

FONA's sensory team works with consumers of all ages to test new products our customers are working on. They conduct product tastings, surveys and focus groups to get accurate data to help them make the best tasting products.

What is sensory?

“Scientific discipline used to evoke, measure, analyze and interpret reactions to those characteristics of foods and materials as they are perceived by the senses of sight, smell, taste, touch, and hearing.”

1975 IFT Definition

Sensory Evaluation

Examination of a product perceived by the sense organs: sight, smell, taste, touch and sound. Usually, we respond to food based on how much we personally like it or not. With Sensory Evaluation people are taught to use their senses to describe a product.

Sight Facts & Trivia

Color and appearance are often the first attributes used to determine the quality of a food.

- One-quarter of the brain is used to control the eyes.
- The eye muscle is the fastest muscle in our body. It enables us to blink 5 times a second.
- Women blink approximately twice as much as men.
- Our eyes remain the same size from birth.

Aroma Facts & Trivia

The sense of smell is very complex! Aroma and flavor are senses stimulated through sniffing or swallowing. Remember: 80% of what we taste is actually perceived in our nose (called: retro-nasal route).

- There are 5 million olfactory receptor cells in a human and 220 million in a dog – that's size of a postage stamp!
- Although the human sense of smell is weaker than most animals, we can recognize 10,000 different scents.
- Women perform better at smelling than men at all ages.
- Smell is our oldest nonverbal channel of communication.
- Usually when you lose one sense, the others are heightened, but Stevie Wonder is anosmic, which means he can't see or smell.

Taste & Flavor Facts & Trivia

Flavor perception is a combination of taste and aroma, plus mouth-feel and texture sensations. We are able to taste food through taste buds located on our tongue. Humans can distinguish among five to six basic taste qualities — sweet, sour, salty, bitter, umami (which means deliciousness in Japanese), and fatty.

- Every person has a unique tongue print.
- A person produces 1 liter of saliva a day.
- Taste buds are renewed every 6 – 8 days.
- Natural loss of taste buds starts at 45 years.
- An onion and apple taste the same. Their different flavors are due to their different smells.

Key Variable in Sensory Evaluations

When performing sensory tests, be sure to standardize everything except the variable under evaluation to get accurate data:

- Visual appearance
- Sample size
- Serving temperature
- Serving containers
- Product carrier
- Number of samples per session