

Cambridge GCSE Notes
5090 Biology

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1 Human gas exchange

1.1 Human gas exchange

The human gas exchange surface consists of the lungs. They are specialised for exchange of gases by having:

- Large surface area, to maximise diffusion.
- Thin surface distance; the surface is only one cell thick so as to minimise distance for diffusion, maximising diffusion rate.
- They are well supplied with capillaries so as to diffuse as much oxygen into the blood and as much carbon dioxide out of the blood as possible. The lungs take in sufficient air so as to cause maximum diffusion as well.

In the atmosphere, **the proportions of gases** present follow: 21% of oxygen O_2 , 0.04% of carbon dioxide (CO_2). These are the gas proportions that we breathe in, i.e., that we inspire. The air that we breathe out, exhale or expire consists of the following compositing: 16% oxygen, 4% carbon dioxide and very high amount of water vapour, compared to that inhaled.

The respiratory tract consists of the larynx, trachea, bronchus and bronchioles. Once air has entered through our noses, it passes the larynx or the voice box. It then goes through the trachea. The trachea splits into two bronchi (bronchus, singular) which branch out into bronchioles further into grape like structures called alveoli. It is these alveoli through which gaseous exchange in humans occur. These are balloon-like in that they blow up when we inhale, and deflate when we exhale.

Inside these alveoli, gases accumulate when we breathe in, and around these there are capillaries enveloping it. The alveolar wall is only one cell thick, and is moist, so as to minimise the distance oxygen has to travel to diffuse into the blood in the surrounding capillaries. The surface area in contact with the blood vessels is also large so as to maximise diffusion. They are constantly supplied with blood so that blood can be oxygenated. They also have a good supply of oxygen from our constant breathing in and out, also called ventilation.

The ribs are the cage-like bones surrounding our lungs and heart. That which is enveloped by the ribs is called the thorax. In between and around each rib-bone there are intercostal muscles, which are arranged antagonistically¹, namely the external and internal intercostal muscles. Beneath the ribs, there is the diaphragm, which is a muscle separating the thorax, i.e. the chest cavity from the abdominal cavity.

Breathing in occurs when the pressure inside the thorax, i.e. the lungs lowers to below that of atmospheric pressure. Air from outside the body rushes in through the nose and mouth into the alveoli when this happens. To do this, the volume of the thorax must be maximised, which is done by contraction of the diaphragm from its relaxed dome shape. Alongside that, the external intercostal

¹A pair of muscles where, when one contracts the other relaxes and vice versa.

muscles contract, relaxing the internal intercostal muscles. This results in the ribs moving up and outwards, decreasing internal pressure and causing air to rush into the lungs.

To **breathe out** the exact opposite must occur. The thorax's volume must lower, so as to increase lung pressure to be greater than that of the surrounding atmosphere. To do so, the thorax relaxes into its dome shape and the internal intercostal muscles relax whereas the external intercostal muscles relax, causing the ribs to move down and in. As a result, air rushes out of the lungs into the atmosphere.

Physical activity has effects on the rate and depth of breathing. When performing physical tasks, such as running, our body needs lots of oxygen as fast as possible to respire aerobically, to produce energy for muscle contraction. This is why we breathe faster, at a higher rate, and take deeper breaths, to maximise oxygen in our blood. Often, this oxygen demand is not met, and the body has to compensate by performing anaerobic respiration, which releases less energy in comparison to aerobic respiration. Anaerobic respiration produces lactic acid, which accumulates in the blood and muscles. To break down this lactic acid, we continue breathing in quicker and deeper even after we have completed the physical task, as the breakdown of lactic acid requires oxygen. This is known as **paying off the oxygen debt**, this breakdown occurs in the liver and we can say we borrowed oxygen when we performed anaerobic respiration, and we are paying it off by taking in the oxygen we need. The rate and depth of breathing is controlled by the brain, which, when it senses that the pH of blood has lowered due to lactic acid, stimulates the diaphragm and intercostal muscles to contract and relax harder and more often. Faster and deeper breaths result.

The trachea, bronchi, even the inside of the nose is lined with **goblet cells and cilia**. Goblet cells produce mucus, a chemical which traps any pathogen or particle that enters the respiratory tract. Cilia are hair like structures which continuously beat upward, pushing mucus upward toward the top of the throat to be swallowed. Once they are, the acid in the stomach destroys any possibly harmful pathogen that may have been stuck in that mucus.

