

Family and Community Health

“Connections” in Tom Green County

TEXAS A&M
AGRI LIFE
EXTENSION

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DEALING WITH BACK-TO-SCHOOL ANXIETY

Whether you are the student or parent, it is common to deal with back to school anxiety. Anxiety is something that is typical in stressful situations. Feeling tired, nervous, difficulty concentrating, increased heart rate, are all common symptoms of anxiety. The number of cases in which a student is suffering with anxiety has increased by 50% in the last eight years. Youth accompanied with anxiety are more at risk to have lower academic scores.

Talk to Someone

One of the most effective ways for minimizing anxiety in the classroom is simply just talking to someone. A friend group, a parent, siblings, or even teachers. Having short daily conversations about emotions and can be what helps each student feel more at ease and comfortable in their environment. Coping strategies that involve thinking aloud is beneficial to a student. A student having the ability to convey how they are feeling is something that will benefit a student in many aspects outside of school. For example, "I am feeling very stressed because my peers are being very loud while I am reading my book. I need to give myself a second and take a deep breath to calm myself down." Developing verbal calming techniques may help lessen the stress caused from anxiety.

Construct a Daily Checklist

Starting a personal checklist may organize your thoughts can help you or your kid have a better idea of what to expect each week. Sunday night, sit down and make a day-by-day schedule of what you have going on that week during school. This can help ease the mind so you don't lose track of due-dates for assignments or any major events your school might be hosting. Sometimes we tend to forget little things when we are struggling with anxiety. This may cause that anxiety to just worsen. If you begin the habit of planning ahead this may help calm your anxiety by preventing over-thinking.

Designate Yourself a Calming Space

Giving yourself or your kid their own safe space allows

them to calm their mind without any judgement. This can vary from a bedroom, to just sitting in the car listening to the radio. Taking a moment to just go to the bathroom away from a crowd may help calm anxiety. Giving your brain the chance to just take a break can be crucial to your mental health at school. Some positive effects to allowing the brain to relax include; an increase in cognitive thinking, enhanced focus, increase in circulation and blood flow, all of which can help concentration.

Seek Guidance from a Counselor

Counseling is a place where a person can voice any worries, stress, difficult problems or feelings without any judgement. Regardless if it is an outside therapist or a school counselor, the therapy sessions may help improve anxiety for a student. Some of the many benefits that come from counseling include, being top of any situation-specific goals, building the student's self-esteem, helping to improve the child's communication skills, stimulating healthy and normal development, as well as bettering mental health and anxiety in students.

Reward Yourself

At the end of the day, remember to reward yourself! Remember you or your child are not alone; 5.8 million students were diagnosed with anxiety in the years 2016-2019. Following these simple suggestions may be just what it takes for a student to beat

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Sources: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih>

Snacks for School-Aged Kids



Snacks are an important part of your child's day. Besides getting three meals, school-age kids usually eat one or two snacks a day. Most schools offer a mid-morning snack. As kids get older, they may not need a morning snack unless they have a very late lunch. Talk with your kids to find out what works best for them.

Most kids want an after-school snack. A healthy after-school snack can help kids stay focused on homework and give them the energy they need for active play, sports, or other after-school activities. Pack healthy snacks for kids who aren't coming home right away. If you have an early dinner time, skip the snack and offer the salad or vegetable you make for dinner to take the edge off their hunger.

What Snacks Are Good for School-Age Kids?

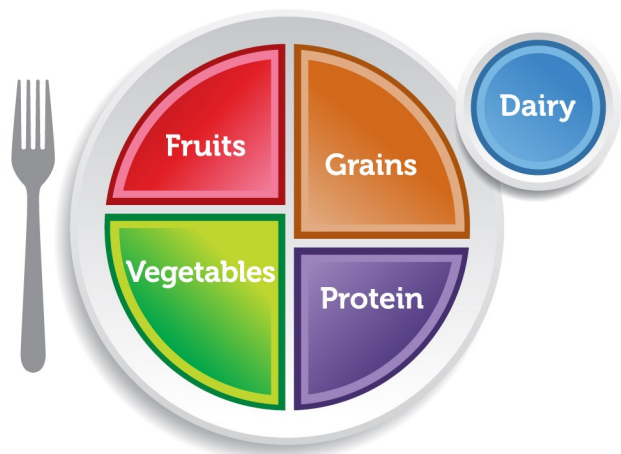
Here are some snacks that school-age kids might enjoy:

- Home-made trail mix with whole-grain breakfast cereal and nuts and raisins
- String cheese with grapes or other fruit
- Fruit smoothies made with yogurt, milk, or a dairy-free milk-alternative
- Ice pops made with 100% fruit juice or yogurt in ice pop molds or ice cube trays. Add chopped fruit before putting in the freezer.
- Whole-grain pretzels with peanut butter
- Fruit slices dipped in low-fat flavored yogurt or veggies dipped in hummus

Make Healthy Snacking a Habit

Buy and serve healthy foods. Avoid snacks that are high in sugar, salt, and fat. Here are some tips to help turn your child into a smart snacker:

- Keep healthy snacks in your refrigerator or pantry. Let kids choose their own snacks from a couple of healthy options.
- Make sweets and other treats the exception rather than the rule. An occasional treat is fine, but serve healthy snacks most of the time.
- Have a schedule for meals and snacks. Kids who graze throughout the day may not notice when they are hungry or full, and are more likely to overeat.
- Serve snacks and meals at the table. Don't let kids eat in front of the TV or other screens.
- Talk to your child about healthy choices and teach your child how to read food labels.
- Be a role model and share a healthy snack with your child.



Source: <https://kidshealth.org/>

Sleep and Health for Back to School

Adequate sleep contributes to a student's overall health and well-being. Students should get the proper amount of sleep at night to help stay focused, improve concentration, and improve academic performance.

Children and adolescents who do not get enough sleep have a higher risk for many health problems, including obesity, type 2 diabetes, poor mental health, and injuries. They are also more likely to have attention and behavior problems, which can contribute to poor academic performance in school.



What can Parents Do?

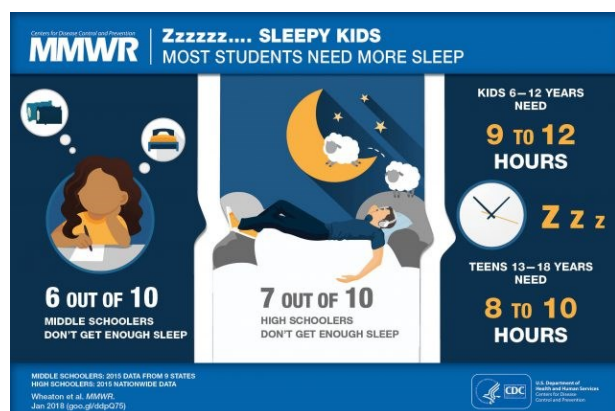
- Following a routine bedtime and rise time, even on weekends, is highly recommended for anyone. Students, children, as well as adults.
- In the evening turn on dim lighting. People who are exposed to more light, whether it is a room light or light from an electronic device, in the evening have shown to be less likely to get enough sleep.
- Setting in place an electronic curfew. Technology use may also contribute to late bedtimes. This includes, televisions, computers, cellphones, videos games, etc.

Consequences of Sleep Deprivation

The consequences of sleep deprivation are fairly well established but may still be surprising.

- Daytime sleepiness and fatigue
- Irritability and short temper
- Mood changes
- Trouble coping with stress
- Difficulty focusing, concentrating, and remembering
- Brain fog

Sources: <https://summer.harvard.edu/>
<https://www.cdc.gov/>



How Much Sleep Do Students Need?

How much sleep someone needs depends on their age. The American Academy of Sleep Medicine has made the following recommendations for children and adolescents:

- 6-12 years need 9 to 12 hours per 24 hours
- 13-18 years need 8 to 10 hours per 24 hours

Source: www.cdc.gov

Easy Healthy Lunch-Box Chicken Wrap

Ingredients:

- 1/4 cup hummus
- 1 whole wheat tortilla (8 inches), room temperature
- 1/2 cup fresh baby spinach
- 1/3 cup shredded cooked chicken breast
- 2 carrot sticks
- 2 sweet red pepper strips

Directions:

1. Spread hummus over tortilla
2. Top with spinach
3. Place chicken, carrot and red pepper in a row near center of tortilla
4. Roll up tightly
5. If desired, cut crosswise into slices
6. Wrap securely or pack in an airtight container; refrigerate until serving



Sources: <https://www.tasteofhome.com/recipes/lunch-box-chicken-wrap/>

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Tom Green TEEA News

Veribest EEA Meeting

September 12, 2023

at 9:00 a.m.

Hello Breakfast

at Dunbar East

Reminder:

Yearly TEEA Dues

will be \$27.00

Family & Community Health “Connections”
is provided by the following

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