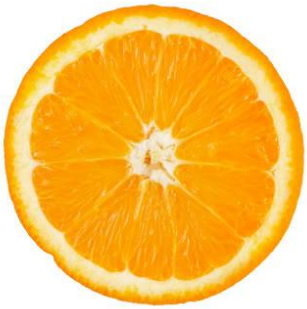
Prep School Performance Nutrition News

with
Kathleen Searles, MS, RD, LDN



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Nutritionist. Speaker. Consultant.

Hello! This month Prep School Performance Nutrition News focuses on maintaining health for athletes who desire weight change. The lead article addresses the female athlete triad, and potential health risks to female athletes who restrict their calorie intake. The new weight change guidelines from the National Athletic Trainers' Association are summarized. Finally, some nutrition tips for athletes recovering from stress fractures are presented. I hope you enjoy reading about these tricky topics and find some tips you can use with your students.
– Kathleen Searles

Female Athlete Triad: Are your female athletes eating enough?

What is the female athlete triad?
The term "female athlete triad" refers to the co-existing conditions of:

- Low energy availability (food intake does not meet calorie needs)
- Disrupted or absent menstrual cycle
- Bone loss These conditions threaten the overall (and long-term) health – and ultimately performance – of female athletes, and should be dealt with pro-actively.

How does the female athlete triad affect health and performance?

Low energy availability obviously can impact stamina and performance. Female athletes may restrict intake in order to lose weight or in response to peer pressure. Dieting, however, is a primary pre-cursor to disordered eating. In a study of 123 female athletes (Jackie Buell, The Ohio State University) the average calorie intake was 1927 Calories/day vs. an average calorie expenditure of 2929 Calories. These athletes were clearly under-fueled! Under-fueling is of particular concern with multi-sport athletes. Disrupted or absent menstrual cycles are related to low energy availability. The altered menstrual cycle signals hormonal changes that affect reproductive health and bone

Kathleen Searles, MS, RD, LDN is available to come to your school to present information about the female athlete triad and nutritional health for your female athletes. November is also a great time to be addressing nutrition with your wrestlers, skiers, and hockey players as we transition into winter sports. Improve your athletes' performance with nutrition know-how!! Call today to set up a visit.
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National Athletic Trainers' Association Weight Loss Guidelines Released

In June 2011 the National Athletic Trainers' Association released "Safe Weight Loss and Maintenance Practices in Sport and Exercise." This document includes 7 basic recommendations for safe weight loss:

health.
Bone loss is a result of decreased estrogen levels in under-fueled athletes, especially in those with menstrual irregularities. The adolescent years are key in building healthy bone to last throughout adulthood. Normal hormone levels and adequate calcium and calorie intake are important to build a strong skeleton. Skeletal scans of under-fueled female athletes have shown signs of decreased bone mass and frank osteoporosis even in young women. In practical terms, this is most often seen as stress fractures or slow healing after a traumatic fracture.

What can coaches do to reduce the incidence of female athlete triad?

- Focus on a balanced diet of healthy foods
- De-emphasize weight as a performance criteria
- Work on other performance factors such a sleep and psychological preparedness
- Recognize and accept individual differences in athletes
- Refer athletes to a health provider if signs of under-fueling, disordered eating, menstrual irregularities, or stress fractures are observed

For more information: www.femaleathletetriad.org and the NCAA Coaches' Handbook "Managing the Female Athlete Triad"

Nutrition in Stress Fracture Recovery

Good nutrition can help get athletes with stress fractures back in the game.

In the October 2011 issue of the Sports Dietetics – USA Score newsletter, Lindsay Langford, MS, RD, CSSD (certified specialist in sports dietetics) offers these tips for the 4-8 week recovery period:

- If the athlete is at an appropriate weight, match calorie input to output to maintain weight.
- If the athlete is underweight and has been restricting calories, use this time to increase calories for weight recovery while activity level is lower.
- Include adequate protein for bone healing and muscle development (to support bones and joints.) Langford suggests adding an extra 3 ounce serving of lean protein or a protein shake or smoothie that provides 15-20 grams of protein.
- Vitamin D and calcium also play a role in bone growth/healing. If the athlete does not use dairy products, consult with a health professional about appropriate supplementation.

Use body composition assessment to determine a body weight that is healthy and supports good performance.
Repeat body composition testing to assess progress toward goals.
Weight change (gain or loss) should be gradual. Suggested parameters are 1-2 pounds per week with an upper limit of Both diet and exercise should be part of any weight change strategy. Weight change plans should be compatible with the athlete's overall training plan and goals.
A weight change plan should provide adequate calories from all food groups.
Programs should conduct regular education on safe diet/weight management and involve trained nutrition and health professionals in the training. Coaches, peers, and family members should not provide information about dietary or weight change approaches.
Athletes should be cautious with the use of dietary supplements, ergogenic aids, and/or rapid weight loss methods.
You can view the complete document by clicking here.

About:

Kathleen Searles provides consulting services to private secondary schools. She is available to speak to students, faculty, coaches, etc. on a variety of general and sports nutrition topics. With over 30 years of experience in the boarding school environment, she is ready to tailor nutrition messages to your school's needs.

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