2 Respiration

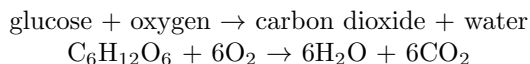
2.1 Respiration

Respiration is the chemical process by which energy is released from glucose in all living cells. This energy is required for many processes, including:

- Muscle contraction
- Protein synthesis
- Cell division
- Active transport
- Growth
- Passage of electrical nerve impulses
- Maintenance of a constant body temperature (homeostasis).

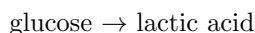
2.2 Aerobic respiration

Aerobic respiration is the breaking of glucose using oxygen to release energy. Given below, are the word and chemical equations denoting the process of respiration:

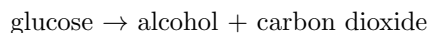


2.3 Anaerobic respiration

Anaerobic respiration is the breaking of glucose without oxygen to release a relatively little amount of energy. In humans, the breakdown occurs as follows:



In yeast, the following happens:



The parts concerning Excess Post-exercise Oxygen Consumption (EPOC), otherwise known as paying of the oxygen debt is given in the last part of Section 9.

During exercise, the heart rate is fast so as to supply oxygen to all the parts that need it as quickly as possible. After exercise, the heart rate remains fast for some time to transport lactic acid to the liver where it can be broken down using oxygen.

3 Transport in humans

3.1 Circulatory system

A **circulatory system** consists of a network of blood vessels, a pump or heart to keep the blood flowing and valves which ensure the flow is in one direction only.

A **double circulatory system** is that in which blood passes through the heart twice for a complete circulation. In such a system, blood at low pressure is sent to the lungs, and its pressure is raised once again after it arrives at the heart and is sent off to the body.

3.2 Heart

The **mammalian heart** is essentially a muscle with four chambers. To prevent backflow, valves are present at specific locations around the heart. The thickness of the muscles of each chambers varies depending on the distance they must pump the blood. The atria are significantly less thick than ventricles as they need only pump blood to the ventricles which are right beneath them. The left² ventricle is significantly thicker than the right, as the left pumps blood to the whole body whereas the right only pumps to the lungs.

The heart is composed of two sides, the left and the right, separated by the septum. On the top of each side is an atrium and on the bottom, a ventricle. Separating the two are atrio-ventricular valves. **The functioning of the heart** consists of the following steps:

1. Deoxygenated blood from the body flows into the right atrium, simultaneously oxygenated blood from the lungs flow into the left atrium. At this moment, the atrio-ventricular valves on both sides are closed.
2. The atria contract, pressuring blood through the atrio-ventricular valves into their respective ventricles. The valves ensure blood does not flow back into the atria.
3. The ventricles contract, the atrio-ventricular valves stay closed, the semi-lunar valves that are at the entrance of the aorta and pulmonary artery of the left and right heart respectively open to allow blood to flow through those blood vessels³

Note that, the atrio-ventricular valve of the left side of the heart is called the bicuspid valve and that on the right is called the tricuspid valve.

The above events occur multiple times every minute, and the number of times it occurs is called the **heart rate**. It can be measured in the following ways:

²Note that the left and right sides of the heart is reversed, as we consider the right to be the right side of whose heart we are observing.

³Note that, blood is pumped away from the heart in blood vessels called arteries and toward the heart in those called veins.

- The heart makes a lub-dub sound when it beats, caused by the opening and closing of the valves. Counting the number of times lub-dub is heard per unit time can give heart rate.
- Pulse rate can be measured by placing one's hand on any artery, and counting the number of times it pulses per unit time.
- An echocardiograph (ECG) can be used to measure and record electrical activity in the heart using electrodes stuck into the person's body.

Coronary heart disease (CHD) occurs when the arteries that supply the heart itself with blood, called the coronary arteries, become blocked in some way. It can occur due to the following factors:

- Diet: Eating high amounts of saturated fats results in high cholesterol concentration.
- Sedentary lifestyle: Those with lethargic lifestyles tend to run a higher risk to develop CHD.
- Stress: Leading a high stress lifestyle may also result in CHD.
- Smoking: Smoking greatly increases risk of CHD.
- Genetic predisposition: Many carry hereditary genes which make them susceptible to CHD, such an individual must lead a healthy lifestyle so as to avoid suffering from the disease.
- Age and gender: Older people run a greater risk of contracting CHD, and men are more prone to CHD than women.

