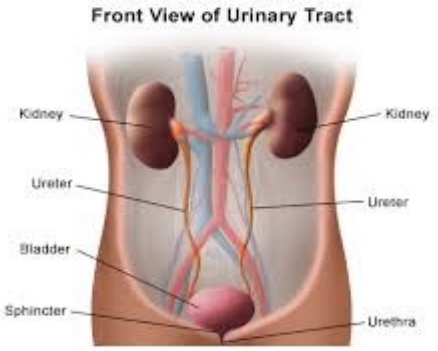
The Urinary System



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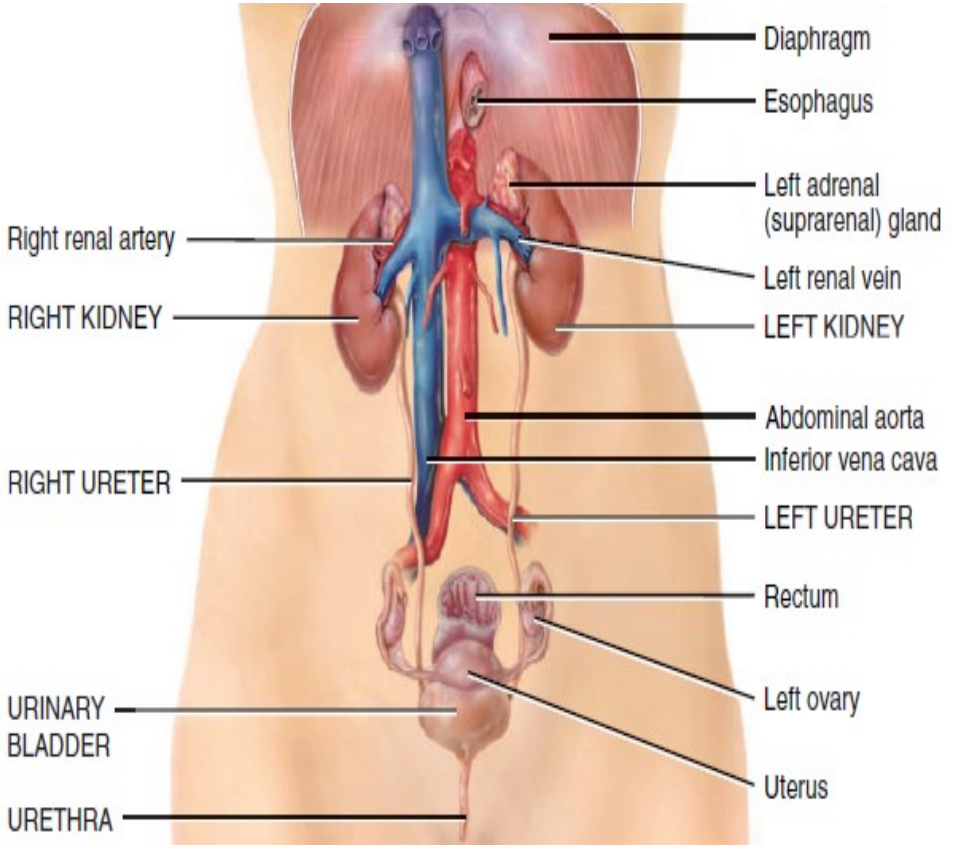
Introduction

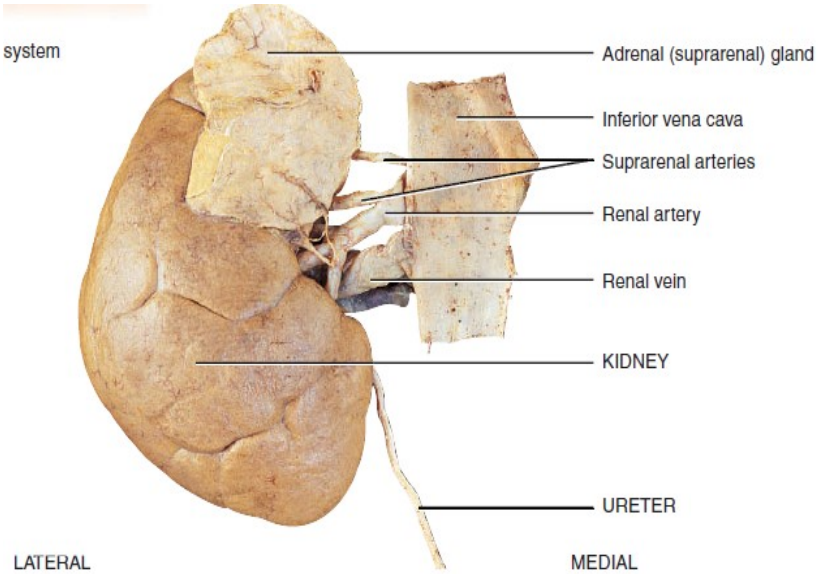
- The **urinary system** consists of two kidneys, two ureters, one urinary bladder, and one urethra (Figure 26.1). After the kidneys filter blood plasma, they return most of the water and solutes to the bloodstream. The remaining water and solutes constitute **urine**, which passes through the ureters and is stored in the urinary bladder until it is excreted from the body through the urethra.
- **Nephrology** is the scientific study of the anatomy, physiology, and pathology of the kidneys.
- The branch of medicine that deals with the male and female urinary systems and the male reproductive system is called **urology**.
- A physician who specializes in this branch of medicine is called a **urologist**.

Figure 26.1 Organs of the urinary system in a female.

Which organs constitute the urinary system?

Urine formed by the kidneys passes first into the ureters, then to the urinary bladder for storage, and finally through the urethra for elimination from the body





