Healthy Heads

Optimising Nutrition in the Workplace



NATIONAL NUTRITION FOUNDATION

Healthy Heads Trucks & Sheds

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Introduction

These resources have been developed by Healthy Heads in Trucks and Sheds and the National Nutrition Foundation to support workplaces and individuals in making practical changes to improve their nutrition and overall health and wellbeing.

Workplaces have an opportunity to influence employees to make better choices by creating awareness and offering education. Additionally, workplaces can look to ensure there is access to healthier choices and appropriate facilities in workplace environments such as well-equipped tea rooms, kitchens and break out spaces.

What we eat impacts our physical and mental health; how we perform at work and how we feel. While there is no one size fits all 'diet' recommended, making small changes such as selecting a better option or increasing the variety of colours in our meals and snacks can go a long way to support better health.

This document contains clear and simple checklists, infographics, articles and recipes for meals suitable to take to work. It offers posters for display and suggestions regarding how workplaces can create better access to healthier choices for their employees.



Swap This for That

Meal swaps and additions



Crumbed chicken



Battered fish and fried seafood



Processed meat (salami, sausage and bacon)

Baked, steamed, grilled or pan-fried chicken, fish, seafood



Tofu



Eggs

Roasted vegetables



Pies



Sausage Rolls

Hot dogs

Burgers



Fresh sandwiches or wraps with lean meats and vegetables





Fried dim sims



Steamed dim sims or dumplings

Rice paper rolls

Sushi



Cream based pasta and curries



Pizza

Tomato or vegetable based pizza and pasta



Vegetable based curries and soups



White bread, wraps or rice



Wholegrain or wholemeal bread, or wraps and brown rice



Swap This for That

Meal swaps and additions



Potato chips or other deep fried snacks

Baked potato, potato salad or other vegetable sides



Iced cakes, cookies, slices, donuts, cheesecake, biscuits, lollies, chocolates

Fruit salad, fruit and yogurt cups, yogurt pouches



Savoury snack foods, biscuits, crisps

Dry roasted or natural nut mixes, wholegrain crackers and cheese, vegetable sticks and hummus



Soft drinks or sugar sweetened beverages

Energy drinks

Alcoholic drinks

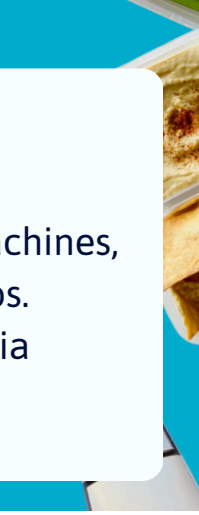
Water, sparkling water, unsweetened iced teas, flavoured water, diet soft drinks, milk based drinks with no added sugar











Actively promote and encourage healthier food and drink options

- **Train Staff:** Educate and encourage promoting healthier options.
- **Display Well:** Place healthy items at eye level in fridges and vending machines, in high-traffic areas, and in special offers such as meal deals and combos.
- **Use Resources:** Access Healthy Heads' engaging posters and social media graphics here.

Guide to a Healthier Tearoom

Many employees consume at least half of their daily meals and snacks during work hours, so it's important to create workplaces that are supportive of healthy eating behaviours.

Daily



Provide nutritious snack and drink options

- ☐ Offer free **fruit or healthy snacks** in tea rooms and encourage staff to help themselves
- ☐ **Long life milk** (full cream, low fat and dairy alternatives)
- ☐ Access to **cold and hot water**

Weekly

Provide clean working spaces



- ☐ Ensure **shared food storage and preparation areas** (refrigerator, freezer, microwave, kettle, dishwaters) are **kept clean and tidy**; a roster may be required for this
- ☐ Provide offsite workers with **proper food preparation facilities** (eskies, cooler bags, thermoses, water coolers, truck fridges)
- ☐ Create a **comfortable space with natural light** for employees to take a break

Stock up on pantry items

- ☐ **Long life milks, tea, coffee, breakfast staples like oats or muesli, wholegrain bread, natural nut butters**
- ☐ Optional items might include tinned legumes, fish, vegetables, microwaveable rice or fruit cups in juice

