

Week 4  
Living in a Mindful Way,  
Increasing Sleep, and Mindful Eating/Nutrition  
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Sleep

The National Sleep Foundation reveals that 40 million people suffer from some sort of sleep disorder. There are varied sleep disorders including things like sleep apnea, narcolepsy, insomnia etc. However, sleep varies across people and across age groups. For example:

School Aged children need approximately 9-11 hours of sleep

Teenagers 14-17 need approximately 8-10 hours of sleep

Young Adults-Adults need approximately 7-9 hours of sleep

Generally it can take 10-20 minutes to fall asleep, which is considered average

\*The body's natural sleep cycle is attuned to a 24-hour period, waking generally with the light, feeling sleepy with coming dark.

\*The problem with sleeping difficulties is, the less you sleep the more you worry, the more you worry the less you sleep.

\*A healthy response to sleep is that sleep is variable even from night to night.

## Strategies for Better Sleep

- \*Make the bedroom cool and dark (total dark, even turning alarm clock light away from view)
- \* Avoid caffeine later in the day
- \*Avoid computer screens for approximately 1 hour before sleep; the blue light delays sleep. Children who have cell phones in their room are either viewing or waiting for calls, which disrupt sleep.
- \* Do not have TV in the bedroom. The brain processes the light from the TV as light and it delays the effect of deeper, more refreshing sleep.
- \*When sleep eludes, do not nap, keep to the same sleep schedule, waking and sleep at approximately the same times.
- \*Do physical aerobic activity during the day.
- \*Weighted blanket might be helpful, adding a secure feeling to the person sleeping.

## Specific Behavioral Strategies for Children and Sleep

- \* Create a bedtime routine that calms down as the night progresses. Set a routine where each thing follows something else that eventually leads to time in bed.
- \* Keep a sleep diary of your child's sleep. This provides you with data about what is actually happening with regard to sleeping. Parents can keep a diary of their own sleeping as well.
- \*Do a behavioral chart about the child remaining in bed (even if not sleeping). Reward the child for certain agreed-upon time frame for staying in bed.
- \*If child will not sleep without parent/guardian in the room, gradually eliminate parents from the room by fading them

towards the door. Again reward the child for staying in bed, even if they are not sleeping.

## Nutrition/Eating

### 5 Strategies for Healthy Eating

1. Have regular family meals
2. Serve a variety of foods and snacks
3. Be a good role model
4. Avoid food battles
5. Involve kids in the process of meals--perhaps, planning, shopping, cooking the meal.

### Some behavioral strategies

- \*Make a food chart (include foods the child will eat, those they will try--especially new foods). Review the chart when praising the child for trying new foods.
- \*Encourage child handle food (might be messy)
- \*Serve food in small portions
- \*Don't battle over food
- \*Allow the child to make some food choices when it comes to eating. Provide a choice of 2-3 possible things.
- \*Try to relax about food, especially now. Even if the child is not eating the most nutritious diet
- \* Give rewards/tangibles to eating and even to trying different foods. Can be special desserts, time to play video games, games with parents.