tablets).

Ask your health carer about the best treatment for you.

Over-the-counter products

You can manage PMOS symptoms with over-the-counter products.

For example:

- for pimples, try topical creams or gels
- for excess hair, try plucking, waxing or shaving.



Managing PMOS – infertility

If you are having trouble getting pregnant, your health carer might recommend:

- a healthy lifestyle, to improve fertility and lower health risks
- medicine, for example, letrozole
- medical procedures, like in vitro fertilisation (IVF).

Infertility

If you are having trouble getting pregnant:

- have a healthy lifestyle
- talk to your health carer about medicines and procedures.



Managing PMOS – anxiety and depression

PMOS can make you feel stressed, anxious or depressed.

If you often feel like this, talking about your feelings can help.

There are lots of people you can talk to. For example:

- your friends, family, people in your community, Elders
- your health carer
- people with special training in social and emotional wellbeing, such as a counsellor, social worker or psychologist.

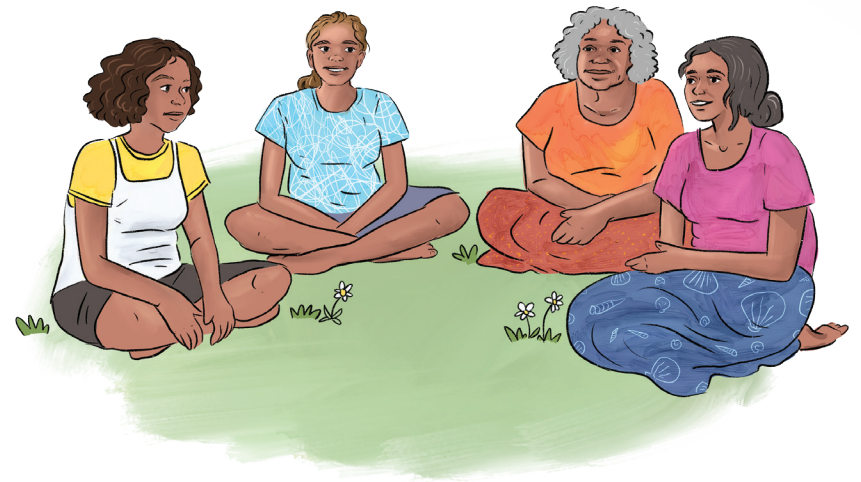
Your health carer can refer you to a counsellor.

Anxiety and depression

PMOS can make you feel stressed, anxious or depressed.

If you feel like this, try talking to:

- your friends, family, Elders
- your health carer
- a counsellor or psychologist.



Remember

- PMOS is a complex health condition.
- You might have PMOS if you have irregular or absent periods.
- A healthy lifestyle is the best way to improve PMOS symptoms.
- Talk to your health carer about treatment options.



For further information contact

Jean Hailes for Women's Health
PO Box 24098
Melbourne VIC 3001

Phone 03 9453 8999

Website jeanhailes.org.au

Disclaimer: This information does not replace medical advice.
If a person is worried about their health, they should talk to their
doctor or healthcare team.

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 Jean Hailes
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