

New video explains the science behind sleepy teens

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A new video developed by the American Academy of Sleep Medicine offers tips to help sleep-deprived teenagers get healthy sleep on a regular basis. Released during Student Sleep Health Week, the video "Why Are

"Teens So Sleepy?" highlights the challenges teenagers face to get sufficient sleep, recommends later school start times, and provides advice on how teens can develop positive sleep habits.

"The obligations of school, work, family and friends make it hard for teenagers to get sufficient sleep to perform their best," said AASM President Dr. Raman Malhotra. "While it might seem like teens sleep a lot, most are sleep deprived and trying to catch up on the weekends."

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, [78% of high school students](#) don't get enough sleep on an average school night. The AASM recommends that teenagers between 13 and 18 years old should obtain eight to 10 hours of sleep per night. One obstacle to achieving sufficient sleep, explained in the video, is that teenagers' body clocks are naturally programmed to trigger sleepiness later at night and wakefulness later in the morning. That makes it more difficult for teens to get up for an early school day, which is why the AASM supports school start times of no earlier than 8:30 a.m. for middle and high schools.

"Adjusting school start times to better align with teens' circadian rhythms is a positive step toward improving student achievement, health and safety," said Malhotra. "Later school start times are associated with longer total sleep time, reduced daytime sleepiness, increased classroom engagement, and reduced tardiness and absences."

Ten Sleep Tips for Teens

The video also instructs teenagers that they can improve their sleep by following these 10 tips:

1. Get some [physical activity](#) every day.
2. Avoid caffeine after [school](#).

3. Limit afterschool naps to 30 minutes or less and avoid naps after 4 p.m.
4. Have meals around the same time every day and avoid eating too close to bedtime.
5. Keep indoor lights dim at night.
6. Put away your smartphone and other [electronic devices](#) at least 30 minutes before bedtime.
7. Give yourself some [time](#) to relax and unwind before going to bed.
8. Set a bedtime that will allow you at least eight hours to sleep.
9. Get bright light every morning when you wake up.
10. Stick to your sleep schedule as closely as you can on weekends.

More information: Nathaniel F. Watson et al, Delaying Middle School and High School Start Times Promotes Student Health and Performance: An American Academy of Sleep Medicine Position Statement, *Journal of Clinical Sleep Medicine* (2017). [DOI: 10.5664/jcsm.6558](#)

Provided by American Academy of Sleep Medicine (AASM)

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