

HEALTHY SLEEP HABITS FOR CHILDREN & TEENS

What is insomnia? Trouble falling asleep, staying asleep, or waking up early in the morning for more than 1 month
If a child/teen is often moody or having behavior problems at school, a lack of quality sleep can be part of the issue

What causes insomnia?

- Poor sleep habits by the child/teen, parents, or caregivers
- Some medications, even if over-the-counter or a natural herb
- Health conditions (ex. stress, anxiety, depression, allergies, asthma, loud snoring, ADHD, or pain)

Do electronic devices make it harder to sleep? Anything with a screen (TV, cell phone, video games, electronic tablets, computers) can make it harder to fall asleep, stay asleep, or have good quality sleep

BEDTIME ROUTINES AND HABITS

- Go to bed at the same time every night, even on weekends. Children and teens need more sleep than adults who usually need about 8 hours (see table on other side).
- Follow the same routine every night to show that bedtime is soon. Have enough time so lights can go out on time (ex. take a warm bath, brush teeth, then read for 15 minutes).
- Plan ahead! Finish busywork about an hour before bedtime (ex. finish homework, lay out clothes for next day).
- Spend the hour before bedtime quietly in low light without rough-and-tumble play or using any electronics.
- Teach your child how to relax and fall asleep alone (ex. use a special blanket, picture of parent, or gentle music/sound machine. An older child may try deep breathing or picturing a pleasant, relaxing time like a day at the lake or beach).
- Put your child to bed drowsy but not asleep and leave the room. Letting them fall asleep only when you are in the room or in places other than their own bed are hard habits to break!
- Be quick, quiet, and boring if you have to check on your child in bed; set limits to your child's attention-seeking behavior.
- If your child is not asleep in about 20 minutes (older children should guess without clock-watching), have them leave bed, keep lights dim, and do a calming screen-free activity (ex. read a relaxing printed book, do a simple word puzzle).

QUIET, COMFORTABLE SLEEP-ONLY ZONE – BEDROOMS ARE FOR SLEEPING!

- Wear comfortable pajamas. Make sure diapers are dry or your older child makes a “last trip” to the bathroom.
- Listen for noises near your child's bed making it hard to sleep (ex. noise from others in the same room or nearby).
- Keep a cool, dark room with blankets and, if needed, a night-light that does not shine directly into the eyes.
- Take distractions out of the room (ex. no TV, computer, phone, or radio; fewer toys in bed).
- Don't use the child's bed for playtime, studying, or other activities.
- Don't use the bed and sleep as punishment or timeout; also, don't use staying up past bedtime as a reward for good behavior. These things can suggest to children/teens that “sleep is bad.”
- For older children/teens, don't watch the clock in bed at night; turn it away so they can't see it.

DAYTIME ROUTINES AND HABITS

- Get up at the same time every day, even on weekends. It's easier than enforcing a set bedtime.
- No naps during the day (usually after age 5) if napping stops sleeping at night. If they must nap, do it before 5 pm for no longer than 45 minutes. Avoid naps in places other than the bedroom (ex. the couch).
- Choose healthy foods and eat meals at the same time every day. No caffeine (ex. tea, soda, energy drinks, chocolate), especially after 5 pm. Don't eat heavy meals close to bedtime; a light snack is ok when hungry.
- Plan exercise and playtime every day, with as much bright light in the morning as possible (to help set the child's internal clock), so your child can go to bed sleepy.
- If your child is a worrier, plan a time earlier in the day to talk about worries and concerns.
- Be aware of activities that seem to cause sleeping problems so that you can stop those activities 1 – 2 hours before bedtime. Keeping a sleep diary may help to find patterns and activities that help and that don't help your child sleep.

ELECTRONICS – TVS, CELL PHONES, GAME DEVICES, COMPUTERS, & TABLETS CAN AFFECT SLEEP!

- Set consistent time limits for daily use of electronics; the youngest age needs the least time.
- Avoid screen time at least 1 hour before bedtime to keep away from screen lights that lower sleep quality.
- Create a “Tech Free Zone” in the bedroom and remove electronics (ex. charge cell phone and computer in the kitchen at night; remove TV).
- Use an old-fashioned alarm clock instead of the cell phone to wake up.
- Be a role model and set a good example for your child or teen.

