Digestive System

Chapter 23

Digestive System

Digestion – is breakdown of complex food molecules like starch into smaller molecules like glucose that can pass through the cell membranes of intestine and get absorbed into blood.

Digestive system has 2 main components. A) GI tract B) Associated organs – teeth, tongue, salivary glands, liver and pancreas.

Alimentary Canal

Mouth → vestibule → mouth or oral cavity → fauces → oropharynx → laryngopharynx → esophagus → stomach → duodenum → jejunum → ileum → ileocecal valve → cecum → ascending colon → transverse colon → descending colon → sigmoid colon → rectum → anal canal → anus

Histology of digestive system: Intestine has 4 major parts. Starting from outside to inner side:-

Serous: or serous membrane is formed of Squamous epithelium and a small amount of connective tissue.

Muscularis Externa: is formed of external longitudinal and inner circular smooth muscles.

Submucosa: is Areolar connective tissue = lamina propria having blood and lymphatic vessels in it.

Mucosa: or mucous membrane is formed of 3 parts. A) Muscularis mucosae is a thin layer of smooth muscles. B) Lamina Propria is a small amount of Areolar connective tissue. C) Epithelium is mostly simple columnar. It helps in secretion of enzymes and absorption of food.

Mouth or Oral Cavity

Mouth = oral cavity – is outlined by lips – anterior; cheeks – lateral; tongue inferior; palate - superior.

Tongue lies at the floor of oral cavity. Mouth is continuous with posterior oropharynx. Anterior roof of oral cavity is Hard Palate formed of bones – palatine processes of maxilla and palatines and soft palate without any bones.

Uvula: Soft palate ends in Uvula, a conical muscular process.

Palatoglossal folds: are anterior folds and attach soft palate to tongue.

Palatopharyngeal folds lie posterior to palatoglossal folds and attach palate to lateral pharynx.

Palatine tonsils lie in between these 2 folds.

Fauces are 2 arched openings made by posterior margin of soft palate and join mouth cavity to Oropharynx.

Teeth

Teeth: are fixed in alveoli in Maxilla and mandible. Each half jaw has 2 incisors – cutting teeth; 1 cuspid – tearing teeth; 2 premolars – smaller chewing teeth; and 3 molars – larger chewing teeth. Permanent teeth are 32 – (i 2/2, c 1/1, pm 2/2, m 3/3) X 2, in adult humans. Deciduous teeth = milk teeth = baby teeth are 20 and include 2 incisors, 1 canine and 2 molars in each half of jaw (i 2/2, c 1/1, pm 0/0, m 2/2). Usually incisors and canines have single root, premolars have 2 roots and molars have 3 roots. Infection or impaction in roots give tooth pain and need Root Canal Treatment. Cuspids and 3rd molar teeth = wisdom teeth are vestigial = nonfunctional in humans.

Tooth: is formed of bone like tissue dentine and is yellow in color. It is covered by white Enamel = ivory, the hardest substance in human body. Crown is the exposed part of tooth. Part of tooth embedded in jaw bone is Root. A narrow part of tooth, Neck joins crown and root. Neck is covered by gum = gingiva. Gingivitis is infection of gums by bacteria and is aggravated by Entamoeba gingivitis.

Salivary Glands

Salivary Glands: 3 pairs of salivary glands.

Parotid glands – below skin in front of but lower to auricles of ears. Parotid duct passes anterior over
masseter muscle, pierces the buccinators and opens inside cheeks in vestibule near 2\textsuperscript{nd} molar tooth. 

**Sublingual glands**— are the smallest salivary glands and lie below tongue. Sublingual ducts are small and open laterally below tongue.

**Submandibular glands**— inner to mandibular angle. Submandibular ducts pass anterior and median to open below tongue next to each other.

**Functions of saliva**: Lubricates food, binds food, has amylase to digest starch

**Pharynx**

Pharynx – is the throat. Soft Palate forms the roof. It lacks any bone support. Its posterior part hangs freely, the Uvula. It has 3 parts. A) Nasopharynx B) Oropharynx C) Laryngopharynx

**Nasopharynx**: nasopharynx is superior pharynx continuous with nasal cavity. **Pharyngeal tonsils and tubal tonsils** do not allow microorganisms to enter internal auditory tubes that open into nasopharynx. Food does not enter nasopharynx.

**Oropharynx** is the middle pharynx and is posterior continuity of mouth. Air and food cross their paths in it. **Palatine and lingual tonsils** lie in this part.

