

4 Major Sleep Inhibitors

1. Caffeine

- **Impact:** On average, it takes 5 hours for half the caffeine consumed to leave the body. This number of hours can vary between 1.5 hours to 9.5 hours depending on the individual.
- **Solution:** Refrain from caffeine use minimum 6 hours before bedtime.
- **Foods with caffeine content:** coffee, black tea, green tea, pops, energy drinks, sports drinks, energy bars, dark chocolate, milk chocolate, some cookies and candies

*Note: 100g of dark chocolate may contain up to 130g of caffeine, which is the equivalent to a cup of coffee. The darker the chocolate, the higher its caffeine content.

2. Gastroesophageal Reflux (GERD)

- **Foods that aggravate reflux:** fatty foods, tomato, citrus fruit, garlic and onion
- **Foods that help reduce acidity:** lower-fat, high fiber options like oats, banana, well-cooked cruciferous vegetables, green beans, mashed potatoes.

3. Alcohol

- **Problem:** alcohol can change the length of the sleep cycle and the time spent in the light versus deep sleep state. As a result, increased tiredness and reduced productivity may occur during the day.
- **Solution:** limit alcohol consumption to 1 beverage per week

4. Choice of Snacks Before Bed

- **Problem:** most snacks are high in fat, sugar and caffeine (dark chocolate) and are big in size, which interrupt your natural sleep cycle and melatonin production.
- **Solution:** opt for a lower-fat, low GI snack like grapes, rye crackers with cottage cheese, yogurt with flax meal, oatmeal cooked in water with cinnamon and a bit of mashed banana.

