

Healthy Sleep Habits

- **Make sufficient sleep a family priority.** Understand the importance of getting enough sleep and how sleep affects the overall health of you and your children.
- **Keep to a regular daily routine.** The same waking time, mealtimes, nap time, and play times will help your child feel secure and comfortable and help with a smooth bedtime.
- **Be active during the day.** Make sure your kids have interesting and varied activities during the day, including physical activity and fresh air.
- **Keep a healthy diet.** Meals just before bedtime may make it difficult to fall asleep and stay asleep. But a small snack just before bedtime tends to promote sleep.
- **Be cautious with coffee after lunch:** Caffeine is a stimulant, and it can take as many as seven hours for just half of a dose of caffeine to be cleared from your body. This means that drinking coffee or other caffeinated drinks in the afternoon and evening may cause you to be less sleepy at bedtime.
- **Monitor screen time.** The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends keeping all screens—TVs, computers, laptops, tablets, and phones out of children's bedrooms, especially at night. To prevent sleep disruption, turn off all screens at least 60 minutes/1 hour before bedtime.

- **Create a sleep-supportive and safe bedroom and home environment.** Dim the lights prior to bedtime and control the temperature in the home.
- **Avoid overscheduling.** Take time to wind down and give your children the downtime that they need.
- **Realize that teens require more sleep, not less.** sleep-wake cycles begin to shift up to two hours later at the start of puberty.
- **Talk to your child's teacher** about your child's alertness during the day. Sleep problems may manifest in the daytime, too. A child with not enough, or poor-quality sleep may have difficulty paying attention or "zoning out" in school.
- **Learn to recognize sleep problems.** The most common sleep problems in children include difficulty falling asleep, nighttime awakenings, snoring, stalling and resisting going to bed, sleep apnea, and loud or heavy breathing while sleeping. Talk to their doctor if you have concerns.

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