

## Dr. Estivill



Born in Barcelona April 2, 1948, Eduard Estivill, PhD, specialist in pediatrics, neurophysiology, and sleep medicine is at present director of the Sleep Clinic at the USP Institut Dexeus, Barcelona, Spain.

Dr. Estivill received his medical degree from the University of Barcelona. He underwent postgraduate training in sleep medicine at the Henry Ford Hospital Sleep Disorders Unit in Detroit, Michigan. Dr. Estivill was previously a consultant physician in the Sleep and Chronobiology Laboratory at the Santa Creu y Sant Pau Hospital, Barcelona, and has worked at the center for Biological Research into Fetal and Neonatal Development, Port-Royal, Paris, and the Sleep Disorders Center of the Henry Ford Hospital, Detroit. He is Honorary Professor of the National University of Santa Fé, Bogotá.

With chief clinical and research interests in sleep and sleep disorders, Dr. Estivill has authored 160 scientific papers and communications in Spain, as well as more than 30 international publications. Additionally he is the author of 22 books on sleep disorders and a best-seller, *Duermete Niño*, which has been translated into 22 languages (English the last one *5 days to a perfect night's sleep for your children*, Ballantine books USA). He is a frequent invited lecturer, presenting his work at European and American Forums.

Dr. Estivill is a member of professional societies and organizations including the American Sleep Disorders Association, the European Sleep Research Society, the Latin American Sleep Society, and the French EEG and Clinical Neurophysiology Society.

**Q: I found on Google that you are specialized in Children's Neurology. You wrote several books to help children to adjust to a good sleeping pattern. Are there a lot of sleeping problems amongst children ?**

Sleep disorders affects at 30% of population between 6month and 5 years. In children is common the wrong habits as a cause of insomnia. Sleep patterns and sleep problems in children are not only influenced by a large number of biological and psychological factors but also by cultural and social factors.

**Q: Can you sum up some basic rules to ensure children to have a good night sleep ?**

Eleven years ago I began studying childhood insomnia. Since then, I have personally treated more than three thousand children with sleep disorders. Our method is not meant to be preachy and in no way claims to be the only possible solution. What's important about our rules is that it is easily applicable to those of you who choose to use it. As parents, you know better than anyone that teaching your child to sleep isn't easy. But it's definitely not impossible, even though it may have felt that way on more than one desperate occasion.

Teaching a child to sleep should be done in exactly the same way for a baby as for a four-year-old. To start with, follow these three steps:

1. *Prepare the external elements.* Choose the elements that will accompany your child throughout the night.
  - a) –A stuffed animal
  - b) –A few pacifiers (if she uses them)
  - c) –A Mobile/wall decoration (out of reach)
  - d) -Foot pajamas
2. *Establish a schedule.* Use meals and baths to cue bedtime.
3. *Prepare yourselves mentally.* Adopt a firm, confident attitude.

#### STEP BY STEP

- a) The affection routine  
After bath time and dinnertime, spend five to ten minutes with your child doing something you both enjoy.
- b) Bedtime  
Put your child in her bed and repeat the refrain, "Sweetie, Mommy and Daddy are going to teach you how to sleep all by yourself. Starting today you are going to sleep here, in your crib, with the poster of the moon, the mobile and Joey." Then leave the room.
- c) Visits

If your child cries inconsolably, make short visits to calm her down, but not to put her to sleep. Maintain fixed intervals between each of the visits.

## **Our latest work:**

### **Techniques for Teaching a Child to Sleep well Starting from Day 1**

- 1 When it is possible, we highly recommend that you feed your baby in the same place, where the temperature is comfortable with a light and soft music on. Your baby should be awake during these feedings. This may seem difficult since he will tend to fall asleep as he nurses or bottle feeds. The mother should speak to him while he feeds, caress him and find loving ways to keep him awake. As we said before, this helps to teach him to associate eating with being awake. Mothers should follow breast feeding routines according to the infant's needs and her paediatrician's recommendations.
- 2 After each feeding the mother should keep the infant awake in her arms for around 15 minutes. This improves the elimination of gases and can possibly avoid colic. This also helps to begin digestion. During these 15 minutes, the mother should keep her baby awake by caressing him and speaking softly to him.
- 3 After changing his diaper, it is important to lovingly put your baby in his crib so that he learns how to go to sleep on his own. You can use a pacifier and or a stuffed animal as elements that he associates with sleep. If the pacifier falls out of his mouth, patiently teach him to put it back in by himself.
- 4 Follow this schedule for your baby's daily feedings. At night, the mother can feed him in her bed (the couple's double bed). After changing his diaper (if it is necessary) she should put him back in his crib while he is still awake.
- 5 It's very important for the mother to follow the same routines as the infant. This is a way of avoiding postpartum depression. It has been proven that one of the factors leading to postpartum depression is a lack of sleep which the mother experiences while feeding her child.

### **Q: Are general sleeping problems with adults different to general sleeping problems with children?**

Very different. In children is common the wrong habits as a cause of insomnia. In the adults, the causes are polyvalent (illness, sleep apnea, snoring, depression, anxiety, etc)

### **Q: Do you think that any therapy to help adults with sleeping disorders (general insomnia) can be similar to the therapy due for children?**

No. Insomnia is a symptom. And a symptom always has a cause. We always need to treat the cause and the cause in children is wrong habits. In adults is more complex as I said before (different illness, stress, etc).