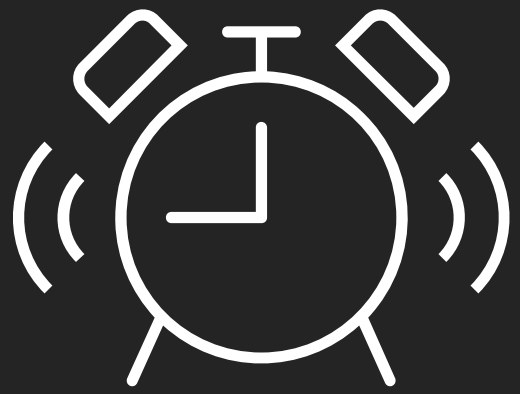
NHS
Tameside and Glossop Integrated Care
NHS Foundation Trust



Sleep Hygiene

Tameside School Nursing Service

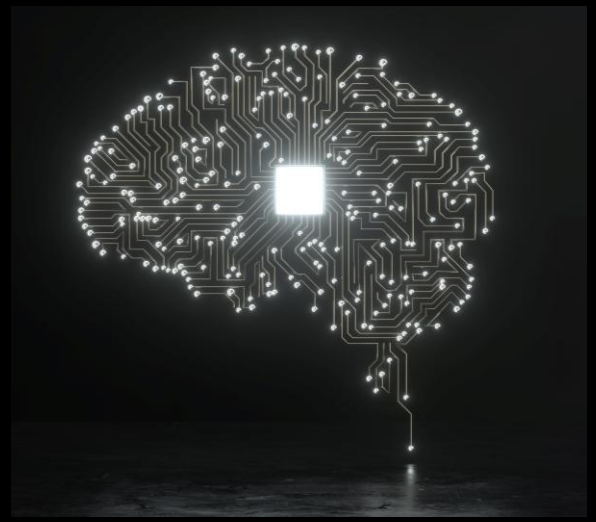
Session Outcomes

- The importance of sleep
- Sleep Physiology
- Causes of sleep issues
- Good sleep practices

Question: How much sleep do you need?

Answer: 8-10 hours

Why is sleep important



- We spend nearly a third of our lives sleeping.
- Sleep is crucial for physical, mental and emotional well-being in both adults and children.
- Having regular, good quality sleep can decrease the risk of developing long term health conditions such as heart disease, stroke and obesity.
- It is also as important as food and water; this is often not valued in society.
- It helps us to learn and create new memories. It also stores our memories from within the day.
- Having enough sleep helps to repair tissues, and our immune system.
- It allows the body and brain to rest, repair, and prepare for the next day
- Whilst society often learns about diet and exercise, the importance of sleep is often overlooked.

Did you know athletes and professional clubs now employ sleep coaches

ENGLAND

Why? Because they recognise

- We look and feel better when better rested.
- It improves concentration and ability to retain information.
- It helps hormone regulation.
- Benefits the family unit.
- Helps us feel calmer.

Myth buster

Sleeping is cheating

Sleep is for the weak

That is NOT true

Lack of sleep will you make weak!

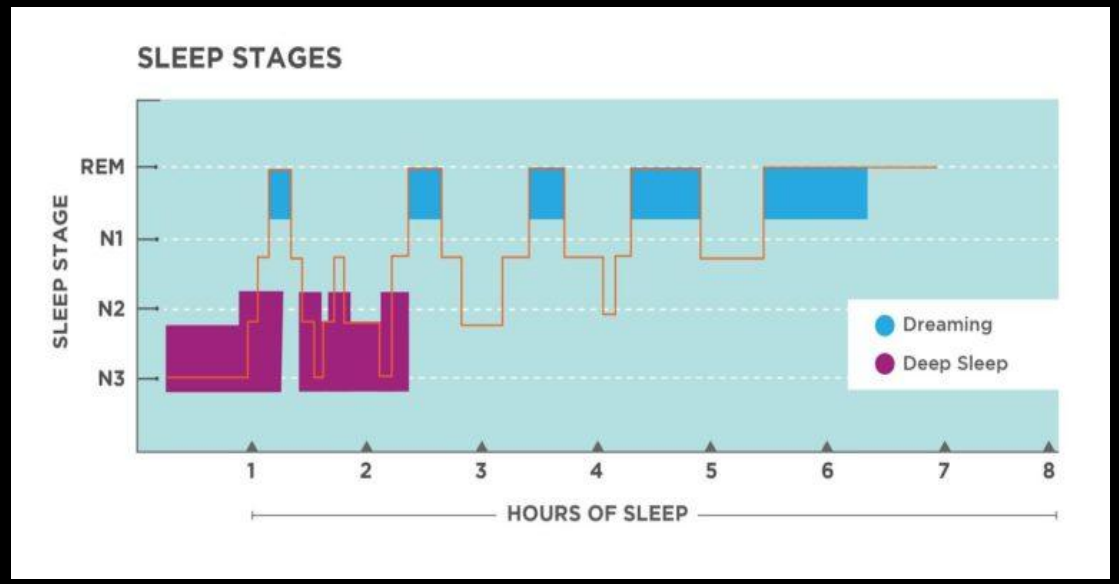
Benefits of sleep to children and young people

