Reset the body clock

Adolescents often have a delay in their body clock. It becomes set slightly later so that they feel tired later at night and wake up later the next day.

This is normal but can become a problem if their body clock becomes out of synch with the usual day and night time cycle. If this happens you can help your child to reset their body clock so that they are ready to sleep and wake up earlier.

* **Talk with your child** and find out if sleep is a problem for them which they want to do something about.
* Choose a time (school holidays are ideal) and let them **wake up naturally**, without an alarm.
* Record this in a **sleep diary** and find out when they are falling asleep (e.g. 12.30 am), when they wake up (9.30 am) and how much time they are spending asleep (9 hours).
* Now gradually **move the bed and wake time back** by 15 minutes each day.
  + If they are sleeping for 9 hours they would go to bed at 12.15 on the first day and would set the wake up alarm for 9.15 am.
  + On the second day they would go to bed another 15 minutes earlier at 12.00 and would set the wake up alarm for 9.00.
* Make sure your child **sticks with the bed and wake times**. Encourage them to get up when the alarm goes off, even at weekends to start with.
* **Take it slowly**. It will be hard work and we want your child to be successful. They may feel tired and may be grumpy as their body clock readjusts. Expect this. **Support them** and encourage them to continue.

If this proves too difficult or your child has a large delay in their body clock you may want to talk with your GP about what help might be available.