

INTRODUCTION TO MEDICAL TERMINOLOGY



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HOW TO BUILD A MEDICAL WORD

It can be very difficult and confusing to understand what medical terminology means. However, the reason that the words are so long is that they are made up of lots of individual building blocks. Once you begin to understand what each of the building blocks mean, it becomes much simpler to understand the whole words.

Medical words have FOUR main components (though not every word has all four):



A prefix goes at the beginning of the word. It modifies the meaning of the word.

The root or stem is the basic medical word.

A combining vowel is used to make the word easier to pronounce. The most common combining vowel is **O**.

The suffix goes at the end of the word. It is another way of altering the meaning of the word.

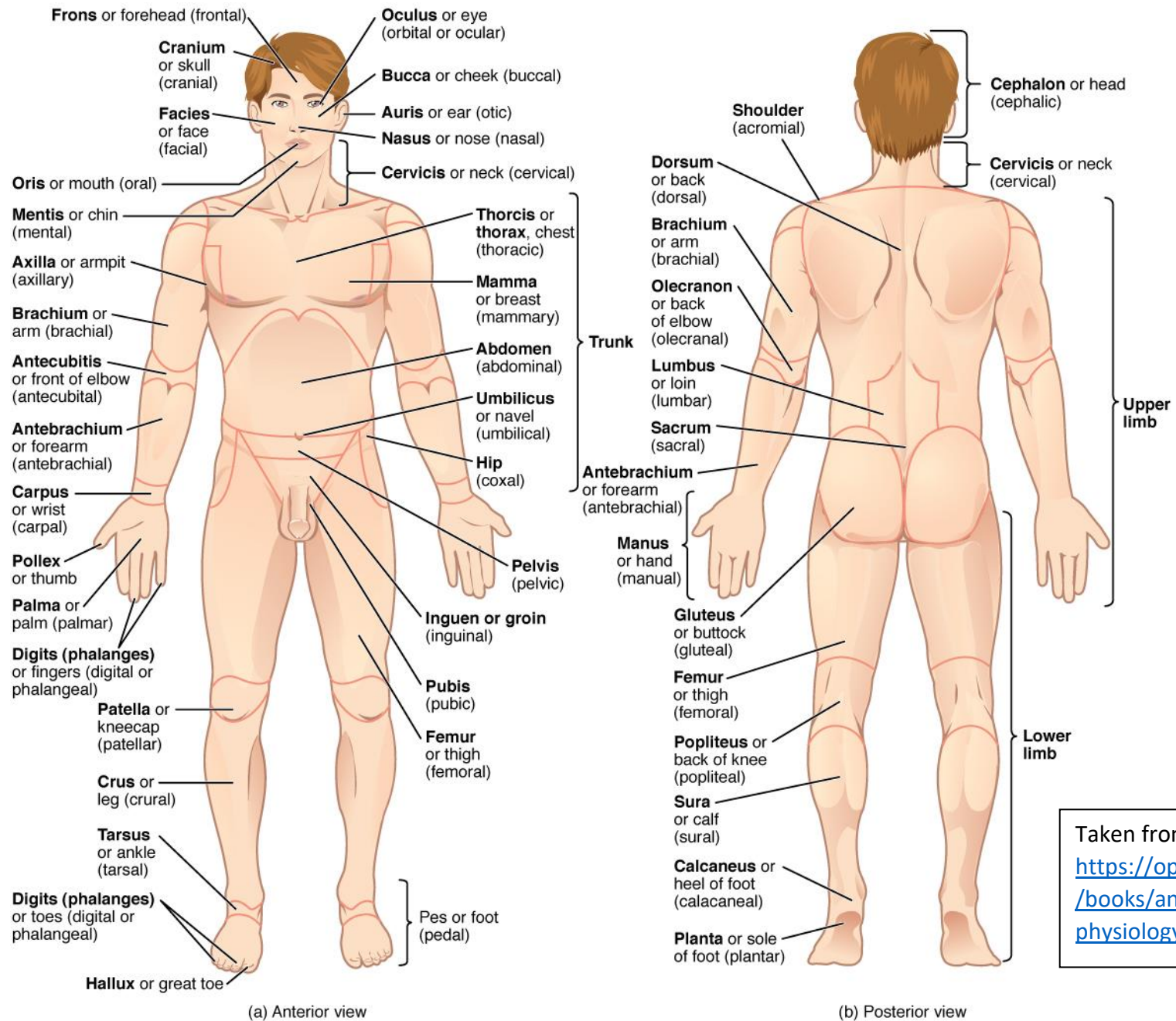
It is often easiest to read backwards to find the meaning of the word.

For example:

POLYNEUROPATHY		
POLY-	-NEURO-	-PATHY
many	nerves	disease
'disease of many nerves'		

HEPATOMEGALY		
HEPAT-	-O-	-MEGALY
liver	combining vowel	enlargement
'enlargement of the liver'		

ELECTROCARDIOGRAPHY			
ELECTRO-	-CARDI-	-O-	-GRAPHY
electricity	heart	combining vowel	recording
'recording of the electrical activity of the heart'			



Taken from:
<https://openstax.org/details/books/anatomy-and-physiology>

PREFIXES

PREFIX	MEANING
a- or an-	without
ab-	away from
acou-	hearing
acro-	extremity
ad-	towards
aero-	air
af-	towards/near
agora-	open space
ambi-	both
amblyo-	dim/dull
ana-	up, excessive
aniso-	unequal
ankylo-	crooked/bent
ante-	before
anti-	against
apo-	away from
audio-	hearing
auto-	self
baso-	basic
bio-	life
blasto-	immature/germ cell
brady-	slow
cata-	down
chemo-	chemical
circum-	around
co-/con-	together
contra-	against
cryo-	cold
crypto-	hidden
de-	away from/reversing
dextra-	to the right
dia-	through
dis-	against/separation
disto-	far
dorso-	dorsal (back)
dys-	difficult/abnormal/painful
ec-	out of/away from
ecto-	external/without/outside
em-	in
en-/endo-	within, in, into, inside
ent-	within
epi-	upon/above/on
eu-	well, good, normal
ex-/exo-	out of/away from

PREFIX	MEANING
extra-	outside
fore-	before/in front of
gen-	birth or producing
haemo-	blood
hetero-	different, other
homeo- /homo-	like, similar, same
hyper-	above, in excess of normal
hypo-	below, under, less than normal
ichthyo-	dry/scaly
idio-	peculiar to the individual
in-	in
infra-	below
inter-	between
intra-	within
iso-	equal, same
juxta-	next to
koilo-	spoon
kypho-	crooked, humped, rounded
latero-	side
leavo-	left
lepto-	thin, soft
lordo-	bent forward
macro-	large
mal-	bad, abnormal
mano-	pressure
medi-	middle
mega- /megalo-	big, enlarged
meso-	middle
meta-	beyond
mio-	smaller
narco-	stupor
neo-	new
nocto- /nycto-	night
oligo-	scanty/deficiency
opistho-	backwards
ortho-	straight
os-	opening, bone
pachy-	thick
pan-	all
para-	alongside, close to, beside

PREFIX	MEANING
ped-	foot, child
per-	through
peri-	around
photo-	light
post-	after
pre-/pro-	before
presbyo-	old age
proximo-	near
pseudo-	false
re-	again/back
retro-	behind
sapro-	dead/decayed
sarco-	flesh
sclero-	hard
scolio-	crooked
scota-	darkness
sono-	sound
squamo-	scaly
staphylo-	grapes/cluster
steno-	narrow
strepto-	chain
sub-	below
super-/supra-	above
syn-	with, union
tachy-	fast, rapid
tact-	touching
trans-	across/through
ultra-	beyond
uni-	one
ventro-	front/anterior
xer/o-	dry

ROOTS/STEMS

GENERAL TERMINOLOGY	
ROOT/STEM	MEANING
actin	ray/sun
adipo	fat
albumen	albumin
albumin	albumin
amyl	starch
andr	man
antr	antrum
append(ic)	appendix
aqua	water
axill	axilla (armpit)
bar	weight
blenn	mucus
cheil	lip
corpor	body
culd	recto-uterine sac
cyt	cell
dacry	tear (duct)
dent	tooth
derm(at)	skin
electr	electricity
embol	plug
faci	face/surface
ferr	iron
f(o)et	foetus
galact	milk
gingiv	gums
glyco	sugar
gyn(aec)	woman
herni	hernia, protrusion
hidr	sweating
hirsut	hair(y)
hist	tissue
hydr	water, fluid
hygr	moisture
iatr	physician
immun	immunity
kal	potassium
kary	nucleus
lac(h)rym	tear
lacrim	tear
lact	milk
lip	fat
lob	lobe

metro	measure
morph	form, dream
my(c(et))o	fungus
myxo	mucus membrane
narco	deep sleep/stupor
natro	sodium
necro	death
noct	night
nucle	nucleus
nyct	night
odont	tooth
onc	tumour
onych	nail
oro	mouth
os	mouth
paed	child
palat	roof of the mouth
path	disease
perine	perineum
peritone	peritoneum
pharmac	drug
phon	voice
pil	hair
polyp	growth from a mucous membrane
py	pus
pyr	fire, heat, fever
sacchar	sugar
sarc	flesh
ser	serum
sin	space, sinus
somat	body
splanch	viscera/organs
steat	fat
syring	cavity/tube
therm	heat
tox(ic)	poison
trich	hair
troph	nourishment
ulcer(at)	ulcer
vesic	bladder/vesicle/fluid-filled blister
vol	palm
zoo	animal

CARDIOVASCULAR SYSTEM	
ROOT/STEM	MEANING
angi	vessel
aort	aorta
arteri	artery
ather	plaque lining blood vessels
atri	atrium
cardi	heart
coron	heart
endocardi	lining of heart
haem(at)	blood
myocardi	myocardium (heart muscle)
pericardi	outer layer of the heart
phleb	vein
sanguin	blood
sphygmo	pulse
thrombo	blood clot
thrombocyt	platelet
valv(ul)o	valve
varico	varicose veins
vasculo	blood vessel
vaso	vessel
ven	vein
ventric(ul)o	ventricle (lower chamber of heart)

enter	intestine
gastr	stomach
hep(at)	liver
ile	ileum (part of intestine)
jejun	jejunum (part of intestine)
lapar	abdomen/abdominal wall
oesophag	oesophagus
pancreat	pancreas
phag	swallow, eat
proct	rectum/anus
ptyalo	saliva
pylor	part of stomach
rect	rectum
sial	salivary gland
sigmoid	part of colon
stoma(t)	mouth

