***10 Tips for a Good Night***

1. **Create a comfortable sleep environment**
* Bed, pillow, sheets, room temperature, humidity, air circulation, darkness and allergies all play a role
* Noise is an especially critical factor: A noise machine (not T.V.!) can assist with either noise reduction or noise cancellation
* The Bed: should be for Sleep and Sex ONLY! Let your mind associate the bed with sleeping, relaxing, and pleasure.
1. **Don’t go to bed stuffed or starving**
* Allow at least 2 hours after a meal for bed time
* A small snack before bed is OK – a small portion of high, complex-carbohydrate or protein is best (too much sugar can increase energy, hindering sleep)
* Limit fluid intake to minimize nighttime interruptions
1. **Get some exercise**!
* Fatiguing the body during the day stimulates a reparative response, leading to more restful sleep
* Do not exercise too close to bed time – the body needs time to “come down” from the adrenalin/endorphin rush produced by exercise
1. **Put away the alcohol. . .**
* Although alcohol is a sedative and can make you feel sleepy – it can severely obstruct/prevent essential sleep cycles that provide the ‘restful’ component during sleep
* Alcohol also increases frequency and intensity of sleeping and breathing disorders (i.e. sleep apnea, snoring, allergic responses, etc.)
1. **Stop smoking**
* Sleep is often disrupted by the body’s perceived need for nicotine! A craving for nicotine may not be recognizable at night – often translating into “late-night munchies.”
1. **Go Decaf! (. . .at least after 12 Noon. . .)**
* For those of us who are “caffeine junkies”, allow at least 5-7 hours to process the last beverage before your planned bed time.
* Don’t be fooled into believing that the ONLY way you can sleep is to have a Coke right before bed. . . Although you may fall asleep – it will likely NOT be restful!
1. **Check and monitor all medications**
* Be certain to investigate effects of all drugs, including herbal supplements!
1. **Leave worries at the door. . .**
* Schedule a designated “worry time” to get as stressed out as you would like – leaving enough time to relax before sleep.
* Schedule the next day - only! Providing yourself with a basic structure for the next day can eliminate moment-to-moment worries about things like breakfast, what to wear, kids’ lunch, important meetings, etc.
* Relaxation methods: meditation, breathing exercises, progressive muscle relaxation (PMR), biofeedback; more information provided below.
1. **Establish a pre-sleep routine or ritual**
* Create and maintain consistent pre-sleep behaviors: bathroom time, prayer, reading (not in bed!), talk to your Mom, etc. This helps to train, prepare and signal the body for sleep.
1. **Do not try to fall asleep. . . Just allow it to happen!**