



Sleep problems

Information for parents and young people about Covid-19

As children and young people aren't in school and are likely to be doing less physical activity this may be impacting their sleep. Here are some tips to improve sleep.

Top Tips

- Try to stick to a consistent bedtime routine. Try to have regular bedtime and wake time (this can be different to the usual sleep and wake time for school. It's the regularity that is important).
- Whilst it is difficult at this time, try to add some structure to your day (such as an activity or two in the morning, lunch, arts and crafts in the afternoon). Try to include some physical activity, although not in the immediate hours before bed time.
- Turn electronics off one hour before bedtime.
- Have a good sleeping environment. Think about room temperature, noise and light level.
- It's difficult to sleep when you are worrying, so try setting a 'worry time' earlier in the day for you to practically think through your problems and their solutions. This might be done with a parent or care giver. Alternatively, write them down in a diary before you begin your sleep routine, then agree with yourself not to think about them until the next day.

- Try eating a balanced diet and cut out caffeine six hours before bedtime.
- Try calming activities before bed such as reading together or breathing and relaxation exercises.
- Discuss the day's highlights before bedtime.

Try to model these things as parents and carers - maintain some structure, set regular waking and sleep times, and find ways to relax in the evening.

If anxiety seems to be impacting on sleep, it might be helpful to look at the other resources for managing anxiety during this time on the Achieving for Children website [AfCInfo](#).

Some more information on sleep problems for young people...

Why do I have sleep problems?

Sleep problems are very common and can occur for a range of different reasons. Sometimes sleep problems are related to the environment that you have set up for yourself to sleep in and sometimes there is an emotional reason for these problems that needs to be addressed.

Different types of sleep problems

Sleep is a very important part of maintaining a healthy lifestyle. However many young people have problems with sleep. These may appear in different ways:

- trouble getting to sleep
- trouble staying asleep
- feeling tired during the day
- nightmares
- night terrors
- sleepwalking

It is important to address these issues early because sleep problems can lead to other problems over time. For example, it can be hard to concentrate when you have not had sufficient sleep and this can cause stress or anxiety.

Nightmares or night-terrors

Most people have occasional nightmares. These are sometimes caused by worry if you've seen something that has upset you or had something scary happen to you. If you have vivid dreams about these events or worries it may be good to talk about them with someone you trust. It would also be helpful to prioritise creating a relaxing sleep environment.

If you still have worries about your sleep problems and want to talk to someone please contact your GP for further advice.