



Becoming an elite athlete takes years of hard work and commitment. Although injuries are often considered a part of an athlete's life, many injuries are preventable.

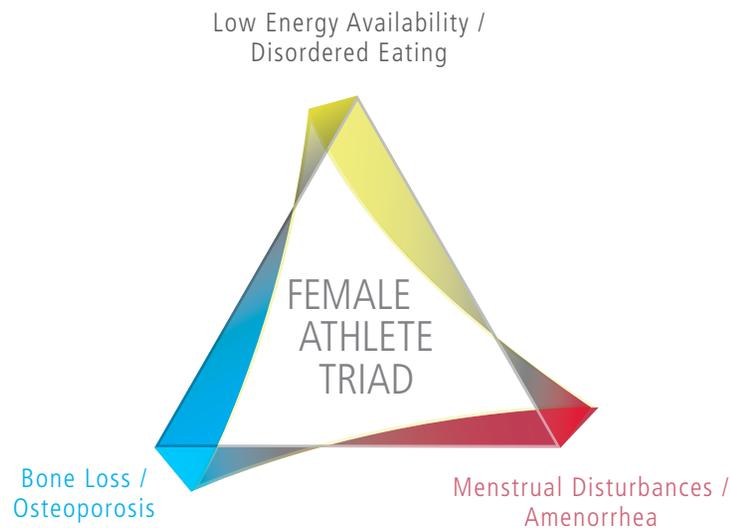
Injuries remove the athlete from development opportunities, from her training program and from her competition schedule. If injuries can be avoided, doesn't it make sense that we do everything possible to reduce the risk of injury?

Poorly planned training programs (both in content and scheduling) are a major factor leading to athlete injury. Other factors, such as early single sport specialization, unhealthy dietary habits, chronic sleep deprivation and insufficient recovery, will also heighten the risk of injury. The **FEMALE ATHLETE PASSPORT** provides valuable information to help elevate awareness to all those involved in athlete development and performance preparation.

Coaches and other members of the Integrated Support Team (strength and conditioning coach, physiotherapist, biomechanist, sport psychologist, dietitian, sport scientist, physician and others) need to be aware of the impact of poorly designed training programs and competition schedules on their female athletes. Compared to males, female athletes have unique responses to flawed implementation programs and competition schedules. **Parents AND athletes** should be well informed of these issues to ensure best practices are being adopted so that the health and wellness of the female athlete is promoted.

The questions included in the **FEMALE ATHLETE PASSPORT** address dietary intake (including vitamins/supplements/medications), menstrual cycle profile (including oral contraceptive pill use), past injury and illness, and sleep. You may wonder why some of these questions are being asked? There is a well-established connection between diet (energy intake), exercise (energy output), menstrual regularity and bone health. This connection is explained briefly:

Proper nutrition is critical for optimal sports performance. Athletes need sufficient energy intake to match the energy output of regular training but some have trouble achieving this balance. When energy intake does not match energy output, not only will performance suffer but other functions in the body will suffer too. *The menstrual cycle requires energy.* If the body does not receive enough fuel, hormonal disturbances may occur and result in delayed menarche (later age of a girl's first period), irregular periods (oligomenorrhea) or stop altogether (amenorrhea). These irregularities will lower an important hormone called estrogen. Typically, athletes with low energy intake are also low in calcium. *The combination of low estrogen with low calcium intake can lead to weak bones, poor bone formation, increased risk of stress fractures and premature osteoporosis.* These three separate but related conditions are called the "Female Athlete Triad."



Answers to the following questions will help coaches and members of the Integrated Support Team design effective and safe training programs. Athletes may find it helpful to track some of these areas to improve their own awareness. We want all female athletes to be informed and we want them to be equipped with the tools to make wise choices in support of her journey to excellence.

Athlete responses are confidential; only the coaching staff and Integrated Support Team will view this information.

Permission from athletes (and also from parents/guardians if the athlete is under 18 years of age) must be obtained if responses are to be shared with others.

Permission to share: Yes No

If yes, signature(s) required:

Athlete: _____

Parent or Guardian: _____

FEMALE ATHLETE PASSPORT

Today's date: _____

Name: _____

Date of birth: _____

Current height: _____ Current weight: _____

Age of first menstrual cycle? _____

Frequency of menstruation (number of times/year)? _____

List any medications, vitamins or supplements you are currently taking:

Do you take oral contraceptive pills? _____

If so, how long have you been taking them? _____

Number of brothers? _____ Ages? _____

Number of sisters? _____ Ages? _____

List injuries and major illnesses, and the year they occurred:

Do you eat from all food groups? Place a checkmark beside each food group you eat.

- Fruits
- Vegetables
- Meat
- Milk/Dairy
- Breads/Grains

Identify the foods or food groups you avoid: _____

Number of meals eaten/day? _____ Number of snacks eaten/day? _____

List your food allergies: _____

List the foods you do not like: _____

How many hours of sleep do you get each night? _____

Do you take naps? _____ How long do you nap for? _____

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For further information please visit canadiansportforlife.ca
and download the article entitled *"The Female Athlete
Perspective: Coach/Parent/Administrator Guide"*
written by Dr. Vicki Harber.

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THE FEMALE ATHLETE PASSPORT