



Factors affecting sleep

Unsurprisingly your lifestyle and your health, both mental and physical, play a large part in how well you sleep.

Sleeping well is a really important part of your overall wellbeing. It can also affect your academic performance.

A 2019 MIT study found that longer sleep duration, better sleep quality, and greater sleep consistency were associated with better academic performance.

Your sleep can be affected by issues within your body and by external, environmental factors.

EMOTIONAL AND HEALTH FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE SLEEP

Your sleep can be affected if

- You are worried, angry, anxious or stressed about something
- You feel depressed or are experiencing sadness or grief
- You are unwell or in pain
- You are experiencing hormonal changes, like menopause, PMS or pregnancy
- You have a sleep disorder

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS INFLUENCING SLEEP

Your sleep can be affected by

- Your diet
- Medication
- Noise, like snoring or traffic noise
- Exposure to light
- Stimulants like caffeine, alcohol or other substances

What you eat can make a difference to how well you sleep. These foods can help your digestion and

improve your sleep quality.

- Cherries contain melatonin which helps control your body clock – they may help if you have insomnia or jetlag
- Bananas contain magnesium, potassium and vitamin B6 – these help the muscles and nerves relax and manage your body clock
- Chamomile or passion flower tea have calming and soothing properties which can help sleep
- Lean healthy protein like tuna, halibut and turkey meat contain vitamins and hormones that help us relax and doze off
- Nuts without artificial, additional ingredients contain tryptophan and magnesium and can boost serotonin levels, helping you fall asleep

You should avoid these foods if you're struggling to sleep well

- Coffee
- Alcohol
- Chocolate
- Fatty food and processed food
- Spicy food
- Sour flavours

You should also limit how much fluids you drink in the hours before you go to bed.

[Home](#) > [Mental health resources](#) > [Lifestyle](#) > [Sleep and rest](#) >

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