



Sleep Solutions

Your questions answered

How to get a baby to sleep through the night? What is the best position for sleep? What can I do about early-afternoon fatigue? A good part of our day (and, of course, night) is affected by sleep. *Binah* readers presented many questions on the topic. We posed your queries to a number of experts in the field, who shared their knowledge and know-how in order to help us remedy the sleep issues that affect us and our families.

Which position is best for a comfortable sleep? I often wake up feeling stiff all over.

Dr. Tova Goldfine:

The best position to sleep in is on your side, with your knees bent. If you find this position causes you any pain or discomfort, then place a pillow between your knees, or lie on your back with a pillow under your knees. These positions are healthiest because they relax the lower back.

The worst position to sleep in is on your stomach. This pulls your body into a “swayback” position, where your lower back curves inward and your abdomen collapses outward, straining your neck and back and causing muscle stiffness. However, I do tell patients that if they



Sleep tip:

Dr. Tova Goldfine Suggests: Always sleep with a cervical pillow

A cervical pillow is a pillow shaped to keep your head and neck in line with your torso, thus relaxing the neck muscles and relieving neck tension. Snoring can also be reduced through use of a cervical pillow, as the airway is straightened by the correct alignment of the head, neck and torso. The pillows can also improve sleep, reducing headaches and other ailments resulting from insufficient sleep.



Sleep tip:

Since 1994, the American Academy of Pediatrics has recommended that infants be placed on their back to sleep, on a firm mattress, with no soft bedding under the baby or in the crib, like bumpers. These recommendations have decreased the rate of SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome) by 50-70 percent. It is important to give your baby “tummy time” so that her development will be normal, but it is not advised for babies to sleep on their tummies or on their sides.

absolutely must sleep on their stomach because they cannot fall asleep any other way, they should do so, because a good night’s sleep is so essential to the body’s functioning (for example, healing takes place when you are asleep). In this position, try to raise one knee slightly outward to the side.

I am plagued by terrible leg cramps in my sleep at least once a week. How do I prevent them?

Dr. Tova Goldfine:

A leg cramp occurs when the body is straining for circulation. Movement is the best antidote — movement at the moment of the cramp, and movement in general in the form of exercise. At the time of the cramp, get up and try to walk on the leg, to restore circulation to it. Regular exercise will improve circulation to the limbs, thus minimizing the occurrence of the cramps.

Moist heat relaxes the muscles, so when you are experiencing a cramp, take a hot shower or bath or use a hot, wet compress. This will help ease the cramp.

My five-year-old son sleepwalks. I’m afraid he’ll hurt himself in his sleep. What should I do to childproof my house for him? When will he outgrow this, and is there anything I can do to make that happen sooner?

Dr. Efraim Rosenbaum:

Sleepwalking is a common, often inherited, trait amongst children aged four to 15 years old. About 15 percent of children sleepwalk. This usually occurs during deep sleep, about one to two hours after going to sleep, and the episode lasts between five and twenty minutes. Most children stop sleepwalking during adolescence.

Here are some safety tips to observe to minimize the dangers sleepwalking can present:

1. When the episodes occur, bring your child to the bathroom, since many children sleepwalk in their attempt to find the bathroom, and then back to his own room.
2. Sleepwalkers have occasionally been hit by cars or bitten by dogs, or gotten lost! So, make sure to put up gates if you have stairs between the

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bedroom and the front door, and put special locks on the doors that a child cannot reach.

3. Do not let children who sleep walk sleep in bunk beds, as they are likely to injure themselves climbing up or down while experiencing a sleep walking episode.

