

Horizons Newsletter

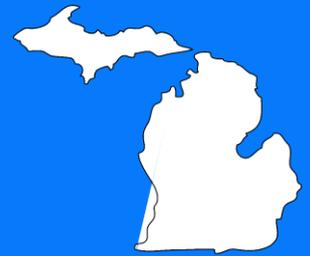
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Can Melatonin Help Children with Autism Sleep Better?

By: Joshua Margetts

With the sales of melatonin increasing, parents are starting to use melatonin as a supplement to help with their children's sleeping disorders.

There are many children that continue to struggle to get to sleep at night and have sleeping disorders. Scientific evidence and studies now show that melatonin can help children with insomnia or that struggle to get to sleep.

Melatonin which is a natural hormone produced in the body to regulate and promote sleep, has become popular amongst parents because of its safe qualities and few side effects.

It is thought that people may not produce as much melatonin as others maybe because of environmental factors and therefore a supplement can help them get to sleep.

However, it should not be used if the sleep disorder is temporary or if it hasn't been a long-term problem that is consistently affecting them. Also, it shouldn't be used if your child is under 2 years old.



Sleeping disorders are just as common in children as in adults. Melatonin has shown to significantly help children with chronic difficulty falling asleep within 30 minutes of an age-appropriate bedtime resulting in less difficulty with falling asleep, earlier time of sleep onset, and more sleep at night.

It should be noted that melatonin should never substitute for healthy sleep practices: a regular, age-appropriate and consistent bedtime and bedtime routine, no caffeine and no electronics/screens before bedtime.

Can Melatonin help children with autism sleep better?

It has been shown that more than half of all children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) struggle with sleep disorders with insomnia being the most common. This is thought to be a problem because children with autism can have different melatonin pathways and/or lower than normal melatonin levels. Not only does it affect children but also many adults with autism also struggle with sleep disorders.

These sleep disorders can be a problem for children with autism as it can increase the autism symptoms such as repetitive behaviors and social difficulties.

Recently the sleep hormone Melatonin has become popular among families and people that are affected by ASD given the low cost of the supplement and the benefits.

Melatonin is naturally produced by the body to regulate the sleep-wake cycle. Its levels begin to rise shortly after nightfall, promoting sleep.

A study with 24 children was taken where they all were diagnosed with ASD with the parents reporting that they did not fall asleep within 30 minutes of bed time three or more nights a week. A positive response to the melatonin was falling asleep within 30 minutes five or more nights a week.

Seven of the children managed to achieve this response with just a 1mg nightly dose of melatonin taken 30 minutes before bedtime. Another fourteen achieved it with a 3mg dose and another three children with a 6mg dose with none of the dose levels producing any worrisome side effects.

Many other studies have shown that melatonin improved sleep in 63 percent of children with autism that received it. The children managed to fall asleep faster and stay asleep longer.

What dose should you take?

When sleep problems start to develop, behavioral strategies are normally prescribed first such as a bedtime routine or staying away from television and avoiding certain foods before bed.

When these strategies don't work then it can be a good choice to introduce melatonin to help develop a good sleep routine.

It is recommended to start with a 1mg dose and to increase it to 3mg if there is no improvement.

Please always consult a doctor before taking any medical supplements.

Reprinted from: www.yuminutrition.us/blogs/yumi-nutrition-blog

Patriotic Breakfast Parfaits



Festive red, white and blue layers of fruit, yogurt and granola make these breakfast parfaits a healthy way to start a patriotic holiday (or any day)!

Author: Maegan - The Baker Mama, www.thebakermama.com

Recipe type: Breakfast

Serves: 1 parfait

Ingredients:

- ½ cup granola, divided
- ⅓ cup blueberry Greek yogurt
- ⅓ cup fresh blueberries
- ⅓ cup plain Greek yogurt
- half of a medium banana, thinly sliced (about 8 slices)
- ⅓ cup strawberry Greek yogurt
- ⅓ cup chopped fresh strawberries

Instructions:

1. In a 9-ounce clear plastic cup, layer the parfait ingredients in the following order: 2 tablespoons granola, blueberry yogurt, blueberries, 2 tablespoons granola, plain yogurt, banana slices, 2 tablespoons granola, strawberry yogurt, strawberries, 2 tablespoons granola.
2. Serve immediately or cover with plastic wrap and place in the refrigerator until ready to serve.



SCHOOL VACATION RULES

You may have time on the computer / iPad / TV after you've finished this list.

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Do Something Nice!

If you're not sure, ask!

Are you all finished?

SUNSCREEN IDEAS FOR TACTILE DEFENSIVE KIDS

SET EXPECTATIONS

This may seem like a no brainer, but don't tell your child right before you're putting on sunscreen that this has to happen. Talk about sunscreen when you *don't* have to put it on. At dinner, mention the beautiful weather tomorrow and how you're looking forward to getting outside. But then also mention how important it is to keep our skin healthy and that we'll need to put on sunscreen. Ask your child why we need sun protection and get him in the conversation. Talk about the fact that it's not smart to go outside and play without sun protection and that everyone in the family is expected to participate in getting lotion on. Even if he's three, he's listening and absorbing a lot more than you might think.

SKIP THE SUNSCREEN LOTION

Yes, you read that right. Do yourself a favor and skip the sunscreen lotion. Instead, use spray sunscreen. Kids who are tactile defensive have a really hard time having someone rub them down. Add in the feeling of lotion and it can feel like torture! With spray sunscreen, you just generously spray down your child (not the face) and make sure they get covered. Don't forget to reapply every two hours — especially after swimming. I've found that there's no argument anymore when we have to reapply because my son knows how easy it will be.

