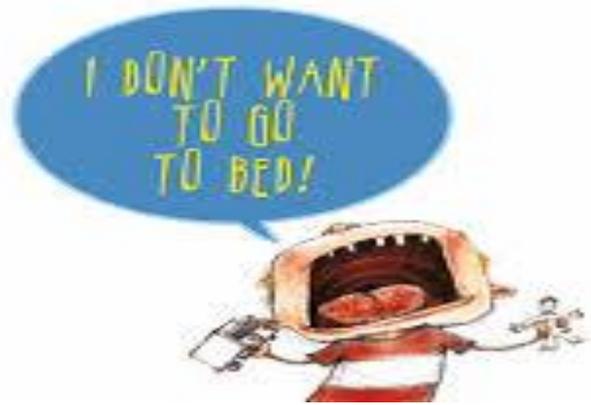


Every night when dream was done, Billie would say —



Sleep is important!

We spend about 1/3 of our lives sleeping and scientists are still not completely sure what we need sleep for!

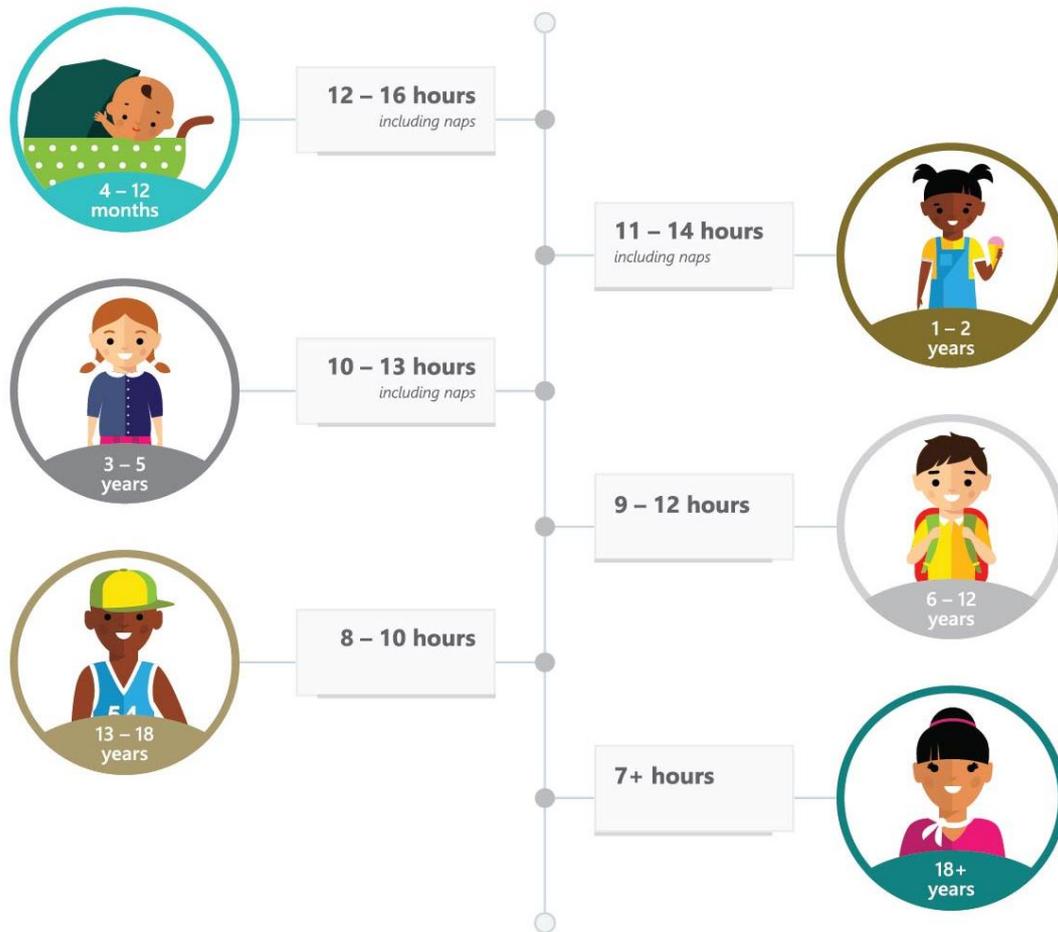
How we may feel if we don't get enough sleep...

