

Demystifying Medical Terminology



newlife
foundation for disabled children

Action for disabled & terminally ill children in th UK

Demystifying Medical Terminology

This glossary helps you to understand some of the words which are often used in respect of genetic conditions, inborn conditions, acquired conditions, infections, accidents and injuries and prematurity.

Please also see our: [Medical Terminology in Plain English](#) document.

Terminology

Many medical words are made up of suffixes and prefixes and parts which can be strung together to describe a symptom or disorder.

E.g. Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy breaks down to be:

Hyper – Excessive

Trophy (trophic) – Growth

Cardio – Heart

Myo – Muscle

Pathy – Disorder

A	Absent, without
ACRO	Extremity
AD	Next to, towards
ADRENO	Adrenal glands
-AEMIA	Blood
-ALGIA	Pain
AMBI	Both, both sides
AN	Not, deficient
ANGIO	Blood vessels

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ANTE	Before
ANTERO	In front of
APO	Separate, away from
ARTHRO	Joints
-ASIA,	State, condition
AUDIO	Hearing
AURI	Ear
BI	Two
BLEPHARO	Eyelids
BRACHY	Short
BRADY	Slow
CARDIO	Heart
-COELE	Swelling
CHONDRO	Cartilage
CONTRA	Against, opposite
CORTICO	Outer layer
COSTO	Ribs
CRANIO	Cranium
CYTO	Cells
-DACTYL	Fingers, toes
DI	Twice, double
DIPLO	Twofold
DIS	Separate, apart
DYS	Impaired, difficult, painful
ECTO	Outer or outside

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-ECTOMY	Cutting out
-EMIA	Blood
ENCEPHALO	Brain
ENDO	Internal, within
EPI	Upon, above
EX	Out
EXO	Situated outside
EXTRA	In addition to
FACIO	Face
FIBRO	Fibrous
GASTRO	Stomach
GENITO	Genital organs
GLOSSO	Tongue
GLYCO	Sugar
GNATH	Jaw
HAEM	Blood
HEMI	Half
HEPATO	Liver
HETERO	Different
HOLO	Whole, complete
HOMEO/HOMO	Same, similar
HYDRO	Water
HYPER	More than normal, excessive
HYPO	Less than normal, lacking
-IA,-IASIS	Condition of

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INTER	Between, among
INTRA	Inside, within
ISO	Equal
LARYNGO	Larynx
LENTO	Lens of the eye
LEUCO	White
MACRO	Large
MAL	Bad, faulty
MEGA,MEGALO	Great
-MELIA	Limb
MESO	Middle
META	Beyond, change
MICRO	Small
MONO	Single
MUCO	Mucous
MULTI	Many
MY,MYOX	Muscle
NEO	New
NEPHRO	Kidneys
NEURO	Nerves
OCULO	Eye
-OID	Resembling
OLIGO	Few, slight
-OMA	Tumour
OMNI	All

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-OPIA	Vision
OPHTHALMO	Eye
ORTHO	Straight, upright
-OSIS	Condition, especially disease
OSTEO	Bone
OTO	Ear
PACHY	Thick
PALATO	Palate
PAN	All
PARA	Beyond, beside
-PATHY	Disease, disorder
PERI	Around, near
-PLASIA	Construction
-PLEGIA	Paralysis development
POLY	Many
POST	After, behind
PRE	Before, in time or order
PRO	In front of
PROTO	Original or first, before in time
PSEUDO	False
PSYCHO	The mind
PYCNO	Dense, close together
QUADRI	Four
RHINO	Nose
RHIZO	Root-like

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SCLER	Hard
SEMI	Half
SPLENO	Spleen
SUB	Under, below
SUPER	On the top, more
SUPRA	Above or upper
SYM	Associated with, together
TACHY	Rapid
TETRA	Group of four
TOXO	Poison
TRANS	Through, across
TRICH	Hair
-TROPHY	Nutrition, growth
ULTRA	Extreme, excess
UNI	One
-URIA	Urine
XERO	Dry





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