

PublisherInfo		
PublisherName	:	BioMed Central
PublisherLocation	:	London
PublisherImprintName	:	BioMed Central

Good taste

ArticleInfo		
ArticleID	:	4413
ArticleDOI	:	10.1186/gb-spotlight-20020301-02
ArticleCitationID	:	spotlight-20020301-02
ArticleSequenceNumber	:	79
ArticleCategory	:	Research news
ArticleFirstPage	:	1
ArticleLastPage	:	2
ArticleHistory	:	RegistrationDate : 2002-3-1 OnlineDate : 2002-3-1
ArticleCopyright	:	BioMed Central Ltd2002
ArticleGrants	:	
ArticleContext	:	130593311

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The ability to [taste](#) gives animals a means to assess the identity and quality of potential food substances. In an Advanced Online Publication from [Nature](#), Greg Nelson and researchers at the [University of California at San Diego](#) describe characterization of the mammalian amino-acid taste receptor (DOI 10.1038/nature726). They employed an expression screening strategy, expressing putative G-protein-coupled receptors in human cells and assaying for stimulus-induced changes in intracellular calcium. A combination of mouse T1R1 and T1R3 taste receptors generated an effective heteromeric receptor for the 20 standard L-amino acids, but not D-amino acids. Amino acids can represent both sweet and unami ('delicious') tastes. Nelson *et al.* also demonstrate that [species-specific sequence](#) differences in T1R taste receptors affect taste perception.

References

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