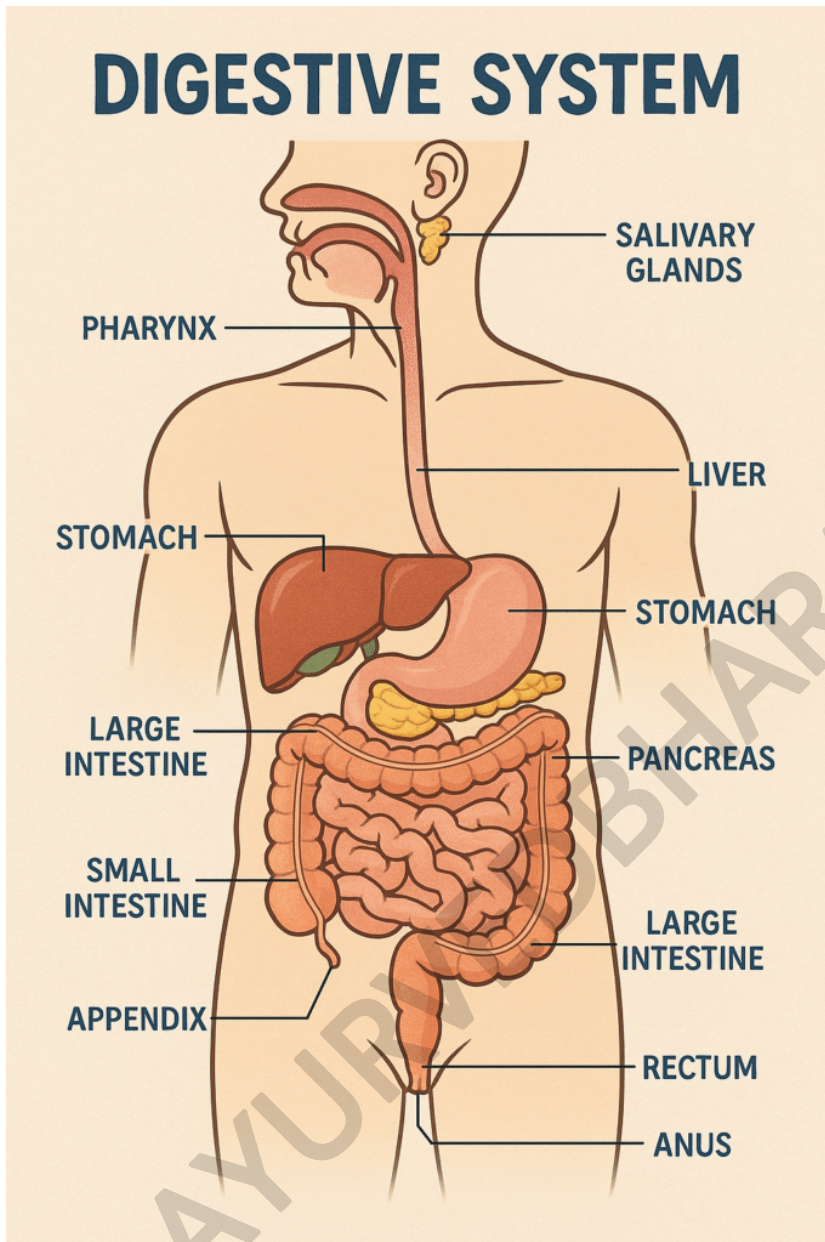


Chapter 5. Digestive System & Metabolism



1. Structure & Functions of Digestive Organs — A Guided Tour

Organ	Key Jobs	Everyday Analogy
Mouth & Salivary Glands	Bite, chew (<i>mechanical</i>), mix with saliva (<i>chemical</i>)—salivary amylase starts starch digestion.	Food-processor with built-in sprinkler.
Pharynx & Esophagus	Swallow reflex then peristaltic “wave” pushes bolus to stomach.	Automatic conveyor belt.
Stomach	Churns food with acid (HCl) + pepsin → chyme; kills microbes; starts protein breakdown.	Cement mixer with disinfectant.
Liver	Makes bile (fat emulsifier), stores glycogen, detoxifies drugs.	Multi-tool factory & warehouse.

