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URL of this page: <https://medlineplus.gov/digestivediseases.html>

## Digestive Diseases

**Also called:** **Gastrointestinal diseases**

When you eat, your body breaks food down to a form it can use to build and nourish cells and provide energy. This process is called digestion.


Your digestive system is a series of hollow organs joined in a long, twisting tube. It runs from your mouth to your anus and includes your esophagus, stomach, and small and large intestines. Your liver, gallbladder and pancreas are also involved. They produce juices to help digestion.

There are many types of digestive disorders. The symptoms vary widely depending on the problem. In general, you should see your doctor if you have:

- Blood in your stool
- Changes in bowel habits
- Severe abdominal pain [<https://medlineplus.gov/abdominalpain.html>]
- Unintentional weight loss
- Heartburn [<https://medlineplus.gov/heartburn.html>] not relieved by antacids

*NIH: National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases*

### Start Here

- Learn about GI Motility [<https://aboutgimotility.org/learn-about-gi-motility/>] (International Foundation for Gastrointestinal Disorders)
- Problems of the Digestive System [<https://www.acog.org/womens-health/faqs/problems-of-the-digestive-system>] (American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists)
- Your Digestive System and How It Works [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/digestive-diseases/digestive-system-how-it-works>]  (National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases)  
Also in Spanish [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/informacion-de-la-salud/enfermedades-digestivas/aparato-digestivo-funcionamiento>]

### Symptoms

- Confusing or Ambiguous Upper Gut Symptoms [<https://iffgd.org/gi-disorders/symptoms-causes/confusing-or-ambiguous-upper-gut-symptoms/>] (International Foundation for Gastrointestinal Disorders)

### Diagnosis and Tests

- Abdominal Pain (Stomach Pain), Long-Term [<https://familydoctor.org/symptom/abdominal-pain-stomach-pain-long-term/?adfree=true>] (American Academy of Family Physicians)  
Also in Spanish [<https://es.familydoctor.org/sintoma/dolor-en-el-abdomen-largo-plazo/?adfree=true>]
- Abdominal Pain (Stomach Pain), Short-Term [<https://familydoctor.org/symptom/abdominal-pain-stomach-pain-short-term/?adfree=true>] (American Academy of Family Physicians)  
Also in Spanish [<https://es.familydoctor.org/sintoma/dolor-en-el-abdomen-de-corta-duracion/?adfree=true>]

**Abdominal Ultrasound** [<https://www.radiologyinfo.org/en/info/abdominus>]

 (American College of Radiology; Radiological Society of North America)

Also in Spanish [<https://www.radiologyinfo.org/es/info/abdominus>]

- **Colonoscopy: MedlinePlus Health Topic** [<https://medlineplus.gov/colonoscopy.html>]  (National Library of Medicine)

Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/colonoscopy.html>]

- **CT Enterography** [<https://www.radiologyinfo.org/en/info/CTenterography>]

(American College of Radiology; Radiological Society of North America)

Also in Spanish [<https://www.radiologyinfo.org/es/info/CTenterography>]

- **Diagnostic Laparoscopy** [<https://www.sages.org/publications/patient-information/patient-information-for-diagnostic-laparoscopy-from-sages/>] (Society of American Gastrointestinal and Endoscopic Surgeons)

- **Gastrointestinal Bleeding: MedlinePlus Health Topic** [<https://medlineplus.gov/gastrointestinalbleeding.html>]


 (National Library of Medicine)

Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/gastrointestinalbleeding.html>]

- **Laparoscopy** [<https://medlineplus.gov/lab-tests/laparoscopy/>]  (National Library of Medicine)

Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/pruebas-de-laboratorio/laparoscopia/>]

- **Lower GI Series (Barium Enema)** [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/diagnostic-tests/lower-gi-series>]

 (National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases)

Also in Spanish [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/informacion-de-la-salud/pruebas-diagnosticas/transito-gastrointestinal-inferior>]

- **MR Enterography** [<https://www.radiologyinfo.org/en/info/MRenterography>]

(American College of Radiology; Radiological Society of North America)

Also in Spanish [<https://www.radiologyinfo.org/es/info/MRenterography>]

- **Radiographic Tests in GI** [<https://gi.org/topics/gi-radiographic-tests/>] (American College of Gastroenterology)


- **Stool Color: When to Worry** [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/diarrhea/expert-answers/stool-color/faq-20058080?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)

Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/stool-color/expert-answers/faq-20058080?p=1>]

- **Stool Tests (For Parents)** [<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/labtest8.html>] (Nemours Foundation)


Also in Spanish [<https://kidshealth.org/es/parents/labtest8.html>]

- **Upper GI Endoscopy** [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/diagnostic-tests/upper-gi-endoscopy>]

 (National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases)

