**What is poop?**

Though it looks complex, the human digestive system is really just a tube with an opening at each end: one where food enters (the mouth), and the other (the anus) where anything that can’t be digested exits as feces (aka poop). The tube looks more complicated because different sections of it (stomach, large and small intestine etc.) are specialized to carry out specific digestive functions. Along the way in these various organs food is broken down into its molecular components, which are eventually absorbed through the walls of the tube into the bloodstream. The blood then carries these nutrients to the cells of the body.

As mentioned above, our bodies are not able to digest all parts of the food we eat. For example, cellulose, which makes up the cell walls of plants, cannot be digested by humans. Cellulose and other indigestible components of our food travel through the tube along with everything else, but since they can’t be broken down or absorbed, they never leave it like digestible material does. Undigested matter remains in the tube until it reaches the other end where it is expelled through the anus.

Thus some of what makes up poop is the part of our food that never is truly “inside” our bodies. Because it was never absorbed into our bloodstream, it never reached our cells. It simply entered the tube at one end and exited the other.

There are other things in poop that were inside our bodies. (We talked about this before.) A lot of it is of course water. Some of the poop is made up of from bacteria that live inside our digestive tube—and not only the bacteria themselves (some die or get pushed through) but also their waste (the bacteria’s “poop”)! Another small portion of the poop is actually cellular waste from your body mixed with secretions made by your liver and pancreas. The brown color of poop, in fact, comes from a reaction between broken down blood cells, hemoglobin (the molecule responsible for the red color in blood) and other molecules in the liver.

The important point here is that we do NOT poop out our body fat or most all of the proteins that make up our bodies. Those must be eliminated in other ways.

***SUMMARY***

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| **Paragraph** | **SUMMARY/MAIN IDEAS** |
| **1** |  |
| **2** |  |
| **3** |  |