

[IMAGE]

Wrestling Your Way to Wellness

Need another way to keep your kids healthy? Encourage athletic participation! Exercise has long been associated with stimulating natural immune cells in adults, but what about its affects on the immune systems of adolescents?

Researchers from the University of California, Irvine, and UC San Diego conducted a study to determine if immune function is enhanced in adolescent boys by intense exercise. The study examined 11 healthy boys, 14-18.5 years old, who were evaluated before and after they engaged in an hour-long wrestling practice session.

Following exercise, blood samples of the participants showed an increase in natural killer cells, T helper cells, and granulocytes, monocytes, and lymphocyte subpopulations - all important components for healthy immune function. Researchers concluded that although the wrestling session stimulated immune function, the role of these changes on the overall status of the immune system could not be definitively determined.

One thing, however, is certain: Exercise benefits people of all ages - mentally and physically. Encourage your children to participate in an athletic activity, or better yet, why not get out there and play with them? Engaging in athletic activities can be a great way for your family to spend time together while doing something good for your health.

Reference:

Nemet D, Mills PJ, Cooper DM. Effect of intense wrestling exercise on leucocytes and adhesion molecules in adolescent boys. *British Journal of Sports Medicine* 2004;38(2):154-158.

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