

DRINK HOT BEVERAGES COULD REDUCE OUR ABILITY TO PERCEIVE THE TASTES

Some food items are served and consumed very hot, notably beverages like tea or coffee. When oral cavity tissues (the tongue for example) come into contact with these beverages, their cells can be damaged due to elevation of the temperature. However, the consequences of regular exposure to high temperatures on taste buds and the ability to perceive tastes remain poorly understood.

Our study was a first approach to assess the impact on taste sensitivity of regular consumption of very hot beverages. We asked 82 regular consumers of hot drinks to fill in a questionnaire about their drinking habits and to complete a test in order to assess their sensitivity to the five tastes. Then, we compared the sensitivity of consumers who like to drink their favourite beverage “very hot” (n=36) vs. “mildly hot” (n=46). Participants’ age and gender were taken into account in every analysis as these factors are known to influence taste sensitivity.

Our results showed that regular consumers of “very hot” drinks are less sensitive to sweet, salty and sour tastes. The results also confirmed that the sensitivity of tastes is reduced when we get older (from 50 years old) and showed that women are more sensitive to certain tastes (sour, bitter and umami).

These first results prove that consumption habits can have significant consequences on our sensory system, and thus on our food perception.

Contact

Christophe MARTIN, christophe.martin@inrae.fr

To know more

Martin C, Neyraud E (2021). Impact of very hot drink consumption habits, age, and sex, on taste sensitivity. *Foods*, 10, 1139.

Keywords

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