Organ	Key Jobs	Everyday Analogy
Gallbladder	Stores/concentrates bile; squirts into duodenum after fatty meal.	Squeeze bottle of dish soap.
Pancreas	Releases digestive enzymes (lipase, proteases, amylase) + bicarbonate; also secretes insulin/glucagon to blood.	Dual-mode printer: ink (enzymes) + Wi-Fi signal (hormones).
Small Intestine - Duodenum, Jejunum, Ileum	90 % of absorption: sugars, amino acids, fatty acids, vitamins. Villi + microvilli boost surface area.	Super-absorbent paper towel ~ tennis-court size.
Large Intestine (Colon)	Reclaims water, electrolytes; hosts microbiome; forms feces.	Waste-water recycling plant.
Rectum & Anus	Stores & ejects feces via defecation reflex.	Storage silo with pressure valve.

2. Digestive Processes Step-by-Step

1. **Ingestion** - conscious act of putting food in mouth.
2. **Propulsion** - swallowing (voluntary) → peristalsis (automatic squeezes).
3. **Mechanical Digestion** - chewing, stomach churning, small-bowel segmentation.
4. **Chemical Digestion** - enzymes + acids break macromolecules into monomers.
5. **Absorption** - nutrients cross mucosa into blood/lymph.
6. **Excretion (Defecation)** - indigestible material leaves body.

3. Enzymes & Their Roles

Region	Enzyme	Acts On	Optimum pH
Mouth	Salivary amylase	Starch → maltose	~7
Stomach	Pepsin (from pepsinogen)	Proteins → peptides	~2
Duodenum (pancreas)	Pancreatic amylase	Starch → maltose	~8
	Trypsin, Chymotrypsin	Proteins → peptides	~8
	Lipase + Bile	Triglycerides → fatty acids + glycerol	~8
Brush-border	Lactase, Sucrase, Maltase	Disaccharides → monosaccharides	~8
	Peptidases	Peptides → amino acids	~8

Tip: Enzymes are lock-and-key catalysts—wrong pH or temperature = lock jammed!

4. Metabolism 101

4.1 Carbohydrates

- **Glycolysis** (cytoplasm) - glucose → pyruvate + 2 ATP (quick cash).
- **If O₂ present:** pyruvate enters mitochondria → **Krebs cycle** → **Electron-Transport Chain** → ~32 ATP (big paycheck).
- **Excess glucose:** stored as **glycogen** (liver, muscle) = savings account.
- **Low blood sugar:** liver breaks glycogen (glycogenolysis) or makes new glucose (gluconeogenesis).

4.2 Proteins

- Digested to **amino acids** → body proteins or de-aminated for energy (NH₃ → urea).
- Cannot be stored long-term; excess turned into fat or carbs.

4.3 Fats

- Triglycerides → glycerol + fatty acids.
- **β-Oxidation** chops fatty acids into acetyl-CoA (hi-calorie fuel).
- Surplus acetyl-CoA → **lipogenesis** (make new fat) or **cholesterol** synthesis.

Big Picture: Carbs = fast fuel, Fats = dense fuel + insulation, Proteins = building blocks.

5. Common Digestive Disorders

Disorder	Hallmark	Quick Ayur-&-Modern Tip
GERD (Acid Reflux)	Heartburn after meals	Smaller meals, avoid caffeine; chew fennel seeds.
Peptic Ulcer	Burning epigastric pain, H. pylori	Test & treat bacteria; liquorice-degly candy soothes.
Lactose Intolerance	Bloating, diarrhea after milk	Lactase pills or use curd/buttermilk.
Celiac Disease	Gluten-triggered villi damage	Strict gluten-free diet; check iron/B-vitamins.
IBS	Alternating diarrhea/constipation, stress link	Soluble fibre + yoga breathing.
Gallstones	RUQ pain after fatty food	Ultrasound; low-fat diet, possible surgery.
Pancreatitis	Severe upper-abdominal pain, ↑lipase	ER visit; no alcohol.
Constipation	<3 bowel movements/week, hard stool	Hydrate, triphala powder at night.
Diarrhea	Loose stool > 3/day	Rehydrate (ORS); banana-rice diet; rule-out infection.

6. Cheat-Sheet Summary

1. **Organs** = mechanical + chemical team.
2. **Enzymes** are region-specific catalysts.
3. **Metabolism** turns digested fuel into energy or storage.
4. Keep gut happy → balanced diet, mindful eating, movement.

Why an Ayurvedic Cosmetologist Must Understand the Digestive System?

