



Ugh! None for me, thanks!

STOP SAYING YUCK!

We all have foods we can't stomach.

To help ourselves get over them, we asked molecular biologist Adam Ruben and nutritional scientist Eric Nowicki for a one-way ticket out of Gagsville.

REASON About one in four people actually tastes vegetables like brussels sprouts and broccoli as extremely bitter (it's a survival instinct to protect you from eating poisonous plants).

Taste buds detect sweet, salty, bitter, sour and umami (a Japanese word for savory). Try masking bitterness by playing up some of the other tastes. Don't overcook veggies—that enhances their sharpness. And instead of steaming or boiling, lightly sauté them in oil with salt and a dash of sugar.

REASON Childhood associations influenced you. Maybe your parents disliked the food, or you had a bad experience (you ate corn on the cob with a loose tooth and it hurt).

Wait until you're really hungry before trying foods after a long hiatus. When you're that famished, your body will start to associate those flavors with a positive benefit: relieving your hunger. Smells change as we age, too, so maybe the food you've always hated won't seem as offensive as it did when you were a kid. To ease into it, try plugging your nose for the first few bites.

REASON It's a texture thing. There's no scientific research that says why, but something about a rubbery glob of mayo or slimy slice of ham just makes you shiver.

Play with your food. If texture is your one problem, try cooking the food to change its consistency. You may hate woody mushrooms or fleshy tomatoes, but spicy tomato salsa or a creamy mushroom soup might appeal to you. When foods aren't a surprise (like, say, finding a chunk of tomato in your salad), you may not react as strongly, either. —JENNIFER CHEN

no matter the reason... This trick works: **Try the same food eight to 10 times.** Incorporate it into several dishes throughout the week, in as many forms as possible—blended into soup, sliced onto a sandwich, chopped in salad.

Q:

How can I make lunch without the same old baloney?



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