AQA GCSE Biology | 8461

SPECIFICATION POINT 4.1.1.4

Cell differentiation

Past-paper questions

Tier	**Higher**
Question groups	**10**
Available paper years	**2011–2025**

Using this booklet

1. Answer the questions in order and show your working.
2. Original question numbers and marks are retained.
3. Print at actual size (100%) for measuring questions.
4. Use the companion answer booklet to check your work.

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

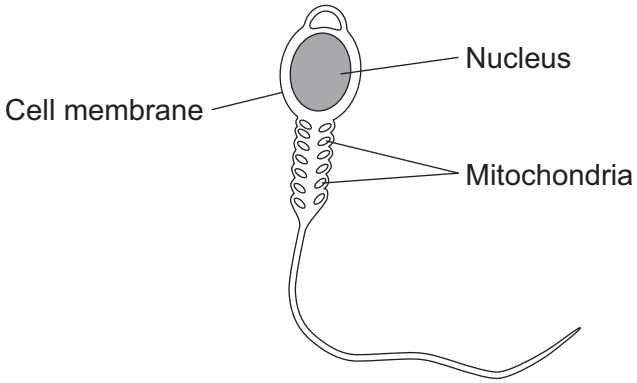
Whole questions are retained for context, so some parts assess other specification points. Current and legacy sources are labelled. Continue on extra paper if needed.

4.1.1.4 Cell differentiation

Question 01

4 Cells in the human body are specialised to carry out their particular function.

4 (a) The diagram shows a sperm cell.



The sperm cell is adapted for travelling to, then fertilising, an egg.

4 (a) (i) How do the mitochondria help the sperm to carry out its function?

.....

.....

(1 mark)

4 (a) (ii) The nucleus of the sperm cell is different from the nucleus of body cells.

Give **one** way in which the nucleus is different.

.....

.....

(1 mark)

4 (b) Stem cells from human embryos are used to treat some diseases in humans.

Explain why.

.....

.....

.....

.....

(2 marks)

4

4.1.1.4 Cell differentiation

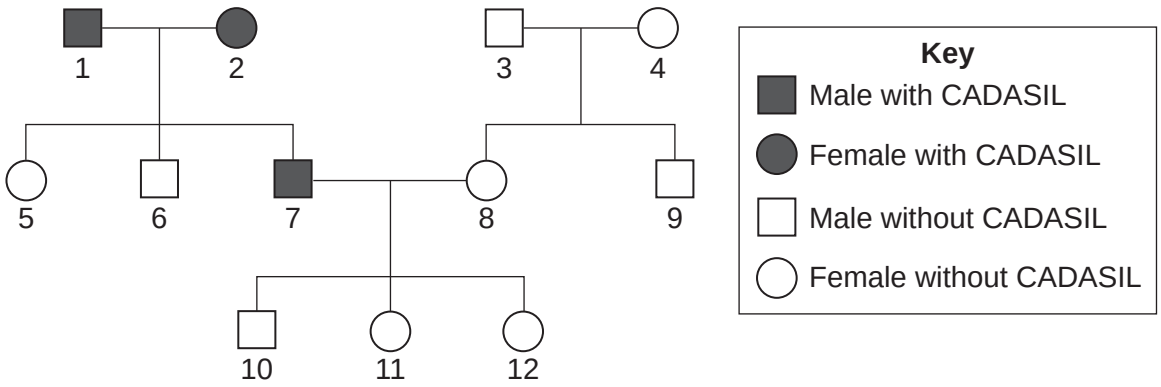
Question 02

January 2013 | BL2HP | Original Q6 | Legacy

6 CADASIL is an inherited disorder caused by a dominant allele.

CADASIL leads to weakening of blood vessels in the brain.

The diagram shows the inheritance of CADASIL in one family.



6 (a) CADASIL is caused by a *dominant allele*.

6 (a) (i) What is a *dominant allele*?

.....

.....

(1 mark)

6 (a) (ii) What is the evidence in the diagram that CADASIL is caused by a dominant allele?

.....

.....

(1 mark)

6 (a) (iii) Person **7** has CADASIL.

Is person **7** homozygous or heterozygous for the CADASIL allele?

Give evidence for your answer from the diagram.

.....

.....

