

# Your Digestive System

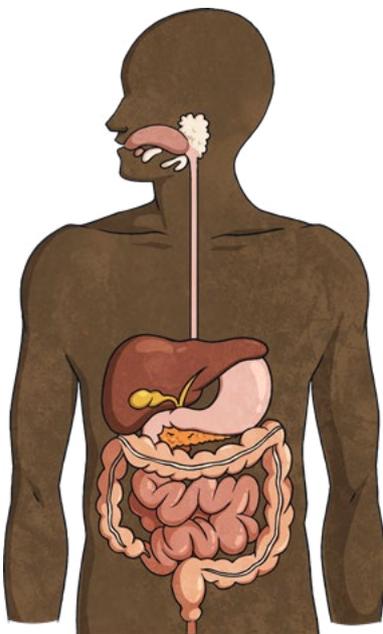
Have you ever wondered what happens to your food after you've chewed it in your mouth?

Your body is amazing and has a system that sorts and uses the food you eat to make sure your body has everything it needs to work properly. This is called your digestive system. Here's how it works...

## Before the Stomach

First of all, we all know that you put food in your mouth to eat it. You enjoy the taste and the feel of the food in your mouth while your teeth break it down into smaller pieces. Saliva is the juice in your mouth that is mixed with your food to help make it softer.

When food is small and soft enough to be swallowed, it goes down a big tube to your stomach called the oesophagus (say: a-soff-a-guss). Muscles in the oesophagus take turns to move the food to your stomach. These muscles are so good at this job that they could even get the food to your stomach if you were standing on your head! (Don't try to eat your tea standing on your head though!)



## Fact File

1. An adult eats about 500kg of food per year.
2. Your body can produce up to 1.5 litres of saliva every day.
3. An adult oesophagus is about 25cm long.
4. A camera has been invented now that is as small as a pill (called Pillcam). It can be swallowed so it passes through your oesophagus in order to take photos of the inside of your body. It can take up to 55,000 pictures over the 8 hours that it's in there! It's been used since 2001 to let doctors see inside patients.

### At the Stomach

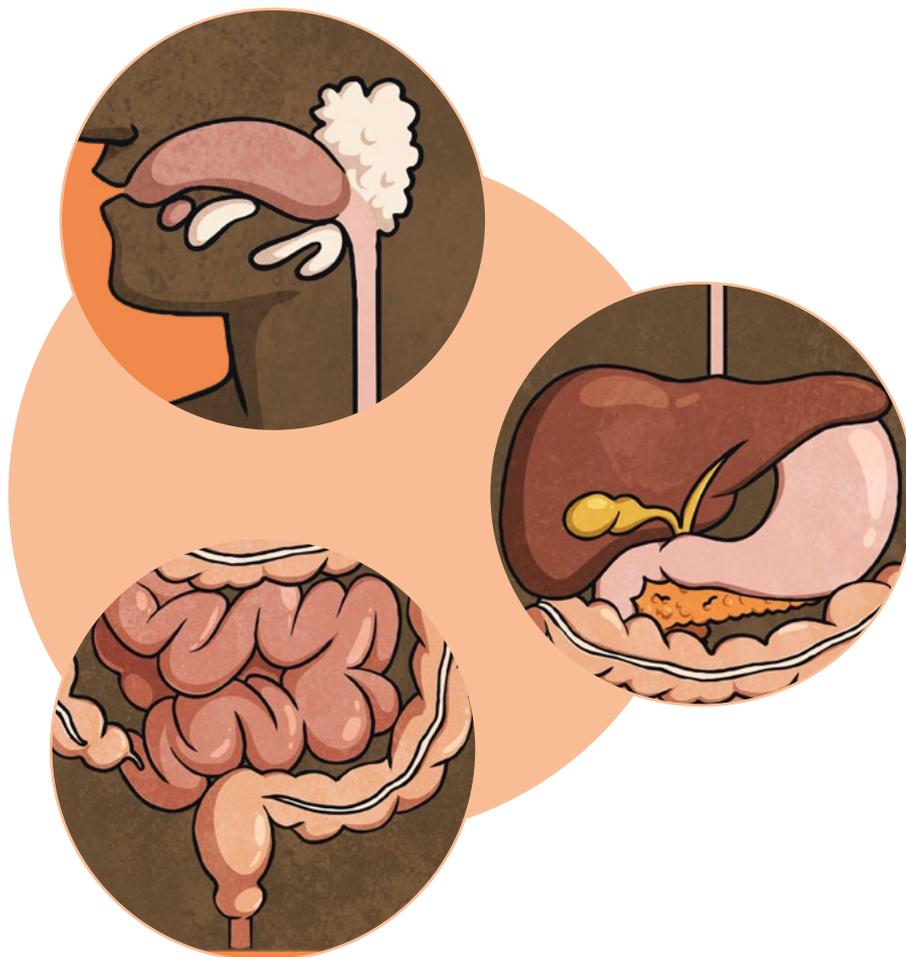
When the chewed-up food arrives in the stomach, it is mixed with acid that breaks the food down even more into something that looks a bit like porridge- this substance is called 'chyme'.

### After the Stomach

The next part of the journey for your food (which doesn't look like food anymore) is through the small intestine. In the small intestine, all the goodness is taken out of the food so it can go off to different places in the body to keep you healthy.

When the small intestine has done its job of getting all the goodness out of the food, all the material that is unwanted goes into the large intestine. Then, it makes its way out of the body as poo at the end of the large intestine.

So, there you have it. Isn't your body clever?



# Questions

1. Why do you have to chew food before it goes down the oesophagus?
2. What mixes with the food in your mouth?
3. How much food does the average adult eat in a year? Tick one.
  - 5kg
  - 50kg
  - 500kg
  - 5000kg
4. Number these organs in the order they are used during digestion. The first one has been done for you.
  - 1      large intestine
  - mouth
  - small intestine
  - stomach
  - oesophagus
5. What does 'chyme' look like? Tick one.
  - water
  - porridge
  - teeth
  - a camera

6. When was the Pillcam first used? Tick one.

2001

2011

2010

2000

7. At the end of the text, the author says: 'Isn't your body clever?'