(b) Anterior view of right kidney

TABLE 26.7

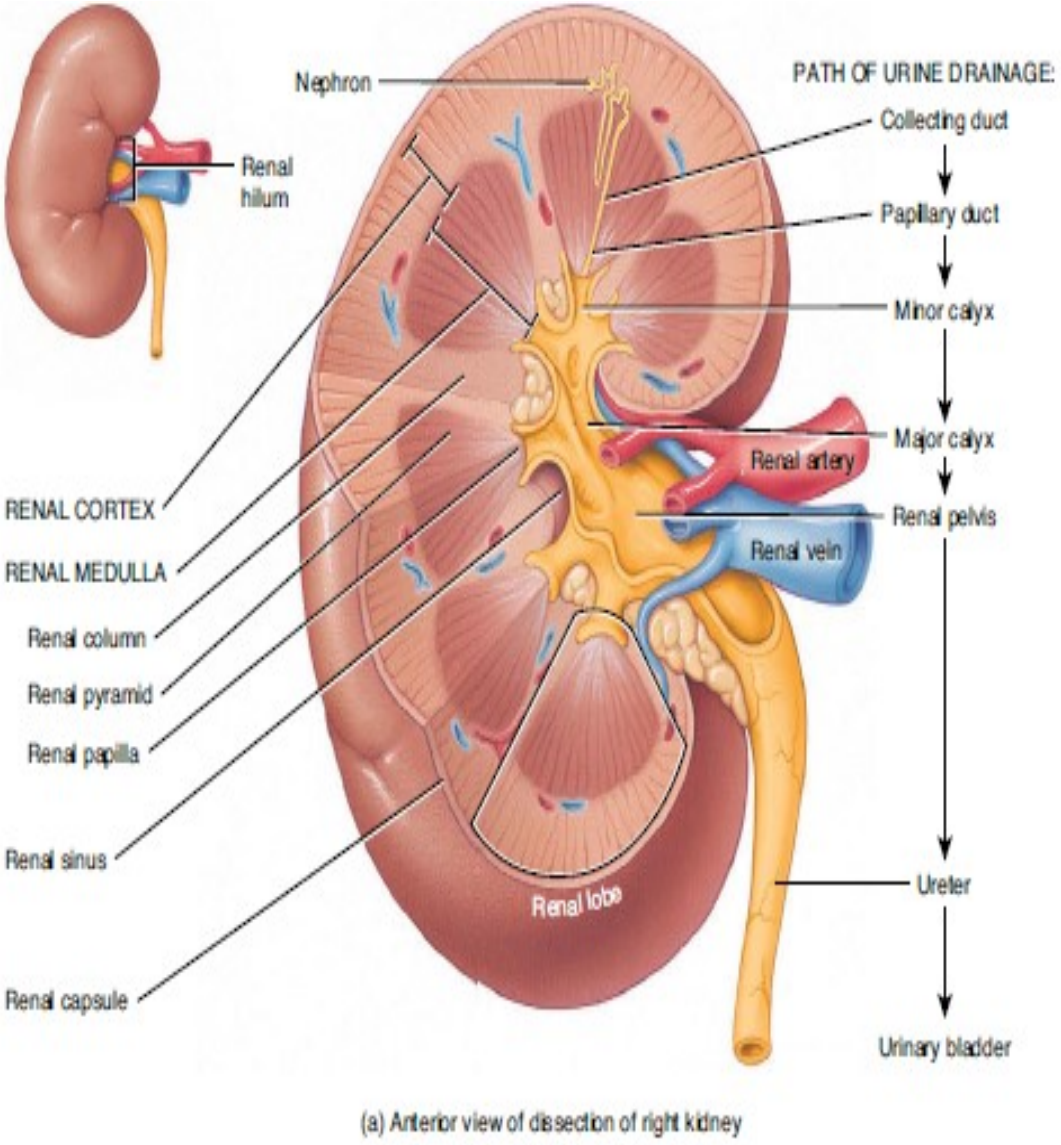
Summary of Urinary System Organs

STRUCTURE	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION	FUNCTION
Kidneys	Posterior abdomen between last thoracic and third lumbar vertebrae posterior to peritoneum (retroperitoneal). Lie against ribs 11 and 12.	Solid, reddish, bean-shaped organs. Internal structure: three tubular systems (arteries, veins, urinary tubes).	Regulate blood volume and composition, help regulate blood pressure, synthesize glucose, release erythropoietin, participate in vitamin D synthesis, excrete wastes in urine.
Ureters	Posterior to peritoneum (retroperitoneal); descend from kidney to urinary bladder along anterior surface of psoas major muscle and cross back of pelvis to reach inferoposterior surface of urinary bladder anterior to sacrum.	Thick, muscular walled tubes with three structural layers: mucosa of transitional epithelium, muscularis with circular and longitudinal layers of smooth muscle, adventitia of areolar connective tissue.	Transport tubes that move urine from kidneys to urinary bladder.
Urinary bladder	In pelvic cavity anterior to sacrum and rectum in males and sacrum, rectum, and vagina in females and posterior to pubis in both sexes. In males, superior surface covered with parietal peritoneum; in females, uterus covers superior aspect.	Hollow, distensible, muscular organ with variable shape depending on how much urine it contains. Three basic layers: inner mucosa of transitional epithelium, middle smooth muscle coat (detrusor muscle), outer adventitia or serosa over superior aspect in males.	Storage organ that temporarily stores urine until convenient to discharge from body.
Urethra	Exits urinary bladder in both sexes. In females, runs through perineal floor of pelvis to exit between labia minora. In males, passes through prostate, then perineal floor of pelvis, and then penis to exit at its tip.	Thin-walled tubes with three structural layers: inner mucosa that consists of transitional, stratified columnar, and stratified squamous epithelium; thin middle layer of circular smooth muscle; thin connective tissue exterior.	Drainage tube that transports stored urine from body.

Overview of Kidney Functions

1. **Kidneys regulate blood volume and composition; help regulate blood pressure, pH, and glucose levels; produce two hormones (calcitriol and erythropoietin); and excrete wastes in urine.**
2. **Ureters transport urine from kidneys to urinary bladder.**
3. **Urinary bladder stores urine and expels it into urethra.**
4. **Urethra discharges urine from body.**

