

CHAPTER EIGHT

PERSONAL HEALTH

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Introduction

The human body is made up of many parts with their special roles and functions and unarguably, for these parts to function effectively, they must be healthy. Many of today's diseases could largely be prevented and controlled through some simple but consistent personal health practices needed for promotion of health and prevention of certain diseases (Kolawole, n.d.)

The Concept of Personal Health

Personal health according to Kolawole (n.d) is concerned with the state of wellbeing of the whole body which is necessary for its sound growth and development. Personal healthiness, enables the individuals body to carry out its different functions effectively. It has to do with the demonstration of health knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for choosing a healthy lifestyle. Over the years, improvements in personal health practices such as personal hygiene, sanitary living conditions and practices, portable water, and sewage facilities have had a major role in improving health and reduction in morbidity and mortality from infections, particularly those transmitted by the faecal-oral and direct contacts routes (Anyanwu, 2013). As the source further stated, at the beginning of year 2000, approximately 1 billion individuals globally lacked adequate sanitation. As World Health Organisation (WHO, 2002), have it, most of the people who do not have access to these basic infrastructure live in developing countries.

Requirements for Personal Health

The human body is made up of many parts and all the parts have their special roles and functions as noted. For these roles and functions to be effective, there are basic requirements that must be

met i.e. good food, exercise and recreation, sleep and rest, good clothing, medical check-up and good personal hygiene among others.

Good Food

Food is one of the basic needs of man and indeed of all living things. It is one of the most important factors that promote good health and wellbeing of all individuals. Good food, in the right proportion has great impact on personal health as the human body is made up of cells and these cells need to be well nourished in order to keep them in good working conditions.

In addition to satisfying hunger and thirst, good food contains nutrients i.e. carbohydrates, proteins, fats and oil, vitamins, minerals and water, that in the views of Kolawole (n.d); Oladipupo (2017) and Olise (2012) performs one or more of the following important functions:

- (i) Growth and replacement of worn out or broken tissues.
- (ii) The production of energy for various bodily functions.
- (iii) The maintenance of the integrity of the body including protection against infections.
- (iv) Supporting proper growth and development.
- (v) Helping in regulation of body temperature.

The above show that there is need for adequate diet. However as Olise (2012) observed, food as vital as it is for human growth and development, could also be a cause of disease and misery if not properly handled. Food hygiene aims at preventing food from going bad and avoiding contamination right from the production stage, through collection, storage, marketing and preparation to consumption.

Only good food should be eaten or preserved. No preservation technique will convert spoilt food to a wholesome one. Therefore, disease carrying food should be totally avoided. Again, good personal hygiene in relation to food is essential. Hands should be washed properly with soap and water before handling food and after visiting the toilets. Some food items like cassava may require fermentation to destroy harmful chemicals, so commercial considerations must not come before food safety. Cooking utensils should also be of safe materials.

Exercise

The body needs regular exercise for the best development of muscles and to keep various parts of the body in turn and healthy. Regular participation in exercises is necessary for maintenance of personal health as a lack of exercise can result in breathing problems, disordered sleeping, anxiety and depression (Kolawole, nd; Universal Class, 2022). Apart from the physical benefits of exercise, it also helps in the development of social and emotional values e.g. tolerance, cooperation, obedience to rules of games and officials.

According to Universal Class (2022), studies have shown that regular moderate exercises is effective in improving personal health. As the source added, even as little as a half an hour of exercises a day can drastically decrease one's risk of becoming overweight and developing health problems. Some easy and fun ways to get exercise include: organised sports, biking, hiking, swimming, gymnastic, dancing, skinning, rollerblading, skateboarding, volleyball and so on.

Sleep

A good night's sleep or afternoon naps is one of the most important ways to maintain and improve one's personal health. Sleep is a state of partial unconsciousness from which one can awaker It is a natural way of giving the body a chance to overhaul all its parts in order to prevent a breakdown. Sleep is one of the most important aspects of personal health, especially when one's body is still growing and developing (Universal Class, 2022).

