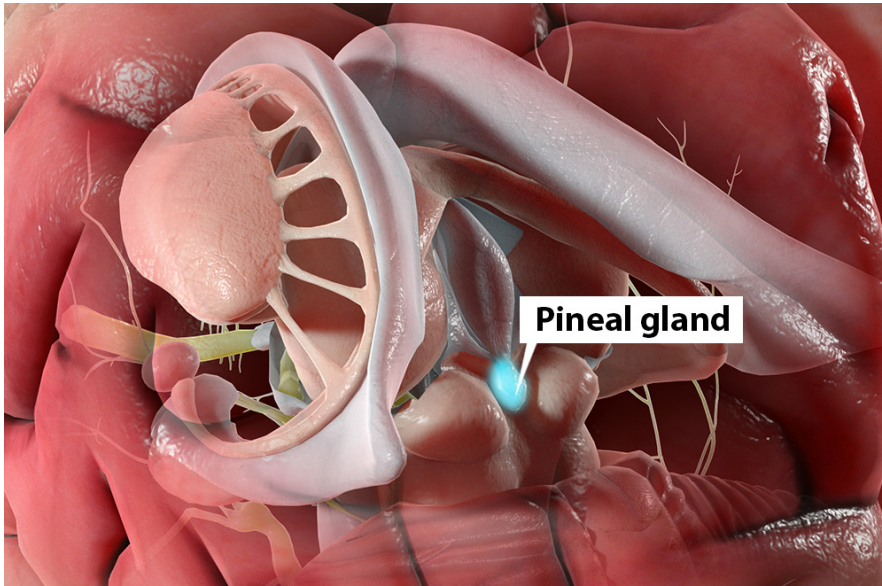




What Does the Pineal Gland Do?



Overview

Your pineal gland (we also call it the "pineal body") is found deep in your brain. It sits between the brain's two halves.

Healthy pineal gland

A healthy pineal gland is about the size of a grain of rice. It's the smallest gland in the body. It's shaped a bit like a pinecone. The pineal gland is 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 pineal gland's role

What does the pineal gland do? It gathers information about light levels from your eyes. Then, it makes and releases the hormone melatonin. That hormone tells the body when it's time to sleep. The pineal gland also plays a role in female sexual development and reproduction. And, it may have other roles we don't yet understand.

Treating the pineal gland

In rare cases, a tumor forms on the pineal gland. We can remove the tumor with surgery. Radiation therapy or chemotherapy can also be used. For more info about the pineal gland, talk to your doctor.

