

## Sleep

Does your child have trouble getting out of bed? If so, it's an obvious sign that they are not getting an adequate amount of sleep. When loss of sleep occurs and the lost hours are not made up, something called "sleep debt" results. As adults, you most likely suffer from lack of sleep at times as well. The demands of the fast-paced world that we currently live in stretches the 24-hour day to its maximum. Regardless, you must protect your family from resulting unhealthy sleeping habits. If your child loses an average of up to two hours of sleep per night, this can accumulate and have detrimental effects on school performance, mood, and physical health. Possible long-term effects include depression, obesity, and diabetes. Both the brain and the body react negatively to loss of sleep. Your child may become physically weaker, making him/her more prone to infections such as colds. Your child should be energetic, motivated, and awake with each new day. Have your child become accustomed to healthy sleeping habits at an early age. The recommended amount of sleep for elementary to high school students is 9 - 11 hours per night. They can, however, get by on eight hours per night as long as the hours are made up on the weekends. Do not allow television, homework, video games, the Internet, or the phone to keep your child awake. Most importantly, try not to over-schedule your child with extracurricular activities. Interrupting your children's natural sleeping rhythm prevents them from performing at their optimum level. Get informed about sleep. Help your family to get proper rest.

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Sleeping is more valuable than people think. No matter how fast-paced society is, you can't allow it to affect your family's health. Make sure your children learn and practice adequate sleep patterns each night.

### ACTIVITY #1: " My Calendar"

Time management is the key to getting adequate sleep every night. Get your children in the habit of routine and organization. Make a schedule each week (or buy an erasable calendar), labeled from Monday to Sunday. Under each day, write down activities in order and the amount of time or time block each activity should take. Make bedtime an activity as well. Write it in big letters at the end of each day. Post this calendar in a place where you and your child can review it. Help your child stick to his schedule and be organized. It might help you to get an organizer as well. Here's a rough sample:

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
10am WAKE UP	7:30 am WAKE UP Brush teeth, shower	10am WAKE UP	10am WAKE UP	10am WAKE UP	10am WAKE UP	10am WAKE UP
xxxxxxxx	8am eat breakfast	xxxxxxxx	xxxxxxxxxxxx	xxxxxxxx	xxxxxxx	xxxxxxxxxx
xxxxxxxx	8:30am leave for school...	xxxxxxxx	7:30-8pm read book with mommy	4pm soccer practice	7pm dinner time	5-6pm watch tv with dad
8pm <b>BEDTIME</b>	8pm <b>BEDTIME</b>	8pm <b>BEDTIME</b>	8pm <b>BEDTIME</b>	8pm <b>BEDTIME</b>	8pm <b>BEDTIME</b>	8pm <b>BEDTIME</b>

## **ACTIVITY #2: " Dream Team"**

Your children need to go to bed early so that they are not tired during the day. They MAY look at 'bedtime' as a down period, but explain that sleeping gives their body energy so that it doesn't become run-down. Explain that sleeping is an active activity even when they are not awake. For example, "People dream because their brains are still working even when their bodies seem to be resting." Every time your child has a dream that he/she can remember, ask him/her to write about it or draw a picture of what happened in the dream. Have the rest of the family participate and make a scrap book or poster board of dreams.

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### **Make Bedtime Fun!!!**

- Read a book with your child before bedtime.
- Do the old fashion "Counting Sheep" trick.
- Sing a song or make up a bedtime song with your child.
- Lie down with your child until he/she falls asleep or tuck him/her in.
- Buy a favorite night light to plug in if your child is afraid of the dark.
- Buy a child alarm clock that your child can set with you every night so that waking up won't be so hard.