During sleep, all activities involving the body parts are decreased and physical and mental strength are partially restored. Therefore, lack of sufficient sleep develops into "sleep debt" with serious negative effects on daily activities leading people to falling asleep at dangerous hours i.e. when driving or operating dangerous tools and serious accidents that may result to injuries or death becomes the consequences. Inconsistent sleep pattern can inhibit growth and healing in the body as one literally grows while sleeping or the body uses the time to repair damaged cells and organs as well as to digest food and extract nutrients.

The place of sleep in the improvement of personal health cannot be overemphasised, therefore, Kolawole (nd) suggests thus:

- ❖ Individuals need at least eight to nine hours of sleep daily to enable one feel at his best.
- ❖ Individuals should have regular bedtime and stick to it.
- ❖ Sleeping is best done on comfortable beds and comfortable room temperature.
- ❖ Avoid heavy meals close to bedtimes.
- ❖ Spend more quiet time relaxing before going to sleep e.g. read a story, take a warm bathe etc.
- ❖ Quiet and restful music may help encourage sleep.
- ❖ There should be good fresh air in the room.
- ❖ Maintain a calm and peaceful state of mind.

Rest

Rest refers to calmness of the body and mind which helps to prevent nervous breakdown and does not necessarily mean absolute sleep and this is important to personal health as it helps the body in the following ways:

- coming back to normal efficiency after it is fatigued or exhaustive.
- decreasing the strain on the heart and blood vessels.
- quieting the nervous system, thus relieves excitement.
- reducing the active motion of some parts of the body thereby avoiding strain and injuries.
- refreshing and enabling one to continue his task with greater ease.

Recreation

Recreation which have exercises as part of it, is one of the greatest avenue to develop both mind and body and assist in recovery from general fatigue. Recreation has to do with socially acceptable physical or mental activities which are indulged in during one's free or leisure times.

Personal health benefits of recreation include:

- ❖ reduction of tension brought about by the demands of the society.
- ❖ increment in physical fitness.

- ❖ improving of emotional health as it is an avenue for relieving emotional strains.
- ❖ provision of relaxation and reduction of tension after a hard day's work.
- ❖ bringing people of common interest together and providing a good atmosphere for social interaction.

Safe Water Supply

There is a common adage which says that "water sustains life". This adage emphasises the importance of water to the existence of human beings and indeed all forms of animals. The role of safe water in the promotion and maintenance of health cannot be overemphasised. Safe and adequate water supply is essential for food preparation, bathing, washing, cleaning the environment, industrial use, disposal of waste from homes and industries as without good and adequate water supply, the environment becomes hazardous for habitation because dirt will accumulate and this may lead to spread of various diseases especially infectious ones.

Water is one of the basic necessities of life as humans require it for drinking, cooking, washing, agriculture and industrial purposes. So, its availability in the right quantity and quality has serious implications for personal health (Olise, 2012). As Anyanwu (2013) corroborated, "a secure and dependable water supply contributes greatly to a healthy population, particularly when supported by promotion of hygienic behaviours.

The pipe born water is regarded as the safest water supply because it is assumed that such water supply is treated before sending it to various homes, industries and other public places for use. Unfortunately, this source of water is not available to majority of the people in Nigerian communities especially, the rural dwellers. Many of the people depends on other sources of water which include rain, surface and underground sources.

Giving the reasons for drinking water, Olise (2012) outlined the following:

- ❖ Water is absolutely essential to the human body's survival. A person can live for about a month without food but only about a week without water.

- ❖ Water helps to maintain healthy body weight by increasing metabolism and regulating appetite
- ❖ Water leads to increased energy levels. The most common cause of daytime fatigue is actually mild dehydration.
- ❖ Drinking adequate amounts of water can decrease the risk of certain types of cancers, including colon cancer, bladder cancer and breast cancer.
- ❖ Water leads to overall greater health by flushing out waste and bacteria that can cause diseases.
- ❖ Water naturally moisturises skin and ensures proper cellular formation underneath layers of skin to give it a healthy glowing appearance.
- ❖ Water can prevent and elevate headaches.
- ❖ Water aids in the digestion process and prevents constipation.
- ❖ Water is the primary mode of transportation for all nutrients in the body and it is essential for proper circulation.

