

Sleep: best legal drug to enhance your performance

BY DR. PHIL WAGNER
FOR THE DAILY NEWS

The "Steroid Era" in baseball has brought performance-enhancing drugs to the forefront of sports. Ever since Ben Johnson was stripped of his gold medal from the 1988 Seoul Olympics, steroids have been the main "culprit" of performance-enhancing drugs. But as the careers of players like Barry Bonds and Mark McGwire came into question, a "new" drug surfaced as a major performance enhancer. HGH (human growth hormone) has been used by athletes since the 1970s and is banned by the International Olympic Committee and almost every major sports governing body. But until major-league baseball players started testing positive for HGH, most people didn't know of it as a major performance enhancer.

Human growth hormone is naturally secreted by the body and stimulates cell growth and reproduction in humans and other animals. The effects of HGH in humans are far reaching and include decreased body fat, increased muscle mass, increased bone density, increased energy levels and immune system function and even improved skin tone and texture. So, you can see why it might be used by elite athletes to improve performance. While supplementing with additional hormones can be dangerous and should only be done under the guidance of a doctor, giving your body all of the chances it can to produce its own HGH is a smart recovery technique for athletes.

The peak time for HGH secretion in humans is about an hour after you fall asleep. Research by Judith Davidson at the Western Division of Toronto Hospital showed that

SPARTA POINT

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HGH secretion was greatest during slow wave sleep (deep sleep). In addition, researchers at the Max Planck Institute of Psychiatry in Munich, Germany, found that sleep deprivation significantly decreases HGH secretion, especially in young adults (less than 24 years old).

So how can you get better sleep? We tell our SPARTA athletes to start by shooting for eight to nine hours a night. Make your bedroom like a "sleep cave," so it's cool and dark. And limit the amount of electronics near your head while you sleep — the electromagnetic field they give off negatively affects deep sleep. In addition, try to go to sleep and wake up at about the same time every day. Research at the Medical University of Lübeck Germany, in the Department of Clinical Neuroendocrinology, showed that disruption of your normal circadian rhythm (sleep-wake cycle), significantly increases cortisol secretion. Cortisol is known as the "stress hormone," it increases your blood pressure and blood sugar and reduces your immune responses.

Dr. Wagner is the Director of SPARTA Performance Science in Menlo Park. For info on this article or to learn more about SPARTA, visit www.SpartaScience.com

LOCAL RESULTS

TUESDAY

PREP BOYS BASKETBALL

■ **Menlo School-Atherton 60, Pinewood-Los Altos Hills 45**
Highlights: Menlo clinched sole possession of the West Bay Athletic League regular-season crown. The host Knights had four players in double figures, led by Alex Smith's 13 points. Willi Tashman continued his solid play with 12 points. Jerry Rice Jr. and Dan Hoffman chipped in 11 apiece. Menlo led 24-20 at halftime then seized control in the second half by turning long rebounds into transition opportunities. For Pinewood, Max Lippe finished with 20 points (4 of 8 on 3-pointers), while Conor Whitlock scored 16.
Record: MS 19-3, 12-1 league

■ **Sacred Heart Prep-Atherton 63, Harker School-San Jose 58**
Highlights: Ryan Sakowski hit six 3-pointers and scored 30 points as the Gators beat

one of the better teams in the WBAL. SHP led 16-12 after one period then upped it to 30-24 at halftime and 50-36 after three. Konopnicki scored 10 for the Gators, who got 8 from Baloff, 5 from Meelen and 4 from Davison.
Records: SHP 16-8, 10-3 league; HA 18-7, 8-5

FRIDAY

PREP BOYS BASKETBALL

■ **Woodside Priory-Portola Valley 40, Pinewood-Los Altos Hills 36**
Highlights: It was a wild game with 12 lead changes. Pinewood led 34-32 going into the 4th quarter, but were hurt by missed free throws. Pinewood missed 10 in the second half and hit just 9 of 24 for the game. Priory led 13-12 after one period and 26-23 at halftime. Pavlonis (13 points), Narai (8), Helmezci (6) and Feldman (9) led Priory scorers. Pinewood got 9 points from Whitlock, 8 from Wolfgramm, 6 from Jindal (on two 3-pointers) and 5 from McClelland.

TV/RADIO

TODAY

■ **MEN'S COLLEGE BASKETBALL**
■ Providence at Louisville, 4:30 p.m., ESPN2
■ Oklahoma State at Texas Tech, 6:30 p.m., ESPN2
■ **CYCLING**
■ Tour of California, 1 p.m., VERSUS
■ **NBA**
■ Magic at Hornets, 5 p.m., ESPN
■ Lakers at Warriors, 7:30 p.m., CSNBA, ESPN, 680

THURSDAY

■ **MEN'S COLLEGE BASKETBALL**
■ Duke at St. John's, 4 p.m., ESPN
■ Xavier at Charlotte, 4 p.m., ESPN2

■ Rutgers at Villanova, 6 p.m., ESPN2
■ Wisconsin at Indiana, 6 p.m., ESPN
■ Cal at Oregon, 6 p.m., CSNCA, 1550
■ Stanford at Oregon State, 7 p.m., 860
■ Saint Mary's at San Diego, 8 p.m., ESPN2
■ Hawaii at Fresno State, 8 p.m., ESPN2
■ **WOMEN'S COLLEGE BASKETBALL**
■ Oregon at Cal, 8 p.m., CSNCA
■ **CYCLING**
■ Tour of California, 1 p.m., VERSUS
■ **GOLF**
■ Euro PGA: Johnnie Walker Classic, 6:30 a.m., GOLF
■ PGA: Northern Trust Open, noon, GOLF
■ **NBA**
■ Spurs at Pistons, 5 p.m., TNT
■ Celtics at Jazz, 7:30 p.m., TNT
■ **NHL**
■ Sabres at Flyers, 4 p.m., CSNBA
■ Kings at Sharks, 7:30 p.m., CSNBA, 98.5

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