

Akinbiola Michael

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The respiratory tract is the pathway through which much needed oxygen enters the body. It begins at the nostrils of the nose, continuing into the nasal cavity. From here, it passes through the pharynx, larynx, trachea, bronchi, bronchioles and ends in the alveoli. The airway as a whole can be divided into two segments: a conducting segment (from the nostrils to the terminal bronchiole) and a respiratory segment (from the respiratory bronchioles to the alveoli).

Along the respiratory pathway, the epithelial lining changes to accommodate different functions. This article reviews changes in the epithelia and supporting cells of the upper respiratory tract (from the nasal cavity to the pharynx).

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