



The #1 Overlooked Tip For Not Getting Sick This Fall

Parents that have [children that are routinely sick](#) in the fall and winter often turn to lifestyle changes to strengthen their child's immune system. Reducing sugar and processed foods, while supplementing vitamins and frequent hand washing are common approaches that parents often try first.



While these are great steps to take, and after practicing for 17 years and seeing 17 cold/flu seasons, I am convinced that the #1 overlooked tip for keeping your child healthy is getting adequate sleep. Lack of sleep can weaken a child's immune system and make them more susceptible to illness. Sleep is essential for overall health, and it plays a crucial role in supporting the immune system's function. Here's how sleep and the immune system are connected:

1. **Immune Function:** During deep sleep, the body produces and releases cytokines, which are proteins that help the immune system respond to infections and inflammation. Without adequate sleep, the production of these cytokines may be reduced, making it harder for the body to fight off infections.
2. **Inflammatory Response:** Chronic sleep deprivation can lead to a chronic state of low-level inflammation, which has been linked to various health problems, including increased susceptibility to illness.

- 3. Cellular Repair:** Sleep is also a time for the body to repair and regenerate cells. This process is vital for maintaining overall health and immune function.
- 4. Antibody Production:** Adequate sleep is necessary for the production of antibodies, which are essential in the body's defense against infections.
- 5. Stress Hormones:** Lack of sleep can lead to an increase in stress hormones, which can negatively affect the immune system. Chronic stress can weaken the immune response and make the body more vulnerable to illness.

Children who consistently do not get enough sleep may be at a higher risk of getting sick more often and taking longer to recover from illnesses. They can also be more susceptible to common childhood illnesses, such as colds, flu, and other infections.

To help children maintain a strong immune system and stay healthy, it's important to prioritize good sleep hygiene practices, which include:

- 1. Consistent Bedtime:** Establish a regular bedtime and wake-up time for your child.
- 2. Create a Relaxing Bedtime Routine:** Develop a calming bedtime routine to help your child wind down before sleep. Activities like reading a book or taking a warm bath can be part of this routine.
- 3. Limit Screen Time:** Reduce exposure to screens (TV, computers, tablets, smartphones) before bedtime, as the blue light from screens can disrupt sleep.
- 4. Ensure a Comfortable Sleep Environment:** Make sure your child's bedroom is quiet, dark, and at a comfortable temperature for sleep.
- 5. Encourage Physical Activity:** Regular physical activity during the day can promote better sleep, but avoid vigorous exercise close to bedtime.
- 6. Healthy Diet:** Provide a balanced and nutritious diet. Avoid heavy or spicy meals close to bedtime.

How much sleep does my child need?

The amount of sleep children need can vary depending on their age, with younger children generally requiring more sleep than older children. Here are the recommended daily sleep durations by age:

Newborns (0-3 months): Newborns typically need about 14 to 17 hours of sleep per day, but this can vary greatly. They usually sleep in short periods, waking up for feeding and diaper changes.

Infants (4-11 months): Infants need about 12 to 15 hours of sleep per day, including naps. By this age, they may start to establish a more predictable sleep pattern.

Toddlers (1-2 years): Toddlers typically require 11 to 14 hours of sleep per day. This includes both nighttime sleep and daytime naps. Naps may decrease as they get closer to 2 years old.

Preschoolers (3-5 years): Preschoolers need about 10 to 13 hours of sleep per day. Most children of this age still take a nap, but they may start to outgrow it.

School-Age Children (6-12 years): School-age children generally need 9 to 12 hours of sleep per night. As children get older, they may need slightly less sleep.

It's important to remember that individual sleep needs can vary. Some children may need more or less sleep than the average recommendations. It's essential to pay attention to your child's specific sleep cues and signs of tiredness. Signs that a child may not be getting enough sleep include irritability, difficulty concentrating, and falling asleep during the day.

Establishing a consistent bedtime routine, providing a comfortable sleep environment, and ensuring that your child gets enough physical activity during the day can all contribute to better sleep. If you have concerns about your child's sleep, or if they consistently have trouble sleeping or exhibit sleep disturbances, consult with a pediatrician or a sleep specialist for guidance and support.

If your child consistently has difficulty sleeping or you notice a significant impact on their health due to lack of sleep, consult with a pediatrician or a sleep specialist for guidance and support.

Did you know that parents often use pediatric chiropractic to help their children sleep better and fight off illnesses? Parents often choose chiropractic as an alternative to traditional medicine because chiropractic focuses on allowing the human body to function more efficiently.