Metabolism Encyclopedia Article

Metabolism

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The sum total of biochemical reactions occurring in living organisms by which energy is made available to the organism. Metabolism consists of *catabolism*, the chemical breakdown of large molecules into their smaller molecular components (e.g., from proteins to amino acids), and *anabolism*, the reconstruction or chemical synthesis of large molecules. In physiology, metabolism also describes regulated sequences of chemical reactions (physiological pathways), such as protein metabolism or urea metabolism. In **ecology**, the metabolism of lakes or ponds is the sum of the chemical reactions taking place between the inhabitants and the **environment**.