

# Sleep Hygiene Tips for Adolescents & Emerging Adults

Age 13-21 Years

## Things to DO:

- Get outside at least 30 minutes a day, especially in the mornings.
- Follow the same bed and wake times during the week as much as possible.
- Bedtime should follow a predictable, calming routine.
- Try to only sleep in your bed (and avoid taking naps/sleeping in other places, as much as possible).
- Keep the space where you sleep as calm, cool, and dark as possible.
  - **TIP:** If you have a room in more than one place - like if you live part of the year away at college, or if your parents live in separate houses - try to keep the same routine everywhere you sleep regularly.
- If you aren't feeling sleepy/drowsy at your planned bedtime, *temporarily delay going to sleep by 15-30 minutes until you feel sleepy.*
- Consider keeping a sleep diary to track your naps, sleep and wake times, and activities to help find patterns & problem areas to address. This can be helpful when discussing any sleep challenges with your doctor.

## Things TO AVOID:

- **Going to bed hungry, thirsty, or overly full.**
- **Especially in the 2-3 hours before bed:**
  - ingesting any alcohol, nicotine, caffeine (i.e. soda, energy drinks, certain teas, and chocolate) as well as any unnecessary medications that may affect sleep.
  - exercising or doing other stimulating activities. Remember to also avoid these activities if/when you wake up in the middle of the night.
  - using screens (such as on *phones, tablets, computers, televisions*). Even with filters, the light from electronics and screens can disrupt our ability to produce the hormone melatonin; which helps people feel drowsy or sleepy.
- **Staying in your bed if you're still awake after 30 minutes.** Keep items in your room so you can do *a relaxing activity* outside of bed until you feel sleepy. This can become a good time to do things like make art, write in a journal, listen to relaxing music, or read by a soft light.

Adapted from the “Primary Care Principles for Child Mental Health” by Dr. Robert Hilt of Seattle Children’s Hospital’s Partnership Access Line (PAL), and “Why We Sleep” (2017) by Dr. Matthew Walker, neuroscientist & professor at UC Berkeley.

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