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me·tab·o·lism  (mĭ-tăb ə-lĭz'əm)

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n.

1. The chemical processes occurring within a living cell or organism that are necessary for the maintenance of life. In metabolism some substances are broken down to yield energy for vital processes while other substances, necessary for life, are synthesized.
2. The processing of a specific substance within a living cell or organism: *iodine metabolism*.

[From Greek *metabolē*, change, from *metaballein*, to change : *meta-*, meta- + *ballein*, to throw; see **g^wela-** [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#).]

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Indo-European & Semitic Roots Appendices

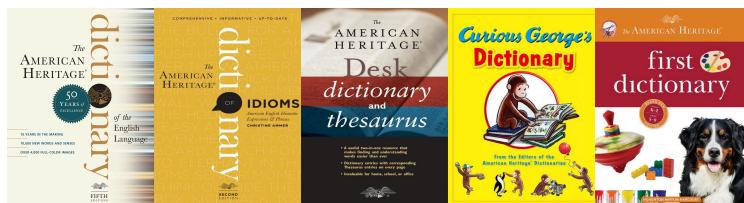
Thousands of entries in the dictionary include etymologies that trace their origins back to reconstructed proto-languages. You can obtain more information about these forms in our online appendices:

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The Indo-European appendix covers nearly half of the Indo-European roots that have left their mark on English words. A more complete treatment of Indo-European roots and the English words derived from them is available in our [Dictionary of Indo-European Roots](#).

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