A top-down photograph of a silver and black stethoscope resting on a yellow spiral-bound notebook. The notebook is open to a page with the words "Medical Terminology" written in a black, sans-serif font. The notebook has a red cover and is placed on a light-colored wooden surface with vertical grain. The stethoscope's chest piece is on the left side of the notebook, and its tubing loops over the top and right edges.

Medical  
Terminology

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# The Language of Medicine

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# The Language of Medicine



Many everyday terms that we use to describe our health and our medical care go back to the early history of civilization.

The language of medicine dates to the time when people had only spoken language, not written.

# The Language of Medicine

Ancient people gave names to parts of their bodies, to illnesses, and to the cures they used.

Some of these names survive in the roots and words still used today in medical terminology.

# The Language of Medicine



For example, the ancient Greeks thought of the disease we call “cancer” as something eating at a person on the inside, and so named the condition karkinos, meaning both crab and cancer.

# The Language of Medicine

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Medical terminology began to become standardized when Hippocrates (460–377 B.C.), a Greek physician, set about to organize an approach to medicine.

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The Hippocratic oath that is generally attributed to him has been in use for over 2,000 years.

# Hippocratic oath

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## HIPPOCRATIC OATH



**SWEAR** by Apollo the physician and Asclepius and Hygieia and Panacea, invoking all the gods and goddesses to be my witnesses, that I will fulfil this Oath and this written covenant to the best of my powers and of my judgment. I will look upon him who shall have taught me this art even as on mine own parents; I will share with him my substance, and supply his necessities if he be in need; I will regard his offspring even as my own brethren, and will teach them this art, if they desire to learn it, without fee or covenant.

**I WILL IMPART** it by precept, by lecture and by all other manner of teaching, not only to my own sons but also to the sons of him who has taught me, and to disciples bound by covenant and oath according to the law of the physicians but to none other.

**THE REGIMEN** I adopt shall be for the benefit of the patients to the best of my power and judgment, not for their injury or for any wrongful purpose. I will not give a deadly drug to any one, though it be asked of me, nor will I lead the way in such counsel; and likewise I will not give a woman a pessary to procure abortion. But I will keep my life and my art in purity and holiness. I will not use the knife, not even, verily, on sufferers from stone, but I will give place to such as are craftsmen therein.

**WHATSOEVER HOUSE** I enter, I will enter for the benefit of the sick, refraining from all voluntary wrongdoing and corruption, especially seduction of male or female, bond or free.

**WHATSOEVER THINGS** I see or hear concerning the life of men, in my attendance on the sick or even apart from my attendance, which ought not to be blabbed abroad, I will keep silence on them, counting such things to be as religious secrets.

**IF I FULFIL** this oath and confound it not, be it mine to enjoy life and art alike, with good repute among all men for all time to come, but may the contrary befall me if I transgress and violate my oath.

# Derivation of Medical Terminology

Many medical terms originate directly from ancient Greek or Latin terms.

For example, the word nerve is derived from the Latin nervus. Later, people of many cultures used these ancient terms in their languages.



## Derivation of Medical Terminology

- Even though the appearance of the words changed, the roots from which the words developed remained the original Greek or Latin terms.
- Over the subsequent centuries, people involved in medicine and the development of treatments tended to look for Greek or Latin words or roots to describe their newest discoveries.

