

## Sleep Hygiene for Children and Teens

### **1. Build a Bedtime Routine:**

- Children need about 10-11 hours of sleep. Teens need about 9-10 hours.
- Set a regular time for bed each night and stick to it, even on weekends.
- Establish a relaxing bedtime routine, such as a warm bath, light reading, gentle stretching, or meditation (for example – imagining being on a beach) before bed.

**2. Make after-dinner time a relaxing time.** Too much activity close to bedtime can keep kids/teens awake.

**3. Avoid feeding children/teens big meals close to bedtime.** A small snack can be helpful if they are hungry (for example, one piece of cheese with a few crackers).

- Avoid giving children/teens anything with caffeine within six hours of bedtime, including chocolate and sodas. Try to avoid coffee or energy drinks completely.

**4. Set the bedroom temperature so that it's comfortable** – cool, but not too cold.

**5. Make sure the bedroom is dark and keep the noise level low.** If your child/teen does not like the dark, try to use a green glow nightlight. If your child/teen is sensitive to light or sound, try a sleep mask or earplugs. Keep clocks turned away if needed.

**6. Avoid naps during the day;** it can disturb the normal pattern of sleep and wakefulness. One exception: Younger children require developmentally appropriate naps.

**7. Exercise can promote good sleep** when engaged in regularly, but vigorous exercise should occur in the morning or late afternoon.

**8. Ensure adequate exposure to natural light,** especially in the mornings. Natural light exposure helps maintain a healthy sleep-wake cycle.

**9. Try to avoid emotionally upsetting conversations and activities before trying to go to sleep.** Don't dwell on, or bring your problems to bed. Schedule a block of time for "worry time" earlier in the day if needed.

**10. Associate bed with sleep.** It's not a good idea to use the bed to watch TV, use cellphones or tablets/iPads. An additional recommendation is that children/teens not have TVs, computers or cell phones in their bedrooms at night.

**11. Try to avoid the use of computers, TV/video games, cellphones or tablets/iPads for two hours prior to bedtime.** This also makes it less likely that your child/teen will push for "one more TV program" or "one more video game" before bedtime.

**12. Review with your child's/teen's physician whether there are any medicines that may be interfering with the quality of their sleep** (such as some asthma medicines and decongestants). Don't be afraid to ask about alternatives.