Environmental Sanitation

The environment is a key determinant of optimum personal health and general well being of all human beings. Men's external environment contains elements which are essential for life and for maintenance of good health. The environment contains both living and non-living things which an individual has to interact with. In addition, environment contains potential hazards that can have negative effects on the health of man.

Sanitation is cleanliness of the individual and his environment to ensure that neither his action/inaction nor his surrounding endangers life. It involves creating and/or maintaining the conditions in the environment to promote health. Environmental sanitation is generally seen as a way of keeping the surroundings of an individual clean, safe and the prevention of contamination/pollution (Olubayo-Fatiregun, Ayodele & Akinnubi, 2013). In the view of Zukerman (1990) in Olubayo-Fatiregun, Ayodele & Akinnubi (2013), environmental sanitation is the control of those factors in man's physical environment, which may have deleterious effect on his physical development, health and survival.

Good environmental sanitation behaviour is a prerequisite for healthy living because good health is totally incompatible with improper disposal of wastes. Sanitation, the safe disposal of wastes is necessary to protect health (Anyanwu, 2013).

The healthy disposal of sewage is necessary for the maintenance of personal health. Human waste could be a great threat to one's health if not properly handled as it is largely responsible for organisms that cause disease, such as diarrhoea, dysentery, typhoid fever and other gastro-intestinal problems. Where there are no water cistern toilets i.e. rural areas, each household should possess at least one pit toilet. Defecating in an open bush is unacceptable to personal health because the practice attract flies easily and can cause the spread of diseases (Kolawole nd). The use of the water cistern toilets is considered safe and healthy if the soakage pit is well constructed and well covered. This method prevents flies and unpleasant odours, neater and more comfortable to use. However, the success of this method depends on adequate water supply as the toilet must be flushed after every use and washed on daily basis.

Disposal of refuse involves collection, storage and disposal of solid waste in our environment. These refuse includes materials such as food remnants, bottles, tins, dead animals, polythene bags and a variety of discarded items. Proper handling of refuse is important as poor refuse disposal attracts flies, insects and other rodents which may constitute health hazards.

Wherever man lives, works or recreates, waste is always generated. Therefore, to properly handle waste, Olise (2012), suggests the following:

- ❖ Avoid the untidiness and embarrassing sight and smell from wastes all over the place.
- ❖ Avoid physical hazards to man. Broken bottles, plates, tins may cause injury to individuals.
- ❖ Discourage environmental pollution affecting the entire ecosystem. A common problem is the pollution of water supply.
- ❖ Control the vectors since refuse provides sites for breeding and habitation by vermin.

- ❖ Ensure that materials of economic value are retrieved for recycling or conversion to other products.
- ❖ Prevent accidental fire arising from scattered combustible materials.

Healthy Housing

Housing in many developing countries has not been given adequate attention as one of the determinants of health. About 25% of the world's population is not properly housed and over 100 million have no shelter at all. Housing is not just roof over one's head but one of the basic needs of man as it provides protection against the elements and environmental hazards, both physical and social.

Good housing that meets health standard provides comfort and convenience as an important aspect of health, hence the following principles of healthy housing as outlined by Olise (2012).

- ❖ **Protection Against Communicable Disease Through:**
 - Safe water supply
 - Sanitary excreta disposal
 - Disposal of solid wastes
 - Drainage of surface water
 - Personal and domestic hygiene
 - Safe food preparation.
 - Structural safeguards
- ❖ **Protection Against Injuries, Poisonings and Chronic Diseases Through:**
 - Structural features and furnishings
 - Guide against indoor pollution
 - Chemical safety
 - Use of the home as a workplace
- ❖ **Reduction of Psychological and Social Stress Through:**
 - Adequate living space, privacy and comfort.
 - Personal and family security
 - Access to recreation and community amenities
- ❖ **Access to a Supportive Living Environment Through Provision of:**
 - Security and emergency services
 - Health and social services

- Access to cultural amenities
- ❖ **Protection of Populations at Special Risk:**
- Women and children
- Displaced and mobile populations
- The aged and ill persons

Food Handling (Food Hygiene)

Food, though necessary for growth, energy and developments can also spread certain diseases through:

- contamination by human or animal excreta
- microorganism that feed on the food but harmful to humans when consumed
- results of the natural process of food spoilage due to the activity of enzymes.

