



## Spring Sleeping: Get Better Sleep

Getting a good night's sleep is as important to your health as regular exercise and eating healthy. **If your sleep routine could be improved, this March break could be a great time to reset your sleep schedule!**

The recommended amount of sleep for most adults is seven to nine hours.<sup>1</sup> Not getting it could leave you feeling irritable, stressed, sad or tired, and you may struggle to stay focused or get motivated. Lack of quality sleep can impact your physical and emotional health.<sup>1</sup> Sleeping poorly can affect normal day-to-day functions and lead to cardiovascular disease, diabetes, hypertension, and more.<sup>2</sup>

### Simple solutions for better sleep

Practicing good sleep hygiene is important. Your bedroom should be cool and dark. You should limit screen time before bed. Keep a regular bedtime and waking schedule. There are other good habits, like a healthy diet and exercise, that can help you sleep better.

Any time is a good time to implement positive changes to your habits and life. Start with one of the suggestions below, add as you can, and prepare for a great night's sleep!



#### Take a walk during the day

Sunshine helps regulate your body's internal clock. It also increases your serotonin, which leads to healthier sleep. Regular activity or exercise for 30 minutes each day helps people fall asleep more easily.



#### Eat no later than three hours before going to bed

This allows enough time for digestion. You can avoid things like gastrointestinal upset or heartburn from interrupting your sleep.



#### Have a turkey burger for dinner

Turkey is one of the highest sources of L-tryptophan, an amino acid that helps you sleep better. Chicken and tuna are also rich in tryptophan.



#### Snack on pumpkin seeds

Pumpkin seeds are an excellent source of magnesium. Magnesium may improve the quality of your sleep.



#### Drink an evening "mocktail"

Have sparkling water mixed with tart cherry juice concentrate rather than wine. Tart cherries contain melatonin, a hormone that helps regulate your sleep cycle. Avoid alcohol and caffeine prior to sleep. This allows your body to enter the deepest and most restful stages of sleep uninterrupted.



#### Drink chamomile tea

Chamomile has an antioxidant that's been shown to support a good night's sleep.



#### Read from a physical book

Using tablets or phones close to bedtime can wreak havoc on your sleep. Reading a book is more likely to help improve your slumber.

