

## No 24 Electric spoon helps people cut down on salt

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. They hope their spoon will help people to 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.

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