

WORKFORCE WELLBEING:

*NUTRITION FOR
REAL LIFE.*



What will we cover today?

- Why does nutrition matter?
- Healthy Eating for shiftwork
- Planning a healthy meal



Why does nutrition matter?

A nutritious, balanced diet promotes both physical & mental health



Food & Mood



Nutrient dense diets are associated with a lower risk of major depressive episodes.

Ultra-processed foods are associated with higher risk of major depressive episodes.

This is due to the gut-brain axis.

The digestive system & the nervous system 'talk' to each other and the foods we eat can influence what they say.

Healthy Eating for Shift Work (Yes, it is possible!)



Does timing matter?

Circadian rhythm:

Helps body processes occur at the right time in the 24hr cycle so that energy is used efficiently.



*“Daytime is for eating,
Night time is for sleeping”*

What happens when we eat at night?

Food eaten at night causes:

 Blood sugars to stay higher for longer

Less energy to be burned, from the same amount of food eaten with the same amount of physical activity



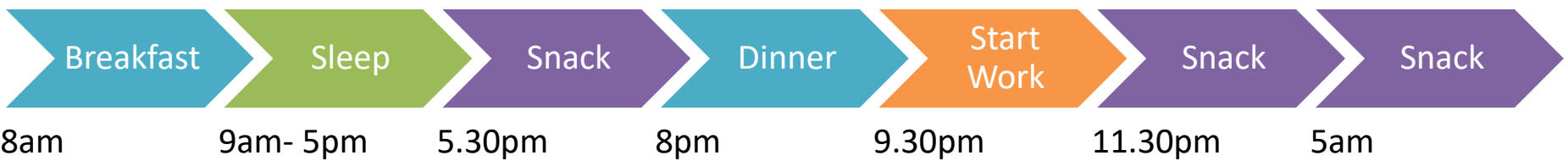
This equates to the equivalent to eating an extra Tim Tam every second night shift.



When should I eat?

- Keep a regular pattern and eat every 4-6 hours (when awake!)
- Eat your “Main Meal” before your shift.
- Aim to have a 5 hour fasting time over night between 10pm -6am.
- If you’re hungry after a shift, eat 1-2 hours before sleeping.





What should I eat?

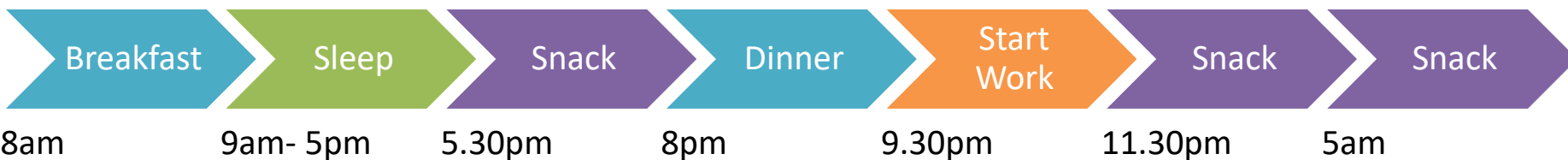
Eat according to the time of day
le. Breakfast foods in the morning.

Choose high protein snacks to eat over night.

This will have less impact on blood sugars than
a high carbohydrate meal.

Choose a light meal before sleeping.





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What should I drink?

- Choose water for hydration
- Avoid sugary drinks
- Herbal tea, low fat milk/milk alternatives are other options.
- Hydration can help with alertness.



If you're unable to drink water throughout your shift, aim to have some before and after.



Breakfast

Sleep

Snack

Dinner

Start
Work

Snack

Snack

8am

9am- 5pm

5.30pm

8pm

9.30pm

11.30pm

5am



Healthy Communities

What about caffeine?

- Coffee, tea, cola + energy drinks can stay in your system for 8 hours.
- Have caffeine at the start of your shift
- Avoid caffeine for 6 hours before sleeping
- Aim for <400mg Caffeine per day

Latte



110mg

Black Tea



65-105 mg

Chocolate Bar



10 mg



Activity

Let's apply what we've learnt!



**What are your healthy
dinner ideas for night shift?**

What are your healthy dinner ideas for night shifts?



What are your healthy dinner ideas for night shifts?





What are some high protein snacks?



Chicken & Avo salad



Hard boiled eggs



Tuna with cucumber



Vege sticks with hummus
or peanut butter



Cheese & crackers



Nuts



Baked beans



Fruit with peanut
butter

Remember high protein snacks keep
you feeling fuller for longer

+

Reduce high blood sugars overnight



Yoghurt



Ready made soup





Case Study

“Sophie”

28 year old nurse, does night shifts one week on and one week off. Hours worked are 9:30pm – 7:30am.

Finds meal prep difficult. Is unsure what to bring for snacks at work. Often has snacks from vending machines e.g. chips/chocolate. Has prepackaged frozen meals or takeaway prior to shifts e.g. McCain meal or leftover chicken curry with large portion of rice. Gets home after night shifts and eats 3 slices of white toast with butter and jam before bed.

Sophie has been feeling low in mood during the weeks she works night shift.





What could Sophie do to prepare for night shifts?

“Sophie”

28 year old who works as a nurse, does night shifts one week on and one week off. Hours worked are 9:30pm – 7:30am.

Finds meal prep difficult. Is unsure what to bring for snacks at work. Often has snacks from vending machines e.g. chips/chocolate. Has prepackaged frozen meals or takeaway prior to shifts e.g. McCain meal or leftover chicken curry with large portion of rice. Gets home after night shifts and eats 3 slices of white toast with butter and jam before bed.

Sophie has been feeling low in mood during the weeks she works night shift.



Suggestions

- If selecting frozen meals, try to choose nutritious options that contain vegetables and watch out for high salt content.
- Pack some high protein snacks to have throughout her shift
 - Consider shelf stable options that are easy to eat.



Suggestions

- Cook in bulk. Portion out meals and freeze.
- Plan for shopping days. Be sure to have a shopping list.
- Try planning meals for a week.
E.g. Tuesday – Frittata.



QUESTIONS?



Healthy Communities

Acknowledgements

Meals & Meal Timing for shift workers,
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