



KATIE BRINDLE

PCOS Guide

Treatment techniques based in Chinese medicine



What is Polycystic Ovary Syndrome?

According to the NHS, Polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) is a common condition that affects how a woman's ovaries work. The 3 main features of PCOS are irregular periods, excess male hormones (which can cause physical signs like excess facial or body hair), and 'polycystic ovaries' or enlarged ovaries containing fluid-filled sacs (follicles) that surround the eggs. But other signs include difficulty getting pregnant because of ovulation problems, weight gain, thinning hair and hair loss from the head, and oily skin or acne.

Women with PCOS may have an increased risk of developing health problems later on, like type 2 diabetes and high cholesterol. PCOS often seems to have a genetic link and is also related to hormone levels in the body, including high levels of insulin.

Despite the name, people with PCOS do not actually have cysts. Polycystic ovaries contain a large number of harmless follicles up to 8mm in size. They are underdeveloped sacs in which eggs develop, yet in PCOS, these sacs are often unable to release an egg, which means ovulation does not occur. Many women do not show symptoms of PCOS, so it is difficult to know exactly how many actually have PCOS. However, it is estimated that it could affect 1 in 5 women in the UK.

Western medicine does not have a cure for PCOS, but can treat the symptoms with medications to treat hair growth, irregular periods and fertility issues, or with surgical procedures to destroy tissue in the ovaries that produce too many male hormones. Usually, with treatment, women with PCOS can get pregnant.

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The Yang Sheng perspective

‘Yang Sheng’ means ‘nurture life’. It is the ‘self-care’ part of Chinese medicine: the part you can do for yourself, as a complement to any other treatment you may be undertaking.

In addition to physical (visible) symptoms, in Chinese medicine we also consider what is happening with the body at an energetic (invisible) level. ‘Qi’ (pronounced ‘tchee’) is the energy that runs through all of us. Even when you sit completely still, there will be some movement happening inside you: your heart is beating, your fluids moving – every cell is constantly in motion. All of these different types of energy, combined with your breath, is what makes up your ‘qi’.

Qi isn’t the same as circulation, but they are linked. When you stimulate your blood flow or move your lymphatic fluid, your qi is also stimulated. Everything flows together. The channels in which qi flows are called meridians. According to Chinese medicine, the quality and movement of qi through the body determines your health.

The ideal state is one of smooth flow with no imbalances or blockages, which are called ‘stagnation’ or stagnant qi. If you have stagnation, whether physical, emotional or spiritual, this will eventually manifest as disease.

In Chinese medicine, PCOS is often due to long time disharmony of the kidney, the liver and the spleen. This is due to three main issues:

One

Spleen and kidney deficiency – since the spleen is in charge of taking in, processing and distributing nutrients extracted from food and drink; transforming, transporting and delivering nourishment (qi and nutrients) to all parts of the body; and assisting the stomach with digestion, if the spleen doesn’t work well, instead of distributing nutrients, it spreads toxins and phlegm. The kidney is responsible for fertility in Chinese medicine. It maintains a healthy menstrual cycle and ovulation process. If it doesn’t have enough nourishment, it becomes weak.

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The Yang Sheng perspective

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This type of PCOS is often due to long-term fatigue, or body weakness after long-term sickness, surgery or an abortion. People with this type of PCOS often have symptoms of fatigue, can become easily tired, have a low appetite and may have diarrhoea.

Two

Kidney yang deficiency – in Chinese medicine, each organ needs both Yin and Yang energy to be balanced. A kidney yang deficiency slows circulation, delays menstruation, hinders ovulation, creates oedema in lower limbs, soreness and pain in the waist and knees, and can even cause symptoms like fear of cold, hair loss and low sexual appetite.

Some ways yang sheng addresses kidney yang is through body and foot massage, foot bathing, and food therapy.

Three

Toxic emotions – this type of PCOS starts with the accumulation of toxic emotions and/or stress. People with toxic emotions may feel like the emotions accumulate inside a box and can't get out. The ancient Chinese philosophy of Taoism suggest that if you can put away the desire to control and dominate, you are getting closer to a place of calm and quiet contentment. Meditation, as well as some of the methods below, can help

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Steps you can take to help

General advice

Chinese breathing and bodywork techniques have both been scientifically proven to be effective in reducing stress and supporting the body. They:

Engage your parasympathetic nervous system

Regulate blood flow

Reduce heat in the body

Calm the nervous system

Strengthen the organs

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Breath & PCOS

The single most effective way to reduce your stress levels is to take conscious, deep, abdominal breaths. By moving your awareness out of your head and into your breath, your heart rate slows, your mind is calmed, and your blood oxygenated.

