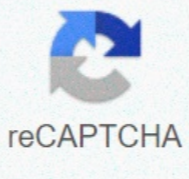




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## 6 month old not sleeping through the night

Created by Good Housekeeping for M&S Have you ever found yourself struggling to get to sleep at night, even though you're exhausted? There's nothing more frustrating than counting sheep when all you want is a full eight hours, but sometimes a deep slumber isn't so easy to slip into. From using your mobile phone before bed to getting too cosy under the covers, we asked the experts about the most common sleep-stealers and what you can do to finally drift off. 1. Using your phone late at night 'Too much blue light (the kind emitted by digital screens) disrupts melatonin production for up to four hours', explains Dave Asprey, founder of Bulletproof. So, stop looking at bright screens for up to two hours before bed and turn out or dim all bright lights at least 30 minutes before you hit the sack. Even small lights on electronic devices can disrupt your natural sleep cycle, so switch off at the socket, cover blinking lights with tape and try charging your phone in another room. 2. Getting frustrated that you can't sleep This might seem counterproductive, but if you aren't asleep 20 minutes after settling down, you should get up and 'do something practical that you need to do but don't enjoy' in a dimly lit room suggests Gareth Hughes, a psychotherapist at the University of Derby. Read that boring work report or match up your socks, but don't reward yourself with food or drink as 'this will motivate your brain to try to get you out of bed again'. 3. Sleeping on the wrong mattress Make your bed as comfortable as possible. Invest in Egyptian cotton bed linen, take time to choose the right pillow fillings and replace your unsupportive mattress with one that's been designed with the ultimate night's sleep in mind. Marks and Spencer's premium mattresses are handmade in an award-winning factory in Somerset, using time honoured traditional techniques to suit and support every customer. 4. Being stressed Feeling overwhelmed can be a common reason why you can't drift off. Lisa Artis, spokesperson for The Sleep Council, advises 'whether it's worries over work, finances, health or family, the first step is to write down any worries or to-do lists to clear the mind. Next, practice some deep breathing exercises, meditation or even gentle yoga to relax the body.' 5. Being too hot Bedroom temperature can be a significant factor in poor sleep, explains Matthew Green, Nuffield Health's Regional Clinical Lead Physiologist. Getting too cosy under the covers can actually keep you from slumber, so resist extra blankets and 'allow your body to adjust to your bedroom's temperature before going to sleep'. Keeping your body temperature between 15-17 degrees Celsius is ideal. To help beat the heat, you could invest in some M&S' Comfortably Cool pillows which have pure cotton covers and a clever eco polyester filling that draws moisture away from your body while you sleep, helping to regulate temperature. 6. Eating the wrong foods Rethink spicy or fatty foods if you want a decent night's sleep. 'Capsaicin, an active ingredient found in chilli peppers, can change your body temperature and affect sleep' according to Push Doctor's nutritionist Will Hawkins, 'while the hypocretin chemical in highly saturated fat foods can be detrimental to your sleeping patterns'. Instead, load up on salmon, tuna and cherry juice, which help create the natural sleeping aid hormone melatonin. 7. Drinking alcohol before bed Drinking alcohol close to bedtime makes you more likely to go straight into second-stage deep sleep, missing out on first-stage REM sleep. Although you'll fall asleep quickly, the sleep won't be as deep and your disrupted cycle could mean you wake up feeling exhausted. 'Even a couple of drinks can affect the quality of your sleep' explains Paul Wallace, Chief Medical Adviser to Drinkaware, so limit your intake if you're hoping for a restful night. 8. Clock-watching You can retrain your body to sleep well by going to bed and getting up at the same time every day - even at the weekend, asserts psychotherapist Gareth Hughes. Resist lie-ins and your body will adjust to a regular pattern after a couple of weeks. Lisa Artis also urges you to take clocks out of the bedroom: 'Constantly clock watching can have a detrimental impact on sleep and anxiety at how many hours you have left to sleep. Remove the clock from the bedroom or cover it.' 9. Having low blood sugar It's recommended that big meals are eaten more than three hours before bedtime, but a snack is actually encouraged. 