



Helping teenagers sleep better

Sleep is important for restoring energy and helping you grow and develop.

Not enough, or poor quality, sleep can have a negative effect on your behaviour, learning, health, wellbeing and weight.

How much sleep you need in 24 hours

You should be regularly sleeping 8–10 hours each night. However, some people naturally sleep slightly less or more than these recommended hours.

It is not just the amount of sleep that is important but also the quality of that sleep. The tips below may be helpful.

Ways you can improve your sleep¹

- Have a regular bedtime routine: this might include having a shower, brushing your teeth, then heading to bed. Quiet activities, like reading, are good before bed.
- Have a regular bedtime and wake up time, including on the weekends (+/- 2 hours). This will make it easier to get up for school on Monday mornings!
- If you are going to bed too late, gradually change this by going to bed 30 minutes earlier and getting up 30 minutes earlier.
- Try to do your study earlier in the afternoon/evening.
- Avoid active games, playing outside and screen use (eg, TV, internet, electronic games, etc) in the hour before bedtime. Try dimming the lights earlier.
- Arrange a comfortable sleeping environment. The place where you sleep should be quiet, warm and dark.



- Don't have any distractions within sight or hearing of the area where you sleep, including TV or any kind of computer screen. Turn off your phone before you go to bed so you are not tempted to keep checking it.
- Try to avoid eating meals within 1 to 2 hours of going to bed.
- Avoid caffeinated drinks like energy drinks, coffee, and tea – especially in the afternoon/evening – as they can affect your sleep.
- Being active throughout the day can help you sleep. Time spent in bright sunlight, such as being active outside, can also help, but don't forget to be SunSmart!
- Illness can affect your sleep. If you discover that you snore a lot or stop breathing for short periods while you're asleep, discuss this with your GP.
- Irregular sleep and insufficient sleep can be a symptom of depression. Discuss this with your GP.

The Australian Sleep Health Foundation has a range of factsheets on sleep health, including behavioural sleep problems in school-aged children, teenage sleep, understanding and helping poor sleep, and technology and sleep (www.sleephealthfoundation.org.au).

1. Adapted from the Australian Sleep Health Foundation (www.sleephealthfoundation.org.au): Sleep Tips for Children