



Facts about Health and Extended Hours Workers

- In the U.S. extended hours workers (people who work irregular schedules, nights and evenings, or typically outside the hours of 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.) represent 10% of the insured population but account for 17% of the health care costs.
- One in five Americans work extended hours and one in three work weekends; more than 25 million Americans and 600 million people globally, work outside normal daytime hours.
- The prevalence of Americans working shift work is the greatest in service occupations such as protective service – which includes police, firefighters, and security guards, where 51% work shifts, in food preparation and serving (40% are shift workers), and among those employed in production, transportation, and material moving occupations (26% work extended hours).¹
- In the U.S. the top five shift work jobs are cashiers, truck drivers, retail sales, waiters, and cooks²; with the exception of drivers these are low paid, part-time occupations where the likelihood of company sponsored health care is low and more employees are likely to be uninsured.

Specific Health Related Concerns for Extended Hours Workers

- Seventy-seven percent report not exercising regularly.
- Fifty-four percent have smoked or currently smoke (55% of men, and 51% of women), compared to 25% and 21%, of non-shift working men and women, respectively.
- They only sleep on average 6.5 hours on workdays—nightshift-only workers sleep even less.
- Forty-one percent report having nodded off while driving to or from work; 24.3% report this happening several times per month.
- 60% report feeling drowsy at work several times per month—11.6% report feeling this way several times per shift.
- Nearly 12% have obstructive sleep apnea (OSA), compared to 2%-4% of the regular population.
- Risk factors for OSA are 17" neck, male, smoking, excessive drinking, and being overweight.
- Up to 75% of night workers have gastrointestinal problems—peptic ulcers are up to 5 times more frequent.
- They are nearly 50% more likely to suffer from cardiovascular disease than daytime workers.
- Thirty-three percent report chronic or frequent back problems, 27% report chronic or frequent leg problems, and 19% report chronic or frequent wrist problems.
- They report taking more drugs; using the following several times per month – pain relievers (58%), antacids (37%), cold/allergy medicine (30%), and stimulants/depressants (10%).

¹ Aguirre, A., & Kerin, A. (2004). Shiftwork practices 2005 by Circadian Technologies, Inc.

² Presser, H.B. (2003, November). Race-ethnic and gender differences in nonstandard work shifts. *Work and Occupations*, 30(4), 412 – 439.

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