

COVID may cause insomnia, expert reveals the foods YOU should eat for a good night's sleep

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Following reports that COVID may cause insomnia, a sleep expert has revealed the foods and supplements that can help aid a good night's sleep – and many of these items might already be sitting in your cupboard or fridge.

A study published in *Frontiers of Public Health* revealed that Vietnamese scientists surveyed over 1,000 COVID patients on their sleep habits and found that three in four of those with a mild infection suffered sleepless nights.

According to a recent report by Nuffield Health, 49% of Brits report that their sleep quality has worsened in the past 12 months, while 49.2% report getting less than six hours of sleep a night.

Now, sleep experts at Bed Kingdom have shared several common foods that can help support a restful night's sleep, including kiwis, cherries, oily fish, and chamomile.

The sleep experts say: “While many people resort to a glass of wine or two to help them drift off in the evening, this can actually be detrimental to the quality of our sleep in the long run.

“There are several much more sensible options that you can add to your diet to help boost your chance of getting some quality Zzz’s. Here are some of the best foods for a good night’s sleep according to science:

Kiwis - While researchers are not entirely sure why kiwis are so good for sleep, they attribute their slumber-aiding properties to the high number of vitamins and minerals such as vitamins C and E.

Cherries - Tart or sour cherries have an antioxidant effect, which can increase total sleep time and efficiency thanks to the high concentrations of the sleep hormone melatonin. This can help regulate circadian rhythm and promote healthy sleep.

Malted milk – Known more commonly by the brand name Horlicks, consuming malted milk powder before bedtime has been proven to increase sleep quality and reduce interruptions, thanks to the high levels of vitamins B and D.

Oily fish – Oily fish such as salmon, mackerel and trout are high in vitamin D and omega-3, which help the body regulate serotonin. Studies have found that those who eat at least three portions of oily fish a week experience better overall sleep.

Nuts - Nuts such as almonds, pistachios, walnuts, and cashews contain melatonin and sleep-promoting minerals like magnesium and zinc, which have been found to help improve the symptoms of sleep disorders like insomnia.

As well as highlighting sleep-promoting foods, the experts also reveal which supplements can help achieve better sleep.

Lavender

The smell of lavender has a relaxing effect as it interacts with the neurotransmitter GABA to act as an anxiety reliever. This helps quiet the brain and nervous system activity to aid a good night’s sleep. Lavender comes in many scented forms, including pillow sprays, diffusers, and topical creams.

Chamomile

Thanks to an antioxidant called apigenin, chamomile has a calming effect on the brain, making it easier to fall asleep. This wonder plant can be consumed via tea or supplement form, but make sure to check before consuming it, as it can interfere with certain medications.

Magnesium

Supplementing diets with foods high in magnesium has been shown to reduce the stress hormone cortisol and promote melatonin. Snacking on dark chocolate, nuts, and seeds will help boost levels naturally. Alternatively, it can be taken as a supplement before bed to relax muscles and prepare the body for sleep.

Sleep experts at Bed Kingdom say: “Consider adding these foods and supplements to your daily routine to promote relaxation and improve your sleep before going down the pharmaceutical route.

“Particularly during the winter months, a lack of vitamin D can impact our sleep quality and have a knock-on effect on our mood and productivity. Therefore, it’s important to ensure you are eating foods that are rich in Vitamin D in order to combat this.