

Name _____

Chewing Champions: The Role of Teeth in Digestion

Open-Ended Response Answer Key

1. Molars play a crucial role in the chewing process by grinding and crushing food into smaller, more digestible pieces. They are essential for breaking down tough and fibrous foods, ensuring that they can be digested effectively.
2. As a person grows from childhood to adulthood, they typically lose their baby teeth (primary teeth) and develop a full set of adult teeth (permanent teeth). This transition involves a change in the number and type of teeth, with adults having more teeth, including molars for efficient grinding and crushing.
3. Saliva contains enzymes, such as amylase, that initiate the breakdown of carbohydrates in the mouth. Amylase starts the digestion of complex carbohydrates into simpler sugars, facilitating nutrient absorption. Saliva also helps moisten food for easier swallowing and contains antimicrobial properties.
4. Chewing food thoroughly is essential not only for digestion but also for overall health. Thorough chewing promotes better digestion and nutrient absorption, reduces the risk of choking and digestive discomfort, and supports healthy teeth and gums. It also allows for better appreciation of the taste and texture of food, enhancing the overall dining experience.

