

All About Sleep

Sleep is an important part of being healthy, and sleep needs vary by age.

Teens need about 8-10 hours of sleep per night, but many don't get it due to early school start times and busy schedules with homework, sports, friends, social media and other activities.

Lack of sleep can lead to:

- Being less attentive
- Inconsistent performance in school and sports
- Short-term memory loss
- Delayed response time

When teens do not get enough sleep, this can also lead to anger problems, trouble in school, a use of stimulants (caffeine, energy drinks) and car crashes due to delayed response time or falling asleep at the wheel.

Additionally, teens may have changes in their sleep patterns, which can cause irregularities with sleep schedules and can make it hard to get the recommended 8-10 hours per night.

Tips for sleep

- Have a consistent bedtime, especially on school nights.
- Have technology-free time (at least an hour) before bed and keep bedrooms screen-free.
- Keep bedrooms cool and dark with comfortable bedding.
- Establish a pre-bed routine—this can help encourage good sleep habits. This may include reading, taking a shower/bath, yoga or stretching, and other quiet activities.

Source:

<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/sleep.html?WT.ac=ctg>

Alcohol Awareness

It's easy for teens to get the wrong message about alcohol—they might see their parents drink or tv shows/commercials that make it look like a lot of fun, but it can lead to health and other problems.

Individuals may develop a problem with alcohol where they crave it and has little or no control over their drinking and can't stop without help, and this is called alcoholism. Other health concerns that happen with drinking alcohol may include liver problems, and damage to the pancreas, heart and brain.

Alcohol is illegal for people under the age of 21, and the hope is that individuals at that age will be able to make good and mature decisions while drinking—such as saying no to drinking and driving.

Earth Day 2021

Earth day falls on Thursday April 22nd this year, but that doesn't mean you can't be thinking about ways to be 'green' the entire month!

Being 'green' means you take steps to be thinking about the environment and the ways you and your friends/family can help protect the land, water and air around us.

Ways to be Green:

- Don't litter and pick it up
- Recycle cans, bottles, and paper
- Turn off the water when brushing your teeth, and be conscientious while showering
- Unplug chargers for electronics when not in use
- Donate clothes to local organizations instead of throwing away

Sleep Q&A for Teens

Can lack of sleep stunt your growth?

Possibly. This will not happen with one or two nights of poor or no sleep, however, if bad sleep habits happen over the long term, a person's growth may be affected.

Growth hormone is released during sleep and if a person consistently gets too little sleep, this hormone is suppressed.

What should I do if I can't fall asleep?

If your mind is racing, try quieting your mind by picturing a relaxing scene—such as laying on the beach in a hammock, or camping in the woods. Focus on the sounds, what you see and what you feel (such as a breeze or the sway of the hammock.)

If that doesn't work, try getting up for a short time and do something relaxing that might make you drowsy, such as reading. Keep the lights low and avoid technology which can keep your brain thinking it's time to be up/wake up.

Why does my body jerk before I fall asleep?

Doctors and scientists call this a "hypnic" or "myoclonic" jerk. It is perfectly normal, and although doctors and scientists aren't 100% sure why this happens, one theory is that the brain misunderstands what is going on as our muscles relax before sleep. It's normal for our muscles to relax, but the brain thinks you are falling and tells your muscles to tense as a way to 'catch yourself' before falling—hence the jerk.

Source:

<https://kidshealth.org/en/teens/expert/sleep?ref=search>