Due to the above reasons and more, there is need for handling food properly and hygiene as food hygiene by food handlers is very important aspect of personal health. The aim of food hygiene is to prevent food contamination at all stages of collection, transportation, storage, sales and preparation.

To maintain high standards of hygiene in food handling, the following measures must be taken:

- Environments where foods are prepared must be very clean and free from flies, rodents and other contaminants.
- Food displayed for sales must be properly covered and with clean packages.
- Regular supervision of all food handlers and their premises to ensure optimum hygienic environment.
- Regular inspection of premises such as abattoirs to ensure that diseased animals are not sold to the public.
- People suffering from any kind of communicable diseases should not be allowed to handle public food.
- Dustbins around food premises should be covered always and not exposed to flies.
- Fruits and vegetables should be washed properly before consumptions.

As mentioned earlier, food hygiene include among others, keeping preparation areas clean and germ-free. Mixing bowls, spoons, knives and any other tool used in the kitchen should be

washed thoroughly before and after use. Kitchen countertops, and cutting boards also should be cleaned from time to time.

Food preservation is also very important in healthy feeding. Food preservation includes a variety of techniques that allow food to be kept for extended periods of time without losing nutritional quality. Some forms of food preservation include sterilisation, pasteurisation, drying, smoking, pickling, salting and refrigeration.

Good storage helps to maintain the quality of food so that it will be safe for consumption. Dried food stuffs should be stored in clean tins or bins with tight lids.

Life Styles and Personal Health

Human ways of life is one of the important determinants of personal health. A lot of things that an individual do or does not do either positively or negatively impact on the personal health. So, people must learn and take to those behaviours that improves their health and at the same time avoid those that impact negatively on them. The individual have to deliberately learn and develop intelligence and wise decision taking about lifestyles and behaviours in order to minimise health risks. It is not unusual to find people engaging in hazardous behaviours such as cigarette smoking, alcoholism, drug abuse, and so on and these constitutes serious dangers to the individuals' health. Many behaviours can become habitual and if not controlled, can constitute serious danger to health. Many degenerative diseases such as, hypertension, cancer and more are associated with negative behaviours. Again, behaviours like excessive intake of alcohol may lead to liver damage and social problems, sexually transmissible infections including HIV/AIDS and cigarette smoking leading to lung cancer.

People generally and patients in particular belief and attitude also determine whether or not they seek appropriate medical advices and attention especially when ill. There are those whose faith forbids members from taking medications and therefore seeking solutions to health problems elsewhere. A lot move others will not go for treatment till the illness becomes too advanced for successful intervention. Meanwhile, the habit of going for regular checkups or seeking early treatments has helped many in the early detection and treatment of dreadful diseases like breast cancer and other tumors.

Personal Hygiene

Observing good personal hygiene is of utmost importance in the promotion of health of any individual. According to WHO (2007), hygiene refers to conditions and practices that help to maintain health and prevent the spread of diseases especially the infections ones. In everyday life hygiene practices are employed as preventive measures to reduce the incidences and spreading of germs that bring about disease conditions. Personal hygiene refers to monitoring the body's cleanliness. It include such habits as how frequently showers or bathes are taken, hand washing, trimming of finger nails, care of the mouth, eyes, ears, clothing, skin, hair and other body parts.

Oral Hygiene (Dental Health)

Dental health is another way of referring to oral health. Healthy mouth including the gums, tongue and teeth, is necessary for personal health. It is a state of being free from mouth and facial pain, oral and throat cancer, oral infection and sores, periodontal (gum) disease, tooth decay, tooth loss and other disease or disorders that limit an individual's capacity in biting, chewing, smiling, speaking and psychosocial disorder induced by oral/facial problems (Oladipupo, 2017). Oral hygiene is the practice of keeping the mouth and teeth clean to prevent dental problems, most commonly, dental cavities, gingivitis, periodontal (gum) disease and bad breath. There are also oral pathologic conditions in which good oral hygiene is required for healing and regeneration of the oral tissues.

The mouth plays numerous roles in the maintenance and upliftment of the physical, social and psychological state of the individual (Olise, 2012). The condition of the teeth quite often mirrors what happens in its immediate environment.

