Parents should help teens get back on right sleep track

Baylor College of Medicine
HOUSTON -- (August 4, 2010) -- Computers, televisions and cell phones are preventing your teen from getting enough sleep, and that can affect grades and day to day life, said a sleep expert at Baylor College of Medicine [1].
"Because teens tend to stay up and wake up later in the summer, their bodies get used to it, making it harder to wake up early in the morning when the school year begins," said Dr. Philip Alapat [2], assistant professor of pulmonary, critical care and sleep medicine [3] at BCM and medical director of the BCM Sleep Center [4].

Sleep deprived

Teens should be getting eight to nine hours of sleep a night, but most do not. This makes them sleep deprived, and it gets worse as the week progresses. This is why teens may prefer to sleep in on the weekends to make up their sleep debt, said Alapat.

However, this type of sleep pattern is not ideal.

"When teens are sleep deprived, it can result in poor performance in school. It can also result in mood changes and sleepiness in dangerous situations like driving," said Alapat.

Routines rock!

Parents should help teens develop and maintain a regular, nightly sleep routine that doesn't involve televisions, computers or cell phones. Teens should also avoid caffeine in the afternoon and evening as this promotes late bedtimes.

Sleep deprivation may also be associated with other sleep disorders such as obstructive sleep apnea. If a teen has symptoms such as snoring, gasping or choking in their sleep, they may need to be evaluated by a specialist to see if they have a sleep disorder.

SOURCE [5]

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