

Medical Dictionary: Word Parts and What They Mean

General Words

Part	Definition
-ac	pertaining to
andr-, andro-	male
auto-	self
bio-	life
chem-, chemo-	chemistry
cyt-, cyto-	cell
-blast-, -blasto-, -blastic	bud, germ
-cyte, -cytic	cell
fibr-, fibro-	fiber
gluco-, glycol-	glucose, sugar
gyn-, gyno-, gynec-	female
hetero-	other, different
hydr-, hydro-	water
idio-	self, one's own
-ity	pertaining to
karyo-	nucleus
neo-	new
-ous	pertaining to
oxy-	sharp, acute, oxygen
pan-, pant-, panto-	all or everywhere
pharmaco-	drug, medicine
re-	again, backward
somat-, somatico-, somato-	body, bodily

Body Parts and Disorders

Part	Definition
acous-, acouso-	hearing
aden-, adeno-	gland

adip-, adipo-	fat
adren-, adreno-	gland
angi-, angio-	blood vessel
ateri-, arterio-	artery
arthr-, arthro-	joint
blephar-	eyelid
bronch-, bronchi-	bronchus (large airway that leads from the trachea (windpipe) to a lung)
bucc-, bucco-	cheek
burs-, burso-	bursa (a small, fluid-filled sac that acts as a cushion between a bone and other moving parts)
carcin-, carcino-	cancer
cardi-, cardio-	heart
cephal-, cephalo-	head
chol-	bile
chondr-	cartilage
Coron-	heart
cost-	rib
crani-, cranio-	brain
cutane	skin
cyst-, cysti-, cysto-	bladder or sac
dactyl-, dactylo-	digit (finger or toe)
derm-, dermato-	skin
duodeno-	duodenum (the first part of your small intestine, right after your stomach)
-esthesio	sensation
gloss-, gloss-	tongue
gastr-	stomach
gnath-, gnatho-	jaw
grav-	heavy
hem, hema-, hemat-, hemato-, hemo-	blood
hepat-, hepatico-, hepato-	liver

hidr-, hidro-	sweat
hist-, histio-, histo-	tissue
hyster-, hystero-	uterus
ileo-	ileum (the lower part of the small intestine)
irid-, irido-	iris
ischi-, ischio-	ischium (the lower and back part of the hip bone)
-ium	structure or tissue
kerat-, kerato-	cornea (eye or skin)
lacrim-, lacrimo-	tear (from your eyes)
lact-, lacti-, lacto-	milk
laryng-, laryngo-	larynx (voice box)
lingu-, linguo-	tongue
lip-, lipo-	fat
lith-, litho-	stone
lymph-, lympho-	lymph
mamm, mast-, masto-	breast
mening-, meningo-	meninges (the membranes that surround the brain and spinal cord)
muscul-, musclo-	muscle
my-, myo-	muscle
myel-, myelo-	spinal cord OR bone marrow
myring-, myringo-	eardrum
nephr-, nephro-	kidney
neur-, neur-, neuron	nerve
oculo-	eye
odont-, odonto-	tooth
onych-, onycho-	finger nail, toenail
oo-	egg, ovary
oophor-, oophoro-	ovary
op-, opt-	vision
ophthalm-, ophthalmo-	eye
orchid-, orchido-, orchio-	testis

ossi-	bone
osseo-	bony
ost-, oste-, osteo-	bone
ot-, oto-	ear
ovari-, ovario-, ovi-, ovo-	ovary
phalang-	phalanx (any bone in the fingers or toes)
pharyng-, pharyngo-	pharynx, throat
phleb-, phlebo-	vein
phob-, phobia	fear
phren-, phreni-, phrenico-, phreno-	diaphragm
pleur-, pleura-, pleuro-	rib, pleura (membrane that wraps around the outside of your lungs and lines the inside of your chest cavity)
pneum-, pneuma-, pneumat-, pneumato-	air, lung
pod-, podo	foot
prostat-	prostate
psych-, psyche-, psycho-	mind
proct-, procto-	anus, rectum
pyel-, pyelo-	pelvis
rachi-	spine
rect-, recto-	rectum
ren-, reno-	kidney
retin-	retina (of the eye)
rhin-, rhino-	nose
salping-, salpingo-	tube
sial-, sialo-	saliva, salivary gland
sigmoid-, sigmoido-	sigmoid colon
splanchn-, splanchni-, splanchno-	viscera (internal organ)
sperma-, spermato-, spermo-	sperm
spirat-	breathe
splen-, spleno-	spleen
spondyl-, spondylo-	vertebra
stern-	sternum (breastbone)

stom-, stoma-, stomat-, stomato-	mouth
thel-, thelo-	nipples
thorac-, thoracico-, thoraco-	chest
thromb-, thrombo-	blood clot
thyr-, thyro-	thyroid gland
trache-, tracheo-	trachea (windpipe)
tympan-, tympano-	eardrum
ur-, uro-	urine
uri-, uric-, urico-	uric acid
-uria	in the urine
vagin-	vagina
varic-, varico-	duct, blood vessel
vasculo-	blood vessel
ven-, veno-	vein
vertebr-	vertebra, spine
vesic-, vesico-	vesicle (cyst or pouch)

