

Tips For Teens

- * **Organize your life for sleep:** Make sleep a priority. Review Teen Time in this toolkit and keep the Teen Sleep Diary. Decide what you need to change to get enough sleep to stay healthy, happy, and smart!
- * **A quick pick-me-up:** Naps can help pick you up and make you work more efficiently, if you plan them right. Naps that are too long or too close to bedtime can interfere with your regular sleep.
- * **Create the right space:** Make your room a sleep haven. Keep it cool, quiet and dark. If you need to, get eyeshades or blackout curtains. Let in bright light in the morning to signal your body to wake up.
- * **You can't fake wake:** No pills, vitamins or drinks can replace good sleep. Consuming caffeine close to bedtime can hurt your sleep, so avoid coffee, tea, soda/pop and chocolate late in the day so you can get to sleep at night. Nicotine and alcohol will also interfere with your sleep.
- * **Drowsy driving is as dangerous as drunk driving:** When you are sleep deprived, you are as impaired as driving with a blood alcohol content of .08%, which is illegal for drivers in many states. Drowsy driving causes over 100,000 crashes each year. Recognize sleep deprivation and call someone else for a ride. Only sleep can save you!
- * **Keep it constant:** Establish a bed and wake-time and stick to it, coming as close as you can on the weekends. A consistent sleep schedule will help you feel less tired since it allows your body to get in sync with its natural patterns. You will find that it's easier to fall asleep at bedtime with this type of routine.
- * **Prepare your body:** Don't eat, drink, or exercise within a few hours of your bedtime. Don't leave your homework for the last minute. Try to avoid the TV, computer and telephone in the hour before you go to bed. Stick to quiet, calm activities, and you'll fall asleep much more easily!
- * **Create a bedtime ritual:** If you do the same things every night before you go to sleep, you teach your body the signals that it's time for bed. Try taking a bath or shower (this will leave you extra time in the morning), or reading a book.
- * **Leave stress out of it:** Try keeping a diary or to-do lists. If you jot notes down before you go to sleep, you'll be less likely to stay awake worrying or stressing.
- * **Talk to your friends about your sleep:** When you hear your friends talking about their allnighters, tell them how good you feel after getting enough sleep.

* **Understand your body:** Most teens experience changes in their sleep schedules. Their internal body clocks can cause them to fall asleep and wake up later. You can't change this, but you can participate in interactive activities and classes to help counteract your sleepiness. Make sure your activities at night are calming to counteract your already heightened alertness.

Pointers for Parents

- 1.** Educate yourself about adolescent development, including physical and behavioral changes you can expect, including those that relate to their sleep needs and patterns.
- 2.** Look for signs of sleep deprivation (insufficient sleep) and sleepiness in your child -- keep in mind that they are not always obvious. Signs include difficulty waking in the morning, irritability late in the day, falling asleep spontaneously during quiet times of the day, and sleeping for extra long periods on the weekends. In addition, sleepiness can also look similar to attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. Above all, don't allow any family member to drive when sleep deprived or drowsy.
- 3.** Enforce regular sleep schedules for all children and maintain appropriate schedules as they grow older. To help induce sleepiness in adolescents, establish a quiet time in the evening when the lights are dimmed and loud music is not permitted.
- 4.** Talk with your children about their individual sleep/wake schedules and level of sleepiness. Assess the time spent in extracurricular and employment activities with regard to their sleep patterns and needs, and make adjustments if necessary.
- 5.** Encourage your children to complete a sleep diary for 7 to 14 consecutive (and typical) days. The diary can provide immediate information on poor sleep hygiene, and it can be used to measure the effectiveness of efforts to change. Be sure to share the sleep logs or diaries with any sleep experts or other health professional who later assesses your child's sleep or sleepiness. (Why not keep your own sleep diary as well?)
- 6.** If your child's sleep schedule during vacation is not in sync with the upcoming school schedule, help him or her adjust it for a smooth transition. This process can take from several days to several weeks, so plan ahead!
- 7.** If conservative measures to shift your child's circadian rhythm are ineffective, or if your child practices good sleep hygiene and still has difficulty staying awake at times throughout the day:
 - Consult a sleep expert. Excessive daytime sleepiness can be a sign of narcolepsy, apnea, periodic limb movement disorder and other serious but treatable sleep disorders.
 - Discuss with teachers and school officials ways to accommodate your child's needs, if necessary. Excessive daytime sleepiness due to sleep disorders or other medical conditions are covered under the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Disabilities Education Act of 1997.
- 8.** Be a good role model: Make sleep a high priority for yourself and your family and practice good sleep hygiene. Listen to your body. If you are often sleepy, get more sleep at night, take naps, or sleep longer when possible. Consult a sleep expert if needed.

