



# SLEEP: EAT RIGHT TO SLEEP RIGHT

PAGE 1 [OF 2]

Melatonin, the chemical which helps us to sleep, is made in the human brain but it is also found in many different foods. Studies show that eating these foods can increase the levels of melatonin found in the body and may contribute to better sleep.

Foods containing melatonin have the added advantage of being good for other aspects of health too and can be easily found in supermarkets, where they are mostly economical to buy.

They contain varying amounts of melatonin depending where, when and how they are grown. However, if eaten regularly, they can all be a good options for supporting a child's natural ability to sleep.

## Foods rich in melatonin include:

-  eggs
-  milk
-  oats
-  wheat
-  rice
-  walnuts
-  pistachio
-  grapes
-  bananas
-  strawberries
-  cherries
-  (tart varieties)
-  tomatoes
-  peppers
-  mushrooms





Although eating a heavy meal in the evening best avoided, including melatonin-rich snacks as part of the bedtime routine for children is a good way to boost levels just at the right time.

## If you are stuck for ideas, why not try some of the following:

- Warm milky drink with homemade (low sugar) flapjack.
- Mashed banana on toast.
- Bowl of cornflakes, chopped strawberries and full fat milk.
- Bowl of porridge with sprinkled nuts.
- Homemade pancake with chopped banana.
- Fruit salad (grapes/strawberries/banana/kiwi).
- Turkey sandwich (turkey contains tryptophan – an amino acid which helps the body produce melatonin).
- Sliced tomato sandwich.
- Bowl of rice with chopped peppers and mushrooms.



## Things to remember:

- Highly processed foods and foods high in sugar should not be given as part of a bedtime snack as they do not contain the right nutrients.
- A snack should be a small amount – avoid large portions.
- Avoid offering any of the foods listed above if you know the child is allergic to them.



To find out other useful advice and information please visit:  
[providechildrenandfamilyservices.co.uk](http://providechildrenandfamilyservices.co.uk)