



HEALTHY HOLIDAY *challenge*

SLEEP

Sleep is the golden chain that ties health and our bodies together!

Sleep is essential to every process in the body, affecting our physical and mental functioning the next day, our ability to fight disease and develop immunity, and our metabolism and chronic disease risk.

DOES SCREEN TIME REALLY AFFECT OUR SLEEP?

There is evidence to show that screen use right before bed could impact sleep. One reason is that the blue light emitted from these devices can affect the secretion of melatonin, the hormone that helps signal to the body that it is time to fall asleep. Other reasons include the content of what is on the screen. If you watch a scary movie, read an emotionally-driven article, or consume any other anxiety-producing content on your screen, it can affect your ability to fall asleep. Sleep clinicians recommend putting away all screens at least one hour before bed and to instead do some light reading or other relaxing activity.

HOW DOES WHAT WE EAT IMPACT OUR SLEEP?

It is well-known that certain substances, such as caffeine, can affect the onset of sleep in a negative way. On the other hand, evidence is growing that shows how other foods like tart cherries, kiwi, fatty fish (like salmon and tuna), and malted milk may have beneficial effects on sleep. More recently, studies have shown that healthy dietary patterns overall—not just specific foods—could be associated with longer sleep duration and shorter time to fall asleep.

HOW DOES ALCOHOL IMPACT SLEEP?

Although alcohol may help a person fall asleep quickly, it hinders sleep quality, often causing interrupted sleep. When consuming alcohol, it is recommended to do so several hours before bedtime so that the alcohol is completely out of the system before sleep.

HOW IMPORTANT IS SLEEP FOR OUR MENTAL HEALTH?

Sleep and mental health go hand-in-hand. Good sleep is essential for maintaining our baseline mental health, as one night of sleep deprivation can dramatically affect mood the next day. Chronic exposure to poor sleep quality is associated with depression, anxiety, and other conditions.

Source: U of M, School of Public Health

