



## SLEEP

### **ZZZ's can help get a W**

Sleep has a huge impact on your performance! Many think sleep is just the opposite of being awake. Not true!! In fact, while you are sleeping, your body is busy repairing itself-both mentally and physically. Our nervous system needs time to tune its connections. Our cells show an increased production of proteins while we are asleep. This promotes growth, tissue healing, and builds your immune system to fight off illness. Lack of the proper sleep will cause a soccer player to have less than optimal concentration, focus, and may slow down healing of injuries.

### **How many ZZZ's do I need?**

There are many stages you go through during a night's sleep. Each stage is important and corresponds to different functions. In fact, during the *deep sleep* stage is where the release of the growth hormone increases in teenagers. So, a lack of sleep could theoretically lead to diminished growth. People need different amounts of sleep based on age, amount of exercise, etc. **Experts agree that teenagers need NINE hours of sleep a night.** That means if you get up for school at 6:30 a.m., then bedtime should be at 9:30 a.m. I can hear it now, "Yeah, right!" However, the more serious you wish to take your performance in soccer, not to mention your performance in the classroom, the more serious you should take your sleep. I would highly recommend the full nine hours around times of frequent training and competition. As athletes, you must be focused both on and off the field to obtain success.

### **Tips for a good night sleep**

To get the best night sleep so you can perform your best on the field, follow the following tips for a good night's sleep:

- **SET A SCHEDULE:** Go to bed and get up at a set time each day. Disrupting this cycle can cause insomnia. It is not good to deprive yourself and then try to catch up.
- **EXERCISE:** Try to exercise 20-30 minutes each day. However, exercising soon before bedtime makes it difficult to fall asleep.
- **AVOID SLEEP-INHIBITING SUBSTANCES:** Avoid soft drinks with caffeine, tobacco products, chocolate and medications.
- **RELAX BEFORE BED:** A bath, reading, music, or some other relaxing activity will help prepare for sleep. Of course, nothing gets you tired like homework!
- **SLEEP UNTIL SUNLIGHT:** If possible, wake up when the sun is up. It may not be possible during certain times of the year or with school schedules. However, it helps the brain "turn on."
- **DON'T LIE AWAKE IN BED:** If you can't fall asleep, don't just lie there. Get up and read or listen to music until you can fall asleep.
- **CONTROL YOUR ROOM TEMPERATURE:** Maintain a comfortable room temperature since your body loses some of its ability to adjust itself during deep sleep. Extreme temperatures may disrupt sleep.
- **SEE YOUR DOCTOR IF YOUR SLEEPING PROBLEM CONTINUES:** If these tips don't work and you are struggling to get good sleep and feel awake, alert, and ready to play, then contact your doctor for advice.