

## Yes, You Can Use Fertility Charting with PCOS

If you've wanted to use fertility charting to conceive, avoid a pregnancy, or just keep better track of your cycles but think you can't because you've been diagnosed with [polycystic ovary syndrome](#), you may want to think again. While it can be more challenging to track and interpret PCOS charts, it's by no means impossible and can actually be incredibly beneficial in managing your PCOS or even getting an official diagnosis in the first place.

### PCOS Charting Challenges

Fertility charting usually involves tracking three main fertility signs: basal body temperature, cervical fluid and cervix position. However, each of those have special challenges when it comes to a PCOS cycle.

Your basal body temperature may be outside the usual numbers (97.0-98.6), and it's very common for women with PCOS to have lower basal temperatures, meaning you'll have to adjust your graph accordingly if you're tracking manually (most apps adjust automatically). You're also more likely to have temperature spikes and dips every few days — think of it looking like a mild roller coaster — which means you'll have to be extremely consistent on temping every day at the same time. Even a half-hour earlier or later can cause you to miss a temperature shift.

Women with PCOS tend to have more fertile-type cervical fluid throughout their cycles, which makes it a less reliable fertility sign. You'll still want to track this every day for consistency, but you may experience wetter days early in your cycle when there's no ovulation occurring or post-ovulation. This is also why it's important to track cervical position (something many women shy away from). While it's not as strong of a fertility sign as basal body temperature or cervical fluid, it can be a good way to confirm one of the other signs.

Consistently tracking all three signs is especially important if you're trying to avoid a pregnancy. You may have very few safe days a month, and it could take even longer than the recommended 6 months of charting before you can safely rely on your chart interpretations.

### Benefits of Charting PCOS Cycles

Even if charting with PCOS makes it too complicated or time consuming to use as a birth control method for you, it can still give valuable insight into your cycles. You will be able to tell if the irregular bleeding you're experiencing is ovulatory spotting, anovulatory bleeding or an actual period, and if you *are* ovulating, you'll be able to predict when your period will start within a 12-24-hour window — with consistent charting and some practice. Since "irregular" cycles often come down to ovulation happening at a different time each cycle, this is often a huge positive life change for women with PCOS.

If you are wanting to get pregnant or are just trying to better control your PCOS, being able to provide your OBGYN consistent charts that show when/if you're ovulating and whether there are any other issues indicated — such as hypothyroidism or [premature ovarian failure](#) — makes it easier to work together with your practitioner toward the best plan for you.

If you're experiencing irregular periods, charting is worth it just to be able to predict when your next period will start so you're not caught unprepared, but it's also a great all-around tool to give you more insight into what your body is doing and how it's responding to your current or future PCOS treatments.