- Grumpy
- Irritable
- Forgetting things
- Find it hard to concentrate
- Find it hard to make decisions
- Find it more difficult to pay attention
- Feel sad, tearful, angry or more worried

It can be really frustrating when we don't get enough sleep.

The more you lie in bed thinking "I need to go to sleep" the more frustrated you may become and the harder it seems.

Average Ages and Hours of Sleep



There are different stages of sleep:

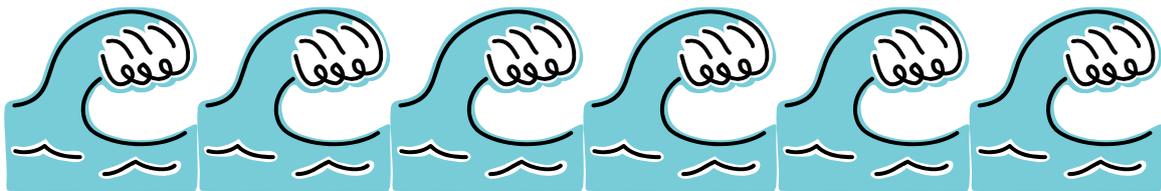
Light sleep: We are half awake and half asleep, it might feel like you are dozing. It's really easy to be woken up in this stage.

True Sleep: Our heart rate and breathing slows down. It's a bit harder for you to be woken up. Most of the time when we are sleeping we are in this stage.

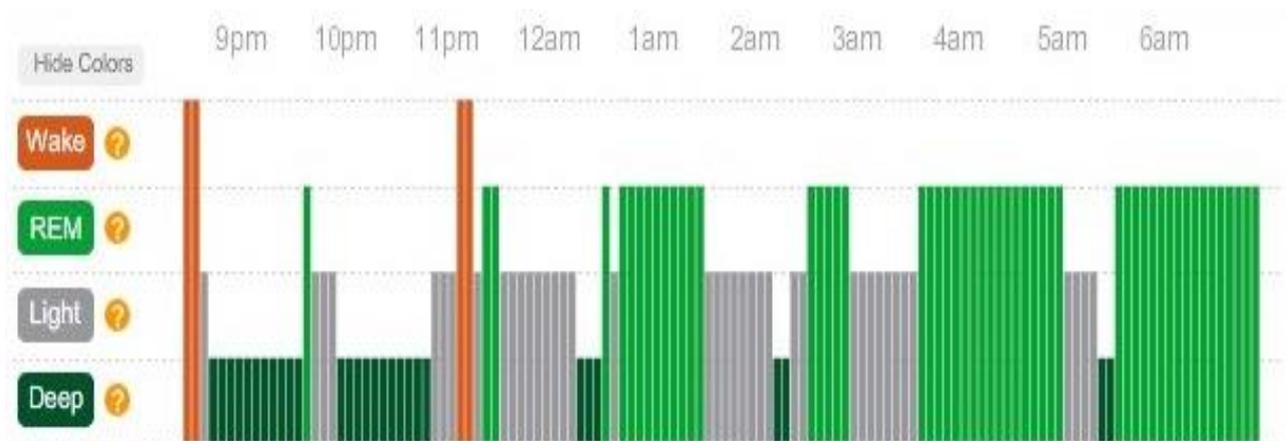
Deep Sleep: Your brain slows down and you don't move much. Some people might sleep-walk during this stage.

REM Sleep: The brain is quite active during this stage and we have dreams. If you are disturbed in this stage of sleep you might remember which stops us acting out our dreams

Through the night we move up and down through these stages, a bit like waves going up and down.



Childs Sleep Pattern



What is REM?

REM (Rapid eye movement) sleep makes up about 25% of your sleep cycle and first occurs about 70 to 90 minutes after you fall asleep. Because your sleep cycle repeats, you enter REM sleep several times during the night.

