



Sleep FAQs

Facts about Sleep:

- Our brains need to sleep.
- Inadequate sleep can lead to dysregulated behaviour and lower attention.
- Anxiety is the most common reason for a child to resist bedtime. 75% of children with ADHD experience sleep disturbances.

How many hours of sleep should my child have?

(Per 24 hour period)

Aged 4-12 months: 12-16 hours

Aged 1-2 years: 11-14 hours

Aged 3-5 years: 10-13 hours

Aged 6-7 years: 10- 10 ½ hours



What is Melatonin?

Often children with neurodevelopmental conditions lack melatonin. Melatonin is a hormone made in the body that regulates the body's internal clock, or in other words the body's circadian rhythm. Melatonin is known as 'our sleepy hormone'.

What is the Circadian Rhythm?

The circadian rhythm is the physical, mental, and behavioural changes that follows a 24- hour cycle. It helps us to regulate cycles of alertness and sleepiness by responding to light changes in our environment.





My child sometimes gets emotional at bedtime, what can I do?

If your child is feeling worried or anxious, they may not be able to relax before bedtime. If there is a quick and easy answer to your child's problem, you can deal with it straight away and give them plenty of reassurance. If it is a problem that may need more time, try acknowledging your child's feelings and create a plan to sort things out in the morning.

Is there anything else I can do to support my child in getting a good night's sleep?

Spend Time Outdoors

Encourage your child to get as much natural light as possible. Aim for at least 30 minutes of exposure to sunlight, especially in the mornings. You might walk the dog with your child or go on bike ride together. If possible, try to get an hour of bright morning sunlight. This can help regulate sleep patterns as it suppresses melatonin. This will help your child to feel awake and alert in the day and sleepy towards bedtime.



Check Out the Bedroom

- **Temperature:** Babies and young children cannot always show or vocalise that they are too hot or too cold, they may not even be able to recognise this themselves yet. The recommended room temperature for sleep is 18-21 degrees. Ensure that the room is well-ventilated too.
- **Bedding:** It is recommended that your child's bedding is made from 100% cotton. Cotton bedding is breathable and helps to regulate the bodies temperature, which in turn supports sleep.
- **Sound:** Be aware of any noise in the bedroom, think about whether your child can hear the boiler or a noisy neighbour. Some children may respond well to listening to a lullaby or white noise as they drift off to sleep.
- **Decor:** Take a look at your child's bedroom. Are there visual distractions? Light shining through the curtains or from devices that are on standby? You may wish to put up black out blinds, purchase a draft excluder to avoid light shining under the door and switch all devices off by the wall.