RECOMMENDED AMOUNT OF SLEEP NEEDED EVERY DAY FOR CHILDREN & TEENS

AGES		HOURS OF SLEEP (INCLUDING NAPS) RECOMMENDED EVERY DAY
NEWBORNS & INFANTS	Newborns up to 3 months	14 – 17 hours while still establishing a sleep cycle
	4 to 12 months	12 - 16 hours
TODDLERS	1 to 3 years	11 – 14 hours
PRESCHOOLERS	3 to 5 years	10 – 13 hours
GRADE SCHOOLERS	6 to 12 years	9 – 12 hours
TEENS	13 to 18 years	8 – 10 hours

September 2019

tip
SC
Timely Information
for Providers in
South Carolina

References:

- American Academy of Pediatrics [Internet]. Elk Grove (IL): American Academy of Pediatrics; c2019. American Academy of Pediatrics supports childhood sleep guidelines; 2016 Jun 13 [cited 2019 Aug 20]; [about 2 screens]. Available from: <http://www.aap.org/en-us/about-the-aap/aap-press-room/Pages/American-Academy-of-Pediatrics-Supports-Childhood-Sleep-Guidelines.aspx>
- Buxton OM, Chang AM, Spilsbury JC, Bos T, Emsellem H, Knutson KL. Sleep in the modern family: protective family routines for child and adolescent sleep. *Sleep Health*. 2015;1(1):15-27.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [Internet]. Atlanta (GA): Department of Health and Human Services (US); c2019. Sleep and Sleep Disorders: How Much Sleep Do I Need?; [reviewed 2017 Mar 2; cited 2019 Aug 20]. [about 2 screens]. Available from: https://www.cdc.gov/sleep/about_sleep/how_much_sleep.html
- Centre for Clinical Interventions [Internet]. Northbridge (WA), Australia: Government of Western Australia; c2018. Sleep hygiene; [cited 2012 Sep 21]; [about 1 screen]. Available from: <https://www.cci.health.wa.gov.au/~media/cci/mental%20health%20professionals/sleep/sleep%20-%20information%20sheets/sleep%20information%20sheet%20-%2004%20-%20sleep%20hygiene.pdf>
- Fuller C, Lehman E, Hicks S, Novick MB. Bedtime use of technology and associated sleep problems in children. *Glob Pediatr Health*. 2017;4:1-8.
- HealthChildren.org [Internet]. Elk Grove Village (IL): American Academy of Pediatrics; c2016. Healthy sleep habits: how many hours does your child need?; [updated 2018 Jul 2; cited 2019 Sep 18]. [about 4 screens]. Available from: <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/healthy-living/sleep/Pages/Healthy-Sleep-Habits-How-Many-Hours-Does-Your-Child-Need.aspx>
- HealthChildren.org [Internet]. Elk Grove Village (IL): American Academy of Pediatrics; c2016. Sleep tips for your family's mental health; [cited 2019 Aug 12]. [about 4 screens]. Available from: <http://www.healthychildren.org/English/healthy-living/sleep/Pages/Sleep-and-Mental-Health.aspx>
- Hilt R. Primary care principles for child mental health [Internet]. Version 8.0. Seattle (WA): Seattle Children's Hospital; 2019. Sleep hygiene for young children; [cited 2012 Sep 15]; p. 79. Available from: <https://www.seattlechildrens.org/globalassets/documents/healthcare-professionals/pal/wy/wy-pal-care-guide.pdf>
- Hirshkowitz M, Whitton K, Albert SM, et al. The National Sleep Foundation's sleep time duration recommendations: methodology and results summary. *Sleep Health*. 2015;1(1):40-3.
- KidsHealth® from Nemours [Internet]. Wilmington (DE): Nemours Foundation; c1995-2019. for Parents: All About Sleep; [reviewed 2019 Jun; cited 2019 Aug 20]. [about 4 screens]. Available from: <https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/sleep.html?ref=search#catsleep>
- LeBourgeois MK, Hale L, Chang A-M, Akacem LD, Montgomery-Downs HE, Buxton OM. Digital media and sleep in childhood and adolescence. *Pediatrics*. 2017;140(S2):S92-6.
- Mclnery TK. American Academy of Pediatrics textbook of pediatric care [Internet]. 2nd ed. Elk Grove Village (IL): American Academy of Pediatrics; 2017 [update 2016 Nov 4; cited 2019 Aug 9]. [about 4 screens]. Available from: <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=1292523>
- Meltzer LJ, McLaughlin Crabtree V. Pediatric sleep problems: a clinician's guide to behavioral interventions [Internet]. Washington (DC): American Psychological Association; 2015. Chapter 9, Insomnia; [cited 2019 Aug 12]; p. 143-59. Available from: <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=pzh&AN=2014-52057-010&site=ehost-live>
- Mindell JA, Owens JA. A clinical guide to pediatric sleep: diagnosis and management of sleep problems [Internet]. 3rd ed. Wolters Kluwer Health; 2015 [cited 2019 Aug 9]. Available from: <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&AN=1473049>
- Paruthi S, Brooks LJ, D'Ambrosio C, et al. Recommended amount of sleep for pediatric populations: a consensus statement of the American Academy of Sleep Medicine. *J Clin Sleep Med*. 2016;12(6):785-6.