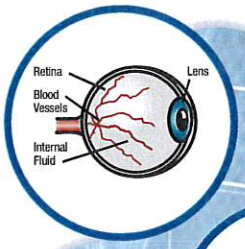
How Diabetes Affects the Body

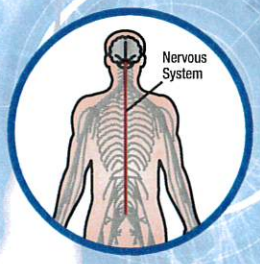
Your Eyes

- Diabetes may cause the following common eye problems: diabetic retinopathy, cataract, glaucoma.
- **See your eye doctor regularly.**
- **Have a dilated-eye exam at least once a year.**



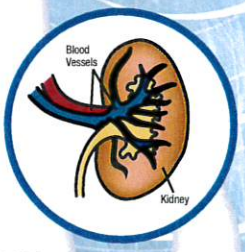
Your Nervous System

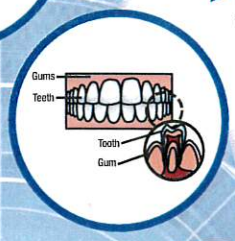
- Diabetic neuropathy can sometimes result in numbness or loss of feeling in the feet, hands, or legs, and also can cause digestion problems, bladder problems, heart problems, and impotence.
- **Tight glucose control is the best way to prevent and/or control the risk of diabetic neuropathy:**
  - **Talk to your healthcare provider about nerve damage.**
  - **Test your blood sugar regularly, and keep your levels controlled.**

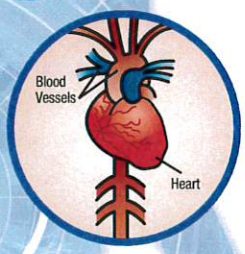


Your Kidneys

- Early in diabetes, the parts of the kidneys that work to filter the blood may be damaged. Early testing for kidney disease—before it causes permanent damage—is very important.
- A sign of this damage is protein in the urine. A urine protein (albumin) test can show whether you are at risk of kidney disease.
- Kidney disease may have no symptoms, or it may include a feeling of tiredness and general weakness; trouble sleeping; swelling; or vomiting.
- **Talk with your healthcare provider about kidney disease.**
- **Test your blood sugar regularly, and keep your levels controlled.**
- **Have your blood pressure checked regularly, and ask about medicines that help control blood pressure, if necessary.**
- **Have a urine protein (albumin) test at least once a year.**







Your Mouth

- Everyone gets plaque on their teeth. Plaque is a sticky film that comes from chewing food. It is filled with germs. In diabetes, high blood sugar helps these germs grow.
- Diabetes can cause red, sore, or swollen gums that bleed when you brush your teeth. Other problems include bad breath, gum disease, or tooth loss.
- **See your dentist every 6 months, and discuss ways to prevent problems and to help keep your teeth and gums healthy.**

Your Heart and Blood Vessels

- Diabetes may cause serious problems to the heart and blood vessels:
  - Fatty deposits can form in the blood vessels.
  - High cholesterol is common in people with diabetes.
  - High blood pressure is common in people with diabetes.
- Diabetes also can lead to heart attack or stroke.
- **Talk with your healthcare provider about ways to control your cholesterol levels, blood pressure, blood glucose, and weight.**
- **Have your A1C tested at least twice a year.**
- **Have your blood pressure tested regularly.**
- **Have your cholesterol tested at least once a year.**
- **Take aspirin daily if instructed by your doctor.**
- **Do not smoke.**

Your Feet

- Diabetes can cause nerve damage in the feet and may affect blood flow in the feet, making it harder for cuts or sores to heal.
- **Check your feet every day for cuts, sores, bruises, dry cracks, loss of feeling, or other signs of infection or redness.**
- **Treat foot infections promptly.**
- **Protect your feet by wearing comfortable socks and shoes at all times.**
- **If you see anything unusual, talk to your doctor right away.**
- **Have your feet checked every time you visit your healthcare provider.**

