# Early to bed won't work for tired teens, so some say start school later

(Group Pink, Blue, Green)



*Notes on my thoughts, reactions and questions as*

*I read:*

Do you have trouble waking up in the morning? If you do, it may be because you are not getting enough sleep.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) has declared that the frequent sleepiness of our nation’s teenagers is a public health problem. As a possible solution, the AAP argues that school should start later in the morning in order to allow students to get more rest.

In the 2011-12 school year, 43 percent of U.S. public high schools started before 8 a.m. As a result, many students had to wake up and get ready for school before they had completed a full night's sleep.

In fact, research shows that it is extremely common for students not to get enough sleep. Eighty-seven percent of high school students in the U.S. are sleeping less than the recommended amount. Teenagers should sleep between 8.5 and 9.5 hours each night. Currently, however, high school seniors get less than 7 hours of sleep at night, on average.

**Letting Teens Wake Up Later**

Not getting enough sleep causes students to be exhausted. This exhaustion leads to a number of problems. The AAP reports that the average teenager in the U.S. is often as tired as someone with narcolepsy, a disease that makes people so tired that they sometimes fall asleep uncontrollably. As many of us know from personal experience, being tired also affects mood, attention, memory and behavior control.

Teens suffer when they do not get enough sleep. So can’t they just go to bed earlier? The answer is: not really. Studies suggest that teenagers' bodies delay releasing melatonin, a hormone that tells the body it’s time to go to sleep. This means that teens cannot always fall asleep when they want to.

“This research indicates that the average teenager in today’s society has difficulty falling asleep before 11 p.m.,” the AAP statement says.

If teens cannot fall asleep earlier, the best solution may be to allow them to wake up later. Studies have shown that a later school start time would help students get an additional hour of sleep per night. Additionally, if school starts later in the morning, the number of students who are absent may go down. It is possible that this change may even improve students' performance in school.

Later start times could create scheduling problems, however. Will there still be enough time for classes and extra-curricular activities? Will parents still be able to get their kids ready for school before going to work? Despite these challenges, the AAP thinks that schools should try to make later start times work, because such a change could lead to important health benefits for teens. You may even find it easier to wake up in the morning.

**Comprehension Questions:**

1. Why can't most teens go to bed early to get enough sleep?

A. They don't like sleeping before 11 p.m.

B. Their bodies don't allow them to fall asleep early.

C. They have to complete their homework at night.

D. They suffer from narcolepsy that affects their sleep pattern.

2. What is the recommended amount of sleep for teenagers?

A. 7 hours

B. 8 hours

C. 9 hours

D. 10 hours

3. Select the paragraph from the first section of the article that describes one of the proposed solutions so students can get enough sleep.

4. Select the sentence that is MOST important to include in a summary of the article.

A . Do you have trouble waking up in the morning?

B. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) has declared that the frequent sleepiness of our nation's teenagers is a public health problem.

C. Later start times could create scheduling problems, however.

D. Will there still be enough time for classes and extra-curricular activities?