



News just in! Chocolate could be the key to a good night's sleep

Description

Chocolate is undoubtedly one of the nation's favourite indulgences and new research suggests a late night square or two might help us get a good night's rest.

Late night snacking



A study conducted by [Time4Sleep](#) found that chocolate topped the list as the nation's most **popular evening snack** to enjoy before bed.

Chocolate topped the chart above popular **savoury snacks** such as crisps and cheese.

According to the poll, the UK's **top five bed-time guilty pleasures** consumed before sleep were:

- Chocolate (38%)
- Crisps (34%)
- Cheese (30%)
- Sweets (28%)
- Bread (26%)

The benefits of eating chocolate before bed



The bed and sleep specialist teamed up with dietitian and lecturer Sophie Medlin of King's College London to examine which foods are best for **promoting sleep**, and which are best to avoid in the evening.

Chocolate was found to be one of the best foods to help you nod off at night, thanks to its **tryptophan** (an amino acid) content.

“Tryptophan is the biggest influence on **melatonin levels**, an important hormone which controls our sleep patterns,” says Medlin.

“Melatonin is **produced in the brain** and the amount of it we produce, and how effectively our brain uses it, is affected by our diet.

Chocolate is a particularly **good source of tryptophan**, so a **hot chocolate** or a little bit of chocolate before bed is actually really good for sleep, so long as you don't overindulge.

Along with tryptophan, foods with **high levels of B vitamins**, calcium and magnesium are also said to be effective in **promoting sleep** thanks to their role in releasing melatonin in the brain.

Foods rich in these nutrients include:

- Meat
- Fish
- Nuts and seeds
- Dark green leafy vegetables, such as spinach, kale and broccoli
- Soya beans
- Dairy products, such as cheese, milk and yogurt
- Pulses, such as beans, lentils and peas

Foods to avoid for a good sleep



If you struggle with restless nights and find a **hot cup of cocoa** doesn't do the trick, Medlin recommends following these simple food-related tips:

Avoid spicy, junk and processed food

These foods should always be avoided late in the evening, especially if it's something heavy and difficult to digest, as it means **your body must stay active** while it processes the food.

Timing is key

Many people may struggle with **acid reflux** if they lay down to sleep with a full stomach.

If you notice that you tend to cough or clear your throat a lot in the morning, it may well be that you are **refluxing acid** into your mouth while you are sleeping.

Try to **finish eating at least an hour before bed** to let your stomach empty.

Look out for hidden caffeine

Most people know how to avoid coffee at night due to the **caffeine**, but you might not be aware of caffeine being **hidden in other substances** such as green tea and fizzy drinks, so it's a good idea to stay away from these too.

Don't go hungry

Being hungry affects sleep as our bodies instinctively try to keep us awake to find food.

Following overly restricted diets that put us at **risk of nutrient deficiencies** can really affect our sleep.

If you find yourself feeling **hungry before bed**, a glass of milk, a small banana or a few nuts around an hour before bed could help to **improve your sleep** and your willpower the next day.

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Date Created

March 6, 2019

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