

The wide Awake Kidz Club and the Sleep Crushers

A story about cool
kids with ADHD and
Autism who discover
the importance of sleep
By Susan Ozer

Foreword by Dr Inyang Takon, Consultant Paediatrician, East and North Hertfordshire NHS Trust

There is increasing awareness of the significant impact of sleep disorders on the health and well being of children. Children with neurodevelopmental disorders such as ADHD and ASD experience sleep difficulties for a variety of reasons. Dr Ozer has not only championed the development of resources for management of sleep problems in children within her Trust but continues to ensure that children and parents have a better understanding of the causes of sleep problems and how they can make changes that can improve the child's sleep.

The new edition of 'The wide awake kidz club and the Sleep crushers' has been extended to cover sleep problems in children with ASD and ADHD. Dr Ozer has combined various styles that will appeal to children and make it easier for parents to talk to children about sleep hygiene. The engaging images, stories and presentation of facts in a very simple, easily understood manner are some of the very positive features of the book.

Dr Ozer has reflected the need to empower children in changing their behaviour by including a section on 'How can I help myself to sleep better at night' which is excellent. There are helpful sleep resource tools included in the book which parents will find very useful. This book is indeed an excellent resource for the child, parents and professionals and distinguishes itself from a lot of other available resources which are mainly targeted at giving guidance to parents of children with sleep difficulties.

Dr Susan Ozer is a Consultant Neurodevelopmental Paediatrician at the East and North Hertfordshire NHS Trust. She is also the clinical lead for the ADHD Service (North Hertfordshire). Dr Ozer regularly manages a large caseload of children and young people with ADHD and ASD in North Hertfordshire.

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Note to parents, teachers and health professionals

The wide awake kidz club and the sleep crushers is a fictional story about the importance of sleep aimed at children aged 7 -11 years. Important sleep facts following the story can be read by children of all ages as the information will help them understand why it's important to sleep at the right time. Children may read the story on their own or with an adult. Children who read on their own should be encouraged to do the sleep quiz at the end of the book and also ask questions to check they have understood the information contained in the book. Teachers can read this with pupils or students with sleep problems impacting on school work. Health professionals can use this with families when conducting sleep hygiene during consultations. There is also a section on sleep for parents and carers.

Hi,
My name is Kieran and I'm 10 years old. I'm going to tell you about a story my grandad told me and my twin brother Sean. His story helped us learn the importance of sleeping at the right time at bedtime.
By the way, grandad is the greatest story-teller of all time. I'd like to tell you some facts about myself before I tell you grandad's story.



Fact 1

I have a condition that you may have heard about.

Are you ready for it?

I must warn you- it has a long name.

ATTENTION DEFICIT HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER.

Don't worry - you can call it **ADHD** which is easier to pronounce.

I was told I had ADHD by my doctor when I was about 9 years old.

Fact 2

Even though my brother Sean (pronounced S-H-O-N) and I like different things, we get along very well. Sean loves trains and becomes very excited when we travel on the London underground. He is very smart and knows all the names of the underground trains, stations, routes and stops. When Sean was younger, mum and dad would take him to watch trains at the station near our home whenever he was upset as this seemed to calm him down. Unlike me, Sean hates going to birthday parties and does not like going on play dates either. Sean says loud sounds and bright lights at parties make him feel sick. Sean gets really upset especially when a balloon pops as he says the noise it makes hurts his ears. Not going to parties or play dates does not seem to bother Sean very much as he says that he would rather play with me or his friend Ben who also loves trains. Mum and dad recently told me that Sean has a condition called Autism Spectrum Disorder or Autism for short-sounds like 'O-T-I-S-I-M', which is different from ADHD. They also said Autism is the reason why Sean does things in a particular way and dislikes certain things.



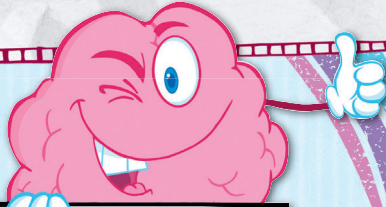
Fact 3

One thing Sean and I have in common is finding it hard to fall asleep at night. Sean struggles with sleep even more than I do as mum and dad frequently have to come into our room in the middle of the night to put him back to bed. I know this because I wake up sometimes when Sean wakes up and then find it hard to fall asleep again. I wonder whether you find it hard sleeping at night too?



