

Summary From Healthline.com 2019

You Can 'Reprogram' Your Taste Buds to Like Vegetables

Don't say no to that asparagus just yet. New research suggests people may find the taste of bitter green vegetables more enjoyable if they eat them more often.

Don't like the taste of bitter green vegetables? Good news! **The way they taste can improve the more frequently you eat them.**

"Gen Z is really great at exploring food," Gardner told Healthline. "They want to blow their taste buds away."

Because even when we think we don't like the taste of something, our tongues haven't quite made up their minds yet.

Bitter, for example, is a complicated taste. It typically serves as a warning sign; as in, if something tastes bitter, then it might be poisonous.

Unfortunately, that includes [cruciferous vegetables](#), like broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, kale, radishes, and arugula.

Recent research out of the University at Buffalo (UB) conducted on rats suggests that **trying more bitter foods — particularly those found in a healthy plant-based diet — changes proteins in saliva that affect how we perceive the taste of food.**

Experts say repetition and engaging picky eaters into the cooking process are surefire ways to help change the minds — or at least the saliva — of stubborn eaters.

Our taste buds aren't made of stone

Into childhood, developing brains prefer foods with energy return and replenishment, like [sugars and salts](#)[Trusted Source](#).

While those same children may be rejecting new foods, Brennan recommends people follow the advice of most pediatric dietitians: Try a new food 10 or more times before finally throwing in the towel.

That's because we experience the world of five key factors: sight, smell, sound, touch, and taste. We experience them best through complex foods, where taste is broken down even further into five more categories: sweet, sour, bitter, salt, and umami.

"The way to make our brains learn to like healthier foods would be to **increase the flavors of these healthy foods to provide some other sensory enjoyment. Possibly adding something to make it smell good**, which would theoretically co-stimulate our vision centers," Segil told Healthline.

"With repetition, our brains can get accustomed to things, and if they are withdrawn, then we would miss it. But I find it challenging to think of a way we can trick our brains into eating healthy," he said.

Just eat the plants

Bundled together, everything in foods like broccoli and kale have been proven to give the human body the essential nutrients it needs. The important part is **eating all of them together in their original packaging.**

That's not burger wrappers or powdered shakes, nor is it fad diets or 30-day challenges.

Earlier this year, Gardner and his team published a study in [JAMA Trusted Source](#) that tested low-fat versus low-carb diets in adults with obesity.

The study found neither was good for everyone, but people who ate a mix of vegetables and whole grains while avoiding sugar and refined grains had the most success.

Creating lasting behavioral changes that "bring joy back to food" are the most impactful. Part of that isn't only the foods we choose, but how we choose to behave around food.

He recommends getting children and the rest of the family into the kitchen as early as possible and making meal preparation a family affair.

Gardner says mass-produced food may taste good, but it has one major drawback.

"It's killing us," he said.

Trying to eat more broccoli, however, won't kill you. Even if your taste buds initially think it will.