



**PCOD: A Closer Look**

By : Teresa Kenney, APRN, CFCP

Polycystic ovarian disease (PCOD) is a disorder of the reproductive system caused by changes in hormones. The most common symptom is irregular cycles. PCOD affects 5-10% of all women and it is one of the leading causes of infertility. Women who experience other common symptoms associated with PCOD—increase in hair growth, acne, insulin resistance, and weight gain—are said to have polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS).

In order to determine if someone has PCOD, a doctor orders certain blood tests, a pelvic ultrasound, and a physical exam. PCOD can be a genetic disorder; therefore, if it runs in your family you may be more likely to have the disorder.

and the increase in symptoms like hair growth and acne. After time the ovaries begin to form small immature follicles or cysts. This can be seen on an ultrasound and it is sometimes referred to as a “string of pearls”. Elevated insulin levels are another effect of PCOD. This is also referred to as pre-diabetes. It leads to increased sugar levels in the body and, therefore, weight gain. Insulin resistance can be treated with medication and dietary intervention.

Using NaProTechnology, a doctor can treat both the symptoms of PCOD and the menstrual cycles. Through the use of different cooperative medications, we can regulate the menstrual cycle. It is not necessary or helpful to use the birth control pill to treat PCOD. In fact, the birth control pill does not treat diseases of women’s health like PCOS. Instead, it suppresses or masks the symptoms of the disease. Once you come off the pill, you will still have the disorder and need help to manage the symptoms and achieve pregnancy.

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**DID YOU KNOW????**

**Fertility Facts about Polycystic Ovarian Disease**

PCOD is commonly associated with infertility. This is because ovulation is irregular or infrequent; ovulation is abnormal and defective; PCOD is commonly accompanied with endometriosis; and the changes in the ovary before and after ovulation are abnormal.

**Risk factors** associated with polycystic ovaries include abnormal lipid levels in the blood, diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, thrombosis, endometrial cancer, ovarian cancer, and breast cancer.

The hallmark **symptom** of polycystic ovarian disease is long and irregular cycles, usually longer than 38 days. A **diagnosis** is confirmed with an ultrasound, a hormone profile, and a diagnostic laparoscopy.

In the 1950s, ovarian wedge resection was used to treat PCOD with a 66% pregnancy rate following surgery. In 2001, IVF was the mainline form of “treatment” for PCOD that targets only a symptom of PCOD—infertility— rather than the disease itself; it has a 23.1% success rate. NaProTechnology, which uses ovarian wedge resection along with NaPro techniques for the surgery and prevention of adhesions, has a **more-than 80% success rate.**

From: Hilgers, TW, The Medical & Surgical Practice of NaProTechnology

A newsletter dedicated to helping young women

# PCOD: A Closer Look ...continued

*Continued from page 1*

There are treatments and medicines that treat the symptoms of increased male hormones like acne, hair growth and weight gain. For example, a medication called spironalactone can be used to decrease androgens and improve acne and decrease unwanted hair growth.

It is important to monitor and manage PCOD. There are certain health conditions that a person with PCOD is at risk for because of the hormonal imbalances in her body. For example, because women may experience insulin resistance and weight gain, they are at risk for diabetes, high cholesterol, and heart disease. Also, over time, if a woman does not have a monthly shedding of the uterus, which occurs when you have regular periods, then she may build up the lining of the uterus. This is caused by a dominance of estrogen in the

woman's body and a decrease in progesterone. This can lead to irregular bleeding and increased risk of uterine cancer.

If you are given a diagnosis of PCOD you may feel confused, sad, and frustrated; or, you may have fears about your future ability to achieve pregnancy. It is important to discuss these fears with your loved ones and your doctor. There is no cure for PCOD, but there is much hope that with treatment by a NaProTechnology-trained physician your cycles and your symptoms can be managed and your chances for future fertility are very good. If a woman is married and looking to achieve a pregnancy, NaProTechnology allows couples with PCOD up to an 80% success rate.

To find a NaProTechnology trained medical consultant please visit our website [fertilitycare.org](http://fertilitycare.org) and search your state or call the Pope Paul VI Institute at 402-390-6600.