Fact 4

I know a lot about ADHD and Autism because of grandad as he likes to tell us stories to help us understand things better. To help me understand ADHD, he told me a cool story about a Christmas tree called 'Pedro' with problem Christmas lights and a traffic light called 'Rainbow', with totally out of control traffic lights. Grandad's stories not only helps us understand ADHD and Autism, it also helps know how we can be helped at home, school and clubs.



Fun quiz

How many colours does a rainbow have?

Answer.....
(See page 27)

Riddle

What moves up and down without moving?

Answer.....
(See page 27)



Enough of the facts about me – let's get back to what I said about trying very hard to sleep at bedtime.

Can you keep a secret about some of the stuff Sean and I take to our room at bedtime?

Mum often checks to see whether we're asleep. As soon as we hear her coming, we quickly switch off our computers pretending we're fast asleep. Mum knows we both find sleeping hard so she makes sure our room's dark especially on summer nights and also not too hot or cold. She sometimes leaves a dim night light on as Sean insists on this. She also makes sure clubs are not too close to bedtime. We cannot drink anything that may make us feel wide awake like tea, coffee, fizzy pop or sport drinks. Drinking warm milk or taking a warm bath before bedtime sometimes helps us wind down and sleep quicker. Sean seems to also wind down after a bowl of warm porridge as he likes this a lot. He asks mum to make him porridge every night.



Finding it hard to sleep is not very nice especially when everyone's snoring and you're left to count the stars. I sometimes think about stuff I was looking at on my computer before bedtime. Also things that happened at school earlier in the day or at football club go round and round like a merry go-round in my head. I often get so bored I get out of my bedroom and wander about much to my parent's annoyance. I tried counting the stars yesterday but gave up when I got to number 500 and still couldn't fall asleep.

Fun quiz

What is the name of the stuff in tea and coffee that can make you feel wide awake and alert at bedtime?



Answer.....

(See page 27)

Sean told me that when he cannot sleep, he either starts going over in his head his favourite London underground facts or looks this up on his computer hoping he would not be found out by mum.

Mum and dad said that we both had trouble with falling asleep ever since we were little. They often came up to our room as we wouldn't settle.

They said that as we grew older, we would only fall asleep in their bed.

On some nights, to help with the boredom, we sneak our computers into bed with us when our parents aren't watching. Playing on our computers is fun but it seems to make matters worse as we end up falling asleep well past our bedtime. We find it very hard to wake up the next morning and feel very tired and sleepy in the morning. When I've not had enough sleep, I'm more active than usual. Sean sometimes refuses to get ready for school and then gets told off by mum which makes him even more cross. My teachers have often asked my mum whether I forgot to take my ADHD medicine as I find it hard to pay attention in class.



Grandad knows how hard it is for us to fall asleep at bedtime. His story helped us understand why we find sleeping hard and how we can help ourselves. By the way grandad is a retired Paediatrician.

Retired means he no longer works as a Paediatrician. Can you guess what a Paediatrician does? It's a big word isn't it? Try sounding it out slowly- **P-A-E-D-I-A-T-R-I-C-I-A-N**. It sounds like "**PEE- DYA-TREE- SHYIEN**"

A Paediatrician looks after children when they're ill. So you see grandad had a very important job looking after children before he retired

What do dentists do ?

Answer -----

(See page 27)

Grandad says that these days he reads a lot and sometimes helps out in the library.

Grandad said when he worked as a paediatrician his story helped a lot of children who found it hard to sleep at night and also helped parents to know how to help their child to sleep.

Anyway enough about my grandad - I won't keep you waiting much longer for the story.

Grandad's story

The wide awake cool kidz club

Charlie and his four best friends had three things in common:

1. They went to the same school and were in the same class.
2. They found it hard to fall asleep at night as they all had ADHD, Autism or both.
3. They were all members of the wide awake cool kidz club.

