

When Taste & Smell Fade ...

You are born with 10,000 taste buds, but after you turn 50, the number starts to decline. The ability to smell also declines after age 60. Loss of smell is more common than loss of taste. While



the most common cause is aging, smell and taste disorders can be caused by viral infections, swollen sinuses, and allergies. Medications and smoking can also affect taste. Changing medication dosages and/or stopping smoking can restore some taste ability. Head trauma, Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease may also cause changes in the ability to taste and smell. Another reason your taste may decline with age, is that your mouth produces less saliva. When your mouth is dry, it is harder to taste and

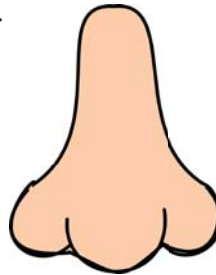
swallow. Loss of the ability to taste and smell can lead to decreased appetite, weight loss, poor nutrition and depression.

There are five basic taste sensations: sweet, salty, sour, bitter and umami (savory, meaty). The ability to taste sweet and salty are often the first to go. You may find yourself compensating by adding more sugar or salt to your food to improve its flavor. However, this can be harmful to your health if you have high blood pressure or diabetes.

If you think you are losing your ability to taste and/or smell, see your doctor to rule out any medical causes.

If the loss is due to normal aging, you can:

- (1) Make sure hot foods are hot/cold foods are cold, since proper temperatures can improve flavors
- (2) Use more herbs and spices, as well as lemon juice and vinegar to increase flavor without salt
- (3) Try new foods or present foods in colorful dishes
- (4) Make meals social events by eating with friends or family
- (5) Savor your favorite meal by picking the time of day you are hungriest and making the most of that time.



Café 60 Dining in Lane County Call for Information

www.laneseniormeals.org

LANE COUNTY

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Wed. Only (541) 682-4378

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Creswell, Cresview Villa

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Eugene, Olive Plaza

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River Road Park Annex Building

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