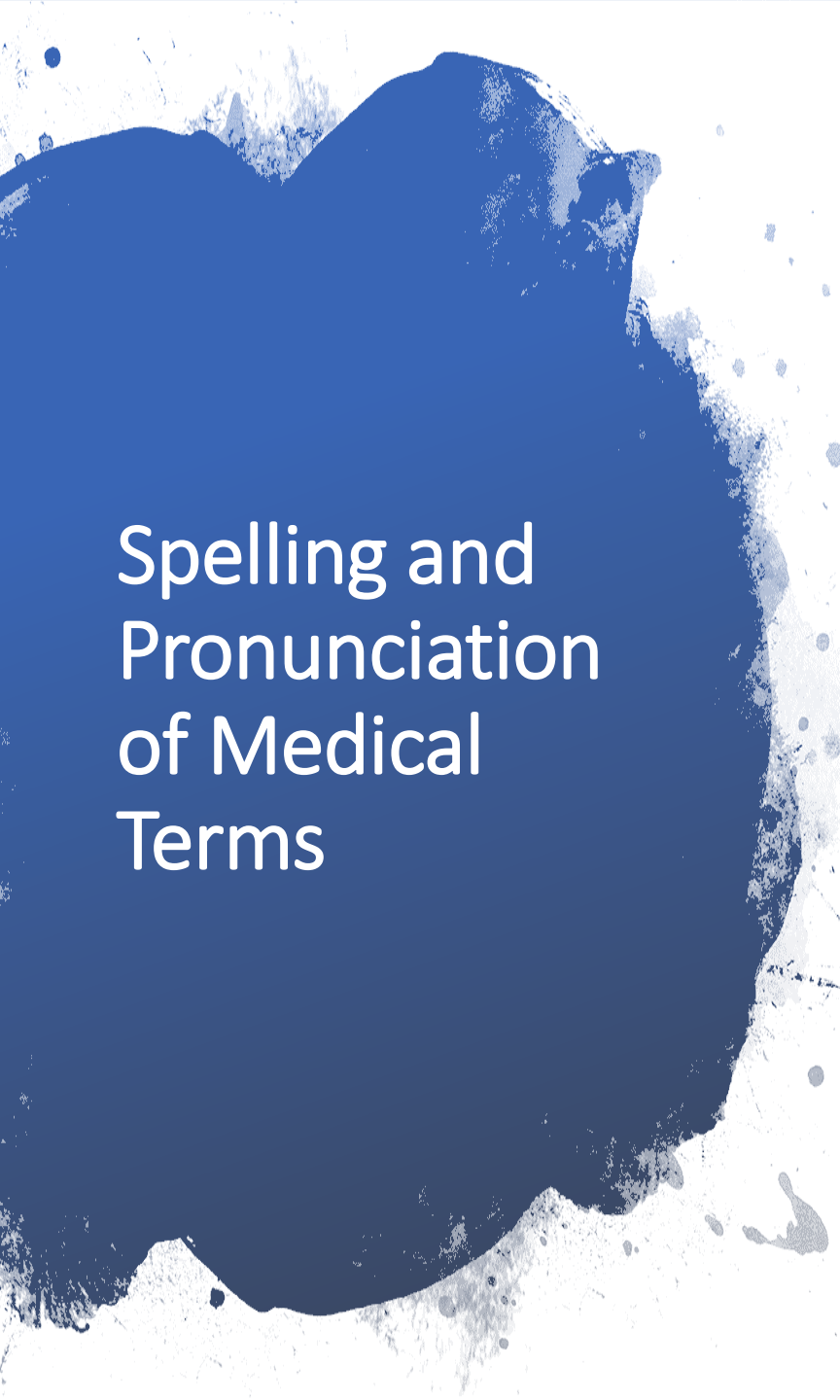
# Derivation of Medical Terminology

- Many medical terms used today are based on ancient Greek and Latin.
- Word building became and remains the primary way to describe new medical discoveries.

