

# THE SCIENCE OF SENSE

## Taste

Taste is the sensation that a human or animal experiences on the tongue when eating.

The tongue uses taste buds, which are tiny bumps on the tongue, to recognise types of food and sends taste signals back to our brains. There are five flavours that we can taste: **sweet**, **sour**, **salty**, **bitter** and **umami**, which is found in things like soy sauce.

### WORD SEARCH

TONGUE	SWEET	SPICY	BITTER
SUGAR	FLAVOUR	SALT	TASTE BUD
PAPILLAE	SOUR	MOUTH	UMAMI
R	E	S	U
M	A	M	I
O	R	F	S
N	U	T	S
A	L	T	H
M	E	I	L
S	W	M	O
U	T	H	M
I	T	A	P
C	J	N	G
T	I	S	
H	T	V	I
S	S	G	A
T	V	S	
R	E	O	C
O	Z	U	R
D	T	W	
O	R	U	Y
U	C	E	I
R	M	E	
T	A	R	N
R	X	R	J
L	I	E	
A	T	A	S
T	E	B	U
D	S	T	
H	P	A	P
I	L	L	A
E	U	T	

### EXPERIMENT!

#### TAKE A TEST, BLIND TASTE TEST

**What it shows:** The effect that smell has on our taste

**What you need:** A friend or family member; a blindfold; different foods that have a similar texture such as: apples versus raw potatoes, orange fizzy drink versus lemon or lime, banana yogurt versus strawberry yougurt, purple jelly beans versus green jelly beans (or jellies or skittles).

**What to do:** blindfold your friends and ask them to

hold their noses. Get them to taste the two different foods of similar texture. For example a raw peeled potato versus an apple, tasting one piece at a time. See if they can identify the two foods. Then try the same food again but this time with their noses not held. See if they can identify the foods easier this time. Offer them a glass of water before they try the next two foods, so they can taste better.

### FUN FACTS

**1** Around 80% of what we think is taste is actually smell. Flavour is a combination of taste and smell. Test this by holding your nose closed when you eat something. Can you taste it very well? Chances are you can't.

**2** Catfish are super tasters and have the ability to taste food with all their body parts. They can detect a taste in the water from miles away and have nearly 100,000 taste buds, over ten times the amount a human has.

**3** Children have more taste buds than adults. As people get older they lose many of their buds. This explains why children are often more fussy eaters than adults.

Professor Theodore Bumbledumm, his trusted cat Denis and a team of Junior Scientists have been busy exploring the amazing science behind our senses and how we use them to interact with the world around us. This week, presenters **Robyn McGarry** and **Rebekah Dunne** investigate our sense of taste with **Anna Wedderburn**, Public Engagement Officer for the Conway Institute in University College Dublin.

