

# The major anatomical regions, directions and cavities of the human body analysis



Many terms are used to describe the human body and its various positions when being observed, studied or referred to in any medical discussion. Using these terms makes it easier to explain the different parts of the body and where they are located. When using these terms we are assuming the body is in a position called the anatomical position. The anatomical position refers to the body being in a standing position with the arms at the sides with the palms, feet and head facing forward. The two other positions also used as reference are supine position and prone position.

Supine position refers to the body lying face upward while the prone position refers to the body laying face downward. Using the anatomical position as a reference it helps define and give meaning to the different directional terms that are used to describe the body parts and their position in or on the body. To help explain the position of organs and body parts to different organs and body parts we use anatomical directions. There are ten different anatomical directions when referring to the placement of body parts. The first two directions are Superior which means towards the head or upper and inferior which means towards the feet or lower.

An example when referring to the position of body parts would be, the stomach is inferior to the heart or the heart is superior to the stomach. To describe a body part that is toward the front of another part is Anterior while posterior describes a part that would be toward the back. An example would be your lungs are anterior to your spine or your spine is posterior to your lungs. Medial and lateral are used to describe body parts that are near or away from the midline or middle of the body. For example the big toe would be on the lateral side while the little toe would be on the medial side.

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Proximal and distal help describe the location of a body part that is nearest or farthest from the trunk of the body or the specify party of the body it is on, For example, the knee is on proximal to the ankle while the ankle is distal to the knee. The last two describe a body parts depth in the body or closer or further away from the body's surface. Superficial is nearer to the surface and deep is further from the surface. The body contains two main cavities, dorsal and ventral. The cavities house and protect the internal organs and are subdivided into other cavities to further distinguish location.

The dorsal cavity is the space within the skull and the spinal canal. The cranial cavity is the fluid filled space inside the cranium and contains the brain. The area around the spinal cord that extends from the cranial cavity to the base of the spine is the spinal cavity. The ventral body cavity houses the organs of the chest and abdomen. The upper area of the ventral cavity includes the thoracic cavity. The thoracic cavity contains the heart, lungs, lower esophagus, the thymus aorta, gland, bronchi, and trachea. The abdominal cavity houses the kidneys , stomach, intestines, gallbladder liver, spleen, pancreas, and ureters.

The pelvic cavity contains some reproductive organs, urinary bladder, some of the large intestine, and the rectum. The abdominal and pelvic cavities are really one cavity due to no physical separation of the two. This area is separated into nine regions. If you use a figure such as a tic tac toe game, the middle section is called the umbilical region. Then from the upper left hand corner going clockwise you have the right hypochondriac region, epigastric region, left hypochondriac region, left lumbar region, left iliac region, hypogastric region, right iliac region and the right lumbar region.  
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