

Sleep Information for Parent/Carers





The importance of good sleep

Sleep is as fundamental to good health as good diet, hydration and exercise. Poor sleep in adults can be linked to many conditions from heart disease to depression and sadly many children with sleep problems become adults with sleep problems.



This session will look at:

- The sleep process
- Common sleep issues
- Good sleep management/hygiene

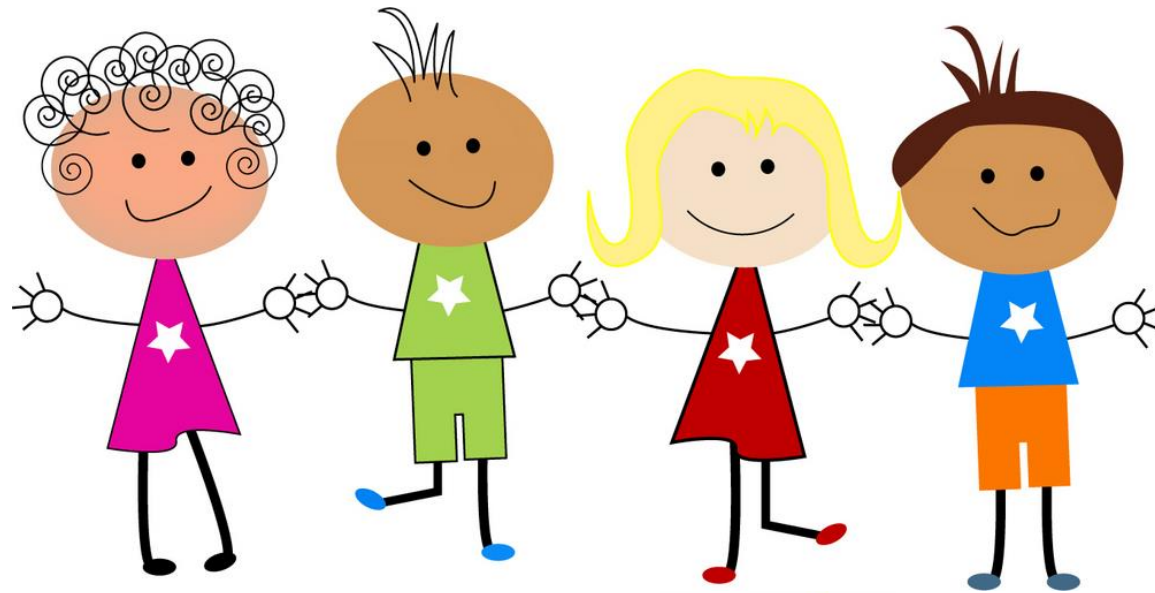


Why we need sleep...

