

# The Monell Connection

Newsletter of the Monell Center

Nearly 5000 individuals have taken the [first U.S. survey of patients](#), caregivers, and families affected by smell or taste dysfunctions! Thanks to your support and participation, the survey (open till **April 20**) will allow Monell scientists, along with partners at Jefferson Health and the Smell and Taste Association of North America, to place the experience of patients at the center of scientific research.

Read on as we share how our scientists continue to advance taste and smell science on many other fronts. In this edition of the Monell Connection, you will learn:

- how your own set of smell receptors may differ from others,
- how humans' ability to taste sour foods has evolved and persisted,
- and why taste assessment should become standard clinical practice!

Happy reading,



Robert Margolskee, MD, PhD  
Director & President



## The Complicated World of Smell

In Dr. Joel Mainland's lab, [a recent study](#) examined the variations of smell receptors among 1,000 people from the Chinese Han population. The results were simultaneously fascinating and puzzling, sparking massive news coverage from all over the world.

Want to be part of a research study? Check out these ways to [get involved](#).

## Finding a Sweet Spot in Flavor, Food Research

Dr. May Cheung asks: "Diet, exercise, and genetics are all tied to your overall health, but what about your food preferences?" This question is now driving her [endeavors to develop simple, effective measures](#) of how much we like the taste of sugar.



## Sour: The Approach-Avoid Taste

Animals, including humans, that enjoy sour taste are not the rule, but the exception. Dr. Paul Breslin shares how he and an interdisciplinary research team [charted the evolutionary history](#) of our ability to taste sour foods.

Did you notice the McDonald's Sprite memes on Twitter? Here is a story about [why Sprite might taste better at McDonald's](#), featuring Monell scientist Dr. Paul Wise.

## The True Prevalence of COVID-19 Taste Loss

About 4 in every 10 COVID-19 patients experience some form of taste loss. [We interviewed the research team](#) behind this data to shed a light on the gap between how such symptoms are being treated and how critical they are for public health.





## Anosmia Awareness Day

On February 27, the Smell and Taste Association of North America (STANA) took the lead on educating the world about the life experiences of anosmics. [In a social media campaign](#), they asked followers to share their stories of living with a taste and/or smell disorder. STANA, Monell, and allies worked together to spread awareness and encourage research. At Monell, we interviewed Dr. Hong Wang to share with you how her work as [an immunologist studying smell loss](#) is helping advance research that promotes health and well-being.

## In Celebration of Fragrance

The Fragrance Foundation gave Monell a starring role in the celebration of Fragrance Day 2022. Dr. Pamela Dalton discussed [the current state of smell research](#) with President Linda Levy. In addition, Senior Director Sharné Jackson and Foundation Member Chris Collins interviewed two [Monell Science Apprenticeship Program students](#) about their research projects. Throughout the day-long presentations, speakers centered the Foundation's commitment to the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion. If you missed the event, make sure to check out the talks [right here](#).



## #HappeningInPhilly

Join us for the [Block Party on Sunday April 24](#), a part of the Everyday Futures Fest organized by the [Da Vinci Arts Alliance](#). We will be joined by [Patricia Moss-Vreeland](#), an artist and long-time partner of Monell to explore how taste and smell help make lasting memories. The event, held along the 700 block of Catharine Street in South Philly, features installations, performances, activities, and workstations engaging visitors within the broad notion of sustainability.



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