- Growth
- Appearance
- Learning
- Improved day time behaviour
- Healthy Relationships
- Better Mental health
- Emotional Regulation
- Immune System
- Weight

Impact of sleep deprivation

- Parental stress and sibling relationships
- Learning, concentration and attainment
- Safety issues
- Depression, anxiety, irritability, low mood and mental health
- Quality of life
- Attachment and/or Behavioural issues and/or hyperactivity
- General health, immune system and tissue repair
- Weight and growth
- Headaches and lethargy
- Appearance and daytime sleepiness
- Relationships

Sleep physiology



- We spend around one-third of our lives sleeping, and this occurs in cycles lasting roughly 90 minutes. Each cycle includes non-REM and REM sleep, both of which play vital roles in physical restoration, memory consolidation, and emotional regulation.
- **REM sleep** is when the eyes move rapidly, breathing becomes shallow and irregular, and heart rate and blood pressure rise. This is the stage where dreams occur, emotional memories are processed, and memory consolidation takes place. Muscle tone is reduced, preventing us from physically acting out our dreams. Nightmares occur during REM sleep and are remembered, whereas night terrors occur in non-REM sleep and are usually not recalled.
- Non-REM sleep is divided into stages:
- **N1** – a very light stage where we can be easily woken by small disturbances, such as heating noises or movement. Jerking or twitching may also occur.
- **N2** – a slightly deeper stage where heart rate and blood pressure drop. If undisturbed, we progress into N3.
- **N3 (deep sleep)** – the body releases slow brain waves, making it extremely difficult to wake. If woken, a person may feel disoriented for several minutes. This stage is essential for feeling well-rested, as well as for hormone release, growth, appetite regulation, and tissue repair.

Sleep physiology

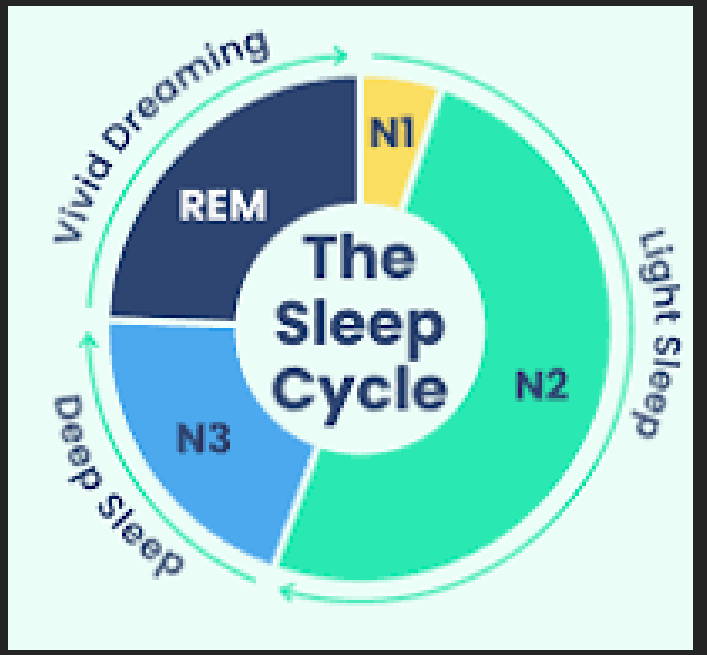
•Daytime learning is consolidated during sleep. Adequate REM sleep improves memory recall and supports emotional regulation.

