

What You Need to Know About Sleep Needs by Age

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The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has age-specific recommendations for how much sleep people should get each night. Understanding your sleep needs at different stages of life—and addressing any issues that arise—can pave the way for a better night's rest.

The CDC recommends that adolescents ages 13 to 18 get 8 to 10 hours of sleep every 24 hours. As a person grows into an adult, sleep needs change:

1. People between the ages of 18 and 60 should get at least 7 hours of sleep each night.
2. People aged 61 to 64 need 7 to 9 hours of sleep each night.
3. People 65 and older need 7 to 8 hours of sleep each night.

0 to 5 years old

Sleep is perhaps most important in the early years of life, and newborns sleep a lot, both day and night. Newborns spend 14 to 17 hours sleeping each day; by 4 months of age, babies tend to sleep a little less, about 12 to 16 hours in a 24-hour period.

Getting that amount of sleep isn't always easy. Sleep training, teaching your baby to self-soothe at night and fall asleep on their own, can begin as early as 3 to 4 months of age. While sleep training can be challenging for everyone involved, it can help the whole family sleep better.

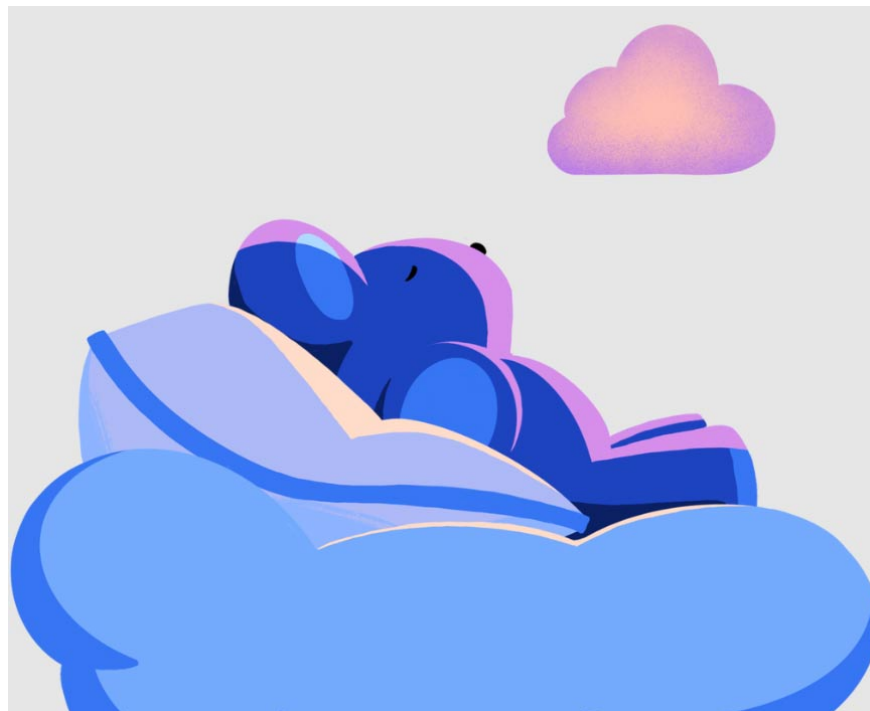
As toddlers and preschoolers move into preschool, they need less sleep than newborns, about 10 to 14 hours in a 24-hour period. It's important for children this age to have a consistent bedtime and simple nighttime routine (which may include a bedtime story or song), especially as they gradually wean themselves off naps.

6 to 12 years old

Elementary and middle school-age children typically function best on nine to 12 hours of sleep each night. Adequate rest is important for children's development, especially as their brains develop.

Sleep also affects academic performance: Children need rest to better absorb and remember information learned during the day.

Establishing a consistent bedtime and wake-up time can help parents get their child into a regular sleep routine. If your child is having trouble sleeping through the night at this age, consider talking to your pediatrician about possible solutions.



13 to 19 years old

As a teenager, you need eight to 10 hours of sleep, which helps fuel the growth spurt many people experience during their teenage years.

Meanwhile, puberty and hormonal changes alter your internal clock, causing you to stay up later and wake up later each morning. Researchers aren't sure why this shift happens, but they do know the consequences: Many

teens are chronically sleep-deprived because they wake up too early for school.

20 to 34 years old

In your 20s and 30s, you should aim for seven to nine hours of sleep each night. But how do you know if you need more or less of that range? Pay attention to how tired you feel throughout the week. Experts recommend spending several days without setting an alarm and waking up when your body naturally wants to, which you can try on a three-day weekend.



35 to 40 years old

As you move through adulthood and into middle age, you'll still want to aim for seven hours or more. Poor sleep habits from your 20s and early 30s can start to catch up with you: As we age, it can be harder to recover from a bad night's sleep. Sleep is important for helping us process emotions and regulate mood, so in addition to making you feel physically exhausted, poor sleep can make you more irritable and lethargic. Lack of sleep can also make it difficult to concentrate.

41 to 50 years old

Welcome to middle age: the years when sleep can take a back seat to work and family obligations, says Sabra Abbott, PhD, a sleep medicine specialist at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine. It's a difficult time in life to prioritize healthy habits like getting enough sleep.

You should aim for seven hours or more, and getting less sleep can have big consequences—our immune systems suffer when we don't get enough sleep, so we're more likely to get sick when we don't get enough rest. Plus, as we get older, it becomes harder to recover from a bad night's sleep, says Dr. Roth.

Some people believe we can get used to not getting enough sleep, but that's a myth, says Indira Gurubhagavatula, PhD, a sleep specialist at Penn Medicine. The less we sleep, the more our sleep "debt"

increases, meaning we'll be more tired and need more rest later. " *The debt can only be repaid through sleep,*" she says. "*There are no alternatives or shortcuts .*"

51 years and older

As you get older, you tend to wake up earlier. At this stage of life, you may fall asleep in the early evening and wake up around 5 or 6 a.m.

Experts stress that you should be cautious when using medications and supplements to help you sleep — many sleep medications have side effects that can be worse in older adults, and they can also increase the risk of falls.

Here are some things you need to know about sleep changes as you age. Hopefully this article will help you better understand the importance of sleep.

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