DIGESTIVE (GASTROINTESTINAL) SYSTEM	
ROOT/STEM	MEANING
abdomin	abdomen/abdominal wall
an	anus
bili	bile
bucc	cheek
caec	caecum
col(on)	colon
cholangi	bile/biliary vessels
chole	bile
cholecyst	gallbladder
choledoch	common bile duct
duoden	duodenum (part of intestine)

ENDOCRINE SYSTEM	
ROOT/STEM	MEANING
aden	gland
adren	adrenal gland
endocrin	endocrine (concerning hormones)
hypophys	pituitary gland
parathyr	parathyroid gland
parot	parotid gland
prostat	prostate gland
thymo	thymus gland
thyr	thyroid gland

LYMPHATIC SYSTEM	
ROOT/STEM	MEANING
aden	gland
lymph	lymphatic, lymph
lymphaden	lymph gland
lymphangl	lymph vessel
splen	spleen

MUSCULOSKELETAL SYSTEM	
ROOT/STEM	MEANING
acetabul	acetabulum (part of the hip)
arthr	joint
articul	joint
brachi	arm
burs	bursa
carp	wrist
cephal	head
cervic	neck
cheir	hand
chondr	cartilage
clavicul	clavicle (collar bone)
cost	rib
coxyg	coccyx
crani	cranium
dactyl	finger/toe
digit	finger/toe
disc	disc between vertebrae
ethmoid	part of the cranium
femor	femur
fibul	fibula
front	front part of cranium
gnath	jaw
hallux	big toe
humer	humerus
ili	ilium (part of pelvis)
ischi	ischium (part of hip)
lamino	lamina (part of vertebra)
mal(ar)	cheek bone
mandibul	lower jaw
mastoid	mastoid (part of ear)
maxill	upper jaw
myel	bone marrow/spinal cord
myo(s)	muscle
occipit	occipital bone (part of the cranium)
olecran	part of the elbow
os	bone
ossic(ul)	ossicles (ear bones)

oste	bone
pariet	parietal bone (part of the cranium)
patell	patellar (knee cap)
ped	foot
phalangio	fingers, toes
pleuro-	rib
podo	foot
pollex	thumb
pub	pubis
pyel	pelvis
rachio	spine
radio	radiation, radius (arm bone)
rhabdomyo	striated muscle
sacr	sacrum
scapulo	shoulder blade
sphenoido	part of the cranium
spondyl	vertebra
sterno	sternum (breast bone)
synovo	synovial
tarso	foot
temporo	temporal bone
ten(din)o	tendon
tibio	tibia (main lower leg bone)
turbino	bone in the nose (turbinate)
ulno	ulna (arm bone)
vertebr	vertebra
zygo(mato)	cheek bone (zygomatic)

NERVOUS SYSTEM AND MENTAL HEALTH	
ROOT/STEM	MEANING
cerebell	cerebellum (part of the brain)
cerebr	brain
encephal	brain
mening	meninges
neur	nerve
phren	mind
psych(o)	mind
radiculo	nerve root

REPRODUCTIVE SYSTEM	
ROOT/STEM	MEANING
balan	penis
cervic	cervix
colp	vagina
endometri	endometrium (lining of uterus)
genit	genital
hyster	womb/uterus
mamm	breast
mast	breast
men(o)-	menstruation
metro	uterus
myometri	myometrium (uterus muscle)
oestr	oestrogen
oo	egg/ovum
oophor	ovary
orchi(d)	testicle/testis
ovar	ovary
pen	penis
phall	penis
salping	fallopian tube
spermato	spermatozoa/semen
thelo	nipples
tilo	breast
uter	uterus (womb)

RESPIRATORY SYSTEM	
ROOT/STEM	MEANING
alveol	air sac
bronch	bronchus
bronchiol	bronchiole
epiglott	epiglottis
laryng	larynx
pharyng	pharynx
phren	diaphragm
pleuro	pleura/side
pneumo(no)	air/gas/lung
pnoea	breathing
pulmon	lung
spiro	breath
steth	thorax/chest
thorac(ic)o	thorax
tonsillo	tonsils

tracheo	trachea
uvulo	uvula
SENSORY ORGANS	
ROOT/STEM	MEANING
aur	ear
blephar	eyelid
choroid	choroid (layer of eye)
cor(e)	pupil
cycl	ciliary body (of eye)
gloss	tongue
irid	iris
kerat	cornea, skin
labyrinth	labyrinth (ear)
lingu	tongue
myring	eardrum
nas	nose
ocul	eye
ophthalm	eye
opt	sight
orbit	part of the eye socket
ot	ear
phako	lens (eye)
retin	retina
rhin	nose
tarso	eyelid
tympan	eardrum
uveo	uveal tract (part of eye)
vestibulo	vestibule of inner ear

URINARY SYSTEM	
ROOT/STEM	MEANING
cyst	bladder
glomerul	glomerulus (part of kidney)
nephr	kidney
pyel	kidney
ren	kidney
ureter	ureter
urethr	urethra
ur(in)o	urine, urinary organs

SUFFIXES

SUFFIX	MEANING
-a	condition of
-ac	concerning/pertaining
-aemia	blood
-aesthesi a	sensibility
-al	pertaining to
-algia	pain
-an	pertaining to
-ase	enzyme
-ate	a salt
-blast	immature cell
-cele	swelling/protrusion/herniation
-chezia	defecation
-cide	killing, destroying
-clasis	breaking
-coccus	round cell, type of bacteria
-crine	secrete
-cyte	cell
-derm	skin
-desis	binding together
-dipsia	thirst
-dynia	pain
-ectasis	dilatation (enlargement)
-form	having the form/shape of
-fuge	expelling
-gen	producing/forming/origin
-genesis	forming or origin
-genic	producing or forming
-gogue	increasing flow
-gram	a picture
-graph	a machine which records
-graphy	the procedure of recording
-gravid	pregnancy
-ia	condition of/state of
-iasis	condition of/state of
-iatric	pertaining to medicine/treatment
-ic	concerning/pertaining to
-iosis	condition of/state of
-ism	condition of/state of
-itis	inflammation of

-ive	relating to, belonging to, of the nature of, tending to
-kinesis	movement, activity
-lalia	speech
-lith	stone
-lithesis	slipping
-lithiasis	condition of stones
SUFFIX	MEANING
-malacia	softening
-megaly	enlargement
-meter	measure
-oedema	swelling caused by excess fluid
-oid	likeness, resemblance
-ology	scientific study of
-oma	tumour
-opia	condition of the eye
-opsia	vision
-opsy	looking at
-osis	condition of
-ous	like, similar to
-paresis	weakness
-pathy	disease
-penia	lack of, decreased
-phage	eating/ingesting/swallowing
-phagia	eating/ingesting/swallowing
-phakia	lens of the eye
-phasia	speech
-philia	loving, affinity for
-phobia	irrational fear of
-phylaxis	protection, prevention
-plasia	formation
-plegia	paralysis
-pnoea	breathing
-poiesis	making
-ptosis	drooping/falling
-ptysis	cough
-rhythmia	rhythm
-rrhage	heavy bleeding
-rrhagia	condition of heavy bleeding
-rrhexis	rupture of
-rrhoea	flowing, discharge
-sclerosis	hardening
-scope	lighted instrument used for examination

-somatic	pertaining to the body
-spadia	to draw out
-stasis	cessation of movement/flow

-stat	an agent to prevent moving or change
-staxis	dripping (blood)/continuous slight loss

-stenosis	narrowing
-sthe(a)nia	strength

-taxia	co-ordination, order
-tocia	labour/birth
-tome	cutting instrument

-tripsy	crushing
-triptor	instrument used to crush
-trophy	nourishment, food
-trop(h)ic	affinity, turning toward
-tussis	cough
-uria	condition of urine

SURGICAL PROCEDURES

SUFFIX	MEANING
-centesis	puncture, drawing off
-cision	cutting
-clysis	injection/infusion
-ectomy	surgical removal of
-lysis	breaking down/splitting
-pexy	fixation of
-plasty	form, mould, reconstruct
-rrhaphy	sewing, repair
-scopy	examination with a lighted instrument
-stomy	artificial opening into
-tomy	to cut into, divide

For example:

ARTHROSCOPY		
ARTHR-	-O-	-SCOPY
joint	combining vowel	examination with a lighted instrument
'examination of the inside of a joint with a lighted instrument'		

ORCHIOPEXY		
ORCHI-	-O-	-PEXY
testicles	combining vowel	fixation of
'fixation of an undescended testicle'		

TRACHEOSTOMY		
TRACHE-	-O-	-STOMY
trachea	combining vowel	artificial opening
'an artificial opening into the trachea'		