Digestive Principle	Cosmetic Impact	Practical Take-away in the Treatment Room
Agni (Digestive Fire) - the enzyme/acid power that converts food → usable nutrients	Steady—or “sama”—agni forms high-quality Rasa dhātu (plasma) and Rakta dhātu (blood), which directly nourish skin (<i>tvak</i>) and hair (<i>keśa</i>). Weak or irregular agni produces partially digested residues (āma) that clog micro-channels and surface as dull complexion, acne, dandruff, cellulite.	Always assess client’s meal timing, appetite pattern, and bloating-belching history before prescribing skin protocols; include mild agni-balancing spices (ginger, cumin) or Triphala when needed.
Āma (Metabolic Toxin) - sticky, half-cooked molecules circulating in blood & lymph	Triggers inflammatory cascades (Pitta-Rakta vitiation) → stubborn acne, rosacea flares, peri-oral dermatitis; kapha-āma can thicken sebum (seborrheic dermatitis, oily scalp).	Do not rely on external lepas alone; advise a 3–5-day <i>khichadi</i> cleanse or mild trikatu tea before anti-acne programs; include internal bitters (neem, guduchi) parallel to topical treatments.
Rasa ↔ Skin Continuum	Classical texts state “ <i>rasāt tvak sruyate</i> ” - the very first tissue juice becomes skin; modern translation: micronutrient status and hydration define epidermal turnover & dermal collagen quality.	When a client requests “glow” packs, probe water intake, anemia, menstrual flow, and gut absorption (e.g., IBS). Oral rasāyana (amla, shatavari ghee) + hydration will amplify external kumkumadi-oil facials.

Digestive Principle	Cosmetic Impact	Practical Take-away in the Treatment Room
Gut-Microbiome ↔ Skin-Microbiome Axis	Dysbiosis (low lactobacilli, high yeast) correlates with dandruff, atopic eczema, even premature aging through oxidative stress.	Combine scalp Taila-dhāra with probiotic hibiscus mist and suggest fermented buttermilk or kanji shots; discourage excessive antibiotics or sugar that feed Malassezia.
Liver-Bile Dynamics (Yakṛt & Pitta sub-types)	Sluggish bile = fat-digestive bottleneck → greasy skin, milia, cellulite; overheated liver = angry pustules, melasma.	Use bitter-cholagogue herbs (bhumi amla, dandelion) in internal teas; schedule gentle virechana before pigment-lightening lepas or anti-cellulite udvartana series.
Metabolic Flexibility (Carb-Fat-Protein Handling)	High-glycemic spikes foster glycation end-products—"sugar sag" wrinkles; protein malabsorption slows collagen, keratin, nail repair; low ω-3 fats dry scalp.	Offer menu hand-out: low-GI grains, adequate legumes, ghee/almond; pair with collagen or amalaki supplements when prescribing micro-needling or hair-regrowth packages.

Key Connections Summarised

- Digestive Fire → Plasma Quality → Skin Glow**
"No good gut, no good glow." Even the finest saffron oil cannot shine through āma-laden plasma.
- Toxin Load Mirrors on the Face**
Chronic constipation or bloating often precedes dark circles, perioral acne, or dull nails. Treat bowels first.
- Internal & External Therapies Must Synchronise**
An udvartana cellulite series will plateau if kapha-provoking diet (ice-cream, cheese) persists.
- Client Education Elevates Results**
Explaining why late-night snacks inflame Pitta and show up as morning puffiness empowers long-term compliance.

Practical Workflow for the Ayurvedic Cosmetologist

- Intake Form** - include 5 gut questions: appetite, bowel frequency, bloating, cravings, food intolerances.
- Tongue & Pulse Glance** - tongue coating = āma; weak pulse quality = low agni.
- Choose Protocol Pairings**
 - Dull, kapha-oily skin → Internal trikatu + external neem-lodhra lepa.
 - Sensitive, rosacea-prone → Coriander-fennel tea + rose-sandal sheet mask.
- Follow-up** - reassess stool and burp/gas score after 2 weeks; tweak herbs or diet before changing serums.

Bottom Line

Knowledge of digestion allows the Ayurvedic cosmetologist to:

- **Diagnose root causes** behind surface symptoms.
- **Sequence treatments:** cleanse gut → nourish → protect.
- **Boost efficacy** of every mask, oil, or marma-massage.
- Deliver **safer, longer-lasting beauty** because true radiance is built from the inside out.