Monthly

Share healthy eating content with employees

- ☐ Print and display the **Australian Guide to Healthy Eating** and the **Australian Dietary Guidelines**
- ☐ Print and display **Healthy Heads nutrition posters** in break rooms, kitchens etc



Healthy catering

- ☐ Read the **Healthy Eating Advisory Service's Catering in the Workplace Guide**
- ☐ Discuss healthier options for **workplace celebrations and events** such as platters with fresh fruit and vegetables, dips and wholegrain crackers

Healthier environments

- ☐ Negotiate to remove foods and drinks high in **added sugars, salt and saturated fat,** such as biscuits, soft drinks, potato chips, chocolates and donuts or cake at regular meetings or events

Healthy vending machines

- ☐ Provide healthier alternatives to onsite vending machines, such as mixed nuts, dried fruit and bottled water

A little planning can go a long way in keeping staff **healthy** and **alert**.

Cafeteria suggestions



Corn on the cob
Serve with lemon, herbs, lime or chilli



Souvlaki/kebabs
Use lean cuts of meat or falafel, served on wholemeal bread and with hummus or tzatziki



Roast vegetable salad
Serve on leafy greens with hummus or tzatziki



Vegetable pasties
Use filo pastry and include a variety of vegetable fillings



Oven-baked vegetable wedges
Serve with natural yogurt or hummus



Zucchini slice
Prepare in bulk to freeze and defrost as needed



Chicken drumsticks/skewers
Use skinless chicken, oven baked with honey soy dressing



Pizza
Top with vegetables, reduced fat cheese
Limit processed meats



Soup
Select reduced sodium options



Warm chicken salad
Serve with roast or grilled chicken



Fried rice
Add fresh, canned or frozen vegetables
Limit amount of soy sauce added



Burritos
Offer Mexican style beans, lean mince or chicken and a variety of vegetables

A Day of Food Mapped Out

Inspiration for your next shift.

Breakfast

Frittata (can be made in bulk the day before and kept in fridge until ready to eat, can be eaten hot or cold).



Snack

1 piece of fruit plus raw **OR** dry roasted nuts **OR** lightly seasoned roasted chickpeas.





Lunch

Sandwich made with wholegrain bread, tuna and vegetables plus a yogurt pouch **OR** a fresh multigrain sandwich or wrap from a service station or your onsite canteen.



Snack

Vegetable sticks **OR** cherry tomatoes with wholegrain crackers and hummus.





Dinner

Lentil Bolognese **OR** 1 pack of microwavable rice with ½ cup precooked or rotisserie chicken and 1 pack of microwavable vegetables **OR** choose a dinner meal at a service station that's packed with fresh vegetables (e.g. curry with rice and vegetables).

If available choose from the **Healthy Heads Healthy Choices Menu- download the Healthy Heads App to find participating venues.**

Remember to drink plenty of water throughout the day / night!

Build a Lunchbox

When building your lunchbox, aim for....

1/4 plate of wholegrain carbohydrates or starchy vegetables

- Opt for wholegrain options - bread, wraps, pasta, brown or black rice or other grains
- Steamed or baked potato or sweet potato



1/2 plate of vegetables

- Stir-fried vegetables
- Steamed vegetables
- Raw salad vegetables such as lettuce or coleslaw mixes

1/4 plate of protein

- Lean beef including mince
- Chicken
- Fish
- Tofu
- Legumes such as chickpeas, lentils, kidney beans

Building a Healthy Meal

The formula is simple: 1 wholegrain carbohydrate + 1 protein + a truckload of veggies!

Carbohydrate



Wholegrain bread



Crackers



Microwave rice cup



Steamed or baked potatoes



Wraps



Pasta

Protein



Boiled eggs



Shredded chicken



Tofu



Canned tuna



Canned tuna and beans



Chickpeas

As many vegetables as you like



Coleslaw kits



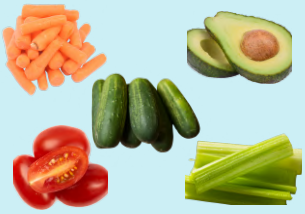
Salad kits



Canned



Frozen



Fresh

Try these sauces

- Vinaigrette
- Balsamic Vinegar
- Sriracha
- Tamari
- Mustard
- Tabasco Sauce

As a guideline, select sauces that contain **less than 400mg/100ml sodium**.



