



#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](http://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](http://www.sleepforkids.org)

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

[www.sleepfoundation.org](http://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/](http://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/](http://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.