Good Sleep Habits

Why is sleep so important?
Sleep is important to brain health. Good habits for restful sleep are the key to dealing with the symptoms of depression. Research shows a clear link between sleep and depression so here are some tips to help you form good sleep habits.

Develop a regular sleep routine
- Go to bed and wake up around the same time every day.

Have a pre-bedtime routine
- Try to have the same routine every night before you go to bed (brushing your teeth, washing your face, etc.)
- A warm bath or shower may help you relax and get into “sleep mode.”
- Meditation or quiet time before bed may also help.

Have a quiet and comfortable bedroom
- Set your bedroom thermostat at a comfortable temperature. In general, a little cooler is better than warmer.
- Turn off the TV and other noises that may disrupt sleep. Background sounds (white noise) like a fan could help.
- If your pets wake you, keep them out of the bedroom.
- Your bedroom should be dark. Turn off bright lights.
- Have a comfortable mattress.
- If you are a ‘clock watcher’ at night, hide the clock.
Don’t watch TV, read, work, or be on social media in bed

- Saving your bed for sleeping and sex tells your mind that it is time to sleep when you go to bed.
- When you watch TV or read in bed, your mind relates your bed to wakefulness.
- Being on a computer or a phone will distract you from a routine or sleep preparation.

Don’t drink caffeine after 12 p.m. (noon)

- The effects of caffeine may last for several hours.
- Caffeine can disrupt sleep and make it hard to fall asleep. Use caffeine only before noon.
- Remember that soda and tea have caffeine.

Avoid common items that affect sleep

- Cigarettes, alcohol, and over-the-counter meds can cause restlessness or trouble staying asleep.

Exercise regularly

- Exercise is crucial to your overall health.
- Exercise spreads endorphins, which your body makes to relieve stress and enhance pleasure. They may make it harder to fall asleep, so try not to exercise after 2 p.m.

Don’t stay in bed awake for more than 5-10 minutes

- If your mind is racing or worrying about not being able to sleep, get out of bed. Sit in a chair in the dark. Stay in the chair until you are sleepy, then go back to bed.
- No TV or Internet during these periods! That will just wake up your brain more.
- If this happens several times during the night, that is okay. Just maintain your regular wake time.