

Eating Right for Your Lifestyle Lesson Guide

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Background

How we live our lives is our lifestyle. Making an effort to change the way one normally does something in the everyday routine is called a lifestyle change. With the focus on prevention of chronic disease gaining in popularity, making a healthy lifestyle change is a term that is being heard often. And no wonder, with the leading causes of death in America directly related to lifestyle, such as food choices, physical inactivity, and tobacco and/or alcohol use, Americans can use some lifestyle change!

For the over 50 crowd, lifestyle change may be even more important as statistics show Americans are living longer. By 2050, Americans 65 years of age and older will comprise about one quarter of the US population, while the World Health Organization estimates that by 2020, two-thirds of all diseases will be the result of lifestyle choices. Staying healthier as we age should be everyone's goal! If simple changes in one's day to day activities can make us healthier, why don't we make the changes? The answer could be we just don't know where to start.What empowers individuals to make effective behavior changes?

Target Audiences

- EHC Members
- Other adults

Objectives

- Participants will be able to identify changes in their personal lifestyle to improve individual health status.
- Participants will be able to name one physical activity they feel comfortable participating in.
- Participants will be able to name one lifestyle change they will commit to try in the next year.

Suggested handouts or visual aids:

- Lifestyle Change Worksheet
- Pen or Pencil
- MyPlate handout
- Food Substitutions handout

Advanced Preparation:

Prior to teaching the lesson, review the main teaching points and study the handouts. Make copies of the handouts.

Discussion/Presenting the Lesson:

Lifestyle change means to change from the usual way of doing everyday things. With regards to our health, lifestyle change means replacing an unhealthy practice with a healthier practice. For example, if someone wants to “eat healthier,” they might choose to eat a piece of fruit every day in place of a candy bar. To get the conversation started on Lifestyle Change, let’s each name a lifestyle change we may have heard of (*ask each person to name a lifestyle change if they would like; answers might be exercise more, eat healthier foods, stop smoking, lose weight, etc*).

Let’s talk about eating healthier foods for a lifestyle change. One way to help with this lifestyle change is to follow the USDA MyPlate recommendations. MyPlate encourages us to fill half of our plate with veggies, one fourth with whole grains, and one fourth with a lean protein. (*Show MyPlate handout*). Having a dairy serving and a fruit serving rounds out the meal. This sounds easy but sometimes it can be hard to follow MyPlate. What are some foods that you enjoy that may not fit into the MyPlate? Write one or two down in Section A on your worksheet.

Activity:

Sometimes we may need to make healthier substitutions in order to make a healthier plate. Let’s review the handout on healthier substitutions. Look at Section A on your worksheet. Can you find a food on the healthier substitutions handout that you would consider choosing? If so, write in the substitution in the right hand column of Section A.

Another option for helping with eating healthier foods is to keep a **food log**. Look at Section B on your worksheet. A food log or food diary is a way to write down what, when, and how much we eat each day. The accountability of documenting our food intake can sometimes be a powerful tool in helping lifestyle change along! Often we do not realize we are eating a larger serving or grabbing an extra snack throughout the day. Writing down everything we eat and drink can be a bit time consuming, but can pay big dividends in making healthy changes. If you prefer electronic versions, there are several free phone apps that provide food tracking options. (*MyFitnessPal and MyPlate are two free apps*).

Physical activity is a lifestyle change many want to make. Current recommendation for physical activity for adults is 150 minutes of moderate physical activity every week. We can meet the recommendation by thinking of ways to be more active in everyday activities. Be creative! Simple changes such as parking farther from the door to the grocery store or library gets in extra steps with small effort. Marching in place during commercials of your favorite TV show slips in additional movement activity. Do you have a way you sneak in extra physical activity that you would like to share?

Activity:

Take a moment and think back to junior high or high school. What were some activities you enjoyed doing? Did you participate in sports or dance? Take a moment and jot down in Section C of your worksheet the activity you used to enjoy. If it is no longer feasible to participate as you once did, think of a revised version of the activity that you can participate in now and jot that down on

your worksheet. Also think of when you could participate in the activity.

Most of the time, with healthier eating and regular physical activity, **weight loss** occurs. Even modest weight loss aids in chronic disease prevention. Studies have shown that weight loss of 5-7 percent of one's starting body weight can be beneficial. Let's do some quick math to see what the numbers are.

Activity:

Let's take a moment to calculate exactly what 5%-7% weight loss would equal in pounds. In Section D of your worksheet, write your weight in pounds and multiply that number by .05. The result is the pounds needed to lose for 5% weight loss. For example:

Current weight: 150 pounds \times .05 = 7.5 pounds

In the example, the person would need to lose about 7.5 pounds to achieve the recommended weight loss, which is an achievable goal!

Summary

While most of us know that making healthier food choices and exercising more is "good" for us, sometimes it is hard to make changes to our lifestyle. By discovering what motivates each individual to make positive lifestyle changes and working toward small, attainable goals, one can make changes over time that truly reflects "Lifestyle Change"! Remember that lifestyle changes take time and should gradually shape us into healthier citizens. We all need motivation to change! Take a moment and jot down in Section E what motivates you to be healthier. Then jot down one lifestyle change you will try in the next year. You can do it! Remember it is what we do the majority of the time (lifestyle) that makes the biggest impact on our health!

Evaluation: Distribute the evaluation form and ask participants to complete it.

Resources:

American Heart Association <https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living>

My Plate <https://choosemyplate.gov>

Chopra M, Galbraith S, Darnton-Hill I. A global response to a global problem: the epidemic of overnutrition. Bull World Health Organ. 2002;80(12):952-958

HealthyPeople.gov website. <https://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/leading-health-indicators/2020-LHI-Topics>