

# Epithelial tissue

**Petr Vaňhara, PhD**

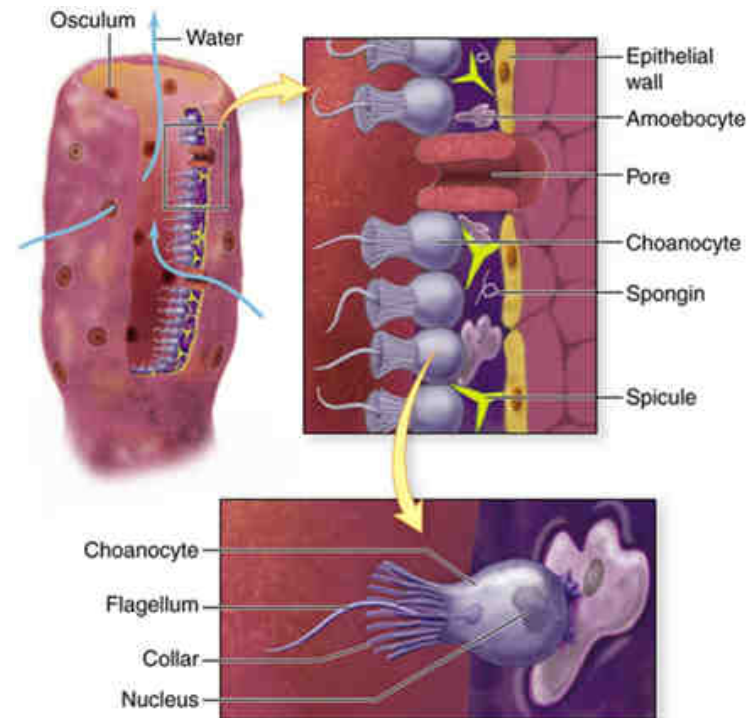
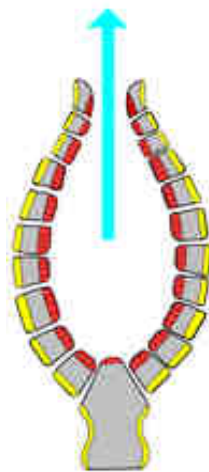
Dept. Histology & Embryology,  
Faculty of Medicine MU

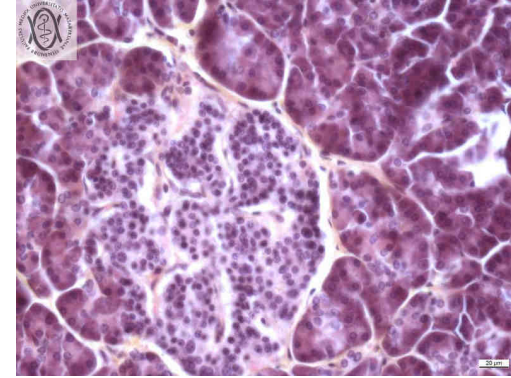
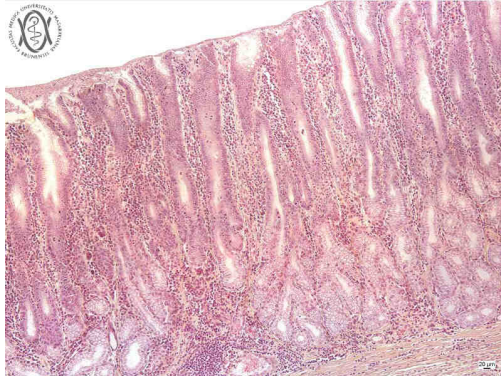
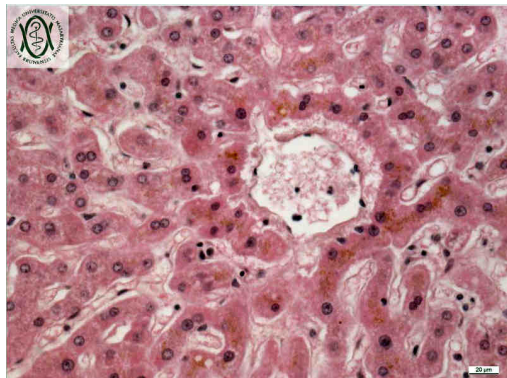
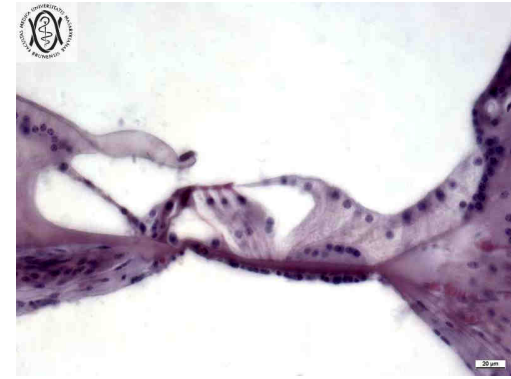
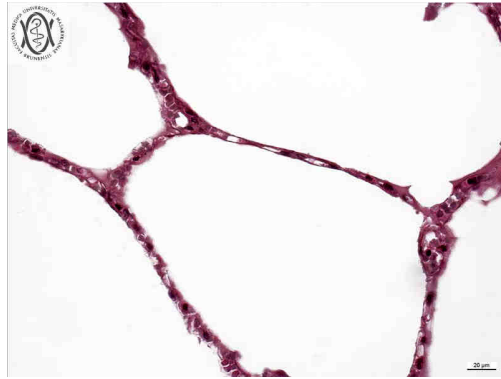
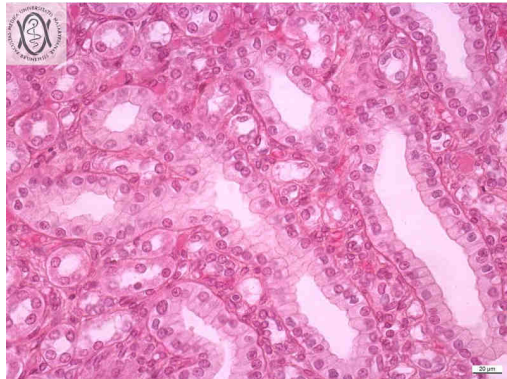
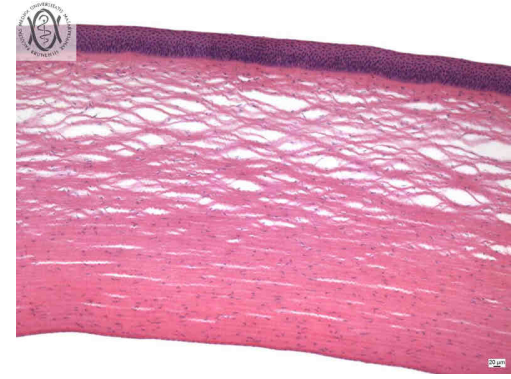
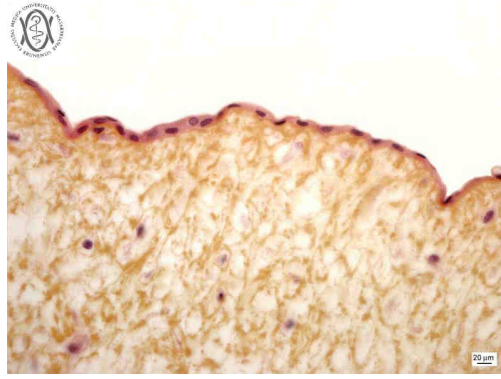
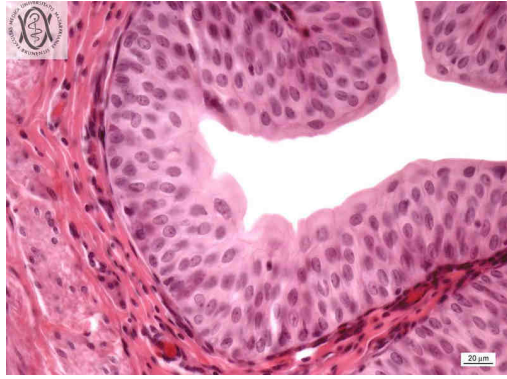
[pvanhara@med.muni.cz](mailto:pvanhara@med.muni.cz)

# ■ General characteristics of epithelial tissue

## - lessons from Sponges

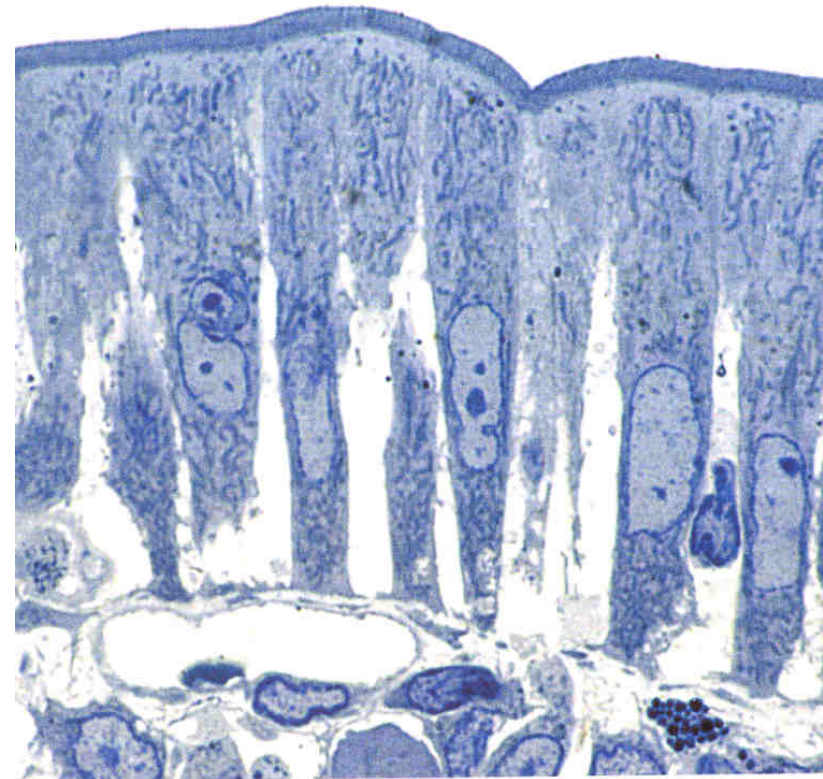
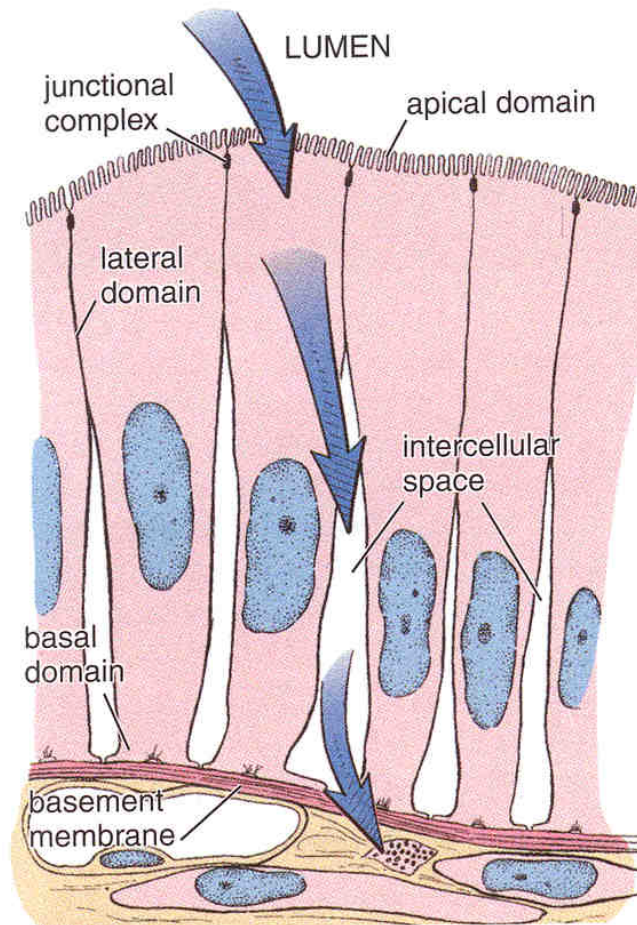
- Very early event and very novel innovation in Metazoa evolution
- From simple colonies of cells to highly specialized tissue structures
- Boundaries and interfaces
- Dividing of the body into separated compartments → separating individual milieu
- Lining of cavities or interfaces of open space
- Attachment and adhesion
- Basal membrane



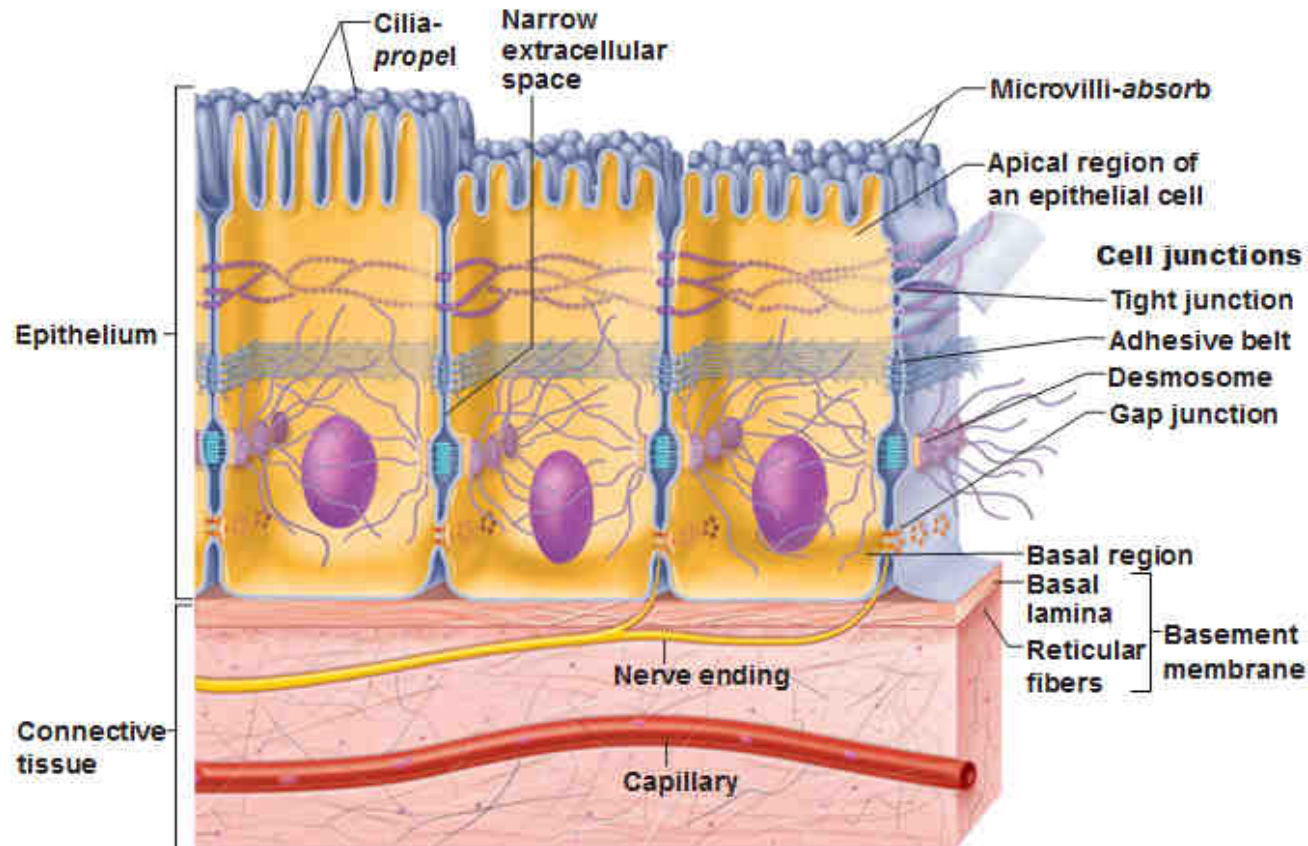
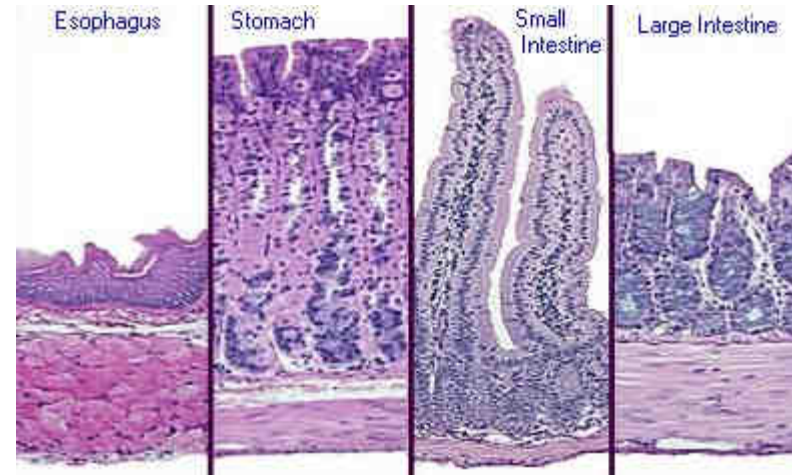


## ■ Hallmarks of epithelial tissue

- Avascular (without blood supply) – nutrition by diffusion from a highly vascular and innervated area of loose connective tissue (*lamina propria*) just below the basement membrane
- Highly cellular – cohesive sheet or groups of cells with no or little extracellular matrix
- Typical morphology and cell connections



- Hallmarks of epithelial cell

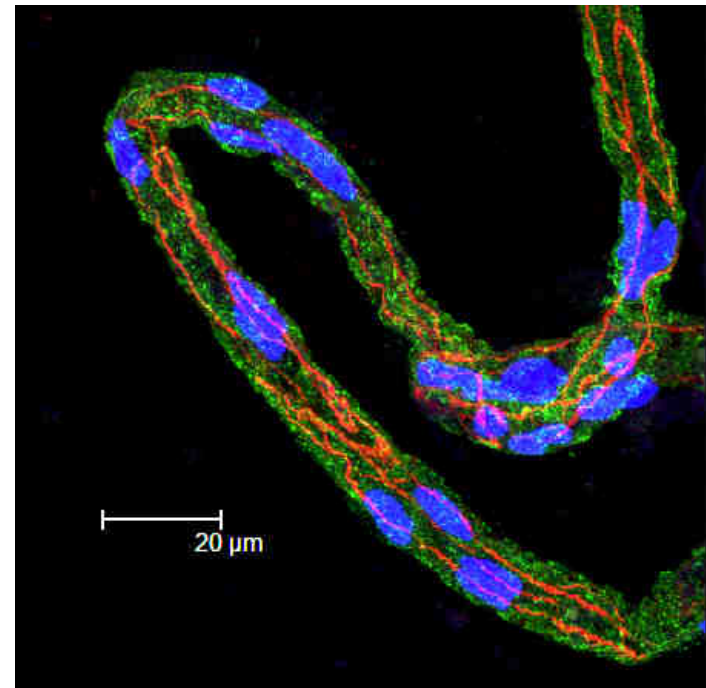
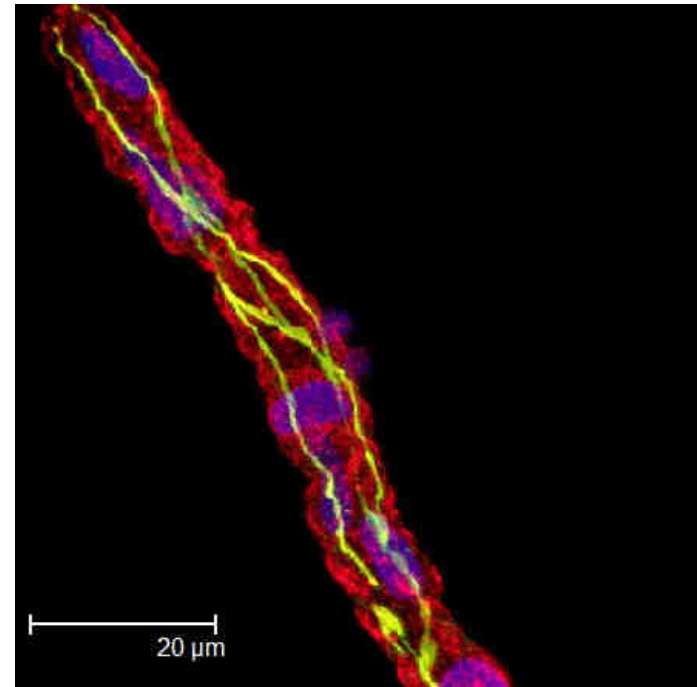


## ■ Diffusion barriers

- Epithelia separate intercellular spaces – compartmentalization
  - intestine epithelium
  - kidney epithelium
  - secretory and duct parts of exocrine glands
  - endothelium in brain capillaries (blood brain barrier)
  - plexus choroideus (blood-liquor barrier)

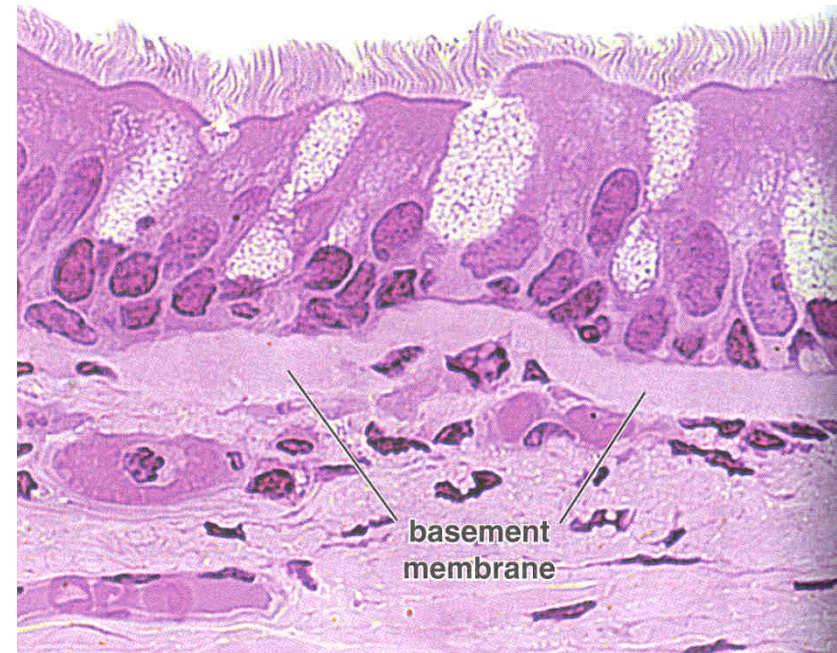
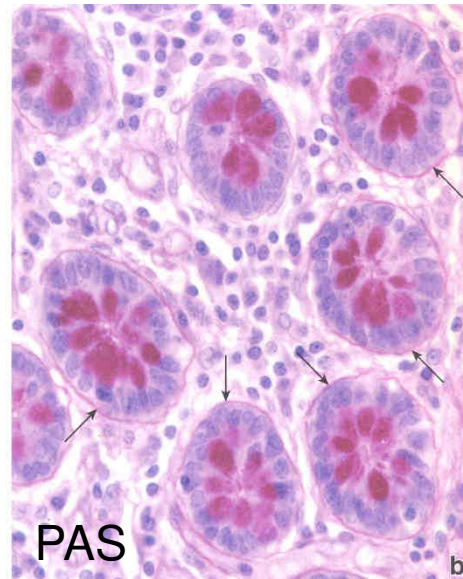
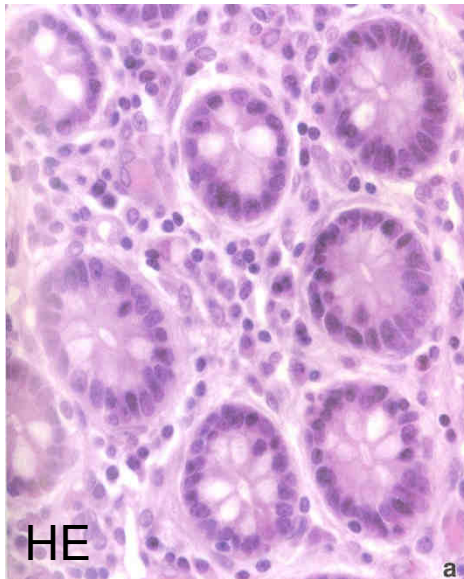
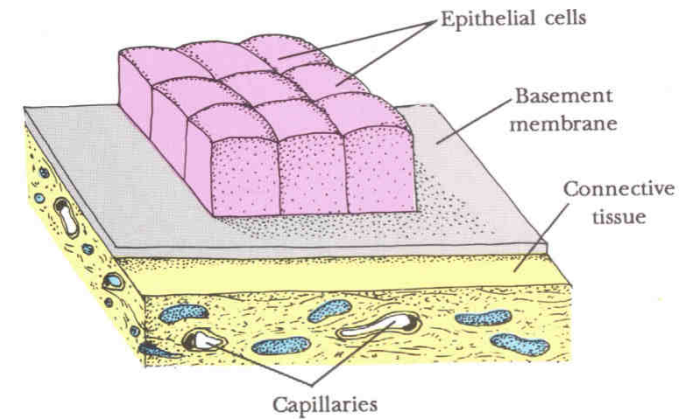
microvessel stained for focal adhesion kinase (green), zonula occludens 1 (red) and endothelial nuclei (blue)

[http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Brain\\_Microvessel.tif](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Brain_Microvessel.tif)



## ■ Basement membrane (*membrana basalis*)

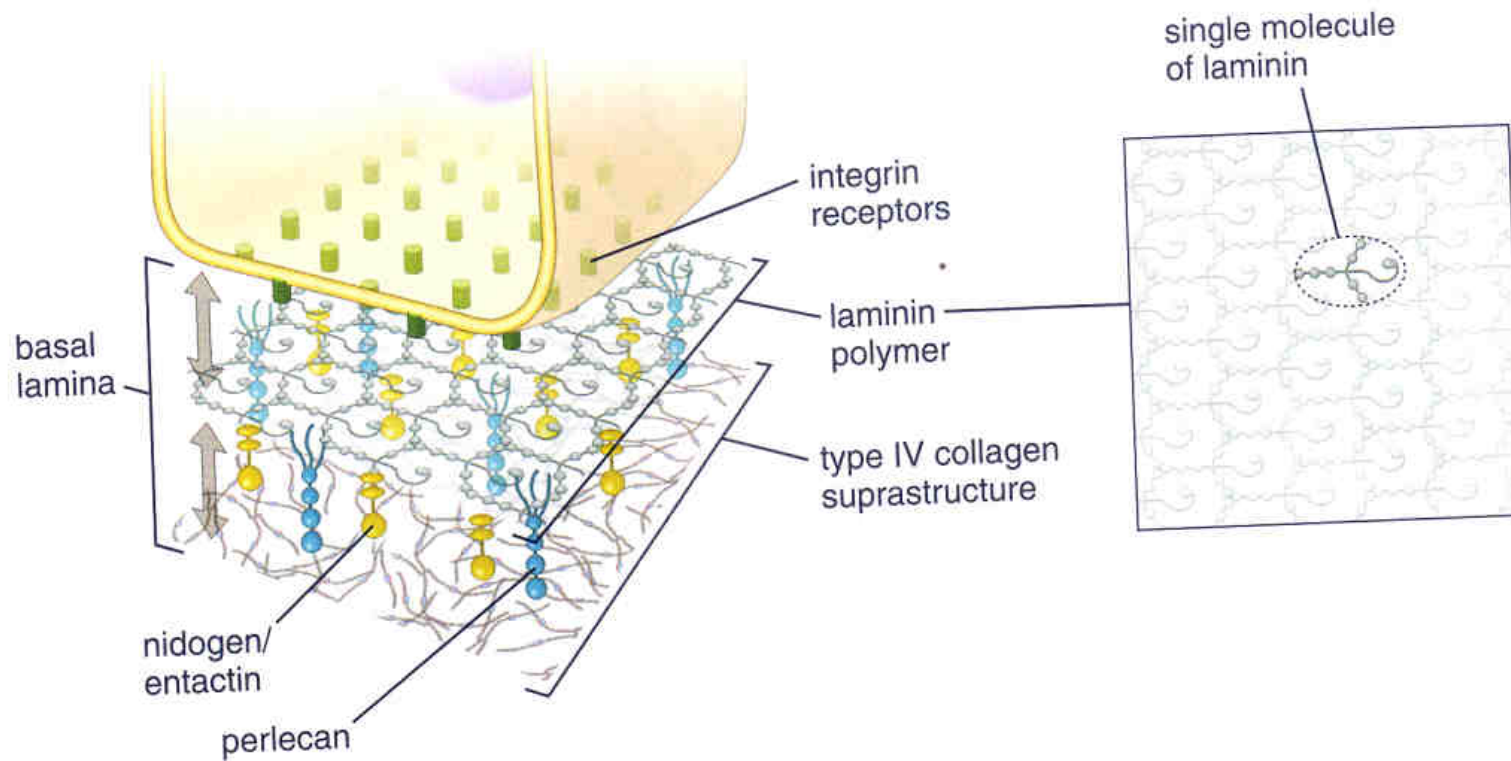
- Attachment of epithelium to underlying tissues
- Selective filter barrier between epithelial and connective tissue
- Communication, differentiation, angiogenesis



