

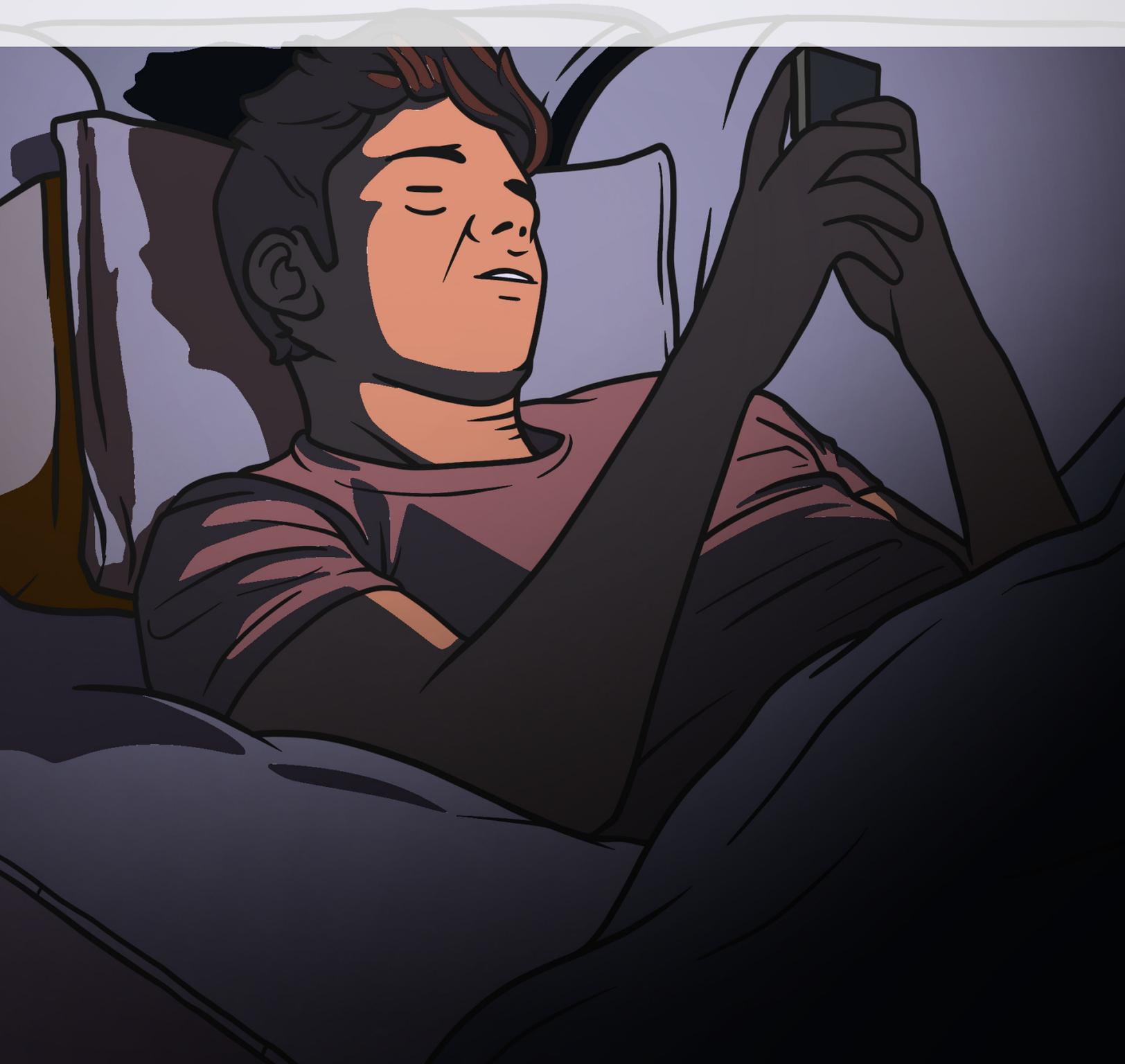
The 41st Wink

Better Sleep For Life

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SLEEP AND YOUR TEENAGER



If you have a teen in your house, it may be all too familiar to see them struggle with getting up and out of bed at a 'decent hour'. The struggle is often real. According to the data, there is a good chance that your teen may not be simply lazing about, but that they may actually be getting insufficient and/or poor quality sleep due in part to changes in their biology.

