



Health Advisory: Melatonin Use in Children and Adolescents

Melatonin is a natural hormone that helps us regulate our own sleep timing. Even though our body makes its melatonin in the brain, some people use extra melatonin to improve their sleep. Melatonin in some children with developmental problems.^{1,2}

Melatonin use has increased in the last two decades across all ages.³ Melatonin is the second-most common supplement that parents give to their children, next to multivitamins. With this increased use, there are growing reports of melatonin overdose, calls to poison control centers, and emergency room visits for children, even more so during the COVID-19 pandemic.^{4,5}

Parents should talk to a health care professional before giving melatonin or any supplement to children.⁶ Be aware that in the U.S., melatonin is considered a

To address the safe use of melatonin in children and teens, we advise that:

1. Melatonin should be handled as any other medication and kept out of reach of children.
2. Before starting melatonin or any supplement in their children, parents should discuss this decision with a pediatric health care professional. Many sleep problems can be better managed with a change in schedules, habits, or behaviors rather than taking melatonin.
3. If melatonin is used, the health care professional can recommend the melatonin dose and timing for the sleep problem. Parents should select a product with the USP Verified Mark to allow for safer use.*

References

1. Williams Buckley A, Hirtz D, Oskoui M, et al. Practice guideline: Treatment for insomnia and disrupted sleep behavior in children and adolescents with autism spectrum disorder: Report of the Guideline Development, Dissemination, and Implementation Subcommittee of the American Academy of Neurology. *Neurology*. 2020 Mar 3;94(9):392-404.

<https://doi.org/10.1212/wnl.0000000000009033>

2. Rosen CL, Aurora RN, clinical practice guideline on evaluating and managing insomnia in children with autism. *J Clin Sleep Med*. 2020;16(6):989-990. <https://doi.org/10.5664/jcsm.8426>

*A [*USP Verified Mark*](#) indicates that the product was produced in a facility following the Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) standards. These products meet some product quality control measures, including containing the amount of an ingredient on the label without harmful levels of specific contaminants. However, this is a voluntary program, and only four melatonin products, all with either 3 mg or 5 mg of melatonin, have received the USP Verified Mark.

The American Academy of Sleep Medicine (AASM) is a professional society that advances sleep care and enhances sleep health to improve lives (aasm.org).

A searchable directory of AASM-accredited member sleep centers is available at