



**The Good Clean Nutrition Podcast  
Episode 8 Show Notes**

**The Connection Between Diet, Sleep & Health with Marie-Pierre St-Onge, PhD, FAHA, CCSH**

Welcome to today's episode of *The Good Clean Nutrition Podcast*, hosted by integrative dietitian and nutrition educator Mary Purdy, MS, RDN. Today's guest is Marie-Pierre St-Onge, PhD, FAHA, CCSH, Associate Professor of Nutritional Medicine at Columbia University Irving Medical Center. In addition to having a Bachelor's, Master's and Ph.D. degrees in Human Nutrition, Dr. St-Onge completed a fellowship at Columbia University and went on to join the New York Obesity Nutrition Research Center and the Institute of Human Nutrition as a Post-Doctoral Fellow to further her knowledge in the area of energy metabolism and body composition. In her current role at Columbia University in New York City, she has had the opportunity to fuel her passion for research related to foods and their influence on disease risk and continues to focus heavily on sleep and its association with obesity and cardiometabolic risk factors.

To kick off the conversation, Dr. St-Onge shares her background in nutrition research and how her interest in sleep habits began. She continues by covering the basics of sleep, including the ideal amount of sleep per age group and the importance of quality sleep. Dr. St-Onge explains that a lack of quality sleep causes mental fog, learning impairment, reduced alertness, and difficulty focusing, and that people who report suffering from poor sleep are at higher risk for cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, hypertension and obesity. She says you should know when you've had a good sleep, because your body should feel good after waking up! Studies show that restricted sleeping may cause people to eat more, reduce glycemic control and ability to handle glucose, and increase blood pressure.

Dr. St-Onge explains that dietary changes may improve sleep quality and quantity, and that what you eat during the day plays a large part in the sleep you get at night. Multiple studies have shown adherence to a Mediterranean diet is associated with better sleep quality, efficiency and fewer sleep disturbances. Dr. St-Onge notes that higher intakes of fruits and vegetables, legumes and whole grain breads are significantly associated with better sleep. Studies show deficiencies in magnesium, vitamin D, and iron can be related to poor sleep quality. Additionally, insufficient sleep is shown to activate cravings for unhealthy foods.

For those struggling with sleep, Dr. St-Onge recommends a diet high in fiber and low in saturated fats, with plenty of fruits and vegetables. Additionally, the timing of what you eat can influence sleep. Consuming more protein earlier in the day can provide building blocks for melatonin throughout the day to stimulate sleep onset and better sleep. On the lifestyle factor front, Dr. St-Onge recommends that adults adopt a relaxing evening ritual. Like we do with our kids, adults should be focusing more calming activities before going to sleep and try to sleep at the same time every night, because studies have shown associations between having a highly variable sleep schedule and a higher risk of metabolic syndrome and cardiovascular disease.

As the episode draws to a close, she urges listeners to consider their diet when considering how to improve their sleep. By examining what and when you eat during the day, she encourages that listeners interrupt the cycle of having poor sleep with their diet choices during the day and before bed.



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