Examples to try

Mexican Bowl
Beans and rice + wholegrain tortilla chips + can of corn + mashed avocadoes and chopped tomatoes.

Tuna Salad
Can of tuna + precooked potato + hardboiled egg + salad mix + vinaigrette.

Pasta Salad
Pasta pouch + precooked/rotisserie chicken + spinach + tomato + cucumber + dressing of choice eg pesto or balsamic vinegar.

Tofu rice bowl
Marinated tofu + microwavable rice + steamed frozen vegetables + dressing of choice eg tamari or sriracha.

...and how to pick the best ones

Ready to Eat Options

Not all ready-to-eat options are created equal, so learning to read the nutrition information panel and understanding key nutrition targets can help you make better choices.

Reading the Nutrition Information Panel

Smokey Chicken with Roasted Chat Potatoes, Corn & Black Bean Salsa

Nutrition Information		
Serving size per package: 1 Serving size: 450g		
	Qty per 100g/100mL	**Qty per serving**
Energy	431kJ (103 Cal)	1550kJ (371 Cal)
Protein	8.6g	31.0g
Total Fat	4.0g	1.6g
Saturated Fat	1.0g	3.6g
Carbohydrates	7.7g	27.7g
Sugars	3.8g	3.8g
Sodium	174mg	628mg
Dietary Fibre	2.1g	7.7g

Use the **per 100g** column to compare nutrients in similar products as serving sizes differ.

Ingredients
Vegetables (47%) (Potatoes (32%), Corn Kernels (5%), Green Capsicum, Red Capsicum), Free Range Diced Chicken (33%), Black Beans (9%) (Black Beans (80%), Water, Salt, Firming Agent (509)), Red Kidney Beans (9%) (Red Kidney Beans, Water, Salt), Olive Oil, Spices, Herbs, Salt.

May Contain Gluten, Wheat, Egg, Fish, Milk, Soy, Tree Nuts, Sesame, Mollusc, Peanuts, Sulphites, Crustacean.

Always listed in **weight** order from **largest to smallest.**

Allergen statements are important to declare allergens present or indicate the possible unintended presence of an allergen.

What to look for

	Energy per serve	Saturated Fats per 100g	Sodium per 100g	Sodium per serve	Fibre per serve	Sugar per 100g
Best Choice	2000 kJ or less	2g or less	250mg or less	750mg or less	5g or more	15g or less
Good Choice	2500 kJ or less	2g or less	300mg or less	900mg or less	3g or more	15g or less

Ready to Eat Examples

From the fridge / freezer

























From the shelf











Water Intake

When you're busy working, it's easy to forget to drink enough water!

Drinking sufficient water is crucial for good health; our bodies rely on it for many functions, and staying hydrated can help fight fatigue (especially important during long hours).

Men need about 10 cups or 2.6L of water every day.
Women need about 8 cups of water or 2.1L of water every day.

Am I drinking enough water?

When working in hot conditions or when sweating, drink more water. Check your urine color to gauge hydration.



Well hydrated

Mildly dehydrated
~ drink a glass of water

Dehydrated
~ drink 2-3 glasses of water

Very dehydrated
~ drink water as soon as possible

Tips to increase Water Intake

- **Make water your drink of choice as often as possible.**
- **Flavour it with slices of your favourite fruits.**
- **Carry a water bottle with you and refill it throughout the day.**
- **Set reminders to drink water (and perhaps move your body around!).**

Fuel your Mind

Our minds need fuel to allow us to concentrate and stay alert. Quality fuel is important. Here are some great options that you can pack for your next shift:

1. Yogurt

This tasty dairy snack contains probiotics – live microorganisms that have been found to be beneficial our brain and bodies. Bring a pouch or cup or you can make your own at home by combining Greek yogurt with frozen berries and muesli of your choice.



2. Canned Tuna



Tuna is a good source of protein and omega 3 fats, which help you feel fuller for longer and are beneficial for your brain health. Canned tuna is cost effective and has a long shelf life, meaning you can bring them anywhere for a quick snack or protein boost for your meals.

