OMEGA-3S AND BRAIN INJURY

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Omega-3 fatty acids are important for brain development and function, help reduce inflammation, and act as antioxidants in the body. As a result, omega-3 supplements have gained some interest for their potential beneficial effects on traumatic brain injuries (TBIs). TBIs can be mild (such as a concussion) to severe, but if you ve suffered from any type of TBI, don t rely on omega-3 supplements to get your head back in the game.   
  
Research in this area is limited, and most of it has been conducted on mice and rats. In these studies, animals given omega-3 supplements before or after a head injury showed reduced signs of damage and performed better on certain mental tasks compared to injured subjects not given omega-3s. Far less research has been conducted on the effects of omega-3 supplements on symptoms of concussion or other TBIs in humans, but there have been some reports of benefit. While these findings are promising, it s too soon to say with certainty whether omega-3 supplements are effective to reduce the risk of or assist in recovery from TBI.  
  
Due to the lack of scientific evidence, it s important to beware of dietary supplement products with claims to be able to prevent, treat, or cure concussions or other TBIs. In fact, dietary supplements cannot be marketed to cure, mitigate, treat, or prevent diseases.  
  
Although omega-3 supplements haven t been proven to help with TBIs, omega-3s are still important for your brain, heart, and overall health. It s best to get your omega-3s from food, but if you choose to take supplements, do so under the supervision of your doctor. For more information on omega-3 supplements, please read Omega-3 Supplements: In Depth from the National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health.  
  
TBI is a serious health condition that can have short- and long-term effects on how you think and feel. To learn more about preventing and addressing TBIs, visit the Human Performance Resources by CHAMP s Traumatic Brain Injury articles, as well as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention s web page on traumatic brain injury and concussion.