

# Pointers For Parents

## Sleep Is Key To Helping Teens Recharge For Success In School

(NAPSA)—Here's eye-opening news: For most teens, one of the best ways to find success in school is to get enough sleep.

When well rested, teens are more likely to be healthy, energetic and have a positive attitude toward life in general—helping them be their best and do their best in school and at home.

To help, the National Healthy Sleep Awareness Project launched the “Sleep Recharges You” campaign, urging teens to get eight to 10 hours of sleep per night to promote optimal health.

“It's important to make sleep a priority,” said Dr. Ronald Chervin, president of the American Academy of Sleep Medicine (AASM) and spokesperson for the National Healthy Sleep Awareness Project. “Setting and sticking to a routine to get as much sleep as possible is one of the best things teens can do for their health, academic achievement and athletic performance.”

### **Lack of Sleep Jeopardizes Teens' Grades, Health and Safety**

More than two-thirds of high school students in the U.S. are failing to get enough sleep on school nights, according to a 2016 study published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Results show that 69 percent of surveyed students in grades 9 to 12 reported sleeping less than eight hours on an average school night. Insufficient sleep can impact everything from grades to safety.

Sleepy teens may fare worse in school than their well-rested peers. Studies show that teens who are sleep deprived may be more easily distracted and recall information more slowly. Sleeping



**Most teens, research suggests, lack sufficient sleep, putting them at risk for health and behavioral problems.**

fewer than the recommended hours is also associated with attention, behavior and learning problems.

Lack of sleep may also affect teens' athletic performance. When teens sleep, hormones are released that help them grow taller and develop muscles. Sleep helps restore energy to the brain and body.

Studies show that teens who sleep less than the recommended hours are more likely to be overweight and develop hypertension and diabetes. Additionally, insufficient sleep in teenagers has been found to increase the risk of depression and is associated with increased risk of self-harm, suicidal thoughts and suicide attempts.

Insufficient sleep also significantly increases teens' risk for drowsy-driving accidents. A 2014 study found that teen drivers who start class earlier in the morning are involved in significantly more motor vehicle accidents than those with later start times. Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for teens in the U.S., according to the CDC.

### **Parents, Caregivers Play Crucial Role**

Teens should be encouraged to

get enough sleep every night to recharge. The AASM advises parents and caregivers to help by modeling healthy sleep habits, promoting a consistent sleep schedule and creating a quiet sleep environment for their teens.

Additionally, setting restrictions on screen time before bed is key to helping teens get to sleep on time. Teens may be tempted to keep using their laptops, smartphones and game consoles late into the night rather than going to sleep.

“Teens are still growing and developing and sleep is a crucial part of these processes,” said Dr. Chervin. “One of the best things parents and caregivers can do for their children's health and well-being is to encourage routines that will help them get enough sleep.”

According to the AASM, a natural shift in the timing of the body's internal “circadian” clock occurs during puberty, causing most teens to have a biological preference for a late-night bedtime.

It is also important that parents and local school boards work together to implement high school start times that allow teens to get the healthy sleep they need to meet their full potential.

### **Official Consensus**

The AASM recommends that teens sleep eight to 10 hours per night on a regular basis to promote optimal health.

Parents concerned that their teen is sleeping too little or too much should consult a board-certified sleep medicine physician or visit [www.sleepeducation.org](http://www.sleepeducation.org) to find an accredited sleep center nearby.

### **Learn More**

For further facts, visit [www.sleepeducation.org/healthysleep](http://www.sleepeducation.org/healthysleep).