

- Try to encourage your teenagers to go to bed at roughly the same time every night as this will programme their body to sleep better. Choose a time when you're most likely to feel sleepy.
- Your child's bedroom should be a relaxed environment. Encourage them to use their bedrooms for rest and sleep rather than somewhere where they go to do homework, play online games etc. Keep it as quiet and dark as possible. It should be neither too hot nor too cold. Temperature, lighting and noise should be controlled so that the bedroom environment helps them to fall (and stay) asleep. Experts say that bedrooms are strongly associated with sleep, but that certain things weaken the association. These include tablet computers, mobiles/smartphones, TVs and other electronic gadgets, light or noise, and a bad mattress or uncomfortable bed.
- The light from screens can also affect how easily children get to sleep. Try to keep your child's bedroom a screen-free zone and get them to charge their phones and other devices downstairs. That way they won't be tempted to respond to friends getting in touch late in the evening.
- It's difficult to get restful sleep on a mattress that's too soft or too hard, or a bed that's too small or old. If they have a pet that sleeps in the room with them then, consider moving it somewhere else if it often makes noise or needs to be let out during the night.
- Moderate exercise on a regular basis, such as swimming or walking, can help relieve some of the tension built up over the day. Make sure that your teenager isn't doing vigorous exercise too close to bedtime, as it may keep them awake.
- A lot of teenagers drink fizzy and energy type drinks so encourage them to cut down on these stimulants and others such as caffeine in tea or coffee, especially in the evening. They interfere with the process of falling asleep, and they prevent deep sleep. The effects of caffeine can last a long time (up to 24 hours), so the chances of it affecting sleep are significant. Instead, have a warm, milky drink/herbal tea or water.

- Too much food, especially late at night, can interrupt your sleep patterns.
- Encourage your teenager to relax before bed, possibly have a warm bath, listen to quiet music or do some gentle relaxation techniques to relax the mind and body. You should be able to purchase or download a helpful relaxation CD.
- Deal with worries or up and coming exams by making lists of things to be tackled the next day. If your teenager tends to lie in bed thinking about tomorrow's tasks, encourage them to set aside time before bedtime to make plans for the next day. The goal is to avoid doing these things when you're in bed, trying to sleep.







