

# Hit and myths: Festive tips analysed by science

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**BEAUTY SLEEP:** Forget heavy makeup, skin serums or monkey glands if you want to look good for the party. The best tip for looking fresh, say scientists, comes from [conventional wisdom](#) -- get yourself plenty of sleep. Stockholm researchers photographed 23 men and women aged 18 to 31 after the volunteers had had a normal, eight-hour sleep and again after they had been deprived of sleep for 31 hours. For the pictures, the volunteers wore no makeup, wore their hair loose, underwent identical cleaning or shaving procedures for both conditions and were told to have

a neutral facial expression. The 46 pictures were then presented in random order to 65 untrained observers. On average, someone who was sleep-deprived was rated six percent less healthy, four percent less attractive and 19 percent more tired than when he or she had had a good night's sleep.

**SCHNAPPS DECISION:** Teetotalers who claim that [drinking alcohol](#) with a rich meal will give you indigestion have got it all wrong. Medical researchers at the University Hospital of Zurich, Switzerland, enrolled 20 volunteers who ate a cheese fondue and washed it down with either wine or black tea, both of them popular options in Switzerland. Ninety minutes after their meal, they were given either a cherry liqueur (schnapps) or water. Those who consumed alcohol had a much slower digestion of their food than the non-alcohol group. And the more booze they drank, the more their appetite diminished. But they did not get any more symptoms of heartburn, belching or bloating compared to the non-alcohol group.

**TEEN SPIRIT:** Can you get drunk by submerging your feet in alcohol? This odd piece of folklore, circulating among young Danes, was subjected to scientific rigour by a trio of Danish hospital doctors in Hillerod. Peter Lommer Kristensen and colleagues immersed their feet for three hours in a washing-up bowl containing the contents of three bottles of cheap Slovak vodka while their blood-alcohol levels were measured every 30 minutes. "For a little while, we were laughing and felt buoyant and wondered if this was the effect of the alcohol," Kristensen told AFP. But it was just the daftness of the occasion -- not the absorption of any booze -- that had caused the giggles. For all its jokiness, the experiment proves that the skin provides a strong barrier against alcohol, although cuts and abrasions or a foot disease could weaken the shield.

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