



# Healthy Routines for a Healthy Child



## Limit screen time and no screens 1 hour before bed

This will help the body prepare for a restful night. If your child does not get enough sleep, their body can't rest and repair for the next day. **Limit your child's recreational screen time to no more than 2 hours**, including watching TV, playing video games or looking at a computer or phone.

- > Adults can be a positive role model. The whole family can turn off screens together and do an activity as a family
  - > If the young people in your home still struggle with turning off screens 1 hour before bed, start slowly with turning off all screens 1 hour before sleep on 1 night of the week and slowly increasing
  - > Remove screens from bedrooms so adults in the home can monitor usage and additional lights do not disturb sleep quality
  - > Swap screens for books and other games or activities for children under 2 years. This will support their language development
  - > Encourage video chatting to help learn social skills.
- [www.schn.health.nsw.gov.au/fact-sheets/screen-time-and-children](http://www.schn.health.nsw.gov.au/fact-sheets/screen-time-and-children)



## Encourage dental hygiene in children from a young age

- > Make brushing twice a day part of their daily routine
- > Help your children brush their teeth until they can brush by themselves, using small circular motions. Once they learn to brush without help, continue to check their teeth regularly to make sure they are clean
- > You can be a positive role model by brushing your teeth with your child
- > Children need help to brush teeth up to at least 8 years of age
- > As your child's teeth start to fit closely together (usually between two and six years old), they should also be taught to floss their teeth daily.



Encourage children to reduce screen time and brush their teeth twice a day by playing a song about brushing teeth while doing it together, by playing outside together or by using a sticker chart or bean/pebble jar. Once the jar is full, they can turn it in for a new toy or fun activity. Avoid using food as a reward.

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## Do 1 hour of physical activity every day

**Children (5-17 years) should be active for at least 1 hour every day.** They should do activities/exercises that increase their heart beat. This can be achieved by combining exercise at school, home and by riding a bike or walking to school. The 60 minutes can be accumulated over the course of their day. Don't worry that your child is doing too much exercise as they sit for many hours at school.



## Pack your own snacks/meals

When going out with friends or as a family, pack your own snacks/meals. Not only will it save you money but it will also help avoid unhealthy snacking and be a positive step towards making a healthier choice for your family.



## Get enough uninterrupted sleep

**Children (5-13 years) should have 9 to 11 hours of uninterrupted sleep per night.** A good way to ensure uninterrupted and solid sleep is to discourage children from taking a nap after school and go to bed early instead.

**Did you know?** Sleep is essential for children's physical and mental development. While they sleep, their body repairs so it can grow. Sleep also helps lock in memories.



## Avoid exposure to harmful substances

Children should not be exposed to harmful substances such as tobacco (including cigarettes, vape, pipes and shisha) drugs or alcohol. Many of these products are not regulated by the government and contain harmful chemicals, leading to serious health conditions such as throat cancer and heart disease.