•Good-quality sleep requires sufficient time in all stages of the sleep cycle.

•Partial waking during a sleep cycle is completely normal. You might notice it when you check the time, roll over, or briefly wake, but during this partial wakening you usually return to sleep without issue.

•If a parent checks on a child too early, it can disturb their sleep or fully wake them.

•Sleep conditions should remain consistent throughout the night. Changes in light, noise, or temperature can increase the likelihood of waking during a sleep cycle.



Lyn Quine: Recommended Sleep by Age

Although every child is different and there is limited evidence on exact sleep requirements, Lyn Quine offers an approximate guide to recommended hours of sleep by age. The emphasis should be on children getting sufficient, good-quality sleep across all cycles, rather than focusing strictly on fixed hours. However, the guide can be a useful reference point.

AGE	AVERAGE NUMBER OF HOURS NEEDED	
	DAYTIME	NIGHT-TIME
1 WEEK	8	8½
4 WEEKS	6¾	8¾
3 MONTHS	5	10
6 MONTHS	4	10
9 MONTHS	2¾	11¼
12 MONTHS	2½	11½
2 YEARS	1¼	11¾
3 YEARS	1	11
4 YEARS	-	11½
5 YEARS	-	11
6 YEARS	-	10¾
7 YEARS	-	10½
8 YEARS	-	10¼
9 YEARS	-	10
10 YEARS	-	9¾
11 YEARS	-	9½
12 YEARS	-	9½
13 YEARS	-	9¼
14 YEARS	-	9
15 YEARS	-	8¾
16 YEARS	-	8½

Task

Sort the cards into two piles:

- One that includes examples to help children sleep better and
- Another for what can disrupt sleep patterns.

Answers

- Eating cheese before bed – dairy products tend to promote sleep. There is no research to suggest that cheese gives you nightmares.
- Teething – if children are teething their sleep patterns can become disrupted due to pain
- Drinking blackcurrant juice in the evening – this can irritate the bladder in some children and act as a diuretic.
- Exercising in the evening – while exercise can be helpful in promoting sleep it is best avoided in the evening time as it can actually interfere with sleep if carried out too close to bedtime.
- Napping in the day – if the naps are in pre-school children and scheduled then these can help with sleep. If they are in older children, they can hinder nighttime sleep.
- Being too hot – ideally, we need to maintain a consistent temperature of 16 to 18 degrees in bedrooms. If it is too hot it will hinder sleep and can even be dangerous.
- Lack of routine – children need to have a good sleep routine in order to help them to sleep better.
- Having a night light in the room – ideally we want children to fall asleep in a darkened environment to promote melatonin production. If a night light is on in a room then it needs to be on throughout the night.
- Noise – some children are very noise sensitive and it can disrupt their sleep. Others like background noise i.e. white noise.
- Watching Bedtime Hour on TV – television in the hour leading up to bedtime is best avoided as it is highly stimulating.
- A bath before bed – can be helpful for children who find baths relaxing. Thirty minutes before going to sleep is the ideal time to offer a bath.
- A light show/cot mobile played as your child falls asleep – may encourage the child to develop an inappropriate sleep association and is best avoided.
- Falling to sleep with a parent by their side – may help a child to settle at the start of the night but if the parent moves it is likely the child will not be able to self-settle and will wake up.
- Being over tired – may prevent a child from falling asleep. Hyperactivity is a symptom of sleep deprivation.
- Being in a darkened environment – is helpful to produce melatonin which makes us feel sleepy.
- Playing on a computer game before bed – is over-stimulating and best avoided in the hour before bed.
- Doing hand eye co-ordination activities before bed e.g. jigsaws, lego etc – is a great idea, fine motor skills activities are very relaxing and should be used in the bedtime routine.
- Sleeping in a brightly coloured bedroom – can be over-stimulating, neutral colours are best for promoting sleep and relaxation.
- Having silence in the house – is difficult to maintain and not necessary. Children need to learn to fall asleep with some noise otherwise they will always need silent conditions to fall asleep in.
- Falling asleep watching TV – is to be avoided. Television is stimulating and is also a light source which may interfere with melatonin production. The TV also would have to remain on all night in order for the child not to awaken after each sleep cycle.
- Falling asleep alone in their cot/bed – is important so that children learn to self settle in a familiar environment.
- Waking up time is as important as bedtime – it is important to wake a child at the same time each day to strengthen their circadian rhythm.
- Being in pain – if a child is in pain their sleep will be disturbed.
- Having a wet nappy – will disturb a child’s sleep.

