

Julie: Let's divorce the dumpster fire that are from the PCOS diets. Are you living with polycystic ovarian syndrome and tired of all the diets that are not giving you the relief that they are promised they will deliver? This episode of a love food podcast is in partnership with my PCOS and food peace course. Finally, free yourself from endless PCOS fatigue, frustration, shame and guilt. For PCOS sufferers who are tired of ineffective diets and unhelpful advice, join me on a PCOS and food peace journey that will change your life forever. Through the month of September, you will get 30% off using the coupon code TRUTH at checkout. Get to all the details at pcosandfoodpeace.com. Say goodbye to the food police and hello to peace.

Julie: Welcome to the Love Food podcast, hosted by dietitian and food behavior expert, Julie Duffy Dillon. This authentically engineered series is in the form of a love letter welcoming you to reconnect with food. Now pour a cup of coffee or a margarita and let's begin.

Julie: Hi and welcome to episode 262 of the Love Food podcast. I'm Julie Duffy Dillon, registered dietitian and partner on your food peace journey. I am so glad you're here. Thank you for connecting today. Over the years, I have changed how I introduced myself. Even just now on this podcast, I said I was a registered dietitian and a partner on your food peace journey. I used to introduce- introduce myself as something different. Clinical dietitian. Sometimes it's mom. Sometimes it's like, oh, I'm a medical transcriptionist - that's for when I don't want to people to know that I'm a dietician, because they love to talk to me about their diet or what they're eating at the moment. Sometimes I need a break too. But lately when people have asked me what I do, I lately have been saying, I help people with PCOS to burn their diet books. And I really honestly need to tell you, I do have a fire under my ass. And this is what's directing this episode. I've had this fire under my ass kind of brewing. It was a little smaller for a while, but I think it's because I wasn't really paying attention to it, and I wasn't tending to it. I probably was just throwing kindling on it all the time and not really taking care of it and putting some big ass logs on it. But let me tell you, I've been doing that lately, and there's so much about health care that after almost actually over 20 years now as a dietitian, it's giving me some perspective, and so much of that perspective is hindered by my privilege. And I'm feel really, honestly, really lucky that people with different lived experiences have helped me to appreciate different perspectives and points of view, and I think that's part of this fire just getting bigger and bigger. There is a lot to health care that is broken. Part of that we talk a lot of a lot in this podcast, how diet culture and anti-fat bias, how they're really provoking a harm under the guise of like actually helping, which is total bullshit. Right? So many of you know, I specialize in helping people with PCOS, like I said just a few seconds ago. And in particular, PCOS is a really interesting condition because it affects mostly people with uteruses, and it also is largely invisible. It's hard to kind of pinpoint because it's a diagnosis of exclusion. It's also not really sexy, you know, it's not bringing in a lot of research dollars, so we don't know a lot about it. And unfortunately, anti fat bias and a lot of other systems of oppression are really hurting people with this chronic condition.

Julie: So I have been journaling on what this fire under my ass is really all about, and I think it's about what I want to see different in PCOS healthcare. And before I go even any further, those of you who have no interest in PCOS, if you're wondering if you should just stop right now? Well, you know, that's up to you. But I have a feeling this episode is more generalizable especially for those of you affected by any chronic condition. I have a feeling that the things that I'm noticing that I would like to change within PCOS healthcare is a part of a lot of chronic conditions. So

leave it up to you if you want to listen to the rest of it or not, it's a really quick episode. There's no letter included today, in case this is your first Love Food podcast episode, just know this is a little different. But I just needed to talk about this, and I think I'm really just fanning the flames in a way that I hope energizes myself and other people to really take a look at PCOS care, and together, only together we can change it. So I want to know if you're with me or not. But before we get to the top six things that I want to see changing in PCOS care, a quick word from our sponsor.