(1 mark)

4.1.1.4 Cell differentiation

Question 02 · continued

6 (b) Persons **7** and **8** are planning to have another baby.
Use a genetic diagram to find the probability that the new baby will develop into a person with CADASIL.

Use the following symbols to represent alleles.

D = allele for CADASIL
d = allele for not having CADASIL

Probability = ...
(4 marks)

6 (c) Scientists are trying to develop a treatment for CADASIL using stem cells.

Specially treated stem cells would be injected into the damaged part of the brain.

6 (c) (i) Why do the scientists use stem cells?

.....

.....

.....

.....
(2 marks)

6 (c) (ii) Embryonic stem cells can be obtained by removing a few cells from a human embryo.

In 2006, scientists in Japan discovered how to change adult skin cells into stem cells.

Suggest **one** advantage of using stem cells from adult skin cells.

.....

.....
(1 mark)

10

4.1.1.4 Cell differentiation

Question 03

June 2015 | BL1HP | Original Q8 | Legacy

8 As embryos develop, some genes in cells are turned off and some genes are turned on. This allows cells to become specialised for particular functions.

Usually, after cells have become specialised, they cannot change again into different types of cells.

8 (a) What is a gene?

[2 marks]

.....

.....

.....

.....

8 (b) Scientists have developed a way to change specialised cells back into embryo-like cells by a method called iPS.

Read the information in the box.

> Cells made using iPS can be changed into different types of cells.
>
> Scientists plan to take skin cells from an endangered species of monkey called a drill and change these cells into iPS cells. These iPS cells can then be changed into egg cells or sperm cells.
>
> After fertilisation, the embryo can be inserted into the womb of a female of a non-endangered species called a mandrill. The mandrill is closely related to the drill.

Describe similarities and differences between the iPS method and adult cell cloning.

[4 marks]

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4.1.1.4 Cell differentiation

Question 03 · continued

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8 (c) Suggest **one** advantage of trying to preserve endangered species such as the drill.

[1 mark]

.....

.....

7

Turn over for the next question

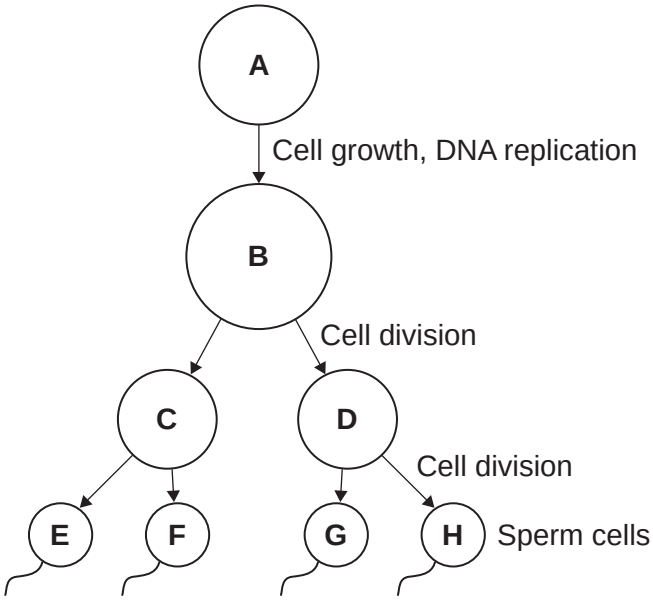
4.1.1.4 Cell differentiation

Question 04

June 2016 | BL2HP | Original Q5 | Legacy

5 **Figure 4** shows the production of human sperm cells.

Figure 4



5 (a) Name the organ where the processes shown in **Figure 4** take place.

[1 mark]

_____

5 (b) (i) Not every cell in **Figure 4** contains the same amount of DNA.

Cell **A** contains 6.6 picograms of DNA (1 picogram = 10^{-12} grams).

How much DNA is there in each of the following cells?

[2 marks]

Cell **B** _____ picograms

Cell **C** _____ picograms

Cell **E** _____ picograms

5 (b) (ii) How much DNA would there be in a fertilised egg cell?

[1 mark]

_____ picograms

5 (b) (iii) A fertilised egg cell divides many times to form an embryo.

Name this type of cell division.

[1 mark]

_____

4.1.1.4 Cell differentiation

Question 04 · continued

5 (c) After a baby is born, stem cells may be collected from the umbilical cord. These can be frozen and stored for possible use in the future.

5 (c) (i) What are stem cells?

