


# Odyssey Schools



# Health & Wellness

Odyssey's Wise Nutrition and Healthy Lifestyles Program

Dedicated to promoting, protecting and enhancing the health and learning potential of our students, families & staff.

## Sleep Is Vital!

Excerpted from <http://www.everydayhealth.com/health-report/back-to-school/sanjay-gupta/healthy-sleep-schedule.aspx>

By Dr. Sanjay Gupta © 2014 Everyday Health Media, LLC

### **A bad night's sleep can affect performance and behavior at school.**

Here, a sleep expert discusses how parents can help:

**Sleep is vital for our physical and emotional well-being. It impacts a person's productivity, learning, mood, and memory. For school-aged children, lack of sleep can lead to poor academic performance and bad behavior in the classroom.**

As Dennis Rosen, MD, associate medical director at the Center for Pediatric Sleep Disorders at Boston Children's Hospital, points out, "it's pretty accepted that kids in the aggregate aren't getting enough sleep, especially teenagers who have lots of things they're trying to get done and just don't allow themselves to sleep."

**Making sure your children are getting enough sleep can be tricky but especially important at the start of a new school year.** Dr. Rosen, author of "Successful Sleep Strategies for Kids," discusses how much sleep is enough and what parents can do to help kids get the rest they need.

### **Is there a formula for how much sleep children and adolescents need?**

The amount of sleep you need is very individual. [But] I'd say elementary school kids probably need somewhere between nine and 10 hours of sleep per night, and teenagers generally need between eight and nine hours of sleep a night.

### **Why is getting enough sleep so critical for young people?**

Sleep is a function of the brain. It's not something you do just because you're bored. It encompasses a whole host of processes surrounding memory, learning and unlearning, and restorative processes in the brain. So getting enough sleep at those particular ages is important because your brain is continuing to develop.

### **What effects can insufficient or poor quality sleep have on kids in school?**

Not getting enough sleep can make it more difficult for kids to pay attention and stay focused. It can impair their behavior, making them less settled and more fidgety. It can actually disrupt their ability to concentrate and can affect their memory. It can also have a profound effect on their emotional state. If you don't get enough

sleep, you may feel more anxious and have more mood disturbances. And then there are physiological aspects of insufficient sleep, such as increased susceptibility to infection which can make kids miss school and not perform as well.

### **Is there such a thing as too much sleep?**

If you see a child sleeping more than you may expect, you have to start wondering what else is going on. Is there a reason for this child being excessively sleepy? Is the child's sleep such poor quality that despite being in bed for an appropriate amount of time, he's not getting a good amount of sleep? If that's the case, parents should probably step in.

### **What kinds of things keep kids from sleeping well?**

Some things that can disturb sleep fall into the realm of...poor sleep hygiene. For example, people who have television sets in their bedroom. People who have cats or dogs that jump in their bed or jump all over them. Kids who have music playing in the bedroom. Rooms that aren't dark or quiet. All these things can really affect your sleep. There are sleep disorders that can really disrupt the quality of your sleep – for example, obstructive sleep apnea. If you're having trouble breathing...and you're constantly being awakened, even though you've been in bed for nine hours, you're not getting good sleep.

### **What signs of sleep apnea in children should parents be aware of?**

If parents notice their child is snoring, gasping, or choking at night, if the child breathes with an open mouth and neck extended, sweats a lot...these might all be signs that a child is having problems breathing while sleeping.

### **Why should electronics be kept out of the bedroom?**

Exposure to light...is known to keep us awake. Electronics distract you and prevent you from letting your mind relax and going off to sleep. If you're busy texting, chatting, playing games, or watching videos, it's going to be more difficult for you to shut your eyes and go to sleep.

**So Count Sheep and Think Sleep!**  
~Wishing you a Healthy Day~