# Basement

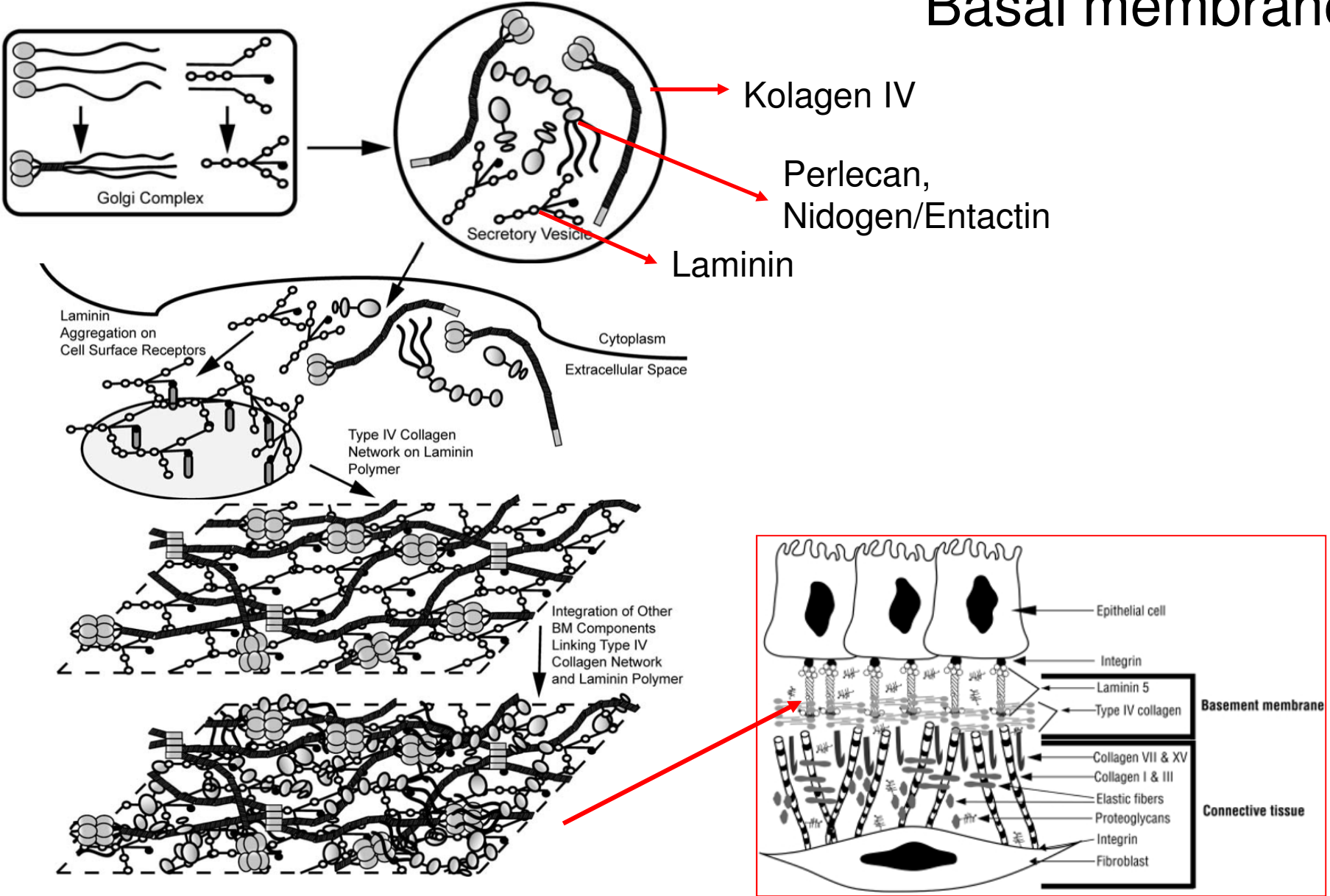
*matrix*

- 50 – 100 nm
- Glycosaminoglycans – heparansulphate
- Laminin, collagen III, IV, VI
- Nidogen, entactin, perlecan, proteoglycans



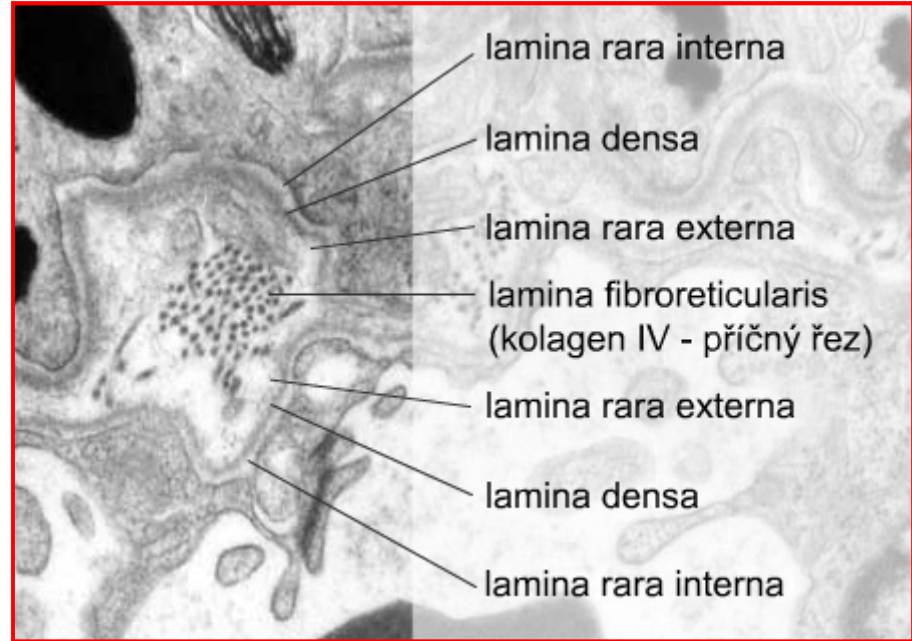
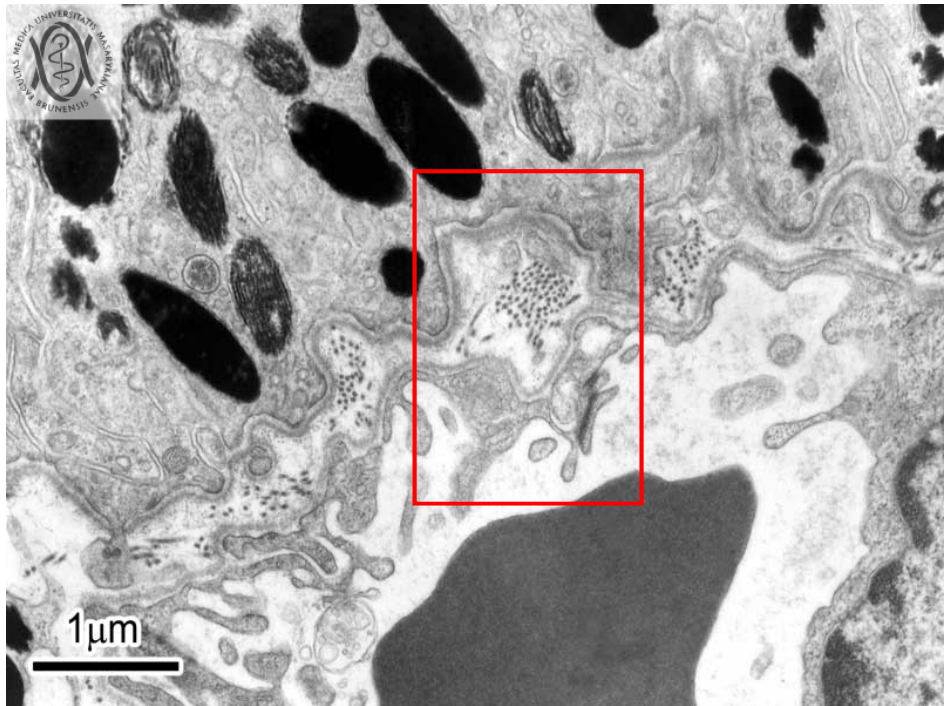


# Basal membrane

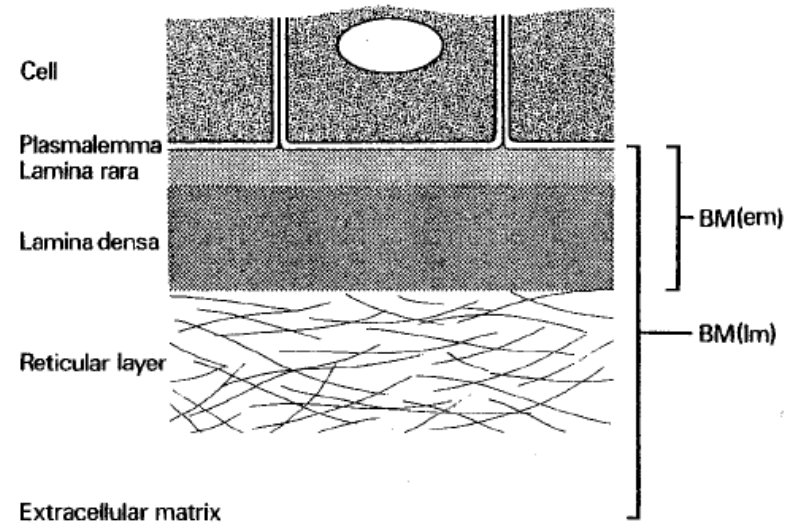
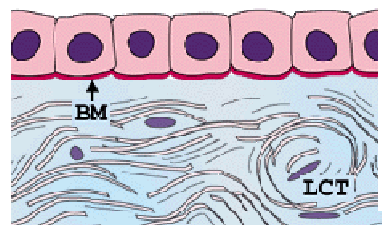


Dunsmore SE, Chambers RC, Laurent GJ. 2003. Matrix Proteins. Figure 2.1.2. In: Respiratory Medicine, 3rd ed. London. Saunders, p. 83; Dunsmore SE, Laurent GJ. 2007. Lung Connective Tissue. Figure 40.1. In: Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease: A Practical Guide to Management, 1st ed. Oxford. Wiley-Blackwell, p. 467.

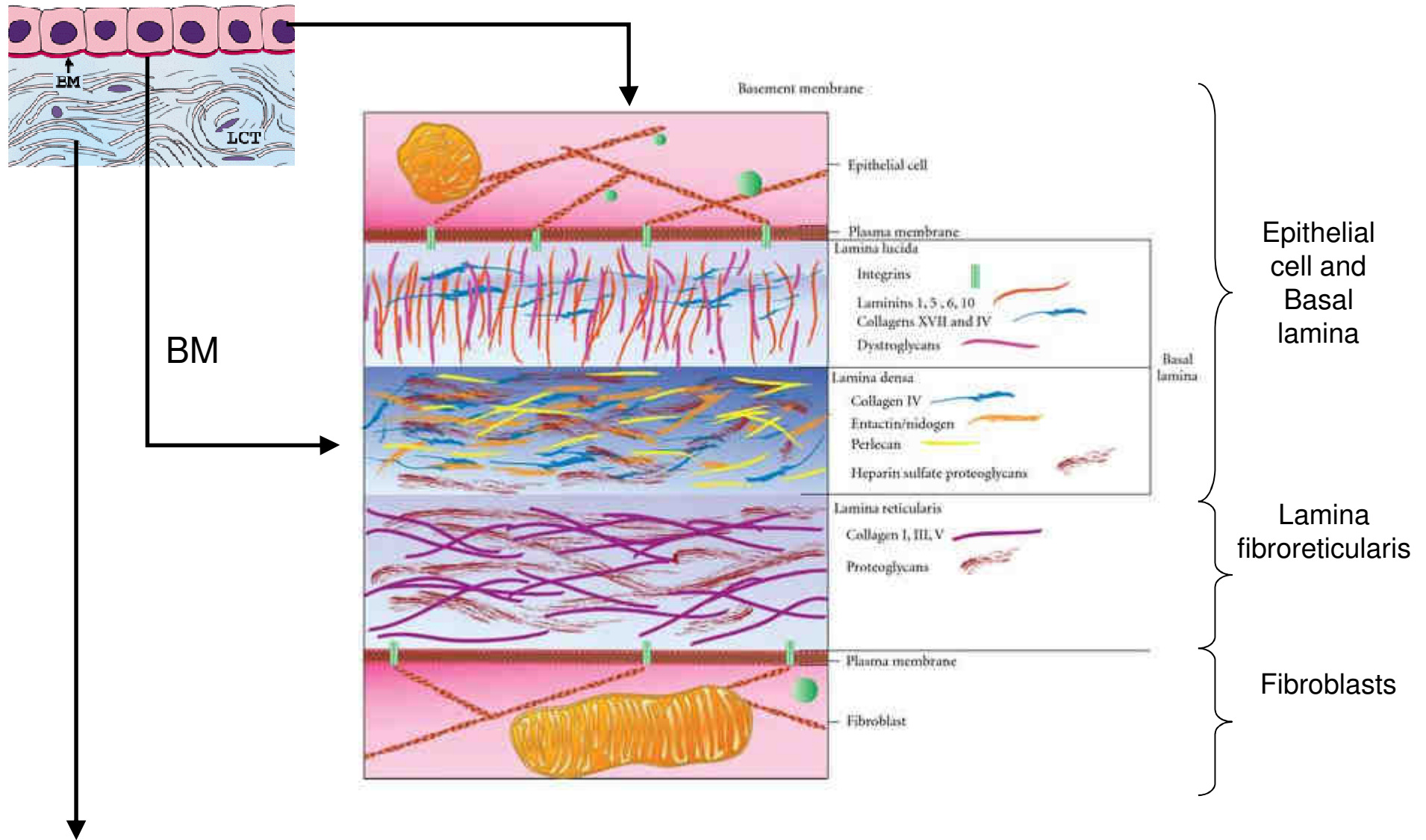
# Basement membrane



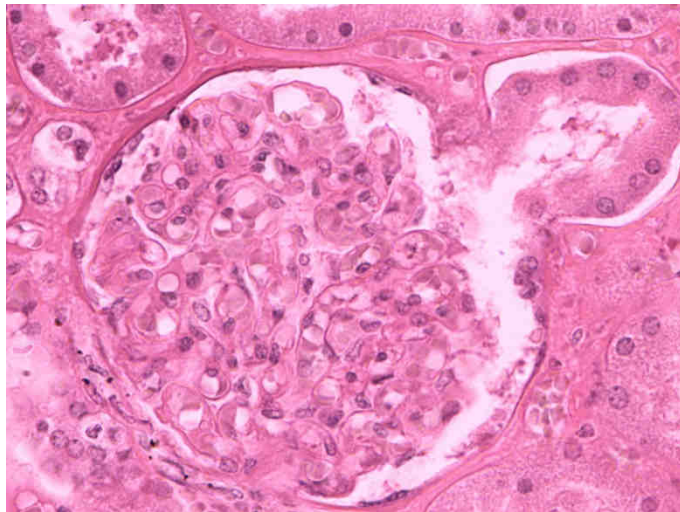
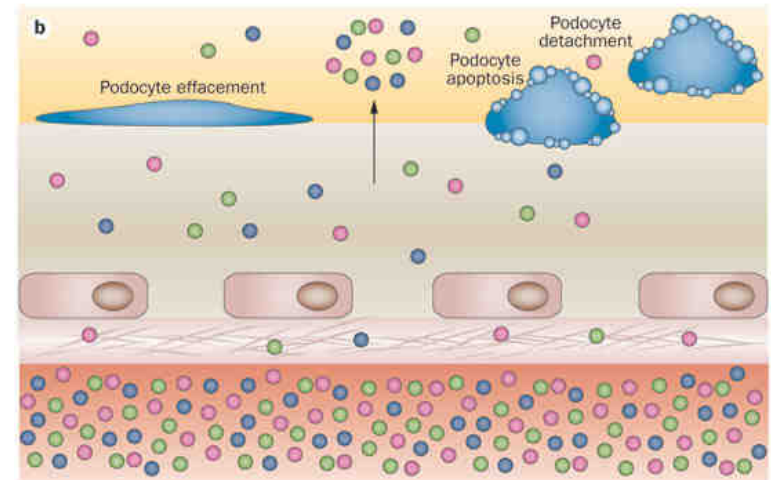
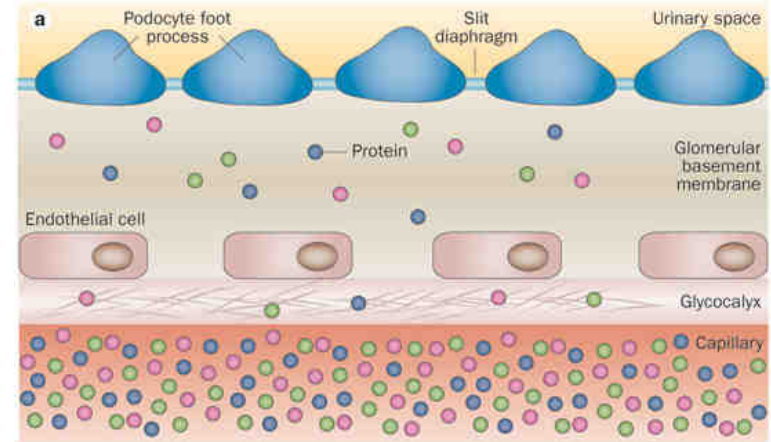
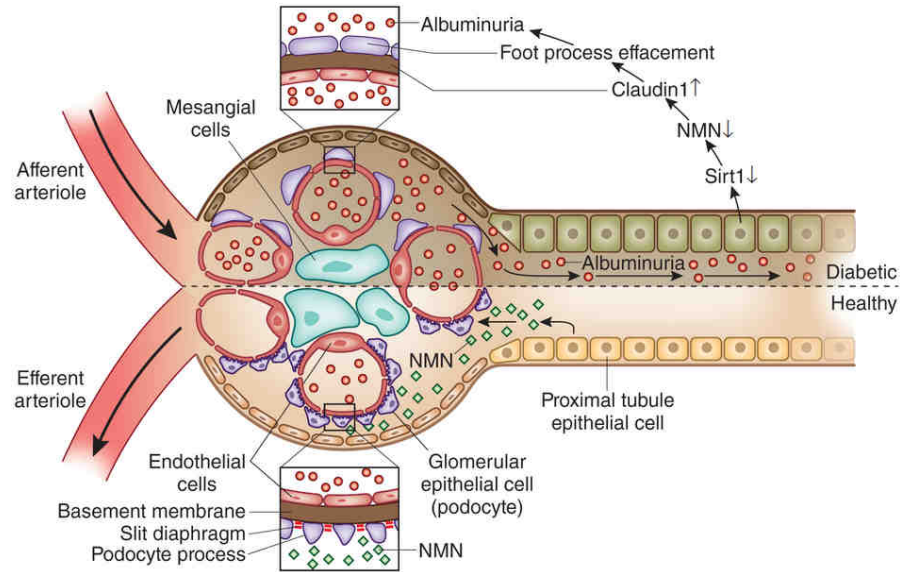
- Two basic layers
  - lamina basalis (basal lamina)
    - lamina densa,
    - lamina rara ext. et int.
  - lamina fibroreticularis



# Architecture of basal membrane



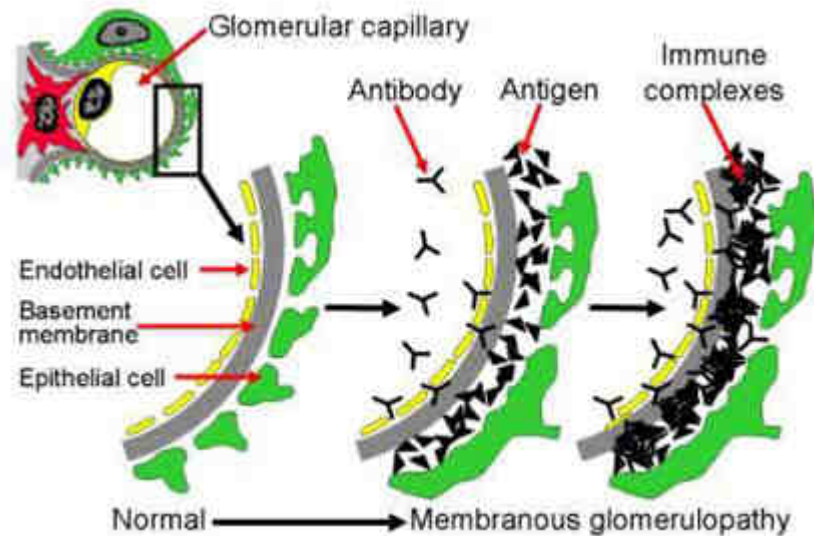
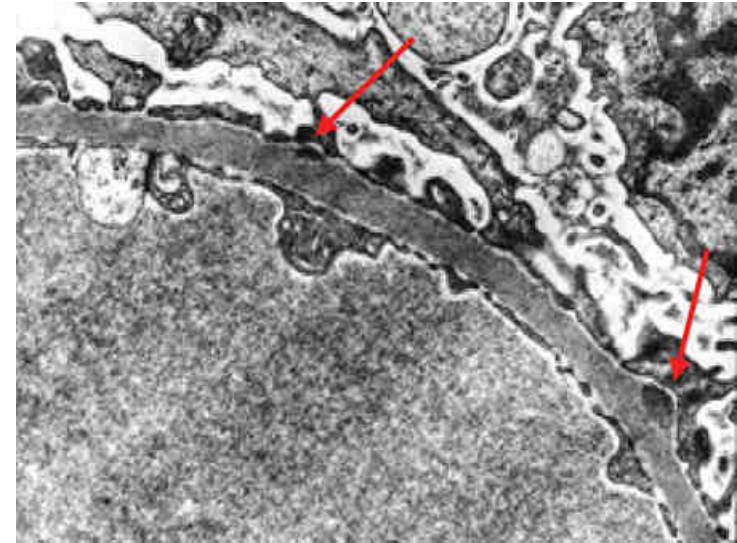
# Basal membrane in corpusculum renis



# Basement membrane in corpusculum renis

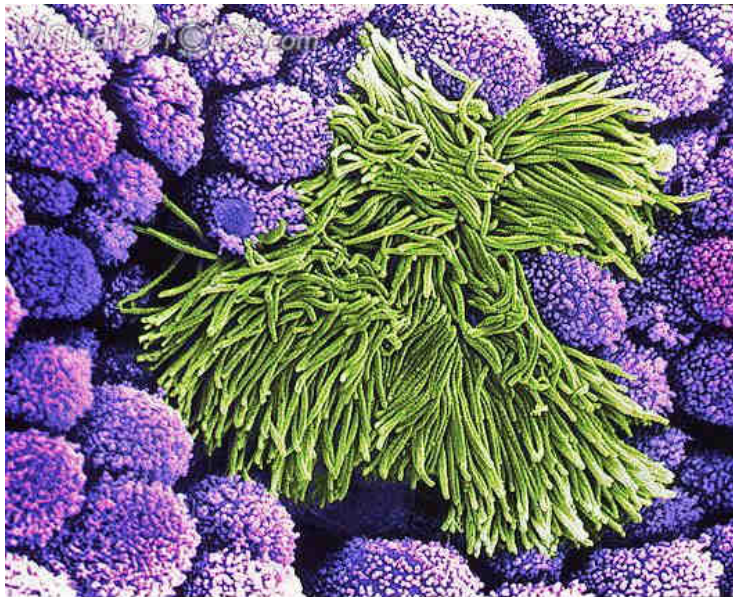
## Pathology example- Membranous glomerulonephritis

- circulating antibodies bind to glomerular basement membrane
- complement (C5b-C9) complex forms and attacks glomerular epithelial cells
- filtration barrier is compromised
- proteinuria, edema, hematuria, renal failure

