

P A N D I A H E A L T H

Vol. 1 Issue 1



1

Introduction

2

Sexual Health Awareness

3

My Truth About PCOS

4

Body Art

5

Q&A with Dr. Yen

6

Birth Control in the News

7

Pandia In The Press

8

Partnership Highlight

T A B L E O F C O N T E N T S



06

Sexual Health Awareness

Let’s talk about sexual health. This topic is something that is often overlooked and/or misunderstood. We are here to share the proper definition and information that all women should have in their hands. So, what is sexual health?

08

My Truth About PCOS

New Yorker Ruby shares her personal story of dealing with PolyCystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) while navigating her way through university, work, love, and life. She tells about the long road of discomfort and pain it took to get to her diagnosis, and how she is living now, trying to help others with their PCOS struggles.



10

Q&A with Dr. Yen

CEO and Co-Founder of Pandia Health, Dr. Sophia Yen, answers all of those hard-to-ask questions that you have always wanted to ask. Still not comfortable asking? No problem. We’ve got you and brought the answers right to you in this issue!



- 12 Bodacious Art
- 14 Birth Control In The News
- 15 Pandia In The Press
- 16 Partnership Highlight
- 17 Our Monthly Visitor Sneak Peek

Hello & Welcome

Welcome to the inaugural issue of Pandia, the women's health digital magazine of Pandia Health. This new publication was created to keep our clients and women everywhere up to date on all things female. Pandia will serve as an easy way to stay in-the-know, just as our company, Pandia Health, serves as the easiest way to receive birth control. Pandia Health currently offers birth control prescription and delivery to individuals with and without insurance. Based on your needs, Pandia can help with either or both prescription and delivery.

Quarterly, we will be covering topics relevant to you: reproductive health, sexual health, legislative updates, wellness, beauty, and more. You can look forward to interviews with female-led and female-founded companies, Q&As with our CEO - Dr. Sophia Yen, birth control news updates, and more. This first issue will be touching on September as Sexual Health Awareness Month and October as Breast Cancer Awareness Month. You'll read personal stories about PCOS and surviving breast cancer, learn about female-focused podcasts and campaigns, and receive updates on news about topics that impact you.

We are excited to begin sharing with you information, highlights, and news about important items in 2018 and the female-leaders we're proud to have surrounding us. Invoking the power of our namesake, Pandia the Goddess of the Full Moon, we hope to disperse wisdom and beauty (both inner and outer) to all who are interested in receiving!

- Pandia Editorial Team





LET'S TALK ABOUT SEXUAL HEALTH

What is Sexual Health?

Sexual health covers a plethora of topics that are so important to all genders today. From avoiding disease to planning or unplanned pregnancy to mental wellness in regards to sexual activity...So many important items fall under the umbrella term. So when the World Association of Sexual Health (WAS) launched World Sexual Health Day on September 4th, eight years ago, many were interested to fully understand what "sexual health" was and how they could be sexually healthy.

[The American Sexual Health Association \(ASHA\)](#) defined someone sexually healthy as someone who:

- Is able to experience sexual pleasure, satisfaction, and intimacy when desired.
 - Is able to communicate about sexual health with others including sexual partners and healthcare providers.
- Now, like all health-related items, you should not think less of yourself (or others!) if you are not able to mark off every section of that list. In general, others may view that list as too little or too much when acknowledging the sexual health of an individual. Everyone has different ideas and standards but in general, safety & happiness (for all involved) are key markers for a sexually healthy life!
- Understands that sexuality is a natural part of life and involves more than sexual behavior.
 - Recognizes and respects the sexual rights we all share.
 - Has access to sexual health information, education, and care.
 - Makes an effort to prevent unintended pregnancies and STDs and seeks care and treatment when needed.

So, let's celebrate Sexual Health Awareness Month throughout September and onward by going out and striving to be the healthiest and happiest individuals that we can be, making sure to include our sexual health as a main focus!

My Truth About PCOS

Ruby Wry, shares her story of being diagnosed with PCOS (Polycystic Ovary Syndrome) as a young woman just graduating college.

