



Stimulating food and drink

Transcript: Video clip from '10 Things You Need To Know About Sleep', presented by Kate Silverton.

KATE SILVERTON:

Meals rich in carbohydrates set off a chain reaction which makes us sleepy. When carbohydrates are digested in the stomach, they release insulin which in turn helps the chemical tryptophan enter the brain. There it is turned into serotonin and serotonin makes us sleepy.

Eating proteins has the opposite effect to carbs. Proteins change into amino acids, which reduce the amount of tryptophan entering the brain. So, less of the sleep-inducing serotonin is produced. As a result, we tend to feel more alert.

Background image for 'Why is a lack of sleep bad for you?': Getty Images