



## **Teen Sleep Deprivation**

**What is Sleep Deprivation?** Sleep deprivation is the condition of not having enough sleep. A chronic sleep-restricted state can cause fatigue, daytime sleepiness, clumsiness and weight loss or weight gain. It adversely affects the brain and cognitive function. According to a recent Stanford University Study, 87% of American teens report that they do not get the 8 – 10 hours of recommended sleep for optimal functioning. Teens with rigorous academic loads may forego their time to sleep to study for high stakes exams and completing homework instead. The American Academy of Pediatrics is calling this an epidemic among adolescents with serious negative consequences for American teens' health and well-being.

### **Common Causes of Sleep Deprivation:**

- ❖ Worry over life changes, transitions, finances, relationships, trauma or loss
- ❖ Poor time management/procrastination with balancing school/home responsibilities
- ❖ Demanding, competitive and/or overscheduled academic or work life
- ❖ Excessive use of electronics and online distractions
- ❖ Teens' biology: Teens experience a shift in their circadian rhythms (or biological clock), so they tend to be more "awake" at night, and have difficulties waking early. This can cause a problem with most traditional school schedules beginning at 8 am.

### **Common Negative Effects of Sleep Deprivation:**

- ❖ Inability to concentrate, memory loss, cognitive impairment, slower response time
- ❖ Decrease in academic and/or work functioning
- ❖ Difficulty in regulating emotions properly (mood swings, lose temper and patience, etc.)
- ❖ Increase in conflicts and relationship issues due to communication problems
- ❖ Increased chance of developing obesity
- ❖ Four times more likely to develop depression, anxiety and suicidal thoughts
- ❖ Weakened immune system and increased likelihood of being sick more often
- ❖ More prone to physical injuries; increased drowsy driving and car accidents;
- ❖ Negatively impacts teens' developing brains

### **Suggestions for Better Sleep Management:**

- ❖ Make establishing a regular nightly routine to get at least 8 hours of sleep nightly a priority
- ❖ Keep the temperature of your bedroom cool and dark
- ❖ Use your bed for sleeping only (No talking on the phone, doing homework, watching TV, etc.)
- ❖ Limit or stop caffeine or sugar intake after morning hours
- ❖ Exercise regularly; however, not right before bedtime
- ❖ Turn off all electronic devices at least one hour before bedtime

**For more information, check out the following recommended websites:**

<http://teens.webmd.com/common-sleep-disorders-teens#1>