Where patients come first MERCK

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20607428(19)-01/07-HMS

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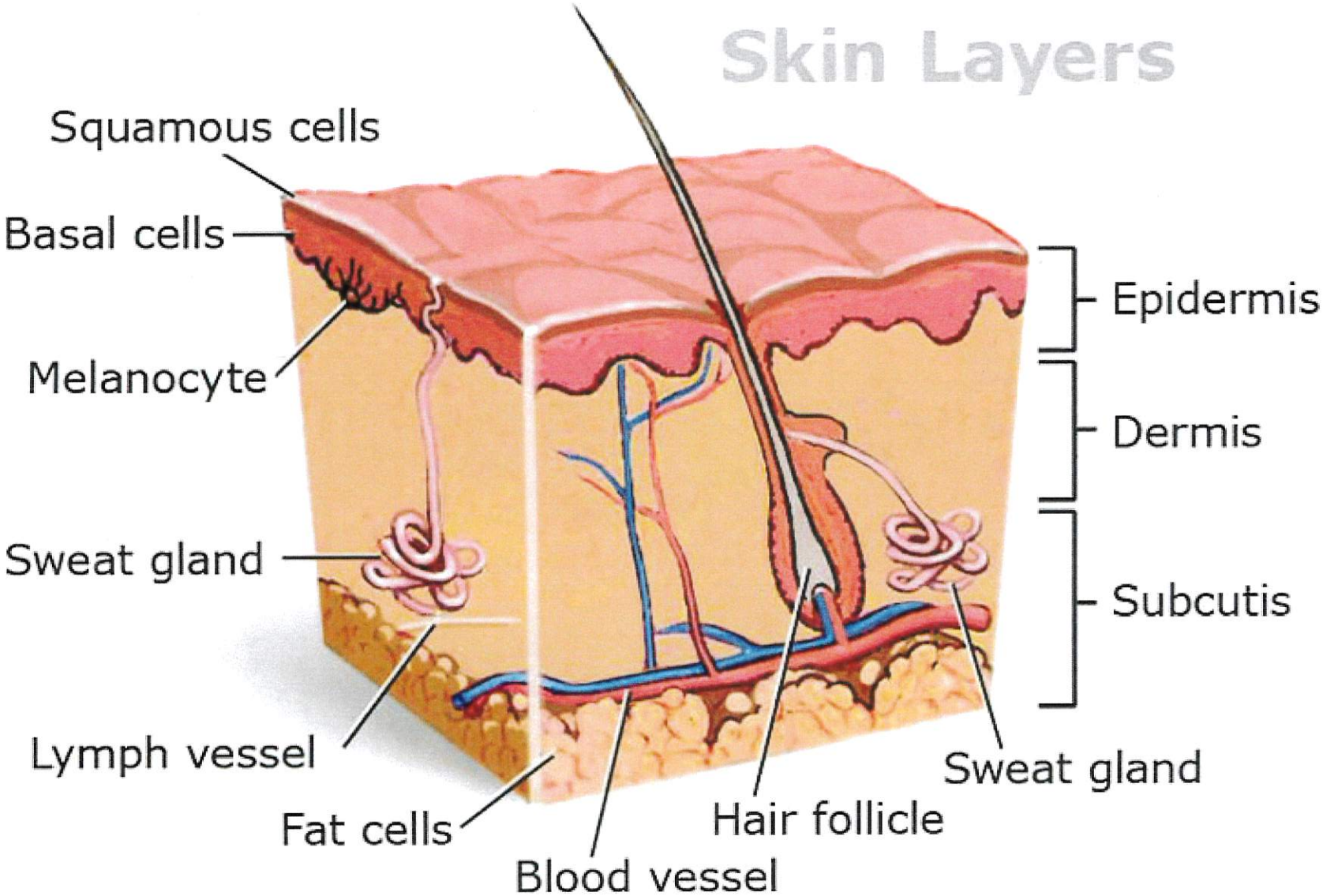
