## PATIENT EDUCATION | *INFORMATION SERIES*

Healthy Sleep In Teens

Sleep is important for how teens develop. It is a key factor in how they feel the next day. Sleep can also affect how teens learn, what they remember, how they get along with friends, and things they do. Teens who get good sleep often do better in school and have less health problems than those who do not. Therefore, it is important to have good sleep practices.
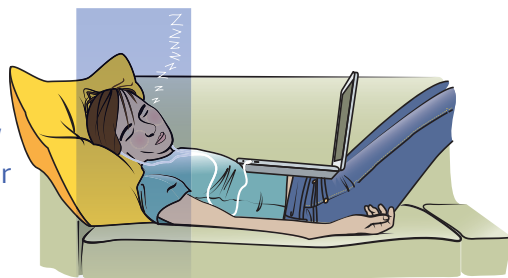
How much sleep is enough?
- The American Academy of Sleep Medicine (AASM) recommends that teens get 8 to 10 hours of sleep a night to be healthy. On average, teens need 9 hours of sleep each night.

What are some reasons why teens do not sleep enough?
- *Puberty:* Puberty is a time when the teenage body begins to go through many changes. This includes a shift in the natural bed time and wake time.
- *Earlier school start times:* Many high schools begin classes early in the morning, when a teenager's body still wants to be asleep.
- *Increased school/after school/social obligations:* It can be difficult to balance school work and extracurricular activities because of limited time after school.

How does puberty affect overall sleep?
- The human body has an internal clock that impacts sleep. This clock is called the circadian rhythm. Puberty is the period in which a teen has many physical changes in the body and in how the mind works as he or she becomes an adult. During puberty, this clock shifts by about two hours, so teens' bodies want to stay up two hours longer and sleep two hours later. The shift in teens' circadian rhythm is called "sleep phase delay."

- Because of this shift, some teens find themselves more alert in the evening and find it easier to stay up later. Going to bed later usually means needing to wake up later in the morning to get enough sleep. But, many teens have to get up early for school. This means they often do not sleep enough.
- Melatonin is a hormone that our body makes. It helps regulate sleep. During puberty, melatonin is released later in the night. This can delay when we fall asleep. Melatonin also turns off later in the morning. This makes it harder to wake up in the morning.

What happens when teens do not sleep enough?
Teens who do not get enough sleep often:
- Fall asleep during class
- Get to school late or miss school
- Have less energy during the day
- Miss after school activities because they nap to catch up on sleep
- Have poor grades or grades that are not as good as they could be if they were well rested
- Drink more caffeine-containing beverages/energy drinks to help stay awake and alert
- Eat more or have bad eating habits
- Have more sports injuries and car crashes
- Are irritable or moody

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- More likely to make bad decisions

What are some ways to improve how teenagers sleep?

- Set a regular and consistent bedtime and wake up time that is the same on weekdays and weekends. On the weekends, avoid sleeping in for no more than 2 hours extra. Use an app or timer as a reminder as to when to start getting ready for bed and when to get up.

- Two hours before bedtime, turn off all electronics such as TV, phone, iPad, computers and video games. They give off blue light that signals the body to stay awake. Adjust your electronic device to limit the amount of blue light emitted. There are apps available that will automatically filter the blue light during the evening time.

- Use your bed only for sleeping. Do not use it as a couch or a desk to do homework.

- Have a routine of winding down 30 minutes to get your body ready to go to sleep. Winding down includes changing into your pajamas, brushing your teeth, taking a warm bath or shower, which promotes sleep, reading a book or magazine, and/or listening to quiet music. Remember, this does not include using electronics.

- Plan for your morning rush the night before— for example, pick out clothes for the next day, get your things together for your backpack.

- Keep the bedroom dark, cool, and quiet during sleep time.

- Go out in the sun in the morning to help you wake up. Avoid wearing dark sunglasses during the morning.

- Get at least 30 minutes of exercise during the daytime. This can include going for a run or a walk, or working out at a gym. Avoid exercising hard 2-3 hours before bedtime.

- Do not take naps during the day to catch up on sleep. But if you have to, only sleep 20-30 minutes. Use an alarm clock to wake yourself up. Do not nap 5 or more hours before you usually go to bed so the nap does not stop you from falling asleep that night.

- Avoid eating large meals before bedtime.

- Avoid caffeine altogether, or at least for 6 hours before bedtime. Caffeine is found in tea, soda, coffee, tea, energy drinks, and chocolate.

- Avoid driving when sleepy. No one should drive if they are sleepy.

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℞ *Action Steps*

- ✔ Get 8-10 hours of sleep each night.
- ✔ Make sure your wake times and bed times are consistent.
- ✔ Have a bedtime routine to help your body be ready to sleep when it is time to go to bed.
- ✔ Look ahead to what you need to do in the morning.
- ✔ Avoid things that can interfere with good sleep like electronic devices and caffeine.
- ✔ Set alarms or reminder alerts to help you fol- low your sleep schedule.

Healthcare Provider's Contact Number:

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Resources:

Sleep Education—American Academy of Sleep Medicine
www.sleepeducation.org

National Sleep Foundation
https://sleepfoundation.org

Healthy Children—American Academy of Pediatrics
www.healthychildren.org

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
www.cdc.gov/sleep

National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute
www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/resources/sleep

American Thoracic Society—Official ATS Statement: The Importance of Healthy Sleep
www.atsjournals.org

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