

Medical Terminology
Medical Prefixes, Roots, and Suffixes

prefix, root, suffix	meaning	example
-ache	pain	headache, backache, earache, toothache
aden(o)	gland, glandular tissue	adenitis, adenotomy, adenoids, adenocarcinoma
aer(o)	air, with air, with oxygen, in gas	aerobic, aerate, aerosol, aerocele
-algia	pain	gastralgia, neuralgia, arthralgia, fibromyalgia
angi(o)	blood vessel	angioplasty, angioma, angiogenesis
ante-	before, forward, in front of	antepartum, anteflexion, anteversion
anti-	against	antihistamine, antiinflammatory, antipyretic
arteri(o)	artery	arteriopathy, arteriosclerosis, arterial
arthr(o)	joint	arthritis, arthrotomy, arthralgia
-ase	enzyme	protease, urease, amylase, lactase
audi(o)	hearing	audiogram, auditory, audiology
brady-	slow	bradycardia, bradypnea, bradyphasia
bronch(o)	bronchial tube, bronchus	bronchoscope, bronchospasm, bronchitis
carcin(o)	cancer	carcinogen, carcinoma, carcinogenic
cardi, cardia, cardio	heart	cardiac, cardiotonic, cardiovascular, cardiopathy
-cele	hernia, protrusion, tumor	cystocele, meningocele, encephalocele
-centesis	surgical puncture (aspiration of fluid)	amniocentesis, arthrocentesis, paracentesis
cephal(o)	head	cephalogram, cephalalgia, cephalic
cerebr(o)	cerebrum, brain	cerebrospinal, cerebral, cerebrovascular
cervic(o)	neck, cervix	cervical, cervicectomy, cervicitis
chol(e)	bile, gall	cholorrhea, cholecystogram, choleresis
chondr(o)	cartilage	chondral, chondrotomy, hypochondriac
-coccus, -cocci	bacteria, organism	pneumococcus, gonococcus,

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		streptococci
col(o)	colon	colitis, colonoscopy, colectomy
cortic(o)	cortex	corticosteroid, cortical,
cost(o)	rib	costal, intercostal, costectomy
crani(o)	skull, cranium	craniotomy, cranial
cyan(o)	blue, blueness	cyanosis
cyst(o)	bladder	cystoscopy, cystocele, cystitis
cyt(o)	cell	cytology, cytoplasm,
-cyte	cell	hepatocyte, leukocyte, microcyte, monocyte
dent-	tooth	dental, dentist, dentistry
derm(o), dermat(o)	skin	dermis, dermatologist, dermatitis,
dipl(o)	double, twofold	diplopia,
dors(o)	back	dorsal, dorsolateral
dys-	difficult, abnormal, bad, painful	dysuria, dysplasia, dyspnea,
-ectomy	excision, removal, to cut out	appendectomy, thrombectomy, gastrectomy
-emia	blood condition	anemia, septicemia, leukemia, uremia
encephal(o)	brain, inside the head	encephalitis, encephalopathy
end(o)-	inside, internal, within	endocrine, endoscopic
enter(o)	intestine	enteric
epi-	outer, upon	epidermis, epidural
erythr(o)	red	erythrocyte, erythema
eu-	normal, well, good	euphoria, eupnea, eupepsia
extra-	outside, beyond	extravasation, extrahepatic
gastr(o)	stomach	gastrostomy, gastrointestinal, gastritis
-genic	producing, originating, forming	pyogenic, carcinogenic, nephrogenic
ger(o)	old age	geriatric, gerontology, geratology,

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		geroderma
gingiv(o)	gum, gums	gingivitis, gingivoplasty, gingivostomatitis
gloss(o)	tongue	glossitis, hypoglossal,
gluc(o)	sugar	glucose, glucagon, glucosuria
glyc(o)	sugar, sweet	hyperglycemia, glycosuria, glycogen
-gram	picture, graph, record	encephalogram, ca
-graph	recording instrument	polygraph, cardiograph, craniograph
hemo-, hema-	blood	hemorrhage, hemoglobin, hemostasis,
hemat(o)	blood	hematoma, hematemesis, hematogenous
hemi-	half	hemiplegia,
hepat(o)	liver	hepatitis, hepatotoxic, hepatomegaly
hidr(o)	sweat, sweat glands	hidradenoma, hidrosis,
hist(o)	tissue	, histamine, histology
homo-	same, alike, similar	homologous, , homogeneous
hydr	water	hydration, dehydration
hydro-	water, fluid, liquid	Hydrocephalus, hydrotherapy
hyper-	excessive, high, above, upward	hypertension, hyperglycemia, hypertonic
hypo-	deficient, low, below, down, under	hypoallergenic, hypocalcemia,
hyster(o)	uterus, womb	hysteroscopy, hysterectomy
-iasis	condition of disease	trichomoniasis, giardiasis, amebiasis
immun(o)	immune	immunodeficiency, immunization, immunity
infra-	below, beneath	inframammary, infracardiac,
inter-	between, among	intercostal
intra-	within, inside	intravenous, intramuscular, intrarenal, intradermal
iso-	equal, same	isotonic, isometric, isomorphic
-itis	inflammation	arthritis, colitis, rhinitis, bronchitis,

