

# **Introduction to Medical Terminology**

# Medical Term: fundamentals

- Most medical terms are derived from Greek and Latin language, which means that two different roots may have the same meaning, e.g. dermatos (Greek word) and the cutane (Latin word) both refer to the skin.
- A medical word consists of some or all of the following elements:

- Medical roots

معظم المصطلحات الطبية مشتقة من اللغة اليونانية واللاتينية ،

- Combining Form

مما يعني أن جذرين مختلفين قد يكون لهما نفس المعنى ، على

- Prefix

سبيل المثال تشير كل من ( dermatos كلمة يونانية (و

- Suffix

cutane ( كلمة لاتينية (إلى الجلد - .تتكون الكلمة الطبية من

بعض أو كل العناصر التالية - :جذور طبية -الجمع بين

النموذج -بادئة -لاحقة

# 1-Term Root

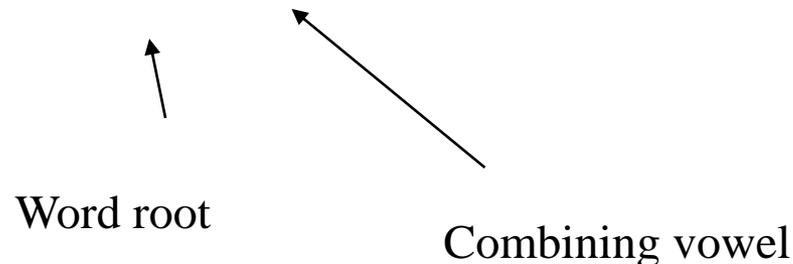
- It is the main part of the medical term and which carries its primary meaning (Greek roots are used for building up the words that describe a disease, condition, treatment, or diagnosis, while, Latin roots are used to build up words that describe anatomical structures).
- It can appear at the beginning of a word, after a prefix, before a suffix, or between a prefix and a suffix.
- All terms have at least one word root.
- A word root may be used alone or combined with other elements to form a complete word.
- Examples of Medical roots
  - “stomat” means mouth (Greek)                      “or” means mouth (Latin)
  - “dermat” means skin (Greek)                      “cutane” means skin (Latin)
  - “nephr” means kidney (Greek)                      “ren” means kidney (Latin)

## 2-Combining Form

- A **combining form** is the combination of the word root and the combining vowel which could be an o, but sometimes it is an i to make the word roots pronunciation easier.
- The combining vowel has no meaning of its own, but enables two word elements to be connected.
- A combining form is presented as word root/vowel (such as gastr/o).

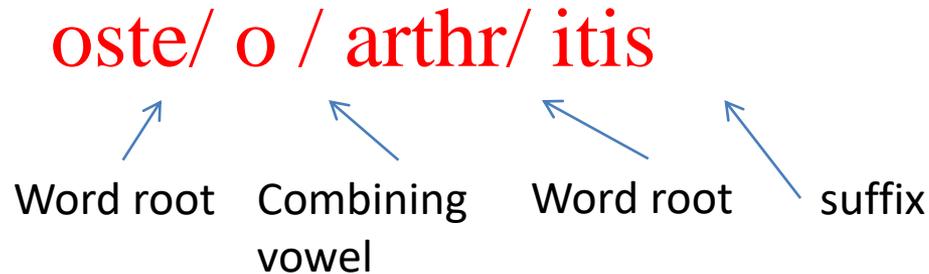
i.e.

gastr / o pronounced GASTRO.



- When a word has more than one root, a combining vowel is used to link the root to each other.

i.e. osteoarthritis



## Examples of Combining Forms

*This table illustrates how word roots and vowels create combining forms. Learning combining forms rather than word roots makes pronunciation a little easier because of the terminal vowel. For example, in the table below, the word roots gastr and nephr are difficult to pronounce, whereas their combining forms gastr/o and nephr/o are easier to pronounce.*

Word Root	+	Vowel	=	Combining Form	Meaning
erythr/	+	o	=	erythr/o	red
gastr/	+	o	=	gastr/o	stomach
hepat/	+	o	=	hepat/o	liver
immun/	+	o	=	immun/o	immune, immunity, safe
nephr/	+	o	=	nephr/o	kidney
oste/	+	o	=	oste/o	bone

# 3-Suffix

- A suffix (derived from Greek or Latin words) is composed of one or more letters added to the END of a word root or combining form to modify its meaning, it describes a pathology (disease or abnormality), symptom, surgical or diagnostic procedure, or part of speech.

