How to Practice Good Sleep Hygiene
(Caring for Yourself Before Bedtime)

- After lunch, avoid caffeinated foods/drinks such as coffee, tea, chocolate, soda, alcohol and nicotine (cigarettes)
- Start a bedtime ritual (such as drinking warm milk, eating a light, high protein snack or reading)
- Finish exercise at least two hours before bedtime
- Spend time in bright light during the day
- Keep up a regular schedule (even if you are tired or didn’t sleep well)
  - If possible, wake up and go to bed at the same time each night
  - Avoid or limit naps
  - Go to bed only when sleepy (if you are still awake after 20 minutes, do something relaxing and go to bed when you get sleepy)
- Set up an environment that helps you sleep
  - Reduce noise or try white noise
  - Turn off the TV and computer at least one hour before bedtime
  - Sleep in a dark, cool, quiet and relaxing room
  - Make sure you have enough bed covers for warmth or adjust room temperature
  - Use the bed only for sleep and intimacy
  - Do not watch the clock

How to Relax

- Take a warm shower or bath before going to bed
- Try some relaxing activities before bed such as reading, meditation, prayer or listening to calming music
- Use relaxation and stress reduction techniques
  - Progressive muscle relaxation (relaxing your body, one muscle at a time)
  - Guided imagery (focusing your mind on positive thoughts)
  - Breathing from your stomach
  - Meditation
  - Massage

Other Tips to Get Restful Sleep

- Be active during the day (exercise, yoga, walking, etc.)
- Use ear plugs or an eye mask at night
- Think about the timing of medications:
  - Diuretic medications (medicines that make you get up at night to urinate)
  - Steroids and other medications that can keep you awake
- See your doctor to treat the causes of insomnia, if known, such as:
  - Sleep apnea
  - Restless leg syndrome
  - Pain
  - Depression
  - Anxiety
- Use a sleep diary for two weeks to see what may be keeping you awake