

Sleep: A leaflet for Parents, Children and Young People

Why sleep is important and
how to get enough sleep
each night.



*"A good laugh and a long
sleep are the best cures in
the doctor's book."
– Irish proverb*

A few important things that happen when we sleep:

- Our brains are very busy sorting out and storing relevant information.
- Our bodies restore themselves (heal and mend).
- We do most of our growing while asleep.
- We sort out our emotions in response to the day's events.

When we have enough sleep, we often:

- Remember things we've learned and are better at applying this new information in other situations,
- Feel more energetic and positive,
- Find it easier to concentrate and learn,
- Find it easier to make decisions and sound judgements,
- Are more creative and find it easier to solve problems,
- Are more relaxed,
- Find it easier to tolerate things we find difficult.

Do I/ my child get the right amount of sleep?

If you answer yes to any of the questions below you may need more sleep:

- Do I need an alarm clock to wake me up most mornings?
- Do I find it very hard to get going in the mornings?
- Do I feel, or do people say I am, grumpy or irritable during the day?
- Do I fall asleep during the day?

How much sleep do I need?

We all need different amounts of sleep from one another, and at different times in our lives.

Below is a general guide of how much sleep most of us need:

Age	Hours Needed
3-5 yrs	10-13
6-12 yrs	9-12
13-18 yrs	8-10
Adults	7-9

It is important to understand that sleep routines are habits. Habits take time and consistency to form. Changes won't happen straight away or by trying things once or twice. By sticking to your new routine for 1-3 months it will become your new sleep routine habit.

Tick the boxes below, which you want to work on

THINGS THAT MAY HELP YOU GO TO SLEEP:

- Getting outside in natural daylight for at least half an hour, preferably in the mornings or early afternoon.
- Evening Routine: The more relaxed you are the better you will sleep.

Try to do relaxing things 1-2 hours before bed such as:

- Listening to calm music or audiobooks.
 - Colouring/ Drawing
 - Reading with a bedside light
 - Mindfulness maybe with an app
 - Relax in a warm bath before bed
- Make your bed a comfortable, quiet, uncluttered and relaxing sleep space.
 - Make your room dark at night.
 - Keep your room cool at night (about 18°C).
 - Make your room light in the morning – open the curtains first thing.
 - Aim to put your light out at the same time most nights.
 - Get up at the same time most mornings.
 - Take regular exercise during the day (aim for 30-60 mins a day).
 - Use a journal to note down your thoughts during the day so that they don't pop up as much at night.

THINGS THAT MAY STOP YOU FROM GETTING GOOD QUALITY SLEEP:

- Getting stressed about not sleeping.
- Napping during the day.
- Electronic screens, such as TV, computers, mobile phones and tablets even if they are on sleep mode. Switch them off at least an hour before sleep and try to put it somewhere you can't see it.
- Watching or reading things that frighten you before bed.
- Eating less than 2 hours before sleep.
- Having caffeine after lunch. E.g. coffee, tea, cola or chocolate.
- Vigorous exercise in the 2 hours before sleep.
- Clock watching.
- Doing activities on your bed such as homework/ watching TV can prevent your mind from associating the space with sleep.
- Long weekend lie-ins can disrupt your body clock and make it harder to sleep.

Questions & Answers

1. Is it normal to wake up during the night?

It is common to wake during the night and this tends to happen more frequently as you get older. If you frequently lie awake for long periods of more than 30 minutes, discuss this with us.

2. Can you sleep too much?

Yes, you can oversleep. This can make you feel tired.

3. Can I monitor how much sleep I get?

Yes, by noticing what time you fall asleep, wake up, and if you were awake during the night. Most shop bought devices do not record sleep (this is done by measuring brainwaves), but measure movement. Some people move a lot when they sleep.

4. Is it a good idea to have a lie in when I had a bad night?

It is best to try and get up the right time and do something you enjoy. Having a lie in will often decrease our ability to fall asleep the following night.

5. I have tried everything and nothing works. What should I do?

Sleep is complex and not simple to change. Discuss what you have tried with us, we are here to help.

How to Contact Us?

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact our Therapy Team:

Email: **ouh-tr.paediatricrheumatology@nhs.net**

How can I give feedback about my experience?

We would like to hear about your experience with our Children's services. There are different ways to feed back to us:

Online: **www.ouh.nhs.uk/childrens-feedback**

Email: **childrens.patientexperience@ouh.nhs.uk**

Further information

If you would like an interpreter, please speak to the department where you are being seen.

Please also tell them if you would like this information in another format, such as:

- Easy Read
- large print
- braille
- audio
- electronic
- another language.

We have tried to make the information in this leaflet meet your needs. If it does not meet your individual needs or situation, please speak to your healthcare team. They are happy to help.

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