

National Digestive Diseases Information Clearinghouse

The Digestive Diseases Dictionary



U.S. Department
of Health and
Human Services

NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

NIDDK NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
DIABETES AND DIGESTIVE
AND KIDNEY DISEASES

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Some terms listed have many meanings; only those meanings that relate to digestion or digestive diseases are included. Words that appear in ***bold italic*** are listed elsewhere in the dictionary.

Information in this dictionary is not a substitute for a visit to your doctor. Talk with a health professional if you have a digestive problem.

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Pronunciation Guide

This pronunciation guide uses letters and letter combinations, rather than phonetic symbols, to stand for the various sounds in the English language.

Vowels

a	cat, bat
ah	father
air	pear, hair
ar	park
ay	say, came, weigh
aw	saw, bought
e	bet, set
eh	(used at the <i>end</i> of a syllable or when standing alone) examples: meadow (MEH-doh) enemy (EH-nuh-mee) <i>but</i> diet (DY-et)
ee	feet, neat
i	sit, igloo
ih	(used at the <i>end</i> of a syllable or when standing alone) examples: chicken (CHIH-ken) miracle (MIHR-ih-kuhl) <i>but</i> picnic (PIK-nik)
ihr	near, here
y	fire, idol
eye	(used at the <i>beginning</i> of a syllable or when standing alone) examples: iron (EYE-urn) chloride (KLOR-eyed) <i>but</i> silent (SY-luhnt)

o	hot, cot
oh	coat, home
oo	food, rude
or	tore, soar, for
oy	soil, boy
ou	now, couch
u	put, foot
uh	about, sum, china
ur	hurt, alert
yoo	use
yoor	cure

Consonants

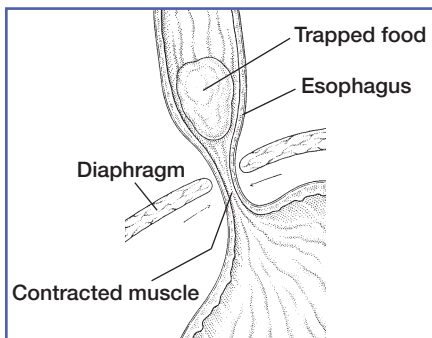
b	bat, job
ch	chop, itch
d	dig, bed
f	fur, tough, calf
g	grape, big
h	happy
j	joke, nudge
k	kite, car, tack
l	lip, sell
m	move, jam
n	not, knee
ng	ring
p	play, hop
r	rain, fur
s	set, tips
ss	bus, guess, fence
sh	shy, fish
t	toy, boat
th	breath
v	vine, have
w	walk, where
y	yes
z	zip, jazz, has
zh	measure

abdomen (AB-doh-men): the area between the chest and the hips containing the *stomach*, *small intestine*, *large intestine*, *liver*, *gallbladder*, *pancreas*, and *spleen*.

abdominal migraine (ab-DOM-ih-nuhl) (MY-grayn): sudden, repeated attacks of abdominal pain, *nausea*, and *vomiting*, usually in children who later develop migraine headaches. A headache may also be present.

absorption (ab-SORP-shuhn): the way nutrients are taken up by the *digestive system*.

achalasia (ak-uh-LAY-zee-uh): a rare disorder of the *esophagus* making it difficult to swallow food because the muscle at the end of the esophagus does not relax enough for the passage to open.



Achalasia.

achlorhydria (ay-klor-HY-dree-uh): a lack of *hydrochloric acid* in the digestive juices of the *stomach*.

activated charcoal (AK-tih-vayt-ed) (CHAR-kohl): a substance that may be used to treat accidental or intentional ingestion of toxic substances.

acute (uh-KYOOT): refers to conditions that happen suddenly and last a short time. Acute is the opposite of *chronic*, or long lasting.

adenovirus (AD-uh-noh-VY-ruhss): viruses that cause *gastroenteritis* and respiratory infection. *Vomiting* and *diarrhea* appear about 1 week after exposure. Infections occur all year round and most often in children less than 2 years old.

aerophagia (AIR-oh-FAY-jee-uh): a condition that occurs when a person swallows too much air, causing *gas* and frequent *belching*.

alactasia (ay-lak-TAY-zee-uh): an inherited condition causing a lack of the *enzyme* needed to digest milk sugar.

A

Alagille syndrome (ah-lah-ZHEEL) (SIN-droh-m): a genetic condition causing multiple abnormalities in the body, including in the *liver*. A lower than normal number of *bile ducts* inside the liver reduces bile passage.

alimentary canal (al-ih-MEN-tur-ee) (kuh-NAL): see *gastrointestinal tract*.

alkaline reflux esophagitis (AL-kuh-lyn) (REE-fluhks) (uh-sof-uh-JY-tiss): the development of *esophagitis* due to prolonged contact of the *esophagus* with nonacidic *gastric* contents.

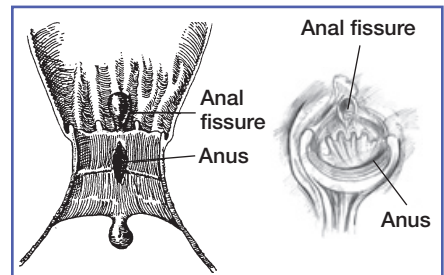
allergy (AL-ur-jee): a condition in which the body's immune system has an over-reaction to certain foods, animals, plants, or other substances.

amebiasis (uh-mee-BY-uh-siss): an *acute* or *chronic* infection caused by amoebas, a type of parasite. Symptoms vary from mild *diarrhea* to frequent, watery diarrhea and loss of water and fluids in the body. See *gastroenteritis*.

amino acids (uh-MEE-noh) (ASS-idz): the basic building blocks of *proteins*. The body produces many amino acids and others come from food, which the body breaks down for use by the cells. See *protein*.

ampulla of Vater (am-PUL-luh) (uhv) (VAH-tur): the opening of the *common bile duct* and pancreatic duct into the *duodenum*. Also called *papilla of Vater*.

anal fissure (AY-nuhl) (FISH-ur): a small tear in the *anus* that may cause itching, pain, or bleeding.



Anal fissure.

anal fistula (AY-nuhl) (FISS-tyoo-luh): a passage that develops between the *anus* and the skin. Most *fistulas* are the result of an abscess or infection that spreads to the skin. Fistulas are typical of *Crohn's disease*.

anastomosis (uh-NASS-toh-MOH-siss): a surgical connection of two body parts. An example is an operation in which part of the *colon* is removed and the two remaining ends are joined.

anemia (uh-NEE-mee-uh): a condition caused when the body does not have enough red blood cells or hemoglobin. Hemoglobin is a *protein* in the blood that carries oxygen.

angiodysplasia (AN-jee-oh-diss-PLAY-zee-uh): abnormal or enlarged blood vessels in the *gastrointestinal tract*.

angiography (AN-jee-OG-ruh-fee): an x ray that uses dye to detect blood vessels in organs.

anorectal (AY-noh-REK-tuhl): related to, or involving, both the *rectum* and *anus*.

anorectal abscess (AY-noh-REK-tuhl) (AB-sess): a collection of pus in a cavity in the *anorectal* area.

anorectal atresia (AY-noh-REK-tuhl) (uh-TREE-zee-uh): the lack of a normal opening between the *rectum* and *anus*.

anorectal function tests (AY-noh-REK-tuhl) (FUHNK-shuhn) (tests): tests used to diagnose abnormal functioning of the *anus* or *rectum* and to evaluate anal *sphincter* muscle function.

anoscopy (an-OSS-kuh-pee): a test to look for *anal fissures*, *fistulas*, *hemorrhoids*, or cancer. A special instrument called an anoscope is used to look into the *anus*.

antacids (ant-ASS-idz): medicines that neutralize acids in the *stomach*. (Brand names: Maalox, Mylanta, Di-Gel.)

antibiotic (AN-tee-by-OT-ik): a medicine that kills bacteria. Examples are cephalixin and amoxicillin. (Brand names: Keflex, Novamox.)

anticholinergics (AN-tee-KOL-ih-NUR-jiks): medicines that are often used to treat muscle *spasms* in the *intestine*. Examples are dicyclomine and hyoscyamine. (Brand names: Bentyl, Levsin.)

antidiarrheals (AN-tee-DY-uh-REE-uhlz): medicines that help control *diarrhea*. An example is loperamide. (Brand name: Imodium.)

A

antiemetics (AN-tee-uh-MET-iks): medicines used to treat *nausea* and *vomiting*. Examples are promethazine, prochlorperazine, and ondansetron. (Brand names: Compazine, Phenergan, Zofran.)

antispasmodics (AN-tee-spaz-MOD-iks): medicines that help reduce muscle *spasms* in the *intestines*. Examples are dicyclomine and atropine. (Brand names: Bentyl, Donnatal.)

antrectomy (an-TREK-toh-mee): an operation to remove the lower portion of the *stomach*, called the *antrum*. This operation helps reduce the amount of stomach acid. It is rarely used when a person has complications from *ulcers*.

antrum (AN-truhm): the lower part of the *stomach*, which is lined with *mucus* and produces *gastrin*.

anus (AY-nuhss): the opening at the end of the *digestive tract* where *bowel* contents leave the body.

aorto-enteric fistula (ay-OR-toh-en-TUR-ik) (FISS-tyoo-luh): a rare condition in which a prosthetic aortic graft causes an opening into the *duodenum*.

appendectomy (AP-pen-DEK-toh-mee): an operation to remove the *appendix*.

appendicitis (uh-PEN-dih-SY-tiss): inflammation of the *appendix*.

appendix (uh-PEN-diks): a 4-inch pouch attached to the *cecum*, the first part of the *large intestine*. The appendix's function, if any, is unknown.

ascending colon (uh-SEN-ding) (KOH-lon): the beginning part of the *colon*, usually on the right side of the *abdomen*.

ascites (uh-SY-teez): a buildup of fluid in the *abdomen* usually caused by severe *liver* disease such as *cirrhosis*.

astrovirus (ASS-troh-VY-ruhss): a virus that causes *vomiting* and *diarrhea* within 1 to 3 days of exposure and is most active during the winter months. It infects primarily infants, young children, and older adults.

A-B

asymptomatic (AY-simp-toh-MAT-ik): the condition of having a disease but none of its symptoms.

atonic colon (uh-TON-ik) (KOH-lon): a lack of normal muscle tone or strength in the *colon*. It may result in chronic *constipation*. Also called *lazy colon*.

atresia (uh-TREE-zee-uh): the lack of a normal opening in the *esophagus*, *intestines*, *bile ducts*, or *anus*.

atrophic gastritis (uh-TROF-ik) (gass-TRY-tiss): *chronic* irritation of the *stomach* lining that causes loss of the stomach lining and glands.

autoimmune hepatitis (AW-toh-ih-MYOON) (HEP-uh-TY-tiss): a *liver* disease in which the body's immune system damages liver cells for unknown reasons.

barium (BA-ree-uhm): a chalky liquid used to coat the inside of organs so they will show up on an x ray.

barium enema x ray (BA-ree-uhm) (EN-uh-muh) (eks) (ray): x ray of the *rectum*, *colon*, and lower part of the *small intestine*. A barium *enema* is given first. *Barium* coats the insides of organs so they will show up on the x ray. Also called *lower GI series*.

barium meal (BA-ree-uhm) (meel): x rays of the *esophagus*, *stomach*, and *duodenum*. The patient swallows *barium* before x rays are taken. Barium makes the organs show up on x rays. Also called *upper GI series*.

Barrett's esophagus (BA-ruhts) (uh-SOF-uh-guhss): a condition in which the tissue lining the *esophagus* is replaced by tissue that is similar to the lining of the *intestine*. It is commonly found in people with *gastroesophageal reflux disease* (*GERD*).

B

belching (BELCH-ing): see *eructation*.

Bernstein test (BURN-steen) (test): a test used to find out if heartburn is caused by acid in the *esophagus*. The test involves dripping a mild acid, similar to *stomach* acid, through a tube placed in the esophagus.

bezoar (BEE-zor): a ball of food, mucus, vegetable fiber, hair, or other material that cannot be digested in the *stomach*. Bezoars can cause blockage, *ulcers*, and bleeding.

bile (byl): fluid made by the *liver* and stored in the *gallbladder* that helps break down *fats* and get rid of wastes in the body.

bile acids (byl) (ASS-idz): acids made by the *liver* that work with *bile* to break down *fats*.

bile ducts (byl) (duhktz): tubes that carry *bile* from the *liver* to the *gallbladder* for storage and to the *small intestine* for use in *digestion*.

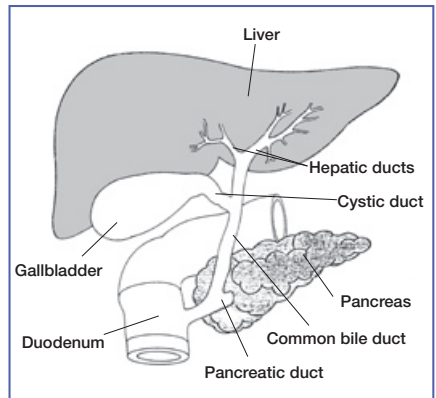
biliary atresia (BIL-ee-air-ee) (uh-TREE-zee-uh): a condition present from birth in which the *bile ducts* inside or outside the *liver* do not have normal openings. *Bile* becomes trapped in the liver, causing *jaundice* and *cirrhosis*. Without surgery the condition may cause death.

biliary dyskinesia (BIL-ee-air-ee) (DISS-kih-NEE-zee-uh): refers to a group of *functional disorders* of the *biliary system* and *gallbladder*.

biliary stricture (BIL-ee-air-ee) (STRIK-choor): a narrowing of the *biliary tract* from scar tissue that results from injury, disease, *pancreatitis*, infection, *gallstones*, or cancer. See *stricture*.

biliary system (BIL-ee-air-ee) (SISS-tuhm): see *biliary tract*.

biliary tract (BIL-ee-air-ee) (trakt): made up of the *gallbladder* and the *bile ducts*. Also called *biliary system* or *biliary tree*.



