

The neural plate is a key developmental structure that serves as the basis for the nervous system. Opposite the primitive streak in the embryo, ectodermal tissue thickens and flattens to become the neural plate. The region anterior to the primitive knot can be generally referred to as the neural plate. Cells take on a columnar appearance in the process as they continue to lengthen and narrow. The ends of the neural plate, known as the neural folds, push the ends of the plate up and together, folding into the neural tube, a structure critical to brain and spinal cord development. This process as a whole is termed primary **neurulation**.

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