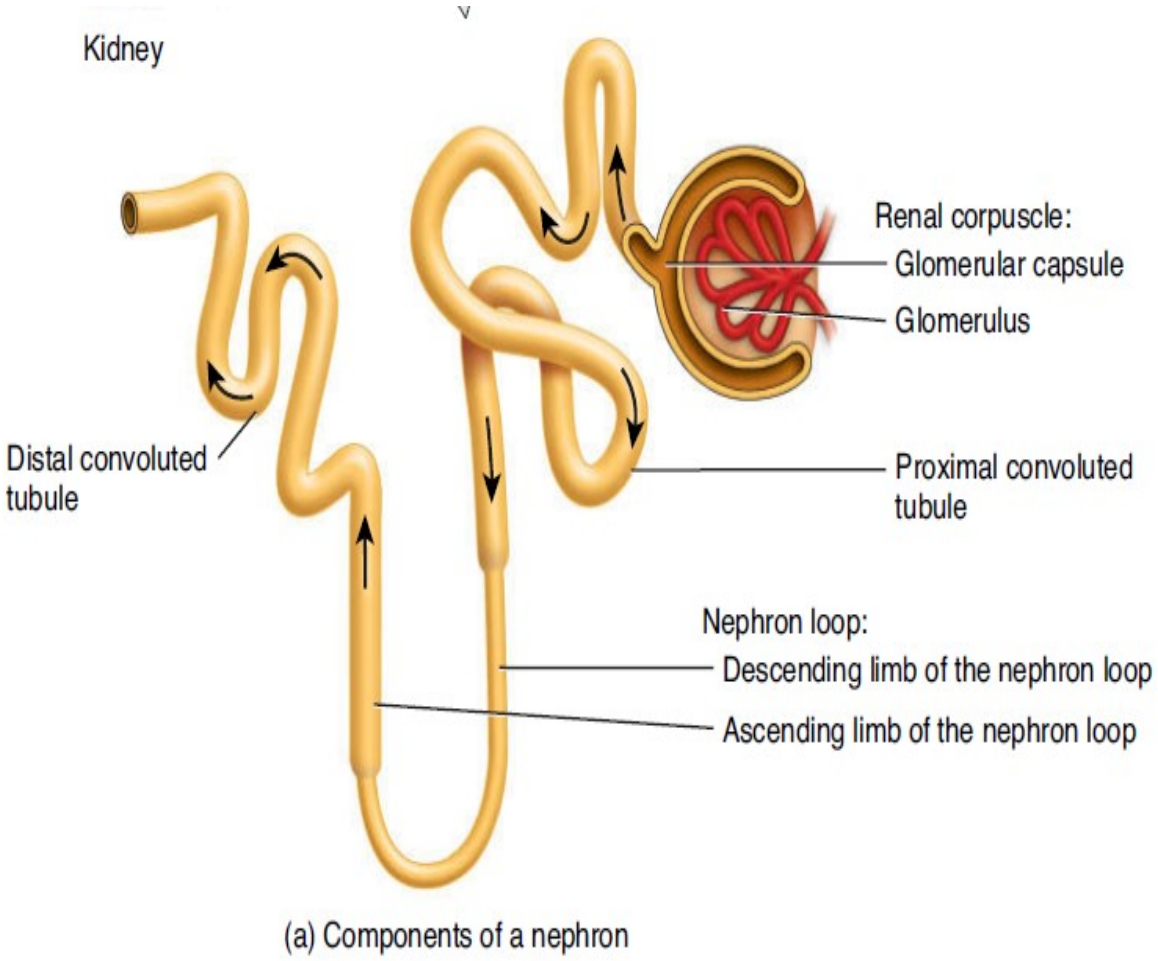
Figure 26.3
Internal anatomy of the kidneys.
The two main regions of the kidney are the superficial, light red region called the **renal cortex** and the deep, dark red region called the **renal medulla.**

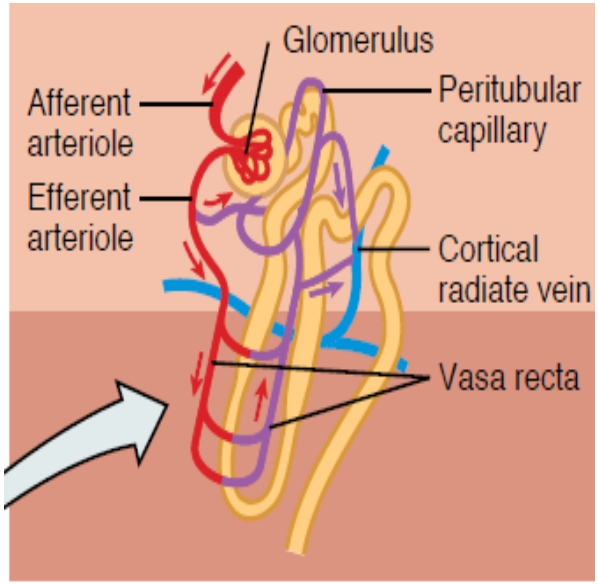


(a) Anterior view of dissection of right kidney

Figure 26.5 The structure of nephrons and associated blood vessels. Note that the collecting duct and papillary duct are not part of a nephron.

→ **Nephrons are the functional units of the kidneys.**





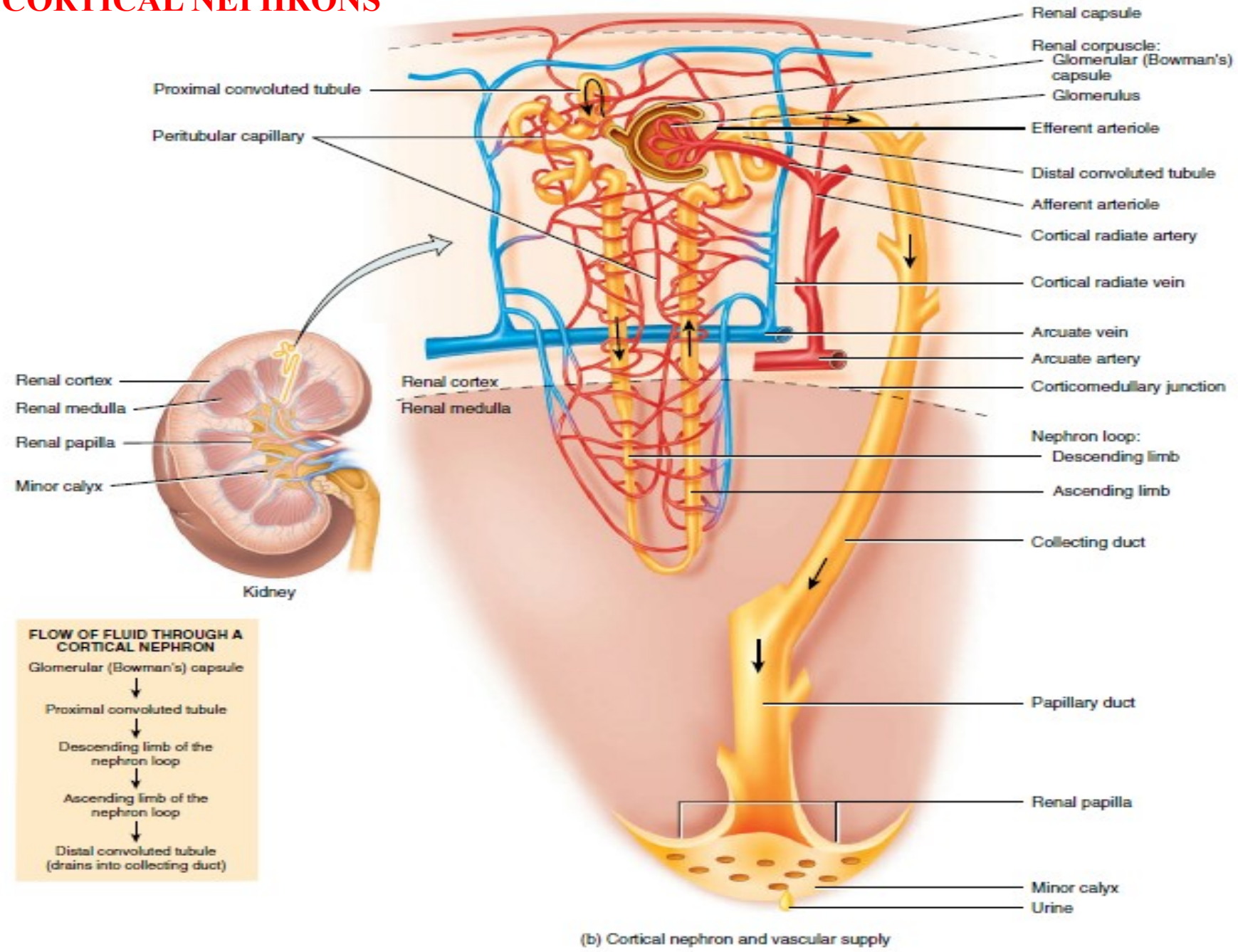
Type of nephrons

There two types of nephrons

1- Cortical nephrons: About 80–85% of the nephrons. Their renal corpuscles lie in the outer portion of the renal cortex, and they have ***short*** nephron loops that lie mainly in the cortex and penetrate only into the outer region of the renal medulla (Figure 26.5b). The short nephron loops receive their blood supply from **peritubular capillaries** that arise from efferent arterioles. These nephrons play a major role in solute reabsorption and excretion

