



Sleep tips for children with ADHD

1. **Exercise daily and avoid trigger foods.** Children should get at least an hour of physical activity each day. While exercise will help keep them physically fit, it will also help them sleep better at night. In terms of diet, avoid drinks and food containing caffeine
2. **Stick to a schedule.** Decide ahead of time with your child what their night-time routine will be, and include when to bathe, brush teeth, read, etc. Remember, children with ADHD need routine and predictability more than other children
3. **Set a bedtime alarm.** Just as you set an alarm for waking, consider setting a bedtime alarm so children associate their bedtime with a clock or timer instead of feeling like sleep is a parental demand. Make sure the sound of the alarm is quiet and not intrusive. Eventually, your child will naturally associate the sound of their bedtime alarm with sleepiness
4. **Use blackout curtains.** Using white noise or nature sounds to block neighbourhood or household sounds can also be helpful
5. **Try aromatherapy.** Essential oils like lavender, chamomile, sandalwood or vanilla can be calming for many people who experience sleeplessness. Let your child choose a calming scent that appeals to them, and then dab a little oil on a cotton ball and place it on their pillowcase
6. **Give them a weighted blanket.** Children with ADHD often have trouble understanding where their bodies are in space. A heavy, weighted blanket can apply deep pressure to muscles and joints throughout the night, helping to support the body's natural ability to fall asleep
7. **Reduce anxiety.** Anxious children, like anxious adults, often have too much on their minds to fall asleep at night. Use these strategies to calm an anxious child so they have a better chance of falling asleep naturally. A sleep diary is provided for you in the Resources section of this website. This can be a very useful assessment tool for identifying and understanding sleep problems. If problems with sleeping persist then talk to your doctor/healthcare professional for further help and advice