Charlie the leader of the group had thought about the idea of the club one boring winter's day on the school playground. Being a member of wide awake club was relatively easy. You had to be good with a computer and also believe in the club motto:



Staying awake well past bedtime was very easy as all the members found it hard to wind down and sleep anyway. Members played computer games with their friends on the internet. The girls preferred chatting with their friends on their smart phones or on computers late into the night. Wide awake club had a lot of members from Charlie's class even though it started only a year ago.



THE SLEEP CRUSHERS

What the children did not know is that when they finally stopped playing their games, or dreaming about the games they were going to play the next day, their bodies were still hard at work.

Bodies don't sleep when people sleep otherwise everyone would die. The heart continues to beat, people move and turn and even the stomach and intestines work on the food eaten the day before. Believe it or not people talk, laugh and even walk in their sleep. I'm very sure you've seen people sleeping with their mouths wide open. For bodies to do their work very well, they need people to sleep so they so they can continue to work uninterrupted.

When people are far away in dreamland, the different parts of the body are able to talk to each other through their smart brains.



On the street that Charlie and his friends lived, smart brain, sleepy eyes, itchy ears, talk-talk mouth, fiddly feet and all the other body parts were meeting to talk about why they felt tired each morning after a long night. The meeting had been organised by smart brain since all the other body parts knew how clever he was - even smarter and faster than his computer cousins and smart phones put together. Smart brain had been able to get all the body parts together by sending messages through the children's dreams whilst they slept snoring away.

There was a lot of talking and grumbling until smart brain caught everyone's attention by asking noisy fingers to tap loudly on the table.

"You don't have to bang on the table that loud," complained itchy ears.

"That wasn't half as loud and annoying as last week's," added talk-talk mouth in her usual grumpy way.

"The meeting has to start now, otherwise it will be morning and we will have run out of time again," announced smart brain.

"We're all here to talk about why children are sleeping so late these days and what we can do about"

"Will everyone have a chance to talk about their problems?" interrupted talk - talk mouth.

"You would have heard that if you had let me finish my sentence," snapped a clearly annoyed smart brain.

"Oops, sorry," replied talk-talk mouth in a very small voice.

"Yes, everyone will get a chance to say how they feel, but first we need to talk about the sleep crushers," continued smart brain.





There was a sudden hush in the room at the mention of the sleep crushers.

The sleep crushers had first made an appearance about a year or two ago. After that more and more of them appeared as presents from parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles after birthdays or when children had done very well in their exams.

The sleep crushers were special bright lights that hid in computers, smart phones and television screens and attacked children's sleep when they switched their games or TV on at bedtime instead of sleeping.

They were so clever that they had even tricked all the smart brains a lot of times.

The sleep crushers had a habit of knocking on sleepy eye's door pretending to be sunlight since they were so bright. If sleepy eyes opened the door, they rushed past and went straight to smart brain's secret cupboard where he kept his special sleep drink. When the crafty sleep crushers finished spoiling the sleep drink with their bright lights, they went on to fiddle with smart brain's sleep clock which he needed to make the sleep drink.

Smart brain's sleep drink and clock were very important to all the body parts as without it they wouldn't be able to fall asleep. Smart brain made the special sleep drink at night when it was all dark and quiet as bright lights spoil the drink. Whenever you're feeling sleepy at bedtime, it's smart brain making his special sleep drink. If you're feeling sleepy and you or someone switches on a bright

light, it spoils smart brain's sleep drink making you feel suddenly wide awake. Because of the sleep crushers, smart brain had been making his sleep drink later and later in the night. In the morning when the sunlight appeared, the sleep drink could still be working as they had a specific time they had to stop working. It was therefore not surprising that children were tired and sleepy in class!

Smart brain asked the bodies to say how the sleep crushers were upsetting them.

"You can go first sleepy eyes. Talk-talk mouth, I hope you let sleepy eyes finish without interrupting," said smart brain looking at talk-talk mouth sternly.

