

Sleep Eating Syndrome

I think the person has a mouth soaping fetish hidden in there.

Sleep eating is a sleep-related disorder, although some specialists consider it to be a combination of a sleep and an eating disorder. It is a relatively rare and little known condition that is gaining recognition in sleep medicine. Other names for sleep eating are sleep-related eating (disorder), nocturnal sleep-related eating disorder (NS-RED), and sleep-eating syndrome.

Sleep eating is characterized by sleepwalking and excessive nocturnal overeating (compulsive hyperphagia). Sleep eaters are comparable to sleepwalkers in many ways: they are at risk for self-injury during an episode, they may (or may not) experience excessive daytime sleepiness, and they are usually emotionally distressed, tired, angry, or anxious. Sleep eaters are also at risk for the same health complications as compulsive overeaters, with the added dangers of sleepwalking. Common concerns include excessive weight gain, daytime sleepiness, choking while eating, sleep disruption, and injury from cooking or preparing food such as from knives, utensils, or hot cooking surfaces. There is also the potential for starting a fire.

As with sleepwalkers, sleep eaters are unaware and unconscious of their behavior. If there is any memory of the episode, it is usually sketchy. A sleep eater will roam the house, particularly the kitchen, and may eat large quantities of food (as well as non-food items). In the morning, sleep eaters have no recollection of the episode. However, in many cases there are clues to their behavior. One woman woke up with a stomachache and chocolate smeared on her face and hands. Candy wrappers littered the kitchen floor. The next morning her husband informed her that she had been eating during the night. She was shocked and distressed because she had no recollection of the event.

As in the case described above, food consumed by sleep eaters tends to be either high sugar or high fat. Odd combinations of foods, such as potato chips dipped in peanut butter or butter smeared on hotdogs, as well as non-food items, have been reported. Oddly, one person was discovered cutting a bar of soap into slices and then eating it as if it were a slice of cheese!

Sleep eating is classified as a parasomnia. It is a rare version of sleepwalking, which is an arousal disorder.