
RED-S Warning Signs Checklist

Signs of low energy availability in athletes

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Relative Energy Deficiency in Sport (RED-S) is low energy availability that can hurt performance, bone health, and recovery. This checklist helps parents and coaches spot patterns early.

Warning signs to watch

Persistent fatigue, heavy legs, or poor recovery; repeated illness or stress injuries; missed or irregular periods (females); stalled growth or weight loss; mood changes or irritability; focus on food or body that affects daily life.

What to do

Track patterns over 2–3 weeks, not single bad days. Use neutral language (energy, recovery) rather than weight or appearance. If several items apply, escalate to a physician or dietitian. Improve meal rhythm and recovery intake before chasing perfect macros.

Context

One tired day is normal. A pattern of low energy, skipped meals, and repeated niggles is worth acting on.

Common mistakes

Waiting for a major injury or collapse before acting; commenting on body size instead of energy and recovery; assuming "eating enough" without checking timing and consistency.

Quick FAQ

Q: Is this only for underweight athletes? A: No. RED-S can occur at any body size. Q: Who should use this? A: Parents, coaches, and athletes as a conversation starter. Q: What next? A: If the checklist lights up, share it with a doctor or dietitian and focus on consistent fueling and recovery.

References

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