



[Click here to print a PDF of this article so you can start a conversation with your child](#)

Talking regularly with youth about the dangers of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs reduces their risk of using in the first place.

[Know! encourages you to share this Parent Tip with friends and family.](#)

Learn more at:  
[DrugFreeActionAlliance.org](http://DrugFreeActionAlliance.org)

Know! is a program of:



Drug Free Action Alliance



[Link to the article on the Drug Free Action Alliance Facebook page](#)

Drug Free Action Alliance  
6155 Huntley Road, Suite H  
Columbus, Ohio 43229  
PH: (614) 540-9985  
FX: (614) 540-9990



## Know! To Use Your Senses for Optimal Sleep!

In the previous tip, **Know! To Send Them To Bed**, we talked about the importance of teens getting the 8 – 10 hours of sleep their bodies and minds desperately need, as well as the many negative consequences of sleep deprivation, including the link to substance use. Now that we know how much sleep our children need, let's take a look at what we can do to help them achieve quality sleep.

According to research by the National Sleep Foundation, small changes in the bedroom can make a big difference when it comes to a good night's sleep. The experts say to simply **use your senses**.

**SIGHT** - Keep it Dark: Light and darkness are powerful indicators for our bodies to know when it's time to sleep and wake. Artificial light after dark (including that of a cell phone) can send false "wake-up" signals to the brain, making it difficult to fall asleep. Early morning sunlight peeking through a curtain can also activate the body, causing one to wake sooner than desired. Keep your bedroom dark and if you need to get up through the night, use a nightlight as your guide.

**HEARING** - Use White Noise: A fan or sound conditioner, for example, creates a consistent background noise that helps to eliminate or at least soften the sounds of other activity going on around you, like a bathroom door closing through the night or cars passing by.

**SMELL** – The Nose Knows: Studies show that certain smells may impact sleep. Lavender, for example, is known to help people relax. The scent is said to decrease heart rate and blood pressure, soothe babies, and induce deeper sleep, so as to wake with more energy. Another study linked smells, both good and bad, with influencing one's dreams as well. So pick up those stinky socks and practice uniform; a clean, clutter-free room with a pleasing scent or no scent at all (depending on your preference) may be the key to helping you drift off and dream pleasant dreams.

**TASTE** - Food and Drink Affect Sleep: Turkey is known for inducing Thanksgiving Day naps, as it contains the sleep-promoting, amino acid tryptophan. Other foods containing tryptophan can make for a good nighttime snack, including dairy products, nuts, seeds, banana, honey and eggs. It is important to keep it a light snack, like yogurt and crackers or a bowl of cereal with milk. Overindulging on carbs or fatty foods, or eating a heavy or spicy meal is likely to cause discomfort and is best to be avoided near bedtime. Steer clear of soda, tea and other stimulants in the evening, as they may delay sleep. Even water should be kept to a minimum so that bathroom trips through the night don't interrupt sleep.

As a side note for adults: Alcohol may be known to cause drowsiness, but it can actually prevent deep and continuous sleep.

**TOUCH** - Comfort is Critical: The feel of one's sheets, mattress and pillow, and even the feel of their pajamas, makes a difference. Fresh, clean sheets atop a comfortable and supportive mattress and pillow are key elements to a refreshing night's slumber. Experts say the bedroom should be cool and that the best pajamas are made of breathable cotton fabric, so that one's body does not overheat.

Regardless of age, the bedroom should be a person's sanctuary that evokes a calm and peaceful feeling. Tap into your senses to create the ideal bedroom environment for optimal sleep.

Sources: [National Sleep Foundation: Inside Your Bedroom – Use Your Senses](#). [WebMD: Foods that help or harm your sleep](#).

Carb-friendly foods can make for a perfect partner to a dairy product, as it increases the level of tryptophan in the blood.

Visit [starttalking.ohio.gov](http://starttalking.ohio.gov) to get the conversation going !!!