

## Sleep

Sleep is an essential foundation for good health. Good sleep helps prevent depression, anxiety, excessive weight gain, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and improves cognitive function, mental health, and overall feelings of wellbeing. The best way to ensure your child gets high quality sleep is to practice good sleep hygiene. Taking care of your sleep routine will promote healing and happiness for your child!

### How much sleep does my child need?

While adults need 7-9 hours every night, kids need much more. Check out this graph from the American Academy of Pediatrics to know how much your child needs.



\*The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) has issued a Statement of Endorsement supporting these guidelines from the American Academy of Sleep Medicine (AASM).  
Source: Paruthi S, Brooks LJ, D'Ambrosio C, Hall W, Kotagal S, Lloyd RM, Malow B, Maski K, Nichols C, Ouan SF, Rosen CL, Troester MM, Wise MS. Recommended Amount of Sleep for Pediatric Populations: A Statement of the American Academy of Sleep Medicine. J Clin Sleep Med. 2016 May 25. pii: jc-00158-16. PubMed PMID: 27250809.

### Key tips for maintaining good sleep hygiene:

- **Make sleep a priority**
  - Go to bed and wake up at the same time every day. Try to maintain this on the weekends as well.
  - Lead by example. Good sleep hygiene should be instituted for the entire family, not just your child.

- **Move your body**
  - Decrease the amount of time you are sedentary and make sure to get regular physical exercise every day. See the Activity section of this handout.
- **Manage your stress**
  - Implement stress management techniques like deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, meditation, yoga, or tai chi. See the Stress Management section of this handout.
- **Optimize your sleep nutrition**
  - Eating a light, healthy snack before bed can ensure you stay asleep as long as you need. Avoid heavy, spicy, and sugary foods. Try light cheese and crackers or turkey slices, a banana with peanut butter, or drink a glass of milk.
  - Avoid caffeine at least four hours before bed.
    - Children less than 12 years old should not consume caffeine.
    - Children 12-18yrs old can consume up to 100mg of caffeine per day (8oz of regular coffee), if they would like. Children should not consume high caffeine sodas, energy drinks, espressos, or other specialty coffee drinks.
    - Adults should limit caffeine to less than 400mg per day.
- **Control your exposure to light**
  - Get exposure to sunlight during the day. Take a walk right when you wake up or eat breakfast outside. Take a walk at lunchtime.
  - Avoid or minimize the use of computers, laptops, TVs, tablets, and phones 2 hours before bedtime.
  - Do not charge your cell phone in or next to your bed, and do not use your cell phone at least 1 hour before bed (ideally 2 hours).
  - Dim, cover, or remove anything that emits light in your bedroom, like an alarm clock or nightlight.
  - Use blackout shades or an eye mask to make your bedroom as dark as possible.

- **Create a relaxing sleep environment**
  - Use the bedroom for sleep only; don't play, hangout, or do homework in your room. Eliminate all electronics from the bedroom.
  - Control the temperature – most people sleep best in a slightly cool room.
  - Reduce the noise level. Use earplugs or a noise machine to block out any noises.

### **Helpful Sleep Resources:**

- American Academy of Pediatrics – Healthy Sleep Habits:  
<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/healthy-living/sleep/Pages/healthy-sleep-habits-how-many-hours-does-your-child-need.aspx>
- Children's Hospital of Philadelphia – Healthy Sleep Habits:  
<https://www.chop.edu/primary-care/healthy-sleep-habits>