

Healthy Living

Not Sick, Just Tired - How Lack of Sleep Affects our Kids

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(excerpts from article)

Children are not getting enough sleep. A poll indicated:

- Infants (0-11 months) average 12.7 hours of sleep / experts recommend 14-15 hours
- Toddlers (1-3 years) average 11.7 hours / experts recommend 12-14 hours
- Pre-Schoolers (3-5 years) average 10.4 hours / experts recommend 11-13 hours
- School-agers (5-11 years) average 9.5 hours / experts recommend 10-11 hours
- Adolescents and teens average 7.9 hours / experts recommend 8.5-9.25 hours

Effects of lack of sleep

Ironically, sleep-deprived children don't always look sleepy during the day. They are often overactive and disruptive. They may exhibit ADHD symptoms such as inattention, impulsiveness and hyperactivity, although these behaviours may be caused by the children's need to create a stimulating environment to keep themselves awake. Their mood may be cranky and irritable, they may act frustrated or silly, and their cognitive abilities may be impaired, affecting decision making, creativity and school performance.

Sleep is essential to a child's health and growth. Children who get enough sleep function better and are less prone to behavioural, emotional and cognitive difficulties.

"Parents lay the groundwork for healthful living, and sleep is a significant factor in healthful living".