



ASHLEIGH FELTHAM

NUTRITION Q&A

Ashleigh Feltham answers your nutrition and health questions.

Q **UESTION:** *I'm getting back into exercise after an extended break. And I've done two gym classes at 6:30pm this week, but both times I've found it so hard to get to sleep. I eat when we get home, which is quite late compared to my usual schedule.*

I've thought tonight about eating dinner at lunch and then something light for tea, but also figure that as a vegetarian these days, I don't have a heap of meat in me to digest anyway! I've also cut out my nightly chai latte, which I used to have religiously, so I don't have that sugar to process at night either.

What advice do you have to help me find my groove and get some results? My goal is to lose weight.

Thank you for your advice, Adeline, South Australia.

ANSWER: Thanks for your question, Adeline.

Research is still building on when is the best time to eat, but recent studies have shown that eating earlier and creating a larger break between dinner and breakfast, may assist in weight loss.

Saying this, there is no magic time to ensure weight loss, and the amount of energy or calories you eat in an entire day will impact the success of your overall weight management.

A balanced diet is key and removing added sugar found in sometimes foods and drinks like a chai latte (depending how it is made) will also assist in your weight loss goal, so well done on removing that from your routine. I definitely recommend avoiding refined sugar and fatty foods before bed. Also be sure to

monitor your caffeine intake throughout the day; half the caffeine you consume will remain in your body up to as many as after five hours after you've consumed it. Alcohol also doesn't help the quality of your sleep, so avoid that where possible if you want to have a good night's rest.

Going to the gym regularly is a great choice for weight loss and overall health, so well done on getting back into an exercise routine. Make sure you include bodyweight/resistance training; ideally around two to three times a week, as this will activate your metabolism, which can also help with weight loss. Remember, if you are standing on the scales, muscle does weigh three times as much as fat – gram per gram – so as a better way to gauge your results is to monitor how you feel in the clothes you wear, and how they're fitting on your body (i.e., when you lose weight, you'll notice they become looser than they used to be).

A good night's sleep is more likely if you create a regular bedtime routine; ideally one that does not involve screen time at least an hour before you want to go to sleep. A bath with lavender oil can also help prepare your body for sleep, as can a lovely cup of herbal tea. Try also, to go to sleep at the same time every night as the key to success is to stick with your wind-down routine.

Adeline, I hope this information helps. If you require any further details, head to feedyourfuturesdietetics.com and request a one-to-one consultation over the net.

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