



Nutrition Tips for Shift Workers

Shift work means working outside the usual 7 am - 6 pm time period. You may find that eating healthy can be a challenge. Here are some practical tips to help [make your workday healthier](#).

Shift work and your health

If you work shifts, you may find that you experience:

- A change in appetite
- Trouble falling asleep or getting a good night's sleep
- Weight gain or weight loss
- Digestion problems like constipation, diarrhea, gas and heartburn

The good news is that by eating well and being active, you can avoid some of these problems.

How to eat healthier when working shifts

Pack healthy meals and snacks

Bringing healthy meals and snacks from home will make it easier to eat well on your shift. Include a variety of foods that include plenty of vegetables and fruits, whole grains and foods high in protein. Try these [meal and snack ideas](#)!

Have a light snack before bed

It's hard to sleep well if you're too full or too hungry. Healthy snacks such as whole grain cereal with milk and fruit, a piece of whole grain toast with a little peanut butter or [smoothies](#) are good choices.

Eat your main meal before going to work

If you work shifts, you may find yourself eating a large meal twice, first at home and then again at work. This may lead to weight gain. Eat your main meal a few hours before going to work. Eat a small meal and have healthy snacks spread out during your shift.

Avoid high-fat, fried or spicy foods

To prevent indigestion or '[heartburn](#)' eat lower fat foods that are not fried or too spicy.



How to eat healthier when working shifts

Skip sweet snacks

Foods high in sugar, such as a chocolate bar or soft drink, may give you a short burst of energy, but can leave you feeling sluggish later. A snack with a little protein will provide energy when you start to feel tired and hungry. Try a handful of nuts with fruit, [hummus](#) with vegetable sticks, yogurt with berries or make your own [granola bars](#) or [energy balls](#).

Drink more water

Drink plenty of [water](#) to prevent dehydration. It may help you to feel more alert during your shift. Keep a reusable water bottle close by and drink regularly during your shift.

Bottom line

The strategies that work best for you might be different from what works for someone else. For more personalized advice on how to eat during your shift, consider speaking with a dietitian. Visit [Find a Dietitian](#) to look for a dietitian near you.

Cut down on caffeine

Drinking caffeinated beverages can help you stay alert; but too much [caffeine](#) can interfere with sleep, make you feel nervous or irritable and upset your stomach. To cut down on caffeine switch to decaffeinated tea or coffee, or herbal teas.

Take active breaks

Do some stretches during your break. Walk up a flight of stairs, or go for a brisk walk. [Being active at work](#) will give you energy to finish your shift, improve your mood and help you sleep better.