

## Latin and Greek Prefixes and Suffixes

Many medical terms are built from Greek and Latin prefixes. Knowing the common words enables one to quickly comprehend and understand many long, complicated terms.

### A

Acro - extremity.

Adeno - gland.

Alba- white.

Algia - pain.

Angi - vessel.

Arthro - joint.

Auto - self.

Acrophobia is a fear of heights.

Adenoid is a lymph gland found in the nasopharynx.

Albinism is the white appearance of skin lacking melanin.

Neuralgia is a pain following the course of a nerve.

Angioplasty is the repair of a blood vessel.

Arthritis is the inflammation of skeletal joints.

Autolysis is the destruction of body cells by bodily enzymes.

### B

Bio- living.

Blast- germ, bud.

Blephar- eyelid.

Brachi- arm.

Broncho- trachea, windpipe.

Bucc- cheek.

Biology is the study of living organisms.

Osteoblast is the germ of a bone cell.

A blepharoplasty is eyelid surgery.

The brachialis muscle moves the arm.

Bronchitis is the inflammation of the respiratory system.

The buccinator muscle is in the cheek.

### C

Capit- head.

Carcin- cancer.

Cardia- heart.

Cephal- head.

Cerebro- brain.

Chole- bile, gall.

Chondro- cartilage.

Chroma- color.

Cili- eyelash.

Corpus- body.

Corona- crown.

Cost- rib.

Decapitate means "Off with the head!"

A carcinogen is a substance which triggers cancer formation.

Cardiologist is a heart specialist.

Cephalon is another term for the brain. (see capit-)

Cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) is fluid circulating within the brain and spinal cord.

Cholecystectomy is removal of the gallbladder.

A chondrocyte is a cartilage cell.

Chromosomes are so named because they took color easily when dye is added to a cell.

Supercilia are eyebrows -- the hairs above the eyelashes.

Corpus albicans is the white body inside an ovary.

Coronary arteries supply blood to the heart muscle run along the heart, encircling it like a crown. The coronary ligaments of the liver encircle the liver like a crown.

Costal cartilages attach ribs to the sternum.

Cut- skin.  
Cysti- sac, bladder.  
Cyto- cell.

Cutaneous tissue is skin tissue.

Cytology is the study of cells.

## **D**

Dactyl- digits.  
Derma- skin.  
Dura- tough, hard.

Polydactylism is the presence of more fingers than is normal.  
Dermatologists are skin specialists. (see cut-)  
Dura mater is the tough covering around the brain and spinal cord.

## **E**

Entero- intestine.  
Erythro- red.

Enteritis is inflammation of the intestines.  
Erythrocytes are red blood cells.

## **G**

Galacto- milk.  
Gastro- stomach, belly.  
Glosso- tongue.  
Glyco- sugar.

Galactose- milk sugar; Galactosemia is the lack of ability to digest one of milk's sugars.  
Gastric juices are produced in the stomach.  
Hypoglossal means "below the tongue".  
Glycosuria is sugar in the urine.

## **H**

Hema- blood.  
Hepato- liver.  
Hyster- uterus.

Hemoglobin is a large molecule of the red blood cell.  
The hepatic vein drains blood away from the liver.  
Hysterectomy is the removal of the uterus.

## **I**

Ileo- ileum.  
Ilio- ilium.

Part of the small intestine.  
Part of the hip bone.

## **L**

Lachry- tears.  
Leuko- white.  
Lingua- tongue.  
Lipo- fat.  
Lith- stone.  
Lumbo- lower back.

Lacrimal glands secrete tears.  
Leukocytes are white cells of the blood. (see alba-)  
Sublingual glands are beneath the tongue. (see glosso-)  
Liposuction is the removal of fat by suction tube.  
Shock wave lithotripsy is a treatment for breaking up kidney stones.  
Lumbar vertebrae are located in the lower back.

## **M**

Macul- spot, blotch.

The macula lutea is a spot on the retina of an eyeball.

Mamm- breast.  
Mast- breast.  
Meningo- membrane.  
Metro- uterus.  
Morpho- shape.

Myelo- spinal cord.  
Myo- muscle.

## **N**

Necro- death.  
Nephro- kidney.  
Neuro- nerve.

## **O**

Oculo- eye.  
Odont- tooth.  
Onco- tumor.  
cancerous tumors.  
Ophthalm- eye.  
Oro- mouth.  
Orchido- testicle.  
Osse-, Osteo- bone.  
Oto- ear.

## **P**

Patho- disease.  
Peps- digestion.  
Phago- eat.  
Philo- love, have an affinity for.  
Phleb- vein.  
Phren- diaphragm.  
Pneumo- lung.  
Pulmo- lung.  
  
Pyo- pus.

## **R**

Ren- kidney.  
Rhin- nose.

Mammogram is a picture of a breast, usually a female breast.  
Mastectomy is the removal of a breast.  
Meninges are the coverings of the brain and spinal cord.  
Endometrium is the inner lining of the uterus. (see hyster-)  
Endomorphs are people whose physical shape extends to the limits of human dimension.  
Poliomyelitis is inflammation of gray matter in the spinal cord.  
A myocardial infarction is also known as a heart attack.

Necrosis is death of cell tissue.  
Nephrons are the functional units of a kidney.  
Neurons are individual nerve cells.

An oculist supplies eyeglasses.  
Orthodontics refers to the repair of teeth.  
Oncology is not doctors wearing pagers; it is the study of  
  
Ophthalmology is the study of eye and its diseases.  
The “oral cavity” is the other name for the mouth.  
Orchidectomy is removal of a testicle.  
Osteoporosis is porosity of bone.  
Otosclerosis is the formation of bone in the ear. Also,  
otomycosis is a fungal infection in the ear.

Pathogens are agents which cause disease.  
Pepsin is an enzyme found in the digestive system.  
Phagocytes are cells (cyto-) which eat foreign material.  
Hydrophilic molecules are attracted to water (hydro-).  
Phlebitis is inflammation of the veins.  
Phrenic refers to a diaphragm.  
Pneumonia is a disease of the lungs.  
The pulmonary artery carries deoxygenated blood from the heart to the lungs.  
Pyruria is pus in the urine.

The renal artery supplies blood to the kidney.  
Rhinoplasty is a nose job.



**S**

Scler- hard.  
Stasis- stand still.

Atherosclerosis is hardening of the arteries. (see dura-)  
Homeostasis is the process of maintaining constant conditions within the body.

**T**

Thromb- clot, lump.  
Trich- hair.

Thrombosis refers to a clot in the heart or blood vessel.  
Trichosis is a disease of the hair.

**V**

Vas- vessel, duct.  
Viscer- organ.

The vas deferens is the vessel that carries sperm from the epididymus.  
Visceral refers to organs.

**Z**

Zoo- animal.

Zoology is the study of animals.