

# GUSTATORY

The gustatory system is the sensory system responsible for the perception and experience of taste.

Taste buds located in the mouth and on the tongue send messages to the brain to process the flavours of what is being eaten.

The gustatory system distinguishes between flavours that are sweet, sour, bitter, salty, and spicy.

This system is closely linked to the olfactory sensory system (smell) and the tactile sensory system (touch/texture).

## Signs of under responsive gustatory system:

Prefers to eat strong flavoured foods.

Young children may eat non-food items (pica).

Oral sensory seeking (linked to proprioception).

May be more alert after eating strong flavours.

## Signs of over responsive gustatory system:

Limits range of foods eaten - may stick to one particular food group.

Reluctant to try new foods (taste or texture).

Children may fail to thrive/gain weight/grow.

## Activities that support gustatory development:

- Include a range of flavours and textures in everyday diet.
- Desensitize program (OT) for oversensitivity to foods

### Oral seeking:

- Chew gum
- Chew tools (chewelery)
- Drink thick liquid through straw
- Blow bubbles