

AMA Glossary of Medical Terms

(Source: www.ama-assn.org)

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

A

Abdominal cavity- the part of the body between the bottom of the ribs and the top of the thighs, containing most of the digestive and urinary systems along with some reproductive organs

ABO blood groups- The system by which human blood is classified, based on proteins occurring on red blood cells; the four classification groups are A, AB, B, and O

Abortion- termination of a pregnancy; can occur because of natural causes (called a miscarriage) or be a medical intervention

Abscess- an accumulation of [pus](#) in a body tissue, usually caused by a bacterial infection

ACE inhibitor- a drug typically used to treat high [blood pressure](#) (Angiotensin-Converting Enzyme inhibitor)

Achilles tendon- the [tendon](#) at the back of the lower leg that connects the calf muscle to the heel bone

Acid-base balance- the mechanisms that the body uses to keep its fluids close to neutral (neither basic nor acidic) so that the body can function properly

Acidosis- a condition marked by abnormally high acid levels in the blood, associated with some forms of [diabetes](#), lung disease, and severe kidney disease

Acid reflux- a disorder in which acid in the stomach comes up into the [esophagus](#), because the valve separating the stomach and esophagus does not function properly

Acne- a skin condition characterized by inflamed, [pus](#)-filled areas that occur on the skin's surface, most commonly occurring during adolescence

Acquired- a word describing any condition that is not present at birth, but develops some time during life

Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome- infection by the [human immunodeficiency virus \(HIV\)](#), which causes a weakening of the immune system

Acute- describes a condition or illness that begins suddenly and is usually short-lasting

Acute respiratory disease- an urgent condition in which oxygen levels in the blood are lower than normal and breathing is difficult

Addiction- dependence on a substance (such as alcohol or other drugs) or an activity, to the point that stopping is very difficult and causes severe physical and mental reactions

Adenitis- infection and inflammation of a [gland](#), especially a [lymph node](#)

Adipose tissue- another term for fatty tissue; it stores energy, insulates, and cushions the body

Adjuvant therapy- the use of drugs or [radiation therapy](#) in the treatment of cancer along with surgery

Adrenal failure- a condition in which the adrenal glands do not produce enough of the [hormones](#) that control important functions such as blood pressure

Adrenal glands- two small [glands](#) located on top of the kidneys that secrete several important [hormones](#) into the blood

Adverse reaction- an unintended and unwanted side effect of some sort of treatment, usually drug therapy

Aerobic exercise- physical activity during which the heart and lungs must work harder to meet the body's increased [oxygen](#) demand

Affective disorder- a mental disorder involving abnormal moods and emotions; affective disorders include [manic-depressive disorder](#)

Afterbirth- the [placenta](#) and membranes that are eliminated from the woman's [uterus](#) following the birth of a child

Afterpains- normal contractions of the uterus after childbirth that usually occur for the first few days after delivery

AIDS- see [Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome](#)

AIDS-related complex- symptoms including weight loss, fever, and enlarged lymph nodes experienced by people who are infected with [HIV](#) but do not yet have AIDS

Air embolism- the blockage of an [artery](#) by air bubbles, which may have entered during surgery or after an injury

Airway obstruction- blockage of the passage of air through the windpipe to the lungs

Airways- the passageways that air moves through while traveling in and out of the lungs during breathing

Albinism- a condition in which people are born with insufficient amounts of the pigment melanin, which is responsible for hair, skin, and eye color

Alcoholic cardiomyopathy- heart damage and failure caused by intake of too much alcohol

Alimentary canal- another term for the digestive tract

Alkalosis- dangerously decreased acidity of the blood, which can be caused by high altitudes, [hyperventilation](#), and excessive vomiting

Alkylating agents- substances used in cancer treatment that interfere with the division of cells

Allergen- a substance that causes an allergic reaction

Allergic rhinitis- irritation of the nasal passages and the whites of the eyes, causing sneezing, runny nose, and sore eyes

Allergy- a negative reaction to a substance that in most people causes no reaction

Alopecia- baldness or loss of hair, mainly on the head, either in defined patches or completely; the cause is unknown

ALS- see [Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis](#)

Altitude sickness- headaches, dizziness, and nausea usually experienced at heights above 8,000 ft because of reduced [oxygen](#) in the air

Alzheimer disease- a condition that occurs late in life and worsens with time in which brain cells degenerate; it is accompanied by memory loss, physical decline, and confusion

Amenorrhea- absence of menstrual periods, occurring either after or before [menstruation](#) has begun

Amniocentesis- a procedure in which a small amount of amniotic fluid is removed from the mother's womb in order to detect abnormalities of the fetus

Amniotic fluid- clear fluid that surrounds a fetus during pregnancy and cushions and protects it

Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis- the most common of a group of disorders known as motor neuron diseases, in which the [nerves](#) in the brain that control the movement of muscles degenerate and muscle function is gradually lost; commonly called Lou Gehrig's disease

Anabolic steroid- a drug similar to the male hormone [testosterone](#) that builds muscles and strengthens bones, but has adverse side effects

Anal fissure- a long, open sore on the skin of the [anus](#)

Anal fistula- an abnormal tubelike passage connecting the [anus](#) to the surface of the surrounding skin

Analgesic- a drug that relieves pain, such as aspirin or acetaminophen

Anal sphincter- a ring of muscle fibers at the opening of the [rectum](#), controlling the opening and closing of the [anus](#)

Anaphylactic shock- a life-threatening allergic reaction resulting in difficulty breathing and low blood pressure

