

Late night snacker? Make it cottage cheese

October 25 2018



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Eager to eat a snack before bedtime? A protein-filled snack like cottage cheese is the way to go, say Florida State University researchers.

Associate Professor of Nutrition, Food and Exercise Sciences Michael Ormsbee and former FSU graduate student Samantha Leyh found that consuming 30 grams of [protein](#) about 30 minutes before bed appears to have a positive effect on [muscle quality](#), metabolism and overall health. And for those who have sworn off eating at night, there is no gain in body fat.

Their findings are published in the *British Journal of Nutrition*.

Study participants—active young women in their early 20s—ate samples of cottage cheese 30 to 60 minutes before bedtime. Researchers specifically wanted to see if this [food](#) may have an impact on metabolic rate and muscle recovery.

This is one of the first nutrition studies where participants consumed a whole food as opposed to a protein shake or some form of supplement.

"Until now, we presumed that whole foods would act similarly to the data on supplemental protein, but we had no real evidence," Ormsbee said. "This is important because it adds to the body of literature that indicates that whole foods work just as well as [protein supplementation](#), and it gives people options for presleep nutrition that go beyond powders and shaker bottles."

Leyh, who is now a research dietitian with the Air Force, said the results serve as a foundation for future research on precise metabolic responses to whole food consumption.

"While [protein supplements](#) absolutely have their place, it is important to begin pooling data for foods and understanding the role they can play in these situations," Leyh said. "Like the additive and synergistic effects of vitamins and minerals when consumed in whole food form such as fruits or veggies, perhaps whole food sources may follow suit. While we can't generalize for all whole foods as we have only utilized cottage cheese, this research will hopefully open the door to future studies doing just that."

Ormsbee said that his research team will start examining more presleep food options and longer-term studies to learn more about the optimal food choices that can aid individuals in recovery from exercise, repair and regeneration of muscle and overall health.

"There is much more to uncover in this area of study," he said.

More information: Samantha M. Leyh et al, Pre-sleep protein in casein supplement or whole-food form has no impact on resting energy expenditure or hunger in women, *British Journal of Nutrition* (2018).

[DOI: 10.1017/S0007114518002416](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007114518002416)

Provided by Florida State University

Citation: Late night snacker? Make it cottage cheese (2018, October 25) retrieved 4 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2018-10-late-night-snacker-cottage-cheese.html>

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