

Let's talk about sleep!



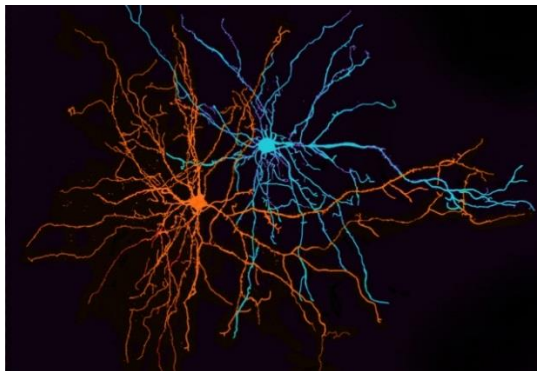
We all recognise the feeling of waking up in the morning after a good night's sleep feeling refreshed, energised and ready to go!

And we also know the feeling of waking up tired, lacking in energy, unable to cope with everyday tasks and longing for the next time we can crawl back in to bed.

Across the world people are sleeping less and less. It's not just young children who can't switch off, toddlers, teens and adults alike, bedtimes are getting later and later and the average time we spend asleep is falling.

This lack of sleep is having a staggering effect on our children! Children who aren't getting enough sleep are more likely to experience daytime behavioural problems, chronic irritability, attention problems, hyperactivity, obesity AND health problems.

During long periods of sleep, our brains are actually REALLY active, processing and consolidating everything we've learnt in the day, and storing in the long-term memory so it can be put to good use at a later date.



A good sleep routine:



1. Now This one is really important so I'm going to write it in capital letters ... **TURN OFF ALL SCREENS 1 HOUR BEFORE GOING TO BED.**

The blue light emitted by tablets, smartphones, computers and TVs stops the production of Melatonin, the hormone the body produces to make us sleepy.

1. **Play games that require hand-eye coordination.**
These games help the brain wind down eg colouring, lego, play dough etc.
2. **Have a warm bath.**
When you soak in a hot tub, your temperature rises—and the rapid cool-down period immediately afterward relaxes you.
3. **Story time!**
4. **Lights off and sleep.**

Things to remember:

- Don't use children's bedrooms as places they are sent to when they are in trouble ... bedrooms need to be a relaxing, happy place that children want to go to!
- The Bedtime routine needs to be a positive experience. Saying "if you carry on misbehaving, you're going to bed early tonight!" gives children the message that bedtime is a punishment.
- End the day on a good note! Look back together and remember something good that happened that day, or something they are thankful for.
- If your children wake early, hungry, try giving them a healthy snack before bedtime.
- Children aged 5-12 need on average 10-12 hours sleep a day.
- Role model healthy sleep behaviours to your children – they are learning how to be from you!

