Before-Bed Snack Ideas for Type 1 Diabetics

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Night-Time Snack Ideas for Diabetics

Having consistent, stable blood glucose levels overnight can be life-changing for a person living with type 1 diabetes. Waking up knowing your body was not in a state of inflammation due to high blood sugar all night or not having your sleep interrupted by low blood sugar is not only revitalizing but empowering. Eating a night-time snack can be the determining factor in whether or not stable levels are achieved; so, finding something that works for you is crucial.

As humans, we spend over 35% of our lives sleeping, and as humans living with type 1 diabetes, that means 35% of our lives not having to worry about anything T1D related. However, this is only possible if we have found an overnight, pre-sleep routine that works in favor of our health!

There are many different ways to approach before bed food. If you are someone who enjoys a medium to large-sized snack before bed that is okay, and the same goes if you prefer something small. Portion size isn't as significant as the balance of what is being consumed.

To test if your snack is supporting your blood sugar, it's a good idea to start by having a very small snack and focusing on making sure your basal rates are properly adjusted (long-acting insulin that is always working including while you are sleeping).

Once proper basal rates have been decided, the next step is to choose a snack that supports the maintenance of these basal rates. Because sleep is a fasting time, it's incredibly important to focus on getting proper protein and fat before bed, along with some fiber-rich carbohydrates to support the slow, extended-release of nutrients.

Protein and fat are important because they have a much slower release into the bloodstream, whereas carbohydrates can be in and out in a matter of minutes. Having some carbs is still important, but they always need to be consumed in conjunction (balanced) with either protein, fat or both!

Here are some ideas for protein and fat focused snacks, along with some fiber-rich carbohydrates to keep blood glucose levels stable all night long.

1. Nut Butter and Fresh Fruit

This is a snack I consume quite often! Getting an adequate amount of nut butter (at least 1-2 tablespoons) and a small to medium amount of fruit (I like to aim for low glycemic index fruit such as berries or a sliced apple) will keep glucose levels happy throughout the night! As well as getting a healthy amount of fat, making sure the fruit is fresh and not in a canned, dried or jam form is important for fiber content — which also supports the slower digestion of carbohydrates.

2. Veggies and Hummus

Hummus is a great source of protein, fat and fiber; eating it together with some sliced veggies, such as cucumber, carrots, bell peppers or cherry tomatoes, makes for a perfectly balanced night-time snack. The key here again is making sure the portion size of the hummus is adequate and the veggies being consumed are non-starchy. Always having some veggies prepared in the fridge for on-the-go moments is a great idea in general, and it makes choosing a healthy option easier!

3. Cheese and Crackers

Make sure to get the least processed crackers with the most amount of fiber! This will ensure slower digestion of the carbohydrates. Opt for a high-quality cheddar or mozzarella, and don't be afraid to throw some extra flavor on these like basil or sesame seeds! Again, make sure an adequate amount of cheese is being consumed in relation to the amount of crackers; the ratio of carbs to fat and protein should be one-third carbs and two-thirds fat or protein.

4. Yogurt Parfait

Putting together a cute little yogurt parfait before bed is a fun and satisfying experience! Ensure you are using full-fat, plain Greek yogurt or Icelandic skyr if it's available. Adding a few nuts or seeds for some crunch and fruit for some carb will balance it out to be the perfect bed-time snack. If it's not sweet enough for your taste, add a couple stevia drops or half of one stevia package.

5. Scrambled Eggs or Tofu

Breakfast before bed? Maybe! But this protein-dense snack is one of the best things you can eat to ensure a good nights sleep. Throw some veggies in there and add half a slice of whole-grain bread and you're good to go! Your tummy, taste-buds and glucose levels will be thanking you all night long.

The Bottom Line

Clearly, there are so many amazing night-time snack ideas for diabetics. Don't be afraid to get creative with your snacks, add spices and change up the veggies or fruits. Consuming a variety of foods will give you a more positive relationship with your type 1 diabetes, instead of being left with feelings of deprivation and dissatisfaction. No matter what your snack before bed ends up being, remember to always focus on getting enough protein and fat. After all, the most important thing is that your snack satisfies your hunger and keeps your blood glucose levels stable.