



Esophagus

The esophagus in its simplest form is a tube that runs from the throat to the stomach.

The esophagus lies between the trachea (windpipe) and the spine. It passes down the neck, pierces the diaphragm just to the left of the midline, and joins the cardiac (upper) end of the stomach. In an adult, the esophagus is about 25 centimeters (10 inches) long. When a person swallows, the muscular walls of the esophagus contract to push food down into the stomach. The glands in the lining of the esophagus produce mucus, which keeps the passageway moist and facilitates swallowing.

The function of the esophagus is to assist the passage of food down to your stomach. Food is passed through the esophagus by using the process of peristalsis. Specifically, the esophagus connects the pharynx to the stomach, where the second stage of digestion is initiated.

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