

[IMAGE]

## Have a Heart: Help Your Teens Get Enough Sleep

By Editorial Staff

Can heart disease start as early as your teen years? The troubling answer is yes, and for a reason you might not realize. Teens who don't get enough sleep on a regular basis are more likely to have hypertension (high blood pressure), one of the primary risk factors for heart disease.

Teens who get fewer than 6 1/2 hours of sleep a night are more than twice as likely to have high blood pressure compared to teens who get more sleep, report researchers in the journal *Circulation*. Eleven percent of teens in the study got inadequate nightly sleep, while 16 percent of teens also had trouble falling asleep or woke up too early ("poor sleep efficiency," according to the study team), which also elevated the likelihood of developing hypertension.

High blood pressure isn't just a risk factor for heart disease; it's also related to stroke, kidney disease, and other life-threatening conditions. Your doctor can tell you more about how to ensure your teen gets enough sleep and understands other lifestyle factors (diet, exercise, etc.) that can impact blood pressure.

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