Regular exercise and having a healthy diet is the key to combat CHD. Regular exercise keeps the mind and body fit, keeps the blood pressure at a good value, reduces chance of excessive weight gain. They make one feel fit. Other than that, avoiding fatty, greasy, animal-based foods is the key to preventing CHD as such foods contain saturated fats which increase cholesterol levels in the body leading to CHD.

3.3 Blood vessels

It is through the aorta that oxygenated blood flows out of the heart and to the rest of the body parts. Through the inferior and superior vena cava, deoxygenated blood enters the right side of the heart. The hepatic vein and artery carry blood to and from the heart and liver, respectively. The hepatic portal vein is a blood vessel going from the small intestine to the liver, carrying nutrients to be assimilated in the liver. The renal artery and vein carry blood to and from the heart and the kidneys, respectively.

Arteries carry blood away from the heart. They mostly contain oxygenated blood, except the pulmonary artery. They have thick, muscular walls with

elastic tissue, that bounce back with the flow of blood to allow the blood to flow smoothly. The lumen of an artery is relatively small, but not as small as capillaries.

Veins carry blood to the heart. They mostly contain deoxygenated blood, except the pulmonary vein. They have thin walls, also composed of muscles and elastic fibres. They have a relatively large lumen and have valves to prevent backflow of blood. Veins do not carry particularly high pressure blood, so, such as to not slow down speed of blood flow they have a large lumen. They need not thick walls as they carry not high pressure blood.

Capillaries are very thin blood vessels which surround cells, they are the middle ground between an artery and a vein. They have very small lumens and walls only one cell thick. It is through capillaries nutrients, oxygen, etc. diffuse in and out of the blood and cells. They are small so as to penetrate every part of the body and supply it with blood as it requires.

3.4 Blood

Blood is a mixture consisting of plasma, red and white blood cells, and platelets. Red blood cells are biconcave and lack all cell organelle. White blood cells are of two types, lymphocytes and phagocytes. Phagocytes have lobed nuclei, whereas lymphocytes have nuclei that take up almost the whole cell. Platelets are tiny structures, smaller than both the blood cells.

Red blood cells contain haemoglobin, which is a substance to which oxygen binds to form oxyhaemoglobin. It is in this form that oxygen is transported around the body. Red blood cells lack any cell organelle to maximise space for oxyhaemoglobin. They are biconcave in shape to maximise surface area for diffusion of oxygen.

White blood cells are involved in immunity of the body. Lymphocytes are cells that produce antibodies to kill any and all pathogens and phagocytes engulf those pathogens to kill them.

Platelets are involved in blood clotting. When a blood vessel is broken, the platelets release a substance to convert soluble fibrinogen present in blood to fibrin, an insoluble protein that forms a mesh-like structure around the wound. Blood cells get trapped in this mesh, preventing excessive blood loss.

Plasma is a substance consisting of mostly water, in which many substances are dissolved for transport. Such as: glucose, amino acids, mineral ions, hormones, carbon dioxide, urea, vitamins and plasma proteins.

Oxygenated blood flows in from arteries into capillaries. Here, oxygen diffuses out from inside red blood cells, into cells and carbon dioxide diffuses into the plasma. Such exchanges occur before the branched capillaries congregate into veins carrying deoxygenated blood. Plasma leaks out from capillaries during this exchange. This leaked plasma is called tissue fluid and it helps in diffusion of substances.

4 Disease and immunity

4.1 Disease

A pathogen is any microorganism that causes disease. A disease that can pass from one host to another is called a transmissible disease. This transmission can occur in two modes: directly or indirectly.

Direct transmission occurs when an infected person comes in direct contact with an uninfected person. This may be in the form of sexual or salivary exchange, or even blood transfusion with an infected person.

Indirect transmission occurs when pathogens come in indirect contact with uninfected people. This may be in the form of pathogen containing droplets in the air, touching a surface touched by an infected person, consuming contaminated substances or animals carrying the disease.

There are **physical barriers** in the body to prevent infection. The skin blocks any pathogen's entry into the body. Hairs in the nose trap any such pathogen. **Chemical barriers** include mucus secreted by the lining of the respiratory tract in which pathogens become trapped. Stomach acid kills any pathogen that has been ingested.