Myth buster

Cheese before bed can cause nightmares?	**FALSE**
It is dangerous to wake someone when they are sleepwalking?	**FALSE**

What are sleep associations

Sleep associations are conditions or actions that a person links with falling asleep such as:

- A cuddly toy
- Dummy
- TV on
- Light shows
- Lights on
- A bed partner
- Certain clothes
- Driven in a car
- Alarm
- White noise

What if they are altered or removed

When these associations are removed it can disrupt their sleep pattern.

- if a parent falls asleep with a child, when they leave, the child is likely to waken, just like you would if you fell asleep with a partner next to you.
- if a child is only allowed to fall asleep on the sofa, they will associate this with their bedtime and will only fall asleep on the sofa.
- Leaving the hallway light on and then turning it off will disturb your child's sleep, as sleep through their cycles.

By removing reliance on external sleep aids or associations, individuals can learn to fall asleep on their own and develop self-soothing skills.

Melatonin

Melatonin is a hormone released in response to darkness; it helps regulate the circadian rhythm —a natural 24-hour internal clock that controls sleep-wake cycles—by signalling to the body that it is time to prepare for sleep

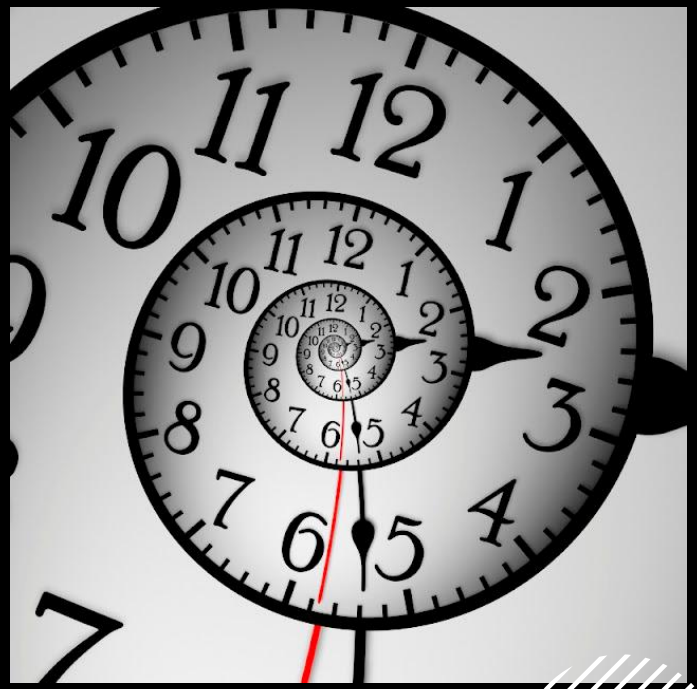
Teenagers have shift in their rhythm which is why they tend to stay up later and wake up later in the day.

Dimming the lights, closing blind/curtains and avoiding screens can help our bodies to produce melatonin.

Good Sleep Practices and Routines

- Sleep hygiene is described by the national sleep foundation, as a variety of difference practices and habits to support good nighttime sleep quality and daytime alertness.
- Routines support good circadian rhythm.
- Routines can also help with relaxing and promote feelings of sleepiness - It is important to avoid stimulating activities within bedtime routines to help children to calm.
- The benefits are enormous, once established.

Homeostasis and our Circadian Rhythm



- Sleep is regulated by **homeostasis** and our **circadian rhythm**.
- **Sleep/wake homeostasis** signals when we are tired and need rest, like a battery that recharges during sleep.
- Young people often like to “lie in” on weekends, but this can reduce sleep pressure, leading to later bedtimes on Saturday and Sunday nights—even if they are still tired.
- The **circadian rhythm** is our internal body clock, which does not run exactly on a 24-hour cycle.
- Some people have shorter cycles and tend to fall asleep earlier and wake up earlier.
- Young people typically have slightly longer cycles, making them naturally fall asleep and wake up later.
- A Harvard study suggested the average circadian cycle runs **24 hours and 11 minutes**.
    - Without a consistent routine, bedtimes and wake times can drift later by about 11 minutes each day.
    - Over a month, this small shift accumulates to a change of approximately **5 hours and 8 minutes**.

