Spokane Holistic Healing Client Handout
Sleep

Sleep is one of the most essential pillars of overall health. It impacts nearly every system in the body, from brain function to immune defense. Here's how sleep affects different aspects of health:

1. Physical Health Benefits of Sleep

- **Boosts Immunity**: Sleep helps produce immune cells and proteins (like cytokines) that fight infections and inflammation.
- **Supports Heart Health**: Poor sleep is linked to high blood pressure, heart disease, and stroke. Adequate sleep helps regulate heart rate and blood pressure.
- **Aids in Weight Management**: Sleep deprivation disrupts hunger hormones (ghrelin and leptin), increasing cravings and overeating.
- **Improves Metabolism**: Poor sleep is linked to insulin resistance, increasing the risk of type 2 diabetes.
- **Enhances Muscle Growth & Repair**: Growth hormone, which helps repair tissues and build muscle, is released during deep sleep.

2. Mental and Cognitive Health

- **Enhances Memory & Learning**: Sleep strengthens neural connections, improving recall and problem-solving skills.
- **Regulates Mood**: Lack of sleep increases stress hormones, leading to anxiety, depression, and mood swings.
- **Boosts Creativity & Focus**: A well-rested brain is more efficient at processing information and making decisions.

3. Effects of Poor Sleep on Health

- **Increased Risk of Chronic Diseases**: Sleep deprivation is linked to diabetes, heart disease, obesity, and even a weakened immune system.
- **Higher Risk of Accidents**: Sleepiness impairs reaction time and decision-making, increasing the risk of accidents at work or while driving.
- **Shortened Lifespan**: Chronic sleep deprivation is associated with a higher risk of mortality from various health conditions.

4. How to Improve Sleep for Better Health

- **Maintain a Consistent Schedule**: Go to bed and wake up at the same time every day.
- **Create a Sleep-Friendly Environment**: Keep your room cool, dark, and quiet.
- **Limit Stimulants**: Avoid caffeine and screens at least an hour before bed.
- **Exercise Regularly**: Physical activity helps regulate sleep, but avoid intense workouts too close to bedtime.
- **Practice Relaxation Techniques**: Meditation, deep breathing, or reading can help unwind before sleep.