Biliary tract.

B

biliary tree (BIL-ee-air-ee) (tree): see *biliary tract*.

bilirubin (BIL-ih-ROO-bin): a reddish-yellow substance formed when hemoglobin breaks down. Bilirubin is found in *bile* and blood and is normally passed in *stool*. Too much bilirubin accumulating in the blood is the cause of *jaundice*.

biofeedback (BY-oh-FEED-bak): a machine that measures physical responses. It is used to treat both physical and psychological problems, including *motility disorders*.

biopsy (BY-op-see): a procedure in which a tiny piece of a body part, such as the *colon* or *liver*, is removed for examination with a microscope.

bismuth subsalicylate (BIZ-muhth) (SUHB-suh-LISS-ih-layt): a nonprescription medicine used to treat *diarrhea*, *heartburn*, *indigestion*, and *nausea*. It can be part of the treatment for *ulcers* caused by the bacterium *Helicobacter pylori*. (Brand name: Pepto-Bismol.)

bloating (BLOHT-ing): a fullness or swelling in the *abdomen* that often occurs after meals.

blue rubber bleb nevus syndrome (bloo) (RUHB-ur) (bleb) (NEE-vuhss) (SIN-droh-m): a rare condition with painful lesions found in the *small intestine*, *colon*, and sometimes *stomach* and parts of the nervous system that may cause *gastrointestinal* bleeding.

borborygmi (bor-boh-RIG-mee): rumbling sounds caused by *gas* moving through the *intestines*. Also known as *stomach* “growling.”

bowel (boul): another word for the *small* and *large intestines*.

bowel movement (boul) (MOOV-ment): body wastes passed through the *rectum* and *anus*.

bowel obstruction (boul) (ob-STRUHK-shuhn): partial or complete blockage of the *small* or *large intestine*.

bowel prep (boul) (prep): the process used to clean the *colon* with *enemas* or a special drink that causes frequent *bowel movements*. It is used before surgery of the *colon*, a *colonoscopy*, or a *barium enema x ray*. See *lavage*.

B-C

Brooke ileostomy (bruk) (IL-ee-OSS-tuh-mee): a procedure in which one end of the *small intestine* is brought through an opening in the abdominal wall and sewn to the skin to create a *stoma*. It is performed when the entire *colon* must be removed or bypassed.

Budd-Chiari syndrome (buhd-kee-AH-ree) (SIN-droh-m): a rare *liver* disease in which the veins that drain blood from the liver are blocked or narrowed.

bulking agents (BUHLK-ing) (AY-jents): *laxatives* that make *bowel movements* soft and easy to pass.

burping: see *eructation*.

calicivirus (KAL-see-VY-riss): a family of viruses divided into the noroviruses and the sapoviruses. They can infect people of all ages and are transmitted from person to person and through contaminated water or food—especially oysters from contaminated waters.

calculi (KAL-kyoo-ly): stones or solid lumps such as *gallstones*.

Campylobacter pylori (KAM-pih-loh-BAK-tur) (py-LOR-eye): the original name for the bacterium that causes *ulcers*. The new name is *Helicobacter pylori*.

candidiasis (KAN-dih-DY-uh-siss): an infection caused by the *Candida* fungus, which lives naturally in the *gastrointestinal tract*.

carbohydrates (KAR-boh-HY-drays): one of the three main classes of food and a source of energy. Carbohydrates are the sugars and starches found in breads, cereals, fruits, and vegetables. During *digestion*, carbohydrates are changed into simple sugars *glucose*, *galactose*, and fructose, which are stored in the *liver* until cells need them for energy.

Caroli's disease (kah-ROH-leez) (dih-ZEEZ): a rare, inherited condition in which the *bile ducts* in the *liver* are enlarged and may cause irritation, infection, *gallstones*, or cancer.

cathartics (kuh-THAR-tiks): see *laxatives*.

catheter (KATH-uh-tur): a thin, flexible tube that carries fluids into or out of the body.

C. difficile (see) (duh-FISS-uh-lee): see *Clostridium difficile*.

cecostomy (see-KOSS-toh-mee): a tube that goes through the skin into the beginning of the *large intestine* to remove *gas* or *feces*. This procedure is a short-term way to protect part of the *colon* while it heals after surgery.

cecum (SEE-kuhm): the beginning of the *large intestine*. The cecum is connected to the lower part of the *small intestine*, called the *ileum*.

celiac disease (SEE-lee-ak) (dih-ZEEZ): an immune reaction to *gluten*, a *protein* found in wheat, rye, and barley. The disease causes damage to the lining of the *small intestine* and prevents absorption of nutrients. Also called *celiac sprue*, *gluten intolerance*, and *nontropical sprue*.

celiac sprue (SEE-lee-ak) (sproo): see *celiac disease*.

chloride channel activators (KLOR-eyed) (CHAN-uhl) (AK-tih-vay-torz): medication used to increase intestinal fluid and motility to help *stool* pass, thereby reducing the symptoms of *constipation*. An example is lubiprostone. (Brand name: Amitiza.) See *laxatives*.

cholangiography (koh-LAN-jee-OG-ruh-fee): a series of x rays of the *bile ducts*.

cholangitis (KOH-lan-JY-tiss): irritated or infected *bile ducts*.

cholecystectomy (KOH-lee-siss-TEK-toh-mee): an operation to remove the *gallbladder*.

cholecystitis (KOH-lee-siss-TY-tiss): an irritated *gallbladder*.

cholecystogram, oral (KOH-lee-SISS-toh-gram), (OR-uhl): an x ray of the *gallbladder* and *bile ducts*. The patient takes pills containing a special dye that makes the organs show up on x ray. Also called *cholecystography, oral*.

cholecystography, oral (KOH-lee-siss-TOG-ruh-fee), (OR-uhl): see *cholecystogram, oral*.

C

cholecystokinin (KOH-lee-siss-toh-KY-nin): a hormone released in the *small intestine* that causes muscles in the *gallbladder* and the *colon* to tighten and relax.

choledocholithiasis (koh-LED-oh-koh-lith-EYE-uh-siss): the presence of *gallstones* in the *bile ducts*.

cholelithiasis (KOH-lee-lih-THY-uh-siss): the presence of *gallstones* in the *gallbladder*.

cholestasis (koh-LESS-tuh-siss): reduced *bile* flow, which may be caused by drugs or *liver* diseases.

cholesterol (koh-LESS-tur-ol): a fatlike substance in the body. The body makes and needs some cholesterol, which also comes from foods such as butter and egg yolks. Too much cholesterol may cause *gallstones* or a buildup of *fat* in the arteries that causes a disease called atherosclerosis that slows or stops blood flow.

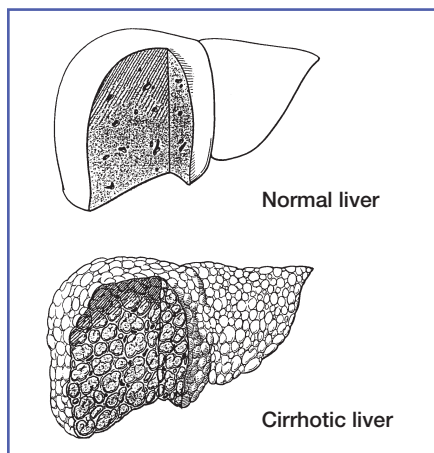
chronic (KRON-ik): refers to disorders that last a long time, often years. Chronic is the opposite of *acute*, or brief.

chronic atrophic gastritis (KRON-ik) (uh-TROF-ik) (gass-TRY-tiss): end stage of *chronic* inflammation of the *stomach*, usually caused by *H. pylori*, resulting in reduced acid production.

chronic idiopathic constipation (KRON-ik) (ID-ee-oh-PATH-ik) (KON-stih-PAY-shuhn): *constipation* caused by a disturbance of colonic or *anorectal* motor function of unknown cause.

chyme (kym): a thick liquid made of partially digested food and *stomach* juices. This liquid is made in the stomach and moves into the *small intestine* for further *digestion*.

cirrhosis (sur-ROH-siss): a chronic *liver* condition caused by scar tissue and cell damage, which makes it hard for the liver to remove poisons or toxins such as alcohol and drugs from the blood. These toxins build up in the blood and may impact brain function.



Cirrhosis.

C

***Clostridium difficile* (C. difficile)** (kloss-TRID-ee-uhm) (duh-FISS-uh-lee): a bacterium naturally present in the **large intestine** that can make a toxin that causes **diarrhea**.

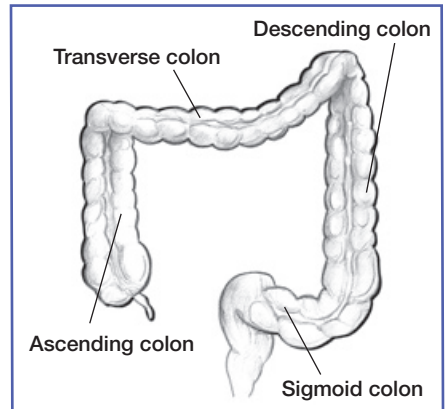
colectomy (koh-LEK-toh-mee): an operation to remove all or part of the **colon**.

colic (KOL-ik): attacks of abdominal pain. Infant colic refers to extended crying of unknown cause in infants.

colitis (koh-LY-tiss): irritation of the **colon**.

collagenous colitis (ko-LAJ-uh-nuhss) (koh-LY-tiss): a type of **colitis** having an abnormal band of collagen, which is a threadlike **protein**.

colon (KOH-lon): the part of the **large intestine** extending from the **cecum** to, but not including, the **rectum**. See **large intestine**.



Colon.

colonic conduit (ko-LON-ik) (KON-doo-it): a surgical procedure that uses a section of the **large bowel**, instead of the **small intestine**, to form a channel for urinary drainage.

colonic inertia (ko-LON-ik) (in-UR-shuh): a condition of the **colon** when the muscles do not work properly, causing **constipation**.

C

colonoscopic polypectomy (koh-LON-oh-SKOP-ik) (POL-ih-PEK-tuh-mee): the removal of tumorlike growths called *polyps* by using a device inserted through a colonoscope.

colonoscopy (KOH-lon-OSS-kuh-pee): a test to look into the *rectum* and *colon* that uses a long, flexible, narrow tube with a light and tiny camera on the end. The tube is called a colonoscope.

colon polyps (KOH-lon) (POL-ips): small, fleshy, mushroom-shaped growths in the *colon*.

coloproctectomy (KOH-loh-prok-TEK-toh-mee): see *proctocolectomy*.

colorectal cancer (KOH-loh-REK-tuhl) (KAN-sur): cancer that starts in the *colon* (also called the *large intestine*) or the *rectum* (the end of the large intestine). Several digestive diseases may increase a person's risk of colorectal cancer, including *polyposis*.

colorectal transit study (KOH-loh-REK-tuhl) (TRAN-zit) (STUHD-ee): a test that reveals how *stool* moves through the *colon*. The patient swallows capsules that contain small markers and an x ray tracks the movement of the capsules through the colon.

colostomy (koh-LOSS-toh-mee): an operation that attaches the *colon* to an opening in the *abdomen* called a *stoma*. An ostomy *pouch*, attached to the stoma and worn outside the body, collects *stool*. A temporary colostomy may be created to allow the *rectum* to heal from injury or surgery.

common bile duct (KOM-on) (byl) (duhkt): the tube that carries *bile* from the *liver* to the *small intestine*.

common bile duct obstruction (KOM-on) (byl) (duhkt) (ob-STRUHK-shuhn): a blockage of the common *bile duct*, often caused by *gallstones* or cancer.

computerized tomography (CT) scan (kom-PYOO-tur-eyezd) (toh-MOG-ruh-fee) (skan): an x ray that produces pictures of the body. Also called a computed axial tomography (CAT) scan or computed tomography (CT) scan.

constipation (KON-stih-PAY-shuhn): a condition in which a person usually has fewer than three *bowel movements* in a week. The bowel movements may be painful.

continence (KON-tih-nenss): the ability to control the timing of urination or a *bowel movement*.

continent ileostomy (KON-tih-nent) (IL-ee-OSS-tuh-mee): an operation to create an internal pouch from part of the *small intestine*. *Stool* that collects in the pouch is removed by inserting a small tube through an opening made in the *abdomen*. See *ileostomy*.

corticosteroids (KOR-tih-koh-STIHR-oydz): medicines such as cortisone and hydrocortisone. These medicines reduce irritation from *Crohn's disease* and *ulcerative colitis*. They may be taken either by mouth or as suppositories. (Brand names: Cortone Acetate, Hydrocortone.)

Crohn's disease (krohnz) (dih-ZEEZ): a form of *inflammatory bowel disease* that causes irritation in the *gastrointestinal (GI) tract*. It usually affects the lower *small intestine* (also called the *ileum*) or the *colon*, but it can also affect any part of the GI tract. Also called *regional enteritis* and *ileitis*. See *inflammatory bowel disease* and *granuloma*.

cryptosporidia (KRIP-toh-spo-RID-ee-uh): a parasite that can cause *gastrointestinal* infection and *diarrhea*. See *gastroenteritis*.

