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## Scientists say cheese could give us nightmares – 7th July 2025

### Level 4

New research suggests that cheese gives people nightmares. People with a severe lactose intolerance were more likely to have bad dreams. The Dream and Nightmare Lab analyzed the diet and sleep patterns of 1,000 people. It investigated how food affected dreams. The lab based its research on a 2015 study that looked into "food-dependent dreaming". Participants in that study blamed dairy products for disrupting their sleep.

The lab found that people with stomach problems and lactose intolerance had scarier nightmares. It said stomach issues could lead to sleep disturbances and nightmares. A professor said many of us do not sleep well. Around 35 per cent of people could have a serious sleep disorder. Research suggests that about 85 per cent of adults have a nightmare at least once a year. About 5 per cent of people have a bad dream frequently.

### Level 5

New research suggests that cheese could give people nightmares. A study in a journal found that people with a severe lactose intolerance were more likely to have bad dreams and insomnia. The director of the Dream and Nightmare Lab in Canada analyzed the diet, health and sleep patterns of 1,000 people. She wanted to investigate how food affected dreams. The director based her research on a 2015 study that looked into "food-dependent dreaming". Participants in that study blamed cheese and other dairy products for disrupting their sleep.

The director found that people with stomach problems and lactose intolerance had scarier and more frequent nightmares. She said: "Gastrointestinal issues...could account for a lot of what's happening in terms of sleep disturbances [and] different dreams." Her colleague said: "Sleep disturbances affect a huge proportion of the general population." Around 35 per cent of people could have a clinically significant sleep disorder. Research suggests that about 85 per cent of adults have a nightmare at least once a year. About 5 per cent of people have one frequently.

### Level 6

New research suggests that dairy products, cheese in particular, could give people nightmares. Research published in the journal "Frontiers in Psychology" found that people with a severe lactose intolerance were more prone to bad dreams and insomnia. Professor Marie-Pierre St-Onge, director of the Dream and Nightmare Lab in Montreal, Canada, analyzed the diet, health and sleep patterns of more than 1,000 people. She wanted to investigate the degree to which food affected dreams. She based her research on a 2015 study that looked into "food-dependent dreaming". Participants in the 2015 study blamed cheese and other dairy products for disturbing their sleep.

Dr St-Onge discovered that people with gastrointestinal problems and lactose intolerance had scarier and more frequent nightmares. She said: "If you have gastrointestinal issues, that could account for a lot of what's happening in terms of sleep disturbances that could be associated with different dreams." Her colleague, Dr Tore Nielsen, said: "Sleep disturbances affect a huge proportion of the general population. One large survey found that 30-40 per cent of individuals will have a clinically significant sleep disorder in their lifetime." Previous research suggests that about 85 per cent of adults have a nightmare at least once a year, with about 5 per cent of people experiencing them frequently.