

Over half of Americans have problems with their sleep.

- Trouble getting to sleep
- Waking up during the night
- Trouble getting out of bed in the morning

For teenagers, 75% do not get enough sleep (8 or more hours a night). While poor sleep may seem minor, it can be harmful to our health.

Children and adults with sleep problems may have one or both of these issues:

1. *Not enough sleep:* getting less than the recommended amount for our age (see table)
2. *Poor quality sleep:* sleep that isn't restful. This can mean waking up frequently, or that the sleep you get just isn't good enough to be healthy.

Sleep problems can cause:

- Daytime sleepiness and low energy
- Increased appetite and weight gain
- Trouble learning
- Poor grades
- Depressed mood and anxiety

In some cases, children and teens may have sleep apnea:

- *Sleep apnea:* a problem with breathing during deep sleep
- Can be treated with special equipment that helps the person breathe while sleeping, or sometimes with surgery.

There are other causes of poor sleep that may require further investigation.

How much sleep does my child need?

Recommended Hours of Sleep in 24 hours

Newborn	0-3 months	14-17 hours *
Infant	4-11 months	12-16 hours *
Toddler	1-2 years	11-14 hours *
Preschool	3-5 years	10-13 hours *
School-age	6-12 years	9-12 hours
Teen	13-18 years	8-10 hours
Young Adult	19-25 years	7-9 hours
Adult	26-64 years	7-9 hours
Older Adult	65 years and older	7-8 hour

* includes naps

Fortunately, a lot of sleep problems can be fixed by good sleep habits.

- *Sleep habits:* behaviors and environments that promote healthy sleep
- In short, many problems with poor sleep can be improved by changing how we get ready to sleep, when we sleep, and ensuring the place we sleep is comfortable.

Tips to improve your sleep:

Stick to a sleep routine: start this routine 30-60 minutes before bedtime

- Don't use electronics since light from screens can disrupt chemicals in the brain that control our sleep.
- Avoid activities such as exercising, eating, or loud music.
- Don't watch movies, videos, or play video games that are exciting.
- Set a bedtime so your body gets used to going to sleep at the same time every night.
- Do something relaxing, such as reading, stretching, taking a shower, or meditation.

Temperature: colder rooms make for better sleep

- 63 degrees F is the optimal temperature for sleep (may need to start warmer). Many people find dropping to 67-68 degrees is enough to sleep better.
- If the room is cold, use heavier or warmer blankets to stay warm in bed.

Limit light

- Keeping your room dark is important.
- No need for room lights above or light from a TV. Night-lights are okay.

Keep it quiet

- Avoid loud noises; music and TV have been shown to reduce sleep.
- If some noise is preferred, white noise makers or music without lyrics are best.

Use scents

- Research has shown that pleasant smells, like lavender, can help us sleep.
- Burn a candle before bed (blow it out before falling asleep) or put a drop of essential oils on your pillow.

Avoid caffeine

- At minimum, stop caffeine use 6 hours before bedtime.

Be patient

- New sleep habits take time, but it is worth it. Sleep is very important to your health.



Myths about sleep:

“My child has to have a snack to sleep well.”

–For some, eating right before bed causes problems such as heartburn and stomach aches. To decrease the chances of these, limit eating 3 hours before bed.

“My child needs the noise of the television to fall asleep.”

–Research shows that children have less restful sleep if the TV is on. Some kids have become used to the sound and light of the TV. Sleep quality is always better in quiet, dark rooms. A white noise app is another option to cover up outside sound.

“My child can just catch up on their sleep on the weekends”

–Research has shown that not sleeping enough during the week can cause a decrease in memory, attention, and ability to manage emotions. In addition, weekend catch-up sleep does not completely improve these problems.