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More spice could help elders avoid salt: Study

Add a little spicy seasoning to a low sodium meal, and adults over the age of 60 may have a harder time noticing a lack of salt, according to a new study in the journal Food Quality and Preference.

By **Manbeena Chawla** | February 7, 2022



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39 healthy people over the age of 60 were recruited in the study

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Led by researchers of Food Sciences at Washington State University, US, the study tested saltiness perception in older adults using white sauce formulations with varying amounts of salt and different spices and seasonings added.

The results of the analysis showed the addition of chipotle seasoning to the white sauce made it difficult for the study participants to differentiate between the samples with low and high levels of salt.

Conversely, the addition of herbs, such as basil leaves, garlic powder and coarse ground pepper, was not as effective at masking the samples with less salt. The research points to the significant role that spice could play in reducing salt intake for people over 60.

In addition to administering the taste test, the researchers surveyed their participants about their oral and olfactory health, the number and type of medications they were taking and any other pre-existing conditions that might affect their saltiness perception.

"To date, a clear relationship between taste loss, and thus higher taste thresholds, and eating behaviour remains to be established. So, we are investigating a bunch of different possible factors", said the researchers.

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