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12.3 DNA Replication

Lesson Objectives

- 1. Summarize the events of DNA replication.
- 2. Compare DNA replication in prokaryotes with that of eukaryotes.

Lesson Summary

Copying the Code Each strand of the double helix has all the information needed to reconstruct the other half by the mechanism of base pairing. Because each strand can be used to make the other strand, the strands are said to be complementary. DNA copies itself through the process of replication.

- The two strands of the double helix separate, forming replication forks.
- New bases are added, following the rules of base pairing (A with T and C with G).
- Each new DNA molecule has one original strand and one new strand.
- **DNA polymerase** is an enzyme that joins individual nucleotides to produce a new strand of DNA.
- During replication, DNA may be lost from the tips of chromosomes, which are called **telomeres**.

Replication in Living Cells The cells of most prokaryotes have a single, circular DNA molecule in the cytoplasm. Eukaryotic cells have much more DNA. Nearly all of it is contained in chromosomes, which are in the nucleus.

- Replication in most prokaryotic cells starts from a single point and proceeds in two directions until the entire chromosome is copied.
- In eukaryotic cells, replication may begin at dozens or even hundreds of places on the DNA molecule, proceeding in both directions until each chromosome is completely copied.

Copying the Code

1. Why are the strands of a DNA molecule said to be complementary?
Because each strand can be used to create the other strand.
2. What is the first step in eukaryotic DNA replication?
The strands of the double helix separate, or unzip.
3. If the base sequence on a separated DNA strand is CATTAGG, what will the base sequence on its complementary strand be?
The complementary strand will be GTATACC.
4. What enzyme joins individual nucleotides to produce the new strand of DNA?
DNA polymerase.

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