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Sleep Hygiene

Healthy and regular sleep patterns are one of the cornerstones of health. Regularly getting a good night of sleep is one of the best things you can do to prevent chronic diseases, decrease inflammation and enhance mental clarity and focus. Included in this handout are some tips to improve your sleep patterns to ensure that your sleep is as restful and beneficial as possible.

- **Use the bed for sleep and sex only.** Don't read in bed, don't use your cellphone in bed and don't watch TV in bed. This will tell your body that when you're in bed, it's time for sleep.
- **Don't use electronic devices before bed.** Starting an hour before you go to sleep, prepare your body for sleep by avoiding disruptive stimuli such as TV, cell phones and other electronic devices.
- **Consider gentle stretching or breathing exercises** before bed. This can help to bring your body into a relaxed state and prepare for sleep. Examples of specific exercises include gentle yoga, progressive relaxation, alternate nostril breathing, deep belly breathing or other similar exercises. If you're not sure what to do, ask for more information.
- **Keep your bedroom dark at night.** It's important to keep your room as dark as possible to help you sleep. Too much light tells the body that it's daytime and makes sleep more difficult. Use good blinds and even dark electrical tape if necessary to keep light out.
- Your bowel movements aren't the only thing that should be regular! Your body likes patterns, try to **go to sleep at the same time every day and get up at the same time as well.**
- **Go to sleep by 11 pm every night.** Your body has natural cycles that follow the rhythms of nature. Going to bed too late will disrupt these cycles.
- **Try not to eat after 7 pm.** You'll get a better night of sleep if your body isn't focused on digesting food while you're sleeping.
- **It's ok to sleep more in the winter.** This is normal. Winter is a time of hibernation and preservation when things slow down as opposed to the action and awakening of spring and summer. A little extra sleep during this time is natural and means you are more in tune with your body's needs.

For additional handouts and health information go to <http://drleedennis.com>