# Derivation of Medical Terminology

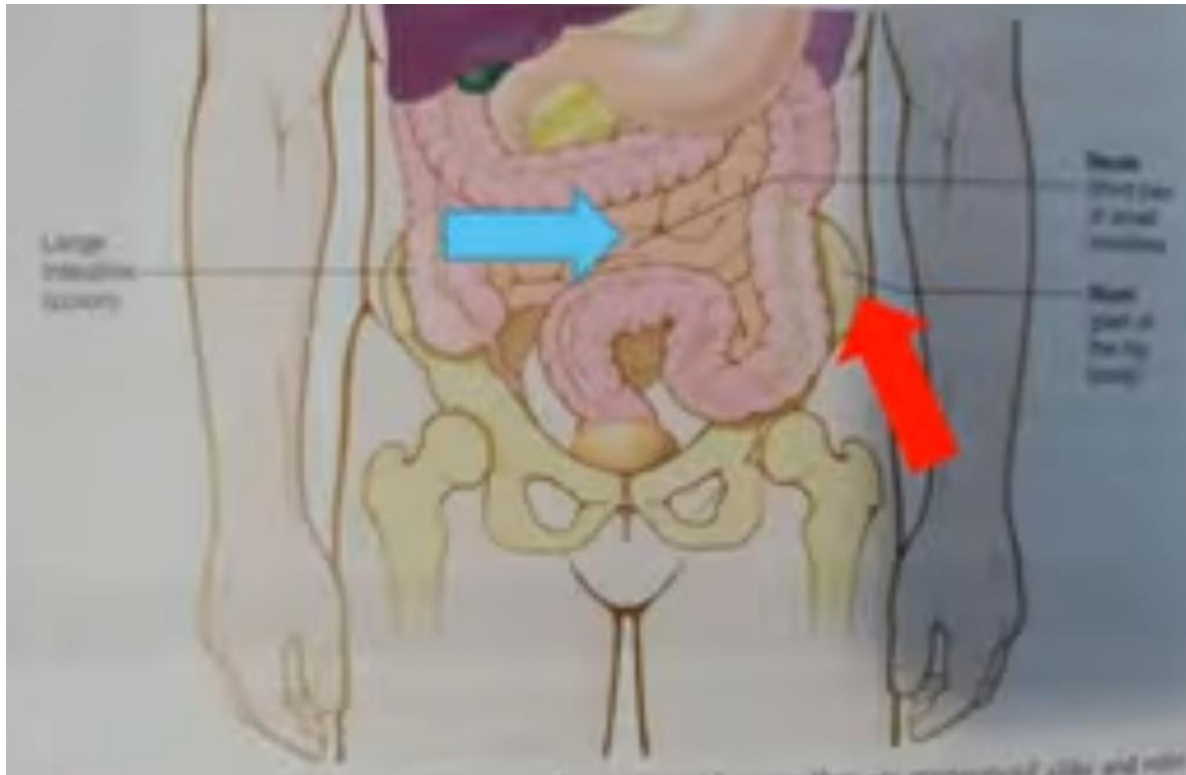
- **Latin roots** are used to write words naming and describing structures of the body
- **Greek roots** are used to write words naming and describing diseases, conditions, diagnosis, and treatment

*Example: cutis (L. for skin), derma (G. for skin), Both dermal and cutaneous mean pertaining to the skin. Inflammation of the skin is dermatitis. dermat/a = skin; cutane/o = skin; -al, -ous = pertaining to.*

