



A Monthly Insight of Practical Tools to Help Your Family

# Wellness Today

For Parents & Families

## Is Covid-19 Disrupting Your Sleep?

Do you feel like you and your children are losing sleep? The culprit may be Covid-19. Many people of all ages have been losing sleep during the pandemic, so much so that there's a name for it: coronasomnia.<sup>1</sup>

How has Covid-19 caused less sleep? Here are a few reasons:

- **New stress due to Covid-19**, including
  - » finding childcare,
  - » having kids home all day,
  - » working or doing school from home,
  - » getting sick, and
  - » losing a job/being out of work
- **Decreased activity.** Without getting out and doing as much as usual, your body may find it hard to be tired at bedtime.
- **Changes in routines.** With different schedules usually comes different sleep schedules, which may result in poor/less sleep.

<sup>1</sup> See "Covid-19 is wreaking our sleep with coronasomnia - tips to fight back," UC Davis Health, posted Sept. 23, 2020.

## How to Get Better Sleep to Help Mental Health

A rough night of sleep once in a while is normal for most people. However, a consistent lack of good sleep can cause many problems, such as anxiety, stress, and depression. Getting enough good sleep is important to good mental health. Below are some tips to help your children (or you!) get better sleep.

### Sleep Tips

- **Keep a routine.** Even though life may not be back to normal, adapt your family's routine and stick to it. For example, limit sleeping in. If your children used to get up at a certain time for school, make sure they still set an alarm for that time each morning. The same applies to anyone working from home. Be sure the routine includes a break for lunch and/or recess.
- **Establish a bedtime routine.** Have your children go to bed at a certain time each night. Make sure their routine includes activities that helps them wind down, such as reading or taking a bath.

Some activities that may hurt their sleep include

- » doing vigorous exercise,
- » looking at screens, and
- » doing homework in bed.

- **Get your children moving!**

As much as your family is able to do safely, take walks, do yoga, visit a park—any kind of movement that will help your children reduce their stress and get out some energy.

- **Avoid naps.** Unless it's a little nap early in the day, try not to let your older children nap. A nap could make it so your children aren't tired when bedtime comes.

- **Reset.** If your children have a hard time getting to sleep or getting back to sleep after waking in the middle of the night, encourage them to reset by getting out of bed for a few minutes. Instruct them to avoid looking at screens, turning on bright lights, or doing anything energizing.

If your children are still having a hard time sleeping and it lasts for at least two weeks, consider talking to a primary care provider about possible treatment.