Mosquitoes can carry disease. They carry pathogens in themselves which pass into us when they bite us to suck our blood. They are called vectors⁴, as a result.

The **malaria** pathogen is a parasite⁵. When a person infected with malaria is bitten by a mosquito, it passes into the mosquito's body, where it stays. When that mosquito, carrying the malarial pathogen bites another uninfected individual, the malaria parasite passes into that person and they become infected. An infected person suffers high fever, diarrhoea, sweating and convulsions. The malaria parasite first enters the bloodstream at the site of the mosquito bite. By the blood they are transported to the liver, where they mature. Once they have done so, they enter the bloodstream and infect red blood cells, causing them to burst after a certain period of time.

Control of malaria spread can be done by controlling the vectors of the disease, i.e., mosquitoes. Use of insecticides, and covering mosquito breeding grounds so that they cannot reproduce. Draining unnecessary bodies of water and populating those necessary with mosquito larva eating fish can also be done.

The **human immunodeficiency virus** (HIV) causes **auto-immune deficiency syndrome** (AIDS). HIV is a viral pathogen and its structure consists of the following:

- RNA (genetic material)
- Protein coat
- Lipid envelope

⁴Vectors are any organisms that can carry disease

⁵A pathogen is that which depends on another organism to live

HIV **spreads** through direct contact. It can only pass by means of direct blood transfusion and sexual intercourse amongst infected and uninfected individuals. It may pass from mother to foetus as the virus is small enough to pass through the placenta. Through breast milk, HIV can also be transmitted.

Controlling HIV comes down to careful screening of blood for the virus before transfusion. Other than that, limiting sex to one partner and avoiding unprotected sex prevents HIV. Condoms or femidoms should be used during intercourse. Re-using syringe needles amongst multiple individuals should be avoided.

Cholera is a disease caused by a bacterium, which is indirectly transmitted through water that has come in contact with the faeces of an infected individual and is drunk by an uninfected individual. To **prevent** its spread, the sewage system of a country should be well handled and the waste should be removed carefully. Maintaining good hygiene, i.e. washing regularly with soap, covering when sneezing and washing hands regularly can lower chances of cholera transmission.

The action of cholera consists of the bacterium manifesting in the small intestine. It then secretes a toxin which causes the walls of the intestine to release chloride ions. As a result, the water potential of the lumen of the small intestine decreases to below that of the intestine walls (epithelium). Water, as a result, passes from the walls of the intestine into the lumen, causing the faeces to be watery otherwise known as diarrhoea. Water is lost from the body in this way, causing the infected individual to be dehydrated. Many ions are also lost in dissolved form through this water.

The treatment of cholera can be done by rehydrating the infected individual by means of oral rehydration solution (ORS).

Excessive **alcohol consumption** results in reduced self-control and damages the liver as it is in the liver that the consumed alcohol is broken down. It is drunk as a depressant to obtain a pleasant numb feeling. Alcohol reduces the reaction times of the drinker, as it slows down nerve impulse transmission. It is also looked down upon by society.

Smokers, along with tobacco smoke, ingest three other substances: tar, carbon monoxide and nicotine.

Tar causes bronchitis, in which the goblet cells that line the respiratory tract produce excessive amounts of mucus. It also increases risk of emphysema, a condition in which alveolar walls become less elastic, causing them to burst and fuse together. This reduces the surface area of the gas exchange surface. It is also a carcinogen, meaning it increases risk of cancer.

Nicotine causes the blood vessels to narrow. This may result in coronary heart disease when the coronary arteries become narrowed.

Carbon monoxide binds to the haemoglobin in red blood cells, rendering them useless and reducing the body's oxygen carrying capacity.

It has also been seen that mothers who smoke tend to give birth to babies whose weights are much less than normal. Mothers are advised not to smoke during pregnancy as doing so increases risks of miscarriage and oxygen availability for foetus. Babies may be born with withdrawal syndrome from cigarette

smoke and the toxins of the smoke may effect the babies growth as well.

4.2 Antibiotics

A **drug** is any substance taken into the body which alters the body's internal chemical reactions.

Antibiotics are drugs which kill bacteria in the body. They are hence used to treat bacterial infections. They have no effect on viruses.

