



### Strategies to improve sleep



NHS Borders  
Children & Young People's Occupational Therapy



Welcome back to our next video. In this short video we will look at strategies that may help to improve your child's sleep pattern.



Think about.....



Think about the bedroom environment.

Have clear transitions between day and nighttime.

Use sleep diaries to help track what may be going wrong.

Promote exercise and fresh air through the day.

Undertake activities which your child finds relaxing before bed.

The use of Melatonin may be considered, but this should only be considered alongside a healthcare professional.



The following should be avoided before bedtime.

- Avoid an afternoon nap after 2pm.

- No television or screens at least an hour before bed, instead introduce some quiet play.
- Your child will find it difficult to go to sleep on an empty stomach so a snack can be helpful however avoid sweets and sugary snacks and avoid caffeine.
- The bedtime routine should start no more than 1 hour before you wish your child to go to sleep.

Consistent bedtime and waking will reinforce circadian rhythm.

Carry out steps in same order each night to increase predictability and reduce anxiety- this also helps to reinforce the circadian body clock.

You may wish to include the following in your bedtime routine relaxing bath, toothbrush then into bedroom, best not to return to sitting room.

Try not to let the bedtime story drag on – be clear before you start that 1 or 2 short stories is enough and don't allow the child to negotiate any more than that.

Ideally pop lights off but a night light could be used if necessary- if using a night light have this carefully positioned to avoid the child's eyeliner.

If your child follows the correct steps, then give praise for this in the morning.



We need to carefully consider the bedroom environment.

Ensure there is minimal clutter and daytime toys are safely stored away.

A calm bedroom environment will help a child to transition to sleep.

Some of the keys things that may need addressing when considering sleep hygiene are:

- Use of screens and devices- the light produced by these devices can inhibit the production of our sleep hormone melatonin.
- Toys which light up and make a noise should be tidied away.
- Gaming equipment although looks sedentary encourages lots of brain activity which will inhibit sleep.
- Caffeine and other stimulants in the evening will prevent sleep.



So....what helps?

Predictability of routine

Keeping the routine the same every night with tasks in the same order keeps it predictable for the child and reduces anxiety.

Promote independence gradually beginning with modelling the routine including quiet bedtime settling, considering your positioning at settling time – can you remove all physical contact after bedtime cuddles. If this is difficult, try and sit on the bed rather than lying in the bed beside the child and gradually move away.

Try as much as possible to ignore temper tantrums and ignore resistance to engage in bedtime routines.

Ensure the child is safe!



# How To Contact Us...



Prior to contacting the service, we suggest you explore our resources online and on Facebook;

 [www.nhsborders.scot.nhs.uk/cypot](http://www.nhsborders.scot.nhs.uk/cypot)

 @CYPOTNHSBorders  
[www.facebook.com/CYPOTNHSBorders](http://www.facebook.com/CYPOTNHSBorders)

Advice and support can be sought from the service by contacting the team directly using our Enquiry Line or via our Enquiry Email Inbox.

 01896 826033 (voicemail)

 [Paediatric.OTEnquiries@borders.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:Paediatric.OTEnquiries@borders.scot.nhs.uk)

We will aim to contact you within 5 working days to discuss your enquiry