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10 Foods That Help You Sleep Better

When too many nights spent tossing and turning cause you to dread your bedroom, instead of looking forward to slipping between the sheets, there's no need to automatically reach for a sleeping pill. Instead, change your bedtime snack to a food known for its sleep-enhancing properties, and you'll soon be visiting the land of Nod.



1. Milk

A glass of warm milk has always been a bedtime staple, and for good reason. It's loaded with calcium, which not only helps your muscles relax; it also regulates your body's production of melatonin. Plus, milk contains the amino acid tryptophan, which is the precursor to [serotonin](#), a hormone that promotes relaxation and a feeling of calm. Enjoy a glass of milk – it's extra

soothing when it's warm – before bedtime, or drink a glass if you wake up during the night.



2. Cherries

Cherries, especially the tart cherries used for baking pies, contain melatonin, the hormone that helps you sleep soundly. To reap the benefits, eat a helping of cherries an hour or two before bedtime, or drink a cup of tart cherry juice twice daily.



3. Walnuts

These tasty tree nuts contain [melatonin](#), the hormone that helps regulate your sleep cycle. In addition, they provide a helping of tryptophan, which converts to melatonin in your body. Enjoy a handful of walnuts an hour or so before bedtime, and enjoy a restful night.



4. Almonds

Almonds are an excellent source of magnesium, which helps you relax, and protein, which keeps blood sugar levels even throughout the night. Additionally, a daily handful of almonds lowers bad cholesterol levels, boosts brain activity and strengthens your bones.



5. Lettuce

While salad may not be a traditional bedtime snack, it's a surprisingly effective one. That's because lettuce, especially romaine lettuce, contains a phytonutrient called lactucarium, which is said to induce sleep, relieve pain and promote relaxation. If munching on a salad before bedtime isn't appealing, you can brew lettuce tea by pouring very hot water over romaine leaves, then letting them steep for ten minutes before adding a touch of honey for sweet flavor.



6. Cheese

Like all dairy products, cheese contains calcium, which helps relieve stress and relax muscles, along with regulating your body's production of melatonin. With so many cheeses to choose from, you can enjoy a different variety each night. Limit yourself to a few small cubes, or two or three slices of cheese on whole-wheat crackers.



7. Hummus

This Mediterranean chickpea staple is not only delicious; it's also a good source of [tryptophan](#). Enjoy a few teaspoons of hummus on whole-wheat crackers a few hours before bedtime, and you'll reap the benefits of steady blood sugar levels, sleep-inducing hormones and protein to soothe any acid reflux – a common cause of insomnia.



8. Bananas

Sweet, portable, inexpensive and loved by just about everyone – what's not to like about bananas? Even better, they pack a hefty punch of magnesium and potassium; two minerals that help relax muscles and promote sleep. Plus, bananas are a good source of tryptophan. Enjoy a small banana an hour or two before bedtime.



9. Jasmine Rice

Rice might not be your first thought when considering a bedtime snack, but jasmine rice is actually a good way to promote shuteye. It has enough glucose to keep your brain fueled for the night, and also boosts levels of tryptophan and serotonin, both important for restful sleep. If a bowl of plain rice doesn't appeal to you, mix in a bit of milk and honey.

10. Honey



This sweet stuff is the bee's knees when it comes to helping you get to sleep.

Honey's sugar raises insulin slightly, allowing tryptophan to more easily enter the brain where it works its magic in helping induce restful sleep. Simply eat a tablespoon of raw honey before bedtime, preferably on an otherwise empty stomach. If that's too much sweetness to tolerate, stir the honey into a cup of chamomile tea.

—WeightsOverMD.com



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