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# Why Eat When You Can Just Shock Tastes Onto Your Tongue?

The future of food could be protein slime and electricity



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By Eric Limer May 22, 2015

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The main problem with Soylent Green isn't that (spoilers!) it's people, but that it probably doesn't taste fantastic. After all, that's the case with [real life soylent](#). But what if you could just

choke down protein slime and electrify your tongue into thinking it's something better? That particularly utopia (dystopia?) [might be closer than you think](#).

Dr. Nimesha Ranasinghe is a research fellow at the [National University of Singapore](#), and his project Taste+ is based around that exact idea. In [an interview with \*Motherboard\*](#), he shared a sampling of his vision for the fake-taste future:

If you want to simulate taste, there are two places we can tap into. First the tongue, then the brain. The brain can be tricky, so we focused on stimulating the tongue.

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The technology, as it exists right now in very preliminary stages, comes in the form of utensils that will shock the tongue ever so slightly at the same time the food is hitting it. A current of 180 microamps, for instance, can simulate the taste of sourness about 80 percent of the time, [according to \*Motherboard\*](#). And even if you're eating a spoonful of nothing-flavored nothing, you'll still get to enjoy that flavor.

There are a ton of catches though. Right now, selection of simulated tastes is pretty basic, and the success rate is fairly low. The most consistent tastes only work for 80 to 90 percent of people, and virtually everyone who tries it can actively feel the whole electricity thing going on. That, and there's a lot more than literal "taste" that goes into the human experience of eating. There's aroma, and mouthfeel, and chewing, and the social experience of sitting around a table with utensils instead of slurping sludge from a jug.

With better accuracy though, it's easy to imagine loading your favorite home-cooked meals directly to your tongue, even if the near-future is just making your chunky sustenance drink taste like it's flavored when really it's not. That's something, right?

Source: [Motherboard](#)

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