

The Importance of Sleep

Lesson Guide

Teresa Henson, PhD, Instructor-Health



Introduction

Sleep is the cornerstone of overall health and well-being. Research consistently shows that inadequate or poor-quality sleep can significantly increase the risk of chronic diseases and other health challenges, no matter your age. In this lesson, we will explore why sleep is so vital to maintaining good health, and how improving your sleep habits can lead to a healthier, happier life.

Let us unlock the benefits of better sleep together and start improving your health—one restful night at a time!

Target Audience

- EHC Leaders and Members
- Adult & Youth audiences

Objectives

- By the end of this lesson, participants will:
 1. Understand why sleep is important for all ages.
 2. Identify the health and wellness benefits of adequate sleep.
 3. Learn practical tips to develop and maintain healthier sleeping habits.

Handouts

- Handout 1: Getting Enough Sleep?
- Handout 2: Tips to Better Sleep
- Activity 1: Do's & Don'ts – Foods for Better Sleep
- Activity 1: Do's & Don'ts – Reference Guide: Foods for Sleep Examples



Suggestions for Teaching

- Review the lesson guide and handouts.
- Make copies of handouts and activity 1.
- Make copies of evaluation.

Suggested Use

- This lesson is suitable for all adult audiences, especially those who may have excess prescription drugs in their home.
- A PowerPoint presentation is available for presenting this lesson.

The Importance of Sleep

Lesson Guide (cont.)

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Group Discussion Activity:

Note to Leader: Ask the participants to share, why sleep is important to all ages? Wait for responses. Allow 5 minutes for participants to share. Once the discussion wraps up, discuss why sleep is important.

Why Sleep Is Important?

Sleep is essential for maintaining good health and daily productivity. While the amount of sleep needed varies across age groups, both the quality and quantity of sleep are critical for everyone—from young children to older adults.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that about one-third of adults in the United States are not getting enough sleep. Research has also shown that poor sleep quality increases the risk of chronic diseases, making sleep a cornerstone of overall health and well-being.

Sleep is as vital as food and water—an absolute important for an excellent quality of life. Quality sleep goes beyond just feeling rested; it also:

- Repairs and heals muscles and tissues.
- Recharges energy for the brain and body.
- Enhances focus, productivity, and readiness to face the day.
- Reduce stress and improve mood.
- Improve your heart health and metabolism.
- Lower your risk of chronic conditions such as high blood pressure.
- Improves memory recall.

By prioritizing sleep, you can significantly boost your overall health, energy, and well-being. Remember, making sleep a priority is not just a lifestyle change—it is an investment in a healthier, more energized life!

Group Discussion Activity:

Note to Leader: Ask participants: do you get enough hours of sleep in a day? Wait for responses. Ask participants: do you know the recommended hours of sleep a person needs? Wait for responses. Allow 5 minutes for participants to share.

Once discussion wraps up: Discuss the points on Handout 1: Getting Enough Sleep? Give participants copies of Handout.

Quality Sleeping Habits

Ask yourself: “**Do I want to improve my physical health?**” If the answer is yes, then start by ensuring you are getting enough sleep.

Sleep is a basic human need and an essential part of life. To achieve better physical health, you need quality sleep—uninterrupted and refreshing rest. Remember, quality sleep is not just about the number of hours you sleep but how well you sleep during those hours.

Signs of Poor Sleep Quality:

- Difficulty falling asleep.
- Waking up repeatedly during the night.
- Feeling sleepy or tired even after what seems like enough sleep.

If you experience these signs regularly, it is a good idea to consult with your physician to address potential underlying issues. **Let us discuss ways to achieve better sleep.**

Discuss the points on Handout 2: Tips to Better Sleep. Give participants copies of Handout.

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Lesson Guide (cont.)

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Group Discussion Activity: Nutrition & Sleep

Note to Leader: Ask the participants, why do you think nutrition is important for sleep? Wait for responses. Allow 5 minutes for participants to share.

Discussion Points to Share After the Activity:

- Nutrition plays an integral role in establishing good sleep patterns for both adults and youth.
- Certain foods can promote better sleep, while others can disrupt it.
- Research shows that what you eat can significantly impact how well you rest at night.
- Highlight examples of sleep-friendly foods (e.g., bananas, almonds, or oatmeal) and foods that may hinder sleep (e.g., caffeine or heavy meals before bedtime).

Activity 1: Do's & Don'ts-Foods for Better Sleep

Distribute Activity 1: Do's & Don'ts-Foods for Better Sleep. Give participants copies of Activity 1 handout.

Instruction: In this activity, ask the participants to complete the chart by listing foods they think are helpful ("Do's") or harmful ("Don'ts") for a good night's sleep. Tell participants to think about how these foods might affect relaxation, digestion, or energy levels before bedtime. Give 5 to 6 minutes to complete.

After completing the chart, have the participants share and discuss their answers as a group. Let us learn how to make smarter choices for a restful night!

Note to Leader: Refer to Activity 1: Do's & Don'ts-Reference Guide for more examples. Give participants copies of the reference guide.

Conclusion

The importance of sleep lies in its ability to serve as natural, high-quality medicine for your body. It replenishes and revitalizes all parts of your body, supporting health and well-being at every age.

Note to Leader: Wrap up by asking participants to share what they will adopt as a better sleeping habit.

Evaluation

Pass out the evaluation and ask participants to complete.