



Direct Effects of Sleep

Sleep helps the brain commit new information to memory through a process called memory consolidation. Studies have shown that people who have slept after learning a task did better on tests related to that task.

Sleep loss may result in irritability, impatience, inability to concentrate, and moodiness.



Losing sleep can alter immune function by lowering a person's white blood cell count. This can make people who have not been getting enough sleep more susceptible to disease.

In children and young adults, Human Growth Hormone release takes place during sleep and sleep deprivation can lead to a hormone imbalance.

Losing sleep makes it more likely that someone will fall asleep during the day at an inopportune time, and hurt themselves or others.

Chronic sleep deprivation may cause weight gain by affecting the way our bodies process and store carbohydrates, and by altering levels of hormones that affect our appetite.



Links between Lack of Sleep and Obesity



Childhood obesity is defined as a child's weight being 20% higher than that of the average child of that age and height. The easiest way to determine this is to use a BMI (Body Mass Indicator) measurement. Numerous sites on-line have BMI calculators. The CDC website's BMI calculator can be located at <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/bmi/index.htm>.

According to a new study, 23% of 6th graders who averaged less than 8.5 hours of sleep per night were considered obese, whereas only 12% of 6th graders who averaged more than 9.25 hours of sleep were considered to be obese.

Children who are tired are less likely to have the energy to exercise, making it more likely for them to become obese.

Kids who are tired are more irritable and more likely to look to junk food to make them happy and give them a "sugar boost". This unhealthy diet can lead to obesity.

Having a consistent bedtime and wake time is extremely important for both children and adults in order to make sure that they are getting the recommended amount of sleep. This should also include a pre-bedtime routine in order to prepare for sleep. This means limiting exercise, TV watching or video game playing, and stimulant intake such as caffeine shortly before bedtime.





Sleep Recommendations



Age	Hours of Sleep
1-3 yrs	12-14
3-6 yrs	10 3/4 - 12
7-12yrs	10-11
13-18yrs	8 1/2 - 9 1/2



Causes for lack of sleep

Over Scheduling



If a child never says “I’m bored” they are probably over scheduled. Try to limit a child to one sport and one other activity during each season. This will allow your child to have enough time to get a good night’s sleep.

Caffeine

The average caffeinated soda, 45mg of caffeine, can rob your child of roughly a 1/2 hour of sleep a night if consumed within 5 hours of their bedtime. Try to limit the amount of caffeine that your child has during the day. Make sure to keep track of caffeine in medicine and in foods as well. Caffeine stays in the bloodstream for at least four hours so it is best to avoid giving your child caffeine within 4-5 hrs of their bedtime.



Sleep Apnea

Sleep Apnea is a condition where people have extreme difficulty breathing while they are asleep. The condition is highly prevalent in overweight children and can disrupt sleep. It is a good idea to see a physician if you suspect Sleep Apnea could be attributed to a child’s lack of sleep.

Strenuous Exercise

Try to have your child avoid engaging in strenuous exercise within 2 hours of the time your child goes to sleep. Physical activity often makes it more difficult for a child to go to sleep rather than “wearing them out”.

Light, Noise, Extreme Temperatures



A nightlight for small children will not prevent sleep, but in most cases there are things that do rob a child of sleep. It is important to try and keep the amount of light, sound, and temperature controlled in order for your child to maximize the amount of sleep that he or she is getting.



This information will be provided in alternate formats for individuals with disabilities upon request. We invite everyone’s participation. Please provide two weeks advance notice for accommodations requests. Assistance for the **Deaf and Hard of Hearing** can be provided through the 711 Telecommunications Relay Service.

