

## 9 HOURS OF SLEEP A NIGHT!

### Get To Bed On Time

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Sleep is just as important in the lives of our children as food, water and safety. Lots of important things occur when the body is asleep, so making sure that your child receives enough is critical to their growth and development.

**Sleep makes you feel happier.** It is restorative to the brain and positively affects many chemicals in the body including serotonin which is linked to depression.

**Sleeping well increases your brainpower.** Memory consolidation happens during slow wave sleep, so the different things we've learned during the day come together coherently and the knowledge can be accessed when we need it.

**Sleep is important to maintain a healthy weight.** Too little sleep can lead to weight gain by changing the levels of the hormones that regulate hunger. Sleep deprivation can cause you to overeat.

**Sleep affects behavioral problems.** Lack of sleep has been linked to a higher incidence of behavioral issues, especially attention deficit disorder and hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

**Sleep can keep you healthy and safe.** Children that do not receive enough rest are more susceptible to illness because their immune system is impacted. Lack of sleep can also affect their growth. Growth hormone is secreted during slow wave sleep.

### Tips for Children

1. **Relax before bed.** Try different quiet activities before going bed and tell your parents which ones you find most calming. For example, take a warm bath, read a story, or talk about your day with your family.
2. **Avoid scary programs before bed.** Don't watch shows with violence before bedtime because they can sometimes make it hard to fall asleep.
3. **Be active earlier in the day.** Exercise gets your body energized so it wouldn't be a good idea to be really active too close to bedtime.
4. **Only use your bed for sleeping.** Don't do your homework, play games, or talk on the phone while on your bed. This can help train your brain and body that your bed is for sleeping.

5. **Talk to your parents.** If you have trouble falling asleep for more than a night or two in a row, tell your mom or dad. They may be able to help you solve your sleeping problems.

### **Tips for Parents**

1. **Create a bedtime routine.** Establishing a consistent routine can encourage good sleep habits. You can include a winding-down period, a set bed-time, and a regular schedule of activities, (such as a bath, teeth brushing, and reading).
2. **Limit your children's caffeine intake.** Be aware of what foods and beverages have caffeine and provide these sparingly, especially later on in the day.
3. **Create a good sleep setting.** Make a sleep-conductive environment in your child's room by keeping it dark, cool, and quiet.
4. **Keep your child's bedroom TV free.** Don't allow your children to watch TV or use a mobile device in their room at night.

### **Resources**

National Sleep Foundation

<http://www.sleepfoundation.org/article/sleep-topics/children-and-sleep>

Sleep for Kids

<http://www.sleepforkids.org/>

All About Sleep (KidsHealth)

<http://kidshealth.org/parent/general/sleep/sleep.html>