Positions and Directions

Part	Definition
ab-, abs-	away from
ambi-	both sides
ante-	before, forward
circum-	around
cycl-	circle, cycle
dextr-, dextro-	right side
de-	away from, ending
dia-	across, through
ect-, ecto-, exo-	outer; outside
en-	inside
end-, endo-, ent- enter-, entero-,	within; inner
epi-	Upon, outside of
ex-, extra-	beyond
infra-	beneath; below

inter-	between
intra-	within
meso-	middle
meta-	beyond, change
para-	alongside, abnormal
per-	through
peri-	around
post-	behind, after
pre-	before, in front
retro-	backward, behind
sinistr-, sinistro-	left, left side
sub-	under
super-	above
supra-	above, upon
sy-, syl-, sym-, syn-, sys-	together
trans-	across, through

Numbers and Amounts

Part	Definition
bi-	two
brady-	slow
diplo-	double
hemi-	half
homo-	same
hyper-	above, beyond, excessive
hypo-	under, deficient
iso-	equal, like
macro-	large, long, big
meg-, mega-, megal-, megal-	great, large
-megaly	enlargement
mic-, micro-	small
mon-, mono-	one
multi-	many

olig-, oligo-	few, little
poly-	many, excessive
quadri-	four
semi-	half
tachy-	fast
tetra-	four
tri-	three
uni-	one

Color

Part	Definition
chlor-, chloro-	green
chrom-, chromato-	color
Cyano-	blue
erythr-, erythro-	red
leuk-, leuko-	white
melan-, melano-	black
xanth-, xantho-	yellow

Physical Properties and Shapes

Part	Definition
-cele	bulge
elect-	electrical activity
kin-, kine-, kinesi-, kinesio-, kino-	movement
kyph-, kypho-	humped
morph-, morpho-	shape
rhabd-, rhabdo-	rod-shaped, striated
scoli-, scolio-	twisted
cry-, cryo-	cold
phon-, phono-	sound
phos-	light
phot-, photo-	light
reticul-, reticulo-	net

therm-, thermo-	heat
tono-	tone, tension, pressure

Good and Bad

Part	Definition
-alge-, -algesi	pain
a-, an-	without; lacking
anti-	against
contra-	against
dis-	separation, taking apart
-dynia	pain, swelling
dys-	difficult, abnormal
-eal, -ial	pertaining to
-ectasis	expansion or dilation
-emesis	vomiting
-emia	blood condition
-esis	state or condition
eu-	good, well
-ia	condition
-iasis	condition, formation of
-ism	condition
-ites, -itis	inflammation
-lysis, -lytic, lyso-, lys-	break down, destruction, dissolving
mal-	bad, abnormal
-malacia	softening
-mania	morbid impulse towards an object/thing
myc-, myco-	fungus
myx-, myxo-	mucus
necr-, necro-	death
normo-	normal
-odyn	pain
-oma	tumor
-oid	resembling

orth-, ortho-	straight, normal, correct
-osis	condition, usually abnormal
-pathy, patho-, path-	disease
-penia	deficiency, lack of
-phagia, phagy	eating, swallowing
-phasia	speech
-plasia, -plastic	growth
-plegia	paralysis
-pnea	breathing
-poiesis	production
-praxia	movement
pro-	favoring, supporting
pseudo-	false
pro-	favoring, supporting
-ptosis	falling, drooping
pyo-	pus
pyro-	fever
onco-	tumor, bulk, volume
-rrhage, -rrhagic	bleeding
-rrhea	flow or discharge
sarco-	muscular, fleshlike
schisto-	split, cleft, division
schiz-, schizo	split, cleft
sclera-, sclero-	hardness
-sclerosis	hardening
-sis	condition
-spasm	muscle condition
spasmo-	spasm
-stasis	level, unchanging
sten-, steno-	narrowed, blocked
-taxis	movement
-trophy	growth

Procedures, Diagnosis and Surgery

Parts	Definition
-centesis	surgical puncture to remove fluid
-desis	surgical binding
-ectomy	cut out, removal
-gram, -graph, -graphy	recording, written
-meter	device used for measuring
-metry	measurement of
-opsy	visual examination
-ostomy	opening
-otomy	Incision
-pexy	surgical fixation
-plasty	surgical reconstruction
radio-	radiation, radius
-rrhaphy	suture
-scope, -scopy	examine, for examining
-stomy	surgical opening
-tomy	cutting; incision
-tripsy	crushing

Source: National Institutes of Health: National Library of Medicine. Appendix A: Word Parts and What They Mean. <https://medlineplus.gov/appendixa.html>. Accessed September 7, 2016.