



I am Experiencing a Sudden Loss of Smell and Taste - FAQ

Taste and flavor

Taste is the sensation felt on the tongue while eating. It could be sweet, bitter, salty, sour, or umami. The flavor is a combination of taste and aroma (smell). These are interrelated, allowing us to experience good food and memorize it in our brains. Our tongue is coated with taste receptors that carry information from the tongue to our brain via nerves.

Loss of taste and Smell

The reduced sensation of taste can be either partial or total. Hypogeusia and hyposmia refer to a reduced sense of taste and smell respectively, and ageusia and anosmia refer to a complete loss of taste and smell.

The major causes are:

- Common cold
- Viral infections like COVID -19
- Sinusitis / Nasal allergies/ nasal polyps
- Aging

- Head injury
- Tumors in the nose (olfactory neuroblastoma)
- Brain tumors, temporal lobe seizures

A loss of smell receptors due to aging causes a decreased ability to smell in older people. People typically notice changes in smell by age 60. After age 70, changes are substantial.



What is Parosmia?

Parosmia refers to an altered sense of smell / or they feel a wrong smell/ bad smell. These people will have trouble detecting certain scents in their environment, smell a foul odor, particularly when food is present, or find previously pleasant scents overpowering and undesirable.

What is the treatment for smell and taste-related disorders?

Tests used to diagnose taste and smell-related disorders:

- Threshold tests use solutions of various strengths to test how strong a sweet,

sour, bitter, or salty flavor must be for an individual to be able to recognize it.

● Odor tests present the patient with a set of smells that they are asked to identify. Diagnosis is dependent on successfully (or unsuccessfully) identifying the smells.

● ENT doctors may perform an Endoscopy of the nose to rule out obstructive causes for hyposmia

● CT/MRI may be advised to rule out any polyps, sinusitis, or tumors.

Treatment options are

□ Changing medicines that help lead to the disorder

□ Correcting the underlying health problem

□ Surgery to remove blockages that may be causing the disorder

□ Quit smoking

□ Counseling helps.

□ Olfactory (smell) training therapy

- Dr. Prashanth R Reddy

“E.N.T health - ENTry for better senses”.

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