

HEALTHY SLEEP HABITS FOR CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS



Sleep plays an important role in growing minds and bodies.

Children and adolescents need plenty of sleep for mental, emotional and physical health. The quality and amount of sleep your child gets has a direct effect on their mood, behavior and learning.

When your child doesn't get enough sleep it can affect school performance, behaviors and feelings. It can also cause health problems. For adolescents, poor sleep can increase the risk of injuries, substance abuse, and car accidents for those who drive. Sleep is important for healthy growth, a stronger immune system, and overall health.

How much sleep should my child or adolescent get (by age)?

Age	Hours of Sleep
0 to 12 months	12 to 16 hours (including naps)
1 to 2 years	11 to 14 hours (including naps)
3 to 5 years	10 to 13 hours (including naps)
6 to 12 years	9 to 12 hours
13 to 18 years	8 to 10 hours

What are the signs that your child needs more sleep?

Sometimes, when a child is "over-tired," they may seem hyper or fight sleep more than usual. Your child might need more sleep if they:

- Have a hard time falling asleep (hyperactive)
- Have a hard time focusing or remembering things
- Become tired during the day (fatigue)
- Feel depressed, anxious, or irritable mood
- Perform poorly in school (their grades drop)



Is my child or adolescent getting enough sleep?

Many children and adolescents do not get enough sleep. Although sleep needs are different for everyone, the American Academy of Sleep Medicine offers helpful guidelines for sleep during development.

Helpful Tip: Think about what time your child needs to wake up in the morning and count backwards to choose the correct bedtime.



TIPS FOR PARENTS

How can I support healthy sleep habits?

Consistency is key! You can help your child get a better night's sleep by supporting healthy "sleep hygiene". Sleep hygiene refers to healthy habits and behaviors that help the body fall asleep. Here are some helpful tips:

All kids:

Encourage physical activity. Regular exercise and fresh air during the day will help your child fall asleep and stay asleep at night. Check with your child's doctor about safe exercises.

Limit caffeine and sugar before bed. They can make it hard to fall asleep.

Turn off screens an hour before bed. The light from screens can trick the brain into thinking it's time to wake up. Help your child's mind prepare for rest by limiting screen time. Remove phones, tablets, computers, TVs and any other electronics from your child's bedroom.

Use the bed only for sleep. No homework or watching TV. This helps your child's brain connect sleep with their bed.



Younger kids:

Create a sleep-friendly environment. Before bedtime, make your child's room dark and quiet. Some children prefer a little background noise, such as "white noise" from a fan or sound machine. Adjust the temperature so it's not too hot or cold. If your child needs a night light, turn it off after they fall asleep.

Set a time for bedtime and follow it every night. Keeping children on a regular sleep schedule helps the quality and amount of sleep they get. This is important on weekends too!

Make a regular bedtime routine. A nightly routine like "bath time, story time and lights out" helps kids fall asleep.

Adolescents:

Encourage a bedtime routine. Have adolescents take a warm shower or bath an hour before bedtime. Encourage quiet activities before bed such as reading, writing in a journal or listening to soft music. For older children and adolescents, avoid afternoon or evening naps. They can make falling asleep at bedtime more difficult.

Have them use a journal. Journaling before bed to get thoughts and feelings out of their system (followed by something soothing) can help adolescents fall asleep.

Help them manage their time. Have your adolescent start homework or studying a little earlier to ensure they get enough sleep at night.



When should we seek help?

If your child wakes up during the night, snores or continues to struggle with sleep, talk with their doctor. There are treatments and therapies available that can help.

Where can I find online resources for more support?



[Bedtime Calculator – English](#)

American Academy of Sleep Medicine



[Healthy Sleep Habits: How Much Sleep Does Your Child Need? – English](#)

American Academy of Pediatrics



[Healthy Sleep Habits: How Much Sleep Does Your Child Need? – Spanish](#)

American Academy of Pediatrics