SLEEP HYGIENE: How to Sleep Better

Good sleep is influenced by many factors. Below is a review of things that are known to make sleep worse and better. Consider changes that you can make to improve your sleep.

**Things That Make Sleep Worse**
- Napping during the day
- Consuming caffeine such as coffee, tea, soda, energy drinks, and even chocolate
  - How many drinks with caffeine do you have each day and what size are they?
  - When do you drink caffeine? It is best to not consume after 2pm
  - Remember that some headache medications contain caffeine
- Consuming alcohol or nicotine within 2 hours of bedtime
- Watching television or using a laptop/tablet in bed/before bedtime
- Eating a heavy meal within 3 hours of sleep
  - Light snack is acceptable, do not want to go to sleep hungry
- Staying in bed even when you can’t fall asleep
  - If you are not asleep after 20-30 minutes, get out of bed and do something relaxing until you are ready to sleep (e.g., reading, calming music)

**Things That Make Sleep Better**
- Exercising and engaging in physical activities regularly
  - It is best not to exercise within 3 hours of bedtime
- Having a regular routine
  - Go to sleep and wake up around the same time each night
  - Using relaxation techniques (e.g., deep breathing, guided imagery)
  - Take a warm bath or shower 2-3 hours before bedtime
- Setting aside a scheduled time for ‘worry’ each day
  - Write down any issues that are bothering or concerning you at least 2 hours before bedtime
  - If you begin to think of these things in bed, remember that you have spent time on them already and that you will leave them behind until tomorrow
- Making your bedroom comfortable
  - Keep room dark and cool
  - Have extra pillows and/or soothing smells
- Using the bed only for sleep and sex
- Waking around the same time each day

Breaking bad sleep habits and adopting better ones can have a positive impact on the quality of your sleep. **Remember:** Making even small changes can make a big difference!