

Improving Sleep for pupils with ADHD

- Develop positive sleep hygiene routines and practices. Keep a regular bedtime for your child and wake them at a regular time each morning, so that the body clock is strengthened.
- Limit exposure to blue light and stimulating activities in the hour before sleep (TV, consoles and tablets). Keep the bedroom clear of distractions and electronic equipment such as TV's and consoles.
- Teach settling strategies, such as: audio books (these are less stimulating than digital content, but reduce stress and boredom); meditation and breathing techniques; develop rigidly structured pre bed routines (take a bath and listening to an Audio book—this signals to your body that “its time to wind down”); soothing music; white noise machines. Consider using apps to support sleep routines. Teach children the value of sleep and its impact on their health, wellbeing and learning.
- Discuss the root of the sleeplessness—develop emotional regulation tools such as the 5 point scale or Sam app for pupils with Anxiety— a common cause of insomnia.

Physical activity causes physical tiredness, but mental and chemical stimulation for the body. High levels of physical activity before bed can cause sleeplessness, so timing is key to using exercise supportively.

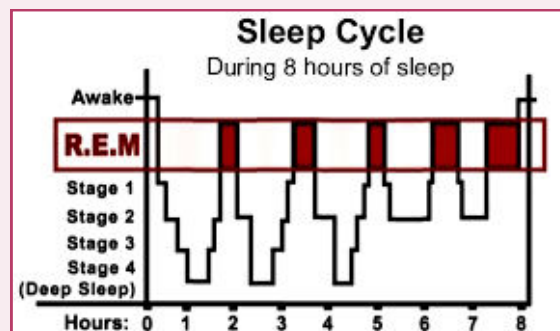
Make sure your child's room is quiet and dark. Avoid drinks of cola, chocolate and other drinks containing caffeine / additives before bed. Try warm milk instead.

Keep room temperature to a comfortable level. High temperatures disturb sleep.

Make sure that your child does not go to bed hungry but do not give a child over 6 months old feeds / drinks during the night. Cereal and milk is ideal to have before bed.

Help your child to fall asleep alone in her/her bed, without your presence.

What Are the Stages of Sleep?



Stage1 is light sleep where you drift in and out of sleep and can be awakened easily. In this stage, the eyes move slowly and muscle activity slows. During this stage, many people experience sudden muscle contractions preceded by a sensation of falling .

In **Stage 2** , eye movement stops and brain waves become slower with only an occasional burst of rapid brain waves. The body begins to prepare for deep sleep, as the body temperature begins to drop and the heart rates slows.

When a person enters **Stage 3**, extremely slow brain waves called delta waves are interspersed with smaller, faster waves. This is a deep sleep. It is during this stage that a person may experience sleeping walking, night terrors, talking during one's sleep, and bedwetting. These behaviours are known as parasomnias and tend to occur during the transition between non-REM and REM sleep.

In **Stage 4**, deep sleep continues as the brain produces delta waves almost exclusively. People roused from this state feel disorientated for a few minutes.

During **REM (rapid eye movement) sleep** brain waves mimic activity during the waking state. The eyes remain closed but move rapidly from side-to-side, perhaps related to the intense dream and brain activity that occurs during this stage.



We tend to think of sleep as a time when the mind and body shut down. But this is not the case; sleep is an active period in which a lot of important processing, restoration and strengthening occurs.

One of the vital roles of sleep is to help us solidify and consolidate memories. REM sleep may help the brain process traumatic events, sleep allows our bodies to have an 'emotional sort-out' and process emotions. Sleep disorders are common, studies show that 2 or more hours of delayed sleep will cause problems. Melatonin helps your body calm and settle. Melatonin is a hormone that's made by the pineal gland in the brain, melatonin helps control your daily sleep-wake cycles. Your body's internal clock (also known as circadian rhythm) influences how much melatonin the pineal gland makes, and so does the amount of light that you are exposed to each day. Typically, melatonin levels start to rise in the mid to late evening, after the sun has set. They stay elevated for most of the night while you are in the dark. Then, they drop in the early morning as the sun rises, causing you to awaken.

During the shorter, darker days of winter, your body may produce melatonin earlier or later in the day, which partly throws off your natural sleep cycles. As a result, you may experience fatigue, a drop in energy, mood changes, or other symptoms of Seasonal Affective Disorder. Natural light isn't the only external factor that influences melatonin levels though: foods such as tomatoes, walnuts, olives, rice, barley, strawberries, cherries and cow's milk contain melatonin. When your body absorbs melatonin from these foods, you may begin to feel calm and sleepy. Restless legs can be linked to iron deficiency. Diet can have an impact on sleep. Sleep can have a huge impact on memory consolidation and the ability to process events, sleep therefore will impact on learning and behaviour. Sleep should be looked at before considering referrals.



SLEEP

Info taken from:
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staff, pupils and other
sources.