

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What do we do?

The Consumer Product Testing Centre (CPTC) is located in downtown Edmonton, Alberta, Canada and is part of the Food and Bio Processing Branch of Alberta Agriculture and Forestry. We also conduct our tests at the Food Processing Development Centre (FPDC) located in Leduc, Alberta, Canada. We work with Alberta's agri-food industry to develop new food products and processes that help add value to Alberta's agricultural commodities. Evaluation of many of these new food products takes place at the CPTC and the FPDC where taste panelists sample the foods and give their consumer opinions. This feedback assists the product development teams to determine how acceptable these products are for the market.

### How does it work?

The program maintains a secure database of people over the age of 18 who are periodically recruited to participate in taste panels. Those who meet the demographic requirements for the particular test are asked to participate at a scheduled time and date.

### How can I sign up to participate?

People who are interested in participating will be asked to fill out a confidential registration form so CPTC staff can contact them about upcoming panel. The registration form can be found in PDF on the website.

**\*\*Please Note: We cannot use panelists who have allergies to: nuts, seeds, eggs, milk, fish, shellfish, soy, wheat, mustard or sulphites**

Please email the completed form to [cptc@gov.ab.ca](mailto:cptc@gov.ab.ca) or fax it to 780-415-6270.

### What if I do not live in the Edmonton area?

You may join our database of consumers as we are hoping to expand our capabilities in the future to include out of town, out of province and out of country evaluations.

### When and how often are tests conducted?

We conduct our tests Monday-Friday between 8:30am and 5:00pm. There are months where we can have many panels and some months where we may not have any panels booked.

### How often can I participate?

Panel participation is normally limited to 3-4 times a year. There may be opportunities to attend more than 3-4 times a year so we encourage our panelists to apply to any panel they are interested in participating in.

### How long are the sessions?

Panels usually require 15-45 minutes to complete. The panel notices you receive will always indicate how long a panel is expected to take to complete.

### Am I compensated for my time?

If confirmed to attend a panel, all participants receive a cash honorarium, starting at \$15. This value may increase depending on how much time the test will take, and the type of product that is evaluated.

### **What kind of products are being tested?**

Some of the products we have evaluated include:

- Snack products (potato chips, tortilla chips, kettle chips, snack mixes, crackers)
- Meat products (beef steak, bison steak, fried chicken, chicken fingers, pork chops, deli meats)
- Potatoes and potato products
- Pasta meals
- Yogurt
- Sports drinks
- Energy bars
- Chocolate
- Cookies

### **What is involved?**

About one week before a test takes place, candidates are contacted and asked to fill out a screening questionnaire about general use and liking of the product to be tested, and availability on the day of testing. If you are interested in testing the product type, simply complete and return the questionnaire from the link provided in the email you received. CPTC staff review the eligibility of all those who respond and book scheduled appointments. Booking is completed at the discretion of CPTC staff. You will receive a confirmation email if you are selected to participate. If you do not hear from us for that test, you have not been selected to participate.

Ingredient listings of the products will always be provided for you to review before you begin each test.

During product testing, there will be a simple questionnaire for you to fill out for each sample you evaluate. Most testing takes place in individual evaluation booths, so your opinions remain private.

Occasionally we conduct home-use tests that allow panelists to evaluate products in the comfort of their own home.

### **Panelist Do's and Don'ts**

Do:

- Be on time
- Let us know in advance if you will be late or unable to attend
- Turn your cell phone off upon arrival
- Ask a staff member if you have any questions
- Spread the word as we are always looking for new panelists

Don't:

- Eat, drink or smoke thirty minutes before your panel time – this can interfere with taste and smell perception
- Wear any perfume/cologne/body spray the day of your panel – you will be asked not to participate if any scents are detected
- Talk with other panelists during the evaluation – this can distract them from their evaluation task
- Bring children who cannot be left unsupervised

### **Notice of Collection**

The personal information collected is used to identify demographic groups for recruiting for taste panels. This information is collected under the authority of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and is subject to the provisions of this act. If you have any questions about the data collection, contact [cptc@gov.ab.ca](mailto:cptc@gov.ab.ca) or call 780-415-6268.