CHILDREN AND SLEEP

Disorders of sleep and wakefulness not only affect adults, as health care providers are learning that children are no exception and also suffer from sleep disorders. Researchers estimate that more than two million children have difficulty sleeping and this number continues to grow. Sleep is an important part of a child's life, and a lack of sleep can impair a child's performance in the classroom, hinder physical abilities, shorten attention span and stunt social growth.

Sleep specialists suggest that children need at least nine hours of sleep each night to effectively function, but most receive far less because of daily demands from modern society, including homework, social activities and technology. Additionally, parents may not realize their child's sleep disorders and may not view sleep as a health-related issue; as a result, the disorders remain undiagnosed and untreated.

Children whom have not received adequate nighttime sleep risk physical and/or mental impairment. Parents should consult a pediatrician if their child sustains any of the following symptoms: snoring, breathing pauses during sleep, difficulty staying awake during the day, or unexplained decrease in daytime performance. Sleep disorders in both children and adults are similar - sleep apnea, insomnia, restless legs syndrome, and narcolepsy. A sleep practitioner can easily treat sleep problems in children through a combination of lifestyle changes and therapy. Practitioners suggest parents follow these steps to ensure a good night's rest for children:

- Make sure your child gets at least nine hours of sleep each night
- Do not over-schedule your child
- Set and maintain a regular bed time
- Do not allow your child to consume caffeine close to bedtime
- Help your child develop a sleep ritual
- Do not allow your child to get wound up in the evening
- Make sure your child's bedroom is dark
- Do not allow your child to fall asleep in front of the television
- Pay attention to your child's mattress
- Monitor the temperature in your child's room

The American Academy of Sleep Medicine is a professional organization dedicated to advancing sleep health care by setting clinical standards for the field; advocating for recognition, diagnosis and treatment of sleep disorders; educating professionals dedicated to providing optimal sleep health care; and fostering the development and application of scientific knowledge.

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SLEEP STATISTICS

More than **2 million** children suffer from sleep disorders**

It is conservatively estimated that between **30 to 40 percent** of children do not sleep enough**

Research suggests that children require an average of **9 to 10 hours** of sleep each night**

Each year, sleep disorders, sleep deprivation and sleepiness add an estimated **$15.9 billion** to the national health care bill**

The International Classification of Sleep Disorders lists **84 sleep disorders** of sleep and wakefulness that serve as a guide for diagnosis

For a complete list of AASM-accredited sleep centers, visit **www.aasmnet.org** or call (888) 41-AWAKE

**Statistic from the National Institutes of Health National Center for Sleep Disorder Research

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