

Nutrition & Wellness for Life © 2012
Chapter 3: How Nutrients Become You—Glossary

absorption. The passage of nutrients from the digestive tract into the circulatory or lymphatic system.

ATP (adenosine triphosphate). The storage form of energy in the body.

bile. A digestive juice produced by the liver to aid fat digestion.

chyme. A mixture of gastric juices and food formed in the stomach during digestion.

constipation. A condition that occurs when the feces become massed and hard in the large intestine, making expulsion infrequent.

diarrhea. Frequent expulsion of watery feces.

digestion. The process by which the body breaks down food, and the nutrients in food, into simpler parts for use in growth, repair, and maintenance.

diverticulosis. A disorder in which many abnormal pouches form in the intestinal wall.

enzyme. A complex protein produced by cells to speed a specific chemical reaction in the body.

feces. Solid wastes that result from digestion.

food allergy. A reaction of the immune system to certain proteins found in foods.

food intolerance. An unpleasant reaction to a food that does not cause an immune system response.

gallstones. Small crystals that form from bile in the gallbladder.

gastric juices. A mixture of hydrochloric acid, digestive enzymes, and mucus produced by the stomach that helps digest food.

gastrointestinal (GI) tract. A muscular tube leading from the mouth to the anus through which food passes as it is digested.

heartburn. A burning pain in the middle of the chest caused by stomach acid flowing back into the esophagus.

indigestion. A difficulty in digesting food.

kilocalorie. The unit used to measure the energy value of food.

mastication. Chewing.

metabolism. All the chemical changes that occur as cells produce energy and materials needed to sustain life.

peristalsis. A series of squeezing actions by the muscles in the gastrointestinal tract that helps move food through the tract.

ulcer. An open sore in the lining of the stomach or small intestine caused by a bacterium.

villi. Tiny, fingerlike projections that cover the wall of the small intestine.