

# What happens to teenagers when they lose sleep?

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On average, teenagers should be getting between eight and ten hours of sleep per night. But with harder and busier schedules, due to an increased emphasis on homework, sports, social lives, and clubs, getting the recommended amount of sleep is difficult for most teenagers. Moreover, studies have shown that 12th graders, on average, are sleeping two hours less than they should each night (Nordqvist). However, most teens do not realize there are consequences to lack of sleep.

They willing sacrifice sleep in order to study more, play an extra sport, or work a few extra hours. They do not realize that lack of sleep can seriously affect their physical, social and mental wellbeing. The physical consequences of not getting enough sleep are one of the first visible signs teens are sleeping less than they should. In fact, one of the first signs is problems with their skin, like pimples. Not only does a lack of sleep affect the outside of their body, but it also affects the inside as well.

Not getting at least eight hours of sleep can cause a person to increase their likelihood of developing an illness. Since their immune system is not resting, teenagers are at increased risk of developing an infection and having their immune system heal slower. More importantly, however, is the effect lack of sleep has on their metabolism. Not getting enough sleep can reduce a teen's glucose metabolism by as much as 40 percent (Ford). Weight gain is another common symptom as teens eat more junk food to help restore their energy levels that lack of sleep drains.

Studies have shown that 28% of all teenagers say they are too tired to do any type of physical exercise (Nordqvist). Unfortunately, when teens are

tired, they are also more prone to injuries, which can then interrupt their sleep patterns. I know this statement is true because I go through it almost every single night. Ever since I developed tendinitis in my right shoulder, I wake up several times throughout the night in pain. The pain feels like someone is stabbing my shoulder repeatedly.

Student athletes are particularly prone to getting less sleep than recommended, and as a result these sleep-deprived athletes experience high levels of cortisol, a stress hormone, as well as lower levels of human growth hormone, which is important for muscle repair (Ford). The point is that when high school students do not obtain the recommended hours of sleep, they can experience weight gain, have skin outbreaks, and have an increased risk of receiving injuries and infections. Thus, it is impossible for teenagers to be healthy without at least eight to ten hours of sleep a night. Not only does the lack of sleep affect the physical aspect of a person, it also affects them mentally. One of the major effects teens encounter from a lack of sleep is depression.

A person can develop depression due to the chemicals in their brain not firing properly. In addition, when deprived of enough sleep, it is possible for a person to develop clinical depression (Danish). After depression, another major effect of not getting enough sleep is the feeling of being constantly frustrated and nervous. Studies have shown sleep-deprived-children were much more likely to feel nervous and suffer from tension (Nordqvist). In addition, a decrease in sleep can limit a student's ability to learn, listen, concentrate and solve problems (Teens).

Forgetting names, homework, important dates, and numbers are an all too common occurrence these days among high school students. A teenager's body is not the only thing affected by lack of sleep; their social lives are also affected. When teenagers do not get enough sleep, they can develop mood swings. In addition, a decrease in sleep can lead to inappropriate behavior, such being extremely impatient or impulsive. This inappropriate behavior can then lead to certain types of aggression. In fact, people who are sleep deprived tend to become very angry.

They can yell at family and friends for no reason. They have also been known to perform irrational stunts, such as punching a wall. Moreover, teenagers lose time to interact with the human race because they cannot stay awake. Studies have shown 28% of high school students fall asleep while at school once a week or more (Nordqvist). While teens may not think that sleeping only a couple of hours a night is a big deal, they often do not realize what they are missing or how their actions affect others.

Sleep is extremely important, especially for teenagers. If teenagers do not get enough sleep, they are committing self harm in an in-direct way. Lack of sleep can cause injuries, depression, heart disease, heart failure, stroke, weight gain, aging skin, and even death. According to researchers in New Zealand and Australia, in a study conducted in 2000 found that people who drive after being awake for seventeen to nineteen hours performed worse on tests than people with a blood alcohol level of 0.05 percent, almost the legal limit for drunk driving. Clearly, teenagers NEED to get the recommended amount of sleep to function properly.