

non-essential amino acid	an amino acid that the body can make itself
non-haem iron	the kind of iron found in plant foods; it is not absorbed as easily haem iron
nutrition	the scientific study of food consumption and the use of nutrients in the body
omega 3 fatty acids	unsaturated fatty acids that have their first double bond between the third and fourth carbon on the chain
omega 6	name for a family polyunsaturated fatty acids

osteomalacia

a sign of vitamin D deficiency in adults, in which bones soften, resulting in bone pain and increased risk of fracture

pectin

a polysaccharide found in fruit and some vegetables; it is also used to make jam sets

peptones

small chains of amino acids that are formed during digestion in the stomach

peristalsis

the rhythmical wave-like motion of the muscles lining the digestive system that moves food through the gut

polysaccharides

a number of monosaccharides joined together

polyunsaturated

describes a fatty acid that has more than one double bond

precursor

chemicals that are converted to an active form of substance

prostaglandins

hormone-like substances that are involved in many processes in the body, including muscle contraction, blood flow, inflammation, and the immune system

protein

one of the main nutrients needed by the body to repair and build cells, produce enzymes and hormones, and which can be used as a source of energy

rickets

a sign of vitamin D deficiency in children, in which the bones do not harden normally and can become malformed

saturated fatty acids

a fatty acid that has no double bonds

sphincter

a ring-shaped muscle that may be tightened to slow or stop flow through part of the body; for example, the lower oesophageal sphincter prevents upward reflux of stomach contents

spirulina

algae-like bacteria that are high in protein and used to make health-food supplements

starch

a polysaccharide of glucose that forms the energy stored in plants

tocopherols

the chemical name for vitamin E

trace elements

minerals required by  
the body in tiny  
amounts

unsaturated fatty  
acids

fatty acids that have  
one or more double  
bonds

vegan

a person who eats a  
diet based wholly on  
plant foods

vegetarian

a person who does  
not eat meat, poultry  
or fish

vitamins

chemical compounds  
required by the body in  
small amounts to carry  
out important activities