

# Facilitator's Guide



Volume 9, Issue 4

FRESH  
CONVERSATIONS

## The connection between diet, exercise, and sleep

### Background Information (optional):

- [Fiber Facts](#)
- [Sleep Tips for Older Adults](#)
- [Ways to Meditate for Better Sleep](#)
- [A Good Night's Sleep - National Institute on Aging](#)
- [Diet and Exercise and Sleep](#)
- [Insomnia and Older Adults](#)

### Behavior Goals

1. Participants will know the importance of physical activity in getting a good night's sleep.
2. Participants will understand how nutrition, physical activity, and sleep all impact their health.
3. Participants will be able to voice some ways to improve their sleep quality and quantity.

### Meeting Preparation:

1. Review the newsletter. Send questions or concerns to your coordinator.
2. Review the background resources (website links are provided above).
3. Choose one of the recipe options. Make the recipe at least once before the meeting. Write down helpful hints for the group. If virtual, have ideas on what to share about the recipe you tried.
4. Determine how to transport and taste featured food tasting.
5. If the meeting is virtual, prepare ideas for how to engage participants in the recipe making process.
  - a. Prepare a grocery list for the recipe chosen that can be sent with newsletter for participants to purchase
  - b. Demonstrate recipe on video and direct participants to the recipe in the newsletter.
  - c. If conference call: create a conversation about the recipe: serving size, freezing instructions, tips, discussion on ingredients, nutrition etc.

*Continued on page 2*

The suggested wording for the presentation is in regular font and the facilitator directions are in ***bold, dark red italic.***

It's best not to read the presentation, but to use your own words, staying close to the meaning.

## Conversation

Welcome to Fresh Conversations! We are so happy to have you all here! Let's wrap up our last series on processed foods. Last meeting we discussed whole grains and serving sizes.

Can anyone tell me how you know if a food is a whole grain vs. refined grain?

***When looking at the package, the first ingredient must say whole (i.e. whole wheat, whole grain, etc.)***

Why is an ultra processed food harmful to our health in excess amounts?

***It is harmful to our health in excess as the more processing a food undergoes, the less essential nutrients it contains and the increased likelihood of saturated fats, sodium, and sugars are added into the foods.***

What are some healthy carbohydrates that you can add into your diet?

***Brown rice, whole grain pasta, whole wheat bread, steel cut oats, fruits and vegetables, beans, nuts, seeds, oatmeal***

Has anyone added any of these foods into their diet recently?

## Introduction

Our topic in this month's newsletter is about the connection between diet, exercise, and sleep. How do you typically feel when one of these areas is out of whack? How do you feel when you don't get enough sleep? How about when you eat certain not-so-healthy foods? What about when you don't move your body?

***Allow time for participants to answer how they feel.***

These are all very common feelings and effects that lifestyle factors may have on your body.

We are going to get a little deeper into the connection these factors have on your health!

## Discussion

First, let's play a quick game about caffeine!

***Have participants hold up 1 or 2 fingers for the answers.***

Tell me which has more caffeine?

1. ***Brewed Coffee***
2. Energy Drink

8 oz cup of coffee contains 80-200 mg of caffeine, 8.4 oz energy drink contains 80 mg of caffeine.

1. Can of Soda
2. ***Green Tea***

8oz green tea contains 28 mg caffeine; 8 oz can of soda contains 22 mg caffeine.

1. ***Hot Chocolate***
2. Decaf Coffee

8 oz hot chocolate contains about 10 mg caffeine and 8 oz decaf coffee contains 2 mg caffeine.

***It is important to note, the caffeine contents may differ between brands but these are average caffeine contents.***

Did you know there are also some other surprising foods and medications that contain caffeine such as chocolate, coffee or chocolate flavored ice cream, cereals, puddings, and headache medications?

So why are we talking about caffeine specifically? When we talk about lifestyle, especially sleep, one of the things that comes up is caffeine and timing. It is recommended to avoid caffeine later in the day. This can include many foods/drinks other than just coffee. There are many caffeine free alternative options that may be a better option later in the day. What are your favorite caffeine free drinks?

***Allow time for participants to answer.***

Now let's dive a little further into sleep! How many hours a night should most adults be sleeping?

***Allow time to answer (7-9 hours per night).***

That is almost a third of our day! For most adults & children, not getting enough sleep leaves your brain and body feeling exhausted. This can affect not only the next day but possibly days to come. So what does this have to do with exercise and nutrition? Do anyone have any ideas how a lack of sleep can affect your physical activity and diet?

***Allow time to answer. Possible ideas: Overeating, choosing higher calorie foods, not exercising enough, hunger and fullness feelings may be affected.***

Let's make a list of good habits that may contribute to better sleep.

***Allow time for everyone to answer. Possibly go around the room and ask everyone to name one thing that may contribute to better sleep. Reference Tips and Tricks in the newsletter for ideas. Participants may take turns reading each bullet point from the newsletter.***

One of the tips and tricks in the newsletter is about electronic devices. There is a blue light that electronic devices emit that suppresses the production of melatonin, a chemical that tells the body when it's time to sleep. So it is a good idea to stop using your devices right before bed. What devices do you think this would include?

