

Cute way to make bland food nice

In two years, you might be able to use a special spoon that can make a bland scoop of porridge taste sweet, sour or even bitter.

The base of the spoon would have two electrode strips, which when in contact with your tongue, send electric pulses to stimulate your taste buds to mimic the different tastes.

At the same time, a light-emitting diode (LED) will flash a colour associated with the desired taste. This would be red for bitterness, blue for saltiness and green for sourness.

The same concept has been applied to chopsticks, a soup bowl and a beverage bottle.

Dr Nimesha Ranasinghe, the lead researcher behind the technology, said the inventions could benefit people on restricted diets due to medical conditions. “The palatability of the bland food can be increased if the eating and drinking utensils themselves can deliver or enhance taste sensations,” he said.

Dr Ranasinghe and his team from the National University of Singapore’s Keio-NUS Cute (Connective Ubiquitous Technology for Embodiment) Centre believe their technology can also be used to enhance digital interactions as well as virtual and augmented reality technologies. The team is in talks with an industry partner to manufacture some of these utensils to start field trials and hopes to get the products commercialised in two years.