Activity / Experiment: Intro to the Digestive System

Learn the pathway of food as it travels through the body and gets broken down for nutrients and energy. Learn about the main organs that assist in digestion.

Materials:
- Printer (optional)
- Paper
- Markers or crayons

Instructions:
1. Print or draw the image below and label the organs correctly using the words in the word bank.
2. Match the organ to the activity you think it does. **Hint:** The activities are already written in the order that food travels through the body. Use the image from Activity 1 as a guide.
3. Get creative! Make a model of the digestive system: Draw an exact replica, make a model using playdough, make a model using items in your house, or create a picture collage featuring items or machines that have similar functions as the organs. Share with us at publicprograms@randallsisland.org
4. When you’re done with the activity, check your work in this answer sheet.
Word Bank
Mouth
Esophagus
Stomach
Small intestine
Large intestine
Rectum
Anus
Pancreas
Liver
Gallbladder

Two full sentences about the digestive system:

1. Teeth, tongue, and saliva breaks down food here before it gets swallowed.
   The tube transports food from the mouth to the stomach.
2. Here, swallowed food is stored, mixed, and then emptied into the next organ.
   Here, food is digested and dissolved by juices from the liver, pancreas, and intestine. Nutrients are absorbed and undigested food is pushed to the next organ for even more absorption.
3. This organ cleans and sorts nutrient-rich blood before the blood can go through the rest of the body.
   This organ stores bile, a fluid made by the liver which helps the body absorb fat into the bloodstream. The liver also uses bile to transport extra nutrients or poisons back into the intestine so that we can get rid of them.
4. This organ makes chemicals that help break down proteins, fats, and carbohydrates into energy that our body needs to remain active.
   Here, water and the last bit of nutrients are absorbed and waste (anything this was not digested like fiber and old cells), also known as feces or poop is pushed onward.
5. Waste is stored here until you’re ready to use the bathroom.
   Finally, waste leaves the body through this organ.
Guiding Questions:

Why do you think that we need to eat healthy foods such as fruits, vegetables, grains, protein, and dairy?

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Why do we need to drink plenty of fluids, especially water?

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Describe how the body takes in food, breaks it down, stores nutrients, and gets rid of waste.

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