

Healthful Eating Tips for PCOS

Polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS) is the most common hormonal imbalance among women of child-bearing age. Eighty percent of women with PCOS have insulin resistance.

Insulin resistance can cause high blood sugar levels, which can raise your appetite, cause you to crave sweets and lead to weight gain. It can also lead to both diabetes and heart disease.

Eating Tips

Eat at set times based on your schedule. Do not go more than 4-5 hours between meals. Skipping meals can cause you to overeat later and cause swings in your blood sugar.

Build healthful meals with at least 3 food groups and healthful snacks with 2 food groups. Check out the snack ideas below:

- Apple or celery with peanut butter
- Greek yogurt with blueberries or whole grain cereal
- Hardboiled egg with whole grain pretzels or crackers
- Fruit with string cheese
- Nuts, such as walnuts or almonds, ¼ cup
- Carrots or celery with hummus
- Wasabi peas or soy nuts, ¼ cup
- Nonfat cottage cheese with sliced tomato or fruit
- Edamame

Avoid simple sugars like those found in regular soda pop, fruit juice, candy, ice cream, cookies, and pies.

Choose foods and drinks with less than 8 grams of sugar per serving.

Choose whole grains, fruit, vegetables, beans, and peas. Try brown rice, oatmeal, quinoa, split peas, or lentil soup. These foods are high in fiber and are more filling.

Choose foods rich in “good” fats, such as salmon, tuna, ground flaxseed, and nuts.

You can eat any food but practice mindful portion sizes. Imagine your plate with one-quarter to half vegetables, zero to one-quarter fruit, one-quarter protein, and one-quarter whole grains.

Filling up on foods rich in whole grains, protein and healthy fats can help curb portion sizes of other, less healthy foods.

Practice mindful eating. Enjoy your food without screen time. Distracted eating can lead to over-eating.

Other Healthful Habits

Move more often. Fitness improves how sensitive your body is to insulin. Start slowly to avoid injury and burnout and work your way to 150 minutes of exercise per week.

Regular activity lowers stress and anxiety levels and helps to improve your mood.

Try indoor activities at home or at the gym (dance, yoga, weightlifting, cardio etc.) or outdoor activities year-round (skiing, ice skating, biking, swimming, walking etc).

Catch some sleep. Poor sleep is less than nine hours of sleep per night, or sleep that is interrupted due to untreated sleep apnea or other reasons. Poor sleep can lead to food cravings and changes in appetite.

Who to Call

If you are a UW Health patient and have more questions, please contact UW Health at one of the phone numbers listed below.

You can also visit our website at:
www.uwhealth.org/nutrition

Nutrition clinics for UW Hospital and Clinics (UWHC) and American Family Children's Hospital (AFCH)
(608) 890-5500

Nutrition clinics for UW Medical Foundation (UWMF)
(608) 287-2770

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 5/2023. University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#281