3. Vegetable Sticks and Hummus

Carrots, capsicums, celery, and cucumbers make great snacks and provide you with essential vitamins, minerals and fibre. Pair them with some hummus (you can even get ones in pre-portioned mini servings) for a fresh and crunchy snack.



4. Hard Boiled Eggs



This is also a great source of protein. Eggs are easy to prepare in bulk and can be a quick option to add to your meals or snacks. Try adding some baby spinach and hummus to make a quick to go snack cup.

5. Fruit

It's recommended to eat **2 serves of fruit a day** and you can easily achieve this by including fruit as a snack.



Important: don't forget to drink plenty of water to help remain alert.

Fuel your Mood

Ever been hangry? Poor food choices lead to energy slumps, low moods, and sleep difficulties. Food affects our mood—eat nutrient-rich meals for better mental health. Here's what to keep in mind:

Choose the Right Carbohydrates

Our brains rely on glucose from carbohydrates for energy. Avoid refined carbs such as sugary drinks, juice, candies, biscuits, and chips, which can cause quick energy spikes followed by crashes.



Try



- starting the day with wholegrains; have oats or a high fibre (3g + per serve) cereal for breakfast
- including wholegrain breads, rice or pasta with lunch or whole grain crackers with snacks.



Watch the Caffeine

Excessive intake can disrupt sleep and impair concentration.

Healthy adults can safely consume up to 400mg of caffeine per day, equivalent to 2 espressos, 4 instant coffees, or 8 cups of tea.



Try

- avoiding caffeine 6-8 hours before you sleep.



- herbal teas (e.g. chamomile or lemon grass and ginger) instead of coffee close to bedtime.

Including omega 3's and healthy fats



Important for promoting brain health. Omega 3 can be found in fatty fish, seafood, flaxseeds, and walnuts.

Try

- canned tuna or salmon.



- a small handful of unsalted nuts (raw or dry roasted).

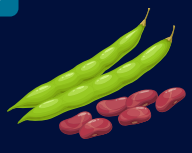
Eat Protein Rich Foods

Foods such as fish, red meat, poultry, eggs, and legumes contain essential proteins. These proteins break down into amino acids in the body. Tryptophan, a crucial amino acid, boosts serotonin production in the brain. Serotonin, known as the 'happy hormone,' fosters feelings of calm and relaxation.

Try



- adding eggs to your breakfast; hard boiled eggs, omelettes and frittatas can be made ahead and be reheated when you want to eat them.
- adding lean chicken to your sandwich or salad at lunch.
- adding legumes to curries and pastas





Hydrate Regularly

70% of our brains are made up of water. Dehydration can lead to headaches, poor concentration, and a low mood.

Fighting the feelings of *fatigue*

Top tips to keep yourself and others safe on the road!

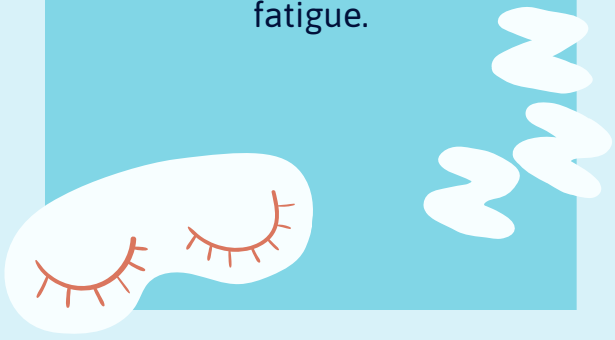
#1 Stay Hydrated

Aim to drink 2-3 litres of water per day to maintain optimal hydration.



#2 Prioritise Sleep

Getting sufficient sleep is essential to combat fatigue.



#3 Moderate Caffeine Intake

Excess consumption can lead to increased fatigue. Limit caffeine intake to 400mg per day and avoid consuming before bedtime.



#4 Eat regularly

Incorporate balanced meals including a variety of wholefoods to sustain energy levels.



