

# How to help if you're experiencing problems sleeping



## How much sleep do we need?

We're all different, but generally each night:

- Children aged 3-5 need 11-12 hours
- Children aged 6-11 need 10-11 hours
- Teenagers need 9-10 hours.

## Why might you experience sleep problems?

There can be different reasons:

- Bedtime fears - you might be afraid of the dark or being left alone.
- Bad habits - such as napping too much during the day, eating a poor diet, use of electronic devices before bedtime or substance abuse.
- Anxiety, low mood or depression because you're worried about things such as friendships, bullying or school work.

## What you can do if you're experiencing sleep problems

1. Think of things that may be contributing to your sleep problems and talk to someone you trust about how you're feeling; a friend, family member, or at school find a teacher, mentor, counsellor or school nurse.
2. Try and establish a good bedtime routine - have a warm drink, a warm bath and avoid using electronic devices for at least an hour before you go to bed because they can stimulate your mind.
3. Aim to get up and go to bed at the same time every day, a routine will help your body and mind to recognise when it's time to sleep.

4. Do some exercise, particularly late afternoon or early evening, but not late in the evening to avoid over-stimulation.

5. Help yourself to relax before bed - perhaps by reading a book, listening to music.

6. If something is troubling you when it's time to sleep, try writing it down or drawing a picture of your thoughts.

7. Imagine being in a relaxing place, feeling happy and slowly breathing in and out.

## Things to consider:

1. Avoid going without sleep for a long period of time.
2. Don't have too much caffeine or sugar in your diet.
3. Avoid eating your evening meal too late, close to bedtime.
4. Don't lie in for too long in the morning, even after a bad night, this will just make it harder to get to sleep the following night.

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If you're still having trouble sleeping,  
it might be time to talk to someone at your school or your GP.  
Or, visit [www.liverpoolcamhs.com/need-advice](http://www.liverpoolcamhs.com/need-advice)