

Name _____

The Amazing Journey of Digestion

Open-Ended Response Answer Key

1. Peristalsis is the coordinated muscular contractions that push food through the digestive tract. It is crucial for propelling food from the esophagus to the stomach and throughout the rest of the digestive system, ensuring digestion continues efficiently.
2. The pancreas is essential because it secretes digestive enzymes into the small intestine, which help break down carbohydrates, fats, and proteins, allowing for efficient nutrient absorption.
3. Beneficial bacteria in the colon play a vital role in breaking down remaining substances and producing certain vitamins. They also help maintain a healthy balance of microorganisms in the gut.
4. The journey of food starts in the mouth, where it is chewed and mixed with saliva. It then travels down the esophagus to the stomach, where gastric juices mix with it. Next, it enters the small intestine, where most digestion and nutrient absorption occur. Any undigested material moves into the large intestine, where water is absorbed, and finally, it is eliminated through the anus during a bowel movement.

