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The digestive system is a collection of organs that work together on digesting and absorbing food. Digestion is a process that your body uses to break down the food you eat into molecules that your body can use for energy and nutrients. The following organs work together to help your body process the food you eat. WIN-Initiative/Getty Images Have you ever noticed how your mouth is starting to water in your favorite food? That's because digestion starts in the mouth. Teeth grind the food you eat and mix it with saliva to form a kind of orb, known as bolus. During mixing, an enzyme called amylase of the drooling begins to break down carbohydrates. Once the food is soft and relatively flexible, the tongue pushes it into the back of the mouth and swallows down the esophagus. SEBASTIAN KAULITZKI/SCIENCE PHOTO LIBRARY / Getty Images Your esophagus is a flattened, muscular tube that connects the mouth to the abdomen. As the food is swallowed, the esophagus expands. It takes food about three seconds to pass through the esophagus, depending on the texture and consistency of the food you've been eating. Common esophageal problems include heartburn, acid reflux and gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD), all of which are caused by acid flowing from the stomach and irritating the lower part of the esophagus. Toshiro Shimada/Getty Images Your stomach is a muscle-shaped, J-shaped bag that receives food from the esophagus and sends it to the small intestine. In the stomach, the food churns and mixes with enzymes and acid until it becomes a liquid, called chyme. The stomach is the main place to digest proteins and uses powerful enzymes, known as pepsins, as well as hydrochloric acid to digest foods such as meat, milk and cheese. OpenStax College/Wikimedia Commons/CC-BY-3.0 The small intestine is about a 24-meter long muscle tube, which is divided into three different parts: duodenum, jejunum and ileum. Each of the three parts is the main place of digestion and absorption. Absorption is a key part of the digestive system that infuses molecules from digested food into the blood and, ultimately, cells. Problems with a thin or thick gut can affect the way your body absorbs and digests food, leading to malnutrition. People who lack parts of the gut or have limited bowel mobility may require a complete parenteral diet (TPN), a type of diet that bypasses the digestive system. PIXOLOGICSTUDIO/SCIENCE PHOTO LIBRARY/Getty Images The last part of the digestive tract, the colon, is a muscular tube about 1.5 meters long. It is divided into a cecum, colon and rectum. Together, these segments bind loose ends of digestion. This includes completing nutrient absorption and processing waste into feces. Your colon also makes some types of vitamin B and vitamin K. Problems with your large intestine, thick intestine and rectum can be caused by diseases such as Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis, as well as celiac disease. If part of the colon or rectum does not function as it should, you may need ostomy. The pancreas helps your small intestine by secreting pancreatic juice, a liquid filled with enzymes and sodium bicarbonate that can stop the process of digestion of pepsin. It also exudes insulin, which helps your body regulate blood sugar. PIXOLOGICSTUDIO/SCIENCE PHOTO LIBRARY / Getty Images Your liver has many functions. First, it produces bile, which the small intestine uses to digest fats in food. It also metabolizes proteins, carbohydrates and fats; helps regulate blood sugar levels; stores glycogen for fast energy; produces fibrinogen, which clots the blood; makes vitamin A; and recycles worn-out red blood cells. Liver diseases, such as hepatitis, can have major complications affecting other parts of the body because the liver is involved in so many essential functions, such as digestion. MedicalRF.com/Getty Images Tucked under the liver, your gallbladder is a container for storing bile, a yellow-green liquid made up of salt, cholesterol and lecithin. Your small intestine uses the gallbladder produced bile to digest fat. Most people never think about their gallbladder until they develop a problem with gallstones or gallbladder disease, such as cholecystitis. If you have a disease associated with the gallbladder, you may experience jaundice. Instead, bile enters the bloodstream, which can cause your skin, eyes and nails to look yellow. Thanks for the feedback! What are your concerns? Verywell Health uses only high-quality sources, including peer-reviewed studies, to support the facts within our articles. Read our editorial process to learn more about how we check the facts and keep our content accurate, reliable and reliable. Bornhorst GM, Singh RP. The formation of bolus and disintegration during the digestion of carbohydrate foods. Compr Rev Food Sci Food Saf. 2012;14(4):431-445. doi:10.1111/j.1541-4337.2011.00172.x National Institutes of Health, National Institute of Deafness and Other Communication Disorders. Dysphagia. Updated March 6, 2017 at the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases. Your digestive system and how it works. December, 2017 Aggarwal L, Sattavan S, Lal R, Sharma D, Borgharia S, Shrivastava N, Alagappan R, Singh R. Short Bowel Syndrome: Unusual Clinical Entity and Therapeutic Challenge—Our Experience and Literature Review. Indian J Surg. 2017;79(4):349-353. doi:10.1007/s12262-017-1651-x Dabirian A, Yaghmaei F, Rassouli M, Tafreshi MZ. Quality of life in patients with ostomy: qualitative study. The patient prefers adherence. 2010;5:1-5. doi:10.2147/PPA.S14508 Fargo MV, Grogan SP, Saguil A. Assessment of jaundice in adults. I am a fam doctor. 