**Laryngopharynx** is inferior pharynx and larynx and esophagus open into it.

**Esophagus** is about 10” long and passes through neck, thorax and diaphragm and immediately enters stomach.

Esophagus is lined by **Adventitia** – a coarse, dry connective tissue that fixes it to surrounding organs. All digestive organs in Abdonomopelvic cavity are covered with Serous membranes = Serosa. Serosa allows frictionless movement of organs.

No secretion or absorption takes place in esophagus.

It is lined with **Stratified Squamous Epithelium that suddenly changes to Simple Columnar tissue in stomach**.

**Stomach**

**Stomach** is highly distensible curved tube 6-10” in length. When empty hardly wider than colon but when full can hold 1 gallon or 3L of food and can extend up to pelvis.

It has 4 main parts.

A) Cardiac region lies around cardiac opening = orifice. A sphincter muscle guards the opening and allows food to enter stomach from esophagus.

B) Fundus is dome shaped superolateral part tucked below diaphragm.

C) Body is the main middle part.

D) Pylorus is the funnel shaped part that opens into small intestine. A pyloric valve is a sphincter guarding pyloric orifice and allows only small amount of food to enter duodenum.

**Greater curvature** is lateral convex surface. **Lesser curvature** is medial concave surface. **Lesser omentum** fixes liver to lesser curvature of stomach. **Greater omentum** attaches greater curvature to coils of small intestine and bends superior to wrap spleen and transverse colon and blends with mesocolon that fixes colon to posterior body wall.

Stomach wall has innermost oblique muscles in addition to outer longitudinal and inner circular muscles of rest of alimentary canal. It helps in mechanical action of churning and mixing the food by continuous contractions and relaxations of stomach muscles. It helps in mixing gastric juices with food. Food is changed to a creamy paste = Chyme inside stomach by combined mechanical (churning) and chemical action of enzymes.

**Gastric Glands**

Gastric glands lie at the base of gastric pits in the stomach mucosa. **Chief cells** are most common and secrete protein digesting enzymes Pepsinogen. Single large cells – **Parietal Cells** open into gastric glands and secrete concentrated HCl acid. **HCl acid change inactive protein digesting enzyme Pepsinogen** →
Pepsin.
A large number of mucous glands open into stomach and secrete mucous. Mucous protects stomach lining from the action of HCl acid and protein digesting enzymes. This explains why stomach and intestine formed of flesh can digest meat without any harm to them.
Fat soluble substances like Alcohol and Aspirin easily pass into blood in stomach and can easily cause gastric irritation.

Small intestine
**Small Intestine**: is formed of 3 parts. A) Duodenum B) Jejunum and C) ileum. It is the main site of digestion and absorption of food. It is hanging by fan shaped mesentery from posterior body wall.
**Small Intestine is about 20 feet in cadaver = dead body but only about 6-13 feet in living human due to muscle tone.**
**Duodenum**: is 1st part of small intestine coils around head of pancreas. Bile duct and main pancreatic duct open into duodenum at hepatopancreatic ampulla. Accessory pancreatic duct opens just before the main pancreatic papilla. Sphincters control openings of bile duct and both pancreatic ducts. It has intestinal glands that secrete complete digestive juice that digests all 4 types of food requiring digestion – carbohydrates, lipids, proteins and nucleic acids.
**Jejunum**: is the middle part of small intestine. Jejunum means ‘empty’ because it gets empty after death of human. It lies mostly in upper left quadrant of abdomen.
**Ileum**: is the last part of small intestine and opens into large intestine at ileocecal valve. Ileum means ‘coiled’. Both jejunum and ileum are coiled. Ileum mostly lies in lower right quadrant of abdomen. Note spellings of ileum – small intestine and ilium – is a part of coxal bone of pelvic girdle. Memory aid – ‘e’ is coiled and ‘I’ is straight.

Surface Area and Movements of Intestine
**Increase in Surface Area in Intestine**: 3 structures increase surface area for absorption of digested food in intestine.
A) **Plicae** – circular folds in intestine
B) **Villi** – finger like multicellular projections on plicae
C) **Microvilli** – finger like projections of cell membrane of cells on villi.

**GI Movements**:
**Peristalsis** is pushing forward of food from one part of GI tract to next.
**Segmentation** is a local to and fro movement that churns food, mixes enzymes with food.
Parasympathetic ANS regulates movements by stimulating contractions in muscularis externa.