Also in Spanish [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/informacion-de-la-salud/pruebas-diagnosticas/endoscopia-gastrointestinal-superior?dkrd=/health-information/informacion-de-la-salud/pruebas-diagnosticas/endoscopia-esofagogastroduodenal>]


- **Upper GI Series** [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/diagnostic-tests/upper-gi-series>]

 (National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases)

Also in Spanish [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/informacion-de-la-salud/pruebas-diagnosticas/transito-esofagogastroduodenal>]

## Prevention and Risk Factors

- **Digestive Health Tips** [<https://gi.org/topics/digestive-health-tips/>] (American College of Gastroenterology)

- **Keeping Your Gut in Check: Healthy Options to Stay on Tract** [<https://newsinhealth.nih.gov/2017/05/keeping-your-gut-check>]  (National Institutes of Health)

Also in Spanish [<https://salud.nih.gov/recursos-de-salud/nih-noticias-de-salud/mantener-el-intestino-bajo-control>]

## Living With

- **Personal Relationships and Digestive Disorders** [<https://iffgd.org/manage-your-health/tips-and-daily-living/personal-relationships/>] (International Foundation for Gastrointestinal Disorders)


## Related Issues

- **Globus** [<https://iffgd.org/gi-disorders/upper-gi-disorders/globus/>] (International Foundation for Gastrointestinal Disorders)





- **What Is a Gastroenterologist?** [<https://gi.org/patients/gi-health-and-disease/what-is-a-gastroenterologist/>]

(American College of Gastroenterology)


## Specifics

- Gut Troubles: Pain, Gassiness, Bloating, and More [https://newsinhealth.nih.gov/2020/02/gut-troubles]  (National Institutes of Health)




## Genetics

- Glucose-galactose malabsorption: MedlinePlus Genetics [https://medlineplus.gov/genetics/condition/glucose-galactose-malabsorption]  (National Library of Medicine)
- Megacystis-microcolon-intestinal hypoperistalsis syndrome: MedlinePlus Genetics [https://medlineplus.gov/genetics/condition/megacystis-microcolon-intestinal-hypoperistalsis-syndrome]  (National Library of Medicine)
- Microvillus inclusion disease: MedlinePlus Genetics [https://medlineplus.gov/genetics/condition/microvillus-inclusion-disease]  (National Library of Medicine)
- Mitochondrial neurogastrointestinal encephalopathy disease: MedlinePlus Genetics [https://medlineplus.gov/genetics/condition/mitochondrial-neurogastrointestinal-encephalopathy-disease]  (National Library of Medicine)

## Videos and Tutorials

- Peristalsis [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/anatomyvideos/000097.htm]  (Medical Encyclopedia)  
Also in Spanish [https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/anatomyvideos/000097.htm]

## Clinical Trials


- ClinicalTrials.gov: Digestive System Diseases [https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Digestive+System+Diseases%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec]  (National Institutes of Health)
- ClinicalTrials.gov: Gastrointestinal Diseases [https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Gastrointestinal+Diseases%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec]  (National Institutes of Health)
- ClinicalTrials.gov: Intestinal Diseases [https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Intestinal+Diseases%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec]  (National Institutes of Health)


## Journal Articles

### References and abstracts from MEDLINE/PubMed (National Library of Medicine)


- Article: Research progress of PYK2 in digestive system diseases. [https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40746536]
- Article: Causal relationship between COVID-19, vaccination, and 20 digestive diseases: a comprehensive... [https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40588731]
- Article: Edaravone in Digestive Diseases - A Narrative Review. [https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40529479]
- Digestive Diseases -- see more articles [https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/?term=%22Digestive+System+Diseases%22%5Bmajr%3Anoexp%5D+AND+humans%5Bmh%5D+AND+english%5Bla%5D+AND+%22last+1+Year%22+%5Bedat%5D+NOT+%28letter%5Bpt%5D+OR+case+reports%5Bpt%5D+OR+editorial%5Bpt%5D+OR+comment%5Bpt%5D%29+AND+free+full+text%5Bsb%5D+]

## Reference Desk


- Digestive Diseases [https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/digestive-diseases]  (National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases)  
Also in Spanish [https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/informacion-de-la-salud/enfermedades-digestivas]
- Digestive System [https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/digestive.html] (Nemours Foundation)  
Also in Spanish [https://kidshealth.org/es/parents/digestive.html]
- Medical Definitions of Digestive Terms [https://iffgd.org/resources/medical-definitions-glossary-dictionary/] (International Foundation for Gastrointestinal Disorders)

Your Digestive System and How It Works [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/digestive-diseases/digestive-system-how-it-works>]  (National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases)  
Also in Spanish [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/informacion-de-la-salud/enfermedades-digestivas/aparato-digestivo-funcionamiento>]