***Examples can be tablets, phones, televisions, computers, etc.***

Another of the tips and tricks to better sleep discussed in the newsletter is focusing on fiber in your diet. Fiber is talked about frequently in nutrition news. Fiber has shown to have so many health benefits. What health benefits have you heard in the past that fiber provides?

***Allow time for answers. Possible answers: Decrease cholesterol levels, blood sugar management, bowel regularity, weight management, keeps you feeling fuller longer.***

What foods are we talking about specifically? Does anyone have any ideas which foods are high in fiber?

***See list of fiber rich foods in newsletter. The list is not all inclusive.***

We've gone over quite a few tips that you can implement in your everyday life that experts recommend for getting better sleep. Does anyone else find anything else that helps get better quality and quantity of sleep at night?

***Share personal examples - taking a bath before bed, meditating, reading, drinking tea, etc.***

## Physical Activity:

Now let's switch gears to talk about Physical Activity. Last time we talked about the newest version of the Physical Activity Guidelines. Does anyone want to share how they increased their activity since we met last?

***Allow time to discuss.***

How do you feel after a great night of sleep?

***Examples: refreshed, alive, ready for the day, in control... facilitators can share their experiences too.***

Has anyone noticed physical activity impacting their sleep?

***Allow time for reflection.***

Physical activity can be a fantastic way to get more sleep. The Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans indicate there are several improved sleep outcomes associated with physical activity.

- Adults who are more physically active sleep better.
- Adults who are active report taking less time to fall asleep.
- They also report an increased sleep efficiency (higher percentage of time in bed actually sleeping).
- They experience better sleep quality and more deep sleep.
- Further benefits include reduced daytime sleepiness and improvements in sleep with regular physical activity are also reported by people with insomnia and obstructive sleep apnea.

Often a concern people have about physical activity and sleep is that if they are active too close to bedtime it could keep them awake. However, the guidelines state that the number of hours before bedtime at which the activity is performed does not matter. Benefits are similar for physical activity performed more than 8 hours before bedtime, 3 to 8 hours before, and less than 3 hours before bedtime.

Who is interested in better sleep? What are some ways we could see if our physical activity is impacting our sleep?

***Example: Keep a log***

This month take a few notes about your sleep for a week and see if you notice any changes. This can be either in physical activity impacting your sleep or in your sleep in general. Look for places to adjust or build on what is working well!

## Optional Game

Let's switch gears and have a little fun playing trivia!

Pop Trivia

**Have participants hold up 1, 2 or 3 fingers up.**

The R.E.M. stage of sleep is when people dream. What does R.E.M. stand for?

1. **Rapid Eye Movement**
2. Reverse Eye Mobility
3. Revolving Eye Movement

Sleeping face up helps to prevent wrinkles. True or False.

1. **True**
2. False

About how many minutes should it take for you to fall asleep once your head hits the pillow?

1. 30 minutes
2. **15 minutes**
3. 2 minutes

How long is an ideal nap?

1. 1 hour
2. 12 minutes
3. **26 minutes**

<https://www.houstonmethodist.org/blog/articles/2019/oct/how-to-plan-the-perfect-nap/>

\*26 minutes was found by a NASA research study in 1995 in which they found the optimal nap of 26 minutes improves alertness by more than 50% and performance by more than 30%.

What kind of music did researchers find helped participants with better sleep quality?

1. **Classical Music**
2. Country Music
3. Reggae Music

Great job with the game! Hopefully you learned a couple interesting facts.

## Discussion Continued

Let's try a meditation activity. Here are the basic steps.

**Display a calming picture on the screen for participants.**

1. Find a quiet area. Sit or lie down, depending on what feels most comfortable.
2. Close your eyes and breathe slowly. Inhale and exhale deeply. Focus on your breathing.

**Allow participants to practice this for 1-2 minutes.**

3. If a thought pops up, let it go and refocus on your breathing.

This can be used as a bedtime activity. Start by meditating for 3-5 minutes before bed. Over time, slowly increase the time to 15-20 minutes. If this is something you are interested in more, try listening to recordings of guided meditations on sources such as meditation podcasts, apps, or from local libraries.

## Tasting Activities:

Preferred Option: Lentil Tacos

<https://spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu/recipe/lentil-tacos/>

- This is a great vegetarian alternative to beef or chicken tacos. Can add lentils to ground meats to help "stretch" the meat further.
- Garlic cloves can be substituted with garlic powder (2 cloves = ¼ tsp powder)
- Some suggested toppings are lettuce, cheese, salsa, and sour cream. Plain greek yogurt is a good alternative to sour cream to increase protein. (2 T plain non-fat greek yogurt = 3 g protein, 15 calories; 2 T non-fat sour cream = 1 g protein, 15 calories)
- The recipe calls for corn tortillas - to add more fiber, you can use whole wheat tortillas.

Option 2: Garlic & Herb Lentils

<https://spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu/recipe/garlic-and-herb-lentils/>

- Italian seasoning can be substituted using dried basil, dried oregano, dried rosemary, dried parsley, dried thyme, garlic powder, red chili flakes.
- This recipe can be served as a side dish or as a main dish on bread or tortilla.  
(<https://www.spendwithpennies.com/homemade-italian-seasoning-recipe/>)

See newsletter food spotlight for additional facts regarding lentils.

## Take Action

Keep a log of your sleep and physical activity for a week. Pay particular attention to any effects physical activity has on your sleep.