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Researchers explore veggie content in baby food

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By **Manbeena Chawla** | April 14, 2020



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A recent survey of commercial baby food products in the United States conducted by some researchers on the team revealed a lack of variety in the types of vegetables offered.

Most notably, there were no commercially available single, dark green vegetable products. Instead, dark green vegetables often were mixed with fruits or red/orange vegetables — such as squash — that provide additional sweetness.

For the liking of vegetables to be learned, the flavors from the vegetables must be perceptible within the mixture, explained Alyssa Bakke, staff sensory scientist in Penn State's Department of Food Science, who spearheaded the research.

She pointed out that the study was an effort to understand the sensory profiles of vegetable-containing, stage 2 infant products commercially available in the United States, and how ingredient composition affects flavor profiles.

There are understandable reasons why vegetables are not preferred. They tend to be more bitter than other foods, and they tend to have less intense, more subtle flavors than most other foods. Sensory attributes that, unfortunately, are innate drivers of liking, are salt and fat.

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