Sleep is just as important as diet and exercise, but even under non-pandemic conditions, more than a third of us don’t get enough sleep. Not to cause even more stress, keep in mind that long term lack of sleep contributes to an increased risk of diabetes and hypertension. Lack of sleep also contributes to weight gain through a hormone driven process that involves both ghrelin (that stimulates the sensation of hunger in the brain) and leptin (that stimulates the sensation of fullness.)

So how much sleep do we need? Adults need an average of between 7-9 hours of sleep per 24 hours to function at their best. It is a myth that older adults need less sleep than those who are younger. Fortunately, Ilene did have a few insider secrets to share with you and your families about getting better sleep during the Pandemic.

1. Keep a routine. Stick to regular bed and wake times.
2. Get exercise daily, but not within 3 hours of going to bed. Ideally get a brisk walk outside in the morning to early afternoon.
3. Do not stay in bed all day. No electronics in the bed, and leave Netflix in another room.
4. Keep your bedroom cool and dark: think cave-like conditions.
5. Write things down in a “worry” book; it is best to do this several hours before going to bed.
6. Practice deep breathing, meditation strategies, and progressive muscle relaxation.

Suggestion: Headspace is offering free access to health care providers through 2020: https://www.headspace.com/health-covid-19