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Construction of Medical Terms



Medical Word Elements

Medical terms are built by combining and connecting word parts called elements. Word elements include Prefixes, Word Roots, Combining Vowels and Suffixes.

- **Word Root (WR):** The core of a word. This element provides the term's central meaning. Medical terms may have more than one WR. *Examples: pod = foot; hyster = uterus; febr = fever*
- **Combining Vowel (CV):** Word Roots sometimes need a Combining Vowel to join them to other word elements. The vowel "o" is most commonly used. Vowels "a, e, i, u and y" are also used, but less often. *Examples: pod / o ; hyster / o ; febr / I*
- **Combining Form (CF):** A Word Root and its Combining Vowel together are called a Combining Form. *Examples: pod/o; hyster/o; febr/i*
- **Prefix (P):** Only used at beginning of word. *Examples: anti- = against; intra- = within; brady- = slow*
- **Suffix (S):** Only used at end of the term, to complete the word. The suffix indicates whether the word is a noun or an adjective. The following suffix elements make the term a noun: a, e, ia, is, on, um, us, y. These suffix elements make the term an adjective: ac, ic, al, ar, eal, eous, ous. A suffix ending means pertaining to. *Examples: hysterectomy, (noun); thoracic (adjective).*

Construction of Medical Terms



Rules for Constructing Medical Terms

Element Order: The first part in a medical term's definition is usually the last element in the medical term. The last element of the medical term is usually the first part of the definition. *Example: psychologist = one who (ist), studys (log), mind (psych)*

Combining Elements: In the case of a medical term with multiple Word Roots, when adding another WR, Combining Vowel from the previous WR is usually retained.

Examples: gastr/ o /enter / itis ; leuk / o / cyt / o /penia

Prefix: A Prefix is usually not modified when added to a WR.

Suffix: A Suffix that begins with a consonant is usually preceded by a Combining Vowel. A Suffix that begins with a vowel is usually added directly to the Word Root. Examples: carcin / o / cyte ; crypt / orchid

Analyzing Medical Terms

Slash Marks: Insert between each element of the term.

Identify the Elements: Label each element as a WR, CV, CF, P and S.

Examples: cardi (WR) / o (CV) / log (WR) / ist (S) ; hypo (P) / gloss (WR) / al (s)

Medical Conditions

Medical Terminology Flashcards

Print 4 slides per page and you will be able to cut and fold the printout to easily make flashcards.