Anatomy- the structure of bodies; commonly refers to the study of body structure

Androgen- a [hormone](#) (such as testosterone) that causes development of male characteristics and sex organs

Anemia- a condition in which the blood does not contain enough hemoglobin, the compound that carries [oxygen](#) from the lungs to other parts of the body

Anencephaly- a fatal birth defect in which the brain and [spinal cord](#) have failed to develop, resulting in the absence of a portion of the skull and brain

Anesthesia- a loss of sensation in a certain part of the body or throughout the body

Anesthetic- a substance that temporarily causes a person to be unable to feel pain, either in a certain area or over the entire body

Aneurysm- an abnormal swelling of the wall of an [artery](#), caused by a weakening in the vessel wall

Angina pectoris- pain experienced in the chest, arms, or jaw because of a lack of [oxygen](#) to the heart muscle

Angioma- a [tumor](#) made of blood vessels or lymph vessels that is not cancerous

Angioplasty- the use of surgery to make a damaged blood vessel function properly again; may involve widening or reconstructing the blood vessel

Anorexia nervosa- a dangerous eating disorder mainly affecting young girls in which the sufferer has an intense fear of looking fat, avoids food, and loses weight excessively

Antacid- a drug that neutralizes stomach acids; used to treat [indigestion](#), [heartburn](#), and [acid reflux](#)

Antibiotic resistance- the development by bacteria of the ability to live in the presence of a certain antibiotic, making treatment difficult

Antibiotics- bacteria-killing substances that are used to fight infection

Antibody- a protein made by [white blood cells](#) that reacts with a specific foreign protein as part of the immune response

Anticoagulants- drugs used to stop abnormal blood clotting, such as to prevent [stroke](#)

Antiemetics- drugs used to treat nausea and vomiting

Antihistamine- a drug that relieves an allergic reaction by stopping the effects of histamine, the substance responsible for the negative symptoms associated with the reaction

Antihypertensives- drugs used to relieve the symptoms and prevent the damage that can occur from high blood pressure

Antioxidants- substances that protect against cell damage by guarding the cell from [oxygen free radicals](#)

Antipsychotics- drugs used to treat severe mental disorders

Antiseptics- chemicals applied to the skin that prevent infection by killing bacteria and other harmful organisms

Anus- the opening through which feces are passed from the body

Aorta- the main [artery](#) in the body, carrying oxygenated blood from the heart to other arteries in the body

Aortic stenosis- narrowing of the opening of the aortic [valve](#) in the heart, which increases resistance to blood flow from the left ventricle to the aorta; commonly a [birth defect](#) or caused by scarring and calcium accumulation in the valve from [rheumatic fever](#)

Apgar score- a system for evaluating the health of a newborn baby; rated on a scale of 0-10

Aplasia- the complete or partial failure of any organ or tissue to grow

Aplastic anemia- a severely reduced number of [red blood cells](#), [white blood cells](#), and [platelets](#)

Apnea- a possibly life-threatening condition in which breathing stops, for either a short or long period of time

Appendectomy- surgical removal of the [appendix](#) to treat appendicitis

Appendicitis- inflammation of the [appendix](#)

Appendix- a short, tubelike structure that branches off the large [intestine](#); does not have any known function

ARC- see [AIDS-related complex](#)

Arteriosclerosis- a disorder causing thickening and hardening of [artery](#) walls

Arteritis- inflammation of the walls of an [artery](#) that causes the passageway to become narrower; can lead to tissue damage because [oxygen](#) is not properly supplied

Artery- a large blood vessel that carries blood from the heart to tissues and organs in the body

Arthritis- a disease of the joints characterized by [inflammation](#), pain, stiffness, and redness

Arthroscopy- a procedure used to examine the inside of a joint using a viewing tube (an [endoscope](#))

Artificial insemination- injection of [semen](#) into the [cervix](#)

Artificial respiration/ventilation- the forcing of air (either by mouth-to-mouth or mouth-to-nose means) into the lungs of a person who has stopped breathing

Ascites- excess fluid in the abdominal cavity, which leads to swelling

Ascorbic acid- the chemical term for [vitamin C](#)

Aspermia- the failure either to produce or to ejaculate [sperm](#)

Asphyxia- the medical term for suffocation; can be caused by choking on an object, by lack of [oxygen](#) in the air, or by chemicals such as carbon monoxide, which reduce the amount of oxygen in the blood

Asthma- a disorder characterized by inflamed [airways](#) and difficulty breathing

Astigmatism- a disorder in which the front surface of the eye (the cornea) is not correctly spherical, resulting in blurry vision

Atherectomy- a procedure performed to remove [plaque](#) that is blocking an artery

Atheroma- fatty deposits on the inner walls of blood vessels, which can cause narrowing and decrease blood flow

Atherosclerosis- narrowing of the lining of the [arteries](#) due to the accumulation of fat and other materials; leads to [coronary heart disease](#), [stroke](#), and other disorders

Athlete's foot- an infection between the toes caused by a [fungus](#), which leads to sore, cracked, and peeling skin

Atresia- a [birth defect](#) in which a normal body opening or canal is absent; usually requires surgical repair soon after birth

Atria- the two upper chambers of the heart; the singular form is atrium

Atrial fibrillation- an irregular heartbeat in which the upper chambers of the heart (the atria) beat inconsistently and rapidly

Atrial flutter- an irregular heartbeat in which the upper chambers of the heart (the atria) beat rapidly but consistently

Atrial septal defect- a hole located in the wall between the two upper chambers of the heart

