

Sellwood Family Medicine

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Healthy Sleep Habits for Children

Your child needs restful sleep for a healthy brain and body. However, sleep can be a struggle for many families. Here are a few tips to create sleeptime success!

Infants:

The rule is... the more they sleep, the more they sleep! You must be the protector of your child's natural need to sleep! Do not let your busy schedule of tasks interfere with baby's nap.

When your baby acts tired put him down for a nap. Sleepy cues include: yawning, baby is quieter, disinterested, less vocal, fussiness, rubbing eyes.

Put baby in a darker, quiet room away from the activity of the house.

If your baby is waking due to gas or colic, eliminate allergens in the mom's diet. (dairy, caffeine, broccoli/cabbage, garlic, and potentially wheat)

"Gripe Water" or Mylecon drops are helpful to decrease gas and abdominal pain. (Gripe Water is an extract of Fennel, Ginger and Chamomile available ready made)

Children:

Eliminate sugar, artificial colorings and caffeine in your child's diet!

Routine is key. Having a schedule makes children feel safe, secure and loved.

Bedtime should be no later than 7-8pm. Any later will contribute to a cycle of restless exhaustion. If a child gets "overtired" his sleep will not be as restful.

Try to accomplish dinner, chores and homework at least an hour before bedtime. Leave the last hour of the evening available to wind down with a "bedtime routine." During this time, turn the TV off, keep the lights low and the energy calm. Your routine may include brushing teeth, reading and bonding with family.

The time just before bed can be a wonderful time to say prayers, review the day, or acknowledge the blessings in your child's life.

Some ideas include:

"Naming the people who love you"

Singing our favorite song

"Counting Blessings"

"Now I lay me down to sleep

I pray the Lord my soul to keep

Let angels watch me through the night

And wake me with the morning light."

Safe effective sleep remedies:

Chamomile tea served warm or cool

Herbs for Kids- Valerian Super Calm (Alcohol free)

Homeopathic Coffea 30 c

1 mg Melatonin one hour before bed (with doctor's supervision only)

Ideas for Nightmares:

☺ Hang an angel from the ceiling and "Tap it three times for sweet dreams"

☺ Put a few drops of lavender essential oil and water in a spritzer bottle and spray it throughout the room to "fill the room with sweet dreams."