



2ND HELPING

Just a Little More Help from **United Way Meals on Wheels** October 2023

Getting to the Heart of Good Circulation

Eating the Right Foods Can Keep Your Blood Flowing Strong

Sleep is essential to your well-being, regardless of age. But as you get older, getting seven to eight hours of restful sleep each night plays an especially important role in your health. It lowers the risk of memory loss, lessens the chance of falling, boosts your immune system and reduces stress. Here are a few nutrition tips that just might help you get a good night's sleep.

▪ **Focus on COMPLEX Carbohydrates**

Think fruits, vegetables, beans, brown rice and whole-grain bread, cereal and crackers that are high in fiber and take longer to digest. Conversely, avoid simple carbohydrates such as white bread and sugary foods and drinks that digest rapidly and spike blood sugar levels.

▪ **Lean on LEAN Proteins**

Lean proteins, such as low-fat cheese, egg whites, chicken, turkey and fish are high in the amino acid tryptophan, which can increase sleep-regulating serotonin. On the flip side, you should avoid high-fat cheese and fried foods (including chicken and fish) that can keep you awake.

▪ **Go a Little NUTS for Nuts**

The heart-healthy unsaturated fats in peanut butter, walnuts, almonds, cashews and pistachios (enjoyed in moderation) can improve your serotonin levels and help you sleep. Saturated fats and trans fats, however, such as french fries and potato chips bring serotonin levels down.

▪ **ADD Some Magnesium**

Foods rich in magnesium help with better quality sleep. Some good sources include leafy greens, nuts, seeds, avocados and black beans.

▪ **Snack WISELY at Night**

A few examples of late-night snacks (in moderation) that may actually help you sleep include: banana with low-fat yogurt; apple with mozzarella cheese; low-fat cottage cheese with whole-grain pita chips; peanut butter on whole-grain crackers; and tart cherry juice, which is another source of tryptophan as well as the sleep hormone melatonin.

Questions for Meals on Wheels? Call us at 205.592.0413.

Source: health.clevelandclinic.org

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