

## WHEN COVID-19 REMINDS US ALL HOW ESSENTIAL THE TASTE AND AROMA OF FOOD ARE

At the start of 2021, Gilles Feron was appointed Deputy Director of the Centre for Taste and Feeding Behavior (CSGA). For several years, his research has concentrated on the oral processes involved in food consumption. As Chairman of the Editorial Board of the *Cahiers de Nutrition et de Diététique* journal, he recently wrote an editorial on COVID 19 and chemosensory disorders:

"I've lost my sense of taste and smell!" Many of us have heard these words recently or perhaps even said them ourselves. A systematic review of the literature<sup>1</sup> recently showed that 47% of symptomatic patients with COVID-19 also had a chemosensory dysfunction. This prevalence varies according to ethnicity, ranging from 18% in Asians to 55% in Caucasian patients.

These disorders appear very quickly in the event of SARS-CoV-2 infection. The mechanisms involved have yet to be fully elucidated but recent results suggest that the chemosensory disturbances induced by COVID-19 may be linked to mechanisms which are distinct from those demonstrated for other coronaviruses<sup>2</sup>. COVID-19 seems to affect both olfactory and gustatory functions unlike common colds which mainly affect the sense of smell<sup>3</sup>.

In most cases, these disorders are temporary with a recovery time varying from a few days to just over 4 weeks<sup>4</sup>. However, about a quarter of the patients in a young population group (less than 40 years old) were found to have these disorders for longer than 30 days<sup>5</sup>.

A friend who caught COVID-19 in the first wave told me that the unprecedented loss of taste and smell was what bothered him most - much more than the symptoms of fever and coughing: "Everything tasted like it was burnt or cardboard!" COVID-19 and its associated chemosensory disorders are a reminder of how essential taste and aroma are to our enjoyment of food and our social interactions in sharing a good meal with others...

### Contact

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### For more information

Feron G (2021). La Covid 19 nous rappelle à quel point le goût et l'arôme des aliments sont essentiels au quotidien ! *Cahiers de Nutrition et de Diététique*, 56, 1-2.

### Keywords

COVID-19; olfaction; gustation



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<sup>1</sup> Von Bartheld, 2020, ACS Chem. Neurosci. <sup>2</sup> Risso, 2020, Nutrients <sup>3</sup> Huart, 2020, Rhinology. <sup>4</sup> Sayin, 2020, ACS Chem. Neurosci. <sup>5</sup> Fjaeldstad, 2020, Dan. Médias. J.