

Medical Terminology

Medical Prefixes, Suffixes and Combining Forms: The Building Blocks of Medical Language

a- not, without, less	com-, con- with, together, in association
ab, abs- from, away from, off	cost(o)- rib
acou- hearing	cranio- cranium
acr(o)- extremity	-ia condition
ad- increase, adherence, motion toward	-crine secretion
aden(o)- gland	cry(o)- cold
adip(o)- fat	cyan(o)- blue
-al pertaining to	cyst(i)-, cyst(o)- bladder; cyst
alb(o)- white	cyt-, -cyte, cyto- cell
alge(si)-, algio-, algo- pain	dactyl(o)- finger, toe
allo- other, different	de- away from; cessation
ambi- around, on (both sides), on all sides, both	derm-, derma-, dermat(o)-, dermo- skin
amyl(o)- starch	-desis binding
an- not, without, less	dextr(o)- right, toward or on the right side
andr(o)- male	di-, dif-, dir-, dis- separation, taking apart, reversal
angi(o)- vessel	duo- two
ankylo- crooked	duodeno- duodenum
ante- before	-dynia pain
anti- against	dys- bad, difficult, wrong
apo- separated from, derived from	ect(o)- outer, on the outside
-ar pertaining to	-ectasia, -ectasis dilation, stretching
-arche beginning	-ectomy excision
arteri(o)- artery	encephal(o)- brain
arthr(o)- joint	end(o)- within, inner
-ary pertaining to	enter(o)- intestine
-ase enzyme	ent(o)- inner, within
athero- pasty, fatty	ep-, epi- upon, following
audi(o)- hearing	erythr(o)- red, redness
aur(l)- ear	esthesio- sensation, perception
aut(o)- self, same	eu- good, well
bacteri(o)- bacteria	ex- out of, from, away from
bi- twice, double	exo- exterior, external, outward
bio- life	extra- without, outside of
blasto- budding of cells or tissue	fibr(o)- fiber
brachi(o)- arm	-form in the form or shape of
brachy- short	galact(o)- milk
bronch-, bronch(i)- bronchus	gastr(o)- stomach, belly
brady- slow	gen-, -gen producing, precursor, coming to be
carcin(o)- cancer	gloss(o)- tongue
cardi(o)- heart	gluco- glucose
carpo- wrist	glyco- sugars
caud(o)- tail, lower part of body	gonio- angle
-cele hernia, swelling	-gram writing, recording
cephal(o)- the head	granul(o)- granular
cervic(o)- neck; uterine cervix	gyn(e)-, gynec, gyno- women
chir(o)- hand	hem(a)-, hemat(o)-, hemo- blood
cho(e)- bile	hepat-, hepatico-, hepato- liver
chondrio-, chondr(o)- cartilage; granular; gritty	hemi- one-half
-cidal, -cide killing, destroying	
-clast breaker	
co-, col- with, together, in association	

hidr(o)- sweat
hist-, histio-, histo- tissue
homeo- same, constant
hydr(o)- water, hydrogen
hyper- above normal, excessive
hypo- below normal, deficient
hyster(o)- uterus

 -ic pertaining to
ilio- ilium
in- in;not
infra-below
inguino-groin
inter-between, among
intra-, intro-within
-ischio(o)- ischium
-ism condition; disease
-ismus spasm; contraction
iso- equal,like,sameness
-ite of the nature of, sameness
-itis inflammation

kal(l)-potassium
kary(o)-nucleus
kerat(o)-cornea, cornified epithelium
kin(e)-, kinesi(o)-, kineso-, kino- movement

labio-lip
lacrim(o)-tears
lact(l)-, lacto-milk
laparo-abdomen, abdominal wall
laryng(o)- larynx
lateri-, latero-lateral, to one side, side
-leptis-, leptis- seizure
leuk(o)- white
lien(o)-spleen
linguo- tongue
lip(o)-fat,lipid
lith(o)-stone,calculus, calcification
-logy study of;collecting
lymph(o)-lymph;lymphocyte
lys(o)-, lysis, -lytic dissolution, disintegration

