



Find eating healthy
a challenge?

Understanding
your taste
preference may help

Take our quiz to see if you prefer sweet,
fatty or salty and find out how you can make
healthy swaps.

Why do taste preferences matter?

We've all heard people say "I have a sweet tooth" or "I crave salty food" – and we now know there are both genetic and environmental factors driving these preferences. Taste preferences vary between people and are a main driver of food choice.

Finding out which of the three different tastes – sweet, salty or fatty - influences what you eat, can help you make healthy choices by satisfying your 'inbuilt' taste preference.

Taste is a key driver of food choice

Australian researchers are discovering why some people love sweet and others salty or enjoy a creamy fatty mouthfeel. A 'wiring' for certain tastes is a combination of nature and nurture. It's natural to prefer energy-dense foods as this was an evolutionary advantage in times when food was lacking, however our preferences are also learned through our experiences with certain foods, for example being rewarded with sweet food for good behaviour.

Healthy diets are tasty

Many people think eating healthy means eating bland, low flavour foods that take away the enjoyment of eating. The good news from Australian research is flavour intensity increases as food choices become more healthy¹.

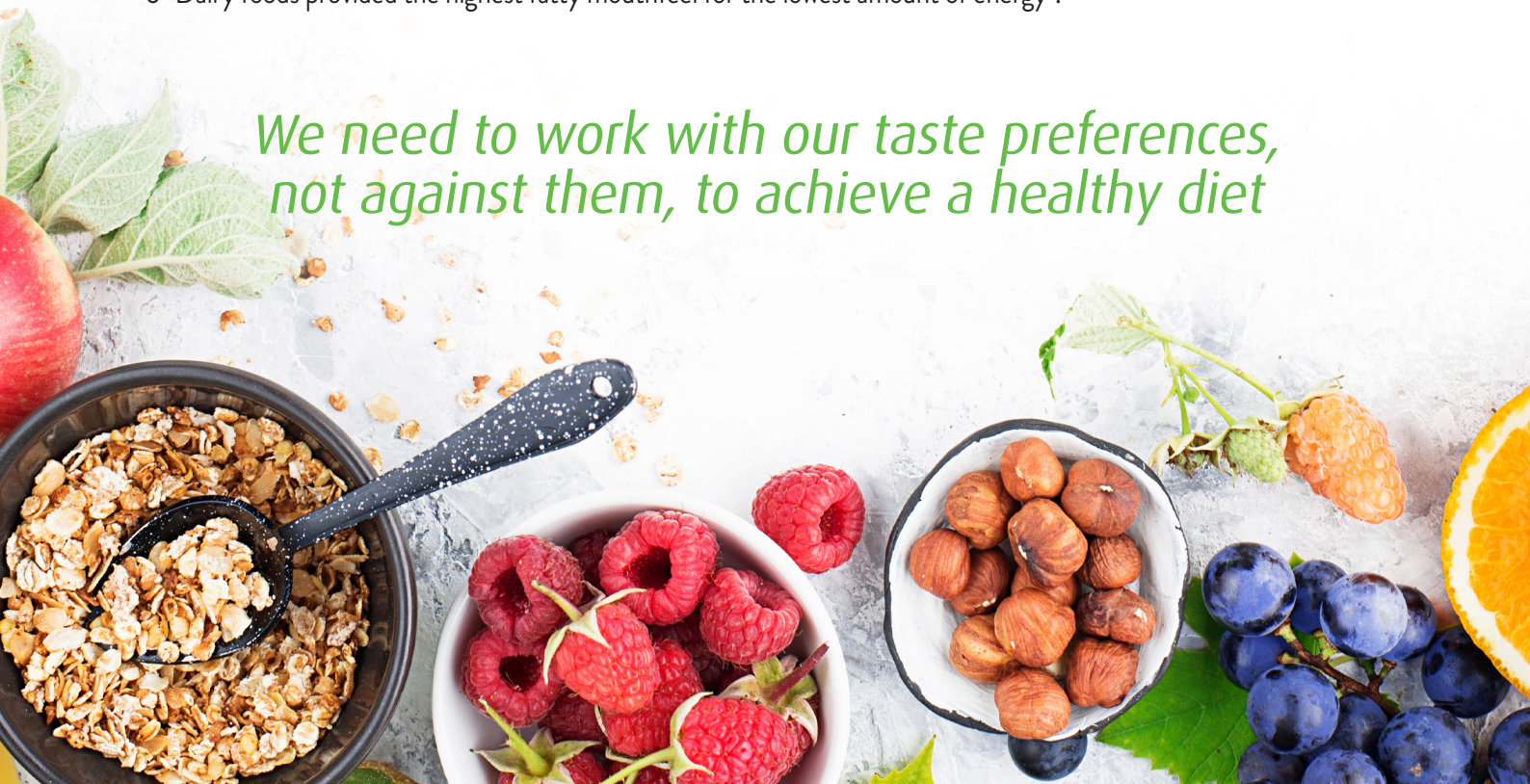
The researchers found healthy diets have higher sweetness and bitterness scores, with a large proportion of sweetness derived from core healthy foods like fruit¹.

Of the three taste preferences, fatty mouthfeel was found to be the strongest predictor of energy (kilojoule) intake².

