

Nova's Guide to the Human Digestive System

Learning objective: To identify and describe the functions of the basic parts of the human digestive system in humans.

Read the passage below carefully, then answer the questions that follow. Use full sentences and refer back to the text to support your answers.

Nova the barn owl has been busy studying human biology. She explains that digestion is the fascinating process of turning food into energy. It all begins in the mouth, where teeth break down food and saliva helps soften it. Once swallowed, the food travels down a long tube called the oesophagus, heading straight for the stomach. Inside the stomach, powerful juices churn the food into a thick liquid. Next, the mixture moves into the small intestine. This is where the body absorbs all the vital nutrients that help us grow, run, and learn. Anything the body cannot use moves into the large intestine, where water is removed, leaving behind waste to be discarded. Without this complex system, our bodies would not be able to fuel our muscles or keep our hearts beating. Digestion is a non-stop, mechanical and chemical marvel happening inside us every single day!

Word bank: oesophagus · digestion · nutrients · intestines · stomach · saliva

1. According to the text, what are the two main jobs of the mouth during the first stage of digestion? (2 marks)

2. What happens to the food once it reaches the large intestine? (2 marks)

3. Why is the small intestine described as a vital part of the digestive system? (2 marks)

4. Using clues from the text, explain why the stomach needs to be a strong organ. (2 marks)

5. Nova says digestion is a 'marvel'. Do you agree with her? Justify your answer using evidence from the text. (3 marks)

Draw: Draw a labelled diagram of the human digestive system, showing the path food takes from the mouth to the intestines.



Extension challenge: Compare and contrast the roles of the small and large intestines. What might happen to a human body if the small intestine stopped working correctly? Explain your reasoning in a short paragraph.