macr(o)-large
mal-bad, deficient
-malacia softening
mamm- mamm(a)-,mammo-breast
mast(o)-breast
meg(a)-,megal(o)-large,oversize
-megaly enlargement
melan(o)-black
men(o)-menstruation
mening(o)-meninges
mes(o)-middle, attaching membrane
meta-after, joint action
metr(o)-uterus
micr(o)-small, microscopic
mon(o)-single

morph(o)-form shape, structure
my(o)-muscle
myel(o)-bone marrow; spinal cord
myring(o)-tympanic membrane
myx(o)-mucus

nas(o)-nose
natr(i)-sodium
necr(o)-death,necrosis
neo-new
nephr(o)-kidney
neur(i)-, neuro-,nerve,nervous system
norm(o)-normal

ocul(o)-eye
odyn(o)-, -odynia pain
-oid resemblance to
olig(o)-few, little
-oma tumor, neoplasm
-omata plural of -oma
oncho-,onco- tumor,bulk,volume
-one ketone
onych(o)-,onychias fingernail,toenail
oo-ovum,oocyte,ovary
oophor(o)-ovary
ophthalm(o)-eye
-opia,-opsia,-opsis vision
or-,or-,oro- mouth
orchi-,orchid(o)-,orchio-testes
-ose sugar
-oses plural of -osis
-osis process, condition,state
osseo-bony
ossi-,ost(e)-,osteo bone
ovari(o)-ovary
ov(i)-,ovo- ovum,oocyte

pachy-thick
pan- all entire
para- beside,near,similar,abnormal
path(o)- disease, abnormality
-pathy disease, abnormality
ped(l)-, pedo- child;foot
-penia deficiency
per- through,thoroughly, intensely
peri- around, about
-phage,-phagia,phago-, -phagy eating,devouring
pharyng(o)- pharynx
phelb(o)-vein
-phobe,-phobia fear;chemical repulsion
phon(o)- sound,speech
-phrenia mind
physi(o)- physical;natural
plan(l)-,plano-flat
-plasia formation
-plegia paralysis
pleur(a)-, pleuro- rib,side,pleura
-pnea,pneo- breath,respiration

pneum(a)-, pneuma(o)- air,gas,lung,breathing
-poiesis, -poietic production
poly-many;multiple
post- after,behind,posterior
pre-anterior, before
presby-old
pro-before,forward;precursor
pseud(o)-false
-ptosis sagging, falling
pyel(o)- renal(pelvis)
pyo- suppuration, pus
pyro-fire,heat,fever

radio-radiation,x-ray;radius
re-again,back,backward
rect(o)-rectum
ren(o)-kidney
retro-backward,behind
rhin(o)-nose
-rrhagia -discharge, bleeding
-rrhea -flow

sacro-flesh,muscle
schisto-,schiz(o)-split,cleft,division
scler(o)-hardness,ocular sclera
scolio-crooked
-scope- instrument for viewing
-scopy -viewing
scot(o)-shadow, darkness
semi-one-half;partly
sept-infection
sin-,sin(o)-,sinu- sinus
somat-,somato-,somatic- body,bodily
son(o)-sound;ultrasound
spasmo-spasm
spir(o)-breathing
splanchn(l)-,splanchno-viscera
splen(o)-spleen
-stasis -stopping
steno-narrowness,constriction
stom(a)-,stomat(o)-mouth
sub-beneath, less than normal, inferior
super- above,in excess, superior
supra- above
sy-,syl-,sym-,syn-,sys-together

tachy-rapid
ten-,tendin-,teno-tenont(o)- tendon
therm(o)-heat
thora-,thorac(l)-,thoracico,thoraco- chest, thorax
thromb(o)- blood clot
-tomy -cutting operation
tox(l)-, toxico-, toxo- toxic
trache(o)- trachea
trans-across,through,beyond
-trophic, tropho-, -trophy food,nutrition
-tropia,-tropic,-trophy- affinity,tendency

ultra-beyond
uni-one,single
uria-urine;urination
uro- urine;urinary track

vas-duct,-blood vessel
vasculo-duct;blood vessel
vaso- duct;blood vessel
vesic(o)-urinary bladder,vesicle

xanth(o)-yellow
xero-dry

zym(o)-enzyme

Anatomy and Positioning

Longitudinal Plane: Running lengthwise; in the direction of the long axis of the body or any of its parts of sections

