

LARGE INTESTINES

The large intestine is a 1.6 meter long tube located behind the bladder in men and the uterus in women. It begins with the cecum, which connects to the small intestine, and consists of the ascending colon, transverse colon, descending colon, sigmoid colon, and rectum. The large intestine absorbs water and salts into the blood vessels in the intestinal wall to harden the stool, and also secretes mucus to make the stool smooth.

[How the large intestine moves]

Since the movement of the large intestine is regulated by the autonomic nerves, it cannot be controlled by one's own will. There are two types of movement in the large intestine: tonic waves and collective peristaltic movements. Tension waves move back and forth, moving forward and back, bringing the colonic mucosa and contents into contact for a long period of time, promoting the absorption of water and salts. Collective peristalsis moves stool from the transverse colon into the sigmoid colon where it is retained.

[Mechanism of the large intestine]

1. Cecum

This pouch-like section at the beginning of the large intestine is around two inches long. It absorbs digestive fluids passing out the ileum of the small intestine, and passes the waste material on to the colon.

2. Appendix

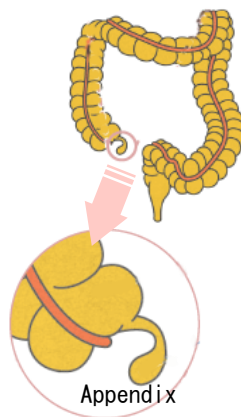
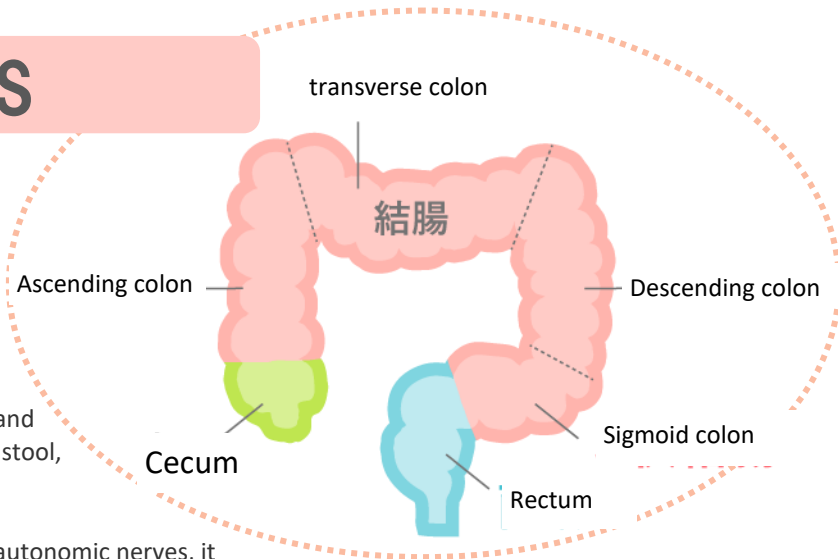
At the bottom of the cecum, there is a closed tube called the appendix which is thought to be a vestigial organ that has lost at least most of its original functions in humans through evolutionary processes. "Appendicitis" is an inflammation of the appendix.

3. [Colon] Ascending colon, transverse colon, descending colon, and sigmoid colon. The colon absorbs water, makes stool, and absorbs electrolytes such as sodium. In addition, the undigested dietary fiber in the small intestine is fermented and sent to the rectum. [Rectum] Temporarily stores stool. When the rectum fills with stool, the urge to pass it is caused by the contraction of parts of the intestine and abdominal muscles, opening of the anal sphincter to force the stool out.



The feces path

In the ascending colon, the contents are in a watery state, but the water is gradually absorbed and becomes porridge-like in the end of the transverse colon and the descending colon. It becomes the shape of stool in the sigmoid colon where it is stored. Then, by the gastrocolic reflex of eating, etc., it descends to the rectum, the cerebrum issues an excretion command, and the anal sphincter works to defecate. The reason why the incidence of colon cancer is high in the sigmoid colon and rectum, where stool is formed, is thought to be that there are many intestinal bacteria in this part where stool is formed, and many harmful substances are generated by putrefactive bacteria.



Colon Cancer prevention

⇒ Increase the risk of colon cancer ⇒

- A diet that is biased towards high animal fat and high protein and carbohydrates
- Lack of fiber diet, etc.

⇒ Reduces the risk of colon cancer ⇒

- Fiber rich diet of vegetables
- Consume well-balanced protein such as fish and poultry.
- Be careful not to eat too much fat, choosing leaner meat
- Take fruits and vegetables
- Take seaweed and konnyaku (seaweed and konjac have a role in protecting the mucous membrane of the large intestine)

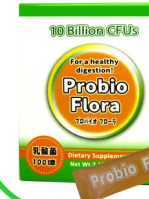
Why is small intestine cancer rare?

Because the small intestine has a highly developed immune system and has a strong function of eliminating poisonous substances, bacteria, and viruses that are likely to cause cancer. This is called intestinal immunity.

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