



Primary School Children

Night Terrors – Management

Night terrors are scary to watch but usually harmless to children!

Keep your child safe

The most important thing to do when your child has a night terror is to keep your child safe. Make sure that all outside doors and windows are secure, that all doors and gates are locked and that areas such as stairs are blocked. Also, as your child may walk or run around during a night terror, clear away anything that she can step on or trip over.

Do not wake your child

Generally, nothing is gained by trying to awaken a child during a night terror, and sometimes doing so can make a child more upset. Also, if they wake up completely you may have problems getting them back to sleep.

Guide your child back to bed

To encourage return to normal sleep, guide your child gently back to bed. If they resist, let them remain where they are but do not leave the child.

Try not to interfere too much

The normal response of parents is to try and comfort their child during a night terror. Try to resist doing this. Most children will just get more upset. Remember, they will not even remember this event in the morning. However, if your child is about to come to harm be sure to keep them safe even if they fight you.

Ensure enough sleep

Increase the amount of sleep that your child is getting and try to stop them getting over tired. Night terrors are much more likely to happen when your child does not get enough sleep.

Maintain a regular bedtime

Night terrors are more likely to happen on nights when your child goes to sleep at a different time than usual. Therefore, stick to a set bedtime for your child, taking in to account the need for increased sleep. This may mean your child's bedtime or wake time needs to be changed.

Do not discuss night terrors the next day

The morning after an event, do not make a point of discussing the episode with your child, as it is more likely they will not remember it. Discussing the event is likely to worry them. However, if on the rare occasion they do remember and bring it up, simply reassure them that they were safe and that you were looking after them.