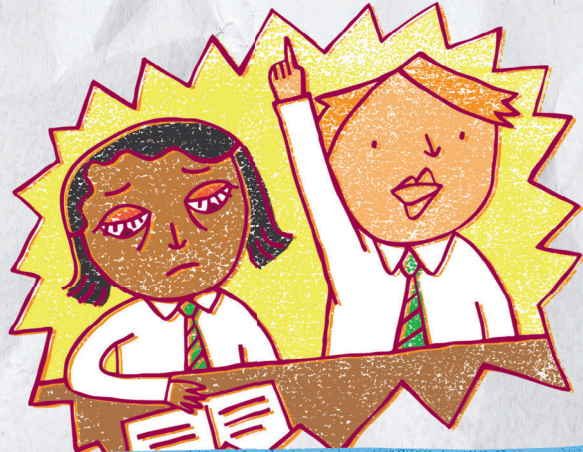
"No worries, I can wait," replied talk-talk mouth meekly.

Sleepy eyes had to be prodded to speak - she looked like she was half asleep.

"I can hardly stay awake in class and would rather be in bed as I'm always going to sleep well past my bedtime. It's so embarrassing when I'm caught sleeping in class. I blame the sleep crushers! I would much prefer to be in bed all day and not at school!!" complained sleepy eyes through half closed eyes.

It was talk-talk mouth's turn and she could not wait to say her bit.

"With sleeping well past my bedtime, I talk a lot in class which gets me into trouble. I have been reminded so many times by the teachers not to shout out answers but cannot seem to help myself," announced talk-talk mouth.





Fidgety feet took over without waiting for smart brain for a cue. Smart brain let it pass much to talk-talk mouth's annoyance.

"I really fidget in class and climb and jump everywhere during playtime at school. I feel so tired the next morning that I find it really hard to stay still and keep getting up from my chair in class."

All the body parts were suffering the effects of nights when children were playing on the computer and internet instead of sleeping.

Noisy fingers was as loud as ever in the class room tapping tables. She also had a habit of irritating others by poking them in their ribs for a laugh when they were not watching and throwing paper airplanes around when the teacher wasn't looking.

Itchy ears could hear all the sounds outside the classroom but not what the teacher was saying.

The one who suffered the most was smart brain. He found it very hard to pay attention in class and had started making a lot of silly mistakes with school work.

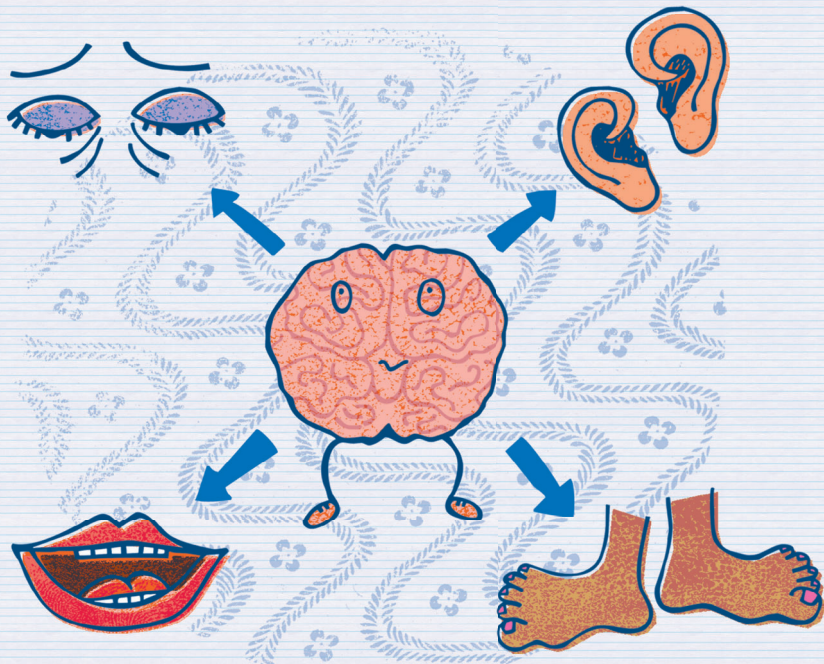
It looked like he wasn't as smart as he used to be. This was because he felt tired from not having enough sleep. It was so important to find a solution to the problem. With the help of the other body parts he hoped a solution would be found soon.

The last body part, hungry tummy explained how he would have snacks and sweets very late at night when everyone else was asleep and was afraid eating the wrong things at night instead of sleeping could have an effect on the health of all the body parts. Hungry tummy was generally very kind and was always thinking about how to help everyone else.