'A great bedtime snack could be oatcakes and cheese, peanut butter on wholemeal toast or a small bowl of low sugar cereal' explains Lisa Artis. This way you won't wake up with low blood sugar, craving a snack. Head to M&S for more tips and advice on getting the perfect night's sleep This content is created and maintained by a third party, and imported onto this page to help users provide their email addresses. You may be able to find more information about this and similar content at piano.io Stressful schedules at work, school, or even both leave many of us feeling drained during the day. Although you would think that this fatigue throughout the day would lead you to a solid sleep at night, this isn't necessarily true. In fact, the very reason you're so tired throughout your daily routine could be due to your inability to get a good night's sleep. There are many factors that could be contributing to poor sleep quality depending on the individual at hand. If you've found that despite your attempts to get to bed early, you're still feeling tired each day, there are some simple hacks you can try to increase your sleep quality and feel more rested in the morning. Here are 5 things you can do to set yourself up for a better night's sleep. 1. Develop a bedtime ritual. It can be difficult to fully unwind from a day full of activities as you lie in your bed attempting to fall asleep. One way you can prep your body and your mind for sleep is to develop a bedtime ritual that signals to your body that it's time to go to bed. You could try things like taking a relaxing bath, drinking a cup of herbal tea, listening to relaxing music, meditating, or even diffusing a relaxing essential oil in your room. 2. Check your mattress. According to sleep experts in an article on The Huffington Post, things like excessive tossing and turning at night and increased stress during the day could mean it's time for a new mattress. The same article addresses the issue of mattresses being too soft or too firm and suggests that you try your mattress for at least 20 minutes prior to purchasing. Although it would be ideal to head to the store and try each mattress before selecting one, most of us don't quite have the time for that. For those of you who are strapped for time, the sleep experts at Eve Mattress recommend checking out memory foam mattress options as these will typically provide a comfortable mix of firm and soft for most buyers. 3. Avoid using your smartphone. Studies continue to show that using your smartphone before bedtime can hinder the quality of your sleep. If you tend to look at your smartphone in bed before attempting to fall asleep, try placing it across the room before you get into bed at night. If you're like most of us who use your phone as your alarm clock, placing your phone across the room could also be a way to help you get out of bed when your alarm goes off in the morning. 4. Exercise regularly. The benefits of exercise are basically endless. Although we typically tie our fitness efforts to weight loss, their benefits in contributing to overall wellness and a better night's sleep are almost more important. Try to exercise for at least 30 minutes each day. This will help your body run off some of its excess energy before you go to bed and will also contribute to your overall health and wellbeing which will help your body maintain regularity in important functions like sleep. 5. Stick to a schedule. Like it or not, humans are creatures of habit. This means that we work best with schedules. According to the Sleep Foundation, if you're having trouble sleeping, a lack of routine could be the issue. Try to set a time to get to bed each night. If you have decided to start a bed time routine as suggested in tip number one, try setting that to start on a specific schedule as well. So there you have it, 5 sleep hacks you can change your daily routine and bedroom setup to get a more restful sleep and feel relaxed and refreshed in the morning. Hopefully these tips will help you achieve not only a better sleep, but a better quality of life as well. If you have any additional tips or questions, I'd love to hear them. Feel free to post them in the comments below. Featured photo credit: pexels via static.pexels.com Most people have experienced at least a few nights in their life where they spend half of the time tossing and turning, frustrated by a seeming inability to fall asleep. One of the main problems with people not being able to fall asleep is that it is a mental game. Often if people are trying to sleep, and find that they cannot, they get frustrated. This frustration causes stress and increases the heart rate. Suddenly it becomes even harder to sleep, and the cycle continues. Fortunately there are plenty of nifty tricks that can calm the body and help create a relaxing night's sleep. Here are five important steps everyone should take to sleep just a little better. 1. Put your phone away. An increasing number of experts and researchers are coming out and saying that using one's phone close to bedtime can severely affect their ability to sleep. A lot of it comes down to the light that most phones emit when they are on. The blue light that phones emit has been proven to mess with many parts of the sleep cycle. Most recommendations say to stay away from your phone at least an hour before bed, preferably two hours. 2. Eat the right food. Many people do not realize how much the food that they eat in the latter half of the day affects their sleep ability. That same caffeine that gives you a needed jolt in the morning can also give you a much less desired jolt right before bed. Many people are not aware of all the foods that they eat that contain caffeine. In addition to caffeine, sugar can push your body into overdrive and energize it at the worst possible moments. Try to eliminate eating close to bed, but if that is too hard, then at least eliminate eating carbs and high-energy foods. 