

# Sleep Hygiene: The Path To Better Nights And Brighter Days



## Why Sleep is Crucial for Your Child:

### For the Body:

- ✓ **Repair and Growth:** Sleep helps the body repair tissues, build muscle, and produce essential hormones like growth hormones.
- ✓ **Energy Conservation:** Adequate sleep conserves energy, ensuring your child functions optimally during the day.

### For the Brain:

- ✓ **Information Processing:** During sleep, the brain processes new information, helping with learning and memory.
- ✓ **Waste Removal:** Sleep clears out toxins that can clutter thinking and memory.

### For Emotions:

- ✓ **Emotional Regulation:** Quality sleep is key to emotional stability. Without enough rest, your child might experience fear, impulsivity, and hyperactivity.
- ✓ **Health Impact:** Poor sleep can influence hormones related to autoimmune, cardiovascular, and behavioral health.

## Sleep Needs by Age:

- ✓ **Preschool Children (3-5 years):** 10-13 hours (including naps)
- ✓ **School-Age Children (6-12 years):** About 10 hours per night
- ✓ **Adolescents (13-18 years):** 8-10 hours per night

## Tips for Better Sleep:

### Create a Sleep-Friendly Routine:

1. **Set Regular Times:** Maintain consistent bedtimes and wake-up times, even on weekends.
2. **Napping Guidelines:** For children 5 and younger, establish a nap schedule, avoiding naps after 4 PM.
3. **Daytime Activity:** For children 6 and older, encourage them to stay active during the day. Use the bed only for sleeping to help their body associate the bed with rest.

### Nutrition and Sleep:

1. **Limit Late Meals:** Avoid late dinners and reduce sugar and caffeine intake in the evening.
2. **Healthy Snacks:** If your child is hungry before bed, offer a small, healthy snack.

### Screen Time and Relaxation:

1. **Cut Off Electronics:** Stop all screen time at least 1 hour before bedtime.
2. **Relaxing Routine:** Develop a bedtime routine lasting around 30 minutes. This can include:
  - Taking a shower
  - Snuggling
  - Reading
  - Drawing
  - Mindfulness and relaxation exercises

### Consistent Sleeping Environment:

1. **Own Bed:** Encourage your child to consistently sleep in their own bed.
2. **Sleep-Inducing Environment:**
  - Dim the lights 30 minutes before bed.
  - Cool the room temperature.
  - Remove clutter from the bed.
  - Eliminate distractions like TVs, video games, computers, and cell phones.

## More Resources:

Explore more about sleep hygiene with these trusted sources:

<https://letssleep.org/Parents/>

<https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/features/students-sleep.htm>

<https://www.sleepassociation.org/about-sleep/sleep-hygiene-tips/>

<https://www.sleepfoundation.org/children-and-sleep>