



Shiftwork and Nutrition



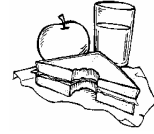
Shiftworkers are highly susceptible to stomach and digestive problems as a result of irregular eating habits. Working shifts often requires eating at night, a time when the stomach and digestive system are at rest. If we eat a big meal – especially one that includes greasy, spicy, or heavy protein foods – it simply sits. Then we feel full and sluggish. Thirty to forty-five percent of shiftworkers report chronic stomach problems from the kinds of food they eat during the night and before bed.

Weight gain can also be a problem. This occurs when people eat regular daytime meals and continue to snack throughout the night- more for the stimulation it provides rather than from hunger.

Nighttime snacking not only contributes to weight gain, it often consists of high-fat, high-calorie “junk” food that is hard to digest.



Tips for Healthy Eating



- Try to schedule one meal with your family each day.
- Establish a normal meal schedule regardless of what hours you work. For most people this is three meals a day spaced at consistent intervals.
- If you are working a night shift, try to eat a hot meal before midnight and snack thereafter.
- Avoid alcohol near bedtime.
- Avoid food and beverages containing caffeine within four hours of bedtime.
- Start your “day” regardless of what time it is with high protein and gradually shift to carbohydrates as bedtime approaches. Because protein is difficult to digest, it’s best to choose from lighter sources of protein right before and during work.

Heavy Protein

Beef
Pork
Eggs
High-fat-cheeses
Duck

Light Protein

Chicken
Turkey
Fish
Veal
Low-fat dairy products
Legumes (cooked beans, peas, lentils)

The increase in body temperature following a meal high in protein works to delay the drop in body temperature thereby helping to maintain alertness. It will also interfere with achieving a

restful sleep. This type of meal should be taken during the second 1/3 of the waking hours when alertness at work is essential and the body is fighting the urge to sleep.

A meal high in carbohydrate taken when the body temperature is dropping will decrease alertness, ability to concentrate and add to the uncontrollable urge to sleep. This type of meal should be taken during the last 1/3 of the waking hours when it is time to begin preparing the body for a restful sleep.

Planning your Meals Afternoon or Evening Work

Breakfast (8-10am.)

Regardless of what time you get up, breakfast is probably the most important meal of your day. Eat soon after rising, it helps stimulate metabolism, signalling the beginning of your “day.” If you plan to exercise, do that first. Otherwise, wait at least two hours after breakfast before doing any strenuous exercise.

Protein (from list); Whole-grain bread or cereal; low-fat dairy products; fresh fruit or juice.

Main Meal (1-2 pm.)

Light protein (from List); Low fats; Carbohydrates (vegetables, fruits, bread, pasta, potatoes, light desserts); Caffeine O.K.

Work Meal Break (7-8pm.)

Choose foods that are easy to digest. Poultry, fish, vegetables, fruit and whole-grain breads and cereals are good choices. Reduce intake of fats, butter, red meats and fried foods. Avoid spicy foods and rich desserts. Keep this meal light and small. You can supplement with snacks.

Soup and vegetable salad-or-soup and sandwich (light protein)-or-Poultry or fish and vegetables. Use salad dressings and sandwich spreads sparingly.

Night Work

Working at night requires eating lighter, easy to digest foods. Poultry, fish, vegetables, fruit and whole-grain breads and cereals are good choices. Reduce intake of fats, butter, red meat and fried foods. Avoid spicy food and rich desserts.

Breakfast (5-7pm.) Main Meal

This is the time for traditional “supper” type foods if you’re going to have them. Protein; Low fats; Carbohydrates (vegetables, fruit, bread, pasta, potatoes); Low-fat dairy products (If you’re planning to go back to sleep before work, make this meal lighter and smaller.)

Work Meal Break

Soup and salad-or-Soup and light sandwich-or-Light protein and vegetables.

Snacks (Before and During Work)

NO CAFFEINE during second half of shift.

Low-fat dairy products;
Fruit; Popcorn; Granola;
Cereal; Plain cookies;
Pretzels; Baked crackers; Dried fruit.



For more information contact a member of the SFL Shift Work Committee.

Visit our website at www.sfl.sk.ca under SFL Committees / Shiftwork.



**#220 – 2445 13th Avenue
Regina, SK S4P 0W1
Ph: 525-0197 Fax: 525-8960**

Shift Work giving you problems?



There's help.... On nutrition