When all the body parts had spoken, they looked at smart brain because he was supposed to be cleverer than all his computer cousins who, by the way, were given their ideas by him.

Smart brain looked at all the other body parts thoughtfully. "I have a plan", he announced, "we can get rid of the sleep crusher's once and for all."

All the bodies stopped talking at once, they could not wait to hear smart brain's clever plan.



Smart brain continued, "I'll talk to all the other smart brains to get the children of wide awake club to think carefully about why bed time is so important and how not having a good night's sleep can make them feel tired and moody at school the next day."

All the other body parts listened carefully to the rest of smart brain's plan. After the meeting, they all agreed the plan was very good. Smart brain had also checked with his computer cousins who told him that they had a lot of information about why sleep was important for children and were happy to provide this information, if only the children bothered to ask.

The body parts were very happy and excited. They had longed for a good nights sleep for the children they belonged to for a long time and it looked like this was going to happen at last.

Charlie and his best friends were talking to each other on the internet at bedtime as usual.

It was Charlie who had started the conversation about doing something about the motto of the club. He told his friends about how he had been thinking hard about finding ways to go to sleep at the right time instead of staying up late. He had started noticing he was very sleepy in class and missed a lot of what the teacher said especially in the mornings. The worst thing was that his school grades had started falling and he wasn't getting the same high marks that he used to get in the school math and science quizzes. Not doing well in school work also meant losing precious house points.

Following Charlie's announcement, all his friends started talking at once. Charlie had to quickly reduce the volume on his computer as he did not want to risk his dad or mum catching him talking to his friends on the computer at such a late hour.

"Charlie, if you start sleeping early and stop playing games at bedtime you'll have to leave the club," they all responded with alarm.

Charlie told his friends his plan about changing the club's motto. He had started doing some research on the computer he was given by his grandparents on his last birthday and had come up with some surprising facts about why sleeping past your bedtime was not a smart thing to do.



"You can all come over to my house this weekend so I can show you what I found. I'm sure my mum won't mind, plus she's baking a lot of yummy brownies this weekend " said Charlie, trying to convince his friends.

YUM



MUM'S
CHOCOLATE
BROWNIES

When the weekend arrived, the friends crowded around Charlie's computer. They were naturally curious about his research on sleep.

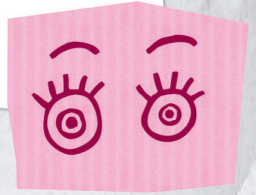
Charlie looked at his friends and wondered whether he could convince them or not. He knew they had really turned up because of his mum's brownies. He really hoped they would be happy about the information he had found and would be willing to try some of the sleep ideas, as he had. Without the help of his friends it would be very difficult to convince all the other wide awake members. Since learning about sleep, he always switched off his computer at least an hour before his bedtime. He realised that when he slept earlier, he woke up in the morning feeling much better. His grades had slowly started to get better which made him very happy. He knew he couldn't hide this good thing from his friends. They had been complaining about him not joining them in the computer games every night at bedtime as he usually did.

Charlie thought about the name of the club. He was determined to keep the same name only this time kids will be wide awake in class not at bed time.



The new motto of the club will be:

Can you suggest a new motto for the wide awake cool kidz club by completing the statement below?



By the way, if you want to know what Charlie found out about sleep, turn over.



What Charlie found

(Sleep facts for children and young people with sleep difficulties)

If you're a child or young person reading this part, it may be a good idea to read it with your mum, dad or a teacher if you find that some words are too hard for you. There is a fun quiz you can try at the end of this section. You can do the quiz with a parent or teacher if you find it too hard.





CHARLIE'S QUESTIONS ?



Why is sleep so important for children?

Sleep is important to rest your body. Just like in the story, bodies, even though working hard at bed time, still need rest. If your body is not given enough sleep at night, you will wake up feeling very tired in the mornings. School can be boring and tiring if your brain is tired. For children to grow and be healthy they need a certain amount of sleep each night depending on their age. A certain special substance called growth hormone is made by the body in larger amounts when you sleep. This hormone, with the help of some other ones, helps children grow. Most grown-ups do not need as much sleep as they have done most, or all, of their growing.



