

Sleep Tips

Getting enough sleep is one of the most important things a teenager can do for their physical and emotional well-being. Teens have an increased need for sleep due to hormonal changes: most need at least 9 hours of sleep every night.

Teens who do not get enough rest may:

- Have trouble concentrating on schoolwork
- Be irritable or crabby
- Feel overwhelmed, sad, or run down
- Lack energy needed to complete activities or participate in sports
- Be more vulnerable to illness
- **Drowsy driving is as dangerous as drunk driving!**



Create a bedtime ritual

Doing the same calming activities every night helps signal your body that it's time to go to bed.

- Take a warm shower or bath with Epsom salts
- Read a book, listen to soothing music
- Drink herbal tea (chamomile, sleepytime, yogi bedtime)
- Take melatonin (check with your doctor first).

Stick to a sleep schedule

Try to go to bed and wake up around the same time every day, including weekends. This can be challenging because hormonal changes cause teens' biological waking rhythms to be pushed forward, so they may naturally want to go to bed later at night and wake up later in the morning.

Make your bed for sleeping only

Do not use ANY electronics in your bed. If you have been lying in bed and can't sleep after 15 minutes, get out of bed and do something non-stimulating in another room, like reading a book. Then try to get in bed again when you are feeling drowsy.

Create a comfortable sleep space

Keep your room cool, quiet, and dark. Turn off all your electronics. Turn your clock around so you aren't staring at it all night. Keep your feet warm. In the morning, expose yourself to bright sunlight to help wake up.

Barriers to a good night of sleep

- Light from computer/tv/phone screens tells your body to stay awake by stimulating your brain; be sure to **turn them off 1-2 hours before bedtime.**
- Avoid caffeine (coffee, soda, tea) after noon.
- Nicotine, alcohol and decongestants such as sudaphedrine also interfere with sleep.

Manage your stress

Write in a journal what you are thinking about, or make a list, so you can deal with it in the morning. Refer to the Stress Busters handout. Talk to your family and friends about your stress. If your stress is severe, talk to your doctor about it.

Exercise daily

Exercise makes it easier to fall asleep at night as long as you don't do any strenuous exercise within 3 hours of your bed time. Try taking a long, relaxing walk with your dog or parking farther away in the parking lot.