



SLEEP TIGHT

Barnet Children & Young People's Psychological Wellbeing Team



WHAT IS SLEEP HYGIENE?

Sleep practices that help you settle to sleep and stay asleep during the night.

These practices can help you get to sleep easier and feel more rested, whilst promoting good health.

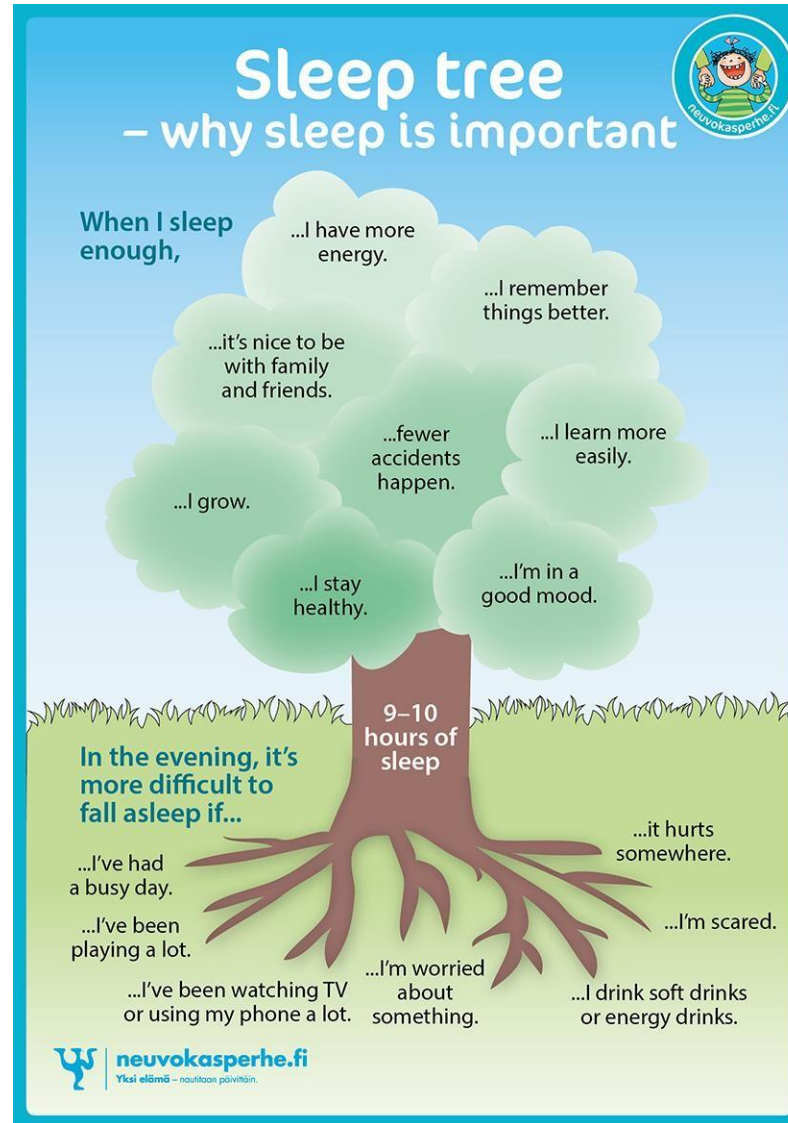
Good sleep hygiene is as important for children as adults.



COMMON SLEEP PROBLEMS

- Fear of being alone/separated from a loved one
- Fear of the dark
- Worries e.g. monsters under the bed, burglars, fire, etc
- Bad habits e.g. daytime napping
- Being 'overtired'
- Nightmares

WHY DOES SLEEP MATTER?

