

Name of Child: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Healthy Sleep Habits

Making good choices about sleep habits can impact the wellness of our bodies, our emotions, and our mental health. It is important to sleep well each night for your physical, emotional, and mental health.

## Healthy sleep habits impact the body in many positive ways including:

- Triggers the “rest and digest” system which allows the body to heal, process nutrients, and be well.
- Decreases inflammation and obesity.
- Allows the brain to rest and heal.
- Supports your ability to remember things, such as what you learned that day.
- Prevents some diseases from occurring now and in the future.
- Helps to keep your emotions stable. This means having less emotional ups and downs.



**Making good choices about sleep habits can impact the wellness of our bodies, our emotions, and our mental health.**

## Unhealthy sleep habits impact the body in many negative ways including:

- Triggers the body’s natural response to danger. This is called the **fight - flight - freeze** system in the body.
- Causes a negative effect on your mood.
- Causes a negative effect on your overall health and wellbeing.
- Causes a negative effect on your memory and your ability to focus.
- Causes a negative effect on your immune system’s ability to fight off infections.

Experts agree that getting enough sleep is very important. The amount of sleep you need changes as you get older. Use this chart as a guide to know how much sleep to get each day according to age:

Age	Recommended Hours of Sleep
0-3 months	14-17
4-12 months	12-16
1-2 years	11-14
3-5 years	10-13
6-12 years	9-12
18-25 years	8-10



## Tips for making healthy sleep habits:

Making the effort to try some simple changes in your sleep habits can help you to sleep better. Try these tips for making healthy sleep habits a normal routine:

- Go to bed at night and wake up in the morning at the same time every day including weekends.
- Limit caffeine and sugar intake, especially in the late afternoon and evenings.
- Relax before you go to bed. Avoid stressful activities such as exercise, computer work, and homework right before you go to bed.
- Start to prepare your body for sleep one hour before you go to bed. Some ways you can do this include:
  - dimming the lights in the room.
  - turning off all screens including computers, gaming devices, cell phones, television, and tablets. It is important to keep these items out of your bedroom when you go to bed.
  - taking a hot bath or shower before bed to release heat from the skin.
  - adding a relaxing activity to your bedtime routine such as reading, journaling, meditation, guided imagery, breathing exercises, gentle yoga, or progressive relaxation.
- If you are having trouble sleeping, avoid watching the clock. Doing this can bring your body to an awake state.
- Stop eating 3 hours before you plan to go to sleep.
- Go outside in the sunshine at least 3 times each day for at least 10 minutes. Being outside during the day helps you to sleep well at night.
- Keep your bedroom cool. Your body needs to drop 3 – 4 degrees before you can comfortably fall asleep. Cool the room where you sleep to 65 – 70 °F, if possible.
- Talk to your doctor about taking naps. Your situation is unique depending on your age and specific problems you might be having with sleeping through the night. Older children, teens, and adults should avoid taking naps late in the day to prevent problems sleeping at night.
- Physical movement or exercise 30 - 60 minutes during the day. Physical activity improves overall health, helps to decrease stress, and helps you to sleep better at night. Avoid high energy exercise at least 3 hours before you go to bed.



**Go to bed at night and wake up in the morning at the same time every day including weekends**



## Natural Sleep Supplements:

If you are not able to get enough quality sleep after implementing the **tips for making healthy sleep habits** listed above, using a natural sleep supplement may be helpful. Natural sleep supplements can help some people get to sleep faster and can help in getting overall quality sleep. Talk to your doctor to learn more about whether a natural sleep supplement is right for you. Give your doctor a list of all medicines you are taking including prescription medicines, vitamins, supplements, and over-the-counter medicines.

### Melatonin:

- A supplement that works like a hormone produced in the brain to help your body know when it is time to sleep.
- Available in pills, liquids, and chewables.
- There are two types of melatonin: short acting and long acting. Short acting melatonin can help with difficulty getting to sleep. Long acting melatonin can help if you have trouble staying asleep.
- Talk to your doctor to find out what dose is right for you.

### Valerian:

- An herb used as a medicine to support quality sleep.
- Available in pills and liquids.
- Talk to your doctor to find out what dose is right for you.

### Lavender:

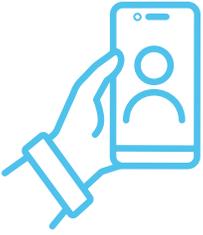
- An herb used to create a feeling of calm and to help your body to relax.
- Available in many different forms depending on how it will be used.
- Can be used in a bath, on the skin, or as aromatherapy.

## Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT):

CBT is a type of therapy with the goal of improving mental health. CBT can benefit people with sleep problems in addition to other physical and mental health problems. CBT involves working with a therapist to change negative thoughts and behaviors through the process of finding and practicing alternative thoughts to improve mood and sleep. One example of using CBT is working with a therapist to replace your worries about not sleeping with positive thoughts and practices about sleeping well. Talk to your doctor to find out if CBT is an option to help you sleep better.

## Now that you have read this:

- Tell your nurse or doctor what you will change to make healthy sleep habits part of your daily routine. (Check when done.)



**If you have any questions or concerns,**

call your child's doctor or  call \_\_\_\_\_

**If you want to know more about child health and illness, visit our library at The Emily Center at Phoenix Children's Thomas Campus**

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