

**The Top Tips**

**Here is a little information to help you understand your teens  
sleep and how you can help.**

1. **Emphasise the importance of sleep**and that it improves memory and performance. Teens need at least eight hours’ sleep on school nights.
2. **Encourage regular exercise** – 20 minutes three times a week will help.
3. **Suggest they drink less caffeine** (in cola and energy drinks as well as tea and coffee). Too much caffeine stops them falling asleep and prevents deep sleep.
4. **Point out that eating too much or too little close to bedtime – an over full or empty stomach – may prevent sleep onset**, or cause discomfort throughout the night.
5. **Try and get your teen into a good bed routine** – suggest that doing the same things in the same order before going to sleep can help.
6. **Avoid using electronic devices** (TVs, gaming machines and more importantly, tablets and smartphones) in the hour before bedtime. Blue light emitting from these gadgets stimulates the brain and may inhibit melatonin production – the hormone you need to sleep.
7. **Eliminate electronic devices from the bedroom**. If this isn’t possible, try to zone areas of the room for work, leisure and sleep.
8. **Ensure a good sleep environment** – a room that is dark, cool, quiet, safe and comfortable.
9. **Make sure your teenager has a comfortable bed**. It may be time to get a new one – and encourage him or her to choose it themselves.
10. **Don’t give teenagers hand-me-down beds**. A good rule of thumb: if the bed’s no longer good for its first user it’s not good enough for them either.

Remember, habits learned in adolescence often become lifetime habits – so make sure good sleep habits are learned early.