



Sleep: a free guide for parents

Listen together, then ask: What is one job your brain does while you sleep? Let your child explain before offering a hint. Sleep supports memory, growth and repair; the brain does not switch off.

Words made simple

Sleep cycle: a repeating journey through different stages of sleep. REM means rapid eye movement; vivid dreams often happen in REM, but dreams can happen in other stages too. Non-REM includes lighter and deeper stages. A nutrient is a useful substance in food that helps the body do its jobs.

Health helpers and why they matter

Magnesium supports normal muscle and nerve function. Beans, oatmeal and leafy greens offer food sources. Vitamin B6 helps the body make chemical messengers used by the brain; chickpeas, chicken and bananas are examples. Their normal roles do not mean that eating a particular food will make someone fall asleep immediately.

Greenblatt's Finally Focused connects sleep, nutrition, movement and family routines. Choose an enjoyable wind-down routine: a story, comfortable pajamas and a quiet room can provide familiar signals that bedtime is approaching. His sleep chapter suggests starting relaxing activities about 30 minutes before bed and stopping screens one to two hours before bedtime. Adapt the routine to your family's circumstances and sensory needs.

One family experiment

Choose one comfortable step and repeat it in the same place in the evening. Notice how it feels without making falling asleep a competition. Persistent snoring, breathing pauses or substantial daytime sleepiness deserve a conversation with your child's clinician.



References and amounts

Children and adults: different sleep needs

Ages 3–5: generally 10–13 hours of sleep in 24 hours, including naps. Ages 6–12: generally 9–12 hours. Adults: generally 7–9 hours at night. These are ranges for planning, not a guarantee that every person needs the same amount.

Functional medicine foundation first: James Greenblatt and Bill Gottlieb, *Finally Focused*, chapter 10; uploaded PDF p.167 gives the child age ranges while citing the American Academy of Sleep Medicine. Mark Hyman, *The UltraMind Solution*, *How to Get a Good Night's Sleep*, gives the adult 7–9-hour range. Greenblatt's routine guidance appears on uploaded PDF p.172. We do not turn the book's condition-specific treatment protocols into general supplement instructions.

Food and supplement context

Magnesium and B6 help the body function; a nutrient's food requirement, a supplement amount and a treatment dose are different things. This guide does not prescribe a sleep supplement or dose. A parent's or child's needs depend on their circumstances and current medicines.

Supporting references

NHLBI: [sleep amounts and naps](#). NIH ODS: [magnesium functions and foods](#). NIH ODS: [vitamin B6 functions and foods](#). These corroborate the book-led teaching rather than replace it.

Recap answers

1. The brain does not completely switch off. 2. Sleep helps with remembering learning. 3. REM means rapid eye movement. 4. Magnesium helps muscles and nerves work; it is not an instant sleep switch.



Optional tools and further reading

Use what your family already has. Purchasing a tool is optional.

Time Timer MOD Home Edition: a visual timer you can use to show the time chosen for a wind-down activity. The manufacturer lists a silent timer with an optional end alert. Choose the alert setting that suits your child; an ordinary clock can also support a routine. This is a time-display tool, with no promise of faster sleep.

Finally Focused, by James Greenblatt and Bill Gottlieb: a parent reference used in this guide's functional medicine foundation. Our cited passages come from the uploaded earlier edition; newer editions may differ. Read treatment and supplement discussions in their clinical context rather than turning them into a plan for every child.

For the distinction between magnesium from food and supplemental magnesium, the **NIH ODS magnesium information** is a supporting parent reference. The guide's food and routine tips remain the starting point. A child's supplement choice and amount belong in a discussion with their clinician.