

# the SNORE Z E letter

Dedicated to helping you get a better night's sleep

## Children, Obesity and Sleep

Thirteen percent of children ages 6 to 11 and fourteen percent of adolescents ages 12 to 19 are overweight. These ever-increasing waist-lines put children at risk for heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and high blood pressure. But there is another problem, often overlooked, accompanying the grim statistics from the U.S. Surgeon General's office. Those extra pounds also put children at risk for sleep apnea, a serious, debilitating, and potentially life-threatening sleep disorder, according to the National Sleep Foundation (NSF) and **Ohio Sleep Disorders Centers**.

Sleep apnea is characterized by brief but numerous involuntary breathing pauses during sleep. These breathing pauses cause awakenings throughout the night, making it impossible for sleep apnea sufferers to enjoy a night of deep, restorative sleep. People with sleep apnea often feel sleepy during the day and their concentration and daytime performance suffer. While being overweight or obese are risk factors for sleep apnea, being thin does not preclude a diagnosis.

Sleep apnea, generally considered a problem among middle-aged men, can be a problem for youngsters, too. "With the increasing rates of obesity in children, it's likely there will also be an increase in sleep apnea," said Jodi A. Mindell, PhD a

pediatric sleep expert and member of NSF's Board of Directors.

The repercussions of sleep apnea and poor sleep for children are vast. When children do not get the sleep they need, they are at risk for health, performance, and safety problems. Difficulties in school are often the result. However, sleep deprivation in children is often overlooked or attributed to attention-deficit or behavior disorders.

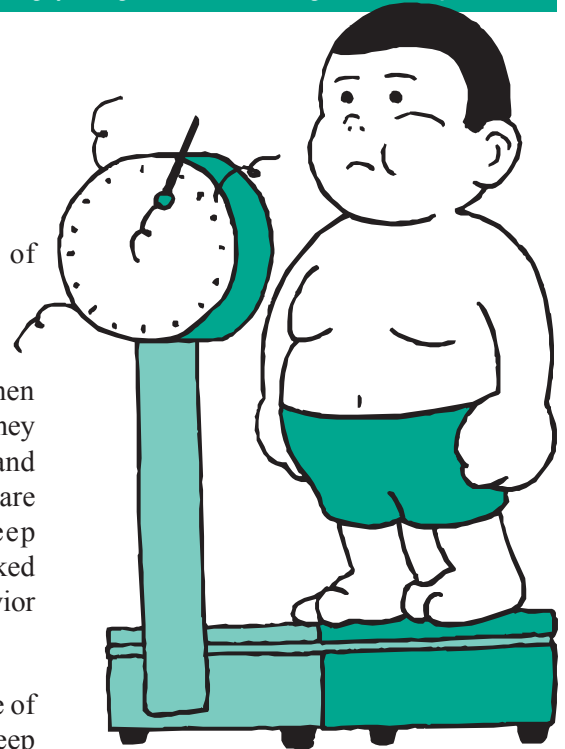
Dr. Mindell advises parents to be aware of nighttime and daytime symptoms of sleep apnea. At night, symptoms include:

- Snoring
- Breathing pauses during sleep
- Restless sleep
- Mouth breathing
- Difficulty getting up in the morning, even after getting the proper amount of sleep

Daytime symptoms include:

- Hyperactivity
- Inattention
- Behavior problems
- Sleepiness

Dr. Mindell notes that if parents suspect their child has sleep apnea, his/her



symptoms should be discussed with a pediatrician or board-certified sleep physician. To help your child get a good night's sleep, NSF and **Ohio Sleep Disorders Centers** offer the following tips:

### Establish a regular bedtime and wake up time.

Parents and children should plan a daily schedule that includes the basic daily sleep requirements for particular age groups. This schedule should be maintained on the weekends, though students can be permitted to sleep in one or two hours on weekend mornings if necessary.

While individual sleep needs can vary, the amount of sleep suggested by sleep experts for particular age groups is:

18 mo. to 3 yrs.	12-14 hrs/night
3-5 years	11-13 hrs/night
5-12 years	9-11 hrs/night
Teens	9.25 hrs/night



**NEUROLOGY & NEUROSCIENCE ASSOCIATES, INC.**

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# Children, Obesity and Sleep

continued from front

## Create a bedtime routine.

A bedtime routine is important, regardless of a child's age. It should include at least 15-30 minutes of calm, soothing activities. Discourage television, exercise, computer and telephone use, and avoid caffeine (found in beverages, chocolate and other products).