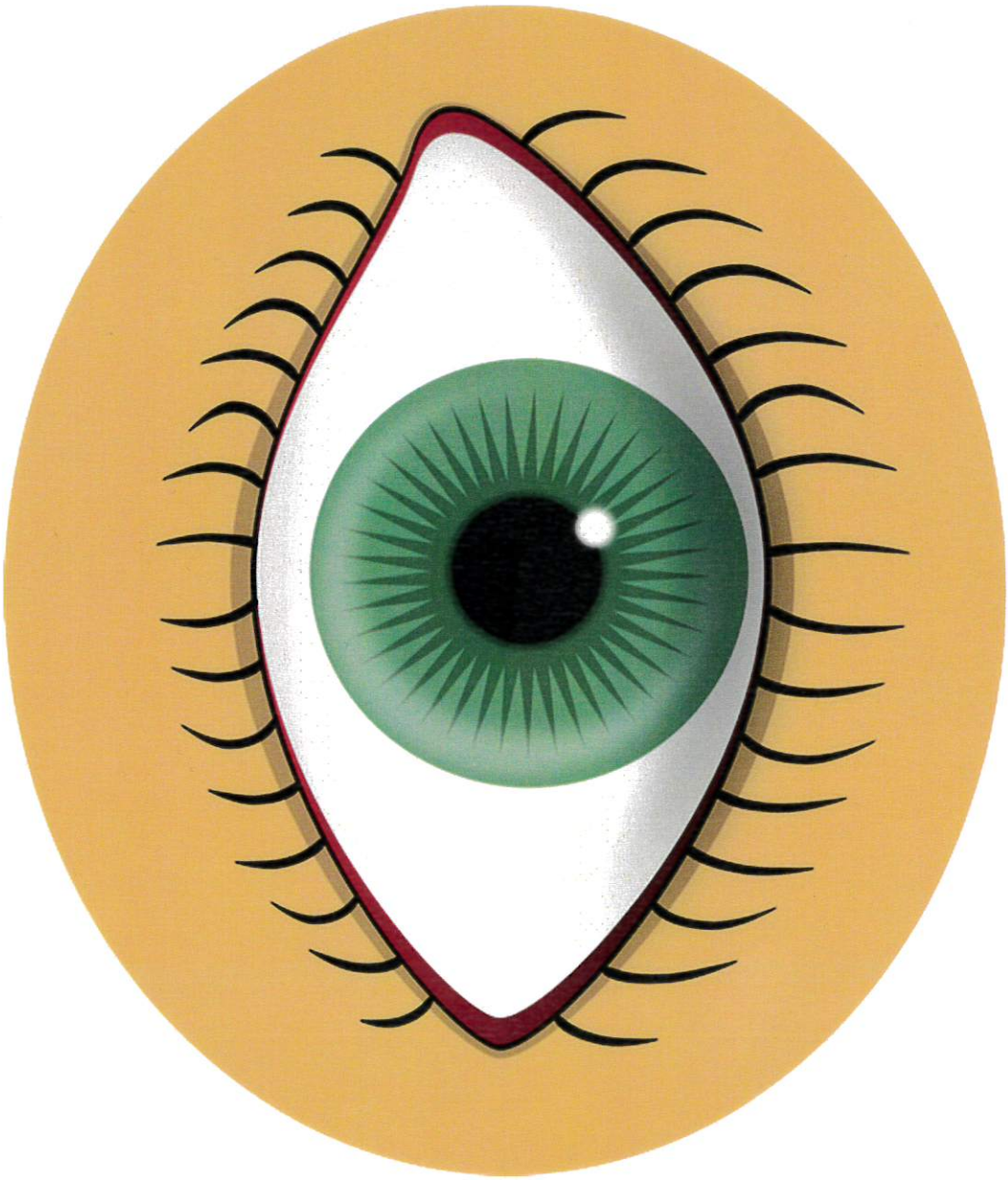
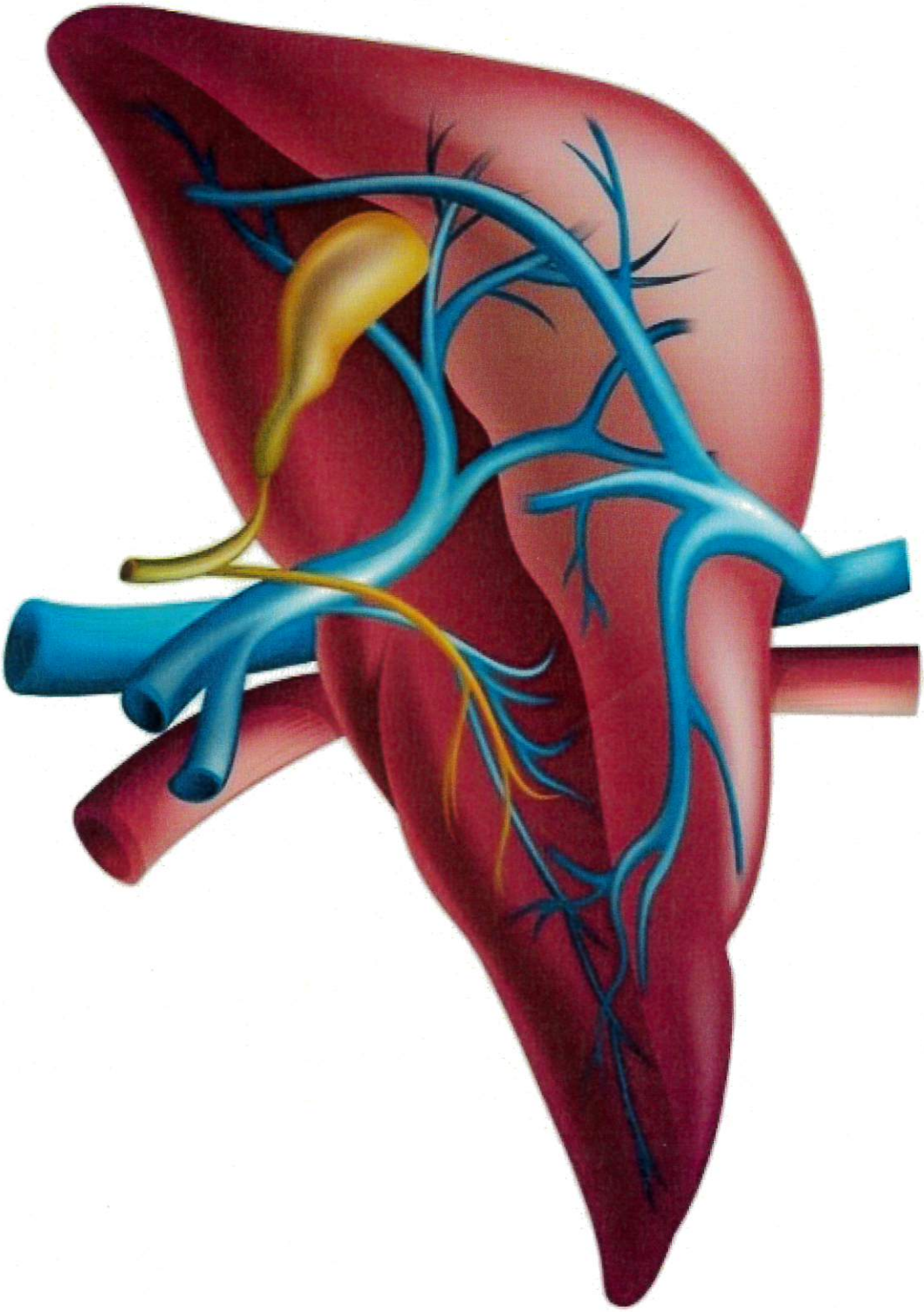
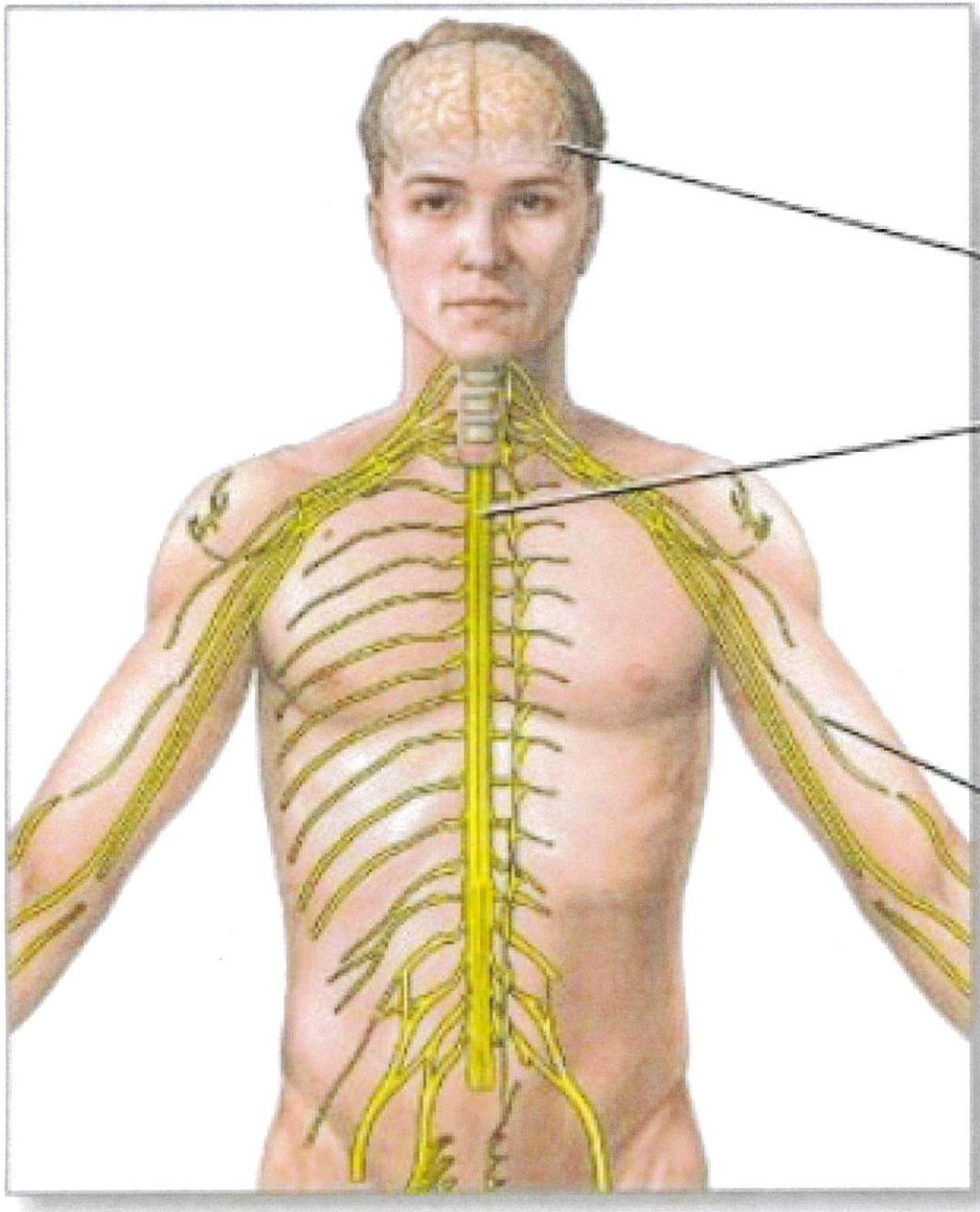