Antibiotic-resistance can arise in a population of bacteria in the following situation:

1. Person infected with bacteria, takes antibiotics.
2. Most bacteria are killed, but some mutate a gene which helps them be resistant to that specific antibiotic.
3. These mutated bacteria are said to be antibiotic resistant.

MRSA is an example of such an antibiotic resistant bacteria. The evolution of antibiotic resistant bacteria can be reduced by completing antibiotic courses and prescribing them only when necessary.

4.3 Immunity

Active immunity is the defense of the body against pathogens by production of antibodies by lymphocytes in the body itself.

Each type of pathogen has a specifically shaped antigen. The antibody for an antigen is a complementarily shaped protein, produced by specific lymphocytes⁶. These antibodies bind to the antigens on the surfaces of pathogens and either destroy them directly, or join them together so that phagocytosis can be done more easily.

Active immunity arises once an individual has already been infected by a certain pathogen once, or by vaccination.

In vaccination, an individual is injected with weakened pathogens, against which the immune system defends once the antigens of that pathogen has been detected. When lymphocytes produce antibodies, they themselves also multiply. Some of these resulting daughter cells are memory cells, and they remain in the blood for a long time. When the actual pathogen infects the individual, these memory cells detect that pathogen's antigens and produce that specific antibody complementary to that pathogen.

When a population is vaccinated, pathogens have very few places to live, and as a result it becomes extinct. This is called herd immunity, where even if not everyone is vaccinated the pathogen disappears for lack of places to live.

Passive immunity arises when antibodies are taken into the body from another individual. This is by means of passage of antibodies across the placenta and via breast milk from mother to child. The body is not being infected by

⁶A specific lymphocyte can only produce a specific antibody.

any form of pathogen in this situation, and hence no memory cells are formed. As a result, passive immunity does not last very long at all. They only last so long as the antibodies are not broken down in the blood.

In an infant, the immune system is not well developed. That is why antibodies from the mother's breast milk must be given to the infant, to protect it against infection.

HIV destroys lymphocytes, reducing their number in the blood. Lack of lymphocytes reduces the body's antibody producing capability, resulting in a weak immune system.

5 Excretion

5.1 Excretion

Excretion is the removal of toxic materials and the waste products of metabolism from organisms. In mammals, carbon dioxide and urea are waste products of respiration and deamination, excreted through lungs and urine respectively.

5.2 Urinary system

The urinary system consists of the kidneys, ureters, bladders and urethra.

The kidneys remove urea, excess salts and water from the blood and form urine from these toxic substances. The urine then flows to the ureters into the bladder. It is in the bladder the urine is stored until the sphincter muscle to the urethra is opened and the urine is excreted through it.

Note that, urea is only excreted due to the toxicity of it.

The cross section of the kidney is made up of two parts, pyramid shaped medulla and the cortex. The ureter joins the kidney at the medulla. The kidneys are made up of tubules called nephrons.

Nephrons begin in the cortex, loop into the medulla and back out and again into the medulla to join up with the ureter.

Blood flows into the kidney through the renal artery, which divides to form many capillaries called glomeruli. As the blood flows through the glomerulus in the Bowman's capsule, which is the first part of the nephron, small molecules are filtered out of it, including water, glucose, urea and other ions. Not all of these filtered substances need to be lost, so the glomerulus continues along the nephron as the nephron drops down into the cortex as the loop of Henle. Glucose, water and some ions are reabsorbed into the blood from the loop of Henle into the blood vessels that surround it, known as reabsorption. The liquid remaining in the nephrons is urine, consisting of urea, excess water and excess ions and can hence be excreted.

Urea is produced in the liver. Amino acids go to the liver after they have been digested through the hepatic portal vein, here they are assimilated by the liver. Proteins cannot be stored and those that are not needed immediately are broken down. This breakdown consists of removal of the nitrogen-containing part of the amino acid, forming urea. The process through which urea is formed, i.e., the breakdown of amino acid in the described way is called deamination.

6 Coordination and control

6.1 Mammalian nervous system

The nervous system, consisting of the brain, spinal cord and nerves coordinate and control the body's functions. The nervous system is in two parts, the peripheral (PNS) and central nervous systems (CNS).

The CNS consists of the brain and the spinal cord whereas the PNS consists of all the nerves that branch out from the CNS.

