

Healthy Sleep Habits

Sleep is very important for your family's overall health. Use these tips to help every member of your family get a great night's sleep!

The people in your family (big and small) require different amounts of sleep:

- *Toddlers (1-3 years) need about 12-14 hours of sleep in a 24-hour period.*
- *Preschoolers (3-5 years) need about 11-13 hours of sleep each night.*
- *School-age children (5-11 years) need about 10-11 hours of sleep each night.*
- *Adolescents (12-18 years) need about 9 ¼ hours of sleep each night.*

Maintain a regular sleep schedule. Wake-up and go-to-sleep at approximately the same time each day, including weekends and holidays.

Create consistent, relaxing bedtime routines that help children "wind down" and prepare for a good night's sleep. Some ideas include:

- *A warm bath before bed*
- *Turning down the lights in child's bedroom*
- *Singing songs or lullabies*
- *Reading a calming story*
- *Listening to quiet music or stories on tape*
- *Talking about the day*
- *Faith-based practices*

For families with parental military deployment, consider audio recording favorite stories or songs that can be played as part of the bedtime ritual while parent is away.

Make child's bedroom conducive to sleep – dark, cool and quiet.

Keep TV and computers out of the bedroom.

Napping should be developmentally appropriate.

- *Naps should not occur too close to bedtime; avoid naps after 3 pm.*
- *Children generally do not require naps after the age of five or six.*
- *For older children, teens and adults, napping during the day should be avoided.*

It's okay to let teens sleep in on the weekend, but no more than 2 or 3 hours later than their usual weekday wake-up time.

Spend time outside each day to help strengthen the body's internal clock.

Regular exercise during the day can help children, teens and parents sleep better.

Keep children away from caffeine. Keep in mind hidden sources of caffeine: chocolate, candy, soda, energy drinks, energy bars, coffee drinks and desserts.

Avoid arguments just before bedtime.