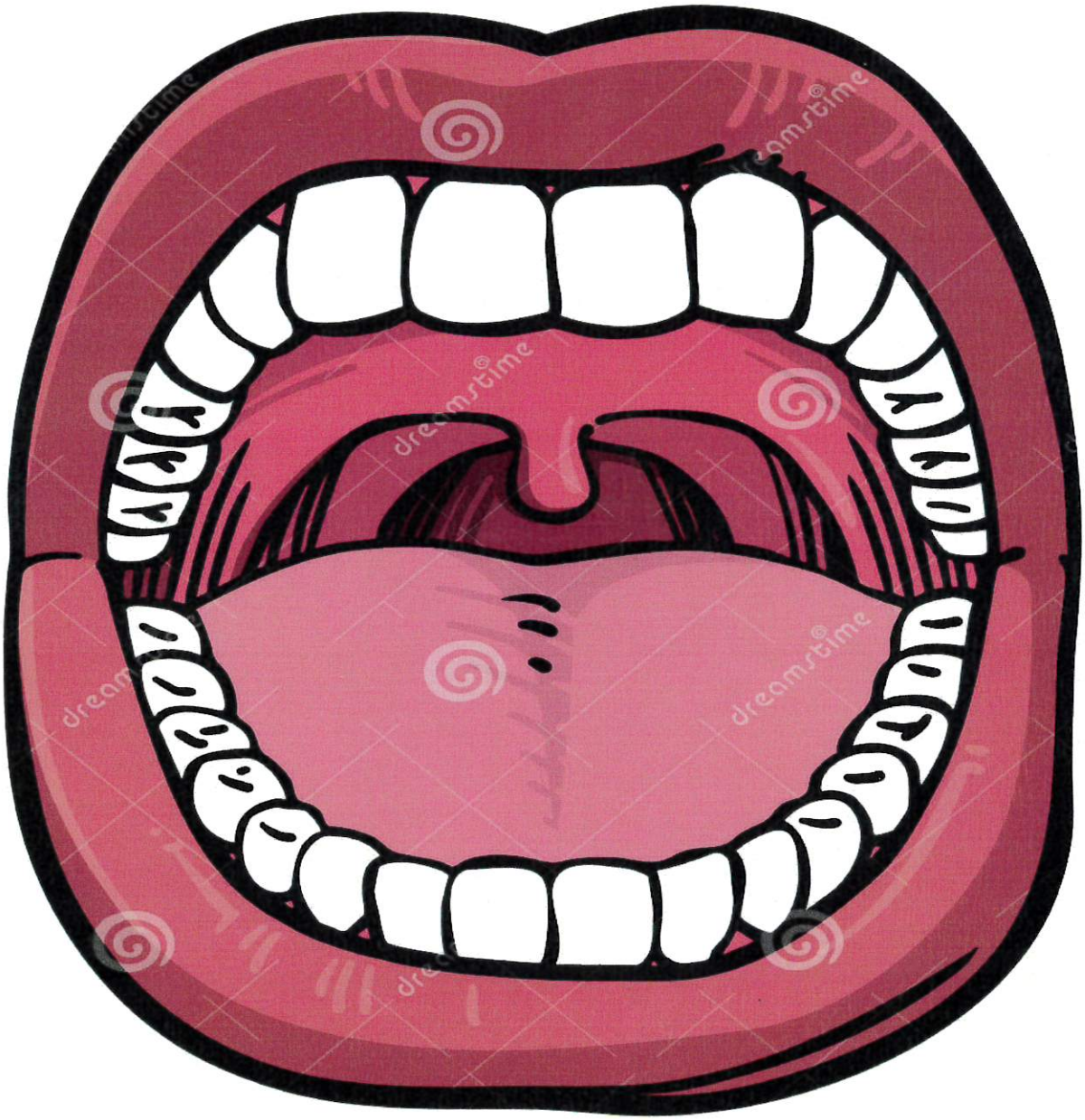
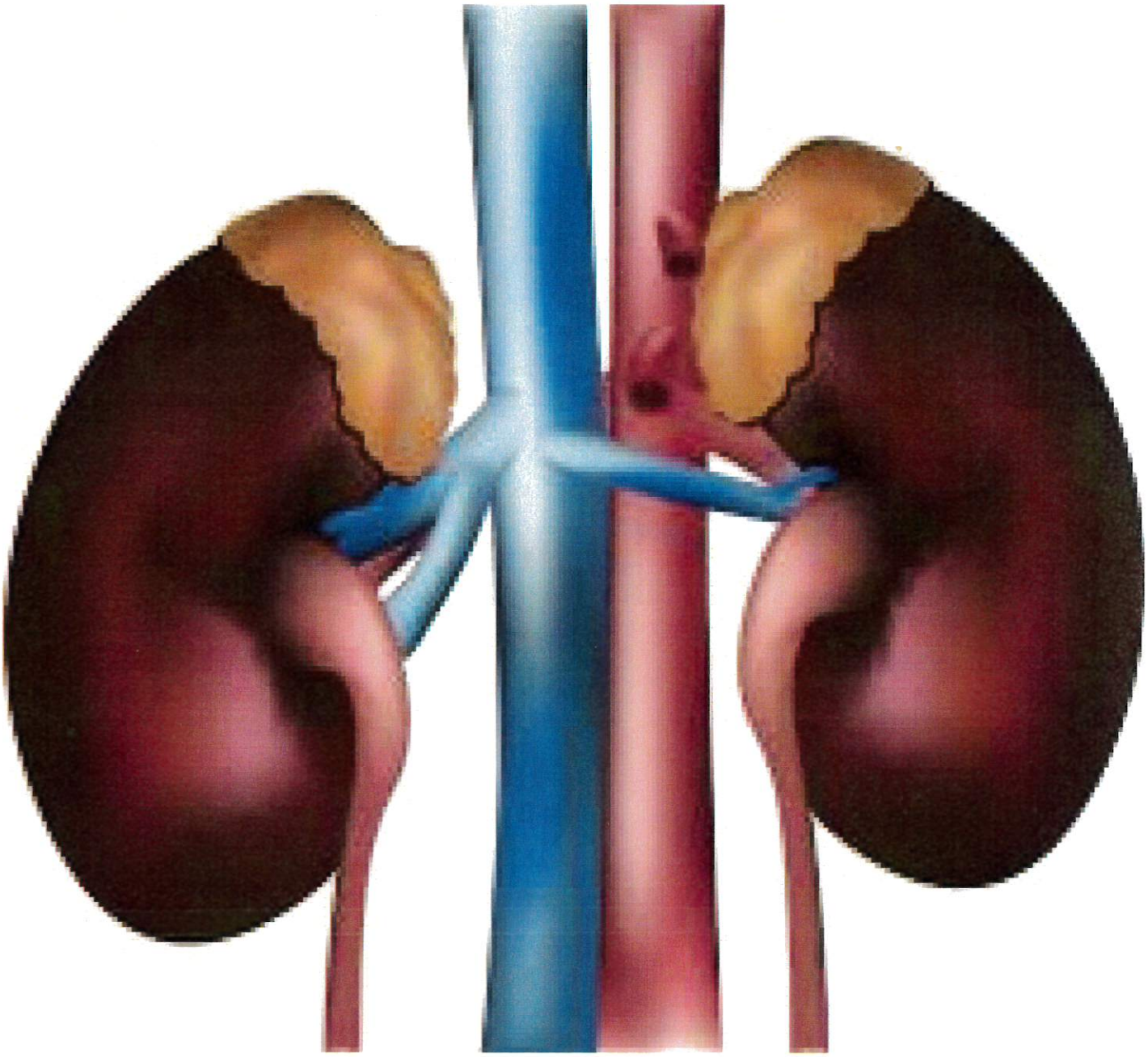
