

Openings in the Diaphragm 1. Aortic opening lies anterior to body of 12th thoracic vertebra between crura. It transmits aorta, thoracic duct & azygos vein 2. Esophageal opening lies at level of 10th thoracic vertebra in a sling of muscle fibers derived from right crus (It transmits esophagus, right and left vagus nerves, esophageal branches of left gastric vessels & lymphatics from lower 1/3 of esophagus 3. Caval opening lies at level of 8th thoracic vertebra in central tendon. It transmits inferior vena cava and terminal branches of right phrenic nerve. In addition to these openings: Sympathetic splanchnic nerves pierce crura Sympathetic trunks pass posterior to medial arcuate ligament on each side Superior epigastric vessels pass between sternal and costal origins of diaphragm