

Removing digital devices from the bedroom can improve sleep for children, teens

2 November 2017, by Marjorie S. Miller

Researchers studying electronic media and sleep recommend 5 healthy bedtime behaviors

- 1 Talk to your family about the importance of sleep.
- 2 Encourage a bedtime routine without electronics.
- 3 Remove all electronics from children and teens' bedrooms.
- 4 Talk about the negative consequences of bright light at night.
- 5 Consider lack of sleep as a factor for behavioral problems.

These recommendations appear in a special supplement of the journal *Pediatrics*.



Removing electronic media from the bedroom and encouraging a calming bedtime routine are among recommendations Penn State researchers outline in a recent manuscript on digital media and sleep in childhood and adolescence. Credit: Joslyn Neiderer, Penn State

Removing electronic media from the bedroom and encouraging a calming bedtime routine are among recommendations Penn State researchers outline in a recent manuscript on digital media and sleep in childhood and adolescence.

The manuscript appears in the first-ever special supplement on this topic in *Pediatrics* and is based on previous studies that suggest the use of digital devices before bedtime leads to insufficient sleep.

The recommendations, for clinicians and parents, are:

- Make sleep a priority by talking with [family](#)

[members](#) about the importance of sleep and healthy sleep expectations;

- Encourage a [bedtime routine](#) that includes calming activities and avoids [electronic media](#) use;
- Encourage families to remove all electronic devices from their child or teen's bedroom, including TVs, video games, computers, tablets and cell phones;
- Talk with [family](#) members about the negative consequences of bright light in the evening on sleep; and
- If a child or adolescent is exhibiting mood or behavioral problems, consider insufficient sleep as a contributing factor.

"Recent reviews of scientific literature reveal that the vast majority of studies find evidence for an adverse association between screen-based [media](#) consumption and [sleep health](#), primarily delayed bedtimes and reduced total sleep duration," said Orfeu Buxton, associate professor of biobehavioral health at Penn State and an author on the manuscript.

The reasons behind this adverse association likely include time spent on screens replacing time spent sleeping; mental stimulation from media content; and the effects of light interrupting sleep cycles, according to the researchers.

Buxton and other researchers are further exploring this topic. They are working to understand if media use affects the timing and duration of sleep among children and adolescents; the role of parenting and family practices; the links between screen time and sleep quality and tiredness; and the influence of light on circadian physiology and sleep health among children and adolescents.

Provided by Pennsylvania State University

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