



Feeling Good on a Shiftwork Schedule

Watch your habits to learn if they contribute to health problems. Here are some common conditions and practical ways to avoid them:

Gastrointestinal: Shiftworkers may be more susceptible to indigestion, ulcers, nausea, diarrhea and constipation. Why? Digestive patterns change when physical routines change. When you work and eat at night, your body's circadian rhythms slow digestion to improve sleep. Couple that effect with poor food choices, and stomach upsets could result.

Solutions: Pack healthy foods and beverages from home and stick to regular meal times as much as possible.

Chronic conditions: The irregular hours of shiftwork can make managing a condition such as asthma, diabetes or arthritis especially challenging. For example, taking medications at the same time each day may be difficult when you work rotating shifts. Fitting in fitness efforts may be harder.

Solutions: Talk with your health care provider about the best ways to manage your condition. Follow your management plan closely — make it a top priority. You'll feel better and enjoy more of life.

Sleep problems: Too little sleep and irregular sleep patterns can produce a sleep debt. When you are short on sleep, you're more likely to feel fatigued, lose focus, be irritable, make mistakes and possibly become injured.



Solutions: Allow your body to adapt to new sleep patterns by maintaining consistent bed and wake-up times, even on your days off. Practice good "sleep hygiene" by creating a relaxing bedtime routine and keeping your sleep environment peaceful, dark, cool and quiet.



More Stay Well Tips

Manage stress. Whether it's deep breathing, exercise, practicing a hobby or spending a few quiet minutes alone, choose the stress-busting technique that works for you and do it every day ... don't wait until you feel the effects of stress.



Learn about depression. Know the signs to watch for and remember that clinical depression is an illness that needs treatment. Talk with your health care provider if depressive symptoms have been interfering with your daily life for more than two weeks.

Talk about prescriptions. Some medications can cause drowsiness or sleep problems or must be taken at the same time every day. Talk with your health care provider or pharmacist about your medications and how they might affect you as a shiftworker.

Avoid sedatives and stimulants. In general, medications should not be considered a way to adapt to shiftwork because they can be addictive, have adverse health effects and generally don't improve sleep or performance. Limit caffeine use and avoid it close to bedtime; switch to water or herbal tea.

Floss daily, and prevent dental disease. Periodontal disease has been linked to heart disease. See your dentist for checkups as recommended, brush at least twice a day, and floss every day.

Tap the power of optimism. A healthy outlook steps up your "shiftwork tolerance," or how well you cope with the changes and challenges of shiftwork. Surround yourself with positive people, make time to do things you enjoy, and concentrate on what you have to be grateful for.

Your good health is the finest asset you have, both on and off the job. Shiftwork does not have to lead to health problems. Take control by practicing prevention.

Staying Well on the Night Shift

Here's to Your Good Health



Stay Well Essentials

Are you working while the majority of the world sleeps? You're not alone, as the number of night shiftworkers is growing rapidly. Taking time to protect your health may be more important than ever. The tips in this brochure can help reduce your risk of developing major and minor health conditions. **First, the basics:**

Know your risk factors. Do you smoke, carry extra weight at your waistline or rarely achieve your exercising heart rate? While your genes play a role in whether or not you develop a chronic health condition, your lifestyle choices can make the difference.

Make healthy choices. You can probably recite "Eat healthily, exercise regularly and don't smoke" in

your sleep. But when you feel good and do not have a chronic illness, it's easy to forget about preventing health problems — until you get sick.

Sooner than you think, your not-so-healthy lifestyle choices can have a cumulative and negative effect on your body. The good news is that many conditions are preventable if you adopt simple healthful habits. So why not start today?

Work with your health care provider.

Do you have a health care provider you can talk to easily about symptoms and concerns? Consider that relationship a joint effort toward a long and healthful life. Get the checkups and health screenings recommended for your age and personal risk factors. Ask questions and be proactive. Talk with your provider about your shiftwork lifestyle.



Medical Reminders Heart Health: The Big Picture

Your heart's worst enemies are a sedentary lifestyle, excess weight, a high-fat diet and smoking; the adverse health effect of each is magnified when you add a family history of heart disease. Thankfully, regular exercise and balanced nutrition go a long way toward a strong, healthy cardiovascular system.

Poor food choices and a lack of physical activity, on the other hand, can potentially lead to high blood pressure, unhealthy cholesterol levels and type 2 diabetes. If not controlled, these conditions can seriously damage your heart and vascular system.

- Unhealthy cholesterol levels lead to plaque buildup in the arteries.
- High blood pressure weakens the heart muscle and the blood vessels.
- Type 2 diabetes significantly raises the risk of heart attack as well as nerve and blood vessel damage.

Stay healthy and strong with lifestyle changes and help from your health care provider.

3 Steps to a Healthy Heart and a Healthy Weight

1 Walk briskly at least 30 minutes most days. Remember, if you are over 40, have been out of shape for some time, or have existing health conditions, talk to your health care provider before starting a vigorous exercise program.

2 Restock your kitchen with heart-healthy foods. Avoid foods high in salt, sugar and saturated fat (including fatty meats, butter, full-fat dairy), and foods that contain trans fats. **Better:** Buy more plant-based foods (fruits, vegetables, beans, nuts, seeds, whole grains and soy products) ... foods with heart-friendly polyunsaturated and/or monounsaturated fats ... lean cuts of meat, poultry and fish.

Health Screenings

Talk with your health care provider about the preventive screenings recommended for you based on your age, risk factors and personal health history.

Women:

- Pap smear and/or pelvic exam
- Bone density test
- Mammogram
- Breast exam

Men:

- Prostate check
- Testicular exam

Everyone:

- General checkup
- Blood pressure
- Diabetes
- Vision and hearing
- Dental
- Immunizations
- Weight and height checks
- Cholesterol
- Colorectal cancer
- Thyroid
- Skin check

Also discuss lifestyle solutions with your health care provider, who can help with weight control, alcohol use and depression.



3 Balance is key. Simply build your meals with a small portion of lean protein and larger portions of plant-based foods such as salad, vegetables, fruit, and brown rice or another whole grain food. Balance your calorie intake with calories burned through physical activity to avoid weight gain, or burn more calories than you take in if you are trying to lose weight.

SMOKING: DID YOU KNOW?

Tools and support for quitting smoking have expanded in recent years. Tobacco cessation aids include the nicotine patch, gum, inhaler, lozenges, nasal spray and medication. Long-term quit rates are highest when combining these aids with advice

or counseling from a physician or other health care provider. You may still need several tries to quit for good, but quitting is one of the best steps you can take for your health.