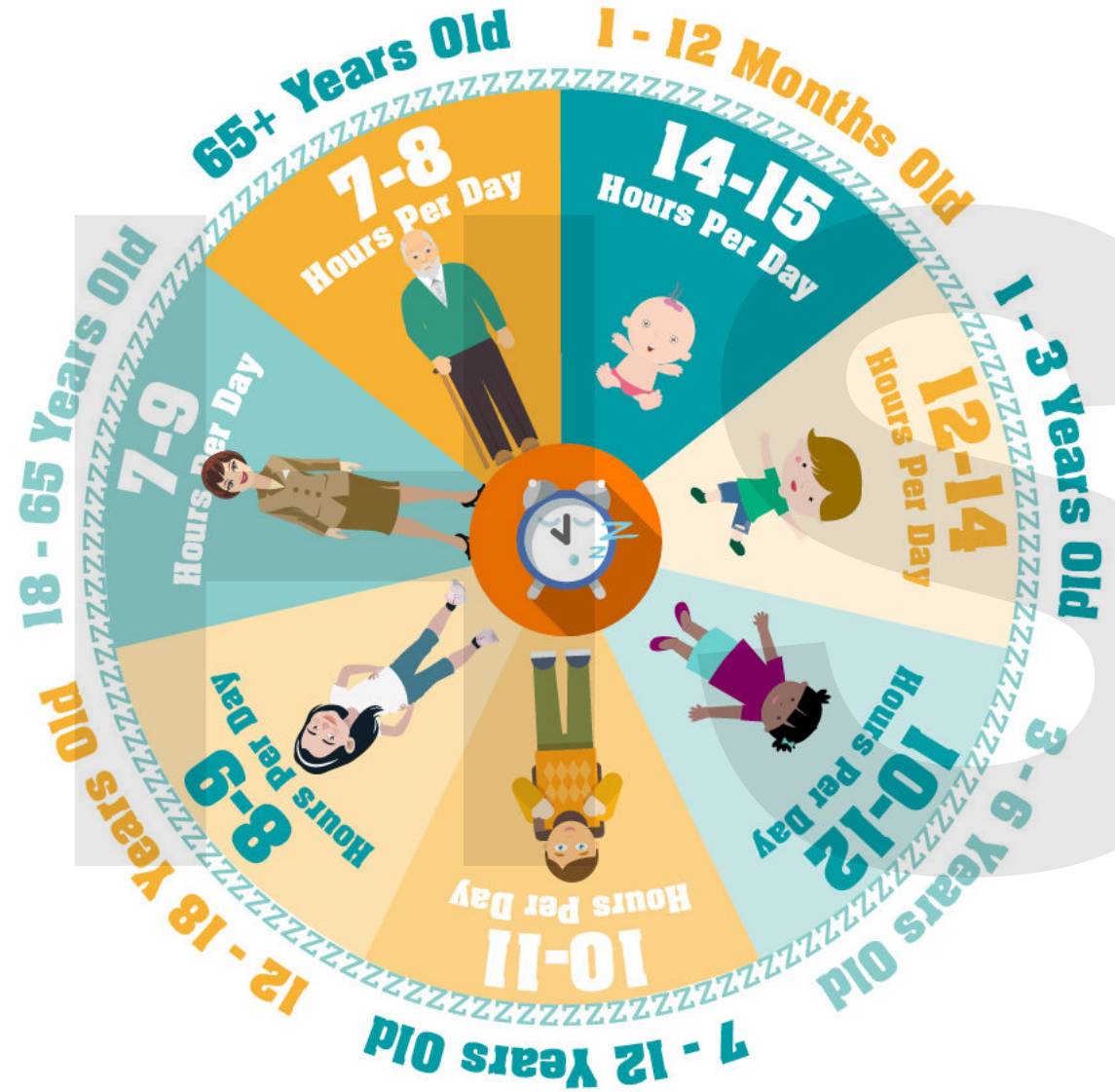How to get what you need

Sleep

Sleep

- The average person spends around a third of their life asleep. In this time, our bodies are able to replenish energy stores and make repairs, while our minds organise and store the memories of the day before. The amount of sleep you need depends on your age, gender, health and other elements, and sleep cycles change as we grow older.

Sleep

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- Sleep Matters!

- **Sleep may be the last thing on your mind but here are some reasons why you should give it a little more thought:**

- The right amount of sleep will make it easier to maintain a healthy weight.

- Sleep deprivation can make it hard to concentrate and remember things – the last thing you need when you are in an exam situation!

- You are more likely to feel down when you are tired.

- Growth hormones are released when you are asleep.

Sleep

- Getting a good night's sleep can help you to cope better with the stress of life such as exams, parents and relationships.

- Lack of sleep can cause havoc with your skin and result in spots and pimples.

- Learning to drive is great but driving when sleep deprived is seriously dangerous.

- Bedtime routines aren't just for young kids! Everyone benefits from having a routine in the run up to bedtime .

- Try to do the same things at around the same time each night so that your body has time to prepare for sleep and relax.

Body Clock

- Why is sleep so difficult?

