



## Healthy Sleep Habits for Children and Teens

### WHY SLEEP MATTERS

Sleep is essential for your child's mental, physical, and emotional health. Poor sleep can affect behavior, learning, mood, and overall well-being. If you're concerned about your child's sleep, seek out a health professional.

### RECOMMENDED SLEEP BY AGE

*(According to the American Academy of Sleep Medicine)*

- Infants (0–12 months): 12–16 hours
- Toddlers (1–2 years): 11–14 hours
- Preschoolers (3–5 years): 10–13 hours
- Children (6–12 years): 9–12 hours
- Teens (13–18 years): 8–10 hours

### COMMON SLEEP PROBLEMS

- Trouble falling or staying asleep
- Daytime sleepiness
- Nightmares or sleep terrors
- Bedwetting, teeth grinding
- Snoring or mouth breathing
- Sleepwalking or talking
- Reversed sleep schedule (awake at night, tired by day)

Most problems can be improved with better sleep routines and **reduced anxiety around bedtime**.

### NIGHTMARES VS. SLEEP TERRORS

- **Nightmares:** Scary dreams that your child remembers. Try calming bedtime routines, dream catchers, or talking about the dream.
- **Sleep Terrors:** Screaming, confusion, and no memory afterward. Usually begin between ages 4–12. May run in families and need specialist support.

### TEEN SLEEP CHALLENGES

Teens often stay up late and sleep during the day. This is partly due to natural shifts in their biological clock, but it can be worsened by:

- Anxiety, depression, PTSD
- ADHD or substance use
- Too much screen time or poor sleep habits

### TIPS FOR BETTER SLEEP

- Keep a consistent sleep/wake schedule (even on weekends)
- Build a calming bedtime routine
- No exercise within 3–4 hours of bedtime
- Avoid caffeine, energy drinks, alcohol, and nicotine
- No screens 1 hour before bed
- Keep the bed for sleep only (no homework, eating, or TV)
- Keep the bedroom cool, dark, and quiet
- If not asleep in 20 minutes, do a quiet activity, then try again
- Avoid daytime naps if possible

### WHEN TO SEE A DOCTOR

Talk to your pediatrician or a sleep specialist if your child has:

- Loud snoring or mouth breathing (possible sleep apnea)
- Restless legs (possible low iron)
- Constant sleepiness despite enough sleep (possible sleep disorder)
- Ongoing sleep issues linked to mental or physical health

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