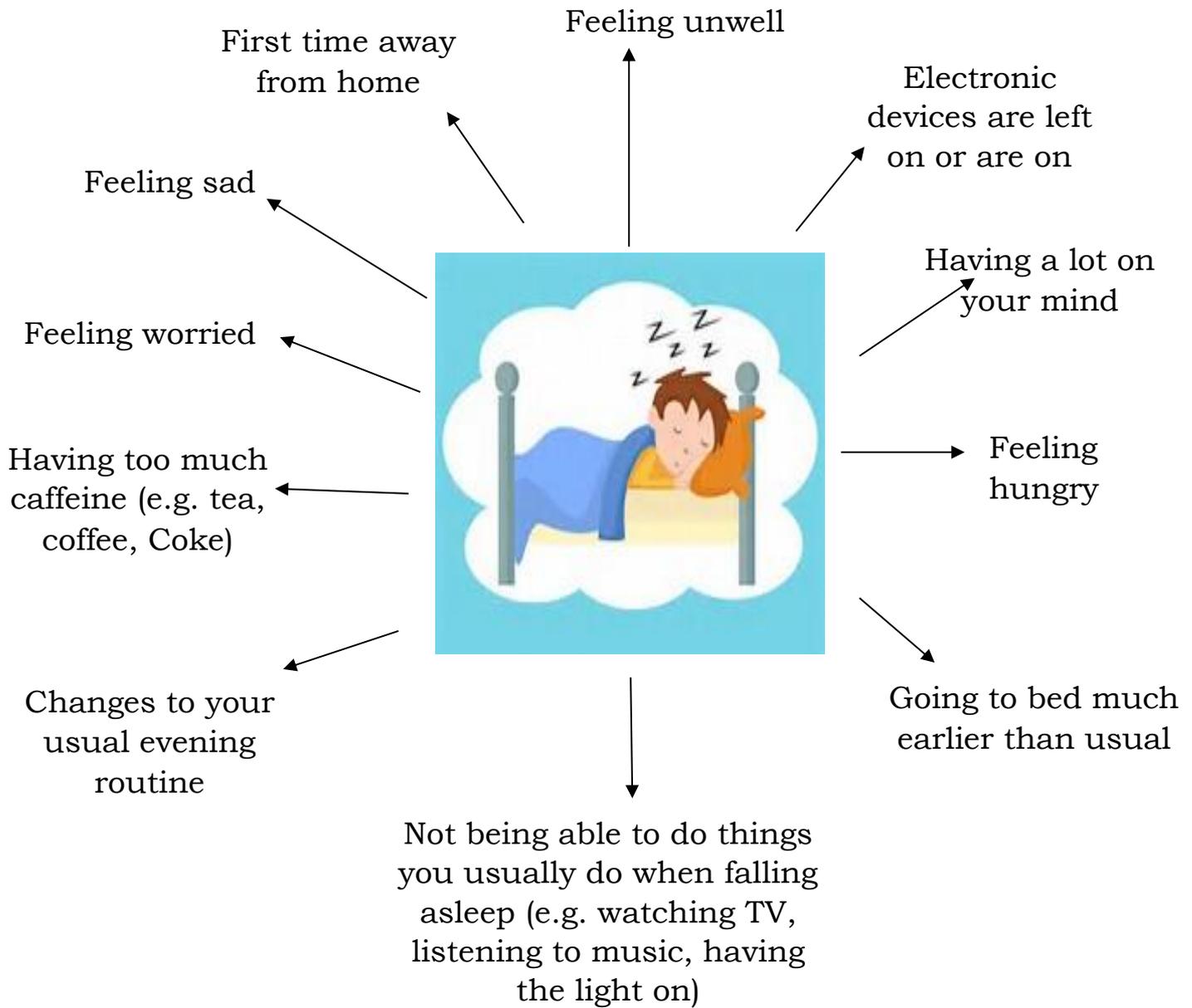
During REM sleep, your brain and body are energised and dreaming occurs.

REM is thought to be involved in the process of storing memories, learning, and balancing your mood, although the exact mechanisms are not fully understood.

Signals are also sent to the spinal cord to shut off movement, creating a temporary paralysis in the arms and legs. Abnormal disruption of this temporary paralysis can cause people to move while they are dreaming and could lead to injuries.