C-D

CT scan: see *computerized tomography scan*.

CVS (SEE-VEE-ESS): see *cyclic vomiting syndrome*.

cyclic vomiting syndrome (CVS) (SIK-lik) (VOM-it-ing) (SIN-droh-m): sudden, repeated attacks of severe *vomiting*, *nausea*, and physical exhaustion with no apparent cause that occur in children and adults, but more often in children. Attacks can last from a few hours to 10 days. The episodes begin and end suddenly. Loss of fluids and changes in body chemicals can require immediate medical attention.

cystic duct (SISS-tik) (duhkt): the tube that carries *bile* from the *gallbladder* into the common *bile duct*.

cystic duct obstruction (SISS-tik) (duhkt) (ob-STRUHK-shuhn): a blockage of the *cystic duct*, often caused by *gallstones*.

defecation (DEF-uh-KAY-shuhn): the passage of *bowel* contents through the *rectum* and *anus*.

defecography (DEF-uh-KOG-ruh-fee): an x-ray test of the *anus* and *rectum* that shows how the muscles work to move *stool*. The patient sits on a toilet placed next to the x-ray machine.

dehydration (DEE-hy-DRAY-shuhn): loss of fluids from the body, sometimes caused by *diarrhea*. It may result in the loss of important salts and minerals.

delayed gastric emptying (duh-LAYD) (GASS-trik) (EMP-tee-ing): see *gastroparesis*.

dermatitis herpetiformis (DUR-muh-TY-tiss) (hur-PET-ih-FOR-miss): a skin disorder associated with *celiac disease* and characterized by severe itching and blisters.

descending colon (dee-SEND-ing) (KOH-lon): the part of the *colon* where *stool* is stored. It is usually located on the left side of the *abdomen*.

diaphragm (DY-uh-fram): the muscle wall between the chest and the *abdomen*. It is the major muscle used for breathing.

D

diarrhea (DY-uh-REE-uh): frequent, loose, and watery *bowel movements*. Common causes include *gastrointestinal* infections, *irritable bowel syndrome*, medicines, and *malabsorption*.

dietitian (dy-uh-TISH-uhn): a nutrition expert who helps people plan what and how much food to eat.

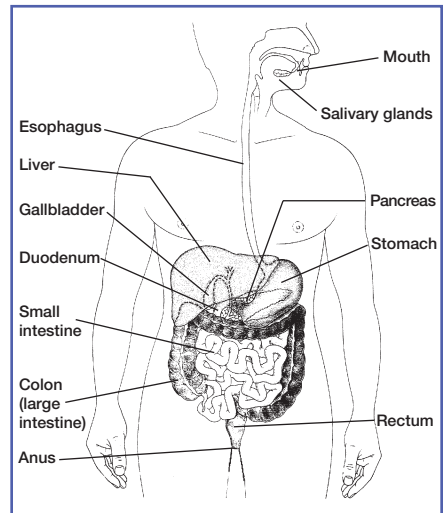
Dieulafoy's lesion (dyoo-lah-FWAHZ) (LEE-zhuhn): a small erosion in the *stomach* that causes heavy *gastrointestinal* bleeding.

diffuse esophageal spasm (dih-FYOOZ) (uh-SOF-uh-JEE-uhl) (SPA-zum): uncoordinated contractions down the length of the *esophagus* that may cause pain or trouble swallowing.

digestants (dy-JESS-tuhnts): medicines that aid or stimulate *digestion*. Examples are digestive *enzymes* for people with *lactase deficiency* or damage to the *pancreas*. (Brand names: Lactaid, Ultrase.)

digestion (dy-JESS-chuhn): the process the body uses to break down food into simple substances for energy, growth, and cell repair.

digestive system (dy-JESS-tiv) (SISS-tuhm): the organs in the body that break down and absorb food. Organs that make up the digestive system are the mouth, *esophagus*, *stomach*, *small intestine*, *large intestine*, *rectum*, and *anus*. Organs that help with *digestion* but are not part of the *digestive tract* are the tongue, salivary glands, *pancreas*, *liver*, and *gallbladder*.



Digestive system.

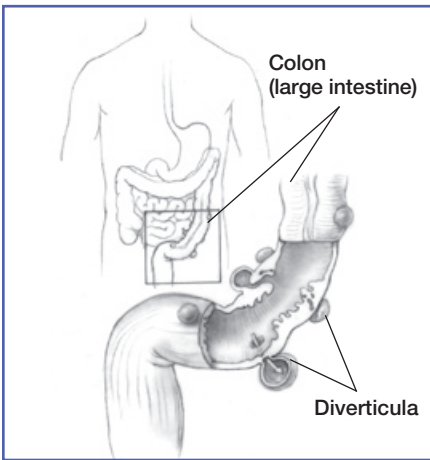
digestive tract (dy-JESS-tiv) (trakt): see *gastrointestinal tract*.

distention (diss-TEN-shuhn): *bloating* or swelling of the *abdomen*.

D

diverticula (DY-vur-TIK-yoo-luh): the plural form of *diverticulum*. See *diverticulum*.

diverticulitis (DY-vur-TIK-yoo-LY-tiss): a condition that occurs when small pouches in the *colon* called *diverticula* become inflamed.



Diverticulosis.

diverticulosis (DY-vur-TIK-yoo-LOH-siss): a condition that occurs when small pouches in the *colon* called *diverticula* push outward through weak spots.

diverticulum (DY-vur-TIK-yoo-luhm): a small pouch in the *colon*. These pouches are not painful and harmful unless they become inflamed.

dry mouth: see *xerostomia*.

Dubin-Johnson syndrome (DOO-bin-JON-suhn) (SIN-droh-m): a rare, inherited form of chronic *jaundice*.

dumping syndrome (DUHMP-ing) (SIN-droh-m): see *rapid gastric emptying*.

duodenal ulcer (DOO-oh-DEE-nuhl) (UHL-sur): an *ulcer* in the lining of the first part of the *small intestine*, also called the *duodenum*.

duodenitis (DOO-od-uh-NY-tiss): an irritation of the first part of the *small intestine*, also called the *duodenum*.

duodenum (doo-OD-uh-nuhm): the first part of the *small intestine*.

D-E

dysentery (DISS-en-tair-ee): an infectious disease of the *colon*. Symptoms include bloody, mucus-filled *diarrhea*; abdominal pain; fever; and loss of fluids from the body.

dyspepsia (diss-PEP-see-uh): upper abdominal discomfort, often provoked by eating, that may be accompanied by fullness, *bloating*, *nausea*, or other *gastrointestinal* symptoms. Also called *indigestion*.

dysphagia (diss-FAY-jee-uh): problems with swallowing food or liquid, usually caused by blockage or injury to the *esophagus*.

E. coli (ee) (KOH-ly): see *Escherichia coli*.

EGD (EE-JEE-DEE): see *esophagogastroduodenoscopy*.

electrocoagulation (ee-LEK-troh-koh-AG-yoo-LAY-shuhn): a procedure that uses an electrical current passed through an instrument to stop bleeding.

electrolytes (ee-LEK-troh-lyts): chemicals in the body fluids that are parts of salts, including sodium, potassium, magnesium, and chloride.

ELISA (uh-LEE-suh): see *enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay*.

encopresis (en-koh-PREE-siss): accidental passage of a *bowel movement*. A common disorder in children.

endoscope (EN-doh-skohp): a small, flexible tube with a light and a camera on the end that is used to look into the *esophagus*, *stomach*, *duodenum*, *colon*, or *rectum*. It can also be used to take tissue from the body for testing or to take color photographs of the inside of the body. Colonoscopes and sigmoidoscopes are types of endoscopes.

E

endoscopic papillotomy (en-doh-SKOP-ik) (PAP-ih-LOT-uh-mee): see *endoscopic sphincterotomy*.

endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatography (ERCP) (en-doh-SKOP-ik) (RET-roh-grayd) (koh-LAN-jee-oh-PAN-kree-uh-TOG-ruh-fee): a test that uses an x ray to look into the *bile* and *pancreatic ducts*. The doctor inserts an *endoscope* through the mouth into the *duodenum* and *bile ducts*. Dye is sent through the tube into the ducts, which makes the ducts show up on an x ray.

endoscopic sphincterotomy (en-doh-SKOP-ik) (SFINGK-tur-OT-uh-mee): an operation to cut the muscle between the *common bile duct* and the *pancreatic duct*. The operation uses a *catheter* and wire to remove *gallstones* or other blockages. Also called *endoscopic papillotomy*.

endoscopy (en-DOSS-kuh-pee): a procedure that uses an *endoscope* to diagnose or treat a condition.

enema (EN-uh-muh): a liquid put into the *rectum* to clear out the *bowel* or administer drugs.

enteral nutrition (EN-tur-uhl) (noo-TRISH-uhn): a way to provide food through a tube placed in the nose, *stomach*, or *small intestine*. A tube in the nose is called a nasogastric or nasoenteral tube. A tube may be placed into the stomach or small intestine through a hole called a *gastrostomy*, *percutaneous endoscopic gastrostomy* (PEG), *jejunostomy*, or *percutaneous endoscopic jejunostomy* (PEJ). Also called *tube feeding*.

enteritis (EN-tur-EYE-tiss): an irritation of the *small intestine*.

enterocele (EN-tur-o-SEEL): a *hernia* in the *intestines*. See *hernia*.

enterokinase deficiency (EN-tur-oh-KY-nayss) (duh-FISH-en-see): a rare disorder of protein malabsorption.

enteroscopy (EN-tur-OSS-kuh-pee): an examination of the *small intestine* with an *endoscope*. The endoscope is inserted through the mouth and *stomach* into the small intestine.

E

enterostomal therapy (ET) nurse (EN-tur-oh-STOH-muhl) (THAIR-uh-pee) (nurss): a nurse who cares for patients who have an *ostomy*.

enterostomy (EN-tur-OSS-tuh-mee): an *ostomy*, or opening, into the *intestines* through the abdominal wall.

enzyme (EN-zym): *proteins* in the body that control chemical reactions in the body, including energy production and *metabolism*.

enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA) (EN-zym-linkt) (IM-yoo-noh-SOR-bent) (ASS-say): a type of blood test usually used to measure antibodies.

eosinophilic esophagitis (EE-oh-sin-oh-FIL-ik) (uh-SOF-uh-JY-tiss): a disease in which the lining of the *esophagus* becomes infiltrated with a type of white blood cell called an eosinophil.

eosinophilic gastroenteritis (EE-oh-sin-oh-FIL-ik) (GASS-troh-en-tur-EYE-tiss): an irritation of the *stomach*, *small intestine*, or *large intestine* caused by a type of white blood cell called an eosinophil.

epithelial cells (EP-ih-THEE-lee-uhl) (selz): one of many kinds of cells that form the *epithelium* and absorb nutrients.

epithelium (EP-ih-THEE-lee-uhm): the inner and outer tissue covering *digestive tract* organs.

ERCP (EE-AR-SEE-PEE): see *endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatography*.

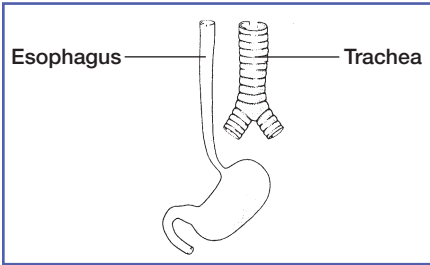
eructation (ee-ruhk-TAY-shuhn): a noisy release of *gas* from the *stomach* through the mouth. Also called *belching* or *burping*.

erythema nodosum (AIR-ih-THEE-muh) (NOH-doh-suhm): swelling or red sores on the lower legs during flare-ups of *Crohn's disease* and *ulcerative colitis*. These sores show that the disease is active and usually go away when the disease is treated.

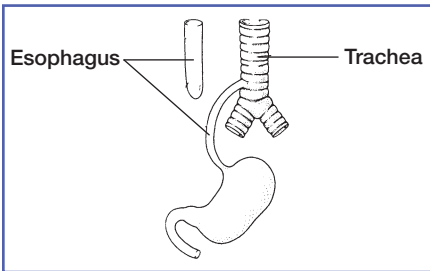
***Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*)** (esh-uh-RIK-ee-uh) (KOH-ly): a family of bacteria found in the *gastrointestinal tract*. Some forms may cause *diarrhea*.

E

esophageal atresia (uh-SOF-uh-JEE-uhl) (uh-TREE-zee-uh): a birth defect in which the *esophagus* lacks the opening to allow food to pass into the *stomach*.



Normal esophageal development.



One form of esophageal atresia.

esophageal manometry (uh-SOF-uh-JEE-uhl) (muh-NOM-uh-tree): a test to measure muscle contraction in the *esophagus*.

esophageal perforation (uh-SOF-uh-JEE-uhl) (PUR-foh-RAY-shuhn): a hole in the *esophagus*, which may be caused by a disease or medical procedure.

esophageal pH monitoring (uh-SOF-uh-JEE-uhl) (PEE-AYCH) (MON-ih-tur-ing): a test to measure the amount of acid in the *esophagus*.

esophageal reflux (uh-SOF-uh-JEE-uhl) (REE-fluhks): see *gastroesophageal reflux disease*.

esophageal spasms (uh-SOF-uh-JEE-uhl) (SPA-zumz): muscle contractions in the *esophagus* that cause pain in the chest or trouble swallowing.

esophageal stricture (uh-SOF-uh-JEE-uhl) (STRIK-choor): a narrowing of the *esophagus* often caused by acid flowing back from the *stomach* or cancer. This condition may require surgery.

esophageal ulcer (uh-SOF-uh-JEE-uhl) (UHL-sur): a sore in the *esophagus* caused by long-term inflammation, infection, pills, or cancer.

esophageal varices (uh-SOF-uh-JEE-uhl) (VAIR-ih-seez): large veins in the *esophagus* that occur when the *liver* is not working properly. If the veins burst, the bleeding can cause death.

