

Your questions about: *Sleep and your Heart*



Why is sleep good for you?

Sleep is essential for good health. It helps refill your “energy tank”. Not only does it help you feel more energetic, it also helps your concentration at school and during sports. If you are tired, you may feel that it takes you longer to do things, such as doing your homework. You may also feel like you are in a bad mood when you are tired.

I feel very tired, why is that?

School aged children (age 6-12) need between 8 to 12 hours of sleep every night. Feeling tired is your body’s way of telling you may not be getting enough rest at night.

What can I do to make sure I get enough sleep at night?

Bedtime routines are an excellent way to develop good sleeping habits. It helps your body understand that you are about to go to sleep. Here are some tips:

- Create your own routine (this means you must do it every night before going to bed):
 - first of all, change into your pyjamas and brush your teeth
 - you can listen to soft music
 - you can read a book
 - you can do some stretching exercises
 - have a light snack or a glass of warm milk (brush teeth after)
 - go to bed even if you are not tired

More tips for you:

- always go to bed at the same time, even on the week-end
- avoid heavy meals before bedtime
- only use your bed for sleeping (don’t do homework on your bed)
- count your hours: if you must get up for school at six in the morning, then you should be in bed by nine. That’s nine hours of sleep.

What is your heart made out of? Is it really red?

Your heart is made up of a special muscle, called cardiac muscle. It contracts (gets tighter) like the muscles in your arms and legs. Yet, these contractions are created by an electrical current. Yes, your heart is actually reddish in colour!

How long does it take the blood to go around your body?

Your heart is the organ that pumps all your blood (5 liters of blood) around your body. At rest, your heart can pump all your blood in ONE minute. During exercise, this can go up to seven times per minute in an athlete!

How do you get a heart attack?

Heart attacks happen when a blood vessel (the tubes that carry your blood) gets blocked by either a ball of fat or blood cells. This causes incredible pain because your heart is not getting enough oxygen. Eating healthy, exercising regularly and not smoking are excellent ways to keep your heart healthy. Note that heart attacks in children are extremely rare.