

One more sleep before Christmas...

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Frazzled parents are being offered tips on how to help excited children get to sleep on Christmas Eve from a prominent sleep researcher at Northumbria University, Newcastle.

Professor Jason Ellis, Director of Northumbria's Centre for Sleep Research, is involved in research into the factors that can encourage or discourage [sleep](#).

As millions of [children](#) excitedly wait for the visit of Father Christmas, he recommends that parents can settle their children by reading a bedtime story.

Professor Ellis said: "Reading before bed helps to distract you from the worries and the stresses of the day. It puts your body into a relaxed state ready for sleep. This is going to be more important as we get closer to Christmas as children are naturally more excited and more resistant to sleep.

"Parents should try to keep routines as normal as possible. It is tempting to relax bedtimes as the children are off school and everyone is getting into the Christmas spirit but, in the long run, it will be harder for them to get back to routine when everything goes back to normal."

He added: "To encourage a good night's sleep you need to associate the bedroom as somewhere suitable for sleep. That's why children – and adults – shouldn't use mobile phones, laptops or tablets in bed because they emit blue light that signals the brain to wake up.

"Research has shown that removing stimuli from the bedroom, particularly if you have a sleep problem, is important to create an environment conducive for sleep."

Professor Ellis leads the Northumbria Centre for Sleep Research, based in a self-contained modern apartment which sits in the middle of the research facilities at Northumbria University. It features comfortable bedrooms and en-suite facilities which are fitted with closed-circuit television cameras that relay pictures to the control room next-door where Professor Ellis and his team of research students monitor the participants' sleep. Blue-tooth-enabled sensors worn by the subjects send back wireless telemetry, allowing the real-time monitoring of physiological data.

The Centre runs both basic research studies and clinical treatment trials, allowing the facility to shed light on many of the mysteries of sleep, while also playing a key role in helping alleviate the problems of people with [sleep disorders](#).

Professor Ellis added: "The impact of a healthy sleep pattern and healthy sleep environment cannot be underestimated. It is our best defence against the increasing pressures of the modern world."

Provided by Northumbria University

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