



## TEACHING TIPS: GETTING ENOUGH SLEEP

Our bodies work hard all of the time. Much of this work goes on without our knowing or thinking about it. The heart beats . . . blood moves through arteries and veins . . . food is digested . . . kidneys take waste from the blood . . . muscles move.

These and many other things happen, even during sleep. Yet, sleep is a time when our activities slow down and the body regains strength. Proper sleep is needed to help all parts of the body work their best. Be sure to emphasize that people can feel run down if they do not get the sleep they need.

How much sleep do we need? This depends on the person. Children of the same age may not need the same amounts of sleep. The same is true of teenagers and adults. Notice that the handout talks about how you can tell if you are getting enough sleep. Emphasize that people differ in their need for sleep. This is an important point!

Conditions that make for a restful sleep are discussed in the handout. You may want to show some people how to control drafts, air temperature, humidity and other conditions in a sleeping area. Some of these conditions are important for health reasons.

For example, if the moisture level (humidity) of air is too low, the throat and nose tend to dry

out. This not only interferes with restful sleep, but makes it easier to catch colds and other respiratory illnesses. Low humidity is most common during the winter months in homes heated by forced air. Room temperatures in the mid 60's do not dry out the air as much as do those in the mid 70's. As you know, some moisture can be added to the air by placing pans of water near heat outlets (registers). Laundry that is hung and dried in the home will also add moisture to the air. Many homemakers do this during the cold winter months.

Window coverings, such as draperies, curtains or shades, may screen light or reduce drafts in a sleeping area or bedroom. Use your own experience as you work with families to solve these problems. When special problems or difficult questions come up, share them with the county Extension agent (home economics).

This information was adapted by Carla Shearer, Extension health education specialist, The Texas A&M University System, from materials prepared by the Illinois Cooperative Extension Service. The author appreciates the assistance of Zelda Williams, Lynne Thibodeaux and Elaine Ward, Extension program specialists—family resource development program, Prairie View A&M University, The Texas A&M University System, in the preparation of this publication.

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