

# H PEDIATRIC UNIT

## The Importance of Sleep

It's no secret that sleep is important – and most of us don't get enough. Some of the symptoms when we don't sleep enough are obvious: daytime sleepiness, behavioral problems (including being cranky or irritable), and difficulty concentrating. However, not getting enough sleep causes problems beyond the immediately obvious ones. Chronic sleep deprivation is associated with a much wider array of health problems, such as depression and other mood problems, obesity, high blood pressure, and heart disease. That means that getting enough sleep is important for everything from doing well in school to protecting your long-term health. Take a look at this chart and think about how much sleep each member of your family usually gets (most adults should sleep at least 7 to 9 hours each night):



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Age	Recommended Sleep Hours per 24 Hour Period
Infants: 4 to 12 months	12 to 16 hours (including naps)
Toddlers: 1 to 2 years	11 to 14 hours (including naps)
Preschoolers: 3 to 5 years	10 to 13 hours (including naps)
Gradeschoolers: 6 to 12 years	9 to 12 hours
Teens: 13 to 18 years	8 to 10 hours

\*The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) has issued a Statement of Endorsement supporting these guidelines from the American Academy of Sleep Medicine (AASM).

Is everyone in your household getting enough sleep? If the answer is no, you're not alone. Researchers have found that between a third to a half of all adults, and as many as three-quarters of teenagers, don't get enough sleep. Some factors contributing this are hard to change, such as early school/work start times (the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that middle and high schools should start at 8:30 a.m. or later). However, there are some things that your family can do:

- Set bedtimes to keep a consistent sleep schedule, including on weekends (going to bed and waking up at the same time every day)
- Avoid using electronics (phone, computer, TV, etc.) for at least one hour before bed time - do not keep electronics in the bed room
- Dim the lights close to bed time and avoid exposure to bright lights
- Use the bed only for sleeping
- Avoid large meals and caffeine shortly before bed
- Stay active and exercise during the daytime

If your child is still not getting enough sleep, or still having daytime sleepiness despite getting enough hours, talk to his/her pediatrician about other ways to improve sleep quality and to evaluate for any contributing medical problems that may be present, such as sleep apnea.

For more information on these and other topics, visit [www.healthychildren.org](http://www.healthychildren.org). This is a great resource designed by the American Academy of Pediatrics specifically for parents.

Should a situation arise in which your child needs to be admitted to a hospital, remember Hendricks Regional Health is home to Hendricks County's only designated pediatric unit, specially designed to treat children. Our experienced staff is available 24/7 to care for all ages from birth to 18 years.