Atrophy- the shrinkage or near disappearance of a tissue or organ

Attention-deficit disorder- a disorder mainly present in children and adolescents, characterized by learning and behavior problems, inability to pay attention, and sometimes [hyperactivity](#)

Audiogram- a graph showing a person's hearing ability, determined from a set of tests examining hearing acuity of different sound frequencies

Aura- a "warning" signal that comes before a migraine headache or an epileptic seizure, which might include emotions or sensations of movement or discomfort

Auscultation- the act of listening to sounds within the body, such as the heartbeat, with a stethoscope

Autism- a mental disorder characterized by an inability to relate to other people and extreme withdrawal

Autoimmune disease- a disorder in which the body's [immune system](#) attacks itself

Autonomic nervous system- the part of the nervous system that controls automatic body functions, such as heart rate, sweating, pupil dilation, and digestion; divided into the [sympathetic nervous system](#) and the [parasympathetic nervous system](#)

Autopsy- the examination of a body following death, possibly to determine the cause of death or for research

Autosomal dominant- a term describing a [gene](#) on any chromosome other than the sex chromosomes that produces its effect whenever it is present; can also describe the effect of the gene itself

Autosomal recessive- a term used to describe a [gene](#) on any chromosome other than the sex chromosomes that produces its effect only when two copies of it are present; can also describe the effect of the gene itself

Axilla- medical term for the armpit

B

Bacillus- any bacteria that is rod-shaped; responsible for [diphtheria](#), [dysentery](#), [tetanus](#), and [tuberculosis](#), as well as other diseases

Bacteremia- a condition in which bacteria are present in the bloodstream; may occur after minor surgery or infection and may be dangerous for people with a weakened [immune system](#) or abnormal [heart valves](#)

Bacteriostatic- term used to describe a substance that stops the growth of bacteria (such as an [antibiotic](#))

Bacterium- a tiny, single-celled [microorganism](#), commonly known as a germ; some bacteria, called [pathogens](#), cause disease

Bacteriuria- bacteria in the urine; large amounts can indicate [bladder](#), [urethra](#), or [kidney](#) infection

Ball-and-socket joint- a joint consisting of a ball-shaped bone that fits into a cup-shaped bone, making the joint free to rotate; examples include the hip and shoulder

Balloon angioplasty- a technique that uses a balloon catheter to open [arteries](#) clogged with fatty deposits

Balloon catheter- a hollow tube with a small, inflatable balloon at the tip; used to open a narrowed [artery](#) or organ that has become blocked

Barbiturates- a group of [sedatives](#) that reduce activity in the brain; are habit-forming and are possibly fatal when taken with alcohol

Barium enema- a technique in which barium is placed into the large [intestine](#) and [rectum](#) and then X-rays are taken to check for possible disorders of these organs

Barrier method of contraception- a [birth-control](#) technique using a condom, diaphragm, or another similar device to block the path of sperm to an egg

Bartholin's glands- two pea-sized [glands](#) that, when sexually aroused, release a fluid that lubricates the [vagina](#)

Basal cell carcinoma- a type of skin [cancer](#) that is caused by exposure to large amounts of sunlight; commonly found on the neck, face, and arms

Basal metabolic rate- the lowest rate at which a person can possibly use energy and remain alive; at this rate, only absolutely necessary functions such as breathing are maintained

B cell- a [white blood cell](#) that makes [antibodies](#) to fight infections caused by foreign proteins

BCG vaccine- a [vaccine](#) used to protect against [tuberculosis](#)

Becker's muscular dystrophy- a [hereditary](#) disease in which the muscles weaken and waste away; similar to [Duchenne muscular dystrophy](#) but starts later in life and advances more slowly

Bell's palsy- another name for facial palsy, the usually one-sided, temporary numbing of the facial muscles, caused by an inflamed [nerve](#)

Bends- see [Decompression sickness](#)

Benign tumor- a tumor that is not cancerous, which means it does not spread through the body, but may grow and become dangerous

Beta blocker- a type of drug used to treat high blood pressure and heart disorders by reducing the strength and rate of the pumping by the heart

Beta carotene- a pigment found in orange vegetables and fruits, which the body converts to [vitamin A](#); possibly protects against [cancer](#)

Bifocal- a lens that corrects both near and distant vision by having two parts with different focusing strengths

Bilateral- a term describing a condition that affects both sides of the body or two paired organs, such as bilateral deafness (deafness in both ears)

Bile- a yellow-green liquid produced in the liver whose function is to remove waste from the [liver](#) and break down fats as food is digested

Bile duct- a tube that carries bile from the [liver](#) to the [gallbladder](#) and then to the small [intestine](#)

Biliary atresia- a birth defect in which the [bile ducts](#) are not completely developed; often a liver transplant is necessary

Biliary colic- a severe pain in the upper right section of the abdomen, usually caused by a [gallstone](#) passing out of the bladder or through the bile ducts

Biliary tract- the system of organs and ducts through which [bile](#) is made and transported from the [liver](#) to the [small intestine](#)

Bilirubin- the orange-yellow pigment in [bile](#), causing [jaundice](#) if it builds up in the blood and skin; the levels of bilirubin in the blood are used to diagnose liver disease

Binging and purging- behavior characteristic of the disorder [bulimia](#) in which a person overeats then rids themselves of the food before it can be absorbed by the body, either by forced vomiting or through the use of [laxatives](#)

Biochemistry- the science that studies the chemistry of living organisms, including humans

