

Concussion Home Instructions

SYMPTOM PREVENTION AND TRIGGER AVOIDANCE

- Use of sunglasses as needed for photophobia (light sensitivity)
- Minimize all screen time to <1 hour and completely avoid all symptom exacerbating media such as iPhone, iPad, video games, active technology media, loud music
- Utilize school/work support plan to avoid any symptom exacerbation in school/work
- Avoid dehydration or poor nutrition
- Daily multivitamin and fish oil supplementation
- Avoid all other known triggers of symptoms
- Do daily gentle neck stretches and exercises
- Utilize sleep hygiene instructions if having any difficulty with sleep

MEDICATIONS FOR HEADACHES

- **Prevention of headaches with trigger avoidance is best option**
- Tylenol only, unless otherwise specified by your doctor
- Advil or Aleve can generally be utilized **after** the first 5-7 days
- **AVOID:** Narcotic pain medication

SLEEP HYGIENE

The most common cause of insomnia is a change in your daily routine. For example, traveling, change in work hours, disruption of other behaviors (eating, exercise, leisure, etc.), and relationship conflicts can all cause sleep problems. Paying attention to good sleep hygiene is the most important thing you can do to maintain good sleep.

Do:

1. Go to bed at the same time each day.
2. Get up from bed at the same time each day.
3. When cleared by your doctor for activity: Get regular exercise each day, preferably in the morning. There is good evidence that regular exercise improves restful sleep. This includes stretching and aerobic exercise.
4. Get regular exposure to outdoor or bright lights, especially in the late afternoon.
5. Keep the temperature in your bedroom comfortable.
6. Keep the bedroom quiet when sleeping.
7. Keep the bedroom dark enough to facilitate sleep.
8. Use your bed only for sleep.
9. Take medications as directed. It is helpful to take prescribed sleeping pills 1 hour before bedtime, so they are causing drowsiness when you lie down, or 10 hours before getting up, to avoid daytime drowsiness.
10. Use a relaxation exercise just before going to sleep.
 - Muscle relaxation, imagery, massage, warm bath, etc.
11. Keep your feet and hands warm. Wear warm socks and/or mittens or gloves to bed.

Don't:

1. Exercise just before going to bed.
2. Engage in stimulating activity just before bed, such as playing a competitive game, watching an exciting program on television or movie, or having an important discussion with a loved one.
3. Have caffeine in the evening (coffee, many teas, chocolate, sodas, etc.).
4. Read or watch television in bed.

Don't (continued):

5. Use alcohol to help you sleep.
6. Go to bed too hungry or too full.
7. Take another person's sleeping pills.
8. Take over-the-counter sleeping pills, without your doctor's knowledge. Tolerance can develop rapidly with these medications. Diphenhydramine (an ingredient commonly found in over-the-counter sleep meds) can have serious side effects for elderly patients.
9. Take daytime naps.
10. Command yourself to go to sleep. This only makes your mind and body more alert. If you lie in bed awake for more than 20-30 minutes, get up, go to a different room (or different part of the bedroom), participate in a quiet activity (e.g. non-excitable reading or television), and then return to bed when you feel sleepy. Do this as many times during the night as needed.

Tryptophan Rich Foods Aid in Sleep

- **Poultry:** Turkey may well be the most well known dietary source of L-tryptophan, but all animal proteins contain some of the amino acid.
- **Seafood:** Fish, such as tuna, halibut, salmon, sardines and cod, and scallops also contain between 250 and 400 mg of L-tryptophan per serving.
- **Dairy Products:** Cheese, milk, and yogurt still provide you with a full essential amino acid set along with bone healthy calcium. A 1-cup serving of reduced fat cow's milk provides 100 mg of the amino acid, while 1 cup of low-fat yogurt gives you 60 mg.
- **Nuts and Seeds:** Nuts and seeds are a convenient way to supplement your L-tryptophan intake when you're short on time. With the highest dose of the amino acid per serving, pumpkin seeds provide 110 mg per 1/4 cup. Sunflower seeds, cashews, almonds and walnuts all contain over 50 mg of L-tryptophan per 1/4 cup.
- **Legumes:** Legumes, such as beans, split peas, peanuts and lentils, offer a fiber- and protein-rich source of L-tryptophan. Kidney beans, black beans and split peas each contain 180 mg per cup, while 1/4 cup of peanuts contains 90 mg.

Sleep Medications

Melatonin is a naturally produced substance in the brain that can help with sleep if above measures not working:

Melatonin 3-6 mg taken 1.5 hours before going to bed as needed for sleep induction

Consult with your doctor prior to using other sleep aids

References:

CDC Heads Up Concussion
University of Maryland Medical Center: Tryptophan
Familymedicine.tufts.edu