To maintain and promote oral health, Achalu (2008) suggests that the following should be observed.

- Brush the teeth at least twice a day with soft bristled brush or if possible, after every meal.
- Choose toothpaste that contains fluoride in order to protect the teeth from decay
- Move your brush back and forth gently in short strokes
- Brush the outer, inner and chewing surfaces of the teeth.

- Use the toe of the brush to clean the inside surfaces of the front of the teeth, using a gentle up and down stroke.
 - Brush the tongue to remove bacteria and freshen breath
 - Eat adequate diets
 - Limit the eating of sugary and starchy foods
 - Choose nutritious food such as cheese, vegetables and fruits.
 - Visit the dentist regularly (at least twice a year)
 - Brush in the morning and don't go to bed without brushing your teeth
 - Treat flushing as important as brushing
 - Consider mouthwash
 - Avoid harmful practices like cigarettes smoking, chewing ice or other objects, and opening strong cocks with the teeth.
- Achieving healthy teeth takes a lifetime of care and dedication to achieve. Even if one have been told that his teeth is nice, it is important to take right steps every day to care for them and prevent problems and these involves getting the right oral care products as well as being mindful of one's daily habits (Hoffman, 2020).

Care of Clothing:

Clothing have great impact on the wellbeing of an individual as they serve as protection against some elements to the human body, protecting it from animal and insects bites, chemicals, harsh weather as well as providing aesthetic values with certain psychological well being.

Clothes are used on daily basis and needs to be cared for to guarantee the needed functions necessary for improvement and maintenance of good personal health.

Proper care of clothes involves;

- Making sure that cloth for work is appropriate for the particular job.
- Keeping clothes clean and pressed.
- Selecting clothes that keep the body cool in hot seasons.
- Wearing night clothes when going to bed
- Washing clothes when dirty with soap and clean water
- Selecting clothes that keeps the body warm in cold seasons.
- Drying clothes especially after washing to kill germs

- Changing underwear and washing on daily basis.

Care of the Skin

The skin is a very important organ in the body as it protects the body against trauma, regulate body temperature, maintain water and electrolyte balance, sense painful and pleasant stimuli and participate in Vitamin D synthesis among others. However, for the skin to perform the above functions effectively, it has to be kept healthy. As Oladipupo (2017) has it, a healthy skin can be gotten through healthy practices and habits ranging from regular washing with soap and water, adequate diet, rest to exercise. On how one does the washing of the skin, it is advised that special attentions be paid to certain body parts that produce more sweats, such as private parts, in between toes, fingers, inner and outer parts of the ear. Cosmetic should be used carefully on the skin as some may cause allergic reactions. As earlier observed during the discussion under care of clothing, every season demands suitable clothing as the weather may affect the skin negatively.

There certain habits that should be avoided if one wants to keep the skin healthy and they include:

- dressing and covering cuts on the skin until they are completely healed in order to avoid any infection and
- avoiding the use of body creams or soap that contains harmful chemicals which may have damaging effects on the skin.

Care of the Hair

The state of health of the body is shown to some extent by the hair condition of the individual and a bushy and dirty hair harbor germs and lice. Therefore, there is need to maintain good hair to keep it healthy and this can be done through:

- Regular washing of hair scalp with soap and water.
- Combing and brushing the hair with good and neat combs that will not cause injury.
- Applying hair cream to give the hair a good texture.
- Washing the hair at least once a week for females and everyday for men.

- Avoiding use of any heat treatment or substances that can cause damage to the scalp.
- Eating adequate diet.

Care of the Eyes

The eye is one of the most important organs in the human body as it is an optical instrument designed by nature, similar to a camera which has a lens on one side and sensitive screen called retina on the other side. (Kolawole, n.d; Oladipupo, 2017). It is a vital organ of vision.

The eye carries out many important functions that make life comfortable and enjoyable and they include being a sensory organ, through which people see around their environment enabling them to properly appreciate nature and protect themselves for accidents and express feelings.

