THE DIGESTIVE SYSTEM

The Oral Cavity, Salivary Glands and Stomach
Digestion begins in the mouth as food is mixed with saliva. Saliva breaks down the starch in food into smaller sugars. After moving to the stomach through the esophagus, food is further broken down by enzymes and hydrochloric acid. A layer of mucous protects the stomach lining from damage by the hydrochloric acid.

The Liver, Pancreas and Duodenum
Partially digested food, or chyme, passes from the stomach to the duodenum. Here bile and enzymes from the pancreas enter the duodenum and further break down fats, proteins, and carbohydrates. Bile is produced by the liver and stored in the gallbladder.

The Small and Large Intestines
Chyme moves to the last part of the small intestine, the jejunum and ileum, where nutrients are absorbed into the bloodstream. The nutrients travel to the liver, via the hepatic portal venous system, for further metabolism and storage. Undigested material enters the colon, where water and electrolytes are absorbed. The remaining waste is stored until eliminated.