

## Changing Our Taste Buds

Within a few weeks of eating healthier, our taste sensations change such that foods with lower salt, sugar, and fat content actually taste better.

How can we overcome our built-in hunger drives for salt, sugar, and fat? We now have scientific evidence to back up the claim that if you go a few weeks cutting down on junk food and animal products, your tastes start to change. We now think humans may actually taste fat, just like we taste sweet, sour, and salty, and people on low fat diets start liking low fat foods and high fat foods less.

Our tongues may actually become more sensitive to fat. And the more sensitive our tongues become, the less butter, meat, dairy and eggs we eat. Whereas we get a blunted taste for fat if we pile too much of it in our faces, it's also associated with eating more calories, more fat, more dairy, meat, and eggs and even being fatter ourselves. And this change in sensation, this numbing of our fat sensation, can happen after just a few weeks.

Put people on a low salt diet, and over the weeks they like the taste of salt-free soup more and more and the taste of salty soup less and less. Your tastes physically change. If you let them salt their own soup to taste they add less and less the longer and longer they're on the diet. It tastes just as salty with half the salt. A control group liked lots of salt in their soup, but to those who've been on sodium restricted diets regularly salted foods taste way *too* salty and they actually prefer less salty food. People should be assured that their diet gradually may become more acceptable as their taste for salt diminishes. The longer we eat healthier foods the better they taste.



### Doctor's Note by Michael Greger

This is exciting news! That's why I've always encouraged my patients to think of healthy eating as an experiment. I ask them to give me three weeks. The hope is by then not only do they feel so much better (not only physically, but in the knowledge that they don't have to be on medications for chronic diseases the rest of their lives after all!—see *Say No to Drugs by Saying Yes to More Plants*), but also that their taste sensitivity has been boosted such that whole foods-as-grown regain their natural deliciousness