In addition, keeping the following two points in mind can help prevent and eliminate sleepwalking:

1. Don’t let your child get overtired. Poor sleep and exhaustion can lead to sleepwalking. If a child is not waking up by himself in the morning, this means that he is overtired. Move the bedtime earlier and earlier until he can wake up by himself in the morning. Many kids do not get up naturally on their own, but they should awaken easily with an alarm clock or a gentle awakening. If a parent must do more than that, then the child is overtired.
2. Most sleepwalking occurs at a

specific time of night (usually one-two hours after they go to sleep). Once you see a pattern in what time the episodes are occurring, wake the child up 30 minutes before the episode is likely to occur. This interrupts the sleep cycle, and after the child goes back to bed, they will most probably no longer sleep walk. Do this for seven days straight and the pattern of sleepwalking should disappear. If it recurs, repeat the same intervention.

My nine-month-old baby sleeps in an infant seat. Is this unsafe?

Dr. Efraim Rosenbaum:

There is no formal recommendation regarding sleeping in car seats. However, as there have been breathing concerns in premature and very young babies who were put to sleep in car seats, I would recommend avoiding letting your baby sleep in an infant car seat at night.

I have read many studies lately that getting good hours of sleep can help you lose weight. How does that work (aside from preventing you from eating during those hours)?

Elisheva Rosenberg:

When you sleep properly, your body is able to do what it is supposed to during that time: heal and repair. Thus, the term “beauty sleep” is truth-based. However, the question could really be: “Why are people who don’t sleep enough more likely to be overweight than those who get adequate sleep?” This is thought to be related to two appetite adjusting hormones called leptin and ghrelin.

Leptin is produced by our fat cells. Its function is to inform the brain when the body is satiated and no longer needs more food. It acts like a brake on our eating. During normal sleep, leptin

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levels rise, but when we sleep less than optimally, our leptin levels are lower. A message is then sent to the brain that the body requires food, the appetite is stimulated, and the body’s fat storing capacity is increased.

The second hormone, ghrelin, an appetite stimulator, decreases when we sleep adequately, so a lack of sleep will result in higher levels of the hormone. In short, when there is a lack of sleep, more fat is stored and a person is hungrier throughout the day than after a good night’s sleep.



Dr. Reuven Rosenberg:

If someone does not get enough sleep on a consistent basis, they will cause their adrenal glands to burn out, which produces an elevated cortisol level. Elevated cortisol increases insulin production. Insulin, in addition to regulating blood sugar, also works to store fat. This increased insulin production will result in the carbohydrates you consume being converted more quickly into fat, before your body has a chance to use it as an energy source.

My teenage yeshivah bachur comes home at around 11 p.m. after a hard day of school, and due to his tension has difficulty falling asleep. He ends up staying up in bed for many hours until he falls asleep, and has difficulty getting up for minyan in the morning and concentrating during the day. This results in a vicious cycle. Can you please advise any ideas or remedies we can try?

Elisheva Rosenberg:

So much of a person’s inability to sleep is related to their anxiety around not sleeping! I am sure you have been given advice about relaxation techniques, deep breathing, calm music and sleeping with a notebook nearby to jot down thoughts as they come. I’d like to focus on another area affecting sleep: food.

Firstly, your son should be careful not to drink coffee or colas from midday, as the caffeine will act as a stimulant. Drinking chamomile tea, on the other hand, may help.

A large, heavy meal before bed is not a good idea, although a carefully chosen snack could help. There is an



Sleep tip:

The general scientific consensus is that cooler is better than warmer.

amino acid called tryptophan which is a building block of the sleep inducing hormones serotonin and melatonin. Through the foods we eat, we can increase the amount of tryptophan, which will aid in inducing a state of sleepiness. Good snacks to be eaten around one hour before bed would be: a whole grain cereal and milk; an oatmeal raisin cookie or two and milk; peanut butter or hummus with a few crackers; two dates or a banana; or a handful of sunflower seeds. Eating a light snack and unwinding for an hour before bed might just help him fall asleep more quickly. A calcium supplement might help, too, as our boys are often deficient in this valuable mineral, and this has been linked to sleeplessness.

