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Ensuring a Good Night's Sleep

1. The brain craves regularity: Go to bed and wake up at the same time every day. Most people need 7 to 8 hours of sleep.
2. Our brains are tuned to the light: Dim lights are best before bed. Get bright, natural light in the AM. Avoid using devices with screens in the evening, especially in the bedroom.
3. Keep it cool: Keep your bedroom on the cool side. Avoid very hot baths or showers just before bed.
4. Don't get overstimulated: Avoid alcohol, caffeinated beverages, nicotine and other stimulants in the evening. Eliminate sources of daytime activity such as work, school, taxes, media consumption, if keeping you awake.
5. Wind down before bed: Engage in quiet, relaxing activities. Keep a pad of paper at the bedside so you can write down and forget about busy thoughts for the night. This will help free your mind for more important things... like sleep!

For more information

If you are interested in learning more about mental health and sleep for youth, please contact:

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MENTAL HEALTH & SLEEP FOR YOUTH

Did you know?

- 85% of adolescents get less than the recommended minimum of 8-10 hours of sleep per night.
- A shortened amount of sleep impairs learning, cognitive performance, as well as jeopardizes physical and mental health, and personal safety.
- Although youth may be tempted to sleep in on the weekends in order to “catch up” on sleep, this actually creates a vicious cycle, throwing off your natural biological rhythms, making it more difficult to wake up early on weekdays.



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What are the consequences of sleep loss in youths?

Sleep deprivation has serious consequences for individuals of all ages, but teens have a great sleep need, and are likely to suffer the consequences of sleep loss. Cognitive, social and behavioural performance is impaired. It takes more effort for teens to remain alert, concentrate, and make decisions needed to achieve academically and to thrive socially when suffering from sleep loss.

Some common consequences of sleep loss include:

- Sleep Apnea
- Poor school performance, lower grades, and tardiness.
- Increased absenteeism, increased risk of dropping out of school.
- Difficulty remaining alert and paying attention.
- Increased risk for motor vehicle accidents.
- Learning and memory deficits.
- Influences on mood such as increased irritability, as well as an increased risk of depression, anxiety and suicidal ideation.

Why is it so difficult for youth to get enough sleep?



Teens experience a biological shift to a later sleep-wake cycle. Studies show that the sleep-inducing hormone, melatonin, is secreted later in the evening for teens – around 11:00 pm – and also, that level drops later in the morning. This puts the teenager’s biological clock in conflict with early school start times. Other demands such as after school jobs, socializing, and after school extracurricular activities create further demands on already busy lives, putting pressure on time for sleep.

How to get help?

- Talk to your family members about the importance of sleep.
- Talk to your school nurse or school counselor.
- Talk to your family doctor about your sleep habits, and how you think sleep loss is impacting your quality of life / daytime functioning.