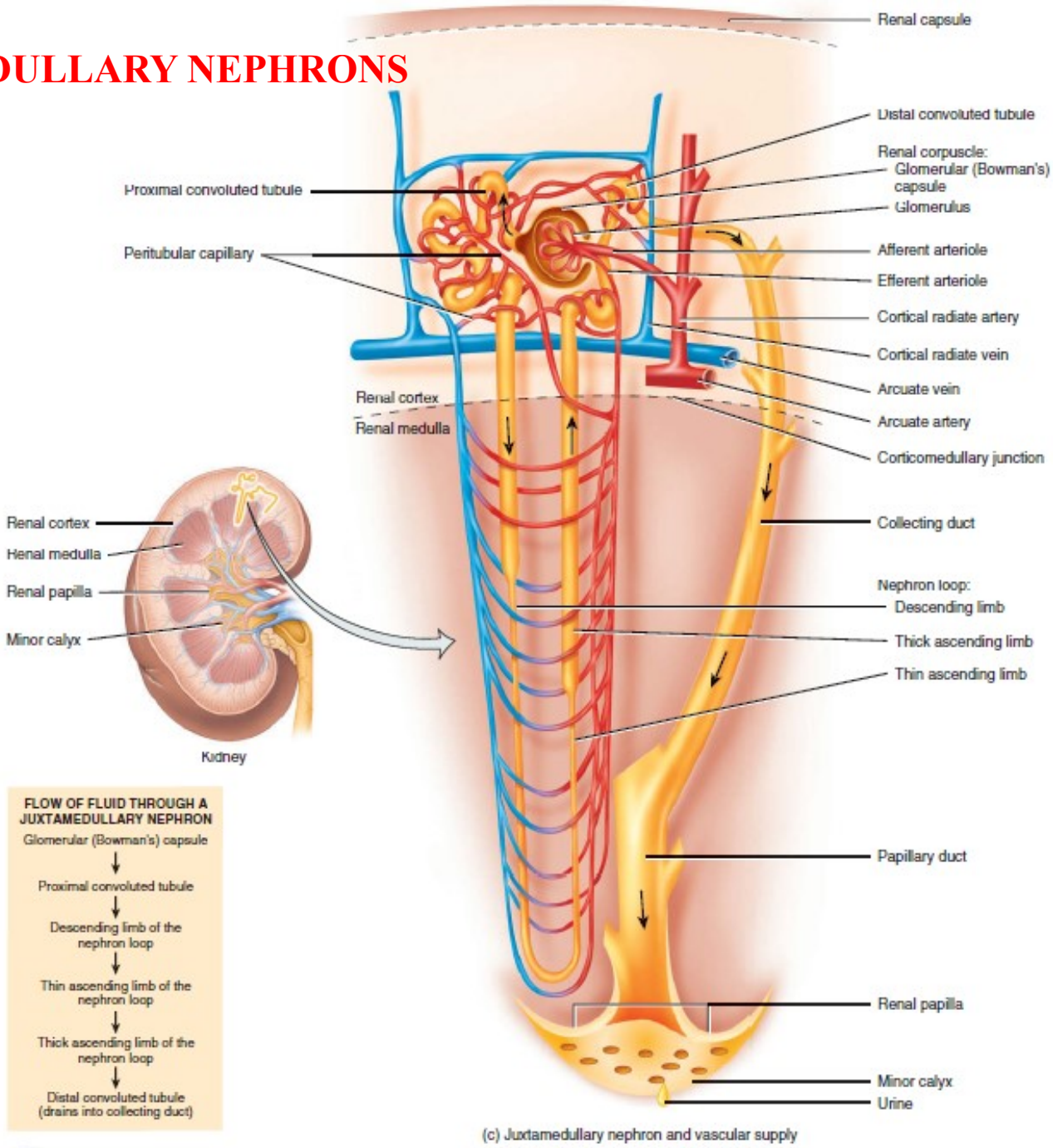
2- Juxtamedullary nephrons The other 15–20% of the nephrons. Their renal corpuscles lie deep in the cortex, close to the medulla, and they have a ***long*** nephron loop that extends into the deepest region of the medulla (Figure 26.5c). Long nephron loops receive their blood supply from **peritubular capillaries** and from the **vasa recta** that arise from efferent arterioles. Nephrons with long nephron loops enable the kidneys to excrete very dilute or very concentrated urine

CORTICAL NEPHRONS



(b) Cortical nephron and vascular supply

JUXTAMEDULLARY NEPHRONS

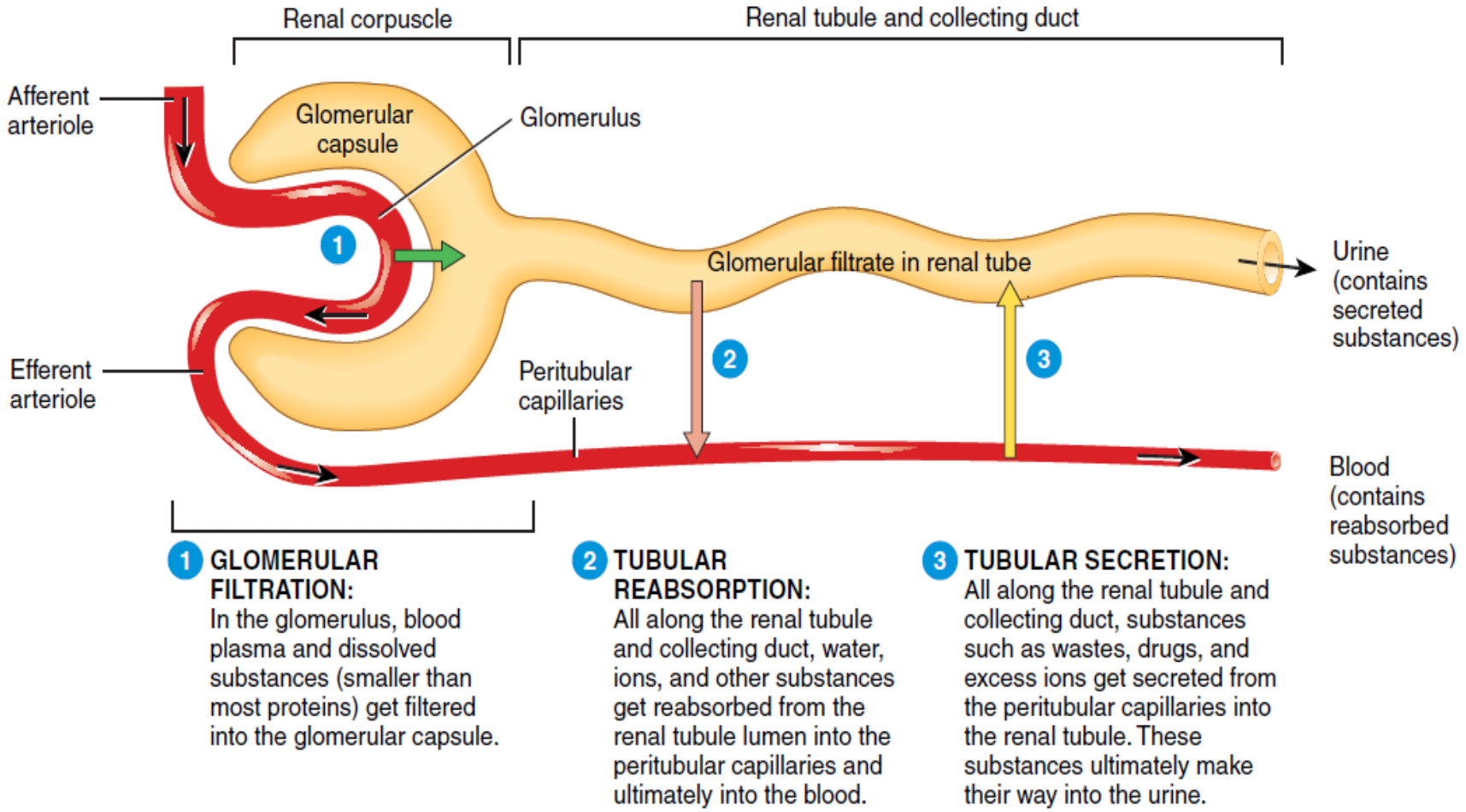


FLOW OF FLUID THROUGH A JUXTAMEDULLARY NEPHRON

Glomerular (Bowman's) capsule
↓
Proximal convoluted tubule
↓
Descending limb of the nephron loop
↓
Thin ascending limb of the nephron loop
↓
Thick ascending limb of the nephron loop
↓
Distal convoluted tubule (drains into collecting duct)

Figure 26.7 Relationship of a nephron's structure to its three basic functions: glomerular filtration, tubular reabsorption, and tubular secretion. Excreted substances remain in the urine and subsequently leave the body.

Glomerular filtration occurs in the renal corpuscle. Tubular reabsorption and tubular secretion occur all along the renal tubule and collecting duct.



Glomerular Filtration Rate

- The amount of filtrate formed in all renal corpuscles of both kidneys each minute is the **glomerular filtration rate (GFR)**.
- In adults, the GFR averages 125 mL/min in males and 105 mL/min in females.
- Homeostasis of body fluids requires that the kidneys maintain a relatively constant GFR.
- If the GFR is too high, needed substances may pass so quickly through the renal tubules that some are not reabsorbed and are lost in the urine.
- If the GFR is too low, nearly all the filtrate may be reabsorbed and certain waste products may not be adequately excreted.

GLOMERULAR FILTRATION

Figure 26.8 The filtration membrane.

→ During glomerular filtration, water and solutes pass from blood plasma into the capsular space.

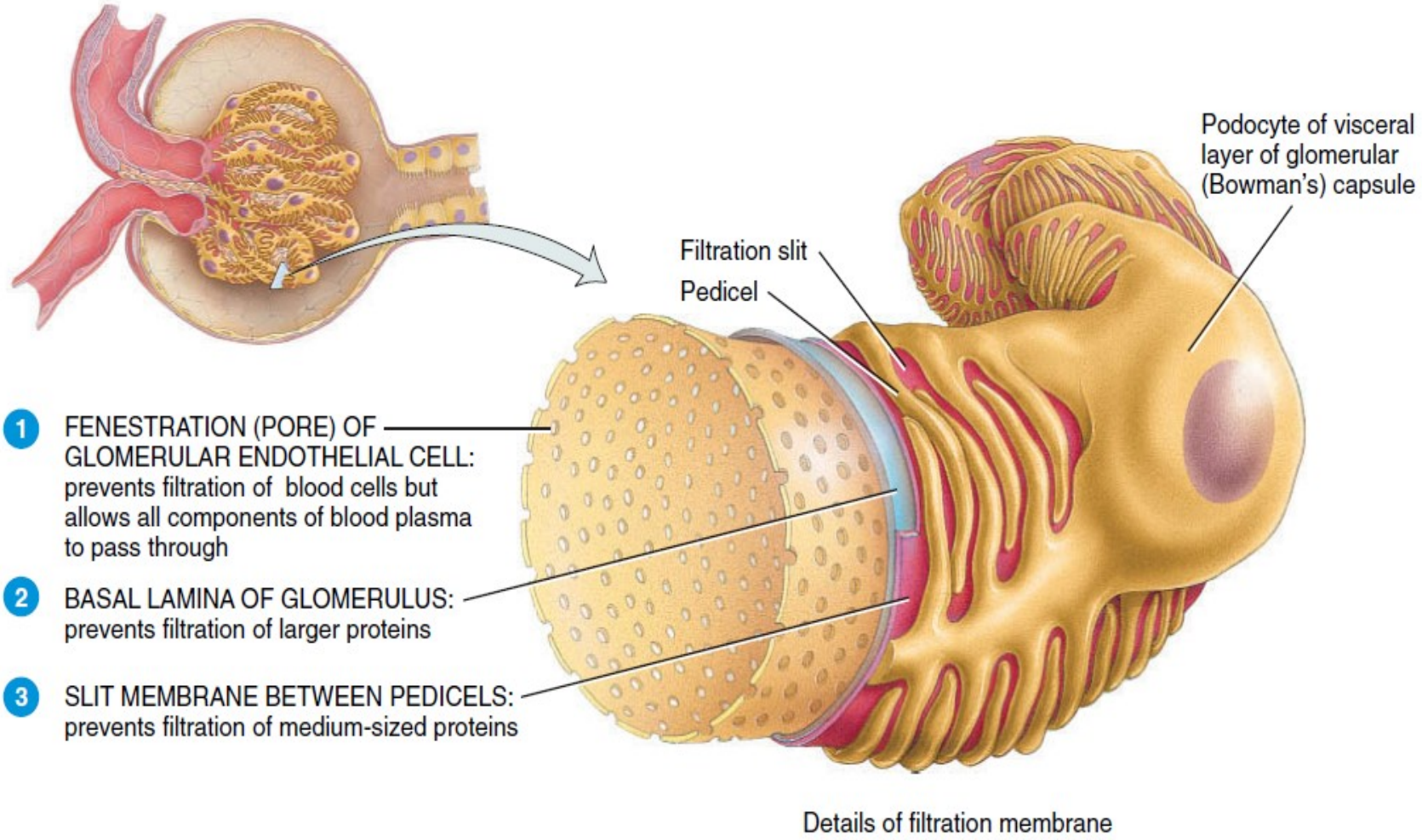


TABLE 26.2

Regulation of Glomerular Filtration Rate (GFR)

