

# 12. Human Nutrition

## Nutrition in humans

- Mouth includes teeth, salivary glands, and tongue. Teeth break down the food. They are of four types – molars (6), premolars (4), canines (2), and incisors (4) in each jaw.
  - Molars and premolars are for chewing and grinding food.
  - Canines are for piercing and tearing food.
  - Incisors are for cutting and biting food.
- In total life span of humans, two sets of teeth grow – milk teeth and permanent teeth.
- Saliva is secreted by salivary glands located under the tongue. It contains a digestive enzyme salivary amylase, which breaks down starch into sugar.
- Tongue helps in chewing and swallowing of food.
- The food from mouth passes down the oesophagus to the stomach, through the movement of walls of oesophagus (peristalsis)
- **Stomach** mixes the food received from oesophagus with digestive juices.
- Inner lining of stomach secretes:
  - Mucus – protects the lining of stomach against the action of the acid.
  - Hydrochloric acid – creates an acidic medium and helps in digestion of proteins.
  - Digestive juices – break down protein into simple substance.
    - Pepsin breaks proteins into polypeptides
    - Rennin changes soluble milk proteins into curd which is insoluble.
- The food from stomach moves into the small intestine.
- **Digestion in small intestine**
  - It is the longest part (about 7.5 m long) of the alimentary canal.
  - It is the site where complete digestion of carbohydrates, proteins, and fats takes place.
  - All the digested food is absorbed by the walls of intestine. This process is known as **absorption**.
  - Inner lining of small intestine has tiny finger-like projections called **villi**.
  - **Villi** increase the surface area for more efficient food absorption.
  - The absorbed food is delivered to each and every cell of the body where they are used to produce complex substances such as proteins, etc. This process is known as **assimilation**.
  - It receives intestinal juice from two glands – liver and pancreas that help in further digestion of food.
  - **Liver** - It is the largest gland of the body and secretes bile juice. Bile juice is stored in gall bladder and plays an important role in the digestion of fats.
  - **Pancreas** - Pancreas contains enzymes that help in complete digestion of all food components.
    - Amylase breaks starch into maltose
    - Lipase breaks complex fats into simple fats.
  - The functions of enzymes secreted in small intestine are :
    - Maltase changes maltose to glucose
    - Sucrase changes sucrose to glucose
    - Lactase changes lactose to glucose
    - Peptidase changes polypeptides to amino acids
- **Digestion in large intestine**
  - The digested food from small intestine goes into blood stream and the undigested and unabsorbed material and water enters the large intestine.
  - The function of large intestine is absorption of water and some salts from undigested food.
  - From large intestine, the waste material is stored in rectum in the form of semi-solid faeces.

- The undigested, stored waste is excreted out from the body as faeces via anus. This process is known as egestion.

## **Digestive glands**

- Three pairs of salivary glands are the parotids, the sub maxillary or sub mandibular, and the sub lingual.
- **Liver** is the largest gland.
- **Cystic duct** (duct of gall bladder) and **hepatic duct** (duct of liver) form a common **bile duct**.
- **Bile duct** and **pancreatic duct** opens together into duodenum as **hepato-pancreatic duct**.
- **Sphincter of Oddi** is located at the surface of duodenum and controls the secretions from liver, pancreas, and gall bladder into the duodenum of small intestine.
- **Crypts of lieberkuhn** are intestinal glands found in epithelial lining of small intestine and colon. These glands secrete maltase, sucrase, etc.
- **Pancreas** act as both exocrine and endocrine gland.
  - i. **Exocrine part** secretes pancreatic juice.
  - ii. **Endocrine part** secretes hormones - insulin and glucagon.
- Glands present in the mucosa of stomach are called gastric glands. Gastric glands have three major types of cells.
  - Mucus cells – Secrete mucus
  - Peptic or chief cells – Secrete pepsinogen
  - Parietal or oxyntic cells – Secrete HCl

## **Digestion of food**

- **Digestion of carbohydrate**
- It takes place in **mouth** and in the **small intestine** region of alimentary canal.

### **In mouth:**

- Carbohydrate digestion stops in stomach and is then resumed in small intestine. Mainly, protein digestion takes place in stomach.

### **In small intestine:**

- **Pancreatic juice** contains pancreatic amylase.
- **Intestinal juice** contains enzymes such as maltase, lactase, sucrase, etc., which convert complex sugars into simple sugars.

- **Digestion of protein**
- It begins in **stomach** and gets completed in **small intestine**.
- Enzymes involved are called **proteases**.
- **In stomach:**
- **Gastric juice** contains **HCl, pepsinogen, and rennin**.
- **HCl** creates acidic medium that activates pepsinogen into pepsin.

Proteins + pepsin----- Proteoses + peptones

- **Rennin** plays a role in coagulation of milk.
- **In small intestine:**
- **Pancreatic juice** contains inactive enzymes such as **trypsinogen, chymotrypsinogen, and carboxypeptidases**.
- **Enterokinase** secreted by **intestinal mucosa** activates trypsinogen into trypsin.
- **Intestinal juice** contains dipeptidases, which digest dipeptides into amino acids.

- **Digestion of fat**
- It takes place in **small intestine**.
- **Bile juice** is secreted by **liver** and is stored in **gall bladder**.
- **Bile juice** contains bile salt that helps in breakdown of fat into smaller globules. It is known as **emulsification of fat**.

#### **Absorption of digested products:**

- The absorption of food materials is carried out by passive (e.g. chloride ions), active (e.g. amino acids, glucose), or facilitated diffusion (e.g. fructose).
- Digested food is absorbed mainly through intestinal walls.
- The inner lining of small intestine has **villi**. **Villi** contain lymph vessels called lacteal to absorb the products of fat digestion.
- **Large intestine** absorbs water and minerals from undigested food.
- **Rectum** stores the undigested matter before they are excreted out from body via **anus**.

## **Digestive system disorders**

- **Jaundice** – Yellowing of eyes due to deposition of bile pigments
- **Vomiting** – Ejection of food through mouth
- **Diarrhoea** – Frequent bowel movement and liquefied faecal discharge
- **Constipation** – Irregular bowel movement
- **Indigestion** – Improper digestion of food