



Fuel Up and Feel Great

Understanding Low Energy Availability

Swim England has produced guidance on how to identify low energy availability (LEA) and its potential health and performance effects, as part of their Fuel Up and Feel Great campaign. Knowing how to spot the signs early helps athletes get the right support — whether from a GP, a dietitian, or a specialist organisation.

What Is Low Energy Availability?

LEA happens when the body doesn't have enough energy to support all its physiological functions, because there's a mismatch between energy in and energy out. The body prioritises energy for exercise before crucial functions like menstruation, bone development and growth — so over time, this can affect health and performance.

What Can Cause It?

RED-S

Relative Energy Deficiency in Sport — impairments to metabolic rate, menstrual function, bone health, immunity, protein synthesis and cardiovascular health.

Overtraining Syndrome

A performance decline lasting over two months, alongside changes to physical and mental wellbeing not explained by another cause.

Disordered Eating

Food-related behaviours that don't meet the threshold for a diagnosed eating disorder, but can still affect physical, mental or emotional health.

Eating Disorder

A mental health condition where control of food is used to cope with feelings or situations.

If You're Worried — About Yourself or a Teammate

Coaches, teammates and parents aren't expected to diagnose the cause — but everyone can help by noticing the signs and encouraging the right support. You don't need to have it all figured out to ask for help, and you don't need to wait until things feel unmanageable.

Speak to a Welfare Officer, coach, or trusted adult

They can help you decide on next steps, including seeing a GP

Your GP

The right first step for a full assessment — they may refer you to a dietitian or specialist

Learn More from Swim England

Fuel Up and Feel Great — Swim England

Full guidance for athletes, parents, coaches and support staff

swimming.org/sport/low-energy-availability-guidance

The CSC Welfare Team Is Here for You

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