How much sleep do children need?

The amount of sleep children need depends on their age. Children generally need less sleep as they get older. Older children like teenagers tend to go to bed later and wake up late. During school days they still have to wake up early to go to school. They can catch up with their sleep on the weekends if they sleep till late.



The list below gives an idea of how many hours sleep children need:

- New-born babies will need between 16-18 hours sleep
- 1-3 year old children need about 12-14 hours sleep
- 3-5 year old children need about 11-13 hours (confined to night)
- 5-10 year old children need 9-11 hours sleep
- Mid adolescence usually need 8.5 hours sleep
- Later adolescence will need about 7-8 hours sleep
- Adults typically need 7-8 hours sleep



Think about how old you are now and decide from the list above whether you're getting enough sleep or not.

HOW CAN PARENTS TELL IF THEIR CHILD IS HAVING PROBLEMS WITH SLEEPING AT BEDTIME?



Children may give a lot of excuses for not going to sleep at bedtime.



Some children may take a long time to fall asleep even though they're just lying in their beds and their room is quiet and dark.

Young children like toddlers may cry at bedtime or wake up several times at night.



Some children may wake up several times because of scary nightmares.

Children may want to play with computers, phones or watch TV well past their bedtime.

Some children may complain of pain in their legs at bedtime or move about a lot even though they're fast asleep.

Some children may sleep walk in the middle of the night.



It may be very difficult for some children to wake up in the morning, or they may wake too early, even if they've gone to bed very late.

Some children may sleep in class or be full of energy as they're tired from not having enough sleep.



Some children may have a condition that makes them snore a lot when sleeping. This may cause them to wake up lots of times in the night thus making them very tired in the morning.

Some children may have an illness or may be on a medication that may make it difficult for them to sleep.

Why do people feel drowsy before they sleep?

Like smart brain in the story who had a special sleep drink and clock and kept this in a secret cupboard, our brains make a special sleep chemical which is kept in a special part of the brain.

This special chemical called melatonin (MEL-A-TON-IN) starts working when it's night or very dark. Anytime people start feeling drowsy it's this special chemical working. The sleep chemical also works on a special sleep clock like a timer for baking cakes or cooking a special meal. When morning comes and sunlight appears, melatonin is reminded by the special clock to stop working. When people wake up and open their eyes and see the sunlight they start to feel awake becoming more alert as the day progresses.



I'm not tired yet...

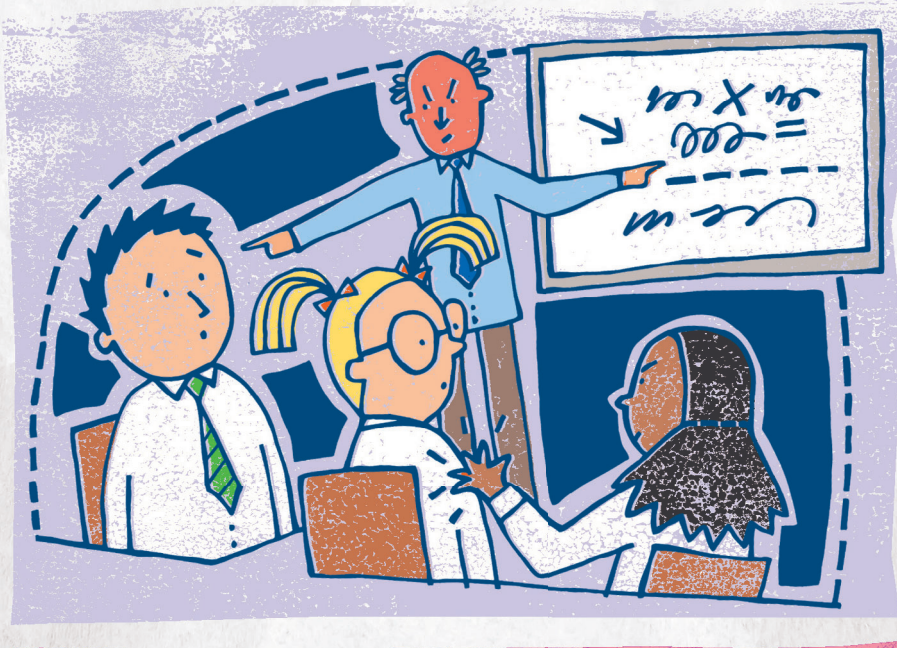
A cartoon character's head is visible at the bottom left, with a thought bubble above it containing the text "I'm not tired yet...". The character has spiky hair and a neutral expression.

