Sleep Support Meal Plan
Evidence Sheet

This program was created with the following key considerations in mind:

Melatonin-Boosting Foods

Certain foods help support the healthy production of melatonin, a hormone that increases at night to make us sleepy. Tart cherries, nuts like almonds and walnuts, fish, oats, and legumes are natural sources of melatonin or help support normal melatonin production.

Serotonin and Tryptophan

Tryptophan is an amino acid found in protein used to make neurotransmitters and hormones in the brain, like serotonin and melatonin. It can help you feel sleepy and relaxed. Serotonin also plays a role in mood and healthy sleep. Increasing foods high in tryptophan, like poultry, kiwi, and chia, can help boost serotonin levels, supporting better sleep health.

Omega-3 fatty acids

Omega-3 fatty acids, particularly EPA and DHA, found in fatty fish, can help improve sleep by lowering inflammation, supporting healthy serotonin levels, and regulating circadian rhythms. Salmon is added to this plan as one of the few food sources of vitamin D, which can also improve sleep patterns. Walnuts are a source of plant-based omega-3s, which can help improve brain health.

Dairy

Dairy is a source of magnesium, tryptophan, calcium, vitamin D, and melatonin, all nutrients that help improve sleep. A calcium or magnesium deficiency has also been shown to impact healthy sleep patterns, so getting enough is key, and dairy can help reach those goals. Milk, Greek yogurt, and cottage cheese are included throughout this plan. For an additional anti-inflammatory and sleep-enhancing benefit, turmeric and chamomile milk teas are added before bedtime. Chamomile is a source of anti-inflammatory flavones and an antioxidant called apigenin that can help reduce insomnia.

Fiber

Research has found that adequate fiber intake is correlated with normal sleep patterns. Specifically, NHANES data discovered that those with the highest fiber intake had the most "normal" sleep patterns, whereas those who did not eat enough fiber either slept too much or not enough. Fiber is found in plant-based foods such as whole grains, fruits, vegetables, beans, legumes, and nuts and seeds.