[2 marks]

5 (c) (ii) Suggest why it is ethically more acceptable to take stem cells from an umbilical cord instead of using stem cells from a 4-day-old embryo produced by In Vitro Fertilisation (IVF).

[1 mark]

5 (c) (iii) Stem cells taken from a child's umbilical cord could be used to treat a condition later in that child's life.

Give **one** advantage of using the child's own umbilical cord stem cells instead of using stem cells donated from another person.

[1 mark]

5 (c) (iv) Why would it **not** be possible to treat a genetic disorder in a child using his own umbilical cord stem cells?

[1 mark]

10

4.1.1.4 Cell differentiation

Question 05

June 2016 | BL3HP | Original Q9 | Legacy

9 **Figure 8** shows some information about 'stem cell burgers'.

Figure 8

The first laboratory burger has now been cooked

In July 2013 the first burger grown from cow stem cells was cooked.

Muscle stem cells from cows were grown into strands of beef in a laboratory. About 20 000 strands of beef were then made into a burger. The burger can be cooked and eaten by humans. This type of meat is called cultured meat.

The cultured meat is exactly the same as normal cow muscle tissue and the cells are not genetically modified.

9 (a) (i) Some scientists think using cultured meat instead of traditionally-produced meat will help reduce global warming.

Suggest **two** reasons why using cultured meat may slow down the rate of global warming.

[2 marks]

1 _____

_____

2 _____

_____

9 (a) (ii) Suggest **two** other possible advantages of producing cultured meat instead of farmed meat.

Do **not** refer to cost in your answer.

[2 marks]

1 _____

_____

2 _____

_____

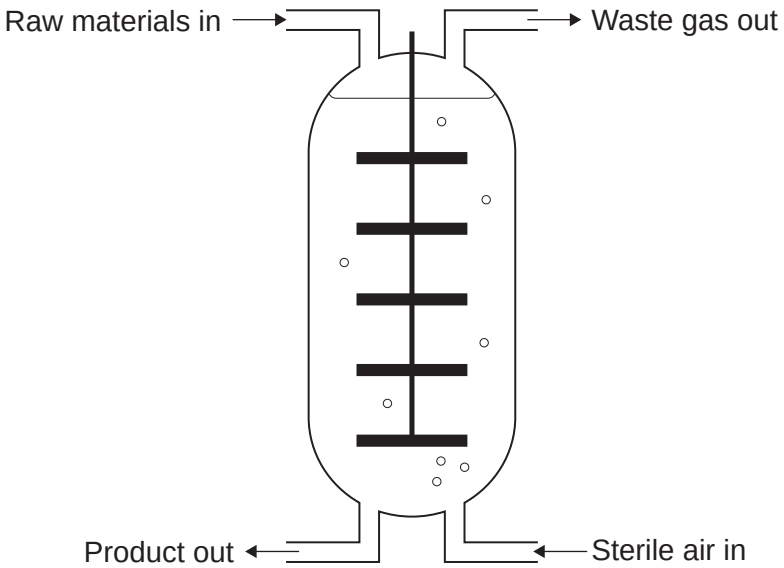
4.1.1.4 Cell differentiation

Question 05 · continued

9 (b) Mycoprotein is one type of food that is mass-produced.

Figure 9 shows a fermenter used to produce mycoprotein.

Figure 9



Describe how mycoprotein is produced.

[4 marks]

8

4.1.1.4 Cell differentiation

Question 06

June 2018 | 8461/1H | Original Q6

0 6 Cystic fibrosis (CF) is a genetic disorder caused by a change in a gene.

0 6 . 1 What molecule are genes made of?

[1 mark]

0 6 . 2 CF affects the cell membranes of cells in the lungs and digestive system.

What is the function of the cell membrane?

[1 mark]

0 6 . 3 In a person with CF, cells lining the lungs and digestive system create too much mucus.

The mucus can:

- block the duct leading from the pancreas to the small intestine
- block the tubes leading to the alveoli in the lungs.

Explain why children with CF grow more slowly than children without CF.

[6 marks]

4.1.1.4 Cell differentiation

Question 06 · continued

Table 6 shows information about people in the UK in 2015.

Table 6

	Median age in years
People with CF	19
Whole population	40

0 6 . 4 Describe how the median age of a group of people can be determined.

