

NIGHT NIGHT SLEEP TIGHT

BEST & WORST FOODS BEFORE BED

Are you having trouble falling asleep at night?

Do you wake up often in the night?

Do you wake up exhausted wondering where the hours went?

We all know the value of good nutrition powering us through our day. But food also has value in powering us down at night. Whether it's the choices that you are making throughout the day, or your favourite bedtime snack, the nutrients you consume (or lack thereof) can be affecting the quality of your sleep. Here's what to include or avoid for a better night's sleep.

BEST: RED FRUITS & VEGETABLES

Foods rich in lycopene have been shown to improve sleep, prevent heart disease and cancer and even have an anti-aging effect. Lycopene is a powerful antioxidant found in foods such as grapefruit, tomatoes, papaya, guava, and sweet red peppers.



WORST: UNHEALTHY FATTY FOODS

Foods high in saturated fats and sodium are linked to silent killers such as hypertension, high cholesterol, heart disease and stroke, but they can also be a silent killer of sleep. Fatty foods before bed can cause digestive distress such as gas and bloating, heartburn and reflux which can be painful and keep you awake at night.

BEST: CALCIUM & MAGESIUM RICH FOODS

Researchers have found calcium levels are higher during the deepest levels of sleep. Normalizing blood calcium levels was shown to improve REM deep sleep.

Insomnia can often be due to a lack of magnesium. Agitated broken sleep can be remedied with foods high in magnesium or a magnesium supplement. Include foods such as walnuts, hazelnuts, navy beans, swiss chard, cheese, yogurt, and tahini.



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BEST: MELATONIN RICH CHERRIES

Melatonin, a sleep-inducing nutrient, is the body's internal clock that regulates sleep. Cherries are one of the only whole food sources of melatonin. Combined with the health benefits of their phytochemical content, cherries have been found to increase sleep duration and quality, and they are an anti-inflammatory. It is recommended to eat about ¼ cup of dried tart cherries or 1 cup of tart cherry juice about an hour before bed.



WORST: ALCOHOL & CAFFEINE

Feel drowsy after that glass of wine and looking forward to a good night's sleep? Don't count on it. Alcohol metabolizes quickly and can cause wakeful periods in the night, increase snoring, and shorten the duration of sleep.

Caffeine is a stimulant and can block sleep inducing chemicals in the brain and increase adrenalin. It should be avoided late in the day but depending on sensitivity to caffeine you may need to avoid your daytime cuppa joe. A 2013 study suggests that consuming caffeine up to 6 hours before bed can reduce total sleep and affect sleep quality.

Avoiding alcohol and caffeine can help to regulate your circadian rhythm and is a great step towards a healthier lifestyle.

BEST: HIGH TRYPTOPHAN FOODS LIKE FISH

A study done by the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition showed regular consumption of fish, naturally rich in tryptophan, omega 3's, and vitamin d can be a great way to boost sleep. Studies show a reduction in sleepiness and increased alertness due to improved overnight sleep quality. Tryptophan, an amino acid that helps to make melatonin is found in fish and meats like lamb, beef, chicken and turkey. If choosing a snack before bed, a light protein like fish is ideal so that sleep is not disturbed by digestion.



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WORST: SPICY FOODS

You might think indigestion is the reason to avoid spicy foods before bed. While it can be disruptive, not everyone will suffer discomfort. The stimulating effects of spices on body temperature, metabolism and circulation can be linked with more time spent awake at night and a more difficult time falling asleep.

Combinations to Promote Deep Sleep

Get the most out of the best foods for sleep by combining them with a carbohydrate. High tryptophan foods help to create serotonin but because of the way amino acids compete, it can be difficult to get enough to the brain. Carbohydrates release insulin. When you combine a tryptophan rich food with a carbohydrate rich food, the insulin diverts the other amino acids away from the blood brain barrier, allowing more tryptophan to cross the finish line!

Here are some ideas to help to take you to La La Land.

1. Jasmine rice with chicken or miso soup
2. Whole grain pita with hummus
3. Whole grain crackers with nut butter
4. Steel cut oats with almond milk
5. Rice with beans or guacamole
6. Eggs with whole grain English muffin
7. Chicken salad on whole grain rice cakes

Sources: <http://drbenkim.com/best-foods-sleep.html>
<http://thescienceofeating.com/2015/01/06/foods-that-help-you-sleep>
<https://nutritiondata.self.com/foods-000122120118123000000-w.html>
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Chicken & Jasmine Rice Soup

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 lbs boneless skinless chicken breasts - 1/2-inch pieces
- 5 cans (14-1/2 ounces each) reduced-sodium chicken broth
- 8 cups coarsely chopped Swiss chard, kale or spinach
- 2 large carrots, finely chopped
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 1 medium lemon, thinly sliced
- 1/4 cup lemon juice
- 4 teaspoons grated lemon peel
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 4 cups cooked jasmine rice



Directions

1. In a large skillet, heat 1 tbsp. oil over medium-high heat. Add half of the chicken; cook and stir until browned. Transfer to a 6-qt. slow cooker. Repeat with remaining oil and chicken. 2. Stir broth, vegetables, lemon slices, lemon juice, peel and pepper into chicken. Cook, covered, on low 4-5 hours or until chicken is tender. Stir in rice; heat through.

Adapted from: <https://www.tasteofhome.com/recipes/lemon-chicken-rice-soup/print/>

Servings: 12 Calories per serving: 203 Fat: 5g Cholesterol: 42mg Sodium: 612mg Carbohydrate: 20g Sugar: 3g Fibre: 2g Protein: 20g