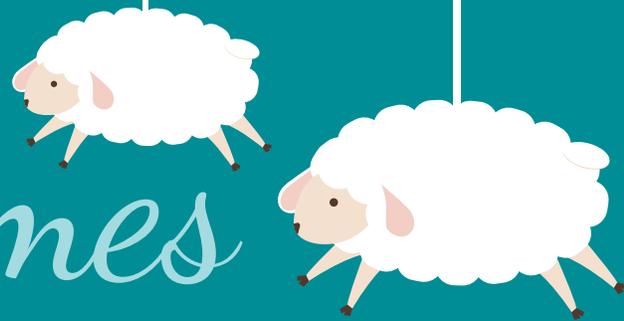


Best bets for better bedtimes



Getting your child to sleep can be a struggle. If you've tried warm baths, relaxing routines, shutting off electronics hours before bed and your child still has trouble getting to sleep or staying asleep, aromatherapy might help, says Pennie Schultz, MD, of Centura Health Physician Group Pediatrics NorthCare. Aromatherapy options include:



Lavender. Studies show lavender aromatherapy may slow nervous system activity, promote relaxation, and improve sleep quality.



Chamomile. This herb is believed to have numerous medicinal qualities, including inducing sleep.

Melatonin may be appropriate for some children, Schultz says. "We will sometimes recommend melatonin, usually for short-term help falling asleep on a case-by-case basis. It does seem to help some kids and is safe for most kids. I do recommend that parents talk to their pediatrician about melatonin, what dose is safe, and how to use it before giving it to their child."

WORKING *at Sleep*

On the outside, your sleeping child may look peaceful and quiet. But inside, his brain and body are abuzz with important activity. While we sleep, our bodies get to work, growing muscle, repairing tissue, and regulating hormones. In children, what happens during sleep is especially vital.

5 potential benefits of your child getting enough sleep:

1. Better behavior
2. Improved attention span
3. Better learning
4. Enhanced emotional regulation
5. Better overall health

5 potential consequences of inadequate sleep:

1. Attention, behavior, and learning problems
2. Increased risk of accident or injury
3. Increased risk of hypertension, obesity, and diabetes
4. Increased risk of depression
5. Increased risk of self-harm and suicidal thoughts among teenagers

If your child has trouble sleeping, make sure she:

- * Avoids exercise within three hours of bedtime.
- * Eats breakfast. The health benefits of this are numerous; one of the more surprising pluses is that it helps regulate the body's natural rhythm.
- * Doesn't nap in the afternoon.
- * Wakes up at the same time every day.



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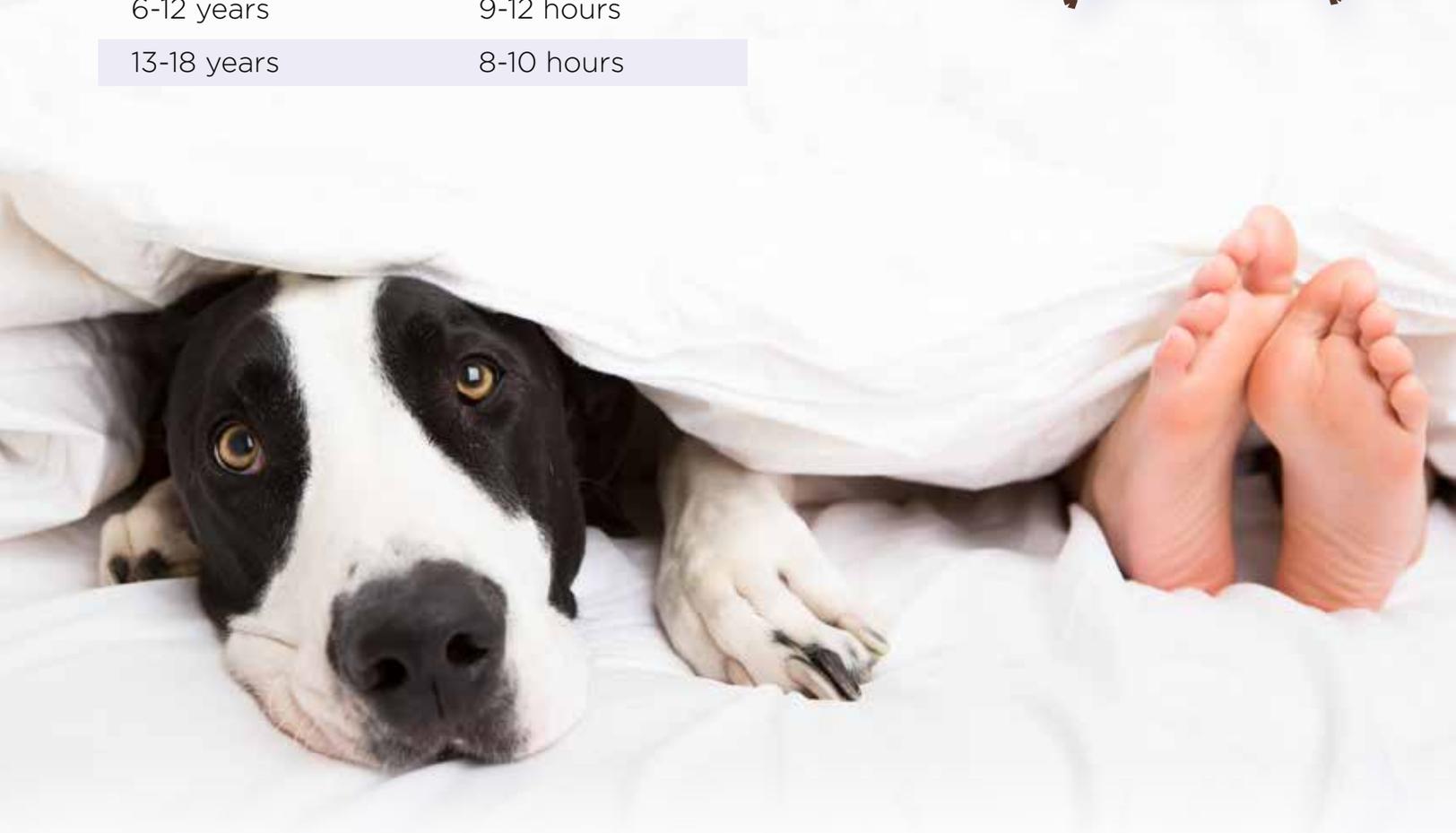
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better bedtimes

Sleepy Time

Sleep is vital at all ages, but especially for growing bodies and brains. Here are recommendations for optimum hours of shut-eye, by age, from the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Academy of Sleep Medicine:

Age	Recommended
0-3 months	14-17 hours
4-12 months	12-16 hours
1-2 years	11-14 hours
3-5 years	10-13 hours
6-12 years	9-12 hours
13-18 years	8-10 hours



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