# GET ENOUGH SLEEP

Did you know that not enough sleep can affect your immune system? Less than seven hours sleep per night can have negative effects on your health & wellbeing.

## SLEEP HELPS IMMUNITY

Sleep is important for many different body processes from brain health through to weight – and, a healthy immune system depends on sleep... lack of sleep will inhibit its function.

Studies show that if you don't get a good quality or enough sleep, you are more likely to get sick – and it can affect how quickly you recover too.

Sleep deprivation and too much stress can increase how much of the hormone cortisol is made; and when you have increased levels of cortisol for a prolonged time, it also suppresses immune function.

## KEEP A SLEEP SCHEDULE

Research shows that certain hormones, chemicals and proteins that fight off infection are released while we sleep.

Sticking to a sleep schedule and having the same sleep and wake times daily will help your immune system – ensure you get between seven and nine hours of quality shut-eye.

Developing a bedtime ritual will give your body cues that it is nearly time for bed; and time to start winding down – aim to be in bed by 10.00pm to give your body and mind time to repair and regenerate.

## DIM LIGHTS AT NIGHT

Turn the lights off or dim them a few hours before bedtime – melatonin, the 'sleep' hormone, is affected by light... replace cool light bulbs with warm light bulbs too.

Switch off devices with blue light a few hours before bedtime – or ensure they are switched to night light as the blue light from computers and phones can also affect melatonin production.

## DIFFICULTY SLEEPING?

If you are struggling to sleep, you could try using sunlight to set your biological clock – your body is driven by circadian rhythm – so in the mornings on waking go outside and face the sun (do not look at the sun!) for 10-15 minutes... this has been found to help your serotonin production and also improve mood.

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Make sure you get enough sleep - it is really important for your immune system... and for your health!