Bioequivalent- a drug that has the same effect on the body as another drug

Biofeedback- a technique used to gain control over a function that is normally automatic (such as blood pressure or pulse rate); the function is monitored and relaxation techniques are used to change it to a desired level

Bipolar disorder- an illness in which the patient goes back and forth between opposite extremes; the most notable bipolar disorder is [manic-depressive disorder](#), which is characterized by extreme highs and lows in mood

Birth canal- the passage that includes the [uterus](#) and [vagina](#) through which the baby passes at birth

Birth control- the regulation of the number of children born, referring either to the prevention of pregnancy (by birth control pill, sterilization, etc) or the prevention of birth (by abortion, etc)

Birth defect- an abnormality that is present when a baby is born

Birthmark- any area of discolored skin that is present when a baby is born

Bisexuality- sexual interest in members of both sexes

Bladder- an organ located in the pelvis whose function is to collect and store urine until it is expelled

Blepharitis- [inflammation](#) of the eyelids

Blind spot- a spot in the field of vision that is not sensitive to light; it is a product of the entrance of the [optic nerve](#) into the eyeball, where no light receptors are present on the [retina](#)

Blood-brain barrier- a layer of tightly bound cells that prevents certain substances carried in the bloodstream from entering the brain

Blood clot- a semisolid mass of blood that forms to help seal and prevent bleeding from a damaged vessel

Blood poisoning- see [Septicemia](#)

Blood pressure- the tension in the main [arteries](#) that is created by the beating of the heart and the resistance to flow and elasticity of the blood vessels

Blood transfusion- the transfer of blood or any of its parts to a person who has lost blood due to an injury, disease, or operation

Blood type- a category used to describe a person's blood according to the kinds of [proteins](#) present on the surface of the [red blood cells](#)

B lymphocyte- a type of [white blood cell](#) that makes [antibodies](#) and is an important part of the immune response

Boil- an inflamed, raised area of skin that is [pus](#)-filled; usually an infected [hair follicle](#)

Bone marrow- the fatty yellow or red tissue inside bones that is responsible for producing blood cells

Bone marrow transplant- a surgical procedure in which defective or cancerous bone marrow is replaced with healthy marrow, either from the patient or a donor

Bone spur- an abnormal growth of bone out of another bone, often located on the heel and usually painful

Booster- an additional dose of a [vaccine](#) taken after the first dose to maintain or renew the first one

Botulism- poisoning from poorly preserved food contaminated with a dangerous bacterial toxin that results in paralysis

Bowel- see [Intestine](#)

Bradycardia- a slow heart rate, usually below 60 beats per minute in adults

Brain damage- permanent death or damage of brain cells resulting in decreased mental ability

Brain death- the condition in which the brain stops functioning while the heart continues to beat

Breech birth- childbirth in which the baby is turned around in the [uterus](#) and emerges head-last instead of head-first

Bronchiolitis- an infection caused by a [virus](#) in the bronchioles (the smallest airways in the lungs), mainly affecting young children

Bronchitis- inflammation of the bronchial tubes, which connect the [trachea](#) to the lungs

Bronchoconstrictor- a substance that causes the lung [airways](#) to tighten up and become more narrow

Bronchodilator- a drug that widens the [airways](#) in the lungs to improve breathing; works by relieving muscle contraction or buildup of [mucus](#)

Bronchospasm- the temporary narrowing of the [airways](#) in the lungs, either as a result of muscle contraction or inflammation; may be caused by [asthma](#), infection, lung disease, or an allergic reaction

Bruise- see [Contusion](#)

Bruxism- an unaware clenching or grinding of the teeth, usually during sleep

Bubonic plague- a form of [plague](#) in which [lymph nodes](#) in the groin and armpit swell

Bulimia- a disorder in which a person eats large amounts of food then forces vomiting or uses [laxatives](#) to prevent weight gain (called binging and purging)

Bunion- a hard, fluid-filled pad along the inside joint of the big toe; may be caused by wearing high-heeled shoes or a genetically weak joint

Burkitt's lymphoma- a cancer of lymph tissue that most frequently occurs in the abdomen, the ovaries, and the bones of the face; it is associated with [malaria](#)

Bursa- a fluid-filled sac that cushions and reduces friction in certain parts of the body

Bursitis- [inflammation](#) of a bursa due to excessive pressure or friction, or from injury

Butterfly bandage- a butterfly-shaped bandage that can help close a minor cut for proper healing

Bypass- a surgical technique in which the flow of blood or another body fluid is redirected around a blockage

C

Calcification- the depositing of calcium salts in the body, which occurs normally in teeth and bones but abnormally in injured muscles and narrowed [arteries](#)

Calcitonin- a [hormone](#) made in the [thyroid gland](#) that controls calcium levels in the blood by slowing the loss of calcium from bones; used to treat hypercalcemia (excess calcium in the blood)

Calcium- a plentiful [mineral](#) in the body and the basic component of teeth and bones; essential for cell function, muscle contraction, transmission of nerve impulses, and blood clotting

Calcium channel blocker- a drug used to treat chest pain, high blood pressure, and irregular heartbeat by preventing the movement of calcium into the muscle

Callus- a thickened area of skin due to consistent pressure or friction, or the area around a bone break where new bone is formed

Calorie- a unit that is used to measure the energy content in food

Canal- a tunnel-like passage

Cancer- a group of diseases in which cells grow unrestrained in an organ or tissue in the body; can spread to tissues around it and destroy them or be transported through blood or [lymph](#) pathways to other parts of the body