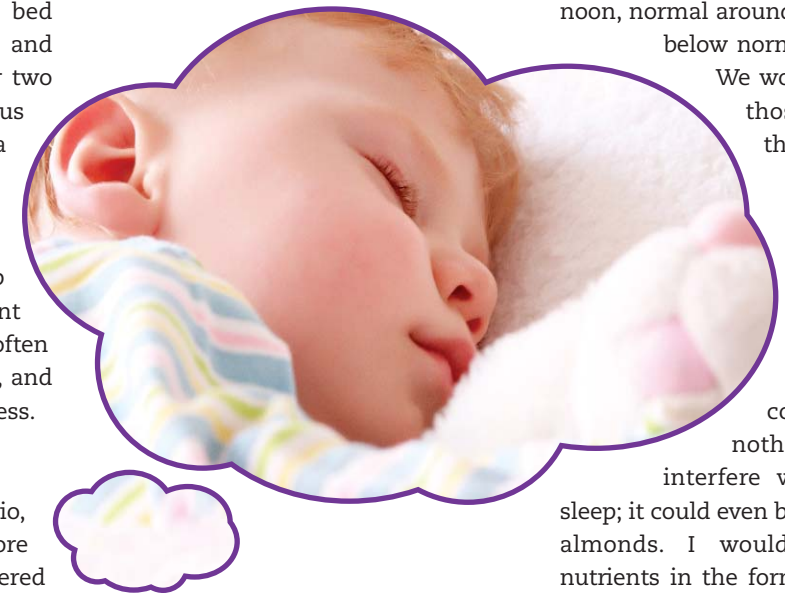
Dr. Reuven Rosenberg:

I understand the basic scenario, but your question raises some more questions which have to be answered in order to assess how to help your son. What time does he leave in the morning? Does he have an opportunity to nap during the day? What is his commute like? Is he stressed by learning in yeshivah or is he at peace with it? What time does he finally fall asleep, and when does he have to wake? Does he sleep well while he’s sleeping? What have you tried so far? How old is he? What is his diet like?

In general, teens usually need more sleep as they surge through their growth spurt. The average teen sleeps 10-12 hours a day! Their bodies need that time to grow. Some public schools have allowed their teen students to come in a bit later in the morning, and this has been met with great success. Perhaps you could talk to the yeshivah and see if they can allow some

compromise in his schedule if his schedule is affecting him to such a degree. It’s not so easy to unwind from a tough day at 11 p.m.

I would also suggest a complete diet and nutritional evaluation, and perhaps a



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urine and salivary endocrine panel. These tests are done via a home test kit, and you send the results to a laboratory to be evaluated. This test will tell us a lot of information about his stress hormones. Based on the results, diet, nutrients, and lifestyle prescriptions can be made in a targeted manner — to support him at the exact times of day his body needs the support.

Let’s say the test results showed that his cortisol level was below normal in the morning, above normal around noon, normal around dinner time, and below normal again at night.

We would want to bring those values within the normal range.

I would prescribe dietary changes, such as extra protein at the times he feels tired, and at night when he comes home — nothing heavy to interfere with digestion or sleep; it could even be just a handful of almonds. I would also prescribe nutrients in the form of concentrated supplements to be given at the specific times of day that his body needs to regulate his cortisol levels into the normal range. In general, I would prescribe amino acid powder, B-complex, ashwaganda (an herb), and PABA.

Lifestyle adjustments involve napping a bit during the day, identifying his stressors and learning relaxation and breathing techniques, practicing better posture, and some light exercises like walking and stretching. It should be noted that it may take three to six months to replenish the body’s depleted nutrient reserves, but function is restored when this happens.

You mentioned that he is very stressed at night. I would suggest Ethiopian Levonah oil, a.k.a.



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Frankincense, to alleviate the stress. This is a powerful anti-stress remedy which you inhale a few times and dab on the forehead and neck. It can be used any time a person feels stressed during the day, and is especially good to use at night. It can even be placed on the pillow case.

