The Digestive Diseases Dictionary
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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

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

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<th>Example(s)</th>
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<td>zip, jazz, has</td>
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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-nuh) (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.

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.

eaerophagia (AIR-oh-FAY-ji-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.
Alagille syndrome (ah-lah-ZHEEL) (SIN-drohm): 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.
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-jeo-diss-PLAY-zee-uh): abnormal or enlarged blood vessels in the gastrointestinal tract.

angiography (AN-jeo-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 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 cephalexin 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.)
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.


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.
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-uhtm): 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-uhtm) (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-uhtm) (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-guhs): 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).
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) (duhkts): 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.
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-drohm): 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*.
Brooke ileostomy (bruk) (IL-eo-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-drohm): 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.

calcivirus (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-drayts): 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.
Carolí'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.

cicum (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 (KLOH-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.


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

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

**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*. 
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.


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-spoh-RID-ee-uh): a parasite that can cause gastrointestinal infection and diarrhea. See gastroenteritis.
CT scan: see computerized tomography scan.

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

cyclic vomiting syndrome (CVS) (SIK-lik) (VOM-it-ing) (SINDrohm): 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.

defhydration (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.

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, Ultrace.)

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.

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

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.


dumping syndrome (DUHMP-ing) (SIN-drohm): 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.
**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-ji-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.
endoscopic papillotomy (endoh-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-TOH-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 (endoh-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.

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


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.
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.


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-i-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.
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.

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


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.


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-tuh-ss) (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.
fecal occult blood test (FOBT) (FEE-kuhl) (uh-KUH-LT) (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.

des (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.
fulminant hepatic failure (FHF) (FUL-mih-nuhht) (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.
Gardner’s syndrome (GARD-nurz SIN-drohm): 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.

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 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.
Gilbert syndrome (zheel-BAIR) (SIN-drohm): 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.


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-uhhn) (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.


gullet (GUHL-uht): see esophagus.

gut: see intestines.
H2 blockers (AYCH-TOO) (BLOK-urz): medicines that reduce the amount of acid the stomach produces. Histamine\textsubscript{2} (H2) signals the stomach to make acid. Examples of H2 blockers include cimetidine, famotidine, nizatidine, and ranitidine. (Brand names: Tagamet, Pepcid, AxD, Zantac.) They are used to treat ulcer symptoms. Nonprescription H2 blockers are Zantac 75, AxD AR, Pepcid-AC, and Tagamet-HB.

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

heartburn (HAR-t-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.


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.
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 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.
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-drohm): 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.

Hepatitis C diagram

Hiatal hernia.
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.


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.

**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.

**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.
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.


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.
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-uhnss): a reaction to a food, drug, or other substance.
**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 *jejenum* and the *abdomen*. See *enteral nutrition*.

**jejenum** (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** (KOOP-furz) (selz): cells that line the *liver*. These cells remove waste such as bacteria from the blood.
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-uhhnss): 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-uhhnss) (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 endosope.

laparoscopic cholecystectomy (LAP-uh-rah-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.
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-drohm): 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.
**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.
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-drohmz): 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.
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-zuhhn) (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.


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.
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.

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

Nissen fundoplication (NISS-uhhn) (FUN-doh-plih-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.
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.
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-uhln): 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.


pelvic pouch: see ileoanal reservoir.
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.

percutaneous transhepatic cholangiography (PUR-kyoo-TAY-nee-uhss) (TRANZ-heh-PAT-ik) (koh-LAN-jee-OG-ruh-ik): 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.
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-drohm): 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.
postcholecystectomy syndrome

postgastrectomy syndrome
(POST-gass-TREK-tuh-mee) (SIN-drohm): 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
(PR Y-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
(PR Y-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-je-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.
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*.


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


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.
**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-L Y-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.
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-drohm): 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-drohm): 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-muhnz) (SIN-drohm): 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.
small bowel enema (smal) (boul) (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 (smal) (boul) (FAH-loh-THROO): see small bowel enema.

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


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

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

**submucosa** (SUH-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.
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*. 
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.
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.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Viral Hepatitis</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Type of Hepatitis</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>hepatitis A</td>
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| hepatitis B | • sexual intercourse  
• sharing infected needles  
• blood transfusion  
• mother to newborn at birth |
| hepatitis C | • sexual intercourse  
• sharing infected needles  
• blood transfusion |
| hepatitis D | • sharing infected needles |
| hepatitis E | • 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-luhs): 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.

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.

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.
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-drohm): 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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