Health Enews

Sleep... Are You Getting Enough?

Getting Enough Sleep is so Important for Benefits Like:

* Assisting in staying at a healthy weight. Studies show that for each hour of lost sleep, the odds of obesity increase.

* Getting sick less often. Your immune system relies on sleep to stay healthy. Ongoing sleep deficiency can change the way your immune system responds to common infections.

* Lowering the risk of high blood pressure and diabetes. Sleep is involved in the repair of the heart and blood vessels along with how your body reacts to insulin.

* Helping your brain work properly and improving learning. While you're sleeping, your brain is preparing for the next day and creating new pathways.

* Helping you make good decisions. Sleep deficiency alters activity in the brain and could cause you to have trouble making decisions, solving problems, and coping with change.

* Helping you avoid injury and accidents. Driver sleepiness is linked to 100,000 car accidents and 1,500 deaths each year.

How Much Sleep is Enough?

Most adults need 7-8 hours of regularly scheduled adequate sleep, teens need at least 9 hours, school-aged children need at least 10 hours, preschooler's need at least 11-12 hours, and newborns need at least 16-18 hours of sleep per day.

Strategies for Better Sleep

* Spend time outside everyday. Be physically active.

* Use the hour before bedtime as quiet time. Turn off the TV, cell phone, and laptop. The light might signal the brain its time to wake up.

* Keep your bedroom dark, quiet, and cool.

* Try the same sleep schedule on weekdays and weekends. Staying up later on the weekends disrupts your body's clock– wake rhythm.

* Avoid heavy/large meals before bedtime. Your stomach will be working hard to digest your food and can prevent a deep sleep.

* Avoid nicotine and caffeine. Both are a stimulate and can make it harder for you to sleep. At the very least, do not indulge beyond afternoon.