# Nutritionist warns of excessive fatigue after meals



A nutritionist has expressed concerns regarding persistent fatigue after eating, identifying it as a potential indicator of underlying health issues. While experiencing some drowsiness following a meal is common, nutritionist Fiona Hunter has cautioned that "excessive fatigue" post-consumption should prompt individuals to consult their GP.

Approximately 20 per cent of the population reports experiencing a phenomenon popularly known as a "food coma" after substantial meals. Medical professionals refer to this condition as post-prandial somnolence or post-prandial fatigue, characterized by feelings of sleepiness, reduced energy levels, and difficulties in concentration. Although such a response is usually not alarming, it can sometimes suggest a deeper health concern.

In an article for BBC Good Food, Hunter noted the complexities surrounding the reasons for post-meal drowsiness, stating, "The exact cause is not fully understood, but there are several theories. One is that it's your body's natural response to digestion.” She elaborated that during digestion, blood flow is redirected to the digestive system, which can result in decreased blood supply to the brain, leading to feelings of tiredness. Additionally, she suggested that the inclination to sleep after eating may be rooted in evolutionary biology, as early humans were likely predisposed to rest after consuming food.

Hunter highlighted several medical conditions that could contribute to extreme fatigue following meals. These include:

**Food Intolerances or Allergies**: Some individuals may experience fatigue and various symptoms when consuming specific foods. Keeping a food diary may help identify any problematic items.

**Diabetes or Prediabetes**: Fluctuations in blood sugar levels post-meal can lead to fatigue in some individuals.

**Anaemia**: Deficiencies in iron or vitamin B12 can result in persistent tiredness.

**Hormonal Issues**: Conditions such as an underactive thyroid can adversely affect energy levels and metabolism.

In her recommendations, Hunter urged individuals who frequently feel exhausted after meals to consult healthcare professionals. She remarked, "If you're consistently feeling exhausted after meals, talk to your GP or a registered dietitian. They can help identify any potential health concerns and provide personalised advice on optimising your diet for sustained energy."

Hunter also discussed dietary factors that could contribute to sleepiness. She pointed out that meals high in sugars or refined carbohydrates, such as white bread, rice, pasta, biscuits, and cakes, as well as proteins containing tryptophan like turkey, chicken, eggs, cheese, fish, nuts, and seeds, may increase feelings of fatigue post-eating.

For those who experience drowsiness after meals but do not have any identified medical conditions, other suggestions from Hunter may assist in managing this common issue.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/health/wellness/why-do-i-feel-tired-after-eating> - This article corroborates Fiona Hunter's concerns about excessive fatigue after meals and explains the common phenomenon of post-prandial somnolence or post-prandial fatigue, which includes drowsiness and decreased energy levels. It also discusses possible dietary factors contributing to these feelings.
* <https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/author/fionahunter> - This link provides background on Fiona Hunter, a nutritionist who has contributed to articles about nutrition and health, supporting her authority on the subject of post-meal fatigue.
* <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10311201/> - Although this article does not directly address post-meal fatigue, it mentions the use of digital evidence in various contexts, indirectly suggesting the importance of consulting health professionals for personalized advice, as Hunter recommended.
* <https://www.mass.gov/guide-to-evidence/article-xi-miscellaneous> - This source is unrelated to the specific topic of post-meal fatigue but can illustrate the broader context of how various factors, including health-related ones, can be addressed through professional consultations and evidence-based advice.
* <https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/foods-that-cause-sleepiness> - This article would likely support Hunter's points about specific foods causing drowsiness, such as those high in sugars or refined carbohydrates and tryptophan-rich foods like turkey.
* <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/321136> - This link could corroborate discussions about underlying health issues like diabetes, anemia, and hormonal imbalances that might contribute to excessive fatigue post-eating.
* <https://www.getsurrey.co.uk/news/health/feeling-tired-after-eating-can-31342935> - Please view link - unable to able to access data