

Sensible Supplementation for PCOS

By Hillary Wright, MEd, RDN, author *The PCOS Diet Plan*

If you have PCOS, basic supplementation may help. To enhance absorption and tolerance, take with food, including some fat to increase absorption of fat-soluble nutrients like vitamin D.

A Basic Multivitamin

- Most women don't eat perfect diets every day, so a multi gives you a little added assurance that you've covered all the bases
- Multis will ensure you're getting the government-recommended minimum 400 micrograms of folic acid daily to help prevent neural tube defects in women who could become pregnant
- Very few women get enough vitamin D, so some basic supplementation is warranted
- Metformin, a commonly used medication to treat PCOS, may interfere with vitamin B₁₂ absorption over time so extra supplement is recommended

Vitamin D

- Research suggests that up to 75 percent of Americans may have inadequate blood levels of vitamin D—that is, less than 30 nanograms per milliliter (ng/ml)
- Research suggests vitamin D may improve insulin resistance; accumulating research has linked low levels of vitamin D with both PCOS and diabetes (as well as other diseases like heart disease and cancer)
- Many vitamin D experts recommend at least 1,000-2000 IUs of vitamin D3 per day for everyone not exposed to the sun year-round; very low levels require higher amounts of D3 or a prescription of 50,000 IU of vitamin D3 followed by a maintenance daily dose to avoid becoming deficient again
- Most multivitamins contain 600 IUs of vitamin D; women's multi's often contain 800-1000 IU

Omega-3 Fats

- Women with PCOS are at higher risk of cardiovascular disease and omega-3s from either fatty fish or supplements have been found to lower blood triglyceride levels and blood pressure, and may slow the accumulation of cholesterol plaques in the arteries.
- Omega 3's may also help improve insulin resistance and counter the chronic inflammation that may be present in PCOS.
- Don't eat at least 8 ounces of fatty fish like salmon, herring, mackerel or sardines per week? A daily fish oil supplement containing at least 650 - 1000 mg of combined DHA and EPA maybe be helpful.

Inositol

- Research shows a deficiency of a natural substance in the body called inositol may contribute to the insulin resistance and high testosterone seen in women with PCOS
- Inositol may also help nurture healthy egg quality in those trying to conceive
- Large amounts of inositol are not widely available in the food supply, so supplementing with inositol may help improve insulin resistance and ovulation
- Inositol in the body occurs in a ratio of 40-to-1 myo-inositol to d-chiro-inositol so supplementing with a product with that ratio (such as Ovasitol by Therologix, LLC) is ideal

