Why is sleep important?

- Your child needs enough sleep to grow and develop.¹
- Sleep is important to your child’s weight.²,³,⁴,⁵
- Sleep allows your child’s physical, mental and emotional functions to reset. Sleep can help your child do better in school because it helps improve focus.⁶,⁷

How much sleep does my child need?

The National Sleep Foundation suggests that children get the following hours of restful sleep⁷:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Recommended number of hours of sleep per night</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 5 years old</td>
<td>11+ hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5–10 years old</td>
<td>10+ hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10+ years old</td>
<td>8.5–9.25 hours</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Studies show that shortage of sleep creates changes in hormone secretions that regulate hunger and appetite.⁷,⁸ Over time, this can slow metabolism and contribute to weight gain in children.³,⁴,⁵ Children who get enough sleep are less likely to suffer obesity-related health problems like diabetes, heart disease, and sleep apnea.⁴,⁹ Even one extra hour of sleep per night for kids who don’t get enough sleep can lower the risk of becoming overweight.³
How can I help my child get enough sleep?

• Talk with your child about getting enough sleep.

• Set and agree on a bedtime with your child and be consistent in sleeping at the agreed time every night.^

• Limit or remove all caffeinated drinks from your child's diet. This includes soft drinks, tea, and energy drinks.

• Make the hours before sleep calm and relaxing by developing a bedtime routine. Bedtime routines may include a bath, reading a story, or quiet time before bed.

• Be aware of the amount of hours your child sleeps each night. Make adjustments in bedtime routine if needed to insure adequate sleep.

• Make the bed only for sleeping and not watching TV, doing homework, or playing video games.

• Remove the television, video games, and cell phone from the bedroom.

References:


