What to Expect When You Get a Sleep Study at Seattle Children’s
A note for parents and caregivers:

This book is for children of all ages. It explains a common patient experience of getting a sleep test at Seattle Children’s.

Some children can cope with a lot of information. Others become anxious with too much information. You know your child best: Choose which sections of this book to share.

What you can do

We encourage you to be present and supportive of your child when they are having their sleep test. Plan to have one parent or caregiver spend the night with your child at the Sleep Center. Ask your child and hospital staff how you can help.

You will receive information about how to prepare for the sleep study at your child’s pre-test appointment and by mail before their appointment. For more information about the sleep study, see “Sleep Study Tests at Seattle Children’s Sleep Disorders Center Bellevue” (www.seattlechildrens.org/pdf/PE1295.pdf).

For questions or to schedule a consult with a Child Life specialist (including medical play, coping strategies and/or a tour), please contact:

Seattle Children’s Child Life Specialists  
206-884-9118
Did you know Seattle Children’s has special rooms where kids get to spend the night? Lots of kids come here for a sleep study.

A sleep study helps doctors and nurses see what your body does while you sleep. The study can show us what your brain does, how your body moves and even how your heart beats at nighttime. There will be no owies or pokes at your sleep study.

You will come to the sleep center in the evening with your parent or caregiver. They will sleep in the same room as you. In the morning after you wake up, you will both go home. This book talks about what the sleep study is like.

Have you ever spent the night away from home?
Kids get sleep studies for different reasons. Some kids snore at nighttime while they sleep. Other kids can’t breathe very well when they sleep. These things make them feel really tired or restless the next day.

After your sleep study, doctors will know what your body is doing at night and how to make you feel better.

Do you ever wake up feeling sleepy or restless?
You can get ready for your visit at home. Before you come for your sleep study, pack a bag with:

- Some things you like to have at bedtime, like a favorite stuffed animal, toy or blanket. You can bring your own pillow, or you can use the pillow on your bed at the sleep center.
- Two-piece pajamas, like a shirt and pants.
- Your toothbrush and toothpaste and hair comb or brush.
- Books, a movie (DVD) or Xbox game if you want.

Wash your hair with shampoo and dry it right before you come. Having freshly clean hair for your study helps to keep small sensors for the study attached to your head. (You’ll learn more about these sensors in a few pages.)

Also, eat dinner or pack a snack. We have some snacks at the sleep center if you get hungry before you go to sleep.
The sleep center is inside Overlake Hospital Medical Center. When you come here, you will park in the parking garage and ride the elevator to the first floor.

Then you will take another elevator to the fourth floor.
If you come during the week, the sleep center’s door will be open. A staff member will greet you when you come in.

If you arrive on the weekend, ring the doorbell. A staff member will answer the door and show you inside.

When you get to the sleep center, remind your parent or caregiver to turn off their cell phone. If you have one, please turn it off, too!
You can sit in the lobby while your parent or caregiver checks you in at the desk. You can watch TV, color with crayons or play a video game while you wait.

You will get an ID band with your name and birthday on it. If you brought a stuffed animal, ask if they can get a band, too!

What will you do while you wait?
Someone called a sleep technician will show you to your room.

You will sleep in the big bed. Your mom, dad or caregiver can sleep on the couch that folds out into a bed.

Your room will have a TV, a DVD player and an Xbox system. You will also see a welcome sign with your name on it!

What do you see in this room that you also have in your bedroom at home?
In the bathroom next to your room, you will stand on the scale so the sleep technician can see how much you weigh. They will also use a ruler to find out how tall you are.

Your parent or caregiver will fill out some paperwork about your day and your sleep.
The sleep technician will leave while you put your pajamas on and brush your teeth.

What do you like to do while you brush your teeth?

Each room has a call button that you can push if you need something during your stay. You can use this call button anytime. When you push it, the sleep technician will come to your room.
After you have your pajamas on, the sleep technician will come back with wires, white stickers and tape. These are the sensors that will go on your body to find out what your body does while you sleep. The wires and stickers do not hurt. You will be awake when the wires are attached.

The sleep technician will first use a liquid cleanser to clean your face, head and legs. This might tickle.

They will also use something called a grease pencil, which is like a very soft pencil, to make marks on your head. It might feel funny as they draw some dots and lines on you. These marks help them know where to put the sensors.
Then the technician will put the sensors on different parts of your body. You will have some under your nose, on your chin and cheeks, near your eyes, and on top of your head. They will also go on your legs, belly and chest and on your fingertip or toe. You will see lots of wires!

What colors are the wires attached to the sensors? Do you have a favorite color?
It can take awhile to attach all the sensors to your body. While the sensors are going on, you can sit in the chair, lie on the bed, or sit in your parent or caregiver’s lap. You can read, talk, watch TV, play a game or just watch. You can even help! Ask your technician what you can do.

What will you do while the sensors are going on your body?
Some kids say the sensors and wires feel a little cold at first. They might feel sticky or tickly. Most of the sensors stick to your body with special “ouchless” tape. Don’t worry, nothing will hurt. There are no needles or pokes during your sleep test.

The technician may wrap mesh netting around your head like a beanie or hat to keep the sensors attached.

If you bring a stuffed animal, it can get a sensor, too! Ask your technician.
Now it’s time for bed. Get comfy and close your eyes. If you want a nightlight, fan or sound machine while you sleep, just ask.

Good night!

What stuffed animals is this boy sleeping with? What stuffed animal or lovey will you bring?
In the morning, the sleep technician will come to your room and wake you up if you aren’t already awake.

The technician will gently take off the sensors. They will first put a liquid over the tape so that it peels off your body and won’t hurt. Some kids say the liquid feels cold, wet and goopy. It may smell a little funny. Your skin may feel sticky where the sensors were.

Your parent or caregiver can help take off the sensors. They will get wipes to clean your skin.
After the sensors are off, you can change into your clothes and pack up your things.

If you want a morning snack, ask your technician for a muffin or a granola bar. You can also get juice or hot chocolate in the snack area.

Your parent or caregiver will fill out some papers about the sleep test. Then you are ready to go home!

What snack will you choose in the morning?
My Sleep Study Plan

You can use this plan to prepare for your sleep study. Fill it out and bring it with you to your appointment.

When I have my sleep study, I will bring:

- A toy
- A favorite book
- My stuffed animal
- A blanket
- A DVD
- An Xbox game

When I get the sensors on my body, I want to:

- Watch TV or a movie
- Play a video game I bring
- Read a book
- Listen to music
- Ask for a job to do

Things that will help me fall asleep:

- My blanket
- My favorite stuffed animal
- A bedtime story
- A nightlight
- Music

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Free Interpreter Services

- In the hospital, ask your child’s nurse.
- From outside the hospital, call the toll-free Family Interpreting Line, 1-866-583-1527. Tell the interpreter the name or extension you need.

Seattle Children's offers interpreter services for Deaf, hard of hearing or non-English speaking patients, family members and legal representatives free of charge. Seattle Children's will make this information available in alternate formats upon request. Call the Family Resource Center at 206-987-2201.

This handbook has been reviewed by clinical staff at Seattle Children's. However, your child’s needs are unique. Before you act or rely upon this information, please talk with your child’s healthcare provider.

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