

TIPS FOR COPING WITH SHIFT WORK INFORMATION SHEET

- 1 Make sure you get enough sleep. The quality of your sleep is just as important as the amount you get. Try and aim for one or two blocks of uninterrupted sleep per day.
- 2 When working night shift, try and sleep as soon as possible after you've finished work. At this time your body is still prepared for sleep.
- 3 When sleeping during the day, use blackout curtains or an eye mask, as light entering through a closed eyelid will stop your body preparing for sleep.
- 4 Minimise noise. Lasting noise such as a TV may impair the quality of your sleep.
- 5 Avoid alcohol. Alcohol usually helps people to get to sleep but interferes with the quality of sleep.
- 6 Avoid caffeine (tea, coffee, chocolate and cola) for 2-3 hours prior to sleep.
- 7 Learn to associate the bedroom with sleep and positive emotions, not TV, wakefulness, worry, trauma, study.
- 8 Avoid sleeping pills.
- 9 Learn a relaxation technique.
- 10 Eat light food when you are working a night shift. Carbohydrates are ideal as they provide you with energy but are easy to digest.
- 11 Try to multi-task. This will help you keep awake during your night shifts.
- 12 Learn to 'power-nap'. A short sleep will make you more alert for the rest of the shift.
- 13 Try using light as an alerter during your night shift. If you are feeling sleepy take a break in a well-lit room.
- 14 Do not try to change or adapt your body clock orientation. It's important that you try to keep to your meal times as close to normal as possible to that of a day-time worker.
- 15 Teach your family and friends to respect your sleep time. They wouldn't want to be woken during their night time sleep.
- 16 Fatigue is the cause of many accidents, some of them lethal. Learn to recognise the signs that it is setting in and take immediate steps to counter it.