

MEDICAL TERMINOLOGY  
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- **Word Parts**

- Medical terms are built from word parts. Those word parts are prefix, word root, suffix, and combining form vowel. When a word root is combined with a combining form vowel the word part is referred to as a combining form.

- **Identifying Word Parts in Medical Terms**

- *Examples*

- **Osteoarthritis**

**Oste/o/arthr/itis – Inflammation of bone and joint.**

Oste/o is a combining form that means bone

arthr/o is a combining form that means joint

-itis is a suffix that means inflammation

- **Intravenous**

**Intra/ven/ous – Pertaining to within a vein.**

Intra- is a prefix that means within

ven/o – is a combining form that means vein

-ous is a suffix that means pertaining to

- **Notice, when breaking down words that you place slashes between word parts and a slash on each side of a combining form vowel.**

- **Language Review**

- Before we begin analyzing the rules let's complete a short language review that will assist with pronunciation and spelling.

- **Short Vowels**

a, e, i, o, u, and sometimes y are indicated by lower case.

- **Long Vowels**

A, E, I, O, U are indicated by upper case.

- **Consonants**

Consonants are all of the other letters in the alphabet. b, c, d, f, g, h, j, k, l, m, n, p, q, r, s, t, v, w, x, and z.

- **Language Rules for Building Medical Terms**
- When combining two combining forms, you keep the combining form vowel.
- When combining a combining form with a suffix that begins with a consonant, you keep the combining form vowel.

## EXAMPLE

- Gastr/o/enter/o/logy – The study of the stomach and the intestines
  - Following **rule 1**, when we join combining form gastr/o (meaning stomach) with the combining form enter/o (meaning intestines) we keep the combining form vowel o.
  - Following **rule 2**, when we join the combining form enter/o (meaning intestines) with the suffix



- When combining a combining form with a suffix that begins with a vowel, you drop the combining form vowel.
- A prefix goes at the beginning of the word and no combining form vowel is used.
- *Examples*

- Intra/ven/ous – Pertaining to within the vein
  - Following **rule 3**, notice that when combining the combining form ven/o (meaning vein) with the suffix -ous (that starts with a vowel and means pertaining to) we drop the combining form vowel o.
  - Following **rule 4**, the prefix intra- (meaning within) is at the beginning of the medical term with no combining form vowel used.
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- When defining a medical word, start with the suffix first and then work left to right stating the word parts. You may need to add filler words. As long as the filler word does not change the meaning of the word you may use it for the purpose of building a medical vocabulary. Once you start to apply the word in the context of a

- sentence it will be easier to decide which filler word(s) to choose.
- *Examples*
- Intra/ven/ous – Pertaining to within the vein or Pertaining to within a vein.

- Following **rule 5**, notice that I start with the suffix -ous (that means pertaining to) then we work left to right starting with the prefix Intra- (meaning within) and the combining form ven/o (meaning vein).
- Notice that we have used two different definitions that mean the same thing.

- In these examples we do not have the context of a full sentence. For the purpose of building a medical terminology foundation either definition is accepted.