TYPE OF REGULATION	MAJOR STIMULUS	MECHANISM AND SITE OF ACTION	EFFECT ON GFR
Renal autoregulation			
Myogenic mechanism	Increased stretching of smooth muscle fibers in afferent arteriole walls due to increased blood pressure.	Stretched smooth muscle fibers contract, thereby narrowing lumen of afferent arterioles.	Decrease.
Tubuloglomerular feedback	Rapid delivery of Na^+ and Cl^- to the macula densa due to high systemic blood pressure.	Decreased release of nitric oxide (NO) by juxtaglomerular apparatus causes constriction of afferent arterioles.	Decrease.
Neural regulation	Increase in activity level of renal sympathetic nerves releases norepinephrine.	Constriction of afferent arterioles through activation of α_1 receptors and increased release of renin.	Decrease.
Hormone regulation			
Angiotensin II	Decreased blood volume or blood pressure stimulates production of angiotensin II.	Constriction of afferent and efferent arterioles.	Decrease.
Atrial natriuretic peptide (ANP)	Stretching of atria of heart stimulates secretion of ANP.	Relaxation of mesangial cells in glomerulus increases capillary surface area available for filtration.	Increase.

TABLE 26.4

Hormonal Regulation of Tubular Reabsorption and Tubular Secretion

HORMONE	MAJOR STIMULI THAT TRIGGER RELEASE	MECHANISM AND SITE OF ACTION	EFFECTS
Angiotensin II	Low blood volume or low blood pressure stimulates renin-induced production of angiotensin II.	Stimulates activity of Na^+–H^+ antiporters in proximal tubule cells.	Increases reabsorption of Na^+, other solutes, and water, which increases blood volume and blood pressure.
Aldosterone	Increased angiotensin II level and increased level of plasma K^+ promote release of aldosterone by adrenal cortex.	Enhances activity of sodium–potassium pumps in basolateral membrane and Na^+ channels in apical membrane of principal cells in collecting duct.	Increases secretion of K^+ and reabsorption of Na^+, Cl^-; increases reabsorption of water, which increases blood volume and blood pressure.
Antidiuretic hormone (ADH)	Increased osmolarity of extracellular fluid or decreased blood volume promotes release of ADH from posterior pituitary gland.	Stimulates insertion of water channel proteins (aquaporin-2) into apical membranes of principal cells.	Increases facultative reabsorption of water, which decreases osmolarity of body fluids.
Atrial natriuretic peptide (ANP)	Stretching of atria of heart stimulates ANP secretion.	Suppresses reabsorption of Na^+ and water in proximal tubule and collecting duct; inhibits secretion of aldosterone and ADH.	Increases excretion of Na^+ in urine (natriuresis); increases urine output (diuresis) and thus decreases blood volume and blood pressure.
Parathyroid hormone (PTH)	Decreased level of plasma Ca^{2+} promotes release of PTH from parathyroid glands.	Stimulates opening of Ca^{2+} channels in apical membranes of early distal tubule cells.	Increases reabsorption of Ca^{2+}.

Figure 26.18 Formation of dilute urine. Numbers indicate osmolarity in milliosmoles per liter (mOsm/liter). Heavy brown lines in the ascending limb of the nephron loop and in the distal convoluted tubule indicate impermeability to water; heavy blue lines indicate the last part of the distal convoluted tubule and the collecting duct, which are impermeable to water in the absence of ADH; light blue areas around the nephron represent interstitial fluid.

→ When the **ADH** level is **low**, urine is dilute and has an osmolarity less than the osmolarity of blood.

