Body Cavities and Serous Membranes
(Note: identify these structures using anatomical wall charts and models)

Major Cavities

Ventral & Dorsal

Ventral Cavity (lungs, heart, all viscera of abdominal/pelvic cavity)
- Thoracic (2 pleural cavities + 1 mediastinum cavity)
- Abdominal/Pelvic (note: not separated by “true” membrane)
  - Abdomen
  - Pelvic

Note: Thoracic & Abdominal cavities separated by “diaphragm”

Dorsal Cavity (contains skull & vertebral column)

Serous Membranes

Located in “closed” cavities

Structure
- Simple squamous epithelial with connective tissue supporting epithelial cells
- Epithelial cells secrete “serous” (i.e. watery) solution / reduces friction

Three “Aspects” of the Serous Membranes
- Parietal = covers outer margins of cavity
- Visceral = covers objects within cavity
- Retro = between the parietal membrane and the muscles that form the outer margins of cavity
  (e.g. retroperitoneal region / see location of kidneys)

Visceral Membranes
- Epicardium (covers heart - also called visceral pericardium)
- Visceral pleura (covers lungs)
- Visceral peritoneum (covers all organs in abdominal/pelvic cavity)

Parietal Membranes
- Parietal pericardium (mediastinum cavity - heart)
- Parietal Peritoneum (abdominal + pelvic cavity)
- Parietal Pleura (2 pleura cavities - right & left lungs)

Serous Membranes
Lining Body Cavities

Coronal View

1

A  C  B

D

E

2

A = Rt Pleural Cavity
B = Lt Pleural Cavity
C = Mediastinum Cavity
D = Abdominal Cavity
E = Pelvic Cavity
D + E = Abdominalpelvic Cavity

1 = Diaphragm (separates thoracic and abdominal pelvic cavities)
2 = Greater Omentum wraps under intestines to “wall off” abdominal area from the pelvic area)