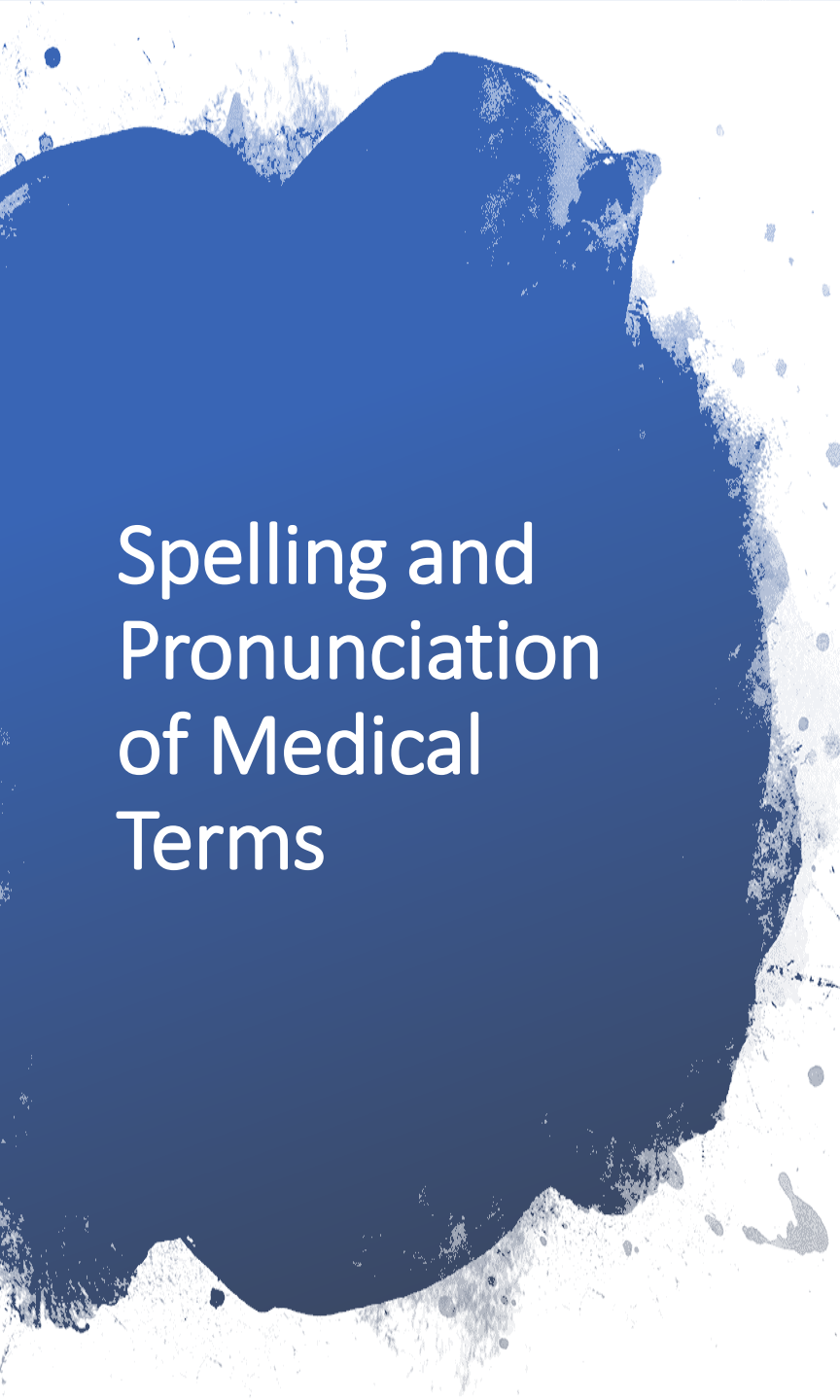


## Spelling and Pronunciation of Medical Terms

- Misspellings and mispronunciations in a medical setting can result in life-threatening situations.
- A misspelled or a misunderstood abbreviation for a medicine dosage was responsible for the death of several children in a cancer ward.

