

How you are affected by your dinner date

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The appearance of your dinner date affects whether you want to spend money on healthy or unhealthy alternatives from the menu, but only if you are a woman. The more attractive women find their company, the more likely they are to buy healthy food. Men are rather more likely to buy expensive drinking and dining options. These are the findings in a new study by Tobias Otterbring at CTF, Service Research Center at Karlstad University.

"Our purchase decisions are influenced by many factors, often without our conscious awareness. In this study, I investigated how exposure to physically attractive individuals influences which [food](#) items people are willing to spend [money](#) on and if there are any gender differences," says Tobias Otterbring, Ph. D student in Psychology.

Women buy healthy and men spend more on luxury

In the study, male and female participants were shown full body pictures of attractive or less attractive people of the opposite gender. Directly after, they had to indicate how much money they were willing to spend on different types of foods and beverages.

Women who were exposed to attractive men were more willing to spend money on healthy foods. Men who saw [attractive women](#) were instead more motivated to buy expensive drinking and dining options.

The results, Tobias explains, are based on evolutionary psychological theories of human mate preferences. Research shows that men, more

than women, appreciate a potential mate's beauty and health, whereas women, more than men, appreciate a potential mate's status and wealth.

"The conclusion of the study is that attractive individuals of the opposite sex trigger a consumption pattern that mirrors men's and women's mate preferences. From a marketing perspective, the results indicate that attractive men, such as service staff or "hot hunks" in advertising, can increase women's tendency to consume products associated with beauty and health. Attractive [women](#), on the other hand, seem to increase men's desire to acquire products associated with status and wealth," says Tobias Otterbring.

More information: Tobias Otterbring. Healthy or wealthy? Attractive individuals induce sex-specific food preferences, *Food Quality and Preference* (2017). [DOI: 10.1016/j.foodqual.2017.02.014](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foodqual.2017.02.014)

Provided by Karlstad University

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