Large intestine
**Large Intestine**: is wider than small intestine but shorter in length – about 5 feet. It is formed of 5 parts.
**Cecum**: is reduced in humans due to omnivore diet. It receives undigested food from ileum through ileocecal valve.
**Appendix**: is a small twisted worm like extension of Cecum. It is rich in lymphatic tissue. Sometimes it creates trouble due to overgrowth of enteric bacteria in it. In some patients needs surgical removal = Appendicitis.
**Colon**: is the largest part of large intestine and frames the jejunum and ileum. Its parts include a) ascending colon b) transverse colon c) descending colon and d) S-shaped sigmoid colon that opens into rectum. No digestion takes place in large intestine. It harbors a large number of enteric bacteria that help in disposal of toxic by-products of digestion and increase the bulk of feces. Water is absorbed here to solidify the feces. It also stores feces.
**Rectum**: is short. We get the feeling to pass out feces when feces enter rectum.
**Anal Canal**: is the last part and opens out through anus. Anus is guarded by 1 voluntary and 1 involuntary sphincter muscles. Undigested food and bacteria pass out through anus as feces.

**Liver**: is the largest gland in human body. It occupies the right upper quadrant in abdomen and lies inferior to diaphragm and mostly covered by rib cage.

**Lobes of liver**: traditionally liver is divided into 4 lobes. 2 prominent lobes are larger **Right lobe** and smaller **Left lobe**; these are separated by falciparum ligament. 2 much smaller lobes lie on posteroinferior side. **Caudate lobe** lies near superior margin next to inferior vena cava and **Quadrate lobe** lies near inferior margin, next to gall bladder.

**Microscopic Anatomy of liver**: liver has distinct hexagonal lobules demarcated by connective tissue. Liver cells = hepatocytes lie in sheets = Plates of hepatocytes. On one side lie microscopic channels = liver sinusoids. On other side lie microscopic channels = Bile canaliculi. Hepatic artery (brings O₂) → branches → portal arteriole → blood enters liver sinusoid between hepatocyte sheets → central vein. Bile canaliculi → bile duct branch → bile duct. Hepatic Portal vein (brings excess nutrients at absorption) → branches → portal venule → blood enters liver sinusoid between plates of hepatocytes → central vein.


**Bile**: Liver produces metabolic waste, Bile. Bile is stored in Gall Bladder. Bile has **bile pigments** – mainly bilirubin formed by breakdown of hemoglobin and **bile salts** – derivatives of cholesterol. Bile salts help in digestion and absorption of fats.

Recap 1 Digestive System
1. ------is outermost covering of intestine and is formed of Simple Squamous epithelium and a small amount of connective tissue.
2. Muscularis externa is formed of outer ------muscles and inner ------muscles.
3. ------ is a thin sheet of muscles between submucosa and mucosa.
4. ------ is areolar connective tissue present in submucosa and mucosa.
5. ------ salivary glands lie below skin anterior to auricles and secrete saliva inside cheeks.
6. ------tonsils lie between palatoglossal and palatopharyngeal folds in mouth cavity.
7. Adult teeth include ----incisor/s, ----cuspid/s, ----premolar/s, and ----molars in each half of jaw.
8. Deciduous teeth include ----incisor/s, ----cuspid/s, ----premolar/s, and ----molars in each half of jaw.
9. Arch shaped opening between mouth cavity and oropharynx is -------.
10. Parietal cells of Gastric glands secrete ------acid and chief cells secrete enzyme -------
11. Surface area in intestine is increased by ------, ------ and -------.
12. Bile is stored and concentrated in -------

Recap 2 Digestive System
1. Dome shaped part of stomach is ------ and esophagus opens into ------ of stomach.
2. ----duct and ----duct open into hepatopancreatic ampulla in duodenum.
3. Humans have # of ------deciduous = milk teeth and # of-------permanent teeth.
4. Pepsin is part of ------- juice and Trypsin is part of ----------------juice.
5. ------is unsegmented narrow tube attached to Cecum.
6. ----------produces alkaline juice to neutralize acidity of food released from stomach and a complete spectrum of enzymes for digestion of all foods.
7. Colon absorbs vitamins ------, ------ and ------ produced by bacteria.
8. During swallowing of food ---- covers nasopharynx and ------ covers larynx.
9. -------- ----------- attaches stomach to liver; -------- omentum attaches stomach to colon.
10. In digestive system only esophagus is lined by a dry coarse connective tissue, ---------------- that fixes it to surrounding organs.
11. -------- -------- is a narrow band of smooth muscle fibers present in middle of colon and -------are small segments in colon.
12. During absorption of food glucose and amino acids directly pass into --------but fats pass into ------lymphatic vessels.