

Employers' guide to **shifting nutrition**



For workplaces that employ roster-based or shift workers

Shift work, extended working hours and fatigue can have significant impacts on the safety, health and wellbeing of your workforce.

Shift workers are at higher risk of:

- cardiovascular disease (40 per cent higher risk compared to day workers)
- motor vehicle and work-related incidents
- increased resting blood pressure
- obesity.

Shift work, combined with an unhealthy lifestyle, also increases the likelihood of sleep disorders and sleep loss, or can exacerbate existing sleep problems.

Eating healthy foods at the right time during a shift can help workers to replenish energy when it's needed, as well as help to prevent fatigue and assist in improved quality of sleep.

Addressing the health and wellbeing of workers should be a key component of your organisation's overarching safety systems, to effectively manage risks associated with shift work and fatigue.

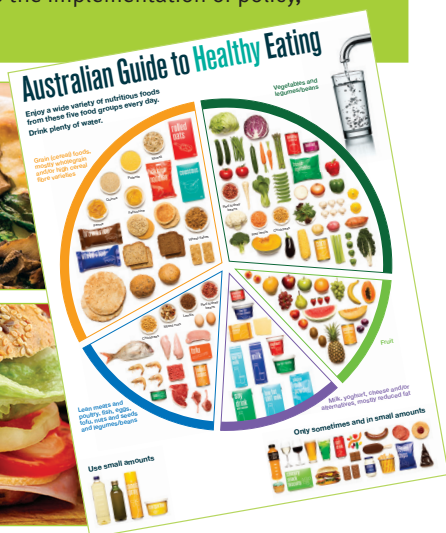
This booklet provides employers with practical ideas and resources to support their shift workers to make healthy food and lifestyle choices.

The importance of the workplace

Well designed and well managed workplaces can play a beneficial role in promoting worker health and wellbeing, through prevention and early identification of chronic diseases such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes and some cancers.

By integrating safety, health and wellbeing, workplaces can influence positive health behaviours of workers and also help to achieve positive business outcomes such as increased engagement and productivity and reduced injury, illness and absenteeism.

Employers and managers are key to building sustainable health and wellbeing programs in the workplace by showing commitment and support to the implementation of policy, environmental and individual strategies.



What the workplace can do?

Management commitment

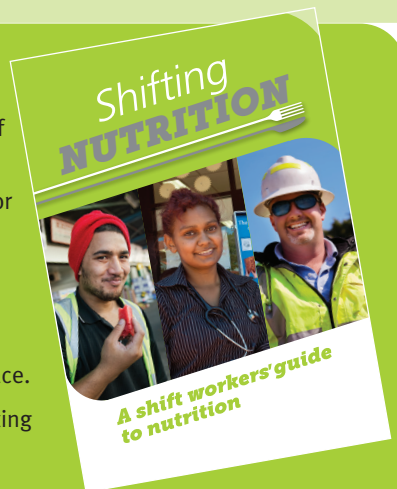
- Management at all levels should understand the impacts that shift work can have on health and how improving the health of workers can assist in managing this risk.
- Ensure policies and procedures implemented to manage fatigue of workers are regularly reviewed and reported.
- Make cultural, policy and environmental changes to encourage healthy lifestyle choices of workers.
- Review shift times and breaks to ensure workers' alertness is maximised by maintaining regular eating patterns throughout rostered shifts.

Environmental strategies

- Conduct a food audit within the workplace.
- Provide healthy options within vending machines (e.g. water, low fat/sugar items).
- Review access to fresh fruit and vegetables within the workplace.
- Provide facilities to store, prepare and consume food (e.g. kitchenette for onsite workers or an esky and cooking items for offsite workers).
- Review and discuss healthy food options provided in canteens such as salad bars, portion sizes and nutritional needs of workers during rostered shifts (see healthy catering guidelines).
- Place healthy foods towards the front of bain-maries.
- Subsidise available healthy food options.
- Have clear labels such as a healthy traffic light system to help employees make healthier choices.

Individual strategies

- Educate workers on healthy eating and the impacts of shift work on health.
- Provide training and information on planning meals for work and reading food labels.
- Coordinate social activities to link with healthy eating behaviours including competitions and healthy barbeques.
- Display healthy food and drink posters in the workplace.
- Provide access to health resources including the Shifting nutrition employee guide.



Resources

Nutrition is just one component in managing health and safety risks associated with shift work. The following resources may be helpful to provide a holistic approach to managing shift work.

A shift workers' guide to nutrition, work health and wellbeing toolkit and mentally healthy workplaces information: [worksafe.qld.gov.au](https://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au)

Guide to managing fatigue at work: [safeworkaustralia.gov.au](https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au)

How to manage shift work: [workcover.nsw.gov.au](https://www.workcover.nsw.gov.au)

Managing shift work health and safety guidance: [hse.gov.uk](https://www.hse.gov.uk)

For more information visit

Workplace Health and Safety Queensland: [worksafe.qld.gov.au](https://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au)

Get Healthy Qld: [gethealthyqld.com.au](https://www.gethealthyqld.com.au)

My health for Life: [myhealthforlife.com.au](https://www.myhealthforlife.com.au)

Healthier. Happier. Workplaces: [healthier.qld.gov.au](https://www.healthier.qld.gov.au)

NAQ Nutrition: [naqld.org.au](https://www.naqld.org.au)

Queensland Health: [health.qld.gov.au](https://www.health.qld.gov.au)

Diabetes Queensland: [diabetesqld.org.au](https://www.diabetesqld.org.au)

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References

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