

Medical terminology

Medical terminology is the language used by physicians and other members of health team.

It includes the medical words that describe or define a disease, a condition or clinical signs and symptoms.

The word building system

The medical words consists of three parts

- 1- The word root
- 2- The prefix
- 3- The suffix

1-The word root

- Indicate the organ or part that is modified by a prefix or suffix or both.
- A vowel (a, i, or o) is often inserted between the combining forms to facilitate euphony.

Is the foundation of the word for example

peri/card/itis,
endo/card/itis,
cardio/megaly

The part card ,means heart, is considered as the word root.

In medical term, the word root may be an organ, tissue, cell, fluid or cavity.

The compound word :

Is formed when two or more word roots are used to build the word.

This compound word has a specific meaning and could not be separated.

The combining word :

Is formed of two word roots or more joined by a vowel such as

Therm/o/meter

The part of the word will retain its specific meaning irrespective of its presence in different words or positions in the words such as

Gastr/o/enter/o/logy Enter/o/col/itis

In this two words, enter- means the small intestine in spite of the different positions in the two words.

+ Gastro- means stomach, while -logy means science, thus the meaning of gastroenterology is the science of digestive system (stomach and intestine).

First stage

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+ In the enterocolitis, the part col means colon and itis means inflammation, so the meaning is inflammation of small intestine and colon.

word root	meaning	example
aden-	gland	adenoma
angio-	vessel	angiogenesis
arthr-	joint	arthritis
card-	heart	cardiopathy
chol-	bile	cholilithiasis
cost -	rib	costal cartilage
cyt -	cell	cytology
derm-	skin	dermatology
encephal-	brain	encephalitis
enter-	small intestine	enteropathy
gastr-	stomach	gastroectasia
heam-	blood	haemorrhage
hepat-	liver	hepatomegaly
hyster-	uterus	hysterectomy
lip-	lipid (fat)	lipoma
lith-	stone	lithiasis
my-	muscle	mylagia
nephro-	kidney	nephropathy
oculus-	eye	ocular
ophthalm-	eye	ophthalmitis
osteo-	bone	osteoporosis
pneum-	lung	pneumonia
proct-	rectum	proctoscopy
psych-	mind	psychology
ren-	kidney	renal failure
splen-	spleen	Splenomegaly
BLAST-	germ, immature cell	blastoma = a cancer made of immature cells
PAED-	child	paediatric oncology = study of childhood cancer
SARCO-	tissue	sarcoma = tumour of bone, muscle, or connective tissue
TOXO-	poison	toxicology = study of poisons
CARCIN-	cancer	carcinogenic = cancer causing

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2- The prefix

+ The prefix is the part that precedes the medical word and changes its meaning and usually indicates a location, direction, type, quality, or quantity. e.g.

Tachy/cardia

Brady/cardia

+ Cardia means the heart and prefix tachy/ means increase in rate and brady/ means decrease in rate.

The most commonly used prefixes

Prefix	Meaning	Examples
a-	without	apnea
an-	not	Anaemia
ante-	before	antepartum
anti-	against	antipyretic
dys-	difficult, painful	dysuria
ect-	outside, outer	ectopic beats
end-	inside, inner	endocarditis
epi-	over, upon	epidermis
hyper-	out	hypertension
hypo-	below	hypotension
poly-	many	polyarthritis
para-	beside, near	parametrium
per-	Passing through	percutaneous
peri-	around	pericarditis
pre-	Before	Prenatal
sub-	Below	subnormal
supra-	over, excess	suprarenal gland
AB-	away from	abnormal = away from the normal
AD-	near / toward	adrenal gland = gland near to the kidney

3- The suffix

+ The suffix means an ending of the word which will convert word into

- A noun

- Adjective

- Modify the meaning of the word.

The most commonly used suffixes

suffix	Meaning	Example
-algia	pain	myalgia
-ectasia	expansion	gastroectasia
-ectomy	surgical excision	nephroectomy
-aemia	Condition blood	Leukaemia = cancer of blood
-genic	origin	myogenic
-graph	to write	electrocardiograph
-ic	pertaining	gastric
-itis	inflammation	gastritis
-lithiasis	stone in	nephrolithiasis
-logy	study of	pharmacology
-lysis	dissolution	haemolysis
-malacia	softening	osteomalacia
-megaly	enlargement	splenomegaly
-oma	tumor	nephroma
-pathy	disease	neuropathy
-penia	decrease	Leucopenia
-OSIS	disease /condition	necrosis = dying cells