



NATIONWIDE CHILDREN'S
When your child needs a hospital, everything matters.™

Helping Hand™

Health Education for Patients and Families

Sports Medicine: Menstrual Dysfunction in the Athlete

The menstrual cycle is the hormonal process a female body has each month to prepare for a possible pregnancy. Regular menstrual periods start in puberty and can last until menopause. A cycle is usually a sign that your body is working normally and lasts about 28 days.

Menstrual Dysfunction is a lack of regular menstrual periods occurring every 21 to 45 days beginning 1 to 2 years after the first menstrual period starts. Menstrual Dysfunction can be described as Primary Amenorrhea, Secondary Amenorrhea or Oligomenorrhea.

Primary Amenorrhea is not having a period by age 15.

Secondary Amenorrhea is not having a period for 3 months in a row when there were regular cycles before.

Oligomenorrhea is when menstrual cycles occur more than 45 days apart.

Many things can cause menstrual dysfunction. Any changes in normal hormone levels can lead to menstrual dysfunction, especially in athletes. This can be caused by overtraining, stress, dieting and weight loss. Typically, menstrual dysfunction occurs when the amount of energy used by athletes exceeds the amount of energy taken in through nutrition.

Increased risk

- sudden increase in the length, intensity or frequency of exercise
- high intensity training
- limited food intake or dieting
- too much weight loss
- not enough nutrition during times of increased activity

Treatment

- Nutrition therapy and exercise revision
 - A multi-disciplinary approach led by primary care or a Sports Medicine provider which may include referrals to sports nutrition, adolescent gynecology and endocrinology specialists. Treatment is tailored for each patient. Daily calcium and Vitamin D intake will be looked at.

How to prevent

- get enough sleep
- gradually increase activity and training
- correct nutritional problems
- maintain well balanced diet
- ensure appropriate energy consumption (ex. extra snacks or small meals before practices or games)

When to call the health care provider

Call your health care provider for further evaluation. You may also schedule with Dr. Amy Valasek or Dr. Anastasia Fischer in **Sports Medicine** at **614-355-6000** for further review and treatment.

**To schedule an appointment with Sports Medicine, visit
NationwideChildrens.org/SportsMedicineScheduling or scan
this code with your camera phone.**

