

Sleep | Sleep & Nutrition

Sleep is instrumental for our physical, emotional and mental health and wellbeing, as during sleep both our body and brains rest, recuperate and recharge for the following day. Sleep can be impacted by many internal and external factors, such as age, lifestyle, personality, surrounding environment, and diet and nutrition. Indeed, proper nutrition can play an important role when it comes to getting a good night's sleep. These are some foods you might want to avoid or consider taking before you go to bed.

Foods to avoid

Coffee – No surprise here as coffee holds high quantities of caffeine, a largely used stimulant. Recent studies have shown that drinking coffee in the late afternoon can still affect your sleeping pattern.

Alcohol – You might think that after a long day a glass of wine will help you unwind and relax before going to bed, and in some cases alcohol might help you to “nod off” quicker. However, consuming alcohol has a direct impact on your later and deep sleep stages, minimizing them and making you wake up during the night.

Chocolate – You might not realise, but typically chocolate has traces of caffeine, which can work as a stimulant and affect our healthy sleeping pattern.

Fatty Foods – Fatty food, especially fast processed food, such as burgers and pizza have a direct impact on prolonging and straining our digestion process. Fatty foods have an effect on your heart, sometimes appearing as heartburn.

Spicy Foods - Spicing it up is not really a good idea before going to sleep. Spicy food can cause heartburn, especially when we are laying down.

Sour Foods – Similar to spicy food, sour foods and fruits such as citrus fruits and even apples can disturb our sleep by causing heartburn, acid reflux and raise the general stomach acidity – try avoiding sour foods high in Vitamin C.

Too much liquids – Water is instrumental for our overall health and wellbeing, however drinking a lot of fluids before sleep can have you running to the loo in the middle of the night. Try to limit the liquid intake 1-2h before sleep time.

Foods to consider

Cherries – These tasty red berries are one of the natural foods that contain the chemical melatonin, which helps us to control our inner body clock. Melatonin has been proven useful for people suffering with insomnia or jetlag.

Bananas – Containing magnesium and potassium bananas serve as muscle and nerve relaxants. More so, Bananas contain Vitamin B6, which helps our bodies to produce serotonin – increasing relaxation and managing our internal clock.

Herbal Teas – Natural, herbal teas are still widely used for different remedies. Teas such as camomile and passionflower hops have plenty of calming and soothing properties to help us sleep.

Lean Protein – Lean, healthy fat, fish such as tuna, salmon and halibut contain high levels of vitamin B6, which is required to produce both melatonin and serotonin by our body. Both melatonin and serotonin play a big part in controlling our internal clock. Turkey meat contains tryptophan, the chemical which helps us to doze off easily.

Nuts – Many varieties of nuts contain high level of unsaturated fats and are deemed healthy and can be helpful when it comes to sleeping better. Craving Peanut Butter? Surprise surprise – peanut butter without any additional and artificial ingredients can improve your serotonin levels. Almonds, walnuts, pistachios and cashews contain tryptophan and magnesium, both of which are important for our sleep.