

## Foods that affect your sleep

We already have sleep issues due to pain, various symptoms, lack of oxygen and the list goes on. Food can affect your sleep as well.

### **Foods That Steal Your Sleep**

- **Spicy foods:** Garlic, chilies, cayenne, and other intense spices are yummy going down, but they can keep you up with heartburn or indigestion. Avoid MSG, too, as it can trigger dreams that are a bit too vivid.
- **A big dinner:** An overtaxed digestive system takes hours to settle down, and there's nothing restful about that. When sleep's critical, make lunch your largest meal, and enjoy a light 500-calorie dinner early in the evening.
- **Raucous veggies:** Eat those good-for-you-but-gassy foods -- beans, cauliflower, broccoli, brussels sprouts -- in the middle of the day. A tankful of gas can keep anyone up at night.
- **Speed eating:** Relax and enjoy meals to avoid swallowing air, another common cause of midnight tummy trouble.
- **Nightcaps:** Alcohol may make you drowsy at first, but later on it disturbs sleep patterns and leads to awakenings and restlessness. A 4-ounce glass of wine with dinner won't hurt, as long as it's not within 2 hours of bedtime.
- **Coffee after breakfast:** Caffeine can linger in your body for as long as 12 hours. So if you're often wide-eyed at bedtime, make sure you're caffeine-clean for at least 12 hours. (Skip tea, chocolate, cola, or other caffeine culprits, too.) Still watching the clock at 2 a.m.? Wean yourself off even morning java, then stay caffeine-free for 2 weeks. If you definitely sleep better, you have your answer: Caffeine is not your friend. If the results are mixed, "Try adding back a cup or two of coffee or tea in the morning and watch what happens," says Somer. "But if sleeplessness comes back, cut it out."

### **10 Top Sleep Boosters**

Nibble on one of these 10 high-carb calmers an hour before bedtime -- you'll be yawning in no time.

1. Half of a whole-wheat English muffin or raisin bagel drizzled with honey
2. Two cups of air-popped popcorn
3. A small slice of angel food cake topped with berries
4. A frozen whole-wheat waffle, toasted, with maple syrup
5. Half a cup of pretzels
6. Fresh strawberries dunked in a little fat-free chocolate syrup
7. Half a cup of pasta topped with marinara sauce
8. A 4-ounce baked potato topped with salsa
9. A handful of oyster crackers and a piece of fruit
10. Canned mandarin oranges sprinkled with crystallized ginger

