7 TIPS FOR IMPROVING SLEEP

It's estimated that more than one-third of adults in the U.S. are getting less than seven hours of sleep daily. Prolonged lack of sleep can lead to serious health consequences, including immunodeficiency, increased risk of hormone abnormalities, obesity, and cardiovascular disease. It also contributes to decreased cognitive function, impaired reaction time, poor performance at work, and higher levels of stress. Try these tips to help improve your sleep:
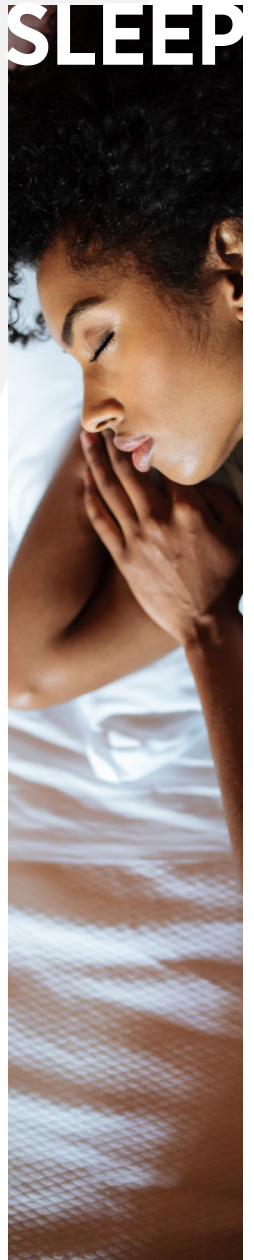
1 Be deliberate in planning your bedtime routine. Going to bed at the same time every night and having the same routine beforehand can train your brain to relax and prepare for a good night's sleep.

2 Make sure your room is set up for restful sleep. Opting for blackout curtains or adding fans/white noise machines can help minimize outside distractions or sleep disturbances.

3 Disconnect from electronic devices at least 30 minutes prior to going to bed. Disconnecting an hour prior is typically recommended. Devices such as a phone or computer can disrupt your body's production of melatonin, which can hinder your ability to fall asleep.

4 Avoid large meals before going to bed. Lighter, healthier meals can lead to easier digestion as you sleep. If you need to snack before bed, opt for a light option like fruit or Greek yogurt.

5 Refrain from caffeine and alcohol too close to bedtime. Both can suppress the early stages of sleep and lead to lower sleep quality.

6 Practice relaxation techniques to "turn off" your mind. Breathing exercises, meditation, or even low-intensity activities like journaling can help you relax and prepare for sleep.

7 Be consistent. Consistency is key when it comes to developing good sleep habits, and consistent sleep leads to consistent results!