

## Teens and Sleep<sup>1</sup>

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Keeping up with the daily schedule of a teenager can be exhausting. However, they are often the ones who are truly suffering! Recent studies have pointed out that many teens may have increased difficulty learning and experience behavioral and emotional problems because they may be chronically sleep-deprived. However, the National Sleep Foundation has a number of tips for parents to ensure that their teens are getting enough sleep.

Signs of sleep deprivation and sleepiness in your adolescent are not always obvious. Signs include difficulty waking in the morning, irritability late in the day, randomly falling asleep during the day, and sleeping for extended times on the weekends. Sleepiness can also mimic attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (National Sleep Foundation, n.d.)

Parents can and should enforce regular sleep routines for their teens, including a quiet time in the evening. Talk to them about their levels of sleepiness and their sleep schedules. You may also need to look at the time they're spending on after-school or work activities and make adjustments if necessary.

Encourage your teenager to keep a sleep diary for one or two weeks. If you can't seem to get them into a good sleep routine or they appear to be getting adequate sleep but still have difficulty staying awake during the day, you may want to consult a sleep expert. And, finally, be a good role model. Make sleep a high priority for the whole family in order to avoid the harmful effects of sleep deprivation.

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## References

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