



Sleep soothers MDs swear by

We asked doctors to share the natural strategies that they rely on to help their own children drift off with ease—and stay snoozing soundly until morning

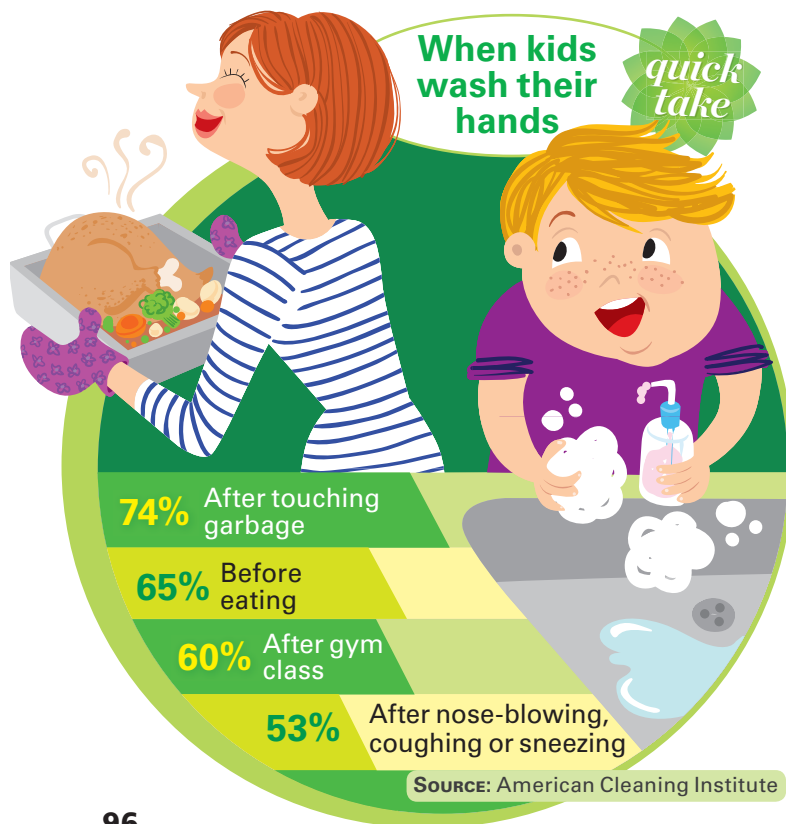
For wired-and-tired

A relaxing sound

“My daughter is a terrible sleeper when she’s all fired up about something,” says mom-of-two Whitney Casares, M.D., author of *The Newborn Baby Blueprint*. To help her daughter relax, Dr. Casares pulls up a metronome app on her phone, like Pro Metronome (free for iPhone and Android). “I set it to the rhythm of a child’s resting heartbeat and let her listen to the tick-tock as I read to her.” (For kids ages 3 to 10, resting heart rate is about 90 beats per minute.) The sound works as a distraction, like white noise, but it’s also rhythmic, so kids start to breathe in sync with it. “This drives her respiratory rate and heart rate closer to resting,” says Dr. Casares. “Before long, she’s drifting off.”

When kids wash their hands

quick take



For trouble falling asleep

A warm snuggle

“When the kids are full of energy, it can be hard to get them to sleep. That’s when I offer a hot-water bottle to tuck under their head or back,” says mom-of-four Rhonda Klein, M.D., founder of Modern Dermatology of Connecticut in Westport. “The combination of squishiness and warmth is psychologically comforting.” Plus, the heat eases tension to increase relaxation. “If your child is too young to tell you if the water bottle is too hot, he or she is too young for this fix,” adds Dr. Klein, who recommends it for kids ages 5 and up. “Any hot-water bottle will work, but to make it feel like a treat, I use one with a cute design.” One to try: HomeTop hot-water bottles with stuffed animal covers (Amazon.com).

For bad-dream anxiety

A happiness spray

“My two kids tend to have nightmares about tornadoes, and since we have a lot of bad storms here in North Texas, I needed something to help alleviate those fears,” says Heather Bartos, M.D., medical director at Be. Women’s Health & Wellness in Cross Roads, Texas. “Luckily, they both responded well to what we call Good Dreams spray.” Dr. Bartos fills a 4-oz. spray bottle with distilled water, adding about 20 drops of lavender oil, then she sprays it around the kids’ room. While lavender has proven relaxation powers—improving sleep quality by 20%, according to a British study—Dr. Bartos gives credit to the placebo effect too. A few minutes after spritzing, Dr. Bartos’ kiddos are always sound asleep. ✨

GETTY, GRAPHIC: NATHALIE BEAUVOIS, TEXT: HOLLY PEVZNER