



Is Your Child Getting
A Good Night's Sleep?

A healthy night's sleep for children is essential for normal growth and development. The amount of sleep is an important indicator of health and well-being in children and adolescents. For instance, children who get an adequate amount of sleep perform better in school. Also, children who sleep well are more likely to achieve or maintain a healthy weight.

Many factors can interfere with normal sleep including, but not limited to, pulmonary, neurological, family, and psychological problems. Certain medications (e.g., Albuterol or Ritalin) can lead to sleep disturbances in your child.

How much sleep should my child get?

Children naturally need more sleep than adults, and more than many families recognize.

Below are the standard recommendations for the number of hours of sleep per night for children of different ages:

Age Group	Hours of Sleep	Naps
Infants	16-20 hrs	Frequent naps
1-4 years	12-14 hrs	1-2 naps/day
5-10 years	10-12 hrs	No naps
11-18 years	8.5-10 hrs	No naps

How can I encourage my child to sleep well?

- Stick to the same bedtime and wakeup time every day.
- Keep TVs out of the bedroom to promote a quiet and dark environment
- Have one hour of quiet time prior to bedtime
- Avoid caffeinated beverages
- Keep active in regular exercise/play time by avoiding more than 2 hours of screen time (computer, TV, video games, etc.)
- Avoid using the child's bedroom for punishment

What if my child doesn't sleep well?

If your child does not sleep well through the night he/she is more likely to:

- Do poorly in school
- Have behavior problems
- Fall asleep or be less active throughout the day
- Have irregular eating patterns

When should I really worry about the way my child sleeps?

Certain signs and symptoms might indicate a serious problem, for which you should consult a physician. These include the following:

- Frequent awakenings during the night (i.e., more than three times a night)
- Frequent sleepwalking
- Very loud snoring
- Your child's breathing appears to stop for a short period of time
- Your child is drowsy or falls asleep during the day when he/she has slept an adequate number of hours the night before.
- Frequent episodes of bed-wetting

References:

1. <http://www.kidzzzsleep.org>
2. Capp P, Pearl P, Lewin D. Pediatric sleep disorders. Prim Care Clin Office Pract 2005; 32:549-62.
3. Anstead M. Pediatric sleep disorders: new developments and evolving understanding. Curr Opin Pulm Med. 2000; 6:501-06.
4. Ferber R. Sleep, sleeplessness, and sleep disruptions in infants and young children. Ann Clin Res. 1985; 17: 227-234.