

## 5 Foods That Help You Sleep

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Should you let yourself have that midnight snack if you're having trouble sleeping and you think hunger might be part of the problem? Here are five foods that can actually help you drift off.

**1. Cherries.** Fresh and dried cherries are one of the only natural food sources of melatonin, the chemical that controls the body's internal clock to regulate sleep. Researchers who tested tart cherries and found high levels of melatonin recommend eating them an hour before bedtime or before a trip when you want to sleep on the plane.

**2. Bananas.** Potassium and magnesium are natural muscle relaxants, and bananas are a good source of both. They also contain the amino acid L-tryptophan, which gets converted to 5-HTP in the brain. The 5-HTP in turn is converted to serotonin (a relaxing neurotransmitter) and melatonin.

**3. Toast.** Carbohydrate-rich foods trigger insulin production, which induces sleep by speeding up the release of tryptophan and serotonin, two brain chemicals that relax you and send you to sleep..

**4. Oatmeal.** Like toast, a bowl of oatmeal triggers a rise in blood sugar, which in turn triggers insulin production and the release of sleep-inducing brain chemicals. Oats are also rich in melatonin, which many people take as a sleep aid..

**5. Warm milk.** Like bananas, milk contains the amino acid L-tryptophan, which turns to 5-HTP and releases relaxing serotonin. It's also high in calcium, which promotes sleep.

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