

Sleep Tips



Good sleep is important for your child's physical and mental wellbeing

How much sleep do children need?

Below are the approximate hours of sleep the NHS recommends children need.

Babies 4 to 12 months old

- 12 to 16 hours including naps

Toddlers 1 to 2 years old

- 11 to 14 hours including naps

Children 3 to 5 years old

- 10 to 13 hours including naps

Children 6 to 12 years old

- 9 to 12 hours

Teenagers 13 to 18 years old

- 8 to 10 hours



Bedtime routine

A relaxing bedtime routine is one important way to help your child get a good night's sleep.

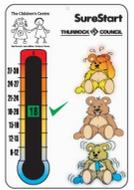
Doing the same relaxing things in the same order and at the same time each night helps promote good sleep:

- A warm (not hot) bath will help your child relax and get ready for sleep.
- Keep lights dim, this encourages your child's body to produce the sleep hormone, melatonin.
- Once they're in bed, read a story together
- Try listening to some relaxing music



Your child's bedroom

- Your child's bedroom should ideally be dark, quiet and tidy.
- It should be well ventilated and kept at a temperature of about 18 to 24C.
- Fit some thick curtains to block out any daylight.



Avoid screens in the bedroom

- Tablets, smartphones, TVs and other electronic gadgets can affect how easily children get to sleep.
- Older children may also stay up late or even wake in the middle of the night to use social media.
- Try to keep your child's bedroom a screen-free zone, and get them to charge their phones in another room.
- Encourage your child to stop using screens or watching TV an hour before bedtime.



Exercise and activity

- Exercise during the day is important to help us sleep. But discourage lots of activity right before bedtime.
- Exercise affects our body temperature and the best time to exercise to promote sleep is 4-6 hours before sleep.



Diet



- A healthy balanced diet promotes good sleep.
- A large meal too close to bedtime will interfere with sleep.
- If your child has a snack before bed, carbohydrates such as bread or cereal are good options.
- Monitor your child's sleep to consider how different foods may be affecting their sleep.

Reward

Give your child lots of praise for achieving even small things as they develop better sleep habits.



But what if

My child frequently awakens during the night?



- Night time waking is normal as a temporary stage. If this problem persists talk to your GP.
- Don't go into the child's room unless you must, for example if they are really upset.
- Assume that the child has to go to the bathroom and steer them that way. Be gentle and quiet. Try not to put any lights on as they wake us up.
- Talk to them as little as possible.
- If your child wakes from a nightmare reassure them, help settle them back to sleep but do not talk to them.

My child keeps getting out of bed?



- Children will create reasons for having to get out of bed. Usually this is because they are either scared, bored or both.

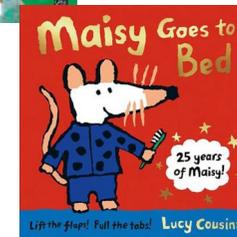
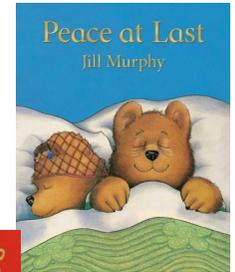
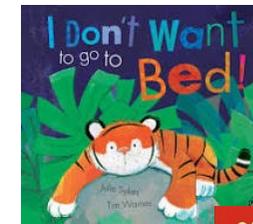


- If a child gets out of bed, the longer they stay up and the further away they get from their bedroom, the more reinforcement they will get from this behaviour.
- Therefore it is important to stop them as soon as possible and do not talk or show any emotion
- Ensure that bedtime routine covers reasons for getting up like being hungry or thirsty.
- If your child has difficulty falling asleep without you, sit in a chair in the room and gradually move further away until you are outside of the room.

Books to help develop a bedtime routine

Reading with your child before bedtime is an ideal opportunity to share quality time together.

You can read any story, but below are a few that might help develop and good bedtime routine.



Useful websites:

The Sleep Charity
<https://thesleepcharity.org.uk/information-support/children/>

NHS
<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/sleep-and-tiredness/healthy-sleep-tips-for-children/>

Sleep Council: 'The Good Night Guide for Children'
<https://sleepcouncil.org.uk>

Basis (the Baby Sleep Information Source) This aims to provide online access to up-to-date research based evidence on infant sleep
<https://www.basionline.org.uk/>