



The Norman Knight Nursing Center
for Clinical & Professional Development

PCAs Quick Reference: Nutritional Health in the Workplace-A. Regalado, RD

What is Eating Well at Work? We spend 40 hours a week or more at work and what we eat affects our productivity, health and happiness. However, maintaining a balanced work diet can be difficult due to limited time to cook, stress, rotating shifts and a busy, unpredictable unit.

Research supports a basic theme of nutritious eating emphasizing vegetables, fruits, whole grains, beans, lentils, nuts, seeds, lean protein and water, while avoiding or limiting highly processed foods.

What do you need to know? The Seven Challenges to eating well at work!

#1 Rushed morning: Breakfast provides necessary fuel and nutrients for the day. Include fiber and protein. Prepare the night before. Have healthy backup breakfast foods at work

#2 Office/shared/gifts of food: Have healthy snacks available. Only eat if you are truly hungry.

#3 Hydration: Staying hydrated is important for every process in our bodies. Dehydration can cause fatigue, difficulty concentrating, headache and poor mood. Aim to drink 8 to 10 glasses of water a day.

#4 Lunchtime: too busy to take a break. Buying lunch and looking for something quick. Think about packing a lunch with vegetables, quality protein, complex carbohydrates and a healthy fat.

#5 Snack time: Snacks tide you over between meals and provide energy. Think complex carb and protein.

#6 Night Shift: Digestive system is “asleep” between midnight and 6 a.m. Eat your larger meals during normal eating hours. Have small, easy to digest snacks every 3 to 5 hours. Stay hydrated.

#7 Mindful eating: Fast paced, hectic environment. Eating in front of computers and smart phones can distract. Sit down to eat, deep breaths, slow down and chew well, eat with others.

What is the role of the PCA (under the direction of the RN)? Practice healthy eating!

- Bring in healthy food and snacks from home.
- Support other team members in eating well.
- Cover each other for breaks.
- Use the Choose Well, Eat Well-green, yellow, red system in the cafeteria.
 - Organize a Be Fit Team on your unit and enjoy the perks!