

Search for articles and books

[Home](#) / [Body, Mind, & Spirit Articles](#) / [Medical Articles](#) / [Terminology Articles](#)

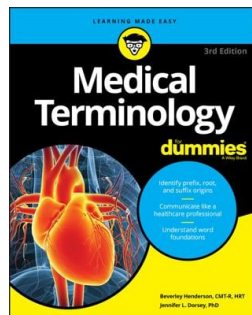
Medical Terminology For Dummies Cheat Sheet

By: [Beverley Henderson](#) and [Jennifer L. Dorsey](#)

Updated: 2021-03-14 16:43:56



Medical Terminology For Dummies



[Explore Book](#)

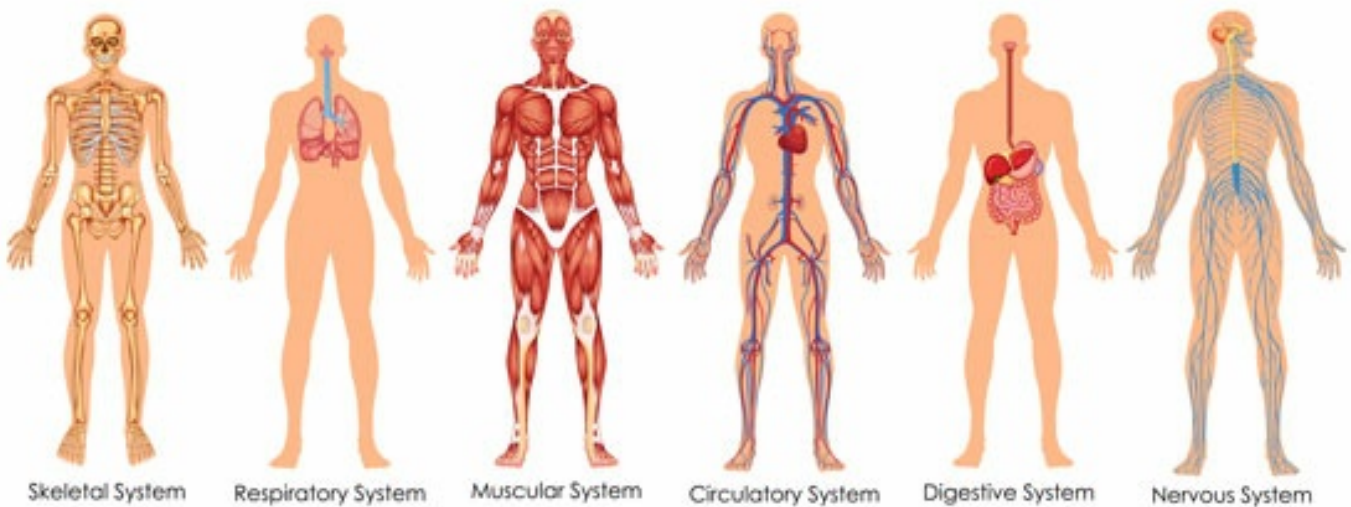
Buy On Amazon

Grasping medical terminology starts with knowing the body's systems, recognizing medical root words commonly used, understanding the Greek influence in medical terminology, and learning those pesky hard-to-spell medical words.

Your Body's Systems

Your body is made up of many systems, each having their own vital parts that work together.

Human Body Organ Systems



©By Vectors/Shutterstock.com

This list represents your bodily systems and the specific parts that comprise them:

- **Skeletal:** Bones, axial skeleton, appendicular skeleton, and joints
- **Muscular:** Muscles and tendons
- **Integumentary:** Skin, hair, nails, and glands in skin
- **Sensory:** Eyes, ears, nose, skin receptors, and mouth
- **Cardiovascular:** Heart, blood vessels, and blood
- **Lymphatic:** Tonsils, spleen, thymus, lymph nodes, lymphatic vessels, and lymph fluid
- **Respiratory:** Nose, pharynx, larynx, trachea, bronchi, and lungs
- **Gastrointestinal:** Mouth, esophagus, stomach, small and large intestines, pancreas, liver, and gallbladder

- **Endocrine:** Hormones, pituitary gland, thyroid, adrenal glands, pancreas, and gonads
 - **Nervous:** Brain, spinal cord, ganglia, nerves, and sensory organs
 - **Urinary:** Kidneys, ureters, bladder, and urethra
 - **Reproductive:** Ovaries, uterine tubes, uterus, and vagina in females; testes, ducts, penis, urethra, and prostate in males
-

Common Medical Root Words

The root of a word is its main part and core meaning. These common medical root words give you a general idea of what you're dealing with or specify a body part.