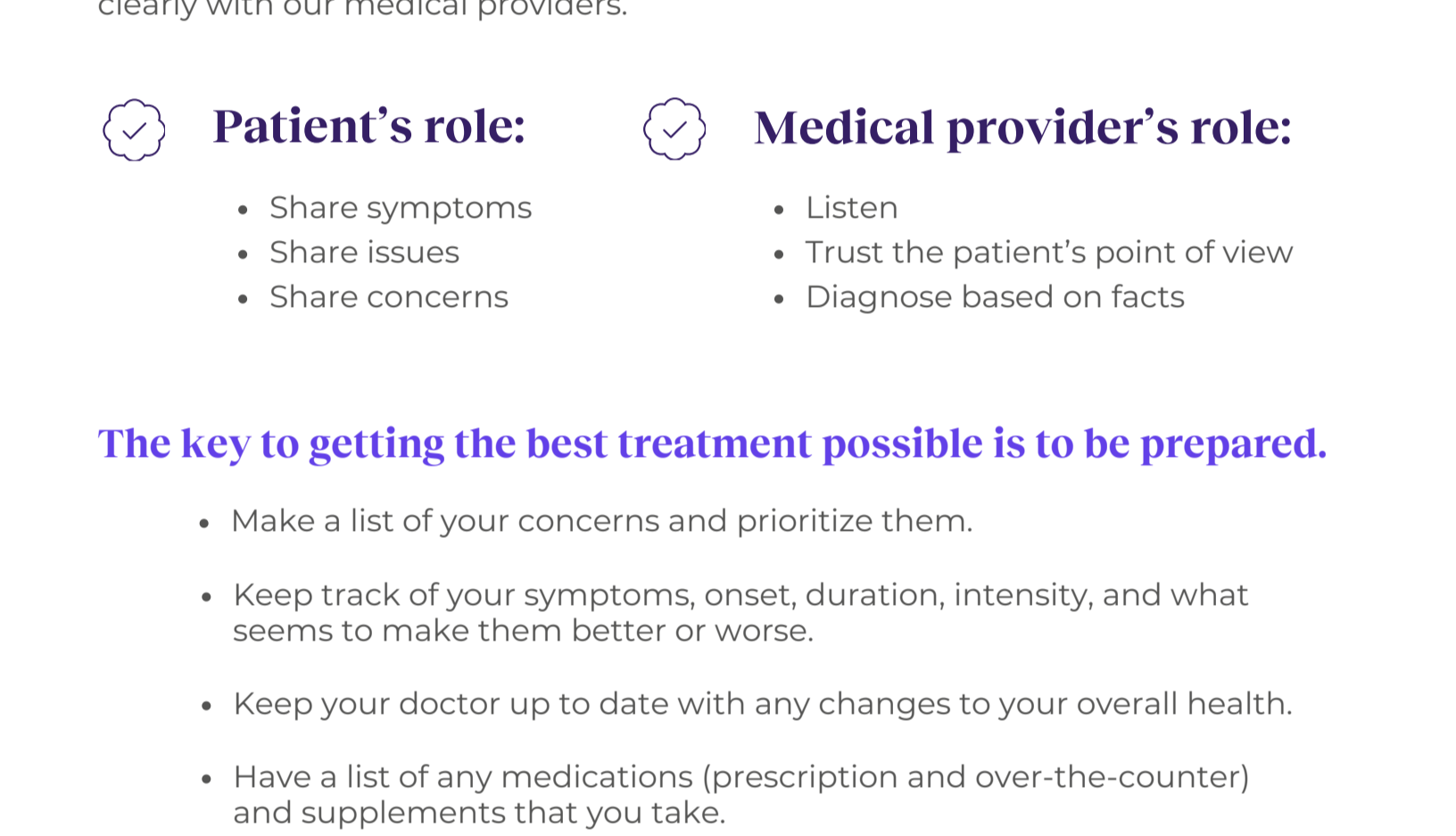


#### Consider a bedtime stretching routine

Gentle stretching and calm, deep breathing are great ways to wind down and set yourself up for a good night's sleep.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/healthy-living/canadian-adults-getting-enough-sleep-infographic.html>

<sup>2</sup> <https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/52375.html>



## How to prepare for your medical appointments

We're rarely at our best when we see our medical providers. There are many reasons for this. We could be sick, frustrated because something's not right or have anxiety about the appointment. It's important for us to communicate clearly with our medical providers.



