

What your child eats during the day may impact their sleep during the night. A **light snack** in the hour before bedtime may be helpful for some children. Avoid heavy meals before bed, as this can make it more difficult to sleep, but also be mindful that if your child is starting the day early, it may be due to hunger.

It's best to avoid sugar, but also consider natural sugar levels when providing a little snack. 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.

**Melatonin** is the hormone that we produce when it gets dark and helps us to feel sleepy. Some foods contain melatonin, although research around amounts and the impact on sleep needs to be explored more.

Below is a list of foods that may aid sleep:

## Almonds

Almonds contain magnesium which promotes both sleep and muscle relaxation. They also help to keep blood sugar levels stable overnight.

## Bananas

Bananas are an excellent source of magnesium and potassium. They also contain tryptophan - an amino acid that helps us to sleep. However, don't forget fruit contains sugar too. Blend one banana with one cup of milk, or soya milk, to make an ideal bedtime drink.

## 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.



## Dairy, Yoghurt, Milk and Cheese

These 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!

## Cereal

Not only is it 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.

## Have you made a family Bedtime Box yet?

Use [these resources](#) to create a restful, screen free activity box to promote good sleep. Add this list to your bedtime box for ideas for 'sleepy foods'.

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