

Keeping your health and wellbeing in the know

# MyHealthTALK



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Courtesy of Asset Health

## Winter Sports: Concussion Alert

Let the games begin!

Millions of people in the United States participate in winter sports every year including hockey, ice-skating, snowboarding, skiing and snowmobiling. While these sports are exciting and an excellent way to stay active during the winter months, there are also many risks involved with the high speeds and slippery conditions. The most common type of injury associated with winter sports is concussions.

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury caused by a bump or blow to the head that causes the head and brain to move rapidly back and forth. This sudden movement can cause your brain to bounce around or actually twist inside the skull. Traumatic brain injuries can cause bruising, damage to the blood vessels, and injury to the nerves. Most people with a concussion recover quickly and fully, while others could have symptoms that last for days or weeks. The effects of a more serious case could last for months or even for a lifetime. Doctors may describe concussions as “mild” because they are usually not life threatening, but the effects of a concussion can be serious and you should always seek medical attention when a head injury is involved.

Head injuries are the leading cause of death among skiers and snowboarders and concussions can be tricky to diagnose. Signs may not appear for days or even weeks after the injury occurred. Signs and symptoms of a concussion may include:

- Headache or a feeling of pressure in the head
- Temporary loss of consciousness
- Confusion or feeling as if in a fog

- Amnesia surrounding the traumatic event
- Dizziness or “seeing stars”
- Ringing in the ears
- Nausea or vomiting
- Slurred speech
- Fatigue

While playing winter sports is fun, you need to know your limitations and how to lower your chances of sustaining a head injury. There are ways to protect yourself and to minimize the risk for concussions. Here are some tips:

- Wear approved, properly fitted, and well maintained protective equipment, such as helmets.
- In hockey and other sports, enforce no hits to the head or other types of dangerous play.
- Be sure to scope out the trail, sledding hill, or skating rink before going full speed.
- Be aware of blind spots, turns, and sudden drops or knolls.
- Never ski or sled through, or close to trees.
- When walking in icy weather be sure to take short, slow steps and always salt your walkways.

When a concussion does occur, it is very important to give yourself plenty of time to heal. Once a person has a concussion, they are four to six times more likely to sustain a second concussion. Although most of these head injuries are mild, it is important to evaluate and treat them appropriately to avoid potentially life-threatening outcomes. Have a great time being active this winter but also remember to be safe.

## Be SMART

### About Your New Year’s Resolutions!

It’s that time of year again...Time to get ready for the new year and time to make those New Year’s Resolutions. Like many of us, we make our New Year’s Resolutions and then two weeks or a month later, they are forgotten. This year try making SMART resolutions.

#### Specific

Straightforward and emphasizes what you want to happen.

#### Measurable

Establishes concrete criteria for measuring achievement of the goal.

#### Attainable

Goals that are not so far out of reach that you won’t stay committed to them. This is a goal that you feel you can accomplish.

#### Realistic

This is do-able and can be achieved with some effort.

#### Timely

This is a timeframe for the goal and gives you an end point to work towards.

Some examples are:

- I will run a 5k in under 30 minutes this year.
- I will lose 5 pounds by March 1st
- I will begin walking at least 20 minutes every day.

By setting SMART resolutions you will not only set realistic goals, but you will not get discouraged in the process. Setting these small and attainable goals can make your New Year’s Resolutions a success!

# HOLIDAY SAFETY TIPS

With the holiday season upon us, it is important to remember some key safety reminders as you decorate your home, and celebrate with family and friends. Although beautiful, and so much a part of the holidays, festive trees, plants, decorations and even pretty wrapped presents can potentially pose a safety risk, especially to children and pets.

## PLANTS

- Poinsettias are **not** really poisonous, however if your child munches on a poinsettia plant, he may feel ill afterwards. Also, the milky sap can produce a skin reaction, so it's still a good idea to keep them out of reach.
- Mistletoe is the real danger of the season. If any part of the plant is ingested, including the leaves or berries, it can produce a fatal reaction.
- Many other common holiday plants that can produce toxic reactions, such as, azalea, Jerusalem cherry, holly berries, bittersweet, Crown-of-thorns, dieffenbachia, ficus, hyacinth bulbs, and philodendron, pyracantha, amaryllis bulbs, ferns, paperwhite narcissus bulbs, ivy, and juniper leaves.
- Tree needles can also cause skin, mouth and stomach irritation depending on your sensitivity.

## PRESENTS

- Many toys require batteries, remember that they are a choking hazard, and toxic if swallowed, always keep them out of the reach of children.
- Avoid wired ribbon around young children. The wires can poke through the fabric and injure the skin or eyes.
- Don't let children play with lengths of ribbon longer than 7 inches, to avoid the risk of strangulation.
- Packaging or wrapping could produce flash flames or toxic fumes, so never burn them, or toss them into a fireplace.
- Plastic packaging and bags are not toys - dispose of them promptly, so that little ones are not tempted to play with them.
- Pick up and dispose of all foam "peanut" packing, as these items pose a serious choking risk.
- Keep ribbons, yarn, and string away from pets, as they can cause intestinal obstruction and bunching of the intestine along the length of the string.

## DECOR

- Use sturdy tree branches that can support the weight of ornaments, and never hang them from wires or lights.
- Metal ornament hooks are a choking hazard, and they are sharp; use cautiously around children.
- Avoid ornaments that look like candy or food; they're just too much of temptation for children.
- Leaded materials are hazardous if ingested by children, therefore choose plastic or artificial tinsel, rather than metal.
- Always remember to turn off all holiday lights, and blow out candles, when you go to bed or leave the house.

Hopefully these tips will help assure your holiday season is joyous and safe! Please remember to always keep the telephone number for the National Poison Control Center near the phone at all times (1-800-222-1222.) Don't waste time having to look it up when you need it!

Sources: About.com, U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, Pet Education.com, American Association of Poison Control Centers.

## Optimize in 45!

Why is the proper nutrition after your workout so important and why do we need to do it within 45 minutes of our workout ending?

If there is one thing that holds the average person back from getting the results they desire from their workouts it is skipping the proper nutrition. The best post workout nutrition is in a balanced protein and carbohydrate liquid mix that can be easily digested.

It is recommended to optimize within 45 minutes (protein and carbohydrate supplement) of your workout ending. Numerous research cited by John Ivy and Robert Portman in their book Nutrient Timing has shown the longest time period you want to wait is 45-minutes after your workout. This ensures the right nutrients (Sugar and protein) go to the right fuel tanks (Muscle). If you wait too long (Longer than 45-minutes) as many people do; three things happen.

1. You end up being more hungry than normal and overeat.
2. It is easy for the body to store calories in fat cells rather than the muscle cells.
3. Your body will begin to feed on muscle tissue to restore glycogen cells.

Imagine your muscles as a battery full of fuel. As you workout imagine that you are slowly draining the fuel (Sugar and protein) out of the battery (Muscle). After you workout you have a window of opportunity to recharge (Muscle) the battery with fuel (Sugar and protein). If you wait too long the battery (Muscle) cannot refuel. The fuel has to go somewhere so it looks for a different storage cell (Fat) and ends up getting absorbed there.

The best way to ensure that the right nutrients get absorbed in the right places is to have the proper nutrition after your workout. So Optimize in 45!