

DIET & SLEEP

What your child eats during the day may impact on their ability to sleep at night.

A light snack in the hour before bedtime may be helpful for some children. Avoid heavy meals as this can make it more difficult to sleep. If your child is starting the day early consider whether this may be due to hunger.

Consider natural sugar levels when providing snacks. Fruit and natural fruit juice contain sugar and too much of them too close to bed can provide a rush of energy. Avoid caffeine from late afternoon onwards. It is not only present in tea and coffee but can also be found in hot chocolate and fizzy drinks.

Below is a list of foods that may aid sleep, there still needs to be much more research in this area but many families share that they find this list helpful:

- Almonds contain magnesium which promotes both sleep and muscle relaxation. They also help to keep blood sugar levels stable overnight.
- Bananas are an excellent source of magnesium and potassium. They also contain tryptophan an amino acid that helps us to sleep but don't forget fruit contains sugar too. Blend one banana with one cup of milk or soya milk to make an ideal bedtime drink.
- Dairy, yogurt, milk and cheese contain tryptophan helping us to nod off more easily. Calcium is effective in stress reduction and it's not true... cheese doesn't give you nightmares!
- Cherries, particularly tart cherries, have been found in one small study to naturally boost melatonin production. You could try drinking a glass of cherry juice (available at most natural foods stores) or a serving of fresh, frozen or dried cherries before bedtime.
- Cereal is not only a healthy snack but it may also help you snooze.
- Complex carbohydrate-rich foods increase the availability of tryptophan in the bloodstream. Avoid sugar-coated cereals though, these will give your child a sugar rush and wake them up.

For more information, contact The Sleep Charity or your representative.

For more information and advice, visit The Sleep Charity at thesleepcharity.org.uk or contact us on info@thesleepcharity.org.uk