CLASSIFICATION OF DISEASES AND ASSOCIATED TERMS

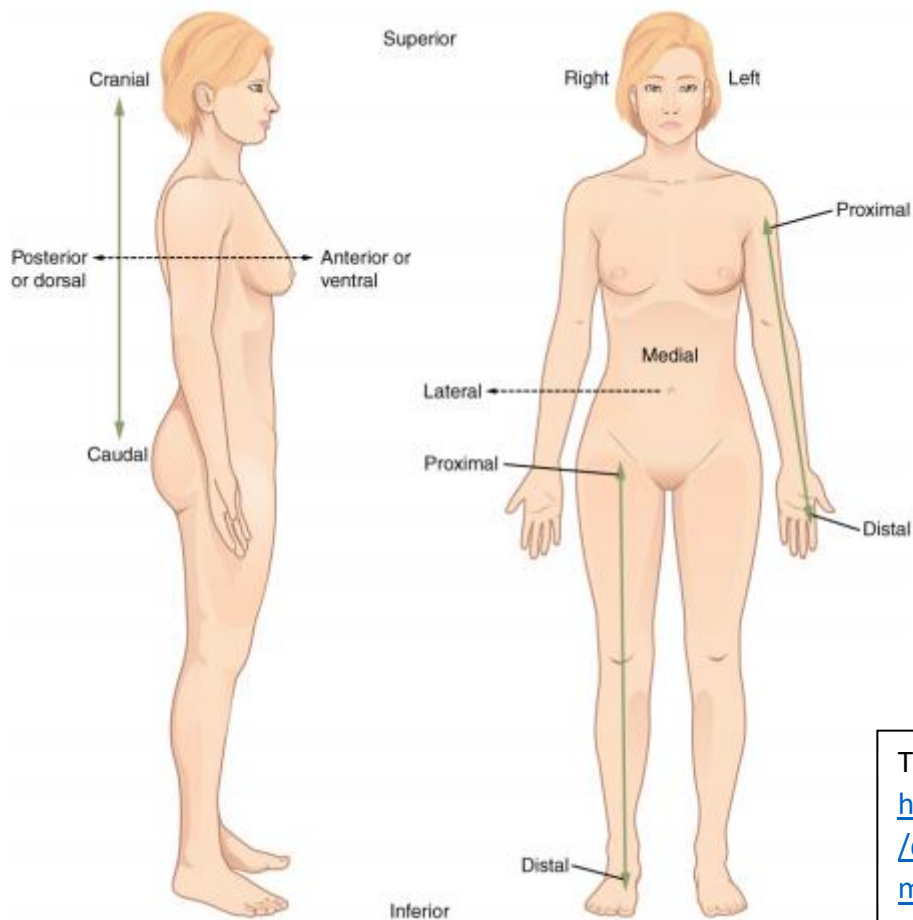
TERM	MEANING
A	
acquired	occurring after birth
acute	of sudden onset
aetiology	the scientific study of the cause of disease
allergic	hypersensitivity to foreign protein
atrophy	wastage or shrinking of an organ
B	
benign	not harmful or not invasive
C	
chronic	of long, slow duration
congenital	present at birth
cryptogenic	of doubtful or hidden origin
D	
diagnosis	determination of the nature of disease using signs and symptoms
differential diagnosis	one of a list of possible diagnoses given the presenting signs and symptoms
dystrophy	disorder of an organ or tissue caused by faulty nutrition of the affected part
E	
empirical	treatment given based on experience, not on scientific reasoning
epidemiology	study of the cause of disease including social factors
exacerbate	increase in the severity of symptoms of a disease
F	
familial	occurs in families
functional	affects the bodily function
H	
hypertrophy	increase in the size of tissue or an organ
I	
iatrogenic	condition caused by a healthcare professional or by medical treatment
idiopathic	self-originating – applied to conditions where the cause is not known
infective/infectious	disease capable of being spread from one person (or animal) to another
M	
malignant	harmful, damaging condition which may worsen
metabolic	concerning disorder of basic working (physiology) of the body

morbid	abnormal
N	
neoplastic	producing new growths (cancerous)
O	
organic	structural abnormality demonstrated
P	
prognosis	forecast of the probable cause and outcome of a disease
S	
sub-clinical	not producing any obvious signs or symptoms
syndrome	collection of three or more signs and symptoms which together form a disease
systemic	involving the entire body
T	
toxic	caused by poison/poisonous
traumatic	caused by injury/damage

ANATOMICAL PLANES AND POSITIONS

Anatomical positions are used to describe the relative locations of body parts. This helps to ensure precision when talking about the body.

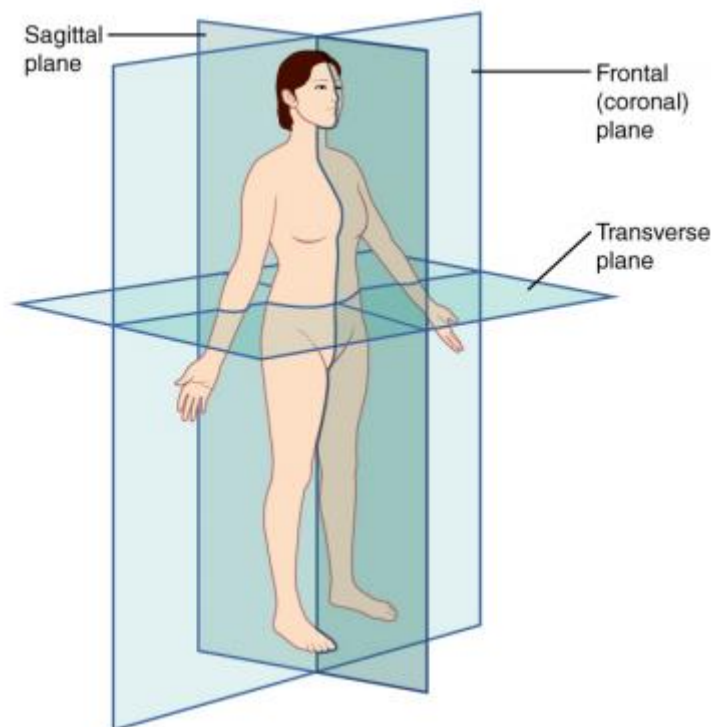
ANATOMICAL POSITIONS	
anterior (or ventral)	the front or toward the front
posterior (or dorsal)	the back or toward the back
superior (or cranial)	the upper section or toward the head
inferior (or caudal)	the lower section or toward the tail
lateral	the side or toward the side
medial	the middle or toward the middle
proximal (for limbs)	nearer the point of attachment or the trunk of the body
distal (for limbs)	further from the point of attachment or the trunk of the body
superficial	closer to the surface of the body
deep	further from the surface of the body



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Anatomical planes are imaginary two-dimensional surfaces that pass through the body. They divide the body into sections. Using anatomical planes and sections helps clinicians to interpret scans.

ANATOMICAL PLANES	
frontal/coronal	lengthwise (vertically) from side to side, dividing the body into anterior (ventral) and posterior (dorsal) sections
horizontal/transverse	divides body horizontally into upper and lower parts, providing images referred to as 'cross-sections'
sagittal	lengthwise (vertically from front to back) – a line directly down the middle is referred to as a midsagittal or median plane; a line either side of the middle is called a parasagittal plane or longitudinal section



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CLINICAL ABBREVIATIONS

ABBREVIATION	MEANING
#	fracture
-	negative
+	positive OR present
++	present significantly
+++	present in excess
=	equivalent to
~	approximately
↑	increasing
↓	decreasing
↔	stable
Δ	diagnosis
/7	days
/12	months
/40	weeks' gestation
/52	weeks
1°	primary
2°	secondary
x	times
A	
A&W	alive and well
AAA	abdominal aortic aneurysm
AAND	allow a natural death
ab	abortion
ABC	aspiration, biopsy, cytology
abd(o)	abdomen/abdominal
ABG	arterial blood gas
ABMP	ambulatory blood pressure monitoring
AHMP	approved mental health practitioner
ABR	auditory brain stem response
acc	accommodation
ACE(I)	angiotensin-converting enzyme (inhibitor)
ACJ	acromioclavicular joint
ACL	anterior cruciate ligament
ACTH	adrenocorticotrophic hormone
ACS	acute coronary syndrome
AD/ad	right ear (auris dextra)
ADD	attention deficit disorder
ADH	antidiuretic hormone

ADHD	attention deficit hyperactivity disorder
ADL	activities of daily living
ADT	admissions, discharges and transfers
ADV	advocate
A/E	air entry into lungs
AET/aet	aged
AF	artificial feeding OR atrial fibrillation
AFP	alpha-fetoprotein
AGN	acute glomerulonephritis
AHF	antihaemophilic factor
AHP	allied health professional
AI	artificial insemination
AIA	allergy induced autism
AID	artificial insemination by donor
AIDS	acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
AIH	artificial insemination by husband
ALL	acute lymphocytic leukaemia
ALS	amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (MND)
AMD	age-related macular degeneration
AMHP	approved mental health professional
AML	acute myeloid leukaemia
AMR	antimicrobial resistance
AN	antenatal
ANS	autonomic nervous system
ant	anterior
AP	artificial pneumothorax OR anterior-posterior
AP&L	anterior, posterior and lateral
APH	anteartum haemorrhage
appt	appointment
APT	activated prothrombin time
APTT	activated partial thromboplastin time
AR	aortic regurgitation OR aortic valve replacement

ARB	angiotensin receptor blocker
ARC	AIDS-related complex
ARM	artificial rupture of membranes
ART	assisted reproductive technology
AS	left ear (auris sinister) OR aortic stenosis OR abdominal system
ASD	autism spectrum disorder OR atrial septal defect
ASHD	arteriosclerotic heart disease
ASIS	anterior superior iliac spine
ASQ	ages and stages questionnaire
Ast	astigmatism
AST	aspartate transaminase (cardiac enzyme)
ATFL	anterior talofibular ligament
ATP	adenosine triphosphate
AU/au	both ears (aures unitas) OR each ear (auris uterque)
AV	atrioventricular
Ax	assessment
AXR	abdominal x-ray
B	
BaE	barium enema
BaM	barium meal
BAU	business as usual
BBA	born before arrival
BBV	blood-borne virus
BCC	basal cell carcinoma
BCG	bacillus Camille-Guérin (TB vaccine)
BESD	behavioural, emotional and social difficulties
BF	breastfeeding
BFZ	bendroflumethiazide (diuretic medication)
BI	bone injury
BID	brought in dead
BM	bowel movement OR Boehringer Mannheim (blood glucose)
BMI	body mass index
BNO	bladder neck obstruction OR bowels not opened
BO	bowels open

BP	bipolar disorder OR blood pressure
BPD	borderline personality disorder OR bipolar disorder
BPM	beats per minute
Br	breach
BRCA	breast cancer gene
BS	breath sounds OR bilateral salpingectomy OR blood sugar OR bowel sounds
BSE	bovine spongiform encephalopathy ('mad cow' disease)
BSL	British sign language
BSO	bilateral salpingo-oophorectomy (surgical removal of the Fallopian tubes and ovaries)
BUN	blood urea nitrogen
BW	birth weight
Bx	biopsy
C	
(m)C&S	(micro)culture and sensitivity
c/c	chief complaint
C/O	complains of
C/S	caesarean section
C1, C2, etc.	cervical vertebrae
C diff	<i>Clostridium difficile</i>
Ca	carcinoma OR calcium
CA	chronological age OR cancer
CAB/C&B	choose and book
CABG	coronary artery bypass graft
CABS	coronary artery bypass surgery
CAD	coronary artery disease
CAPD	continuous ambulatory peritoneal dialysis
CAT	computerised axial tomography (type of scan: computerised X-ray of layers of tissue)
CAUTI	catheter-associated urinary tract infection
CBT	cognitive behavioural therapy
CCB	calcium channel blocker
CCF	congestive cardiac failure

