



Healthy & Resilient You

Food for Thought (and Rest)

Is the Secret to Good Sleep
in Your Gut?



We've all had those nights spent tossing and turning in bed, fixating on how little sleep we're getting, only to stress ourselves more, making it even harder to fall asleep. All while the white noise machine drones on in the background, and the promises made by the salesperson who sold us that new mattress echo back at us like bad jokes.

But what if our get-to-sleep tricks have been missing the real target? What if the secret to better rest is hiding right under our noses — in the complex community of microbes that helps keep our bodies in balance?



Our Gut Microbiome: Well-Oiled Factory or School Cafeteria Chaos?

Inside each of us lives a bustling world of trillions of microorganisms — bacteria, fungi, viruses, and other single-celled helpers — collectively known as our gut microbiome. These tiny partners aren't just freeloading in our tummies, though. Along with helping us digest food, they're in constant conversation with our brains through the "gut-brain axis," a communication network linking our digestive system and central nervous system.

That steady back-and-forth plays a big role in regulating our [sleep-wake cycle, or circadian rhythm](#). Just like us, our microbial helpers keep their own daily schedules, shaped by what we eat, when we eat, and how much light we get each day. Among their many jobs is helping make serotonin, which our brains use to produce melatonin — the hormone that signals it's time for sleep.

When this delicate system gets out of whack, it can disrupt the production of these vital sleep chemicals and throw our bodily rhythms out of tempo.

The Gut-Brain Connection Is a Two-Way Street

The link between digestion and rest runs in both directions. Just as a troubled gut can disrupt sleep, research shows that sleep deprivation can throw the microbiome off balance. That can lead to digestive problems, inflammation, chronic fatigue, and even mood disorders. Without intervention, it can become a frustrating, self-perpetuating cycle.

The good news is that lifestyle changes can support both systems at once. Restful sleep gives our bodies time to reset, while a nourished microbiome helps maintain steady mood, energy, and sleep patterns.

Simple Habit Recipes to Support Better Sleep and Digestive Health

If you've already invested in the weighted blanket and blackout curtains, don't go hunting for the receipts just yet. Instead, try a few everyday tweaks to bring your body and microbiome into better balance for deeper sleep, steadier energy, and a brighter mood.



Start the day right with morning light –

Natural sunlight triggers your body to produce vitamin D, an essential nutrient linked to many health benefits including improved brain function and digestive balance. Morning light also helps reset your circadian rhythm, boosting the hormones that keep you alert during the day and setting up stronger melatonin release for deeper sleep at night.



Feed your microbes well – Your friendly microbiome thrives on soluble fiber found in many fruits and vegetables. Fill your plate with fiber-rich choices like raspberries, avocados, broccoli, and artichokes. These prebiotic foods fuel the production of short-chain fatty acids — natural compounds that calm inflammation, strengthen the gut lining, and support healthy sleep.



Stick to a steady rhythm – Consistency matters. Going to bed and waking up at the same time each day — yes, even on weekends — trains your body's internal clock and supports a more balanced microbiome, leading to steadier energy and deeper rest.



Add more fermentation – Yogurt, kefir, sauerkraut, and kimchi deliver live beneficial bacteria that boost microbial diversity and help reduce inflammation. That's a win for your digestion and your overall wellbeing.



Wind down with intention – First, power down screens an hour before bed since blue light suppresses melatonin. Then, try a [body scan meditation](#): close your eyes and slowly move your attention from your toes to your head, releasing tension as you go.

By nurturing your gut microbiome, you're investing in better sleep and overall wellbeing. And, if improvements don't come right away, don't sweat it: stress can disrupt your gut-brain balance even more. Instead, remind yourself that your little microbial helpers will appreciate even small changes, soon paying you back with increased energy, brighter days, and more restful nights.



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