3. Relax your muscles. There are dozens of ways that people use to relax their muscles before they get into bed. Many people do not even realize that they are tense until they do these exercises. One that works for many people is based on a series of tensing and relaxing muscles. Start with your head muscles and make them as tight as you can. Next, move on to your chest, then arms, then legs, then feet. Once your entire body is tense, move back up, relaxing one thing at a time. Sometimes your body just needs to be forced to relax. If you are not unconsciously doing it, then consciously doing it is the next best thing. Here are a few more details on the muscle relaxing exercises. Mattresses are something many people do not think of when they try to figure out why they can't sleep. However there are many benefits to choosing the right mattress, and a good night's sleep is just one. If you find yourself often waking up stiff, or having sore muscles after a night's sleep, then the mattress is likely the culprit. All mattresses are not created equally and it is important to have one that fits your needs and body type. Here is a great mattress guide for finding one that works for you. 5. Eliminate stress. This is obviously easier said than done. The top reason many people cannot sleep is that they lay awake thinking about their problems. When they try to think about something else, their problem just seems to come right back. Fortunately there are many people that suffer from those same problems. There are mental exercises that are fairly easy to do that can yield incredible results when trying to sleep while stressed. Get into the habit of doing each one of these things each day. It may not fix your sleep issues at first, but over time habits will be developed and your body will learn to calm down and relax at night and your sleep will dramatically improve. It's science. Written by Catharine Paddock, Ph.D. on July 5, 2011A good night's sleep is something we all value. Scientists tell us, and we know from experience, that it refreshes us, helps us perform better, and contributes significantly to health and happiness, especially in children. And yet, there are millions of us suffering from ongoing shortage of sleep. According to the World Association of Sleep Medicine (WASM), sleep problems add up to a global epidemic that affects 45% of the world's population. "Insomnia, obstructive sleep apnea (OSA), restless legs syndrome (RLS), and sleep deprivation significantly impact physical, mental and emotional health, in addition to affecting work performance and personal relationships," they said, on the fourth annual World Sleep Day on Friday 18th March 2011, when health professionals from WASM and other organizations worldwide came together to deliver the message that sleep is a "human privilege that is often compromised by the habits of modern life". When we think about it, these figures are hardly surprising. Over the last two or three decades, the choice of round the clock activity available to the average Westerner today has become overwhelming. We can shop at 2 am, either at the supermarket or online, we can do our banking online 24/7, we can watch any number of films and TV channels or catch up on programs around the clock, we can download games, books and software and start enjoying them without having to wait until the morning. And then there's the communications technology through which we make ourselves accessible to others, via mobile or cell phones, internet chats and social networks like Facebook and Twitter. Over less than a generation our social "interfaces" have multiplied enormously, leading to an ever increasing volume of transactions with a growing number of people. And all this impacts not only our daytime activity, but damages our sleep environment, it's much harder to wind down and prepare for sleep when the bedroom is more like a NASA control center than a haven of peace and tranquility. This is especially evident in the younger generation. Research suggests that as a group, teenagers are experiencing sleep deprivation on an unprecedented scale. A contributing factor is the tide of technology flooding into the bedroom of the average teenager. Home insurance surveys show that most British children have a games console, a TV, a CD player and a DVD player in their bedroom, which one in five parents now ranks as containing more expensive items than the kitchen or living room. The bedroom is also the room teenagers spend most of their time in, and where they tend to hang out with their friends when they call round. Calling and texting on cell phones is an especially big stealer of sleep time among teenagers. Doctors in the US are becoming very concerned about the effect this has on their health and development. Dr R Michael Seyffert of the New Jersey Neuroscience Institute at JFK Medical Center in Edison, sees two or three teenagers a month with severe night-time cell phone problems, which he defines as spending two or more hours of texting and phoning each night. He says he has seen more of this in the last five years than ever before, and