CCG	clinical commissioning group
CCT	controlled cord traction
CD or cd or CD	controlled drugs
CDH	congenital dislocation of the hip
ceph	cephalic
CF	cystic fibrosis
CFS	chronic fatigue syndrome
CHD	coronary heart disease
CHF	congestive heart failure
CIBH	change in bowel habits
CIC	child in care
CIN (I-IV)	cervical intra-epithelial neoplasia OR child in need
CJD	Creutzfeldt-Jacob disease
CKD	chronic kidney disease
CLL	chronic lymphocytic leukaemia
CMC	carpometacarpal joint
CHMN	community mental health nurse
CML	chronic myeloid leukaemia
CNS	central nervous system OR clinical nurse specialist
CO	carbon monoxide
C°	Celsius
CO ₂	carbon dioxide
COAD	chronic obstructive airway disease
COC(P)	combined oral contraceptive (pill)
COHS	controlled ovarian hormone stimulation
COLD	chronic obstructive lung disease
conts	contractions
COPD	chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
(n)CoV	(novel) coronavirus
CPAP	continuous positive airway pressure
CPD	cephalo-pelvic disproportion
CPK	creatine phosphokinase (cardiac enzyme) OR care package
CPN	community psychiatric nurse
CPR	cardiopulmonary resuscitation
CPT	carpal tunnel syndrome

CQC	Care Quality Commission
CQUIN	commissioning for quality and innovation
Cr	creatinine
CRL	crown rump length
CROM	clinician reported outcome measure
CRP	C-reactive protein (indicates presence of inflammation within the body)
CRT	capillary refill time
CSF	cerebrospinal fluid
CSp	cervical spine
CSU	catheter specimen of urine
CT	coronary thrombosis OR computerised tomography
CTG	cardiotocograph
CTO	community or compulsory treatment order
CTPA	computer tomography pulmonary angiogram
CVA	cerebrovascular accident (stroke) OR costo-vertebral angle
CVC	cyclic(al) vomiting syndrome
CVD	cardiovascular disease
CVP	central venous pressure
CVS	chorionic villus sampling (to detect foetal abnormalities) OR cardiovascular system
Cx	cervix
CXR	chest x-ray
D	
D	diopter (lens strength)
D&C	dilatation and curettage (scraping out of womb)
D&V	diarrhoea and vomiting
d/c	discharge
D/W	discussed with
D2A	discharged to assess
DAMA	discharged against medical advice
db	decibel (measure of volume)
DBP	diastolic blood pressure
DBT	dialectical behaviour therapy
DC	day case
DCIS	ductal carcinoma in situ (type of breast cancer)

DD	delayed discharges
Dec	deceased
DEXA	dual energy x-ray absorptiometry (bone density scan)
DH	drug history
DIP	distal interphalangeal joints
DLE	disseminated/discoid lupus erythematosus
DM	diabetes mellitus
DMARD	disease-modifying anti-rheumatic drug
DNA	did not attend OR deoxyribonucleic acid
DNA(CP)R	do not attempt (cardiopulmonary) resuscitation
DNR	do not resuscitate
DOA	dead on arrival
DOAC	direct oral anticoagulant
DOB/dob	date of birth
Dr	doctor
DRUJ	distal radioulnar joint
DT	delirium tremens OR diphtheria, tetanus vaccine
DTaP	diphtheria, tetanus, acellular pertussis vaccine
DTOC	delayed transfer of care
DTP	diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (whooping cough) vaccine
DTs	delirium tremens
DTwP	diphtheria, tetanus, whole cell pertussis
DU	duodenal ulcer
DUB	dysfunctional uterine bleeding
DV	domestic violence
DVT	deep vein thrombosis
DWP	discussed with patient
Dx	diagnosis
Dxr	deep x-ray
DXT	deep x-ray therapy/treatment
E	
EBL	estimated blood loss
EBM	expressed breast milk
EBT	electron beam tomography
ECG	electrocardiogram

ECT	electroconvulsive therapy
ECV	external cephalic version
ED	erectile dysfunction OR emergency department OR eating disorder
EDC	expected date of confinement
EDD	expected date of delivery OR expected date of discharge
EEG	electroencephalogram
eGFR	estimated glomerular filtration rate
EHC	emergency hormonal contraception
EHR	electronic health record
EI	early intervention
EI C/S	elective lower segment caesarean section
EI LSCS	elective lower segment caesarean section
EMA	emergency medical admission
Em C/S	emergency lower segment caesarean section
Em LSCS	emergency lower segment caesarean section
EMG	electromyogram
EMI	elderly, mentally ill/infirm
EMS	early morning stiffness
EMU	early morning urine sample
EOF	end organ failure
EOLC	end of life care
EOM	extraocular movement
EP	emergency plan
EPR	electronic patient records
ERCP	endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatography
ERPC	evacuation of retained products of conception
ESD	early supported discharge
ESL	extracorporeal shock-wave lithotripsy
ESMI	elderly, severely mentally ill/infirm
ESN	educationally sub-normal
ESR	erythrocyte sedimentation rate
ETA	estimated time of arrival

ETP	electronic transmission of prescriptions
EUA	examination under anaesthetic
EVS	external ventricular drain
F	
FAROM	full active range of movement
FAS	foetal abnormality or alcohol syndrome
FAST	focused assessment with sonography in trauma
FB	foreign body OR finger breadth OR fasting blood
FBC	full blood count
FBG	fasting blood glucose
FBS	fasting blood sugar (to determine diabetes mellitus or low blood sugars) OR foetal blood sampling
FDIU	foetal death in utero
Fe	iron
FEV ₁	forced expiration volume (small number shows timed interval in seconds)
FFP	frozen fresh plasma
FGC	female genital cutting
FGM	female genital mutilation
FH	family history OR foetal heart OR familial hypercholesterolaemia
FHH	foetal heart heard
FHHR	foetal heart heard and regular
FHNH	foetal heart not heard
FiO ₂	fraction of inspired oxygen
FMF	foetal movement felt
FMRI	functional magnetic resonance imaging
FMS	fine motor skills
FNA	fine needle aspiration
FNE	fibre optic nasal endoscopy
FOOSH	fall on outstretched hand
FPROM	full passive range of movement
FROM	full range of movement
FSE	foetal scalp electrode
FSH	follicle stimulating hormone
FTND	full term normal delivery

FU	follow up
FUO	fever of unknown origin
FVC	forced vital capacity
FWB	fully weight bearing
FY (1/2)	foundation year (1/2) doctor
G	
G&A	gas and air
G&S	blood group and save
G&X match	blood group and cross match
GA	general anaesthesia
GAD	general anxiety disorder
GCA	giant cell arteritis
GCS	Glasgow Coma Scale
GH	growth hormone
GHJ	glenohumeral joint
GI(T)	gastrointestinal tract
GIRFT	getting it right first time
GIFT	gamete intra-fallopian transplantation
GMS	gross motor skills
GOK	God only knows
GORD	gastro-oesophageal reflux disease
GOT	glutaminoxalo-acetic transaminase (cardiac enzyme)
GP	General practitioner OR gutta parcha (root canal filling)
GPI	general paralysis of the insane
GTT	glucose tolerance test (to diagnose diabetes mellitus)
GU	genitourinary OR gastric ulcer
GUM	genitourinary medicine
GUS	genitourinary system
GUT	genitourinary tract
GVHD	graft vs. host disease (in transplants)
H	
H/O	history of
H ₂ O	water
HAI	hospital-acquired or healthcare-associated infection
Hb	haemoglobin

HbA _{1c} , HBA ₁ or HbA _{1c}	blood test for diabetes mellitus
HBL	horizontal bone loss OR horizontal beam lateral
HC	head circumference
HCG	human chorionic gonadotrophic hormone
HCl	hydrochloric acid
HCM	hypertrophic (obstructive) cardiomyopathy
HCP	healthcare professional
HCT	haematocrit
HCTZ	hydrochlorothiazide (high blood pressure medication)
HD	Huntington's disease OR high definition OR heloma durum (hard corn on the foot)
HDL	high-density lipoprotein
HE	healthy eating OR higher education
Hep A	hepatitis A viral infection (waterborne)
Hep B	hepatitis B viral infection (bodily fluids)
Hep C	hepatitis C viral infection
HETF	home enteral tube feeding
HF	heart failure
Hg	mercury
HI	hypodermic injection OR hearing impairment OR head injury
HIB	haemophilus influenzae bacillus – immunisation for babies
HIV	human immunodeficiency virus
HM	hand movement
HMR	hospital medical record
HNPU	has not passed urine
HoCM	hypertrophic (obstructive) cardiomyopathy
Hp	helicobacter pylori
HPC	history of present complaint
HPL	human placental lactogen
HPU	has passed urine
HPV	human papilloma virus
HR	human resources OR hallux rigidus

HR(/P)	heart rate(/pulse)
HRT	hormone replacement therapy
hrs	hours
HS	heart sounds
HSV	herpes simplex virus
ht	height
HTN	hypertension
HUS	haemolytic uraemic syndrome
HVGD	host vs. graft disease
HVS	high vaginal swab
Hx	history
I	
I&C	incision and curettage
IBD	inflammatory bowel disease
IBS	irritable bowel syndrome
IDDM	insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus
IDVA	independent domestic violence advisor
IF	interstitial fluid
Ig	immunoglobulin
IgA	immunoglobulin (gamma) A
IgBF	immunoglobulin (gamma) binding factor
IgD	immunoglobulin (gamma) D
IgE	immunoglobulin (gamma) E
IgG	immunoglobulin (gamma) G
IgM	immunoglobulin (gamma) M
IGT	impaired glucose tolerance
IGTN	in-growing toenail
IM	intermetatarsal OR intramuscular
IMB	inter-menstrual bleeding
IMCA	independent mental capacity advocate
INR	international normalised ratio (prothrombin time)
IOFB	intraocular foreign body
IOL	induction of labour
IOP	intraocular pressure
IP	inpatient
IP&C	infection prevention and control
IPJ	interphalangeal joint
IPPB	intermittent positive pressure breathing

