

# Sweet-tooth tendencies change as kids get older, study finds

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(HealthDay)—Young people seldom say a food or drink is "too sweet." A new study suggests that may be because they're less sensitive to sugar than adults and prefer more of it.

Researchers found that compared to [adults](#), kids and teens needed 40% more [sugar](#) in a solution to detect [sweetness](#).

The researchers also found that [young people](#) have a bigger "sweet tooth" than adults, or prefer more intense sweetness, a finding that echoes previous studies.

The study included almost 500 children, teens and adults. The researchers gave participants sugar-water concoctions with different levels of sugar. They measured how much sugar the participants preferred and the lowest concentration required for them to taste it.

"Both of these dimensions of sweet-taste perception—sensitivity and preference—undergo

distinct developmental trajectories from childhood to adulthood," said study co-author M. Yanina Pepino, an assistant professor of nutrition at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

"However, they did so independently, and we found no association between the two," she said in a university news release.

Adults could taste a single cube of sugar dissolved in 56 ounces of water, while younger participants could only taste it in a less-concentrated solution—40 ounces.

The study also found that children and teens preferred a 50% higher sugar concentration. Researchers explained that the adults' preferred sweetness level was equivalent to eight sugar cubes in an 8-ounce glass of water—comparable to a cola drink—while kids preferred 12 cubes in the same amount of water.

The results were published recently in the journal *Nutrients*.

**More information:** There's more about sugar consumption at the [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).

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