SLEEP HYGIENE – What you should know

Sleep impacts are daily lives and should be part of maintaining a healthy lifestyle along with eating right and exercising (Performance TRIAD). The average adult should obtain at least 7 – 9 hours of good quality sleep.

When our sleep is affected it can lead to difficulty concentrating, processing information, memory and problem solving. It impairs our ability to function throughout the day, leaving us irritable, extremely tired, no energy or motivation.

Sleep can also cause or make medical conditions worse, such as irregular heartbeat, nighttime heartburn, morning headaches to name a few.

Here are a few simple things you can do to improve your quality of sleep

1. Maintain a regular bedtime and wake time during the week and on weekends. But at time we like to enjoy life and stay out late, that’s ok but it is important that you try to get up the same time every day.
2. You should finish eating several hours before you go to bed as some foods will create or aggravate heartburn.
3. Avoid alcohol, caffeine and nicotine products at least 6 hours before bed. Alcohol will help you fall asleep but when it wears off during the night it will create a reverse effect and cause you to wake throughout the night.
4. Exercising daily will help with sleep but ensure its earlier in the day as not to create an energetic feeling keeping you awake.
5. AVOID NAPS during the day as this takes away from your feeling of tireness at night when you want to sleep.
6. Have a nighttime routine to prepare and relax your body to sleep for example, a cup of tea, soothing music, aromatherapy, warm bath or shower. We recommend to avoid watching TV, using a computer or looking/using your phone.
7. Your bedroom should be free of light and sounds (other than white noise) and should be cool and comfortable.
8. Your bed should only be used for sleeping or sexual activity. Reading, watching TV or using a computer type product teaches your body to stay awake in bed.
9. If you find that after going to bed you are still awake after 30 minutes, get up and do something that will make you tired ie. Reading a very boring manual.
10. We all have periods of anxiety. It is important that we attempt to alleviate or decrease them prior to going to bed. Spend time right after dinner addressing them as you do not want to be thinking about them as you are getting into bed.
11. If none of these things help follow up with your Primary Care Provider