

Sleep

About sleep

- It is important that children and young people get enough sleep to maintain their physical and psychological health and development.
- There is no definitive answer to the question "what is sleep for?", but generally sleeping is thought to be essential for regenerating the mind and body.
- The amount of sleep children and young people need varies from individual to individual. Age is only one of the factors that can affect the amount of sleep required:
 - Babies require on average 16-17 hours each day.
 - Older children require 10 hours.
 - Adolescents sometimes appear to need less sleep at night, but will sleep longer in the morning.
- There are consequences for children who do not get enough sleep; they are tired all the time, they fall asleep during the day, and they have difficulty concentrating.
- Younger children who get less than 10 hours sleep have also been shown to be less likely to do as they are told.
- Teenagers may do less well at school due to not getting enough sleep.
- It should be remembered that occasional periods of lack of sleep are unlikely to have any long-term serious consequences.
- Sleeping too much or too little can sometimes be an indication that a child is unwell and/or depressed, but remember that children do vary in their needs.
- Sleep can be interrupted or prevented by stress, excitement, anxiety, worry, noise, hunger, pain and bed-wetting.
- It is important to be aware of anything that may be worrying or exciting a child or young person.
- Sleep can also be disturbed by common childhood experiences such as nightmares and night terrors.
- A good bedtime routine is important to develop a healthy sleep pattern in children as well as adults.
- Don't forget the bedroom environment - make sure that it is quiet, comfortable and conducive to sleep.