

## It's important to get a good night's sleep

Sleep may be something you take for granted, until you miss out on a good night of shut-eye. To feel your best, you should aim to get at least seven hours of good quality sleep every night. However, just one night of interrupted sleep can leave you feeling irritable, fatigued and unable to focus.

Here are some helpful tips for a successful slumber:

- **Set your bedtime schedule.** Having a regular bedtime is not just for kids. All you need to do is count back seven to eight hours from the time your morning alarm will go off. If you need to wake up at 6:30 a.m., then you need to be sleeping by about 11 p.m.
- **Create a relaxing bedtime routine.** This routine should include a set of activities you perform in the same order, every night, in the 30 to 60 minutes before you go to bed. Bedtime routines establish habits that help our brains recognize when it's time to sleep. By performing the same activities in the same order every night, your brain learns that those activities are leading to sleep. Some wind-down ideas include stretching, meditation, reading a book or listening to calming music.
- **Be aware of sleep thieves.** Certain activities can rob you of a good night sleep, such as:
  - Caffeine intake. Caffeine can stay in your system for up to 10 hours. Therefore, cut down on your intake later in the afternoon and evening.
  - Bedroom temperature. Although a toasty bedroom may feel cozy during these cool months, temps above 70 degrees can disrupt your sleep. According to the National Sleep Foundation, the ideal range to promote sleep is 60-67 degrees Fahrenheit.
  - Surrounding lights. Because light can distract and disrupt your sleep, it is best to sleep in as much darkness as possible. Try to block out light from windows using dark curtains or light blocking blinds. Also, keep in mind that the glow of a clock or small nightlight can impact the quality of your sleep, too.
- **Get moving during the day, so you can slow down at night.** Expend the excess energy you have during the day by exercising regularly. You don't need to push through an hour spin class either – low-impact walking, swimming or yoga will work just as well. Your body will look forward to the upcoming rest later that evening!

By making sleep a priority for you and your family this month, you can look forward to increased energy, a boost in your mood and better overall health.