The research shows that healthy foods can satisfy our taste preferences with less energy (kilojoules) compared to treat foods. For example:

- o Fruit provides the highest sweetness for the lowest amount of energy
- o Vegetables provide the highest saltiness for the lowest amount of energy
- o Dairy foods provided the highest fatty mouthfeel for the lowest amount of energy².

We need to work with our taste preferences, not against them, to achieve a healthy diet



References:

1 Cox, DN, Hendrie GA, & Lease HJ (2018). Do healthy diets differ in their sensory characteristics?. Food Quality and Preference, 68, 12-18.

2 Cox DN, Hendrie GA, Lease HJ, Rebuli MA, & Barnes M (2018). How does fatty mouthfeel, saltiness or sweetness of diets contribute to dietary energy intake? Appetite, 131, 36-43.

Do you prefer sweet, fatty or salty?

Take our quiz³ by answering the questions below based on your initial feelings – there are no right or wrong answers. Don't worry about whether you would consume it for health reasons, as we are thinking about liking for specific tastes only.

STEP 1. For questions 1 to 9, answer: How much do you like the following foods?

Mark the circle that best suits how you feel with a score of 1-5.

Q1	Ham	I don't like it at all	1	2	3	4	5	I like it a lot
Q2	Soy sauce	I don't like it at all	1	2	3	4	5	I like it a lot
Q3	Smoked salmon	I don't like it at all	1	2	3	4	5	I like it a lot
Q4	Dried fruit (e.g. sultanas, raisins)	I don't like it at all	1	2	3	4	5	I like it a lot
Q5	Honey	I don't like it at all	1	2	3	4	5	I like it a lot
Q6	Lollies	I don't like it at all	1	2	3	4	5	I like it a lot
Q7	Roasted peanuts (unsalted)	I don't like it at all	1	2	3	4	5	I like it a lot
Q8	Chicken drumstick with skin	I don't like it at all	1	2	3	4	5	I like it a lot
Q9	Lamb chop (untrimmed)	I don't like it at all	1	2	3	4	5	I like it a lot

STEP 2. For questions 10 to 18, answer: How would you prefer to eat the following foods?

Mark the circle that best suits your initial feeling with a score of 1-5.

Q10	Hot chips	Without salt	1	2	3	4	5	Very salty
Q11	Steak	Without salt	1	2	3	4	5	Very salty
Q12	Green beans	Without salt	1	2	3	4	5	Very salty
Q13	Yoghurt	Not sweet	1	2	3	4	5	Very sweet
Q14	Bread	No jam	1	2	3	4	5	Lots of jam
Q15	Tea or coffee	Not sweet	1	2	3	4	5	Very sweet
Q16	Mashed potatoes	Without butter	1	2	3	4	5	Very buttery
Q17	Pasta	Without oil	1	2	3	4	5	Very oily
Q18	Soup	Without cream	1	2	3	4	5	Very creamy

STEP 3. Add up your scores for the different taste sensations.

Your highest score indicates the type of taste (salty, fatty or sweet) that you most prefer.

For salty taste, add points for all GREEN questions.	My salty taste score =
For sweet taste, add points for all BLUE questions.	My fatty taste score =
For fatty taste, add points for all ORANGE questions.	My sweet taste score =

You can make healthy swaps and still satisfy your taste preference. Read on for examples of how to do this.

Salty Swaps

BREAKFAST



Bacon and egg roll



Smoked salmon, baby spinach and cream cheese bagel



Toast with vegemite



Wholemeal toast with peanut butter

SNACKING



French onion dip



Hummus dip



Salty crackers



Wholegrain crackers



Cabanossi Sausages



Handful of olives



Chips or crisps



Handful of salted mixed nuts

MAIN MEALS



Sausage roll



Sushi rolls with soy sauce



Beef burger with the lot



Steak sandwich with salad and a drizzle of gravy

Sweet Swaps

BREAKFAST



High-sugar
breakfast cereal



Wholegrain breakfast
cereal with dried fruit
(e.g. muesli)



Slice of banana bread



Slice of raisin toast

SNACKING



Confectionary



Fresh dates



Sweet biscuits



Fresh fruit

DESSERT



Slice of apple pie



Baked or stewed apple



Ice cream



Fruit-flavoured yogurt

DRINKS



Can of soft drink



Cup of
flavoured milk



Glass of cordial



Glass of soda water with
lemon or lime

Fatty Swaps

BREAKFAST



Ham and cheese croissant



Chicken and avocado toastie



Buttered toast



Avocado on wholemeal toast

SNACKING



Plain biscuits



Handful of mixed nuts



Chocolate bar



Bliss ball made with dried fruit and nuts



Chips or crisps



Wholegrain crackers with ricotta cheese



Ice cream



Greek yogurt

MAIN MEALS



Pasta with creamy sauce



Pasta with tomato-based sauce stirred with ricotta



Butter chicken



Chicken with yogurt dressing

1 This questionnaire has been adapted by the SNRC from the research paper Deglaire A et al (2012). Development of a questionnaire to assay recalled liking for salt, sweet and fat. Food Quality and Preference, 23, 110-124.

This resource was developed by the Sugar Nutrition Resource Centre (SNRC), a scientific information service which provides evidence-based information on the role of sugars in nutrition and health. For further information: www.sugarnutritionresource.org