If you go onto Youtube, you will find an entire genre of transformational videos that are so easy to love. The videos usually take an individual or a group of individuals and commits them to a lifestyle change for a certain amount of time. In 10 minutes you get it all: the self doubt, the setbacks, the rewards; basically an entire emotional pilgrimage of change. And holy hell, by the end of the clip, it's amazing. These people are healthier, stronger, faster, smarter, more clairvoyant; in essence: positively new. However, the common trait shared by all participants is that they didn't realize just how terrible they felt previously until they had a new standard of "feeling good" to compare it to.

The truth is it's hard to tell that you're sick when you've forgotten what it's like to feel well. Our lives are busy and often we don't prioritize our health, for whatever reason. It's even more difficult when the small contribution we do make isn't visible and the accumulation of your efforts is not summarized in a neat before and after shot. I think about this a lot: what health actually means and the investment it requires, mostly because my health was challenged after receiving the diagnosis of a disease called Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome.

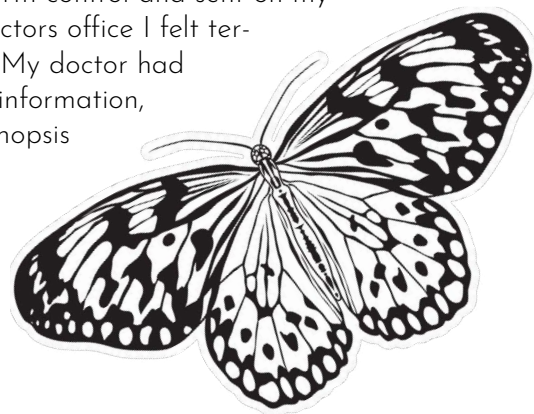
Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome (PCOS) is the most common hormonal disorder affecting women of reproductive age. Essentially PCOS is the imbalance of androgens or sex hormones that leads to complications in the ovaries in the form of cysts. It is estimated that 116 million or approximately 5-15% of the population fit the criteria for PCOS. Currently there is no final consensus of the actual cause, although research seems to indicate it has both a genetic and environmental basis and could potentially involve something called the anti-Müllerian hormone.

PCOS is diagnosed based on the Rotterdam criteria, where a woman must exhibit two of the three benchmarks in order to be diagnosed: Delayed ovulation or absence of menstrual cycles,

hyperandrogenism/high androgenic hormones, and/or polycystic ovaries on an ultrasound. However, what makes PCOS so difficult is the many associated symptoms. Women with PCOS face weight gain, hair loss (where you want hair), excess hair growth (where you don't want hair, such as your face, back and arms), cystic acne, mood instability, risk of Type II diabetes, insulin resistance, infertility, the list truly goes on...

I was diagnosed with PCOS at the age of 22. I was living in New York City and was trying to juggle a full class schedule, a job, and a social life. There is a whole list of excuses: I was busy, working in a bar, on a budget, etc. but the long and short of it was I treated my body terribly. I drank heavily, smoked, ate whatever I wanted, and had no other form of exercise besides walking to class and work. At first I started feeling exhausted, but how could I not be? I thought it was normal for a 22 year old to feel completely fatigued. Then I started gaining weight. Again I dismissed this, as I rationalized that it was bound to happen given my lifestyle. Next I started getting deep red cystic pimples around my ankles, and yet still I ignored my symptoms despite never having a pimple my entire life. It wasn't until I started bleeding for weeks at a time, that I finally made an appointment to see my OB/GYN.

I was booked for an ultra sound and received my diagnosis the same day. Visible inside both of my ovaries sat a collection of black dots, the size of beans. These are the cysts that collect in the ovaries, which fit number three on our list: polycystic ovaries. I was given a brief synopsis of PCOS, prescribed birth control and sent on my way. Leaving the doctors office I felt terrified and confused. My doctor had handed me a lot of information, but I was given a synopsis of my disease, not a solution.



