



What Does the Pancreas Do?



Overview

Your pancreas is both an organ and a gland. It's found in your abdomen behind your stomach. But what does the pancreas do, exactly? Let's take a moment to learn more about it.

Healthy pancreas

A healthy pancreas is about the length of your hand. It's a long, narrow organ with a wide head that tapers to a narrow tail. It connects to the first part of the small intestine.

The pancreas' role

The pancreas has a few important jobs. First, it plays a role in digestion. It does this by making enzymes that aid digestion. These enzymes mix with bile from your gallbladder and help break down food in the small intestine. The pancreas also makes insulin and glucagon, which help your body regulate its blood sugar level.

Not a vital organ

Even though the pancreas performs these important roles, it isn't a vital organ. That means if it becomes diseased or damaged, we can take it out and you can still live. But you'll need to take enzyme pills and get insulin shots for the rest of your life. For more info, talk to your doctor.

