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Eating well to sleep better and not gain weight

Everyone knows that sleep is essential for our health, that a truly restful sleep improves our psychomotor performance during the day, but many do not know that it is scientifically proven that good sleep without waking up for at least 8-9 hours per night reduces the risk of obesity and improves the effect of low-calorie diets.

Good sleep can be achieved in a few moves, first of all by cleaning and tidying the environment: unplug any device that produces electromagnetic waves, turn off your cellular phone, ensure you have a proper mattress to support the body, isolate the room as much as possible from outside noise.

Sleep, however, is often disturbed by internal elements of the body that stimulate the nervous system.
They wake us up or produce a restless sleep, and many of these disturbances are brought about by the food we have eaten at dinner. Dinner is usually the time when you relax and sit at the table, along with family or friends, a shared moment where it is easier to drink and eat more than at lunch. Unfortunately this is not good for our sleep.

Food science guidelines recommend to distribute the calories (kcal) of the day in five meals by eating 25% of the day's calories for breakfast, 5% in a mid-morning snack, 35% at lunch, 5% in a mid-afternoon snack, and 30% for dinner. Snacks are small recharges of energy and allow you to get to lunch or dinner without feeling overly hungry and then run the risk of overeating.

For dinner, one needs to eat less than at lunch, and head to sleep about three hours after dinner, because in the evening metabolism slows down and the body reduces the need for energy by accumulating any excess into fat deposits.

Going to bed before having digested can lead to the development of gastroesophageal reflux and nocturnal awakenings, which are not at all pleasant. In addition, it is best not to drink beverages containing caffeine (coffee, tea, Hibiscus tea, cola etc.) that slows falling asleep, and it is recommended to consume a digestible

dinner to avoid the risk of having a restless sleep:

> The first course must be based on carbohydrates or complex sugars such as: pasta, rice, spelt, barley and potatoes (gnocchi).
The dressings should be simple and based on vegetables, tomato and raw extra virgin olive oil, and if one tolerates them, spices as well.

> The second course should supply proteins: fish, white meat, light cheese, accompanied by raw or cooked vegetables seasoned with extra virgin olive oil.

> Foods should be cooked in a simple way: steamed, grilled, and baked without adding fats.

> After dinner, absolutely avoid desserts, always prefer fruit.
The gratifying chocolate square is better eaten two hours before going to bed, the chocolate you find on the pillows in some hotels is best eaten the following morning.

Alcohol and sleep

If you drink a lot of wine or spirits, because you believe they help you sleep better, know that this is not true.
Ethanol provides a lot of energy (7 kcal per gram) and promotes falling asleep (stuns) but not a prolonged and refreshing sleep. Remember also that calories from alcohol in the evening are not burnt and will turn into fat.

Don't skip dinner

If it is wrong to overeat or eat more at dinnertime than at lunch, it is just as wrong to fast or eat a very frugal dinner.
In fact, our body requires always a bit of energy, even during our sleep; if the glucose in the blood decreases, because you have not eaten, you are unlikely to wake up due to hunger, but - if you do - you will struggle to fall asleep again, and your sleep will be disturbed.

The contents of this article are in accordance with the parameters set out by the European Food Safety Authority - EFSA.