

Fatigue Risk Management

On/Post-Call



I am on call – how can I combat fatigue?

It's important to recognize that you will not get adequate sleep on call, but there are some steps you can take to increase alertness and minimize fatigue:

- Take breaks: Although breaks are not a routine part of physician schedules, it does not mean that you or your team should not take them. Breaks allow individuals to recover from the mental and physical demands of work. Breaks reduce task-related fatigue, risk of error and improve productivity.
- During a break:
 - Try to leave the work environment and have something healthy to eat or drink. Move around or stretch; 10 minutes of light exercise can improve flexibility and mood.
 - Take a nap – See FRM napping resource.
- Try to work in bright light – this can help delay melatonin production to prevent you from feeling like you need to catch some Zs.
- Have that cup of coffee (or tea!) – caffeine can help temporarily increase alertness, especially during our typical drop in alertness between 0200-0600 hours.

I'm post-call and feeling fatigued – what can I do?

If you're feeling fatigued at the end of your shift, there are a few options available at the hospital to help you:

- Get some rest in your call room prior to driving home. You can place the Do Not Disturb sign in your call room on the front of the door for extra rest; the sign will signal cleaning staff to wait until after 11 a.m. to enter the room for cleaning.
- If you do not feel alert enough to drive home – **do not** take the risk! Utilize our Fatigue Risk Management Taxi program – this will allow you to leave your car at the hospital, take a taxi home to rest. Once you feel more alert, you can take another taxi back to the hospital to pick up your car. For more details on our taxi program, please see <https://pgme.mcmaster.ca/>.



Post call days aren't days off – they're days for rest!

When you're coming off a 24-hour call shift, it can be tempting to use your post-call day to get much-needed errands done, visit friends and family, or get some chores done at home – however, when you're post-call, you're at a heightened risk for fatigue! Post-call days should be designated rest days, where you dedicate time to getting adequate rest after a long stretch of work. Rest needs to be prioritized so that you can be the best, most present version of yourself in all other aspects of

Other important factors to consider

It can be difficult to maintain balance when working long hours and a lot of call shifts, so keep these tips in mind to help with combating fatigue:

- Prioritize rest as much as you can. You don't need to spend all of your downtime sleeping, but getting adequate rest will help you be happier and healthier in other areas of your life.
- Share your schedule with friends and family so that you can plan time together in a meaningful way. Working long hours can leave you feeling isolated from your friends and family, so it's important to share your scheduling and try to plan visits to maintain healthy relationships.
- Maintain a healthy eating schedule and find time for activity. Taking care of your health through healthy eating, staying hydrated and finding activities you enjoy will help create a balanced lifestyle and reduce the effects of fatigue.
- Enjoy time to yourself – this is an important factor in managing stress, enjoying hobbies or ensuring you are getting adequate rest!



<https://pgme.mcmaster.ca/>

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