Retroperitoneal Structures

The retroperitoneal structures are a commonly tested topic on board exams. They can be remembered by the mnemonic, SAD PUCKER. The "S" is for suprarenal, or adrenal, glands. The "A" is for aorta and the inferior vena cava. The "D" is for the 2nd through 4th parts of the duodenum. The "P" is the head, neck, and body of the pancreas. The "U" is for the ureters. The "C" is for the ascending and descending colon. The "K" is for the kidneys. The "E" is for esophagus. And finally, the "R" is for rectum.



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SAD PUCKER Mnemonic

SAD PUCKER
Sad Pucker-face
The mnemonic "SAD PUCKER" can be used to help memorize retroperitoneal structures. The mnemonic is as follows: the Suprarenal (Adrenal) gland, Aorta and IVC, Duodenum, Pancreas, Ureter, Colon, Kidney, Esophagus, and Rectum.

Suprarenal (Adrenal) Gland
Adrenal Gland
The suprarenal, or adrenal, gland is a retroperitoneal structures. This gland releases catecholamines, steroid hormones, and plays a role in blood pressure regulation.

Aorta and Inferior Vena Cava
A-orca and In-fur Vine Cave
The Aorta and IVC are both retroperitoneal structures.

Duodenum (Parts 2-4)
Dodo-denim
Not all of the parts of the duodenum are retroperitoneal structures. Retroperitoneal parts of the duodenum include the 2nd through the 4th parts.

Pancreas (Head, Neck, and Body)
Pancreas
All of the parts of the pancreas (head, neck, and body) are retroperitoneal except for the tail. The pancreas is the most commonly injured retroperitoneal organ.

Ureters
U-rooster
The ureters are both retroperitoneal structures. They deliver urine from the kidneys to the bladder.

Colon (Ascending and Descending)
Colon
The ascending and descending colon are both retroperitoneal structures. The transverse and sigmoid colon are both intraperitoneal.

Kidneys
Kidney
The kidneys are both retroperitoneal structures. They sit below the adrenal glands, which are both retroperitoneal as well.

Esophagus
Sarcophagus
The esophagus is a retroperitoneal structure. It delivers food from the oral cavity to the stomach.

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Rectum

Rectum-rectangle

The rectum is the final retroperitoneal structure we will discuss in this Picmonic.

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