Julie (ad break): We are welcoming back Ovo Folic as a sponsor of the Love Food podcast, and we want to ask you a question: what is your PCOS truth? If you are living with PCOS, you may or may not know that September is PCOS awareness month. How many people are not even aware of what PCOS actually is? But so many people experience this syndrome, and it is something that can make life really complicated, especially because so much of what you experience, so many of the symptoms are invisible. We know that you often don't feel heard or are just dismissed by your doctor, and told to just lose weight, and try another stupid diet that we know is not going to work and actually can provoke a lot of harm. Well, the folks at Ovo Folic at Elan Healthcare, they are teaming up with me to really shine a light on how the stigma is so harmful. And so we are encouraging people with PCOS just like you to share your PCOS truth using the hashtag #mypcostruth anywhere that you use social media. You know, I love Ovo Folic. It's a great inositol supplement that is third party tested has the 40 to 1 ratio. And the company who makes it, Elan Health Care, is a women owned and led company. We are giving away a six month supply of Ovo Folic to two lucky winners. Do you want to enter? I think you should, someone has to win. So go to juliedillonrd.com/ovofolic and you'll get a link to sign up. Again, it's juliedillonrd.com/ovofolic and Ovo Folic is spelled O V O F O L I C. You can also grab the link in the shootouts.

Julie: All right, let's go ahead and get to the meat of the episode.

Julie: So there are six things that I want everyone to know about polycystic ovarian syndrome. And as I'm talking about PCOS, keep in mind, even if you don't have PCOS, this probably applies to many different chronic illnesses and experiences as you are navigating healthcare the world in general. I came to these particular six items in PCOS care as sort of a manifesto. I've been really thinking about what I want to do as a clinician, how I want to serve people with PCOS. And these are the things that I really would like to see change. I appreciate that it's not something I can do. It's only something that we all can do together. So let's get to it.

Julie: So first up, I want everyone to know that diets harm people with PCOS. This is probably not a surprise if you've listened to the Love Food podcast for very long. But if you're new to my work, I firmly believe that people with PCOS are not a math problem to be solved. Assuming that eating less carbs, intermittent fasting, keto, or any other diet are the PCOS fix neglects key research- key research, and insight. We know that long term dieting worsens insulin and inflammation and also predicts binge eating. Even more, diet recommendations prevent access to healthcare and contribute to the oppression of fat people with PCOS. People with PCOS should not have to practice an eating disorder like anorexia nervosa to earn healthcare provider attention praise and care. And I know so many of you are doing that. We need to fight to end this normalization of disordered eating to treat PCOS.

Julie: All right. Moving on to number two, this is really, really important. People with PCOS are not just women. You may notice that I don't say girls and women with PCOS. I did at some point, but I don't anymore. Everyone, everyone with PCOS matters, not just women with PCOS. And if you are someone who identifies as a woman, you may be wondering like, oh I didn't know men could get PCOS, and I have a feeling that you're talking about something different. What I'm referring to is that anyone at any point in time that was born with a uterus and has been diagnosed with PCOS may not actually be a woman. Non binary people, intersex people, and trans men live with PCOS too. We only use inclusive language like people with PCOS rather than sister or women with PCOS because I really believe everyone deserves to have a place to tend their PCOS and feel valued there, to feel wanted. This is so important. So again, you won't hear me say girls and women with PCOS. And honestly, I don't know the quote "best way" to refer often to like, PCOS diagnoses and statistics, because I don't want to exclude people. This is important. It's honestly also a nuance that can wait, because I'd rather include someone and have a clumsy way of getting to explaining what PCOS is and how people experience it. I'd rather include someone than have a sound bite. So, it's people with PCOS and everyone with PCOS is valued and wanted in the work that I do.

Julie: Now we're on to number three: people with PCOS, I hope you know this. People with PCOS are more than their ovaries. If you have PCOS, I wonder what you were told when you were diagnosed. Was it something like, "here is birth control and come back when you're trying to get pregnant." There's many people listening right now, at least one of you who is like, oh yes, that's exactly what I was told. I do not assume that people with PCOS want to increase their fertility or decrease their androgen levels, even. Typical PCOS recommendations like that come back when you're trying to get pregnant. They neglect the metabolic and psychological consequences from PCOS. They also, more importantly, reinforce misogynistic and transphobic beliefs that people with ovaries are only valued for the reproductive purposes. Again, people with PCOS are valuable, and they are valuable because of their humanity rather than their ability to reproduce. And I cannot mention reproductive health without acknowledging in real time in the United States, in the state of Texas, there has recently been um, a law cleared, changed? I don't understand the- I don't know exactly the terms, but all I know is now abortions are illegal after six weeks in the state of Texas. And while this may be polarizing, I think it's really important to name that reproductive justice is a part of PCOS healthcare as well. This is something that's going to hurt the most oppressed people, this law, and I am against this law. Reproductive health care, reproductive justice is important to PCOS care.