I often wake up in the middle of the night feeling like I've had a nightmare. I have no recollection of any nightmares, but I wake up in fright and have a tough time falling back asleep. What is going on and what can I do about it?

Linda Holtz:

A nightmare is a dream occurring during rapid eye movement (REM) sleep which arouses feelings of intense, inescapable fear, terror, distress, or extreme anxiety. Sometimes there is a very vivid recollection of the bad dream, and other times, we don't remember it at all. There are many different causes of nightmares. Often, people with a creative personality type are susceptible. In other cases, nightmares can be related to Post Traumatic Stress following an intensely frightening or highly emotional experience.

Behavioral techniques, including a desensitization method that involves rehearsing the nightmare and imagining of a different ending, are often used in treatment. If one is taking medications, it is advisable to ask the prescribing physician if the pills might



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be the culprit. If this doesn't work, psychotherapy may be called for to understand the root causes.

Is there any way of getting babies and toddlers who seem to be wired as night owls to get into regular sleep patterns?

Batya Sherizen:

Sleep patterns are a continuous, rolling cycle; sleep patterns during the day affect sleep patterns during the night, which in turn affect the sleep patterns of the following day and night, *ad infinitum*. A general rule of thumb regarding sleep is that sleep induces sleep, and over-tiredness simply creates more over-tiredness! Therefore, although it may be tempting to keep him up all day so that he will be exhausted at night, this is actually counterproductive. An overtired baby sleeps less. Therefore, to prevent your baby from being a "night owl," ensure that he is getting the necessary amount of sleep during the day. Encourage naps, both in length and in quality, to ensure he's well rested — which will cause him to generally fight sleep less.

That said, what is the necessary amount of sleep a baby needs, and how should it be divided up? A baby only needs a certain amount of sleep within a 24 hour period, and it needs to be divided carefully so that he is not getting too much during the day, which can cause him to fight sleep at night. I would first recommend evaluating your baby's current sleep habits, asking yourself when he sleeps and for how long. If you notice a consistent

pattern of him fighting bedtime or remaining awake for hours in the middle of the night, but at the same time he's sleeping for a long chunk during the day, it is probably time to reconfigure his sleep schedule. Some babies just may need to have their nap(s) slightly shortened or redistributed in order to enhance the quality of their night sleep.

It is important, though, to take your baby's natural internal clock into account to a certain extent. Some babies naturally want to go sleep earlier, while others prefer a later bedtime. Forcing your baby into an unrealistic routine can not only prove stressful and frustrating, it can be more detrimental than helpful in creating healthy sleep habits. When scheduling your baby's nap times, remember that there is a general range for babies this age, so follow his natural rhythms instead of choosing a time at which you know he's not tired.

Dr. Efraim Rosenbaum:

There is a lot you can do to help your young child to get to sleep and stay asleep. Sleep is a learned behavior. The sleep cycle is such that every child (and adult) awakes multiple times per night, but we learn how to put ourselves back to bed. How? We learn to go back to sleep based on how we went to sleep at the beginning of the night. If a child is rocked to sleep, or drinks a bottle to go to sleep, or falls asleep with a parent, then it is very difficult for the child to learn how to go



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to sleep at the beginning of the night by himself, and thus how to go back to sleep on his own in the middle of the night. Remember that a good amount of sleep (1-3 year olds should be sleeping 12-14 hours per day) is critical to growth,

development and good behavior. Encouraging good sleep habits should be started around 4-6 months of age.

Why do some people seem to need more sleep than others? What is it in our bodies that makes some of us more or less needy of this commodity

Dr. Harly Greenberg:

Each person's sleep needs are different, with most people requiring seven and a half hours of sleep a night. However, just as there are short and tall people, some people do well with less and others require more hours to feel rested. What determines our specific sleep need is not fully known. However, if you are feeling rested and not somnolent during the day, you are probably getting enough sleep.