Growth and
development

Helps to fight illness
and stay healthy

Body
maintenance



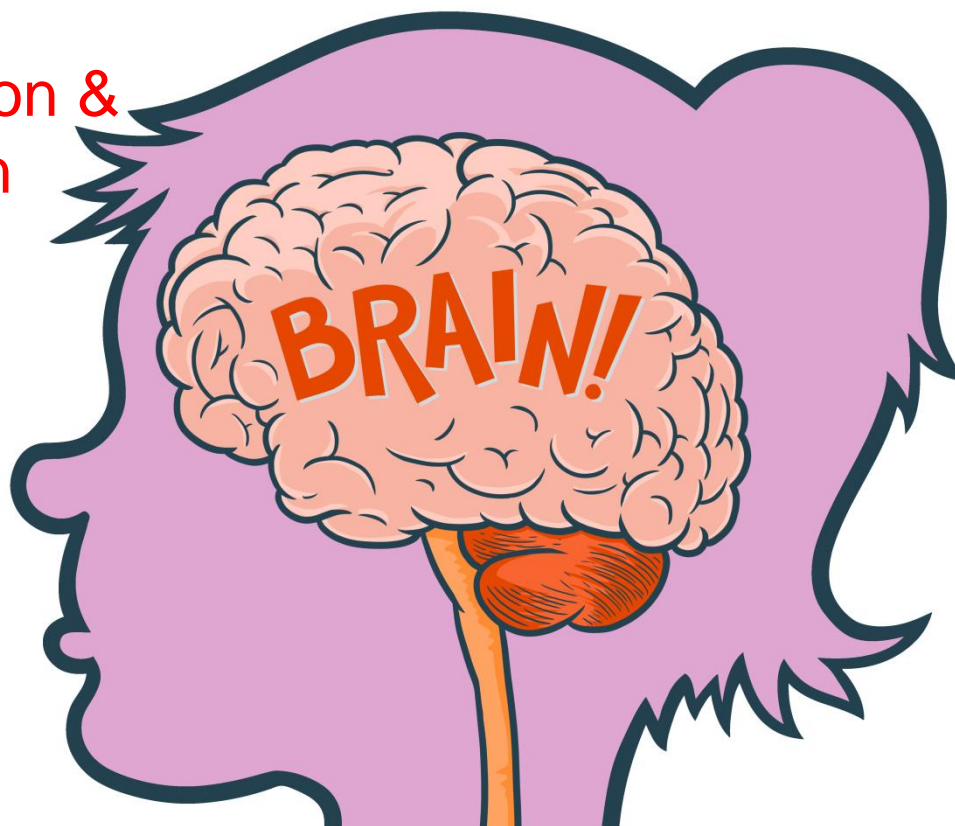


Concentration &
attention

Problem
solving

It makes
sense of the
day's events

Helps with
mental health
& emotional
wellbeing





If your child has sleep problems

YOU ARE NOT ALONE!

50% of children experience sleep difficulties

(Children's Sleep Charity 2023)





Things that can effect sleep

- Health Issues
- Diet
- External or internal environments
- Technology



After a poor nights sleep

Children can:

- Find it hard to learn and concentrate
- Have poor eating habits
- Be grumpy, miserable and be in a bad mood
- Have trouble in engaging in activities
- Find it difficult to listen and focus

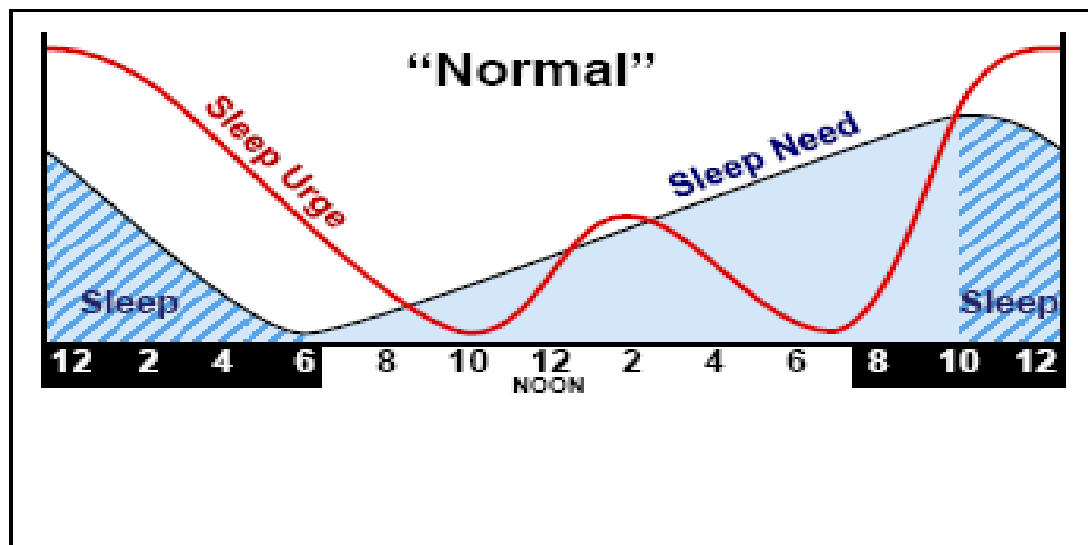


The natural sleep cycle

Our sleep pattern is controlled by our circadian rhythm this is basically a 24-hour internal clock that is running in the background of our brain and cycles between sleepiness and alertness at regular intervals. It's also known as your sleep/wake cycle.