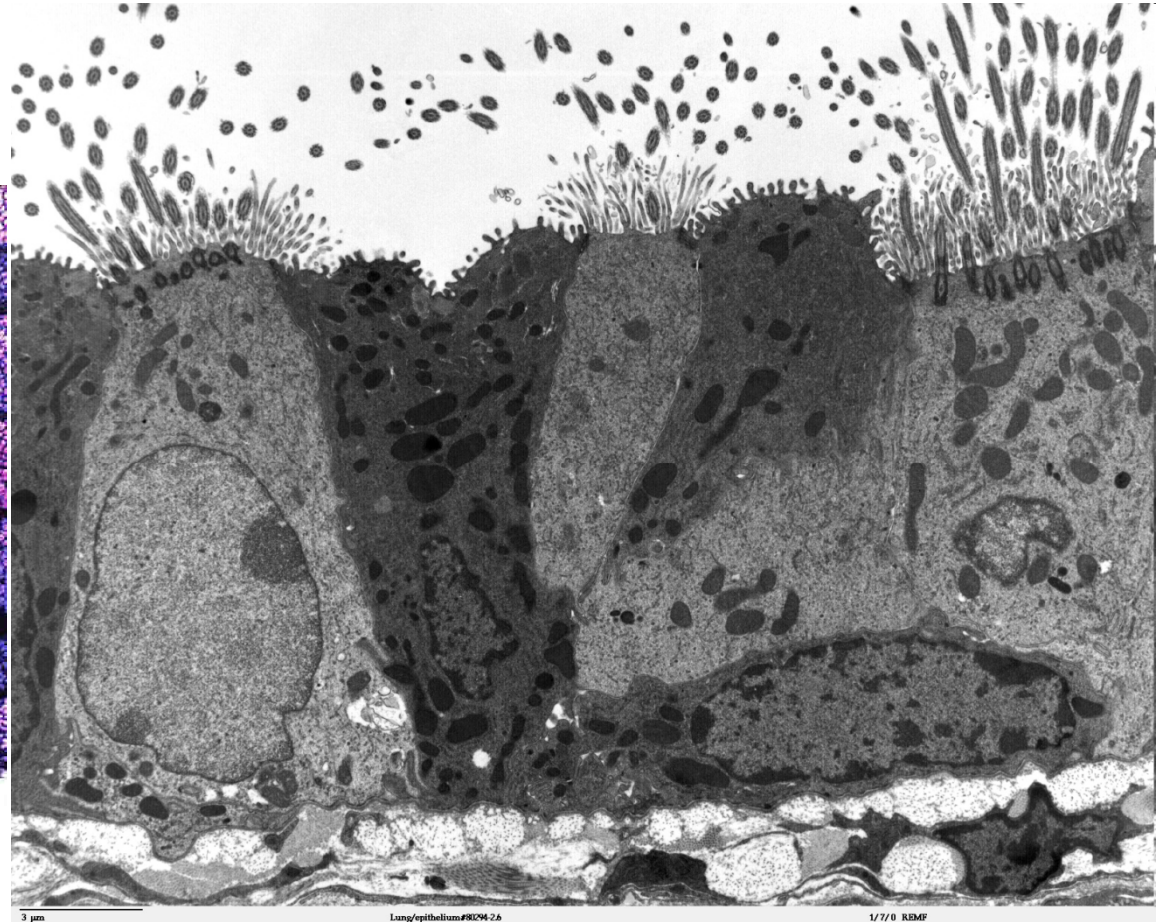


# ■ Classification of epithelial tissue

- Based on **morphology** (covering, trabecular, reticular)
- Based on **function** (glandular, resorptive, sensory, respiratory)



p580102 [RM] © www.visualphotos.com



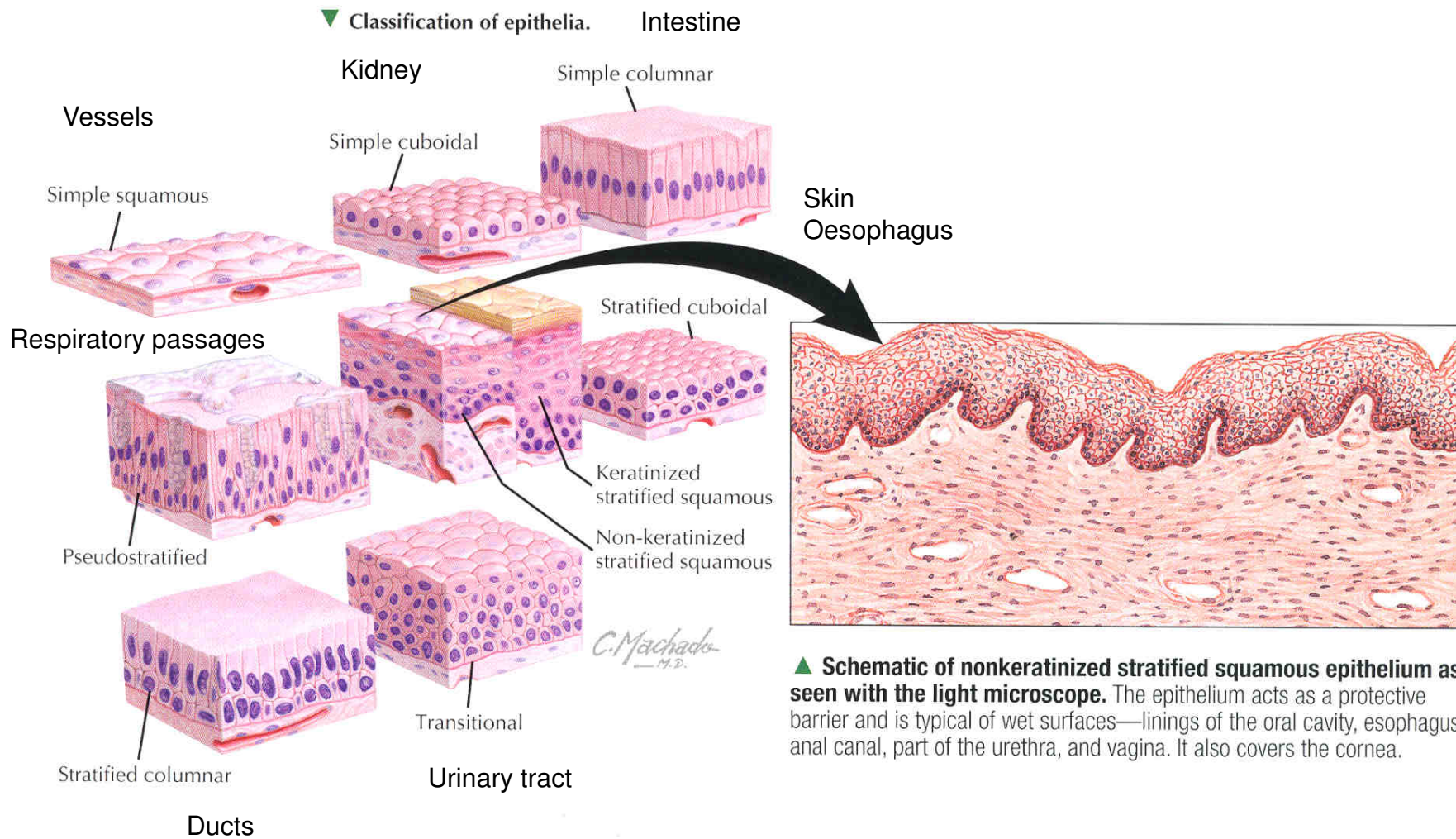
3 µm

Lung/epithelium#80294-26

1/7/0 RBMP

# Classification of epithelial tissues

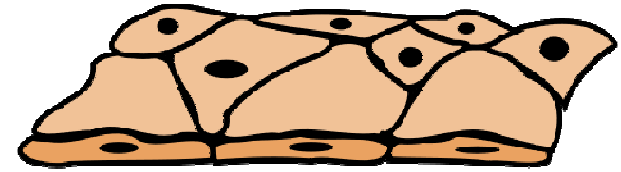
## 1. Covering (sheet) epithelia



- **Simple squamous epithelium**

- Single layer of flat cells with central flat nuclei
- Capillaries
- Lung alveolus
- Glomerulus in renal corpuscle

} Selective permeability

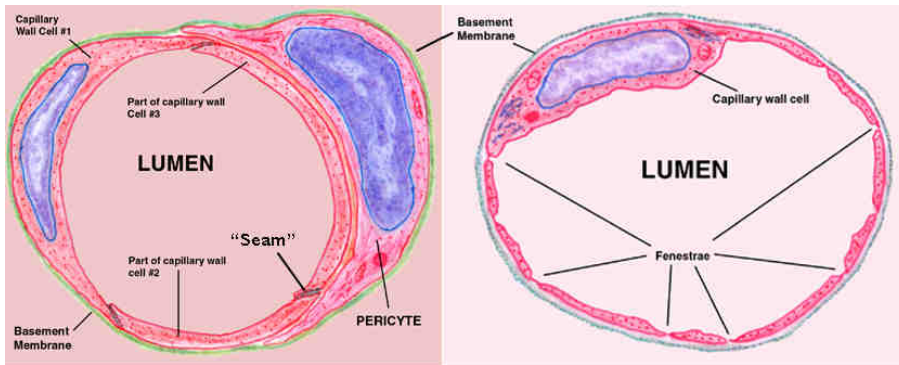
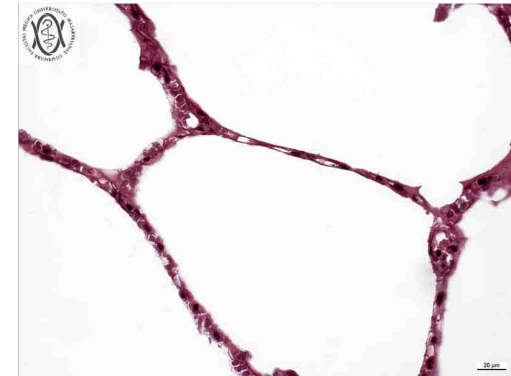
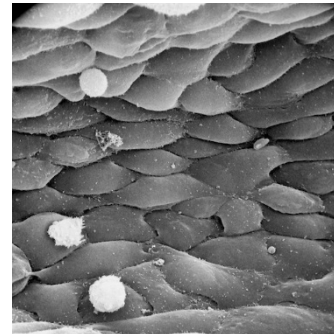


**Endothelium.**

heart, blood, and lymphatic vessels.

**Mesothelium.**

serous membranes - body cavities



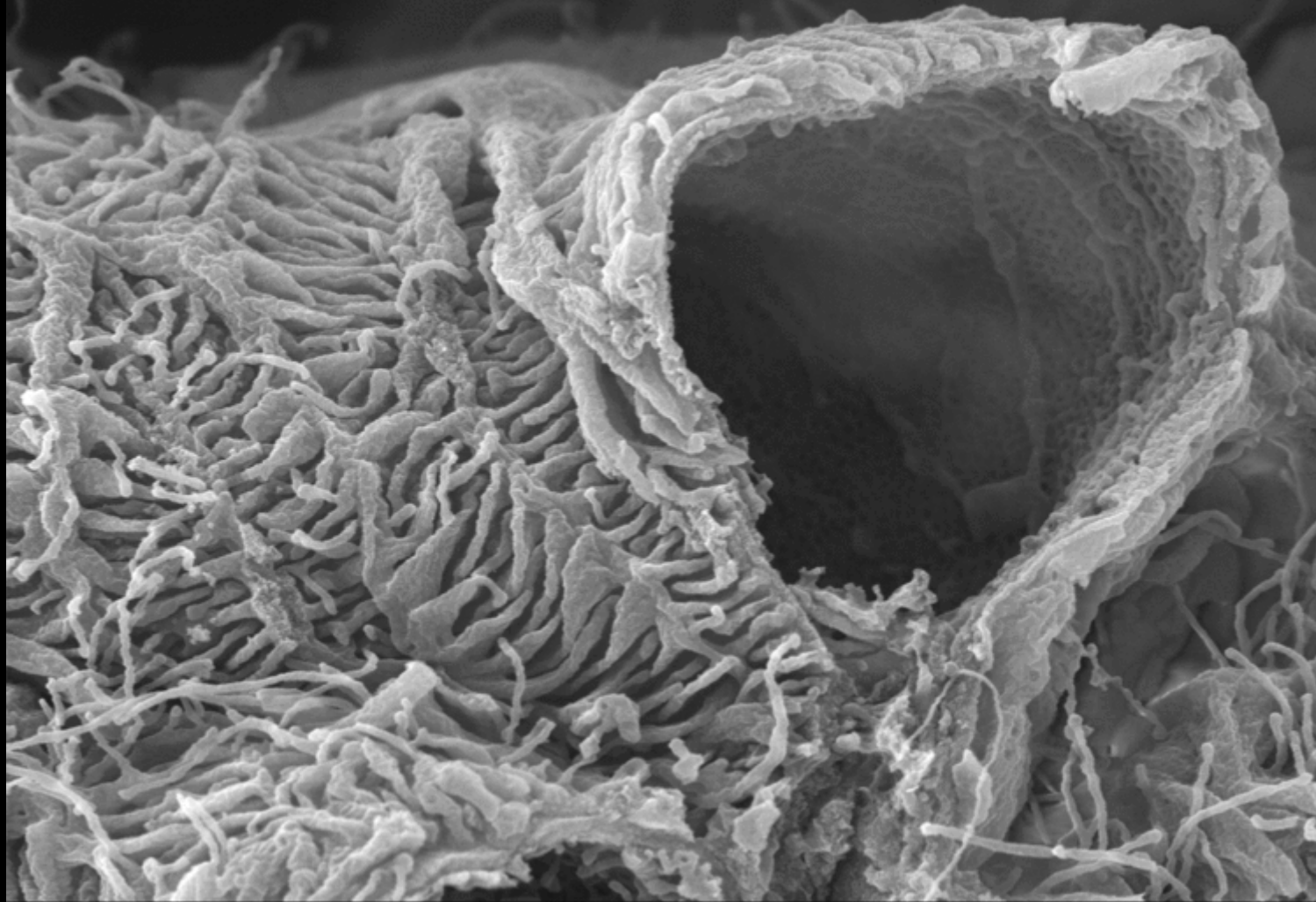
**Closed or Continuous Capillary**

**Fenestrated Capillary**





Kapillare des Glomerulums



x10000

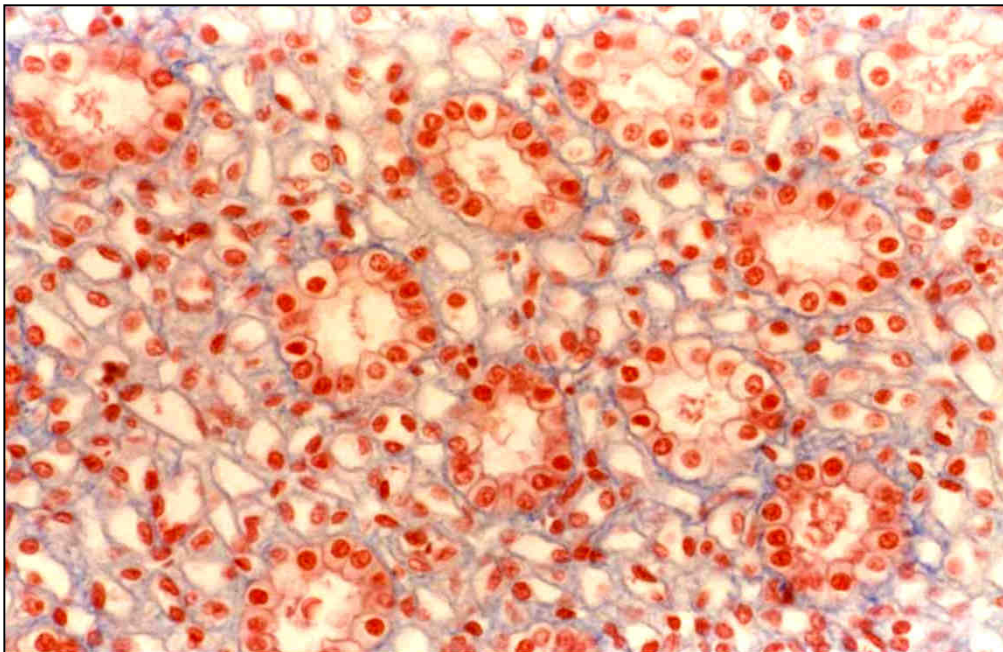
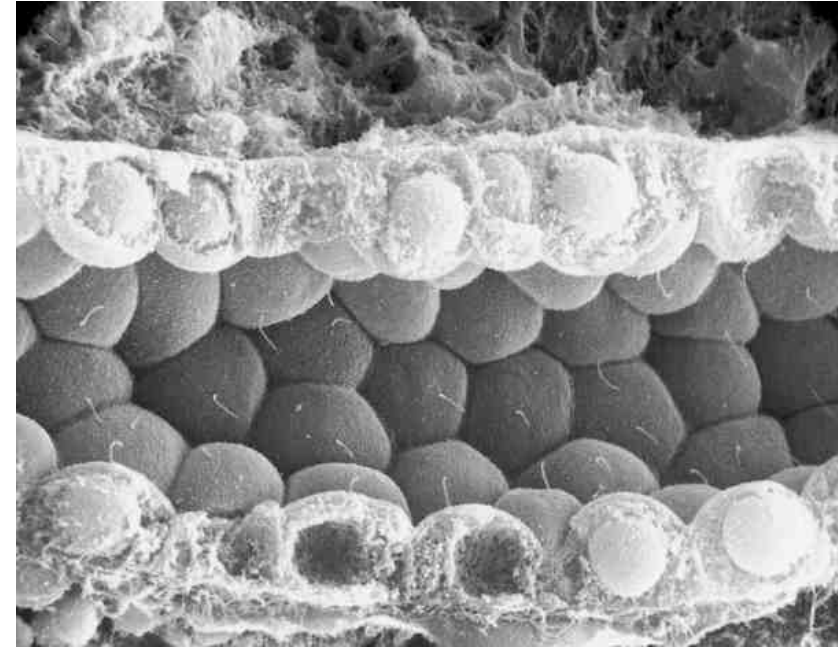
2  $\mu$ m

5kV

4mm

- **Simple cuboidal epithelia**

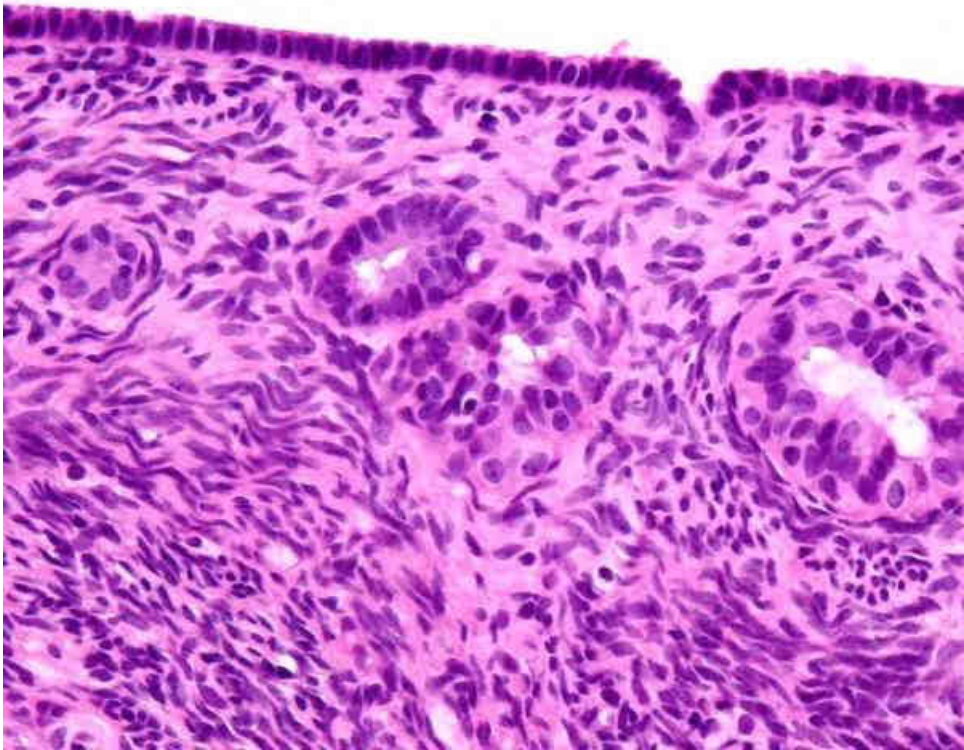
- Single layer of cuboidal cells with large, spherical central nuclei
- Secretion or resorption



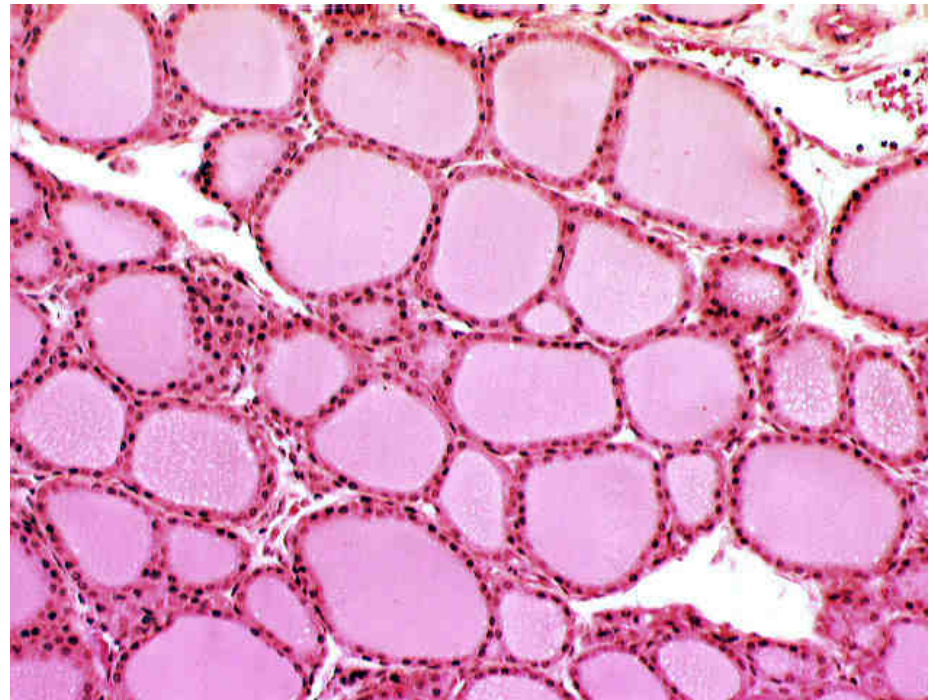
Examples:

- Ovarian surface epithelium
- Renal tubules
- Thyroid
- Secretion acini

Ovarian surface epithelium

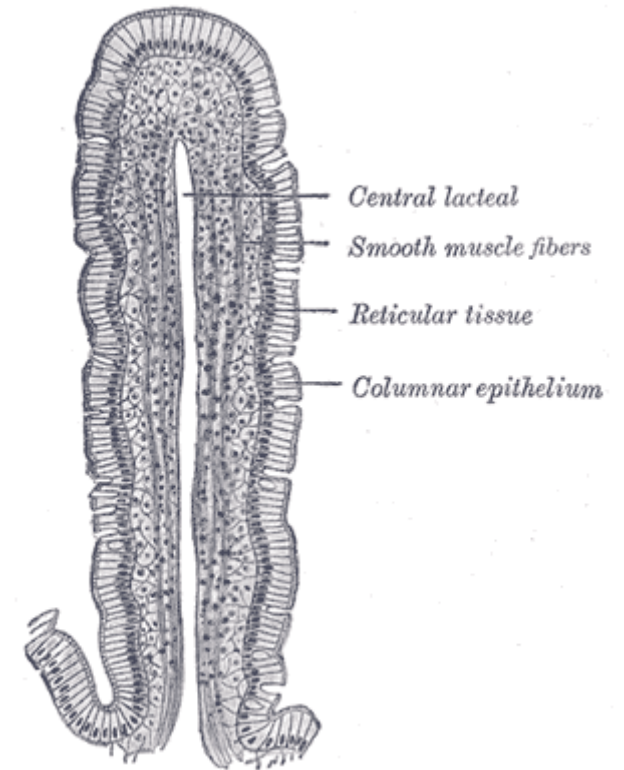
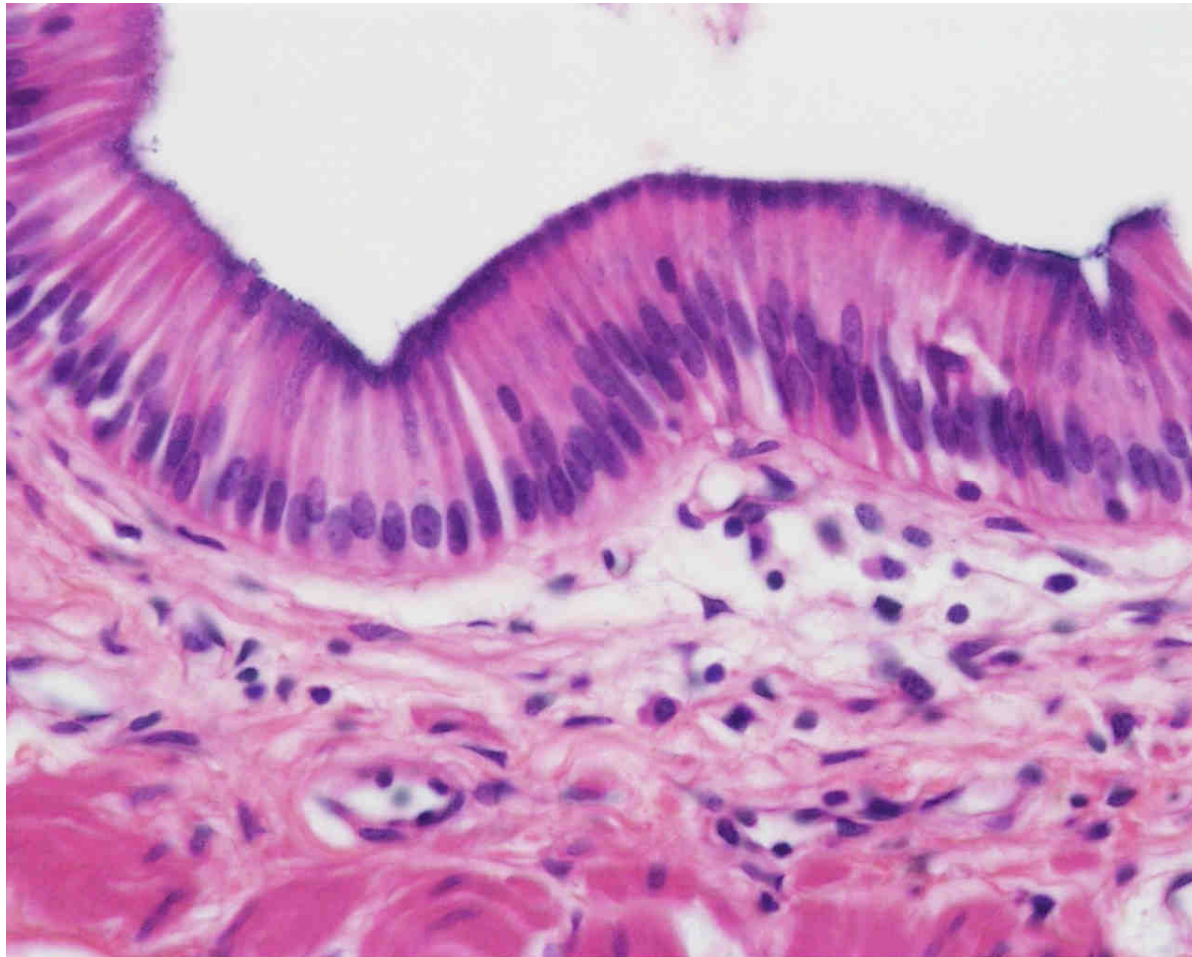


Thyroid follicles



## ▪ Simple columnar epithelium

- Single layer of columnar cells with large, oval, basally located nucleus
- GIT
  - stomach
  - small intestine
  - large intestine

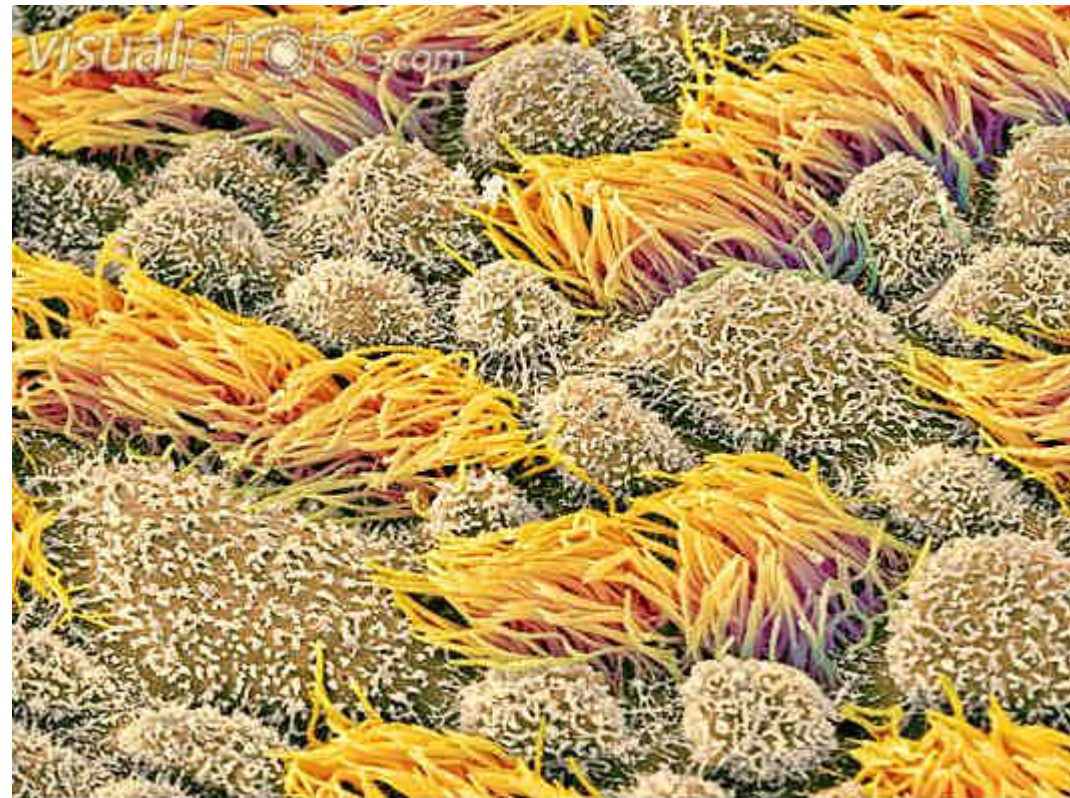
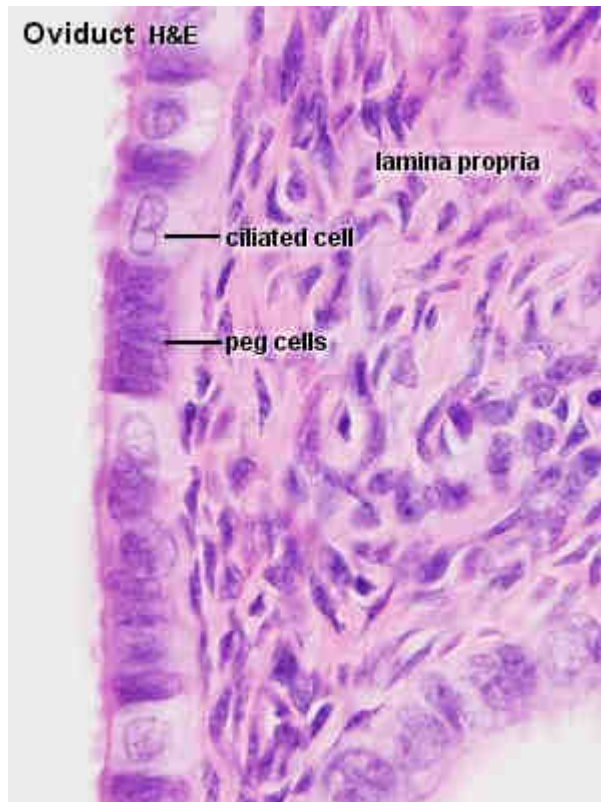