- **Do you find nodding off hard work? If you struggle to stop your brain going round at 100 miles an hour, here are a few possible reasons why:**

- Your body clock alters in your teen years which means that waking and sleeping times get later and later. You will probably find that you prefer to stay up late at night but struggle to get up in the morning. This is normal. Getting into a good routine can help with this.

- According to some research using "screens" before you go to bed can double the length of time it takes you to fall asleep as it suppresses the production of your sleep hormone, melatonin. Ditch your phone, tablet or Xbox in the hour leading up to you bedtime.

- The school day may start early for you which means that you have to get up before your body has had enough sleep. However being overtired makes it even more difficult to fall asleep. Unfortunately we can't change the time that school starts but what you can do is have a regular sleep and wake up time to help your body to cope better with the early mornings.

Diet

- Your diet may impact on your night time sleep. Fuelling yourself with energy drinks can mean it is harder to nod off. Likewise reaching for sugary snacks to give you that much needed energy boost can increase the chance of a restless night. And not getting right the amount of sleep can make you gain weight.

- You may be feeling stressed with exams looming. It is really important to share your worries with somebody or even write down any concerns. Try to find ways of relaxing in the evening.

- You may be uncomfortable and this makes falling asleep more difficult. Is your mattress and pillows providing you with enough support? Is your bedding comfortable? If not, it's important to let your parents know.

Technology and Bedroom

- If you're having trouble sleeping, one of the first things to consider is your bedroom. In order to get a restful night's sleep you need the right setting, which means a clean, peaceful and welcoming room. Many of us are unknowingly sleeping in a bedroom that's simply not fit for purpose, and that environment could be the key cause of a restless night.

- Fortunately, it's relatively easy to transform your bedroom into a space that encourages a peaceful night's sleep. Here are our top tips:

Technology and Bedroom

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- When it's time for bed, make your room completely dark. This can be achieved with a blackout blind or curtains, an additional window dressing, or even an eye mask.

- Maintain an ambient temperature in your room. If you're too hot or too cold, you won't sleep soundly. We recommend a cool temperature of around 16-18° C (60-65° F).

- A tidy room makes for a tidy mind… and a restful night's sleep! De-clutter your bedroom and create a space that's clean, neat and simple. Even just relocating the laundry basket, stacking up some books or blitzing your bedside table can make a real difference.

Technology and Bedroom

- Say no to technology in the bedroom! That means avoiding televisions and computers. Having access to these will urge you to switch on when you can't drift off, which in turn can lead to even more disturbed sleep.

- LED displays are particularly troublesome when it comes to getting a good night's sleep. When it's time to snooze, switch off your mobile phone, tablet, and any alarm clocks with a digital display.

- Avoid treating your bedroom like an extension of the rest of your house. That means you shouldn't use it for work, watching TV, eating, and even talking on the phone. Save the bedroom for sleep.

Technology and Bedroom

- Add special touches to the space, which will help you feel more connected and peaceful. Family photographs, plants, flowers and ornaments will help to create a room that's pleasant and relaxing.

- Avoid using certain colours when decorating. Remember that bright reds, yellows and oranges are jarring, while browns and whites are boring and drab. Instead, choose soft, muted tones that will make you feel calm.

- Certain smells can affect your mood, helping you to feel more calm and relaxed. Lavender and germanium are naturally calming, so invest in some essential oils to help you drift off. Remember, these should not be used in pregnancy or children's rooms.

- Take the time to really consider your bedroom. Realise that you have a duty of care to yourself, and should therefore create a sleep area that's as effective as possible. Boost your wellbeing by making your bedroom more sleep-friendly – you're worth it!

Lifestyle

- The 21st century lifestyle is typically fast paced, chaotic and jam-packed with technology. From the moment we wake up we switch on our brains with smart phones, and as our day progresses, we're presented with even more triggers. The continuous content that's fed from TV and radio, real time social feeds and our constant checking of emails all make for a non-stop stimulation... It's no wonder that many of us can't switch off or fall asleep, then struggle to wake up in the morning and spend a lot of time complaining "I can't sleep!"

Anxiety and Stress

- Scientists have found a direct correlation between anxiety and rhythm of sleep. When a person is anxious, their heart rate increases, which causes the brain to 'race', too. An alert mind produces beta waves, making you far too stimulated to sleep. To make matters worse, an active brain triggers other worries, so it's even harder to achieve sleep.

- Once this pattern sets in, bedtime can become a thing of anxiety. So how can you combat the stress of sleeping?

Eating habits
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- They say you are what you eat, and when it comes to getting a restful night's sleep, the food and drink you consume has a drastic effect. The best foods for sleep include milk, cherries, chicken and rice, while fatty meat, curry and alcohol are some of the worst. Some people choose not to eat after 6pm, as late meals can make it difficult to sleep.

Exercise

• Sports and exercise can help you to enjoy a better quality of sleep. Working out effectively can tire your body out gently, promoting a better night's sleep. Releasing pent up tension through exercise is also highly beneficial, helping to banish stress before bedtime. Exercising also lowers your body's temperature, which induces better sleep.