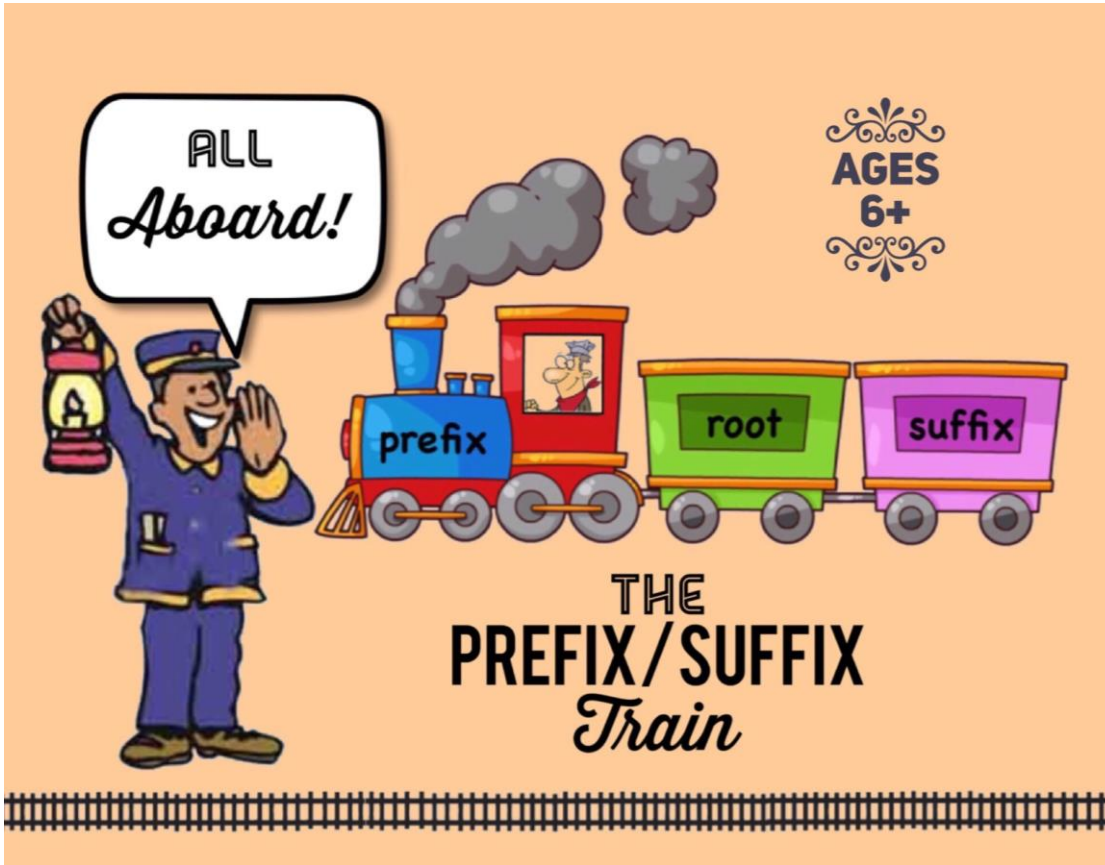


Ileum vs ilium



## Spelling and Pronunciation of Medical Terms

- Learning how to spell and pronounce medical terms is a matter of practice.
- Familiarizing yourself with correct spellings of terms is a matter of practice and of seeing the terms over and over again.



Medical words are made up of the following word parts: roots, suffixes, and prefixes

# Forming Medical Terms

Derived from  
**Latin**  
**Predictable**  
(In English)

Prefix: pre-

Root: -dict-

Suffix: -able



To live  
(Root)

Study of  
(Suffix)

**Bio**

**logy**

**Biology**

Around  
(prefix)

inflammation  
(Suffix)

**Peri-**

**neur**

**-itis**

**Perineuritis**

Nerve  
(Root)



1. Use the context of the paragraph as a clue

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**Example:** The patient was hostile when the doctor approached the bed. The patient sat up in bed with his arms folded and looked in the other direction as soon as the doctor started to speak.

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**Explanation:** As described in these sentences, hostile means unfriendly

1. Use the context of the paragraph as a clue

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**Example:** The patient developed a voracious appetite after surgery. In one day he ate enough to equivalent to three days of meals.

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**Explanation:** Because the patient ate an extraordinary amount, voracious means extremely hungry or greedy.

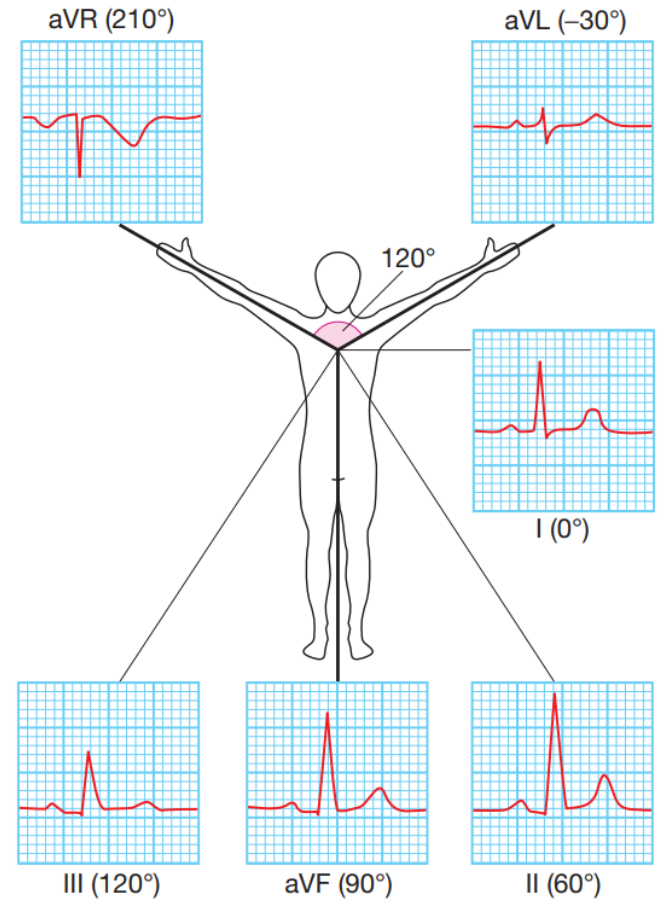
2. Use the knowledge of word parts:

a. Look to the composition of the word and identify the parts: prefix- root- suffix.

b. Define the meaning of the parts: start with the suffix. Find out what it means. Then go to the beginning of the word. It will be either a prefix or a root. Find out what it means. If there is another part, it will be a root. Once you have all the meanings, put them together.

