

The Digestive System

the basics...

The digestive system consists of the gastrointestinal (GI) tract and the accessory organs involved within the digestion process. Digestion involves the breakdown of food into smaller substances (micro and macro nutrients) that the body absorbs and assimilates into the body. Without the digestive system, the body wouldn't be able to gain the essential nutrients that are required to sustain life.

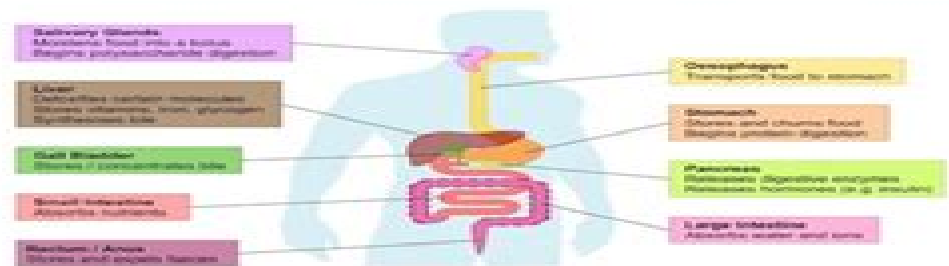
There are two major groups which make up the digestive system:

1. The **alimentary canal** - where food passes through, includes:

- Oesophagus
- Stomach
- Small Intestine
- Large Intestine

2. The **accessory organs** - Aid in digestion but do not transfer food:

- Salivary Glands
- Pancreas
- Liver
- Gall Bladder



Key Information

- > Stomach should look like a 'J'-shaped bag and be connected to the oesophagus and small intestine.
- > Liver should look like a right-angled triangle and be superimposed to the left of the stomach (right side of the human).
- > Bile duct (connected to gall bladder) and pancreatic duct should both feed into a u-shaped bend of the small intestine.
- > Small intestine should be thinner in width than the large intestine. Small intestine is 6-7m long, large intestine 1.5m long.

Movement of Food

PERISTALSIS



Peristalsis - A wave of contraction caused by contraction of longitudinal and circumferential involuntary (smooth) muscle in the walls of the digestive tract.

SEGMENTATION



Segmentation - The contraction and relaxation of non-adjacent segments of circular smooth muscle in the intestines. Contractions move chyme in both directions allowing greater mixing of food.

The Alimentary Tract

The Oesophagus - A hollow tube that connects to the oral cavity to the stomach. Food is mixed with saliva and moved into a bolus via peristalsis.

The Stomach - A temporary storage tank, food is mixed by a churning motion, protein digestion starts here. It is lined by gastric pits that release gastric juices, creating an acidic environment.

The Small Intestine - A long folded tube where nutrients are absorbed. Consists of the duodenum, jejunum and the ileum.

The Large Intestine - The final part of the alimentary canal, water and dissolved minerals are absorbed. Consists of the ascending, transverse, descending and sigmoid colon, as well as the rectum.

The Accessory Organs

The Salivary Glands - These release saliva that moistens the food, it contains enzymes that aid in the breakdown of starch. The salivary glands are the parotid gland, submandibular and the sublingual gland.

The Pancreas - This produces lots of different enzymes, these are released into the small intestine through the duodenum. It also secretes hormones such as insulin and glucagon that regulate our blood sugars.

The Liver - This takes the raw materials absorbed by the small intestine and uses them to make important chemicals. The main functions are detoxification, storage, metabolism, bile production and haemoglobin breakdown.

The Gall Bladder - It stores the bile produced by the liver which are used to emulsify fats. The bile is released into the small intestine through the common bile duct.

Macro Nutrients - Water, Carbohydrates, Proteins and Fats.
Micro Nutrients - Vitamins, Minerals and Trace Elements.

Enzymes - A chemical substance which causes or accelerates a chemical change in another substance without being changed itself.

Main Functions of The Digestive System

Digestion breaks down a food groups into their component parts and together with vitamins and minerals are used by the body to:

- Build and repair the body
- Produce heat and energy
- Provide raw materials for the body's chemical reactions.

INGESTION
Taking food into body

PIGESTION
Breaking down food

ABSORPTION
Moving food part of cell

ASSIMILATION
Making food part of cell

ELIMINATION
Removing unused food

Digestive System Notes Study Guide Answers

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