

How greasy are different brands of crisps?

Research Information

Crisp science is big business! In America the FDA (Food and Drug Administration) does some very important tests so that the food people eat—including crisps—is accurately labelled. We may not have access to the FDA's expensive machines, but we can still do some pretty cool tests without them. For this science fair project, let's assume you're a scientist working for the FDA and that you need to double-check the fat content (or "greasiness") of several brands of crisps. If you don't have any specialised machines, then how do you find out how much grease your crisps have? One thing we could try is to simply mash up a crisp and look at how much grease comes out. Paper absorbs grease really well, so we can use it as our "instrument" to help us quantify—or find a number that describes—how much grease is in an individual crisp. But wait a minute. Not all crisps are the same size! Even crisps from the same bag come in different sizes, and of course, different brands usually make differently sized crisps. If we were to test a really big crisp, we would get more grease than if we tested a small one, and this certainly wouldn't describe how much grease is in a single serving of chips very well. So what's a good way to determine how much grease is in your crisps? We can calculate a useful number known as an average to describe how much grease we have in our chips. We can find the average by adding together all of the grease we find divided by the number of crisps we used to get that much grease.

Materials

- Several bags of crisps (different brands)
- Something to write with
- Rolling Pin
- Wax Paper, plastic wrap, or large sandwich bag
- Graph paper
- Tape
- Window
- Sunlight