- **Abdomin/o:** Abdomen
- **Aden/o:** Gland
- **Anter/o:** Front
- **Arteri/o:** Artery
- **Audi/o:** Hearing
- **Bio:** Life
- **Brachi/o:** Arm
- **Bronch/i, bronch/o:** Bronchus
- **Carcin/o:** Cancer
- **Cardi/o:** Heart
- **Col/o:** Colon
- **Cyt/o:** Cell
- **Derm/a, dermat/o, dermat/o:** Skin
- **Dors/i, dors/o:** Back or posterior
- **Encephal/o:** Brain
- **Gastr/o:** Stomach
- **Gynec/o:** Female
- **Hemat/o:** Blood
- **Hist/o, histi/o:** Tissue
- **Intestin/o:** Intestine
- **Lapar/o:** Abdomen, loin or flank
- **Lymph/o:** Lymph vessels
- **My/o:** Muscle
- **Neur/o:** Nerve
- **Ocul/o:** Eye
- **Ophthalm/o:** Eyes
- **Optic/o, opt/o:** Seeing, sight
- **Or/o:** Mouth
- **Ot/o:** Ear
- **Path/o:** Disease
- **Pharmac/o:** Drug
- **Pulmon/o:** Lungs
- **Sept/o:** Infection
- **Thorac/o:** Chest/thorax
- **Thyr/o:** Thyroid gland
- **Trachel/o:** Neck or necklike

- **Trich/o:** Hair or hairlike
 - **Ventr/i, ventr/o:** Front of body
 - **Viscer/o:** Viscera (internal organs)
-

Greek Tidbits in Medical Terms

Most common medical terms used today are derived from Latin or Greek. After all, the Greeks were the founders of modern medicine. Examples of medical terminology used today based on the Greek language are

- The word *semantics* is derived from the Greek *semantikos*, meaning “significant.”
 - *Coccyx* comes from the Greek word for “cuckoo” — it resembles a cuckoo’s beak.
 - Remember: *myo* (muscle) is not to be confused with *myelo* (bone marrow).
 - *Diaphoresis* comes from the Greek *dia* meaning “through” and *phoreo* meaning “I carry.” Translated, it means “the carrying through of perspiration.”
 - Glaucoma: Greek *glaukos* means “blue-grey,” and *oma* means “a condition.” In *glaucoma*, gray color replaces the black pupil.
 - Both Latin and Greek play a role in the roots of the word for heart, *cardium*. This word stems from the Greek word *kardia*.
 - *Adenoid* comes from the Greek *aden*, meaning “gland,” and *oidos*, meaning “like.” The term was once used for the prostate gland.
 - *Pancreas* is so named because of its fleshy appearance. Greek *pan* means “all,” and *krea* means “flesh.”
 - *Endocrine*: Take *endo* and add it to the Greek *krinein*, which means “to separate.”
 - *Paraplegia*: The Greek *para* means “beside,” and *plegia* means “paralysis.”
 - The Greek word *pyelos* means “tub-shaped vessel,” which describes the shape of the kidney.
 - *Venereal* is derived from Venus, the goddess of love. It was thought in ancient times to be one of the misfortunes of love.
-

Medical Terms Commonly Misspelled

Don’t get discouraged studying medical terminology. A large group of medical terms are notorious for being difficult to spell. These medical terms are commonly misspelled:

Abscess, adolescence, alimentation, alopecia, Alzheimer, analyze, aneurysm, anorexia, arrhythmia, ascites, asphyxia, asystole, auscultation, callus, catheter, Caucasian, chickenpox, cirrhosis, curettage, decubitus, diabetes mellitus, diaphoresis, diaphragm, dilatation, diphtheria, eczema, effusion, elicit, epididymitis, fascia, flaccid, gallbladder, gangrene, gauge, gonorrhoea, hemoptysis, hemorrhoid, humerus, hygiene, icterus, inoculate, intraocular, intussusception, ischemia, melanin, menstruation, oophorectomy, ophthalmology, orthopnea, pacemaker, palliative, palpate, palpitation, perineum, periosteum, peritoneum, peroneal, prosthesis, prostate, protocol, pruritus, rhythm, sagittal, sedentary, sequela, sieve, spleen, splenectomy, supersede, syncope, syphilis, tonsils, tonsillectomy, tricuspid, ventricle, vertical, and xiphoid.

About This Article

This article is from the book:

[Medical Terminology For Dummies](#)

About the book author: **Beverley Henderson, CMT-R, HRT** has more than 40 years of experience in medical terminology and transcription as both an educator and manager. **Jennifer L. Dorsey, PhD** has coauthored, revised, and ghostwritten books in the medical, business, and personal growth categories for more than 20 years.

This article can be found in the category:

[Terminology](#)

From Category

Terminology

Integumentary System: Glands, Hair, and Nails

How the Urinary System Works

How the Muscular System Works

How the Skeletal System Works

Decoding Medical Lingo



[About For Dummies](#) [Contact Us](#) [Activate a Book PIN](#)

Connect



About Dummies

Dummies has always stood for taking on complex concepts and making them easy to understand. Dummies helps everyone be more knowledgeable and confident in applying what they know. Whether it's to pass that big test,

qualify for that big promotion or even master that cooking technique; people who rely on dummies, rely on it to learn the critical skills and relevant information necessary for success.

Copyright © 2000-2024 by John Wiley & Sons, Inc., or related companies. All rights reserved, including rights for text and data mining and training of artificial technologies or similar technologies.