

# Sleep Basics for Children and Adults

Children model our behavior in their quest to live a successful life

## **Make the bedroom a place for sleep and intimacy:**

When the bedroom is a simple place set aside for sleep, all our associations with that room are restful, peaceful and sleep related. When we enter that room the mind/body literally produces an inner dialog that is restful, and a chemistry that supports natural sleep. It becomes easier and normal to quiet the mind. Like sleep the bedroom becomes a refuge, a healing break from the waking world. Keep the bedroom simple, quiet, uncluttered and cool. Keep it dark at night and have outside light blocked so that it's dark in the morning.

## **Gradually reduce light at night:**

In the evening darkness helps our brain to cease producing alerting chemicals and helps our pineal gland produce melatonin. And so the thinking mind quiets down while melatonin helps us to go to sleep. Melatonin also helps us to stay asleep even as our drive to sleep gets gradually spent in those first hours of sleep. For hundreds of thousands of years our world got dark in the early evening and darker as the night progressed. Protect especially that last 90 minutes before bedtime from bright and blue lights. It is thought that the increasing availability of artificial light at night is fueling much of the insufficient sleep that has become epidemic. Light, especially the blue light from TV's and computers, causes the brain to continue producing stimulating chemicals and suppresses the production of melatonin.

## **Maintain a regular sleep schedule:**

Sleep thrives on as regular a sleep-schedule as you can maintain. Going to sleep at night and waking in the morning at the same time each day is the ideal schedule for good consistent sleep. And while it's appropriate for children and adults to have different schedules it's good to let children know that adults also have schedules for their sleep. Children need a great deal more sleep than adults and need to go to bed earlier to get that additional sleep.

## **Create healthy sleep rituals:**

Arrange the evening so that there are some simple but regular habits or rituals that ready you for sleep. It can be comforting to write in a journal or make a to-do list earlier in the evening. This helps prevent nighttime worrying. Read in as low light as possible later in the night avoiding bright lights and quieting the mind. Reading to children at bedtime can be soothing and help a child to wind down before sleep. Holding or rocking a child is comforting but try not to rock the child to sleep so that they don't become dependent on that habit.

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