

SLEEP BARRIERS BACKGROUND

Screen Time

Screen time is a major reason why students don't get enough sleep. This includes television, computer, cell phone, videos, and electronic games (video, handheld, computer, telephone, game systems).

Screen time before bedtime excites the brain. Instead of making you feel sleepy, screen time wakes you up!

»» Solve the problem:

- No screen time at least 1 hour before bedtime
- Remove electronic devices from the bedroom to avoid temptation
- Do restful activities before bed: reading, using a relaxation technique, deep slow breathing, saying prayers, listening to calming music

Caffeine

Caffeine is another major reason why students don't get enough sleep. Caffeine can be found in most soft drinks, chocolate candy and drinks, coffee drinks, energy drinks, and tea.

What the experts say about caffeine:

Caffeine stimulates the central nervous system: too much can cause a racing heartbeat and jittery feelings. The effects of caffeine can last up to six hours.

Caffeine increases energy and alertness: that's why there are large amounts of caffeine in energy drinks. As a result, there has been an increase in the numbers of children visiting emergency rooms for overdose symptoms. Though rare, death due to an irregular heartbeat is also possible.

Caffeine is addictive. Once addicted to caffeine, a person must have it or face side effects such as headaches, irritability, sleepiness, depression, flu-like symptoms, achiness, and insomnia.

Caffeine makes sleep disruption likely if consumed late in the day.

»» Solve the problem:

- Limit caffeine intake during the day. *The American Academy of Pediatrics* recommends that teens should have no more than 100 mg per day. *The Mayo Clinic* specifies that younger children should not have caffeine on a regular basis. *Health Canada*, the federal agency responsible for health in that country says that children between the ages of 10 and 12 should not exceed 85 mg a day.
- No caffeine after 2 pm