

## The One with the Green Spot Sorbet

**Alice** Eugeni, thank you so much for chatting to me.

**Eugeni** Thank you Alice. It's a pleasure. Thanks for calling.

**Alice** Now my kids are loving learning about taste buds, and I thought I'd come to you, as a taste expert, to talk a little bit more about the science of what it means to taste stuff.

**Eugeni** It's about science, and it's about nutrition, understanding what taste means, and what taste means is actually the nutritional quality of our food. That's what taste is all about. So when we talk about taste, we talk about the five, maybe six, if you consider fatty acids, different taste types.

**Alice** So sweet, salty, sour, bitter, umami, and fat now, right?

**Eugeni** Nowadays it's well accepted that we can taste fatty acid

**Alice** That's fat with a Ph, Eugeni! And so it's a bit of a bonus, then, that it also tastes good to us.

**Eugeni** Not everything tastes good to us, right? We learn to like bitter. Bitterness is supposed to be identifying potentially toxic compounds, right? So there's innate taste that we like, sweetness. Innately we're born with it, but in general, bitterness is about caution, it is about rejecting the food, that is the initial feeling about bitterness that's across all kids, right? But then we like bitterness only after we learn that it's a good potential food.

**Alice** Your taste buds are like a muscle, and the more you flex the muscle, the more that you challenge it, the bigger it gets. Is that a good way to describe it?

**Eugeni** So there's some aspects that we can train or modulate through environmental and external factors, but then there's a part of it that we will not be able to train well, which is the genetics of it, and that brings me to, for example, the very popular topic on taste, which is the super taster. There's one particular gene that will allow us to sense these compounds that we call thioureas, and I think what's important about these compounds is that they are present in some fruits and some vegetables. Nowadays we believe that roughly 40 to 50% of the population will be able to taste these thiourea compounds as really bitter. So if you're a super taster, chances are that some of these vegetables you'll find them really bitter.

**Alice** But that's not to say that if you're a super taster you're always going to dislike bitter, or if you're a non-taster, you're always going to be okay with bitter. What's the research around that?

**Eugeni** When we talk about taste in general, we probably think about what 30, 40 genes involving taste perception. So each one of us, we have a slightly different profile of taste. There's

not two of us which are actually the same. So because of all the different combinations of all these different genes, makes us all perceive taste a little bit different.

**Alice** Eugeni, I could talk to you all day, but I've gotta get to class. I'm so grateful for your time.

**Eugeni** I'm really happy to anytime.

**Alice** Gracias and adios.

**Maddy** Mmm, I love the beetroot from Lily's story, and I love the chocolate from Lucy's story. Wait, and I love ice cream. So if we mix them together, could we make an ice cream?

**Alice** Heck, yes you could.

**Group** Ice cream!

**Maddy** Blood and bone.

**Jonathan** Jack o'lantern.

**Joseph** Slimy snot.

**Maddy** What flavour would you like? We have blood and bone, jack o'lantern, and slimy snot.

**Child** Jack o'lantern.

**Maddy** One jack o'lantern. Here you go.

**Child** Can I please also get a snotty slime?

**Maddy** Sure thing. Thank you.

**Child** Um, can I please have the purple one?

**Maddy** Blood and bone. Oh, okay, definitely. Thank you.

**Child** What flavours are there?

**Joseph** Guys, did you like the ice cream?

**Child** It's delicious.

**Children** Yes. It's absolutely delicious.

**Joseph** Really? Did it taste different to normal ice creams that you have?

**Child** Yeah. Yeah, a bit.

**Joseph** Well was it a better?

**Child** Yes, it's a much better. You don't really know, is it some sort of chocolate and raspberry?

**Joseph** And so a mix? It tastes slightly different.

**Jonathan** A better different or a worse different?

**Child** A better different.

**Jonathan** Do you know what's in it?

**Child** No.

**Joseph** Do you have any idea?

**Child** No. Um, was it green snot, or something? Snot?

**Joseph** This was the slimy snot.

**Children** Yes, slimy snot. Yeah, slimy snot. I have no clue what's in mine. Pumpkins? Chocolate?

**Joseph** Do you wanna know?

**Child** Uh, I don't think so.

**Joseph** Surprise, surprise, it's beetroot. Do you like beetroot?

**Child** I love beetroot.

**Joseph** Can I just ask you a question, do you like beetroot? Because that had beetroot in it.

**Child** Really?

**Joseph** Yeah, do you like it?

**Child** It's okay, but not usually, but this is actually really good.

**Joseph** You guessed right, pumpkin. The yellow one. The yellow one.  
Do you like cucumber?

**Child** Yeah.

**Joseph** Well you just tasted an ice cream cucumber. It's actually cucumber inside. Do you like cucumber?

**Child** No

**Joseph** Cucumber and ice cream. What a good combination. You liked it. Well you got two things you love, put together to make a better sort of ice cream, and a better sort of beetroot.

**Jonathan** Happy Halloween, and I'll see you guys later. See ya.

**Joseph** See ya.