E-F

esophagitis (uh-SOF-uh-JY-tiss): an irritation of the *esophagus*, usually caused by acid that flows up from the *stomach*.

esophagogastroduodenoscopy (EGD) (uh-SOF-uh-goh-GASS-troh-DOO-oh-den-OSS-kuh-pee): an exam of the upper *digestive tract* using an *endoscope*. See *endoscopy*.

esophagus (uh-SOF-uh-guhss): the organ that connects the mouth to the *stomach*. Also called the *gullet*.

ESWL (EE-ESS-DUHB-uhl-YOO-EL): see *extracorporeal shock wave lithotripsy*.

ET nurse (EE-TEE) (nurss): see *enterostomal therapy nurse*.

excrete (eks-KREET): when the body gets rid of waste.

extracorporeal shock wave lithotripsy (ESWL) (EKS-truh-kor-POH-ree-uhl) (shok) (wayv) (LITH-oh-TRIP-see): a method of breaking up *bile* stones, *gallstones*, and pancreatic and renal stones that uses a specialized tool and shock waves.

extrahepatic biliary tree (EKS-truh-heh-PAT-ik) (BIL-ee-air-ee) (tree): the *bile ducts* located outside the *liver*.

failure to thrive (FAYL-yoor) (too) (thryv): a condition that occurs when a child grows at a slower-than-normal rate.

familial adenomatous polyposis (FAP) (fa-MIL-ee-uhl) (AD-uh-NOH-muh-tuhss) (PAHL-ee-POH-siss): an inherited disease characterized by the presence of 100 or more *polyps* in the *colon*. The polyps lead to *colorectal cancer* if not treated.

FAP (EF-AY-PEE): see *familial adenomatous polyposis*.

fat: 1. one of the three main nutrients in food. Foods that provide fat are butter, margarine, salad dressing, oil, nuts, meat, poultry, fish, and some dairy products. 2. a greasy liquid or solid material found in the human body, animals, and some plants. In the body, excess calories are stored as fat, providing a reserve supply of energy.

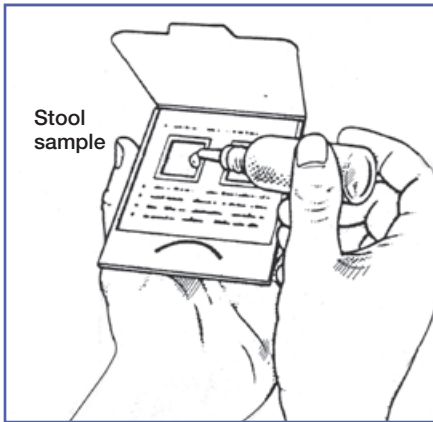
fatty liver (FAT-ee) (LIV-ur): see *steatosis*.

fecal fat test (FEE-kuhl) (fat) (test): a test to measure the body's ability to break down and absorb *fat* by examining *stool* for fat.

fecal incontinence (FEE-kuhl) (in-KON-tih-nenss): being unable to hold *stool* in the *colon* and *rectum*.

F

fecal occult blood test (FOBT) (FEE-kuhl) (uh-KUHLT) (bluhd) (test): a test to see whether there is blood in the *stool* that is not visible to the naked eye. A sample of stool is placed on a chemical strip that changes color if blood is present. Hidden blood in the stool may be a sign of *colorectal cancer*.



Fecal occult blood test.

feces (FEE-seez): the solid waste that passes through the *rectum* as a *bowel movement*. Feces are undigested food, bacteria, mucus, and dead cells. Also called *stool*.

fermentation (FUR-men-TAY-shuhn): the process of bacteria breaking down undigested food and releasing alcohols, acids, and gases.

FHF (EF-AYCH-EF): see *fulminant hepatic failure*.

fiber (FY-bur): a substance in foods that comes from plants. Fiber helps keep *stool* soft so that it moves smoothly through the *colon*. Soluble fiber dissolves in water and is found in beans, fruit, and oat products. Insoluble fiber does not dissolve in water and is found in whole-grain products and vegetables.

fistula (FISS-tyoo-luh): an abnormal passage between two organs, or between an organ and the outside of the body, caused when damaged tissues come into contact and join together while healing.

flatulence (FLAT-yoo-lenss): excessive *gas* in the *stomach* or *intestine* that can cause *bloating* and *flatus*.

flatus (FLAY-tuhss): *gas* passed through the *rectum*.

FOBT (EF-OH-BEE-TEE): see *fecal occult blood test*.

foodborne illness (FOOD-born) (IL-ness): an *acute gastrointestinal* infection caused by food that contains harmful bacteria or toxins. Symptoms include *diarrhea*, abdominal pain, fever, and chills.

F-G

fulminant hepatic failure (FHF) (FUL-mih-nuhnt) (heh-PAT-ik) (FAYL-yoor): **liver** failure that occurs suddenly in a previously healthy person. The most common causes of FHF are acute **hepatitis**, acetaminophen overdose, and liver damage from prescription drugs.

functional disorders (FUHNK-shuhn-uhl) (diss-OR-durz): disorders such as **irritable bowel syndrome** that are of unknown cause. Symptoms such as **gas**, pain, **constipation**, and **diarrhea** come back repeatedly but without signs of disease or damage. Emotional stress can trigger symptoms. Also called **motility disorders**.

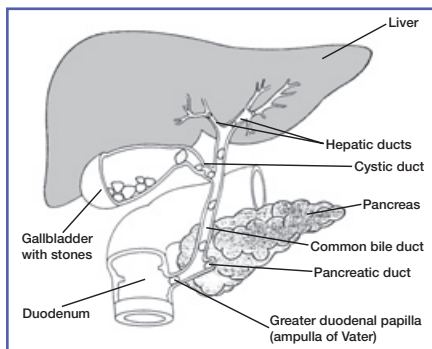
fungus (FUHNG-guhss): a mold or yeast such as *Candida* that may cause infection.

galactose (guh-LAK-tohss): a type of sugar in milk products and sugar beets. The body also makes galactose.

galactosemia (guh-LAK-toh-SEE-mee-uh): a buildup of **galactose** in the blood caused by the lack of one of the **enzymes** needed to break down galactose.

gallbladder (GAWL-blad-ur): the organ that stores the **bile** made in the **liver** and that is connected to the liver by **bile ducts**. The gallbladder can store about 2 tablespoons of bile. Eating signals the gallbladder to empty the bile through the bile ducts to help the body digest **fats**.

gallstones (GAWL-stohnz): the solid masses or stones made of **cholesterol** or **bilirubin** that form in the **gallbladder** or **bile ducts**.



Gallstones.

G

Gardner's syndrome (GARD-nurz) SIN-droh-m): a condition in which many *polyps* form throughout the *digestive tract*. Because these polyps are likely to become cancerous, the *colon* and *rectum* are often removed to prevent *colorectal cancer*.

gas: air that results from the normal breakdown of food. The gases are passed out of the body through the *rectum* (*flatus*) or the mouth (*burping*).

gastrectomy (gass-TREK-tuh-mee): an operation to remove all or part of the *stomach*.

gastric (GASS-trik): related to the *stomach*.

gastric hypersecretion (GASS-trik) (HY-pur-see-KREE-shuhn): the oversecretion of *gastric acid* and the hallmark symptom of *Zollinger-Ellison syndrome*.

Some Causes of Gastroenteritis

- Bacteria
 - *Escherichia coli*
 - *Salmonella*
 - *Shigella*
- Viruses
 - Norwalk virus
 - Rotavirus
- Parasites
 - *Cryptosporidia*
 - *Entamoeba histolytica*
 - *Giardia lamblia*

gastric juices (GASS-trik) (JOO-sez): liquids produced in the *stomach* to help break down food and kill bacteria.

gastric resection (GASS-trik) (ree-SEK-shuhn): an operation to remove part or all of the *stomach*.

gastric ulcer (GASS-trik) (UHL-sur): an open sore in the lining of the *stomach*. Also called *stomach ulcer*.

gastrin (GASS-trin): a *hormone* released after eating that causes the *stomach* to produce more acid.

gastritis (gass-TRY-tiss): inflammation of the *stomach* lining.

gastrocolic reflex (GASS-troh-KOL-ik) (REE-fleks): an increase of muscle movement in the *gastrointestinal tract* when food enters an empty *stomach*. It may cause the urge to have a *bowel movement* right after eating.

gastroenteritis (GASS-troh-en-tur-EYE-tiss): an infection or irritation of the *stomach* and *intestines*, which may be caused by viruses or by bacteria or parasites from spoiled food or unclean water. Other causes include eating food that irritates the stomach lining and emotional upsets such as anger, fear, or stress. Symptoms include *diarrhea*, *nausea*, *vomiting*, and abdominal cramping. See *infectious diarrhea* and *traveler's diarrhea*.

G

gastroenterologist (GASS-troh-EN-tur-OL-uh-jist): a doctor who specializes in digestive diseases.

gastroenterology (GASS-troh-EN-tur-OL-uh-jee): the field of medicine focusing on the function and disorders of the *digestive system*.

gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) (GASS-troh-uh-SOF-uh-JEE-uhl) (REE-fluhks) (dih-ZEEZ): a condition in which *stomach* contents flow back up into the *esophagus*. GERD happens when the muscle between the esophagus and the stomach (the *lower esophageal sphincter*) is weak or relaxes when it should not. It may cause *esophagitis*. Also called *esophageal reflux* or *reflux esophagitis*.

gastrointestinal (GI) (GASS-troh-in-TESS-tin-uhl): related to the *gastrointestinal tract*.

gastrointestinal duplications (GASS-troh-in-TESS-tin-uhl) (DOO-plih-KAY-shuhnz): rare, smooth cystic structures attached to the border of the *intestines*, which are most commonly seen in the *ileum*.

gastrointestinal tract (GI tract) (GASS-troh-in-TESS-tin-uhl) (trakt): the large, muscular tube that extends from the mouth to the *anus*, where the movement of muscles, along with the release of *hormones* and *enzymes*, allows for the *digestion* of food. Also called the *alimentary canal* or *digestive tract*.

gastroparesis (GASS-troh-puh-REE-siss): nerve or muscle damage in the *stomach* that causes slow emptying, *vomiting*, *nausea*, or *bloating*. Also called *delayed gastric emptying*.

gastrostomy (gass-TROSS-tuh-mee): an artificial opening from the *stomach* to a hole (*stoma*) in the *abdomen* where a feeding tube is inserted. See *enteral nutrition*.

GERD (gurd): see *gastroesophageal reflux disease*.

GI (JEE-EYE): see *gastrointestinal*.

giardiasis (JEE-ar-DY-uh-siss): an infection of the parasite *Giardia lamblia* caused by spoiled food or unclean water. It can cause *diarrhea*. See *gastroenteritis*.

G

Gilbert syndrome (zheel-BAIR) (SIN-droh-m): a buildup of *bilirubin* in the blood caused by the lack of a liver *enzyme* needed to break it down. See *bilirubin*.

GI tract (JEE-EYE) (trakt): see *gastrointestinal tract*.

globus sensation (GLOH-buhss) (sen-SAY-shuhn): a constant feeling of a lump in the throat that is usually related to stress.

glucose (GLOO-kohss): a simple sugar the body manufactures from *carbohydrates* in the diet. Glucose is the body's main source of energy. See *carbohydrates*.

gluten (GLOO-tuhn): a *protein* found in wheat, rye, and barley. In people with *celiac disease*, gluten damages the lining of the *small intestine* or causes sores on the skin. See *celiac disease*.

gluten intolerance (GLOO-tuhn) (in-TOL-ur-uhns): see *celiac disease*.

gluten sensitive enteropathy (GLOO-tuhn) (SEN-sih-tiv) (EN-tur-OP-uh-thee): a general term that refers to *celiac disease* and *dermatitis herpetiformis*.

glycogen (GLY-koh-jen): the stored form of sugar in the *liver* and muscles that releases *glucose* into the blood when cells need it for energy. Glycogen is the chief source of stored fuel in the body.

glycogen storage diseases (GLY-koh-jen) (STOR-uhj) (dih-ZEEZ-iz): a group of birth defects that changes the way the *liver* breaks down *glycogen*.

granuloma (GRAN-yoo-LOH-muh): a type of immune reaction seen in some diseases.

granulomatous colitis (GRAN-yoo-LOM-uh-tuhss) (koh-LY-tiss): another name for *Crohn's disease* of the *colon*.

granulomatous enteritis (GRAN-yoo-LOM-uh-tuhss) (EN-tur-EYE-tiss): another name for *Crohn's disease* of the *small intestine*.

gullet (GUHL-uh): see *esophagus*.

gut: see *intestines*.

H

H2 blockers (AYCH-TOO) (BLOK-urz): medicines that reduce the amount of acid the *stomach* produces. Histamine₂ (H₂) signals the stomach to make acid. Examples of H₂ blockers include cimetidine, famotidine, nizatidine, and ranitidine. (Brand names: Tagamet, Pepcid, Axid, Zantac.) They are used to treat *ulcer* symptoms. Nonprescription H₂ blockers are Zantac 75, Axid AR, Pepcid-AC, and Tagamet-HB.

