

Nutrition for Shiftwork Lifestyles

The primary hours for digestion are 10:00 am - 8:00 pm.

Around 9:00 pm the body's release of digestive enzymes significantly diminishes. When large quantities of food or hard to digest foods like animal protein & fats are eaten in the late evening & early morning hours, a range of digestive disorders can occur. Because the digestive system does not release the necessary enzymes for digestion in the late evening & early morning hours, particularly between 2:00am and 5:00 am, food eaten at these times remains in the stomach, fermenting and causing such symptoms as stomach upset, indigestion, and other possible long term gastrointestinal disorders (e.g. ulcers) and medical problems. Proteins & Fats should be eaten during the day time hours when the primary hours of digestion are occurring.

Eating on Late Evening and Midnight Shifts:

Choose:

Complex carbohydrates like Starches, Whole Grains, Vegetables, and Fruit

Whole grain toast, bagels, English muffins with jam

Fresh, leafy vegetables with low fat dressings

Rice

Pasta with light marinara or low fat cream sauce (not spicy tomato sauce)

Sandwich on whole grain bread (small amount of chicken or tuna)

Soup (chicken with rice, noodles or vegetables, minestrone, vegetable)

Tossed salad OR raw vegetables with low fat salad dressing

Fresh Fruit (apple/orange/banana/ pear/pineapple chunks/seasonal fruit)

Fruit Juices (grape/apple/pineapple/orange/cranberry/real fruit juices)

Non- sugared cereal with small amount of low fat milk

Avoid:

Proteins (particularly animal proteins) & Fats

Meats (chicken, fish, pork and particularly red meats & spicy cold cuts)

Dairy products (milk, cheese, cottage cheese, yogurt) -high protein

Butter- high in protein & fat

Beans/legumes -high protein

Eggs -high in protein

Peanut butter-high in protein & fat

Fried foods & oils -bake or broil instead

Rich gravies & sauces

Heavy casseroles

Spicy foods & Caffeine