USE A SUNSCREEN STICK

When I learned about the Neutrogena Sunscreen Ultra Sheer Stick, all I could think was, "Where have you been all my life?" It's basically sunscreen but in a solid stick. You just rub the stick on your child's face and you're done! Once we discovered this product, the fighting about getting sunscreen on my son's face went away. Now my son will even apply his own sunscreen to his face. It has been a true life saver!

CHANGE YOUR CHILD'S SHIRT

Parents love sun protection shirts for many reasons (often called rash guard shirts as well). But the best part is you don't have to worry about reapplying sunscreen on the shoulders, arms or chest. Many of these sunscreen shirts offer SPF 50+. Just be sure to check the label. Not all sun protection shirts are created equal. Depending on your tactile defensive child, this may be a hit or a miss... but it's worth a try! One of my son's loves his sunscreen shirts; the other one... well, let's just say if he could be naked all of the time, he would be.

TRY A HAT

Tactile defensive kids want to wear as little as possible... but this is where negotiation comes into play. Your child may be more willing to wear a sun protection hat if he knows that he won't have to get lathered in lotion every hour. Again, this may be a hit or miss. But every time I assume my son won't be interested in a compromise of this sort, I'm always surprised.

HAVE YOUR CHILD HELP

Have your child be part of the process in choosing sun protection. As parents, it's our job to make decisions for our kids. But the more you can include them in the process, the better buy-in you'll get and less fighting about sun protection.

Have your child pick out their sun protection shirt. Bring your child along to purchase the sunscreen. Talk about why we wear sunscreen and how important it is to keep our skin healthy. And when it comes time to actually put on the sunscreen or sun protection items, why not have your child help you get ready, too? Have them put some lotion on your legs. Or let them choose which of your two sun protection shirts you'll wear that day. Empowering your child to make some of the choices will go a long way!

How to Help Employees with Asperger's

By: Chris Daniels

Asperger syndrome is classified as an autism spectrum disorder affecting social interaction, attention and planning. Employees with Asperger syndrome are typically very intelligent but may not respond to situations in the same way as other employees. Adapting their work environment and job duties can help you get the most out of a valuable employee and comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Choose job responsibilities that do not include large amounts of customer or staff interactions, stress or frequent multitasking.

Allow employees with Asperger syndrome to work independently and communicate electronically, when possible. Asperger syndrome often impairs the interpretation of social cues and can make the employee very uncomfortable in social interactions. People with Asperger syndrome may resort to repetitive movements, behaviors or fidgeting for comfort that may be disruptive to others.

Train your other employees on the proper way to interact with those who have Asperger syndrome. Special actions are rarely required, but it is important for other employees to know that apparent social slights are a manifestation of the syndrome and not personal feelings.

Allow for methods of stress management during work hours including personal phone calls or Internet chat for support, control of work space, positive reinforcement and a flexible work schedule.

Break large tasks down into individual steps laid out in a check list to accommodate for problems with time management, memory and focus. Provide a means for employees with Asperger syndrome to stay occupied during down time.

Provide a quiet and clean workspace. Asperger syndrome can cause over-sensitivity to sensory stimuli. Constant noise, potent smells, bright lights and high traffic can be too intense for someone with Asperger syndrome.

Limit the number of supervisors that the employee must report to. Asperger syndrome can impair the understanding of social structure.

Provide specific examples of acceptable conduct and other desired behaviors rather than relying on the employee to interpret broad guidelines.

Reprinted from: www.woman.thenest.com

Sensory Friendly Kits Available at ASM

Donation Recommended

Please call ASM's office at 517-882-2800 for more information



Pool Noodle Game – Memory Game for Kids

Materials Needed:

Pool noodles Serrated Knife Permanent Marker Large bowl, bin or water table water

1. Begin by cutting your pool noodle into 1-2-inch segments. Use the serrated knife in a sawing motion until the segments are cut. Try to keep the pool noodle as smooth as possible so that you can draw your dots on each layer.
2. Use the marker to make a series of dots on the inside of the noodle as shown above. Color in and press firmly so the color sets well. For each set of dots you make you'll need to make another pool segment with the identical matching pattern on it to create a matching set.
3. Continue creating matching sets until your pool noodle is gone or until you have 7-10 matching sets. Allow ink to dry well.
4. Fill a large bin or kiddie pool with water. (or the bathtub!)
5. Toss the pool noodle segments into the water making sure the pattern is facing down into the water. Let the kids pick up one segment at a time trying to match it with the other pool noodle segment that matches. If they don't match them, they must return them to the water!
(This also makes a great inexpensive carnival game!)



Reprinted from: www.survivingateacherssalary.com

With Much Gratitude & Appreciation

A lifelong member of ASM, Beatrice T. Caldwell recently passed away. Her estate made a monumental and extremely generous donation to ASM. Mrs. Caldwell was ASM's Board Secretary in the 1970's. She and her husband, Professor William V. Caldwell had a son, who was diagnosed in 1965 with ASD. The family resisted the pressure to institutionalize their son. They sought to find alternative solutions and advocated for better education and treatment for their son and others with autism. The ASM Board & Staff are so grateful to Beatrice!



Special Thanks To:

In Honor of Susan & Christopher Freehan:

Robert & Joan Freehan

In Memory of W. Jean Davis:

Sharon Bayer Family
 Jerry & Diane Baum
 Linda Garrison-Kehres
 Sally Geisenhaver
 Eric & Jean Goodwin
 Jeffrey Martin
 Duane Smuts
 Jeaneen Smuts
 Terri & Gordon Schroder
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New Members:

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 Alex Keesling

