



Sleep Disturbances from Electronic Devices

Sleep is one of the most important ways for both children and adults to stay healthy. However, getting children to go to sleep can be difficult. Electronic devices such as phones or tablets can play a major role in keeping children awake at night time. "Younger children require between 9 to 12 hours of sleep each night and teens require 8 to 10 hours of sleep each night," explains [Dr. J. Lia Gaggino](#), pediatrician at [Bronson Rambling Road Pediatrics Oshtemo](#).

Sleep is especially important as children become teenagers. This is because there is a significant shift in their sleep schedules at this time. "Teens naturally will fall asleep later and wake up later," said Dr. Gaggino. Increased amounts of homework and using phones can dramatically interrupt sleep for teens.

"Electronic devices including phones, iPods, computers and TVs should be kept out of the bedroom and turned off at least one hour prior to bedtime," said Dr. Gaggino. "This allows for the brain to get ready for sleep. Electronic devices have blue backlighting that mimics the blue sky telling the brain to stay awake. Shutting off electronic devices an hour before bedtime helps the brain prepare for sleep."

Dr. Gaggino suggests one way to help children is by "getting a regular alarm clock to help wake up in the morning versus using a cell phone. This can help keep electronic devices away from the bedroom and less opportunity for distractions.

Tips to help children go to sleep

It is important to find ways to support children and help them to learn healthy habits when it comes to sleep. According to [HealthyChildren.org](#), to help children sleep better parents can:

- Encourage children to get physically active during the day.
- Avoid packing children's schedules with evening activities.
- Make sleep a priority for the whole family.
- Creating a bedtime routine for children to participate in.
- Turn off electronic devices including phones, computers and televisions at least one hour prior to bedtime.

Understand your child's sleep habits

Teachers can be a good resource for understanding how your child's sleep is affecting their alertness throughout the day at school. According to [HealthyChildren.org](#), "A child with not enough, or poor quality, sleep may have difficulty paying attention or "zoning out" in school.

If you have concerns about your child's sleeping patterns, talk to your child's pediatrician. In many cases, they may request you track your child's sleep patterns. Many sleep problems can be easily treated.¹

This article is brought to you by Bronson Children's Hospital, southwest Michigan's only children's hospital. For more information about children's health, visit bronsonhealth.com/services/children.

¹Healthy Sleep Habits: How Many Hours Does Your Child Need? <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/healthy-living/sleep/Pages/Healthy-Sleep-Habits-How-Many-Hours-Does-Your-Child-Need.aspx>