The nose detects volatile aromas released from food. An odour may be described by association with a particular food, e.g., herby, cheesy, fishy. The intensity can also be recorded.

A product’s size, shape, colour and surface texture can be described, e.g., large, small, oblong, square, yellow, pink, rough.

Odour and taste work together to produce a flavour. These words may be used to describe either odour or taste of food products.

SENSORY VOCABULARY

Sensory evaluation involves using one or more tests to determine different characteristics of food such as appearance, odour, taste, and texture. A wide range of vocabulary is used to describe sensory characteristics of food products.

Odour:
- aromatic
- floral
- rotten
- perfumed
- acrid
- musty
- fragrant
- scented
- pungent

Taste:
- sweet
- cool
- bitter
- zesty
- warm
- hot
- tangy
- sour
- sharp
- rich
- salty

Texture:
- brittle
- rubbery
- short
- gritty
- clammy
- close
- stodgy
- bubbly
- sandy
- tacky
- tender
- waxy
- open
- soft

Appearance:
- firm
- flaky
- crispy
- fluffy
- dry
- crumbly
- lumpy
- smooth
- hard
- mushy
- sticky

These words may be used to describe either appearance or texture of food products.

The tongue can detect four basic tastes: sweet, sour, salt, and bitter. Tastes may be described by association with a particular food, e.g., meaty, minty or fruity. The intensity can also be recorded.

Texture may be assessed through touch. When food is placed in the mouth, the surface of the tongue and other sensitive skin reacts to the feel of the surface of the food. Different sensations are felt as the food is chewed.