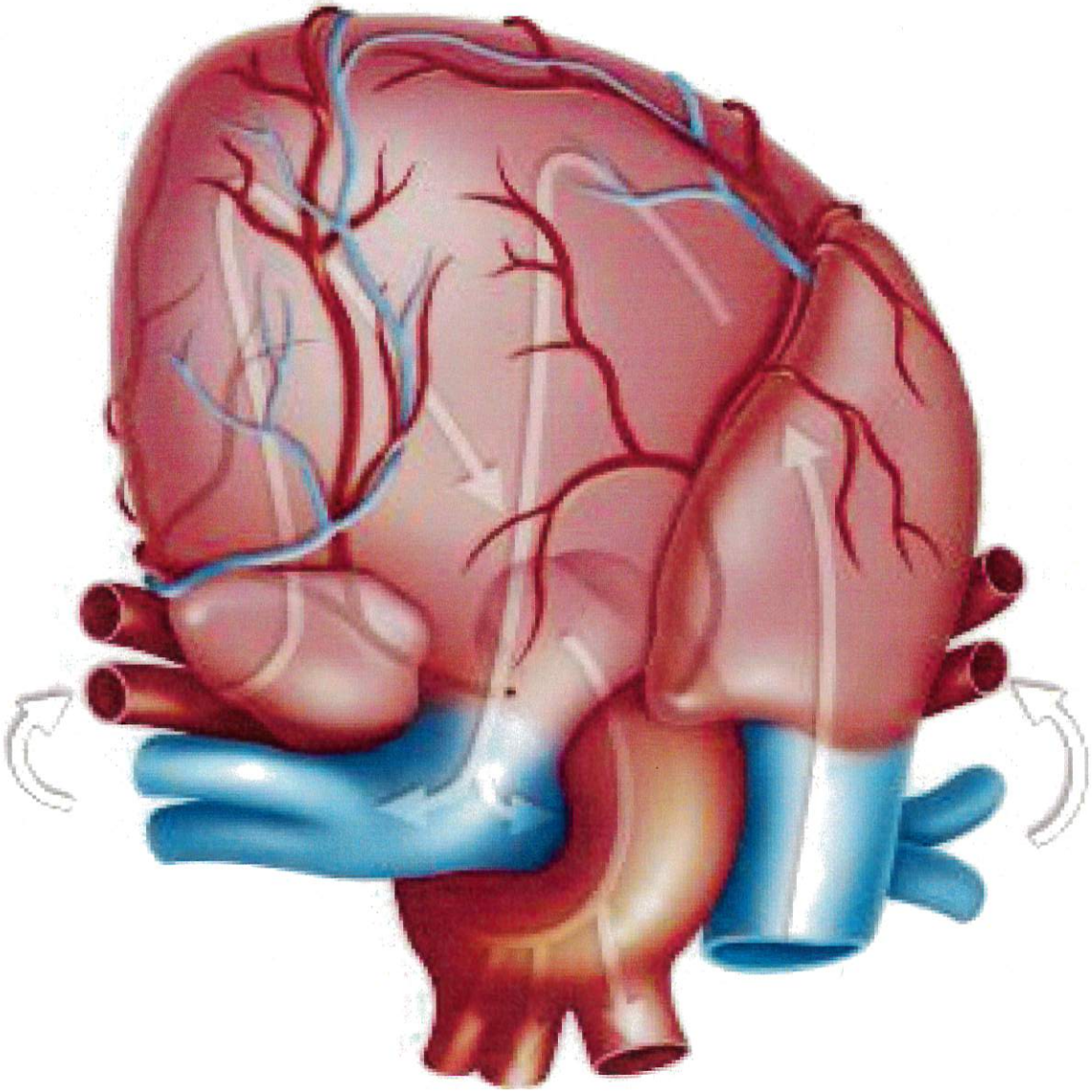

Skin Layers
Squamous cells
Basal cells
Melanocyte
Sweat gland
Lymph vessel
Fat cells
Blood vessel
Hair follicle
Sweat gland
Epidermis
Dermis
Subcutis






Central nervous system
Brain
Spinal cord
Peripheral nervous system
Peripheral nerve

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