

Sleep is vital for everybody. When we don't get enough sleep it affects us in lots of ways. Parents and carers, siblings and other family members, children and young people can all be affected by sleep deprivation.

### **What is the impact of sleep deprivation?**

Lack of concentration, affecting our ability to learn, poor memory

Mood swings

Worrying more

Finding it difficult to deal with day to day challenges

Over eating or under eating

Lacking energy or becoming hyperactive "running on empty"

Lack of sleep can impact on a child's growth and appetite

Behaviour difficulties

Low immune system - more prone to catching colds, having headaches, viruses

Anxiety and depression

Poor decision making

Anger management difficulties

### **How much sleep does my child need?**

A two year old, on average will need 11 and  $\frac{3}{4}$  hours sleep at night and a nap of around 1 and  $\frac{1}{4}$  hours, by 4 years a child requires around 11.5 hours sleep per night. At 7 years old, around 10.5 hours sleep per night and by 9 years around 10 hours sleep per night and by 11 years at least 9.5 hours sleep per night.

### **What helps to encourage a good night time sleep?**

#### ✓ **Routine**

Cut out screens - that's phone, ipad, x box, TV, lap top at least an hour before bedtime. The light from the screens fools our brains and bodies into thinking that it is day time and will wake us up!

Ensure that your child has a relaxing night time routine in the hour before they go to sleep. This includes;

Activities that promote sleep and relaxation (hand - eye coordination activities - jigsaws, colouring, loom bands, modal making, lego etc).

Supper and a drink

bath /wash, toilet and teeth brushing

Bedtime story/reading

Cuddle and kiss good night, leave child to fall asleep independently

✓ **Daytime Exercise Outdoors**

Take a walk or do some exercise outdoors on a morning - This sets our body clocks for the day!

Enjoy time outdoors during the day, even when the weather isn't too good!

Don't do exercise late on an evening as this makes us more awake near bedtime.

Get up at the same time each day even in holidays and weekends - This strengthens our body clocks, helping us to feel tired naturally at the right time.

✓ **Foods and Drinks**

Cut out sugary snacks and any caffeinated drinks like coca cola or coffee. Stick to water or milk for a drink at night time rather than fizzy drinks.

✓ **Bedroom**

Bedrooms should be a distraction free zone - put toys in a toy box or cover with a sheet at night, ideally no computers or TVs in bedrooms.

Keep bedrooms dark to promote sleep - use black out blinds or lined curtains. If a child is afraid of the dark use a glow light/night light

✓ **Did you know?**

There are foods that are thought to improve sleep and relaxation. These include cheese, milk, yogurt, chicken and turkey, wholemeal bread and even bananas!

Colour in a bedroom can have an impact on relaxation and sleep - red and bright white are too stimulating and less restful. The best colours for a bedroom are paler colours - pastel blues and greens, beige, lilac. The ideal temperature in a bedroom is 17 degrees.

