

Healing PCOS: A Proven Protocol for Regaining Health

Amy Medling, CHC



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Rebekah Kelley: Welcome to the Humanized podcast, all about personalizing your health. I'm your host, Rebekah Kelley, and today our topic will be Healing PCOS, a Proven Protocol for Regaining Health, with certified health coach Amy Medling. Before I introduce Amy, I want to remind everyone to subscribe and get all the other variety of casts in audio, video and transcription at HumanizedHealth.com. I'd also like to thank our lead sponsor, Village Green Apothecary, at MyVillageGreen.com.

A little bit about Amy. Amy's a certified health coach and bestselling author of *Healing PCOS*. She specializes in working with women with polycystic ovary syndrome who are frustrated and have lost all hope when the only solution their doctors offer is to lose weight, take a pill, and live with their symptoms. In response, Amy founded PCOS Diva and developed a proven protocol of supplements, diet, and lifestyle programs that offer women tools to help gain control over their PCOS and regain their fertility, femininity, health and happiness. Amy has helped tens of thousands of women with PCOS take back control of their health and their lives through lasting healing and sustainable lifestyle change.

We're so happy to welcome you here, Amy. Thank you for being with us.

Amy Medling: I'm thrilled to be here. Thanks for inviting me.

Rebekah Kelley: So I just want to jump right in. Please tell us about your journey, your PCOS journey.

Amy Medling: Yeah. So as you mentioned, there's so many women that get a PCOS diagnosis, and the only support they're given is the pharmaceutical drug Metformin, which is used off-label for PCOS, and the birth control pill. And they're sent on their way, told to lose weight, that they may have trouble getting pregnant because PCOS is the leading cause of infertility. These women were – and I was – left without a lot of hope. I thought this was my life. I was kind of going to live this less-than-life with PCOS. And I know, at age 31, when I was finally diagnosed and was on these pharmaceutical pills, I felt way too young to feel so old. And I was really sick and tired of feeling sick and tired. And I just didn't have, I felt like there wasn't a lot of options, but there had to be another way to live.

So I spent several years searching PubMed and reading books at the time – this was back in, like 2007, there wasn't a lot of resources for PCOS like there is today – but I pieced together a protocol that really helped me, and it began with mindset. And that's what I wanted to talk to your listeners about today, especially when you're dealing with a chronic health condition or diagnosis, like PCOS. I know that I was really looking to everyone else to fix it for me. You know, I wanted the magic pill. And it wasn't until I figured out that, in essence, I was the magic pill and it was with the changes in lifestyle that I needed to make that the true healing really began.

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I went on to have three children after doctors told me, when I was 17, that they would have to jump through hoops to get me pregnant. So, I think that's the other thing that I really want to stress, is that what doctors tell you doesn't have to be your truth, that there's so much that's within your control and you do not have to be a victim of PCOS.

Rebekah Kelley: I love that. What a beautiful way of saying that. You became the pill. And also, I do think doctors have a tendency to kind of sometimes give you – I mean, I think they're required to, right – the "worst case scenario." But there's so many other better scenarios. And you took control and you decided, I'm going to figure this thing out. And now you also wrote a book from this, that you are helping other people with.

Amy Medling: Yeah. And I think, especially with PCOS, as I mentioned, it's the leading cause of infertility, but most women with PCOS can and do get pregnant, with appropriate treatment and lifestyle change. So I guess that's where I'm saying that you don't need to take that as you're infertile, you'll never get pregnant. There's certainly a lot of hope.

And yes, I ended up sharing my journey and what helped me heal in my book that I published with Harper Collins back in 2018, *Healing PCOS*. And it is, really, the three tenets of living life like a PCOS diva. First, you have to think like a diva and that's the mindset piece. And then eat like a diva and move like a diva. And I outline how to do that in a 21-day plan in that book. With lots of recipes.

Rebekah Kelley: Wow. So, how can women move beyond the pain and struggles of PCOS and truly heal? You've kind of hinted at a few things, right? So, can you share a little bit more in-depth?

Amy Medling: Yeah. You know, I think that a lot of the language out in social media surrounding PCOS is very ripe with masculine energy. So, conquer PCOS, fight PCOS, battle PCOS. And that's what I was doing for so long. I was literally going to battle with my sugar cravings, because there's a huge insulin resistant component and blood sugar dysregulation component of PCOS. And it really, over time, it began to feel like I was battling myself. PCOS is something that, once you're diagnosed, you can keep the symptoms at bay with your treatment plan, but it will never completely go away. So it's something that is part of who I am. And rather than battling myself, kind of embracing the PCOS and realizing that it was a sign that there was something out of balance in my body and in my life.

So I really took more of a partnering approach with myself to figure out where I needed some more support. And for so many women with PCOS, that often comes down to self-care. And I approached PCOS, and I named my company PCOS Diva, because I feel like embracing that feminine side of yourself was really important and I thought that the diva, kind of that goddess in you, is like the perfect kind of archetype for managing PCOS.