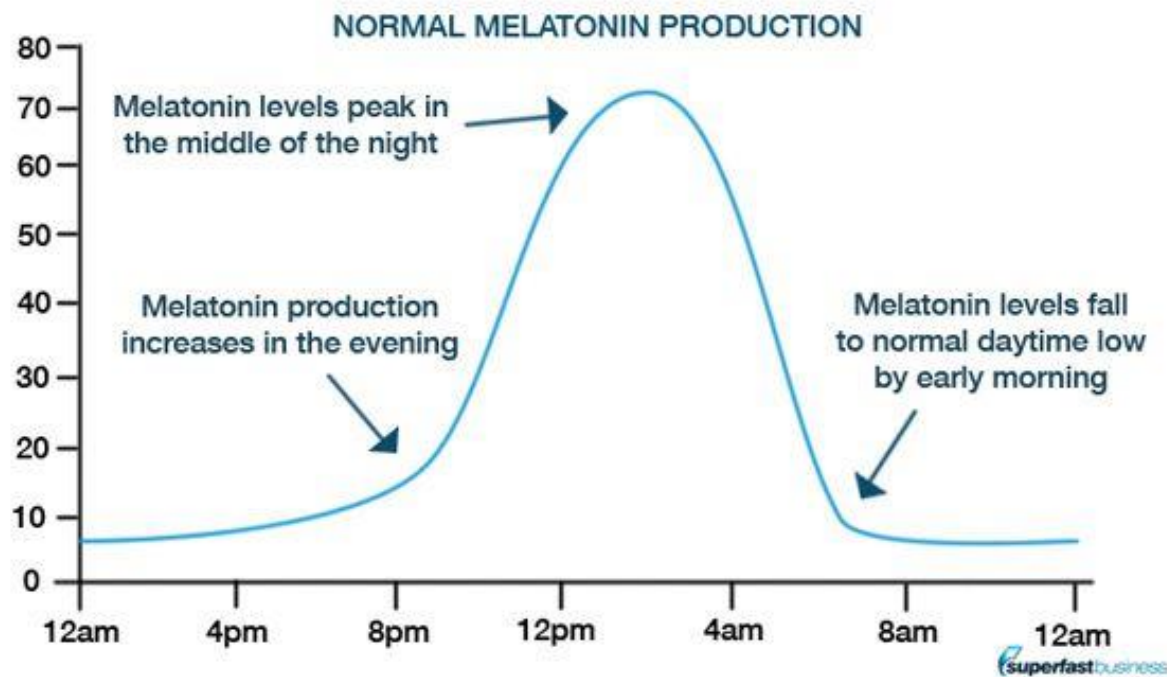


The sleep process





As it becomes dark the body releases a hormone called melatonin which makes us feel sleepy.



Stages of sleep



- At night your body cycles through different stages of sleep.
- It usually moves from light sleep to deep sleep back to light and then into REM.
- This is repeated several times.



