



## Curiosity Guide #204

### Digestive System

Accompanies Curious Crew, Season 2, Episode 4 (#204)

#### Polly Wants ANOTHER Cracker

Investigation #7, an extension of Investigation #1

##### Description

Cheese and crackers go together, but are they treated the same way in your mouth? Find out in this fun investigation!

##### Materials

- 1 small saltine cracker for each person
- 1 small piece of cheese
- Stopwatch

##### Procedure

- 1) Place a small piece of saltine cracker on your tongue. Don't chew or swallow yet!
- 2) Start the stopwatch. Hold the cracker in your mouth for 20 seconds. Stop the stopwatch.
- 3) What has begun to happen to the cracker? Describe any changes.
- 4) Repeat the trial with a small piece of cheese. What happens?
- 5) Compare what happened with the cracker to what happened with the cheese.

##### My Results

## Explanation

In this case, the cracker begins to dissolve. The amylase enzyme in your saliva starts to work on it.

What does the cheese do? Nothing! It doesn't dissolve like the cracker did. You can't see any change, other than the cheese being wet. This is because there is no starch in the cheese. The amylase in your saliva does not contribute to the digestion process of the cheese.

We've learned that saliva is really important for digesting food, but saliva makes it easier to taste too. Try this challenge with a family member. Ask your relative to take a paper towel and dry off their tongue, and then have them place a cracker on their tongue. What do they notice? They can't taste the cracker well! Without the saliva dissolving some of the cracker, our taste buds don't detect anything. Remember, digestion begins in the mouth! Keep experimenting!

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