



SLEEP TIPS

for Shift Workers

If you are a shift worker, try these tips to help get the rest you need.

- ❑ **Take a nap during a break or before reporting to work.** Short naps (20 to 30 minutes) can improve alertness on the job.
- ❑ **Work clockwise.** If you work rotating shifts, request that succeeding shifts start later than your last shift. This will help your body adjust.
- ❑ **Plan ahead for changes in your shift-work schedule.** Adjust your sleep times three days in advance of a change in your work schedule.
- ❑ **Avoid exposure to sunlight if you need to sleep during the day.** Wear dark glasses to block out the sun on your way home.
- ❑ **If possible, have someone drive you home or take public transportation after a night shift.** Drowsy driving puts you and others at risk.
- ❑ **Maintain a consistent nonwork schedule.** Keep the same bedtime and wake time, even on weekends. Keeping a routine helps your body know when to be alert and when to sleep.
- ❑ **Eliminate noise and light in your sleep environment.** Use room-darkening shades or drapes. Wear a sleep mask and/or ear plugs.
- ❑ **Avoid caffeine, alcohol, and nicotine.** All three substances are known to disrupt sleep. While alcohol may induce sleep, the quality of this sleep is often fragmented.
- ❑ **Avoid heavy meals before bedtime.** Junk food and foods with high sugar and/or fat content can increase your metabolism.
- ❑ **Relax before bed.** Unwind after work. Engage in relaxing activities prior to going to sleep.
- ❑ **Seek professional help.** If you experience ongoing sleep problems, ask a health care provider if melatonin, medications, bright light therapy, or a sleep study are appropriate options for you.