Resorption / Secretion



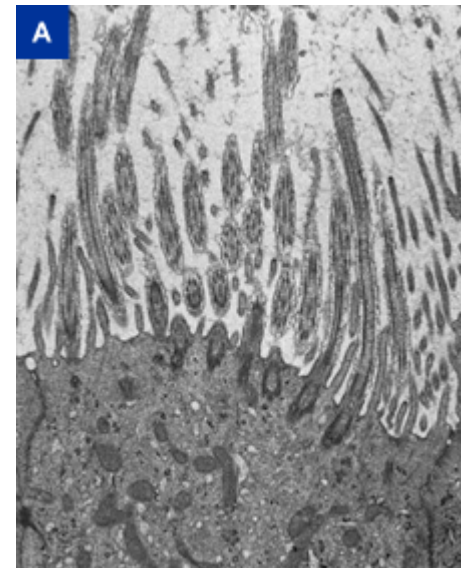
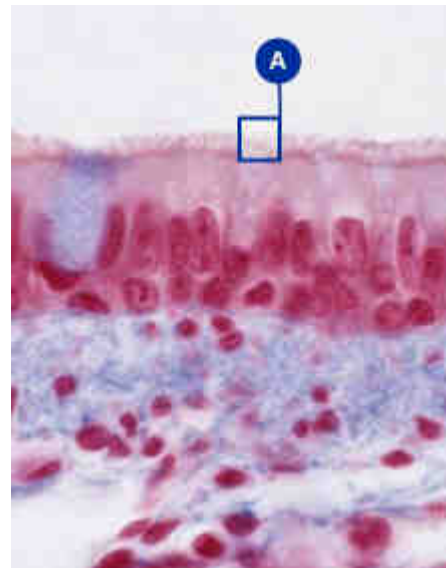
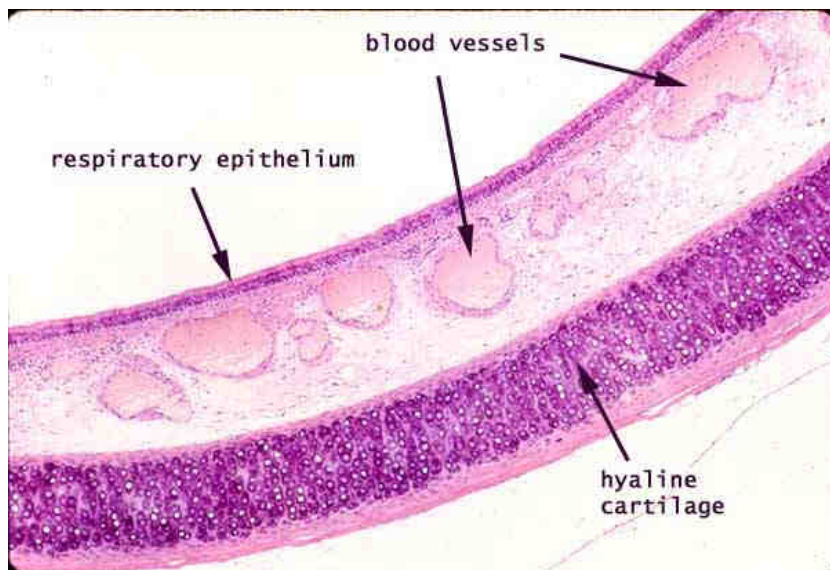
- **Simple columnar epithelium with kinocilia**

- Uterine tube, epidydimis, respiratory passages



- **Simple columnar epithelium with kinocilia (also pseudostratified)**

- Upper respiratory passages
- Removes mucus produced by epithelial glands



Other locations:

- Spinal cord ependyma
- Epididymis
- Vas deferens

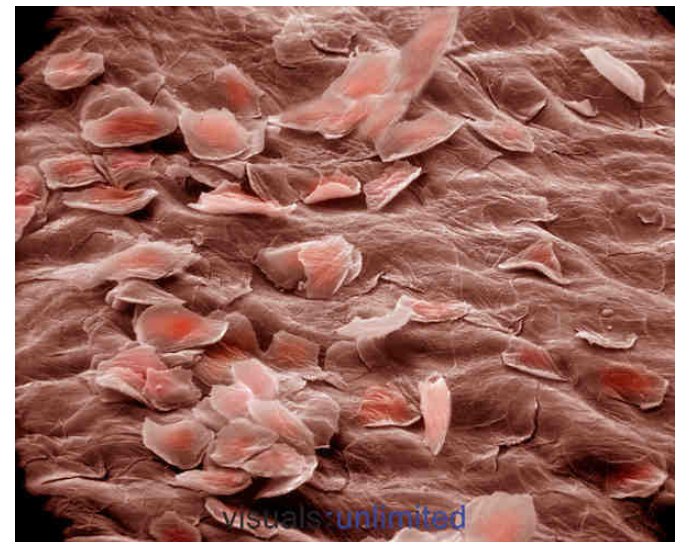
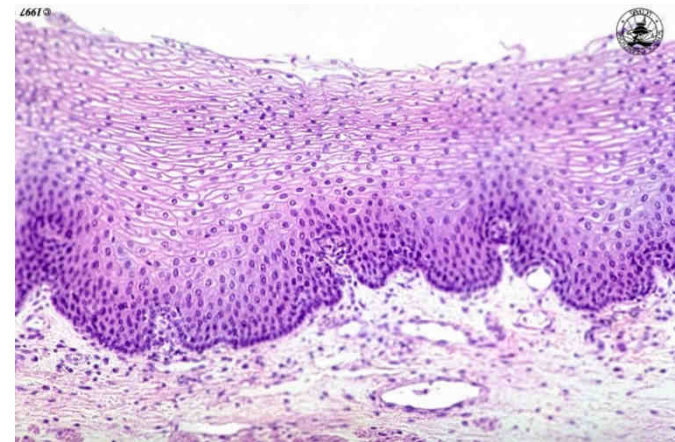
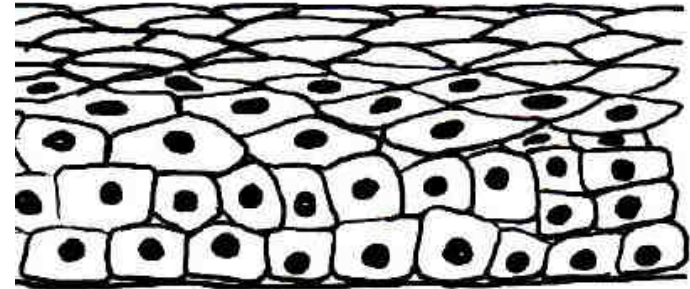
## ▪ Stratified squamous epithelium

- Multiple layers of cubic cells with central nuclei, flattening towards the surface
- First layer in contact with BM, last layer – flat
- Constant abrasion
- Mechanical resilience
- Protection from drying
- Rapid renewal

### Keratinized vs. non-keratinized

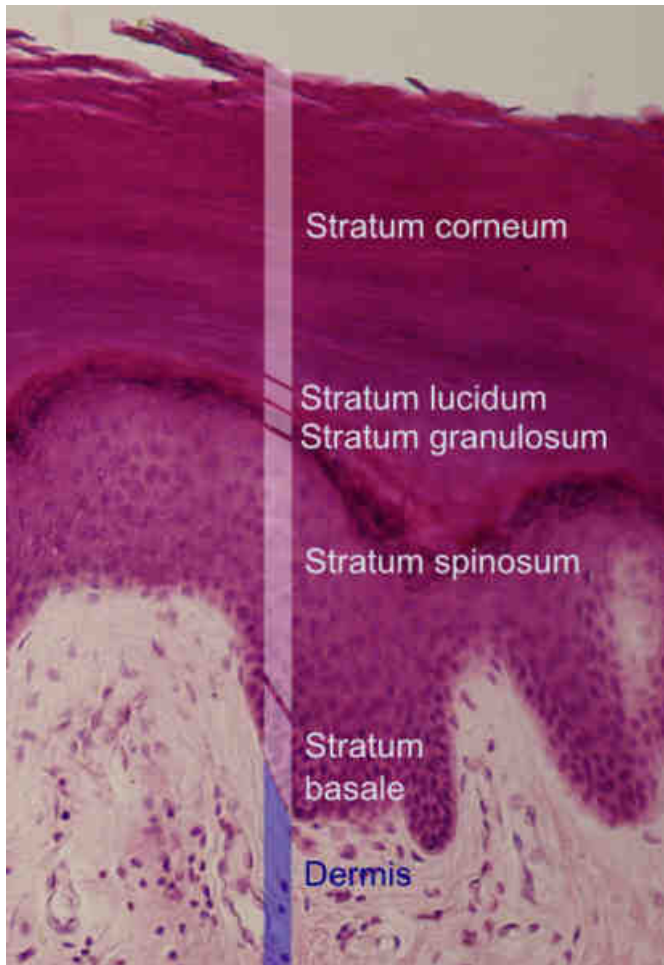
#### Examples:

- Cornea
- Oral cavity and lips
- Esophagus
- Anal canal
- Vagina



- Stratified squamous epithelium

Keratinized



Skin (epidermis)

Nail

Keratins

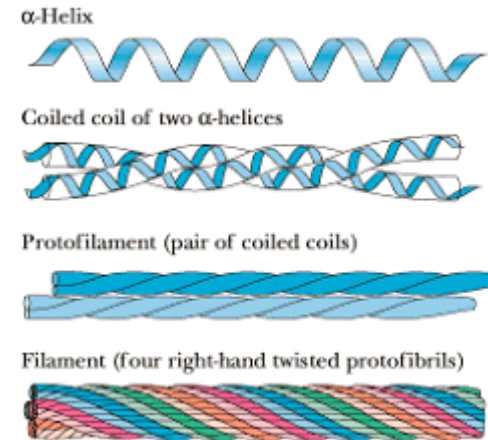
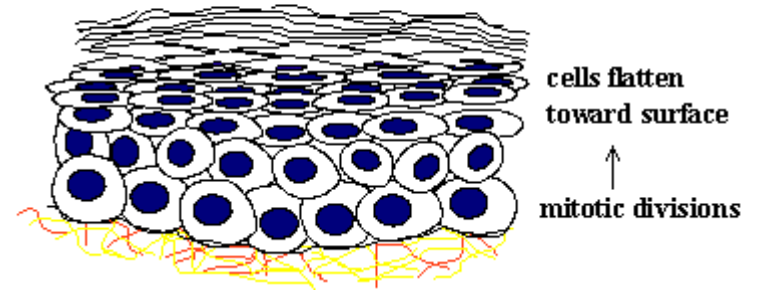
Fibrous proteins, ~ 40 types

Very stable, multimeric

Disorders of keratin expression  
– variety of clinical symptoms

e.g. Epidermolysis bullosa simplex

keratinized stratified squamous  
dead, keratinized cells at surface

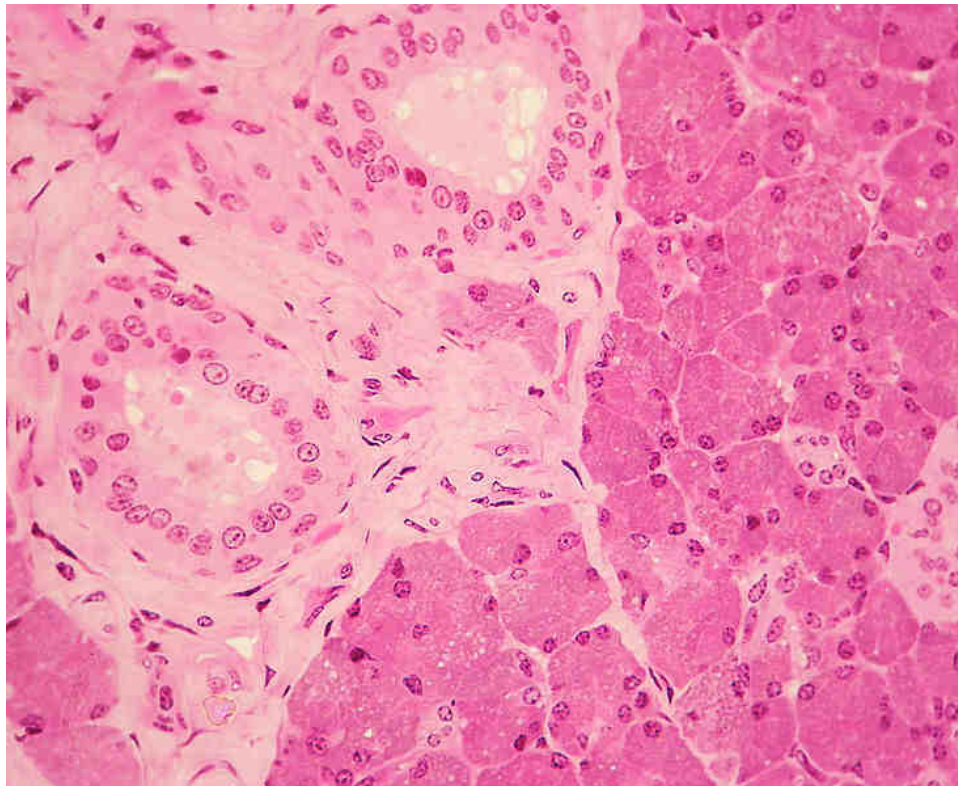
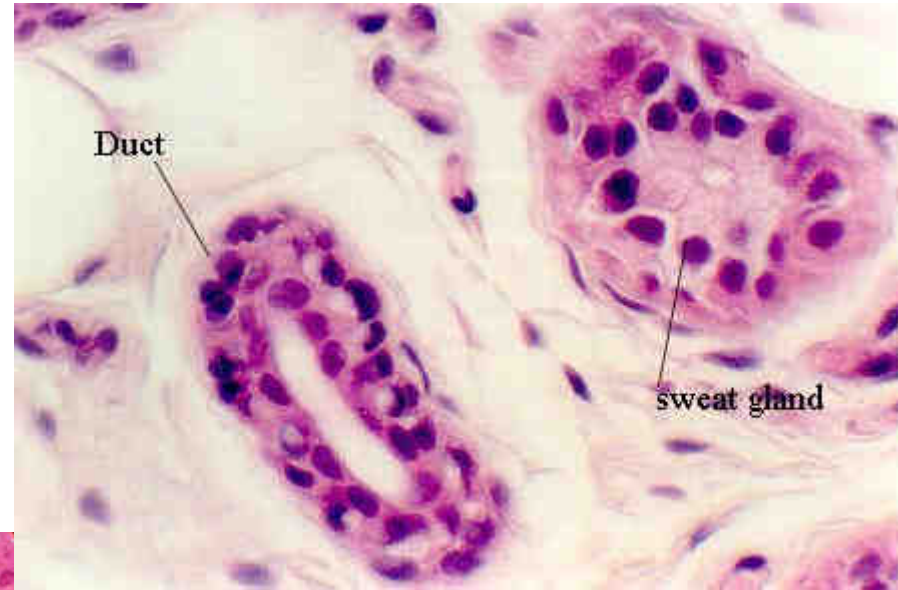




▪ **Stratified cuboidal epithelium**

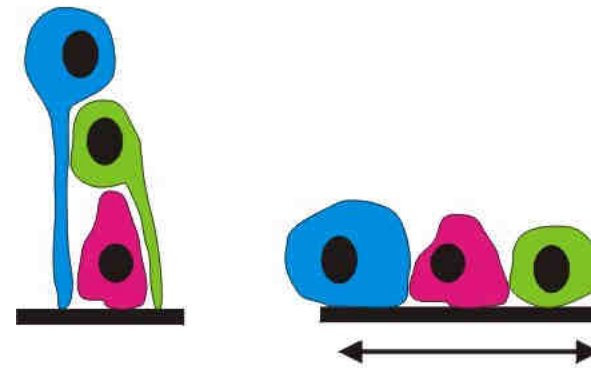
Large ducts of :

- sweat glands
- mammary glands
- salivary glands



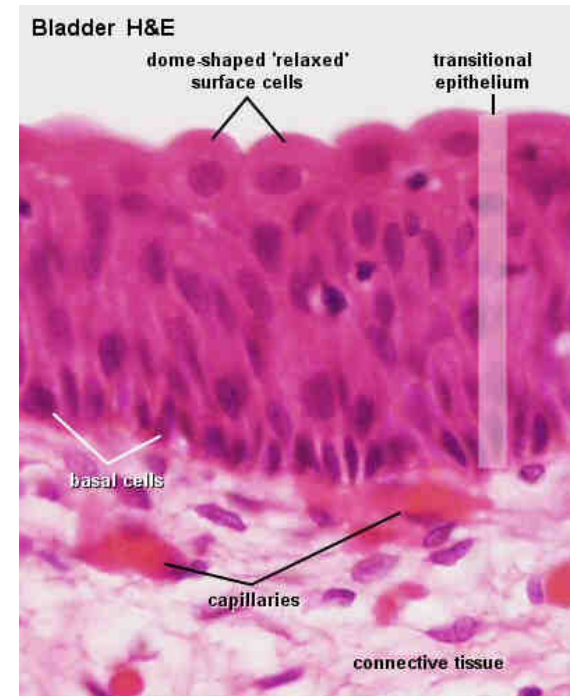
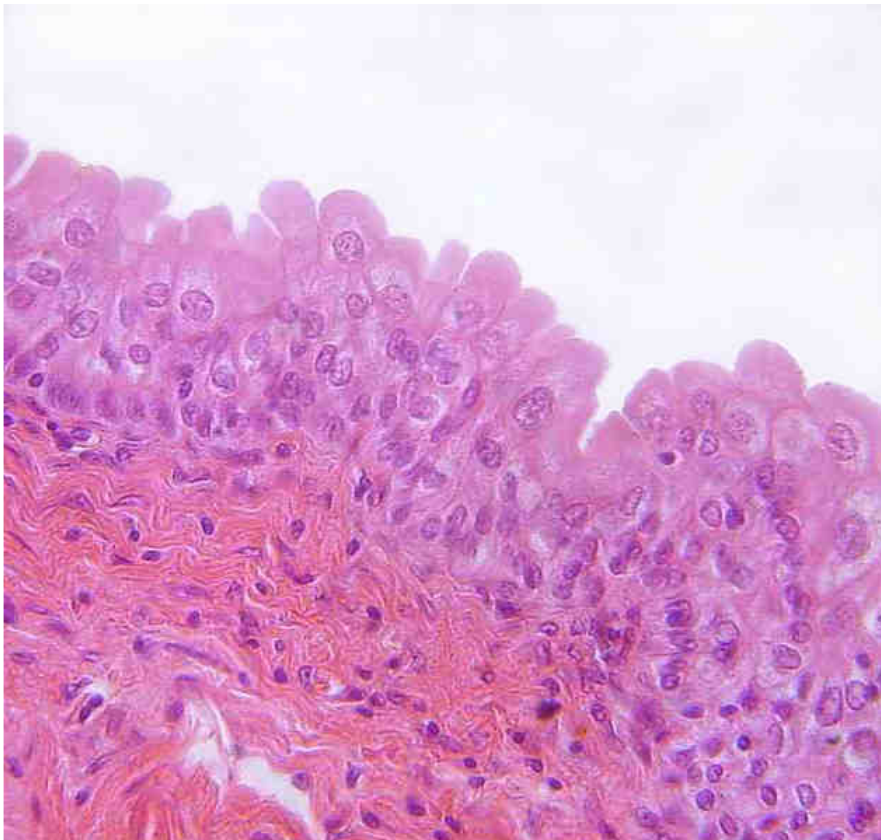
- **Transitional epithelium (urothelium)**

- Fluctuation of volume
  - organization of epithelial layers
  - membrane reserve
- Protection against urine
- Urinary bladder, kidneys, ureters



Empty: rather cuboidal with a domed apex  
 relaxed: flat, stretched

Basal cells  
 Intermediate layer  
 Surface cells



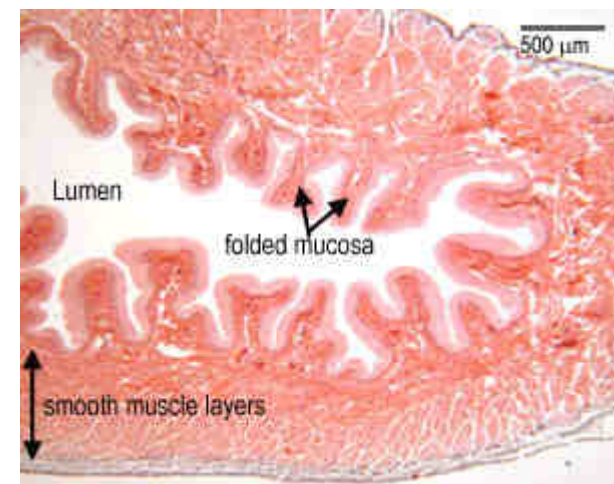
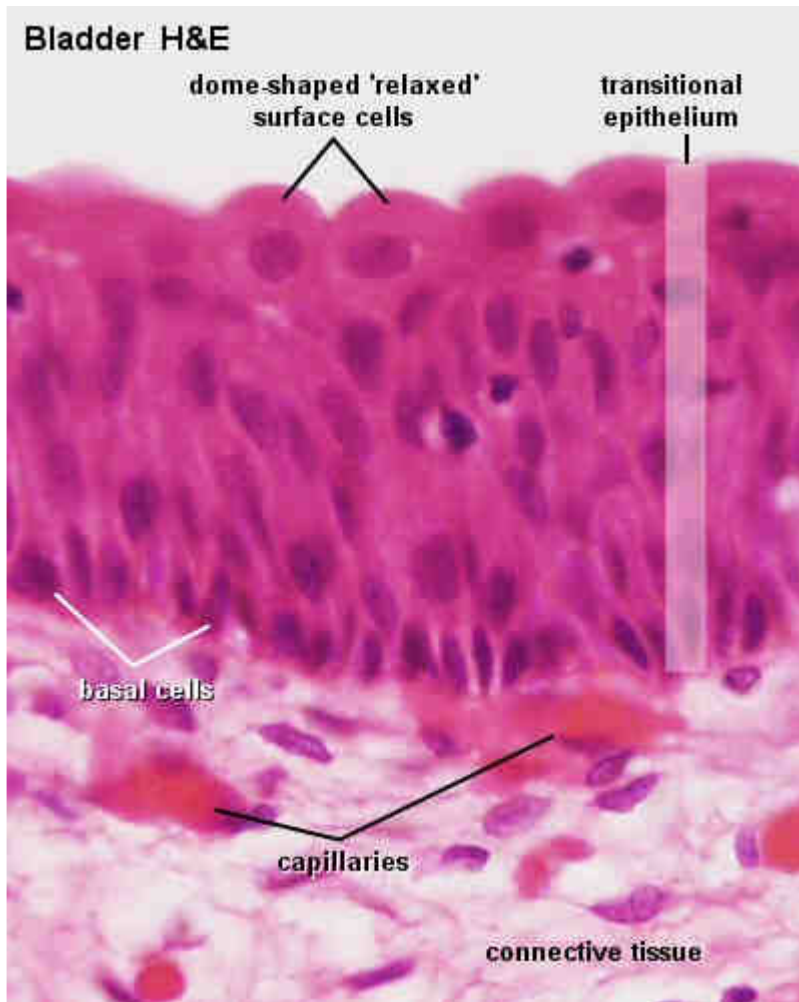
- **Transitional epithelium (urothelium)**

glycosaminoglycan layer (GAG) on the surface

- osmotic barrier
- antimicrobial properties

**Barrier architecture:**

- GAG-layer
- surface cells (tight junctions), uroplakin proteins in the apical cell membrane
- capillary plexus in the submucosa



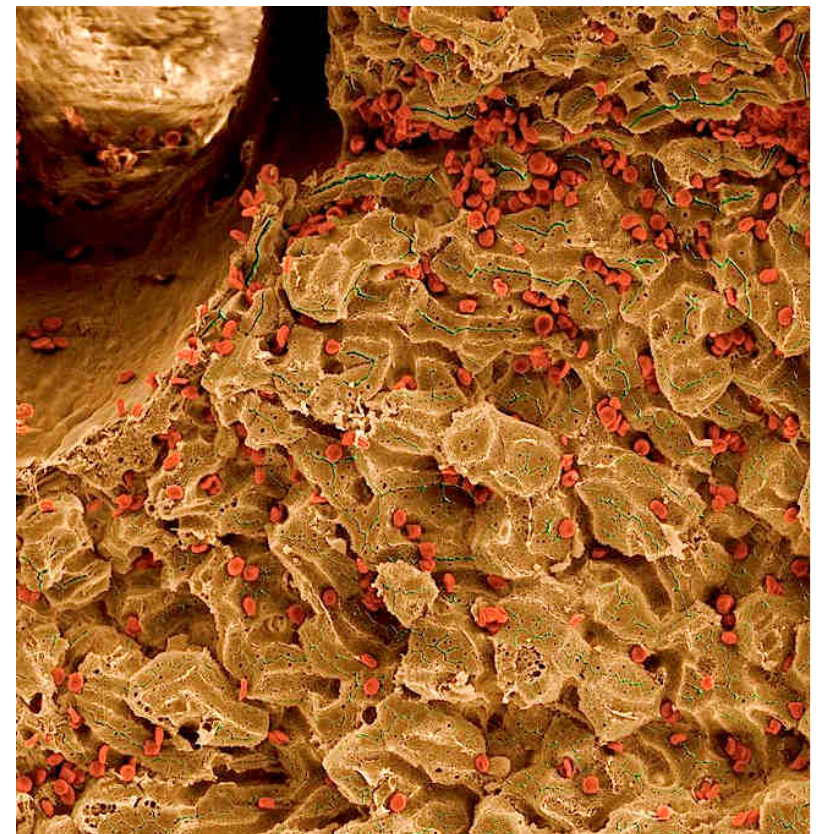
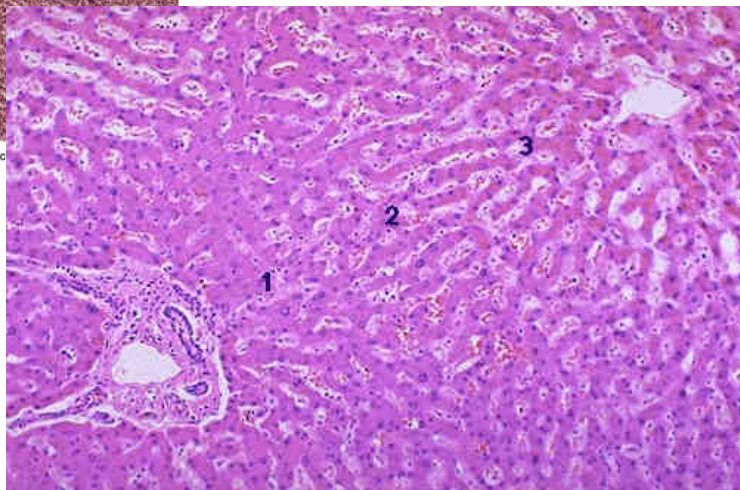
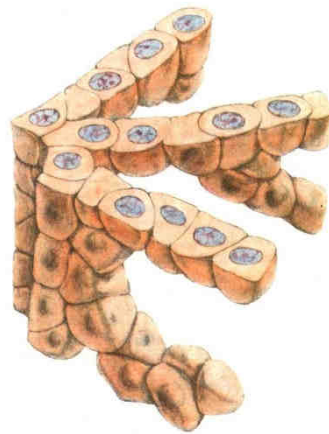
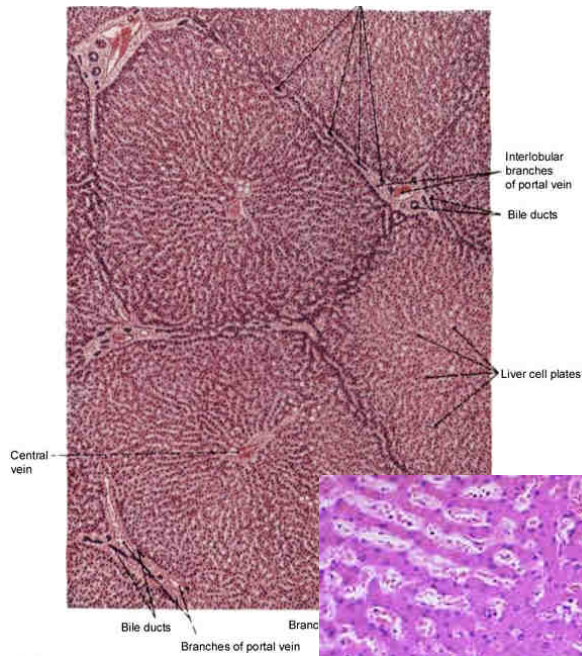
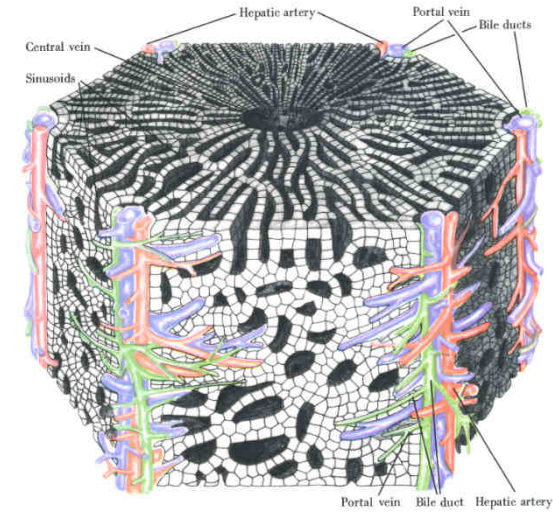
- **Stratified columnar epithelia**
  - several layers of columnar cells
  - secretion / protection
  