predicts it is only going to get worse. Few would disagree with him: as we drift on this tide of technology toward a total 24/7, globally connected society, with an increasing number of gadgets to inform, stimulate and entertain us, the traditional boundaries between activity and sleep are being eroded, and we are likely to see a rise in the number of people experiencing health problems from lack of sleep. Expert opinion varies as to the exact number of hours of sleep we need for optimum health, and some suggest it also depends on individual needs and age. The American Academy of Sleep Medicine says most adults need about seven to eight hours of sleep a night to feel alert and well rested. The National Sleep Foundation also recommends between 7 and 9 hours. One recent study suggests it could be as little as 6 hours, but more than 9 hours could be just as bad as not enough. Dr Charles Bae, a neurologist at the Cleveland Clinic Sleep Disorders Center in Ohio, and colleagues examined data on 10,654 patients who had completed questionnaires about quality of life, depression and average hours sleep per night. They were surprised to find that sleeping more than 9 hours a night was linked to a similar reduction in quality of life and increase in symptoms of depression as sleeping less than 6, they said at the SLEEP 2011 conference in Minneapolis. Children and teenagers need more sleep than adults. Teenagers need at least 9 hours, says the National Sleep Foundation in the US. Many people do not realize that sleep is far from being a "passive" process where the brain just switches off at night. It is an "active" process involving the whole body and the brain. Neurotransmitters, chemicals that brain cells use to signal to each other, control whether we are asleep or awake by action on different parts of the brain. In the brainstem, which joins the brain to the spinal cord, brain cells produce serotonin and norepinephrine that keep some parts of the brain active while we are awake, while other brain cells at the base of the brain control signals that lead to sleepiness and falling asleep by "switching off" the ones that keep us awake. When we sleep we go through several stages of sleep from light to deep sleep, and then the cycle starts over. One of the stages is REM (rapid eye movement), which stimulates the brain regions used in learning. Infants spend much more time in REM sleep than adults. REM is also linked to increased production of proteins and learning of mental skills. Research also suggests that a chemical called adenosine, which causes drowsiness, gradually accumulates in the bloodstream while we are awake and gradually breaks down during sleep. Insufficient sleep is linked to diabetes, cardiovascular disease, obesity and depression, and other chronic diseases. Lack of sleep is also responsible for accidents on roads and involving machinery, causing substantial injury and disability every year, according to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), who warn that "drowsy driving can be as dangerous - and preventable - as driving while intoxicated". Against this backdrop of the encroaching 24/7 technological society eroding our sleep boundaries, we also have the usual stresses and strains of everyday life and work, the responsibilities of running a home, and taking care of family. Add to this financial worries, threat and reality of job loss, relationship problems, and coping with illness, it is no wonder that getting a good night's sleep is even more elusive. One thing we can do is to shift our perception of sleep as a luxury and treat it as necessary for good health, as important as keeping to a healthy weight, eating a healthy diet and taking plenty of exercise: we need to regard sleep as a "vital sign" of good health, say the CDC. Here are some tips that might help: Tip 1: Keep a Sleep Journal A good place to start if you think you are not getting enough hours or quality of sleep at night, is to keep a sleep journal noting things like hours of sleep, ease or difficulty of falling asleep, when you exercise, when you drink alcohol and caffeine, how refreshed you feel, and then look for patterns between quality and length of sleep and what you do during the day and when you go to bed. This is often the first thing that a clinician will ask you to do. For instance, after two weeks, you might find a pattern between exercise and sleep quality, or between caffeinated drink consumption late at night and the number of times you get up to go to the bathroom or difficulty falling asleep. Tip 2: Stick to a Routine Try to go to bed and get up at around the same time every day. Even at the weekend. Keeping to a routine reinforces the body's sleep-wake cycle and helps you fall asleep more easily at night, say experts at the Mayo Clinic in the US. If you need an alarm clock to wake you up on time, you should consider going to bed earlier. Tip 3: Control Napping and Drowsiness A cat-nap during the day can be a great refresher, especially for older people. But be careful about sleeping during the day: a refreshing nap may be useful occasionally for paying off your sleep debt, and is better than sleeping late because this disrupts your sleep-wake rhythm, but if you have