



Sleep

Sleep is extremely important for children and adults. We have been seeing some students coming into the health room tired and/or stating they did not get enough sleep or went to bed late. Sleep is needed to maintain good health and setting good sleep habits early is important. It is hard to learn in school when you are tired. Sleep is especially important for children due to the impact it has on both mental and physical development. Sleep is the time for restoration and for children's bodies to recharge and retain the information they have learned throughout the day. According to the American academy of pediatrics children ages 3-5 need 10-13 hours of sleep, ages 6-12 need 9-12 and ages 13 and over need 8-10. If your child is struggling with sleep share this with your provider so they can work with you to establish better sleep. [HealthyChildren.org](https://www.healthychildren.org) has some great tips and information on this topic and many others. [HealthyChildren.org](https://www.healthychildren.org)

Here are some tips for supporting a good night's sleep for your children and yourselves:

1. We all sleep better when they have the same bedtime and wake time daily.
2. Try to use the bed only for sleeping. Lying on a bed and doing other makes it hard for your brain to associate your bed with sleep.
3. The bedroom environment should be cool, quiet, and comfortable.
4. If you tend to stare at the clock, hoping to fall asleep, just turn the clock away.
5. A predictable series of events should lead up to bedtime. This can include brushing teeth, putting on pajamas, and reading a story from a book, a glass of water, or prayers.
6. Before bedtime is an ideal time to relax by listening to soft, calming music or reading a story. It is best to keep video games, televisions, or phones out of the bedroom and to limit their use at least 1 hour before bedtime.
7. Need help relaxing? Take 3 deep and slow breaths or think of positive images like being on a beach.
8. Exercising earlier in the day can help anyone feel more energetic and awake during the day, have an easier time focusing, and even help with falling asleep and staying asleep later that evening.
9. Avoid caffeine in the late afternoon and throughout the evening. It can cause nighttime awakenings and shallow sleep. Ginger Ale, Mug/ASIRoot Beer and lemon lime sodas are caffeine free.
10. If you can't sleep, get out of bed to avoid the bed being associated with sleeplessness. If a child is tossing and turning in bed, have them get out of bed and do something that isn't too stimulating, such as read a boring book (e.g., textbook).
11. The ideal time for a child to go to bed is when they are drowsy, but still awake.
12. Giving a child a security object (stuffed animal or soft blanket) can be a good transition to help them feel safe when a parent isn't there.

13. When checking up on a child, the main purpose is to let them know you are there and that they are all right. The briefer and less stimulating, the better.
14. Some children feel safer sleeping on the floor or even under the bed. Safety and security are the goal here so respect this need.
15. Maintain a sleep diary to track naps, bedtimes, wake times, and behaviors to find patterns and work on problems when things are not going well.

Resources: Healthychildren.org, AAP, Texas Children's Hospital,