

# WHAT SLEEP IS AND WHY ALL KIDS NEED IT ...

53 Pyfrom Road (Bar 20 Corner) P.O. Box 55-19006 Nassau, Bahamas 242-393-1879 (ph) 242-393-8117 (fax)



Kindergartners need about 10 to 12 1/2 hours of sleep per night (with naps declining and eventually disappearing around age 5), and older elementary age kids need 9 1/2 to 11 1/2 hours a night.

Without adequate sleep, growth problems — mainly slowed or stunted growth — can result. Growth hormone production can also be disrupted in kids with certain physical sleep problems, such as obstructive sleep apnea.

More than your child's height can be affected by a shortage of sleep. Some kids fail to produce enough growth hormone naturally, and a lack of sleep makes the problem worse. It can lead to a condition known as growth hormone deficiency that can affect heart or lung strength or immune system function. (It's treatable with a supplementary hormone.)

Hormones that regulate hunger and appetite can be affected, causing a child to overeat and have a preference for high-calorie carbs. What's more, a shortage of sleep can affect the way the body metabolizes these foods, triggering insulin resistance, which is linked to type 2 diabetes.

A lack of sleep at night can also affect motor skills and concentration during the day, leading to more accidents and behavioral problems, and **poor performance at school.**

## How to Catch Your ZZZs

- Put your child to bed at the same time every night; this helps their body get into a routine.
- Follow a bedtime routine that is calming, such as taking a warm bath or reading.
- Limit foods and drinks that contain caffeine. These include some sodas and other drinks, like ice tea.
- Don't have a TV in your child's room. If you have a TV, turn it off when it's time to sleep.
- Don't allow your child to watch scary TV shows or movies close to bedtime because these can sometimes make it hard to fall asleep.
- Your child should use their bed just for sleeping — not doing homework, reading, playing games, or talking on the phone. That way, you'll train their body to associate their bed with sleep.