

Nova's Dental Discovery Flashcards

Learning objective: To identify and describe the functions of different types of human teeth in the digestive system.

Use these flashcards to test your knowledge of human teeth. Nova the owl suggests you read the front, try to define the term, and then flip to check your answer.

Incisors

Sharp, chisel-shaped teeth at the front of the mouth used for biting and cutting food.

Canines

Pointed teeth located next to the incisors, designed for tearing and gripping food.

Premolars

Teeth located between the canines and molars, used for crushing and grinding food.

Molars

Large teeth at the back of the mouth used for thorough grinding and chewing food before swallowing.

Enamel

The hard, protective outer layer of the tooth that shields the inner structures from decay.

Dentine

The layer of living tissue found underneath the enamel, which makes up the bulk of the tooth.

Pulp

The soft centre of the tooth containing blood vessels and nerves.

Herbivore

An animal that only eats plants; they usually have large, flat molars for grinding tough plant fibres.

Carnivore

An animal that eats meat; they often have sharp, pointed teeth for slicing and tearing.

Omnivore

An animal that eats both plants and meat, requiring a variety of tooth shapes like humans do.

Explain why humans are classified as omnivores based on their dentition.

Humans possess a mix of sharp incisors/canines for biting/tearing and flat molars for grinding, allowing us to process both plant and animal matter.

What might happen to the digestive process if a person had no molars?

The food would not be ground down effectively, making it harder for the stomach to break it down and reducing the efficiency of nutrient absorption.