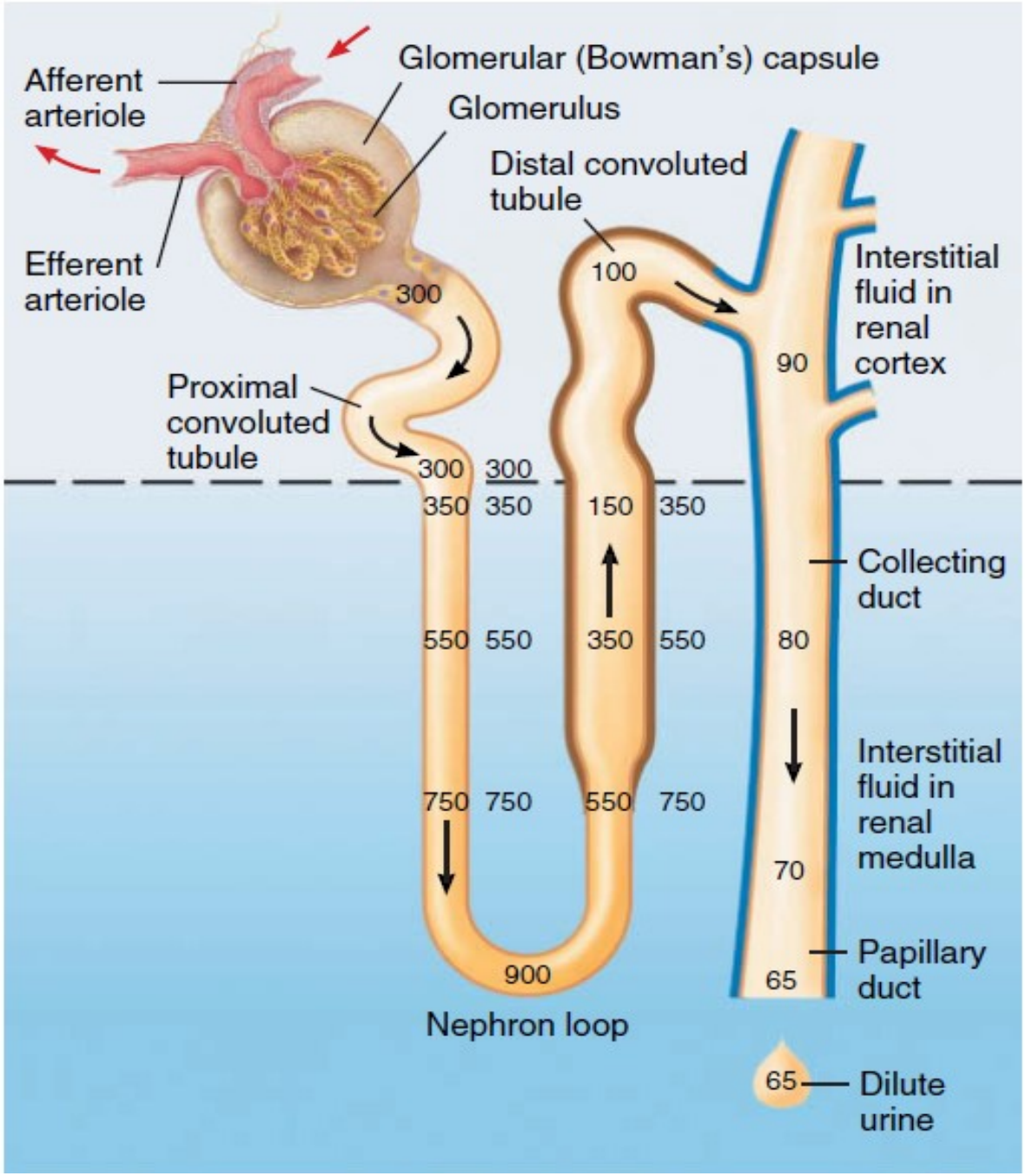


Figure 26.19
Mechanism of urine concentration in long-loop juxtamedullary nephrons.
The green line indicates the presence of Na–K–2Cl symporters that simultaneously reabsorb these ions into the interstitial fluid of the renal medulla; this portion of the nephron is also relatively impermeable to water and urea. All concentrations are in milliosmoles per liter (mOsm/liter).
→ The **formation of concentrated urine** depends on high concentrations of solutes in interstitial fluid in the renal medulla.

Symporters are membrane proteins that move two or more substances in the same direction across a membrane.
Antiporters move two or more substances in opposite directions across a membrane. Each type of transporter has an upper limit on how fast it can work, just as an escalator has a limit on how many people it can carry from one level to another in a given period.

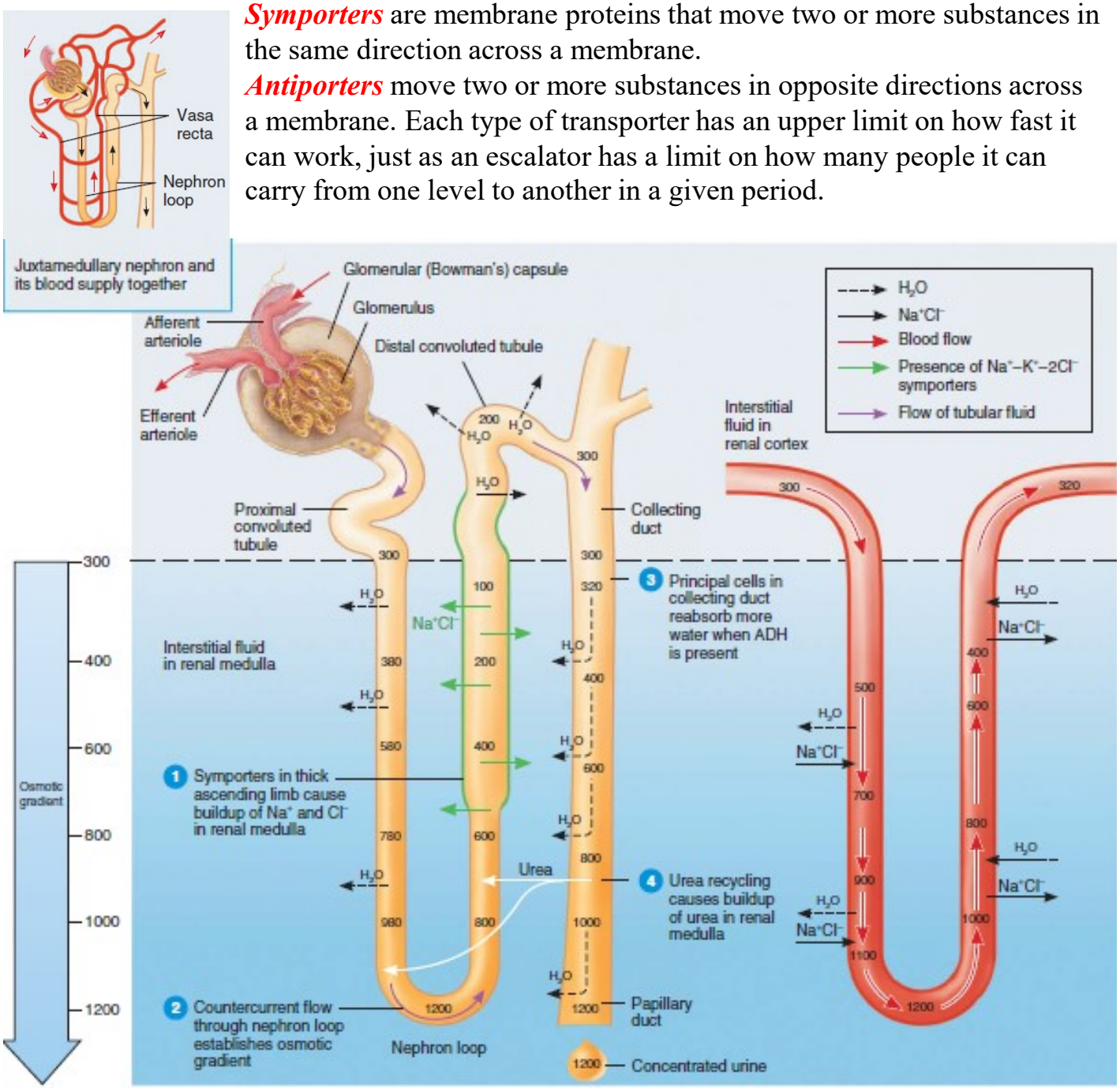


Figure 26.20
Summary of filtration, reabsorption, and secretion in the nephron and collecting duct.
Filtration occurs in the renal corpuscle; **reabsorption** occurs all along the renal tubule and collecting ducts.