For the eyes to carry out their functions well, they have to be cared for in the following ways;

- * Avoiding carelessness while playing as you might hurt your eyes.
- * Correct lighting at all times
- * Washing of the eyes preferably with cold water, keeping it free from any kind of germs
- * Avoiding sharp objects close to the eyes
- * Avoid rubbing the eyes when some dust particles gets into them but be washed.
- * Avoiding carelessness while playing as you might hurt your eyes.
- * Avoiding unnecessary straining of the eyes i.e. when reading with a light that is not bright enough.
- * Avoiding exposure of the eyes to excessive brightness
- * Learning and practicing some eyes exercises in the mornings and the evenings
- * Resting the eyes at intervals during long periods of studies
- * Going for yearly medical examinations for the eyes by a qualified ophthalmologist.
- * Not staying too close to television sets when watching
- * Not wearing medicated classes that are not recommended for the individual.

Care of the ears

The ear is a very important part of the human body that enables one to hear sounds, that are required for effective communication. So, the ear performs some major roles that are as important as those of the eyes. Its function is to convert physical vibration into encoded nervous impulses. However, apart from detecting sounds, the ears also aids in body equilibrium and position balancing. It helps in listening to good music that can help in the promotion of emotional health.

To protect the ears from dangers, injuries and help them to remain healthy, the following should be taken note of and observed:

- * Avoid putting or pushing obstacles into the ears.
- * Clean the ears regularly with cotton buds.
- * Wiping the outer part of the ears gently to avoid irritating or breaking the delicate skin on your ears.
- * Do not allow the entrance of water into the ears.
- * Wearing of earplugs or other protective gears during exposure to loud music or noises as the later may damage one's ability to hear.
- * Avoiding exposure of the ears to high pitched or prolonged colds
- * Avoiding blows on the ears.
- * Not ignoring any ear infection because they can result to worsening of symptoms or long-term hearing impairments.
- * Avoiding blowing the nose too vigorously.
- * Removing any wax that accumulates in the outer ear by gently wiping it away with cotton buds
- * Consulting a doctor, if one experiences any earache, discharge or infection.

Hand Washing

Human beings act as vectors carrying disease-causing organisms from one person to another, either through direct contact or indirectly via surfaces (Olise, 2012). Regular hand washing can be effective in preventing diseases because hand washing with soap is one of the most effective and inexpensive ways of preventing

diarrhea diseases, acute respiratory infections, halmmith infections and eye infections, especially trachoma.

Some critical times in hand washing with soap are:

- * Before and after eating food including snacks.
- * After blowing one's nose, coughing or sneezing.
- * Before, during and after preparing food, especially raw meat, poultry or sea food.
- * When hands are dirty.
- * Before and after caring for someone that is sick.
- * After changing diapers or cleaning up a child who has used the toilet.
- * After touching a public surface.
- * After touching an animal or animal waste.
- * After using the toilet.

The Need for Personal Health Education

Health education in general can promote a satisfying personal health as it enables an individual to make decisions about everyday health related issues at all stages of life (WHO, 2017). Personal Health, which Denise (2014) defined as the mental, physical and social well being of an individual, must involve the ability to take charge of one's health by making conscious decisions and taking deliberate actions to become healthy. Personal health is our life-time asset which boosts our health and well being to live longer than normal life expectancy. Surprisingly, with the passage of time, body wear and tear, mental stress, poor hygiene, ageing and nutritional deficiencies, our bodies suffer irreparable losses during blood cells, hormones and enzymes production which collectively down regulate our health indicators like natural immunity, physical, mental and emotional wellbeing. To overcome such falls, one need to be enlightened and intellectually ready for personal health.

As a young adult, it is imperative to learn the basics of maintaining good health before venturing out into the world. Once on their own, many young ones will be solely responsible for making healthy choices for themselves. Unfortunately, as Universal Class (2022). Through it, many teens and young adults may not have a model of healthy living at the home and as a result emulate the poor health practices that they grow up around. Education is

power, especially when coupled with correct implementation of policies. Understanding one's options at especially young age to living a healthy and balanced life shall more probable have positive impacts on not only one's personal health, but on that of others as well.

The individual, particularly from a young age must be taught and get educated on what to do to improve their personal health. This awareness and putting it into practice is required to make for improved individual health, whose conglomerate is community health as a result.

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