## Improving Sleep

Most experts agree that adults and children are not getting enough sleep. With TV, computer games, and increasing levels of stress, many people are going to bed later and waking up earlier.

While we sleep our bodies are storing memories, fighting illnesses, and repairing and growing tissues and muscles. Sleep deprivation can lead to increased levels of stress, changes in appetite, decreased mental ability, weight gain, irritability, anxiety, and/or depression.

Elementary children need about 10 to 11 hours of sleep each night. Adults need 7 – 9 hours per night. Here are some things you can do to improve sleep for your family.

**Go to sleep the same time every day, even on weekends.** This helps your body recognize it's time to sleep.

**Develop a nighttime routine.** For example, 30 minutes before bed bathe, brush teeth, set out clothes for next day, and read.

**Relax your body.** Listen to relaxing music, read, play a board game. Limit electronics which can make your body more alert.

**Create a peaceful bedroom.** Minimize light. Keep room temperature comfortably cool. Minimize noise with ear plugs or a white noise machine.

**Avoid eating or drinking too much before bed,** but don't go to bed hungry or thirst either. Avoid caffeine, alcohol, and nicotine before bed.

**Exercise.** It helps you to fall asleep and sleep more deeply. Limit exercise right before bed if you find it too energizing.

**Avoid daytime naps.** If you really need to nap, keep it to 10 – 30 minutes during the middle of the day.

Here's an easy tasty, meal your child can help you make.

### Black Beans and Quinoa
1 cup uncooked quinoa
2 15oz cans black beans, drained and rinsed
1 cup fresh cilantro, chopped
2 green onions, sliced
1 small jalapeno pepper, seeded, finely diced
2 carrots, peeled and chopped
¼ cup olive oil
Juice and zest of one lime
1 teaspoon each of ground cumin, chili power, salt

**Directions:** Rinse quinoa well. Cook quinoa according to package directions. Combine cooked quinoa and all other ingredients. Mix well