

Don't stay up all night: Study says early bedtime may help kids keep healthy weight

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It may be tempting to let children stay up a little later with virtual schooling now and summer on the way, but a new study indicates it may be better not to let them do so.

A study recently published in the monthly peer-reviewed medical journal *Acta Paediatrica* found that children who regularly went to bed late gained more weight over the course of several years compared to those who rested their heads earlier.

The study reviewed 1,258 Indigenous Australian children with an average age of 6, and about half were male. Five classes of sleep patterns were present in the study: 4.5% were early/long sleepers, 25.5% were normative sleepers, 49.9% were late sleepers, 11.1% were consistent late sleepers and 9% were early risers.

Children who were consistent late sleepers experienced 1.03 unit gain in BMI compared to early sleepers.

The study shows the importance of not only looking at the duration of sleep, which other studies have reviewed, but the benefits children may receive from going to sleep earlier.

"While we know it can be hard to get [children](#) to bed early, and at consistent times both on weekdays and at weekends, it might help parents or carers to know that establishing consistent and early bedtimes may reduce the risk that their child will be overweight or obese," said lead author Yaqoot Fatima of the Institute for Social Science Research at the University of Queensland, and James Cook University.

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