

Medical Terminology: Examples

Understanding

Prefixes > Prefixes Related to Size and Quantity

Prefix	Meaning	Example with pronunciation & meaning
bi-, di-	twice, double	bilateral [bī-LAT-er-ā] (both sides of the body)
hemi-	half	Hemiplegia [hēm-ī-PLĒ-jē-ā] (paralysis of half of the body)
micro-	small	Microscopic [mī-krō-SKOP-ik] (too small to see without a scope device)
mono-	single	monomania [m ^o n-ō-MĀ-nē-ā] (single thought or idea)
uni-	one, single	unilateral [yū-nī-LĀT-ēr-ā] (one side of the body)
multi-	many	multiarticular [MUL-tē-ār-TĪK-yū-lār] (many joints)
poly-	many	polyarteritis [p ^o l-ē-ār-tēr-ī-tīs] (inflammation of multiple arteries)

> Prefixes Related to Position or Location

Prefix	Meaning	Example with pronunciation & meaning
sub-	less than, under, inferior, below or beneath	subcutaneous [süb-kyū-TĀ-nē-ūs] (beneath the skin)
supra-	above, over, excessive	supramaxillary [sū-prā-MĀK-sī-lār-ē] (above the maxilla)
trans-	across, through	transdermal [trāns-DĒR-māl] (across/through the skin)
peri-	around, about, near	periappendicitis [PĒR-ē-ā-pēn-dī-SĪ-tīs] (Inflammation surrounding the appendix)

> Prefixes Related to Time

Prefix	Meaning	Example with pronunciation & meaning
pre-	before	prenatal [prē-NĀ-tāl] (before the birth of a child)
post-	after, following	postnatal [pōst-NĀ-tāl] (after the birth of a child)

> Prefixes Related to Presence or Quality

Prefix	Meaning	Example with pronunciation & meaning
brady-	slow	bradycardia [brād-ē-KĀR-dē-ā] slow heartbeat.

tachy-	fast	tachycardia [TĀK-i-KĀR-dē-ā] rapid or fast heartbeat.
hyper-	above normal, overly	hypertension (high-per-TEN-shun): High blood pressure.
hypo-	below normal	hypotension (high-poh-TEN-shun): Low blood pressure.
dys-	abnormal, difficult, painful	dysfunctional [dīs-FUNGK-shūn-āl] functioning abnormally
mal-	bad, inadequate	malabsorption [māl-āb-SORP-shūn] Inadequate absorption

Understanding Suffixes

➤ Suffixes Related to Sensation and Feelings

Suffix	Meaning	Example with pronunciation & meaning
-kinesia, -kinesis	movement	bradykinesia [brăd-ĭ-kin-Ē-zē-ă] Decrease in movement
-esthesia	sensation	paresthesia [păr-ĕs-THĒ-zē-ă] abnormal sensation
-phobia	fear	acrophobia [ăk-rō-FŌ-bē-ă] fear of heights
-phonia	sound	neuraphonia [nūr-ă-FŌ-nē-ă] Loss of sounds
-phoria	feeling, carrying	euphoria [yū-FŌR-ē-ă] feeling of well-being.
-algia	pain	Neuralgia [nr-al-juh] pain due to an irritated or damaged nerve

➤ Suffixes Related to Conditions or Symptoms

Suffix	Meaning	Example with pronunciation & meaning
-trophy	nutrition	dystrophy [DIːs-trō-fē] inadequate nutrition
-edema	swelling	lymphedema [lĭmf-ĕ-DE-mă] swelling result from obstructed lymph glands
-itis	Inflammation	Appendicitis (a-pen-di-SITE-is): Inflammation of the appendix
-osis	condition, state, process	halitosis [hăl-ĭ-TŌ-sĭs] bad breath state
-megaly	enlargement	cephalomegaly [SĔF-ă-IŌ-MĔG-ă-lē] enlargement of the head
-oma	tumour, neoplasm	myoma [mĭ-Ō-mă] Tumour of muscle
-pathy	abnormal condition, disease process	osteopathy [oːs-tē-OːP-ă-thē] bone disease.

➤ Suffixes Related to Body Parts or Chemical Elements

Suffix	Meaning	Example with pronunciation & meaning
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-cyte	cell	thrombocyte [THROːM-bō-sĭt] blood platelet cell
-derma	skin	scleroderma [sklĕr-ō-DĔR-mă] hardening of the skin
-emia	blood	uremia [yū-RE-mē-ă] excess urea in the blood
-globin, -globulin	protein	hemoglobin [hē-mō-GLŌ-bĭn] protein of red blood cells
-oxia	oxygen	anoxia [ăn-OːK-sē-ă] Lack of oxygen
-uria	urine	pyuria [pĭ-YŪ-rē-ă] Pus in the urine

➤ Suffixes Related to Surgical or Procedural Processes

Suffix	Meaning	Example with pronunciation & meaning
-ectomy	Surgical removal of	Appendectomy (ap-pen-DEK-toe-me): Surgical removal of the appendix
-otomy	Surgical incision or cutting into	Colotomy (koh-LOT-oh-me): Surgical cutting into the colon
-ostomy	Surgical creation of an artificial opening	Colostomy (koh-LOST-oh-me): Surgical creation of an opening in the colon
-plasty	Surgical repair	Abdominoplasty (ab-DOM-in-o-plasty): Surgical repair of the abdomen
-scope	instrument used for visual examination or for viewing	Bronchoscope (BRONK-o-scope): Instrument used to examine bronchus
-scopy	visual examination (process of viewing)	Bronchoscopy (bronk-OSK-oh-pee): Visual examination of bronchus using a bronchoscope
-graphy	process of recording a record or picture	Cardiography (car-dee-OG-rah-fee): Process of recording heart activity
-gram	Resulting record or picture	Cardiogram (CARD-ee-oh-gram): Film produced by a cardiography