Tips to Improve Sleep Health

Getting enough sleep is important for overall health. Not only are we less able to function during the day when we are sleep deprived, but we may also experience increases in blood sugar and blood pressure.

There are small changes that we can make to improve sleep behaviors!

**Here are some tips to try:**

* **Find your pattern and stick to it.** Your body has an internal clock. You can work with it to find sleep times and wake-up times that make you feel better. Try to stick to this time every day, even on weekends. If you want to try to go to bed earlier, adjust the time in 15-minute increments so your body and internal clock can get used to it.
* **Set the stage for your best sleep.** Do you like a little light or complete darkness? Soothing ocean sounds, your favorite songs, or silence? Is your mattress, pillow, or blanket helping you sleep or keeping you up? How is the temperature in the room? Try different sleep environment combinations until you find what works best. This can be a challenge if your partner prefers the opposite of you. You may need to find a middle ground, or one of you may need a sleep mask, ear plugs, or an extra blanket.
* **Silence all electronic devices at least 1 hour before bed.** Our brains need time to settle in for the night, so put down devices such as phones and tablets before you get ready for bed. Our eyes are sensitive to the blue light from these devices, which makes it harder to rest.
* **Make activity part of your day.** Exercising (vigorous is best, but any will do) has benefits to the mind and body. It can help you keep your blood sugar and blood pressure at lower levels. It can also help quiet your mind and make your body settle down faster at bedtime.
* **Limit alcohol, caffeine, and heavy meals before bed.** A light, protein-rich snack before bed can help your body settle in for the night. But heavy meals, alcohol, and caffeine consumed before bed can keep your body from resting.

**Sleep Scale (Rate Your Sleep)**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

If you rated your sleep 8 or higher: Great job!

If you rated your sleep 5 to 7: Keep up the good work, but look for ways to improve your sleep habits.

If you rated your sleep 1 to 4: Your sleep habits are probably making it hard for you to feel and function at your best. What steps could you take to improve your sleep health? You may want to discuss your sleep habits with your health care provider at your next