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Eat well to sleep well!

A high-fiber, low-sugar, low-saturated fat diet may help you catch more zzz's.

If every health benefit of a plant-based, whole-foods diet were a guest at a wedding, you'd probably have to rent a bigger tent. The most recently identified guest to show up, unexpected but welcome, is better sleep. (As usual, she looks glowing and well-rested!) In a small clinical study, researchers found that a nourishing diet, high in fiber and low in both sugar and saturated fat, led to falling asleep faster and sleeping more deeply. "The results of this study are important because there is currently very little scientifically based information about eating for better sleep," notes Cleveland Clinic sleep specialist Michelle Drerup, PsyD. More research is needed to confirm the link, in particular for people who have trouble sleeping, says Drerup. But there's no need to wait for confirmation to align your plate with the principles in the study. Vegetables and fruit, lentils and beans, intact (not stripped) grains like brown rice and quinoa, and nutritious fats from salmon, ocean trout and avocados all fit the bill. You'll set yourself up for good health on any number of fronts, including a lower risk of inflammation and cardiovascular disease. And that's a reason to party!

By: Cleveland Clinic Wellness Editors



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Vegetables at Breakfast? You Bet!

When we think of produce in the morning, we tend to think of fruit. Our habits back this notion—as a whole, Americans eat two-thirds of their daily vegetable intake at dinner. But we're not getting the vegetables we need: As a country, we're eating less than 60 percent of the recommended daily amount. Adding them to our morning meal can mean a big nutritional payoff.

Your first thought might go straight to egg dishes like omelets or frittatas, but let's skip past these more traditional choices to highlight a few more creative ways to up your veggies at breakfast. Here are some of my top choices to try:



Savory oatmeal: Oatmeal is much more than a vehicle for fruit toppings. Spinach, mushrooms, tomatoes, and kale can combine nicely with oatmeal for a hearty, savory dish. Add chopped herbs, scallions, or a small dash of reduced-sodium soy sauce for another twist. And for extra protein, top with a cooked egg or diced tofu.



Baked sweet potato: As someone who prefers something a little sweet at breakfast time, this is right up my alley. Make it an easy part of your morning by baking the sweet potato the night before or microwaving

for about 5–6 minutes in the morning. Top with a tablespoon of your favorite nut butter or chopped nuts, low-fat or non-fat Greek yogurt, and a dash of cinnamon. If you want to go the savory route, add beans, sliced avocado, or steamed spinach.



Breakfast salad: Think of this as the un-blended green smoothie. Try a spinach salad with sliced avocado, berries, and/or walnuts. Add some complex carbohydrates like quinoa or farro for a tasty and nutritious topping.



Vegetable pancakes: Pancakes made with shredded zucchini, carrots, or sweet potato add wonderful texture and flavor to the traditional all-flour version we know and love. You can use 100% whole wheat flour and egg whites to bind and add a variety of different seasonings and herbs to flavor. Try ginger and cinnamon with carrots, or scallions and garlic with zucchini.



Avocado toast: This is on the trendy side, and for good reason! The healthy fats and fiber from the avocado combined with complex carbohydrates from a 100% whole grain toast give a balanced start to the day. Topping combinations are seemingly endless—go simple with smashed avocado and a dash of salt and pepper; add sliced strawberries and drizzle with balsamic dressing for something on the sweeter side; slice cucumber and radishes for a refreshing crunch; or top with sliced tomatoes with basil for a bright touch.

By: Amy Gannon, M.Ed., RD, LD



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All in a day's work! Improve your cholesterol with every bite — and sip.

Even if you know which foods make your heart sing like a bird in spring—like whole, fiber-rich plant foods, nourishing fats, and omega-3-rich fish—it helps to see how to assemble the chorus on a given day.

Breakfast: Shout hallelujah for hearty, delicious oatmeal. The soluble fiber in oatmeal binds lousy LDL cholesterol and takes it far, far away. (Good riddance!) Add in some berries and walnuts or almonds for more fiber, plant protein, phytonutrients, and nourishing fats.

Lunch: Beans, beans, they're good for your heart! Black beans, white beans, chickpeas, lentils — you name it — help lower LDL with their copious soluble fiber. They also stick to your ribs. With delicious plant-based power lunches, you'll happily say sayonara to the white flour and processed products that raise your cholesterol and blood sugars.

Dinner: Go fish! Cold-water catches such as salmon contain omega-3 fats that lower LDL. Try dishes such as Grilled Salmon, Bok Choy and Scallions with Ginger Vinaigrette twice a week and you'll get loads of heart-healthy phytonutrients, too. If you drink alcohol, sip on a glass of red wine and you may just raise your HDL — the protective kind — too.

By: Cleveland Clinic Wellness Editors

GRILLED PEACHES

Put together four simply delightful ingredients and you've got one totally delicious and nutritious dessert. Plus, this no-bake treat keeps your kitchen cool on warm summer days. How sweet!

Yield: 4 Servings

Ingredients:

- 4 peaches, halved and pitted
- ½ teaspoon extra-virgin olive oil
- ½ cup nonfat Greek yogurt
- 2½ teaspoons honey
- 12 fresh mint leaves, torn

Instructions:

Heat the grill to medium-high. Drizzle the olive oil over the flesh of the peaches and rub gently with your fingertips to coat. Grill, flesh-side down, until slightly charred, about 2 minutes.

Remove the peaches from the grill and arrange them on a platter. Spoon a tablespoon of yogurt onto each peach half, and drizzle lightly with honey. Scatter the mint leaves on top and enjoy!

Nutrition Info Per Serving: (1 peach) 90 calories, 1 g total fat, 0 g saturated fat, 4 g protein, 20 g carbohydrate, 2 g dietary fiber, 17 g sugar (mostly from the peaches), 0 mg cholesterol, 10 mg sodium

By: Sara Quessenberry for Cleveland Clinic Wellness

Healthy Recipe

