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Your health

Q & A



You asked: "I get off to sleep quickly but often wake in the small hours and struggle to get back off to sleep until it's nearly time to get up! What can I do about this?"



ROSIE WESTON ANSWERS: "Your sleep can be affected by much more than the food you eat. What you do in the few hours before bedtime can negatively or positively affect your sleep cycle. Alcohol, caffeine, temperature, electronics, pollution and noise are all known sleep disruptors. Best to drink caffeine in the morning and not after 2pm and save alcohol for the weekends. Electronic devices emit blue light which affects melatonin production (our sleep-regulating hormone). Try not to use these the few hours before bed or wear blue light-blocking glasses. Make sure your bedroom is cool and dark as this creates the best environment for deep sleep."

Magnesium is required in melatonin production; increase magnesium-rich foods like organic almonds, leafy green veg and white beans or try taking a good quality supplement which includes magnesium malate or bisglycinate before bed; 300mg is the RDA but individual requirements need a nutritional therapist's advice. Tryptophan-rich foods like bananas, turkey, nuts, seeds and dairy also support serotonin production – a hormone very much involved in the sleep-wake cycle – so aim to eat these in your evening meals.

Opt for balanced meals throughout the day and especially in the evening. These keep blood sugar stable through the night and will stop you from waking up when your blood sugar levels drop. If you continue to have broken or disturbed sleep, seek the services of a nutritional therapist who will be able to support you with personalised recommendations."

■ Rosie Weston is a Nutritional Therapist and CNM graduate. CNM offers internationally accredited diploma courses and has a 22-year track record training successful professionals in natural therapies including nutrition, herbal medicine, acupuncture, homeopathy and health coaching. Call 01342 777 747 or visit cnmcourses.com



You asked: "I have a family history of osteoporosis. What advice can you offer for how to protect my bone health?"



DR MARILYN GLENVILLE ANSWERS: "You may have a higher risk but there is a lot you can do to work on prevention. Your diet is the most important thing to consider. One of calcium's roles in your body is to act as a neutraliser. When you eat too much acidic food your body calls up calcium reserves from the bones to counteract the acidity. We know that women who consume the most acid-producing diets have four times as many hip fractures as those whose diets are the least acid-producing."

One of the most highly acid-forming substances that causes the most calcium to be leached from the bones is protein, particularly in red meat but also hard cheeses.

The best way to make your diet more alkaline is simply to have more alkaline-forming foods each day instead of acid-forming. So, aim to eat more fruit and vegetables and less animal protein, and choose good quality animal protein like fish or eggs. You also need to watch what you drink as caffeine causes the loss of calcium and soft fizzy drinks will also cause a leaching effect of calcium from your bones.

You also need to add in certain vitamins and minerals to make sure that you are 'feeding' your bones. The first nutrient that comes to mind is calcium, but many other nutrients are equally crucial for healthy bones including magnesium, vitamin D, boron and vitamin C.

Exercise is also important for your bone health; it is a case of 'use it or lose it'."

■ Dr Marilyn Glenville PhD is the UK's leading nutritionist specialising in women's health. She is the author of 16 internationally bestselling books including *Osteoporosis: how to prevent, treat and reverse it*. The Glenville Nutrition Clinics are all operating remotely at the moment. Visit www.glenvillenutrition.com or phone 01892 515905

You asked: "I want to stick to a healthy eating plan but I'm really struggling and keep failing. Can you offer any advice?"



DR RACHEL EVANS ANSWERS:

"If you ever feel like you know exactly what you should be doing to stick to your plan, but something is keeping you stuck in old habits of overeating, it can often feel like you are sabotaging yourself over and over again, and this behaviour is likely to be driven by deep subconscious beliefs about food and yourself which can be difficult to break."

To help get a grip on healthy eating plans, it's important to be clear on goals, to ensure that they aren't too restrictive, and to take small sustainable steps. Rather than beating yourself up and eating more, try to learn from slip-ups and form new healthy habits instead of relying on willpower. One of the most effective ways to combat negative subconscious beliefs and bad eating patterns is to recognise patterns from childhood and when exactly they are showing up in life now. Another way to tackle these behaviours is to look in to hypnotherapy, to directly access the subconscious mind and find the root of eating issues – through hypnotherapy, these can be rewired for more helpful thought patterns, to help healthy eating become more achievable."

■ Dr Rachel Evans is a psychologist specialising in the psychology of eating. For more information, visit eatingdisordertherapist.co.uk

Email your questions to liz@jfnproductions.co.uk

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