

# Megan McCrory

## When did you discover you had PCOS?

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I was formally diagnosed with PCOS whenever I was 18 years old. And that came after a few years of irregular cycles, which caused my mom to take me to the doctor to be tested. Because we have a family history of PCOS, my older sister had been diagnosed with PCOS, and she's quite a few years older than me. And we also my grandmother passed away from ovarian cancer, which is not directly related, but also a sign that there may be like some issues going on with that part of your body.

## What were your personal health struggles with PCOS?

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Initially, the first issues I saw and noticed were the irregular cycle as a teenager, and then it kind of evolved into the weight gain. And those certain ways that you carry your weight, like women with PCOS often carry it at their midsection and the front of their body. And then I kind of as I got older, notice the hormonal issues, hormonal acne, the mood issues, depression and anxiety, as well as, just like the overall the feeling that you have usually feel like something's just not right, whether it be with your emotions, or with how you feel eating certain foods, and things like that.

## How did you find resources for dealing with PCOS?

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Since whenever I was diagnosed, this was about 14 years ago, 15 years ago. And so the internet was still in its budding stages. And I would say that the research on PCOS was still on its budding stages as well. So I did look to doctors, I looked at family members lived experiences. But then primarily, most of my research came through the internet and through support groups on Facebook, trying to find people with similar experiences, and kind of match what similarities we had. And I strongly believe in being your own health advocate in so doing a lot of medical research and medical journals and things like that.

## What treatments were recommended to you for PCOS?

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The first treatment that was prescribed to me for PCOS, as a younger individual was birth control. And that targeted regulating your cycles. However, it didn't really address the hormonal issues that you have, which PCOS is an endocrine disorder, meaning that it affects your hormones. And so although that addressed one thing, it didn't address everything. Another thing that is common to be prescribed that I was prescribed with was Metformin, which helps control your insulin levels. It's commonly prescribed to people with diabetes, but women with PCOS tend to have insulin resistance. And so they're prescribed Metformin as well, which insulin is another hormone that you have to deal with. And then next, I was probably prescribed weight loss as something to work on for PCOS. And what I have kind of ended up doing is more a holistic approach, trying to figure out, you know, what really nourishes my body in all ways. Mentally doing counseling, physically seeing a dietitian.

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How did you find treatments that work for you?

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After being prescribed certain medications, and kind of being your own guinea pig, you have to be, you become your own health advocate, and you learn what works best for your own body. And so through research, and through just understanding how I was feeling after each treatment, I was able to look at what works best for me, and a target, you know, my diet, my lifestyle, the support that I needed to best equip my body.

Can you describe your journey in trying to have a baby while being diagnosed with PCOS?

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So my family's kind of interesting. My mom had four children without any issues. My oldest sister was unable to have children, and was diagnosed with PCOS, she ended up adopting a child. And then my next oldest sister had four children without any issues, that I have a large enough age gap that by the time it came to me, we kind of knew what to look for. And I was diagnosed with PCOS. Whenever I got married, and we wanted to start a family, we knew that this would be a struggle for me. I don't know if we knew exactly how much of a struggle it would be, or even what our options were.

How long was that process for you?

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We decided to start for a family about five and a half years ago. And after about six months of trying and kind of with the knowledge that PCOS would be a problem. We decided to seek fertility treatments. They were not immediately successful. And so it took a few years to get to the point where we could kind of figure out what my body needed to be most fertile.

How did you feel when you found out that you were going to have a baby?

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Whenever we found out that we were going to have a baby, it was very surreal that maybe the biggest thing, because having PCOS you go your whole life knowing that it may not be a possibility. And so there's a lot of times where you're just questioning it and wondering like how this can be an even now that we're a month out, it's like, is this really happening? Okay, you know, there's a lot of gratitude that goes into it and a lot of disbelief.

What advice do you have for women struggling with PCOS?

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My biggest piece of advice and after being a part of the PCOS community, for several years now is to, to find a community. There are people out there, whether it's through a social media support group, a local group, reaching out to your own physician, and find people that share your common diagnosis and experiences, because you are not alone. And there's help out there and there are people with similar things going on in their life.

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What does the immediate future look like for you with your first child arriving soon?

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I think because it took us so long to get here. And because we've been married for seven years without a child, it's, we're shifting into a new stage of life. And it's taking away our old identities in a good way, in a positive way. And it's something we've always wanted. It's just also the stage where you're moving into something foreign and brand new and extremely exciting. And so in a lot of ways, it's learning about who we are now, who we are as parents. In some ways, it feels victorious, because PCOS did not keep us down. Because we were able to overcome these struggles and, and find hope, and a solution. And so there's a lot to be proud of. And that too, I'm proud of my body for what it's done. And where it's taken us. I'm proud of health care. There's so many things this year for health care that I've been grateful for. And the fact that this is one of them, that modern medicine has afforded us the ability to conceive and that we're about to be parents, there's just a lot to be grateful for.

How did the pandemic affect your plans to have a baby?

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You hear a lot about quarantine babies. And there's obviously a surge of babies being born this year. But this baby did result from the pandemic in some ways, but at the same time has been planned for years and years. And it just so happens that she's coming at this time. And regardless of the pandemic and the compromises that it's put on the health care system, and everything else. There were plenty of people in the health care field that urged us on and made this possible for us to have a baby.

Any final thoughts for women with PCOS?

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I would say that you did not cause your PCOS. PCOS is an endocrine disorder. And there is not often one treatment to fix it all. And there are plenty of resources out there. And if you're frustrated, know that that's a perfect, a perfectly rational feeling to have whenever you have this disorder because it deserves more research, but you are not alone and you can always reach out for support.