

Tasting sweets is an evolutionary skill — and kids are better at it

The ability to taste the intense sweetness of summer fruit is actually a skill, and according to a new study, kids are just better at it than adults.

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In the new [report](#), researchers from Monell [Chemical Senses Center in Philadelphia] and the University of Florida offered two harvests of blueberries to 49 children and their mothers. They tested three different varieties of blueberries. When asked to pick their favorites, adults and children chose the sweetest berries picked during the first harvest fairly equally, but in the second harvest, the children — aged 6 to 16 — picked the sweeter fruit, while the adults like each variety equally.

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[Monell's Julie] Mennella says that science can help parents channel the sweet preference to a food humans evolved to like — healthy fruits. Young children are more tolerant of both sweetness and saltiness. Somewhere in mid-adolescence, those windows narrow.

"It's a really smart biologic response," said Mennella. "Sweet taste is a signal for calories, and salt is a signal for minerals."

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"Children aren't the same, and an appreciation of those differences can help them get on a healthy track. Parents can cater their preferences to the foods they should be eating," [Mennella] says.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: [Why Kids and Adults Taste Blueberries — and Sweets — Differently](#)