



Sleep

Why is it important

Sleep is essential for optimal development.

It is essential in helping us with:

- Memory
- Organizing thoughts
- Thinking critically
- Working accurately
- Problem solving
- Engaging in abstract thought
- Being creative
- Keeping our body healthy

Factors that influence sleep include

- Macro sleep environment (temperature, noise, light)
- Micro sleep environment (bedding, sleep positions)
- Sleep practices (napping, electronic use, exercise)
- Socio-cultural context (eg. bedtimes differ in different countries)
- Socio-emotional context (stress in the home, connection, individual temperament)
- Health issues (different types of medication, nutrition)
- Developmental context (sleep needs at different ages- most 5-12 years olds need about 10 hours of sleep a night, but this varies from child to child. Best way to figure out your child's needs is to monitor daytime sleepiness- if they are sleepy during the day, they need more sleep)

Strategies

- 1 Turn off electronic devices at least an hour before bed.
- 2 Keep electronics out of the bedroom: even a quick look at your phone at night will not only delay you getting back to sleep, but can interfere with sleep quality.
- 3 Follow a bedtime routine: reading and/or listening to a sleep story can be particularly calming.
- 4 Avoid sugar and caffeine - particularly in the afternoon and evening.
- 5 Increases movement through-out the day, but avoid it close to bedtime.
- 6 Use your bed just for sleep - that way you train your brain to associate sleep with your bed.
- 7 If you are having a hard time sleeping- get up and go to the bathroom, get a drink of water. Lying in bed for hours creates negative sleep associations.
- 8 Keep naps short and don't nap after 3pm- when naps are long, you don't have enough "sleep debt "by night and so you end up going to bed later, which creates a never-ending cycle of poor sleep.
- 9 Make sure your bedroom is cool: cooler rooms result in a better quality of sleep.
- 10 Make sure your bedroom is dark and quiet: even small amounts of light and noise can interfere with optimal sleep.
- 11 Go to bed and wake-up at the same time-try not to have more than an hour difference on weekends! This helps to set your sleep-wake cycle.
- 12 Once you wake up, open up the blinds or go outside: this tells your body that it is day time.
- 13 Teach your body to lie still at night: this may be by doing a body scan or listening to a meditation.