

Suzy's World

Sleep - Why do I need sleep?

Fact

- I need to sleep so my body can rest. This includes the muscles we work like our legs and the muscles that work automatically like our heart. Our mind and brain also needs a rest.
- While you sleep and rest your body turns the food that you ate in the evening into food for growing and repairing your body. That food is also used by your body for energy to fight germs and some energy is stored.
- Your brain keeps pretty busy organising your sleep cycle and giving you dreams.



Do you know

- Nobody really knows what dreams are. Scientists believe dreams happen when your brain is sorting through all the information it has stored.
- When you were a baby you needed more sleep than you do now. When you are an adult you will probably need only 7 or 8 hours of sleep each night.
- If you don't get enough sleep you have less energy so you get tired and grumpy more easily.
- An insomniac (in-som-nee-ack) is someone who can't go to sleep night after night.

Experiments you can do

Family Sleep Survey

Conduct a survey of your family. On a piece of paper write the names of your family members (including your Grandparents) and write their age beside their names. Keep a record of the time each person goes to bed and what time they wake up for over a week. Then work out how many hours of sleep they get each night. Can you work out the average? Do the older members of your family need less sleep than you? How about the oldest member? (Sometimes they need more sleep!) You might be able to interview them and record their comments about their needs for sleep. Collect suggestions from your family of how to get a good nights sleep.

If you want to do a real scientific study you will need to collect more data about each age group. Collect the data of 10 people your age, 10 people in your parent's age group and 10 people from your grandparent's age group for over a week. You could then use your data to answer other questions like "Do females need more sleep than males?"

Other Investigations

Dream Maker

See if you can remember the dreams you have. You probably won't remember all of them, but perhaps the one that you have just before you wake up. What is it about? Who's in it? Is it in colour or black and white? Does it have anything to do with what you were doing just before you went to bed, or saw on TV, or did during the day?



Jokes

Did you hear about the person who dreamt they ate a huge fluffy marshmallow? When they woke up their pillow was missing.