

## Medical Terminology: Introduction: Prefixes

Prefix	Meaning	Example
a- / an-	without, no, absence of	<b>a</b> febrile: not running a fever <b>an</b> oxia: absence of oxygen supply to the body tissues
ab-	away from	<b>ab</b> ducted: positioned away from the midline of the body
acoust-	hearing, to listen	<b>ac</b> oustic neuroma: benign tumour involving the vestibulocochlear nerve
ad-	towards	<b>ad</b> duction : movement of a body part towards the midline
ambi-	on both sides	<b>amb</b> ilateral: affecting both sides
amni- / amnio-	amnion (sac surrounding the embryo)	<b>amniocent</b> esis: puncture into the uterus to remove amniotic fluid for testing
angio-	blood vessel	<b>angi</b> oplasty: repair of a blood vessel
aniso-	unequal	<b>anisoc</b> oria: unequal pupil size
ante-	before, in front of	<b>antec</b> ubital <b>fossa</b> : triangular area in the inner elbow
anter-	in front of	<b>anter</b> ior: situated or directed toward the front of the body
anti-	against, opposing	<b>antico</b> agulant: medication that helps prevent clots
arterio-	artery	<b>arteri</b> oplasty: repair of an artery
audio-	hearing	<b>audi</b> ology: evaluation and measurement of hearing loss
ausculto-	to listen to	<b>auscult</b> ation: listen to sounds within the body
baso-	base or foundation	<b>basal cell carcin</b> oma: skin cancer originating in the basal cells of the skin
brachio-	upper arm	<b>brach</b> ial pulse: the pulse which felt over the brachial artery in the forearm
brady-	slow	<b>brady</b> cardia: slower than normal heart rate

bronch-	relating to the bronchi	bronchiectasis: abnormal widening of the bronchi or their branches, causing a risk of infection
cardio-	heart	cardiomyopathy: chronic disease of the heart muscle
cata-	extreme	cataplexy: sudden loss of muscle tone caused by extreme emotion
centr- / centro-	central, middle	central nervous system: the nerves in the brain and the spinal cord
cerebro-	brain	cerebrospinal fluid: fluid in the subarachnoid space of the spinal cord
chromato-	colour	achromatopsia: absence of colour vision, so that only black, white and grey are seen
corono-	heart, crown	coronary artery spasm: intermittent contraction or squeezing of the main arteries of the heart
cut-	skin	subcutaneous: under the skin
diplo-	double	diplobacterium: a type of bacterium which occur in pairs which are joined end to end
dolich- / dolicho-	long	dolichocephaly: an increased antero-posterior length of the head in comparison to its width
dys-	bad or wrong, difficult or painful	dysphonia: altered speech production
erythro-	red	erythrocyte: red blood cell
gastro-	stomach	gastritis: inflammation of the lining of the stomach
genio-	chin	genioplasty: plastic surgery of the chin
genito-	relating to birth	genitourinary: relating to the genital and urinary organs
haem-	blood	haemoglobin: blood protein which transports oxygen from the lungs to the body
hepato-	liver	hepatectomy: removal of the liver

hidro-	sweat, sweat gland	hidrosis: sweating
hyper-	excessively high, too much	hyperventilate: breathe an at excessively high rate
hypno-	sleep	hypnosis: artificially induced state of altered consciousness
hypo-	beneath, decreased	hypoglycaemia: low blood glucose level hypodermic: beneath the dermis layer
intra-	into, within	intracranial: within the skull
ipsi-	same	ipsilateral: on the same side
kerato-	cornea, hard tissue	keratoplasty: corneal transplant keratin: tough protein which makes up the hair and nails
later-	side	vastus lateralis muscle: muscle which enables the knee to stretch out
leuco- / leuko-	white	leucocyte: white blood cell
lumb-	loins	lumbar region: part of the body between L1 and L5 between the ribs and the hips
mal-	abnormal, bad, wrong	malabsorption: poor taking in of nutrients by the intestines
masto-	breast	mastopexy: cosmetic surgery to lift sagging breasts
medi- / medio-	near the midline of an organ or the body	mediastinum: middle part of the thoracic cavity
melan- / melano-	black	melatonin: hormone secreted by the pineal gland during the hours of darkness
men-	month	menstruation: monthly or periodic shedding of the uterine lining
mento-	chin	mentoplasty: cosmetic surgery to the chin
mis-	abnormal, bad, wrong	misdiagnosis: incorrect assessment of a patient's condition
myo-	muscle	myocardium: middle and thickest layer of heart muscle