Each nerve consists of thousands of neurones. Neurones are of three types: sensory, relay and motor. All neurones have three parts, dendrites from which they receive nerve impulses, the cell body and the axon through which they transmit nerve impulses. Nerve impulses are electrical in nature.

Sensory neurones have long dendrites and a long axon, the motor neurone has shorter dendrites and long axons and the relay neurone has short dendrites and axon.

Reflex actions are rapid and automatic response to potentially dangerous stimuli, such as touching a hot surface. We do not think about such actions as the impulses do not reach the brain in such an action. The following happens in a reflex arc:

1. Sensory cells sense something dangerous.
2. Impulses are created and passed onto sensory neurone.
3. Sensory neurone pass it onto relay neurones.
4. Relay neurones pass it onto motor neurones.
5. Motor neurones stimulate effector cells.
6. Danger averted.

Reflex actions are effective as no time is wasted in thinking about what to do, which may be the difference between survival and death in some cases

A synapse is the junction between two neurones. There is a gap between each pair of neurones, the gap, along with the ending and starting of those neurones is the synapse. The end of the first neurone has vesicles with neurotransmitter molecules. When an electrical impulse travels down this neurone, the vesicles are stimulated to move to the end of the neurone and empty their contents. These neurotransmitter molecules diffuse over to and bind to the receptor proteins on the dendrites of the second neurone and an electrical impulse is hence generated in that neurone too.

Synapses ensure that neurotransmitters travel in one direction only as only one side of the synapse has receptor proteins and the other has neurotransmitters.

6.2 Mammalian sense organs

Sense organs are groups of receptors cells that respond to specific stimuli such as light, sound, touch, temperature and chemicals. The eye is a sense organ consisting of the following parts:

- Cornea: Refracts entering light.
- Iris: Controls the amount of light entering the eye.
- Lens: Focuses light onto the retina.
- Ciliary muscles and suspensory ligaments: Control the shape of the lens.
- Fovea: Contains the greatest density of light receptors.
- Optic nerve: Carries impulses to the brain.

Circular and radial muscles are antagonistic. They control the size of the opening of the pupil. When we are in a bright atmosphere, not much light need enter the eye, so the pupil must be made smaller. To do so circular muscles contract as radial muscles relax. When light is scarce, the opposite occurs.

The light entering the eye is refracted mostly by the cornea, but fine-tuning is done by the lens. Light coming from far away need not be reflected much, hence the lens must be thin. To do so, suspensory ligaments and ciliary muscles are used. The ciliary muscles relax, the suspensory ligaments become taught and the pull the lens thin. The opposite happens for objects close.

6.3 Mammalian hormones

A hormone is a chemical substance, produced by a gland and carried by the blood which alters bodily functions, that of some specific organs. A few glands and their hormones are:

- Adrenal glands: Adrenaline
- Pancreas: Glucagon and insulin
- Pituitary gland: FSH, LH, (see Section 16)
- Testes: Testosterone
- Ovaries: Oestrogen and progesterone.

Adrenaline is produced in life threatening situations, it stimulates the release of glucagon which results in glycogen stored in the liver to be released into the blood as glucose so that energy can be used. It increases heart rate to provide muscles with oxygen and glucose as much as they require. Breathing rate increases too, to absorb as much oxygen as possible.

Nervous and hormonal control differ in that nervous control is faster yet last longer but hormonal control is slower yet lasts as long as the hormones are not broken down.

6.4 Homeostasis

Homeostasis is the maintenance of a constant internal environment. There are set points of conditions in the body, when the body goes beyond or below which, negative feedback occurs and the body is stimulated to undo this change.

6.4.1 Temperature control

The skin consists of hairs, muscles to erect those hairs, sweat glands and ducts, receptors, sensory neurones, blood vessels and fatty tissue.

Insulation through adipose tissues under the skin prevent the loss of heat from the body and entrance of heat from outside the body.

Hypothalamus

Insulation through adipose tissues under the skin prevent the loss of heat from the body and entrance of heat from outside the body.

The hypothalamus has receptors which can sense temperature of blood passing through it. When the temperature of blood is above or below the set point of body temperature the hypothalamus stimulates actions to bring it back to set point.

Sweating happens when we are too hot. When sweat evaporates from our body, the body gets cooler.