  - ocular conjunctiva
  - pharynx, anus – transitions
  - uterus, male urethra, vas deferens
  - intralobular ducts of salivary glands



# ■ Classification of epithelial tissues

## 2. Trabecular epithelium

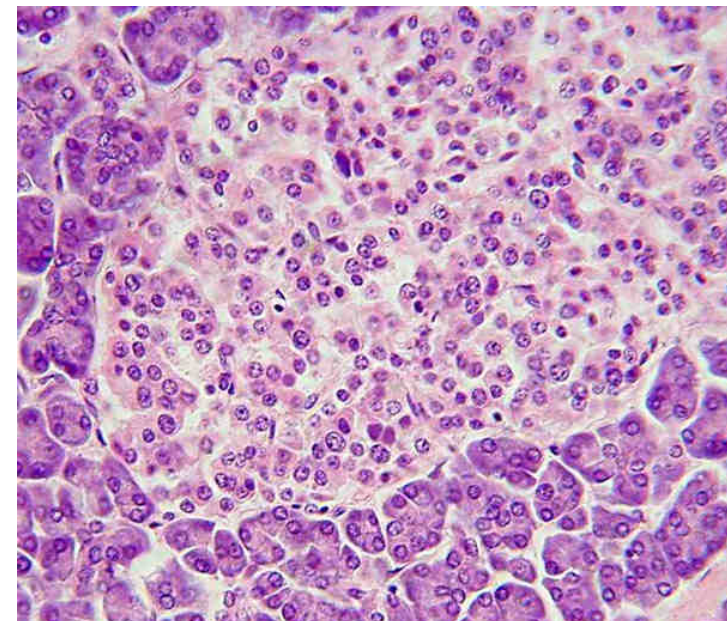
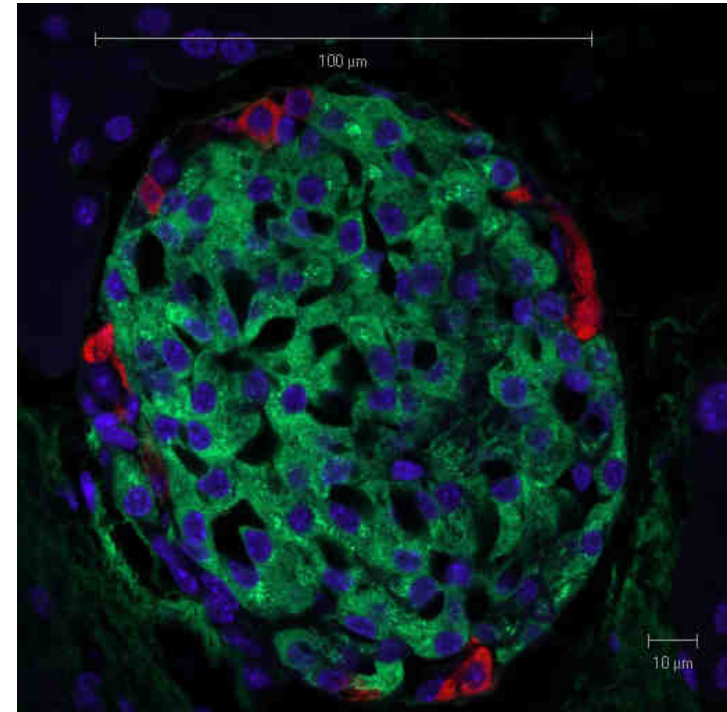
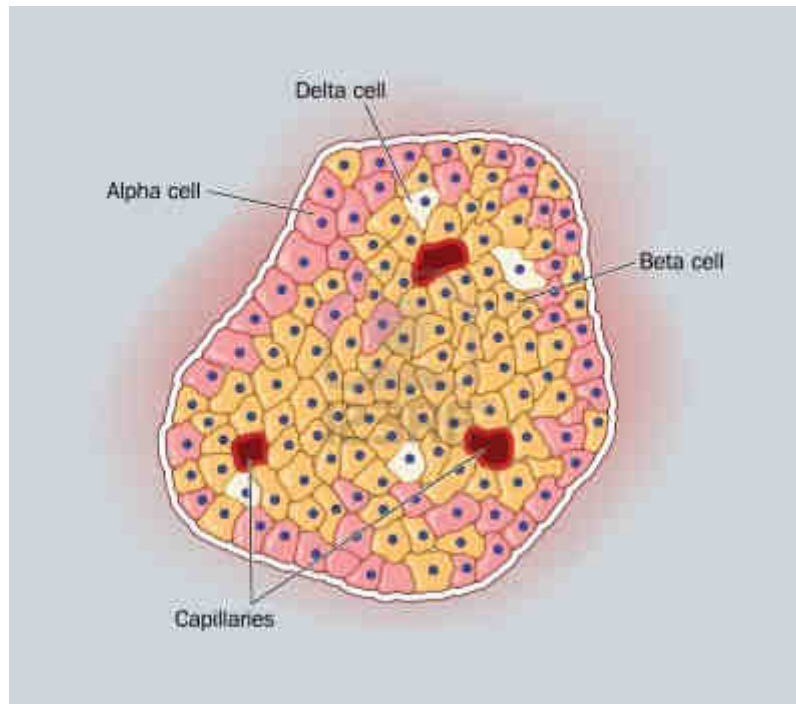
Liver – trabecules (cords) of hepatocytes



- **Endocrine glands**

## **Islets of Langerhans**

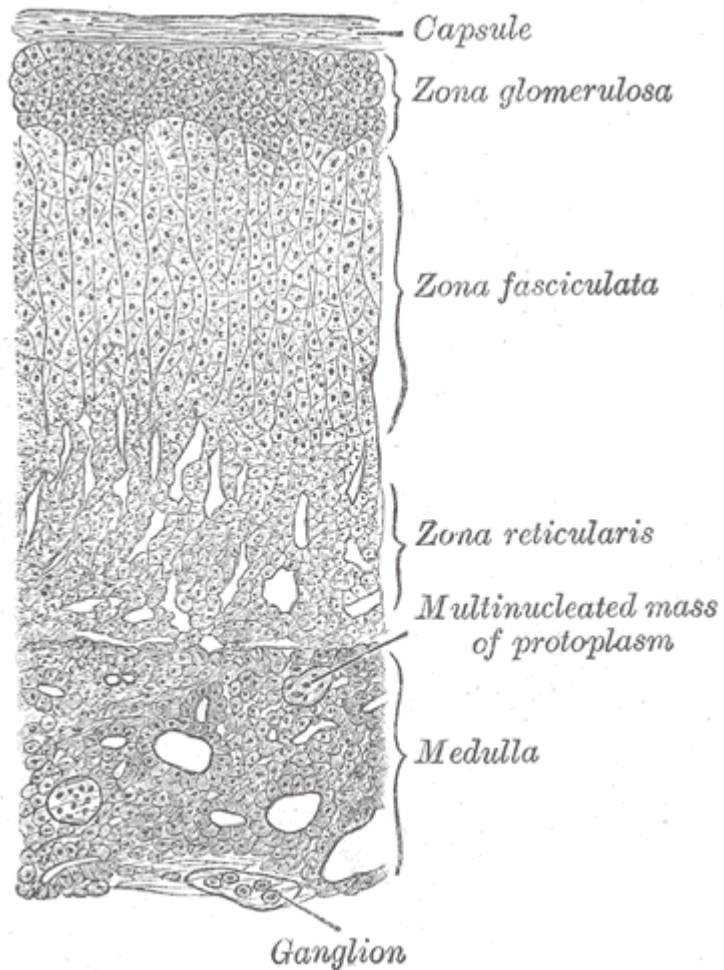
Cords of endocrine active cells



- **Endocrine glands**

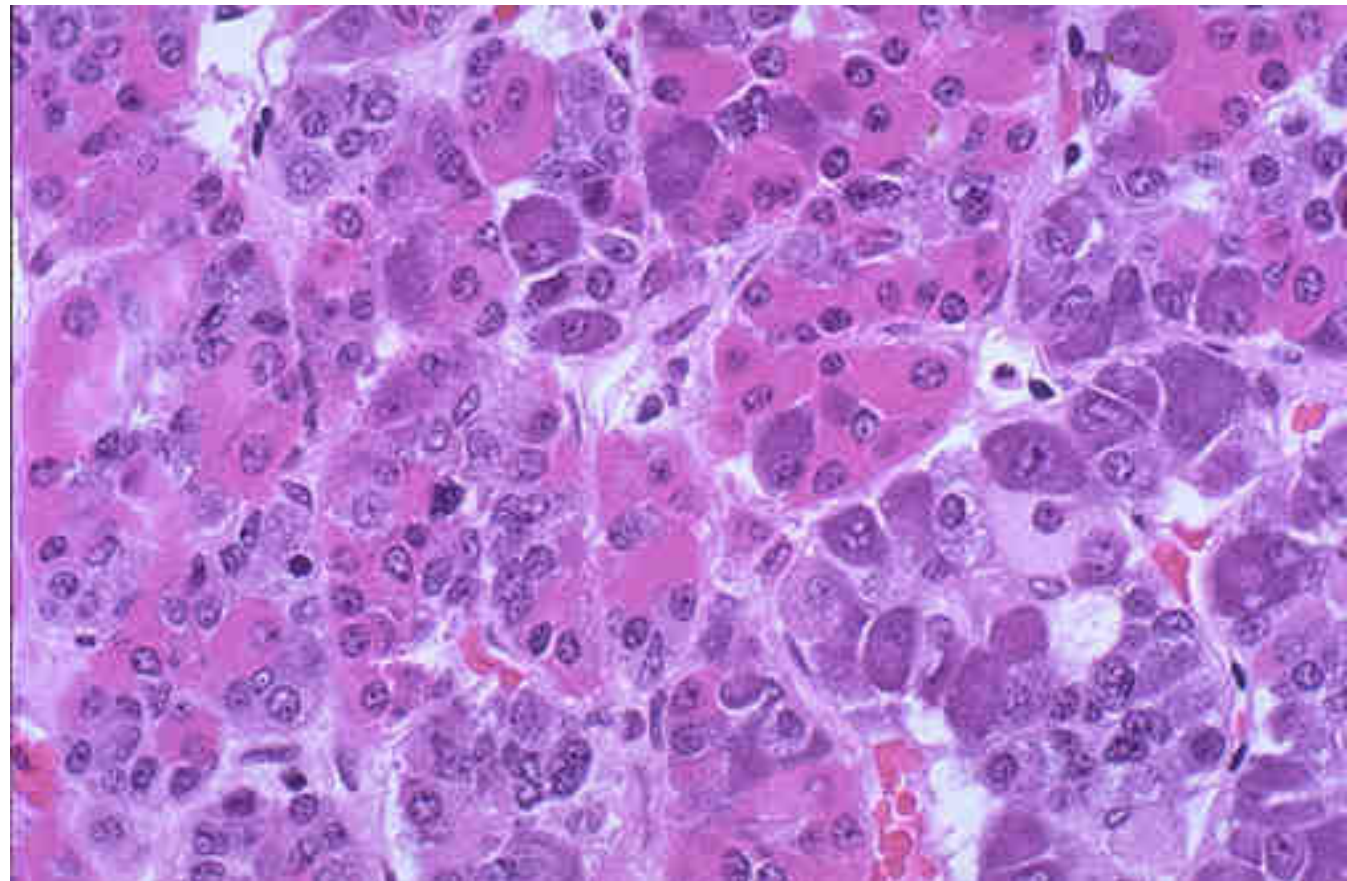
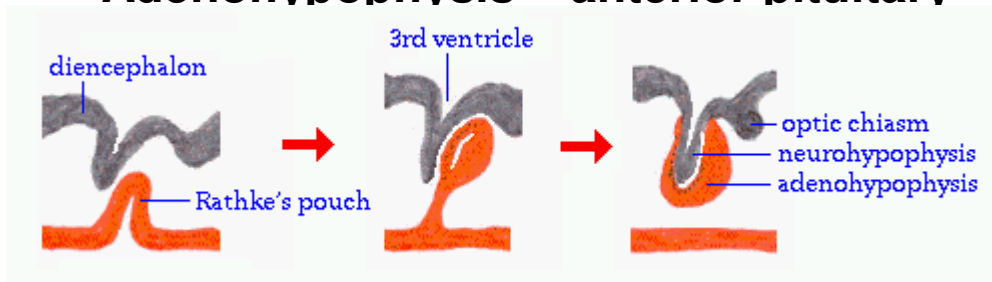
### **Adrenal cortex**

Cortex of adrenal gland – epithelial cells in cords secreting corticoid



- Endocrine glands

### Adenohypophysis – anterior pituitary

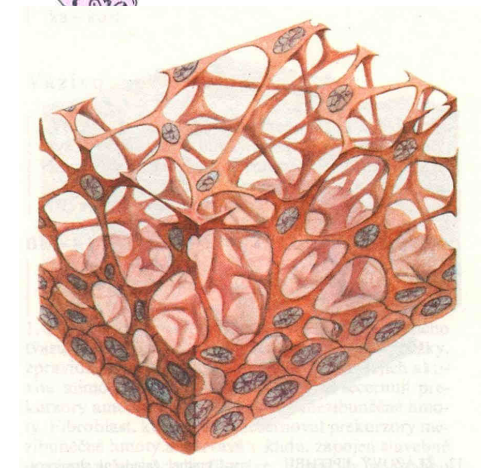
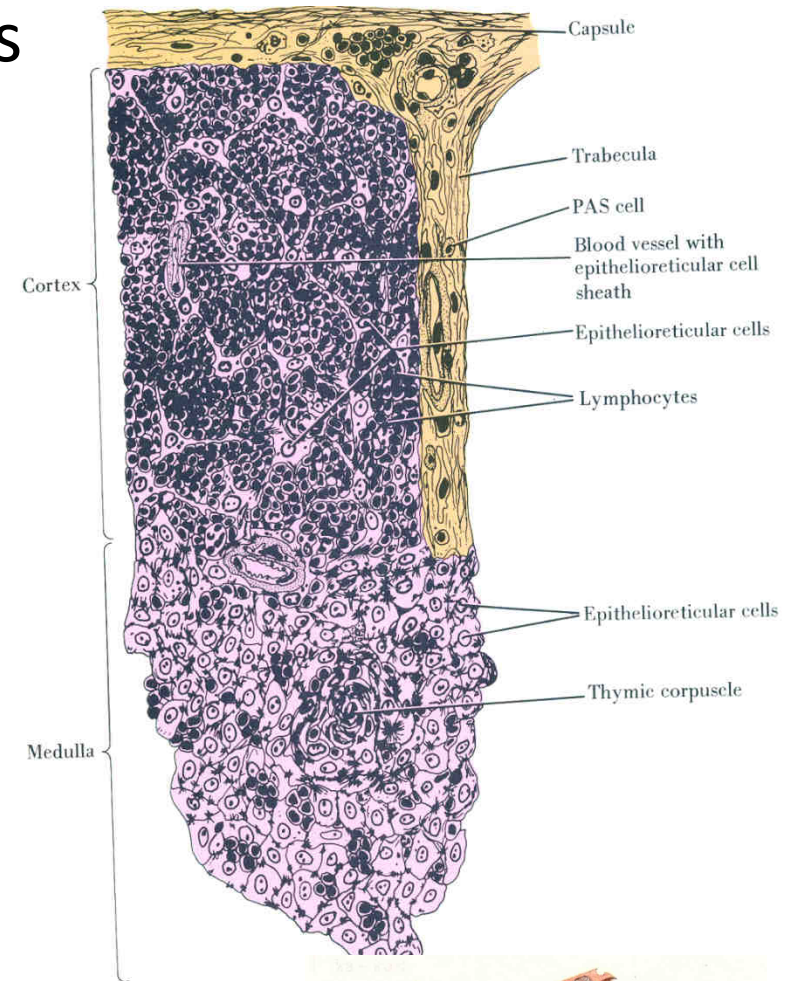
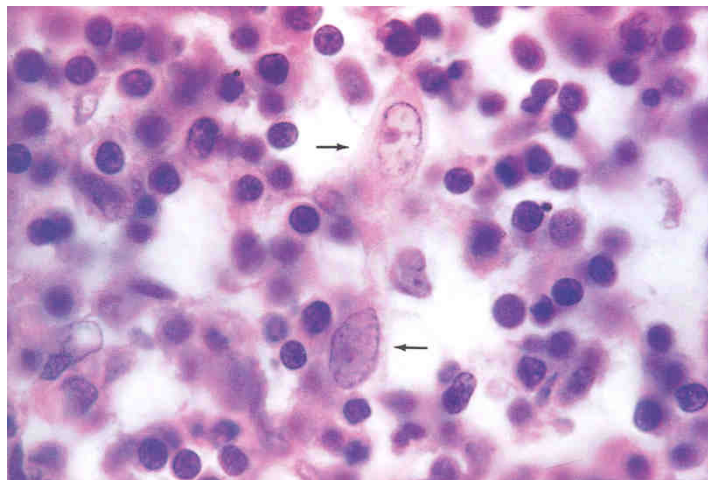
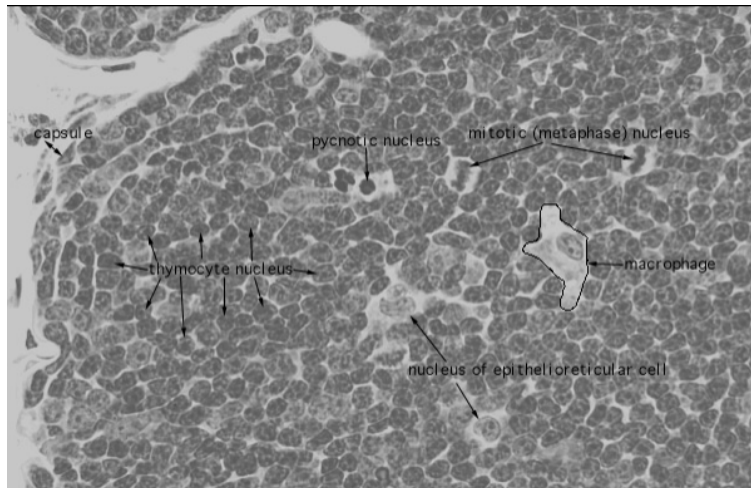




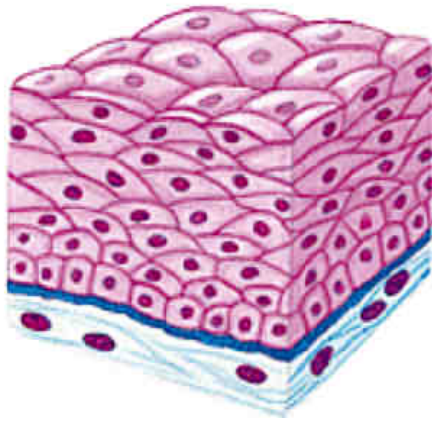
# ■ Classification of epithelial tissues

## 3. Reticular epithelium

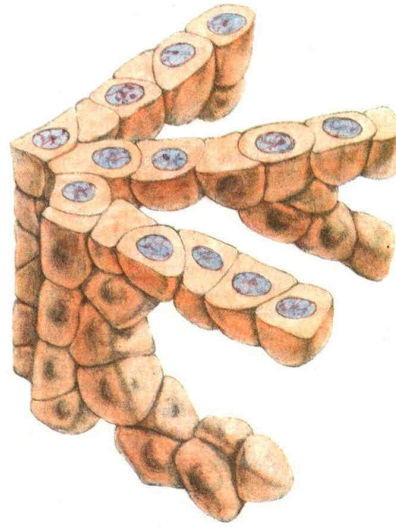
### Thymus - cytoreticulum



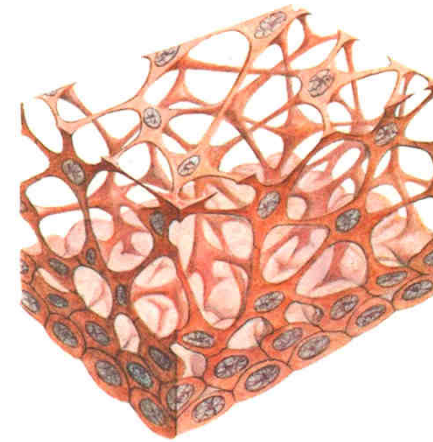
- Classification of epithelial tissues



Covering



Trabecular



Reticular

**BREAK**

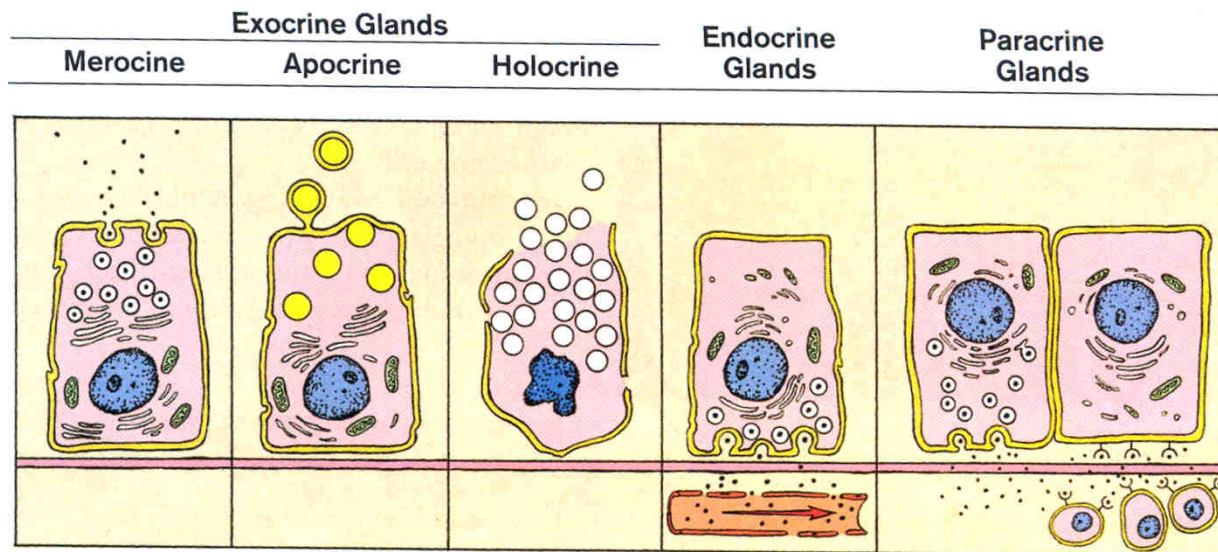
10 min



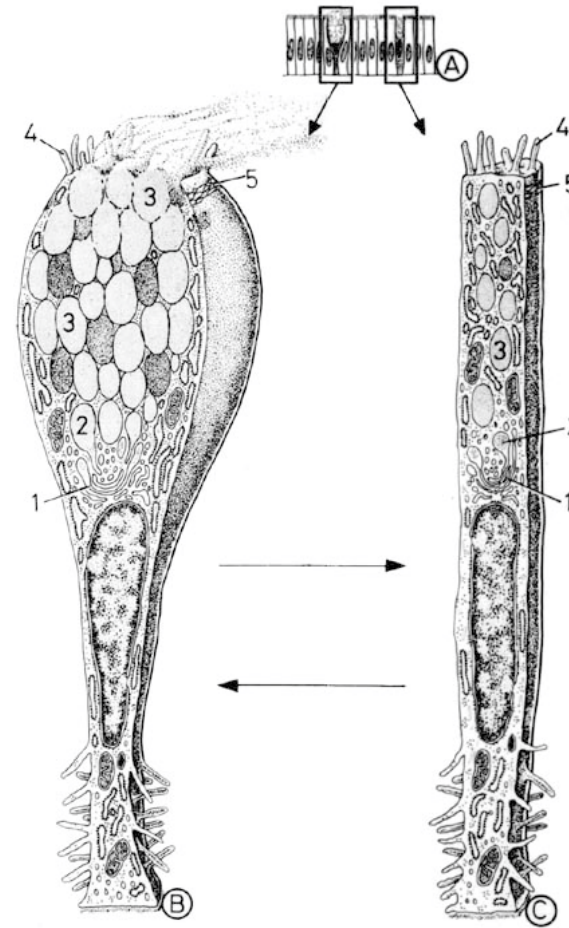
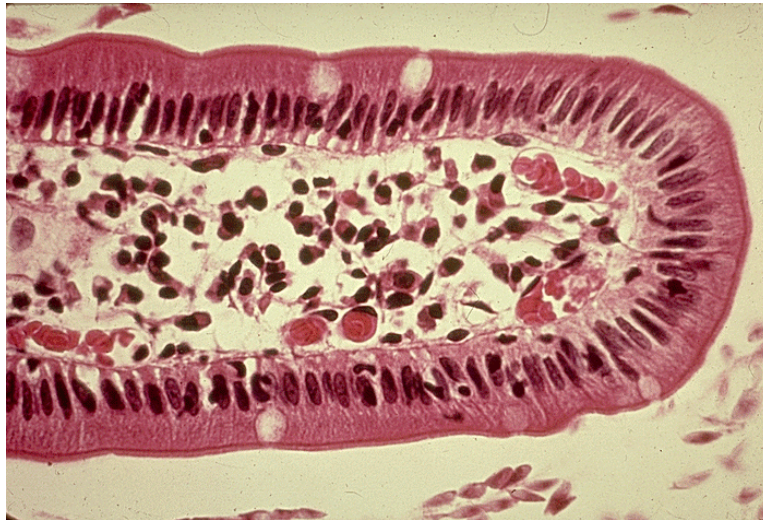
- Epithelium may posses a function

- Glandular epithelium

- Secret ↔ excret
- Process of secretion:

