My Sleep Diary

A simple diary to track sleep patterns and share with professionals

For autistic and neurodivergent children, young people and adults — with tips for better sleep

Name:	Start date:

Record it	Spot patterns	Get support

About this diary

Why and how to keep a sleep diary

Sleep difficulties are very common for autistic and neurodivergent people. A **sleep diary** helps you see what is really happening at night, spot patterns and share clear information with your GP, health visitor, paediatrician, school nurse or a sleep practitioner.

How to use it

- Keep it for at least **two weeks** — including weekends
- Fill it in each evening and each morning while it is fresh
- Write down what really happened — there are no right or wrong answers
- Bring it to appointments

What to record

- Bedtime, time asleep and time awake
- Night wakings and what helped
- Daytime naps
- Food, drinks, screens, exercise, medicine, illness and mood

A calm, predictable bedtime routine

A visual bedtime routine like this can help. Use pictures or photos that suit the person and keep the steps the same each night.

Example entry

Day	Into bed	Asleep	Night wakings	Woke up	Notes
Monday	7:30pm	9:15pm	1:20am for 40 mins — came into our bed. 4:50am, back to sleep with music.	6:10am	Busy day at school. Tablet until 7pm. Chicken pasta for tea.

Week 1

Daily sleep record

Day and date	Routine started	Into bed	Fell asleep	Night wakings (time, how long, what helped)	Woke for the day	Naps	Notes (food, screens, activity, medicine, mood)
Monday							
Tuesday							
Wednesday							
Thursday							
Friday							
Saturday							
Sunday							

Week 2

Daily sleep record

Day and date	Routine started	Into bed	Fell asleep	Night wakings (time, how long, what helped)	Woke for the day	Naps	Notes (food, screens, activity, medicine, mood)
Monday							
Tuesday							
Wednesday							
Thursday							
Friday							
Saturday							
Sunday							

Sleep chart

Shade the boxes when asleep

Use the key to mark each night. Shading the hours asleep makes patterns easy to see at a glance.

Day	6pm	7	8	9	10	11	12am	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10am
Wk 1 Mon																	
Wk 1 Tue																	
Wk 1 Wed																	
Wk 1 Thu																	
Wk 1 Fri																	
Wk 1 Sat																	
Wk 1 Sun																	
Wk 2 Mon																	
Wk 2 Tue																	
Wk 2 Wed																	
Wk 2 Thu																	
Wk 2 Fri																	
Wk 2 Sat																	
Wk 2 Sun																	

Key	Meaning
↓	Went to bed
■■■	Shade the boxes while asleep
W	Woke up in the night (write how long)
↑	Got up for the day
N	Daytime nap

Looking for patterns

Fill in at the end of each week

	Week 1	Week 2
Usual time into bed		
Usual time to fall asleep		
How many night wakings?		
Usual time to wake up		
About how many hours of sleep?		
What seemed to help?		
What seemed to make sleep harder?		

Questions to ask at my appointment

Ideas that may help sleep

Try one change at a time and record it in the diary

Routine

- Same bedtime and wake-up time every day, including weekends
- A short, predictable wind-down routine with a visual timetable
- A social story about bedtime

The bedroom

- Dark, quiet and a comfortable temperature
- Think about sensory needs: labels, bedding textures, light from gaps, noises
- Use the bed for sleeping, not for play or screens

Screens

- Switch off screens about an hour before bed
- Keep phones and tablets out of the bedroom overnight

During the day

- Daylight and physical activity, especially in the morning
- Avoid long or late naps for older children
- No caffeine (cola, energy drinks, tea, coffee, chocolate) in the afternoon or evening

Worries

- Talk about tomorrow's plan earlier in the evening
- A worry box or notebook to “put worries away”
- Calming activities: music, a story, deep pressure if liked

When to get help

- Speak to your GP if there is loud snoring, pauses in breathing, or sleep problems affecting daily life
- Sleep medicine (such as melatonin) must only be used if prescribed by a doctor

Where to find more help

Organisation	How they can help	Website and contact
National Autistic Society	Sleep advice for parents of autistic children.	autism.org.uk – Sleep
The Sleep Charity	Sleep advice and support for children and families.	thesleepcharity.org.uk
Cerebra	Sleep advice and a sleep service for families of children with brain conditions, including autism.	cerebra.org.uk
Contact	Information for families with disabled children, including sleep.	contact.org.uk
Sycamore Trust UK	Family Services support. 020 8517 9317.	Home - Sycamore Trust

Thank you for using this diary

Sycamore Trust UK is a registered charity supporting autistic children, young people, adults and their families across Barking & Dagenham, Havering and Redbridge.

Call us	Visit us	Find us online
020 8517 9317	27–29 Woodward Road, Dagenham RM9 4SJ	Home - Sycamore Trust

Disclaimer

This sleep diary is a tool to help families record and understand sleep patterns. It gives **general information only** and is not medical advice. It does not replace an assessment or advice from a GP, health visitor, paediatrician, school nurse or other health professional.

If you are worried about a person's breathing during sleep, a sudden change in sleep, or their health, please contact your GP or NHS 111. In an emergency call 999. Never give sleep medicine, including melatonin, unless it has been prescribed for that person.

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