

# SLEEP

Sleep is essential for health and daily functioning. It's as important as a healthy diet and regular physical activity. The recommended amount of sleep for teenagers is 8 to 10 hours a night. If your schedule is busy, that can feel hard to achieve.

**However, another time that sleep suffers is when our life is NOT busy and we are left to create our own schedules.**

Many of us will not set consistent sleep times and we end up with unpredictable sleep schedules and poor quality of sleep, which can wreak havoc on our mental and physical health.

## Poor Sleep Habits Impact...

- **Mood** causing you to be irritable, cranky, and easily upset.
- **Behavior** as you are more likely to engage in risk-taking behavior such as drinking, driving fast, and other dangerous activities.
- **Cognitive Ability**, resulting in problems with attention, memory, decision making, reaction time, and creativity.
- **Academic Performance** with less sleep you are more apt to get poor grades, not focus on the details of an instruction or your assignments
- **Driving** teenagers are at the highest risk for falling asleep at the wheel.

## Technology and Sleep

We are immersed in technology, and with recent COVID-19 restrictions that may feel more true than ever. More than 90% of teens use some form of technology before bedtime. Exposure to blue light from devices can delay the release of melatonin and push back sleep. Mental stimulation like that makes it harder to get to sleep and get a good night's rest. There is also emerging evidence that heavy social media use by young adults is not only linked to sleep problems, but increased risk for depression.

## Tips Get Enough Sleep:

- *Maintain a regular sleep schedule.* You should go to bed and wake up at about the same time each day. **Yes, even during a distance learning schedule!**
- *Avoid oversleeping.* Although catching up on some sleep on the weekends can be helpful, sleeping in until noon on Sunday will make it hard to get back on a school schedule that night.
- *Take early afternoon naps.* A nap of 15-20 minutes in the early afternoon can be beneficial.
- *Avoid caffeine, smoking, alcohol, and drugs.* All of these cause sleep problems.
- *Make bedrooms tech free.* Have a central charging area in the home and limit use of electronics in the 30-60 minutes before sleep.
- *Keep bedrooms cool.* This creates an environment that promotes sleep.
- *Contact your doctor* if there is excessive snoring, sleep apnea (pauses in breathing or very shallow breathing), or you are continually drowsy despite changes towards healthy sleep habits.

## Self-Care Corner

*A good laugh and a long sleep are the best cures for anything.*

- Irish Proverb

**Sleep Challenge:** For one full week (7 days) commit to a consistent sleep schedule and using the "tips" above. Observe how you feel at the end of that week, compared to how your usual sleep habits. I dare you!

## References:

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