RENAL CORPUSCLE

Glomerular filtration rate: 105–125 mL/min of fluid that is isotonic to blood

Filtered substances: water and all solutes present in blood (except proteins) including ions, glucose, amino acids, creatinine, uric acid

PROXIMAL CONVOLUTED TUBULE

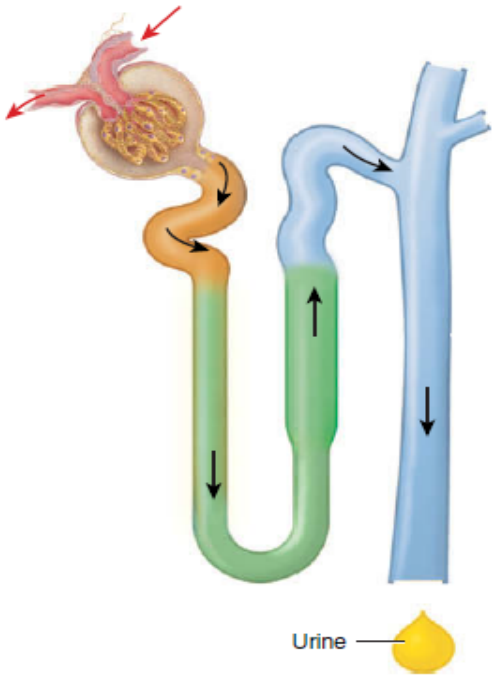
Reabsorption (into blood) of filtered:

Water	65% (osmosis)
Na^+	65% (sodium–potassium pumps, symporters, antiporters)
K^+	65% (diffusion)
Glucose	100% (symporters and facilitated diffusion)
Amino acids	100% (symporters and facilitated diffusion)
Cl^-	50% (diffusion)
HCO_3^-	80–90% (facilitated diffusion)
Urea	50% (diffusion)
Ca^{2+}, Mg^{2+}	variable (diffusion)

Secretion (into urine) of:

H^+	variable (antiporters)
NH_4^+	variable, increases in acidosis (antiporters)
Urea	variable (diffusion)
Creatinine	small amount

At end of PCT, tubular fluid is still isotonic to blood (300 mOsm/liter).



NEPHRON LOOP

Reabsorption (into blood) of:

Water	15% (osmosis in descending limb)
Na^+	20–30% (symporters in ascending limb)
K^+	20–30% (symporters in ascending limb)
Cl^-	35% (symporters in ascending limb)
HCO_3^-	10–20% (facilitated diffusion)
Ca^{2+}, Mg^{2+}	variable (diffusion)

Secretion (into urine) of:

Urea	variable (recycling from collecting duct)

At end of nephron loop, tubular fluid is hypotonic (100–150 mOsm/liter).

EARLY DISTAL CONVOLUTED TUBULE

Reabsorption (into blood) of:

Water	10–15% (osmosis)
Na^+	5% (symporters)
Cl^-	5% (symporters)
Ca^{2+}	variable (stimulated by parathyroid hormone)

LATE DISTAL CONVOLUTED TUBULE AND COLLECTING DUCT

Reabsorption (into blood) of:

Water	5–9% (insertion of water channels stimulated by ADH)
Na^+	1–4% (sodium–potassium pumps and sodium channels stimulated by aldosterone)
HCO_3^-	variable amount, depends on H^+ secretion (antiporters)
Urea	variable (recycling to nephron loop)

Secretion (into urine) of:

K^+	variable amount to adjust for dietary intake (leakage channels)
H^+	variable amounts to maintain acid–base homeostasis (H^+ pumps)

Tubular fluid leaving the collecting duct is dilute when ADH level is low and concentrated when ADH level is high.

TABLE 26.5

Characteristics of Normal Urine

CHARACTERISTIC	DESCRIPTION
Volume	One to two liters in 24 hours; varies considerably.
Color	Yellow or amber; varies with urine concentration and diet. Color due to urochrome (pigment produced from breakdown of bile) and urobilin (from breakdown of hemoglobin). Concentrated urine is darker in color. Color affected by diet (reddish from beets), medications, and certain diseases. Kidney stones may produce blood in urine.
Turbidity	Transparent when freshly voided; becomes turbid (cloudy) on standing.
Odor	Mildly aromatic; becomes ammonia-like on standing. Some people inherit ability to form methylmercaptan from digested asparagus, which gives characteristic odor. Urine of diabetics has fruity odor due to presence of ketone bodies.
pH	Ranges between 4.6 and 8.0; average 6.0; varies considerably with diet. High-protein diets increase acidity; vegetarian diets increase alkalinity.
Specific gravity (density)	Specific gravity (density) is ratio of weight of volume of substance to weight of equal volume of distilled water. In urine, 1.001–1.035. The higher the concentration of solutes, the higher the specific gravity.

TABLE 26.6

Summary of Abnormal Constituents in Urine

ABNORMAL CONSTITUENT	COMMENTS
Albumin	Normal constituent of plasma; usually appears in only very small amounts in urine because it is too large to pass through capillary fenestrations. Presence of excessive albumin in urine—**albuminuria** (al′-bū-mi-NOO-rē-a)—indicates increase in permeability of filtration membranes due to injury or disease, increased blood pressure, or irritation of kidney cells by substances such as bacterial toxins, ether, or heavy metals.
Glucose	Presence of glucose in urine—**glucosuria** (gloo-kō-SOO-rē-a)—usually indicates diabetes mellitus. Occasionally caused by stress, which can cause excessive epinephrine secretion. Epinephrine stimulates breakdown of glycogen and liberation of glucose from liver.
Red blood cells (erythrocytes)	Presence of red blood cells in urine—**hematuria** (hēm-a-TOO-rē-a)—generally indicates pathological condition. One cause is acute inflammation of urinary organs due to disease or irritation from kidney stones. Other causes: tumors, trauma, kidney disease, contamination of sample by menstrual blood.
Ketone bodies	High levels of ketone bodies in urine—**ketonuria** (kē-tō-NOO-rē-a)—may indicate diabetes mellitus, anorexia, starvation, or too little carbohydrate in diet.
Bilirubin	When red blood cells are destroyed by macrophages, the globin portion of hemoglobin is split off and heme is converted to biliverdin. Most biliverdin is converted to bilirubin, which gives bile its major pigmentation. Above-normal level of bilirubin in urine is called **bilirubinuria** (bil′-ē-roo-bi-NOO-rē-a).
Urobilinogen	Presence of urobilinogen (breakdown product of hemoglobin) in urine is called **urobilinogenuria** (ū′-rō-bi-lin′-ō-je-NOO-rē-a). Trace amounts are normal, but elevated urobilinogen may be due to hemolytic or pernicious anemia, infectious hepatitis, biliary obstruction, jaundice, cirrhosis, congestive heart failure, or infectious mononucleosis.
Casts	Casts are tiny masses of material that have hardened and assumed shape of lumen of tubule in which they formed, from which they are flushed when filtrate builds up behind them. Casts are named after cells or substances that compose them or based on appearance (for example, white blood cell casts, red blood cell casts, and epithelial cell casts that contain cells from walls of tubules).
Microbes	Number and type of bacteria vary with specific urinary tract infections. One of the most common is *E. coli*. Most common fungus is yeast *Candida albicans*, cause of vaginitis. Most frequent protozoan is *Trichomonas vaginalis*, cause of vaginitis in females and urethritis in males.