

# Nurse's Corner

## Spirit Lake Community Schools

*Spirit Lake School Nurses are committed to promoting the health and well-being of all students so that they may achieve academic success and develop lifelong healthy habits!*

In our ever busy lives, there is one health habit that gets neglected the most- **SLEEP!** The importance of sleep for both children and adults is often underestimated and overlooked.

### Why do we need sleep?

- Needed to support brain function! Sleep helps the brain maintain pathways (how neurons travel), creates new memories, and removes brain toxins that build up while you are awake.
- Crucial for physical growth and mental development —> Bodies grow better with sleep!
- It may sound extreme, but sleep is as essential to our survival as food and water.

### What happens when we don't get enough sleep?

- Decreased sleep affects concentration and ability to focus —> poor academic performance.
- Lack of sleep correlated with behavioral problems in school and ability to regulate emotions.
- Lack of sleep decreases immune system and ability to fight off infections —> more likely to get sick.
- Lack of sleep affects mental health and emotional well-being.
- Chronic lack of sleep increases risk of cardiovascular disease, obesity, type 2 diabetes, depression, and high blood pressure.

### How much sleep do I need?

- Toddlers (1-2 years): 12-14 hours per day
- Preschoolers (3-5 years): 11-13 hours per day
- School-age children (6-13 years): 9-11 hours per day
- Teenage children (14-18 years): 8-10 hours per day
- Adults (18+): 7-9 hours per day

## **How to I get good sleep?**

Like many things, there is an “art” to getting good rest. To get into the habit of anything, it takes practice. Here are some good strategies to try to get into a good sleep routine:

- Create a bedtime routine to help signal to the body that it is time to wind down.
- No screen time (TVs, phones, iPads, etc) 30 minutes before bedtime. Blue light emitted from screens suppresses melatonin production.
- Keep phones/devices out of your children’s bedroom. Use an “old fashioned” alarm clock at bedside, instead of a phone.
- Keep a consistent bedtime and rise time, even on weekends, to help the body stay adjusted to this routine.
- Exercising 20+ minutes per day helps the body sleep better (but be sure to exercise >2 hours before bedtime or it’ll have the opposite effect).
- Avoid any caffeinated beverages 4 hours before bedtime.
- Relax before bedtime – try a warm bath, reading, or another relaxing routine.
- Keep your bedroom cool; a lower temperature helps the body fall into REM sleep faster.
- See a doctor if you consistently have a problem falling asleep or staying asleep. Most sleep disorders can be treated effectively.

If you have any questions, please contact the school nurses:

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