

PCOS

A whole-person approach

Insights & tips from a
dietitian and a women's
health physio

A collaboration by:

embrace
PHYSIOTHERAPY

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DIETITIAN

What is PCOS?

Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome (PCOS) is a complex, chronic condition affecting around 1 in 10 women of reproductive age. It impacts hormonal, metabolic, reproductive, psychological, and dermatological health often leading to reduced quality of life.

How is PCOS diagnosed?

Diagnosis follows the Rotterdam Criteria, requiring two out of three:

Irregular Ovulation

Infrequent or absent menstrual cycles (less than 9 per year)

Hyperandrogenism

- Evident through symptoms (acne, excess facial/body hair, scalp hair thinning)
- Or confirmed with blood tests measuring testosterone or Anti-Müllerian Hormone (AMH)

Polycystic Ovaries

Seen on pelvic ultrasound as enlarged ovaries with multiple small follicles (a "string of pearls" appearance)

Nutrition for PCOS

With PCOS, it's not about cutting food groups, it's about eating in a way that keeps blood sugar stable, reduces inflammation, and supports your energy levels.

FAQs for a dietitian



Q: Do I need to cut carbs completely?

A: Absolutely not. Carbohydrates are an important source of energy, fibre, and enjoyment. The key is choosing nutrient- and fibre-rich options, such as whole grains and sweet potatoes. Pairing carbohydrates with protein and fat can also help stabilise blood sugar levels.

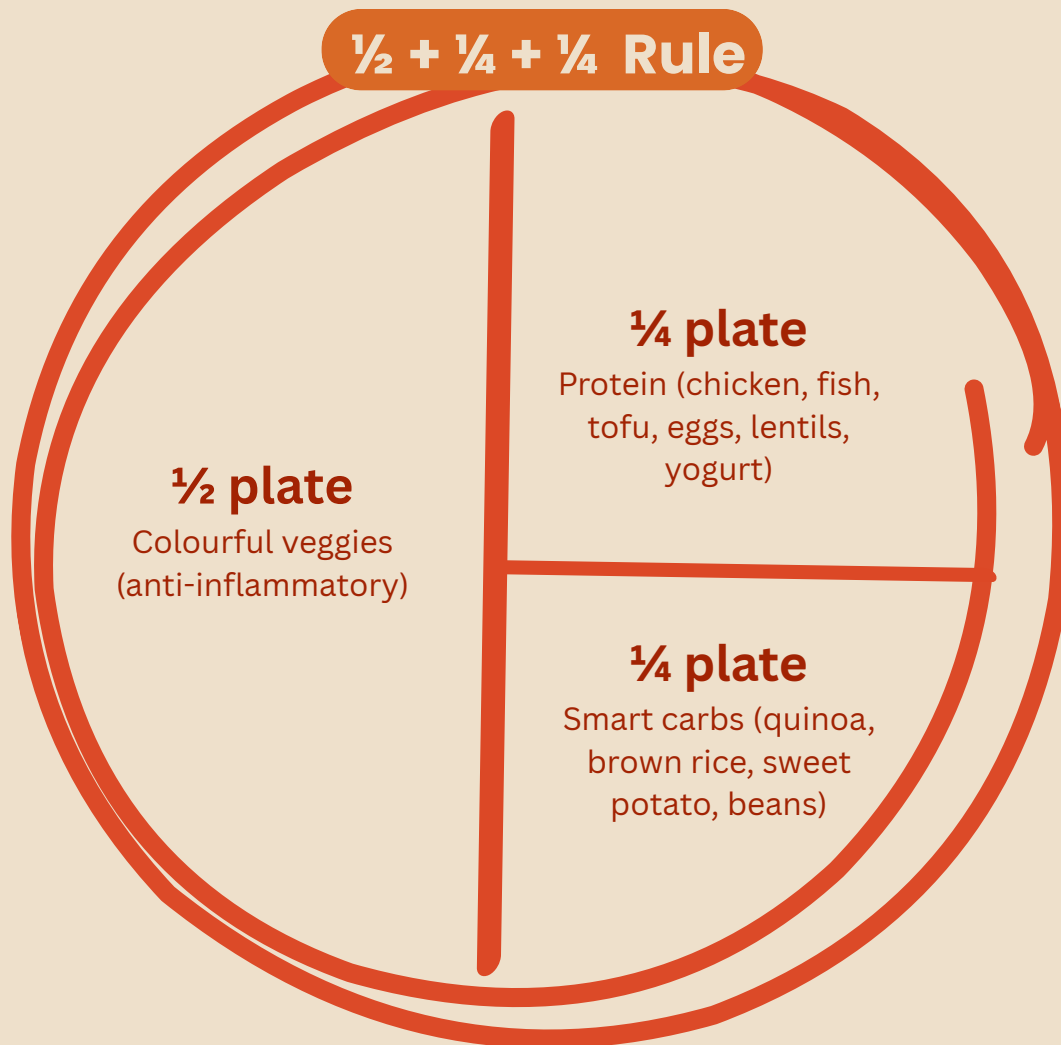
Q: Why do I still feel hungry after eating?