Just like the sleep crushers in the story, if you stay up late playing on the computer, phone or watching TV, bright lights from these gadgets enter your eyes and fool your brain into thinking it's still daylight thus preventing it from making the special sleep chemical, melatonin, at the right time.

Sleeping well past your bedtime forces the brain to make the sleep chemical later causing the sleep clock to go off later and later in the morning. This is why you may wake up in the morning feeling very sleepy and grumpy when your mum or dad wakes you up for school.



If you're tired you may find it very hard to concentrate on what your teacher is saying in class. If you're not attentive in class you may find it hard to understand what is being taught in class which can lead to poor grades in exams or school work. Feeling tired at school can make you feel grumpy making you do silly things in class that can get you into trouble with the teacher or your class mates.



How can I help myself to sleep better at night?

There are so many easy things you can do to help you sleep better at bedtime.

Try and keep to the same bedtime each night.

Older children should avoid naps in the day.

Don't go to bed hungry. You can have a light snack especially if you've done some after school sports activities. Don't forget to brush your teeth after the evening snack.

Avoid stimulating drinks at bed time like tea, coffee, fizzy and energy drinks.

Warm milk is very good as it contains natural things that help you go to sleep.

Physical exercise is very good and can help you burn off a lot of energy as long as you avoid doing this too close to bedtime as much as possible.

Make sure your room is nice and warm but not too cold or hot.

Your room should be dark with lights switched off. If you prefer sleeping with the light on, your parents can buy a night light that is not too bright.

Reading can be very relaxing when done an hour before bedtime. Try and avoid bright bedside lamps. If you read with an electronic device, it may be a good idea to reduce the brightness setting when you're reading.

A relaxing bath before bedtime can help.

If a story helps you relax, your mum or dad can read you a story if you ask them nicely.

If you must have the TV on in your room, ask your mum or dad to reduce the brightness setting on the TV.

Avoid TV, computer games and electronic gadgets with bright lights at least 2 hours before bedtime.

Older teenagers with smart phones can find out about apps that can automatically change the colour of the light on smart phones to a less bright colour when downloaded onto phones. It is however better to switch phones completely off at bedtime.

Parents can ask the local optician about special light blocking glasses that can be used at night time for teenagers who need to work on their computers at night to complete school projects.

You may play soothing music on your iPods but avoid music that will make you feel full of energy.

You can answer the questions on your own or with a parent or teacher.

Doing the sleep quiz will help check whether you've understood why it's important to sleep at bedtime.

Sleep Quiz

1. Why is sleep so important for you?
2. How old are you?
3. How much sleep do you need for your age?
4. How can you tell if you have not had enough sleep?
5. What is the name of the special sleep chemical that makes you feel drowsy before bedtime?
6. What do children do at bedtime that stops this sleep chemical from working?
7. True or false - Drinking tea, coffee or fizzy drinks can help us go to sleep quicker.
8. True or false - It is always better to avoid bright lights at bedtime.
9. What are some of the things you can do to sleep better at night?
10. What can happen to you at school when you haven't had enough sleep?



Is there advice for parents as well?

(Sleep information for parents and carers)

For parents to help their children develop good sleep habits and routines, they need to make sure rules are clear and consistent. Parents should avoid changing the rules too often and stick to one bedtime rule; otherwise children may become confused.

Parents should be aware that a lot of children may play with their phones and computers at bedtime. It may be a good idea to make the bedroom computer and TV free.

Melatonin is a sleep hormone produced by the brain. It's known as the 'hormone of darkness' as it requires night or dark conditions to start working. Bright lights from TV and other electronic game media and computers can switch off this hormone and the body's sleep clock, completely disrupting the natural sleep cycle or rhythm. It's a good idea to avoid all sources of bright lights at least an hour before your child's bedtime¹.