Medical Conditions: Card 1 - Front

alges / i
WR CV
—————
CF

Noun: *algesia*

Adj: *algesic*

Medical Conditions: Card 1 - Back

pain

Medical Conditions: Card 2 - Front

- **opsia**
Suffix

vision condition

Medical Conditions: Card 3 - Front

a - or **an** -
Prefix

Medical Conditions: Card 3 - Back

without

Medical Conditions: Card 4 - Front

- oma

Suffix

tumor, growth

Medical Conditions: Card 5 - *Front*

- itis

Suffix

inflammation

Medical Conditions: Card 6 - Front

crypt / o
WR CV
—————
CF

Adj: cryptic

Medical Conditions: Card 6 - Back

hidden

Medical Conditions: Card 7 - Front

erythr / o
WR CV
—
CF

Medical Conditions: Card 7 - Back

red

Medical Conditions: Card 8 - Front

leuk / o
WR CV

CF

Medical Conditions: Card 8 - Back

white

Medical Conditions: Card 9 - Front

tachy -
Prefix

Medical Conditions: Card 9 - Back

fast, rapid

Medical Conditions: Card 10 - Front

cyan / o
WR CV

CF

Medical Conditions: Card 10 - *Back*

blue

Medical Conditions: Card 11 - Front

scler / o
WR CV
—————
CF

Medical Conditions: Card 11 - Back

hard

Medical Conditions: Card 12 - Front

melan / o
WR CV

CF

Medical Conditions: Card 12 - *Back*

black

Medical Conditions: Card 13 - Front

1. hyper -

2. hypo -
Prefix

1. above, more than normal
2. below, less than normal

Medical Conditions: Card 14 - Front

1. hom / o
2. heter / o

WR CV

CF

Medical Conditions: Card 14 - Back

1. same
2. different

Medical Conditions: Card 15 - Front

iS / o
WR CV

CF

Medical Conditions: Card 15 - *Back*

same, equal

Medical Conditions: Card 16 - Front

sanguin / o
WR CV
—————
CF

Noun: sanguine

Adj: sanguinous

Medical Conditions: Card 16 - *Back*

blood

Medical Conditions: Card 17 - Front

seps / o
sept / o
WR CV
—
CF

Noun: sepsis

Adj: septic

infection, infected

Medical Conditions: Card 18 - Front

pleg / o
WR CV
—
CF

Adj: plegic

paralysis

Medical Conditions: Card 19 - Front

febr / i
WR CV

CF

Adj: febrile

fever, elevated temperature

Medical Conditions: Card 20 - Front

sten / o
WR CV

CF

narrowed, constricted

Medical Conditions: Card 21 - Front

psor / o
WR CV

CF

Medical Conditions: Card 21 - Back

itching

Medical Conditions: Card 22 - Front

- **eurysm**
Suffix

Medical Conditions: Card 22 - Back

widening

Medical Conditions: Card 23 - Front

- **penia**
Suffix

deficiency

Medical Conditions: Card 24 - Front

carcin / o
WR CV
—————
CF

Medical Conditions: Card 24 - Back

cancer

Medical Conditions: Card 25 - Front

megal / o
WR CV
—
CF

Adj: plegic

Medical Conditions: Card 25 - *Back*

enlarged

Medical Conditions: Card 26 - Front

agglutin -
Prefix

clumping, sticking together

Medical Conditions: Card 27 - Front

- **osis**
Suffix

condition of, increase in #

Medical Conditions: Card 28 - Front

necr / o
WR CV
—
CF

dead tissue

Medical Conditions: Card 29 - Front

narco / o
WR CV
—————
CF

Medical Conditions: Card 29 - Back

sleep

Medical Conditions: Card 30 - Front

- **algia**
Suffix

Medical Conditions: Card 30 - *Back*

pain

Medical Conditions: Card 31 - *Front*

- oid

Suffix

resembling

Medical Conditions: Card 32 - Front

malac / o
WR CV
—
CF

Noun: malacia

softening of tissue

Medical Conditions: Card 33 - Front

- trophy
Suffix

development

Medical Conditions: Card 34 - Front

path / o
WR CV
—
CF

Medical Conditions: Card 34 - *Back*

disease

Medical Conditions: Card 35 - Front

thromb / o
WR CV
—
CF

Medical Conditions: Card 35 - Back

clot

Medical Conditions: Card 36 - *Front*

- **opia**
Suffix

Medical Conditions: Card 36 - *Back*

vision

Medical Conditions: Card 37 - Front

- edema

Suffix

Medical Conditions: Card 37 - Back

swelling

Anatomy: Card 38 (combo) - Front

- 1. algesia**
- 2. algia**
- 3. ectasia**
- 4. esthesia**
- 5. phasia**

Anatomy: Card 38 (combo)- Back

- 1. sensitivity to pain**
- 2. pain**
- 3. stretching, dilation**
- 4. feeling, sensation**
- 5. speech**

Medical Conditions: Card 39 - Front

- rrhea
Suffix

discharge, flow

Medical Conditions: Card 40 - Front

- **rrhagia**
Suffix

excessive flow, hemorrhage

Medical Conditions: Card 41 - *Front*

- **cele**

Suffix

herniation, hernia

Medical Conditions: Card 42 - Front

brady -
Prefix

Medical Conditions: Card 42 - *Back*

slow

Medical Conditions: Card 43 - Front

- **lysis**
Suffix

breakdown, destruction

Medical Conditions: Card 44 - *Front*

- **ptosis**
Suffix

downward displacement, prolapse

Medical Conditions: Card 45 - *Front*

- **plasia**
Suffix

formation, development

Medical Conditions: Card 46 - Front

py / o
WR CV
—
CF

Medical Conditions: Card 46 - Back

pus

Medical Conditions: Card 47 - Front

lith / o
WR CV
—
CF

Medical Conditions: Card 47 - Back

stone

Medical Conditions: Card 48 - Front

dys -
Prefix

difficult, painful

Medical Conditions: Card 49 - Front

- **ectasia**

Suffix

stretching, dilation

Medical Conditions: Card 50 - Front

dips / o
WR CV
—
CF

Medical Conditions: Card 50 - *Back*

thirst