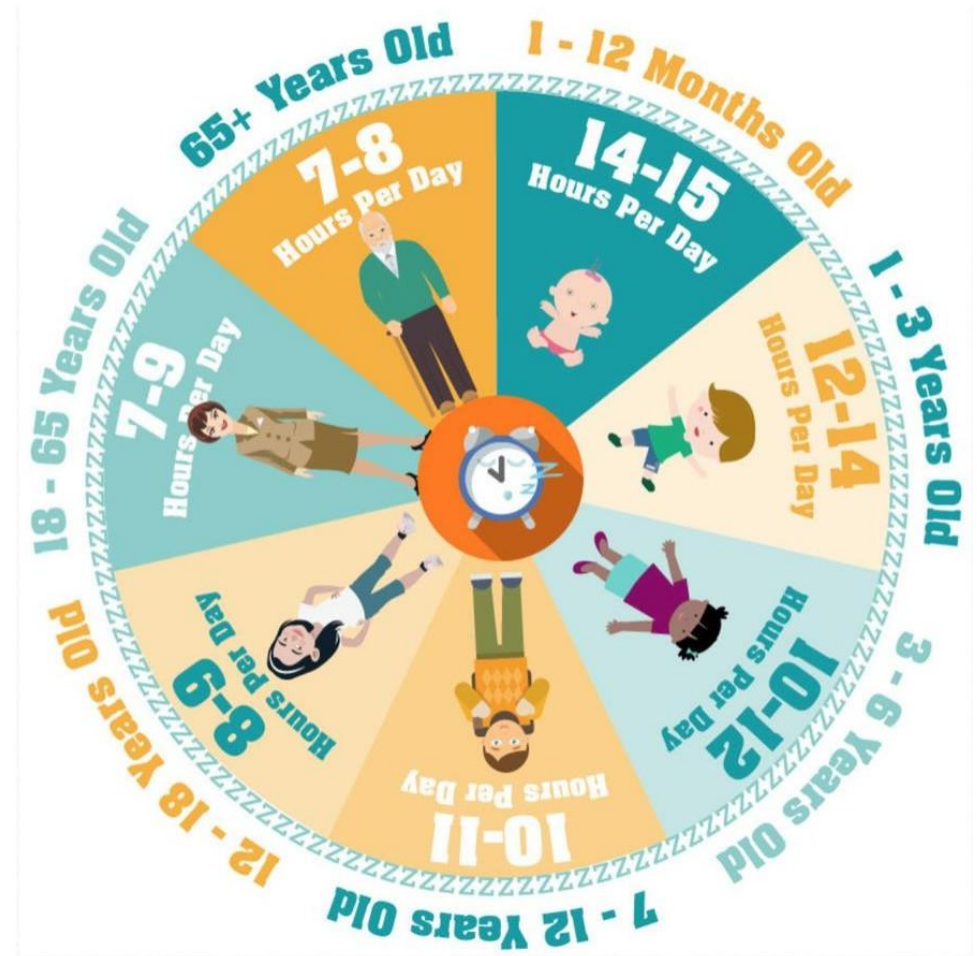


WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE SLEEP?

- Whilst asleep your brain and body are doing things they can't do when awake, such as repair or fight infections.
- We grow in our sleep
- Our brains at night sort out all the information gathered during the day, and processes it.

BASICS OF GOOD SLEEP HYGIENE

- Protect your child' need for sleep
- Children of different ages need different amounts of sleep
- The figure on the right gives you an idea of how much sleep your child needs



BASICS OF GOOD SLEEP HYGIENE

- Have a good bedtime routine!
- Go to bed at the same time every night and get up at the same time every morning.
- Ensure a dark, quiet, cool environment as this helps your children relax and prepare for sleep. They need to feel safe and secure in their night time environment.
- Avoid oversleeping or lying in bed for prolonged periods of time after sleep is completed.
- Avoid big meals before bedtime, have a light snack instead.
- Exercise during the day to help your body get ready for sleep.