Transverse Plane: Placed across the body at right angles to the frontal and sagittal planes. The transverse plane is perpendicular to the long axis of the body or limbs in the anatomic position

Sagittal Plane: A plane vertical in the anatomic position, through the midline of the body that divides the body into the right and left halves

Frontal(coronal) plane: A vertical plane at right angles to the sagittal plane, dividing the body into anterior and posterior portions

Body Part Terminology

Anterior: the front surface of the body or the position of one part relative to another

Posterior: the back surface of the body or the position of one part relative to another

Medial: Relating to the middle or center

Lateral: Farther from the medial or sagittal plane

Proximal: Nearest to the trunk or point of origin

Distal: situated away from the center of the body or from the point of origin

Superior: situated nearer the vertex of the head

Inferior: situated nearer the soles of the feet

Body Movement

Abduction: Movement of a limb or body part farther from or away from the midline of the body

Adduction: Movement of a limb or body part closer to or toward the midline of the body

Extension: Straightening of a joint or extremity so that the angle between contiguous (adjoining) bones is increased

Flexion: Bending of a joint or extremity so that the angle between contiguous (adjoining) bones is decreased

Eversion: Movement of turning a body part outward (away from the midline)

Inversion: Movement of turning a body part inward (toward the midline)

Pronation: Movement of turning the body to face downward or turning the hand so that the palm is facing downward

Supination: Movement of turning the body to face upward or turning the hand so that the palm is facing upward

Positioning Terminology

Anatomic Position: The position of the body when the subject is facing the front in the erect position with the arms and legs fully extended. The palms of the hands are facing forward and the feet are together.

Supine Position: Position in which the subject is lying on the back with the face up

Prone Position: Position in which the subject is lying face down on the front of the body

Lateral Decubitus (Recumbent) Position: The position of the body when the subject is lying on their side. The lateral position is named by the side that situated against the table or radiographic table. For a left lateral decubitus position the patient's left side is placed against the table or radiographic table

Radiographic Projections

Anteroposterior (AP) Projection: The patient is either supine (face up) on the radiographic table or erect with their back against a vertical grid device. The x-ray beam enters the front (anterior) surface of the body and exits the back (posterior) surface

Posteroanterior (PA) Projection: The patient is either prone (face down) on the radiographic table or erect facing the vertical grid device. The x-ray beam enters the back (posterior) surface of the body and exits the front (anterior) surface

Lateral Projection: The patient is lying on either side on the radiographic table (lateral decubitus) or standing with either side against a vertical grid device. The lateral projection is always named by the side of the patient that is placed next to the film

Oblique Projection: The patient is rotated into a position that does not produce either a frontal (AP or PA) or lateral projection

Chiropractic Concepts

Static Listing: A concept that analyzes the position (alignment) of one bone relative to what is considered its correct position.

Every bone is assigned a reference point (i.e., in a vertebrae, the vertebral body is commonly used as its reference point).

The listing describes the position of the bone's reference point relative to its correct position.

For example, in the listing – L4 right rotation malposition – the position (alignment) of the body of the fourth lumbar vertebrae is rotated to the right of the position it should normally be found in. Your goal as a chiropractor would be to contact that vertebrae and adjust it in such a way as to place it back into its correct position.

Motion Listing: A concept that analyzes a bone's ability to move in a particular plane of motion.

The listing describes the plane of motion in which the bone's (reference point) does not properly move within.

For example, in the listing – L4 right rotation restriction – the fourth lumbar vertebrae does not properly move within the plane of right rotation. Your goal as a chiropractor would be to contact that vertebrae and adjust it in such a way as to restore normal motion in the plane of right rotation.