

# Business blog

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## The power of 'mouthfeel'

**Adam Jones** Apr 16 13:09 Comment

Oral haptics – more simply known as “mouthfeel” – is one of the food industry’s subtler (or murkier) arts. New research gives an intriguing glimpse into how snackmakers can use it to manipulate grazing customers: for better or for worse.

A group of people were offered either a hard or soft version of the same chocolate and asked to estimate how many calories it contained. They erroneously assumed that the hard version had fewer calories, when the energy content in each of the treats was actually the same.

This has “intriguing practical implications”, according to the four academics behind the Journal of Consumer Research paper: Dipayan Biswas and Courtney Szocs of the University of South Florida, Aradhna Krishna of the University of Michigan and Donald Lehmann of Columbia.

For a start, it might explain why high-calorie crunchy cereal bars are seen as healthy.

The authors also note that the fast-food chain Burger King chose to give its recently introduced lower calorie fries (known as “Satisfries”) a rougher, crinkle-cut texture: this ought to reinforce the product’s “healthier” positioning, they reckon. Perhaps that counts as progress.

Tags: chocolate consumer research food

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