Chapter 2
Surgical Anatomy of the Pancreas
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The pancreas is a lobular gland, grayish-pink in color and 12–15 cm in length. It extends crosswise along the posterior abdominal wall, behind the stomach, between the duodenum and the spleen.

Embryology

The pancreas grows in the part of the intestine situated directly under the stomach, cranial to the connection between the duodenum and the yolk-sac. In this region the intestinal epithelium becomes thicker, forming the so-called hepato-pancreatic ring. From this thicker part, dorsal epithelial buds form, giving origin to the dorsal pancreas, and ventral epithelial buds, from which the ventral pancreas derives (Fig. 2.1).

![Fig. 2.1 Embryology of the pancreas. Formation of the dorsal and ventral pancreatic buds](image)
When the duodenum grows and rotates clockwise, the ventral bud is dragged dorsally, integrating with the dorsal bud (Fig. 2.2). The superior portion of the head, the body, and the tail of the pancreas originate from the larger, dorsal bud, whereas the lesser pancreas forms from the ventral bud. When the pancreatic buds merge, the ducts fuse. The main pancreatic duct (duct of Wirsung) originates from the duct of the ventral bud and from the distal portion of the duct of the dorsal bud. The proximal portion of the dorsal bud duct remains in the form of the pancreatic accessory duct (Fig. 2.3).

Fig. 2.2 As the duodenum grows and rotates, the ventral bud is dragged dorsally, becoming integrated with the dorsal bud

Fig. 2.3 Formation of pancreatic ducts