

Cherry juice, the sweet solution for insomniacs?

CHERRY juice could hold the key to a good night's sleep, say scientists.

Volunteers who drank a glass of unsweetened cherry juice in the morning and evening enjoyed more shut-eye than when they drank the same amount of other juices, a study found.

Curing insomnia has become one of the biggest health challenges of the modern age.

About one in four adults suffer from it and a fifth regularly get fewer than five hours' sleep a night.

Psychiatrist Dr Wilfred Pigeon, of the University of Rochester in New York, who led the study, said the cherry juice effect could be due to the fruit's high content of melatonin, the hormone that regulates the body's sleep-wake cycle.

His researchers analysed sleeping patterns of participants on two routines. During the first they drank cherry juice, and the second a comparable fruit juice. The cherry juice led to an average of 17 minutes more sleep.

Dr Pigeon, whose findings are published in the *Journal of Medicinal Food*, said: 'Given the side-effects of some medications, it is encouraging to have a natural alternative.'

Melatonin expert Dr Russel Reiter, of the University of Texas, said foods such as cherries may be a better alternative to boost the body's supply than supplements.