

LESSON: The Digestive System

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Define and explain what digestion is
- Understand and identify key stages and important body parts of the digestive system
- Understand and describe the process of digestion and how your body breaks down food

LEVEL:



MATERIALS:

- Activity Sheet: Level 1 - The Digestive System: Label the Body
- Activity Sheet: Level 1 - Digestion Maze
- PowerPoint: Level 1 - Digestion
- Quiz: Level 1 - Digestion

LESSON:

Starter: The purpose is to introduce the idea of digestion for grades JK-1. Students can critically consider questions such as: What happens to our food after we eat it? How is our food broken down? What does food do for our body and why is digestion important?

Bring students together to have them start talking and thinking about these topics.

**Educators Note:* For a starter, try asking students what their favorite food or meal is. While going through the stages of digestion, use that food example to trace the food journey. I.e. Journey of the Cucumber slices.

Section 1: Why is Food Important?

Ask Class: *Who here likes food?*

Yes! Food is really important for our bodies. Food helps to give our bodies ENERGY and something we call NUTRIENTS (*Nutrients* - things in food that help us to grow and that help our bodies to function properly).

Let's say it together! *Food gives us ENERGY and NUTRIENTS!*

Energy and nutrients help our bodies to function throughout the day!

For Example: Energy will help you RUN, JUMP, and THINK, all day long!

So, we know that food is yummy and very helpful for our bodies, but where does our food go once we eat it?

*Ask Class: Has anyone ever heard of digestion? What is digestion? *listen to responses, build a definition together, recap and compare with the following**

Digestion is how the body breaks down food so that we are able to use all of the nutrients from that food.

There is a WHOLE process on how we break down food for our bodies. We are going to focus in on FOUR important steps.

Section 2: The 4 Steps of the Digestive System

*Ask Class: What are the 4 steps of the digestive system? *listen to response, create a list, recap and compare with the following**

- 1. The Mouth: Teeth and Tongue**
- 2. The Esophagus**
- 3. The Stomach**
- 4. The Intestines**

The Mouth

The mouth is where digestion first begins. There are two very important parts of digestion in the mouth.

- 1. Teeth:** As you chew your food, your teeth help to break the food down into tiny, small pieces, making it both easier to swallow and easier for your body to break down.

*Ask Class: Can you show me your strong teeth? *make chomp sound*

- 2. Tongue:** Your tongue can also help to move your food around and help you to chew and swallow.

Ask Class: Can we make a face with our tongues?

Fun Fact: Your mouth also has something called saliva (or spit) to help break down your food!

The next step in digestion is the ESOPHAGUS!

Ask Class: Can you all say it together? E-S-O-P-H-A-G-U-S.

The Esophagus

The esophagus looks like a tube and it helps food to travel from the mouth to the STOMACH. The esophagus carefully moves food slowly to the stomach using its MUSCLES.

**Educators Note: Using both hands, make wave movements to show how the esophagus muscles move food.*

The Stomach

Your stomach acts like a BIG blender where it mashes and grinds down your food into a wet mixture. This is done with the help of your strong stomach muscles and the stomach's juices.

Fun Fact: Did you know that your stomach is shaped like the letter J?

**Educators Note: Make or show the letter J for comparison.*

The Intestines

The intestines are very LONG measuring at about 6-7 meters long! That would be about 7 of you! Intestines help you to ABSORB nutrients. This means that the intestines grab all those important nutrients from the food that you have eaten to give your body the energy that it needs so that you can grow tall and strong. The intestines take all those important nutrients back to the body and then leave what your body doesn't need in the intestines. This is what we call *waste*. Once ready, this waste moves through the intestines and then leaves the body when you go to the bathroom.

Fun Fact: Your intestines are often called your guts!

Summary: Wrap-up and Take-Home Points

That concludes your food's journey through the digestive system! Remember, it is not just your mouth that is important for eating, but there are many other important parts too!

**Educators Note: For further facilitation, use the assigned quiz to recap the key concepts and to test knowledge learned from this lesson.*

REFLECTION NOTES: