

Secret to staying slim may be as close as your fruit bowl

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The food sitting out on your kitchen counter offers clues about your weight, a new study reveals.

Cornell University researchers photographed kitchen counters in more than 200 American homes and then checked the [weight](#) of the women living in those houses.

Women who had breakfast cereal sitting on the counter weighed 20 pounds more than women who didn't have [cereal boxes](#) on display. And women in homes with [soft drinks](#) sitting on the counter weighed 24 to 26 pounds more than those living in homes without soft drinks on the counter, the investigators found.

"It's your basic 'see-food diet'—you eat what you see," lead author Brian

Wansink, professor and director of Cornell's Food and Brand Lab, said in a university news release.

"As a cereal lover, that shocked me. Cereal has a health-halo, but if you eat a handful every time you walk by, it's not going to make you skinny," he explained.

On the flip side, women who had a stocked fruit bowl on their countertops weighed 13 pounds less than [women](#) without the easily accessible fruit.

Although this study found an association between what was on the counter and a person's weight, it wasn't designed to prove a cause-and-effect relationship.

The study was published online recently in the journal Health Education and Behavior.

"We've got a saying in our lab: 'If you want to be skinny, do what skinny people do.' If skinny people make their homes 'slim by design' by clearing the counters of everything but the [fruit bowl](#), it won't hurt us to do the same," Wansink said.

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