IPPV	intermittent positive pressure ventilation
IPV	inactivated polio virus/vaccine
IQ	intelligence quotient
ISQ	in status quo (no change)
ITB	iliotibial band
IUC	idiopathic ulcerative colitis
IUCD	intra-uterine contraceptive device
IUD	intra-uterine device OR intra-uterine death
IUFB	intra-uterine foreign body
IUGR	intra-uterine growth restriction
IUI	intra-uterine insemination
IUC	intravenous system
IVC	intravenous cholangiography OR inferior vena cava
IVDU	intravenous drug user
IVF	in-vitro fertilisation
IVI	intravenous infusion
IVP	intravenous pyelogram
IVT	intravenous transfusion
IVU	intravenous urogram
Ix	investigations
J	
JVP	jugular venous pressure
K	
K	potassium
KUB	kidney, ureter and bladder (X-ray)
L	
L&D	light and dark OR labour and delivery
L1, L2 etc.	lumbar vertebrae
LA	local anaesthetic OR left atrium OR local authority
LAC	looked-after children
LASIK	laser <i>in situ</i> keratomileusis
LBC	liquid-based cytology
LCL	lateral collateral ligament
LCP	Liverpool Care Pathway
LCS	left convergent squint (eye turns inward)
LD	learning disability OR lactate dehydrogenase (cardiac enzyme) OR lethal dose

LDL	low density lipoprotein
LDS	left divergent squint (eye turns outwards)
LFD	late for dates
LFT	liver function tests
LGA	large for gestational age
LH	luteinising hormone
LIF	left iliac fossa
LIH	left inguinal hernia
LL	lower limb
LLQ	left lower quadrant
LMP	last menstrual period
LN	lymph node
LOA	left occipito anterior (position of fetus in uterus)
LOC	loss of consciousness
LOL	left occipito lateral (position of fetus in uterus)
LOP	left occipito posterior (position of fetus in uterus)
LOS	length of stay
LOT	left occipito transverse (position of fetus in uterus)
LP	lumbar puncture
LRTI	lower respiratory tract infection
LSA	left sacro anterior
LSCS	lower segment caesarean section
LSL	left sacro lateral
LSP	left sacro posterior
LSp	lumbar spine
LTC	long-term condition
LTH	luteotropic hormone (prolactin)
LUQ	left upper quadrant
LV	left ventricle
LVDD	left ventricular diastolic dysfunction
LVSD	left ventricular systolic dysfunction
M	
MA	mental age
MAOI	monoamine oxidase inhibitor (antidepressant)
MC	metacarpal
MC&S	microscopy, culture and sensitivity

MCH	mean corpuscular haemoglobin
MCHC	mean corpuscular haemoglobin concentration
MCL	medial collateral ligament
MCP(J)	metacarpophalangeal joint
MCV	mean corpuscular volume (size of cell)
MDA	multi-disciplinary assessment
MDT	multidisciplinary team OR multi-drug therapy
ME	myalgic encephalomyelitis
Mec st	meconium staining
MEOWS	modified early obstetric warning score
MET/S	metastases
MEWS	modified early warning score
MFFD	medically fit for discharge
Mg	magnesium
MgSO ₄	magnesium sulphate
MH	mental health
MI	myocardial infarction OR mitral incompetence
MMH	maternal mental health
mmHg	millimetres of mercury
MMR	measles, mumps, rubella (vaccine)
MND	motor neurone disease
MOF	multi-organ failure
MRI	magnetic resonance imaging
MROP	manual removal of placenta
MRSA	multiple-/methicillin-resistant <i>Staphylococcus aureus</i>
MS	multiple sclerosis OR mitral stenosis
MSE	mental state examination
MSH	melanocyte-stimulating hormone
MSK	musculoskeletal
MST	multi-systemic therapy
MSU	mid-stream specimen of urine
MT	metatarsal
MTP(J)	metatarsophalangeal joint

MTX	methotrexate (chemotherapy/immune suppressant drug)
MUA	manipulation under anaesthetic
MUR	medicines use review
MUS	medically unexplained symptoms
N	
N&V	nausea and vomiting
N/A	not applicable
N/K	not known
N/T	not tested
Na	sodium
NAD	no abnormality detected/demonstrated
NAI	non-accidental injury
NASH	non-alcoholic steatohepatitis
NBFD	Neville Barnes forceps delivery
NBI	no bone injury
NBM	nil by mouth
NBS	newborn blood spot
ND	normal delivery
NDI	nephrogenic diabetes insipidus
NE	never event
NEWS	national early warning score
NFR	not for resuscitation
NG	new growth OR nasogastric
NGT	nasogastric tube
NHL	non-Hodgkins lymphoma
NHS No.	NHS number
NIDDM	non-insulin dependent diabetes mellitus
nmol	nanomoles
NMR	nuclear magnetic resonance
NND	neonatal death
NOAD	no other abnormality detected
NOF(F)	neck of femur (fracture)
NOK	next of kin
NP	new patient OR nurse practitioner
NPO	nil per oral
NPU	not passed urine
NRT	nicotine replacement therapy

NSAID	non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug
NSCLC	non-small cell lung carcinoma
NSTEMI	non-ST elevation myocardial infarction
NTDs	neural tube defects (of the brain, meninges or spinal cord; e.g. spina bifida)
NT-proBNB	blood test for heart failure
NVD	normal vaginal delivery
NWB	non-weightbearing
O	
O ₂	oxygen
O/A	on arrival/admission
o/e	on examination
OA	osteoarthritis OR on arrival/admission
OATs	out of area treatments
obs	observations OR obstetrics
OCD	obsessive-compulsive disorder
OD	oculus dexter (right eye)
O(/)E	on examination
OGD	oesophago-gastro-duodenoscopy
OGTT	oral glucose tolerance test
OM	otitis media OR osteomyelitis OR onychomycosis
ONTR	orders not to resuscitate
OOH	out of hours
OOHC	out of hours care
OP	outpatient OR original pack
OPATT	outpatient attendance
OPROC	outpatient procedure
ORD	oesophageal reflux disease
ORIF	open reduction and internal fixation (of fracture)
OS/os	oculus sinister (left eye)
OTC	over the counter
OU/ou	oculus uterque (each eye)
P	
P	pharmacy only drugs OR pulse
P&N	pins and needles
p/c	presenting complaint
PACS	Picture Archiving and Communication System OR

	partial anterior circulation stroke
PAD	peripheral arterial disease
PAP	Papanicolaou smear (cervical smear)
PAR	patient at risk
PAT	paroxysmal atrial tachycardia
PBI	protein-bound iodine
PC	primary care
PCB	post-coital bleeding
PCI	percutaneous coronary intervention
PCL	posterior cruciate ligament
PCO	patient complains of OR polycystic ovaries
PCOS	polycystic ovarian syndrome
PCP	<i>Pneumocystis carinii</i> pneumonia
PCV	packed cell volume
PD	Parkinson's disease OR past due OR posterior distal
PDA	patient decision aid
PDT	photodynamic therapy
PE	pulmonary embolism
PEEP	positive end expiratory pressure
PEFR	peak expiratory flow rate
PEMD	people with enduring mental disorder
PERLA/PERRLA	pupils equal (round), react to light and accommodation
PET	pre-eclamptic toxæmia OR position emission tomography (type of scan)
PEWS	paediatric early warning score
PF	peak flow
PFJ	patellofemoral joint
PGD	patient group direction
PGE ₂	prostaglandin
PGP	pelvic girdle pain
PH	past history
pH	acid/alkaline balance
PI	peripheral iridotomy
PID	pelvic inflammatory disease OR prolapsed inter-vertebral disc

PIH	pregnancy-induced hypertension
PII	personally identifiable information
PIP(J)	proximal interphalangeal joint
PLCV	procedures of limited clinical value
plt	platelets
PM	postmortem
PMB	post-menopausal bleeding
PMH (or PHx)	past medical history
PMS	pre-menstrual syndrome
PN	postnatal
PND	post-nasal drip OR paroxysmal nocturnal dyspnoea OR postnatal depression
PNH	paroxysmal nocturnal haemoglobinuria
PO	per oral
POCT	point of care testing
POD	pouch of Douglas
POM or POM	prescription-only medication
POP	plaster of Paris OR progesterone only pill OR persistent occipito posterior
PP	placenta praevia OR private patient
PPH	postpartum haemorrhage
PPI	proton pump inhibitor
PRK	photo-refractive keratotomy
PRN	as required
PPROM	preterm premature rupture of membranes
PROM	premature (or pre-labour or prolonged) rupture of membranes OR patient-related outcome measure
PSA	prostatic-specific antigen (test for prostate cancer) OR psoriatic arthritis
PSIS	posterior superior iliac spine
pt/PT	physiotherapy OR patient OR posterior tibial
PTCA	percutaneous transluminal coronary angioplasty
PTH	parathyroid hormone
PTL	patient tracking list

PTSD	post-traumatic stress disorder
PTT	prothrombin test time OR partial thromboplastin time
PU	passed urine OR peptic ulcer OR pressure ulcer
PUO	pyrexia of unknown origin
PVC	premature ventricular contraction
PVD	pulmonary vascular disease OR peripheral vascular disease
PVS	persistent vegetative state
PYLL	potential years of life lost
Q	
QALY	quality-adjusted life year
QoL	quality of life
R	
RA	rheumatoid arthritis OR right atrium OR risk assessment OR right auricle
RAG	red, amber, green assessment rating
RAI	radioactive iodine
RAIU	radioactive iodine uptake
RAIT	rapid assessment, interface and discharge
RAT	rapid assessment and treatment
RBC	red blood cell/count
RCL	radial collateral ligament
RCS	right convergent squint (eye turns inwards)
RD	respiratory disease
RDS	respiratory distress syndrome OR right divergent squint (eye turns outwards)
REM	rapid eye movement
resp	respiration
RFT	respiratory function test OR renal function test
RGP/RP	retrograde pyelogram
Rh	rhesus
RIF	right iliac fossa
RIH	right inguinal hernia
RIS	radiology information system
RLQ	right lower quadrant
RN	registered nurse

