

How Do Crocodilians Eat Animals Whole?

New research shows how crocodilians eat animals whole.

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New research shows how crocodilians can consume meals weighing 23 percent of their own body weight. This is similar to a 130-pound woman eating a hamburger weighing 30 pounds in one sitting.

But what do they do with all that food?

After feasting, crocodilians usually find a warm place to lay down while they digest their meal. During this period of digestion, crocodilians divert blood through a vessel that bypasses the lung, named the left aorta.

When crocodilians are digesting a meal, they shunt and direct carbon dioxide-rich blood straight to the stomach, where glands make use of it to form gastric acid and bicarbonate.

This enables crocodilians to secrete gastric acid at a rate that is approximately 10 times the highest rates measured in mammals. If crocodilians are deprived of this ability to sidestep their lungs, their rates of acid secretion drop significantly, and their ability to dissolve bone, a regular part of their normal diet, is impaired.

Crocodilians need this super secretion because the huge meals they consume, which are stored in the stomach while they are gradually broken down, would decay due to the overgrowth of bacteria if not inhibited by the constant acid bath.

To read the full journal article, please [click here](#).