2017;95(3):164-168. is the breakdown of carbohydrates, proteins and fats into small soluble substances that are absorbed into the blood. Amylase, protease and lipase are enzymes that are important in digestion. The structure of your digestive system your digestive system is uniquely designed to do its job of turning your food into the nutrients and energy you need to survive. And when you do with it, it manually packs your solid waste, or chair, for disposal when you have a bowel drain. The main organs that make up the digestive system (in order of their function) are the mouth, esophagus, stomach, small intestine, colon, rectum and anus. Along the way, they are helped by the pancreas, gallbladder and liver. Here's how your organs work together in your digestive system. Mouth mouths are the beginning of the digestive tract. Actually, digestion starts before you bite. Your salivary glands become as active as you see and smell that pasta dish or warm bread. Once you start eating, you chew the food into pieces that are easier to digest. Your saliva is mixed with food to begin to break it down into a form that your body can absorb and use. When you swallow, your tongue carries food down your throat and esophagus. Oesophagus Located in the throat near the trachea (trachea), the esophagus receives food from the mouth when swallowing. Epiglottis is a small flap that overlaps over the trachea as you swallow to prevent suffocation (when food goes into the trachea). A series of muscle contractions inside the esophagus called peristalsis brings food to the stomach. But first, the ring-like muscle at the bottom of the esophagus, called the lower esophagus, has to relax to release food. The sphincter is then infected and prevents the stomach contents from flowing back into the esophagus. (When this does not happen and these contents flow back into the esophagus, you may experience acid reflux or heartburn.) Stomach stomach is a hollow organ, or container, that holds food while mixing with gastric enzymes. These enzymes continue the process of decoding food into a usable form. Cells in the lining of the stomach secrete strong acid and powerful enzymes that are responsible for the process of degradation. When the contents of the stomach are sufficiently processed, they are released into the small intestine. The small intestine composed of three segments -- duodenum, jejunum and ileum -- is a 22-meter long muscle tube that breaks down food using an enzyme that releases pancreas and bile from the liver. Peristalsis also works in this organ, moving food and mixing it with digestive juices from the pancreas and liver. Duodenum is the first segment of the small intestine. It is largely responsible for the continuous process of breaking. Jejunum and ileum lower in the gut are mainly responsible for the absorption of nutrients into the bloodstream. The content of small start semi-firm and end up in liquid form after passing through the organ. Water, bile, enzymes and mucus contribute to the change in consistency. Once the nutrients are absorbed and the remaining liquid for food residue passes through the small intestine, it then passes to the colon or colon. Pancreas Pancreas secretes digestive enzymes in the 2n states that stretch out proteins, fats and carbohydrates. The pancreas also produces insulin, transferring it directly into the bloodstream. Insulin is the main hormone in your body for metabolizing sugar. The liver liver has many functions, but its main job within the digestive system is to process nutrients absorbed from the small intestine. Bile from the liver secreted in the small intestine also plays an important role in digesting fat and some vitamins. The liver is a chemical plant of the body. Raw materials are needed that the gut absorbs and makes all the different chemicals the body needs to function. The liver also detoxifying potentially harmful chemicals. It breaks down and drives many drugs that can be toxic to the body. The gallbladder gallbladder stores and concentrates bile from the liver, then releases it into the binner's small intestine to help absorb and digest fat. The colon (colon) Colon, or colon, is responsible for processing waste so that bowel movements are simple and practical. It is a 6-foot-long muscle tube that connects the small intestine to the rectum. The colon is located from the chekuma, ascending (right) colon, transverse (via) colon, descending (left) colon and sigmoid colon, which is associated with the rectum. The stool, or waste that is left over from the digestive process, passes through the colon using peristalsis, first in a liquid state and eventually in a solid form. As the chair passes through the colon, the water is removed. The chair is stored in the sigmoid (S-shaped) colon until mass movement empties it into the rectum once or twice a day. It usually takes about 36 hours for the stool to pass through the colon. The stool itself is mainly the rest of the food and bacteria. These good bacteria perform several useful functions, such as synthesis of various vitamins, processing of waste products and food particles and protection against harmful bacteria. When the descending colon becomes full of stools, or feces, it empties its contents into the rectum to begin the process of elimination (bowel movements). The rectum rectum is a flat, 8-inch chamber that connects the colon to the anus. The job of the rectum is to receive a chair from the colon, to let you know that the chair must be evacuated (pooped) and hold the chair until the evacuation occurs. When anything (gas or stool) reaches the rectum, sensors send a message to the brain. The brain then decides whether rectal content can be published or not. If they can, the sphincters relax and the rectum contracts, distributing its contents. If the cannot be disposed of, the sphincter contraction and the rectum is placed so that the sensation temporarily disappears. Anus Anus is the last part of the digestive tract. It is a 2-inch long channel consisting of pelvic floor muscles and two sphincters (internal and external). The lining of the upper anus can detect rectal content. This lets you know if the content is liquid, gas or rigid. The anus is surrounded by sphincter muscles that are important in enabling control of the stool. The pelvic floor muscle creates an angle between the rectum and anus that prevents the stool from coming out when it shouldn't. The inner sphincter is always tight, except when the stool enters the rectum. This keeps us on the continent (preventing us from inadvertently pooping) when we sleep or otherwise unaware of the presence of a chair. When we get the urge to go to the bathroom, we rely on our outdoor sphincter to hold the chair until we reach the toilet, where it then relaxes to release the contents. Last review by Cleveland Clinic medical expert on 09/13/2018. References Get useful, useful and relevant health + wellness information enews Cleveland Clinic is a nonprofit academic medical center. Advertising on our site helps support our mission. We don't support the products or services of a clinic that isn't Cleveland. Policy rules

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