

# Eat Right and Work Right



## A Diet Quiz for Shiftworkers

1. Does our digestive system work as well at night as in the daytime?
2. Are processed foods from a snack machine a good food for the middle of a night shift?
3. If a person is thirsty, is a soft drink or cup of coffee the best thing to drink?
4. When it's time for dinner, is ordering a large pepperoni pizza a great choice?
5. After night shift, will a big breakfast lead to a restful sleep?

Answers to the quiz: NO, NO, NO, NO, NO

If you work rotating shifts, you already knew those answers. We should eat light meals or healthful snacks throughout a shift, drink plenty of water, avoid high-fat foods at work and avoid a large breakfast before going to bed. Read the suggestions in the next column.

Shift workers, who do not follow those suggestions, may have more digestive problems and a greater risk for obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular issues.



Consider the timing and quality of your meals. Digestive problems are common in shift workers due to disruption of the body clock and poor diet. Plan your meals to help you stay alert at work and to relax or sleep when you need to rest.

- Several light meals will not affect alertness or cause drowsiness like one heavy meal.
- Eat foods that are easy to digest such as fruits, vegetables, pasta, breads, and dairy products.
- Don't eat foods that are hard to digest like fatty, spicy or heavy meals. They will make you drowsier when you need to be alert.
- Avoid processed foods that contain large amounts of sugar. They provide an energy rush followed by a crash.
- The sugars in fruits and vegetables release their energy more slowly while providing vitamins and minerals.
- Drink plenty of water because dehydration can affect both mental and physical performance.

**What dietary and healthful practices do you and your co-workers use to eat right and work right?**