

## Sleep

School-aged children need 10 -11 hours sleep a night. Getting a good night's sleep will help your child to be more settled, happy and ready for school, and will strengthen his/her immune system. Here are some sleep tips:

- Have a bedtime routine – this will help your child wind down from the day.
- Keep the bedroom dark, cool and quiet - this will help your child drift off easily.
- If anxieties or worries are keeping your child from relaxing, acknowledge the feelings and deal with it straight away or plan to sort the issue out in the morning after a good night's sleep.

Remember, medication is not the answer to children's sleep problems.

Go to <http://raisingchildren.net.au> for more information.

## Mindfulness

We can often spend time with full and tangled thoughts constantly whirling around our minds and then we miss the joy of the present moment. When you're mindful, you're able to pay attention to the present moment, and not get swept up thinking about the past or worrying about the future.

Mindfulness has been shown to help manage stress, build resilience and compassion, improve focus at work or in the classroom and can help with creativity and collaboration.

Adults and children can benefit from mindfulness, especially those who have a busy or restless mind or are experiencing stress, anxiety or other mental health issues.

To learn more about mindfulness for children and young people go to <https://www.kidsmatter.edu.au> or <http://au.reachout.com> . If you would like to try an online mindfulness meditation program for yourself or your child check out [Smiling Mind](#).

## Personal hygiene

Ensuring children have good hygiene is one way to prevent illness. Here are some tips for helping children maintain good hygiene:

- Wash hands before and after touching food, and after going to the toilet, touching animals or being around someone who is coughing or has a cold.
- Wash body daily and keep hair clean.
- To prevent body odors, change clothes regularly and use deodorant if necessary.
- Change underwear and socks daily, and leave shoes outside to dry.
- To prevent bad breath, brush and floss teeth and visit the dentist regularly.
- If ill, try not to cough or sneeze on others, clean things that you touch, and throw away things with germs on them (like tissues).

Should you require further information about hygiene go to <http://raisingchildren.net.au> .

## Hand washing

Washing hands is the easiest way to protect ourselves from contagious diseases, like colds, influenza and gastroenteritis. Hands should be washed before and after eating or preparing food, after going to the toilet and after nose blowing.

When teaching your child to wash their hands:

- Use clean water and soap, making sure they cover their hands and wrists.
- Use a brush to clean under nails if they're dirty too
- Dry their hands with something clean (like a paper towel)

Alcohol based sanitisers are useful when soap and water is not available. Use half a teaspoon of the product and encourage your child to rub their hands together until they're dry. If you can see dirt on their hands, it is better to use soap and water.

For more information go to [www.healthywa.wa.gov.au](http://www.healthywa.wa.gov.au)

## Online Safety - how to keep your child safe online

Protecting your children from harm is just as important online as it is in the real world. As a parent or carer, you can play an important role in helping children have safe and positive experiences online.

The internet offers an exciting world of experiences for children and the whole family. It can be entertaining, educational and rewarding. However, using the internet also involves risks and challenges.

By taking an active role in talking with your kids about the risks and answering their questions or concerns about something that they find on the Internet you can help them stay safer online.

For more information on keeping your children safe online try the following website:

- [iParent](#) is an online resource developed by the Office of the Children's E-Safety Commission where parents can learn about the digital environment and keep updated on their children's technology use. Guidance for using safety settings on your family's web-connected devices, tips for choosing movies and games and strategies for keeping young people safe online is available. [www.esafety.gov.au](http://www.esafety.gov.au)
- Stay Smart Online is the Australian Government's online safety and security website, designed to help everyone understand the risks and simple steps we can take to protect our personal and financial information online. [www.staysmartonline.gov.au/](http://www.staysmartonline.gov.au/)
- Raising Children Network <http://raisingchildren.net.au>.

## Anxiety – how to help your child

All children experience anxious feelings as part of their normal childhood development. Some anxious feelings include fear, agitation, nervousness, worry and apprehension. Some children find it harder to get these feelings under control and may experience anxiety more intensely and more often than others.

Anxiety is when the level of fear or worry about something is out of proportion to the level of risk or danger. Thinking about the situation makes them more worried and tense.

If your child is experiencing anxiety try to:

- Acknowledge your child's fear – don't dismiss or ignore it.
- Gently encourage them to do things they're anxious about, but don't push them to face situations they're not yet ready to face.
- Wait until they actually get anxious before you step in to help
- Praise him for doing something they're anxious about, rather than criticising them for being afraid.
- Avoid labelling your child as 'shy' or 'anxious'.

Your child might need some extra support if their anxiety stops them from doing the things they want to do or interferes with their friendships, school work or family life.

If you are worried about your child, contact your local Community Health Nurse, School Psychologist or General Practitioner. For more information about anxiety in children go to [www.raisingchildren.net.au](http://www.raisingchildren.net.au) or [www.healthyfamilies.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.healthyfamilies.beyondblue.org.au)