

Bedtime Snack Ideas

The amino acid tryptophan – available in dairy foods, as well as in oats, bananas, poultry, and peanuts – helps make us feel sleepy.^{1,2} Tryptophan converts to melatonin and serotonin in the body, both of which are thought to induce sleep. It is also important to note that carbohydrates and proteins play a role.

Carbohydrates

“Carbohydrates make tryptophan more available to the brain, which is why carbohydrate-heavy meals can make you drowsy.”³

Proteins

“Proteins from the food we eat are the building blocks of tryptophan.”³

This is why the best bedtime snack is one that contains both a carbohydrate and protein,³ along with the tryptophan-containing foods.

Bedtime Snack Ideas

- cereal (particularly, oatmeal) with milk
- 1 tablespoon of peanut butter on toast
- 1 ounce of cheese with crackers or an apple
- 1 slice of turkey on half of a whole wheat bagel.^{2,3}

Keep these snacks small and light to avoid other problems. Protein-rich foods also contain tyrosine, which is an amino acid that stimulates the brain,² so too much could result in alerting you rather than making you sleepy.



Sources

1. American Medical Association (2008). Stress and sleep [on-line]. Retrieved June 19, 2008. From http://medem.com/search/article_display.cfm?path=\\TANQUERAY\M_ContentItem&mstr=/M_ContentItem/ZZZT5PYYN6E.html&soc=AMA&srch_typ=NAV_SERCH.
2. Mayo Clinic (2007). Foods that help you sleep: Does warm milk really work? [on-line]. Retrieved August 5, 2008. From <http://mayoclinic.com/health/foods-that-help-you-sleep/AN01582>.
3. National Sleep Foundation (2007). Ingredients for slumber: How food and beverages may affect your sleep [on-line]. Retrieved August 5, 2008. From http://www.sleepfoundation.org/site/c.huIXKjM0IxF/b.2453615/apps/nl/content3.asp?content_id={32BB1322-7AE9-425A-B9D9-5B43BF2FF9C9}¬oc=1.