

## What are cells?

Robert Hooke in 1665 was credited for the discovery of cells in both living and dead organisms. He was the first to use a microscope to look at the cell.

The **cell** is the basic unit of structure and function of all living things. Cells work together to perform basic life processes that keep an organism alive, and carrying out the following functions: movement, breathing, feeding, reproducing, excreting, and growing.

All cells have similar parts. However, plant cells have a **cell wall** and chloroplasts which contain chlorophyll. These are not present in animal cells. The parts that are common to both plant and animal cells are the **nucleus, cell membrane, cytoplasm, and vacuole**.

The **nucleus** controls the activities of the cell.

The **cell membrane** holds the parts of the cell together. It also separates the cell from its surroundings and controls what material enters and leaves the cell.

**Cytoplasm** is a jellylike substance containing many chemicals to keep the cell functioning.

The **vacuole** stores food, waste, and water.

The **cell wall** is only found in plants. It is a stiff outer layer that protects the cell and gives it shape.

**Chloroplasts** contain chlorophyll that plants need to make food.

Plant cells, usually, have a rectangular shape, while animal cells, usually, have a round shape.