For more information:

http://www.4women.gov/
A National Institutes of Health site

http://www.hormone.org/
The Endocrine Society- information in Spanish

http://www.pcosupport.org/
Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome Association
What is Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS)?

PCOS is a common disorder that causes changes in hormone levels and many different symptoms including irregular periods, excess body hair, and/or obesity. The cause is unknown. The first reports of PCOS involved women with multiple ovarian cysts (therefore the name) although we now know that ovarian cysts are not present in most women with PCOS.

Women with PCOS have higher levels of androgens (male hormones) than other women. They also have insulin resistance which means that the pancreas has to produce higher levels of insulin than usual to keep the blood sugar normal. This increases the risk of developing diabetes.

The symptoms may include:
- Irregular or absent periods
- Obesity or overweight (especially at the waist)
- Acne
- Excess dark hair on face or body
- Thinning hair on scalp
- Vaginal yeast infections
- Infertility
- Dark-colored skin at neck and armpits

What are the long-term health risks of PCOS?

Many women have PCOS without realizing it. Since PCOS affects hormone levels, it can cause other problems. Women are at higher risk for diabetes, high cholesterol, high blood pressure and heart disease. Irregular menstrual cycles may increase the risk of cancer of the uterus since the lining of the uterus may not shed as often as it should.

Women who have PCOS may also have difficulty with infertility but usually are able to conceive with the help of medication.

How is PCOS diagnosed?

There is not one test for PCOS. Your health care provider will ask about your medical history, perform a physical exam, and check your cholesterol, blood sugar and perhaps some hormone levels.

Goals and Benefits of PCOS treatment:

1) Decrease free testosterone levels with hormonal contraception (birth control pills). This treats acne and excess or thinning hair while regulating periods.
2) Decrease or prevent insulin resistance which can become diabetes. This can help with overweight, infertility, yeast infections and the dark skin on neck and armpits. Along with a healthy diet and exercise, Metformin (glucophage) is often used.
3) Decrease risk of heart disease. Lower cholesterol, maintain a healthy weight and regular physical activity, giving you a longer, healthier life with less risk of high blood pressure and stroke.

How Can We Help?

- Call 812-855-7688 to make an appointment with a women’s clinic provider for a personal health assessment.
- Call 812-855-7688 to meet with a Health & Wellness Education registered dietitian to help you eat healthier.
- If you smoke, visit Health & Wellness Education for free help to quit. This will help cut risks of heart disease.
- Schedule an appointment with a personal trainer at the SRSC or HPER to help you be fit.