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2016

Jun 10

1:37 PM

TRENDING

By Korin Miller

The Surprising Sign You May Have PCOS

"Star Wars" actor Daisy Ridley posted on Instagram about how polycystic ovary syndrome affects her skin. Here's what you need to know about the condition—and how to get its related skin problems under control.



Daisy Ridley is getting real about polycystic ovary syndrome. On Thursday, the *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* actor posted an Instagram photo with a mask on her face, the caption detailing how the hormonal disorder has wreaked havoc on her skin.

"I've tried everything: products, antibiotics, more products, more antibiotics, and all that did was left my body in a bit of a mess," she says in the Instagram post. "Finally found out I have polycystic ovaries and that's why it's bad. I can safely say

feeling so self-conscious has left my confidence in tatters. I hate wearing [makeup] but I currently don't want to leave the house without it on."



daisyridley • 3 days ago

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At 15 I was diagnosed with endometriosis. One laparoscopy, many consultations and 8 years down the line, pain was back (more mild this time!) and my skin was THE WORST. I've tried everything: products, antibiotics, more products, more antibiotics) and all that did was left my body in a bit of a mess. Finally found out I have polycystic ovaries and that's why it's bad. I can safely say feeling so self conscious has left my confidence in tatters. I hate wearing make up but I currently don't want to leave the house without it on. HOWEVER PROGRESS IS BEING MADE! (With some help from a dermatologist and cutting out dairy (waah, except for spontaneous ice creams) and cutting down sugar (bigger waah but gotta do what you've gotta do)). Finally. Finally. (Throughout all this I've only had people being wonderful and encouraging and occasionally making me realise I'm being ridiculous and there's more to life)... My point is, to any of you who are suffering with anything, go to a doctor; pay for a specialist; get your hormones tested, get allergy testing; keep on top of how your body is feeling and don't worry about sounding like a hypochondriac. From your head to the tips of your toes we only have one body, let us all make sure ours our working in tip top condition, and take help if it's needed.

#wasthispostlongenough #maybethesehashtagscanbulkkitupabit
#alsohowmanybracketsdoesonewomanneed #ifyourearingthisiapplaudyou
#thisisaclaymaskincaseyourewondering

229.1k likes 6,162 comments

Instagram

Ridley isn't alone. According to the PCOS Foundation, polycystic ovary syndrome, a condition in which a woman has enlarged ovaries with small cysts on the outer edges, is one of the most common hormonal endocrine disorders in women, affecting five to 10 percent of women.

Like Ridley, many women with PCOS struggle with acne. "Patients with PCOS have hormonal abnormalities that affect their skin, as well as other organ systems," Gary Goldenberg, M.D., medical director of the Dermatology Faculty Practice at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, tells SELF. "In the skin specifically, higher levels of hormones stimulate oil production and that in turn causes acne to develop." If a woman already has acne, hormonal abnormalities like PCOS can make it worse, he says.

How do you know if you have acne from PCOS or just "regular" acne? Board-certified dermatologist Marie Leger, M.D., Ph.D., a member of the American Academy of Dermatology, tells SELF that there are a few signs. If your acne is more common or exacerbated around your period and you have excessive hair growth as well, it could be an indicator that you're suffering from PCOS-related skin problems.

PCOS can be diagnosed with a blood test, New York City dermatologist Doris Day, M.D., author of *100 Questions & Answers About Acne*, tells SELF. However, she adds, she sees a lot of women who have PCOS-like symptoms get a blood test that actually comes back negative for PCOS—something that Leger says she sees as well. They may also not have the irregular periods that are a hallmark of PCOS, but might still have other PCOS-related skin symptoms like facial-hair growth.

If you don't have a PCOS diagnosis, your doctor may refer you to an ob/gyn or endocrinologist to find out more. If you *do* have a diagnosis, your dermatologist will typically work with your other doctors to combat the acne symptoms. "Unless I balance out the hormones and work with the ob/gyn and endocrinologist, nothing I do will have lasting effects," Day says. "I can make the acne better, but I can't keep it better."

Goldenberg agrees. "These patients do get better with standard acne therapy, but it's very important to treat the hormonal abnormalities of PCOS," he says. "This may be done with hormonal therapies and birth control pills."

If you suspect your PCOS is causing or exacerbating your acne, see your doctor. "We treat lots of patients with PCOS and we can usually help," Leger says.

Ridley agrees, noting in her Instagram post that her skin is getting better thanks to her dermatologist and dietary changes—and she urges fans to seek treatment if they have similar symptoms. "My point is, to any of you who are suffering with anything, go to a doctor, pay for a specialist, get your hormones tested, get allergy testing, keep on top of how your body is feeling, and don't worry about sounding like a hypochondriac," she says. "From your head to the tips of your toes, we only have one body, let us all make sure ours our working in [tip-top] condition, and take help if it's needed."