Young people, seek Christ in order to remain young.

*(Ad fratres in eremo, Sermon 44)*

God does not command impossible things, but in commanding he admonishes you both to do what you can do, and to seek his grace to do what you cannot do.

— Saint Augustine

## The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality...

Love is a gift of God, nourished by and expressed in the encounter of man and woman. Love is thus a positive force directed towards their growth in maturity as persons. In the plan of life which represents each person's vocation, love is also a precious source for the self-giving which all men and women are called to make for their own self-realization and happiness. In fact, man is called to love as an incarnate spirit, that is soul and body in the unity of the person. Human love hence embraces the body, and the body also expresses spiritual love. Therefore, sexuality is not something purely biological, rather it concerns the intimate nucleus of the person. The use of sexuality as physical giving has its own truth and reaches its full meaning when it expresses the personal giving of man and woman even unto death. As with the whole of the person's life, love is exposed to the frailty brought about by original sin, a frailty experienced today in many socio-cultural contexts marked by strong negative influences, at times deviant and traumatic. Nevertheless, the Lord's Redemption has made the positive practice of chastity into something that is really possible and a motive for joy, both for those who have the vocation to marriage (before, in the time of preparation, and afterwards, in the course of married life) as well as for those who have the gift of a special calling to the consecrated life.

Excerpts on this page and page 3 from:

The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality — Pontifical Council for the Family, Alfonso Cardinal Lopez Trujillo, December 8, 1995

# The Season of Fertility

By: Teresa Kenney, APRN, CFCP

Love  
to be real,  
it must cost  
– it must hurt –  
it must empty  
us of self.

—

Intense love  
does not  
measure...  
it just gives.

Blessed Teresa of Calcutta

Women's fertility cycles are very much like our weather's changing seasons. As we move into fall with its changes that go with the temperature dropping, it reminds me of how the beginning of our cycles—or the menstruation days—are like fall. Menstruation is a time for the body to start over by shedding the old so that it can prepare for the new.

In the cold days of winter, it is dry and covered with a blanket of snow. Similarly, after menstruation, there is a period of quiet in our bodies as our fertility pacemaker sends messages to our brain to send for a new egg to prepare to be released. Our bodies show no sign of our fertility.

Springtime is marked by the peaking out of green grass and the forming of new buds on all the trees and plants. Slowly, our bodies begin to form a follicle on one ovary, the sign that the egg is preparing to be released. As we come closer to ovulation, the follicle on the ovary matures and

prepares to burst open the egg. By now, our bodies have the presence of cervical mucus, which is similar to the warm spring rains.

In the dry hot weather of summer, mother nature turns her attention to nurture the life that has formed in the spring. Likewise, at the time of ovulation, our bodies now prepare the womb for a new life to form inside. Just as water is needed to fertilize our newly growing flowers and grass, our female bodies fertilize the womb by nourishing the lining of the uterus and thickening it's walls.

When the "summer" of our cycles come to an end, either God has blessed our wombs with a newly conceived human being or we enter into fall again, shedding the old and starting the menstrual and fertility cycles again.

God shows us that life is cyclical and that there is always hope in the shedding of the old and beginning again anew. We see this with our menstrual and fertility cycles and with the seasons of the year. Let us pray that God gives us all a deeper appreciation and respect for the amazing gift of our fertility.

In the light of the Redemption and how adolescents and young people are formed, the virtue of chastity is found within temperance—a cardinal virtue elevated and enriched by grace in baptism. So chastity is not to be understood as a repressive attitude. On the contrary, **chastity should be understood rather as the purity and temporary stewardship of a precious and rich gift of love,** in view of the self-giving realized in each person's specific vocation. Chastity is thus that "spiritual energy capable of defending love from the perils of selfishness and aggressiveness, and able to advance it towards its full realization."