9. Actively seek positive changes in your community by increasing public awareness about sleep and the harmful effects of sleep deprivation, and by supporting sleep-smart policies. Request sleep education in school curricula at all levels and encourage your school district to provide optimal environments for learning, including adopting healthy and appropriate school start times for all students.

Teens Can Take Steps Now to Adapt Their Sleep/Wake Schedules to School Bells

Adolescents' Unique Biological Sleep Needs Often Conflict with High School Start Times

August 19, 1999, WASHINGTON, DC /PRNewswire/ — Teenagers returning to school for the academic year need to take specific steps now to tune their unique sleep needs with the demands of the school year, urges the National Sleep Foundation (NSF).

With puberty comes a delay in the timing of teens' internal body clocks, or circadian clocks, which regulate sleepiness and wakefulness. Teenagers aren't able to fall asleep until at least 11 p.m. or later, and awaken later in the day. Typically, they also need more sleep than their younger siblings and their parents -- about 9 hours and 15 minutes. Shifting to an early morning school schedule is difficult for adolescents after summer vacation, when most teens go to bed very late and "sleep in," a pattern that more closely resembles their internal clock than the school year schedule.

"Because of their unique sleep needs, teenagers' brains are not ready to be alert until long after the typical high school day has already begun," explains Richard Gelula, NSF Executive Director. "Also, researchers have found that even adolescents who get an adequate amount of sleep tend to be drowsy during the mid-morning and alert in mid-afternoon because of their internal clock."

Sleep Tips for Teens

Teens may be able to adjust their circadian clocks for the school year through gradual, consistent steps outlined below. The process may take several days to several weeks.

- Go to sleep and awaken about 15 minutes earlier each day until you reach your desired sleep and wake times. Ideally, teens should strive for 8- 1/2 to 9-1/4 hours of sleep each night. You must make these incremental schedule changes every day, including weekends. Also, avoid naps during this process.
- While adapting to your new sleep schedule, avoid caffeine, alcohol and other substances that can affect your sleep. Also, open blinds or shades or turn on bright lights as soon as possible after waking to help reset your internal clock. Avoid bright light in the evening.
- Maintain the new schedule and practice other good sleep habits, such as relaxing before bed time. Remember, it is critical that the new sleep/wake schedule is followed daily, especially during the first few weeks.

Beware of Weekends

Teens appear to be affected more easily than adults by erratic sleep schedules; they are also more likely to vary from their sleep/wake schedule on weekends and holidays. For the adolescent's circadian clock to stay on track, it is essential that teens remain on the

new schedule every day, especially during the first several weeks. Afterwards, staying up late or sleeping in periodically may be an option as long as the following guidelines are met:

- Do not go to sleep more than one hour later on the weekend than you do during the week.
- Do not go off schedule for two or more nights in a row. Experts also strongly recommend against delaying sleep time by more than one hour from the schedule.
- Wake up no more than two or three hours later than your normal schedule (for example, if your normal wake time is 6 am, you should not sleep later than 8 am). Take a nap in the early afternoon if you are sleepy.

"Helping a teenager prepare for the school year with more appropriate sleep and wake schedules benefits the entire family," explains Gelula. "As a teen becomes less sleepy during the day, the likelihood of falling asleep or losing concentration at critical times, such as while driving or studying, is significantly reduced. An alert teen is more likely to be a happier, more emotionally stable and socially competent individual than a sleepy teen."