RNLD	learning disability nurse
ROA	right occipito anterior (position of fetus in uterus)
ROL	right occipito lateral (position of fetus in uterus)
ROM	range of movement
ROP	right occipito posterior (position of fetus in uterus)
ROSC	return of spontaneous circulation
ROT	right occipito transverse (position of fetus in uterus)
RR	respiratory rate
RRR	recovery, rehabilitation and reablement
RS	respiratory system
RSI	repetitive strain injury OR rapid sequence induction
RSV	respiratory syncytial virus
RT	radiation therapy
RTA	road traffic accident OR renal tubular acidosis
RTC	road traffic collision/crash
RTT	referral to treatment
RUQ	right upper quadrant
RV	right ventricle
RVS	respiratory virus syndrome
Rx	treatment
S	
SA	sarcoma
SAD	seasonal affective disorder
SADS	sudden adult death syndrome
SAH	subarachnoid haemorrhage
SAMS	stabilise and make safe
SARS	sudden acute respiratory syndrome
SAS	staff grade/associate specialist doctor
S/B	seen by
SB	stillbirth
SBG	serum blood glucose
SBP	systolic blood pressure
SC	<i>sine correctione</i> (without corrective spectacles) OR secondary care OR social care
SCAN	suspected child abuse or neglect

SCC	squamous cell carcinoma
Sch C/S	scheduled lower segment caesarean section
Sch LSCS	scheduled lower segment caesarean section
SCJ	sternoclavicular joint
SCLC	small cell lung cancer
SCR	serious case review OR summary care record
SEN	special educational needs
SFD	small for dates
SGA	small for gestational age
SGOT	serum glutamic oxaloacetic transaminase (liver enzyme)
SGPT	serum glutamic pyruvic transaminase (liver enzyme)
SH	social history
SI	standard units OR sexual intercourse OR serious incident
SIDS	sudden infant death syndrome
SIRI	serious incident requiring investigation
SkXR	skull x-ray
SLE	systemic lupus erythematosus
SLR	straight leg raising
SLS	social and life skills
SMI	school medical inspection
SMR	submucosal resection
SOB	shortness of breath OR stools for occult blood
SOL	space-occupying lesion
SOM	supervisor of midwives
SOP	standard operating procedure
SPC	specialist palliative care
SPD	symphysis pubic dysfunction
SpLD	specific learning disability
SpO ₂	oxygen saturation
SpR	specialist registrar
SR	sinus rhythm
SROM	spontaneous rupture of membranes
SSRI	selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor
STD	sexually transmitted disease

STEMI	ST-elevation myocardial infarction
STI	sexually transmitted infection OR soft tissue injury
SUDC	sudden unexpected death in childhood
SUDEP	sudden unexpected death in epilepsy
SUSARS	suspected unexpected serious adverse reactions
SVD	spontaneous vaginal/vertex delivery
Sx	surgery OR suction OR symptoms and signs
T	
T	temperature OR tumour
T-	decreased intra-ocular pressure
T+	increased intra-ocular pressure
T1, T2, etc.	thoracic vertebrae OR tumour sizes
T ₃	triiodothyronine (thyroid hormone)
T ₄	serum thyroxine test for thyroid disease
T&A	tonsillectomy and adenoidectomy
TAH	total abdominal hysterectomy
TATT	tired all the time
TAVI	transcatheter aortic valve implantation
TB	tuberculosis
TBA	to be arranged
TC	transitional care OR total cholesterol OR tertiary care
TCA	to come again OR tricyclic antidepressant
TCI	to come in
TCRE	transcervical resection of the endometrium
Td	low-dose diphtheria vaccine
Tel No	telephone number
temp	temperature
TENS	transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation
TFT	thyroid function test

THA	total hip arthroplasty
THR	total hip replacement
THREAD	no thyroid, rheumatoid arthritis, epilepsy, asthma or diabetes
TIA	transient ischaemic attack
TIBC	total iron-binding capacity
TKA	total knee arthroplasty
TKR	total knee replacement
TLC	tender loving care OR total lung capacity
TLE	temporal lobe epilepsy
TM	tympanic membrane
TMJ	temporomandibular joint
TMR	transmyocardial revascularisation
TNM	tumour nodes metastases
TOE	trans-oesophageal echocardiography
TOF	Tetralogy of Fallot OR tracheoesophageal fistula
tomo	tomogram
(m/s)TOP	(medical/surgical) termination of pregnancy
TPHA	Treponema pallidum haemagglutination assay (blood test for syphilis)
TPN	total parenteral nutrition
TPR	temperature, pulse and respiration
TS	Tourette's syndrome
TSH	thyroid-stimulating hormone
TShR	total shoulder replacement
TSp	thoracic spine
TSS	toxic shock syndrome
TT	triple test
TTA	to take away
TTI	transfusion-transmitted infection
TTO	to take out
TTOM	to take out medicine
TUP	tubal uterine pregnancy
TUR	transurethral resection
TURB	transurethral resection of bladder
TURBT	transurethral resection of bladder tumour
TURP	transurethral resection of the prostate

TV	tidal volume OR <i>Trichomonas vaginalis</i> (vaginal infection) OR tissue viability
TVH	total vaginal hysterectomy
TWR	two-week referral
TWW	two-week wait
Tx	therapy OR treatment
U	
U&E	urea and electrolytes
UA	urinalysis
UC	ulcerative colitis
UCL	ulnar collateral ligament
UGI	upper gastrointestinal
UL	upper limb
UPLD	upper limb disorder
urg C/S	urgent lower segment caesarean section
urg LSCS	urgent lower segment caesarean section
UR(T)I	upper respiratory (tract) infection
USG	ultrasonography
USS	ultrasound scan
UTA	unable to attend
UTI	urinary tract infection
UV	ultraviolet (light)
V	
VA	visual acuity (clarity or accuracy of vision)
VAS	visual analogue scale (used for pain)
VBG	venous blood gas
VC	vital capacity of lungs
vCJD	variant Creutzfeldt-Jacob disease
VCU(G)	voiding cystourethrogram
VD	venereal disease
VE	vaginal examination OR ventricular ectopic
VF	visual field OR ventricular fibrillation
VI	<i>virgo intacto</i> (virgin) OR visual impairment
vit K	vitamin K
VLDL	very low-density lipoprotein
VPC	ventricular premature complex
VS	vital signs

VVs	varicose veins OR vulva and vagina
VSD	ventricular septal defect
VT	ventricular tachycardia
VTE	venous thromboembolism
Vx	vertex (the crown of the head of the fetus)
W	
WBC	white blood count
WBC&diff	white blood count and different percentages present
WBCT	whole body computer tomography
WCC	white cell count
wd	ward
WL	waiting list
WNL	within normal limits
WRAPs	wellness recovery action plans
WRULD	work-related upper limb disorder
wt	weight OR waiting time
WZF	wheeled zimmer frame
X	
XR(T)	x-ray (treatment)
XRC	chest x-ray
XX	female sex chromosomes
XY	male sex chromosomes
Y	
YOB	year of birth
Z	
ZIFT	zygote intra-fallopian transfer

ABBREVIATIONS FOR HOSPITAL DEPARTMENTS, CLINICS, AND SERVICES

ABBREVIATION	MEANING
A	
A&E	accident and emergency
AAU	acute assessment unit
ACAD	ambulatory care and diagnostic unit
ACC	ambulatory care centre
ACS	adult care services
ACU	ambulatory care unit
AEC	ambulatory emergency care
AIC	adult intensive care unit
AMU	acute medical unit OR alongside midwifery unit
ANC	antenatal clinic
APC	alcohol problems clinic
ASU	acute stroke unit
B	
BRC	biomedical research centre
BRU	biomedical research unit
C	
CAC	children assessment centre
CAMHS (LD)	child and adolescent mental health services (learning disability)
CARU	clinical audit and research unit
CAS	clinical assessment service
CAU	child and adolescent unit OR clinical assessment unit
CCG	clinical commissioning group
CCORT	critical care outreach team
CCU	coronary care unit OR critical care unit

CDU	clinical decision unit
ChYPS	children and young persons' service
CIW	clinical investigation ward
CLAD	corporate learning and development
CMHT	community mental health team
CoE	care of the elderly OR care of older people
CSSD	central sterile services department
CSSU	children's short stay unit
CSU	clinical service unit OR commissioning support unit
D	
DAT	drug action team
DAAT	drug and alcohol action team
DART	drug and alcohol response team
DGH	district general hospital
DID	diagnostic imaging department
DME	department of medicine for the elderly
DSU	day surgery unit
DTC	diagnosis and treatment centre
E	
EAU	emergency assessment/ admissions unit
ED	emergency department
ENT	ear, nose, and throat
EOC	elective orthopaedic centre
EPAU	early pregnancy assessment unit
EP(A)C	early pregnancy (assessment) clinic

ERAS	enhanced recovery after surgery
F	
FMC	foetal medicine clinic
FPC	family planning clinic
FT	Foundation Trust
G	
GIC	gender identity clinic
GUM	genitourinary medicine
H	
H@H	hospital at home
HASU	hyper acute stroke unit
HDU	high dependency unit
HEMS	helicopter emergency medical service
HLC	healthy living centre
HPU	health protection unit
HR	human resources
HSDU	hospital sterilisation and disinfection unit
I	
IAPT	improving access to psychological therapies
ICU	intensive care unit
IDA	intermediate dependency area
IG	information governance
IM&T	information management and technology
IPC	infection prevention and control
IPCU	intensive psychiatric care unit
ISTC	independent sector treatment centres
ITU	intensive therapy unit
IUC	integrated urgent care
M	
MASH	multi-agency safeguarding hub
MAU	medical assessment/admission unit
MDU	medical decisions unit
MEC	medical education centre
MES	medical elective

	specialties/suite
MET	medical education team
MIU	minor injuries unit
MLU	midwife-led unit
MSK	musculoskeletal
MTC	major trauma centre
N	
NCCU	neurosciences critical care unit
NICU	neonatal intensive care unit
NNU	neonatal unit
NRU	neurorehabilitation unit
O	
O&G	obstetrics and gynaecology
OD	operating department
ODIL	organisational development and improvement learning
OMFS	oral and maxillofacial surgery
OPD	outpatient department
P	
PACU	post-anaesthesia care unit
PALS	patient advice and liaison service
PAR	post-anaesthesia recovery
PAU	paediatric assessment unit
PDU	paediatric day unit
PGMC	postgraduate medical centre
PHEM	pre-hospital emergency medicine
PICU	psychiatric OR paediatric intensive care unit
PIMHS	Perinatal/parent and infant mental health service
PLC	pigmented lesion clinic
PNC	postnatal clinic
POAC	pre-operative assessment clinic