#### Patient's role:

- Share symptoms
- Share issues
- Share concerns



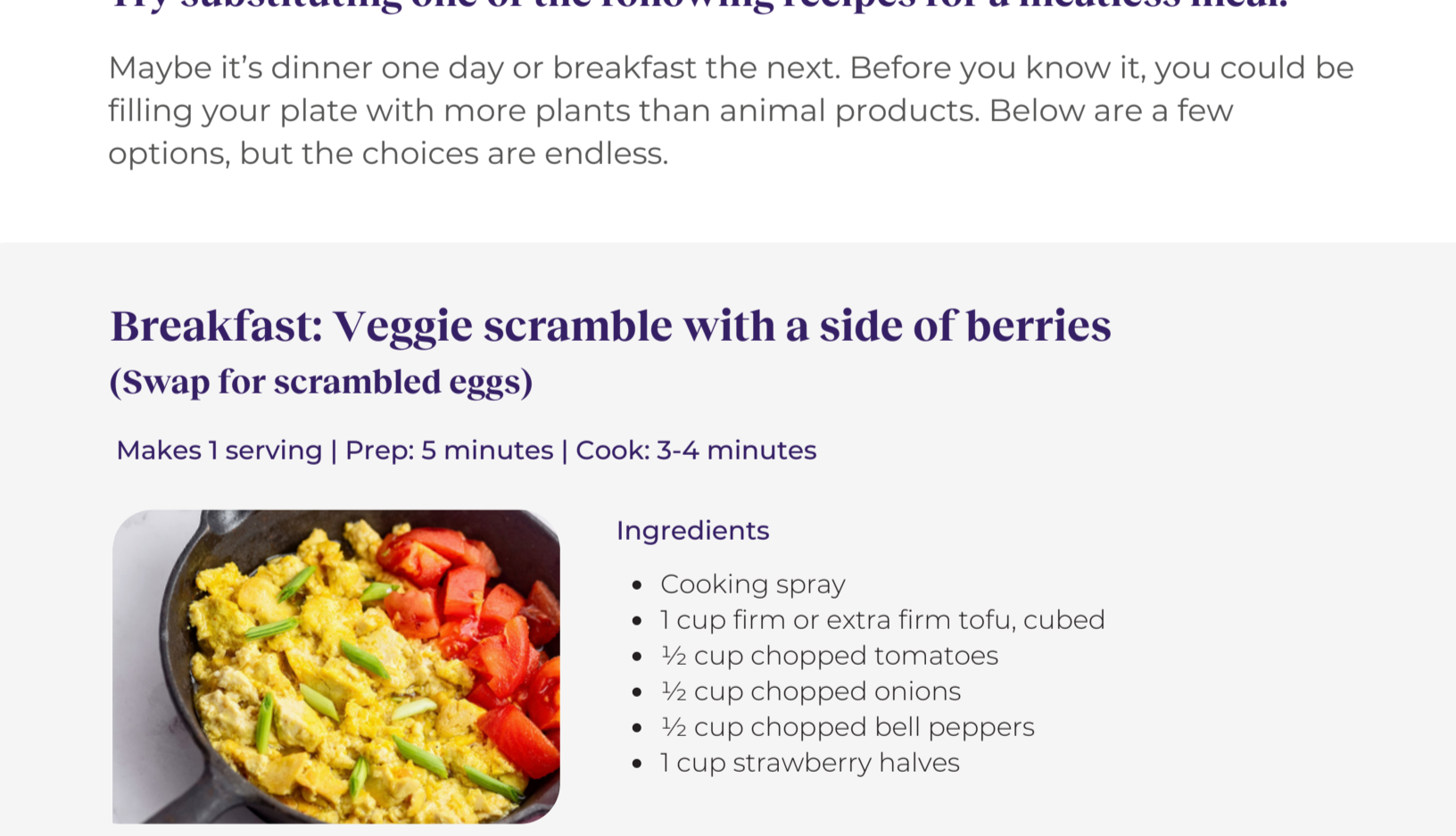
#### Medical provider's role:

- Listen
- Trust the patient's point of view
- Diagnose based on facts

### The key to getting the best treatment possible is to be prepared.

- Make a list of your concerns and prioritize them.
- Keep track of your symptoms, onset, duration, intensity, and what seems to make them better or worse.
- Keep your doctor up to date with any changes to your overall health.
- Have a list of any medications (prescription and over-the-counter) and supplements that you take.

### To ensure you always get the best care, come prepared and have an open conversation with your provider.



## Delicious plant-based swaps (really!)

It seems like plant-based eating is the hottest thing in food options today.

Fast-food chains all seem to have alternative "meats" on their menus, and grocery stores have upped their options. It makes sense. Studies have associated regular intake of red meat with cardiovascular health consequences.<sup>1</sup> Red and processed meats contain high amounts of cholesterol and saturated fat, and there are many studies that link regular red and processed meat consumption to developing heart disease, cancer and even death.<sup>1</sup>

Still, use caution with meat alternatives since they are highly processed and may contain just as much saturated fat as beef versions. Eating a plant-based diet doesn't have to be all or nothing. Some people describe themselves as semi-vegetarian or "flexible" vegetarian, consuming mostly plant-based, nutrient-dense foods with occasional meat.<sup>2</sup> You could adopt a "Meatless Monday"—or any day of the week.

### Natural ways to add plant-based protein:

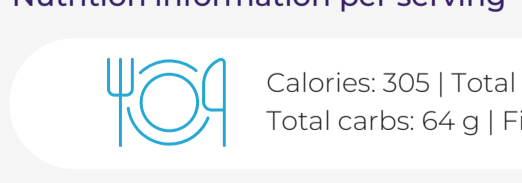
- Quinoa
- Flax seeds
- Tofu
- Lentils
- Nut butters
- Garbanzo beans

### Try substituting one of the following recipes for a meatless meal.

Maybe it's dinner one day or breakfast the next. Before you know it, you could be filling your plate with more plants than animal products. Below are a few options, but the choices are endless.

