

What to expect

Adolescents are notorious for not getting enough sleep. The average amount of sleep that teenagers get is between 7 and 7 ¼ hours. However, they **NEED** between 9 and 9 ½ hours (studies show that most teenagers need exactly 9 ¼ hours of sleep). Teenagers do not get enough sleep for a number of reasons:

- **Shift in sleep schedule.** After puberty, there is a biological shift in an adolescent's internal clock of about 2 hours, meaning that a teenager who used to fall asleep at 9:00 PM will now not be able to fall asleep until 11:00PM. It also means waking 2 hours later in the morning.
- **Early high school start times.** In most school districts, the move to high school is accompanied by an earlier start time. Some high schools start as early as 7:00 AM, meaning that some teenagers have to get up as early as 5:00 AM to get ready for and travel to school.
- **Social and school obligations.** Homework, sports, after-school activities (often occurring during the evening), and socializing lead to late bedtimes.

As a result, most adolescents are very sleep deprived. Sleep deprivation will impact on many aspects of your teenager's functioning:

- **Mood.** Sleep deprivation will cause your teenager to be moody, irritable, and cranky. They may have a difficult time regulating their mood, such as by getting frustrated or upset more easily.
- **Behavior.** Sleep deprived teens are more likely to engage in risk-taking behaviors such as drinking, driving fast, and engaging in other dangerous activities.
- **Cognitive ability.** Inadequate sleep will result in problems with attention, memory, decision making, reaction time, and creativity.
- **Academic performance.** Studies show that teenagers who get less sleep are more apt to get poor grades in school, fall asleep in school, and have school tardiness/absences.
- **Drowsy driving.** Teenagers are at the highest risk for falling asleep at the wheel. Drowsy driving is the most likely to occur in the middle of the night (2 to 4 AM), but also in mid-afternoon (3 to 4 PM).

How to help your teenager get enough sleep

- **Maintain a regular sleep schedule.** Your teenager should go to bed and wake up at about the same time each day. Their sleep schedule should also ensure adequate time in bed.
- **Avoid oversleeping on weekends.** Although catching up on sleep on the weekend can be helpful, sleeping in until noon on Sunday will make it hard for your teenager to get back on schedule for school the next day.
- **Take early afternoon naps.** A nap of 15-20 minutes in the early afternoon can be beneficial.
- **Turn off TVs, computers, and phones.** TV watching, games, internet use, and other stimulating activities should be turned off for one hour before bedtime.
- **Keep electronics out of the bedroom.** Your teenager may use a normal alarm clock and leave the smartphone downstairs.
- **Avoid caffeine, smoking, alcohol, and drugs.** These all cause sleep problems.

Download the app [Insight Timer](#) for free & amazing guided sleep meditations.