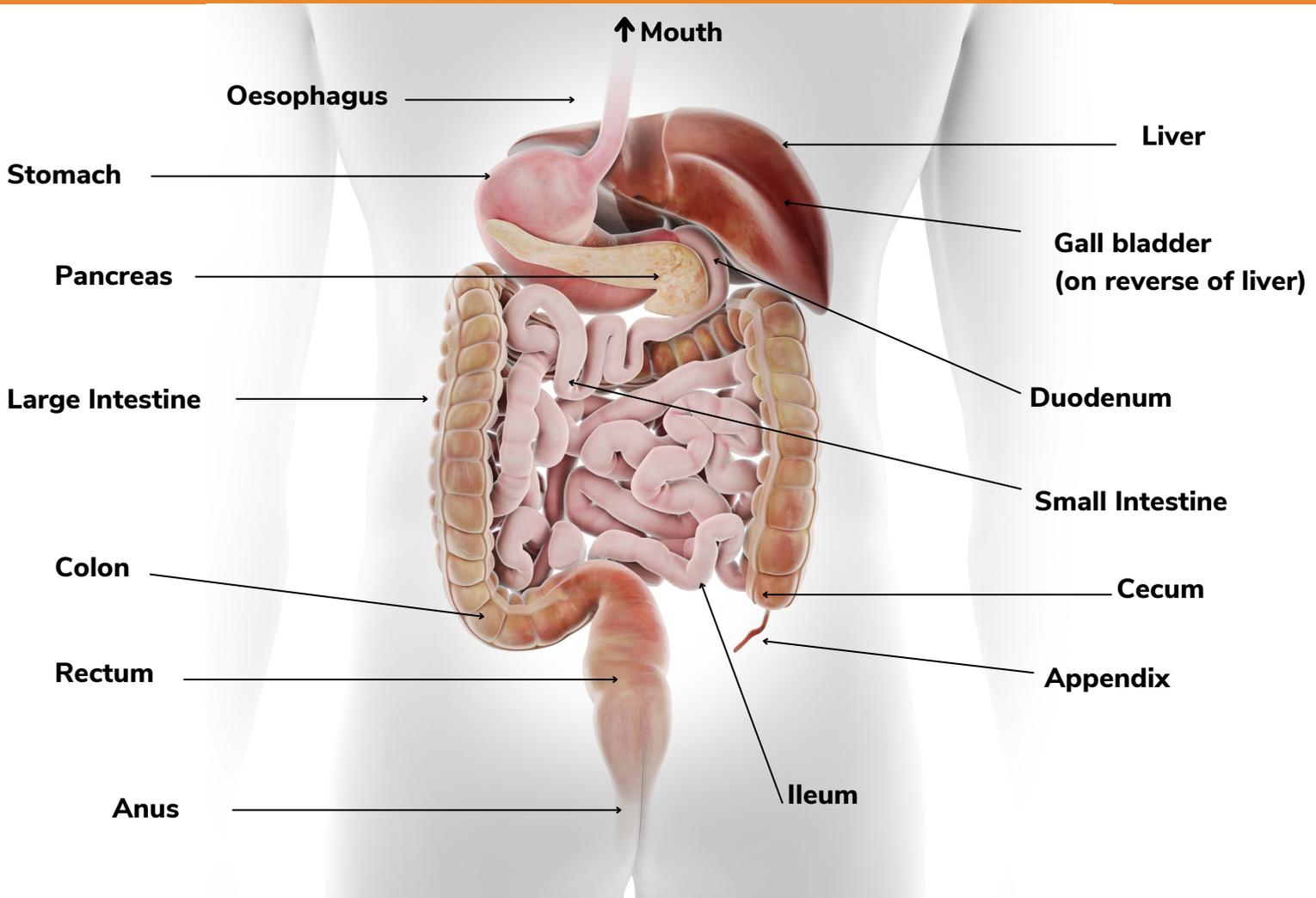


# The Gastrointestinal tract

a pathway by which food enters the body and solid wastes are expelled



## What is the gastrointestinal tract?

The gastrointestinal tract (GI), often called the digestive tract or alimentary canal, is a tube that runs the entire length of the body from your mouth to your anus. The GI includes all the organs of the digestive system including the mouth, pharynx, esophagus, stomach, small intestine, large intestine, and anus.

## What is the main function of the gastrointestinal tract?

The principal functions of the gastrointestinal tract are to digest and absorb ingested nutrients, and to excrete waste products of digestion and other bodily processes. As such, the GI provides a pathway by which food enters the body and solid wastes are expelled. Most nutrients in the foods we eat are ingested in a form that is either too complex for immediate absorption or they are insoluble, meaning they cannot be easily digested. As such, within the GI tract, food substances are degraded by digestive enzymes into simpler molecules, sufficiently small in size, and in a form that permits absorption across the intestinal lining called the mucosal epithelium. From here the nutrients enter the blood stream and are transported around the body to be used as fuel by our cells and organs.