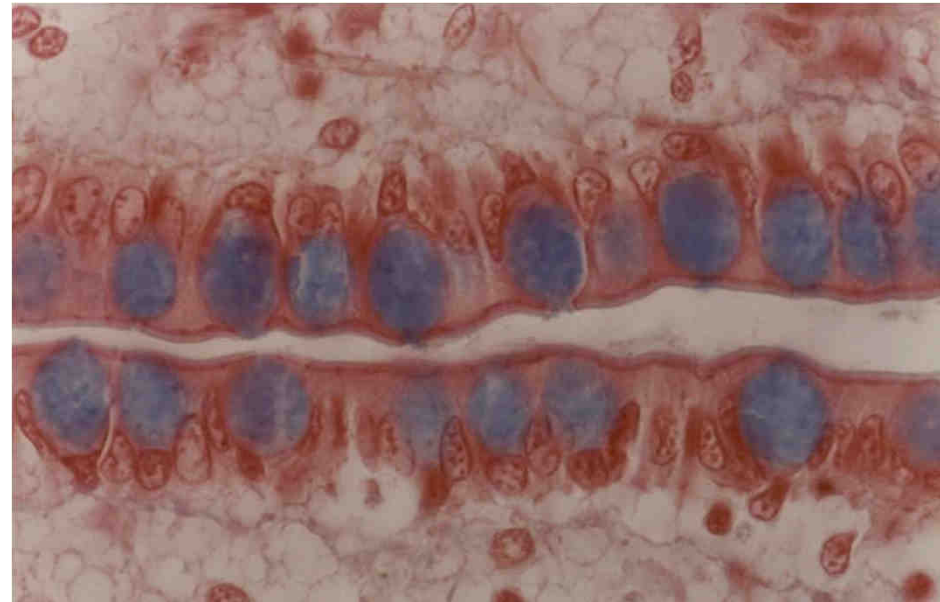


- Glandular epithelium
- Single cell glands
  - Goblet
  - Enteroendocrine



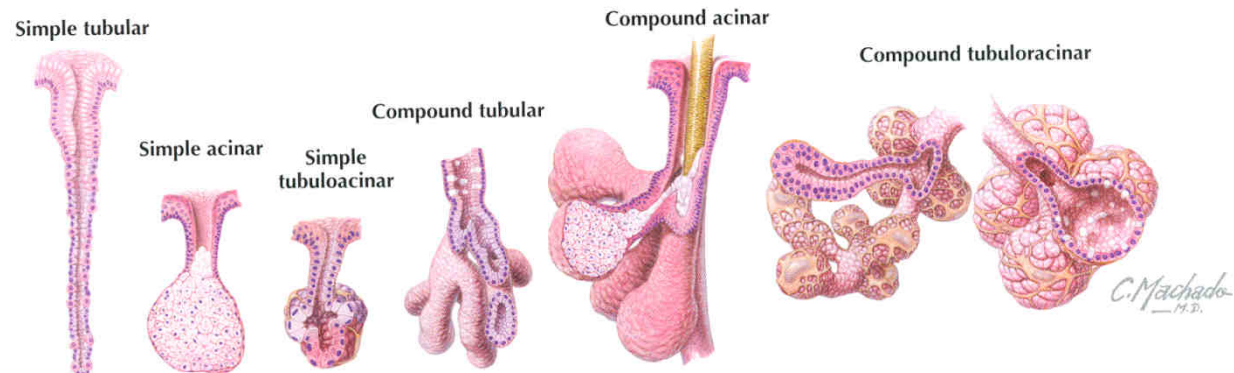
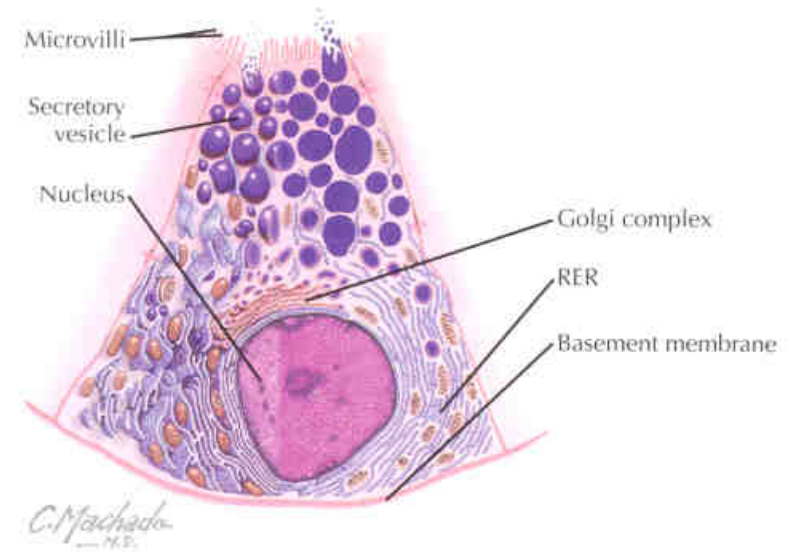
## ■ Goblet cells

- Mainly respiratory and intestinal tract
- Produce mucus = viscous fluid composed of electrolytes and highly glycosylated glycoproteins (mucins)
- Protection against mechanic shear or chemical damage
- Trapping and elimination of particular matter
- Secretion by secretory granules constitutive or stimulated
- After secretion mucus expands extremely – more than 500-fold in 20ms
- Dramatic changes in hydration and ionic charge
- Chronic bronchitis or cystic fibrosis – hyperplasia or metaplasia of goblet cells

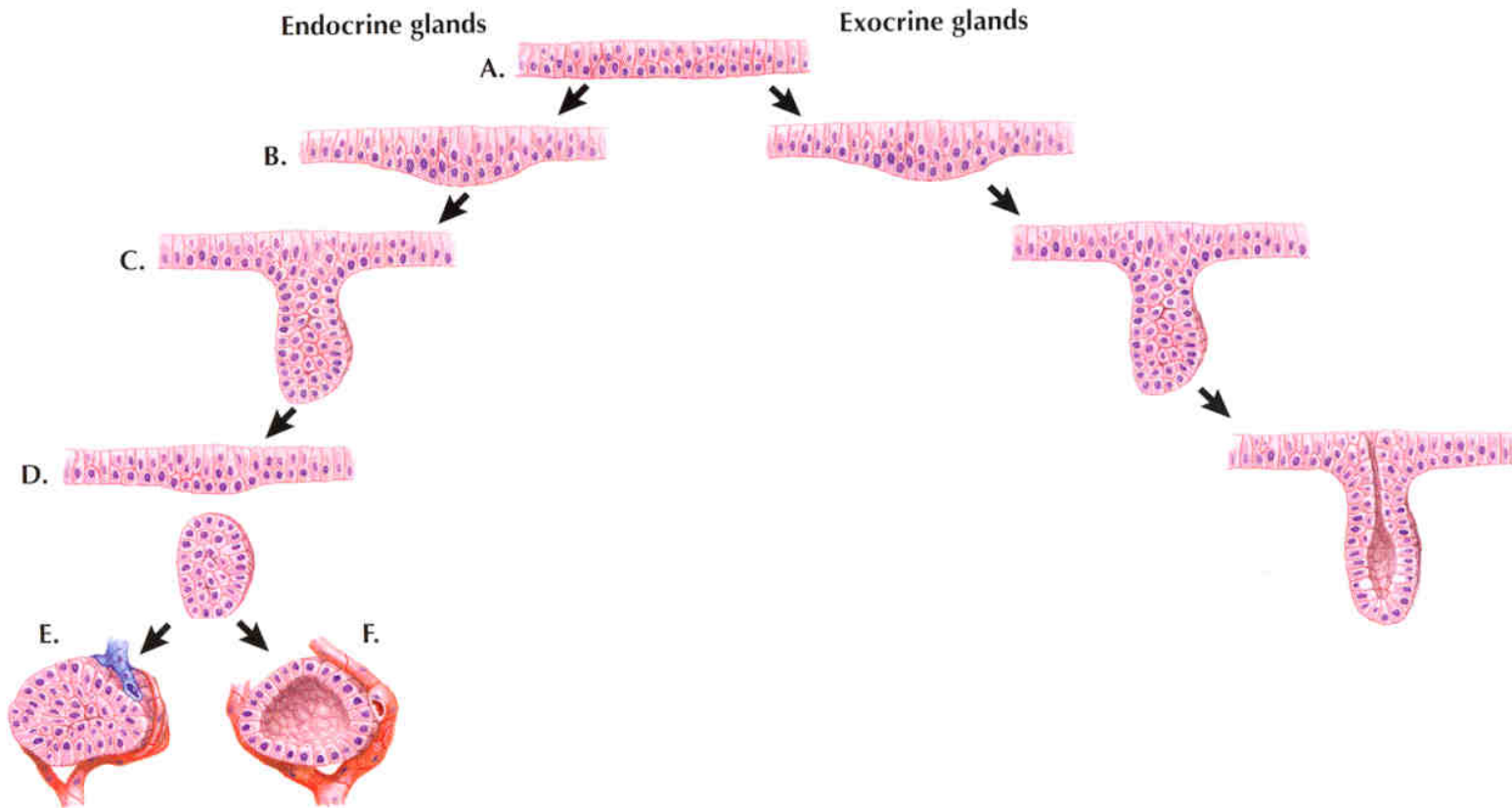


## ■ Multicellular glands

- Shape of secretion part
  - Alveolar (acinar)
  - Tubular
  - Tubuloalveolar (tubuloacinar)
- Branching
  - Simple
  - Branched
  - Compound
- Secretion
  - Mucous
  - Serous
  - Compound



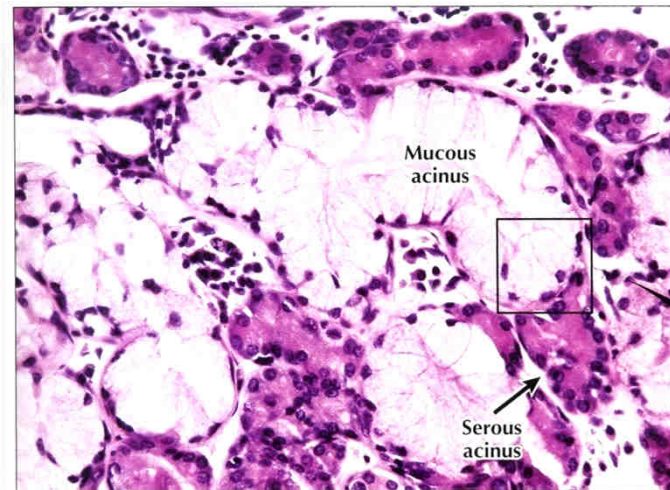
- **Multicellular glands**
  - Endocrine vs. exocrine





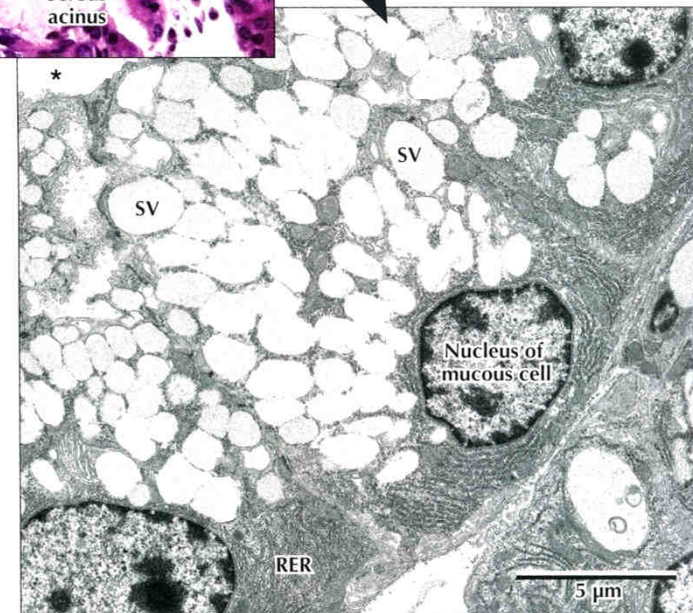
## ■ Mucous glands

- Viscous secretion
- Tubular secretion compartments

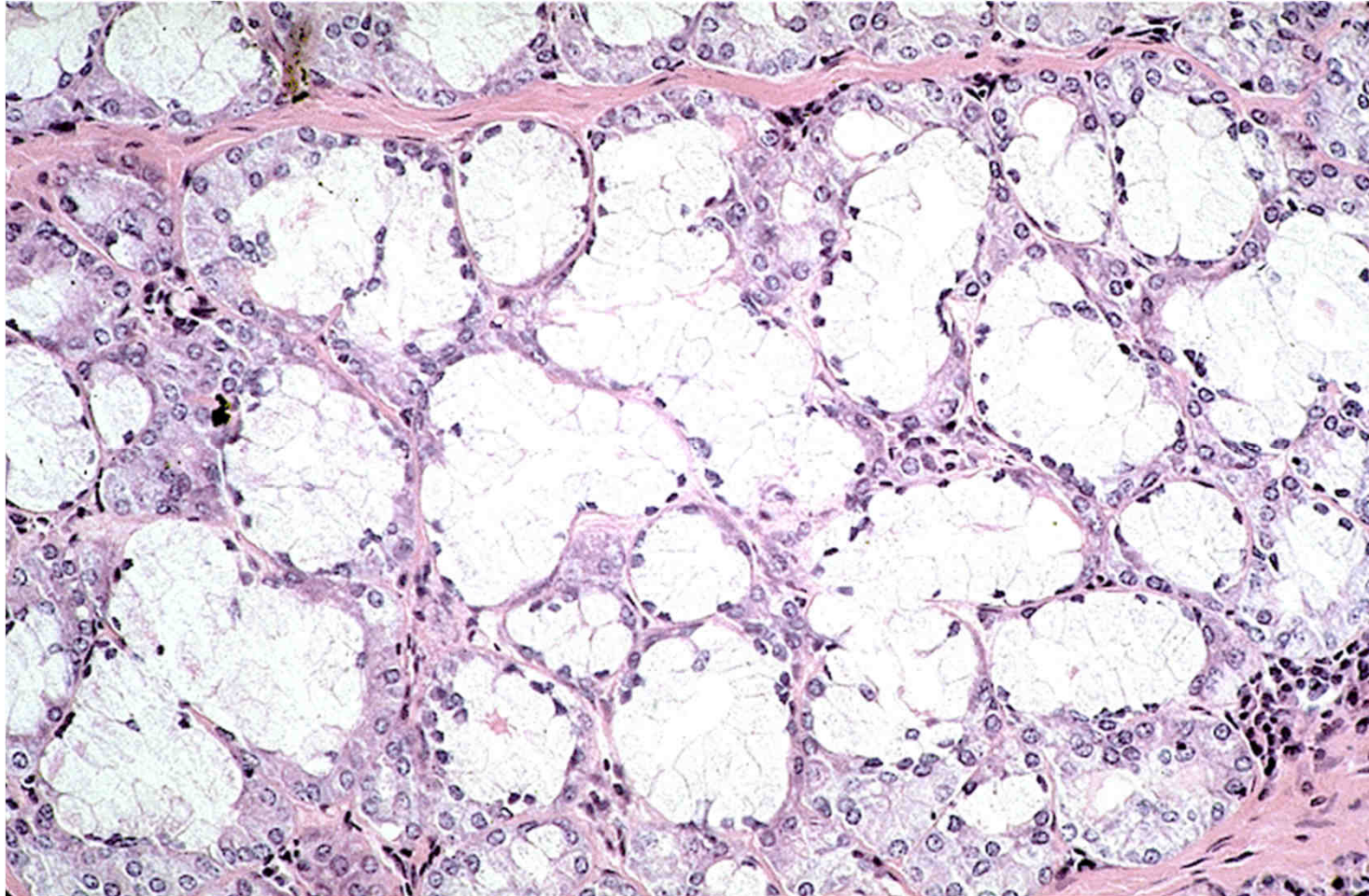


◀ **LM of part of a mixed seromucous gland in the trachea.** Several mucous acini with pale-stained mucous cells are seen. The basal nuclei are flat, and cells appear washed out because mucous droplets dissolved during specimen preparation. Darker stained serous cells in adjacent acini have more rounded basal nuclei. Serous cells are smaller than mucous cells. The square outlines the area of interest seen in the EM below. 295 $\times$ . H&E.

▶ **EM of part of a mucous acinus in a mixed salivary gland.** Parts of three mucous cells line the acinus lumen (\*). Euchromatic basal nuclei have prominent nucleoli. Basal cytoplasm contains many profiles of rough endoplasmic reticulum (RER). Many large, electron-lucent secretory vesicles (SV) dominating the remaining cytoplasm are discharged by exocytosis into the acinus lumen. 5400 $\times$ .

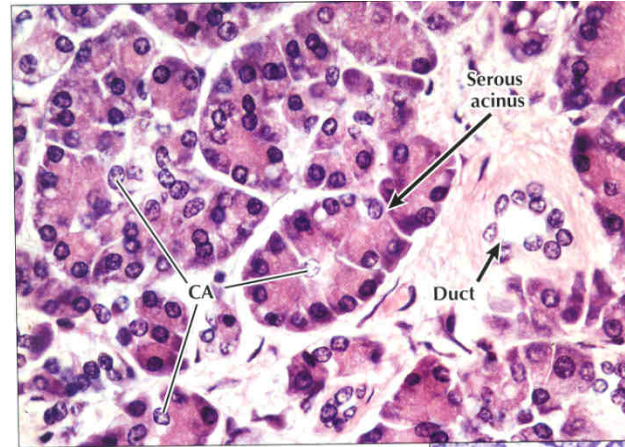


- **Mucous glands**

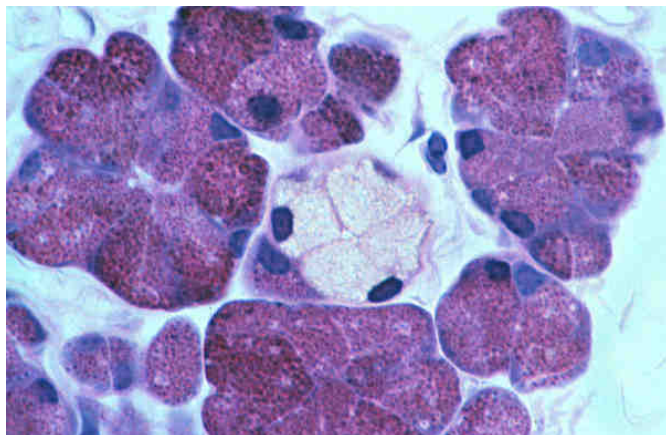
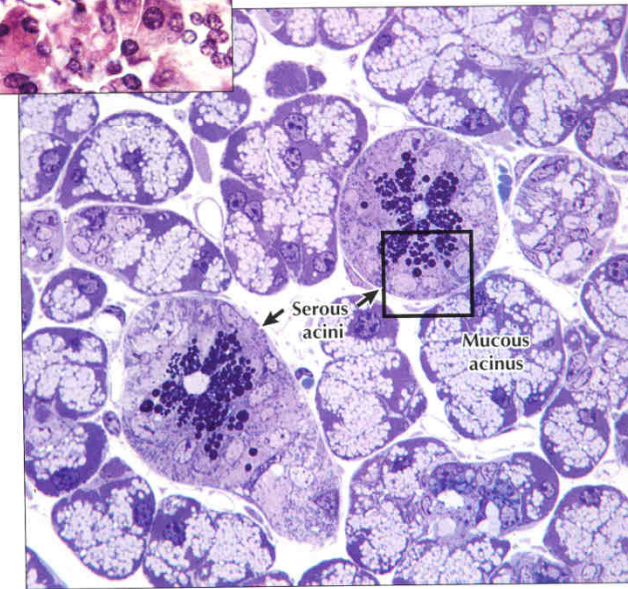
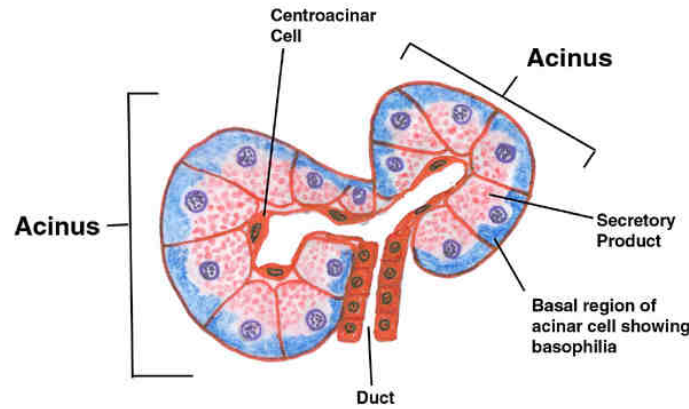


# ■ Serous glands

- Secretion rich in electrolytes
- Acinous secretion compartments

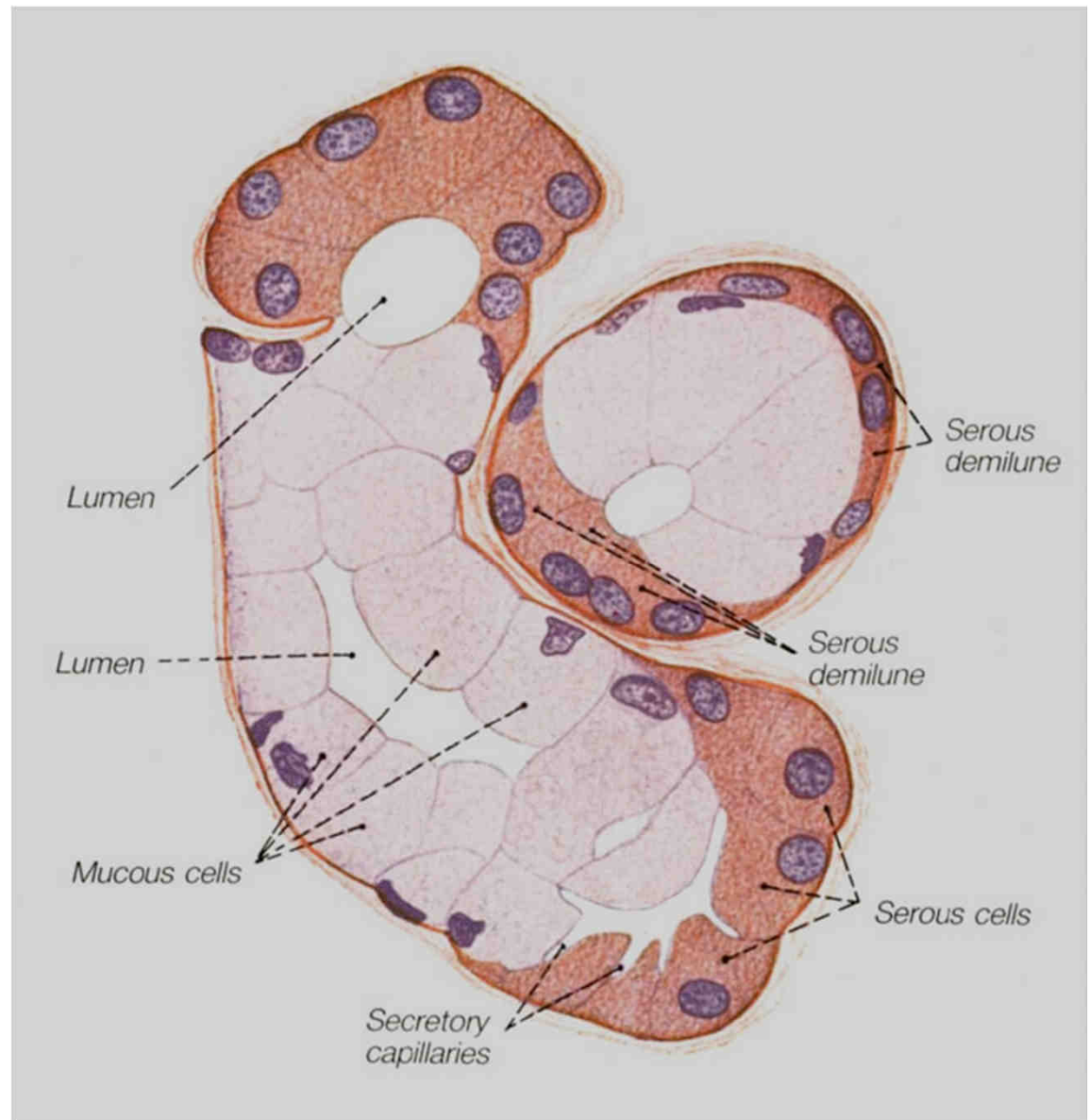


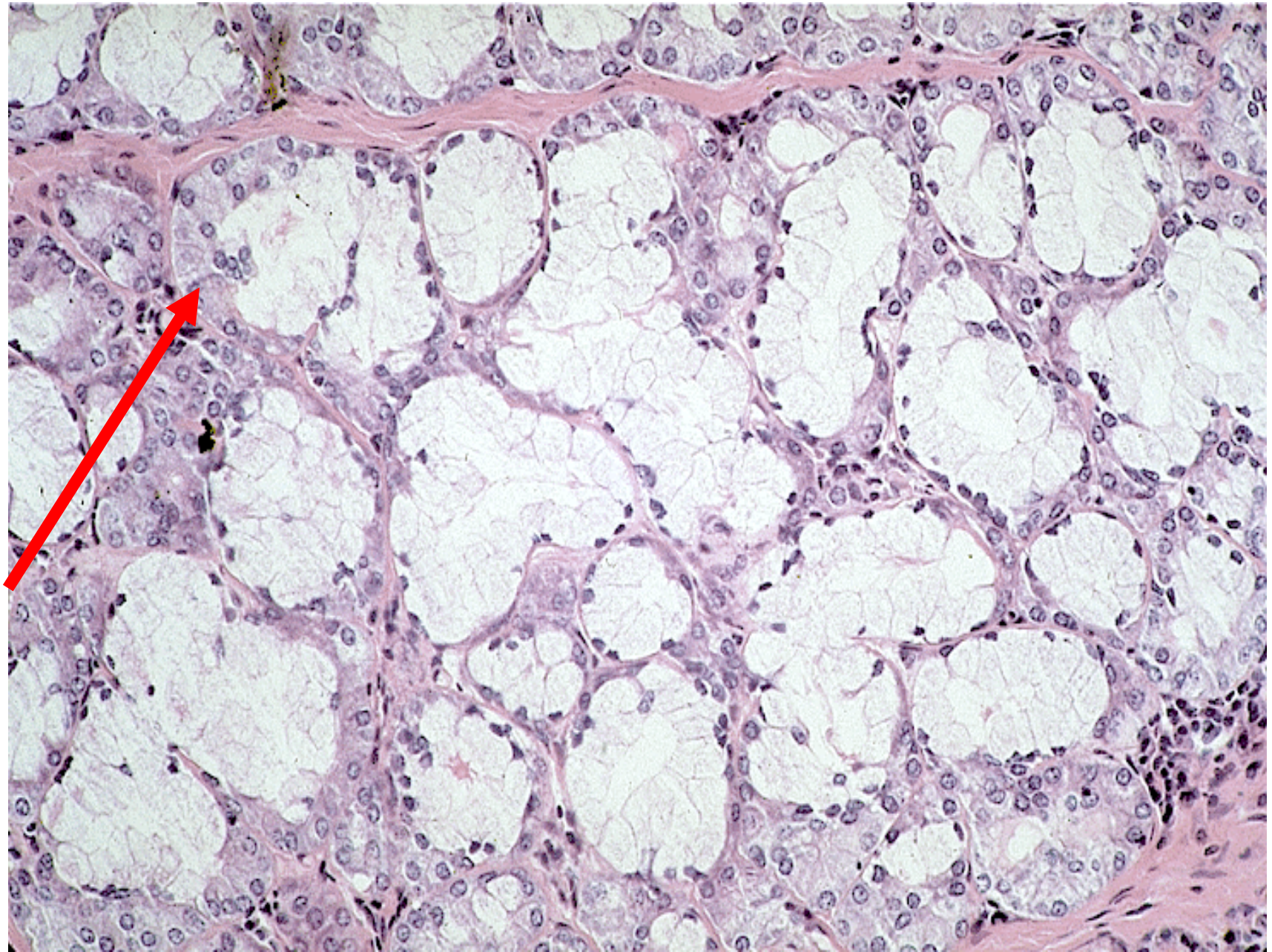
◀ **LM of part of the exocrine pancreas.** The exocrine part of the gland consists of closely packed spherical or pear-shaped serous acini. Several columnar to pyramidal acinar cells, with round basal nuclei, face a small central lumen in each **serous acinus**. Basal cytoplasm is basophilic; apical cytoplasm is more eosinophilic. Small clear centroacinar cells (**CA**) in acini centers help distinguish this purely serous gland from others, such as the parotid salivary gland. A small **duct**, in the connective tissue stroma, conveys secretions from acini to larger pancreatic ducts. 385x. *H&E*.



