



The Endocrine System

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The endocrine system consists of a highly integrated and widely distributed group of organs that orchestrate a state of metabolic equilibrium among the various organs of the body. Signaling by secreted molecules can be classified into three types—autocrine, paracrine, or endocrine—on the basis of the distance over which the

signal acts. **In endocrine signaling, the secreted molecules, also known as hormones, act on target cells that are distant from their sites of synthesis.** An endocrine hormone is frequently carried by the blood from its site of release to its target. In response, the target tissue often secretes factors that down-regulate the activity of the gland