



# HEALTH AWARENESS

## Clues Lead To PCOS

(NAPSA)—It has been estimated that 10 percent of all reproductive-age women in the United States have Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS)—and most don't even know they have it.

The usual signs of PCOS include irregular menstrual periods, excess facial and body hair, and acne. Women with PCOS may have difficulty in conceiving and there are serious medical problems that are more common in women with this condition. It is also the leading cause of infertility for women.

Unfortunately, PCOS can be difficult for both patients and physicians to detect. Women with PCOS may see a variety of medical professionals before the clues lead to a diagnosis of PCOS. PCOS can include some of the following symptoms:

- Irregular or absent menstrual cycles
- Infertility
- Acne
- Scalp hair loss
- Ovarian cysts
- Elevated insulin levels
- Increased production of testosterone from the ovaries
- Excessive hair on the face and body

If left undetected, serious complications can arise. More than 50 percent of women with PCOS will have diabetes or blood sugar problems before they turn 40. Women with PCOS have a 50 percent increased risk for heart problems than those without PCOS.



**Dealing with a common disorder can help prevent both discomfort and perhaps even infertility.**

There is an increased risk of lipid disorders, stroke, cancer of the uterus, certain liver problems and possibly breast cancer. Early diagnosis and treatment of PCOS can reduce these risks.

If you have two or more of these symptoms, you should see an endocrinologist for an accurate diagnosis and treatment of symptoms. Endocrinologists receive special training to treat hormone disorders such as PCOS. PCOS is not curable, but it is treatable with medications and lifestyle changes such as sound nutrition and physical activity.

The American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists makes it easy to find out more information on PCOS and to locate an endocrinologist. Just visit [www.aace.com](http://www.aace.com) for a free PCOS patient brochure.