

Word Parts Are The Key!

Learning medical terminology is much easier once you understand how word parts work together to form medical terms.

Three Types of Word Parts:

Word Roots -

Suffixes -

Prefixes -

Word Part Guidelines:
1. A word root cannot stand alone. A suffix must be added to complete the term.
2. The rules for the use of combining vowels apply when a suffix is added to a word root.
3. When a prefix is necessary, it is always placed at the beginning of the word.

Word Roots:

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Word Roots Indicating Color:	
cyan/o	blue (Cyanosis: blue discoloration of the skin caused by lack of O ²)
erythr/o	red (Erythrocytes: mature red blood cells)
leuk/o	white (Leukocytes: white blood cells)
melan/o	black (Melanosis: any condition of unusual deposits of black pigment)
poli/o	gray (Poliomyelitis: viral infection of the gray matter of the spinal cord)

Combining Vowels:

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Rules for Using Combining Vowels:
1. A combining vowel is used when the suffix begins with a consonant.
2. A combining vowel is not used when the suffix begins with a vowel.
3. A combining vowel is always used when two or more root words are joined.
4. A prefix does not require a combining vowel.

Introduction To Medical

Commonly used word roots:

- Refer to the list I have given you for the word roots that are associated with each system.

Suffixes:

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Suffixes Meaning “Pertaining To” -

- Refer to the “Pertaining To” table I have given you.

Suffixes as Noun Endings -

- Refer to the “Noun Endings” table I have given you.

Suffixes Meaning Abnormal Condition -

- Refer to the “Abnormal Conditions” table I have given you.

Suffixes related to Pathology -

-algia	-megaly
-dynia	-necrosis
-itis	-sclerosis
-malacia	-stenosis

Suffixes Related To Procedures -

-centesis	-gram
-ectomy	-plasty
-graphy	-scopy

The Double RR’S -

-rrhage	-rrhea
-rrhaphy	-rrhexis

Prefixes:

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- **Pre-**
- **Peri-**
- **Post-**

Contrasting and Confusing Prefixes -

Contrasting and Confusing Prefixes	
ab-	ad-
dys-	eu-
hyper-	hypo-
inter-	intra-
sub-	supra-

Determine Meanings on the Basis of Word Parts:

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Taking Terms Apart - To determine a word's meaning by looking at the components, you must first separate it into word parts.

1. Always start at the end of the word, with the suffix, and work toward the beginning.
2. As you separate the word parts, identify the meaning of each. This should give you the definition of the term.
3. Since there are multiple meanings for some words, you must determine the context in which the term is being used in order to determine the correct definition.
4. When in doubt use the dictionary.

Using the Dictionary:

Guessing at Meanings -

If You Know How to Spell The Word -

If You Don't Know How to Spell The Word -

Guidelines To Looking Up Unfamiliar Terms		
If It Sounds Like	It May Begin With	Example
F	F	flatus
	PH	phlegm
J	G	gingivitis
	J	jaundice
K	C	crepitus
	CH	cholera
	K	kyphosis
	QU	quadriplegia
S	C	cytology
	PS	psychology
	S	serology
Z	X	xeroderma
	Z	zygote

Look Under Categories - Most dictionaries use categories such as Diseases and Syndromes to group disorders with these terms in their titles.

Pronunciation:

A medical term is easier to understand and remember when you know how to pronounce it properly. The part of the word that receives the primary (most) emphasis when you say it is shown in **bold** and in capital letters. Ex. edema (eh-**DEE**-mah)

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Spelling is Always Important:

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Look-Alike Sound-Alike Terms and Word Parts:

arteri/o	ather/o	arthr/o
ileum	ilium	
infection	inflammation	
laceration	lesion	
mucous	mucus	
myc/o	myel/o	my/o
-ologist	-ology	
-ostomy	-otomy	
palpation	palpitation	
prostate	prostrate	
pyel/o	py/o	pyr/o
supination	suppuration	
suturing	ligation	
triage	trauma	
viral	virile	

Using Abbreviations:

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Singular and Plural Endings:

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Guidelines To Unusual Plural Forms		
Guideline	Singular	Plural
1. If the term ends in a , the plural is usually formed by adding an e .	bursa	
2. If the term ends in ex or ix , the plural is usually formed by changing the ex or ix to ices .	appendix index	
3. If the term ends in is , the plural is usually formed by changing the is to es .	diagnosis metastasis	

Introduction To Medical

4. If the term ends in itis , the plural is usually formed by changing the is to ides .	arthritis meningitis	
5. If the term in is nx , the plural is usually formed by changing the x to ges .	phalanx meninx	
6. If the term ends in on , the plural is usually formed by changing the on to a .	criterion ganglion	
7. If the term ends in um , the plural is usually formed by changing the um to a .	diverticulum ovum	
8. If the term ends in us , the plural is usually formed by changing the us to i .	alveolus malleolus	

Basic Medical Terms:

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Basic Medical Terms		
sign	symptom	syndrome
objective	subjective	
diagnosis	differential diagnosis	prognosis
acute	chronic	remission
Diseases named for the condition described .	Eponym	acronym

Career Opportunities:

Medical Records Administrator (RA)
 Medical Records or health information technician
 Medical Records clerk
 Medical billings clerk
 Medical Transcriptionist
 Medical illustrator, photographer, or writer
 Health Unit clerk
 Administrative medical Assistant
 Insurance underwriter or assistant
 Biomedical equipment technician
 Biomedical Researcher
 Pharmaceutical Sales Representative
 Mortuary Worker