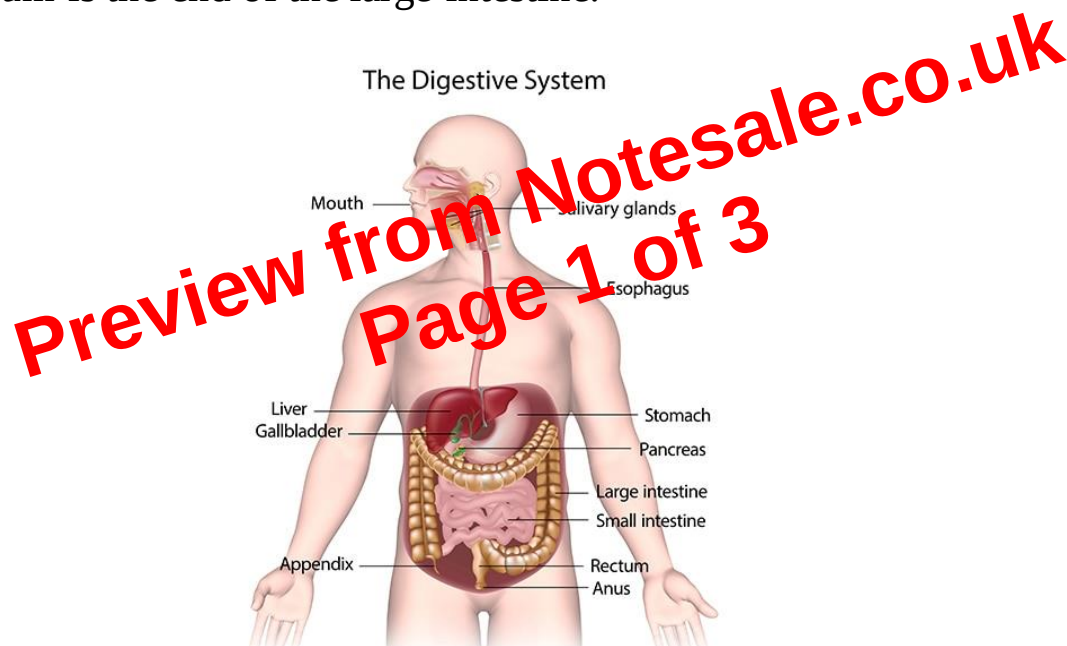


What is the digestive system?

The digestive system is made up of the gastrointestinal tract—also called the GI tract or digestive tract—and the liver, pancreas, and gallbladder. The GI tract is a series of hollow organs joined in a long, twisting tube from the mouth to the anus. The hollow organs that make up the GI tract are the mouth, esophagus, stomach, small intestine, large intestine, and anus. The liver, pancreas, and gallbladder are the solid organs of the digestive system.

The small intestine has three parts. The first part is called the duodenum. The jejunum is in the middle and the ileum is at the end. The large intestine includes the appendix, cecum, colon, and rectum. The appendix is a finger-shaped pouch attached to the cecum. The cecum is the first part of the large intestine. The colon is next. The rectum is the end of the large intestine.



Bacteria in your GI tract, also called gut flora or microbiome, help with digestion. Parts of your nervous and circulatory NIH external link systems also help. Working together, nerves, hormones, bacteria, blood, and the organs of your digestive system digest the foods and liquids you eat or drink each day.

Why is digestion important?