

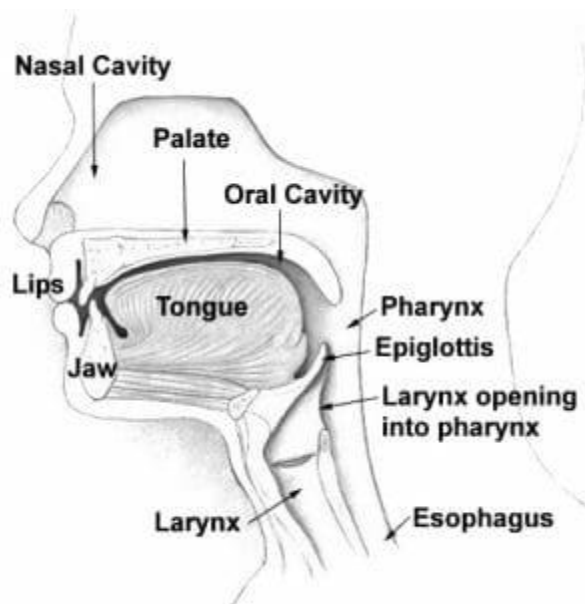
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Pharynx Definition

The pharynx is a five-inch long tube that starts near our nose and ends at our windpipe. The pharynx is generally considered a part of the throat in both vertebrate and [invertebrate](#) animals. In humans, it is a hollow structure (or muscular cavity) lined with moist [tissue](#). This is typical of all structures within our alimentary and digestive tracts.

The muscular pharynx effectively forms the entry for the [esophagus](#), or our “food canal,” and the trachea, also known as our “windpipe.” For this reason, the pharynx is considered a part of both our respiratory and digestive systems.



The image above illustrates the human pharynx and its surrounding structures.

Pharynx Location

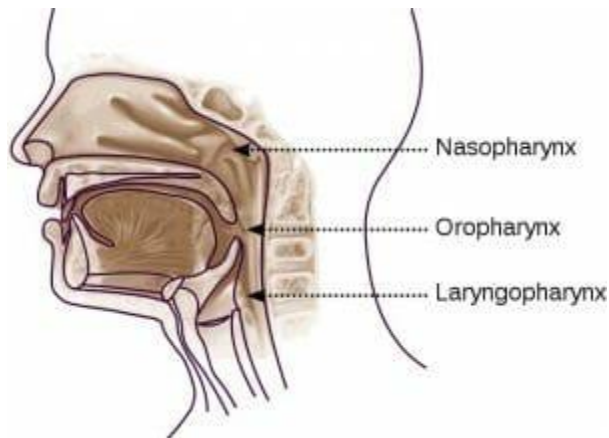
As we will discuss in more detail below, the pharynx is comprised of three sections. The pharynx's location can be said to start in the space immediately behind our nasal cavity, and ends just above our esophagus and larynx – which are the two main passageways that follow entry at the mouth for food and air, respectively.

Parts of the Pharynx

The pharynx measures about thirteen centimeters long and is made up of several sections. The uppermost portion of the pharynx is called the “nasopharynx,” which makes sense given its proximity to our nasal cavity.

In the same vein, the “oropharynx” is the “oral” section of the pharynx. It is thus found in the region near our mouth, starting at our soft palate and ending at the epiglottis – which is the high-rising “flap-like” tissue found posterior to our tongue.

Finally, we have our laryngopharynx. This section lies between our epiglottis and ends at our esophagus. Our esophagus, of course, is a continuation of the passageway that moves food to our gut through peristalsis, or muscular pulsing.



The diagram above illustrates these three areas or sections of the pharynx.

Pharynx Function

As mentioned before, the pharynx has roles in both the respiratory and digestive systems, and can be thought of as the point where these systems diverge. While food and liquids will follow the [alimentary canal](#) through the esophagus, the air we breathe in through that common entry point will enter the trachea and follow into the [respiratory system](#).

The pharynx's respiratory role is mainly to allow inhaled air entering the nasal cavity to make its way to the respiratory tract – which includes the larynx, the trachea or “windpipe” and finally the lungs' [bronchioles](#) and alveoli where respiration takes place.

ESOPHAGUS

The esophagus is a tubular structure about 10-inch (25cm) long that is continue about the laryngeal part of the pharynx opposite the sixth cervical vertebra . it passes through the esophagul hiatus of the diaphragm to join the stomach at the level of the 10 thoracic vertebra to join the stomach

Anteriorly

The trachea and the left recurrent laryngeal nerve the left principal bronchus , which constrict it; and the pericardium, which separate the esophagus from the left atrium.

Posteriorly

the bodies of the thoracic vertebrae, the thoracic duct, the azygos vein, the right posteriorly intercostal arteries and, at its lower end, the descending thoracic aorta.

Blood Supply

The upper third of the esophagus is supplied by the inferior thyroid artery, the middle third by esophageal branches by the descending thoracic aorta, and the lower third by branches from the left gastric artery.

The vein from the upper third drain into the inferior thyroid veins, from the middle third into the azygos veins and from the third into the left gastric vein, a tributary of the portal vein.