HBIg (AYCH-BEE-EYE-JEE): see *hepatitis B immunoglobulin*.

heartburn (HART-burn): a painful, burning feeling in the chest caused by *stomach* acid flowing back into the *esophagus*. Changing the diet and other lifestyle habits can help prevent heartburn. Heartburn may be a symptom of *GERD*. See *gastroesophageal reflux disease*.

Tips to Control Heartburn

- Avoid foods and beverages that worsen symptoms or irritate the esophagus lining, such as fried, spicy, and acidic foods.
- Lose weight if overweight.
- Stop smoking.
- Elevate the head of the bed 6 inches.
- Avoid lying down 2 to 3 hours after eating.
- Take an antacid.

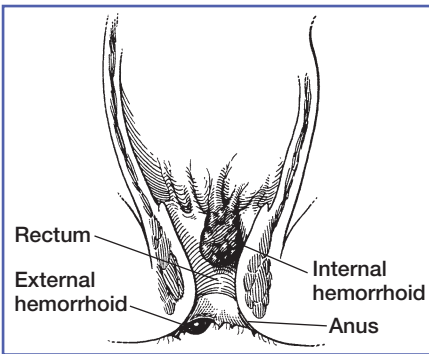
Helicobacter pylori (*H. pylori*) (HEL-uh-koh-BAK-tur) (py-LOR-eye): a spiral-shaped bacterium found in the *stomach*. *H. pylori* damages the stomach and tissue in the first part of the *small intestine*, causing *ulcers*. Previously called *Campylobacter pylori*.

hemochromatosis (HEE-moh-KROH-muh-TOH-siss): a disease that occurs when the body absorbs too much iron or receives many blood transfusions. The body stores the excess iron in the *liver*, *pancreas*, and other organs and can cause *cirrhosis*. Also called *iron overload disease*.

H

hemorrhoidectomy (HEM-oh-roy-DEK-tuh-mee): an operation to remove *hemorrhoids*.

hemorrhoids (HEM-uh-roydz): swollen blood vessels in and around the *anus* and lower *rectum*. Continual straining to have a *bowel movement* causes them to stretch and swell. They cause itching, pain, and sometimes bleeding.



Hemorrhoids.

hepatic (heh-PAT-ik): related to the *liver*.

hepatic coma (heh-PAT-ik) (KOH-muh): see *hepatic encephalopathy*.

hepatic encephalopathy (heh-PAT-ik) (en-SEF-uh-LAW-puh-thee): a condition that may cause loss of consciousness and coma. It is usually the result of advanced *liver* disease. Also called *hepatic coma*.

hepatitis (HEP-uh-TY-tiss): an irritation of the *liver* that sometimes causes permanent damage. Hepatitis may be caused by viruses, medicines, or toxins.

hepatitis A (HEP-uh-TY-tiss) (ay): a virus most often spread through unclean food and water.

hepatitis B (HEP-uh-TY-tiss) (bee): a virus commonly spread through sexual intercourse, blood transfusion, sharing needles with infected people, or from mother to newborn at birth. Hepatitis B is more common and much more easily spread than the AIDS virus and may lead to *cirrhosis* and *liver* cancer.

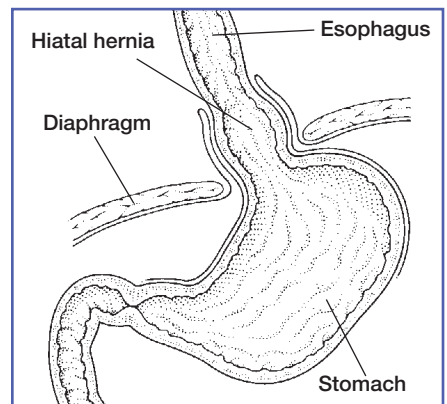
hepatitis B immunoglobulin (HBIG) (HEP-uh-TY-tiss) (bee) (IM-yoo-noh-GLOB-yoo-lin): a vaccination that gives short-term protection against *hepatitis B*.

hepatitis B vaccine (HEP-uh-TY-tiss) (bee) (vak-SEEN): a vaccination to prevent *hepatitis B*. The vaccine leads the body to make its own protection (antibodies) against the virus.

H

- hepatitis C** (HEP-uh-TY-tiss) (see): a virus spread by blood transfusion (prior to July 1992) and possibly by sexual intercourse or sharing needles with infected people. Hepatitis C can lead to *cirrhosis* and *liver* cancer. Hepatitis C used to be called non-A, non-B hepatitis.
- hepatitis D** (HEP-uh-TY-tiss) (dee): a virus that occurs mostly in people who share needles with infected people. Only people who have *hepatitis B* can get hepatitis D.
- hepatitis E** (HEP-uh-TY-tiss) (ee): a virus spread mostly through unclean water. This type of *hepatitis* is common in developing countries. It has not occurred in the United States.
- hepatologist** (HEP-uh-TOL-uh-jist): a doctor who specializes in *liver* diseases.
- hepatology** (HEP-uh-TOL-uh-jee): the field of medicine focusing on the functions and disorders of the *liver*.
- hepatorenal syndrome** (HEP-uh-toh-REE-nuhl) (SIN-droh-m): unexplained kidney failure seen in people with severe *liver* or *biliary tract disease*.

- hepatotoxicity** (HEP-uh-toh-tok-SISS-ih-tee): refers to damage a medicine or other substance does to the *liver*.
- hernia** (HUR-nee-uh): the part of an internal organ that pushes through an opening in the organ's wall. Most hernias occur in the abdominal area. For an example, see *inguinal hernia*.
- herniorrhaphy** (HUR-nee-OR-uh-fee): an operation to repair a *hernia*.
- hiatal hernia** (hy-AY-tuhl) (HUR-nee-uh): an opening in the *diaphragm* that allows the upper part of the *stomach* to move up into the chest. It may cause *heartburn* from stomach acid flowing back up through the opening. See *diaphragm*. Also called hiatus hernia.



Hiatal hernia.

H

Hirschsprung disease (HURSH-spruhng) (dih-ZEEZ): a birth defect in which some nerve cells are lacking in the *large intestine*, causing the intestine not to move *stool* and become blocked. It causes the *abdomen* to swell. See *megacolon*.

hormone (HOR-mohn): a natural chemical produced in one part of the body and released into the blood to trigger or regulate particular functions of the body. The *digestive system* makes a large number of different hormones.

H. pylori (aych) (py-LOR-eye): see *Helicobacter pylori*.

hydrochloric acid (HY-droh-KLOR-ik) (ASS-id): an acid made in the *stomach* that works with *pepsin* and other *enzymes* to break down *proteins*.

hydrogen (HY-droh-jen): an odorless, colorless, flammable *gas* that combines chemically to form water.

hydrogen breath test (HY-droh-jen) (breth) (test): a test for *lactose intolerance* that measures breath samples for *hydrogen* levels. The body makes too much hydrogen when *lactose* is not broken down properly in the *small intestine*.

hyperalimentation (HY-pur-AL-ih-men-TAY-shuhn): see *parenteral nutrition*.

hyperbilirubinemia (HY-pur-BIL-ih-roo-bih-NEE-mee-uh): the condition of having too much *bilirubin* in the blood, which occurs when the *liver* does not work normally or blood breaks down too quickly. Symptoms include *jaundice*.

hyperchlorhydria (HY-pur-klor-HY-dree-uh): having too much *hydrochloric acid* in the *stomach*.

hyperplastic polyps (HY-pur-PLASS-tik) (POL-ips): the most common form of *polyps*, usually found in the *sigmoid colon* and *rectum*. These polyps are not thought to progress to cancer.

hypoproteinemic hypertrophic gastritis (HY-poh-PROH-teen-EE-mik) (HY-pur-TROF-ik) (gass-TRY-tiss): see *Ménétrier disease*.

IBD (EYE-BEE-DEE): see *inflammatory bowel disease*.

IBS (EYE-BEE-ESS): see *irritable bowel syndrome*.

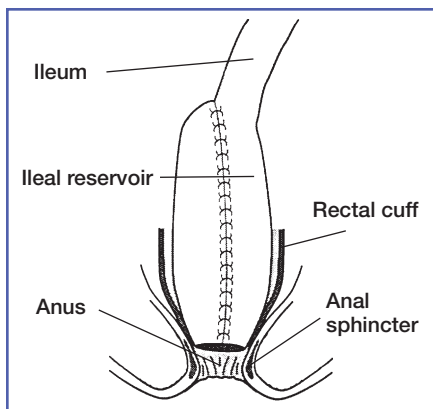
ileal (IL-ee-uhl): related to the *ileum*, the lowest end of the *small intestine*.

ileal pouch (IL-ee-uhl) (pouch): see *ileoanal reservoir*.

ileitis (IL-ee-EYE-tiss): see *Crohn's disease*.

ileoanal pouch anastomosis (IL-ee-oh-AY-nuhl) (pouch) (uh-NASS-toh-MOH-siss): an operation to remove the *colon* and inner lining of the *rectum*. The outer muscle of the rectum is not removed. The bottom end of the *small intestine* (*ileum*) is pulled through the remaining rectum and joined to the *anus*, allowing *stool* to pass normally. Also called *ileoanal pull-through intestine*.

ileoanal pull-through intestine (IL-ee-oh-AY-nuhl) (PUL-throo) (in-TESS-tin): see *ileoanal pouch anastomosis*.



ileoanal pouch anastomosis.

ileoanal reservoir (IL-ee-oh-AY-nuhl) (REZ-ur-vwar): a colonlike *pouch* created from the last several inches of the *ileum*. The pouch allows *stool* to exit through the *anus* after the *colon* is removed. Also called a *J-pouch* or *pelvic pouch*.

ileocecal valve (IL-ee-oh-SEE-kuhl) (valv): one or more flaps of tissue between the lower part of the *small intestine* (*ileum*) and the upper part of the *large intestine* (*cecum*).

ileocolitis (IL-ee-oh-koh-LY-tiss): irritation of the lower part of the *small intestine* (*ileum*) and the beginning part of the *colon*.

I

ileostomy (IL-ee-OSS-tuh-mee): an operation that attaches the *small intestine* to an opening in the *abdomen* called a *stoma*. An *ostomy* pouch, attached to the stoma and worn outside the body, collects *stool*.

ileum (IL-ee-uhm): the lower end of the *small intestine*.

impaction (im-PAK-shuhn): when an object is trapped in a body passage. Examples are stones in the *bile duct*, hardened *stool* in the *colon*, or food in the *esophagus*.

imperforate anus (im-PUR-foh-rayt) (AY-nuhss): a birth defect in which the anal canal fails to develop. The condition is treated with an operation.

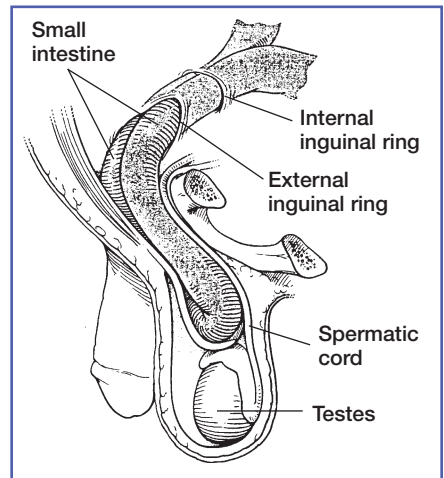
indigestion (IN-dih-JESS-chuhn): see *dyspepsia*.

infectious diarrhea (in-FEK-shuhss) (DY-uh-REE-uh): *diarrhea* caused by infection from bacteria, viruses, or parasites. See *traveler's diarrhea* and *gastroenteritis*.

infectious gastroenteritis (in-FEK-shuhss) (GASS-troh-en-tur-EYE-tiss): see *gastroenteritis*.

inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) (in-FLAM-uh-toh-ree) (boul) (dih-ZEEZ): long-lasting disorders that cause irritation and *ulcers* in the *gastrointestinal tract*. The most common disorders are *ulcerative colitis* and *Crohn's disease*.

inguinal hernia (ING-gwih-nuhl) (HUR-nee-uh): a condition in which intra-abdominal *fat* or part of the *small intestine* bulges through a weak area in the lower abdominal muscles.



Inguinal hernia.

intestinal adhesions (in-TESS-tih-nuhl) (ad-HEE-zhuhnz): bands of fibrous tissue that can connect the loops of the *intestines* to each other, to other abdominal organs, or to the abdominal wall. These bands can pull sections of the intestines out of place and may block the passage of food.

intestinal flora (in-TESS-tih-nuhl) (FLOH-ruh): the bacteria, yeasts, and fungi that normally grow in the *intestines* and *colon*.

intestinal mucosa (in-TESS-tih-nuhl) (myoo-KOH-suh): the inner surface lining of the *intestines* where the cells absorb nutrients.

intestinal pseudo-obstruction (in-TESS-tih-nuhl) (SOO-doh-ob-STRUHK-shuhn): a disorder that causes symptoms of blockage, but no actual blockage, such as *constipation*, *vomiting*, and pain. See *obstruction*.

intestines (in-TESS-tinz): also called the *gut*. See *large intestine* and *small intestine*.

intolerance (in-TOL-ur-uhns): a reaction to a food, drug, or other substance.

intussusception (IN-tuss-suhss-SEP-shuhn): a disorder that causes part of the *intestines* to fold into another part, causing blockage. It is most common in infants and can be treated with an operation.

iron overload disease (EYE-urn) (OH-vur-lohd) (dih-ZEEZ): see *hemochromatosis*.

irrigation (IHR-ih-GAY-shuhn): cleansing of a cavity or tube with fluid. Example: when an *enema* is given through a colostomy *stoma* to cleanse the large *bowel*.

irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) (IHR-ih-tuh-buhl) (boul) (SIN-droh): a disorder of unknown cause that is associated with abdominal pain, *bloating*, and altered *bowel* habits. Also called *spastic colon* or *mucous colitis*.

ischemic colitis (iss-KEE-mik) (koh-LY-tiss): irritation of the *colon* caused by decreased blood flow. It may cause bloody *diarrhea*.

