

PRONUNCIATION KEY

The most strongly accented syllable appears in capital letters, for example, bilateral (bĪ-LAT-er-al) and diagnosis (dĪ'-ag-NŌ-sis).

If there is a secondary accent, it is noted by a prime (´), for example, constitution (kon'-sti-TOO-shun) and physiology (fiz'-ē-OL-ō-jē). Any additional secondary accents are also noted by a prime, for example, decarboxylation (dē'-kar-bok'-si-LĀ-shun).

Vowels marked with a line above the letter are pronounced with the long sound, as in the following common words:

ā as in *māke* ē as in *bē*
ī as in *īvy* ō as in *pōle*

Vowels not so marked are pronounced with the short sound, as in the following words:

a as in *above* e as in *bet*
i as in *sip* o as in *not*
u as in *bud*

Other phonetic symbols are used to indicate the following sounds:

oo as in *sue*
yoo as in *cute*
oy as in *oil*

Many medical terms are “compound” words; that is, they are made up of one or more word roots or combining forms of word roots with prefixes or suffixes. For example, *leukocyte* (white blood cell) is a combination of *leuko*, the combining form for the word root meaning “white,” and *cyt*, the word root meaning “cell.” Learning the medical meanings of the fundamental word roots will enable you to analyze many long, complicated terms.

The following list includes the most commonly used combining forms, word roots, prefixes, and suffixes used in medical terms and an example for each.

COMBINING FORMS, WORD ROOTS, PREFIXES, AND SUFFIXES

Many terms used on anatomy and physiology are compound words; that is, they are made up of word roots and one or more prefixes or suffixes. For example, *leukocyte* is formed from the word roots *leuko-*, meaning “white,” and *-cyte*, meaning “cell.” Thus, a leukocyte is a white blood cell. The following list includes some of the most commonly used combining forms, word roots, prefixes, and suffixes used in the study of anatomy and physiology. Each entry includes a usage example. Learning the meanings of these fundamental word parts will help you to remember the terms that, at first glance, may seem long or complicated.

Combining Forms and Word Roots

Acr-, Acro- extremity; Acromegaly

Aden- gland; Adenoma

Angi- vessel; Angiocardiology

Arthr-, Arthro- joint; Arthritis, arthroscopy

Aut-, Auto- self; Autolysis

Audit- hearing; Auditory canal

bio- life, living; Biopsy

blast- germ, bud; Blastomere

Brachi- arm; Brachial plexus

Bucc- cheek; Buccal

Capit- head; Decapitate

Carcin- cancer; Carcinogen

Cardi-, Cardia-, Cardio- heart; Cardiogram

Cephal- head; Hydrocephalus

Cerebro- brain; Cerebrospinal fluid

Chondr-, Chond- cartilage; Chondrocyte

Cost- rib; Intercostal

Crani- skull; Cranial cavity

Derma-, Dermat- skin; Dermatology

Dur- hard; Dura mater

Enter, Entero- intestine; Gastroenterology

Erythr-, Erythro- red; Erythrocyte

Gastr-, Gastro- stomach; Gastrointestinal tract

Gloss-, Glosso- tongue; Hypoglossal

Glyco- sugar; Glycogen

Gon- seed; Gonad

Gyn- female, woman; Gynecology

Hem-, Hemato- blood; Hematoma

Hepar-, Hepat- liver; Hepatic duct

Hist-, Histo- tissue; Histology