

Sniffing Out Good Taste

To taste something, it is helpful to have your smeller working well also. The smell that gets into your nose from the food that is in your mouth can have a big effect on the taste of the thing you are eating. Try this activity to get a sense of what we mean!

Materials:

- M&Ms
- Reese's Pieces

Procedures:

1. Hold your nose closed and place an M&M in your mouth. While keeping your nose closed, chew the M&M but don't swallow yet. Notice how the M&M tastes.



2. While the chewed up M&M is still in your mouth, let go of your nose and see if the taste seems to change. What do you notice? Repeat steps 1 and 2 to test again whether opening your nose affects the taste. How would you describe the different tastes?



3. Do the same activity with a Reese's Piece. What do you taste with your nose closed? How about with your nose open?

Think about this ...

When you have a cold and your nose is all stuffed up, food tastes a little different and sometimes its hard to taste at all. If two foods feel about the same in your mouth, it may be difficult to tell the difference between them if you pinch your nose closed. Ask an adult to give you a very small piece (pea size) of apple and raw potato. Close your eyes and put one in your mouth. Keep your nose closed as you chew it up. Now do the same with the other piece. Was it easy or hard to tell which was which? Try it again with your nose open. Was the difference between them easier to taste?

Where's the Chemistry?

When you eat something, some smell molecules from the food you are eating evaporate into the air behind your nose and mouth. Some of the molecules land on special parts of your nerve cells called smell receptors. So when food is in your mouth, the sensation of taste that you have is really the sensation of taste and smell at the same time.



The American Chemical Society develops materials for elementary school age children to spark their interest in science and teach developmentally appropriate chemistry concepts. The *Activities for Children* collection includes hands-on activities, articles, puzzles, and games on topics related to children's everyday experiences.

The collection can be used to supplement the science curriculum, celebrate National Chemistry Week, develop Chemists Celebrate Earth Day events, invite children to give science a try at a large event, or to explore just for fun at home.

Find more activities, articles, puzzles and games at www.acs.org/kids.

Safety Tips

This activity is intended for elementary school children under the direct supervision of an adult. The American Chemical Society cannot be responsible for any accidents or injuries that may result from conducting the activities without proper supervision, from not specifically following directions, or from ignoring the cautions contained in the text.

Always:

- Work with an adult.
- Read and follow all directions for the activity.
- Read all warning labels on all materials being used.
- Wear eye protection.
- Follow safety warnings or precautions, such as wearing gloves or tying back long hair.
- Use all materials carefully, following the directions given.
- Be sure to clean up and dispose of materials properly when you are finished with an activity.
- Wash your hands well after every activity.

Never eat or drink while conducting an experiment, and be careful to keep all of the materials used away from your mouth, nose, and eyes!

Never experiment on your own!

For more detailed information on safety go to www.acs.org/education and click on "Safety Guidelines".

