



SLEEP TIPS FOR TEENS

Because of the changes their bodies are going through, adolescents need approximately 9 hours of sleep every night. Unfortunately, studies show that the average teenager only gets about 6 hours--that means every night they are running a 3 hour sleep deficit. No wonder they are lethargic and moody--they're tired!

So what's a parent to do?

1. Make sure your teen gets adequate sleep. Not having a bedtime is a right of passage, but sometimes parents need to guide their kids to a reasonable time to shut down and get some rest.
2. Establish a regular routine, varying it by no more than an hour even on weekends. We sleep best when we keep to a regular sleep and wake times that support our bodies' natural rhythm.
3. Have them catch up on sleep by going to bed early instead of sleeping in. Sleeping in or taking long naps may make it difficult to get to sleep at bedtime, perpetuating the problem.
4. Exercise 30-60 minutes at least 4 days a week will lead to better sleep.
5. Limit caffeine after 2pm--chocolate, too.
6. Create a restful atmosphere by keep the bedroom clutter free and relaxing. The room should be cool, dark and quiet.
7. Keep to a healthy diet. Avoid high fat, spicy or large meals 4-5 hours before bedtime.
8. Limit time in bed. If your teen has trouble falling asleep, make sure that they don't take long naps after school.
9. Make sure your teen has a good bed. If your teen is still sleeping on the same mattress she got as her "big girl bed" it's probably time for a new one. If your son is suddenly as tall as his father, his bed may not be long enough to allow him to stretch out and sleep well. A bed should be 6" longer than it's occupant is tall, so if space allows, you may want to consider a queen-size bed. (80" long vs. a full-size at 75" long).



Overall, the best thing parents can do is set the example by valuing the benefits of adequate sleep. If you are well rested, vibrant and healthy, chances are your teen will pick up your good habits.