

People watching tearjerkers eat 28-55% more

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Credit: Daniel Miller

Sad movies are bad news for diets. A newly reported study from the Cornell Food and Brand Lab showed movie-goers watching tearjerkers ate between 28% and 55% more popcorn both in the lab and in a mall theater during the Thanksgiving holiday.

According to findings published in a *JAMA Internal Medicine* research letter, movie goers ate 28% more [popcorn](#) (125 versus 98 grams) when watching the tragedy *Love Story* than when watching the comedy *Sweet Home Alabama*.

Dumpster diving analyses of discarded mall movie popcorn in seven cities across the US, showed similar results over a Thanksgiving weekend. After weighing discarded popcorn and counting popcorn

boxes, Cornell Food and Brand Lab researchers found that moviegoers who bought popcorn and watched a sad movie, *Solaris*, ate an average of 55% more popcorn (127 versus 82 grams) than those watching the more upbeat movie, *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*.

If you love tearjerkers, don't despair. "Sad movies also lead people to eat more of any healthy food that's in front of them," says lead author Cornell Professor Brian Wansink, author of [Slim by Design: Mindless Eating Solutions for Everyday Life](#), "It's a quick and mindless way of getting more fruit or veggies into your [diet](#)."

This study complements a [recent finding](#) also by the Cornell Food and Brand Lab which shows that action and adventure movies also lead television viewers to eat more calories - but only if the foods are within arm's reach. "With action movies, people seem to eat to the pace of the movie," said Aner Tal, Ph.D. Cornell researcher and co-author, "But [movies](#) can also generate emotional eating, and people may eat to compensate for sadness."

Wansink provides a last piece of advice for dieting movie-lovers, "Keep snacks out of arms reach, ideally leave them in the kitchen and only bring to the couch what you intend to [eat](#). It's easier to become slim by design than slim by willpower."

More information: Wansink, Brian and Aner Tal (2015). Mood for Food? What Factors Underlie the Influence of TV Content on Food Consumption? *JAMA Internal Medicine*, forthcoming.

Provided by Cornell Food & Brand Lab

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