



# Power down at night

Make the hour before bed a no-electronics zone, said Dr. Jill Creighton, pediatrician at Stony Brook Children's Hospital. Powering down makes bedtime easier because kids need to relax before going to sleep.

Most school-age kids (ages 6 to 17) have at least one device; a smartphone, video games, iPad or computer in their bedrooms while sleeping, according to a National Sleep Foundation survey. And children who leave those devices on at night sleep less—up to one hour less on average per night. Dr. Creighton makes a few more observations for your kids (and maybe for you as well):

- Ban hand-held devices from the bedroom. “The burst of light from a phone (even if it’s just to check the time) can break a sleep cycle,” she said. “A regular alarm clock is best.”
- If your child has a slight addiction to technology and is resistant about turning off a device, try dialing down the screen time. “Reduce screen time by 30 minutes or more each week until you reach your goal,” said Dr. Creighton. “A good rule of thumb is try to limit recreational screen time to 60 minutes every day. And for every 30 minutes of screen time, make sure your kids get 30 minutes of physical activity.”
- Try to replace screen time with an activity. “It’s sometimes hard to get kids off the couch and get them moving,” said Dr. Creighton. “Parents, get creative and make moving fun for kids.” Some ideas: a 20-minute family walk, 20 minutes of shooting hoops outside, walking the dog, going bike riding and doing chores (with the promise of an allowance) such as vacuuming, putting away laundry, raking leaves, shoveling snow and helping with the garbage/recycling.