Shift Workers: Tips for Better Sleep and Health

Sleep timing:
• Go to bed right after your shift is over.

The sleep environment:
• Make sure your sleep environment is dark; it may help to install blackout drapes or use a sleep mask.
• Use earplugs or a white noise machine.

A little help from family and friends:
• Set the expectation that once your shift is over, you will be sleeping. Make sure family and friends respect bedtime.
• Tell your family members not to disturb you while you are sleeping. Asking for peace and quiet while sleeping can go a long way toward helping you achieve a good sleep pattern.

Napping:
• Try to take a 90–120-minute nap before work if possible.

Eating and drinking:
• Eat at the same time every shift and bring food from home.
• Eat smaller portions.
• Try to drink any caffeine early in your shift.
• Drink plenty of water throughout your shift.

Other tips:
• If possible, try not to leave the most tedious or boring tasks to the end of your shift when you are apt to feel the drowsiest.
• Increase the intensity of light in your work area.
• Take short breaks throughout your shift.

For more information on shift work and sleep:
www.sleepcenter.ucla.edu/body.cfm?id=54
www.sleepfoundation.org/article/sleep-topics/shift-work-and-sleep