

Menstrual Health

'Having a menstrual cycle is like having an extra vital sign - like your pulse or body temperature'

Causes

Reproductive hormones play a role beyond reproduction

They can affect:
Sleep
Mental health
Weight
Bone density
Heart health

Factors

Factors influencing regularity



Female life stages

Stress



Energy imbalance



High training load (energy expenditure)



Restrictive diet (energy intake)
Pregnancy



Sleep including jet lag

Contraceptives

Example

Menstrual Dysfunctions

- Heavy menstrual bleeding
- Excessive pain/cramps (dysmenorrhea)
- Absence of period (amenorrhea)
- Cycle lasts longer than 38-45days (oligomenorrhoea)
- Cycle lasts less than 21 days (polymenorrhea)
- Cycle varying in length more than 7-9 days (irregular pattern)
- Endometriosis
- Polycystic ovary syndrome
- Ovarian cysts and fibroids

RED-S



Energy balance

Relative Energy Deficiency in Sport (RED-S) - A condition of energy deficiency causing adverse effects on all bodily systems. It affects both male and female athletes who do not fuel adequately, either intentionally or unintentionally to meet high training loads.

Difference between Female athlete Triad and RED-S, 2 models which interlink:

- Triad considered to affect menstrual function & bone health
- RED-S recognizes the larger impact it can have on all systems and can also affect males



Impact on health:

- Amenorrhea (loss of period or delayed menarche)
- Bone health
- Urinary incontinence
- Fertility



Impact on performance

- Decreased response to training
- Decreased competition performance
- Increased injury risk.

Advice

Increase awareness & support

Seek medical advice if:

- Periods have not started by 15-16yrs
- Started developing breasts more than 3yrs ago and does not have her period
- Has severe cramps not relieved by ibuprofen
- Has very heavy bleeding (goes through pad or tampon faster than 2hours)
- Has severe PMS affecting everyday activities
- Has lost her period for >3months)