

Metformin for Polycystic Ovary Syndrome

Yeovil Fertility Unit

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another format, eg. large
print or a different language,
please ask a member of staff.**

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We have today suggested that you take a treatment called Metformin for Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS). We would like to tell you a little bit about this treatment and why it works in PCOS.

Metformin has been used for many years as a treatment for diabetes, where it helps the body's own sugar lowering hormone, insulin to work more efficiently. Over the past few years, it has been found that the body's resistance to Insulin is one of the reasons why some develop PCOS. Because Metformin helps insulin, to work more efficiently, it has been found to be a useful treatment for PCOS. In addition, together with a healthy diet, it may help you to lose weight (although you will need to stick to a healthy diet to lose weight).

Metformin is particularly useful in making your periods normal, and helping your ovaries to release an egg (ovulate). This will increase your chances of becoming pregnant, although it often can take two to three months to become fertile. It may help to reduce hair growth.

Using Metformin for PCOS is unlicensed. So, although it has been used to treat older patients with diabetes for many decades, we do not have studies giving us results about the safety of Metformin in long term use in young women. In the short term studies (two to three years), it does appear to be safe and effective, but it is important for you to understand it is an unlicensed use.

Side effects

Metformin is a safe drug, and will not make your blood sugar levels fall below normal. However, about one in ten people develop diarrhoea, tummy pains and wind whilst on the drug.

There is limited data as to whether Metformin is safe in pregnancy. Current guidelines, which are generally accepted nationally, recommend you stop the drug as soon as you discover you are pregnant.

To reduce the side effects, you will start on a lower dose which is increased gradually every two weeks. You are also advised to take the tablets with meals.

If you have any questions

Please contact Jasmine Ward on the number below or contact your own GP.

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