



# Sleep well



Health  
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Public Health  
Agency

Project supported by the PHA



Western Health  
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Practical ways you and your family can get a good night's sleep

# Sleep Well Tips for Families

Getting enough sleep is directly linked to your overall health and wellbeing. These Sleep Well tips aim to support practical ways for your family to get a good night's sleep.

- Avoid long naps especially in the afternoon as this can make it difficult to get to sleep at night.
- Getting enough natural daylight and physical activity are important for better sleep at night, though avoid exercise close to bedtime.
- Enjoy your caffeine before noon. Also be mindful that alcohol disrupts and impairs sleep.
- Avoid food high in sugar for a couple of hours before bedtime. Eating a heavy meal close to bedtime can impact on your ability to fall asleep and stay asleep.
- Unwind for an hour before your intended bedtime. Do something you feel relaxes you. Dim the lights and switch off from technology as blue light from devices has been proven to disrupt sleep.
- To help to manage stress or anxiety, calm and clear your mind using deep breathing or muscle relaxation techniques. Keep a notebook and pen beside your bed to write down thoughts or worries.
- Keep your bedroom gadget free and ensure it is quiet, cool and dark.
- Enjoy sleeping in a comfortable, cosy and fresh bed.

In order to support a good night's sleep go to bed when you feel tired even if it is before your usual bedtime. Listen to your body's natural cues for sleep. If you ignore and stay up later you may miss the ideal time for sleep.

# Children's Bedtime Routine

Preparation for a good night's sleep begins with a regular and consistent bedtime routine.

Create a calming and relaxed environment. Bedtime routine should begin one hour before intended bedtime after an active busy day.

- Relaxing activity e.g. puzzles, colouring, building blocks (no screens).
- Light supper e.g. small glass of warm milk, cereal or toast.
- Relaxing bath, pyjamas, brush teeth then toilet.
- Read a bedtime story, or sing a lullaby to your child when they are in bed.
- Conversation with your child at bedtime can be really beneficial so they feel listened to, understood and connected to you.
- Goodnight kiss and cuddle.
- Leave the room to encourage your child to settle and fall asleep in their own bed.
- Make sure that your child's room is quiet, cool and dark. Toys should be out of sight.
- Provide a night light emitting orange light if needed.

## Additional Tips for Children

- If your child struggles to settle alone, use the disappearing chair method. Using this technique over time allows the parent or caregiver to sit next to the child's bed until they fall asleep, gradually moving further away from the child's bed until the child is comfortable falling asleep alone.
- If your child wakes at night it is important to respond and comfort them as fear and distress at night can be very real.

# Recommended Sleeping Times by Age Group



Toddlers  
1-2

11 to 14 Hours



Pre-school  
3-5

10 to 13 Hours



School Aged  
Children • 6-13

9 to 11 Hours



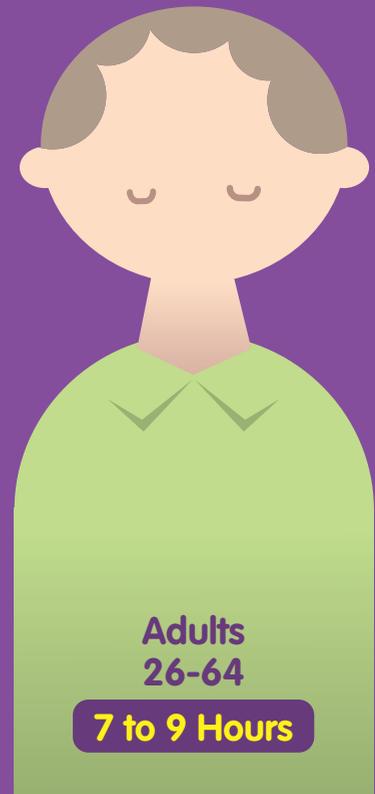
Teenagers  
14-17

9 to 11 Hours



Young Adults  
18-25

7 to 9 Hours



Adults  
26-64

7 to 9 Hours

Remember, having a consistent bedtime and morning routine strengthens your body clock.

If you cannot fall asleep within 20 minutes, or if you wake up and cannot get back to sleep, get up, do something that relaxes you in dim light and return to bed when you feel sleepy.

If you are worried about yourself, your child or family member not sleeping and sleep difficulties are affecting daily life, seek support from your Health Visitor or GP.

The tips in this leaflet do work but may take time.  
**Stick with it.**

## Further Information

Sleep Scotland  
[www.sleepscotland.org](http://www.sleepscotland.org)

Millpond  
[www.millpondsleepclinic.com](http://www.millpondsleepclinic.com)

The Children's Sleep Charity  
[www.thechildrenssleepcharity.org.uk](http://www.thechildrenssleepcharity.org.uk)

National Sleep Foundation  
[www.sleepfoundation.org](http://www.sleepfoundation.org)

The Sleep Council  
[www.sleepcouncil.org.uk](http://www.sleepcouncil.org.uk)





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# Sleep Well

Sleeping every night is an important part of life. Your body is designed to sleep so that you can effectively cope with the rest of your day. Make a good night's sleep a priority for you and your family.

**Practical ways you and your family can get a good night's sleep**