

## How Sleep-Deprived Are U.S. Teens?

**Adolescents require about 9 hours of sleep** each night for optimal physical and mental health. CDC data show that more than 90% of U.S. high school students get inadequate sleep.

*The average U.S. adolescent sleeps 6.75 hours on school nights*

**Needed Sleep For Teens - 9 hrs**

**Average Sleep - 6.75 hrs**

## What are the Effects of Sleep Loss on Adolescents?

The physiological and psychological effects associated with chronic sleep loss in teens include:

- More automobile **crashes**
- More sports **injuries**
- Increased **depression**
- Increased **suicidal ideation**
- Increased **substance abuse**
- Poorer attention
- Poorer problem-solving
- Poorer academic performance
- Increased risk-taking
- More school-based violence
- Lowered immune functioning
- Increased insulin resistance
- Increased stress response
- Increased inflammatory response
- Increased risk of obesity
- Increased risk of diabetes
- Increased risk of heart disease
- More aggressive forms of cancer

Visit **StartSchoolLater.net** for more research and full references.

## What Time Should School Start?

**The American Medical Association, American Academy of Pediatrics, and Centers for Disease Control & Prevention all recommend that middle and high schools start no earlier than 8:30 am.**

Today, many schools start much earlier, often around 7:00 am. **Bus pick-ups starting between 5:15 and 6:30 am** require students to wake up hours before what is healthy, safe, and developmentally appropriate for their still-growing brains and bodies.

## Can't Teens Just Go To Bed Earlier?

With today's early school and bus times, most teens would need to be asleep by 8:00 or 9:00 pm in order to get enough sleep. Falling asleep that early is often unrealistic for both biological and cultural reasons.

**During puberty, adolescents are biologically programmed to fall asleep later in the evening than children and adults, and to rise later in the morning.** Most teen sleep deprivation is a product of wake-up, not bed, time.

## The Solution? Start School Later

**The science supporting later school start times has been clear since the 1990s.**

Some schools have acted, but the vast majority have yet to act. Current schedules too often force parents to choose between child health and school attendance.

Experts are calling on state and federal lawmakers to set parameters and support efforts to protect child health and put parenting back into the hands of parents.

## Have Some Schools Changed School Start Times?

Hundreds of schools across the nation have adopted later start times, with positive results including **more and better-timed sleep, improved grades, decreased auto crashes, less teen depression and substance misuse, better attendance and graduation rates, and fewer suspensions.** These schools include large and small districts, as well as rural, suburban, and urban ones.

Visit **StartSchoolLater.net** for examples.

## Why Haven't More Schools Changed?

Lack of awareness of the science of teen sleep is the biggest barrier to change.

Communities also often assume that running schools at safe, healthy hours would increase transportation costs or reduce extracurricular opportunities, but real-life examples prove these speculations are unfounded and offer many feasible, fiscally responsible ways to have safe, healthy schedules.

## How Can Students and Adults Help?

Change will take collaboration among stakeholders and policymakers at all levels. Here are some ways to help:

1. **SHARE** this information with parents, students, and community leaders.
2. **ASK** school administrators and local, state, and national policymakers to take action to support the well-being of children.
3. **PROVIDE** data and case studies from the Start School Later website, and follow us on social media.