Medical terminology Lecture 2

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Medical terminology

Prefixes

A prefix is a word element attached to the beginning of a word or word root. However, not all medical terms have a prefix. Adding or changing a prefix changes the meaning of the word. The prefix usually indicates *a number, time, position, direction, or negation*. Prefixes do not require adding a connecting vowel. Many prefixes in medical terms are the same as the prefixes used in the english language. Consider the following terms. (as in the example below.)

prenatal	postnatal
prē-NĀ-tăl	pōst-NĀ-tăl
pertaining to (the period) before birth	*pertaining to (the period) after birth*
PRE / NAT / AL	POST / NAT / AL
⇓ ⇓ ⇓	⇓ ⇓ ⇓
prefix root suffix	*prefix root suffix*
⇓ ⇓ ⇓	⇓ ⇓ ⇓
(before) (birth) (pertaining to)	*(after) (birth) (pertaining to)*

The prefixes *pre- and post-* indicate a *state of time*. Both prefixes are attached directly to the word root that follows. In the above examples, pre- and post- are attached to the root nat. In this text, whenever a prefix stands alone, it will be followed by a hyphen, as in pre- and post-. Whenever a suffix stands alone, it will be preceded by a hyphen.

Common word roots

Head	
brain	enceph

ear	ot, aur
eardrum	tympan, myring
eye	ophthalm, ocul
face	faci
nose	rhin
skull	crani
tongue	lingu
tooth	odont, dent
Heart and Circulatory System	
aorta	aort
arteries	arteri
blood	hem, sangu
blood vessels	angi
heart	cardi
veins	ven, phleb
Bones and Muscles	
arm	brachi
dorsa	back
bone	oste
foot	pod, ped
muscle	myo
rib	cost
shoulder	carp
Digestive scapul System	
appendix	append
colon	col
esophagus	esophag
intestine (usually small)	enter
kidney	ren, neph
liver	hepat
stomach	gastr
Other Common Roots	
cancer	carci
drug	chem
electric	electr
heat	therm
pressure	bar

Compound Words

A medical word may include multiple roots. This frequently occurs when referencing more than one body part or system. For example, *cardio-pulmo-nary* means pertaining to the heart and lungs; *gastro-entero-logy* means the study of the stomach and intestines.

Combining Forms

A combining vowel is used when a root is followed by another word part that begins with a consonant. A combining vowel (usually the letter "o") is added after the root (e.g., *neur-o-logy*) to aid pronunciation. The root and vowel together (e.g., neur-o) are called the combining form. For simplicity, combining vowel options are omitted from the word part tables.

Underline the *word roots* in the following terms

Medical Word	Meaning
-nephritis	inflammation of the kidneys .
-arthrodesis	fixation of a joint .
-dermatitis	inflammation of the skin .
-arthrocentesis	surgical puncture of a joint .
-gastrectomy	excision of the stomach .

Underline the following elements that are *combining forms*

-nephr /o	kidney .
-hepat/o	liver .
-arthr /o	joint .
-oste/o	arthr bone, joint .
-cholangi/o	bile vessel.

Prefixes

A prefix modifies the meaning of the word root. It may indicate a *location, type, quality, body category, or quantity*. Prefixes are optional and do not appear in all medical terms.

:Common prefixes

<u>Size</u>

 -macro--   mega(lo) large

-micro   small

<u>Number</u>

-semi   Half

-hemi   half (one side)

<u>Level</u>

-hyper   above normal

-hypo   below normal

Suffixes

Medical terms always end with a suffix. The suffix usually indicates a *specialty, test, procedure, function, condition/disorder, or status*. For example, "itis" means inflammation and "ectomy" means removal.

Alternatively, the suffix may simply make the word a noun or adjective. For example, the endings -a, -e, -um, and -us are commonly used to create a singular noun (e.g., crani-um.

Although the suffix appears at the end of the term, it often comes first in the definition. For example, appendicitis means inflammation (-itis) of the appendix. Accordingly, it is sometimes helpful to read unfamiliar medical terms from right to left.

Occasionally, medical terms are composed of only a prefix and a suffix. For example, apnea includes the prefix a- (without) and suffix -pnea (breathing).

Common suffixes (letters in parentheses are not always present).

ectomy-   removal of

graphy-   recording instrument

otomy-   cut in

scopy-   visual examination

stomy-   opening