



#sleep
#publichealth5-19service



Teenagers & Sleep FACTSHEET

Sleep research suggests that a teenager needs between 8-10 hours of sleep every night, this is more than the amount an adult or child needs. Yet most adolescents get 6.5-7.5 hours per night and some get less.

Regularly not having enough sleep every night results in chronic sleep deprivation. This can have a dramatic effect on your life; it will impact on your mental well-being, increase your risk of depression, anxiety and low self-esteem. It can also affect your academic ability to function in school with difficulty concentrating, poor memory and decision making. Physical ability for sports/activities can be affected with slower reflexes and more clumsiness increasing risk for injury both in and out of school time.

Top sleep tips for Teens

Typically your brain will want to stay up late at night and sleep in the morning, which is usually hard to manage around school/college. You may be able to adjust your body clock but it will take time.

Some suggestions include:

- Choose a relaxing bedtime routine; for example have a bath and hot milky drink before bed, or use meditation/mindfulness activities
- Avoid screens such as computers, TV or smart phones, loud music, homework or any other activity that gets your mind racing for at least an hour before bedtime
- Avoid stimulants in the evening which include coffee, coca cola/energy drinks and tea
- Keep your bedroom dark at night. Your brain's sleep-wake cycle is affected by how much light is received through your eyes. Try to avoid having a TV/smart phone on when you are in bed. In the morning open the curtains/blinds to expose your eyes to as much light as possible to help your brain wake up

- Do the same bedtime routine every night for at least 4 weeks to make your brain associate this routine with sleep
- Start your bedtime routine a little earlier than usual after the 4 weeks start with 10 mins and do this for 1 week
- Add an extra 10 mins per week after that till you reach the desired bedtime
- Get active during the day so you are more physically tired at night
- Set up a comfortable sleep environment
- Set up a regular wake up time
- Avoid staying up late at weekends. Late nights will undo your hard work
- Remember that even 30 minutes of extra sleep each night on a regular basis makes a huge difference. However you might not feel the benefits until 6 weeks into getting that regular extra sleep

Other issues to consider if sleep deprivation persists;

- Assess your sleep hygiene, for example, factors that may be interfering with your quality of sleep include a noisy bedroom, lumpy mattress or habits like lying awake worrying
- Consider learning a relaxation technique to help you wind down in readiness for sleep
- Avoid having caffeine in food/drink after dinner this includes chocolate, soft drinks, tea and coffee
- Avoid recreational drugs including alcohol, tobacco and cannabis they can cause you to have broken and poor quality sleep
- See your GP if all the above do not improve your nightly sleep quota

VISIT THESE USEFUL WEBSITES

www.nhs.uk/livewell/childrenssleep

Solutions to help you or your child prepare for bed and get a full night's sleep.

www.sleepforkids.org

Website for parents and young people about sleep and how to get a good sleep routine.

www.sleepfoundation.org

Includes information from the National Sleep Foundation which is dedicated to promoting the many positive health and wellbeing benefits of a good night sleep for all ages.

www.healthforteens.co.uk/

Website for young people aged 11+ to promote a healthy body and mind.

www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/your-feelings/feelings-emotions/problems-sleeping/

Childline has lots of helpful information for teenagers; this web page provides more advice about getting a good night's sleep.