narco-	stupor	<b>narcolepsy</b> : disorder characterised by excessive daytime sleepiness
nephro-	kidney	<b>nephrostomy</b> : incision into the kidney
odonto-	mouth	<b>odontoblast</b> : cell in the tooth that produces dentine
olfacto-	relating to sense of smell	<b>olfactory nerve</b> : first cranial nerve concerned with the sense of smell
omphalo-	navel	<b>omphalocele</b> : umbilical hernia
orchi-	testicles	<b>orchiditis</b> : inflammation of a testis
ortho-	straight	<b>orthotic</b> : appliance used to straighten a body part
pancreato-	pancreas	<b>pancreatitis</b> : inflammation of the pancreas
para-	abnormal, resembles, beside/near	<b>paranoia</b> : a condition resulting in an unfounded distrust of other people
peri-	around	<b>pericardium</b> : fibroserous membrane around the heart
phlebo-	vein	<b>phlebitis</b> : inflammation of a vein, e.g. around the site of an IV cannula
photo-	light	<b>photophobia</b> : sensitivity to light
pilo-	hair	<b>pilonidal abscess</b> : abnormal pocket in the skin that contains hair and skin debris
post-	after	<b>postnatal</b> : the time immediately after the birth of a baby
posterioro-	back, behind	<b>posterior</b> : back surface of a body
pre-	before	<b>pre-eclampsia</b> : condition in late pregnancy of high blood pressure, oedema and protein in the urine
presby-	old, old age	<b>presbyopia</b> : normal ageing process making it difficult to focus on objects close up
procto-	anus	<b>proctoscope</b> : instrument used for dilating and visually inspecting the rectum and lower portion of the sigmoid colon

profundo-	deep	<b>flexor digitorum profundus</b> : muscle which provides flexion of the fingers and hand
proxim- / proximo-	near, next to	<b>proximal</b> : nearest to the point of origin, the opposite of <i>distal</i>
py- / pyo-	pus	<b>pyocyst</b> : a cyst containing pus
rachi-	spine	<b>rachiodynia</b> : pain in the vertebral column
recto-	anus	<b>recto-urethral fistula</b> : abnormal hole between the urethra and the rectum
reno-	kidney	<b>renography</b> : a type of medical imaging of the kidneys
retro-	back, backward, behind	<b>retroversion</b> : tipping backward of an organ, e.g. uterus
rhytid-	wrinkle	<b>rhytidectomy</b> : face lift
schist- / schisto	cleft	<b>schistosome</b> : type of parasitic worm with a split body which infests dirty water causing schistosomiasis
schiz- / schizo-	divided, split	<b>schizophrenia</b> : mental health disorder which was originally described as having a <i>split mind</i> , that is the splitting apart of mental functions
sclero-	hard, hardening	<b>primary sclerosing cholangitis</b> : progressive disease which causes inflammation and narrowing of the bile ducts
spleno-	spleen	<b>splenomegaly</b> : enlargement of the spleen
sub-	below, under	<b>sublingual</b> : under the tongue
supra-	above, upper	<b>suprarenal tumour</b> : tumour found above the kidney
tachy-	fast	<b>tachycardia</b> : rapid heart rate, usually above 100 beats per minute
testiculo-	testicles	<b>testicular</b> : relating to the testicles
thrombo-	relating to clotting of the blood	<b>thrombocytopenia</b> : condition of abnormally low platelet counts

thymo-	thymus gland, mind, emotions	thymog <b>enic</b> : relating to the thymus gland (thymogenic cyst) or the mood or emotions
thyro-	thyroid gland	thyro <b>lytic</b> : causing destruction of thyroid gland cells
trans-	across, through	trans <b>dermal</b> : through the skin
tricho-	hair	trich <b>iasis</b> : ingrowth of the eyelashes
utero-	uterus, womb	uter <b>ine</b> : describing the uterus
vaso-/ vasculo-	blood vessel	<b>vascular dementia</b> : decreased intellectual function caused by cerebrovascular damage vasod <b>ilation</b> : widening or stretching of a blood vessel
veno-	vein	veno <b>venostomy</b> : anastomosis or surgical joining of two veins
ventro-	stomach	ventr <b>otomy</b> : incision into the stomach