

# TEEN SLEEP: What you need to know

## Why Sleep Is Important?



Sleep is a basic need our bodies have, just like breathing, drinking water, eating, and moving around. When you sleep, you are giving your body and mind time to recover from the day, keeping yourself healthy. In fact, getting enough, good sleep gives you:

- Higher levels of physical and mental energy.
- Less anxiety, depression, and moodiness.
- More creativity for hobbies and every day problem-solving.
- Better ability to pay attention, concentrate, and sit still.
- Improved memory, which supports learning and better grades.
- Faster reaction times to improve sports performance and driving safety (because drowsy driving is just as dangerous as drunk driving).

## What is Normal Sleep?

Teens aged 13-18 need more sleep than you might think—8 to 10 hours a night. This is because your brain and body are still growing and developing important skills.



Good sleepers typically take less than 20 minutes to fall asleep at night and may wake up once or twice, but can get back to sleep pretty quickly. Even good sleepers might sometimes have trouble falling asleep or staying sleep, maybe because of stress, but that usually gets better after a few nights.

## 8 Quick Tips to Support Good Sleep

### 1. Save your Bed for Sleep:

Only get into bed when you feel sleepy or ready to sleep. This will help your brain and body understand that your bed is for sleeping, not for other activities like struggling to sleep, watching TV, or doing homework.

### 2. Reduce Naps:

Try to sleep only at night without napping during the day. If you feel like you really need a nap, try to do it in the early afternoon and keep it short -- around 30-45 minutes.

### 3. Limit Caffeine:

Avoid drinks with caffeine at least 4-6 hours before bedtime.



### 4. Avoid Exercise near Bed:

Don't exercise 1-3 hours before sleep. Give your body time to relax and wind down.

### 5. Consider your Bedroom Environment:

Create a soothing bedroom that avoids distractions from noise, light, an uncomfortable temperature, and pets.

### 6. Consistent Schedule:

Try to sleep for 8-10 hours every night. Go to bed and wake up at the same time. Try to keep close to the same schedule on weekdays and weekends (within about 2 hours).



### 7. Screen-Free Time:

Try to avoid screen time 30-60 minutes before bed because the light from screens, like TVs, phones, and tablets, can make it harder for your brain to know it's time to sleep.



### 8. Relaxing Routine:

Create a relaxing bedtime routine that lasts at least 15-30 minutes. Include tasks like turning off screens, getting things ready for tomorrow, and calming your mind and body by doing things like stretching, meditation, taking deep breaths, or listening to music.



Akron Children's Sleep Medicine

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## Common Sleep Problems

Many people struggle with sleep at night and sleepiness during the day. Sleep troubles can get worse if you don't do something about them. Below are some common sleep problems for teens.

- **Insomnia**
  - You have a hard time getting to sleep or staying asleep, even though you are trying to sleep, and these problems last for months.
  - Stress, anxiety, or poor sleep habits interfere with your body's ability to relax, and unwind.
- **Delayed Circadian Rhythm Disorder**
  - Your internal body clock, which controls when you feel awake or sleepy, naturally shifts during teen years so you aren't tired until later at night.
  - This shift can then make it hard to fall asleep at your bedtime or wake up on time for school – and that can make it hard to get through the day.
- **Obstructive Sleep Apnea**
  - Brief pauses in breathing during sleep, often accompanied by snoring and feeling sleepy during the day.
  - This can happen because your tonsils or adenoids are big, your height and weight have changed, or your family's health history.
- **Sleep-related Movement Disorders**
  - Moving around a lot in your sleep or feeling like you have to move around because you're uncomfortable, especially when trying to fall asleep.



## How to Get Help

- If sleep troubles are bothering you at night and making it harder for you to do what you need to do during the day, please ask for help.
- You can:
  - Talk to your doctor about your worries about sleep.
  - Ask if a referral to a Sleep Medicine doctor would be beneficial.
  - Get help from Akron Children's Sleep Medicine by calling **330-543-8885**.

## For more information...

About age-appropriate sleep and tips for how to get good rest scan the QR code or visit [akronchildrens.org/sleepmedicine](http://akronchildrens.org/sleepmedicine).



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