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Multisensory influences on olfactory perception during food consumption

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Identification of familiar food and avoidance of rotten or contaminated food is critical for human survival. While odors play a key role in this perceptual process, surprisingly few studies have studied the neural basis of olfactory influences on object perception.
During this talk I will highlight the integration of odor into the food object perception during two separate stages of the eating process that draw on two distinct sensory pathways: the anticipatory stage, where odors are perceived by sniffing (orthonasally) in combination with a visual image of the food, and the consummatory stage, where the taste of a food object is bound together with the odor that reaches the nose through the passageways of the throat (retronasally).
I will discuss some perceptual phenomena arising from concurrent presentation of semantically matched or mismatched sensory information during food evaluation, and discuss evidence for interdependency of these phenomena.
I will also present some neuroimaging data from simulations of both anticipatory and consummatory stages of food consumption to compare the cortical processes that integrate information during these distinct perceptual stages.

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