I am a very light sleeper. Even with a sound machine and earplugs, I am easily roused by thumps and thuds. Why is this?

Dr. Harly Greenberg:

A recent study has helped to shed some light on why some people are lighter sleepers and more susceptible to disturbances than others. The brain has mechanisms that prevent or "gate" external stimuli from disturbing sleep. In easily disturbed sleepers, this mechanism may be less active than in those people who can sleep through anything. We are just beginning to discover the reasons behind differences in sleep physiology. At this point, the best steps you can take to help yourself sleep more deeply are behavioral measures, such as relaxing before bedtime, avoiding caffeine after noon and making sure the sleep environment



Sleep tip:

By Dr. Harly Greenberg

If seeking a sleep medicine consultation or evaluation at a sleep disorders center, look for the following notations as good indicators of quality care: Physician Board Certification in Sleep Medicine and Sleep Laboratory Accreditation by the American Academy of Sleep Medicine.

is free of outside disturbing factors.

Regular work days, I function fine. But put me at a lecture, and I doze off. Why do interesting and even dynamic speakers put me to sleep?

Dr. Harly Greenberg:

When vigilance and alertness are high, other mechanisms in the body kick in to maintain wakefulness. When a person's vigilance is decreased, he becomes sleepy. However, falling asleep when vigilance is reduced actually suggests underlying excessive sleepiness, either from insufficient sleep time or a sleep disorder. If increasing sleep time does not reduce these episodes, it may be helpful to contact a sleep medicine physician for an evaluation to investigate a possible underlying sleep disorder.

What is the bare minimum amount of sleep a mother of young children should be getting, practically speaking? Can one make up for several hours of night sleep with an afternoon nap?

Dr. Harly Greenberg:

The average amount of sleep an individual needs is seven and half hours, but this may vary from person to person. When one gets less sleep than their body needs, sleep debt begins to accrue, with adverse consequences on daytime function, including decreased performance in various tasks. An afternoon nap can help a busy mother get the total number of hours of sleep needed in a 24-hour period. However, it is recommended to limit these naps to no more than 30-45 minutes. This is

because longer daytime naps can result in deep or slow wave sleep, after which it is often difficult to awaken and return to full alertness.

After waking in the middle of the night, I can't seem to fall asleep. No matter how little sleep I got, the night is over once it was interrupted. How can I get myself to go back to sleep?



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Dr. Harly Greenberg:

It is normal to awaken between natural 90-minute sleep cycles. However, most people fall asleep rapidly after these awakenings and are unaware or do not recall having awoken. If middle of the night awakenings are prolonged and recurrent, their cause should be investigated. They may be due to a number of factors:

- Daytime stresses and anxiety that disturb sleep
- An underlying medical sleep disorder, such as sleep apnea, that causes awakenings and may be associated with serious medical consequences
 - Other medical disorders and unresolved pain
 - Unresolved depression

So, the first answer to this question is to try to determine the cause of these awakenings, so that the underlying problem can be treated. This often requires an evaluation by a sleep medicine physician at a sleep disorders center. If there is no identifiable cause, a behavioral measure that often works is to limit attempts to try to fall asleep again to no more than 20-30 minutes. After that, leave the bedroom and do something relaxing in another room. This avoids associating the bed and bedroom environment with a sense of frustration about not being able to sleep.

I have battled this problem for years: Despite the fact that I get an average of seven to nine hours of sleep a night and feel refreshed upon awakening, I get fatigued mid-afternoon — around one p.m. or so — and it's impossible for me to function without a nap. I am 29 years old, fit and in good health otherwise. Is there anything I can do, nutrition-wise, to give me a boost in the afternoons?

Dr. Reuven Rosenberg:

Consistent afternoon fatigue is a classic sign of adrenal burnout. The stress hormone cortisol has a normal wave pattern during a 24-hour period. Normal levels are highest from six to eight a.m. and lowest around midnight. Some people experience a lull in their energy around three or four p.m., but yours seems to be a bit earlier.

