

Dr. Montgomery's Dozen Sleep Tips:

(For Children up to age 11 years old)

1. Build a Bedtime Routine:
 - a. Set a regular time for bed each night and stick to it.
 - b. Establish a relaxing bedtime routine, such as giving your child a warm bath or reading him or her a story.
2. Make after-dinner playtime a relaxing time. Too much activity close to bedtime can keep children awake.
3. Avoid feeding children big meals close to bedtime.
 - a. Dietary changes can cause sleep problems, if someone is struggling with a sleep problem, it's not a good time for dietary changes.
 - b. Avoid giving children anything with caffeine (e.g. tea, coffee, coca cola) within six hours of bedtime. And, remember, chocolate has caffeine.
4. Set the bedroom temperature so that it's comfortable – not too warm or too cold.
5. Make sure the bedroom is dark. If necessary, use a green glow nightlight.
6. Keep the noise level low.
7. Avoid naps during the day; it can disturb the normal pattern of sleep and wakefulness. (Exception: Younger children require developmentally appropriate naps.)
8. Exercise can promote good sleep when engaged in regularly.
 - a. Vigorous exercise should be taken in the morning or late afternoon.
 - b. Relaxing exercise done before bed can help initiate a restful night's sleep.
9. Ensure adequate exposure to natural light. Natural light exposure helps maintain a healthy sleep-wake cycle.
10. Try to avoid emotionally upsetting conversations and activities before trying to go to sleep. Don't dwell on, or bring your problems to bed.
11. Associate bed with sleep. It's not a good idea to use the bed to watch TV, listen to the radio, or read.
 - a. Having a "buffer zone" between TV and computer use and bedtime allows for a winding down time before sleep. This also makes it less likely that you will have to negotiate "one more TV program" or "one more computer game" before bedtime.
 - b. An additional recommendation is that children do not have TVs / 'screens' in their bedrooms.
12. Review with your child's physician whether there are any medicines (such as some asthma medicines and decongestants) that may be interfering with the quality of your child's sleep. Don't be afraid to ask about alternatives.