## Examples of Suffixes

*This table lists examples of pathological suffixes as well as their phonetic pronunciations. Begin learning the pronunciations as you review the information below.*

Combining Form	+	Suffix	=	Medical Word	Meaning
gastr/o (stomach)	+	<b>-itis</b> (inflammation)	=	<b>gastritis</b> gās-TRĪ-tīs	inflammation of the stomach
	+	<b>-megaly</b> (enlargement)	=	<b>gastromegaly</b> gās-trō-MĒG-ă-lē	enlargement of the stomach
	+	<b>-oma</b> (tumor)	=	<b>gastroma</b> gās-TRŌ-mă	tumor of the stomach
	+	<b>-itis</b> (inflammation)	=	<b>hepatitis</b> hĕp-ă-TĪ-tīs	inflammation of the liver
hepat/o (liver)	+	<b>-megaly</b> (enlargement)	=	<b>hepatomegaly</b> hĕp-ă-tō-MĒG-ă-lē	enlargement of the liver
	+	<b>-oma</b> (tumor)	=	<b>hepatoma</b> hĕp-ă-TŌ-mă	tumor of the liver

# Building Medical Words

There are three basic rules for building medical words.

## Rule I

A word root links a suffix that begins with a vowel.

## Rule II

A combining form (root o) links a suffix that begins with a consonant.

## Rule III

A combining form links a root to another root to form a compound word. This rule holds true even if the next root begins with a vowel, as in osteoarthritis.

Keep in mind that the rules for linking multiple roots to each other are slightly different from the rules for linking roots and combining forms to suffixes.

## Rule 1

Word Root	+	Suffix	=	Medical Word	Meaning
hepat liver	+	-itis inflammation	=	hepatitis hĕp-ă-TĪ-tĭs	inflammation of the liver

## Rule 2

Combining Form	+	Suffix	=	Medical Word	Meaning
hepat/o liver	+	-cyte cell	=	hepatocyte HĒP-ă-tō-sīt	liver cell

## Rule 3

Combining Form	+	Word Root	+	Suffix	=	Medical Word	Meaning
oste/o (bone)	+	chondr cartilage	+	-itis inflammation	=	osteochondritis ōs-tĕ-ō-kŏn-DRĪ-tĭs	inflammation of bone and cartilage
		arthr joint	+	-itis inflammation	=	osteoarthritis ōs-tĕ-ō-ăr-THRĪ-tĭs	inflammation of bone and joint

# Meanings of certain suffixes

-scope (instrument to view)

-rrhexis (rupture)

-rrhea (excessive flow or discharge)

-toxic (poison)

-stenosis (narrowing, stricture)

-pathy (disease)

(All begin with a consonant, therefore a combining vowel must be used between the word root and the suffix).

-algia (pain)

-edema (swelling)

-uria (urine, urination)

-osis (abnormal condition)

-ectomy (excision)

(These suffixes begin with a vowel, therefore a combining vowel is NOT used between the word root and the suffix).

## 4-Prefix

- A prefix is a syllable or syllables attached to the beginning of a word or word root to alter its meaning or create a new word.
- Not all medical terms have a prefix.
- The prefix usually indicates a number, time, position, direction, or negation (absence). Many of the same prefixes used in medical terminology are also used in the English language.

Anti- (against)  
Hyper- (excessive)  
Pre- (before)  
Post- (after)  
Homo- (same)  
Hypo- (under)  
Hetero- (different)  
Eu- (normal)  
Dys- (painful)  
Brady- (slow)

Epi- (above)  
hemi- (half)  
bi- (two)  
tri- (three)  
mono- (one)  
Hypo- (under)  
para- (beside)  
Intra – (within)  
Endo- (within)  
Ecto – (outside)

Epi- (above))  
inter- (between)  
retro- (behind)  
macro- (large)  
micro- (small)  
multi- (much)  
ab- (away from)  
ad – (within)  
Endo- (toward)  
circum– (around)

## Examples of Prefixes

*This table lists examples of prefixes as well as their phonetic pronunciations. Begin learning the pronunciations as you review the information below.*

<b>Prefix</b>	+	<b>Word Root</b>	+	<b>Suffix</b>	=	<b>Medical Word</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
<b>an-</b> (without, not)	+	<b>esthes</b> (feeling)	+	<b>-ia</b> (condition)	=	<b>anesthesia</b> ăn-ēs-THĒ-zē-ă	condition of not feeling
<b>hyper-</b> (excessive, above normal)	+	<b>therm</b> (heat)	+	<b>-ia</b> (condition)	=	<b>hyperthermia</b> hī-pēr-THĒR-mē-ă	condition of excessive heat
<b>intra-</b> (in, within)	+	<b>muscul</b> (muscle)	+	<b>-ar</b> (pertaining to)	=	<b>intramuscular</b> în-tră-MŪS-kū-lăr	pertaining to within the muscle
<b>para-</b> (near, beside; beyond)	+	<b>nas</b> (nose)	+	<b>-al</b> (pertaining to)	=	<b>paranasal</b> păr-ă-NĀ-săl	pertaining to (area) near the nose
<b>poly-</b> many, much	+	<b>ur</b> (urine)	+	<b>-ia</b> (condition)	=	<b>polyuria</b> pōl-ē-Ū-rē-ă	condition of much urine

