

DOES MY CHILD HAVE A SLEEP PROBLEM?

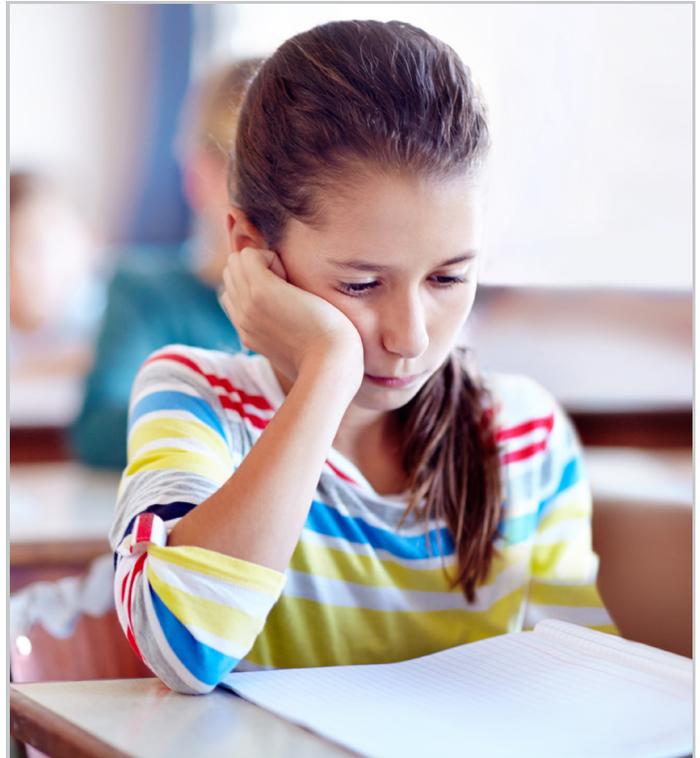
Quick Facts:

Sleep problems and sleep disorders are common among children. Most sleep problems have warning signs. You should discuss these signs and symptoms with your child's health care provider. Some sleep problems go away as a child grows and develops. Most ongoing sleep problems can be treated effectively.

KEY POINTS:

Sleep is essential for optimal health in children. Be sure that your child is getting enough sleep each night. The American Academy of Sleep Medicine recommends that children and teens get the following amounts of sleep on a regular basis to promote optimal health:

- **Infants 4-12 months old: 12-16 hours (including naps)**
- **Children 1-2 years old: 11-14 hours (including naps)**
- **Children 3-5 years old: 10-13 hours (including naps)**
- **Children 6-12 years old: 9-12 hours**
- **Teens 13-18 years old: 8-10 hours**



How Can I Learn More?

- Talk to your board-certified sleep medicine physician.
- Visit www.sleepeducation.org

Is My Child At Risk:

Children who have inconsistent sleep schedules are more likely to have sleep problems. Obstructive sleep apnea is more common in children who are overweight and in those who have large tonsils and adenoids. Stress, anxiety or trauma may cause children to have sleep problems such as nightmares or bedwetting.

GENERAL OVERVIEW

Sleep disorders prevent children from getting the healthy sleep that they need. Children who don't sleep well can be tired and cranky during the day. They also can have behavioral problems. Look for these common warning signs of sleep problems in children:

- **Restless legs** - Children may complain that they have a creepy-crawly, tugging, itchy or tingly sensation in their legs when they try to sleep. Symptoms of restless legs syndrome tend to improve with walking or stretching.
- **Sleepwalking** - It is common for children to sleepwalk. They usually stop sleepwalking by the time they become a teen. Sleepwalking can be dangerous if your child uses stairs or appliances, or leaves the house.

- **Excessive daytime sleepiness** – Warning signs include having trouble waking up in the morning and acting sleepy throughout the day. Other symptoms include a general lack of daytime energy and an unexplained decrease in daytime performance. Another warning sign is if your child takes naps at unusual times of day. However, it is normal for children to take naps up to about 5 years of age.
- **Difficulty falling asleep and problems sleeping through the night** – At one time or another, most children have trouble sleeping through the night. It is more concerning if the problem becomes a nightly pattern or if it has a negative effect on your child during the day.
- **Nightmares** – It is normal for a child to be frightened by a vivid dream. However, frequent nightmares are much less common. Nightmares become a problem if they cause anxiety, distress or bedtime resistance.
- **Snoring or breathing pauses during sleep** – Many children will snore when they have a cold or allergies. Nightly snoring may be a sign of obstructive sleep apnea. It can be caused by a

deviated nasal septum or enlarged tonsils and adenoids. Warning signs include periods of snoring followed by long, silent pauses between breaths.

- **Screaming** – An episode of sleep terrors involves waking with a feeling of intense fear. It often occurs along with a cry or piercing scream. Your child may be unresponsive and appear to be confused. A child often has no memory of the event.
- **Bedwetting** – Children who are under the age of 5 often wet the bed. Bedwetting is considered a sleep disorder if your child is older than 5 years and has episodes at least twice a week. Some children may begin to wet the bed during periods of emotional distress.

TIPS:

- Set a consistent bedtime for your child.
- Develop a relaxing bedtime routine to help your child get ready for bed.
- Don't let your child drink sodas that have caffeine.
- Keep the TV and other electronic devices out of your child's bedroom.
- Turn off the TV, computer and video games at least 1 hour before bedtime.

➔ Next Steps:

- Help your child develop healthy sleep habits.
- Create a relaxing sleep environment for your child.
- The doctor may schedule your child for a sleep study.
- Talk to your child's doctor about any ongoing sleep problems.

Questions For Your Physician



Take a few minutes to write your questions for the next time you see your healthcare provider.

Sample Questions:



Why doesn't my child sleep through the night?

Why is my child so tired all the time?



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