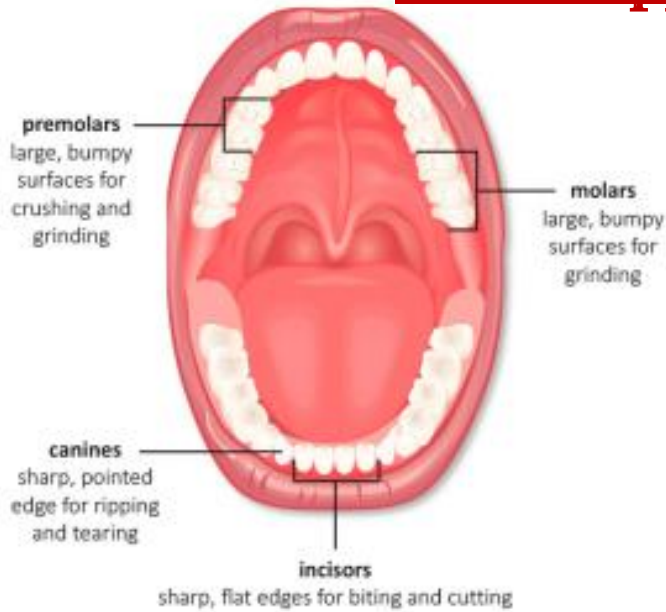
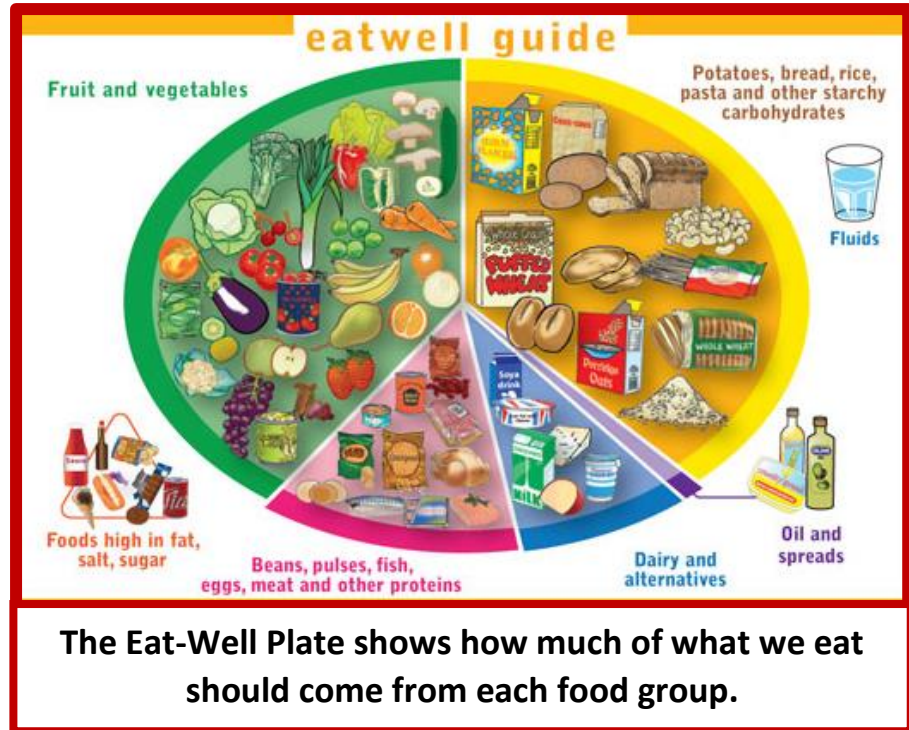


What happens to the food we eat?



Cross section of a healthy tooth



The Eat-Well Plate shows how much of what we eat should come from each food group.

What happens to the food we eat?

Human digestion

Humans need to absorb proteins, carbohydrates, fats, vitamins and minerals from their food to keep healthy and have enough energy to live and work. The job of the digestive system is to break down food so it can be absorbed and used by the body.

Glossary

bacteria	Microorganisms that are found everywhere. Some can be useful but others cause disease.
decay	Damage caused by bacteria.
digestion	The process when food is broken down and absorbed inside the body after being eaten.
enzyme	A chemical in the body that speeds up changes. For example, enzymes in saliva start the breakdown of food.
nutrient	A substance needed by the body to live and grow.
faeces	The solid waste passed of the body after digestion. Also known as poo.
saliva	The liquid made in the mouth that contains enzymes and starts digestion.

The digestive system

- 1 Teeth chew food into small pieces in the **mouth**. These pieces mix with saliva containing enzymes to start digestion.
- 2 The muscles in the **oesophagus** move a ball, or bolus, of food down to the stomach.
- 3 The muscles in the **stomach** churn the food and acids and enzymes break it down. This can take 2–6 hours.
- 4 Partially digested food travels through the **small intestine** and nutrients are absorbed into the body. This can take 3–5 hours.
- 5 The **large intestine** removes excess water from the food that can't be digested to make solid faeces (poo). This can take 4–72 hours.
- 6 The faeces are stored in the **rectum** ready to leave the body.