PPU	private patient unit
PSD	patient services department
PTS	patient transport service
R	

R&D	research and development
RAFA	rapid access frailty assessment
S	
SAMU	stand-alone midwifery unit

S(A)LT	speech (and) language therapy
SAU	surgical assessment or admission unit

SCBU	special care baby unit
SDEC	same day emergency care
SDU	sterilisation disinfection unit

SEAU	surgical emergency assessment unit
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SSPAU	short stay paediatric assessment unit
SSSU	short stay surgical unit
T	
T&D	training and development
T&O	trauma and orthopaedics
U	
UCC	urgent care centre
UEC(C)	urgent and emergency care centre
UTC	urgent treatment centre
V	
VIU	vascular imaging unit
W	
WIC	walk-in centre
Y	

YPU	young people's unit
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PHARMACY/PRESCRIBING ABBREVIATIONS

ABBREV	LATIN MEANING	ENGLISH MEANING
μmole		micromole
A		
aa	ana	equal amount
AAA		apply to affected area
ac	ante cibum	before food
ad lib	ad libitum	as much as desired; freely
alt die	alt die	alternate days
alt noct.	alt nocte	alternate nights
am	ante meridiem	morning
amp.		ampule
amt		amount
aq	aqua	water
ATC		around the clock
B		
bd/bid	bis die	twice daily
bib	bibe	drink
bucc.	bucca	inside cheek
C		
c.	cum	with
cc/cm ³		cubic centimetre
cap.		capsule
cm		cream
D		
DAW		dispense as written
d.c. or d/c		discontinue
dil.		dilute
disp.		dispense
dL		decilitre
DR		delayed release
E		
EC		enteric-coated
EOD		every other day
ex.aq.	ex aquain	water

ER/XR		extended release
et	et	and
F		
f/c		film-coated
f., ft.	fiat	make, let it be made
fl.		fluid
FXD	X = roman numeral for 10	for 10 days
G		
g, gm		gram
gal		gallon
gr.		grain
gtt	gutta	drops
H		
h, hr, hor		hour
hn	hac nocte	tonight
h.s.	hora somni	at bedtime
I		
ia		intra-articular
id		intra-dermal
im		intra-muscular
in		intra-nasal
inf		infusion
inh		by inhalation
inj		injection
IR		immediate release
it		intra-thecal (spinal cord)
IU or U		international unit
iv		intra-venous
L		
L		litre
lb	libra	pound
liq.		liquid
lot.		lotion
M		
m		metre
mcg		microgram
mdu	more dicta utendus	as directed
mg		milligram

ml(s)		millilitre(s)
mmol		millimole
m/r		modified release
mu/min		milliunits per minute
N		
neb.		nebuliser
nocte	nocte	at night
NP	nomen proprium	proper name
O		
occ. or oc.		for the eyes
od	omni die	once daily
ODT		oral disintegrating tablet
oint.		ointment
om	omni mane	every morning
on	omni nocte	every night
oz		ounce
P		
pa	parti affectae	to the affected part
pc	post cibum	after food
PCA		patient-controlled analgesia
pessary		for the vagina
pm	post meridiem	evening; after noon
po	per os	orally
poc		for the eyes
pr	per rectum	via the rectum
prn	pro re nata	when required
pt		pint
pv	per vaginam	via the vagina
Q		
q(number)	quaque	every; per
q4h		every 4 hours
qad/qod	quaque alternis die	every other day
qam	quaque anti meridiem	every morning
qds/qid	quarter die sumendum	four times daily
qhs	quaque hora somni	every day at bedtime

qpm	quaque post meridiem	every evening; every day after noon
qqh	quarter quaque hora	every 4 hours
qs	quantum sufficiat	a sufficient quantity
qt		quart
qty.		quantity
qw.		every week
R		
R/Λ	recipe	take
rep.	repetitur	let it be repeated
S		
s.	sine	without
s/c		sugar-coated
sc, sq, subq		subcutaneous
sig.	signa	write; label
sl		sublingually (under the tongue)
sol.		solution
sos	si opus sit	if necessary (one dose only)
stat.	statim	at once
supp(os).		suppository
susp.		suspension
syr.		syrup
T		
tab.		tablet
TAD		take as directed
tbsp		tablespoon
tds/tid	ter die sumendum	three times daily
tinct.	tincture	tincture
top.		topical
troch.	trochisci	lozenge
tsp		teaspoon
U		
ud/ut/dict	ut dictum	as directed
ung.	unguentum	ointment
V		
vap.	vapore	vapour
W		
w.		with

w/f		with food; with meals
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MEDICAL SPECIALTIES AND TITLES

Doctors are able to apply to specialty training upon finishing the Foundation Programme. The specialty they choose determines which particular areas of medical expertise they will pursue during their careers. The length of training varies between specialties, from 3 to 8 years. Once they have completed specialist training, doctors are then able to become consultants.

MEDICAL SPECIALTY	TITLE	WHAT DOES IT INVOLVE?
Acute internal medicine (AIM)	AIM physician	Caring for patients with conditions that have developed quickly and may be life-threatening
Allergy	Allergist	Diagnosing and treating allergic disorders
Anaesthetics	Anaesthetist	Administration of anaesthetics
Audiovestibular medicine (AVM)	Audiovestibular physician	Looking after patients with hearing, balance and communication disorders
Cardiology	Cardiologist	Diagnosing and treating conditions of the heart and blood vessels
Cardiothoracic surgery	Cardiothoracic surgeon	Operating on the heart, lungs, and other thoracic organs
Chemical pathology	Chemical pathologist	Using biochemical lab tests to diagnose disease and manage patients
Clinical genetics	Clinical geneticist	Diagnosing and managing families with genetic disorders
Clinical neurophysiology	Clinical neurophysiologist	Investigating and diagnosing nervous system disorders
Clinical oncology	Clinical oncologist	The radiological treatment of cancer
Clinical pharmacology and therapeutics (CPT)	Clinical pharmacologist	The science of medicines and their clinical use
Dermatology	Dermatologist	Diagnosing and treating skin conditions
Emergency medicine (EM)	Emergency physician	Immediate assessment and treatment of patients with serious and life-threatening illness and injuries
Endocrinology (and diabetes)	Endocrinologist	Concerning the endocrine system (glands which produce hormones)
Gastroenterology	Gastroenterologist	Diagnosing and treating digestive system diseases
General internal medicine (GIM)	GIM physician	Managing patients with a wide range of acute and long-term medical conditions and symptoms
General practice	General practitioner (GP)	Treat common medical conditions and refer patients to secondary (hospital) care
General surgery	General surgeon	Operating on a wide range of body parts; subspecialties include transplant surgery and upper and lower GI surgery

Genitourinary medicine (GUM)	Genitourinary physician	Managing the urinary system and male reproductive system
Geriatrics (also Medicine for the Elderly, Care of the Elderly, Complex Medicine)	Geriatrician	Diagnosing and treating disorders in elderly people
Gynaecology	Gynaecologist	Managing diseases specific to women
Haematology	Haematologist	Diagnosing and managing blood and bone marrow disorders
Histopathology	Histopathologist	Diagnosing and studying disease through interpreting cell and tissue samples
Immunology	Immunologist	Studying and treating the immune system
Infectious diseases	Infectious diseases physician	Diagnosing and treating infections
Intensive care medicine (ICM) or critical care medicine (CCM)	Intensivist, intensive care physician	Treating patients with, at risk of, or recovering from organ failure
Interventional radiology	Interventional radiologist	Performing minimally-invasive procedures using medical imaging guidance
Medical oncology	Medical oncologist	The non-radiological treatment of cancer
Medical microbiology and virology (MMV)	Medical microbiologist and virologist	Diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of infection
Nephrology (renal medicine)	Nephrologist	Diagnosing and treating disorders of the kidneys
Neurology	Neurologist	Diagnosing and treating nervous system disorders
Neurosurgery	Neurosurgeon	Operating on the nervous system
Nuclear medicine	Nuclear medicine physician	Using radioactive substances to examine the physiological processes of disease
Obstetrics	Obstetrician	Caring for pregnant people and their unborn children (especially those at high risk)
Occupational medicine or occupational health	Occupational medicine or health physician	Diagnosis, management and prevention of disease caused or exacerbated by workplaces
Ophthalmology	Ophthalmologist	The medical and surgical treatment of the eyes
Oral and maxillofacial surgery (OMFS)	OMFS surgeon	Operating on the mouth, jaws, face, and neck
Orthopaedics (and trauma) (T&O)	Orthopaedic surgeon	Operating on the musculoskeletal system
Oto(rhino)laryngology (ENT)	ENT surgeon, oto(rhino)laryngologist	Operating on the head and neck (especially the ear, nose, and throat)
Paediatric cardiology	Paediatric cardiologist	Looking after heart conditions before birth and throughout childhood
Paediatrics	Paediatrician	Caring for children

Palliative medicine	Palliative medicine physician	Caring for patients with incurable conditions
Physician	Physician	Caring for medical (as opposed to surgical) conditions
Plastic surgery	Plastic surgeon	Performing aesthetic surgery and reconstructive surgery after illness or trauma
Psychiatry	Psychiatrist	Diagnosing and treating mental illness – specialist include children and adolescents, forensic, intellectual disability and old age
Public health	Public health doctor	Finding ways of making communities healthier
Radiology	Radiologist	Using images to diagnose and treat disease
Rehabilitation medicine or physiatry	Rehabilitation medicine physician/physiatrist	Assessing and treating individuals with complex disabling conditions
Respiratory medicine	Respiratory physician	Diagnosing and treating conditions affecting the nose, throat (pharynx), larynx, trachea, lungs, and diaphragm
Rheumatology	Rheumatologist	Diagnosing and treating conditions of the joints, bones, muscles, and soft tissues
Sport and exercise medicine (SEM)	Sport and exercise physician	Treating sport and physical activity related injuries and common conditions
Stroke medicine	Stroke medicine physician	Caring for and rehabilitation of stroke patients
Surgery	Surgeon	Caring for surgical (as opposed to medical) conditions
Tropical medicine	Tropical medicine physician	Diagnosing and managing tropical infections (e.g. malaria, Ebola)
Urology	Urologist or urological surgeon	Treating problems of the female urinary system and the male genitourinary tract
Vascular surgery	Vascular surgeon	Treating conditions of the vascular system (except heart and brain)

CLINICAL (NON-MEDICAL) ROLES AND TITLES

The following tables are not designed to be comprehensive, but to provide an overview of some of the roles you might encounter in a hospital environment.

