



Pediatric



Pediatrics Overview

Sleep problems are among the most common issues that parents can have with their children. When faced with the difficult task of getting your child to sleep (and sleep well) through the night, you may want to throw your hands up, not knowing the cause or understanding how to alleviate it. The fact is that children, like many adults, go through their days deprived of sleep. The same sleep disorders that affect adults also challenge a child's ability to sleep; however, we also see sleep concerns that are unique to children.

1 Sleep Apnea

Commonly seen in children 2 to 6 years old, obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) results when the upper airway is blocked by an enlargement of the tonsils. Prolonged pauses in breathing occur in the child, which means oxygen flow is reduced and brain and cardiovascular function can be impaired. Emerging research is also linking childhood OSA with metabolic syndrome later in life, a disease that includes obesity, high blood pressure and diabetes.



These cardiovascular and metabolic effects of OSA may not be seen for years. However, there are also signs that you can look for. Children suffering from OSA may seem hyperactive, have a poor attention span, or be excessively tired in the daytime. One of the telltale symptoms, which many of us think is “normal,” is snoring. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that any child who snores see a sleep specialist.

HOW MUCH SLEEP IS ENOUGH?

One to Three Years Old: 10-13 hours
Preschoolers: 10-12 hours
Six to Nine Year Olds: About 10 hours
Teenagers: 8 to 9.5 hours

2 Insomnia



Like adults, children may experience difficulty falling or staying asleep – which usually means daytime drowsiness is a certainty. One of the biggest effects of childhood insomnia is the effects in the classroom, as a tired child won't be as alert, won't learn or retain information as easily, and may actually fall asleep at his or her desk.

As with adults, childhood insomnia is often related to either another sleep disorder that disrupts sleep, or to environmental, psychological, or medication influences. Regardless of the cause of insomnia, it is of utmost importance to find a way to return your child to restful sleep.

If your child has trouble falling or staying asleep at night or experiences excessive daytime sleepiness, contact the **SleepCenter** today.

3 Restless Legs Syndrome

Children can experience a creepy, crawling sensation in their legs known as restless leg syndrome (RLS), keeping the child from falling asleep or simply not allowing a full, deep sleep to be achieved. You may notice your child seems restless during sleep, having jerking movements, thrashing around, or even falling out of bed. If RLS is present, your child will often display signs of insomnia or daytime sleepiness as well.

Fortunately, there are now medications to treat pediatric RLS, calming those uncomfortable sensations your child feels and allowing him or her to finally sleep peacefully again. A **SleepCenter** specialist will be able to examine the symptoms your child displays and recommend a medication or another treatment.



HOW MUCH SLEEP IS ENOUGH?

- Include a period of winding down in your nightly routine.
- Stick to a specific bedtime each night!
- Alerting your child half hour and again 10 minutes prior.
- Allow your child to choose their pajamas or stuffed animal.
- Tuck your child into bed snugly for a feeling of security.

4 Parasomnias



Some sleep disorders are episodic, brief, predictable as to when they occur during sleep, don't respond to changes in the child's sleep environment, and are associated with amnesia for preceding events. These disorders are thought to be related to normal development of the brain and are therefore most common in children. They take many forms including: nightmares, night terrors, sleep walking, and sleep talking. These arousals from sleep can be quite concerning to parents and until recently, were considered to be innocent phenomena. However, sleep terrors occurring on a regular basis should trigger referral to a sleep specialist for further evaluation due to the association with obstructive sleep apnea.

If you have a concern about your child displaying unusual behaviors that may be related to any of these sleep disorders, please contact the **SleepCenter** of the Rockies today.

Are you a good candidate for a sleep study? Log on to find out.
www.sleepcenterotr.com/survey



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