A: Aim for a plate with plenty of fibre, a moderate portion of protein and carbohydrates, and a little healthy fat to keep you satisfied. Staying hydrated and eating slowly and mindfully can help too.

Q: Are supplements necessary?

A: Supplements cannot replace a balanced diet. In PCOS, supplements should be recommended based on an individual's symptoms and needs. A dietitian can personalise your supplement plan to align with your symptoms, diet, and health goals.

The PCOS plate



Don't forget the healthy fats!

Olive oil, avocado, nuts, seeds

A sample day

Breakfast

Wholegrain toast + avocado +
poached eggs

Lunch

Quinoa salad with chickpeas
+ spinach + olive oil + feta

Snack

Apple slices + nut butter

Dinner

Salmon + roasted
veggies + brown rice

Exercise for PCOS

Exercise is one of the most effective 'medicines' for PCOS. It regulates hormones, improves insulin sensitivity, boosts mood, and supports pelvic floor health. The key is consistency, not intensity.



FAQs for a women's health physio

Q: What's the best exercise for PCOS?

A: The one you'll stick to! Both cardio and strength matter. Aim for 150 mins of moderate cardio + 2 strength sessions weekly.

Q: Why strength training?

A: Because it builds muscle, which improves insulin sensitivity, balances hormones, supports your joints, and protects long-term health.

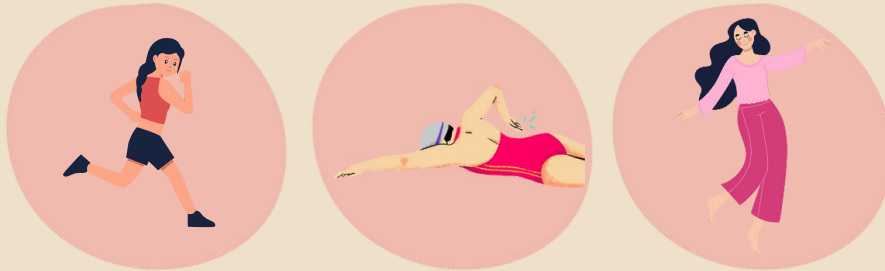
Q: I feel tired/bloated. Should I skip exercise?

A: Not necessarily. Choose gentler movement like walking, stretching, or Pilates on those days. Consistency matters more than intensity. To note, it might be a sign of constipation or have a food sensitivity, book an appointment with a women's health physio to better understand the why behind your bloating.

An exercise formula

3 days a week: *Cardio*

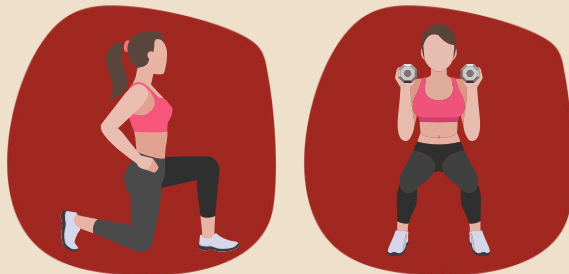
30–40 mins each: brisk walking, cycling, swimming, dancing



2 non-consecutive days per week:

Progressive strength training

30–45 mins each: bodyweight or weights



Daily movement

Short walks, mobility, stairs

