

COACHES' CHECKLIST

HOW TO IDENTIFY SITUATIONS THAT PLACE ATHLETES AT NUTRITIONAL RISK



Do you discuss weight control with your athletes? Is there pressure on you or your athlete to make a lower/higher weight class?



Are your athlete's nutritional needs changing due to puberty, growth spurt, or a change in activity level?



Do any of your athletes avoid specific foods/food groups? Do any of your athletes have special diets? Are any of your athletes diabetics?



Are any of your athletes living alone or away from their families? Are they preparing their own meals with limited nutrition knowledge and grocery shopping/cooking skills?



Do any of your athletes travel to competitions for extended periods of time?



Are any of your athletes unusually fatigued before or during workouts?



Do you frequently practice in hot and/or humid environments or exercise at high intensities for long periods of time?



Is your athlete displaying signs of an eating disorder? (Weight changes, frequent illness, rigid behaviours or ideas around food or eating, etc.)

If you answered 'yes' to any of the above questions, your athlete may be at nutritional risk due to:

Excessive weight-consciousness: Athletes facing pressure to look a certain way or achieve a specific weight or body fat percentage are at an increased risk for disordered eating behaviours, calorie restriction, and nutrient deficiencies.

Restricted diet: Athletes restricting certain foods due to allergies or other health/ethical concerns may have a harder time meal planning and meeting nutritional needs.

Poor/inexperienced cooking skills: Athletes living alone without much help or experience in the kitchen may have trouble stocking their kitchen and preparing healthy meals.

Travel: Athletes who travel a lot may find it challenging to eat quality/healthy/fresh foods, and maintain an eating routine.

High energy demands: Athletes who train long hours and/or at high intensities have increased nutritional and hydration demands.

Encourage these athletes to consult a registered dietician or a nutritionist to assist them in planning a nutritious diet, and to ensure that they are meeting their caloric and nutritional needs. Your provincial Sport Medicine Council can help you find a qualified dietician/nutritionist with sport experience in your area.

Help athletes to build skills by conducting grocery store tours, simple cooking lessons, and by providing recipes and other nutrition-related resources.

Encourage open, non-judgemental conversation around these sometimes sensitive topics, and refer to a professional when needed.