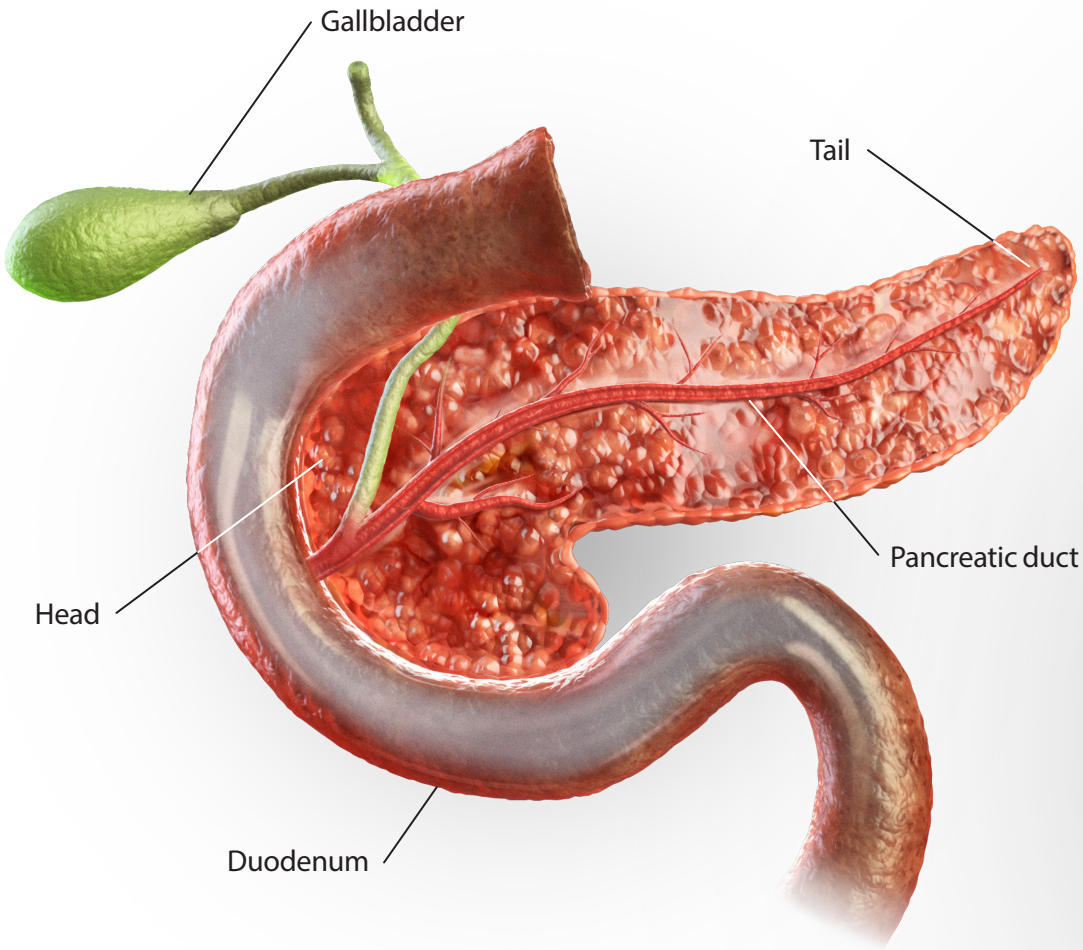
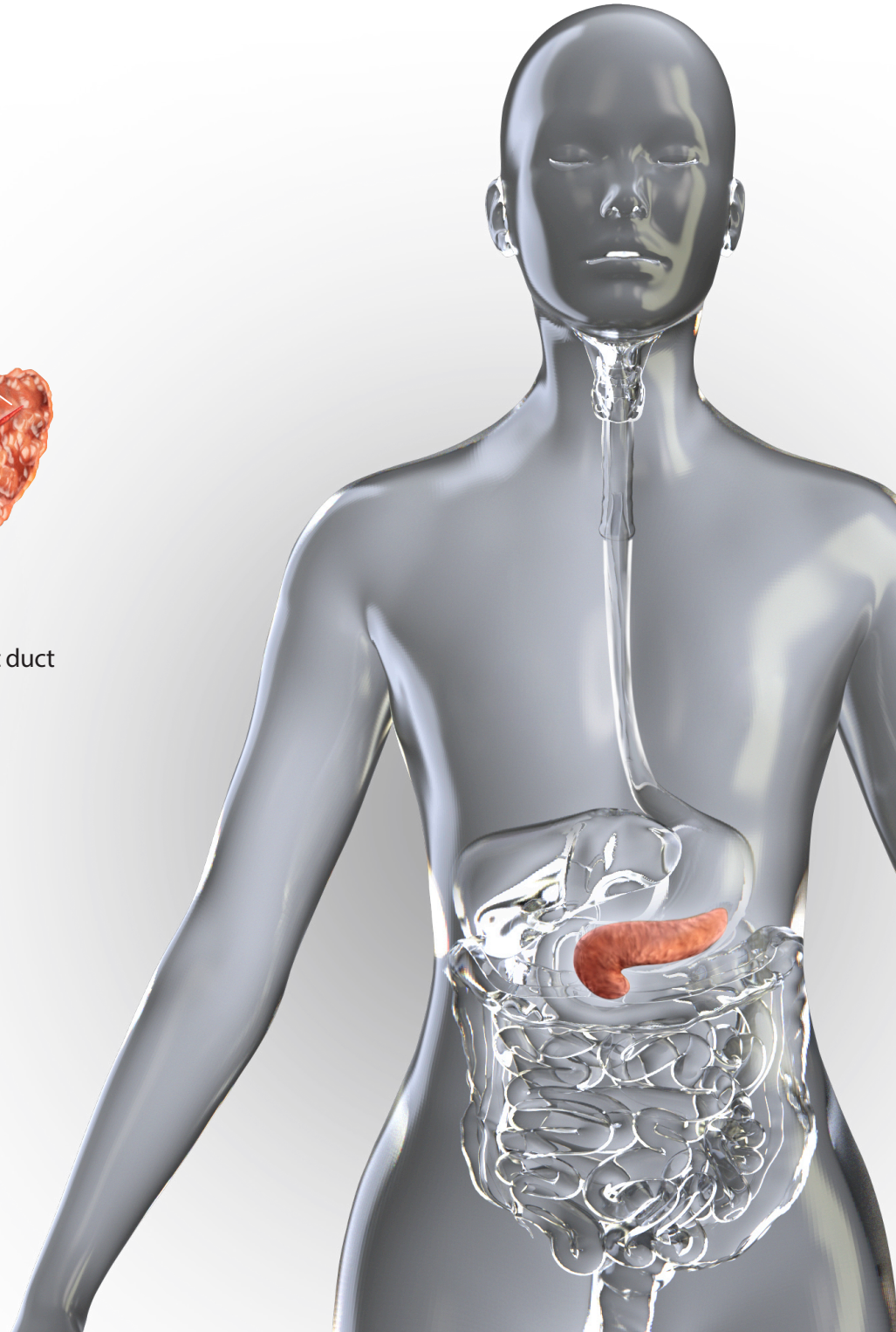
A deeper look into the pancreas





The pancreas resides in the abdomen and has 2 important functions:

1. The exocrine function creates enzymes to help digest food.
2. The endocrine function creates insulin.

Digestion and pancreatic enzymes

Normal digestion

During normal digestion, the pancreas releases enzymes that mix with food as they enter the small intestine. Once there, these pancreatic enzymes help break down food into nutrients:

LIPASE
breaks down fats

PROTEASE
breaks down proteins

AMYLASE
breaks down carbs

Range of normal pancreatic enzyme secretion

LIPASE UNITS PER MEAL

Maldigestion, malabsorption, and malnutrition

When the exocrine function of the pancreas is compromised, it can result in maldigestion and malabsorption—which can ultimately lead to malnutrition.

Maldigestion—impacts the body's ability to digest fats, proteins, and carbs which may lead to malabsorption

Malabsorption—impacts the body's ability to absorb essential vitamins and nutrients, especially fat-soluble vitamins A, D, E, and K

Malnutrition—a result of maldigestion and malabsorption, which can lead to a variety of consequences, like vitamin deficiencies and unintended weight loss

> Pancreatic enzymes are vital for normal digestion and a lack of them can increase your risk for a condition like Exocrine Pancreatic Insufficiency (EPI).