

Food & digestion

Big picture

We eat food to provide us with the energy we need for our life processes, but also to provide what we need to grow and repair.

The food we eat contains, fats, proteins, carbohydrates, vitamins, minerals, water, and fibre. For the body to absorb these, the food must be broken down. This is the process of digestion.

The organs of the digestive system are adapted to make this process efficient.

All animals need to eat food, they are consumers. Plants make their own food, they are producers. Energy is transferred from plants to animals in a food chain.

The digestive system



- Incisors cut food
- Canines tear food
- Premolars crush and grind food
- Molars crush and grind food

Our teeth begin the process of digestion. They physically break up the food we eat. In the mouth the food is covered in saliva, this helps us swallow the food.

Food is broken down into small molecules either mechanically, by teeth and churning, or chemically by enzymes.

Enzymes are found in the saliva, stomach and small intestines. They help break down large pieces of food into pieces that are small enough to be absorbed.

Vocabulary

- **digestion** (noun): the process by which large insoluble molecules are broken down into small soluble molecules
- **oesophagus** (noun): a muscular tube that connects the mouth to the stomach
- **stomach** (noun): an organ that churns food, produces acid and enzymes for the digestion of protein
- **small intestine** (verb): a large organ where chemical digestion and absorption takes place
- **large intestine** (noun): an organ where water is removed from undigested food
- **rectum** (noun): where faeces are stored until the body is ready to expel them