Cancer staging- a method to determine how much a cancer has developed

Candidiasis- a yeast infection caused by the [fungus](#) *Candida albicans*; occurs most often in the [vagina](#), but also in the mouth, on moist skin, or on the penis

Canker sore- small, painful sore that usually occurs on the inside of the lip or cheek, or sometimes under the tongue; caused by bacteria, irritation of the area, stress, or allergies

Capillary- a tiny blood vessel that connects the smallest [arteries](#) to the smallest [veins](#) and allows exchange of oxygen and other materials between blood cells and body tissue cells

Carbohydrate- a substance, mainly sugar and starch, that is a main source of energy for the body and is found in sources such as cereals, breads, pastas, grains, and vegetables

Carbon dioxide- a colorless, odorless gas present in small amounts in the atmosphere and formed during respiration

Carcinogen- anything that can cause [cancer](#)

Carcinoma- a [cancer](#) that occurs on the surface or lining of an organ

Cardiac arrest- the sudden cessation of the heart's pumping action, possibly due to a heart attack, respiratory arrest, electrical shock, extreme cold, blood loss, drug overdose, or a severe allergic reaction

Cardiogenic shock- a severely dangerous condition involving decreased blood output from the heart, usually as a result of a heart attack

Cardiomegaly- a condition marked by enlargement of the heart, either because of a thickened heart muscle or an enlarged heart chamber; usually a result of the heart having to work harder than normal, as occurs with high blood pressure

Cardiomyopathy- a disease of the heart muscle that results in decreased output and reduced blood flow

Cardiopulmonary resuscitation- the administration of heart compression and [artificial respiration](#) to restore circulation and breathing

Cardiovascular system- the heart and blood vessels that are responsible for circulating blood throughout the body

Carditis- inflammation of the heart

Carotene- an orange pigment present in colored plants such as carrots that is converted by the body to the essential nutrient [vitamin A](#)

Carotid arteries- four main [arteries](#) that carry blood to the head and neck

Carpal bones- eight bones that together make the wrist

Carpal tunnel syndrome- a condition in which pressure on the [median nerve](#) in the wrist causes soreness, tingling, and numbness in the thumb and index and middle fingers

Cartilage- a [connective tissue](#) (softer than bone) that is part of the skeletal system, including the joints

Cast- a hard plaster or fiberglass shell that molds to a body part such as an arm and holds it in place for proper healing

Cataract- a disorder in which the lens of the eye becomes less transparent and in some cases a milky white, making vision less clear

Catheter- a hollow, flexible tube inserted into the body to put in or take out fluid, or to open up or close blood vessels

Catheterization- a technique in which a hollow, flexible tube is used to drain body fluids (such as urine), to introduce fluids into the body, or to examine or widen a narrowed [vein](#) or [artery](#)

CAT scanning- see [Computed tomography scanning](#)

Cat-scratch fever- an illness transmitted to humans through a cat's bite or scratch, which is thought to be caused by an unidentified bacteria; characterized by a swollen [lymph node](#) or blister near the bite or scratch, fever, rash, and headache; most commonly occurring in children

Cauliflower ear- a deformed ear caused by repeated injury

Cauterization- the use of heat, an electric current, or a chemical to destroy tissue or stop bleeding

Cecum- the beginning of the large intestine, which is connected to the [appendix](#) at its lower end

Cell- the tiny structures that make up all the tissues of the body and carry out all of its functions

Cellulitis- a skin [infection](#) caused by bacteria (usually streptococci); can lead to tissue damage and blood poisoning if untreated; characterized by fever, chills, heat, tenderness, and redness

Central nervous system- the brain and [spinal cord](#)

Cerebellum- a region of the brain located at the back; responsible for coordination of movement and maintaining balance

Cerebral palsy- a group of disorders of movement and posture resulting from damage to the brain early in a child's development; causes muscle weakness, difficulty coordinating voluntary movements, and sometimes complete loss of motion

Cerebrospinal fluid- a clear, watery fluid circulating in and around the brain and spinal column, which contains [glucose](#), [proteins](#), and salts for nutrition

Cerebrovascular disease- a disease affecting any [artery](#) supplying blood to the brain; may cause blockage or rupture of a blood vessel, leading to a [stroke](#)

Cerebrum- the largest part of the brain and the site of most of its activity, including sensory and motor functions

Cervical cap- a small rubber cup that is placed tightly over the [cervix](#) to prevent pregnancy

Cervical dysplasia- changes that occur in the [cells](#) on the surface of the [cervix](#) that usually precede the stages of cancer

Cervical incompetence- a weakness of the neck of the [uterus](#), which can lead to spontaneous [abortion](#) due to an inability to support the weight of the [fetus](#)

Cervical smear- a procedure in which [cells](#) are scraped off of the [cervix](#) and examined to detect changes that might precede the stages of cancer; also called a Pap smear

Cervicitis- inflammation of the [cervix](#)

Cervix- a small, round organ making up the neck of the [uterus](#) and separating it from the [vagina](#)

Cesarean section- an operation performed to remove a [fetus](#) by cutting into the [uterus](#), usually through the abdominal wall

Chancre- a painless sore that has a thick, rubbery base and a defined edge; usually occurs on the genitals after the contraction of the sexually transmitted disease [syphilis](#)

Chemotherapy- the treatment of [infections](#) or [cancer](#) with drugs that act on disease-producing organisms or cancerous tissue; may also affect normal cells

Chickenpox- a contagious disease that causes a rash and a fever; most commonly occurs during childhood

Chlamydia- microorganisms that cause several human infections and can be transmitted sexually

