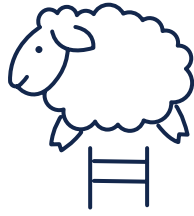


Foods That Support Sleep



Does anyone catch enough zzz's these days? It's one of the most common struggles we hear but we have good news! There are tons of things you can try before turning to prescriptions or artificial sleep aids.

There are two main hormones and neurotransmitters that affect sleep: serotonin and melatonin. (Fun fact - these hormones are both largely produced by the gut so gut health is actually super important when it comes to restful sleep!) Try these foods and tips to boost melatonin and serotonin and improve your sleep.

First up? Your diet.

Incorporating certain foods into your daily diet can impact your sleep.

- Throughout the day incorporate healthy fats (coconut oil, olive oil, eggs, avocado, nuts, seeds, fish) to help provide your body with the necessary building blocks for sleep hormones, including serotonin.
- High quality proteins also play a big role. Protein helps with melatonin production and can prevent blood sugar drops that might wake you up in the middle of the night.
- Eat foods high in tryptophan. You may have heard turkey has tryptophan (although your post-Thanksgiving lethargy is probably mostly attributed to overeating in general) but shrimp, halibut, tuna, chicken, turkey, beef, and lamb are also high in the amino acid precursor to serotonin.
- Fruits and vegetables high in antioxidants are important for hormone production and the fiber helps remove toxins that can negatively impact sleep.
- Some fresh herbs can have a calming effect on the body. Sage and basil can reduce tension and improve sleep so try incorporating these herbs into dinner for a relaxing evening. Bonus: sip lavender or chamomile tea after dinner for even more zen.
- We always advocate steering clear of added sugar but this is especially important at night. When you overeat or consume a lot of sugar close to bedtime, your blood sugar spikes (making it hard to fall asleep) and then crashes later on (which can wake you up in the middle of the night).

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(continued)

Certain supplements can help with sleep as well.

- Cod liver oil is high in healthy fats which help promote sleep hormone production and is also high in the fat soluble vitamins A and D. Our favorite brands are Green Pastures and Nordic Naturals. Both come in capsules or as a liquid.
- Magnesium aids in relaxation and can help with sleep. Leafy greens, whole grains, and nuts are naturally high in magnesium, or you can add in a magnesium supplement before bed to improve sleep (we love Natural Calm powder).
- Melatonin is a hormone that can assist with sleep cycles when needed. We recommend working with a health practitioner to discuss dosing (start low and go slow) and avoiding long-term use.

Lifestyle changes can also make a huge impact.

- Get into a routine. Try to go to bed and wake up at the same time each day (even weekends). Your body will adjust to the schedule and you'll have an easier time falling asleep at night.
- Eat carbs at night (betcha never thought we'd say that!). Serotonin production requires the amino acid tryptophan and carbohydrates increase the amount of tryptophan available to the brain. Eating a small snack before bed that contains carbohydrates can help you fall asleep. Popcorn, a small piece of whole grain toast with nut butter or a small bowl of oatmeal are good options.
- Bone broth contains amino acids like glycine that can help with sleep. Plus, drinking a warm cup before bed just sounds cozy and soothing!
- Get outside and soak up the sun as much as possible during the day and avoid artificial light later in the evening. Sunlight (or the lack thereof) is your body's cue to increase or suppress melatonin production. Start by opening up your blinds first thing in the morning (bonus points if you take a short walk), get outside mid-day for a walk or bike ride, and then turn the lights down and shut off your phone, tv, and devices a couple of hours before bedtime.
- Cut back on caffeine and ditch your afternoon cup o' joe. Caffeine, especially later in the day or afternoon, can keep you wired and alert, affecting your ability to fall asleep and stay asleep.
- Drink enough water throughout the day and start to cut back after dinner time to avoid the 2AM trip to the bathroom.
- Relax and settle in. Create some healthy wind-down habits around bedtime - take an epsom salt and essential oil bath, listen to a relaxing playlist, read a book, meditate or pray, do a light yoga sequence, stretch, or journal. Not only are they relaxing but they're great alternatives to scrolling through IG or binge watching the latest Netflix show which can significantly disrupt sleep.