

Food Trend: Food for Your DNA



By Alycia Williams

“Everyone is different.” We’ve all heard this saying at least once in our lives, and it’s true we are all different all the way down to our taste buds. Have you ever wondered why you think something tastes amazing while your friend absolutely hates the exact same thing? That’s because depending on our DNA, things can taste differently. How does your genetic make-up influence your taste buds?

In this food trend, check out ways DNA can affect how you experience

eating food.

Here are some key ways:

1. Bitter blindness: Some people have what's called Bitter Blindness which basically means their taste buds are immune to things that are more bitter. These people usually have a better time eating vegetables, because most vegetables are loaded in PTC (phenylthiocarbamide), which is what makes vegetables bitter. Those who can't taste it have bitter blindness.

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2. Hypersensitive, sensitive, and tolerant: Not only are our taste buds different, but depending on your DNA, some people have more or less taste buds than someone else. You can have anywhere from 500-11,000 taste buds. Those who have more taste buds are considered hypersensitive tasters. Anything too bitter or too overpowering will be too much for a hypersensitive taster. People who have less taste buds are tolerant tasters, as there aren't many things that a tolerant taster can't eat.

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3. Anxiety & depression: There are some physical side effects to anxiety and depression that can affect your taste buds. Someone dealing with anxiety or depression can eat the most flavorful food on the planet, but it could taste like cardboard to them. Essentially, the brain's chemicals are in control of what you taste so when their levels are a bit abnormal, your ability to enjoy a food's distinctive flavor suffers.

4. Carrier of the OR6A2 Gene: Have you ever heard someone say they think Cilantro tastes like soap? That's because they have the OR6A2 gene. Approximately 14 percent of the population

carries this gene, which actually makes cilantro taste like soap, while others are just tasting cilantro.

5. The Womb Experience: Depending on what your mother ate while you were in her womb can determine what you have a taste for once you're born. Once a baby is born, the baby will already know what the people in his or her culture eat and have a preference for these foods. That doesn't mean you can't acquire your own love for different kinds of food later on, though.

Do you know some other ways genetics influence your taste buds? Start a conversation in the comments below!