# Resources

[www.popepaulvi.com](http://www.popepaulvi.com)  
[www.DrHilgers.com](http://www.DrHilgers.com)  
[www.fertilitycare.org](http://www.fertilitycare.org)

<http://www.chastity.com>  
<http://vocation-network.org>  
[www.onemoresoul.com](http://www.onemoresoul.com)  
[www.ewtn.com](http://www.ewtn.com)

## SNAPSHOT: Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati (1901-1925)

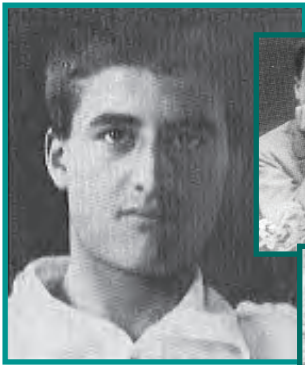
Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati is a saint for the modern world, and especially for the young people of our time. Born in 1901 in Turin, Italy, his time on earth was short—only 24 years—but he filled it passionately with holy living. ...

To our modern world which is often burdened by cynicism and angst, Pier Giorgio's life offers a brilliant contrast, a life rich in meaning, purpose, and peace derived from faith in God. From the earliest age, and despite two unreligious parents who misunderstood and disapproved of his piety and intense interest in Catholicism, Pier Giorgio placed Christ first in all that he did. These parental misunderstandings, which were very painful to him, persisted until the day of his sudden death of polio. However, he bore this treatment patiently, silently, and with great love.

Pier Giorgio prayed daily, offering, among other prayers, a daily rosary on his knees by his bedside. Often his agnostic father would find him asleep in this position. "He gave his whole self, both in prayer and in action, in service to Christ," Luciana Frassati writes. After Pier Giorgio began to attend Jesuit school as a boy, he received a rare permission in those days to take communion daily. "Sometimes he passed whole nights in Eucharistic adoration." For Pier Giorgio, Christ was the answer. Therefore, all of his action was oriented toward Christ and began first in contemplation of Him. With this interest in the balance of contemplation and action, it is no wonder why Pier Giorgio was drawn in 1922 at the age of 21 to the Fraternities of St. Dominic. In becoming a tertiary, Pier Giorgio chose the name "Girolamo" (Jerome) after his personal hero, Girolamo Savonarola...

Pier Giorgio was handsome, vibrant, and natural. ...He had many good friends and he shared his faith with them with ease and openness. He engaged himself in many different apostolates. Pier Giorgio also loved sports. He was an avid outdoorsman and loved hiking, riding horses, skiing, and mountain climbing. ...He relished laughter and good humor.

As Luciana points out, "Catholic social teaching could never remain simply a theory with [Pier Giorgio]." He set his faith concretely into action through spirited political activism during the Fascist period in World War I Italy. He lived his faith, too, through discipline with his school work, which was a tremendous cross for him as he was a poor student. Most notably, however, Pier Giorgio...



Beatification image of  
John Paul II



lived his faith through his constant, humble, mostly hidden service to the poorest of Turin. Although Pier Giorgio grew up in a privileged environment, he never lorded [it] over anyone... Instead, he lived simply and gave away food, money, or anything that anyone asked of him. It is suspected that he contracted from the very people to whom he was ministering in the slums the polio that would kill him.

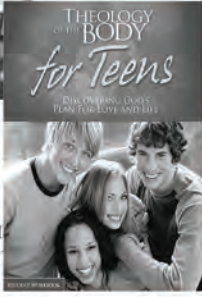
Even as Pier Giorgio lay dying, his final week of rapid physical deterioration was an exercise in heroic virtue. His attention was turned outward toward the needs of others and he never drew attention to his anguish, especially since his own grandmother was dying... On the eve of his death, with a paralyzed hand, he scribbled a message to a friend, reminding the friend not to forget the injections for Converso, a poor man Pier Giorgio had been assisting.

When news of Pier Giorgio's death on July 4, 1925 reached the neighborhood and city, the Frassati parents, who had no idea about the generous self-donation of their young son, were astonished by the sight of thousands of people crowded outside their mansion on the day of their son's funeral Mass and burial. The poor, the lonely, and those who had been touched by Pier Giorgio's love and faithful example had come to pay homage to this luminous model of Christian living.

Pier Giorgio's mortal remains were found incorrupt in 1981 and were transferred from the family tomb in the cemetery of Pollone to the Cathedral of Turin. (Taken from: <http://www.3op.org/frassati.php>)

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The Meaning  
of Vocation