## Changing Prefixes and Meanings

*In this table, each word has the same root, nat (birth) and suffix, -al (pertaining to). By substituting different prefixes, new words with different meanings are formed.*

Prefix	+	Word Root	+	Suffix	=	Medical Word	Meaning
pre- (before)	+				=	prenatal prē-NĀ-tāl	pertaining to (the period) before birth
peri (around)	+	nat (birth)	+	-al (pertaining to)	=	perinatal pēr-Ī-NĀ-tāl	pertaining to (the period) around birth
post (after)	+				=	postnatal pōst-NĀ-tāl	pertaining to (the period) after birth

# Medical term Interpretation

It can be done by defining the term components (1- suffix, or last part of the word, 2- the first part of the word (which may be a word root, combining form, or prefix), 3- the middle parts of the word).

Examples:

Acrocyanosis

Acr (word root = extremities)

cyan (word root = blue)

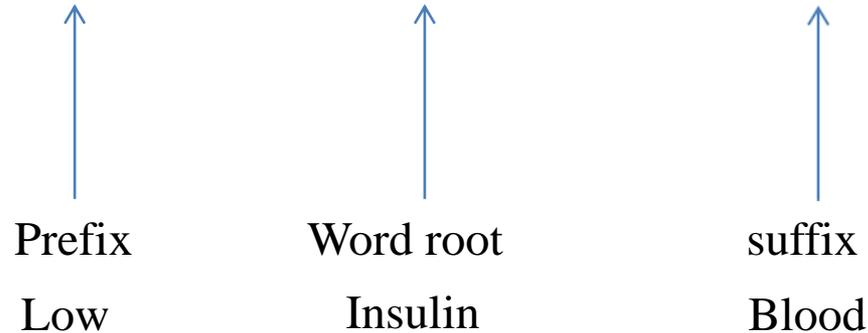
/ o / = combining vowel

- osis (suffix = condition)

So, Acrocyanosis = a condition characterized by blue extremities

# Hypoinsulinemia

**Hypo / insulin / emia**



In this example, there is no combining vowel in this word because the prefix ends with a vowel and the suffix begins with a vowel.

## Plural words

Are formed by adding or substituting another vowel or syllable at the end of a word (i.e. suffix).

### Examples

- macula – the plural is maculae
- adenoma – the plural is adenomata
- glomerulus – the plural is glomeruli
- ovum – the plural is ova
- spermatozoon – the plural is spermatozoa

## Rules for Singular and Plural Suffixes

*This table presents common singular suffixes, the rules for forming plurals, and examples of each.*

Rule		Example	
Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
<i>-a</i>	Retain <i>a</i> and add <i>e</i> .	<i>pleura</i>	<i>pleurae</i>
<i>-ax</i>	Drop <i>x</i> and add <i>ces</i> .	<i>thorax</i>	<i>thoraces</i>
<i>-en</i>	Drop <i>en</i> and add <i>ina</i> .	<i>lumen</i>	<i>lumina</i>
<i>-is</i>	Drop <i>is</i> and add <i>es</i> .	<i>diagnosis</i>	<i>diagnoses</i>
<i>-ix</i>	Drop <i>ix</i> and add <i>ices</i> .	<i>appendix</i>	<i>appendices</i>
<i>-ex</i>	Drop <i>ex</i> and add <i>ices</i> .	<i>apex</i>	<i>apices</i>
<i>-ma</i>	Retain <i>ma</i> and add <i>ta</i> .	<i>carcinoma</i>	<i>carcinomata</i>
<i>-on</i>	Drop <i>on</i> and add <i>a</i> .	<i>ganglion</i>	<i>ganglia</i>
<i>-um</i>	Drop <i>um</i> and add <i>a</i> .	<i>bacterium</i>	<i>bacteria</i>
<i>-us</i>	Drop <i>us</i> and add <i>i</i> .	<i>bronchus</i>	<i>bronchi</i>
<i>-y</i>	Drop <i>y</i> and add <i>ies</i> .	<i>deformity</i>	<i>deformities</i>

# Eponyms

Eponyms are medical terms derived from the name of a person. Many procedures and tests are also named after the person who invented or perfected them.

Examples of diseases;

- Addison's disease
- Cushing's disease
- Stokes-Adam's syndrome
- Alzheimer's disease
- Parkinson's disease

Examples of body parts;

- Bowman capsules
- Wernicke's center or area
- Cowper's glands

Examples of tools;

- Foleys catheter
- Hegar dilators

# Acronyms

Acronyms are medical abbreviations. They are used very frequently in medicine. They boost efficiency as long as they are used intelligently.

Examples;

- ACE (angiotensin converting enzyme)
- ACTH (adrenocorticotrophic hormone)
- AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome)
- HDL (high density lipoprotein)
- Hx (history)
- MI (myocardial infarction)
- RBC (red blood cells)
- RBBB (right bundle branch block)
- TB (tuberculosis)
- ADH (anti-diuretic hormone)