

# Shift Work Dangers

In construction work, there may be times when you must work odd hours, such as during the night. It can be difficult to adjust to shift work and it can be dangerous if you don't. Here are some tips to help you adjust:

## WATCH SLEEPING HABITS

- 1 Stick to a routine that works for you. (Go to bed at the same time; read before falling asleep; etc.)
- 2 Make your bedroom as dark as possible to help you sleep (Use heavy shades, curtains or an eye mask.), and try to wake up to light (Use a timer on a bedside light, etc.).



- 3 Make sure your room is quiet. If this isn't possible, use a fan, soft music or white-noise device to drown out the noise.
- 4 Keep your bedroom cool.
- 5 Create a comfortable sleeping environment. Invest in a top-quality mattress, warm blankets and firm pillows.
- 6 Practice relaxation techniques such as deep breathing, visualization and meditation.
- 7 Avoid drinking alcohol or using sleeping pills; they can adversely affect the quality of your sleep.

## WATCH EATING HABITS

- 1 Try to keep a regular eating schedule.
- 2 Have a routine that you follow for the shift you're on. By sticking to a routine you can control your body clock.
- 3 After you wake up, eat a nutritious meal balanced with both protein (nuts, meats, beans, soy) and complex carbohydrates (grains, breads, pastas, fruits, vegetables).
- 4 Eat your highest protein meal midway through your shift or at least four hours before going to bed.
- 5 The last meal of your "awake period" should consist mainly of complex carbohydrates such as pasta and vegetables. This type of meal will help you sleep.
- 6 Avoid a high-protein, high-fat meal just before going to bed—your body will be unprepared to digest it and the protein may keep you awake.
- 7 Try to have at least one meal with your family during your daily routine.
- 8 Avoid caffeine if possible, especially during the last half of a night shift.
- 9 Eat 20 to 30 grams of fiber a day. This can help you avoid digestive disorders frequently experienced by shift workers.
- 10 Drink plenty of fluid, especially water. (Avoid drinking lots of liquids right before going to bed.)
- 11 Control your sugar intake. Sugar acts as a mild stimulant and can affect sleep patterns.



## MAINTAIN YOUR HEALTH

- 1 Establish a regular exercise routine.
- 2 Get plenty of sleep.
- 3 Limit your intake of caffeine and alcohol.
- 4 Eat nutritious, balanced meals.
- 5 Avoid using nicotine.
- 6 Make time to socialize and enjoy recreational activities.