Our Maker has set the foundation of a good lifestyle-the eating of plant-based foods. Following the divine provision that man should subsist on plant-based food (Gen. 1:29), Apostle takes it from there and gives these counsel: *"Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth."* (3 John 1:2).

A HOLISTIC VIEW

This verse emphasizes a close, affectionate relationship between salvation and the care of the whole person. Such care must requires a holistic view of prosperity, encompassing physical, spiritual, emotional, and relational well-being. Apostle Paul also writes on the same subject; *"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?"* (1 Cor. 6:19).

It is not enough to watch against temptation; we should be so filled with the Holy Spirit that the desires of the flesh shall have no fascination. The power that raised the body of Jesus from the grave is surely strong enough to raise our bodies from the bondage of sin to Christ's righteousness including the control of appetite.

"And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Thess. 5:23). In the plan of redemption, God undertook to save us wholly and entirely in spirit, soul, and body.

A digestive tract is 6 to 9 meters long and runs from the mouth to the anus. Its function is to turn the food we eat into microscopic particles that the cells can use for energy, maintenance, growth and repair. There are, among others, four reasons why digestion matters; (a) for energy production, (b) for cell growth and repair, (c) for nutrient absorption and (d) for elimination of waste. This process is carried out in six steps; (a) ingestion, (b) propulsion, (c) mechanical digestion, chemical digestion, (d) absorption and (e) defecation. We now examine each one of these processes.

INGESTION

This is the first process of digestion and refers to the entry of food into the alimentary canal through the mouth. It is in the mouth where food is chewed and mixed with saliva secreted by salivary glands, which contains enzymes that begin breaking down the carbohydrates in the food. The mouth is the first part of the human digestive system. The instruments of ingestion are the oral cavity, tongue, mouth and salivary glands.

The mouth is the mill that grinds the food by thorough mastication. The chewing of agreeable food starts up the whole digestive machinery. During mastication, the saliva flows freely, the gastric and other juices likewise begin to flow and the peristaltic waves which move the food along the food tube from one laboratory to another, start in the stomach and travel along the whole 9 meters of the alimentary canal.

Mastication. Mastication is a technical term for chewing, which is the very first step of human digestion. Mastication is important because; (a) it breaks down food into smaller particles; (b) it mixes food with saliva; (c) it initiates chemical digestion by triggering enzymatic signals throughout the gastrointestinal tract; (d) it creates a safe bolus by lubricating the chewed food into a smooth, cohesive mass; and (e) it signals the GI tract by stimulating the vagus nerve which signals the stomach to produce hydrochloric acid, the pancreas to release digestive enzymes and the gallbladder to prepare bile.

PROPULSION

This is the process of driving or pushing food molecules forward, or the active movement of food through the digestive tract. It includes swallowing and peristalsis (the automatic wave-like movement of muscles in the digestive tract). The major instrumental organ is the gastrointestinal tract. Propulsion is important because; (a) it transports food from organ to organ, (b) it allows continuous mixing of digestive juices, (c) it ensures maximum nutrient absorption, and (d) it eliminates solid waste.

We briefly examine propulsion activities. **Contraction.** This is the squeezing and relaxing of stomach muscles. **Relaxation.** This is the widening and softening of the digestive muscles to let food pass. **Bolus formation.** It is a soft, rounded mass of chewed food mixed with saliva which is formed in the mouth during the act of chewing and swallowing. All these activities take place in the **lumen**, which is a hollow interior cavity inside the gastrointestinal tract.

MECHANICAL DIGESTION

This is the physical breakdown of large food pieces into small pieces. This process makes the surface area of the food bigger to enable the digestive chemicals to work much faster and better. It involves mixing of food in the mouth, in the stomach, and in the small intestine. This process is important because; (a) it creates more surface area, (b) the chewing and churning of food expose more food area so digestive enzymes can attach and work fast, (c) it makes swallowing easy, (d) the teeth and saliva turn large bites into a soft ball called bolus that safely slides down the throat, (e) in the stomach, the gut muscles mix the food bits evenly with strong digestive juices and, (f) the movement pushes food steadily through the long digestive tube without blockages.

CHEMICAL DIGESTION

This is the process where complex food molecules are broken down into smaller, absorbable nutrients through the action of enzymes, stomach acids and bile via hydrolysis (splitting of a compound into smaller parts). It is an enzymatic reaction to improve digestion of (a) carbohydrates, (b) proteins and (c) lipids. This process is important for: (a) nutrient absorption by turning complex food into basic units that can be used by the blood, (b) energy production, and (c) growth and repair.

ABSORPTION

Next, we examine the last and final process of digestion, the absorption of the food eaten. Without this important process the food we eat would benefit us nothing. This process ensures that the ingested food enters the cells where it is used to fuel the body activities. This is a biological process where small, digested food molecules pass the lining of the small intestine and enter the blood (lymph) systems to be used by the body.

This process is important because, (a) it gives cells the energy needed for daily functions, (b) it absorbs essential minerals and vitamins that support the immune system, regulate hormones and keep bones strong, (c) it takes amino acids from proteins to build and fix muscles, tissues and organs, and (d) it ensures the absorption of nutrients.

DEFECATION

This is the elimination of indigestible substances as feces, the discharge of solid or semi-solid waste material (feces) from the digestive tract through the anus. Defecation is important because; (a) it removes toxins from the body, (b) it prevents dangerous physical blockages, (c) it prevents infection by lowering the risk of gas inflammation and bacterial overgrowth, (d) it prevents severe infections by maintaining a smooth moving GI tract and, (e) it relieves rectal pressure and lets the nervous and circulatory systems to relax after a bowel movement.

Compiled from the writings of The Loud Cry Herald Ministry. The Loud Cry Herald Ministry.

FOOD DIGESTION

Nutrition, Absorption and the Temple of the Body

> *Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.*
>
> **— 3 John 1:2**

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