How to get a good night's sleep

• Awaken at approximately the same time every day.
• Try to get at least 40 minutes of bright light (sunlight) soon after awakening- go for a walk in the morning sunlight.
• Avoid napping if you have trouble sleeping at night. Otherwise, a 30 minute nap 8 hours after awakening is OK.
• Limit caffeine to 2 cups of coffee, or the equivalent, during the first half of your day. If you have trouble with sleep, try to eliminate caffeine intake completely.
• Eliminate nicotine.
• Reduce alcohol use to no more than 2 drinks several hours before bedtime.
• Establish a bedtime ritual:
  o Set aside a worry time about an hour before bedtime.
  o Write down your worries or concerns. They will be there when you wake up, so you don’t need to think about them while you sleep.
  o Relax for 30 minutes before going to bed. Reading helps many people, but avoid studying and job related material.
  o A glass of warm milk or herbal tea may be soothing.
• Go to bed only when you are sleepy.
• If you wake up and have trouble returning to sleep, get up and go to a different room and engage in something relaxing until you are drowsy. Then, return to bed to sleep.
• Use your bed primarily for sleeping, and make it and the space around it comfortable.
Sleep Disorders

- Do you snore loudly when you sleep?
- Do you snore loudly and stop breathing during your sleep?
- Do you have violent movements during your sleep? Have you injured yourself or others, or acted out dreams?
- Is it hard to stay awake in boring situations?
- Do you fall asleep or get drowsy while driving?
- Do you get sleepy during certain times of the day, but have trouble falling asleep or awakening too early?
- Do you get so sleepy in the ‘daytime’ that you just have to lie down for a nap or rest?
- Do you ever get muscle weakness when you are emotional?
- When you lie down at night, do you ever get an unpleasant (creepy, crawly) feeling in your legs that makes you want to rub your legs or move them?
- Is your sleep disrupted by frequent awakenings?
- Are you worried about your sleep?

What to do if you think you have a sleep problem:

Record your sleep habits and your sleep/wake schedule for 2 weeks. Each morning when you awaken record the following:
The time you went to bed
How long it took you to fall asleep.
The number of times you remembered awakening.
The time you got out of bed to start your day.
The number of hours that you felt that you slept.

Question your bed partner or roommate about whether you snore or move excessively at night.
Get at least 8 hours in bed every night during this 2 week period.
Practice good sleep hygiene (see other side of handout).
Then, schedule an appointment with your health care provider.