Cholecystectomy- the surgical removal of the [gallbladder](#)

Cholera- a bacterial [infection](#) of the small intestine that causes severe watery diarrhea, [dehydration](#), and possibly death

Cholesterol- a substance in body [cells](#) that plays a role in the production of hormones and bile salts and in the transport of fats in the bloodstream

Chondritis- inflammation of [cartilage](#)

Chondroma- a noncancerous tumor that occurs in [cartilage](#)

Chondromalacia patellae- painful damage to the [cartilage](#) behind the kneecap

Chondrosarcoma- a cancerous [cartilage](#) tumor that develops inside of bone or on its surface

Chorionic villus sampling- a method of diagnosing fetal defects in which a small amount of tissue is taken from the [placenta](#) and analyzed for abnormalities

Choroiditis- inflammation of the blood vessels behind the [retina](#) that line the back of the eye

Chromosome analysis- examination of a person's chromosomes either to determine if that person has an abnormality or to investigate one

Chronic- describes a disorder that continues for a long period of time

Chronic obstructive lung disease- a combination of the lung diseases [emphysema](#) and [bronchitis](#), characterized by blockage of airflow in and out of the lungs

Cilia- tiny, hairlike structures on the outside of some [cells](#), providing mobility

Circumcision- the surgical removal of the [foreskin](#) of the penis

Cirrhosis of the liver- gradual loss of liver function due to cell damage and internal scarring

Claudication- a cramping pain in one or both legs while walking, which can cause limping

Claustrophobia- fear of being confined in an enclosed or crowded space

Clavicle- the medical term for the collarbone

Cleft lip- a birth defect in which the upper lip is split vertically, extending into one or both nostrils

Cleft palate- a birth defect in which the roof of the mouth is split, extending from behind the teeth to the nasal cavity; often occurs with other birth defects such as cleft lip and partial deafness

Clinical trial- carefully monitored and planned testing of a new drug or treatment

Clitoris- a small female organ located near the opening of the [vagina](#) that swells when sexually aroused

Clone- an exact copy of a [gene](#), [cell](#), or [organism](#)

Closed fracture- a bone break that does not break the skin

Clotting factor- a substance in the blood that is needed for blood to harden and stop a wound from bleeding

Clubfoot- a [genetic disorder](#) in which the foot is twisted and misshapen

Cluster headache- severe pain that occurs suddenly and affects one side of the head, including the face and neck

CNS- see [Central nervous system](#)

Coagulation- a process that plays a large role in the hardening and thickening of blood to form a clot

Cocarcinogen- a substance that does not cause [cancer](#) by itself, but increases the effect of a substance that does cause cancer

Coccyx- four fused bones that form a triangular shape at the base of the [spine](#) (also known as the tailbone)

Cochlea- a coiled organ in the inner ear that plays a large role in hearing by picking up sound vibrations and transmitting them as electrical signals

Coitus- sexual intercourse

Cold sore- a small blister anywhere around the mouth that is caused by the herpes simplex virus

Colectomy- the complete or partial surgical removal of the large intestine (the colon), usually as treatment of a cancerous tumor or a narrowing and blockage of the intestine

Colic- waves of pain in the abdomen that increase in strength, disappear, and return; usually caused by a stone blocking a [bile](#) or urine passageway or an intestinal infection

Colitis- inflammation of the large intestine (the colon), which usually leads to abdominal pain, fever, and diarrhea with blood and [mucus](#)

Collapsed lung- a condition in which all or part of a lung cannot expand and fill with air

Colon- the main part of the large intestine, between the [cecum](#) and the [rectum](#)

Colonoscopy- investigation of the inside of the colon using a long, flexible [fiberoptic](#) tube

Color blindness- any vision disorder in which the person sees colors abnormally, has trouble distinguishing between them, or cannot see them at all

Colostomy- a surgical procedure in which some part of the [colon](#) is cut and moved to the surface of the abdomen so that feces can be passed into a bag worn outside of the body

Coma- a condition in which the area of the brain involved in maintaining consciousness is somehow affected, resulting in a state of unconsciousness in which the patient does not respond to stimulation

Comminuted fracture- a crushed or shattered bone

Common cold- an infection caused by a [virus](#), which results in an inflamed lining of the nose and throat; characterized by a stuffy and runny nose and, sometimes, a sore throat

Communicable disease- a disease that can be passed from one individual to another

Compound fracture- a bone break that breaks the skin

Compression fracture- a break in a short bone in which its soft tissue is crushed

Computed tomography scanning- a technique for producing cross-sectional images of the body in which X-rays are passed through the body at different angles and analyzed by a computer; also called CT scanning or CAT scanning

Concussion- disturbance of electrical activity in the brain due to a blow to the head or neck, causing temporary loss of consciousness

Congenital- present or existing at the time of birth

Congestive heart failure- inability of the heart to efficiently pump blood through the body, causing buildup of blood in the [veins](#) and of other body fluids in tissue

Conjunctiva- the clear membrane covering the white of the eye and the inside of the eyelid that produces a fluid that lubricates the [cornea](#) and eyelid

Conjunctivitis- inflammation of the conjunctiva; commonly called pinkeye

Connective tissue- strong tissue that connects and supports body structures

Constipation- difficult or infrequent bowel movements of hard, dry feces

Contraindication- an aspect of a patient's condition that makes the use of a certain drug or therapy an unwise or dangerous decision

Contusion- damage to the skin and underlying tissue as a result of a blunt injury; a bruise

