Respiration Encyclopedia Article

Respiration

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Respiration

The term respiration has two major definitions. On a cellular level, respiration is the chemical process by which food molecules are oxidized to release energy. In the process, **carbon dioxide** and water are also produced. Cellular respiration is, therefore, the reverse of **photosynthesis**, the process by which **carbon** dioxide and water are combined to form complex carbohydrate molecules. On an organismic level, respiration refers to the act of inhaling and exhaling. **Respiratory diseases** are among the most common of all environmental illnesses. Inhaling **particulate** matter in polluted air may result, for example, in various forms of pneumoconiosis.