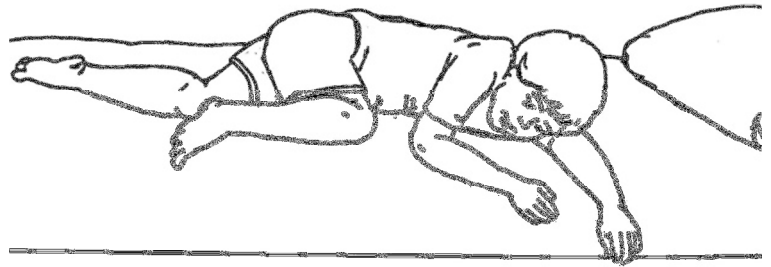


Healthy Sleep Habits for Older Children and Teens

Sleep is important at all ages. Sleep problems are common among many children and teens and can affect their focus while at school, work or home. Almost one-fourth of all children have some type of sleep problem. The problem can be caused by poor sleep habits or a medical condition.



Picture 1 Use the bed only for sleeping.

What to Do

1. Get enough sleep. School aged children need at least 10 to 11 hours of sleep every night. Teens need at least 8 to 9 hours of sleep.
2. Keep a regular sleep schedule. Try to go to sleep and wake up at the same time every day, even on weekends. If you would like to sleep later on the weekends, wake up within 2 hours of the time you would wake up on the weekday. For example, if you wake up at 7 AM during the week, wake up no later than 9 AM on the weekend.
3. Have a bedtime routine. Do relaxing things like listening to music or reading a book before going to bed. Try to have 4 to 5 hours between any exercise and bedtime.
4. Avoid daytime naps. Napping during the day can make it harder to fall asleep at night.
5. Avoid drinks with caffeine (such as sodas, energy drinks, coffee and tea), especially in the afternoon and evenings.
6. Eat regularly and don't go to bed hungry. A light snack before bed is a good idea.
7. Use the bed only for sleep. Do not watch TV, read or eat in the bed (Picture 1).
8. If you need to, completely remove TV or radio from your bedroom at bedtime. Avoid using cell phones and the computer at bedtime. The light from the screens can keep you awake.
9. If you are unable to fall asleep after lying in bed for 20 minutes, get out of bed and do something until you feel sleepy. When you feel sleepy, go back to bed and try to fall asleep again.

It may take up to 2 weeks to see results from these changes, so don't give up in the first week!

When to Call Your Doctor

Call your doctor or the Nationwide Children's Hospital Sleep Clinic at 614-722-4613 if:

- Sleep problems continue even after you follow the tips above.
- You have any other questions or concerns.