Your child's room should be dark and not too warm or cold. Dark curtains or blinds on windows during long summer months can be beneficial. Avoid bright night lights and bedside lamps. Red coloured lights are better than white or blue ones if your child needs a light at bedtime.

Children and teenagers who struggle to wake up in the mornings may benefit from switching room lights on or opening curtains allowing the morning light to help the waking process. Be aware that your child may try avoiding the lights by hiding under their duvets or blankets.

Some younger children may settle with recordings of familiar household sounds such as TV, parent's voices, running water, sounds from pets and so on.

Carefully read medication information given to you by your chemist and doctor as some medications may cause sleeplessness.

Make your house safe by locking doors and windows and using stair gates on stairs if your child sleep walks.



If your child moves their legs a lot at bedtime and is always wanting you to massage their legs because of pain or discomfort, you may need to speak to your doctor or health visitor as this may be a sign of an underlying medical condition.

Speak to your doctor, school nurse or health visitor if your child often snores at night and wakes up very tired most mornings. Some children may have large tonsils or adenoids partially blocking their airways when they sleep. They will need to see an ear, nose and throat specialist for a check up.

Children may be anxious because of changes in family circumstances, exams or before a performance at school. Encourage your child to talk about any anxieties they may have. Anxiety can lead to sleep difficulties in children.

A lot of medical conditions such as eczema (a dry and itchy skin condition), breathing problems, painful joints and so on can result in sleepless nights. It is important to let the doctor or nurse know if this happens.

Children can have simple treats if they've managed to sleep and wake up at the right times.

Be aware that if your child is not having enough sleep, they may find it hard to wake up in the morning to get ready for school. The teacher may also tell you your child appears tired and inattentive and may even be disrupting the whole class.

Let your child's class teacher be aware that they are not getting enough sleep. Your child may receive some additional support at school if appropriate.

Parents should be aware that insufficient sleep in a child may worsen concentration and may cause their child to be more overactive than usual.

If you have put in place good sleep habits and your child is still finding it hard to sleep, you can complete a 2 week sleep diary and questionnaire like the one at the end of this page and make an appointment to see your doctor, school nurse or health visitor. Diaries can also be shown to the child's Paediatrician if they have one.

Parents should not forget that teachers can also offer some very valuable advice on sleep.

SLEEP DIARY AND QUESTIONNAIRE

Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday | Sunday

List of child's activities performed up to 2 hours immediately before bedtime

List drinks/snacks consumed up to an hour before bedtime

Time the TV is switched off

Time computers, phones, music players and kindles are switched off

Time reading activities cease

Normal evening bedtime

Time the child / teenager actually fell asleep

Night awakenings (state times)

Reasons for night awakenings e.g. night mares, sleep walking,

Snoring during sleep?

Examples of movements observed during sleep e.g. head banging, jerking of legs etc

Pains in the legs at bedtime?

State medications taken just before bedtime

Time child/teenager wakes up in the morning

Any difficulties with waking up?

Any sleepiness observed during the day?

Frequent naps during the day?

Additional Comments

How is your child's lack of sleep affecting you and your family?

Additional reading/resources

1. My child won't sleep. Richman D et al 1984
2. Solving your children's sleep problems. Faber 1986
3. Solving children's sleep problems; a step by step guide for parents. Dr Lyn Quinn 1997

Website

Sleep Scotland UK
www.sleepscotland.org

ADHD support website (East and North Hertfordshire NHS Trust)

www.addmore.org.uk

Answers to fun quiz and riddles

- A rainbow has 7 colours. To know the colours it will be useful to know this simple mnemonic: VIBGYOR (violet, indigo, blue, green, yellow, orange and red)
- What moves up and down without moving?
People stationary on escalators.
Passengers sitting on an airplane.
- The stuff found in tea and coffee that can keep you awake at night is called caffeine. Some energy and fizzy drinks also contain little amounts of caffeine.
- A dentist is a special doctor who looks after people's teeth. Ideally your mum and dad should be taking you for regular checks with your dentist.

OFF to BED
Never to SLEEP