Currently the treatment plan for PCOS is addressing the hormone imbalance through pharmaceutical intervention. The most common drugs prescribed are oral contraceptives, Metformin, Spironolactone or some combination depending on your symptoms. Oral contraceptives can induce a withdrawal bleed, prevent future cysts and endometrial cancer, and decrease circulating "man hormones" which cause the acne and hairiness. Metformin is a drug used for diabetes. Because many women with PCOS are diabetic or insulin-resistant, Metformin helps facilitate the absorption of glucose into the cell. At low dosages Spironolactone acts as an androgen blocker, which can reduce symptoms of acne and hair growth that results from the excess testosterone. If you're lucky then your physician will also advise you on dietary changes that can help manage your symptoms.

A common complaint that I share with many other PCOS sufferers is that it feels like there is little explanation for what is happening to our bodies and even less support regarding our treatment plan. You take some pills, lose some weight, and we'll figure out pregnancy when the time comes. However, I was taking the prescribed medication and yet I still felt sick. Even worse, I felt like I was jumping from birth control to birth control as each one came with a new unwelcomed side effect. It wasn't until a year later that I decided to ditch the conventional treatment plan and attempt to heal my body rather than manage my symptoms.

In hindsight it was obvious. However, just like those people in the videos, I didn't remember what being healthy felt like and in the beginning it often felt like I was groping in the dark. Tackling PCOS for me took a lot of trial and error, loads of will power, and tremendous amount of support from loved ones and the right healthcare practitioner. It wasn't easy but I was able to change my diet, start exercising, and find the right supplement routine. Eventually I was able to eliminate most of my symptoms and in a way that worked for me. That isn't to say that the conventional treatments aren't effective, they just weren't effective for me. There are thousands of women whose lives have been saved due to those drugs; I just wasn't one of them. I found I did best managing PCOS through a more holistic approach.



My diagnosis of PCOS has been bitter sweet. Although it is manageable, it is a lifelong condition that threatens many aspects of our daily lives. Those with PCOS suffer both physically and emotionally due to its symptoms, all while knowing that there is no cure. However, at the same time I am fortunate to have been forced through the grueling process that is taking control of your health. PCOS has taught me that health is not something that can be neatly summarized in a cute before and after shot, but is a continual process of self-betterment.

To learn more about PCOS, take a look at this [video](#) from Pandia Health's CEO and Co-Founder, Dr. Sophia Yen.

If you have a personal story you'd like to share, email us at info@pandiahealth.com for a chance to be featured in our next issue!

A & Q WITH Dr. Yen



Andrijana P. Hi, I want to ask if I can start taking the birth control pill on the 3rd day of my period or should I wait for next month and start on the first day of my period?

Dr. Yen Start on the 3rd-5th day. When the bleeding is done is the best time to start. Here are some more tips! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3-Pzapgs68s>

Leah S. Hi, I'm a bit worried because I haven't had my period for the past month and I don't know what the cause is.

Dr. Yen It depends how old you are. How long have you had your periods? If you skipped one period AND there is no chance of you being pregnant, then just wait and see. If it is possible that you could be pregnant, check a pregnancy test. It sometimes takes two weeks after sex for a pregnancy test to turn positive. You can also watch this video for more information: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WX88ryqeieO>

Sarah N. I'm on the ring (just started this month) and want to skip my period for one month (on the third month of being on the ring). Do I leave the ring in for three weeks and take it out and right away put a new ring in or do I leave the ring for four weeks and then put the new ring in? I want to do everything I can do avoid spotting. Thanks!!

Dr. Yen You should leave the ring in for four weeks and put in a new one as soon as you take the old one out!

Kelly B. I forgot one pill almost four months ago, in the second week of my pack. My doctor told me that in the first and second week there is a chance of getting pregnant but in my notice it says that in the second week there's no chance. Which is the right answer?

Dr. Yen If you are getting your regular bleed now, then you probably aren't pregnant. If you think you're pregnant, checking a pregnancy test never hurts for peace of mind! Any time you miss 2-3 pills in a row, you can risk pregnancy (unless it's the sugar/bleeding week or if you are taking pills without any bleeding/during the sugar week and you have taken at least three weeks of active pills in a row before the "accident.")

Allison S. Will you only get the acne clearing from pills alone or are there other forms of birth control like shots that help with clearing up acne?

Dr. Yen The pill, patch, and ring should all be good for clearing up acne. The shots, IUD with hormone, and the implant also work, but it all really depends on the person and how their body responds to that particular type of progesterone. Hope that helps!

