

Wellness Articles

Attached are weekly health and wellness articles provided by Alberta Health Services. As a way to help all Albertans live a healthy life, we welcome and encourage weekly newspapers, community newsletters and other publications to reproduce this information free of charge. Credit to Alberta Health Services or the identified content provider would be appreciated.

If you would like to be added to the distribution list for these articles, please email: Rebecca.johnson2@albertahealthservices.ca. You will receive a monthly email containing articles for the upcoming four weeks.

An archive of past wellness articles is available at <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/9966.asp>

Proposed publication date: October 15, 2018

Content provided by: Alberta Health Services

Shift Work Sleep Tips

Sleep and safety go hand in hand. Maintaining healthy sleep and bedtime routines can help you to mitigate the challenges of a variable sleep pattern due to shift work.

It's important to get adequate sleep while adapting to night shifts or rotating shifts. Here are some tips to improve your quality of sleep and alertness:

Getting ready for bed:

- Include relaxation into your daily routine and make it a priority.
- Avoid using light-emitting devices (e.g. tablets, smartphones) for at least one hour before bedtime.
- If you're a light sleeper, try using earplugs, a white noise machine, an eye mask or blackout curtains.
- Keep your bedroom comfortable, quiet, dark and cool, ideally between 17-20 degrees Celsius.

At work:

- When it's time to be alert, maximize your exposure to daylight or another bright light source to give your body the cue it needs.
- Where possible, keep your work area brightly lit.
- Get some exercise and eat light, healthy meals and snacks during your shift.
- Ask for rotating shifts to be scheduled so that new shifts start later than your previous ones.

After work:

- After a night shift, wear sunglasses to help keep your body from getting further cues to be alert because of being exposed to daylight.
- To reduce the risk of drowsy driving (especially after a night shift), find alternate ways of getting home; get a ride, take a cab or public transit or use a ridesharing service.
- Avoid running errands or doing chores after your evening or night shift. These types of activities keep you more alert and are best done after you've met your daily need for sleep.
- Avoid caffeine or other stimulants when you're preparing for sleep.

Discover the routine that works for you and stick to it, even on your days off work. If you have questions or concerns about your sleep health, please discuss them with your healthcare practitioner.