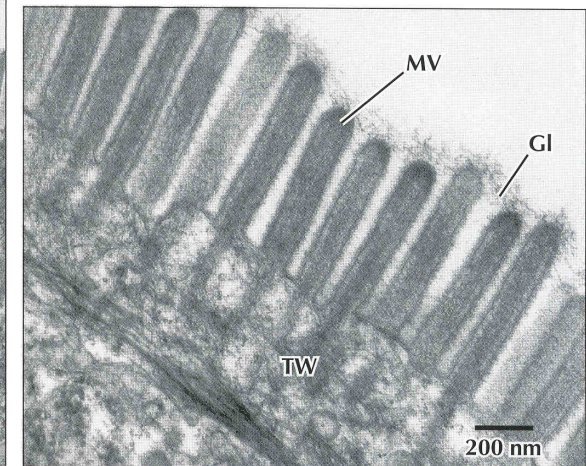
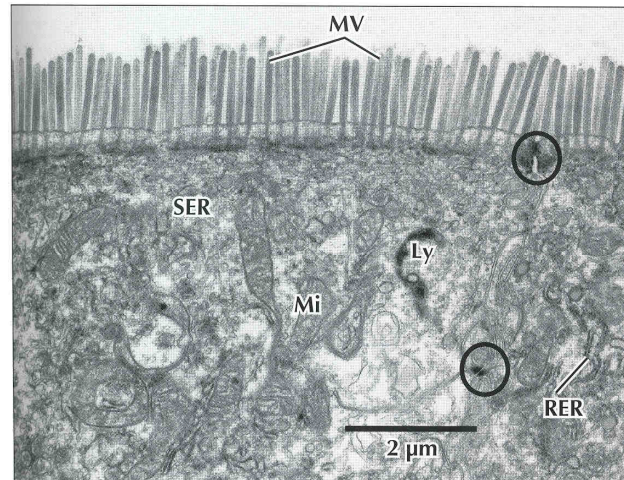
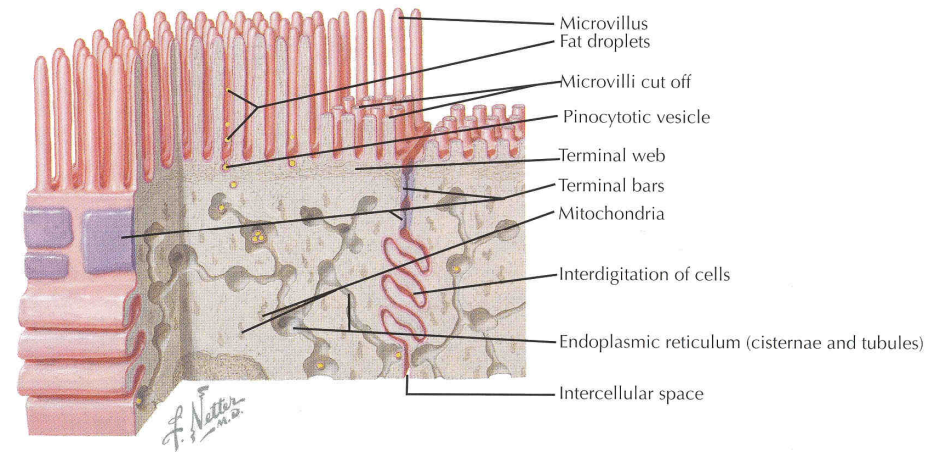
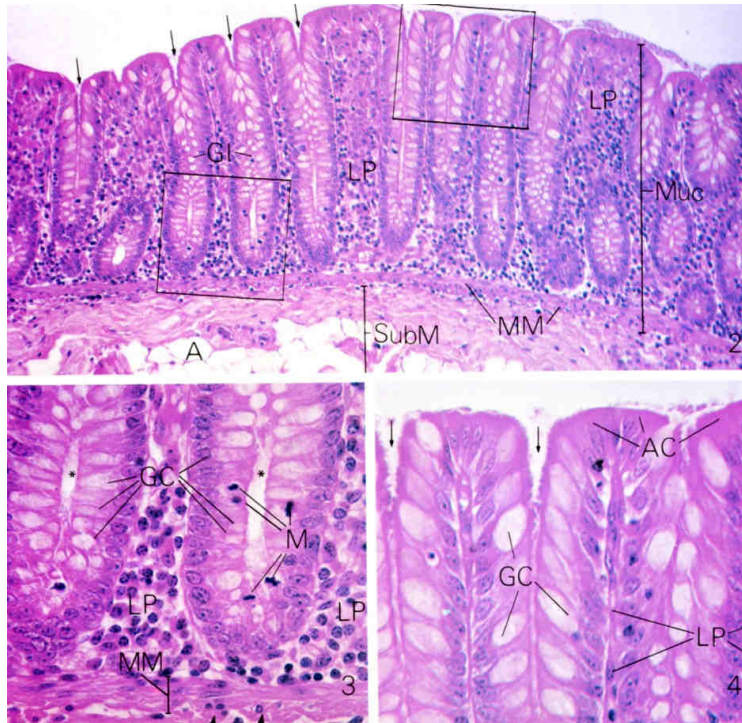
## ▪ Compound glands

- both serous and mucous
- usually tuboacinous
- both compartments individually or in combination (serous demilunes)

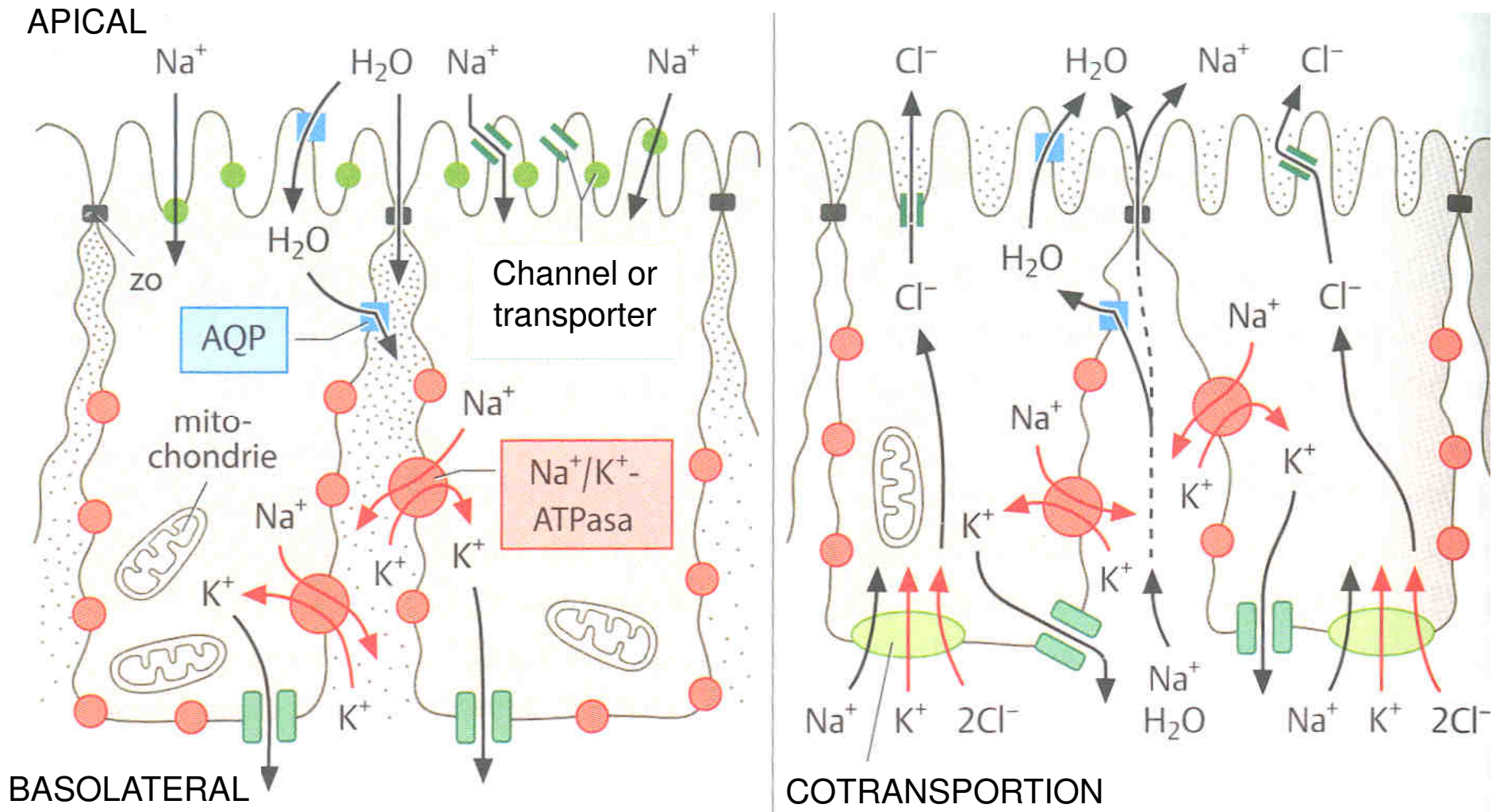




# Resorptive epithelium



# Resorptive epithelium



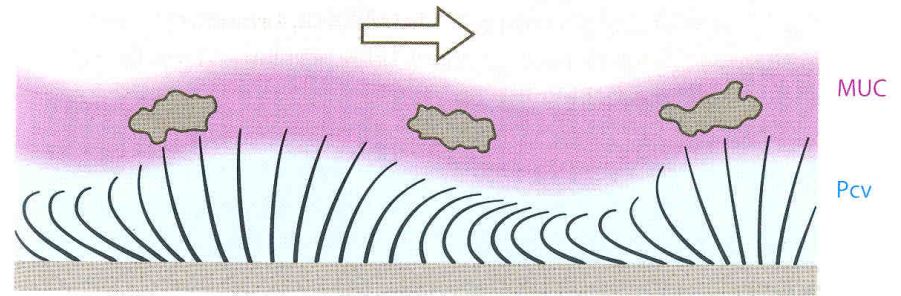
WATER RESORPTION

WATER SECRETION

# ■ Respiratory epithelium

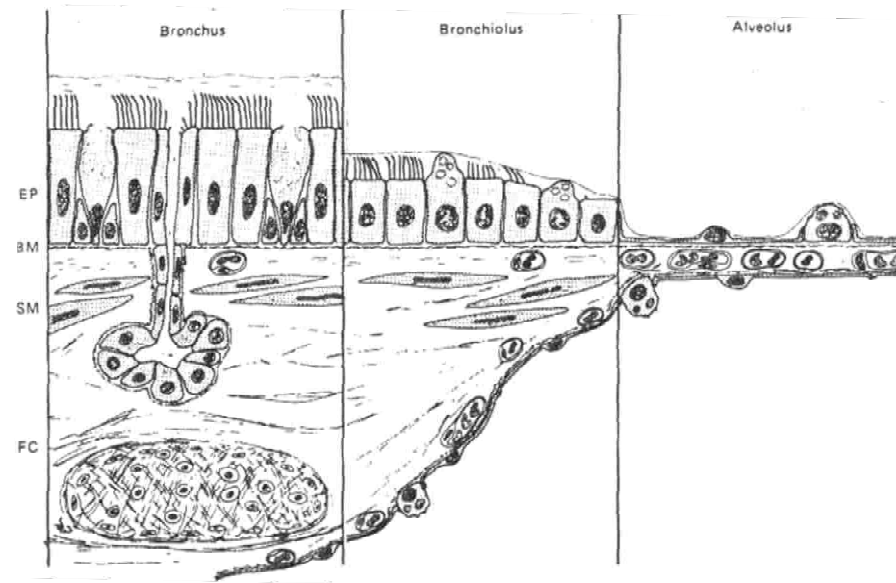
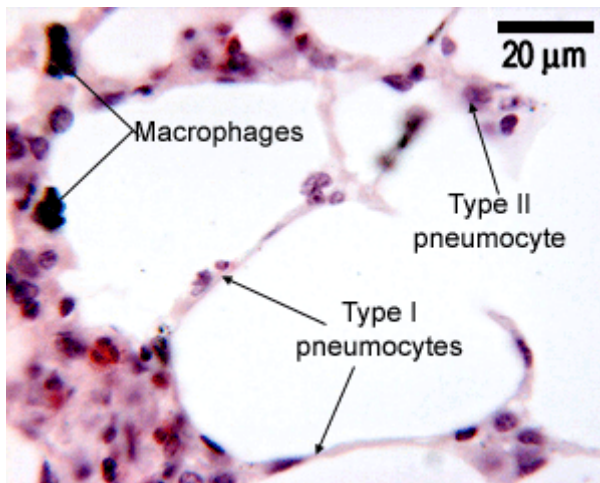
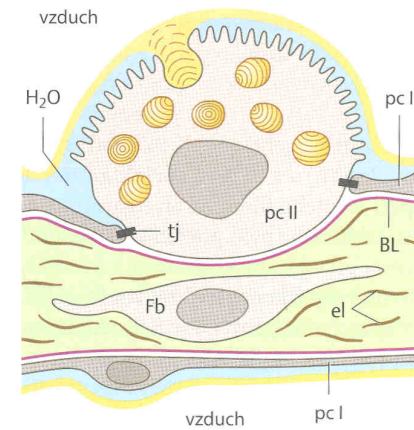
## Respiratory passages

- Moisten, protect against injury and pathogen
- Remove particles by „mucociliary escalator“
- Pseudostratified columnar epithelium with cilia
- Basal cells- epithelium renewal



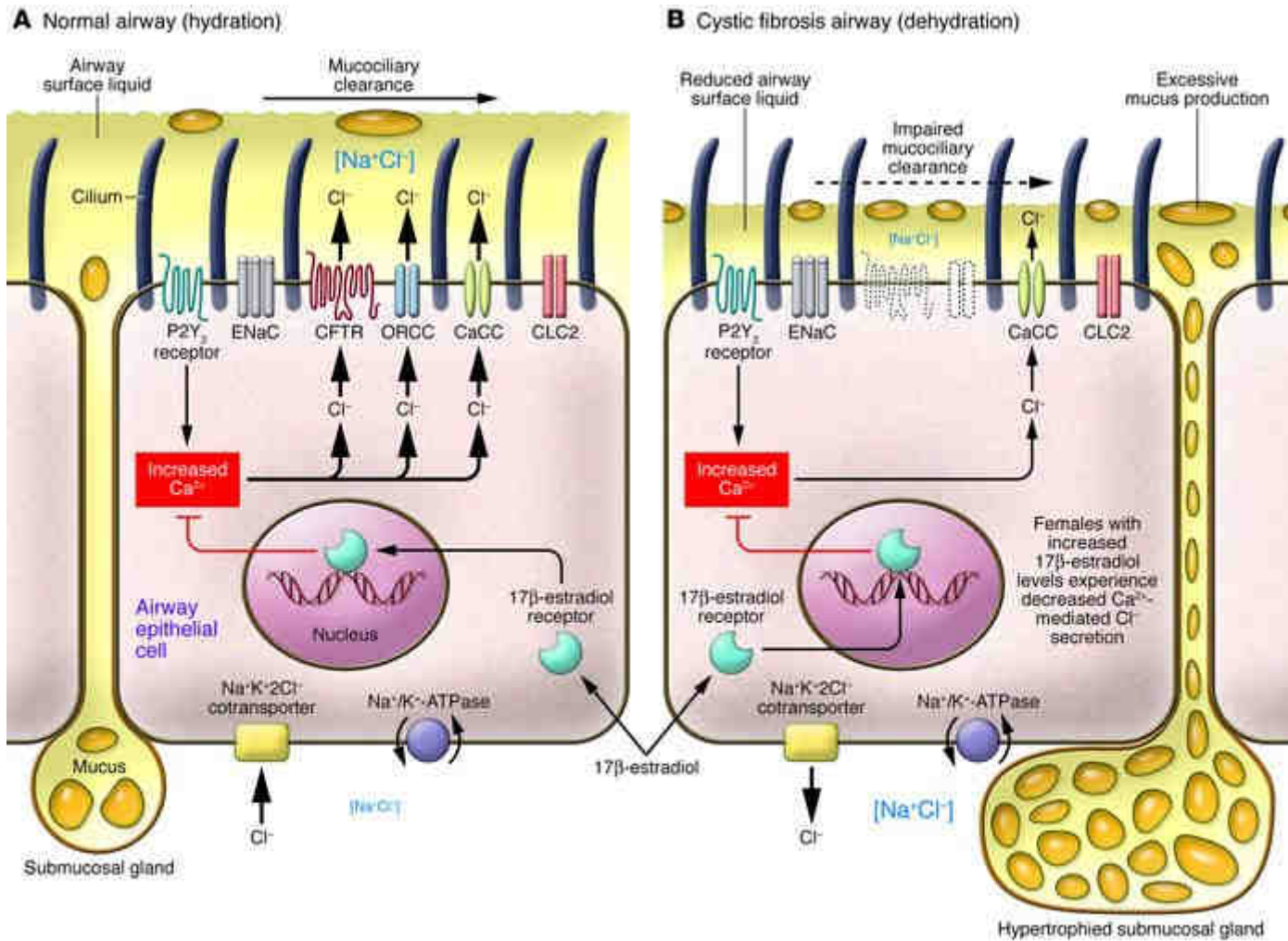
## Alveolar epithelium

- Gas exchange
- Respiratory bronchiols, alveolar passages and alveoli
- Type I and II pneumocytes





# ■ Respiratory epithelium



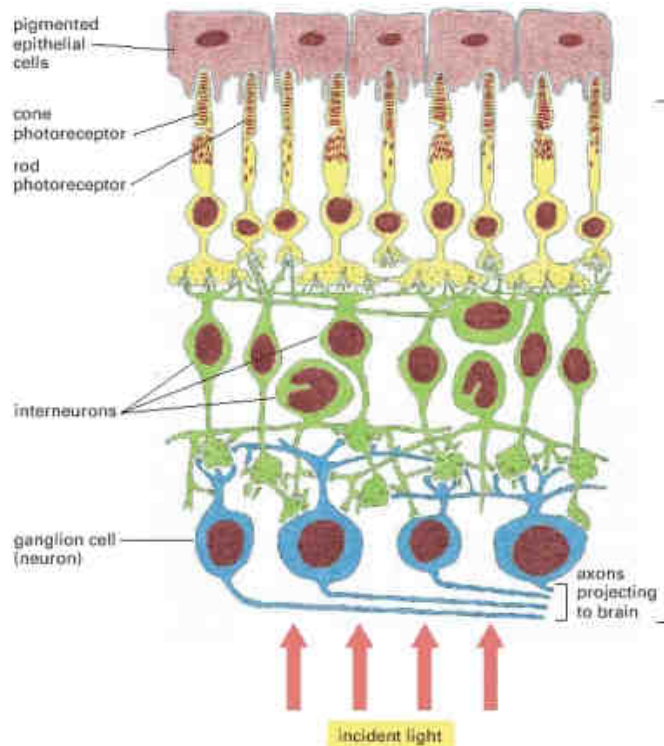
# ■ Sensory epithelium

- Supportive and sensory cells

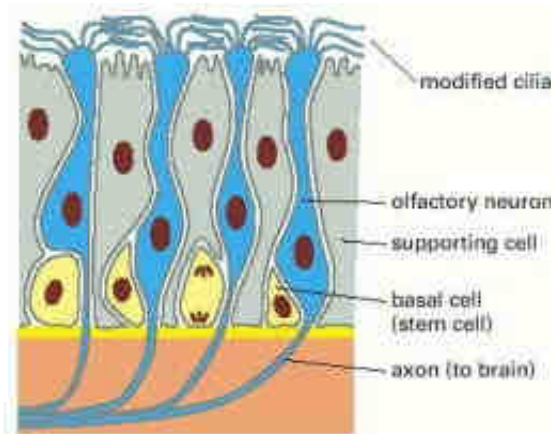
**Primary sensory cells** – directly convert stimulus to membrane potential

Receptor region, body, axonal process

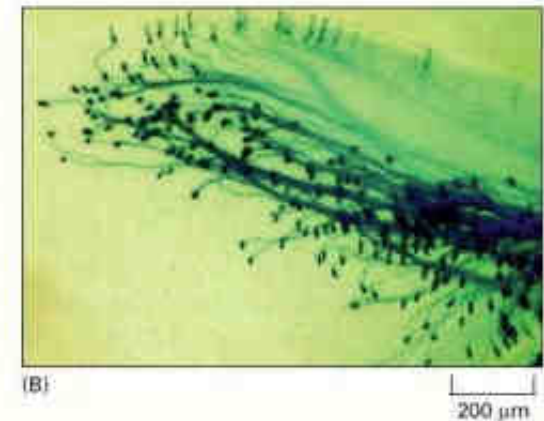
**Nasal epithelium** (*regio olfactoria nasi*), **retina** (rods and cones)



neural layer of retina



(A)



(B)

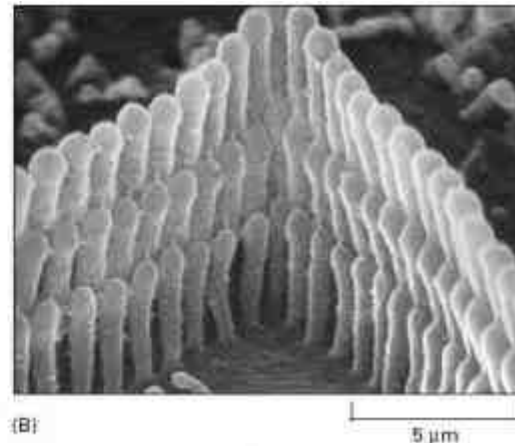
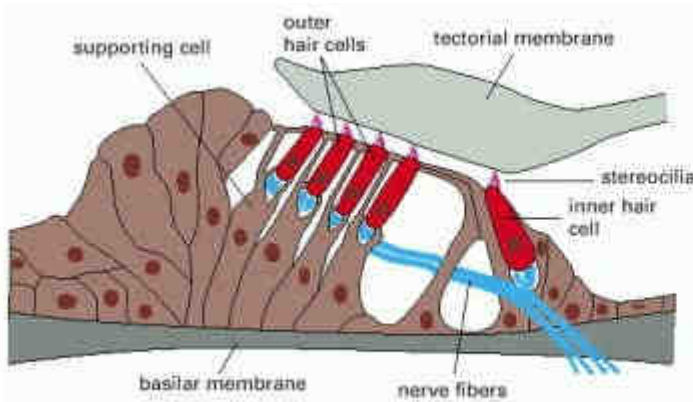
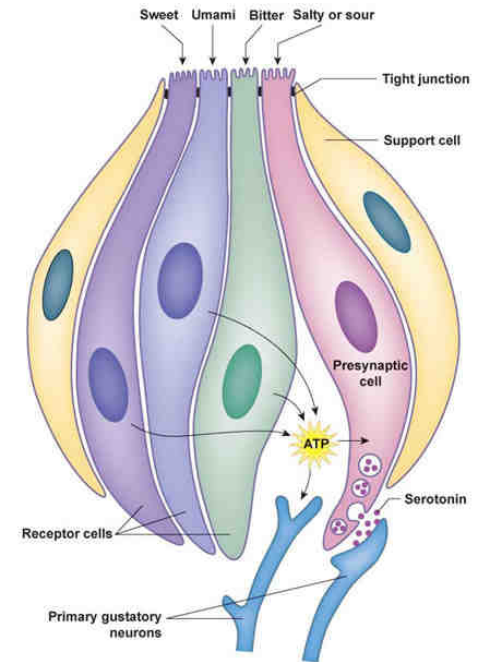
# ■ Sensory epithelium

## Secondary sensory cells

Receptor region and body

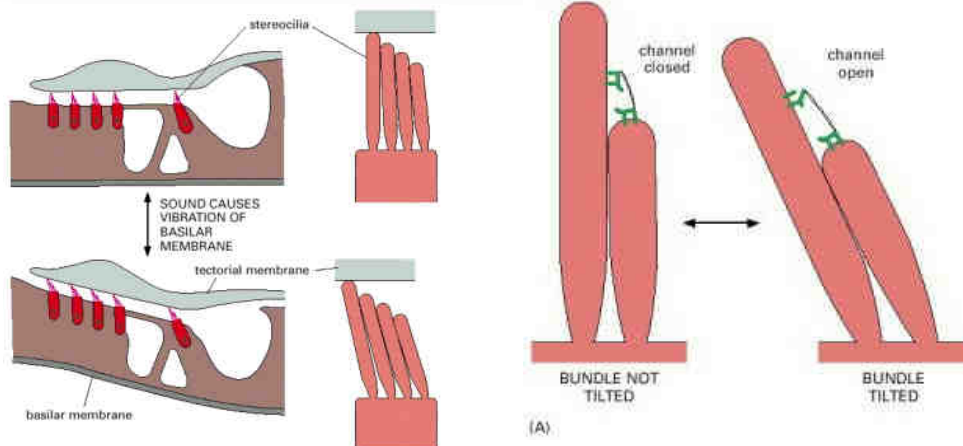
Signal is transmitted by adjacent neurons ending on secondary sensory cell

## Taste buds, vestibulocochlear apparatus



(A)

(B)



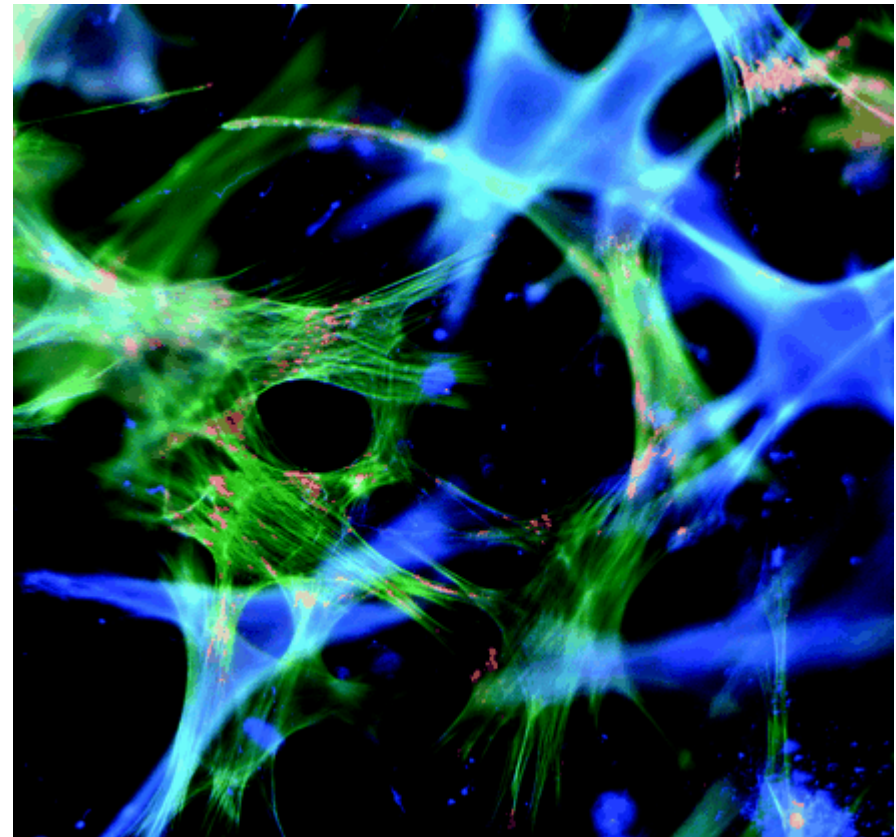
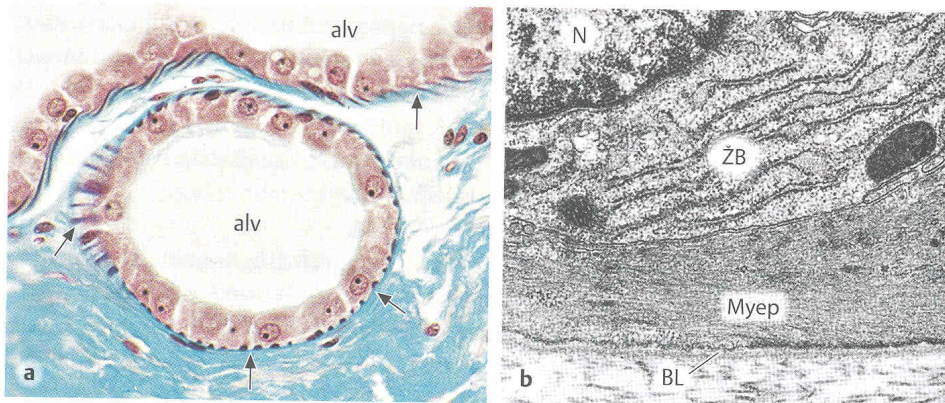
(A)