[2 marks]

0 6 . 5 Suggest **one** reason why the median age for people with CF is lower than the median age for the whole population.

[1 mark]

4.1.1.4 Cell differentiation

Question 06 · continued

0 6 . 6 People with a lung function below 30% may need a lung transplant.

Table 7 gives information about people with CF in 2015.

Table 7

Lung Function (%)	Percentage of people with CF
>75	22
51 – 75	72
30 – 50	4
<30	2

In 2015, the total number of people with CF in the UK was 10 800.

Calculate how many people with CF in the UK in 2015 would **not** need a lung transplant.

[2 marks]

Number of people = _____

4.1.1.4 Cell differentiation

Question 06 · continued

0 6 . 7 Lung transplants from donors have risks. One risk is organ rejection.

Scientists are researching how to solve the problem of organ rejection and hope to use stem cells to create healthy lungs.

The healthy lungs can then be transplanted into CF patients without the risk of organ rejection.

Describe how scientists may use stem cells to create healthy lungs that are **not** rejected by the CF patient.

[4 marks]

0 6 . 8 Some people disagree with the use of stem cells because of the risk of cancer.

Give **one** other reason why some people disagree with the use of stem cells to create new organs for transplants.

[1 mark]

18

4.1.1.4 Cell differentiation

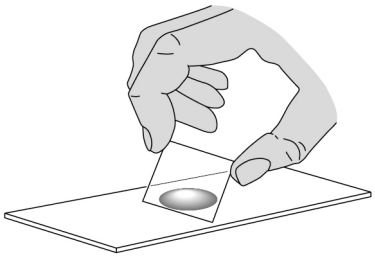
Question 07

November 2021 | 8461/1H | Original Q1

0 1 A student prepared some animal cells to view using a microscope.

Figure 1 shows the student preparing the cells.

Figure 1



0 1 . 1 Name **two** pieces of laboratory equipment the student could have used to **prepare** cells to view using a microscope.

[2 marks]

1 _____

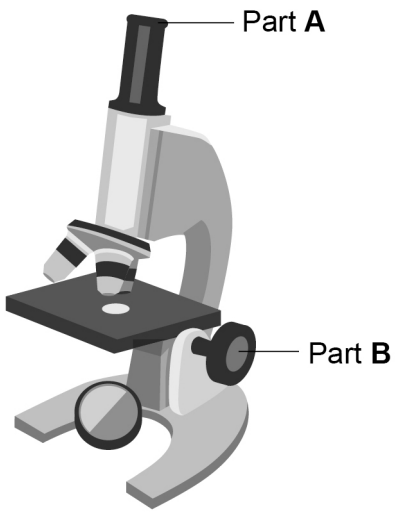
2 _____

4.1.1.4 Cell differentiation

Question 07 · continued

Figure 2 shows the student's light microscope.

Figure 2



0 1 . 2 Name part **A**.

[1 mark]

0 1 . 3 What is the function of part **B**?

[1 mark]

0 1 . 4 The student tried to look at the cells using the microscope.

Suggest **one** reason why the student could **not** see any cells when looking through part **A**.

[1 mark]

Question 1 continues on the next page

4.1.1.4 Cell differentiation

Question 07 · continued

0 1 . 5 Red blood cells are specialised animal cells.

Compare the structure of a red blood cell with the structure of a plant cell.

[6 marks]

0 1 . 6 When placed into a beaker of water:

- a red blood cell bursts
- a plant cell does **not** burst.

Explain why the red blood cell bursts but the plant cell does **not** burst.

[2 marks]

13

4.1.1.4 Cell differentiation

Question 08

0 4 Plants and animals have many defence responses.

0 4 . 1 **Table 5** shows some plant defences.

Identify whether each defence is a chemical response or a physical response.

[2 marks]

Tick (✓) **one** box in each row.

Table 5

	Type of response	
Plant defence	**Chemical**	**Physical**
Thick, waxy layer on leaf surface		
Berries that are poisonous		
Bark on trees that falls off		

4.1.1.4 Cell differentiation

Question 08 · continued

Mimicry is a mechanical adaptation seen in both plants and animals.

Figure 5 shows two insects.

Figure 5



Hornet **Hornet Moth**

0 4 . 2 Hornets are insects that sting other animals and cause pain.

Hornet moths do **not** sting other animals.

Suggest how mimicry helps the **hornet moth** survive.