Corn- a thickened callus on the foot that is caused by an improperly fitting shoe

Cornea- the clear, dome-shaped front portion of the eye's outer covering

Coronary- describes structures that encircle another structure (such as the [coronary arteries](#), which circle the heart); commonly used to refer to a coronary thrombosis or a heart attack

Coronary arteries- the arteries that branch off from the [aorta](#) and supply oxygen-rich blood to the heart muscle

Coronary artery bypass surgery- an operation in which a piece of vein or artery is used to [bypass](#) a blockage in a coronary artery; performed to prevent [myocardial infarction](#) and relieve [angina pectoris](#)

Coronary heart disease- disorders that restrict the blood supply to the heart, including [atherosclerosis](#)

Coronary thrombosis- the blockage of a coronary artery by a blood clot

Corpuscle- a tiny, rounded structure in the body, such as a red or white blood cell

Corticosteroids- synthetic drugs that are used to replace natural [hormones](#) or to suppress the [immune system](#) and help prevent inflammation

CPR- see [Cardiopulmonary resuscitation](#)

Creatinine- a waste product that is filtered from the blood by the [kidneys](#) and expelled in urine

Croup- a usually mild and temporary condition common in children under the age of 4 in which the walls of the [airways](#) become inflamed and narrow, resulting in wheezing and coughing

Cruciate ligaments- two [ligaments](#) in the knee that cross each other and help stabilize the knee joint

CT scanning- a procedure that uses X-rays and computers to create cross-sectional images of the body to diagnose and monitor disease

Culture- the artificial growth of [cells](#), tissue, or microorganisms such as bacteria in a laboratory

Curettage- the use of a sharp, spoonlike instrument (a curet) to scrape away tissue that is abnormal or to obtain a sample that can be analyzed

CVS- see [Chorionic villus sampling](#)

Cyanosis- a bluish discoloration of the skin, caused by low levels of [oxygen](#) in the blood

Cyst- a lump filled with either fluid or soft material, occurring in any organ or tissue; may occur for a number of reasons but is usually harmless unless its presence disrupts organ or tissue function

Cystectomy- surgical removal of the bladder; the [bladder](#) is often replaced with a short length of [small intestine](#)

Cystic fibrosis- an inherited disorder in which the lungs are prone to infection, and fats and other nutrients cannot be absorbed into the body

Cystoscopy- examination of the [urethra](#) and [bladder](#) using a long, thin, fiberoptic tube

Cystostomy- the surgical placement of a drainage opening in the [bladder](#)

D

D and C- see [Dilatation and Curettage](#)

Debridement- surgical removal of dead, damaged, or infected tissue, or some foreign material from a wound or burn

Decompression sickness- the formation of gas bubbles in the body's tissues as a result of a scuba diver ascending too quickly from depth; commonly called the bends

Deep-vein thrombosis- the formation of a blood clot inside of a deep-lying [vein](#), usually in the legs

Defecation- the passing of feces out of the body through the [anus](#); a bowel movement

Defibrillation- a short electric shock to the chest to normalize an irregular heartbeat

Degenerative arthritis- the breakdown of the [cartilage](#) lining the bones in joints, usually weight-bearing joints (such as the knee); causes stiffness and pain (also called osteoarthritis)

Dehydration- excessive, dangerous loss of water from the body

Dementia- a gradual decline in mental ability usually caused by a brain disease, such as [Alzheimer disease](#)

Depilatory- a chemical hair remover

Depot injection- [injection](#) of a drug into a muscle; the drug is designed to absorb slowly into the body

Depression- feelings of hopelessness, sadness, and a general disinterest in life, which for the most part have no cause and may be the result of a psychiatric illness

Dermabrasion- removal of the surface layer of skin with a sanding wheel to treat scarring or to remove tattoos

Dermatitis- [inflammation](#) of the skin

Dermis- the inner skin layer

Desensitization- the process of making a person less allergic to a substance by injecting gradually increasing amounts of the substance; sometimes done to prevent [anaphylactic shock](#)

Detoxification- treatment given either to fight a person's dependence on alcohol or other drugs or to rid the body of a poisonous substance and its effects

Dextrocardia- a rare genetic condition in which the heart is located on the right side of the body, instead of the left

Dextrose- another name for the sugar [glucose](#)

Diabetes insipidus- a rare condition characterized by increased urine production

Diabetes mellitus- a common form of diabetes in which the body cannot properly store or use glucose (sugar), the body's main source of energy

Dialysis- a procedure to treat kidney failure in which artificial means are used to filter waste, maintain [acid-base balance](#), and remove excess fluid from the body

Diaper rash- a common condition in babies in which the skin in the diaper area becomes irritated and red, usually because of exposure to urine, feces, or heat

Diaphragm- the large, dome-shaped muscle separating the abdomen and chest that contracts and relaxes to make breathing possible; also, a thin, rubber dome that is used as a method of female contraception

Diastolic pressure- the [blood pressure](#) measured when the heart is at rest between beats

Diathermy- the use of high-frequency currents, microwaves, or ultrasound to produce heat in the body to increase blood flow, relieve pain, or destroy diseased tissue

Dilatation and Curettage- a procedure in which the vagina and cervix are widened and the lining of the uterus is scraped away to diagnose and treat disorders of the uterus

Diphtheria- a bacterial infection that causes a fever, headache, sore throat, and possibly death; diphtheria is rare in developed countries

Disk prolapse- a disorder in which one of the disks located between the [vertebrae](#) in the spine breaks down and the pulpy interior squeezes out, causing pressure on a [nerve](#); commonly called a "slipped" or "ruptured" disk