For the following jobs, it is necessary to have a professional qualification in the subject (typically a diploma or a degree) and/or be registered with a relevant professional body. The 15 jobs highlighted in green make up the 15 allied health professional roles.

NON-MEDICAL PROFESSIONAL ROLE	TITLE	WHAT DOES THIS ROLE INVOLVE?
Advanced clinical practice	Advanced clinical practitioner (ACP)	Advanced practice in a variety of departments
Advanced critical care practice	Advanced critical care practitioner	Advanced practice in critical care environments
Anaesthesia associate practice	Anaesthesia associate	Providing high-level support to consultant anaesthetists
Anatomical pathology	Anatomical pathology technician (APT)	Helping pathologists to carry out post-mortems
Art therapy	Art therapist	Using art as psychotherapy
Audiology	Audiologist	Measurement of hearing
Biomedical science	Biomedical scientist	Performing laboratory and scientific tests to support the diagnosis and treatment of disease
Cardiac physiology	Cardiac physiologist	Diagnosis, monitoring and treatment of heart problems
Clinical psychology	Clinical psychologist	Working with people on a wide range of psychological difficulties
Dental hygiene	Dental hygienist	Promoting tooth health through education and cleaning treatments
Dental nursing	Dental nurse	Supporting dentists in all aspects of dental care
Dental technology	Dental technician/technologist	Making dentures, crowns, bridges and dental braces
Dental therapy	Dental therapist	Supporting dentists by carrying out routine treatments (e.g. fillings)
Dentistry	Dentist	Caring for the teeth, mouth, and jaw – specialties include orthodontics (braces), periodontics (gums), and endodontics (inside of the teeth)
Dietetics	Dietitian	The treatment of diet and nutritional problems
Drama therapy	Drama therapist	Using drama as psychotherapy
Emergency medical technician practice	Emergency medical technician (EMT)/associate ambulance practitioner	Pre-hospital care of patients at accidents or in medical emergencies
Extended scope practice	Extended scope practitioner	A physiotherapist who has undergone extra specialist training

First contact practice/physiotherapy	First contact practitioner/physiotherapist	A physiotherapist who has specialist training who works in primary care
Genomics	Clinical scientist in genomics	Studying genetics to support and confirm diagnoses or provide screening
Health visiting	Health visitor (HV)/specialist community public health nurse (SCPHN)	Working with families with a child aged 0 to five to identify health needs as early as possible
Hearing aid dispensary	Hearing aid dispenser	Assessing hearing and providing aftercare for hearing aids
Histopathology	Histopathologist	Studying tissue samples using a microscope
Microbiology	Microbiologist	Studying bacteria, viruses, fungi and parasites that cause disease
Midwifery	Midwife	Caring for and supporting pregnant people and newborn infants
Music therapy	Music therapist	The use of music as psychotherapy
Neurophysiology	Neurophysiologist	Diagnosing and treatment nervous system disorders
Nursing	Nurse	Assessing, observing, and caring for patients – subspecialties include adult, children, learning disability, and mental health
Nursing associate practice	Nursing associate (NA)	Working with nurses and support workers to care for patients
Occupational therapy	Occupational therapist (OT)	Improving people’s ability to do everyday tasks (e.g. after a stroke)
Operating department practice	Operating department practitioner (ODP)	Supporting patients during their perioperative care
Optometry	Optometrist	The measurement of refraction (ability to focus) of the eye and dispensing glasses
Orthodontistry	Orthodontist	Correction of teeth (dentition)
Orthoptics	Orthoptist	Treatment and diagnosis of squints, eye movement defects, etc.
Orthotics	Orthotist	Caring for patients with problems of the skeletal and neuromuscular systems
Osteopathy	Osteopath	Caring for patients by taking a holistic view of the body’s structure and function
Paramedic science/paramedicine	Paramedic	Pre-hospital care of patients at accidents or in medical emergencies
Pharmacy	Pharmacist	Using medicines effectively and appropriately
Physician associate practice	Physician associate (PA)	Supporting doctors in the diagnosis and management of patients
Physiotherapy	Physiotherapist (PT or physio)	Treatment by physical exercises
Podiatry	Podiatrist	The care of feet
Prosthetics	Prosthetist	The treatment of patients with limb loss

Psychology	Psychologist	Assessing and treating how people think and behave
Psychotherapy	Psychotherapist	Providing psychotherapy
Radiography (diagnostic or therapeutic)	(Diagnostic or therapeutic) Radiographer	Imaging of the body and delivery of treatment
Radiotherapy	Radiotherapist	Another name for a therapeutic radiographer
Respiratory physiology	Respiratory physiology	The diagnosis and treatment of lung disease
Sleep science	Sleep scientist	The diagnosis and treatment of sleep disorders
Speech and language therapy	Speech and language therapist (SALT or SLT)	The treatment of communication difficulties and problems with eating, drinking, and swallowing
Social work	Social worker	Helping people to find solutions to their problems
Surgical care practice	Surgical care practitioner (SCP)	Supporting surgeons and other healthcare professionals before, during and after surgical procedures
Vascular science	Vascular scientist	Imaging and assessment of patients with diseases of the arteries and veins
Virology	Virologist	Studying viral diseases

For the following jobs, it is not necessary to have a professional qualification in the subject and/or be registered with a relevant professional body. There may however be a training programme you can follow, such as an apprenticeship or a vocational qualification.

NON-MEDICAL, NON-PROFESSIONAL ROLE	TITLE	WHAT DOES THIS ROLE INVOLVE?
Assistant practice	Assistant practitioner	Providing high-level support to qualified healthcare professionals
Dental support	Dental support worker	Supporting qualified dentists and dental nurses in caring for patients
Dietetic assistance	Dietetic assistant	Assisting registered dietitians
Healthcare support	Healthcare assistant (HCA)/ healthcare support worker (HCSW)	Supporting qualified health professionals with basic tasks
Imaging support	Imaging support worker (ISW)	Supporting qualified radiographers
Laboratory support	Medical laboratory assistant (MLA)	Assisting healthcare scientists
Maternity support	Maternity support worker (MSW)	Assisting midwives caring for pregnant people and babies
Orthopaedic practice	Orthopaedic practitioner/plaster technician/casting technician	Fitting casts and splints after injury or surgery
Pharmacy support	Pharmacy assistant/technician	Helping pharmacists to order, prepare and dispense medications
Phlebotomy	Phlebotomist	Collecting blood samples from patients
Theatre support	Theatre support worker (TSW)	Supporting the surgical team

Therapy assistance	Therapy assistant	Assisting qualified OTs, PTs, and SALTs
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MISCELLANEOUS

COLOURS	
COLOUR	MEANING
alb-	white
chlor-	green
chromo-/chromato-	colour
cirrh-	brown
cyano-	blue
eosin-	rosy red
ery-/erythro-	red
flav-	yellow
leuco-/leuko-	white
melano-	black, dark, pigment
polio-	grey
rub(o)r-	redness
xantho-	yellow

SINGULAR VS PLURAL	
SINGULAR	PLURAL
-a	-ae
-ax	-aces
-is	-es
-ix	-ices
-oma	-omata
-on	-a
-um	-a
-us	-i

BRITISH VS AMERICAN SPELLINGS	
ENGLISH	AMERICAN
ae (e.g. anaemia)	e (e.g. anemia)
ence (e.g. licence)	ense (e.g. license)
oe (e.g. diarrhoea)	e (e.g. diarrhea)
ogue (e.g. analogue)	og (e.g. analog)
ou (e.g. tumour)	o (e.g. tumor)
s	z

(e.g. computerised) (e.g. computerized)	
NUMBERS	
NUMBER	MEANING
bi-	two
bin-	double/two
centi-	a hundredth
deca-	ten
deci-	tenth
demi-	half
di-	two
diplo-	double
hect-	one hundred
hemi-	half
hex-	six
kilo-	one thousand
mega-	million
micro-	small/one millionth
milli-	thousandth
mono-	one/single
multi-	many
nulli-	none
oct-	eight
pent-	five
pluri-	many
poly-	many
proto-	first
quadr-	four
quingu-	five
semi-	half
sex-	six
ter-	three
tetr-	four
tri-	three
un-	one

Both Greek and Latin prefixes are used in the metric system.

Greek prefixes (deca (10), hect (100), kilo (1000) and mega (million)) denote multiplied by (e.g. kilometre = 1000 metres)

Latin prefixes (deci (10), centi (100), milli (1000) and micro (million)) denote divided by (e.g. millimetre = one thousandth of a metre)

QUIZZES

Exercise 1: Matching terms and definitions

Place the number of the word listed in column A against the correct meaning in column B.

	A		B
1	Erythrocyte		Painful or abnormal menstruation
2	Dactylomegaly		Disease of the heart muscle
3	Dysmenorrhoea		Night-time urination
4	Medial		Enlargement of a finger or toe
5	Cardiomyopathy		Underactive thyroid gland
6	Nocturia		Inflammation of blood vessels
7	Vasculitis		Difficulty breathing
8	Hypothyroidism		Red blood cell
9	Dyspnoea		Low platelet count
10	Thrombocytopenia		The middle or toward the middle

Exercise 2: Matching abbreviations/acronyms and full phrases

Place the number of the abbreviation/acronym listed in column A against the correct meaning in column B.

	A		B
1	Rx		Intensive care unit
2	T&O		Four times daily
3	pc		Operating department practitioner
4	HCA		Hypertension
5	stat		Trauma and orthopaedics
6	ICU		Urinary tract infection
7	qds		After food
8	HTN		At once, immediately
9	UTI		Healthcare assistant
10	ODP		Prescription

Exercise 3: Missing meanings

Fill in the missing meaning in the breakdown of the word.

STEATOHEPATITIS		
STEATO-	-HEPAT-	-ITIS
_____	liver	inflammation
'inflammation due to _____ in the liver'		

HYPERKALAEMIA			
HYPER-	-KAL-	-AEM-	-IA
high	_____	blood	condition of
'condition of high levels of _____ in the blood'			

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