

Dr. Beachgem: Are your child's sleep habits normal?

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Featured topic and speaker

Sleep changes at every age and stage of childhood, and understanding what's normal can help parents know when to seek support.

Pediatric emergency medicine physician Dr. Beachgem (Meghan Martin, MD) discusses which sleep behaviors are common, what warning signs deserve attention, and how healthy sleep habits can support your child's overall well-being.

Learn about:

- Consistent bedtime routines
- Night terrors and what parents should do
- Bedwetting and when to talk to a pediatrician
- Snoring and signs of possible sleep apnea
- Teen sleep habits and screen time
- Sleep-related changes in mood, focus and daytime energy

If you notice a pattern that's affecting your child's daily life, it's always a good idea to discuss your concerns with your pediatrician.

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Speaker

- **Meghan Martin, MD/Dr. Beachgem**, pediatric emergency medicine physician

Transcript

Dr. Beachgem: I'm Dr. Beachgem. I'm a pediatric emergency medicine physician, mom of four, and AMA member for the last 20 years. Sleep is one of those things that changes with every age and stage.

For younger kids, sleep problems can be related to changing routines, and if they go to bed with their parent, they're expecting their parent to be there when they wake up. It's important to make sure that kids have consistent sleep routines, going to bed and waking up at the same times.

Night terrors can be frightening for parents to witness. Kids can be panicking and look very scared. They can also be doing things and moving around the room. They're not awake and generally, they won't even remember. Prioritize safety and getting them back to bed.

Bed wetting is common and can be normal for kids all the way up through school age. If they are dry for six months, and then they start bed wetting again, check in with their pediatrician.

One thing I want parents to pay attention to is loud, frequent snoring, especially if kids are having gasping or pauses in their breathing. Kids can have sleep apnea, too. When the teen years hit, everything shifts, including sometimes naturally, their bedtime, which can make an early morning start more challenging. When they wake up in the morning, open the windows and let that morning light in. It helps set their circadian rhythm and try to get the screens down at least an hour before bedtime.

Sleep problems don't always show themselves at nighttime. Sometimes they can also manifest in difficulty, focusing, change in mood or daytime sleepiness. Sleep can look different between four years old and nine years old and 16 years old. If you're noticing a pattern that you're concerned about or it's starting to impact their life, it's time to talk to their pediatrician.



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