

HEALTHY EATING

SHIFT YOUR TASTE BUDS, SHIFT YOUR HEALTH

Did You Know?

Your taste buds can adjust to consuming less sugar, salt, and fat over time. Studies show that if you reduce your unhealthy food intake, your taste begins to change as well. You may be able to *taste* fat, just like you taste sweet, sour, and salty flavours. As your taste buds adjust, the unhealthy foods you used to eat may become less appealing.



We are surrounded by foods and beverages aimed at satisfying our taste buds with super sweet or extra salty flavours. Unfortunately, these artificial flavours can make it difficult to be satisfied with the natural flavours of healthier foods. Our taste buds are so used to eating foods that stimulate us. If we suddenly eliminate salt or sugar in our foods, we find the flavour very bland.

Shifting your taste buds takes time, but it is possible.



It's a gradual process and a real physical change.

A study done in the Netherlands (Bolhuis et al., 2011) examined 116 students who were asked to eat bread for breakfast as they normally did. The sodium content in the experimental group, however, was reduced by 31% in week 2, 52% in week 3, and 67% in week 4. Researchers discovered that even though the bread had less sodium, the students did not feel the need to compensate by eating additional salty foods.

The students were also asked to rate the saltiness of certain foods. The experimental group rated foods saltier, while the control group found the same foods to be not salty at all.

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Detox Your Taste Buds!

Many complain that healthy foods *don't taste good*. This is likely because your taste buds have adapted to the flavours of processed foods. This probably means your taste buds could use a detox. So how do you do that?

- 1 Eat less processed foods. This includes fast food, prepared supermarket foods, and packaged, ready-to-eat snacks.
- 2 Choose frozen over canned foods. Most canned foods are loaded with salt to better preserve them. Frozen foods also contain more of their original vitamins.
- 3 Delay salting your food. Add salt after you've finished preparing a meal, not while you're making it.
- 4 Gradually reduce the amount of salt you add to food. In a few weeks, you'll notice that foods will taste saltier than normal.
- 5 Reduce the sugar you add to your coffee. At the start of a new week, add one-quarter tsp less and move toward zero sugar.
- 6 Swap dark chocolate for milk chocolate. Start with 50% cocoa. Gradually, work your way to 80% or 90% for a chocolatey treat with health benefits!

Remember, it's a gradual process. It's also unique for everyone, so find what works for you.



Break the Fast-Food Habit!

Food manufacturers purposely create flavours that are extremely addictive so we continue to purchase their products.

Your taste buds can become so accustomed to high amounts of sugar and fats, that they forget what *real* food tastes like! It takes time and perseverance to break the fast-food habit, but it is possible.

These steps will help you get on the right track!

- Eliminating fast-food all at once may be unrealistic, so limit fast-food to 3 times a week, then 2, then 1, and eventually less than once a month or less!
- Track your meals to learn your eating patterns. What processed foods are you eating and when? This will identify where change is needed.
- Create a meal plan using Canada's food guide recommendation.
- Eat breakfast that includes protein. This decreases your need to satisfy your hunger with a fast-food fix at lunch.
- Keep healthy snacks in your purse, car, and work desk.
- Build a support network so they can motivate and encourage you.

Sources: Stewart, J., Newman, L., & Keast, R. (2011). Oral sensitivity to oleic acid is associated with fat intake and body mass index. *Clinical Nutrition*, 30(6), 838-844.

Bolhuis, D., et al. (2011). A Salt Reduction of 50% in Bread Does Not Decrease Bread Consumption or Increase Sodium Intake by the Choice of Sandwich Fillings. *Journal Of Nutrition*, 141(12), 2249-2255.