

Fact Sheet on Healthy Sleep

9 5 2 1 0
for Health™

The Northern Virginia Healthy Kids Coalition is promoting healthy lifestyles for children & youth through the 9-5-2-1-0 for Health™ message. In this fact sheet we focus on healthy sleep. Remember sleep is an important part of the 9-5-2-1-0 for Health™ message:

- 9** Get at least 9 hours of sleep per day
- 5** Eat 5 servings of fruits and vegetables per day
- 2** Limit screen time to no more than 2 hours per day
- 1** Get at least one hour of physical activity per day
- 0** Avoid beverages with added sugar

Can lack of sleep really increase the chances for obesity in children?

Recent research has linked inadequate sleep with a higher risk for childhood obesity:

- Lack of sleep disrupts a child's 'energy balance,' or the balance between 'energy in' (calories consumed) and 'energy out' (calories burned). This can cause the body to produce hormones which increase the child's appetite and result in weight gain/obesity.
- Childhood obesity/overweight puts a child at risk for sleep apnea, a disorder that prevents uninterrupted, deep sleep at night. Children with sleep apnea feel sleepy during the day and have impaired concentration/daytime performance of normal tasks.
- One study found that for each hour increase of sleep, the risk for childhood obesity/overweight is decreased by 9%.
- See the references for these studies at www.NorthernVirginiaHealthyKids.org

How much sleep do children & youth need each night?

The National Sleep Foundation recommends these basic daily sleep requirements:

- Preschoolers: 11-13 hours
- Elementary school students: 10-12 hours
- Pre-teens: 9 - 11 hours
- Teens: 8 1/2 - 9 hours
- See the references at www.NorthernVirginiaHealthyKids.org.

What can I do to promote healthy sleep in children & youth?

- Model the way by getting the appropriate amount of sleep.
- Educate kids, parents, & caregivers about the importance of adequate sleep for good health.
- Learn more about the Northern Virginia Healthy Kids Coalition at www.NorthernVirginiaHealthyKids.org.

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revised Northern Virginia Healthy Kids Coalition 12.26.13/rr



Healthier, together.