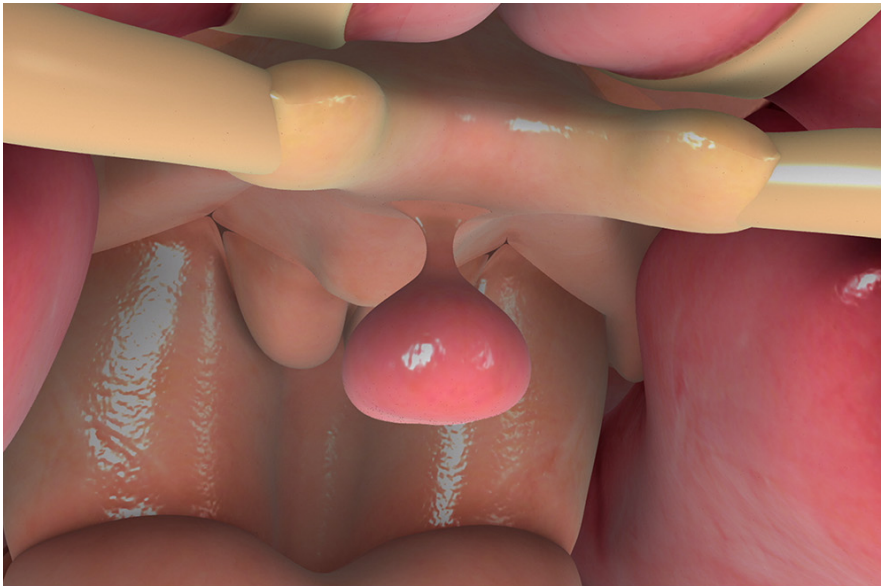




What Does the Pituitary Gland Do?



Overview

Your pituitary is a tiny gland deep inside your head. Despite its small size, it plays a big role. It controls many other glands in your body. We often call it the "master gland."

Healthy pituitary

A healthy pituitary gland is about the size of a pea. It hangs from a short stalk at the base of the brain. It's part of your endocrine system. That's the system that makes hormones. Hormones are the chemicals that control many different functions of your body.

The pituitary gland's role

The pituitary gland makes and releases hormones that regulate many of your body's functions. It controls your growth and development. It controls your metabolism. That's the way your body turns food into energy. It controls reproduction. It controls the way your body responds to stress. It maintains the balance of water and salt in your body. And, it releases hormones that tell many other glands what to do. The thyroid, the adrenals and the reproductive glands are all heavily influenced by the pituitary gland.

Living without a pituitary gland

Even though the pituitary gland performs these important roles, you can live without it. If it becomes diseased or damaged, it can be removed. You will need to take hormones for the rest of your life. These replace the hormones the pituitary made. For more info, talk to your doctor.