

COMMON CHILDHOOD SLEEP DISORDERS

Quick Facts:

Sleeping is required for normal growth and development. Sleep disorders are common in children and can have a negative impact on their health and well-being.

KEY POINTS:

- **Childhood sleep complaints are common. Some of these complaints may be signs of a sleep disorder.**
- **Common sleep disorders include obstructive sleep apnea, parasomnias, behavioral insomnia of childhood, delayed sleep-wake phase disorder and restless legs syndrome.**
- **A sleep disorder can cause problems for your child's daytime alertness, mood, school performance and safety.**
- **Treating a sleep disorder may prevent or minimize its negative effects on health and performance.**



How Can I Learn More?

- Talk to your board-certified sleep medicine physician.
- Visit www.sleepeducation.org

Is My Child At Risk:

Up to 50% of all children have a sleep problem, but a much smaller percentage of children have a serious sleep disorder.

GENERAL OVERVIEW:

Sleep is required for the healthy development of a child's body and brain. Poor sleep in a child can cause:

- Daytime sleepiness
- Irritability
- Behavioral problems
- Learning difficulties
- Poor academic performance
- Motor vehicle accidents in teens

The most common sleep problem in children is a lack of adequate sleep time. Younger children require the longest sleep duration. Children require less sleep as they age.

TIPS:

Help your child develop healthy sleep habits that will last a lifetime:

- **Set a regular bedtime for your child.**
- **Develop a relaxing bedtime routine to help your child settle down at night.**
- **Set a "technology curfew" to limit use of cell phones, tablets and other devices in the evening.**
- **Keep the TV, computer and video game system out of your child's bedroom.**
- **Create a soothing bedroom environment that is quiet, dark and cool.**

COMMON CHILDHOOD SLEEP DISORDERS INCLUDE:

- **Obstructive sleep apnea**
 - » A child snores very loudly and has short breathing pauses during sleep.
 - » Occurs in 1-5% of children.
- **Parasomnias**
 - » A child looks awake, but is really sleeping. Sleepwalking, sleep talking, sleep terrors and nightmares are common types.
 - » Occurs in up to 50% of children.
- **Behavioral insomnia of childhood**
 - » A child has difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep without the presence of a parent.
 - » Occurs in up to 30% of children.
- **Delayed sleep-wake phase disorder**
 - » A child consistently falls asleep very late and wakes up late. Parents have trouble getting their child to fall asleep at a normal bedtime. The child tends to be difficult to wake up in the morning, often causing the child to be late for school.
 - » Occurs in up to 16% of teens.
- **Restless legs syndrome**
 - » A child has unpleasant sensations in their legs and needs to move their legs, most commonly in the evening. Other symptoms include difficulty falling asleep, "growing pains," and symptoms similar to attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).
 - » Occurs in at least 2% of children.

➔ Next Steps:

- Talk to your child's doctor about any ongoing sleep problems.
- The doctor will help find and treat any underlying causes of your child's sleep problem.
- Your child's doctor may refer you to a sleep doctor for help.
- The sleep doctor may schedule your child for a sleep study if your child has symptoms of a sleep disorder such as sleep apnea.



Questions For Your Physician

Take a few minutes to write your questions for the next time you see your healthcare provider.



Sample Questions:

Why do I feel tired all the time?

What is a CPAP machine and how can it help me?