

Electronics and Your Sleep

Do you have trouble unplugging when it is time for bed?

According to the National Sleep Foundation, 90% of teens and adults use some kind of electronic device such as a TV, computer, phone, or tablet within an hour of bed. Four in ten teens and adults bring their cell phones to bed with them. Not surprisingly, younger adults are more likely to fall asleep with electronics by their side than older adults.



Electronic devices are connected to at least two sleep-related problems. First, late night electronics use stimulates the brain, which can make it difficult to relax and fall asleep.

Secondly, once asleep, light from bedside devices can interfere with restful sleep.

How Stimulation from Electronics Disrupts Sleep

Late night gaming, texting, or internet surfing are stimulating activities, so they can increase your level of alertness. Even when you put them away, it may take your brain some time to relax. Time you spend unwinding cuts into your time for sleep, leaving you feeling tired the following day. For those who use TV to fall asleep, there is good news: TV tends to be a more passive process, so you may find that you are able to watch TV and still fall asleep with ease.

How Light Emitted from Electronics Disrupts Sleep

A bedside cell phone or tablet does more than entice you to check it repeatedly as you try to drift off to sleep. Studies show that the light emitted by electronic devices can actually mislead or confuse your brain, which uses light and darkness to decide whether to remain alert or drift off to sleep. With a lighted electronic device nearby, your brain can mistakenly believe that it is still daylight. This can increase your level of wakefulness and make it more difficult to fall asleep and remain asleep.

A few simple changes in your bedroom routine may make a big difference in the length and quality of your sleep.

To get started, identify the electronic devices that you have in your bedroom:

- TV
- Cell phone
- Tablet
- Laptop
- Gaming device
- Other

Ask yourself, do I:

- Use a cell phone as a bedroom alarm?
- Use a phone, tablet, or gaming device right before bed?
- Check and respond to electronic messages (email, chat, text) at bedtime?
- Leave devices turned on while I sleep?

Take Steps to Prevent Your Electronic Devices from Interfering with Your Sleep

- Turn off all device screens an hour before bed.
- Avoid bringing your cell phone, tablet, or other electronic device into your bedroom.

- Establish a restful device-free nighttime routine: read a book or magazine, listen to calming music, or complete some breathing and meditation exercises.
- If you must bring electronics into your bedroom, use your devices while you are seated, then put them away before you climb into bed.
- Avoid using your cell phone as your alarm. Use an alarm clock instead.
- Adjust settings so your devices are set to the dimmest light level possible.
- Put electronic devices on sleep mode.
- Turn off ringers.
- Use a timer on a bedroom TV so it will shut off automatically.
- If there are children in your home, avoid letting them take their electronics to bed. Children benefit when they begin practicing good sleep habits at an early age.

If sleep continues to be an issue for you, contact Carebridge for additional information and assistance.

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