



MEDICAL TERMINOLOGY THE BASICS

FOUNDATION OF MEDICAL WORDS

A. Structure

Most medical words are composed of two or more terms. To define a medical word:

- divide the word into its terms
- analyze the terms
- define the word

Examples:

Pericarditis
peri = around; card = heart; itis = inflammation
Inflammation around the heart

Oncology

onc = tumor, mass; logy = study of
Study of tumors

B. Terms

Term + Term (____ + ____) = medical word

There are five categories of terms:

1. **Prefix** - beginning of a word
(ex., pre - _____)
Designated by a "_____" after the term.
2. **Suffix** - ending of a word
(ex., _____ -ology; _____ -itis)
Designated by a "_____" before the term.
3. **Root** - foundation/base of a word
(ex., hepat-, gastr-)
4. **Combining vowel** - vowel (usually "o") added to a root (ex., hepat-, gastr-).
Use a combining vowel when joining:
a. Root to another root (ex., hepatogastrology)
b. Root to a suffix beginning with a consonant (ex., cardiomyopathy)
5. **Combining form** - root + vowel
(ex., hepatogastr-)

Designated by a "-" between the root and the vowel

Examples:

Hyperleukocytosis
hyper (prefix) = excessive
leuko (combining form) = white
cyt (root) = cell
osis (suffix) = condition of
Definition: condition of excessive white blood cells (leukocytes)
Hematotoxic
hema (combining form) = blood
tox (root) = poison
ic (suffix) = pertaining to
Definition: pertaining to blood poisoning

TIPS:

1. Some terms have more than one definition. To determine the correct definition in a particular medical word, analyze the other terms in the word.

Example: Polioencephalitis
polio = gray (matter)
enceph = spinal cord, brain
itis = inflammation

Definition: Inflammation of the gray matter of the spinal cord. The brain does not have gray matter.

2. Some terms may function as a root/combining form in one word and a suffix in another word. Classification depends upon the specific medical word.

Examples: Cytology
cyt- (combining form) = cell
logy (suffix) = study of
Definition: Study of cells.
Erythrocyte
erythr- (combining form) = red
cyte (suffix) = cell
Definition: Red blood cell

THE HUMAN BODY

A. Development

Cells - tissues - organs - systems - organisms

1. **Cells**: Major Components
a. Cell membrane
b. Cytoplasm
c. Nucleus
2. **Tissues**: Primary Types
a. Connective
b. Epithelium
c. Muscle
d. Nervous
3. **Organs**
a. Composed of two or more different tissues
b. Have specific functions
4. **Systems**: Related organs with common functions
5. **Organism**: A living person

B. Cavities

A space containing organs

1. **Dorsal**
a. Cranial
b. Vertebral (spinal)
2. **Ventral**
a. Abdominal
b. Pelvic
c. Thoracic

C. Planes

An imaginary flat surface

1. **Frontal** - anterior/posterior
2. **Sagittal** - right/left
3. **Transverse** - upper/lower

D. Positions

A reference point for location or direction.

1. **Anterior/Ventral** - front of the body
Posterior/Dorsal - back of the body
2. **Deep** - away from the surface
Superficial - on the surface
3. **Inferior** - situated below
Superior - situated above
4. **Lateral** - pertaining to the side
5. **Medial** - pertaining to the middle
6. **Prone** - lying face down
Supine - lying face up

TERMS	DEFINITIONS	WORDS
acidic	acid, sour, bitter	acidify
ac-	needle	acupuncture
acu/o, acut/o	sharp, severe	acutator
adip/o	fat	adiposectomy
aer/o	air, gas	aerophagy
agit/o	rapidly, restlessness	agitation
-algia	pain	cephalgia
ambul/o	to walk	ambulatory
anomalo-	irregular	anomaly
anthrac/o	coal, carbon, carbuncle	anthracosis
anthrop/o	man, human being	anthropometry
atri/o	atrium	atriotomy
apath/o	shock	apathia
apic/o	apex	apicalomy
aqua/o	water	aqueduct
atmo-	steam, vapor	atmosphere
axis	axis	axial
bar/o	weight, pressure	barometer
bary-	heavy, dull, hard	barophony
-basia	walking	basiphobia
bathe-, batho-	deep, depth	bathyscaphe
bios-, bio-	life, living	biogenesis
blast/o, -blast	early embryonic stage, immature	blastocyte

-calculus	to compute	dyscalculia
calori	heat	calorimetry
capac/o	heat	capacitance
capul/o, caps/o	capsule, container	capsulotomy
carcin/o	cancer	carcinofobia
caris	caries, rottenness	cariology
-cataphasia	affirmation	cataphasia
cathart/o	cleansing, purging	cathartic
-cathisis, -kathisis	sitting	acathisis
caud/o	tail	caudal
cavit/o, cav/o	hollow, cavity	cavitation
chem/o	chemical, chemistry	chemosurgery
chron/o	time, timing	chronobiology
clin/o	to slope, bend	clinoccephaly
-coemesis	sleeping	coemesis
-coma	deep sleep	comatose
conscious	awareness, aware	unconscious
constrict/o	narrowing, binding	vasoconstriction
constr/o	to bruise	contusion
corpore/o	body	corporeal
crisis/o	crisis, dangerous	critical
cryo-	cold	cryotherapy
cyto-, -cyte	cell	cytoid
dem/o	people	epidemic
desicc/o	to dry	electrodesiccation
dilate	enlarge, expand	vasodilator
dolich/o	long	dolicholateral
dolor/o	pain	alodysgenic
dors/o	back	abdominal
duct/o	to lead	conduction
dynam/o	power, strength	dynamometer
-dynia	pain	gastrodynia
dys-	bad, difficult, painful	dysphasia
echin/o	spiny, prickly	echinocyte
ectr/o	congenital absence	ectropia
ele/o	oil	elema
emmetr/o	the correct measure, proportioned	emmetropia
enanti/o	opposite, opposed	enantiobiosis
equi-	equality, equal	equilibrium
erethism/o	irritation	erethism
eti/o	cause	etiology
eu-	good, normal, well	eubiosis
-faciat	to cause, make happen	disfaciat
febril	fever	febrilephobia
fibr/o, fibr-	thread, threadlike	fibrinogen
filament/o		
-form	specified shape, form	morphism
frig/o, frigid/o	cold	frigidity
fact/o	performance	dysfunctional
gel/o	to freeze, congeal	gelosis
gemell/o	twins	gemellology
-gen, gen/o	producing, generating	pathogen
-genesis	production, formation	metagenesis
-genic	produced by, forming	carcinogenic
ger/o, geriatric/o	aged, old age	geriatrics
-grade	step	centigrade
hap/o	simple, single	haploid
heredo-	hereditary	heredodisunity
-hexia	condition	echinhexia
hist/o	tissue	histology
homoeo-	likeness, constant, sameness	homeodynamics
hydr/o	water, hydrogen	hydrolysis
iatri/o	treatment, physician	iatriogenic
-ician	specialist	clinician

Medical Terminology List

Kathleen Armour

A red circular graphic with a gradient, appearing as a partial circle or a thick arrow pointing to the right, located on the right side of the slide.

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