[1 mark]

Question 4 continues on the next page

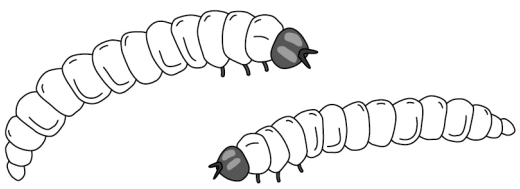
4.1.1.4 Cell differentiation

Question 08 · continued

Adult hornet moths lay eggs that hatch into larvae.

Figure 6 shows the larvae of a hornet moth.

Figure 6



0 4 . 3 The larvae of the hornet moth:

- live inside the roots of trees
- use the tree roots as a source of food
- cause damage to the tree roots.

Explain why a tree might die if the roots of the tree are damaged.

[6 marks]

4.1.1.4 Cell differentiation

Question 08 · continued

0 4 . 4 The larvae of the hornet moth form when fertilised eggs divide by mitosis.

Describe how mitosis produces two genetically identical cells.

[4 marks]

0 4 . 5 The cells which are first formed from the fertilised eggs of the hornet moth are stem cells.

Name the process by which these stem cells then form specialised cells.

[1 mark]

14

4.1.1.4 Cell differentiation

Question 09

0 1 A root is a plant organ.

Plant roots contain many different types of tissue.

0 1 . 1 What is a tissue?

[1 mark]

0 1 . 2 Tissue in the tip of a plant root contains stem cells.

Stem cells can differentiate into any type of cell.

Name the type of tissue in plants that contains stem cells.

[1 mark]

In the past many drugs were extracted from plants.

0 1 . 3 Aspirin is a painkiller.

Which plant does aspirin originate from?

[1 mark]

Question 1 continues on the next page

4.1.1.4 Cell differentiation

Question 09 · continued

Scientists have extracted chemical **A** from the deadly nightshade plant.

Chemical **A** can be used as a painkiller.

Table 1 shows information about where chemical **A** is found.

Table 1

Part of deadly nightshade plant	Mass of chemical A in 100 g of plant tissue in grams
Roots	1.3
Leaves	1.2
Berries	0.7

0 1 . 4 The scientists usually extract chemical **A** from the berries of the deadly nightshade plant.

Suggest **one** reason why berries are used instead of leaves or roots.

[1 mark]

4.1.1.4 Cell differentiation

Question 09 · continued

A deadly nightshade plant has chlorosis (yellow leaves).

The mass of chemical **A** found in the **leaves** of the plant is 60% of the mass shown in **Table 1**.

0 1 . 5 Calculate the mass of chemical **A** in 200 g of the **leaves** with chlorosis.

Give your answer in mg.

[4 marks]

Mass of chemical **A** = _____ mg

0 1 . 6 Suggest **one** reason why the leaves of the deadly nightshade plant have chlorosis.

[1 mark]

Question 1 continues on the next page

4.1.1.4 Cell differentiation

Question 09 · continued

Chemical **A** has **not** been tested in large-scale clinical trials in the UK.

0 1 . 7 It is important for drugs to be tested in clinical trials before the drugs are approved for use by the public.

Give **two** reasons why.

[2 marks]

1 _____

_____

2 _____

_____

There are many online reports making claims about the effects of chemical **A**.

Some of these reports are biased.

0 1 . 8 Suggest **one** reason why a report making claims about the effects of chemical **A** may be biased.

[1 mark]

_____

_____

4.1.1.4 Cell differentiation

Question 09 · continued

0 1 . 9 How can scientists be sure that claims about new drugs are valid?

[1 mark]

Tick (✓) **one** box.

Advertise the claims on social media. ☐

Ask an international company to produce the drug. ☐

Have the claims peer reviewed. ☐

Publish the claims in a newspaper. ☐

13

Turn over for the next question

4.1.1.4 Cell differentiation

Question 10

June 2025 | 8461/1H | Original Q7

0 7 In people with severe liver disease the liver stops working correctly.

A person with severe liver disease can be treated with:

- an injection of embryonic stem cells
  or
- a liver transplant from a donor.

The person's body can reject embryonic stem cells and can reject a liver transplanted from a donor.

0 7 . 1 What property of embryonic stem cells makes them suitable to treat liver disease?

[1 mark]

0 7 . 2 Suggest **one ethical** reason why a person may **not** want an injection of embryonic stem cells.