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lact(o)	milk	lactose
laryng(o)	larynx, voice box	laryngitis, laryngospasm, laryngoscope
leuk(o)	white	leukemia, leukopenia, leukocyte
lingu	tongue	sublingual
lip(o)	fat	lipid, lipoprotein, liposuction, lipoma
lith(o)	stone, calculus	nephrolithiasis, lithotripsy, urolith
-logist	one who studies or specializes	cardiologist, anesthesiologist, urologist
-logy	the study of	biology, gynecology, dermatology
-lysis	breakdown, destruction,	, urinalysis, histolysis, thrombolysis
macro-	large	macrocyte
mal-	bad, abnormal, inadequate	malnutrition, malpractice, malformed
-malacia	soft, softening, softness	osteomalacia
mamm-	breast, mammary gland	mammogram, mammography,
megalo-	large, enlarged, grandiose	megal megalocyte
-megaly	enlargement	cardiomegaly, acromegaly, hepatomegaly
melan(o)	dark pigmented, black	melanoma, melanoderma, melanogenesis
men(o)	menstruation, menses	menopause, dysmenorrhea, menorrhagia
mening(o)	meninges	meningitis, meningococcus, meningeal
-metry	process of measuring	audiometry, pelvimetry,
micro-	small	microscope, microgram, microorganism
my(o)	muscle	myocardial, myalgia, fibromyalgia
myc(o)	fungus, fungi	mycosis, , mycology, dermatomycosis
myel(o)	bone marrow, spinal cord	myelopathy, myeloma
nas(o)	nose	nasal, nasosinusitis, nasogastric
-natal	birth, infant	prenatal, intranatal, neonatal, postnatal, perinatal
nephr(o)	kidney	nephrectomy, nephropexy, nephrolysis

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neur(o)	nerve	neurology, neurosurgery,
non-	not	nonsteroidal, nontoxic
odont	tooth	odontitis, odontology, orthodontist
-oma	tumor, abnormal growth	carcinoma, osteosarcoma, adenoma
onco-	tumor	oncology, oncogenic, oncogene,
onych-	nail of the finger or toe	onychectomy
ophthalm(o)	vision, eye	ophthalmology, ophthalmoscope,
-opia	vision, eye	myopia, presbyopia, diplopia
opt-	vision, eye	optician, optical, optometry
orchi	testes, testis	cryptorchidism, orchiectomy,
-osis	condition, increase,	halitosis, leukocytosis, neurosis, acidosis
oste(o)	bone	osteoporosis, osteoarthritis, osteoclast
ot(o)	ear	otic, otitis, otalgia, otorrhea, otoplasty,
-pathy	disease, anomaly	neuropathy, myopathy, osteopathy
-penia	deficiency, low number	eosinopenia, thrombocytopenia, erythropenia
-pepsia	digestion	dyspepsia, eupepsia
peri-	near, around, surrounding	pericardium, periodontal, perineurium
-pexy	fixation	hysteropexy, orchiopexy, gastropexy
phag(o)	eat, swallow, consume	dysphagia, phagocyte
pharyng(o)	pharynx	pharyngitis, pharyngeal,
phleb(o)	vein	phlebitis, phlebotomy
-phobia	fear of	hydrophobia, acrophobia, necrophobia
-plasia	development, formation	neoplasia, myelodysplasia, hyperplasia
-plasty	surgical	arthroplasty, osteoplasty, rhinoplasty
-plegia	paralysis	paraplegia, hemiplegia
-pnea	breathing, breath	apnea, tachypnea, orthopnea
pneum(o)	air, lung	pneumonia, pneumothorax,
pod(o)	foot	podiatrist, podiatric, podalic, podagra

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poly-	much, many, several, excessive	polyuria, polycystic, polyarthritis
post-	after	postnatal, postcoronary, postoperative
pre-	before, in front of	prenatal, preoperative, premature,
presby(o)	old age	presbyopia, presbycusis, presbyophrenia
proct(o)	anus, rectum	proctitis, proctoscopy, proctology
psych(o)	mind, mental	psychology, psychotropic, psychiatry
-ptosis	prolapse, sagging, sagged	blepharoptosis
pulmon-	lung	pulmonary, pulmonology, pneumonectomy
py(o)	pus	pyemia, empyema
pyel(o)	renal pelvis	pyelonephritis
pyr-, pyro-	fever, heat	pyrogen
ren(o)	kidney	renogram, renal, renoprival
retro-	behind, backward, in back of	retroocular, retrocolic, retroflexion, retrolental
rhin(o)	nose	rhinorrhea, rhinitis, rhinoplasty
-rrhagia	excessive discharge or flow	menorrhagia
-rrhea	excessive	rhinorrhea
salping(o)	fallopian tube	salpingitis,
scler(o)	hard, hardening	atherosclerosis, myelosclerosis, arteriosclerosis
-scope	instrument used to	microscope, arthroscope, otoscope,
-spasm	involuntary contraction	angiospasm, vasospasm, bronchospasm
-stomy	surgical opening	enterostomy, colostomy, gastrostomy
sub-	under, beneath, below	sublingual, subcutaneous, subcostal
tachy-	fast, rapid	tachypnea, tachycardia, tachyarrhythmia
thorac(o)	chest, thorax	thoracotomy, thoracoscopy
thromb(o)	blood clot	thrombosis, thrombogenic, thrombus
thyr(o)	thyroid	thyroxine, hypothyroidism, hyperthyroidism

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-tomy	incision, incise, to cut into	gastrotomy, duodenotomy, laparotomy
toxi-	poison	toxic, toxicology, toxicity
trache-	trachea, windpipe	tracheitis, tracheoscopy, tracheostomy
trans-	across, over, through,	transdermal, transfusion, transurethral
-trophy	growth, development	hypertrophy, hypotrophy, dystrophy
urethr(o)	urethra	urethritis, urethrotomy, urethroscope
-uria	urine	pyuria, nocturia, polyuria, albuminuria
vas(o)	blood vessel, vas deferens	vascular, vasospasm, vasectomy, vasodilator
ven(o)	vein	venipuncture, venous, venopressor, intravenous