

9 ways

how not having a

PERIOD
IS DANGEROUS
FOR YOUR
HEALTH

Let's get that lady party going again

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Why Our Periods Matter

(it's not only about making babies!)

It took me many, many years to open my eyes to the fact that my hypothalamic amenorrhea, which means, not having a monthly period, is a serious problem.

Us women *should* have a period, because that's how nature intended. No matter how we don't like those 5-6 days a month that come with mood swings, belly aches and chocolate cravings, having a normal menstrual cycle is crucial to our health.

“Having a normal menstrual cycle is crucial for women's health.”

I didn't have my period for years, but for a very long time, I was not *too* concerned about it. I saw doctors a few times for it, but no one was able to figure out why this happened to me.

They suggested me the pill, which doesn't solve the problem. They put me through some tests, including the brain scan to detect a possible tumor. None of those tests showed that there's anything wrong with me.

So, I thought that if doctors couldn't figure it out, maybe *that's just how I am*. I just didn't have a period (even though I had had it in the past), period. And because I wasn't interested in having babies, I wasn't too worried.

I vaguely remember one doctor once telling me that my quick weight loss may have caused it. In 2007, I lost about 14kg/30 lbs in six months, by significantly decreasing my calories, eating a super low-fat diet and running an hour or sometimes two hours a day, six days a week.

But I didn't pay much attention to it because I didn't want to hear anything about possibly having to stop exercise and gaining weight. Looking back to it now, I know that eating too little, training too much and losing a lot of weight were the reasons that caused my period to disappear.

“Eating too little, training a lot and losing a lot of weight were what caused my period to disappear.”

At the end of 2016, I started doing a lot of research and realised that there are many reasons why I should want my period back as soon as possible, which you can read more about in a second.

As I'm writing this, I am recovered from hypothalamic amenorrhea and I get my period every month. What I had to do: stop exercising (don't worry, it's temporary!), start eating much more, get rid of stress as much as I could, and put on weight.

Sounds like a lot of things to give up? But here's the thing: Nothing should be more important than your health, because not having a period may be really dangerous for you. Keep reading to find out how.

9 Ways How Not Having A Period Is Dangerous For Your Health

Fertility. Of course, for many of us, having babies is the main reason why we want to have regular periods.

But getting the period back just the first step. We also want to ovulate, or, release an egg, so it could happily join with a sperm cell and get the baby started.

It's possible to have a period but not ovulate. We want them both, ovulation and a period. They're both needed for a healthy cycle.

Bone health. When we don't ovulate and don't get our periods, we may seriously harm our bone health. If we haven't had a period for more than one year, we are at risk for osteoporosis.

For those women who are not interested in having babies, maintaining bone health is probably the main motivator to get their cycle going again.

Maintaining body temperature. Women with hypothalamic amenorrhea have all experienced this: Everyone else around them are wearing shorts and T-shirts, while they are the ones wearing a hoodie and sweatpants and are still cold.

Having hypothalamic amenorrhea often means that our bodies don't have enough resources to maintain a normal body temperature and keep us warm. We're likely not eating enough, we're spending too much energy via exercise, or the combination of both. So our bodies have to conserve energy and there's just not enough to keep us warm.

Hair, nail and skin health. Brittle nails, dry skin and thin hair or hair loss are all results of energy deficiency in the body. These are simply not the areas our bodies can afford pouring energy to, because there are other, literally life-or-death functions to take care of, like breathing and metabolism.

Once we get our cycles back, our hair will get thicker, nails stronger and our skin will find its glow again.

Digestion. With no sufficient energy available, our digestion slows down too. That's why a lot of women that are suffering from hypothalamic amenorrhea experience constipation. So much so that it can become the new normal: We think that that's *just how we are* and that we're simply having "poor digestion". That's exactly what I thought too!

The real reason might be that the body is holding on to every bit and piece of energy we're giving it, and it doesn't want to eliminate anything. Therefore, you may suffer from frequent constipation.

Sex drive. If our sex drive is low, we may also think that *that's just how we are* – although most of us are in our 20s and 30s!!

Vaginal dryness that often goes hand-in-hand with low libido, and it doesn't make getting intimate very much fun.

But when we then think back to when we still had natural periods (not being on the birth control pill), we may realize that we actually used to like having sex!

Low sex drive and vaginal dryness are caused by low estrogen levels. Once we get our hormones balanced again, estrogen levels rise, our ovulation and period comes back and sex drive *will* return also.

Sleep. Many women who don't have a regular menstrual cycle are also having trouble sleeping. They're having hard time falling asleep and sleeping through the night. They're always waking up in the middle of the night (and often hungry)!

We need to have a hormone called leptin in our bodies to regulate our sleep. Energy deficiency, which is often the main cause of hypothalamic amenorrhea, causes the levels of leptin to drop, so we can't fall asleep or wake up often.

Giving our bodies more rest and more food, we can restore the normal leptin production and start sleeping better. I can tell that great sleep was probably the greatest “side effect” for me as I had been almost insomniac *for years*, without knowing why!

Overall energy. Women with hypothalamic amenorrhea are often brain-foggy, tired, depressed and their energy levels are low.

When we’re under-fed and over-stressed, we just don’t have the energy to crush our life goals. Makes sense, right?

When we get our period back, all “departments” in our body will have more energy. We won’t be okay with just *surviving*, we can actually *thrive*. Finally!

Obsession-free life. If you’re reading this, chances are that you have lost your period because you went a tiny bit too far with trying to be super fit.

Hours running or lifting weights at the gym, never taking a rest day, always counting calories, calculating macros, getting on a scale every day or even multiple times a day, turning down parties and get-togethers because you had to work out or because you didn’t know what they’d have to eat at the party...

Sounds familiar?

“Getting your period back will also help you to get your life back.”

If you lost your period because you were obsessing over food and exercise, then getting it back means you have to stop obsessing about both.

Not controlling your food and exercise can be scary. But trust me: as you learn to trust your intuition, eat and train according to your body’s needs and remember to reduce stress and have fun, you will get your period back and enjoy a completely different, obsession-free life.

Disclaimer:

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