



# 4 Common PCOS Treatment Mistakes (and what to do instead)

Misinformation about what PCOS is and how to treat it is everywhere. Most current treatment recommendations are Band-Aids that mask symptoms rather than addressing the underlying causes. We believe in taking the time to dig down to the root cause of hormone issues and empowering you to take command of your health.

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## 1. Assuming weight = health

People of ALL shapes and sizes get diagnosed with PCOS and other hormone issues. If weight were the cause (and weight loss the solution), only people with higher weights would be diagnosed with PCOS. Even if weight were the cause, we don't have a successful long-term approach for weight loss. 95-97% of diets fail and that is especially true for those with PCOS due to:

- Slowed metabolism
- High insulin levels (leading to increased fat storage)
- Insulin resistance (often leading to carbohydrate cravings and binge eating)

Dieting and weight loss attempts can actually make PCOS **worse**:

- Calorie deficit further slows metabolism and contributes to hunger and fatigue
- Carbohydrate restriction (combined with insulin resistance) increases cravings
- Intense cravings lead to binge eating
- Adequate fat intake is needed for hormone function and diets often limit fat
- Physical and mental restriction of food increases cortisol levels and inflammation

Weight gain is typically a symptom of insulin resistance and focusing all efforts on managing weight worsens almost every other area that affects PCOS symptoms - physical and mental stress, cravings, sleep patterns, hormone balance, and insulin levels.

Instead, we recommend focusing on behaviors that can actually improve symptoms, such as self-care, enjoyable movement, consistent meals and snacks, and sleep,

## 2. Believing you caused your PCOS

You **did not cause** your PCOS because you gained weight, because you don't enjoy the gym, or because of how you eat. **PERIOD**. The only thing this idea does is create guilt and shame, which can be paralyzing and keep you from giving your body the care and respect it deserves. The cause of PCOS is still unclear but it is likely related to both genetic and environmental factors (such as a period of high stress). Ditching the guilt and shame frees you up to learn and implement what actually works to improve your symptoms.

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## 3. Demonizing and Avoiding Carbs

Avoiding carbohydrates is some of the most **misguided** and **harmful** advice people with PCOS are given. Not only will avoiding carbohydrates NOT help manage your blood sugar or insulin resistance, it will drive intense cravings and binge eating. Not to mention that avoiding or severely restricting any major nutrient is incredibly stressful on the body. You can eat carbohydrates in a way that supports your PCOS **and** allows you to eat without guilt, uncertainty, or fear of a binge occurring afterward. Regularly incorporating carbohydrates in meals and snacks, especially things like fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, will allow you to feel energized and able to engage in the things most important to you rather than leaving you feeling fatigued and distracted.

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## 4. Using Birth Control to Mask Symptoms

The purpose of birth control is contraception. If that is not why you were started on birth control, it is only **masking** whatever symptoms you were having. The bleeding you get while on birth control is NOT a natural period. It is a withdrawal bleed. Birth control is not regulating your period. If you haven't addressed the underlying causes, your period will still be irregular when you come off the pill. We want to know what your period is doing without birth control pills and then deal with hormone issues at their root (stress, nutrition, sleep, etc) so you aren't dealing with irregular periods or infertility after coming off the pill when you thought everything was fine.