Recipe

Frittata to go

Serves: 5 Difficulty: Medium



Ingredients

- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 red or green capsicum - diced
- 1 cup pumpkin - diced
- 1 zucchini - diced
- 1 cup sweet potato - diced
- 1 cup mushrooms - sliced
- 1/2 red onion - sliced
- 1 cup spinach
- 1 tsp garlic - crushed
- 10 eggs - beaten
- 1/2 cup low fat milk
- 1 1/2cup reduced fat cheese - grated
- 1/2 tsp smoked paprika
- 1/4 tsp dried oregano
- Salt and pepper to taste

Method

1. Pre heat the oven to 180c.
2. Put the pumpkin and potato in a bowl and toss with a third of the oil, tip on a tray and bake for 20-25 minutes.
3. Toss the capsicum, mushrooms and zucchini with another third of the oil and bake for 10-15 minutes.
4. In a pan, heat the remaining oil and fry off the onion and garlic.
5. Tip all of the vegetables including the onion and spinach into a bowl and mix with the paprika, oregano and pepper.
6. In a separate bowl, beat the eggs, cheese and milk together.
7. Combine the 2 mixtures and pour into a lined and lightly sprayed deep dish and bake for 35 minutes to an hour, depending on the size of the tray, or until set and beginning to brown slightly. Serve hot or cold.

Recipe

Bircher Muesli

Serves: 4 Difficulty: Easy



Ingredients

- 1 1/2 cups rolled oats
- 1 cup low-fat milk
- 1 apple - grated
- 2 tbs pepitas (pumpkin seeds)
- 1/4 cup orange juice
- 1/2 tsp orange rind - grated
- 1 1/2 cups raspberries (fresh or frozen)
- 3/4 cup natural yogurt
- 2 tbs pistachios - chopped

Method

1. Combine oats, milk, apple, pepitas and orange juice in a bowl. Cover and refrigerate overnight.
2. Stir orange rind through muesli.
3. Divide between serving bowls and top with raspberries, yogurt and pistachios.

Recipe

Lentil Bolognese

Serves: 4 Difficulty: Medium



Ingredients

- 1 brown onion
- 4 garlic gloves
- 1 carrot
- 1 celery stick
- 1 tbsp rosemary leaves
- 8-10 mushrooms
- 400g can brown lentils
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 400g can crushed tomatoes
- Salt and pepper to season
- 1/2 cup water
- 500g spaghetti
- Parmesan cheese to serve

Method

1. Wash carrots and celery under cold water and finely dice. Peel brown onion and finely dice. Set aside in a bowl.
2. Peel garlic cloves and finely dice. Roughly chop rosemary leaves. Peel mushrooms and roughly chop. Set aside.
3. Drain and rinse lentils. Set aside.
4. Heat olive oil in a large saucepan over medium-high heat.
5. Add onion, diced carrot and celery to the pan and cook, stirring for 1-2min. Add garlic and rosemary and cook for 1min. Add mushrooms and cook for 3-4min.
6. Add lentils and season with salt and pepper. Add canned tomatoes and cook, stirring for 1-2min. Add water and stir. Bring to the boil ten reduce heat to low.
7. Simmer for 15min until sauce begins to thicken.
8. Meanwhile, cook spaghetti according to packet instructions and drain.
9. Stir cooked spaghetti through sauce and serve with parmesan.

Recipe

Power Berry Smoothie

Serves: 1 **Difficulty: Easy**

An on-the-road smoothie is a meal or snack, packed full of fibre, protein and healthy fats to keep you full, plus it's an easy way to include fruit or vegetables if you don't particularly enjoy them. Try out some frozen cauliflower for added nutrients; you won't even notice it!



Ingredients

- 3/4 cup mixed frozen berries
- ½ frozen banana
- ½ cup milk
- ¼ cup rolled oats
- 1 tbsp peanut butter
- Vegetables –
  e.g. 1 cup spinach
  e.g. ¼ cup frozen cauliflower
- 2 tbsp Greek yoghurt
- 1 serve of protein powder – optional

Method

1. Put all ingredients in a blender or portable blender and blend until smooth.



Nutrition and Fatigue: A Vital Connection for Transport and Logistics Workers

Fatigue among transport and logistics workers isn't just a matter of feeling tired – it's a serious safety hazard that can lead to accidents. The demands of the job, including long hours, irregular sleep patterns, and isolation, can take a toll on both physical and mental well-being. Among the various factors contributing to fatigue, nutrition plays a significant role.

