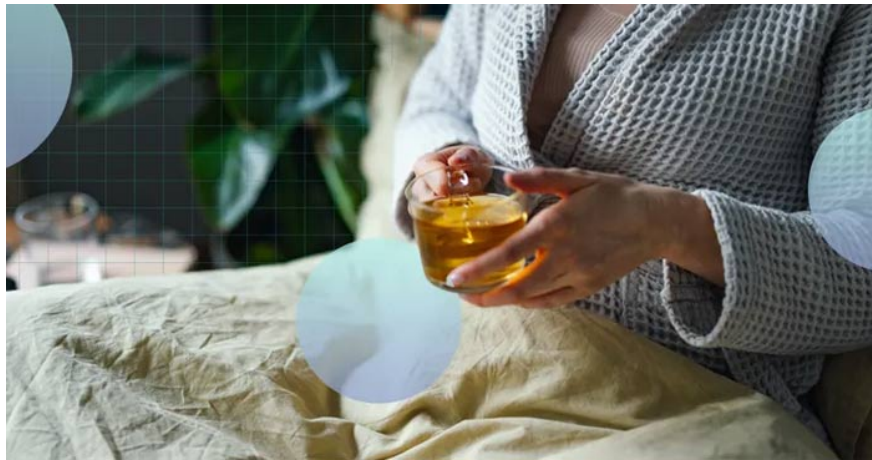


# Things to do after 5pm to help you detox well the next morning

These small, practical evening changes can help you have a smoother morning and more regular bowel movements naturally.

You wake up feeling bloated, uncomfortable, and maybe even a little cranky. You take a sip of coffee, wait... but nothing happens. If your digestive system seems to have missed its morning cues, the culprit may not be what you ate for breakfast, but rather what you did (or didn't do) the night before.



' Overnight, bowel movements naturally slow down as part of your circadian rhythm ,' says Ekta Gupta, MD, a board-certified gastroenterologist. ' When the body sleeps, the colon sleeps too. ' So what you eat, drink, and do after 5 p.m. can make or break your chances of a smooth morning.

The good news? You don't have to change your entire life to get things working. **These small, practical evening changes can help you have smoother mornings and more regular bowel movements naturally.**

## Eat dinner light and early

Eating late at night can disrupt digestion. Digestion slows down in the evening, so eating late can slow down stomach emptying, leading to bloating, indigestion, and sluggish bowel movements the next day. Ideally, you should try to finish eating two to three hours before going to bed.

Dietitians recommend choosing lighter meals in the evening. Avoiding heavy or fatty meals close to bedtime can be beneficial, as these foods slow down digestion and interfere with sleep. Instead, opt for a balanced meal with lean protein, high-fiber vegetables, and whole grains — such as grilled chicken with quinoa and sauteed greens.

### **Walk after dinner**

A short walk after dinner is not only good for your mood, it's also great for digestion. Even 10 to 15 minutes of light exercise after dinner can help stimulate bowel movements and reduce bloating or discomfort that can linger into the next day.

Walking helps activate the gastrocolic reflex, a natural response that signals your colon to get moving. It's a low-impact, high-benefit way to support your digestion and overall health.



### **Take a sip of a refreshing drink**

Hydration in general will help keep stools soft. This includes what you drink after dinner. While you should avoid drinking large amounts of water right before bed (to minimize bathroom trips), a warm, caffeine-free drink after dinner can be very effective.

Wondering which one to choose? Herbal teas—like ginger, peppermint, and chamomile—offer a variety of benefits for your digestive system, including soothing your digestive tract. They hydrate, soothe your gut, and help you relax—making them a perfect addition to your evening routine.

### **Snack smarter**

Late-night snacking doesn't have to be a no-no—just be mindful of your choices. Nutritionists recommend combining water and fiber to help keep your bowels moving overnight. For example, try a banana with a spoonful of almond butter, paired with a glass of prune juice. Prune juice is especially helpful because it

provides some fiber and sorbitol, a natural compound known to help relieve constipation.

Other smart options include a small bowl of oatmeal, Greek yogurt with berries, or sliced apples with peanut butter.

## **Relax with purpose**

Stress and digestion are intimately linked through the brain-gut axis. Stress in the evening activates the sympathetic nervous system, which slows down digestion. That's why relaxation is so important.

Gentle yoga, deep breathing, meditation, or a warm bath can help your body shift into parasympathetic mode—also known as rest and digest. Just a few minutes of relaxation can calm your digestive system and prepare you for a healthy start to the day.

## **Consider using gentle supplements**

If you're getting enough fiber, staying hydrated, and staying active, but still feel uncomfortable in the morning, a gentle supplement may help.

Fiber or magnesium citrate supplements can be great options to support digestive health. They are especially helpful before bed, helping your digestive system improve overnight. Magnesium citrate can also help draw water into the intestines to soften stools, while fiber supplements can increase bowel movement and bulk.

Consult your doctor before adding any new supplements, especially if you are taking medications. And remember that supplements are not a substitute for a good health routine.



## **Prioritize good sleep**

You may be surprised, but sleep quality can affect bowel quality. Lack of sleep or poor sleep hygiene can impair the brain-gut axis and impair normal bowel movement response in the early morning.

Try to get 7–8 hours of sleep each night to allow your nervous and digestive systems to rest and recover. Going to bed on a regular schedule, reducing screen time, and practicing relaxing bedtime rituals can help keep your digestive system running smoothly.

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