Basic Elements of a Medical Word

- Word Root
- Combining Form
- 3. Suffix
- 4. Prefix

These four parts of a word are known as ELEMENTS.

Word Root

- Main part or foundation of a word.
- All words have at least one word root.
- A word root may be used alone or combined with other elements to form a complete word.

IE: SPEAK (word root) + ER (suffix) = SPEAKER (complete word)

- The word root usually refers to a body part.
- Some root words are derived from the Latin or Greek language.

Word Root Examples

- "dent" means tooth
- "dermat" means skin
- "cardi" means heart
- "gastr" means stomach
- "pancreat" means pancreas

Combining Forms

- Correct pronunciation of medical words is important.
- In order to make the pronunciation of word roots easier, sometimes it is necessary to insert a vowel after the root.
- The combination of a word root and a vowel is known as a COMBINING FORM.

- Combining forms consist of a <u>combining</u> <u>vowel.</u>
- The combining vowel is usually an "o", but others may be used.

IE: gastr / o pronounced GASTRO.

Word root Combining vowel

Word-Building System

 By understanding the meanings of word roots, one can determine the meaning of complex medical terms by putting together the smaller parts.

Leukocytopenia

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Word Roots: Leuk / (white)
cyt / (cell)
Combining Vowel / o /
Suffix: / penia (decrease)
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Suffixes

 A suffix is added to the END of a word root or combining form to modify its meaning.

 By adding a suffix to the end of a word root, we create a noun or adjective with a different meaning.

- A combining vowel is used between a word root and a suffix that begins with a consonant (not a vowel).
- This is to make pronunciation easier.

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Word root: scler / (hardening)
Suffix: / derma (skin)
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Term: Scler / o / derma (hardening of the skin)

Combining vowel

REVIEW

 A combining vowel IS used to link one root to another root, and before a suffix that begins with a consonant.

 A combining vowel IS NOT used before a suffix that begins with a vowel.

Prefixes

 A prefix is a syllable or syllables placed BEFORE a word or word root to alter its meaning or create a new word.

Some prefixes:

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Hyper- (excessive)
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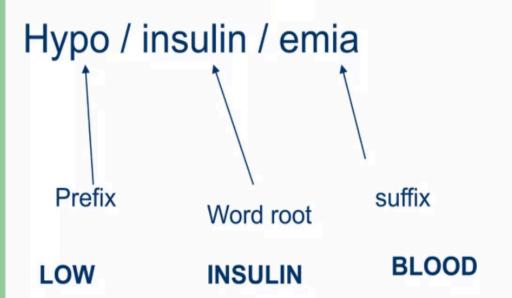
Pre- (before)

Post- (after)

Homo- (same)

Hypo- (under)

Hypoinsulinemia



Notice that there is no combining vowel in this word because the prefix ends with a vowel and the suffix begins with a vowel.