## Achieve a balanced schedule.

Identify and prioritize activities that allow for downtime and sufficient sleep time. Help students avoid an overloaded schedule that can lead to stress and difficulty coping, which contribute to poor health and sleep problems.

To help children maintain a healthy body weight, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) offer these tips:

## Be supportive.

Children know if they are overweight and don't need to be reminded or singled out.

## Plan family activities that involve exercise.

Instead of watching TV, go hiking or biking, wash the car or walk around the mall. Offer choices and let your children decide.

## Eat meals together.

Dine as a family and eat at the table, not in front of the television. Eat slowly and enjoy the food.

## Don't use food as a reward or punishment.

Children should not be placed on restrictive diets unless done so by a doctor (for medical reasons). Children need food for growth, development and energy.

The National Sleep Foundation is an independent nonprofit organization dedicated to improving public health and safety by achieving greater understanding of sleep and sleep disorders, and by supporting education, sleep-related research, and advocacy. NSF is based in Washington, DC. For more information, visit [www.sleepfoundation.org](http://www.sleepfoundation.org).

*Ohio Sleep Disorders Centers is a member of the National Sleep Foundation, working with NSF as a Community Sleep Awareness Partner®.*

*Call the Sleep Experts at 330.379.5013 or 866.455.6693*



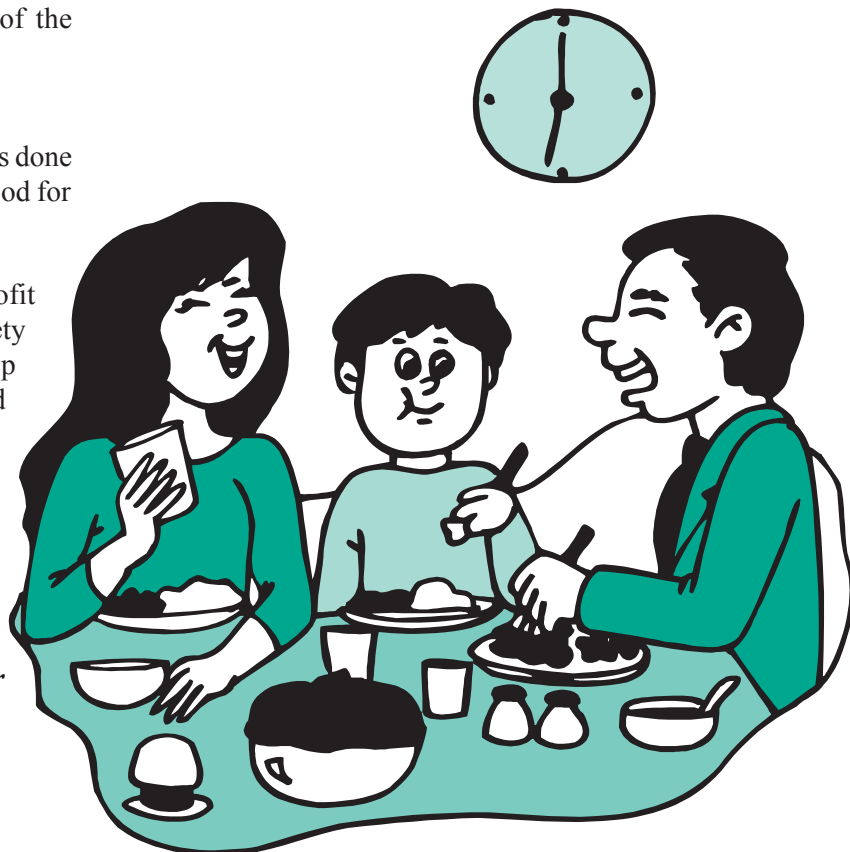
The pediatric sleep specialist at Ohio Sleep Disorders Centers is our medical director, José Rafecas, M.D. Sleep studies for children 3 years and older are available at our nationally accredited sleep centers in Fairlawn and Green. One parent must stay with the child for the overnight sleep evaluation.

Consider a sleep consultation with Dr. Rafecas if your child:

- Snores. Snoring is not normal.
- Has decreased daytime performance because he/she is always tired.
- Is overweight

In children, sleep disordered breathing is often remedied by removal of tonsils and adenoids.

Call the sleep experts at Ohio Sleep Disorders Centers to discuss your child's sleep habits. 330.379.5013 or 866.455.6693.



# Trust the Sleep Experts at Ohio Sleep.

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