In Australia, a staggering 20% of fatal road crashes are caused by driver fatigue. This fatigue often manifests as sleepiness and mental exhaustion, compromising driving performance, reaction times, and overall alertness. Poor diet, characterised by excessive consumption of discretionary and processed foods, exacerbates these issues, leading to dangerous driving behaviours.

WHY NUTRITION MATTERS

Our bodies rely on food as fuel, and what we eat directly impacts our energy levels and fatigue. Adequate intake of vitamins and minerals is crucial for supporting energy production and overall bodily functions. Deficiencies in essential nutrients can exacerbate feelings of fatigue and tiredness, highlighting the importance of maintaining a balanced diet.

TIPS FOR FIGHTING FATIGUE

1. Stay Hydrated

Dehydration can contribute to fatigue, so aim to drink 2-3 litres of water per day to maintain optimal hydration levels.

2. Prioritise Sleep

Getting sufficient sleep is essential for combating fatigue. Aim for at least 8 hours of sleep per day, even with challenging shift work schedules. Sustained sleep deprivation can impair decision-making abilities and make it harder to maintain a healthy diet.



3. Moderate Caffeine Intake



While caffeine can temporarily boost alertness, excessive consumption can lead to increased fatigue overall. Limit caffeine intake to 400mg per day and avoid consuming it within 8 hours of bedtime.

Caffeine levels in common products	
Espresso	145mg caffeine per 50ml cup
Formulated caffeinated beverage or 'energy' drink	80mg caffeine per 250ml cup
Instant coffee (1 teaspoon/cup)	80mg per 250ml cup
Black tea	50mg caffeine per 250ml cup
Cola drinks	36.4mg caffeine per 375ml can
Milk chocolate	10mg caffeine per 50g bar

4. Eat Regular Meals



Consistent, balanced meals provide the body with the necessary nutrients for sustained energy levels. Align your eating schedule with your body's circadian rhythm, even during night shifts, to optimise energy production. As much as possible, aim to eat to the body's natural circadian rhythm (if working night shift, aim to eat meals when you traditionally would, for example eat dinner before your shift starts, include healthy, wholefood snacks throughout the night, eat breakfast at the end of the shift or before going to bed and eat lunch when waking).

5. Diversify your Diet



Incorporate a variety of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, healthy fats, lean meats, and low-fat dairy into your meals to ensure you're getting essential nutrients. Limit consumption of high-fat, high-sugar, and highly processed foods, which can contribute to fatigue and impair overall health.

By prioritising nutrition and implementing these strategies, truck drivers can take a step to mitigate the risk of fatigue-related accidents on the road. Remember, your health and safety, as well as that of others, depend on your ability to stay alert and focused behind the wheel. **So, fuel your body right, stay hydrated, and drive safe!**





Mindful Miles:
Nutrition for Mental Health

Research shows that drivers report more severe levels of psychological distress compared to other Australians.

Driving long hours can be tough, and mental health should be prioritised just as physical health. Positive lifestyle habits such as a healthy diet and regular exercise can improve mental health.

What we eat can impact how we feel, which makes sense when we consider the link between our gut and our brain. Although there is no single diet considered the 'best' way to eat for your mental health, including a wide variety vegetables, fruit, wholegrains, fish and seafood will be beneficial.

TIPS FOR IMPROVING YOUR NUTRITION



1. Eat the Rainbow
Aim to include more plant foods and a range of colours. Including **at least 30 different types of plant foods (vegetables, legumes, fruit, wholegrains, nuts, seeds, herbs and spices) each week** will provide the bacteria in our gut with the fuel to produce compounds in our body that are beneficial for our brain health.

Start small and aim to include a different type of plant food this week that you wouldn't normally; maybe purchase some dried fruit or ready to eat flavoured chickpeas for a snack on the road!



2. Go for the WHOLEgrain
Select wholegrains like wholemeal bread or pasta, oats, weetbix, brown or black rice or grains like quinoa as these will provide our body with B group vitamins and tryptophan; an essential amino acid important for the production of serotonin (commonly known as the feel-good hormone).

