



Too Little Sleep

Most teens need about nine hours of sleep a night, and sometimes more, to maintain optimal daytime alertness. But few teens actually get that much sleep regularly. Although this might seem like no big deal, sleep deprivation can have serious consequences. Tired teens can find it difficult to concentrate and learn, or even stay awake in class. Too little sleep also might contribute to mood swings and behavioral problems. Another major concern is drowsy driving, which can lead to serious, even deadly, accidents.

- **Adjust the lighting** - As bedtime approaches, dim the lights.
- **Stick to a schedule** - Tough as it may be, encourage your teen to go to bed and get up at the same time every day, even on weekends.
- **Nix long naps** - If your teen is drowsy during the day, a 30-minute nap after school might be refreshing.
- **Keep it calm** - Encourage your teen to wind down at night with a warm shower, a book or other relaxing activities. Discourage stimulating activities — including vigorous exercise, loud music, video games, television, computer use and text messaging — an hour or two before bedtime.
- **Know when to unplug** - Take the TV out of your teen's room, or keep it off at night. The same goes for your teen's cellphone, computer and other electronic gadgets.
- **Curb the caffeine**