

[IMAGE]

Less Sleep = Higher Concussion Risk?

By Editorial Staff

Concussion is a big buzzword these days in health care and athletic circles, so much so that some athletes – from amateur to professional – are deciding the risk (particularly the potential long-term consequences) doesn't outweigh the benefits of playing. But no one can reduce concussion risk entirely, which makes prevention key. How can you reduce your risk of suffering a concussion? Here's one way that might not be on your radar: improve your sleep habits.

Research published in *Sleep Medicine* evaluated sleep patterns among nearly 200 Division I college athletes by having them complete questionnaires regarding quality of sleep and frequency of insomnia, among other variables. In matching questionnaire data with injury rates in the following year (including concussion), the researchers found athletes with insomnia and/or excessive daytime sleepiness were nearly 15 times more likely to suffer a sports-related concussion compared to better-rested athletes.

When it came to sleep problems and concussion risk, it didn't take much, according to the study: even a few days a month of excessive daytime sleepiness more than doubled concussion risk. What's more, moderate to excessive insomnia more than tripled concussion risk compared to the risk in athletes with better sleep patterns.

Whether you're a college athlete, a weekend warrior or somewhere in between, the concussion risk is a reality. Ask your doctor about how to reduce your risk when participating in sports; how to help identify concussion signs if you or a loved one appears to have suffered one; and how chiropractic care may be able to help manage post-concussion symptoms, which have the potential to last for weeks or even months depending on the severity of the initial impact.

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