3. Include a Serve of Healthy Fats
Unsaturated fats such as avocado, fish such as salmon, sardines or tuna, nuts, seeds and olive oil are important for brain health. In particular, oily fish includes omega-3 fatty acids which, when consumed regularly, can impact our mental health.

4. Practice Mindful Eating by Removing Distractions
Focusing on our meal (rather than TV, computer or phone) will give our brain a chance to register satisfaction from our food and help to avoid overeating.



STEPS TO MINDFUL EATING:

1. Consider
Why are you reaching for a certain food? Are you stressed or seeking comfort? Tired? Do you need a 5-minute break? Or are you physically hungry?



2. Slow Down
Slow down and eat intentionally, removing distractions.

3. Be Present
Appreciate your food and focus on what you're enjoying about it.

4. Savour
Focus on the taste, texture & smell of your food.

5. Check-In
Are you satisfied? You can use the hunger fullness scale to determine if you have eaten enough. This sounds simple but it can take a lot of practice! Aim to keep between a 3 to a 7 or 8.

Hunger-Fullness Scale	
1	Empty, shaky, dizzy, nauseated
2	Stomach pain, loss of concentration, lack of energy
3	Beginning of physical signs of hunger, slight stomach growling
4	After a snack
5	Neutral, comfortable
6	Can begin to feel food in stomach but need more to be satisfied
7	Satisfied
8	Full
9	Overfull, sleepy
10	Uncomfortable, feeling physically sick, no energy



Fueling the Drive: Nutrition for Shift Work

We know that shift workers are at higher risk of lifestyle conditions such as cardiovascular disease, increased blood pressure and obesity.

Irregular schedules make it challenging to prioritise nutrition, but **small steps in what we choose to eat can go a long way** in improving overall health for the short and long haul.

Our body works on a 24-hour cycle which helps regulate when we fall asleep and wake up, our digestion and hormones.

We are creatures of habit and when working different shifts our body struggles to adjust which can lead to disturbances in our sleep, mood, and not surprisingly, what we eat.

Common barriers to consuming a healthy diet while completing shift work include:

1. Eating to fight fatigue:
When driving long hours and late at night it can be tempting to reach for foods higher in saturated fat and refined sugars. These **won't** keep us sustained and energy levels will soon fall, prompting us to reach for the next snack.

2. Limited access to suitable storage:
Healthy meals and snacks can't be eaten if they aren't stored on the truck. This can result in reliance on canteens and vending machines.

3. Irregular work times and interrupted or no set break times:
This can impact the ability to plan and execute a healthy diet.



Tips for Shift Workers to Overcome These Barriers:



1. Keep a Regular Eating Pattern
Regardless of your shift time, it's important to eat consistent meals and snacks according to the time of the day. Where possible, aim to eat meals when you traditionally would according to the body's natural circadian rhythm. For example, breakfast in the morning, lunch during the day and dinner at night-time around the sleeping pattern required to recover from your shifts.



2. Include Protein in your Snacks
A source of protein like mixed nuts, dairy such as yogurt or cheese, jerky, tuna, eggs or roasted legumes such as chickpeas will keep you full and energised for longer.



3. Select Wholegrains Rather than Processed Carbohydrates
Options like wholegrain bread or crackers, brown or black rice or other grains like quinoa in place of processed carbohydrates like pastries and biscuits will sustain concentration levels over the day.



4. Choose Healthier Drinks
Drink plenty of water and find ways to reduce soft drink intake, for example substitute these with teas (either hot or iced); there are lots of flavours you can get creative with. Avoid caffeine for 6-8 hours before you plan to sleep; even if you're usually able to fall asleep straight after a coffee this will always impact your sleep quality.

5. Plan for Success
If spending your Sunday meal prepping with Tupperware isn't your style, consider a simpler approach: try ingredient prepping instead. Take some time to chop fruits and veggies, portion snacks, and pack lunches. This way, you'll have healthier options ready to go when mealtime comes.

Also look at foods you can purchase which have a longer shelf life, reducing the trips to the shops you need to make for healthy options like tinned legumes and fish, soups and frozen meals.

