

TEST YOUR TASTE BUDS

Find out if other senses impact what you taste

What you'll need:

- Small, peeled cubes of raw apple, carrot, turnip and onion (all cubes should be about the same size)
- 1 plate
- 1 blindfold
- 1 pencil and paper
- 1 experiment partner



1. Prepare

Place the fruit and vegetable cubes on a plate. Keep track of which cube is which.

Blindfold your experiment partner so that they can't tell what the fruit or vegetables are by sight. Ask them to hold their nose to block their sense of smell.

2. Taste

Hand your experiment partner one vegetable cube at a time to taste. Ask them to guess what fruit or vegetable it was.

Take your pencil and paper and write down what they think each cube is and what it really is next to it.

Ask them to let go of their nose and remove their blindfold. Then, reveal the results.

3. Switch

Now it's your turn to take the taste test! Repeat the experiment with you as the taster.

4. Compare

When you're both done going through all the cubes, compare your scores. The chances are that both of you made a few wrong guesses!

What's happening?

Why was it so hard to tell one food from another with a similar texture? The secret is inside your nose! The taste buds on your tongue—those tiny bumps on the surface—can only identify sweet, sour, salty, bitter and “umami” (a word to describe the savoury taste found in things like smoked meats and fish). The rest of the information about the taste of food comes from its odour. So, without being able to smell, you can't taste! Now you know why food has no taste when you have a cold.

