

15 Foods to Help You Sleep

June 25, 2018 by [Michele Foley](#)



Image Source: [Flickr user Rachel Hathaway](#)

If you rely on sleeping pills for a good night's sleep, take note: a recent study found that those who took sleeping aids like Ambien and Lunesta [had a higher risk of dying sooner](#) or developing cancer. While the jury's still out on whether the study found merely a correlation between being sick and taking sleeping pills (rather than the medication being the cause of the early deaths), why not play it safe with a natural fix? If you're a restless sleeper, try eating any of these foods a few hours before bedtime and be ready for a personal visit from Mr. Sandman.

1 Honey

Image Source: POPSUGAR Photography / Anna Monette Roberts



Add a drizzle of honey to warm milk or herbal tea a few hours before you plan on heading to bed. That little bit of glucose [lowers levels of orexin](#), a neurotransmitter that raises your level of alertness.

2 Whole Grains



Image Source: POPSUGAR Photography / Nicole Perry

If you're feeling a little restless before bedtime, reach for a piece of whole grain bread or toast. Whole grains [encourage the production of insulin](#), which helps neural pathways get tryptophan — an amino acid that acts as a sedative — to the brain.

Related: [The Definitive Guide to Getting Better Sleep](#)

3 Bananas



Image Source: POPSUGAR Photography / Grace Hitchcock

Skip the Ambien; reach for a banana instead. Bananas are high in potassium, a mineral that is essential to a having a [deep night's sleep](#).

Bananas also contain tryptophan and magnesium, making this fruit nature's little sedative.

4 Beans

Image Source: [POPSUGAR](#)

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B vitamins have long been used to treat [insomnia](#) and help alleviate stress and anxiety. If you're looking for a natural vitamin B complex, try beans — they contain a nice smattering of different B vitamins like B6, niacin, and folate.



5 Dairy



Image Source: POPSUGAR Photography / Jae Payne

It's true — that warm glass of milk your mom gave you when you were a kid does help you sleep better. Dairy is a natural source of sleep-inducing tryptophan, and the calcium content of dairy has a nice booster effect on the amino acid.

Related: [The 10 Scary Things That Happen When You Don't Get Enough Sleep](#)

6 Nuts



Image Source: POPSUGAR Photography / Nicole Perry

A handful of nuts are a great bedtime snack because they help boost serotonin levels in the brain and are an excellent source of magnesium and tryptophan. Walnuts, flax seeds, pumpkin seeds, and sunflower seeds contain the highest levels of the natural sedative.

7 Oats



Image Source: [POPSUGAR Photography / Lizzie Fuhr](#)

[Melatonin](#) is a hormone that helps to control the body's sleep/wake cycle. Oats are a natural source of melatonin. If you need a snack before bed, have a small bowl of oatmeal or a healthy oat cookie.

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8 Poultry



Image Source: POPSUGAR Photography / Susannah Chen

It's not just turkey that contains sleep-inducing tryptophan; all poultry does. If I'm hungry before bed, I'll nibble on a piece of chicken or put sliced turkey onto a piece of whole wheat bread. Both are great foods to help you sleep!

9 Chickpeas



Image Source: POPSUGAR Photography / Nicole Perry

Chickpeas may just be the miracle legume. Not only have chickpeas been proven to help you eat less, but they're also high in vitamin B6, which plays an important role in helping your body produce serotonin, the feel-good hormone that boosts your mental health and helps you rest easy. If you're not in the mood for hummus, check out a few of our [healthy chickpea recipes](#) here.

10 Yogurt



Image Source: POPSUGAR Photography / Anna Monette Roberts

A small bowl of yogurt with a few of your favorite toppings added in may be just what you need to fall asleep. That's because yogurt contains calcium, which is needed for processing sleep-inducing hormones tryptophan and melatonin.

11 Cherry Juice



Image Source: POPSUGAR Photography

Cherries are high in melatonin as well, and a recent study found that regularly drinking cherry juice or eating cherries may help people with insomnia regulate their sleep cycles for better sleep.

12 Leafy Greens



Image Source: POPSUGAR Photography / Nicole Perry

Leafy greens contain high levels of calcium, important for producing sleep hormones. Craving something salty and crunchy before you go to sleep? Make some kale chips ([watch our video for directions](#)) for a nutritious, sleep-inducing snack.

13 Tea



Image Source: POPSUGAR Photography / Jae Payne

The tried-and-true mug of chamomile tea before you go to bed is effective for a reason. The herb has calming effects, and drinking a warm cup of (noncaffeinated) tea before bed may be just the bedtime routine you need to help you drift off to sleep.

14 Grapes



Image Source: POPSUGAR Photography / Nicole Perry

A 2006 study found that popular grape varieties used to make wine, like Merlot, Sangiovese, and Cabernet, [contain high levels of melatonin](#). The study tested the actual fruit, not wine, but the researchers say that melatonin levels in wine may be possible. Don't take this as a good excuse to imbibe before bedtime, however, since alcohol can make it harder for you to stay asleep throughout the night.

Related:

[This Vegan Cheese Sauce Made With High-Protein Red Lentils Looks So Damn Creamy!](#)

15 Eggs



Image Source: POPSUGAR Photography / Nicole Perry

Eggs are also a good source of tryptophan, so have a hard-boiled egg alongside a cup of tea or a poached egg on whole grain bread to combine the power of your favorite sleep-inducing foods.

Source: https://www.popsugar.com/fitness/Foods-Help-You-Stay-Asleep-6962641?stream_view=1