



The Digestive System

What is the digestive system?

The digestive system, or **gastrointestinal tract**, is a tract of organs that is responsible for digesting and absorbing nutrients from food. Food enters through the mouth, is broken down in the stomach, and then moves through the small intestine, where nutrients are absorbed. The digestive system also includes accessory organs that help in the process, such as the liver, pancreas, and gallbladder.



Liver, pancreas & gallbladder

After leaving the stomach, digested material enters the duodenum, the first part of the small intestine, where it is mixed with bile secreted by the **liver**. The liver is a large organ on the right side of the abdomen. It produces bile, which is stored in the **gallbladder**. Bile then moves through the **pancreas** and **gallbladder** into the small intestine.

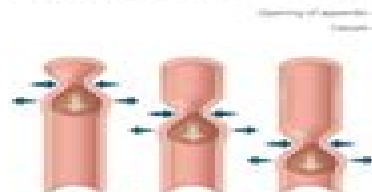


Layers of large intestine



Large intestine

The large intestine consists of the cecum, the colon, and the rectum. It is responsible for absorbing water and electrolytes from the remaining indigestible food matter. The large intestine is divided into the cecum, ascending colon, transverse colon, descending colon, and sigmoid colon.



Peristaltic action

Food material is pushed through the digestive system by a series of powerful muscular contractions called peristalsis. These contractions move the material forward and the wave action, which the stomach has initiated.

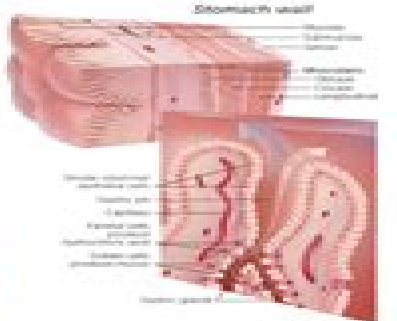
The mouth & salivary glands

Chewing, the mechanical action of the food, begins in the mouth. The tongue mixes the food with the secretions of the salivary glands, which moisten the food and help in swallowing. The salivary glands are located in the mouth and produce saliva, which contains the enzyme amylase for starch digestion.



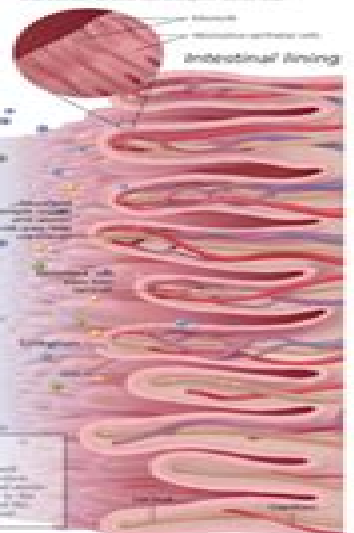
The stomach

The stomach is a large, muscular organ that is responsible for the mechanical and chemical digestion of food. It is located in the upper left part of the abdomen. The stomach wall is composed of several layers, including the mucosa, submucosa, muscle, and serosa.



Small intestine

The small intestine is a long, coiled tube that is responsible for the majority of the chemical digestion of food. It is located in the central part of the abdomen. The small intestine is divided into the duodenum, jejunum, and ileum.



Absorption

The small intestine is responsible for the absorption of the majority of the nutrients from the food. The nutrients are absorbed into the bloodstream through the walls of the small intestine. The large intestine is responsible for the absorption of water and electrolytes.

Anatomy And Physiology Packet On Digestion

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The Journal of Anatomy and Physiology, Normal and Pathological ,1887 Journal of Anatomy and Physiology ,1887

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