



Healthy Living MyTaste

OBJECTIVE

Youth will become more aware of their taste personality and discover how to use their knowledge to eat healthier.

TIME

30 minutes

MATERIALS

Chairs (one per person)

PARTICIPANTS

6 minimum

BACKGROUND

4-H has a long history of promoting healthy living among youth and their families. Making healthy food choices is an important part of physical health. Each individual has unique food preferences which create each person's "taste personality." Being aware of these food preferences is important to understanding our food attitudes, habits, and aspirations.

One research study found that people who prefer fruits have certain taste personality traits—they tend to avoid new recipes, spend little time cooking, and often eat dessert with dinner. On the other hand, people who prefer vegetables have different traits—they are likely to try new recipes, enjoy spicy foods, and cook with health in mind. In this activity, youth will become more aware of their taste personality and discover how to use their knowledge to eat healthier.

GETTING READY

Arrange chairs in a circle, facing the middle. You will need one less chair than the total number of participants.

EXPERIENCING THE ACTIVITY

Step 1

Ask the group to think of a personality trait they either personally possess or admire in another person. Share.

Step 2

Explain that just like our personalities, we each have a "taste personality" that reflects foods we like and things we don't like. Like our own personalities, taste personalities are quite complex and include many different traits. Today we are going to participate in an activity to discover our taste personalities.

Step 3

Explain the following directions for "MyTaste."

1. Instruct the participants to find a seat in the circle of chairs. The group leader will stand in the middle of the circle. Every chair should be filled.
2. To begin the activity, the group leader will stand in the middle of the circle and say a statement that describes one trait of their taste personality. Immediately after the statement is announced, everyone in the circle who agrees with the statement ("That's true for me too!") must move to a different seat.

HELPFUL HINT

If the activity evolves to youth stating foods they like instead of the traits they like, help participants get back on track by asking them “what is it about _____ that makes you like it?”

Here are some examples of statements:

- I like crunchy foods.
- I prefer salty snacks to sweet snacks.
- I like having a sweet breakfast.
- I like sour foods, like lemons and plain yogurt.
- I like eating chocolate after meals.
- I like spicy foods.
- Trying new foods is exciting.
- I like eating ketchup on everything.
- I like bitter foods, like coffee and olives.

3. The person left standing who does not find a vacant seat, will be in the center of the circle for the next round.
4. Repeat the above steps so that everyone participating in the activity has the opportunity to tell the group a trait that describes their food personality.

Step 4

Play the game, adjusting the duration of play based on your group's time restrictions.

SHARE

What happened in this activity?

What was challenging about this activity? What was easy?

Do you have a similar food personality to any other participants?

PROCESS

What did you learn about your food personality?

Do you think your food personality will change over time? Why or why not?

Note: Food preferences do change over time, and it is important to continue to try foods to determine if you still like or dislike them. Taste buds die as you get older, and foods that once seemed bitter become delicious—like coffee and dark chocolate.

How does your food personality effect your eating habits?

What are the benefits of knowing your food personality?

GENERALIZE AND APPLY

What qualities do you typically consider when choosing food to eat?

How can you use what you know about your taste personality to help you make healthier food choices?

DEVELOPED BY

Kay Coelho, 4-H Student Assistant, and Mandi Bottoms, 4-H Healthy Living Coordinator, in partnership with the 4-H Healthy Living Leadership Team.