

Overview of SHORT BOWEL SYNDROME

Short bowel syndrome (SBS) is a condition that is characterized by poor absorption of nutrients due to a lack of functional small intestine. SBS may occur in individuals who:

- have had surgery to remove a portion of their small intestine
- have significant damage of the small intestines
- have intestines with altered functional ability (eg, poor intestinal motility)
- are born with a short bowel (congenital SBS)

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

The signs and symptoms of SBS may include:

- Diarrhea
- Dehydration
- Bloating
- Cramping
- Fatigue, or feeling tired
- Foul-smelling stool
- Heartburn
- Flatulence
- Vomiting
- Weakness



COMPLICATIONS OF SBS

Some of the complications of SBS are:



Malnutrition, a common problem in individuals with SBS. Is related to the intestines inability to absorb nutrients. It may be managed with nutritional therapy and dietary recommendations that are tailored to the individual.



Kidney stones occur for a variety of reasons in individuals with SBS. They may be managed with traditional medical therapy, shock wave lithotripsy, cystoscopy, or percutaneous nephrolithotomy.



Peptic ulcers are caused by the overproduction of gastric acid. They may be managed by proton pump inhibitors or histamine receptor blockers.



Small intestinal bacterial overgrowth is another common complication in individuals with SBS. This overgrowth is managed with antibiotics.

Gastrointestinal Manifestations of Intestinal Failure

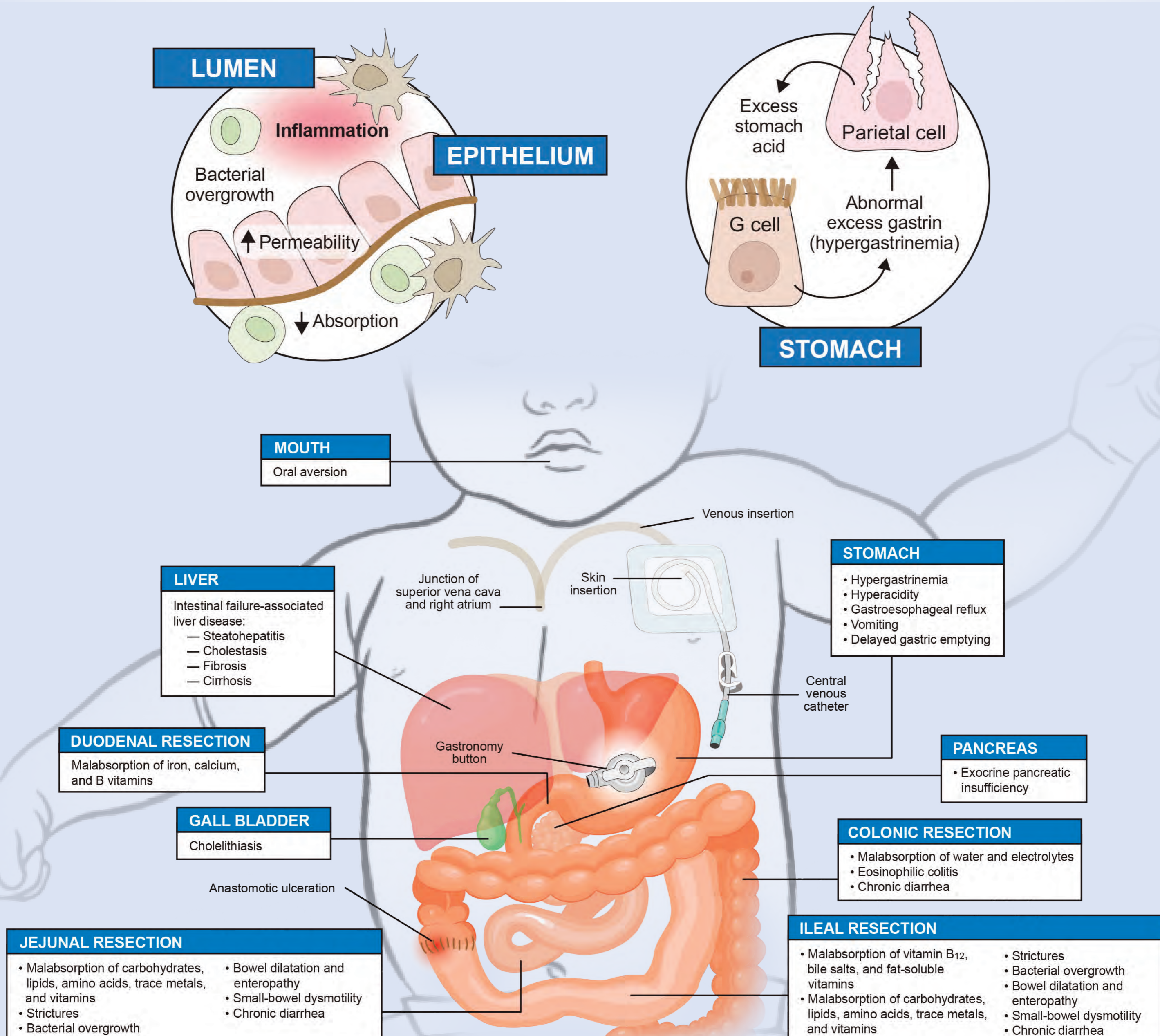


Figure adapted from Duggan, et. al.

EVALUATION/ASSESSMENT OF SBS

Individuals with SBS usually cannot adequately absorb water, vitamins, minerals, proteins, fats, calories, and other nutrients from food via their gastrointestinal tract. Determining the optimal treatment requires a thorough assessment of the individual. The evaluation/assessment of a patient with SBS may include:

- **Medical and family history**
- **Physical examination**
 - Muscle wasting
 - Weight loss
 - Signs of vitamin and mineral deficiencies
- **Blood testing**
 - Metabolic disturbances
 - Vitamin and mineral deficiency
- **Fecal tests**
- **X-ray of the small and large intestines to identify intestinal blockage**
- **Upper gastrointestinal series**
 - Small bowel follow-through study
- **Small bowel enteroscopy**
- **Computerized tomography enterography**

CLINICAL PEARLS

SBS is a condition characterized by poor absorption of nutrients resulting in PN dependence.

The condition occurs as a result of the loss of small intestine due to disease, trauma, or birth defects.

Management decisions for patients with SBS should be based on a thorough assessment of the individual's presentation and history. The evaluation of these patients may include a complete history, physical examination, blood testing, and imaging studies.

References/Resources

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