REM sleep stimulates regions of the brain that are used for learning. Studies have shown that when people are deprived of REM sleep, they are not able to remember what they were taught before just before going to sleep

Why it might be hard to sleep



Encourage your child to self soothe

Children need to learn how to self soothe. This involves comforting oneself when unhappy or distressed without support from a parent/carer.

SELF-SOOTHING has to do with comforting, nurturing and being kind to yourself. One way to think of this is to think of ways of soothing each of your five senses:

- Vision
- Hearing
- Smell
- Taste
- Touch

These are mostly physical techniques that use different senses and can help us to feel calmer, relaxed and safe

Helping to get to sleep

There have been lots of suggestions about what might help people get good sleep.

Different things work for different people.

Often these ideas don't work straight away; you have to try them for a few nights first.

Having a regular evening routine

When we do the same things each night before going to bed it helps our mind know it's nearly time to sleep. An example of an evening routine might be: 7.00pm warm bath, 7.30pm use toilet and brush my teeth, get into bed, read book and then turn the lights off.



Having a warm drink

Having a warm drink can help you to relax before bed. Remember though you shouldn't drink things with caffeine in them before going to sleep as caffeine keeps you awake.



Having a warm bath or shower

Having a warm bath or shower can also help you relax, especially if you have tense muscles. Remember not to have the water too hot or too cold though as this will make you feel even more awake.



Reading a book

Reading a book can also help you to relax as this can help us slow our minds down and take our minds off other things.



Listen to music

Listening to calming music can help us to sleep. It's best to listen to something calming and quiet rather than something which makes you feel excited.

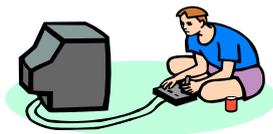
Don't exercise right before bed

Doing exercise before releases chemicals which make us feel awake. Although it is a good idea to exercise during the day (especially if you aren't feeling tired when it comes to the evening) try not to do this right before bed.



Use relaxation exercises

There are several different relaxation exercises you can try which might help you to sleep



Turn TV and computer games off earlier

Having the TV on while we are trying to sleep keeps our minds active and busy and will make it more difficult to fall asleep, not least because need to concentrate on the TV and keep our eyes open. The same is true for computer games; especially those which make you feel excited, scared or stressed.

What is Melatonin?

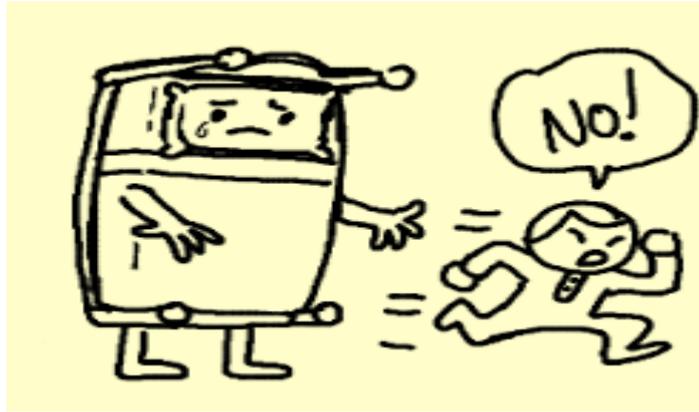
Melatonin is a natural hormone made by a pea-sized gland located just above the middle of the brain. Melatonin signals that it's time to sleep.

During the day the gland is inactive. When the sun goes down and darkness occurs, the gland is "turned on" and begins to actively produce melatonin, which is released into the blood. This usually occurs around 9 pm and as a result; melatonin levels in the blood rise sharply and you begin to feel less alert and more sleepy.

Melatonin levels in the blood stay high for about 12 hours (all through the night) - before they fall back to low daytime levels by about 9 am. Daytime levels of melatonin are barely detectable.

Ipad's, TV's, mobile phones, lap tops etc emit light of all colors, but it's the blue light in particular that poses a danger to sleep. Blue light prevents the release of melatonin, causing sleep difficulties.

You don't have to be staring directly at a television or computer screen: If enough blue light hits the eye, the gland can stop releasing melatonin.



