

Enterocyte

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An enterocyte is a specialized cell that lines the small intestine and is involved in nutrient absorption from food. These cells have a distinctive shape and are long and thin, with a brush-like structure on their surface called microvilli. Microvilli increase the surface area of the enterocyte, which allows for more efficient absorption of nutrients.

Enterocytes are responsible for the absorption of nutrients such as carbohydrates, proteins, and fats, as well as vitamins and minerals. Once nutrients are absorbed into the enterocyte, they are transported across the cell and into the bloodstream for delivery to other parts of the body.

Enterocytes are also involved in the regulation of the gut microbiome, which is the collection of microorganisms that live in the gastrointestinal tract. They produce mucus and antimicrobial peptides that help to protect the gut from harmful bacteria and other pathogens.

The health of enterocytes is important for overall digestive health and can be influenced by various factors, including diet, medication use, and the presence of certain diseases. Dysfunction of enterocytes can lead to malabsorption of nutrients, which can cause a variety of health problems, including malnutrition and gastrointestinal disorders.

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