J-K

jaundice (JAWN-diss): a sign of many disorders. The skin and eyes turn yellow from too much *bilirubin* in the blood. See *hyperbilirubinemia*.

jejunostomy (jeh-joo-NOSS-tuh-mee): an operation to create an opening, called a *stoma*, between the *jejunum* and the *abdomen*. See *enteral nutrition*.

jejunum (juh-JOO-nuhm): the middle section of the *small intestine* between the *duodenum* and *ileum*.

J-pouch: see *ileoanal reservoir*.

karaya (kuh-RY-uh): a plant-derived adhesive used in *ostomy* appliances.

Kupffer's cells (KOOOP-furz) (selz): cells that line the *liver*. These cells remove waste such as bacteria from the blood.

L

lactase (LAK-tayss): an *enzyme* in the *small intestine* needed to digest milk sugar (*lactose*).

lactase deficiency (LAK-tayss) (duh-FISH-en-see): a lack of the *lactase* enzyme, causing *lactose intolerance*.

lactose (LAK-tohss): the sugar found in milk. The body breaks lactose down into *galactose* and *glucose*.

lactose intolerance (LAK-tohss) (in-TOL-ur-uhnss): being unable to digest *lactose*, the sugar in milk. This condition occurs when the body cannot produce *lactase*.

lactose tolerance test (LAK-tohss) (TOL-ur-uhnss) (test): a test for *lactase* deficiency. The patient drinks a liquid that contains milk sugar. Then the patient's blood is tested to measure the amount of milk sugar in the blood.

laparoscope (LAP-uh-roh-skohp): a thin tube with a tiny video camera attached that is used to look inside the body to view the surface of organs. See *endoscope*.

laparoscopic cholecystectomy (LAP-uh-roh-SKOP-ik) (KOH-lee-siss-TEK-toh-mee): an operation to remove the *gallbladder*. The doctor inserts a *laparoscope* and other surgical instruments through small holes made in the *abdomen*. The camera allows the doctor to see the gallbladder on a television screen. The doctor removes the gallbladder through the holes.



Laparoscopic cholecystectomy.

laparoscopy (LAP-uh-ROSS-kuh-pee): a procedure that uses a *laparoscope* to look at and take tissue from the inside of the body.

laparotomy (LAP-uh-ROT-oh-mee): an operation that opens up the *abdomen*.

L

large intestine (larj) (in-TESS-tin): the part of the *intestine* that includes the *appendix*, *cecum*, *colon*, and *rectum*. The large intestine absorbs water from *stool* and changes it from a liquid to a solid form. The large intestine is 5 feet long.

lavage (luh-VAHZH): a cleaning of the *stomach* and *colon* that uses a special drink and *enemas*. See *bowel prep*.

laxatives (LAK-suh-tivz): medicines that relieve long-term *constipation*. Also called *cathartics*.

lazy colon (LAY-zee) (KOH-lon): see *atonic colon*.

levator syndrome (leh-VAY-tur) (SIN-droh-m): a feeling of fullness in the *anus* and *rectum* with occasional pain caused by muscle *spasms*.

liver (LIV-ur): the largest abdominal organ. The liver carries out many important functions, such as making important blood *proteins* and *bile*, changing food into energy, and cleaning alcohol and poisons from the blood.

liver enzyme tests (LIV-ur) (EN-zym) (tests): blood tests that may indicate abnormalities of the *liver* or *biliary system*. Also called *liver function tests*.

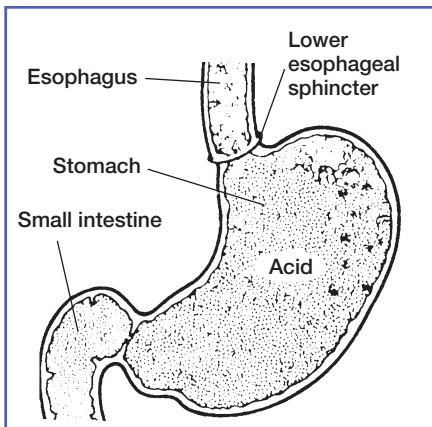
liver function tests (LIV-ur) (FUHNK-shuhn) (tests): see *liver enzyme tests*.

loop ileostomy (loop) (IL-ee-OSS-tuh-mee): a temporary *ileostomy* in which a loop of the *small intestine* is pulled through the abdominal wall to create a *stoma*.

lower esophageal ring (LOH-wur) (uh-SOF-uh-JEE-uhl) (ring): an abnormal ring of tissue that may partially block the lower *esophagus*. Also called *Schatzki's ring*.

L

lower esophageal sphincter (LOH-wur) (uh-SOF-uh-JEE-uhl) (SFINGK-tur): the muscle between the *esophagus* and *stomach*. When a person swallows, this muscle relaxes to let food pass from the esophagus to the stomach. It stays closed at other times to keep stomach contents from flowing back into the esophagus.



Lower esophageal sphincter.

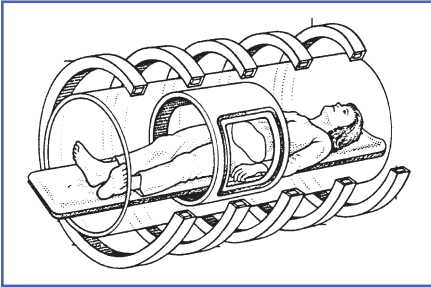
lower GI series (LOH-wur) (JEE-EYE) (SIHR-eez): see *barium enema x ray*.

lymphangiectasia (lim-FAN-jee-ek-TAY-zee-uh): an obstruction of lymph drainage from the *small intestine* causing *malabsorption*.

lymphocytic colitis (LIM-foh-SIT-ik) (koh-LY-tiss): an *inflammatory bowel disease* that affects the large *bowel*. Also called microscopic *colitis* because there is no sign of inflammation on the surface of the *colon* during a *colonoscopy*.

M

magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) (mag-NET-ik) (REZ-oh-nuhns) (IM-uhj-ing): a test that takes pictures of the body's soft tissues. The pictures do not use x rays.



Magnetic resonance imaging.

malabsorption syndromes (MAL-ab-SORP-shuhn) (SIN-drohms): conditions that occur when the *small intestine* cannot absorb nutrients from foods.

Mallory-Weiss tear (MAL-uh-ree-WYSS) (tair): a tear in the lower end of the *esophagus* caused by severe *vomiting*.

malnutrition (MAL-noo-TRISH-uhn): a condition caused by not eating enough food or not eating a balanced diet.

malrotation (MAL-roh-TAY-shuhn): when the *bowel* does not rotate completely during embryonic development.

manometry (muh-NOM-uh-tree): tests that measure muscle pressure and movements in the *gastrointestinal tract*. See *esophageal manometry* and *rectal manometry*.

Meckel's diverticulum (MEK-uhlz) (DY-vur-TIK-yoo-luhm): a bulge in the *small intestine* that is a remnant of the umbilical cord that persists in about 2 percent of people. It can cause bleeding or *obstruction*.

megacolon (MEG-uh-KOH-lon): a huge, swollen *colon* that results from several different conditions. In children, megacolon is more common in boys than girls. See *Hirschsprung disease*.

melena (meh-LEE-nuh): blood in the *stool*.

Ménétrier disease (MAYN-ay-tree-AY) (dih-ZEEZ): a long-term disorder that causes large, coiled folds in the *stomach*. Also called *hypoproteinemic hypertrophic gastritis*.

M

metabolism (muh-TAB-oh-lizm): the way cells change food into energy after food is digested and absorbed into the blood.

microvillus inclusion disease (my-kroh-VIL-uhss) (in-KLOO-zhuhn) (dih-ZEEZ): a disease characterized by severe *diarrhea* beginning the first few days after birth. It is life threatening.

motility (moh-TIL-ih-tee): the movement of food through the *digestive tract*.

motility disorders (moh-TIL-ih-tee) (diss-OR-durz): see *functional disorders*.

MRI (EM-AR-EYE): see *magnetic resonance imaging*.

mucosal lining (myoo-KOH-suhl) (LYN-ing): the lining of *gastrointestinal tract* organs that absorb nutrients and fluid, form a barrier, and produce *mucus*.

mucosal protective drugs (myoo-KOH-suhl) (proh-TEK-tiv) (druhgz): medicines that protect the *stomach* lining from acid. Examples are sucralfate and misoprostol. (Brand names: Carafate, Cytotec, Mylanta, Maalox.)

mucous colitis (MYOO-kuhss) (koh-LY-tiss): see *irritable bowel syndrome*.

mucus (MYOO-kuhss): a clear liquid made by the *intestines* that coats and protects tissues in the *gastrointestinal tract*.

N

NASH (nuhsh): see *nonalcoholic steatohepatitis*.

nausea (NAW-zee-uh): the feeling of needing to throw up, or vomit. See *vomiting*.

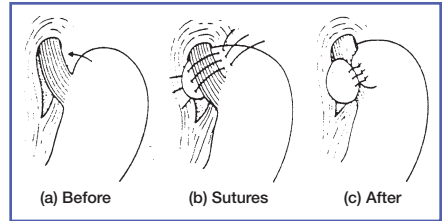
necrosis (nuh-KROH-siss): death of cells or tissues.

necrotizing enterocolitis (NEH-kruh-TY-zing) (EN-tur-oh-koh-LY-tiss): a condition in which part of the tissue in the *intestines* is destroyed. It occurs mainly in underweight newborns.

neonatal hepatitis (NEE-oh-NAY-tuhl) (HEP-uh-TY-tiss): irritation of the *liver* with no known cause. It occurs in newborns and its symptoms include *jaundice* and *liver* cell changes.

neoplasm (NEE-oh-plazm): new and abnormal growth of tissue that may or may not be cancerous. Also called a tumor.

Nissen fundoplication (NISS-uhn) (FUN-doh-plied-KAY-shuhn): an operation to sew the top of the *stomach* (fundus) around the *esophagus*. It is used to stop stomach contents from flowing back into the esophagus (*reflux*) and to repair a *hiatal hernia*.



Nissen fundoplication.

nonalcoholic steatohepatitis (**NASH**) (NON-al-koh-HOL-ik) (STEE-uh-toh-HEP-uh-TY-tiss): a common, often “silent,” *liver* disease that resembles alcoholic liver disease but occurs in people who drink little or no alcohol. The major characteristic of NASH is *fat* in the liver, along with inflammation and damage.

nontropical sprue (NON-TRAH-pih-kuhl) (sproo): see *celiac disease*.

N-O

nonulcer dyspepsia (NON-UHL-sur) (diss-PEP-see-uh): constant pain or discomfort in the upper *gastrointestinal (GI) tract*. Symptoms include burning, *nausea*, and *bloating*, but not *ulcers*. It is a *functional disorder*.

Norwalk virus (NOR-wok) (VY-ruhss): a virus that may cause *gastrointestinal* infection and *diarrhea*. See *gastroenteritis*.

nutcracker esophagus (nuht-KRAK-ur) (uh-SOF-uh-guhss): a condition in which the muscle contraction in the *esophagus* is too strong, causing chest pain or difficulty swallowing.

obstruction (ob-STRUHK-shuhn): a blockage in the *gastrointestinal tract* that prevents the flow of liquids or solids.

occult bleeding (uh-KUHLT) (BLEED-ing): blood in *stool* that is not visible to the naked eye. It may be a sign of inflammation or a disease such as *colorectal cancer*.

oral dissolution therapy (OR-uhl) (DIH-suh-LOO-shuhn) (THAIR-uh-pee): an infrequently used method of dissolving cholesterol *gallstones*. The patient takes the oral medications chenodiol and ursodiol. These medicines are most often used for people who cannot have an operation. (Brand names: Chenix, Actigall.)

osmotics (oz-MOT-iks): drugs that draw fluid into the *colon* and soften *stool*, making it easier to pass. This class of drugs is useful for people with idiopathic *constipation* and includes lactulose and polyethylene glycol electrolyte solution. (Brand names: Cephulac, Miralax.) See *laxatives*.

O-P

ostomate (OSS-toh-mayt): a person who has an *ostomy*. Also called an ostomist in some countries.

ostomy (OSS-tuh-mee): an operation that makes it possible for *stool* to leave the body through an opening made in the *abdomen*. An ostomy is necessary when part or all of the *intestines* are removed or blocked. *Colostomy* and *ileostomy* are types of ostomy.

pancreas (PAN-kree-uhss): a gland that makes the *hormone* insulin and *enzymes* and fluids for *digestion*.

pancreatitis (PAN-kree-uh-TY-tiss): an irritation of the *pancreas* that can cause it to stop working. It is most often caused by *gallstones* or alcohol abuse.

papilla of Vater (puh-PIL-uh) (uhv) (VAH-tur): see *ampulla of Vater*.

papillary stenosis (PAP-ih-LAIR-ee) (steh-NOH-siss): a condition in which the openings of the *bile ducts* and pancreatic ducts narrow.

parenteral nutrition (puh-REN-tur-uhl) (noo-TRISH-uhn): a way to provide an intravenous liquid food mixture through a special tube in the chest. Also called *hyperalimentation* or *total parenteral nutrition*.

parietal cells (puh-RY-uh-tuhl) (selz): cells in the *stomach* wall that make *hydrochloric acid*.

pediatric gastroenterologist (PEE-dee-AT-rik) (GASS-troh-EN-tur-OL-uh-jist): a doctor who treats children who have digestive diseases.

