

Medical Terminology

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MEDICAL TERMINOLOGY

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EXAMPLE: COMBINING VOWEL: ROOT AND SUFFIX	CARD/I / O / LOGY	
Word	card/i/o	-logy
	↓	↓
Element	combining form (root + vowels)	suffix
	↓	↓
Element Meaning	heart	study of
Word Meaning	study of the heart	

WORD DIVISION MARKS

Each root introduced hereafter will include its most common accompanying vowels or vowel consonant combinations separated by forward slant bars, as shown below:

1. psych/o _ mind
2. path/o _ disease
3. arthr/o _ joint
4. derm/o, dermat/o _ skin.

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Singular and Plural Endings

In English, we usually add an *s* or *es* to make a word plural. Since many of the medical terms have Greek and Latin origins, the plural endings sometimes follow the rules of these languages. Where English rules are not preferred, plurals are formed in the following

ways:

- If the term ends in *a* , the plural is formed by adding an *e* to the word.

Example: singular **scapula** plural **scapulae**

- When a term ends in *ax* , change the *ax* to *aces* to form the plural.

Example: singular **thorax** plural **thoraces**

- To form the plural of a singular term ending in *is* , change the *i* to an *e*.

Example: singular **neurosis** plural **neuroses**

- If a term ends in *ix* or *ie* , change the ending to *ices* to form the plural.

Example: singular **cervix** plural **cervices**

- A term ending in *um* is made plural by changing the *um* to an *a* .

Example: singular **septum** plural **septa**

- To form the plural of words ending in *us* , change the *us* to an *i* .

Example: singular **calculus** plural **calculi**

- If a term ends in *y*, make it plural by dropping the *y* and adding *ies* .

Example: singular **biopsy** plural **biopsies**

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Table 1-2 Common Roots in Medical Terms

Root	Refers to
arthr/o	joint
bronch/o	bronchus
cardi/o	heart
derm/o, dermat/o	skin
gastr/o	stomach
ger/o, geront/o	aged
hem/o, hemat/o	blood
hep/o, hepat/o	liver
neur/o	a nerve cell, the nervous system
oste/o	bone
path/o	disease
psych/o	mind

Table 1-3 Common Suffixes in Medical Terms

Suffix	Meaning
-ac, -al, -ar, -ia, -ic, -ory	pertaining to
-algia	pain
-centesis	surgical puncture
-cyte	cell
-ectomy	to surgically excise, remove
-graph	to write, record
-ist	one who specializes, agent
-itis	inflammation
-logy	study of, specialty of
-megaly	enlargement
-oma	tumor
-path/y	disease
-scope	an instrument to view

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Table 1-4 Common Prefixes in Medical Terms

Prefix	Meaning
a-, an-	no, not, without
anti-, contra-	against
brady-	slow
cyan-	bluish
dys-	painful, difficult
en-, endo-, intra-	within, inner
epi-	above, upon
ex-, exo-	out, away from
hyper-, supra-	excessive, above
inter-	between
post-	after
pre-	before, in front of
tachy-	fast, rapid