

# RED-S



## what is RED-S?

(formerly called Female Athlete Triad)

Relative Energy Deficiency in Sports (formerly known as Female Athlete Triad) is a condition which happens when the body begins to break down from not getting enough energy (food) to support exercise. It is not the same thing as an eating disorder, such as anorexia or bulimia, and often needs a different approach to treatment.

## treatment

eat more, train less

That sounds simple, but it can take a team of professionals to get the balance right. A Registered Dietitian can ensure an athlete is getting the nutrition needed for their sport. Behavioral health can help an athlete with any worries about how these changes in nutrition and exercise could affect sports performance. Sports Medicine can monitor hormones, vitamins, minerals, and bone density, as well as treat injuries and prescribe needed medications. These professionals can communicate with coaches, school athletic trainers, and other staff about short-term changes to training or eating schedules. Depending on severity, other specialists may also be involved. These could include Adolescent Medicine, Gynecology, Endocrinology, or Orthopedics.

## symptoms

three major categories

### 1. Not enough energy (food).

An athlete may eat enough to support normal life, but not enough to support their training schedule. Symptoms may include fatigue, exercise intolerance, changes in sports performance, and weight loss

### 2. Decreased hormone levels.

When lack of energy becomes the body's 'normal' state, it begins to shut-down the 'optional' systems. The reproductive system usually shuts off. This is more noticeable in females, who may have irregular periods or stop having periods entirely. It is more difficult to monitor in male athletes. Early studies show that they have a similar change in hormones, but without any noticeable outward signs that there is a problem.

### 3. Bone health.

As the body begins to shut down systems from lack of energy, athletes lose bone mass. The body has peak bone growth during the teen years. Losing bone mass, (or not building enough bone mass) during this time can cause lifelong problems. It also increases the chance that an athlete has an overuse injury, either now or later.