## Find an Expert

- American College of Gastroenterology [<https://gi.org>]
- ASGE: Find a Doctor [<https://www.asge.org/find-a-doctor-results>] (American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy)
- Find a Gastroenterologist (GI Doctor) [<https://gi.org/patients/find-a-gastroenterologist/>] (American College of Gastroenterology)
- National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov>] 

## Children

- Collecting a Stool Sample for Testing (For Parents) [<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/stool-tests-done.html>] (Nemours Foundation)  
Also in Spanish [<https://kidshealth.org/es/parents/stool-tests-done.html>]
- Kids and Teens GI [<https://iffgd.org/gi-disorders/kids-teens/>] (International Foundation for Gastrointestinal Disorders)
- Protein-Losing Enteropathy (For Parents) [<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/protein-losing-enteropathy.html>] (Nemours Foundation)
- What Is a Pediatric Gastroenterologist? [<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/family-life/health-management/pediatric-specialists/Pages/What-is-a-Pediatric-Gastroenterologist.aspx>] (American Academy of Pediatrics)  
Also in Spanish [<https://www.healthychildren.org/spanish/family-life/health-management/pediatric-specialists/paginas/what-is-a-pediatric-gastroenterologist.aspx>]
- Your Digestive System [<https://kidshealth.org/en/kids/digestive-system.html>]  (Nemours Foundation)  
Also in Spanish [<https://kidshealth.org/es/kids/digest.html>]

## Teenagers

- Digestive System (For Teens) [<https://kidshealth.org/en/teens/digestive-system.html>]  (Nemours Foundation)  
Also in Spanish [<https://kidshealth.org/es/teens/digestive-system.html>]

## Older Adults

- Aging and the Digestive System [<https://www.merckmanuals.com/home/digestive-disorders/biology-of-the-digestive-system/aging-and-the-digestive-system>] (Merck & Co., Inc.)  
Also in Spanish [<https://www.merckmanuals.com/es-us/hogar/trastornos-gastrointestinales/biolog%C3%ADa-del-aparato-digestivo/efectos-del-envejecimiento-sobre-el-aparato-digestivo>]

## Patient Handouts

- Digestive diseases [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007447.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)  
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/007447.htm>]
- EGD discharge [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000898.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)  
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/patientinstructions/000898.htm>]
- Fecal fat [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003588.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)  
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/003588.htm>]
- Gastrointestinal fistula [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001129.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)  
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/001129.htm>]
- Gastrointestinal perforation [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000235.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)  
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000235.htm>]
- Stools - floating [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003128.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)  
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/003128.htm>]



## MEDICAL ENCYCLOPEDIA

- Abdominal sounds [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003137.htm>]
- Barium enema [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003817.htm>]
- Black or tarry stools [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003130.htm>]
- Digestive diseases [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007447.htm>]
- EGD discharge [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000898.htm>]
- Fecal fat [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003588.htm>]
- Gastrointestinal fistula [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001129.htm>]
- Gastrointestinal perforation [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000235.htm>]
- Hiccups [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003068.htm>]
- Mesenteric angiography [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003819.htm>]
- Peristalsis [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/anatomyvideos/000097.htm>]
- Protein-losing enteropathy [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007338.htm>]
- Satiety - early [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003127.htm>]
- Stool guaiac test [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003393.htm>]
- Stools - floating [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003128.htm>]
- Stools - foul smelling [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003132.htm>]
- Stools - pale or clay-colored [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003129.htm>]
- Upper GI and small bowel series [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003816.htm>]

## Related Health Topics

- Celiac Disease [<https://medlineplus.gov/celiacdisease.html>]
- Colonic Diseases [<https://medlineplus.gov/colonicdiseases.html>]
- Constipation [<https://medlineplus.gov/constipation.html>]
- Diverticulosis and Diverticulitis [<https://medlineplus.gov/diverticulosisanddiverticulitis.html>]
- Gas [<https://medlineplus.gov/gas.html>]

Gastroenteritis [<https://medlineplus.gov/gastroenteritis.html>]

GERD [<https://medlineplus.gov/gerd.html>]

Indigestion [<https://medlineplus.gov/indigestion.html>]

Intestinal Obstruction [<https://medlineplus.gov/intestinalobstruction.html>]

Liver Diseases [<https://medlineplus.gov/liverdiseases.html>]

Peptic Ulcer [<https://medlineplus.gov/pepticulcer.html>]

Small Intestine Disorders [<https://medlineplus.gov/smallintestinedisorders.html>]

Stomach Disorders [<https://medlineplus.gov/stomachdisorders.html>]

## National Institutes of Health

The primary NIH organization for research on *Digestive Diseases* is the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov>]

## Other Languages

Find health information in languages other than English [<https://medlineplus.gov/languages/digestivediseases.html>] on *Digestive Diseases*

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