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But a lot of women with PCOS are suffering from lack of self-care. And I think that's true for a lot of women who are dealing with chronic health conditions. So being able to put my oxygen mask on first [so to speak]. You know, we hear about all the time, it honestly was the first thing that really helped me to manage my PCOS, making sure that I had the food that I needed, the time to do exercise, making sure that I had the supplements, which we can talk about, and making sure that I was taking them every day – really putting self-care as a priority in my life, that was a huge mindset shift, and living life, as I say, like a diva was really important.

Rebekah Kelley: Wow. I love that. I love the self-care, because I do think that a lot of times, even with myself, I feel like sometimes I don't take the time. Right? It's so easy to be rush, rush, rush, or I have to do this, I have to do that – to take the time and be like, wow, what do I need right now? And that's kind of what you're saying, right? You took the time to be like, what do you need right now? What is it that you need in your body to heal? I love that.

So, beyond the mindset, which I think sounds, it's huge, right? The mindset that you just provided. Diet and exercise, which it sounds like is something else that you have to make adjustment to.

Amy Medling: And the diet, it's really focusing on an anti-inflammatory diet. So, whatever that means for you. I know for me, that means really reducing gluten and dairy, and corn, that's very inflammatory for myself. I think that doing a food sensitivity panel to figure out which specific foods cause inflammation in your body is really important. But then beyond that, lots of plant-based foods. Reducing seed oils is really important. They're super inflammatory and I think a real problem for women with PCOS. And eating clean animal protein. I think it's very difficult to manage hormones without some animal protein. So I do think that that is important. But focusing on eliminating any type of processed foods. So I don't really take, you know, counting macros and carbohydrates and calories. I think that a lot of women with PCOS tend to be type A and perfectionists, and I think just being more, eating more intuitive and just being more gentle with your body kind of helps us move away from that diet deprivation and mindset. I think that we've, so many women, have grown up with this diet culture, and just focusing on foods that nourish your body and help it to heal is the way that I like to approach eating with PCOS.

Rebekah Kelley: And when you said supplements, can you talk a little bit about that? What are the key supplements that you recommend?

Amy Medling: Yeah. So I'm sure that many of the experts that you bring on to the Humanized podcast... you can't out-supplement a bad diet, but there are some key supplements that really are important for women with PCOS. I call these three supplements the essential supplements for every woman with PCOS. So, a really high-quality multivitamin that has methylated B vitamins and folate instead of folic acid is really the basis. So much of our food, as you know, is just... our soils are deplete. We don't have the same levels of nutrients that our great grandmothers did in food. So that's important, to take a multivitamin.

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And then on top of that, making sure that your vitamin D level is checked, because so many women with PCOS are deficient in vitamin D, and it can really exacerbate PCOS symptoms. And then supplementing with D3. And I like to have a D3 supplement with vitamin K1 and K2 to help with absorbability. But you want a supplement according to your level, so that you can get those optimized. And then, a really high-quality omega-3 supplement is really critical. Omega-3s, like in fish oil, help with so many aspects of PCOS. It helps reduce androgens, helps with blood sugar control, and helps insulin resistance.

Rebekah Kelley: I love that. And can you also maybe share, because I like how you... and you know, the title of this is Humanized health, your health personalized, and I love how you mentioned that the diet itself has to be customized to you, based upon, as you said, like corn didn't work for you, right? Like dairy, gluten. Can you maybe talk a little bit more about how that personalizing, how can someone personalize it for themselves? Obviously you mentioned the food sensitivities, but are there other ways where someone can really better understand? Because you also then talked about being intuitive about it and listening to your body, so that you're not just necessarily counting your macros? How does that apply? Because that really kind of fits to our sweet spot as a podcast.

Amy Medling: Yeah, you're absolutely right. You have to listen to your body, and your body will tell you what food works and what doesn't work. And of course you have the physiological symptoms, so looking for signs of bloating or digestive distress, or achy joints, or skin issues, acne or eczema. Those are all physiological indications that a food might not work for you. But also looking at the emotional and your mental feelings. I know for me, gluten makes me very irritable and agitated, and oftentimes my husband can usually figure out if I've had gluten, because I just get really irritable with him and he'll ask me, geez, what did you eat? [Laughs] I know that. But he knows me now and I know myself and that's kind of a food that's just a non-negotiable. I just really can't eat it. Sugar would be another one that might cause some, you know, emotional kind of issues. So you want food that makes you feel energized and centered and balanced and, you just feel good after you're eating it. And usually greens, lots of greens, a good animal protein. Lots of carbohydrates can be a problem for women with PCOS, can cause a lot of fatigue. So those are kind of some of the cues to look for in ways that your body sends you those messages.

Rebekah Kelley: That's great, Amy, thank you so much. Really valuable insights. Amy Medling can be found at www.PCOSdiva.com. I'm just going to spell that: P C O S D I V A.com. Let me remind you to subscribe to get access to all of our Humanized videos, podcasts and transcriptions from all of our thought leaders on personalized health at HumanizedHealth.com. Amy, thank you so much for being with us. It's been a complete pleasure.

Amy Medling: Oh, thanks for sharing awareness of PCOS. I appreciate that.