

Anatomy and Physiology I

Some notes on membranes:

The body is full of membranes. They wrap around organs, separate cavities and spaces and protect vital tissues. The majority of membranes in the body are referred to as serous membranes; a collective term for them, like the word vehicle.

Some characteristics of the body's membranes:

1. A membrane is essentially a very thin, flat sheet of tissue. All membranes are remarkably thin, no more than one to 4 or 5 cells thick.
2. A membrane may be a broad sheet-like structure, thin and string like, wrap completely around something, or bubble-like (like a soap bubble)
3. Membranes in the body are essentially made from one of two types of tissue. They are either
 - A) Epithelial Tissue (specifically simple squamous type)

Or

- B) Connective Tissue (generally dense irregular similar to tendons and ligaments)

Regardless of tissue type, both share the characteristics of #1 and #2. And share the same function of separation and encasement.

4. Additionally, the epithelial type membranes (typically the ones we call *serous*) have a function they share with the glands of the body because they are epithelial in nature. Epithelial tissues are secretory (they produce and secrete things, from sweat to hormones). As such, many of the serous epithelial membranes in the body will produce and secrete some product. A generic term for this is *serous fluid*. Principle used by the body as a lubricant.
5. Some membranes, because of where they are at, cover, or what they do, have unique or special names, such as the Peritoneum or Mesenteries.
6. Due to the nature of the tissue that makes a membrane, they may range from fragile, thin and transparent to really tough, still thin but thicker than others, and opaque. Some just tear while others need a scalpel to cut them.