Given that you sleep seven to nine hours and are young and otherwise healthy, I would suggest a salivary cortisol test and a comprehensive nutritional and lifestyle evaluation and consult. The results of this test can help determine your cortisol curve as compared to a normal curve. A urine sample while you are fasting is taken in the morning, as well as four saliva samples during the day. These four samples provide a “moving snapshot” of your cortisol curve, and the results allow for a targeted prescription of diet, nutrients, and lifestyle changes to be administered at the exact time that your body needs to the support. If you follow this plan, most likely you will be up and running when 1:00 p.m. rolls around. The results may take several months, so some patience is needed.

By the way, there's nothing wrong with needing an occasional nap. There's no harder working person than a mom and housewife. Part of being healthy is giving yourself a break once in a while!

The Respondents:

Dr. Tova Goldfine, DCM has been practicing chiropractic for over 30 years. She specializes in aquatic fitness/hydrotherapy. Her goal is to educate her patients to age gracefully — without experiencing the debilitating effects of pain that can accompany the process — through focusing on good posture and balance. She runs a posture class at the OU Center in Israel, and can be contacted for any questions and concerns you may have, free



Sleep tips for children:

Good "sleep hygiene" will help your child go to sleep more easily.

By Dr. Efraim Rosenbaum

1. Make sure the room is quiet, dark and at a comfortable temperature. Ideally, the child should be in his own room, not near his parent's bed.
2. Try to be consistent about the time your child goes to sleep each evening. During the day, nap times should also be consistent.
4. Prior to going to sleep, develop some bedtime rituals such as giving a bath, brushing teeth, reading a book, singing a quiet song, saying shema, etc.
5. One hour before sleep, children should not engage in physical activities.
6. You should never give a child a bottle of milk, tea, juice or any other substance to help them fall asleep. This can cause terrible problems with cavities, as well as coughs and ear infections.
7. You can place toys or dolls in bed with the child to help them relax, but remember that until age one, you should not place soft toys in the crib due to the increased risk of SIDS.

of charge, at (+972)52-420-1201.

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Dr. Efraim Rosenbaum, MD is a pediatrician and medical director at Leumit Health Services in Ramat Beit Shemesh Alef. The clinic has developed a unique personalized approach to medicine which includes: a staff of all Anglo physicians, phone consultation 24/6 by the branch doctors, clinic hours on Motzoei Shabbos, and a personalized web site for the branch (www.rbsmedical.com). Dr. Rosenbaum trained at Boston Children's Hospital/Harvard Medical School and moved to Eretz Yisrael in 2000.

Elisheva Rosenberg, B. Sc. has a degree in Nutrition from the Manchester

Metropolitan University, and has more than 15 years experience in the weight loss industry. She runs the popular slimming groups Slim for Life, sees clients on a private basis, and works at the new Lose It! center in Givat Shaul, Jerusalem.

Dr. Reuven Rosenberg, DCM is a Board Certified Chiropractor and Clinical Nutritionist, having graduated in 1998 from Parker College of Chiropractic in Dallas, Texas. He is currently pursuing a post graduate diploma in chiropractic neurology and continues to take post graduate courses to stay current with the latest information. He is a member of the American Association of Integrative Medicine and The Chiropractic Board of Clinical Nutrition.

Batya (Brenda) Sherizen, aka “Batya the Baby Coach,” offers a professional baby sleep consulting service, advising parents on how to train their babies and toddlers to sleep better during the night and day. She has helped countless mothers and babies regain their sleep through her holistic and gentle sleep programs. Batya is a wife and mother living in Jerusalem, Israel, and loves nothing more than helping fellow mothers empower themselves by accessing the many benefits of a well-rested mommy and baby. For more information, please visit her website www.brendathebabycoach.com.