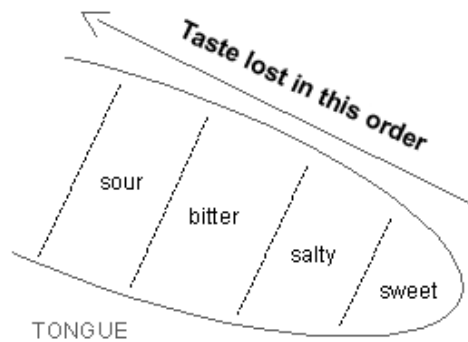


Changes in Taste: A Fact Sheet on Aging

Taste Changes:

- Taste buds decline with age – flavor identification
- Taste buds decline to 1/6 of 20 year old by late 70's
- Gum disease – poor teeth; periodontal disease reduce appetite



Taste difficulties may produce these behaviors:

- **Loss/increased** appetite – stop because no taste; increase to achieve **some taste**; weight gain/loss
- Statements about food – complaints about bitter or sour flavors
- Questions – mistaken identity of foods
- Tongue coating
- Excessive seasoning – increase sugar and salt

Actions you may take:

- Attractive food presentation increases person's willingness to eat
- Separate food rather than mixing food on plate
- Vary texture
- Good dental care
- Taste parties – to teach using vision and smell to identify foods; to increase social enjoyment associated with food