[View the Breath Guide](#)

Qigong & PCOS

Qigong is a fundamental pillar of Chinese medicine. It is classed as a form of internal exercise. Internal exercise is any combination of slow, considered movements with breath and mental engagement, it's often referred to as 'Chinese yoga'. Qigong is, quite simply, the ultimate selfhealing technique. Whatever your issue, qigong will help to rebalance the body. By learning to manipulate qi around the body, you rejuvenate and energise, lower the heart rate and blood pressure and support the immune system.

[View the Qigong Guide](#)

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Tapping & PCOS

Tapping with bamboo is an ancient Chinese therapy that works wonders for your general wellbeing. It's a simple, pleasurable, yet hugely effective way to support and maintain your health, no matter what your age or physical state. Tapping the skin on a daily basis enables the free flow of this all-important circulation. In as little as one minute a day, an all over body tap can clear areas of stagnation, support lymphatic drainage and encourage a smooth flow of blood and qi around the body. Think of it as a natural battery charger for the body.

[View the Tapping Guide](#)

Gua sha & PCOS

Gua sha is a therapeutic healing technique that has been widely practised in China for thousands of years. It involves using a round-edged tool, traditionally made from materials such as jade or metal, to pressstroke the skin until redness appears. You can even use a jam jar lid! Gua sha has been used to treat a whole range of conditions from fever to chronic cough and migraines. It has been shown in studies to increase micro-circulation by 400%, and clear inflammation. Note that gua sha should NOT be used directly on broken skin. However, it can be effective to lessen the marks left by an acne outbreak. There are lots of how-to gua sha videos on my Instagram feed; and you can also download the Gua Sha Guide.

[View the Gua sha Guide](#)

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Meditation & PCOS

Meditation is a fundamental pillar of Chinese medicine and studies have confirmed a host of health benefits. If you struggle with traditional forms of meditation, there are simple Chinese techniques that offer impressive results.

[View the Meditation Guide](#)

Specific advice

Any symptoms of ill health will always relate to one of the five key organs we consider when we are treating in Chinese medicine. These are Heart, Lung, Liver, Stomach/Spleen and Kidney.

Depending on what your symptoms are, it will usually indicate an imbalance in a specific organ. For example, palpitations are concerned with the heart.

An energetic imbalance does not mean you have a dramatic health issue. This aspect of Chinese medicine is about prevention, not cure. That means reading the subtle signs and symptoms of the body daily. Imbalance starts at an energetic level and you rectify it at an energetic level.

The more serious the symptoms, the deeper the imbalance. If the symptom is mild – e.g. low-level anxiety before a meeting or mild rosacea after a glass of red wine, the imbalance will be easier to rectify.

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It is important to know that when I refer to organ imbalance, I mean energetic and not physical. So, for example, heart imbalance does not mean heart disease. It is a subtle signal that your body is not in balance and the strain of that is impacting your heart energy, which may eventually lead to an issue over time. In the first instance, it could be felt as low level anxiety, occasional palpitations or a lack of desire to socialise. We look for the low level signs to stop things getting a foothold in the body and causing a greater problem further down the line.

Use low levels symptoms as a barometer of your wellness. Address them to keep the body healthy and they are much less likely to become a deeper issue. This is the principle behind yang sheng and self-care.

There are many techniques rooted in Chinese medicine that can help with PCOS. However, since PCOS is often due to long term disharmony in the body, yang sheng methods can only adjust the internal environment slowly. For more information:

[Download the Stomach & Spleen Guide](#)

[Download the Kidney Guide](#)

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Want to know more?

We will be delighted to support you as you continue along your Yang Sheng journey.
The following will get you started:

'Yang Sheng: The Art of Chinese Self-Healing' available on Amazon, Waterstone and www.hayoumethod.com

Download Yang Sheng Book

Live Qigong Healing classes (3 x each week) for a more in-depth and healing practice – full details on www.hayoufit.com

Free Masterclass "[Master Your Health](#)" – understand the 3- step plan for preventative health.

Free self-care weekly content [@katiebrindle](#) on Instagram, Facebook and YouTube.

Free regular gua sha demonstrations on [@thehayoumethod](#) Instagram. The accompanying tools available from www.hayoumethod.com

DISCLAIMER:

Please note that any of these Yang Sheng techniques are designed to support your overall self-care and wellbeing and should not be used as a substitute for any Western medical advice or treatment that you may be receiving. You should not use the information in this Guide or on our website for diagnosing or treating a health problem or disease and must always consult your doctor if you have any health concerns. Additionally, please note that there are a few contraindications to Yang Sheng techniques, so please visit www.hayoumethod.com to view our comprehensive FAQs.

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