Adolescent Sleep: Resources
from Nicola Morgan


INTERESTING STARTING POINTS

- Parent-set bedtimes help: www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3098947/
- Screen use: washingtonpost.com/national/health-science/blue-light-from-electronics-disturbs-sleep-especially-for-teenagers/2014/08/29/3edd2726-27a7-11e4-958c-268a320a60ce_story.html
- Carskadon’s research: www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3130594/
- BBC sleep deprivation survey: www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-22209818
- Bad sleep affects health www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-21572686
- Sleep deprived teens, Sleep Scotland http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-23811690
- World Sleep Day has lots of resources and activities - https://worldsleepday.org/
- Book: Night School by Richard Wiseman – everything you need to know about sleep

“SLEEP HYGIENE” describes what we should or shouldn’t do during the hour before we want to sleep. The brain’s powerful habit-forming mechanism means that repeated actions before bed are cues to becoming sleepy. So, during the lead up to desired sleep time, create a routine, the same every evening. It’s important for each individual to create their own routine but here is an example:

1. Dim the lights and close curtains in bedroom.
2. Switch computer and all electronic gadgets off and ideally out of sight/reach.
3. Have light snack if hungry; avoid caffeine; try herbal tea such as fennel or chamomile.
4. Play slow and soft music.
5. Spend 5 minutes tidying room – hooray! Or at least tidy desk or clothes.
6. Spend 5 minutes getting tomorrow's schoolbag ready or make list.
8. Do something relaxing, eg stretching exercises/relaxation audio.
9. Get into bed.
10. Read (for pleasure) and/or listen to slow, quiet music; writing is also fine (not for work.)

The following can have a negative impact on sleep, so avoid in the 2 hours before bed:

- Caffeine in all forms, including normal tea + many fizzy drinks. Energy drinks are not recommended for young people at any time and certainly not from lunchtime onwards. NB even “decaf” coffee has some caffeine in it.
- A heavy meal or a sugary or spicy snack.
- Exercise that raises heart rate; fast music.
- Anything with backlit display (mimics daylight) – PCs, TV, electronic games, DVDs, phones.
- Phones – as well as the light, they bring messages likely to excite, not relax!
- Arguments/stress – another reason to remove phones/internet from bedroom.
- Worrying about not sleeping! Reassure that we can cope with a few bad nights, even with exams next day. Our aim is to get the best we can, but not worry when we don’t.

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