



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*... = *post*...)

Designated by a "____" after the term.

2. **Suffix** - ending of a word

(*ex.*... *scopy*; ... *itis*)

Designated by a "____" before the term.

3. **Root** - foundation/base of a word

(*ex.*... *hyper*; *gastro*)

4. **Combining vowel** - vowel (usually "o")

added to a root (*ex.*... *gastro*).

Use a combining vowel when joining:

a. Root to another root (*ex.*... *gastrogastroitis*)

b. Root to a suffix beginning with a consonant (*ex.*... *cardiomyopathy*)

5. **Combining form** - root + vowel

(*ex.*... *gastro*; *gastro*)

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)

Hematoxic

hemate (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: Polymyositis

polio = gray (matter)

myo = spinal cord, bone marrow

itis = inflammation

Definition: Inflammation of the gray matter of the spinal cord. The bone marrow 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. **Organisms** - 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/Neutral** - 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
acne	needle	acupuncture
acute/acute	sharp, severe	acute
adip/o	fat	adipose/arthritis
aer/o	air, gas	aerophagy
agile/o	rapidity, restlessness	agility/phobia
-algia	pain	cephalgia
ambly/o	to walk	ambulatory
anomal/o	irregular	anomaly
anthrac/o	coal, carbon, carbuncle	anthracosis
anthrop/o	man, human being	anthropometry
atri/o	atrium	atrial/atrium
apath/o	shock	apathy
apic/o	apex	apical/apex
aque/o	water	aqueduct
atmo-	steam, vapor	atmosphere
axis	axis	axial
bar/o	weight, pressure	barometer
bury-	heavy, dull, hard	buryphobia
-basia	walking	basiphobia
-bathy-, batho-	deep, depth	bathyscaphe
-bios-, bio-	life, living	biology
blast/o, blast-	early embryonic stage, immature	blastocyte

-calculus	to compute	dyscalculia
calori	heat	calorimetry
capac/o	heat	capacitance
capsul/o, caps/o	capsule, container	capsulitis
carcin/o	cancer	carcinofobia
carci/o	caries, rottenness	cariology
-cataphasia	affirmation	cataphasia
cathart/o	cleansing, purging	cathartic
cathart/o		
-cathixia, -kathixia	sitting	acathixia
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	dyscoemesis
-coma	deep sleep	comatose
conscious	awareness, aware	unconscious
constrict/o	narrowing, binding	vasoconstriction
constr/o	to bruise	contusion
corpore/o	body	corporeal
critic/o	crisis, dangerous	critical
cry/o	cold	cryotherapy
cyto-, -cyte	cell	cytotoxic
dem/o	people	epidemic
desicc/o	to dry	electrodesiccation
dilate	enlarge, expand	vasodilator
dolich/o	long	dolichofacial
dolor/o	pain	alodysgenic
dors/o	back	sternodorsal
duct/o	to lead	conduction
dynam/o	power, strength	dynamometer
-dynia	pain	gastrodynia
dys-	bad, difficult, painful	dysphasia
echin/o	spiny, prickly	echinocyte
ectri/o	congenital absence	ectropion
ele/o	oil	elema
emmetr/o	the correct measure, proportioned	emmetropia
emati/o	opposite, opposed	emmetropia
equi-	equality, equal	equilibrium
erethim/o	irritation	erethism
eti/o	cause	etiology
eu-	good, normal, well	eubiosis
-faciat	to cause, make happen	disfaciat
febril	fever	febrilephobia
fil/o, fil/i	thread, threadlike	filament
filament/o		
-form	specified shape, form	myofibril
frig/o, frigid/o	cold	frigorous
fract/o	performance	dysfunctional
gel/o	to freeze, congeal	gelatin
genet/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
haplo-	simple, single	haploid
heredo-	hereditary	heredodisunity
-hexia	condition	euchexia
hist/o	tissue	histology
homero-	likeness, constant, sameness	homeodynamics
hydr/o	water, hydrogen	hydrolysis
iatri/o	treatment, physician	iatriogenic
-ician	specialist	clinician

Medical Terminology Answers For The Sixth Edition

Xiaolong Qi



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Table of Contents Medical Terminology Answers For The Sixth Edition

1. Understanding the eBook Medical Terminology Answers For The Sixth Edition
 - The Rise of Digital Reading Medical Terminology Answers For The Sixth Edition
 - Advantages of eBooks Over Traditional Books
2. Identifying Medical Terminology Answers For The Sixth Edition
 - Exploring Different Genres
 - Considering Fiction vs. Non-Fiction
 - Determining Your Reading Goals
3. Choosing the Right eBook Platform
 - Popular eBook Platforms
 - Features to Look for in an Medical Terminology Answers For The Sixth Edition
 - User-Friendly Interface
4. Exploring eBook Recommendations from Medical Terminology Answers For The Sixth Edition
 - Personalized Recommendations
 - Medical Terminology Answers For The Sixth Edition User Reviews and Ratings
 - Medical Terminology Answers For The Sixth Edition and Bestseller Lists
5. Accessing Medical Terminology Answers For The Sixth Edition Free and Paid eBooks
 - Medical Terminology Answers For The Sixth Edition Public Domain eBooks
 - Medical Terminology Answers For The Sixth Edition eBook Subscription Services
 - Medical Terminology Answers For The Sixth Edition Budget-Friendly Options

6. Navigating Medical Terminology Answers For The Sixth Edition eBook Formats
 - ePub, PDF, MOBI, and More
 - Medical Terminology Answers For The Sixth Edition Compatibility with Devices
 - Medical Terminology Answers For The Sixth Edition Enhanced eBook Features
7. Enhancing Your Reading Experience
 - Adjustable Fonts and Text Sizes of Medical Terminology Answers For The Sixth Edition
 - Highlighting and Note-Taking Medical Terminology Answers For The Sixth Edition
 - Interactive Elements Medical Terminology Answers For The Sixth Edition
8. Staying Engaged with Medical Terminology Answers For The Sixth Edition
 - Joining Online Reading Communities
 - Participating in Virtual Book Clubs
 - Following Authors and Publishers Medical Terminology Answers For The Sixth Edition
9. Balancing eBooks and Physical Books Medical Terminology Answers For The Sixth Edition
 - Benefits of a Digital Library
 - Creating a Diverse Reading Collection Medical Terminology Answers For The Sixth Edition
10. Overcoming Reading Challenges
 - Dealing with Digital Eye Strain
 - Minimizing Distractions
 - Managing Screen Time
11. Cultivating a Reading Routine Medical Terminology Answers For The Sixth Edition
 - Setting Reading Goals Medical Terminology Answers For The Sixth Edition
 - Carving Out Dedicated Reading Time
12. Sourcing Reliable Information of Medical Terminology Answers For The Sixth Edition
 - Fact-Checking eBook Content of Medical Terminology Answers For The Sixth Edition
 - Distinguishing Credible Sources
13. Promoting Lifelong Learning
 - Utilizing eBooks for Skill Development
 - Exploring Educational eBooks
14. Embracing eBook Trends
 - Integration of Multimedia Elements

- Interactive and Gamified eBooks

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