



HEALTHY SLEEP HYGIENE FOR CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

Sleep Guidelines



- Children 3 to 5 years of age should sleep 10 to 13 hours per 24 hours (including naps) on a regular basis to promote optimal health.
- Children 6 to 12 years of age should sleep 9 to 12 hours per 24 hours on a regular basis to promote optimal health.
- Teens need about 8 to 10 hours of sleep each night to function best.

Relaxing Sleep Strategies



Establish a consistent sleep routine:

- Shift towards relaxing tasks before sleep
- Engage in consistent bed time rituals (i.e. bath / shower, reading, songs, music...)
- Keep regular sleep and wake times
- Limit screen time 1-2 hours prior to bedtime (see below)
- Keep bedroom clean and cool
- Have child / teen rearrange sleeping set up for increased feelings of safety and comfort

Grounding activities:

- Seek and find books
- Reading
- Deep massage of hands, feet, and legs
- Soft rubbing with backs of nails on arms / back
- Essential oils
- Guided imagery and / or Progressive Muscle Relaxation
- Deep breathing together- modeling is key!
- Rocking and singing
- Snuggling
- Weighted blanket

Screen Time



- Limit screen time 1-2 hours prior to bedtime
- The glow from electronic screens can confuse the brain and stop the process of melatonin release which prepares the body for sleep
- Keep devices like TV's and video games out of your child's bedroom
- Turn off smartphones, tablets, and other screens about an hour before bed
- Limit and monitor violent content at any time of day, because this can affect sleep regardless of the time and length of use

Healthy Diet for Sleep



- DHA Supplements, one of the key omega-3 fatty acids, can help improve sleep
- Avoid caffeine and sugar closer to bed, opting for high protein bedtime snacks if needed
- Eating food groups that contain tryptophan such as meat, fish, cheese, fruits, nuts, and many others, can help produce melatonin and promote sleep regulation



Creating a Sense of Safety

- Evaluate as needed in order to address any reported fears / worries
- Include comforting items in their sleep space such as night lights or dream catchers
- Having the child create a space that feels safe for them
- Rearranging the room for safety and comfort
- Embrace color psychology- try using cool paint colors like blue, green, or purple because their calming effect can make a child's room feel spacious and relaxing. Important: let child choose!