- **Light sleep**
 - important for mental and physical restoration
- **Deep sleep**
 - good for physical recovery, memory and learning
- **REM**
 - important for memory and mood



Sleep can vary from child to child

| Age in years | Hours of sleep needed |
|--------------|--------------------------|
| 1 - 4 | 11 - 14 |
| 5 - 9 | 10 - 11 |
| 10 - 14 | 9 - 10 |
| 15 and older | 8 - 9 |



Bedtime routines

- Good routines before going to bed helps to settle children
- Helping to be calm before bed is important e.g. quiet play, bath, story time; warm milky drink
- Evidence shows regular predictable bedtime routines enable children to fall asleep more quickly and easily



Bedtime Routine

- This should be well planned
- Bedtime should be the same time, same place, same way
- The room should be quiet, dark and not over stimulating
- Children do not always go to sleep immediately
- Don't forget to kiss and hug them goodnight



© Can Stock Photo



Creating a positive bedroom

Not too much stimulation

Not too hot or cold

The room should be dark

No technology in the bedroom

Décor that is calming

Do not use the bedroom as a punishment



Preparing the child

- Give time to discuss any worries before going up to bed
- Avoid big meals before bed
- No caffeine, alcohol or energy drinks
- Exercise during the day but not before bedtime
- Relaxation, bath time, story time, goodnight kiss and cuddle



Settling down to sleep

- We all wake briefly but usually settle back to sleep
- For some children this can occur naturally, but others may need to be taught this
- Children may get confused if they go to sleep in one place and wake in another





Lets talk technology

- Game console
- Mobile phone
- iPad
- Computer
- TV
- Electronic reader
- Tablet
- Digital watch





Evidence shows all technology can
unfavourably effect sleep.

Any light can reduce the production of melatonin,
the blue light produced by many gadgets is
particularly associated with this.

Television / iPads / game consoles

- Be aware of what your child is watching before going to sleep
- Action programmes can increase adrenaline
- Frightening programmes and late news items can be upsetting and can often stop children from wanting to sleep



Common sleep problems and how to deal with them...

If your child is used to you being present when they go off to sleep you need to wean yourself away

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- A cartoon illustration of a boy with brown hair and a blue shirt sitting up in bed, reading a red book titled 'Bedtime stories' to a girl. The girl, with brown hair and wearing an orange shirt and blue pants, is lying down with her eyes closed and a 'Zzzzzzz' sound effect above her head, indicating she is asleep. The bed has green headboard and footboard, and a white pillow with colorful stars.



The child who continually wakes



If your child gets up:

- Stay calm!
- Take them back to the comfort of *their* bed
- Do not get into conversation
- No stimulation, give gentle calming and reassurance
- Repeat as many times as your child gets up



The child who does not sleep until late

Changing your child's bedtime should be done gradually – reduce bedtime half an hour for a few nights and repeat until your child is in a good routine and going to bed at an appropriate time.



Nightmares

- Nightmares are like dreams, they help us make sense of the days events
- They are frightening dreams that are usually remembered
- They can occur at any age but are more common in the under 8's
- They are normal



Nightmares what to do:

- Give lots of comfort and reassurance
- Encourage them to settle in *their* own bed
- Do not dwell or reinforce your child's fears and anxieties



Night Terrors

- These are often not remembered
- Common between ages 3 to 8 years
- Child will often cry out and seem distressed but will *not* remember in the morning
- Child will often be difficult to comfort and may not recognise their parent/carer



Night terrors what to do:

- Do not wake the child
- Stay calm yourself
- Watch for calming signs in your child which indicates the episode is ending
- Allow the child to naturally fall back to sleep in *their* bed



Sleep Walking

- Is rare
- Can effect any age
- Often not remembered
- Child can complete complex tasks but will often have no memory of this
- Child is unable to maintain their own safety



Sleepwalking what to do:

- Do not wake them
- Guide them calmly and gently back to *their* bed
- Maintain a safe environment
- Nights away - let an adult know this may happen



Top Tips ...



Any Questions

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Further help and support



Healthy Together

Parent and children's websites:

www.healthforunder5s.co.uk

www.healthforkids.co.uk

www.healthforteens.co.uk

Parent/Carer text service

City: 07520 615 381

County: 07520 615 382

<https://thesleepcharity.org.uk/information-support/children/childrens-sleep-ebook/>

www.childrenssleepcharity.co.uk





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