

Mayo Clinic Minute: Hope for COVID-19 patients who've lost their sense of taste, smell

VIDEO	AUDIO
	Current estimates indicate that 20% of people with COVID-19 will experience some alteration of their sense of taste and smell.
Greg Vanichkachorn, M.D. Occupational Medicine Mayo Clinic	"On top of that, about another 20% of folks will come down with some prolonged version of this that can sometimes last for several weeks to several months."
	The good news, over time, roughly 95% of those people can expect improvement in taste and smell in less than a year. And with help, the recovery of those senses can be sped up even more.
	"There's been a lot of different therapies out there touted for help with this, and we've combed through all the research. But the thing that we have seen to be the most effective, both in practice and in research, is something called 'olfactory retraining.'"
	The nerves involved in taste and smell can heal and regrow. It's called "neuroplasticity."
	"So the idea is that if we can challenge those nerves with different smells, that will help them regrow in the proper fashion."
	Olfactory retraining involves smelling specific substances to do that.
GRAPHIC: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clove • Lemon • Eucalyptus • Rose 	"And those substances are clove, lemon, eucalyptus and rose. And what we recommend is that patients smell these substances for 15 seconds, twice a day for several weeks to several months. And this has been associated with significant improvements in the ability to taste and smell."
	One resource that experts say can be a big help is the website abscent.org . It's a nonprofit group that provides smell training tools and support for patients.

For the Mayo Clinic News Network, I'm Jason Howland.