

# Adolescents and Sleep

“There are millions of adolescents who feel despondent, get poor marks, and are too tired to join school teams all because they are getting too little sleep.”

“When you see a classroom of teens sleeping they’re not learning.”

1. Teens require 9 ¼ hours of sleep every night.
2. Most teens are getting about 7 ½ hours of sleep every night.
3. 25% of our teens are getting less than 6 ½ hours of sleep every night
4. 20% of all high school students fall asleep in school
5. 50% of students report being most alert after 3 p.m.
6. Adults need 8 hours of sleep every night.
7. Lack of sleep affects both a teen’s mood and their ability to think and their ability to perform and react appropriately.
8. Until the age of 10, many children wake up fresh and energetic to start the day. In contrast, the biological clock of pre-teens shifts forward, creating a “forbidden” zone for sleep around 9–10 pm. It is propping them up just as they should be feeling sleepy. Later on, in middle-age, the clock appears to shift back, making it hard for parents to stay awake just when their teens are most alert.
9. Teens, far from needing less sleep, actually need as much or more sleep than they had gotten as children.
10. Teens have a kind of sleep trough in the mid-afternoon and then perked up at night, even though they haven’t had a nap.

## Sleep and Memory

1. Tests show that the brain consolidates and practices what is learned during the day after the students (or adults, for that matter) go to sleep. Learning actually continues to take place while a person is asleep. That means sleep after a lesson is learned is as important as getting a good night’s rest before a test or exam.
2. One survey showed that students with higher grades reported that they obtained more sleep and go to bed earlier on school nights than students with lower grades.

## Learning Good Sleep Habits – How Parents can help reset their Teen’s Body Clock.

1. Putting good sleep habits into practice may not be easy for our teens because of their “Circadian Rhythms” but we can help them bring their internal body clocks forward.
2. Dim all the lights in your home at night, especially your teen’s room. Some studies say that teens may be less sensitive to light in the morning and more sensitive to light in the evening.
3. Remember: Melatonin is the brain’s hormone of darkness, so the brain turns on melatonin production when it’s dark. Light of any kind – even from your clock radio can shut down the production of melatonin.
4. Have a routine bedtime of 10 p.m. and make sure the entire house is winding down also.
5. Try to turn off the television at least 30 minutes prior to sleep.
6. Sleep in a cool environment.
7. Try to turn off music, the internet and cell phones especially in your teen’s bedroom.
8. Even though sleeping in is a good idea on week-ends try to only get an extra hour or two than to “binge sleep”. If your teen usually gets up around 6:30 a.m. they shouldn’t sleep until noon on the weekend. This simply confuses their bodies and makes it even harder to wake up on Monday morning.
9. Keeping physically fit helps our teens sleep better at night. This is good for us also☺
10. Lack of sleep is a bigger problem than just our teens. Society in general has put sleep in the back seat and we really don’t understand or acknowledge the importance of sleep any more. Perhaps we should be teaching about sleep in our schools.

Remember that stress and the use of stimulants (coffee, tea, colas and chocolate) can have a negative affect on sleep habits.

Eat foods high in tryptophan (typtophan is a precursor of the sleep-inducing substances serotonin and melatonin)

Examples: For dinner and bedtime snacks, eat a meal or snack that is high in complex carbohydrates, with a small amount of protein.

- \* Scrambled eggs and cheese
- \* Meat, fish or poultry with vegetables.
- \* Tuna salad sandwich