

4. The digestive system

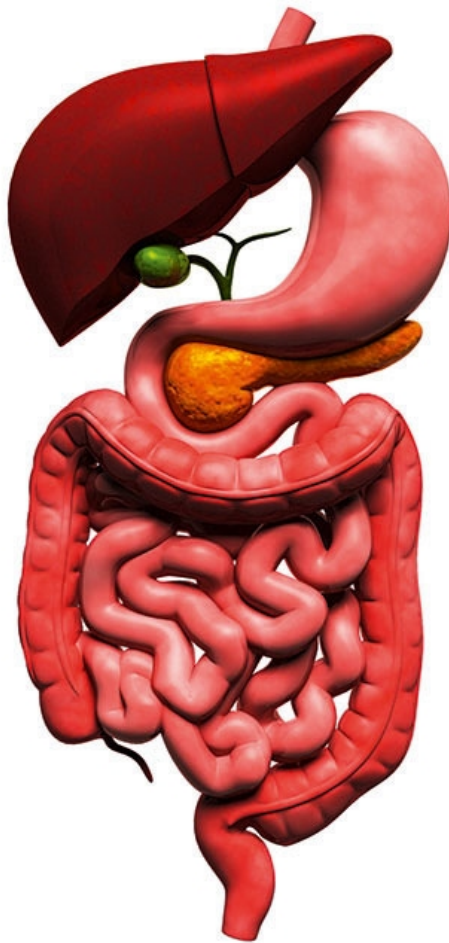
4.3 Historical representations of digestion

4.3.4

Today

DIGESTION

Nowadays, we are aware that digestion is a complicated process. What happens is that food is firstly ground, then moistened as it is chewed. At this point, carbohydrates start to be broken down by salivary enzymes. Once swallowed, food quickly travels down the oesophagus.



Contractions churn the alimentary bolus in the stomach, mixing it with the gastric juices. Together, this churning and stomach enzymes produce a kind of liquid which can penetrate into the small intestine. Pancreatic juices and bile complete the digestive process and enable nutrients to be absorbed. What has not been assimilated goes into the large intestine, and here water and minerals are absorbed by the body. Finally, waste materials are emptied away through the anus.