So, what does a good routine look like….

- Having a regular bedtime to promote routine… **Even at weekends**
- Setting an alarm to promote wake up time**…** **Even at weekends**
- Planning meals to ensure they are not too close to bedtime, or the child hungry. It might be an idea to introduce a light sugar and caffeine free bedtime snack.
- In the hour before bed darken the environment, make it screen free – blue light may suppress melatonin.
- **Warm baths may help promote sleep, depending on your child's response.** The warm water causes blood vessels near the skin to dilate, which helps the body release heat. After the bath, as the body cools down, **heart rate (HR) and blood pressure (BP) naturally drop**, mimicking the body's normal pre-sleep changes. This drop in HR and BP encourages a **feeling of sleepiness**, helping your child relax and prepare for bedtime.
- It's important to note that not all children respond the same way—some may become energised by the bath, so observing your child's reaction and adjusting the timing can be helpful.
- Reading a book and avoiding stimulating activities.
- Consider the bedroom environment such the noise level that may heard or toys on show, remove toys and teddies off the bed

Consistency is key!

Routines

- Once produced – share the routine in prominent place such as on the fridge or cupboard.
- If your child is staying out, tell them their routine.
- Children also benefit from a good morning routine. It's important for families to stick to what time their day starts, 7 days a week. This includes the use of an alarm.
- Giving warning that bedtime is approaching is important – some may need a verbal warning, or others may need visual such as a sand timer so they can see how long they have left.
- Avoid sending to bedroom/bed as a sanction, likewise, don't reward good behaviour with allowing late nights.
- Young People tend to spend a lot time in their bedroom, try to encourage a period out of their room.
- If young people are studying and this is disturbing their sleep, encourage them to produce revision timetable that does not include using their bed to study as this can hinder their relationship with bedtime.
- Implement strategies consistently for at least two weeks.
- Introduce a **reward chart** to encourage positive sleep behaviours but **only include goals that are within your child's control**. Avoid using outcomes they cannot manage, such as staying in bed all night, since they may need to wake for the toilet or seek comfort after a nightmare.

Example of achievable goals for a reward chart:

- Going to bed at the agreed time.
- Following their bedtime routine without reminders.
- Staying in bed for a set period after lights out.
- Using their sleep tools (like a comfort object or nightlight) independently.
- Completing a morning routine without delay

Examples of a good routine should begin in the hour before bed and be easy to follow……..

8:00 PM
No screens, dim lights, light snack such as milk, cheese, wheatbix if hungry

8:10 PM
relaxing activities such as jigsaw, puzzles, colouring.

8:30 PM
Bathtime

8:45 PM
Teeth brushing and Toilet

8:50 PM
Book in bed

9:00 PM
Lights out

Remember…..Consistency is key!

Additional Advice for families

Match the routine to the child's current sleep time:

- If a child is consistently not falling asleep until around 12 am, starting the bedtime routine at 7 pm is too early.
- Begin the routine **about 1 hour before their typical sleep time** (e.g., 11 pm).
- Once the child adjusts, gradually move the bedtime earlier by **15 minutes every 2–3 days**.

Consider sensory factors:

- If the child's bedroom is above the kitchen, cooking smells may disturb them. In this case, they could start the routine later, once they are likely in **stage 3 of non-REM sleep (deep sleep)**, so it does not interrupt falling asleep, or they could cook their meals earlier, depending on their family life.
- If a family member takes a shower, consider scheduling it before the child's bedtime routine to reduce noise or disturbances, or again when the child is there stage of deep sleep.

Finally,

- Many families feel they have tried everything, and this may be true, but **they may give up before seeing the benefits**.
- **Consistency is key:** Encourage families to stick with the sleep plan for **at least two weeks**.
- It may feel harder at first, but **improvements will occur with persistence**.
- Once the routine and sleep habits are established, **the benefits for both child and family are enormous**

What works for one child, may not work for yours.

You can adapt the routine to suit your family life and a parenting style.

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