

---

# Nutrition for Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome (PCOS)

---

Women with PCOS often have higher levels of insulin (a hormone) in their blood, and many have trouble maintaining a healthy weight. Knowing the right foods to eat as well as the kinds of foods to limit can improve the way you feel. It may also help you lose weight.

- **Eat 3 times a day.** Eating consistently during the day will sustain your energy level. Eating small meals frequently may also help prevent feelings of nausea and boost metabolism. **Including a lean protein source with each meal or snack may help improve satiety and stabilize blood sugar levels.**
- **Insulin and Carbohydrates.** The insulin level in your blood goes up after you eat. It goes up the most after you eat or drink something that contains carbohydrates, like grains (bread, rice, pasta), starchy vegetables (corn, potatoes, peas), fruit and juice, milk and yogurt, sweets and sugary beverages (soda, sports drinks). **Aim to eat a consistent, portion-controlled amount of carbohydrates regularly throughout the day for consistent blood glucose levels.**
- **Carbohydrates with Fiber.** Carbohydrate foods with fiber are better choices than sugary or refined foods (such as soda, juice, white bread, and white rice). High fiber foods raise blood sugar levels gradually and are more filling.

## Good sources of Fiber:

- Whole grain breads and cereals
- Brown rice
- Whole grain pasta
- Oatmeal
- Beans (kidney, baked, navy, etc.)
- Fresh fruit
- Non-starchy vegetables like broccoli, cauliflower, carrots, leafy greens



**VA**  
HEALTH  
CARE | Defining  
**EXCELLENCE**  
in the 21st Century

- **Drink plenty of fluids.** Aim to drink 6-8 cups of non-caffeinated fluids every day. Water and other fluids are needed to prevent constipation and to keep the body working well.
- **Be active.** Exercise brings down insulin levels and can help with weight loss. Work towards increasing your physical activity to at least 5 days a week for 60 minutes per day.

## Sample Menus



<b>Breakfast (300-350 calories)</b>	<b>Lunch (400 calories)</b>	<b>Dinner (400 calories)</b>	<b>Snack Options</b>
1 packet plain oatmeal with 1 Tbsp. peanut butter or 2 Tbsp. chopped nuts	1 whole wheat pita with 3 oz. chicken breast, 1/4 cup 2% shredded cheese, lettuce/tomatoes, 2 Tbsp. light sour cream Side salad with dressing on side 1 fruit	<u>Healthy Chicken Parmesan</u> 3 oz. chicken breast breaded with egg white, Italian-seasoned bread crumbs, 2 Tbsp. reduced-fat parmesan cheese, 2/3 cup whole wheat pasta & top with 1/2 cup tomato sauce, 1 cup fresh spinach	1 fruit and 1 low-fat string cheese  6 oz. non-fat, low sugar Greek yogurt with 2 Tbsp. chia seeds
1 whole wheat waffle with 1 Tbsp. peanut butter	Individual whole grain pizza Side salad with dressing on side	<u>Healthy Quesadillas</u> Fold 1 whole wheat tortilla over 1/4 cup 2% shredded cheese, 4 oz. chopped chicken and cook 2 minutes per side in pan, top with 2 Tbsp low-fat sour cream & salsa, 2 thin slices avocado Side salad with dressing on side	Apple or celery and 2 Tbsp. natural peanut butter  1/2 cup low-fat cottage cheese and 1/2 cup canned mandarin oranges or peaches in their own juice
3/4 cup whole grain cereal with low-fat milk, 1 egg, low-fat yogurt	15 whole wheat crackers 4-6 slices (2-3 oz.) deli meat 2% cheese stick 1 small fruit	<u>Healthy Taco Salad</u> 4 cups lettuce & tomato 1/4 cup 2% shredded cheese, 2/3 cup ground turkey browned on stove w/ taco seasoning 2 Tbsp. light sour cream 2 thin slices avocado & salsa 6 baked tortilla chips	2 Hard-boiled eggs  1/2 cup plain oatmeal with 1 Tbsp. chopped walnuts and a drizzle of honey
1 whole grain English muffin	Whole grain wrap	<u>Pita Pizza</u>	Single-serving pouch tuna in

with 1 Tbsp. peanut butter, 2 slices of lean Canadian bacon	with 1 slice cheese, 4-5 slices of deli meat, lettuce, tomato, veggies & 1 Tbsp. low-fat mayo 1 cup strawberries	1 whole wheat pita with ¼ cup tomato sauce, ¼ cup 2% shredded cheese, top with pepperoni Or ham. Broil in oven for 4-5 minutes. Salad with dressing on side	water with 6-8 whole grain crackers  1-2 squares dark chocolate (at least 60% cacao or higher)
1 whole wheat English muffin with 1 slice of Canadian bacon, 1 slice 2% cheese, 1 egg	300 calorie Frozen single serving meal Salad with dressing on side	<u>Wrap</u> 1 whole wheat tortilla toasted w/ 3 oz. grilled chicken breast, lettuce/tomato, 1 slice low-fat cheese 10 whole wheat crackers Salad with dressing on side	¼ cup hummus and raw veggies for dipping  1 ¼ cup edamame pods (about ½ cup shelled)