According to the National Sleep Foundation, "the sleep-wake bio-regulatory factors appear to undergo significant changes during adolescence irrespective of culture or geography. These changes lay the ground work for the biological night to occur later during the teen years than before. Circadian rhythms (daily biological clock) seem to slow down and lag behind as young people progress through the middle school years. At the same time, the sleep pressure system appears to change in a way that makes it easier to stay awake longer, though without changing the amount of sleep that is needed."

Both the National Sleep Foundation and the American Academy of Sleep Medicine agree that teenagers need between eight and 10 hours of sleep each night. Surveys however indicate that the majority of teens fail to achieve even the minimum threshold of eight hours.

Data from multiple US national surveys conducted from 2007-2013 found that nearly 69% of high school students got seven or fewer hours of sleep per night.

Teen sleep restriction facts

- Estimates place the rate of insomnia in adolescents at as high as 23.8%.
- Students in early morning classes report being less alert, more weary, and having to expend greater effort.
- 58 to 68% of teens report being “really sleepy” between 8 and 10 a.m.
- Insufficient sleep among teens has been found to be higher among women than men.
- Older teens report getting less sleep than people in early adolescence.
- Teens who identify as Black, Asian, and multiracial have the highest rates of reduced sleep (sleeping less than eight hours per night).

How sleep changes during adolescence

- Teenagers require more sleep as they transition to young adulthood, however many experience increasing sleep deficits as they mature.
- Teens can experience real consequences due to ongoing sleep deprivation beyond sleepiness. Poor quality and / or inadequate sleep can negatively affect physical and mental health as well as the ability to control behavior, emotion and attention. It can also be a significant impediment to learning, attainment of social competence and general quality of life.
- During adolescence, there is a strong tendency toward being a “night owl,” staying up later at night and sleeping longer into the morning. Experts believe this is a two-fold biological impulse affecting the circadian rhythm and sleep-wake cycle of teens.
- As teens progress through adolescence, they often develop a sleep drive that builds more slowly, which means they may not start to feel tired until later in the evening. Melatonin, a naturally occurring sleep promoting hormone, is produced later in the day and they may in fact experience a peak of wakefulness around 9pm!

- If allowed to sleep according to their body's natural schedule, many teens would get eight hours or more per night, sleeping from 11 p.m. or midnight until 8 or 9 a.m., but school and work start times often force them to wake up earlier in the morning

Easy steps to help improve your teen's sleep

- Talk with them – ask about the quality of their sleep. Data suggests that many parents may not realize if their children are having sleeping problems.
- Help create a sleep-promoting environment in their bedroom (cool, dark, quiet).
- Help create a consistent wind-down routine to help with relaxation.
- Avoid caffeine and energy drinks, especially in the afternoon and evening.
- Put away electronic devices for at least a half-hour before bed and keep them on silent.
- Manage scheduling and commitments, so that stress is reduced and adequate time is reserved for wind-down and sleep.
- If your teen has persistently poor sleep quality, consult with a sleep specialist.

Beyond fatigue - other factors that may negatively impact sleep quality

- Certain sleep disorders, such as obstructive sleep apnea, restless leg syndrome and narcolepsy can all begin to manifest in the teenage years and if unaddressed may become a long-term challenge deep into adulthood.
- Teenagers who suffer with depression, anxiety and other emotional / mental health challenges may find that these disorders affect their sleep as well.

Learning how to create healthy sleep habits is the long-lasting gift your family deserves.

Sources:

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