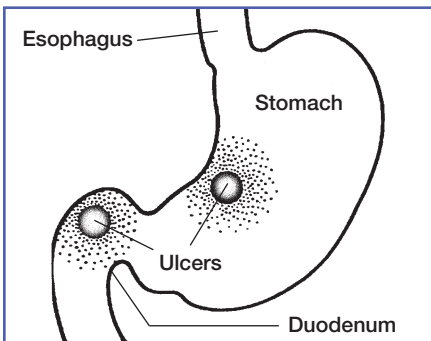
pelvic pouch: see *ileoanal reservoir*.

P

pepsin (PEP-sin): an *enzyme* made in the *stomach* that breaks down *proteins*.

peptic (PEP-tik): related to the *stomach* and the *duodenum*, where *pepsin* is present.

peptic ulcer (PEP-tik) (UHL-sur): a sore in the lining of the *esophagus*, *stomach*, or *duodenum*, usually caused by the bacterium *Helicobacter pylori*. An *ulcer* in the stomach is a *gastric ulcer*; an ulcer in the duodenum is a *duodenal ulcer*.



Peptic ulcers.

percutaneous (PUR-kyoo-TAY-nee-uhss): the passage of an instrument through the skin to allow access to the organs.

percutaneous transhepatic cholangiography (PUR-kyoo-TAY-nee-uhss) (TRANZ-heh-PAT-ik) (koh-LAN-jee-OG-ruh-fee): an x ray of the *gallbladder* and *bile ducts*. A dye is injected through the *abdomen* and *liver* to make the organs show up on the x ray.

perforated ulcer (PUR-foh-RAYT-ed) (UHL-sur): an *ulcer* that breaks through the wall of the *stomach* or the *duodenum*, causing stomach contents to leak into the abdominal cavity.

perforation (PUR-foh-RAY-shuhn): a hole in the wall of an organ.

perianal (PAIR-ee-AY-nuhl): the area around the *anus*.

perineal (PAIR-ih-NEE-uhl): related to the *perineum*.

perineum (PAIR-ih-NEE-uhm): the area between the *anus* and the sex organs.

peristalsis (PAIR-ih-STAL-siss): a wavelike movement of muscles in the *gastrointestinal (GI) tract*. Peristalsis moves food and liquid through the GI tract.

peritoneum (PAIR-ih-toh-NEE-uhm): the lining of the abdominal cavity.

P

peritonitis (PAIR-ih-toh-NY-tiss): an infection of the *peritoneum*.

pernicious anemia (pur-NISH-uhss) (uh-NEE-mee-uh): *anemia* caused by a lack of vitamin B₁₂. The body needs B₁₂ to make red blood cells and nerve cells.

Peutz-Jeghers syndrome (PUTS-JAY-gurz) (SIN-droh-m): an inherited condition causing many *polyps* to grow in the *intestine*. It poses an increased risk of cancer.

pharynx (FAIR-ingks): the space behind the mouth that serves as a passage for food from the mouth to the *esophagus* and for air from the nose and mouth to the larynx, or voice box.

polyp (POL-ip): a growth on the surface of an organ. People who have polyps in the *colon* may have an increased risk of *colorectal cancer*.

polypectomy (POL-ih-PEK-tuh-mee): the surgical removal of a *polyp*.

polyposis (POL-ih-POH-siss): the presence of many *polyps*.

porphyria (por-FIHR-ee-uh): a group of rare, usually inherited disorders that affect the skin or nervous system and may cause abdominal pain. When a person has porphyria, cells fail to change porphyrins (body chemicals) into heme, the substance that gives blood its red color. Porphyrins then build up in the body and cause illness.

portal hypertension (POR-tuhl) (HY-pur-TEN-shuhn): high blood pressure in the *portal vein*. This vein carries blood into the *liver*. Portal hypertension is a common complication of *cirrhosis* and may cause *esophageal varices* and *ascites*.

portal vein (POR-tuhl) (vayn): the large vein that carries blood from the *intestines* and *spleen* to the *liver*.

portosystemic shunt (POR-toh-siss-TEM-ik): an operation to create an opening between the *portal vein* and other veins around the *liver* to treat *portal hypertension*.

P

postcholecystectomy syndrome (POST-koh-lee-siss-TEK-toh-mee) (SIN-droh-m): symptoms persisting after removal of the *gallbladder* or new symptoms caused by its removal.

postgastrectomy syndrome (POST-gass-TREK-tuh-mee) (SIN-droh-m): a condition that can occur after an operation to remove the *stomach* (*gastrectomy*). It causes food to empty too quickly. Also called *dumping syndrome* or *rapid gastric emptying*.

postvagotomy stasis (POST-vay-GOT-uh-mee) (STAY-siss): delayed *stomach* emptying, which can occur after surgery affecting the *vagus nerve*.

pouch: 1. a special bag worn over a *stoma* to collect *stool*. Also called an *ostomy* appliance. 2. an internal, surgically constructed cavity. See *ileoanal pouch anastomosis*.

primary biliary cirrhosis (PRY-mair-ee) (BIL-ee-air-ee) (sur-ROH-siss): a chronic *liver* disease that slowly destroys the *bile ducts* in the liver, preventing the release of *bile*. Long-term irritation of the liver may cause scarring and *cirrhosis* in later stages of the disease.

primary sclerosing cholangitis (PRY-mair-ee) (skleh-ROHSS-ing) (KOH-lan-JY-tiss): irritation, scarring, and narrowing of the *bile ducts* inside and outside the *liver*. *Bile* builds up in the liver and may damage its cells. Many people with this condition also have *ulcerative colitis*.

proctalgia fugax (prok-TAL-jee-uh) (FYOO-gaks): short episodes of intense pain in the *rectum*. It is caused by muscle *spasms* around the *anus*.

proctectomy (prok-TEK-tuh-mee): an operation to remove the *rectum*.

proctitis (prok-TY-tiss): irritation of the *rectum*.

proctocolectomy (PROK-toh-koh-LEK-tuh-mee): an operation to remove the *colon* and *rectum*. Also called *coloproctectomy*.

proctocolitis (PROK-toh-koh-LY-tiss): irritation of the *colon* and *rectum*.

P

proctologist (prok-TOL-uh-jist): a doctor who specializes in disorders of the *anus* and *rectum*.

proctoscope (PROK-toh-skohp): a short, rigid metal tube used to look into the *rectum* and *anus*.

proctoscopy (prok-TOSS-kuh-pee): looking into the *rectum* and *anus* with a *proctoscope*.

proctosigmoiditis (PROK-toh-SIG-moy-DY-tiss): irritation of the *rectum* and the *sigmoid colon*.

proctosigmoidoscopy (PROK-toh-SIG-moy-DOSS-kuh-pee): an endoscopic examination of the *rectum* and *sigmoid colon*. See *endoscopy*.

prokinetic drugs (PROH-kih-NET-ik) (druhgz): medicines that cause muscles in the *gastrointestinal tract* to move food. Examples are bethanechol and metoclopramide. (Brand names: Duvold, Reglan.)

prolapse (PROH-laps): a condition that occurs when a body part slips from its normal position.

protein (PROH-teen): one of the three main nutrients in food. Foods that provide protein include meat, poultry, fish, cheese, milk, dairy products, eggs, and dried beans. Proteins are also used in the body for cell structure, fighting infection, and other functions. The *stomach*, *small intestine*, and *pancreas* break down proteins into *amino acids*. After the body's cells use protein, it is broken down into waste products containing nitrogen that must be removed by the kidneys. The blood absorbs amino acids and uses them to build and mend cells. See *amino acids*.

proton pump inhibitors (PROH-ton) (puhmp) (in-HIB-ih-turz): medicines that stop the *stomach's* acid pump. Examples include omeprazole, lansoprazole, and esomeprazole. (Brand names: Prilosec, Prevacid, Nexium.)

P-R

pruritus ani (proo-RY-tuhss) (AY-nee): itching around the *anus*.

pseudomembranous colitis (SOO-doh-MEM-bruh-nuhss) (koh-LY-tiss): severe irritation of the *colon* caused by *Clostridium difficile* bacterium. It occurs after taking oral antibiotics, which kill bacteria that normally live in the colon.

pyloric sphincter (py-LOR-ik) (SFINGK-tur): the muscle between the *stomach* and the *small intestine*.

pyloric stenosis (py-LOR-ik) (steh-NOH-siss): a narrowing of the opening between the *stomach* and the *small intestine*.

pyloroplasty (py-LOH-roh-PLASS-tee): an operation to widen the opening between the *stomach* and the *small intestine*, which allows stomach contents to pass more freely from the stomach.

pylorus (py-LOH-ruhss): the opening from the *stomach* into the top of the *small intestine* (*duodenum*).

radiation colitis (RAY-dee-AY-shuhn) (koh-LY-tiss): damage to the *colon* from radiation therapy.

radiation enteritis (RAY-dee-AY-shuhn) (EN-tur-EYE-tiss): damage to the *small intestine* from radiation therapy.

radionuclide bleeding scans (RAY-dee-oh-NOO-klyd) (BLEED-ing) (skanz): tests to find *gastrointestinal* bleeding. Radioactive material is injected in the body to highlight organs on a special camera. Also called *scintigraphy*.

rapid gastric emptying (RA-pid) (GASS-trik) (EMP-tee-ing): a condition that occurs when food moves too fast from the *stomach* to the *small intestine*. Symptoms include *nausea*, pain, weakness, and sweating. This syndrome most often affects people who have had stomach operations. Also called *dumping syndrome* or *postgastrectomy syndrome*.

R

rectal manometry (REK-tuhl) (muh-NOM-uh-tree): a test that uses a thin tube and balloon to measure pressure and movements of the rectal and anal sphincter muscles. It is used most often to diagnose chronic *constipation* and *fecal incontinence*.

rectal prolapse (REK-tuhl) (proh-LAPS): a condition in which the *rectum* slips so that it protrudes from the *anus*.

rectum (REK-tuhm): the lower end of the *large intestine* leading to the *anus*.

reflux (REE-fluhks): a condition that occurs when *gastric juices* or small amounts of food from the *stomach* flow back into the *esophagus* and mouth. Also called *regurgitation*.

reflux esophagitis (REE-fluhks) (uh-sof-uh-JY-tiss): irritation of the *esophagus* occurring when *stomach* contents flow back into the esophagus. See *gastroesophageal reflux disease*.

regional enteritis (REE-juhn-uhl) (EN-tur-EYE-tiss): see *Crohn's disease*.

regurgitation (ree-GUR-jih-TAY-shuhn): see *reflux*.

resection (ree-SEK-shuhn): the surgical removal of an organ.

retching (RECH-ing): dry *vomiting*.

revision (ree-VIH-zhuhn): an operation to modify the effects of a previous operation.

R-S

rotavirus (ROH-tuh-VY-ruhss): the most common cause of infectious *diarrhea* in the United States, especially in children less than 2 years old. Children between the ages of 6 to 32 weeks can be vaccinated against the virus. (Brand name: RotaTeq.)

rupture (RUHP-chur): a break or tear in any organ or soft tissue.

saliva (suh-LY-vuh): a mixture of water, *protein*, and salts produced in the mouth that makes food easy to swallow and begins the process of *digestion*.

Salmonella (SAL-moh-NEL-uh): a bacterium that may cause intestinal infection and *diarrhea*. See *gastroenteritis*.

sarcoidosis (SAR-koy-DOH-siss): a condition that causes *granulomas* in the *liver*, lungs, and *spleen*.

Schatzki's ring (SHAHT-skeez) (ring): see *lower esophageal ring*.

scintigraphy (sin-TIG-ruh-fee): see *radionuclide bleeding scans*.

sclerotherapy (SKLAIR-oh-THAIR-uh-pee): a method of stopping upper *gastrointestinal* bleeding. A needle is inserted through an *endoscope* to send hardening agents to the place that is bleeding.

secretin (seh-KREE-tin): a *hormone* made in the *duodenum* that causes the *stomach* to make *pepsin*, the *liver* to make *bile*, and the *pancreas* to make digestive juices.

S

segmentation (SEG-men-TAY-shuhn): the process by which muscles in the *intestines* move food and wastes through the body.

serotonin agonists (SAIR-oh-TOH-nin) (AG-on-ists): these drugs help the muscles in the *intestines* work correctly when a slow-moving *digestive system* is caused by low levels of serotonin. Serotonin is a neurotransmitter found mostly in the *digestive tract*. See *laxatives*.

shigellosis (SHIG-uh-LOH-siss): an infection with the bacterium *Shigella*, which usually causes a high fever, acute *diarrhea*, and *dehydration*. See *gastroenteritis*.

short bowel syndrome (short) (boul) (SIN-droh-m): problems related to absorbing nutrients after removal of part of the *small intestine*. Symptoms include *diarrhea*, weakness, and weight loss. Also called *short gut syndrome*.

short gut syndrome (short) (guht) (SIN-droh-m): see *short bowel syndrome*.

short stature (short) (STACH-yoor): a person who is significantly below the average height, possibly due to a disease or medical condition such as *malnutrition*.