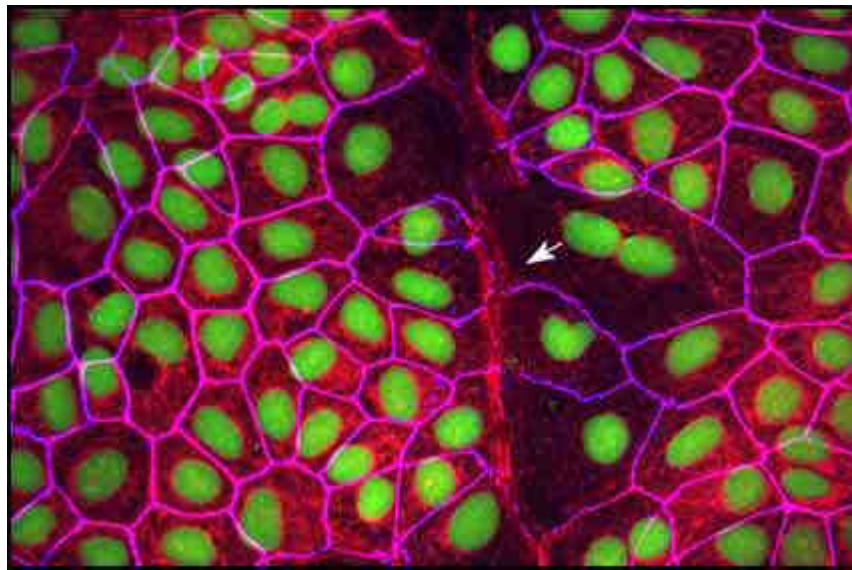
(B)

## ■ Myoepithelium

- Derived from epithelium (cytokeratin filaments, desmosomes)
- Biochemical properties of smooth muscle cells ( $\alpha$ -actin, myosin, desmin, gap junctions)
- Contraction upon nerve or hormonal stimulation
- Sweat and salivary glands – enhance secretion



# Regeneration and plasticity of epithelial tissue



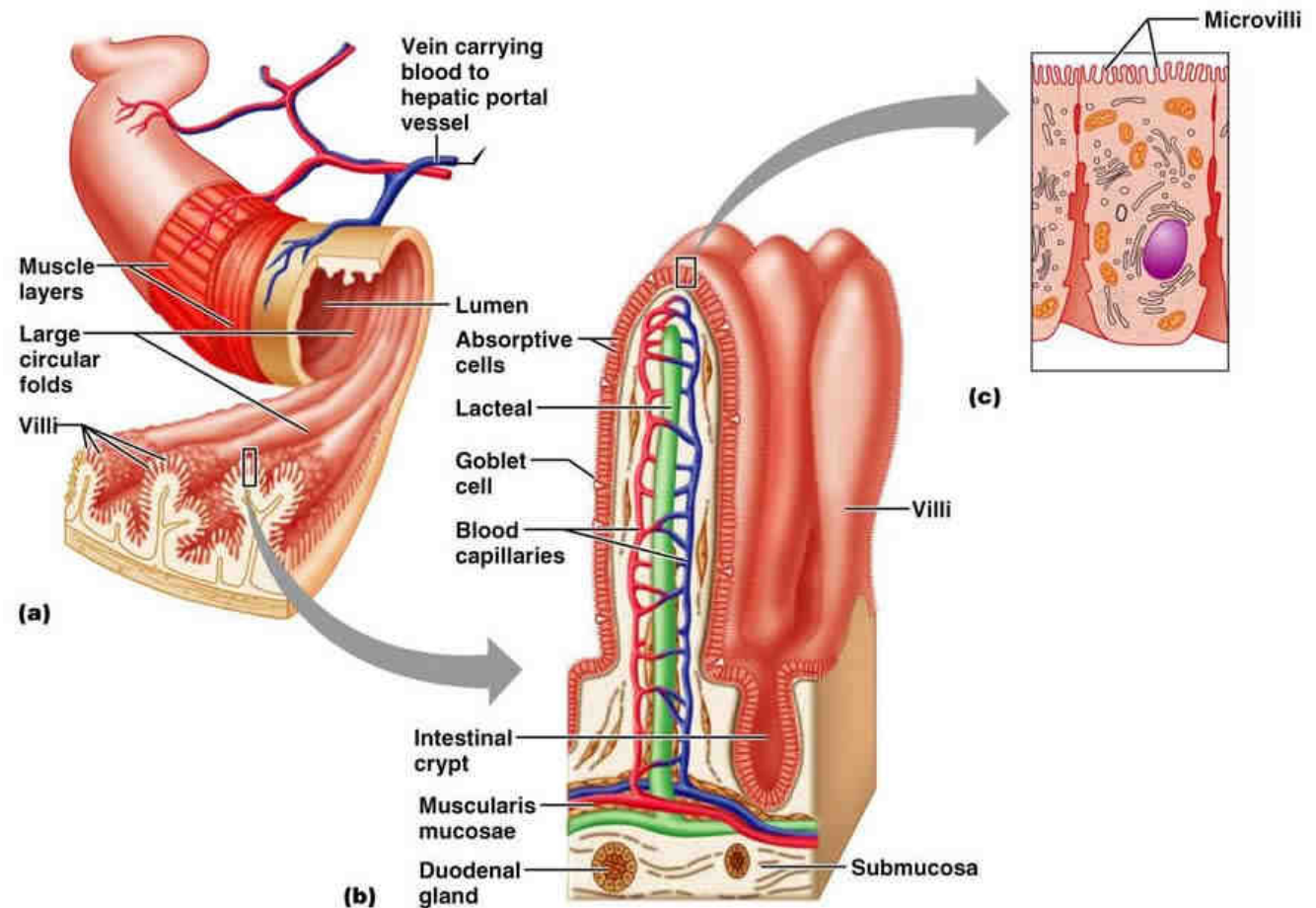
# Regeneration of epithelial tissue

Different epithelia have different capability of regeneration  
(epidermis × inner ear sensory epithelium)

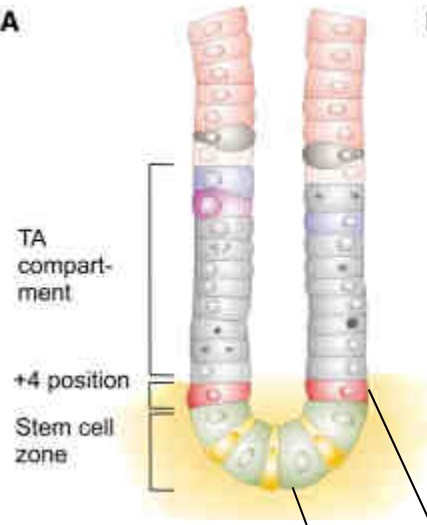
Multi- a oligopotent stem cells

Microenvironment – *stem cell niche*

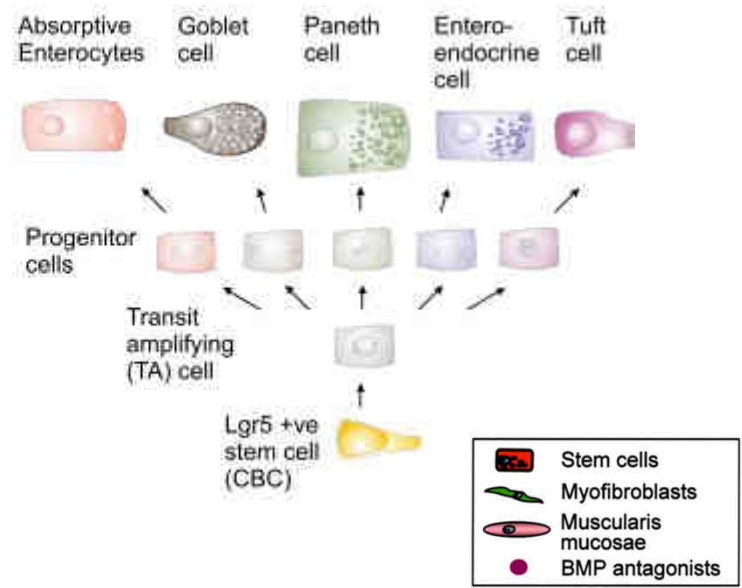
## Example: Regeneration of intestinal epithelium



**A**



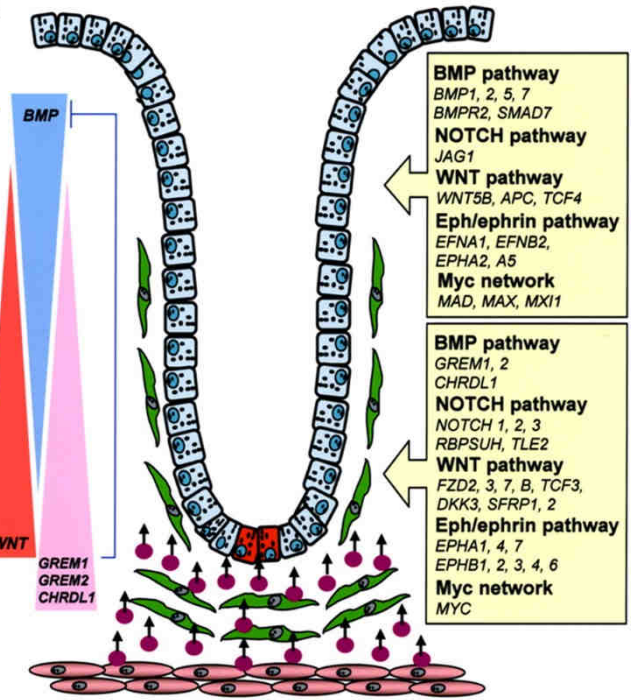
**B**



**Differentiative Compartment**  
(active BMP signaling)

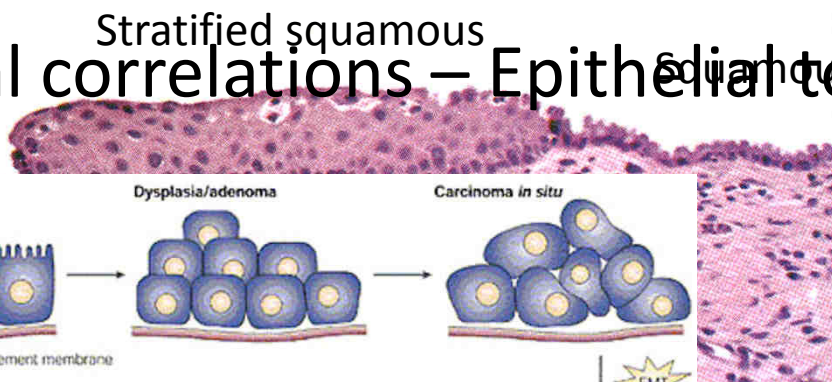
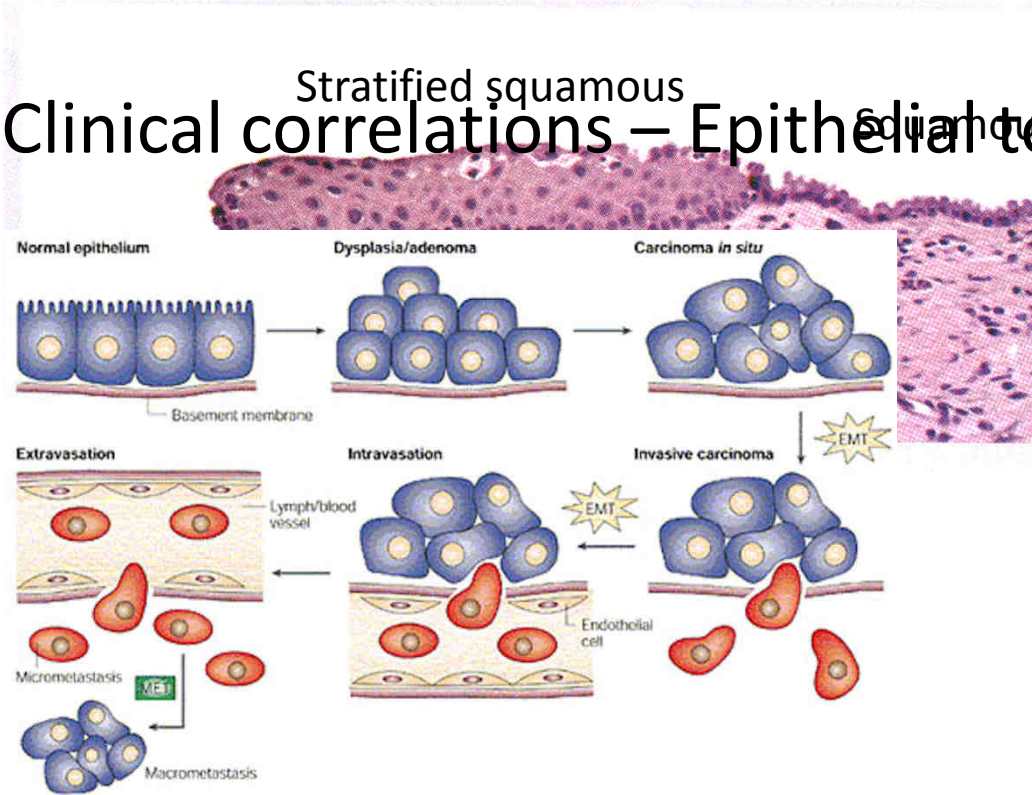
**Proliferative Compartment**  
(active WNT signaling)

**Stem Cell Niche**  
(ISEMF + SMC provide source of BMP antagonists)

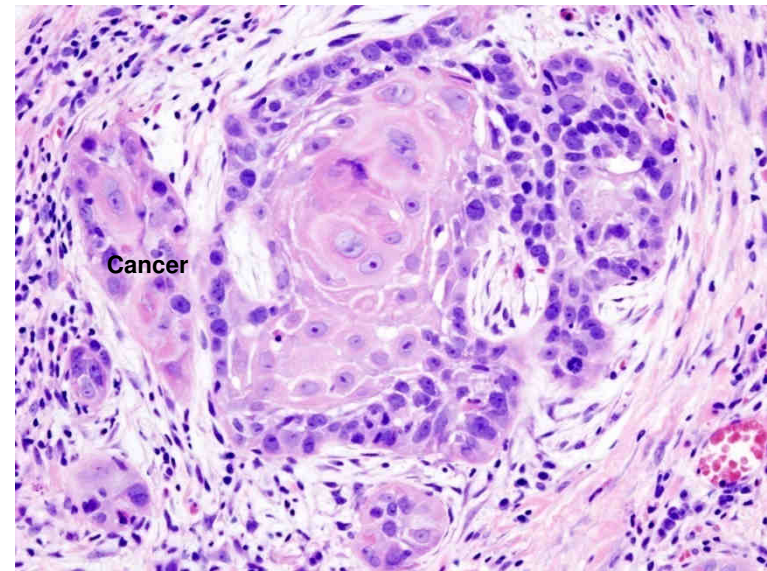


# Clinical correlations - Metaplasia

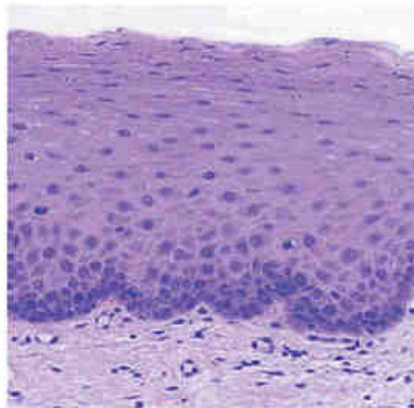
## Clinical correlations – Epithelial to mesenchymal transition



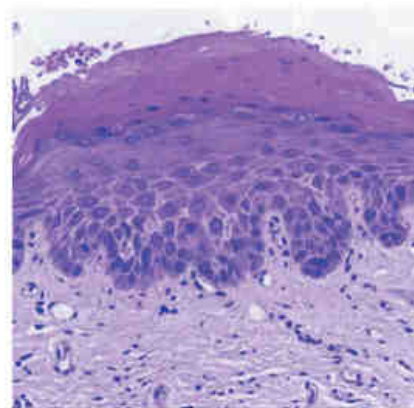
Simple columnar



c Normal oral mucosa



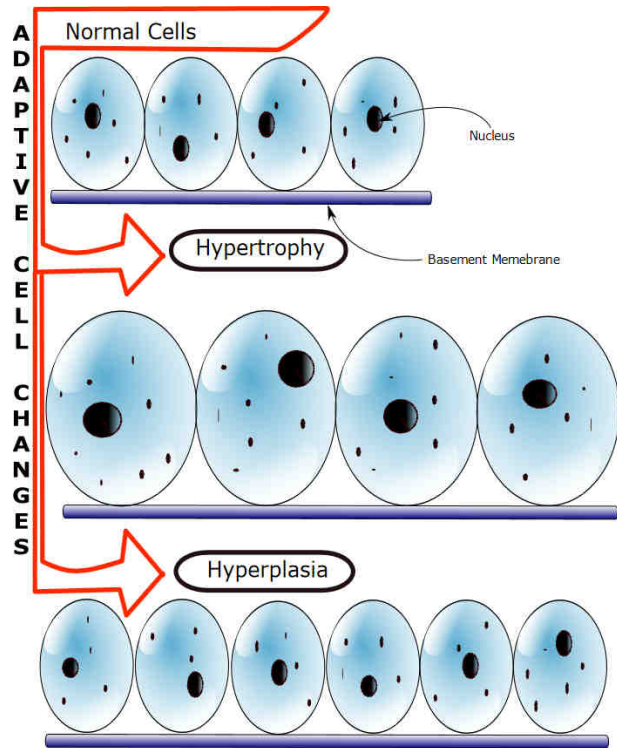
d Moderate dysplasia



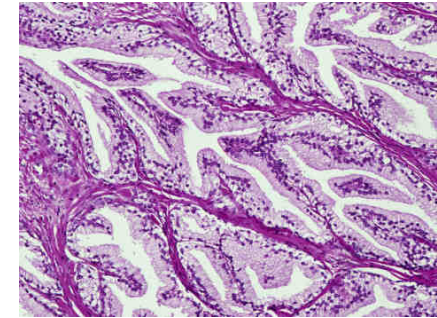


# ■ Plasticity of epithelial tissue

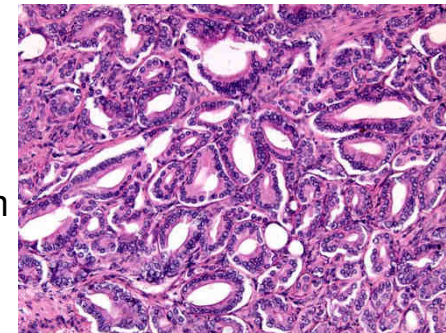
## Hyperplasia



Normal prostate



Hyperplasia of glandular epithelium

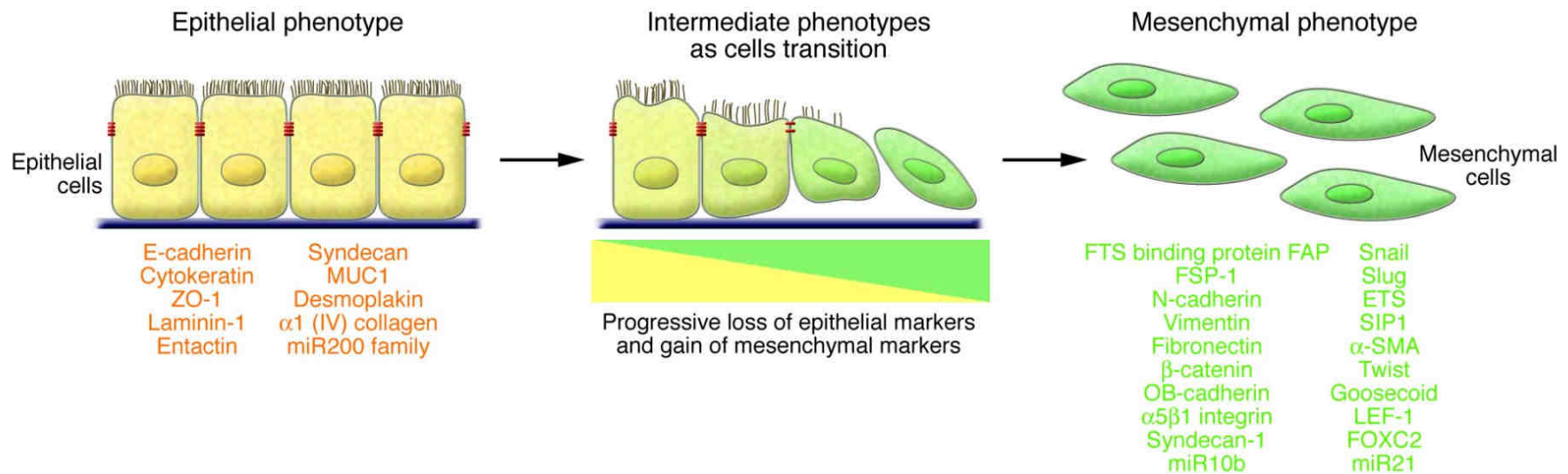


Prostate cancer

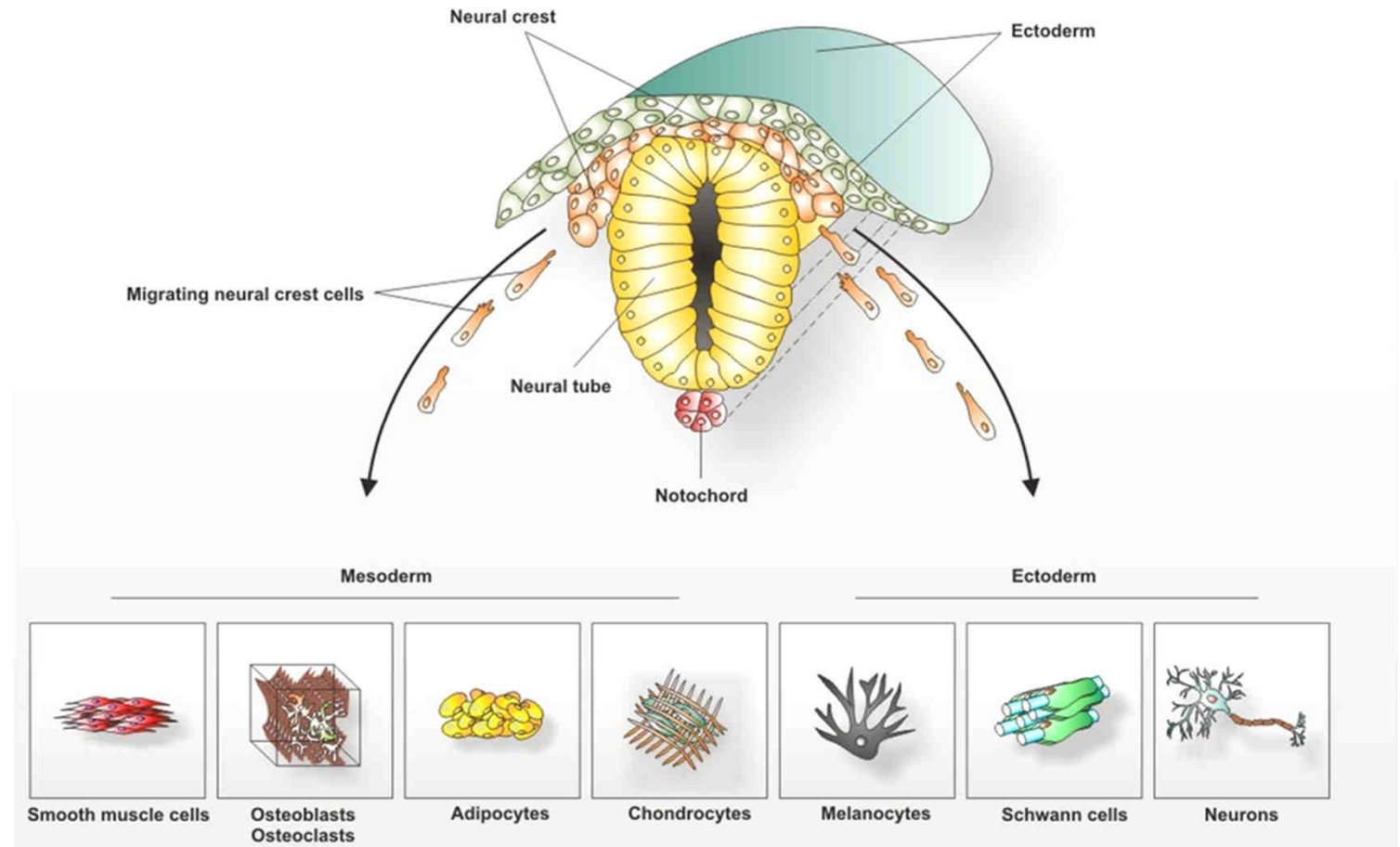
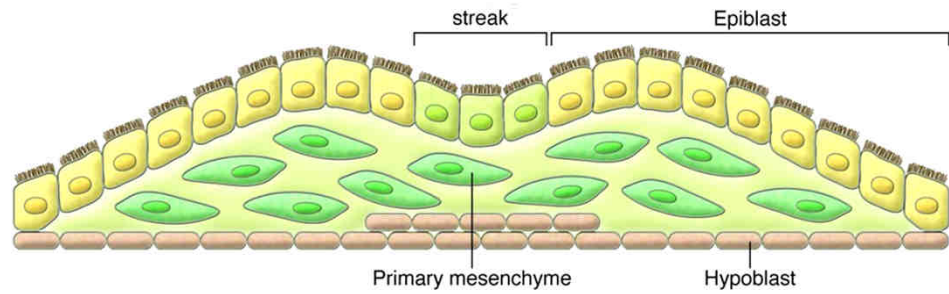


# ■ Plasticity of epithelial tissue

## Epithelial – to mesenchymal transition (EMT)



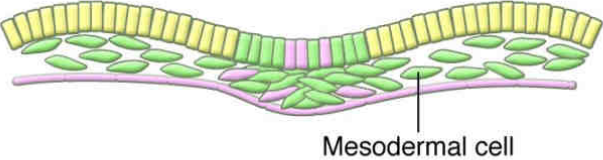
# EMT in embryonic development





**Embryos**

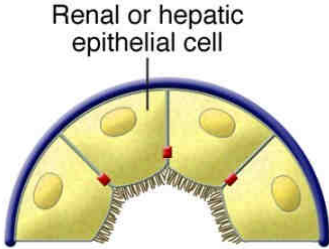


**EMT inducers**  
Physiological expression

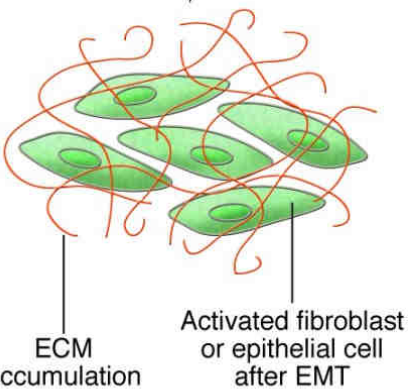


	Epithelial cells
	Mesenchymal cells

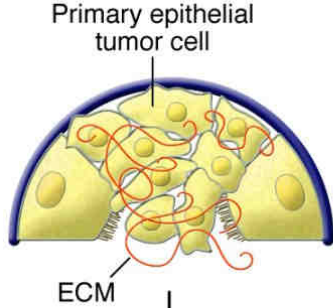
**Fibrosis**



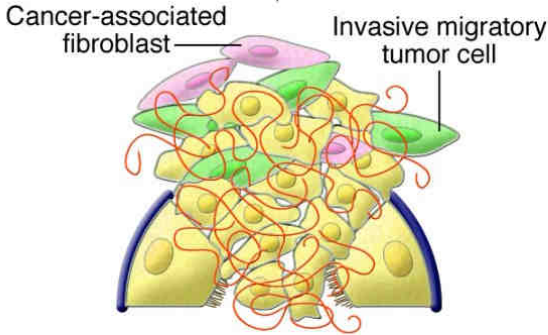
**EMT inducers**  
Aberrant activation



**Tumor progression**



**EMT inducers**  
Aberrant activation



# Thank you for attention

pvanhara@med.muni.cz

<http://www.med.muni.cz/histology>

