People genetically sensitive to bitter taste may ingest twice as much salty foods

An unhealthy taste for salty foods is the fault of nature rather than nurture, new research suggests.

People with with a genetic makeup that makes their taste buds especially sensitive to bitter flavours are nearly twice as likely to consume excessive amounts of salt….

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Previous research revealed that people carrying a common variant of the gene TAS2R38 tended to avoid healthy foods such as broccoli and dark leafy greens, because they tasted the bitterness particularly keenly.

The new research, presented at a meeting of the American Heart Association, found that the same group of people were 1.9 times more likely to consume higher than the recommended levels of sodium than those without the genetic profile.

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Lead researcher Jennifer Smith, a PhD student at the University of Kentucky college of Nursing, said: "Genetic factors that influence taste aren't necessarily obvious to people, but they can impact heart health by influencing the foods they select.

"There is some research suggesting that individuals who taste bitter more intensely may also taste salt more intensely and enjoy it more, leading to increased sodium intake.

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