

## Electric spoon helps people cut down on salt

13th June 2024



Creative Commons 2.0  
via Sue Thompson on Flickr.com

A battery-powered spoon that makes food taste saltier is now in stores in Japan. It is called the Electric Salt Spoon. It was created by researchers from Tokyo's Meiji University and the Japanese drinks company Kirin. The researchers hope their

spoon will help people cut down on the amount of salt they eat. The spoon sends a weak electric current to the tongue. The current is too weak to be felt. However, it makes salt taste up to one and a half times stronger. This means we can eat food with less salt, but still sense a salty taste. Researcher Ai Sato said: "Japan has a food culture that tends to favour salty tastes. People need to reduce the amount of salt in their food." However, she added that food with no salt is bland and tasteless.

Salt is important for our health. However, too much of it can cause cardiovascular diseases, like high blood pressure, strokes, and heart problems. These are the leading causes of death globally. The World Health Organization recommends a daily salt intake of less than 5 grams. In Japan, the average person has around 10.1g of salt a day. That's higher than the average of 8.5g for Americans. In many countries, around 75 per cent of salt in the diet comes from processed foods, and from things like soy sauce. The Electric Salt Spoon costs 19,800 yen (around \$99). Kirin hopes to sell a million of them over the next five years. The spoon's developer has also created electric chopsticks. These will go on sale next year.

Sources: sky.com / voanews.com / who.int

### Writing

We need more education about salt and health. Discuss.

### Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

battery / salty / drinks / spoon / electric current / tongue / food culture / tasteless / health / cardiovascular diseases / blood pressure / processed food / chopsticks / sale

### True / False

- 1) A battery in a new spoon is full of never-ending salt. T / F
- 2) The new electric spoon was jointly created by a drinks company. T / F
- 3) The spoon sends an electric current to a person's tongue. T / F
- 4) A researcher said food with just a little salt is bland and tasteless. T / F
- 5) The article says salt can lead to people having strokes. T / F
- 6) On average, people in Japan consume less than 5 grams of salt a day. T / F
- 7) The article says that processed foods are 75% salt. T / F
- 8) The man who helped make the spoon has also made electric chopsticks. T / F

### Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- |                       |              |
|-----------------------|--------------|
| 1. <b>created</b>     | a. prefer    |
| 2. <b>cut down on</b> | b. top       |
| 3. <b>weak</b>        | c. tasteless |
| 4. <b>favour</b>      | d. such as   |
| 5. <b>bland</b>       | e. suggests  |
| 6. <b>cause</b>       | f. reduce    |
| 7. <b>leading</b>     | g. worldwide |
| 8. <b>globally</b>    | h. made      |
| 9. <b>like</b>        | i. faint     |
| 10. <b>recommends</b> | j. lead to   |

### Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think about what you read?
- b) What would eating be like if food had no salt?
- c) Would you like an Electric Salt Spoon?
- d) What other things do we need salt for?
- e) Do you worry about cardiovascular diseases?
- f) What do you think of processed foods?
- g) What do you think of an electric sugar spoon?
- h) What questions would you like to ask the spoon's designer?

## Phrase Match

- |  |                             |
|--|-----------------------------|
| 1. A battery-powered spoon that makes      | a. diseases                 |
| 2. help people cut down on the amount      | b. less than 5 grams        |
| 3. it makes salt taste up to one and       | c. is bland                 |
| 4. a food culture that tends to favour     | d. of salt they eat         |
| 5. food with no salt                       | e. over the next five years |
| 6. too much of it can cause cardiovascular | f. food taste saltier       |
| 7. high blood                              | g. foods                    |
| 8. a daily salt intake of                  | h. salty tastes             |
| 9. processed                               | i. pressure                 |
| 10. sell a million of them                 | j. a half times stronger    |

## Discussion – Student B

- What do you think of salt?
- How important is salt in food?
- What do you think of the Electric Salt Spoon?
- Do you need to cut down on salt?
- What do you think of your country's food culture?
- Is a spoon or a fork better?
- Which taste do you prefer - salty, sweet, sour or spicy?
- What are your favourite salty foods?

## Spelling

- A atybetr-powered spoon
- recasrhese from Tokyo's Meiji University
- cut down on the monatu of salt
- a weak electric current to the tnegou
- a food culture that tends to favour alyst tastes
- food with no salt is nbadl
- cardiovascular siaesds
- high blood ruseps
- smdmcereon a daily salt intake
- the geavaer of 8.5g for Americans
- seorpdces foods
- The spoon's rvdleepoe

### Answers – Synonym Match

1. h	2. f	3. i	4. a	5. c
6. j	7. b	8. g	9. d	10. e

## Role Play

### Role A – Salty

You think a salty taste is best. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their tastes. Also, tell the others which is the least tasty of these (and why): sugary, nutty or chocolatey.

### Role B – Sugary

You think a sugary taste is best. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their tastes. Also, tell the others which is the least tasty of these (and why): salty, nutty or chocolatey.

### Role C – Nutty

You think a nutty taste is best. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their tastes. Also, tell the others which is the least tasty of these (and why): sugary, salty or chocolatey.

### Role D – Chocolatey

You think a chocolatey taste is best. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their tastes. Also, tell the others which is the least tasty of these (and why): sugary, nutty or salty.

## Speaking – Tastes

Rank these with your partner. Put the best tastes at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- |              |          |
|--------------|----------|
| • Salty      | • Spicy  |
| • Fishy      | • Meaty  |
| • Lemony     | • Nutty  |
| • Chocolatey | • Sugary |

### Answers – True False

1	F	2	T	3	T	4	F	5	T	6	F	7	F	8	T
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.