

# Are you a Supertaster?



What does it mean to be a super-taster? Is it the newest kind of super-power? No, not likely! However, it is probably something that has prevented you from being an adventurous eater. Being a super taster means you taste more intensely, especially bitter compounds that are naturally found in foods like brussel sprouts, broccoli and cabbage, some fruits and artificial sweeteners, too. Sometimes the bitter is so intense you can barely swallow the food or drink! ICK! Do you think you are a super taster?

## Some fun facts about your tongue & taste buds:

- Every person has a unique tongue print.
- A person produces about 1-liter of saliva a day!
- Taste buds are renewed every 6 – 8 days.
- Natural loss of taste buds starts about 45 years old.
- TRY THIS AT HOME: An onion and apple taste the same (when you are blind folded, with your nose plugged... their flavors are due to their different smells. *But, they both have similar amounts of water, sugars, texture –the aroma is what tells your brain, that’s an apple (or an onion)!*

## What you will need to find out if you are a super taster:

### **Experiment 1:**

1. Blue food dye
2. Small glass of water
3. Magnifying glass
4. Flashlight
5. A piece of paper with a hole punch (like the lined paper used in school to write on, that can go into a binder)

# How do you taste?

## What you will do:

1. Write down each person that will do the experiment on a piece of paper (see example at end of instructions) & have them answer the first 2 questions:
  - Do you like dark green veggies (broccoli, brussels sprouts, kale, cabbage)?
  - Do you like coffee (plain-no sugar or cream)?
2. Take the blue food coloring and add 1 drop to each person's tongue (don't touch it to the tongue, we don't want to spread germs!), **quickly** move to step 3.
3. Take a small amount of water in your mouth and swish it around.
4. Spit it out in the sink.
5. Get your flashlight, magnifying glass and hole ready....
6. Count the number of taste buds inside the hole. Only count the bigger ones (that are easier to see), not the smaller ones.
7. Based on the tasted buds counted:
  - 30 taste buds = supertaster
  - 15-30 taste buds = average taster
  - less than 15 taste buds = non-taster



## What's happening?

- We are all born with our sense of taste. The sense of taste has long been something that we have used to detect food that has spoiled, gone rancid or to detect food that is poisonous (bitter & sour tastes).
- We are naturally drawn to are sweet and salty foods, for purposes of cell functionality & energy production.

Here are a few videos that help describe what's happening:

- Scientific America - <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/super-tasting-science-find-out-if-youre-a-supertaster/>
- SciShow - Are you a supertaster?. <https://youtu.be/W7Pzhvypg9A>

# How do you taste?

**Question:**

- How many in your family are supertasters?

Name	Do you like dark green veggies?	Do you like coffee?	Do you think you are a super taster?	Blue Tongue Experiment # of taste buds

Be sure to report your findings to your family, it may be an inherited trait.

Now you may have insight into why you, or certain family members, like or dislike certain foods!