[1 mark]

4.1.1.4 Cell differentiation

Question 10 · continued

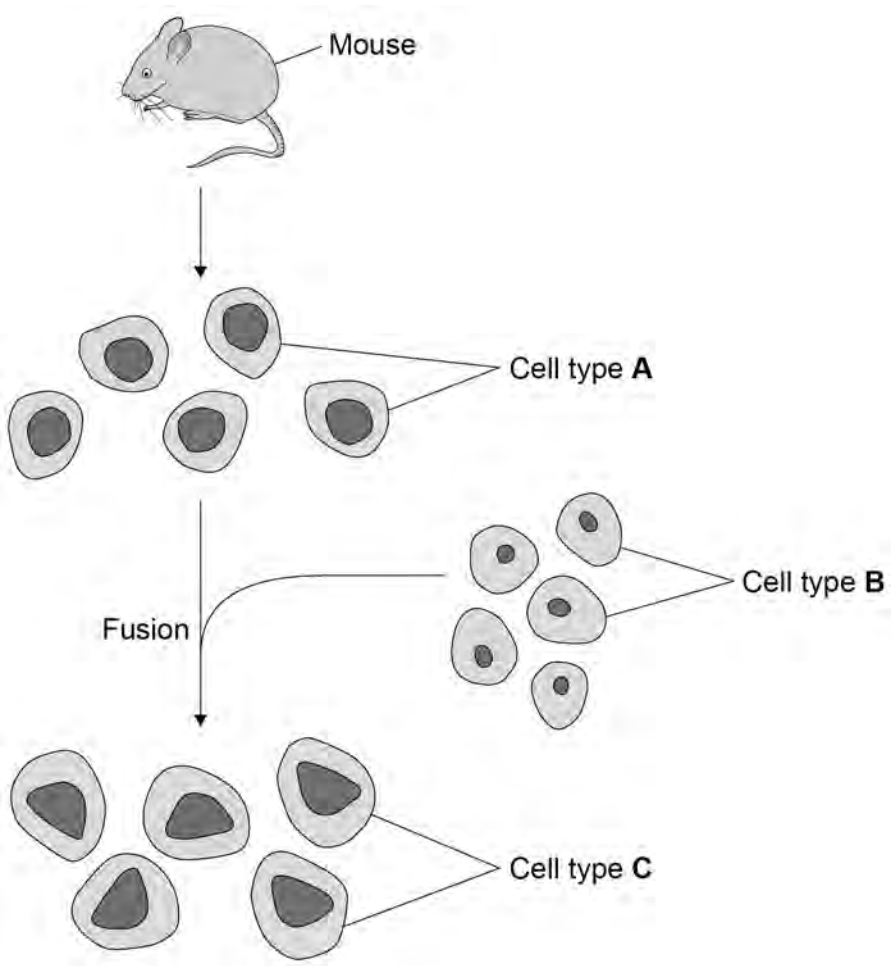
Drugs can be used to reduce the risk of liver rejection after a transplant.

One drug contains monoclonal antibodies.

The monoclonal antibodies are specific to an antigen on the surface of liver cells.

Figure 9 shows part of the process used to create the monoclonal antibodies.

Figure 9



0 7 . 3 Name the **three** types of cell in **Figure 9**.

[3 marks]

A _____

B _____

C _____

4.1.1.4 Cell differentiation

Question 10 · continued

0 7 . 4 How is the mouse stimulated to produce cell type **A**?

[1 mark]

0 7 . 5 A patient with severe liver disease was given a liver transplant.

The drug containing the monoclonal antibody is given to the patient.

Explain how the monoclonal antibody stops the patient's white blood cells from attacking the cells of the donor liver.

[3 marks]

0 7 . 6 Give **one** other use of monoclonal antibodies.

Do **not** refer to pregnancy tests.

[1 mark]

Question 7 continues on the next page

4.1.1.4 Cell differentiation

Question 10 · continued

The liver produces bile.

Bile is needed for efficient digestion.

0 7 . 7 Where is bile stored in the human body?

[1 mark]

Tick (✓) **one** box.

- Gall bladder ☐
- Kidney ☐
- Pancreas ☐
- Small intestine ☐

0 7 . 8 Explain why a person with severe liver disease has difficulty digesting fats.

[6 marks]

17