WHO IS SHE



ART BELONGS TO: [Elisa Riemer](#)



“ONLY SHE HURTS THIS MUCH.” by Melina Piroso



ART BELONGS TO: [Katherine Killeferran](#)

birth control in the news



teenVOGUE [FDA Approves Contraceptive Vaginal Ring That Can Be Used for a Year](#)

On Friday, August 10, the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved the first-ever contraceptive vaginal ring that can be used for up to a full year, BuzzFeed News reports. The product, called Annovera, was developed by the non-profit organization Population Council, which recently partnered with TherapeuticsMD, a pharmaceutical company, in order to market the ring to the public. As BuzzFeed notes, Annovera works like other contraceptive rings (like the NuvaRing) in that it's placed inside the vagina, where it releases hormones like progestin and estrogen.

healthline® [FDA Approves Controversial Birth Control App](#)

There's an app for everything these days, including not getting pregnant. This month, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) announced its approval of Natural Cycles, the first-ever digital birth control for women age 18 and older, which charts a patient's fertility so that she knows which days to avoid intercourse. Created by a women's health tech company based out of Stockholm, Sweden, the app has been approved for contraceptive use in Europe since 2017. Natural Cycles requires the patient to take her basal body temperature – that is, her temperature at rest – each morning upon waking, as well as track her menstrual cycle, and input that data into the app.

COSMOPOLITAN [An advert for contraception app Natural Cycles has been banned on Facebook](#)

Controversial contraception app Natural Cycles has had its advert banned on Facebook, the BBC reports. The Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) found that the app's claims it is "highly accurate" and that it "provided a clinically tested alternative to other birth control methods" were actually misleading. Earlier this year Natural Cycles received widespread criticism when one hospital in Stockholm noticed that 37 women using the app as a means of avoiding conception had fallen pregnant in the last quarter of 2017.

The Trentonian [Packaging error leads to birth control pill recall in US](#)

Allergan is voluntarily recalling packs of its birth control pills in the U.S. because of a packaging error with placebos, increasing the possibility of unintended pregnancy. The company says four placebo pills were placed out of order in the Taytulla packs. Allergan says the first four days of therapy had four non-hormonal placebo capsules instead of active capsules.



Perricone MD ★



Perricone MD, the beauty company specializing in anti-aging skin care by Dr. Nicholas Perricone, recently did a refreshingly empowering campaign titled "Born Seekers" which showcased women pushing boundaries in their fields. [Dr. Sophia Yen](#) of Pandia Health was one of [nine women featured in the campaign](#), which came from a partnership with the Scientista Foundation. Check out Dr. Yen's interview (video and print) where she goes into 6 key ways you can support women and girls in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM)!



Good Girl Mafia started out as a statement about women being good to other women, made by [Diana Perkovic](#). What it became is a movement to empower and encourage women every to be good to their fellow females and to themselves! [Dr. Sophia Yen was recently interviewed in an episode of Good Girl Mafia podcast](#) where she discussed Pandia Health, #periodsoptional, and her experience as a female entrepreneur! Don't miss this special episode and be sure to catch the entire Good Girl Mafia podcast series!

Partnership Highlight



We had heard of smart phones, smart houses, smart cars...but when **Lioness** came out with a smart vibrator, our minds orgasmed. The company took revolutionary technology and made it user friendly for your own personal pleasure device. After syncing the device to your phone, you simply use your vibrator as you normally would and afterwards you can learn about your body's sensations and climax patterns so you can optimize your pleasure. Brilliant! Pandia Health loved this trailblazing technology so much that in August we partnered with Lioness and sent out some in-depth literature about the company and their technology along with a discount code. Slightly hesitant? [Read their reviews](#) and you'll be interested in no time!

Looking For Our Next Monthly Visitor

The secret's out. Look for a special guest segment in our next issue! We're going to be highlighting an influencer in the women's health & wellness space. Keep your eyes out for a social media takeover from a fabulous female that's sharing a message of empowerment! If you or someone you know wants to be considered to be Our Monthly Visitor, e-mail us at info@pandiahealth.com!



Great catching up with you!

In the meantime, keep in touch with us on social media!

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