

## **Assignment Discovery Online Curriculum Digestion**

### **Curriculum Focus**

Health

### **Grade level**

9-12

### **Duration**

One or two class periods

### **Objectives**

Students will

- research one common problem of the digestive system, such as constipation, gas, lactose intolerance, or ulcers
- create a brochure, similar to one found at a doctor's office, that describes the problem, its causes, symptoms, and possible treatments

### **Materials**

- Paper (8½ x 11 inches)
- Pens, pencils
- Computer with Internet access

### **Procedures**

1. Begin the lesson by reviewing the major organs of the digestive system and the function of each. Make sure your discussion covers at least the following parts of the digestive tract: esophagus, stomach, small intestine, large intestine, and colon. You will find a good overview at:

Discovery Health: Healthy Digestion

<http://health.discovery.com/centers/digestive/digestion.html>

2. Ask students to name some of the problems of the digestive system covered in the video. Challenge students to link each condition with the appropriate part of the digestive tract. Below are some common digestive problems. (See "Vocabulary" for definitions.)
  - nausea
  - diarrhea
  - constipation
  - acid indigestion (heartburn)
  - gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD)
  - ulcer
  - lactose intolerance
  - colorectal polyps or colorectal cancer

3. Have students work individually to create a patient brochure about one digestive problem. The brochure, similar to one they might see in a doctor's office, should describe the problem, its causes, symptoms, and possible treatments. In addition, the brochure should be written and designed for a specific audience, such as kids, teens, young adults, middle-age adults, or older adults. When selecting an appropriate audience, ask students to consider what age a patient might be when he or she has questions about that problem. Each brochure should include age-appropriate illustrations or diagrams to help explain the digestive problem.
4. Finally, have students title their brochure in the form of a question a patient might have. For example:
  - "Why do I burp?" (for kids)
  - "Why do I throw up?" (for kids)
  - "Why do dairy products make me sick?" (for teens)
  - "Are you taking antacids every day?" (for middle-aged adults)
  - "Is it time for a colonoscopy?" (for older adults)

The following Web sites will help students in their research:

Discovery Health: Digestive Conditions

<http://health.discovery.com/centers/digestive/conditions.html>

GERD

<http://www.gerd.com/>

KidsHealth: Lactose Intolerance

[http://www.kidshealth.org/teen/diseases\\_conditions/digestive/lactose\\_intolerance.html](http://www.kidshealth.org/teen/diseases_conditions/digestive/lactose_intolerance.html)

KidsHealth: Ulcers

[http://www.kidshealth.org/teen/diseases\\_conditions/digestive/ulcers.html](http://www.kidshealth.org/teen/diseases_conditions/digestive/ulcers.html)

Discovery Kids: Your Gross and Cool Body

<http://yucky.kids.discovery.com/flash/body/index.html>

5. Have students create their brochures by folding an 8½ by 11-inch piece of paper into thirds. They may use a word processing program such as Microsoft Word. Remind students to include images with labels, whether they import them from another file or sketch them by hand.
6. When the brochures are complete, have students work with a partner who covered another condition. Each student should use the brochure to explain the condition, as if he or she were the doctor and the partner were the patient.

### **Evaluation**

Use the following three-point rubric to evaluate students' work during this lesson.

**3 points:** Students were highly engaged in class discussions; they wrote comprehensive and thoughtful brochures that included several relevant facts and clear illustrations

**2 points:** Students participate in class discussions; they wrote somewhat compressive brochures that included some facts and at least one illustration

**1 point:** Students participate minimally in class discussions; they wrote simplistic brochures with few or no facts or illustrations

## **Vocabulary**

### **acid indigestion (heartburn)**

**Definition:** A burning sensation that seems to occur in the area of the heart and is usually related to spasms of the lower esophagus or the upper stomach

**Context:** Also called heartburn, acid indigestion affects most people at one time or another.

### **colorectal polyps**

**Definition:** An abnormal growth of tissue on the inside lining of the colon or rectum

**Context:** Colorectal polyps are usually benign, or noncancerous, but sometimes they can develop into colorectal cancer.

### **constipation**

**Definition:** Abnormally difficult or infrequent bowel movements

**Context:** Constipation occurs when the amount of water the colon reabsorbs from the stool is increased.

### **diarrhea**

**Definition:** Abnormally frequent and loose, watery bowel movements

**Context:** Diarrhea occurs when the amount of water the colon reabsorbs from the stool is decreased.

### **digestion**

**Definition:** the process of breaking down food into simpler forms that can be taken in and used by the body

**Context:** Digestion begins in the mouth when food is ground and broken down by the teeth.

### **gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD)**

**Definition:** A backflow of acid from the stomach into the esophagus; also called reflux or reflux esophagitis.

**Context:** If someone has recurring, frequent, and severe heartburn, they may be suffering from GERD.

### **lactose intolerance**

**Definition:** A condition in which a person cannot digest enough lactose, the sugar found in milk and milk products; occurs when an individual has a deficiency of an enzyme known as lactase.

**Context:** Common symptoms of lactose intolerance include abdominal bloating, cramps, diarrhea, gas, and nausea.

### **nausea**

**Definition:** a feeling of queasiness in the stomach, usually associated with the feeling that one is going to throw up, or vomit

**Context:** Nausea can be caused by many different conditions, ranging from food poisoning to pregnancy.

**ulcer**

**Definition:** a painful sore or hole in the stomach

**Context:** Most ulcers are caused by a specific bacterium, and can be treated by antibiotics.

**Academic Standards**

This lesson plan addresses the following national standards:

- Life Science: Interdependence of organisms
- Science in Personal and Social Perspectives: Personal and community health

**Credit**

Joy Brewster, freelance education writer, editor, and consultant