

[IMAGE]

The Right Time to Eat?

By Editorial Staff

If your first response is, "Whenever I want to!", you might be one of the millions experiencing health consequences – one of which is increased levels of anxiety / depression. Fortunately, choosing the "right time" to eat has a big benefit when it comes to your mental health.

Eating at night is bad news for a number of reasons, including potential sleep difficulties (if you eat a fatty / greasy meal, or too much sugar or caffeine and/or eat too much right before bedtime). Mental health can also take a hit, suggests a new study that compared two eating scenarios: daytime and nighttime eating vs. daytime eating only.

Researchers simulated a night work environment such that one group of participants (the Daytime and Nighttime Meal Control Group) ate both during the day and at night (typical among night-shift workers); while the second group (the Daytime-Only Meal Intervention Group) ate only during the day. Both groups worked at night per the simulation.

Negative mood levels increased dramatically in the group that ate both in the daytime and nighttime: depression-like mood levels increased by 26.2 percent, while anxiety-like mood levels increased by 16.1 percent. The group that ate only during the daytime experienced no such increases in negative mood levels. Findings appear in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.

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