

# Are Kids Catching Enough Z's? Or Too Many?



By Ana-Marija Dolaskie — June 14, 2016



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The [new sleeping recommendations](#) [1] are out just in time to confirm what millions of Americans already knew: We are so sleep deprived. *Yawn.*

Though many of us can get by on a few hours of sleep, there is mounting evidence that not catching enough Z's can lead to various health problems. Similarly, getting too much sleep can have the same outcome. And when it comes to learning healthy habits young, how much sleep do children need? Here's a breakdown of the recommendations developed by the American Academy of Sleep Medicine, published in the *Journal of Clinical Sleep Medicine*:

- Infants 4 to 12 months - **12 to 16 hours** of sleep every 24 hours (including naps).
- Children 1 to 2 years - **11 to 14 hours** of sleep every 24 hours (including naps).
- Children 3 to 5 years - **10 to 13 hours** of sleep every 24 hours (including naps).
- Children 6 to 12 years - **9 to 12 hours** of sleep every 24 hours.
- Teens 13 to 18 years - **8 to 10 hours** of sleep every 24 hours.

According to the paper's authors, adequate hours of sleep in children's age range results in a number of health benefits like improved memory and learning, better behavior, and longer attention spans. Similarly, not getting enough sleep is linked with hypertension, obesity, diabetes, and other health problems. Sleep-deprived teens are also at a greater risk for depression and suicidal thoughts.

Based on the guidelines, pediatricians urge that screen time (TV, iPads, video games) be limited to less than two hours per day, and at stop at least an hour before bedtime.

Experts say it's important to set children up for good sleeping habits from the get-go. Newborns and toddlers benefit from a consistent, structured bedtime routine, which includes changing into PJs, brushing teeth, and reading a bedtime story. And since sleep takes a back seat by the time children reach middle school and high school, instilling those habits early — experts say — can play a crucial role in the development of the child.

Adults aren't off the hook, either. Past research has shown that those who are chronically sleep-deprived often believe they can train themselves to properly function without enough sleep. But

experts say this simply isn't so. Sleep deprivation plays a major role in some car accidents, and can be linked to a host of serious health problems like heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes and stroke.

### **Midday Siestas: Is Everyone Else But Us Doing It Right?**

We Americans have undoubtedly deprived ourselves of naps. We believe in the strict, one-time snooze, preferably during the night. Daytime slumber simply isn't our thing. This sort of power nap is embraced in Europe but not in the U.S. Maybe the Europeans are onto something!

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#### **Links**

[1] <http://www.livescience.com/40732-pediatricians-media-guidelines-kids.html>