My child won't go to bed!

Top Tips:

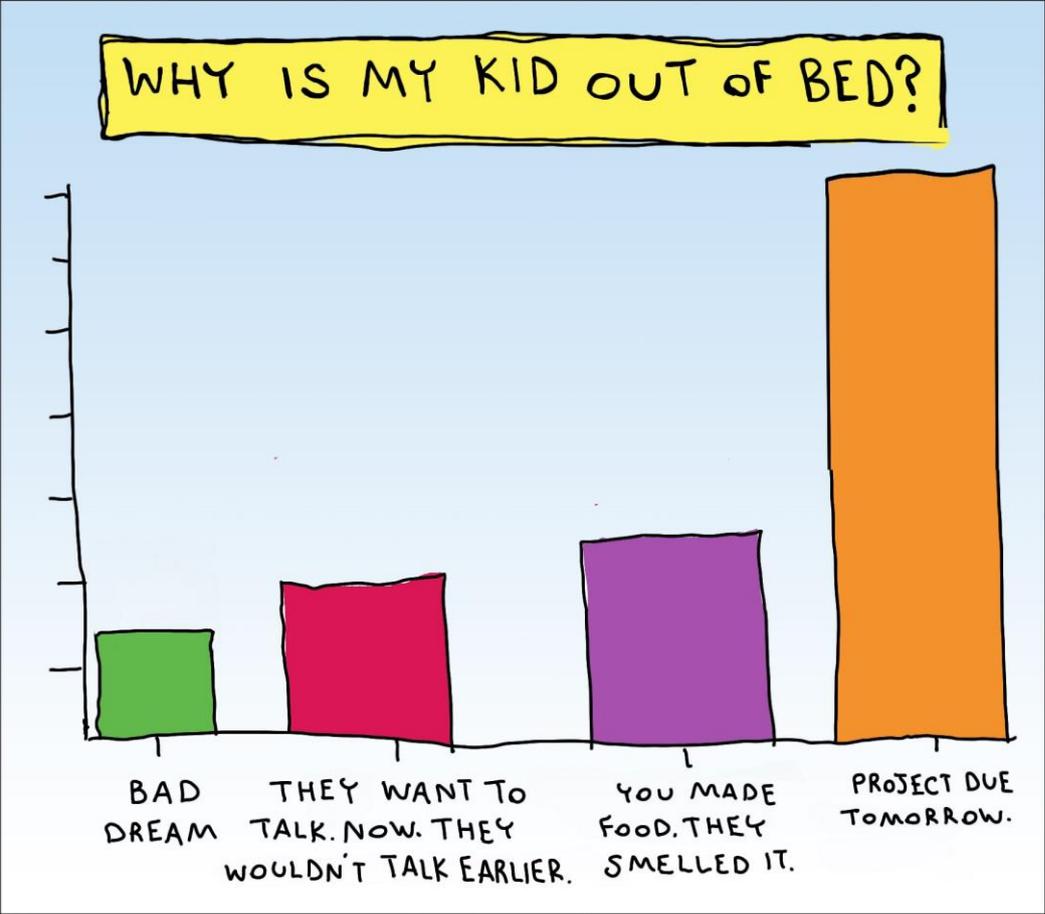
- Everything stays upstairs during bedtime routine
- No Ipads, phones or TV in bed
- Make sure the room is uncluttered and comfortable
- Keep the room at a cool temperature
- Don't leave a bright light on, a small dim light is better
- Read only 1 short bedtime story
- Remind the child half way through the story it is shortly rest time
- With an older child allow them a few minutes reading to themselves after your story has ended
- When story is finished, kiss and settle child down
- Remain calm, don't get into any conversation
- Don't shout
- Be consistent
- Don't mention sleep! Ask your child to rest as this seems less final or isolating
- Reiterate "rest now" if you child decides to talk about the events and troubles of the day
- Leave the room
- If you child continues to fuss, don't go in immediately, gently take them back to bed, "rest now" kiss, then leave

REMEMBER... YOU CAN DO IT!!

Sleep Hygiene...Just good sleep habits



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