Julie: All right, let's move on to number four. Number four is: we are going to end weight based discrimination in PCOS care. So that's something that I just feel in my bones. We together are going to end weight based discrimination in PCOS care because we have to. Putting um, gates up for people to access reproductive medicine, gender affirming surgery, knee surgery, hip replacement, any other kind of interventions, putting a weight as a gate to getting those um, surgeries, is not okay. Everyone deserves access to health care. They should never be weight based. This common healthcare practice is discriminatory, plain and simple, and we know it harms health. So, this is something I want everyone to know, that it is not okay to push weight based discrimination in PCOS healthcare.

Julie: All right. Number five. I believe people with PCOS, and you should too. How many times, you, the listener with PCOS, how many times have you explained to a health care provider that you are trying to cut back on something? Maybe it's carbs, or sugar, or trying to exercise more, only to be told or at least understood that you are not believed by this health care provider. This is actually quite the norm. Most people that I have talked to with PCOS have tried all of the things that their health care providers have told them to try, and they've been told directly or indirectly that they were not believed. As someone without PCOS who's trained in the medical care system as a dietitian, I was trained to not believe people, that if people were telling me that they ate a certain amount to multiply that by three, that was actually something that I was instructed to do. I regret that, because I believe people with PCOS when they say that they have tried, I lift up their concerns even if I don't see them or understand them, and I encourage you to do the same together. Let's believe people with PCOS when they have tried. Let's lift up their concerns. Even if we don't see them or understand them, we need to stop dismissing people with PCOS and stop minimizing their pain, their fatigue, and their other experiences.

Julie: Okay, so number six, our last one is, we need to stop scamming people with PCOS. So many people experience this condition. So many people. So of course, there's going to be folks preying on vulnerability of someone who's really wanting to feel better. Yet we know PCOS is a chronic condition. It can't be cured. While Instagram influencers may have found a certain way to fix PCOS symptoms by eliminating a food group or using a special supplement, we appreciate this is the exception, not the rule. It also shines a big old spotlight on elitism within PCOS care. Promoting these fixes minimizes the fact that PCOS is a condition that is lifelong, chronic, and worsens with age. It also promotes this culture of shame for those still suffering after following the directions. While some interventions like increasing access, decreasing oppression, nutrition therapy, stress management, and movement can improve symptoms, they do not cure PCOS. We do not promise a cure. I don't promise a cure, and I encourage you not to promise a cure. Instead, we need to provide a safe space to explore options to making living with PCOS symptoms easier. Sometimes this is going to come down to the person with PCOS doing something different, and sometimes that easier living comes from together, changing the system to make chairs more accessible, to make health care more accessible, to allow people to have more access to the food that they need, the shelter they need, and the safety that they also need. I make a point to say all of that because with all these six items, what I really, really starting to appreciate more than anything is that only together we will change PCOS care to be more accessible and equitable for all. We need to do this together. I appreciate this is not something I can do. And so I'm hoping you'll join me.

Julie: Thank you for letting me share these six things that I want everyone to know about PCOS. My sort of manifesto when it comes to PCOS care. If you enjoyed this episode of the Love Food podcast, I would love it if you left a rating, a review, or subscribed or shared an episode. Doing any of these acts of kindness really helps us show grow, and I want everyone to have access to food peace. So thank you in advance for playing your part in helping more people to find the show.

Julie: This episode of the Love Food podcast was brought to you by my PCOS and Food Peace course. Remember, it is 30% off through the month of September, so you have a few more days left. You can use the coupon code TRUTH at checkout. Go to pcosandfoodpeace.com.

Julie: Alright, until next time, take care.

Julie: Thank you for listening. I am Julie Duffy Dillon, and this is the Love Food podcast. Do you want access to more food peace? Jump on over to my website and join my email list there. I share exclusive content that I don't share anywhere else. Get access to these tips and strategies by going to juliedillonrd.com/signup. And I look forward to seeing you here next week for another episode of the Love Food podcast. Take care.