Shivering happens when we are too cold, the movement of muscles along with the respiration required to cause it warms us up.

When we are cold our hairs stand up so as to trap warm air.

Vasodilation occurs when we are too hot and heat must be lost to the atmosphere from the blood vasoconstriction is the opposite and occurs when we are too cold and heat must be conserved in the blood. Vasodilation is the dilation of arterioles near the skin surface and vasoconstriction is the constriction of those arterioles.

6.5 Blood glucose control

Cells need steady amount of glucose supply to respire and carry out their processes. Too much glucose can be bad as they can mess with water potentials causing water to move out of the cells.

Insulin is the hormone that when secreted, stimulates liver to convert more and more glucose to glycogen. Glucagon does the opposite in that it stimulates the liver to convert more glycogen to glucose.

Type 1 diabetes is a condition where the body cannot produce its own insulin resulting in high blood glucose concentrations and high urine glucose concentrations. Such persons must eat controlled amounts of carbohydrates as eating too much may make them feel unwell and eating too little will result in them being lethargic as they have no stored glycogen. Their treatment consists of injecting insulin directly into their blood stream.

7 Coordination and response in plants

7.1 Coordination and response in plants

Gravitropism is a response in which parts of a plant grow towards or away from gravity (positive and negative gravitropism, respectively). Phototropism is the same only with light.

Auxin is a hormone that is produced in the shoot tip of a plant and diffuses downward through the plant. It stimulates cell elongation and is unequally distributed in response to light and gravity. Specifically, it diffuses away from light and towards gravity. Hence the plant roots elongate downward into the soil and bend toward light.

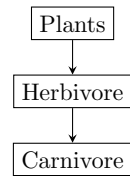
8 Relationships of organisms with one another and with the environment

8.1 Energy flow

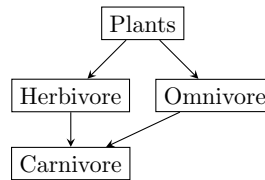
Sun is the principal source of energy input to most biological systems.

The energy from the sun is captured into glucose by photosynthesis, that energy is then passed onto other organisms and so every animal on earth is dependent on photosynthesis.

Food Chain



Food Web



Using the two diagrammatic structures above, energy flow from one organism to another can be represented. A food chain is a diagram showing the flow of energy from one organism to another. food web shows that but in multiple interconnected food chains. Both diagrams begin at producers. Each stage in a food wave or food chain is called a trophic level.

Producers are organisms that make their own organic nutrients, generally using energy from sunlight, through photosynthesis. Consumers are organisms that eat these producers to get their nutrients.

Herbivores are animals that feed on plants, carnivores are animals that feed on animals.

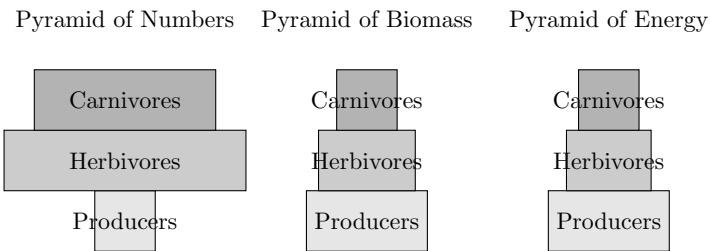
A decomposer is an organism that gets its energy from dead or waste organic material.

The transfer of energy from one trophic level to another is inefficient for the following reasons:

- The organism being eaten has itself respired some of the energy.
- Not all of the organism is eaten
- Not all of the eaten part of the organism is digested

Those that eat consumers are called primary consumers, they are also herbivores. Those that eat primary consumers are secondary and so on tertiary and quaternary. There are rarely more than five trophic levels.

In terms of just energy, it is more efficient for humans to eat crops than to eat animals raised on crops, as energy is lost in two stages when we eat animals, that during photosynthesis from the sun and that during eating by the animals. Crops provide energy directly captured from the sun and hence eating crops is more efficient.



Above are diagrams for the pyramids of numbers, biomass and energy. The pyramid of numbers is uneven because there may be one huge producer, such as a tree upon which many herbivores depend.

The pyramids of biomass represent the mass of each trophic level and are hence evenly shaped because no matter the number of the organisms, the mass will be directly proportional to the energy at that trophic level.

The pyramid of energy represents the energy at each trophic level.