



Best and Worst Night-Time Snacks for Your Health



Worst: Leftover Pizza

It might look tempting, but anything that's too greasy can cause heartburn, especially if you lie down soon after indulging. A snack that has fewer than 200 calories is a much safer bet.

Best: Half a Turkey Sandwich

When you want something to fill you up, half a sandwich on whole wheat bread is a good pick. Your body digests whole grains more slowly so you'll feel satisfied longer. If you're not into turkey, try peanut or almond butter on whole wheat toast. Nut butter has healthy fats that raise your levels of serotonin, a feel-good mood chemical that helps you relax.

Worst: Beef , Bean and Cheese Burrito

Chowing down on something fatty and spicy isn't a great idea close to bedtime. Not only could you end up with heartburn, but you might also have lots of uncomfortable gas thanks to the beans (which would be a healthy add-in earlier in the evening).

Best: Whole-Grain Crackers or an apple with 1 oz. Cheese

If you're craving something cheesy, try a small amount with a few whole-grain crackers. Or go for a scoop of cottage cheese.



Worst: Chips

The fat and salt are a bad combo, especially as bedtime nears. In addition, it's easy to have too many, so what starts out as a small treat could turn into a binge that's bad for your mood and your waistline. There are seasoned pretzels that have just as much fat as chips.

Best: Popcorn

If it is not drenched in butter or super salty, popcorn is a pretty good choice. It is a whole grain and it has fiber, so it can be more satisfying than chips and tide you over for longer. You can find some really great microwave popcorn that say "94% fat free" on the label. Do not trust labels that say "Light" without reading the label!



Worst: Cookies and Chocolate

Too much sugar will perk you up -- at least for a bit -- when you should be slowing down. Plus, a sugar high is often followed by a crash that can leave you feeling lousy.

Best: Half a banana and a handful of almonds

Both are good sources of magnesium, a mineral that can help you wind down.



Worst: Ice Cream

Ben and Jerry might be calling your name but try to resist. The fat and sugar can make it harder to snooze. And if you choose a flavor with chocolate, you'll get caffeine you don't want at a late hour.

Best: Greek Yogurt

When you want a creamy treat, protein-packed Greek yogurt is a better idea. Top it with cherries or raspberries, which have melatonin, a hormone that helps lull you into dreamland.



Worst: Sugary Cereal

It is loaded with empty carbs, so it will not satisfy you for long. If you are in the mood for cereal, swap your fruity, frosty, or coco flakes for a low-sugar, high-fiber variety such as bran flakes, Cheerios, Wheat Chex. Add sliced banana or strawberries!

Best: Oatmeal

It's not just for breakfast. The warmth can be soothing, and the fiber will help fill you up. Oatmeal also has melatonin, which promotes sleep. Other good choices include Cheerios, Bran Flakes with low fat milk

Worst: Soda

You probably know to stay away from coffee in the wee hours but watch out for tea and soda with caffeine as well. Try to cut off all caffeine at least 6 hours before bedtime. And carbonated drinks can be a problem even if they're caffeine-free. The bubbles can make you feel bloated and trigger heartburn. A nightcap isn't a good idea, either. While alcohol can make you feel sleepy, it can also make it harder to stay asleep.

Best: Herbal tea

A cup of herbal (caffeine-free) tea can help you unwind before bed. Try chamomile, passionflower, or valerian. Peppermint can be a relaxing choice, too, as long as you don't tend to get heartburn.

Avoid Mindless Munching

If you find yourself craving something while watching late-night TV, pause and ask yourself if you're really hungry. Maybe you're just bored, restless, or ready to turn in for the night? But if you are truly hungry, don't ignore your body's signals: It's hard to fall asleep when your tummy's rumbling or your blood sugar is low. Choosing the right nighttime snack may help you fall asleep faster and sleep more soundly.

Think Small and Satisfying

Even if you feel you are starving, don't overdo it. Going to bed with a too-full stomach can lead to heartburn and bloating. It can also make it harder to sleep. Think of your snack as a snack, not a meal. It is good to choose a snack that has a little protein and some complex carbs.



More quick, healthy snacks, delicious enough to share with your family and friends.

1. 1 tablespoons peanut, almond or other nut butter with 1/2 cup carrot sticks or 1 sheet graham crackers
2. Sliced apple or pear with cheese
3. 1-2 ounces cheese (such as mozzarella string cheese) with 1/2 cup whole grain cracker, pretzels or 1 whole grain tortilla
4. ½ cup cottage cheese with fresh, frozen, or canned (juice packed) peaches or pears
5. 1-2 ounces turkey***, roast beef ***with 1 slice whole grain bread
6. ¼ cup nuts (nuts are healthy but they are also very high in calories and fat)
7. 1 tablespoon peanut butter with celery sticks, ½ banana or an apple
8. Hardboiled or deviled egg
9. 1/2 cup low-fat milk with 3/4 cup cold cereal
10. ½ peanut butter sandwich
11. Homemade smoothie: 1/2 cup fruit, 1/2 cup milk or juice and 1/2 cup Greek yogurt. Mix all ingredients in a blender. Sweeten with honey or sugar sub, to taste
12. Avocado on toast or guacamole with veggies or crackers
13. Greek Yogurt with berries
14. 2 Tbsp raisins and ¼ cup almonds
15. Kabobs made with 1 cup melon and 1 oz cheese
16. Sugar snap peas, carrots or cucumber slices with hummus
17. ½ cup tuna or egg salad in one half of a whole-wheat pita
18. One toasted English muffin topped with tomato sauce and 1 oz low-fat mozzarella cheese
19. Whole-wheat tortilla, topped with ½ cup apples and 1 oz. cheddar, and then heated in microwave
20. Whole-wheat tortilla filled with ½ cup low-fat refried beans, 1 oz low-fat cheddar cheese, and salsa, and heated in microwave

Get creative! See if you can design your own healthy snacks!!

***Avoid meats with "Nitrates": Sodium nitrite or sodium nitrate, potassium nitrate, potassium nitrite. Read label on lunch meats, processed meats, hot dogs, bacon, etc.