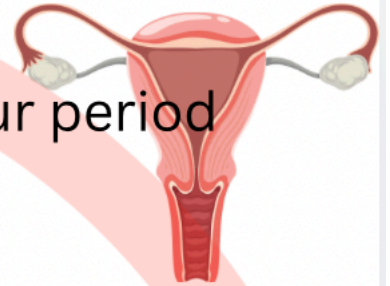


What happens when we have lost our period



WHAT IS HYPOTHALAMIC AMENORRHOEA (HA)?

HA occurs when a part of our brain called the hypothalamus decides that it's not in our best survival interest to spend precious energy on having a regular menstrual cycle.

Our hypothalamus is like our internal surveillance system that's concerned with two main things; safety and homeostasis. Our hypothalamus is essentially always scanning our internal and external environments in order to make a decision about whether it is in our best survival interests to carry a pregnancy or not.

There are two main causes of HA

HA is one possible cause of a missing or irregular period that leads to a low levels of certain hormones that are important for our health and wellbeing.

WHAT CAUSES HA?

1. Inadequate energy availability - This is when we're not eating enough energy to sustain our basic body functions and our energy output (for some this may include exercise).
2. Too much stress - This can include psychological and/or physical stress (e.g. exercise, drug use, lack of sleep etc)

Our hypothalamus is highly attuned to both inadequate energy availability and high levels of stress as both of these things threaten our safety and balance. At the point that our hypothalamus decides we're no longer safe, the normal cascade of hormones that lead to ovulation is interrupted. As a result, we lose our ability to produce adequate levels of estrogen and progesterone and therefore have a healthy period.