insomnia and nap regularly, consider eliminating the daytime nap. If you must have a nap, restrict it to 20 minutes and do it early afternoon and not later. Drowsiness often happens after big meals. Avoid the temptation to let this drift into sleep. Get off the couch and get active: do the dishes, go for a walk, do some chores, or call a friend. The killer is the TV dinner: eat, fall asleep on the couch, wake up hours later, and then you can't get to sleep when you go to bed properly. We've all been there. Tip 4: Avoid Lots of Drink and Food Before Bedtime Keep in mind the saying: "breakfast like a king, lunch like a prince, and dine like a pauper". Eating or drinking large amounts before bedtime can result in indigestion, and night-time toilet visits to empty a bursting bladder. Try to eat a light meal at least two hours before bedtime, and if fatty or spicy foods give you heartburn, try to avoid them in your evening meal. Be careful with coffee and tea, and other caffeinated drinks. Caffeine is a well-known stimulant that lingers in the body and if you drink it in the evening, it will not help you sleep. Try replacing that after-dinner coffee with chamomile tea, a traditional sleep inducing remedy that soothes. Tip 5: Avoid Alcohol in the Evening Although it is often thought of as a sedative, alcohol actually disrupts sleep. Even in small doses, it can impair quality of sleep, especially in the second half of the night. Alcohol disrupts chemical messengers in the brain and the balance between REM sleep and non-REM sleep. The right balance in sleep patterns and brain waves, what scientists call "sleep architecture", helps us feel refreshed in the morning, as Jessica Alexander, of the UK's Sleep Council told the Times newspaper in an interview: "Alcohol can mean that sleep is no longer refreshing, because the brain can't perform the normal restorative job it does during the night." Tip 6: Make Your Bedroom Sleep-Friendly Keep your bedroom dark, cool, quiet and comfortable. This is the ideal environment for sleeping. Consider carefully each item in your bedroom, especially gadgets. If you have to keep them there, then be strict about switching them off, or even put them away in a cupboard. Switch off the cell phone or turn it to silent mode. Many people watch TV in bed and claim it helps them get to sleep. Try doing without it for two weeks, and see what effect it has on your quality of sleep. It could be that the light from the screen disturbs the natural sleep-wake rhythm, and stimulating content like violence, advertisements, sudden loudness, raises your adrenaline and has the opposite effect from that which eases your body into sleep. If you can't lessen disturbing noises such as dogs barking, sirens, birds singing in the morning, then consider masking the sound with a fan or white noise generator, or wearing earplugs. An eye mask that blocks out the light can also help if you wake up easily when a light goes on, or the early sun comes through the curtains. Tip 7: Exercise in the Morning Exercise is a great way to help us relax and consolidate sleep. However, when we exercise can affect our quality of sleep. Researchers say that morning exercise is best, and that exercising too close to bedtime delays the time the body starts to unwind because it increases chemicals that are associated with wakefulness. In a study published earlier this year, Dr Scott Collier, assistant professor at Appalachian State University, found that aerobic exercise at 7 am was linked to higher improvements in sleep quality than exercising at 1 pm and 7 pm. To help improve children's sleep health, here are some tips from the World Association of Sleep Medicine and others: Make sure children get enough sleep by setting an age-appropriate bedtime and waketime: and stick to this at weekends too. Establish a consistent bedtime routine. Make sure children wear comfortable night-time clothes, and infants have strong absorbing diapers or nappies. Limit electronic gadgets in the bedroom and their use before bedtime. Ensure children get plenty of outdoor exercise during the day. Avoid bright light at bedtime and during the night, and increase light brightness in the morning. Encourage your children to fall asleep independently. Stick to a consistent mealtime schedule, and don't give them caffeinated drinks. This article covers some of the causes of sleep problems and gives some suggestions for overcoming them. If you find these don't help, or suspect your problems may be more serious than those covered here, then you should seek the advice of a medical professional who can give you expert help. Sources: "Sleep Well, Grow Healthy: World Sleep Day Promotes Healthy Sleep for Infants, Children, and All Ages on March 18, 2011", PR Newswire 15 March 2011; Dec 2009 survey for esure.com, and Dec 2007 survey for Lloyds TSB Insurance (gadgets in children's bedrooms); "Night-texting taking its toll on N.J. teens", nj.com Sep 2009; National Academy of Sleep Medicine (US); Mayo Clinic; MNT Archives; Helpguide.org; "Alcohol How It Affects Your Sleep" Feb 2010 Times Online; National Sleep Foundation (US); CDC; NINDS (NIH). Written by: Catharine Paddock, PhD

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