

Topic of the Month-

Sleep and your little one

How much sleep do you really need?

Age	Sleep Needs
Newborns (0-2 months)	12-18 hours
Infants (3-11 months)	14-15 hours
Toddler (1-3 years)	12-14 hours
Preschoolers (3-5 years)	11-13 hours
School-age children (5-10 years)	10-11 hours
Teens (10-17 years)	8.5-9.25 hours
Adults	7-9 hours

Source: National Sleep Foundation

Sleep is very important to your child's health and well-being. In fact, good sleep habits start from birth. Children who do not get enough sleep may have trouble functioning during the day. At night, they may find it hard to settle. Your mother always told you that a sound night's sleep is best for a sound body. And it turns out, she was right. Learning good sleep habits starts early in life and can be a benefit for the rest of our lives.

If children are to get up in the morning well rested, we need to start preparing the evening before. Parents can help their kids settle and sleep if they keep a consistent bedtime routine, which includes:

- Ensuring that children have active play during their day.
- Keeping the hour before bedtime as screen-free time. This includes removing all television, computers, video games, and handheld devices from the child's sleeping area. (Research suggests this is a good idea for adults too.)
- Creating a pleasant transition from daytime to sleep time by playing a quiet activity, reading bedtime stories and snuggling in together.
- Helping your child to feel safe and secure in their sleeping area. (i.e. nightlight, stuffie)
- Keeping a calm, but firm approach to settling kids to sleep.

How much sleep does my child need?



Babies (birth to 4 months)

Newborns may sleep as much as 18 hours a day, for 3 to 4 hours at a time. It's normal and healthy for babies to wake up during the night to feed. As your baby gets older, they will stay awake longer during the day and sleep for longer stretches at night.

Babies, just like adults, need the right cues to learn when it is time to sleep. For example, if you always put your baby in their crib to sleep, they will learn that this is the place where they sleep. This may not work right away, but over time, your baby will come to understand.

Sometime after 3 months, your baby's sleep habits will become more predictable and you can expect a more regular nap schedule. Trust your baby's cues – they will let you know when they are tired. A sleep diary might help you to recognize their regular sleeping pattern.

A naptime routine is a good idea. It could include a quiet cuddle and short story in a darkened room before it's time to nap.

Infants (4 to 12 months)



At this age, babies sleep an average of 14 hours a day, but anything less or more can be normal for your baby. By 4 months, most babies need three naps a day; one in the morning, afternoon and early evening.

Between 6 and 12 months, your baby will probably go from having 3 naps a day to 2 longer naps, in the morning and afternoon. Every baby's napping needs are different. Some nap for as little as 20 minutes at a time, while others sleep for 3 or more hours.

Healthy sleep habits for your infant:

- Maintain a regular daytime and bedtime sleep schedule as much as possible.
- A consistent bedtime routine is important. Many parents like to use the “3 Bs”: bath, book, bed.
- Don't put your baby to bed with a bottle. This can lead to tooth decay.
- At around 6 months, if your baby wakes at night and cries, go check to see if there is anything wrong, such as being too cold or too warm, but don't take him out of the crib. You can comfort them by stroking the forehead or talking softly to let them know you're there. This helps your baby learn how to self-soothe, important steps toward falling back to sleep on their own.

Toddlers (1 to 2 years)



Most toddlers sleep between 1 and 14 hours in a 24-hour period

Healthy sleep habits for your toddler:

- It's still important to keep a sleep schedule your child is familiar with. The routine you established during the first year is even more important for your toddler.
- Avoid naps that are too late in the day, because at this age, it can affect nighttime sleeping.
- Help your child wind down about half an hour before bedtime with stories and quiet activities.
- Be gentle but firm if your child protests.
- Keep the bedroom quiet, cozy, and good for sleeping, such as keeping the lights dim.
- Soft, soothing music might be comforting.
- Security items (such as a blanket or stuffed animal) are often important at this age.

Children (3 to 5 years)



Preschoolers typically sleep about 10 to 13 hours a day. As your child approaches 3 years old, they have probably dropped to one nap a day. Some days they may need a nap, while other days they may not. Some children give up daytime naps altogether during this period. You can use that time—often after lunch—for quiet time for your child to read and relax.

At this age, it's common for children to have some sleep problems and to resist going to bed. They may also wake up during the night from nighttime fears or nightmares.

Healthy sleep habits for your preschooler:

- Don't give your child drinks with caffeine.
- Avoid screens before bedtime. Don't allow tablets, televisions, computer or video games in the bedroom.
- Some children will try to delay bedtime. Set limits, such as how many books you will read together, and be sure your child knows what they are.
- Tuck your child into bed snugly for a feeling of security.
- Don't ignore bedtime fears. If your child has nightmares, reassure and comfort them.