

Eat Well to Sleep Well

Getting a good night's sleep—seven to eight hours—on a regular basis can help you feel rested and ready to go. Yet, when stress levels are high and the to-do list is long, getting quality sleep may seem like an elusive goal.

Here's a wake-up call: Your body works hard during sleep, restoring and replenishing. Your brain rewires cells to create connections for learning and concentration, and even performs some housekeeping—clearing out toxins that build up while you're awake.

Beyond your brain, sleep affects your:

- Heart
- Lungs
- Immune system
- Metabolism
- Mood

It's no wonder that poor sleep increases your risk for health problems like:

- High blood pressure
- Heart disease
- Diabetes
- Depression
- Obesity

Sutter Health

Trying to Get More Shut-Eye? Look at Your Diet

A good night's sleep begins with a nutritious breakfast, followed by an equally healthy lunch and dinner plus several small snacks, if needed—all comprised of pro-sleep foods and that stay within your daily calorie needs. And when it comes to sleep, mealtimes matter:

- Front-loading your calories (i.e., eating your biggest meals earlier in the day) provides energy to keep you going all day long, as well as offering weight loss and body mass index (BMI) benefits.
- Eating dinner at least three hours before bedtime leads to better sleep. A late dinner, on the other hand, may raise your body temperature and interfere with the release of melatonin—a hormone your body clock uses to control its daily sleep and wake cycle—along with increasing blood sugar and insulin. Together, these physical changes can wreak havoc with your sleep.

Nighttime Snacks to Help You Snooze

If you're craving a small snack before bedtime, enjoy one of these snooze-supporting options at least one hour before you turn in:

- Peanut butter on whole-wheat toast with sliced banana
- Celery with hummus
- Popcorn (three cups for serving size) sprinkled with parmesan cheese instead of butter
- Oatmeal
- Tart cherry juice
- Chamomile tea
- Milk



7 Sleep Superfoods



Greek yogurt. Greek yogurt is a good source of protein, calcium and vitamin B12, which are all essential nutrients to sleeping soundly.



Fish. Fatty fish like salmon, tuna and mackerel are great sources of vitamin D and omega-3 fatty acids—both of which can help improve sleep quality.



Bananas. Bananas contain tryptophan, which the body converts to melatonin and serotonin—the brain's calming hormone.



Broccoli. Including more fiber in your diet may help you spend more time in restorative sleep. Other vegetables, fruits, beans and whole grains are also fiber-filled options.



Orange and red tomatoes. They're filled with lycopene, which is an important mineral for sleep. It's most concentrated and available in canned or cooked tomatoes.



Almonds or walnuts. Go nuts with a handful or two (¼ cup is a serving size) for a healthy dose of melatonin and magnesium—a stress-reducing, sleep-promoting essential mineral.



Kale. It's loaded with calcium, which helps the brain use tryptophan to make melatonin.

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