ROUTINE

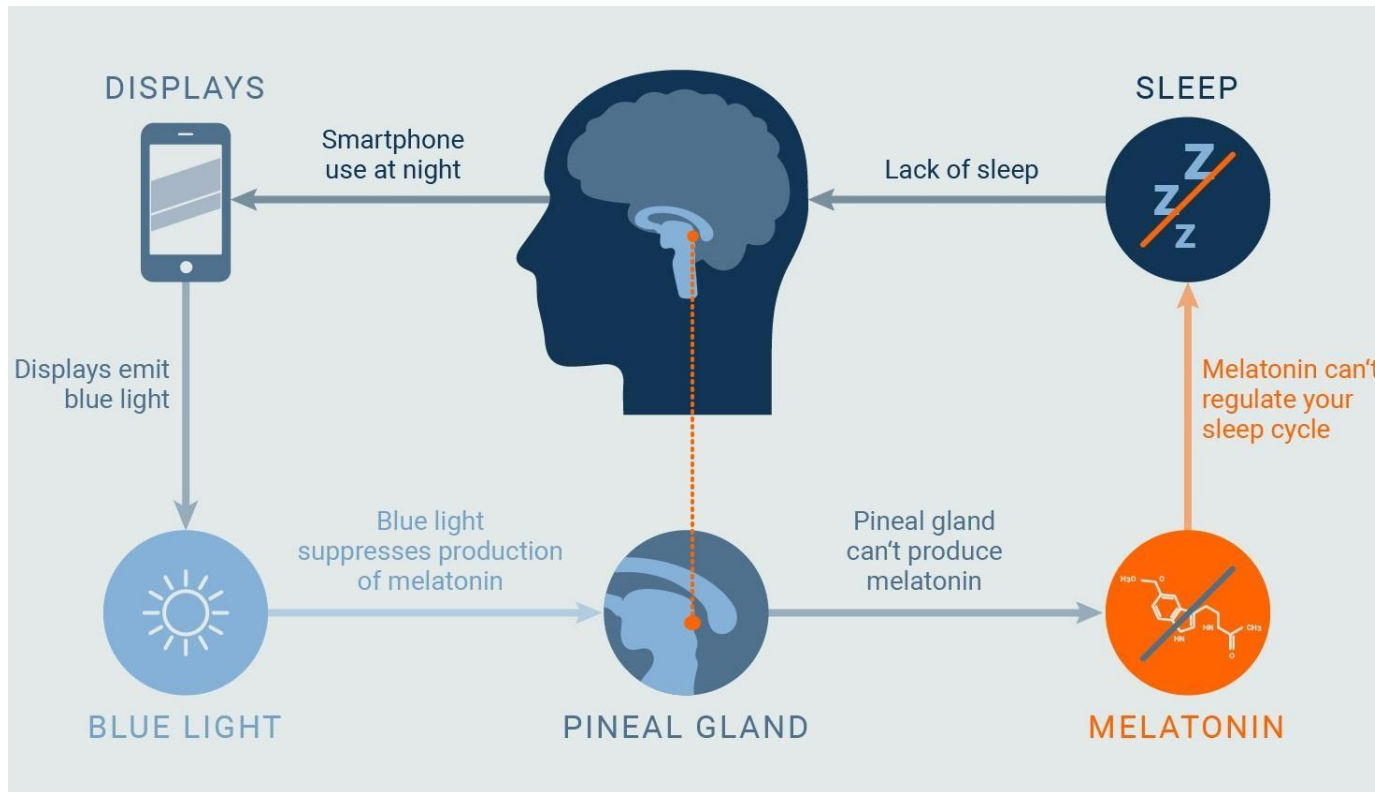
- Create a bed time pattern.
- Have a **shift activity** to signal brain that its bedtime. This activity should last 10 minutes such as having a quick snack or saying good night to pets.
- Complete **bedtime routine** – this is also to ensure they have no reason to get out of bed – they've been to the toilet, had some water

WINDING DOWN

- Start the night time activity **one hour** before bedtime. Find relaxing activities such as look at stars or take a bath.
- This signals the brain time to wind down. At this point the body produces melatonin which helps us sleep all night.
- Create a snug activity such as reading in bed, or listening to story.
- Finally have a snooze activity such as giving a kiss goodnight, or a back rub. This is a final signal to the brain that it's okay to fall asleep.
- This will then become a pattern.

TECHNOLOGY

- Avoid any electronics or use night shift if unavoidable.



RESISTANCE TO BED TIME

- Decide on a bed time
- Establish the bed time routine
- Give warning 10 – 15 mins before sleep
- Be firm and ignore protests
- Check in – agree if they don't call out you will check in in 5-10 mins
- Have a reinforcement program.
- Return child to room – use time out / earlier bedtime tomorrow.

RULES

- Don't go into the child's room unless you must, for example if they are really upset. Children need to learn to self settle – parents need to remain firm.
- If a child wakes assume that the child has to go to the bathroom and steer them that way. Be gentle and quiet.
- Try not to put any lights on as this will wake them.
- Do not talk to them or show emotion as engaging them in conversation will waken them more.
- If your child wakes from a nightmare then provide reassurance to help settle them back to sleep but do not engage in conversation.

NIGHT TIME AWAKENING

- Provide a night light
- Be understanding – but never take them to your bed or say their dreams are ridiculous.
- Return your child to their room if they come into yours.
- Ignore crying if you suspect there's nothing wrong and you've already settled them.
- Help them feel safe and loved during the day.

SLEEPING IN THEIR OWN BED

- Sometimes sleep problems can affect the sleep environment, where a young person has trouble sleeping in their own bed.
- In small steps attempt to address this.
- This may mean you physically move yourself away, or the light stays on for x amount of time.
- This should be a gradual process so the child becomes used to each step as you attempt them.

BOOKS

