

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH AND CARE EXCELLENCE

Guideline scope

Polycystic ovary syndrome: assessment and management

NICE is developing a guideline on PCOS.

For this guideline, NICE is proposing to adapt the [International evidence-based guideline for the assessment and management of polycystic ovary syndrome \(2023\)](#), produced by MONASH University and partners. Further details are given in the section [How we will develop the guideline](#).

Who the guideline will cover

The guideline will cover:

- women, and trans men and non-binary people, with suspected or confirmed polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) aged 18 and over.
- children and young people aged 10 to 17 who have suspected or confirmed PCOS.

Equality considerations

NICE has carried out an [equality health and impact assessment](#) during scoping.

Settings

The guideline will cover all health settings in which NHS care is received or commissioned.

Activities, services or aspects of care

We will assess the following areas of the [International evidence-based guideline for the assessment and management of polycystic ovary syndrome \(2023\)](#). The section numbers and headings correspond with the international guideline.

1 Screening, diagnostic and risk assessment and life stages

Final

- 1.1 Irregular cycles and ovulatory dysfunction
 - 1.2 Biochemical hyperandrogenism
 - 1.3 Clinical hyperandrogenism
 - 1.4 Ultrasound and polycystic ovarian morphology
 - 1.5 Anti-mullerian hormone in the diagnosis of PCOS
 - 1.6 Ethnic variation
 - 1.7 Menopause life stage
 - 1.8 Cardiovascular disease risk
 - 1.9 Impaired glucose tolerance and type 2 diabetes
 - 1.10 Obstructive sleep apnoea
 - 1.11 Endometrial hyperplasia and cancer
 - 1.12 Risks in relatives
- 2 Prevalence, screening, and management of psychological features and models of care
- 2.1 Quality of life
 - 2.2 Depression and anxiety
 - 2.3 Psychosexual function
 - 2.4 Body image
 - 2.5 Eating disorders and disordered eating
 - 2.6 Information resources, models of care, cultural and linguistic considerations
 - 2.7 Psychological therapy
 - 2.8 Antidepressant and anxiolytic treatment
- 3 Lifestyle management
- 3.1 Effectiveness of lifestyle interventions
 - 3.2 Behavioural strategies
 - 3.3 Dietary interventions
 - 3.4 Exercise interventions
 - 3.5 Factors affecting weight gain in PCOS
 - 3.6 Weight stigma
- 4 Management of non-fertility features
- 4.1 Pharmacology treatment principles in PCOS

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- 4.2 Combined oral contraceptive pills
 - 4.3 Metformin
 - 4.4 Metformin and combined oral contraceptive pills
 - 4.5 Anti-obesity pharmacological agents
 - 4.6 Anti-androgen pharmacological agents
 - 4.7 Inositol
 - 4.8 Mechanical laser and light therapies for hair reduction
 - 4.9 Bariatric and metabolic surgery
 - 4.10 Pregnancy outcomes
 - 4.11 Metformin in pregnancy
- 5 Assessment and treatment of infertility
- 5.1 Preconception risk factors
 - 5.2 Tubal patency testing
 - 5.3 Letrozole
 - 5.4 Clomiphene citrate and metformin
 - 5.5 Gonadotrophins
 - 5.6 Laparoscopic ovarian surgery
 - 5.7 In vitro fertilisation and in vitro maturation
 - 5.8 Inositol
 - 5.9 Anti-obesity pharmacological agents

Note that guideline recommendations for medicines will normally fall within licensed indications; exceptionally, and only if clearly supported by evidence, use outside a licensed indication may be recommended. The guideline will assume that prescribers will use a medicine's summary of product characteristics to inform decisions made with individual patients.

How we will develop the guideline

We will assess the international guideline, including assessment of the systematic reviews that were used to inform the guideline, using the methods and processes in [developing NICE guidelines: the manual](#).

Recommendations from the [International evidence-based guideline for the assessment and management of polycystic ovary syndrome \(2023\)](#) may be rewritten in the NICE style without changing their meaning. We may also amend or not include some sections or recommendations, for example where there are considerations around:

- the estimated costs or savings associated with the guideline (resource impact)
- availability and implementation within the NHS
- health economics
- health inequalities
- where NICE has guidance that is within the scope of the international guideline.

Key issues and review questions

The key issues and review questions to be covered, along with details of the evidence, are included in the technical report of the [International evidence-based guideline for the assessment and management of polycystic ovary syndrome \(2023\)](#).

Economic aspects

We take economic aspects into account when making recommendations. We will develop an economic plan that states for each review question (or key area in the scope) whether economic considerations are relevant, and if so whether this is an area that should be prioritised for economic modelling and analysis. We will review the economic evidence and carry out economic analyses, using an NHS and personal social services (PSS) perspective, as appropriate.

NICE guidance that may be affected by this guideline update

Published

- [Overweight and obesity management](#) (2025) NICE guideline NG246
- [Menopause: identification and management](#) (2015, last updated 2024) NICE guideline NG23
- [Acne vulgaris: management](#) (2021, last updated 2023) NICE guideline NG198
- [Depression in adults: treatment and management](#) (2022) NICE guideline NG222

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- [Type 1 diabetes in adults: diagnosis and management](#) (2015, last updated 2022) NICE guideline NG17
- [Type 2 diabetes in adults: management](#) (2015, last updated 2022) NICE guideline NG28
- [Obstructive sleep apnoea/hypopnoea syndrome and obesity hypoventilation syndrome in over 16s](#) (2021) NICE guideline NG202
- [Heavy menstrual bleeding: assessment and management](#) (2018, last updated 2021) NICE guideline NG88
- [Eating disorders: recognition and treatment](#) (2017, last updated 2020) NICE guideline NG69
- [Diabetes in pregnancy: management from preconception to the postnatal period](#) (2015, last updated 2020) NICE guideline NG3
- [Fertility problems: assessment and treatment](#) (2013, last updated 2017) NICE guideline CG156
- [Type 2 diabetes: prevention in people at high risk](#) (2012, last updated 2017) NICE guideline PH38
- [Non-alcoholic fatty liver disease \(NAFLD\): assessment and management](#) (2016) NICE guideline NG49

In development

- [Type 2 diabetes in adults: management \(medicines update\)](#) NICE guideline. Publication expected July 2025.
- [Fertility problems: assessment and treatment – update 1 and 2](#) NICE guideline. Publication date to be confirmed.
- [Non-alcoholic fatty liver disease \(NAFLD\): assessment and management.](#) NICE guideline. Publication date to be confirmed.

NICE guidance about the experience of people using NHS services

NICE has produced the following guidance on the experience of people using the NHS. This guideline will not include additional recommendations on these topics unless there are specific issues related to PCOS:

- [Babies, children and young people's experience of healthcare](#) (2021) NICE guideline NG204

Final

- [Shared decision making](#) (2021) NICE guideline NG197
- [Medicines optimisation](#) (2015) NICE guideline NG5
- [Patient experience in adult NHS services](#) (2012) NICE guideline CG138
- [Service user experience in adult mental health](#) (2011) NICE guideline CG136
- [Medicines adherence](#) (2009) NICE guideline CG76

Further information

The guideline is expected to be published in November 2026.

You can follow progress of the [guideline](#).

Our website has information about how [NICE guidelines](#) are developed.

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