Shwachman's syndrome (SHWAHK-muhn-z) (SIN-droh-m): a digestive and respiratory disorder in children that causes a lack of certain digestive *enzymes* and few white blood cells. Symptoms may include *diarrhea* and *short stature*.

sigmoid colon (SIG-moyd) (KOH-lon): the lower part of the *colon* that empties into the *rectum*.

sigmoidoscopy (SIG-moy-DOSS-kuh-pee): looking into the *sigmoid colon* and *rectum* with a flexible or rigid tube called a sigmoidoscope.

sitz bath (sits) (bath): a special plastic tub that allows a person to sit in a few inches of warm water to help relieve the discomfort of *hemorrhoids* or *anal fissures*.

S

small bowel enema (sma) (bou) (EN-uh-muh): x rays of the *small intestine* taken as *barium* liquid passes through the organ. Also called *small bowel follow-through*. See *lower GI series*.

small bowel follow-through (sma) (bou) (FAH-loh-THROO): see *small bowel enema*.

small intestine (sma) (in-TESS-tin): the organ where most *digestion* occurs. It measures about 20 feet and includes the *duodenum*, *jejunum*, and *ileum*.

small intestine mucosal biopsy (sma) (in-TESS-tin) (myoo-KOH-suhl) (BY-op-see): the standard test for diagnosing *celiac disease*.

solitary rectal ulcer (SAH-luh-TAIR-ee) (REK-tuhl) (UHL-sur): a rare type of *ulcer* in the *rectum* that can develop because of straining to have a *bowel movement*.

somatostatin (SOH-muh-toh-STAT-in): a *hormone* in the *pancreas* that helps the body know when to make the hormones insulin, glucagon, *gastrin*, *secretin*, and renin.

spasms (SPA-zumz): muscle movements, such as those in the *colon*, that cause pain, cramps, and *diarrhea*.

spastic colon (SPASS-tik) (KOH-lon): see *irritable bowel syndrome*.

sphincter (SFINGK-tur): a ringlike band of muscle that opens and closes an opening in the body. An example is the muscle between the *esophagus* and the *stomach* known as the *lower esophageal sphincter*.

sphincter of Oddi (SFINGK-tur) (uhv) (OD-ee): the muscle between the *common bile duct* and pancreatic ducts.

spleen: the organ that cleans blood and makes white blood cells. White blood cells attack bacteria and other foreign cells.

splenic flexure syndrome (SPLEN-ik) (FLEK-shur) (SIN-droh): a condition that occurs when air or *gas* collects in the upper parts of the *colon* and causes pain in the upper left *abdomen*. The pain often moves to the left chest and may be confused with heart problems.

S

squamous epithelium (SKWAY-muhss) (EP-ih-THEE-lee-uhm): tissue in an organ such as the mouth or *esophagus* that consists of layers of flat cells.

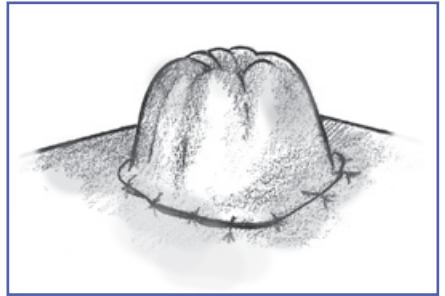
steatorrhea (STEE-uh-toh-REE-uh): a condition in which the body cannot absorb *fat*. It causes a buildup of fat in the *stool* and loose, greasy, and foul-smelling *bowel movements*.

steatosis (STEE-uh-TOH-siss): the buildup of *fat* in *liver* cells, commonly caused by alcoholism. Other causes include obesity, diabetes, and pregnancy. Also called *fatty liver*.

stenosis (steh-NOH-siss): the abnormal narrowing of a normal opening in the *esophagus*, *intestines*, or *anus*.

stimulant laxatives (STIM-yoo-luhnt) (LAK-suh-tivz): drugs that cause rhythmic muscle contractions in the *intestines*. (Brand names: Senokot, Correctol, Dulcolax.) See *laxatives*.

stoma (STOH-muh): an opening in the *abdomen* that is created by an operation (*ostomy*). It is usually covered by an external *pouch* that collects *stool*. A pouch is not needed for a *continent ileostomy*.



Stoma.

stomach (STUHM-uhk): the organ between the *esophagus* and the *small intestine*. The stomach is where the *digestion* of *protein* begins.

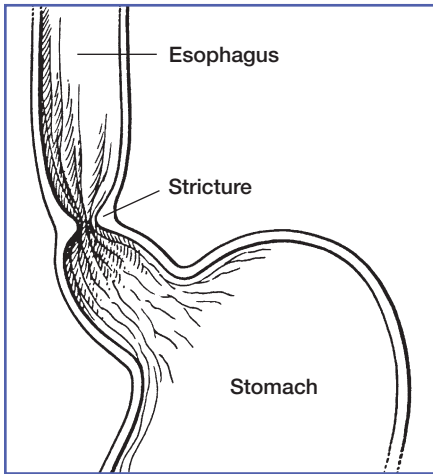
stomach ulcer (STUHM-uhk) (UHL-sur): see *gastric ulcer*.

stool: see *feces*.

stress ulcer (stress) (UHL-sur): an upper gastrointestinal *ulcer* resulting from physical injury such as surgery, major burns, or a critical head injury.

S-T

stricture (STRIK-choor): the abnormal narrowing of a body opening. Also called *stenosis*. See *esophageal stricture* and *pyloric stenosis*.



Stricture.

submucosa (SUHB-myoo-KOH-suh): a layer of connective tissue underneath the mucosa, a layer of smooth muscle.

TEF (TEE-EE-EF): see *tracheoesophageal fistula*.

tenesmus (teh-NEZ-muhss): a feeling of a continuous need to have a *bowel movement*. It may be painful and associated with cramps and involuntary straining. It is common in conditions affecting the *rectum*, such as *ulcerative colitis*.

total parenteral nutrition (TPN) (TOH-tuhl) (puh-REN-tur-uhl) (noo-TRISH-uhn): see *parenteral nutrition*.

TPN (TEE-PEE-EN): see *total parenteral nutrition*.

tracheoesophageal fistula (TEF) (TRAY-kee-oh-ee-SOF-uh-JEE-uhl) (FISS-tyoo-luh): a condition that occurs when there is a connection between the *esophagus* and the trachea, or windpipe, causing food and *saliva* to enter the lungs. It is most often caused by cancer.

transverse colon (tranz-VURSS) (KOH-lon): the part of the *colon* that goes across the *abdomen* from right to left.

T-U

traveler's diarrhea (TRAV-lurz) (DY-uh-REE-uh): an infection caused by ingesting unclean food or drink. It often occurs during travel outside of one's own country. See *gastroenteritis*.

triple therapy (TRIH-puhl) (THAIR-uh-pee): a combination of three antibiotics used to treat *Helicobacter pylori* infection and *ulcers*. Drugs that stop the body from making acid are often added to the triple therapy to relieve symptoms.

tropical sprue (TRAH-pih-kuhl) (sproo): a condition of unknown cause producing abnormalities in the lining of the *small intestine* that prevent the body from absorbing food normally.

tube feeding: see *enteral nutrition*.

ulcer (UHL-sur): a sore on the skin's surface or on the *stomach* or intestinal lining.

ulcerative colitis (UHL-sur-uh-tiv) (koh-LY-tiss): a disease that causes *ulcers* and irritation in the inner lining of the *colon* and *rectum*. See *inflammatory bowel disease*.

ulcerative jejunoileitis (UHL-sur-uh-tiv) (jeh-JOO-noh-IL-ee-EYE-tiss): a severe complication of *celiac disease* causing ulcerations and *strictures* of the *small intestine*.

upper GI endoscopy (UHP-pur) (JEE-EYE) (en-DOSS-kuh-pee): looking into the *esophagus*, *stomach*, and *duodenum* with an *endoscope*. See *endoscopy*.

upper GI series (UHP-pur) (JEE-EYE) (SIHR-eez): see *barium meal*.

urea breath test (yoo-REE-uh) (breth) (test): a test used to detect *Helicobacter pylori* (*H. pylori*) infection. The test detects the presence of urease, an *enzyme* made by *H. pylori*.

V

vagotomy (vay-GOT-uh-mee): an operation to cut the *vagus nerve*. This procedure causes the *stomach* to produce less acid but also to empty abnormally.

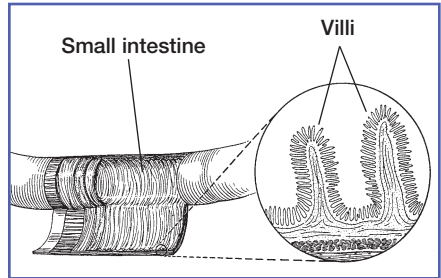
vagus nerve (VAY-guhss) (nurv): the nerve in the *stomach* that controls the making of stomach acid and stomach emptying.

valve: one or more flaps of tissue in the lining of an organ that controls the flow of fluid and prevents backflow.

varices (VAIR-ih-seez): stretched veins such as those that form in the *esophagus* due to *cirrhosis*.

VC (VEE-SEE): see *virtual colonoscopy*.

villi (VIL-eye): tiny, fingerlike projections on the surface of the *small intestine* that help with nutrient absorption.



Villi.

viral gastroenteritis (VY-ruhl) (GASS-troh-en-tur-EYE-tiss): an intestinal infection caused by several viruses, which is highly contagious and causes millions of cases of *diarrhea* each year.

V

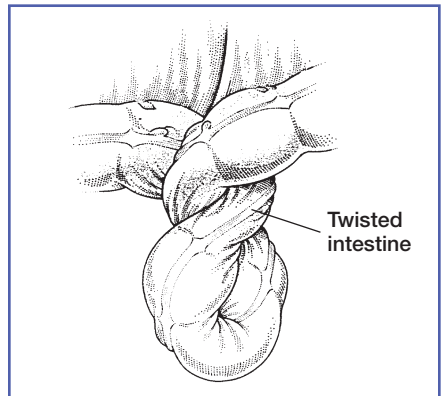
viral hepatitis (VY-ruhl) (HEP-uh-TY-tiss): *hepatitis* caused by a virus. Five different viruses (A, B, C, D, and E) most commonly cause this form of hepatitis. Other rare viruses may also cause viral hepatitis. See *hepatitis*.

Viral Hepatitis	
Type of Hepatitis	Mode of Transmission
hepatitis A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> contaminated food and water
hepatitis B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sexual intercourse sharing infected needles blood transfusion mother to newborn at birth
hepatitis C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sexual intercourse sharing infected needles blood transfusion
hepatitis D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sharing infected needles
hepatitis E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> contaminated water from poor sanitation

virtual colonoscopy (VC) (VUR-chuh-wuhl) (KOH-lon-OSS-kuh-pee): a procedure that uses x rays and computers to produce two- and three-dimensional images of the *colon* and displays them on a screen. A VC can

be performed with *computerized tomography (CT)*, also called a *CT scan*, or with *magnetic resonance imaging (MRI)*.

volvulus (VOL-vyoo-luhss): a twisting of the *stomach* or *large intestine*. It can be caused by the stomach being in the wrong position, a foreign substance, or abnormal joining of one part of the stomach or *intestine* to another. Volvulus can lead to blockage, *perforation*, *peritonitis*, and poor blood flow.



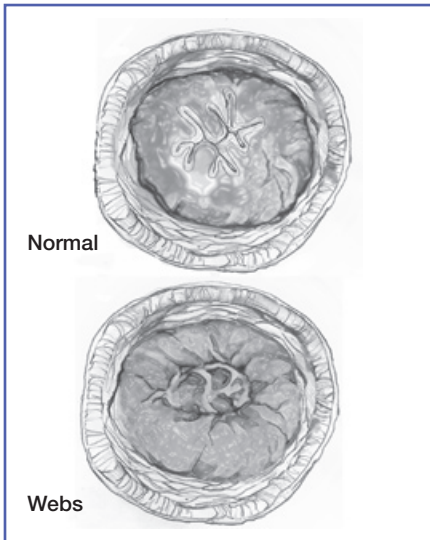
Volvulus.

vomiting (VOM-it-ing): forceful release of *stomach* contents through the mouth.

wafer (WAY-fur): a molded plate that is part of an ostomy *pouch* system.

watermelon stomach (WAH-tur-MEH-luhn) (STUHM-uhk): parallel red sores in the *stomach* that look like the stripes on a watermelon.

webs: thin membranous structures within the lining of the *esophagus* that can narrow the esophageal lumen, or space in the interior of the esophagus.



Normal esophagus and esophagus with webs.

Wilson disease (WIL-suhn) (dih-ZEEZ): an inherited disorder in which too much copper builds up in the *liver* and is slowly released into other parts of the body. The overload can cause severe liver and brain damage if not treated with medication.

X-Z

xerostomia (ZEE-roh-STOH-mee-uh): dry mouth. Xerostomia can be caused by a number of conditions, including rheumatoid arthritis, diabetes, kidney failure, infection with HIV (the virus that causes AIDS), drugs used to treat depression, and radiation treatment for mouth or throat cancer.

Zenker's diverticulum (ZEN-kurz) (DY-vur-TIK-yoo-luhm): *pouches* in the *esophagus* caused by increased pressure in and around the esophagus.

Zollinger-Ellison syndrome (ZOL-in-jur-EL-ih-suhn) (SIN-droh-m): a group of symptoms that occur when a tumor called a gastrinoma forms. The tumor, which can be cancerous, releases large amounts of the *hormone* called *gastrin*. The gastrin causes too much acid in the *duodenum*, resulting in *ulcers*, bleeding, and *perforation*.

National Digestive Diseases Information Clearinghouse

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