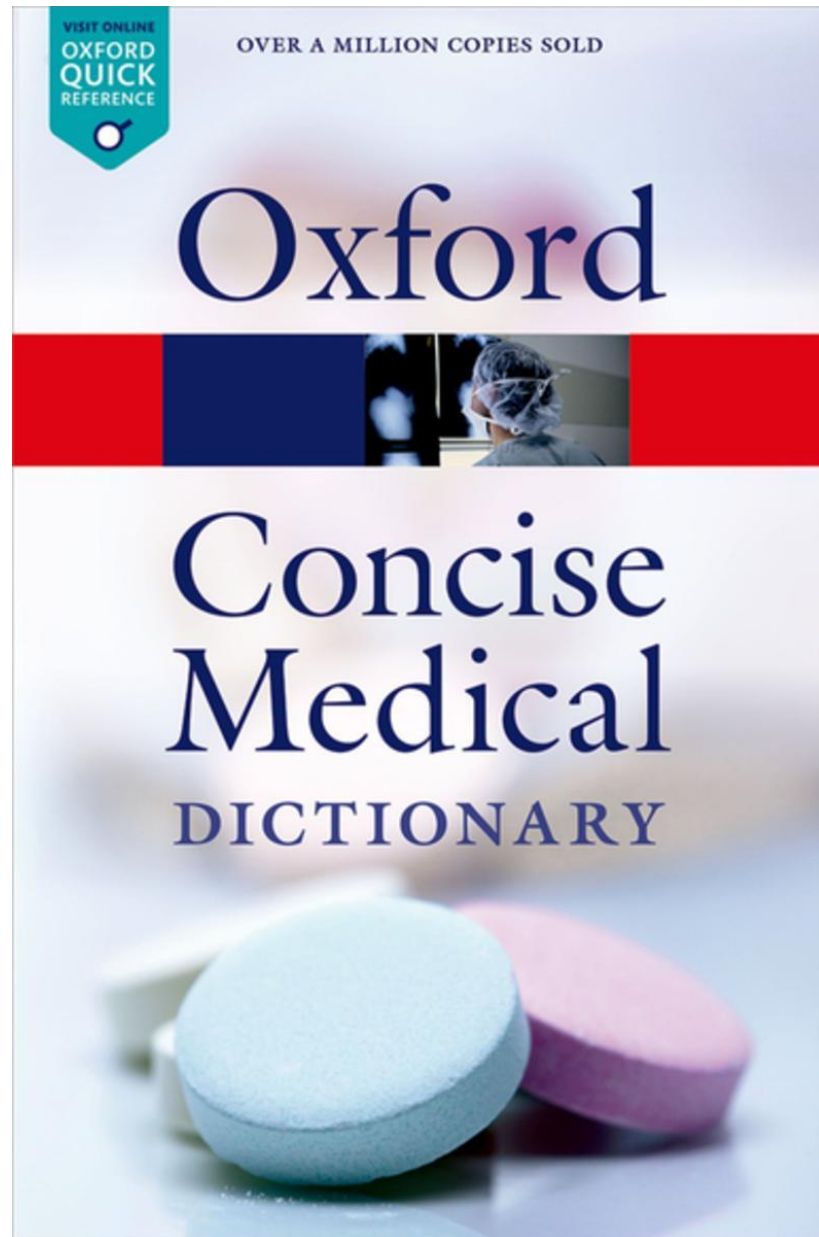
# Electrocardiogram

- **-gram**: record
- **-cardi(o)-** : heart
- **Electro-**: electrical activity



3. Lastly,  
use a  
dictionary

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# Thank You

Contact info.

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