#### Breakfast: Veggie scramble with a side of berries (Swap for scrambled eggs)

Makes 1 serving | Prep: 5 minutes | Cook: 3-4 minutes



#### Ingredients

- Cooking spray
- 1 cup firm or extra firm tofu, cubed
- ½ cup chopped tomatoes
- ½ cup chopped onions
- ½ cup chopped bell peppers
- 1 cup strawberry halves

#### Preparation

Spray a pan with cooking spray. Over medium heat, add tofu, tomatoes, onion and bell pepper. Cook for 3-4 minutes, until onions are translucent. Serve with a side of berries.

Veggie boost: Add extra non-starchy veggies like spinach or zucchini.

Flavour boost: Use pepper and garlic powder.

Energy boost: Mix in 1/2 sautéed sweet potato.

#### Nutrition information per serving



Calories: 259 | Total fat: 11 g | Saturated fat: 2 g | Sodium: 42 mg | Cholesterol: 0 mg  
Total carbs: 30 g | Fiber: 5 g | Sugars: 7 g | Protein: 24 g | Potassium: 809 mg

#### Lunch: Black bean collard burrito (Swap for beef burrito)

Makes 1 serving | Prep: 5 minutes | Cook: 20 minutes



#### Ingredients

- 2 large collard greens leaves
- ½ cup canned low-sodium vegetarian refried beans, warmed
- ½ cup cooked brown rice, warmed
- 2 Tbsp salsa
- ½ avocado, sliced

#### Preparation

Wash collard greens leaves well, and trim off thick stems. Lay flat. With a fork, mash the center vein to make it more pliable. Put beans, rice, salsa and avocado on leaves and roll like a burrito.

Veggie boost: Use an unlimited amount of non-starchy vegetables.

Flavour boost: Add a squeeze of lime or diced jalapeno peppers.

#### Nutrition information per serving



Calories: 420 | Total fat: 17 g | Saturated fat: 2 g | Sodium: 347 mg | Cholesterol: 0 mg  
Total carbs: 58 g | Fiber: 16 g | Sugars: 3 g | Protein: 13 g | Potassium: 584 mg

#### Dinner: Grilled portobello mushroom with broccoli & sweet potato (Swap for a pork chop)

Makes 1 serving | Prep: 10 minutes | Cook: 12 minutes



#### Ingredients

- 3-4 oz portobello mushroom
- ¾ cup white kidney beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 tsp fresh rosemary
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- 2 Tbsp salsa
- ½ cup roasted broccoli
- Small baked sweet potato

#### Preparation

Coat a medium skillet with cooking spray. Over a medium flame, cook portobello mushroom until lightly browned, around 3-5 minutes. Flip and cook on other side for another 2-3 minutes. Slide mushroom onto plate. In the same skillet, sauté white kidney beans with rosemary and garlic. Top mushroom with bean mixture and salsa. Serve with broccoli and sweet potato.

Veggie boost: Serve with a side salad.

Flavour boost: Add lemon pepper, fresh lemon juice, and roasted broccoli.

#### Nutrition information per serving



Calories: 305 | Total fat: 1 g | Saturated fat: 0 g | Sodium: 465 mg | Cholesterol: 0 mg  
Total carbs: 64 g | Fiber: 20 g | Sugars: 10 g | Protein: 20 g | Potassium: 1,687 mg

## Whether for "Meatless Monday," or any day, these plant-based options are all delicious and packed with nutrients, including protein. Your overall health will thank you.

<sup>1</sup> <https://healthsci.mcmaster.ca/home/2021/03/31/worldwide-study-ratifies-link-of-processed-meat-to-cardiovascular-disease-and-death>

<sup>2</sup> <https://cns-scnc.ca/education-resources/resources/flexitarian-diet>

## Contact Us Today

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