Dislocation- displacement of the two bones in a joint

Distention- swelling, enlargement, or stretching

Diuretic- a drug that increases the amount of water in the urine, removing excess water from the body; used in treating high blood pressure and fluid retention

Diverticulitis- inflammation of diverticula (small sacs in the intestine's inner lining); can cause fever, pain, and tenderness

DNA- deoxyribonucleic acid; responsible for passing genetic information in nearly all organisms

Dominant gene- a [gene](#) that always produces its effect when it is present

Dopamine- a chemical that transmits messages in the brain and plays a role in movement

Down syndrome- a [genetic disorder](#) in which a person's cells have 1 too many chromosomes, causing moderate to severe mental handicap and a characteristic appearance

Duchenne muscular dystrophy- a genetic condition in boys in which [nerves](#) degenerate and muscles get progressively weaker

Duodenal ulcer- an erosion in the inner lining of the wall of the first part of the small intestine (called the duodenum)

Duodenum- the first part of the small intestine, immediately following the stomach

Dysentery- a severe intestinal [infection](#), causing abdominal pain and diarrhea with blood or [mucus](#)

Dyspnea- difficulty breathing

Dystrophy- any disorder in which [cells](#) become damaged or do not develop properly because they do not receive adequate nutrition

E

Eardrum- a thin, oval-shaped membrane that separates the inner ear from the outer ear and is responsible for transmitting sound waves

ECG (sometimes called an EKG)- an electrocardiogram, which is a record of the electrical impulses that trigger the heartbeat; used to diagnose heart disorders

Echocardiogram- an image of the heart that is created by high-frequency (ultrasound) sound waves

Eclampsia- a serious condition that occurs in late pregnancy, characterized by [seizures](#) in the woman

Ectopic- occurring at an abnormal position or time

Eczema- inflammation of the skin, usually causing itchiness and sometimes blisters and scaling; may be caused by allergies, but often occurs for no apparent reason

Edema- abnormal buildup of fluid in the body, which may cause visible swelling

EEG- see [Electroencephalography](#)

Elective- describes a treatment or procedure that is not urgent and can be arranged at the patient's convenience

Electroencephalography- a procedure for recording the electrical impulses of brain activity

Embolism- the blockage of a blood vessel by an embolus - something previously circulating in the blood (such as a [blood clot](#), gas bubble, tissue, bacteria, bone marrow, [cholesterol](#), fat, etc)

Embryo- a term used to describe a child in the womb from [fertilization](#) to 8 weeks following fertilization

Emetic- a substance that causes vomiting; used to treat some cases of poisoning and drug overdose

Emphysema- a chronic disease in which the small air sacs in the lungs (the alveoli) become damaged; characterized by difficulty breathing

Encephalitis- inflammation of the brain, usually caused by a [virus](#); may be very mild and barely noticeable, but is usually serious and can progress from headache and fever to [hallucinations](#), [paralysis](#), and sometimes [coma](#)

Endarterectomy- surgery performed to remove the lining of an [artery](#) that has been narrowed by fatty tissue buildup

Endemic- describes a disease that is always present in a certain population of people

Endocarditis- inflammation of the inner lining of the heart, usually the [heart valves](#); typically caused by an [infection](#)

Endocardium- the inner lining of the heart

Endocrine gland- a [gland](#) that secretes [hormones](#) into the bloodstream

Endogenous- arising from inside of the body

Endometrial polyp- a growth (usually noncancerous) occurring on the lining of the [uterus](#)

Endometriosis- a condition in which fragments of the endometrium are found in other pelvic organs

Endometrium- the membrane that lines the [uterus](#)

Endophthalmitis- [inflammation](#) of the inside of the eye

Endorphin- a group of chemicals produced in the brain that reduce pain and positively affect mood

Endoscope- a lighted instrument used to view the inside of a body cavity

Endothelium- the layer of flat [cells](#) that lines the blood and lymph vessels, the heart, and other structures in the body

Endotracheal tube- a plastic tube that is fed down into the [trachea](#) through the mouth or nose to supply oxygen to a person who is not breathing properly

Enteritis- inflammation of the [small intestine](#), usually causing diarrhea

Enterobiasis- infestation by a [pinworm](#)

Enuresis- the medical term for wetting the bed

Enzyme- a chemical, originating in a [cell](#), that regulates reactions in the body

Epidemic- a term used to describe a disease that is rare then suddenly affects more people than usually expected

Epidermis- the outer layer of the skin

Epididymis- a long, coiled tube, exiting from the back of the [testicle](#), in which sperm mature

Epidural anesthesia- a method of pain relief in which a painkilling drug is injected into the space surrounding the [spinal cord](#) to block sensations in the abdomen and lower body

Epilepsy- a disorder of the nervous system in which abnormal electrical activity in the brain causes [seizures](#)

Epinephrine- a [hormone](#) produced by the [adrenal glands](#) in response to stress, exercise, or fear; increases heart rate and opens [airways](#) to improve breathing; also called adrenaline

Episcleritis- a patch of [inflammation](#) on the outer layer of the white of the eye

Episiotomy- a surgical procedure in which an incision is made in the tissue between the [vagina](#) and [anus](#) to prevent tearing of this tissue during childbirth

Epithelium- the layer of [cells](#) that covers the body and lines many organs

Epstein-Barr virus- a virus that is the cause of [mononucleosis](#) and is involved in [Burkitt's lymphoma](#)

Erysipelas- an infection caused by [streptococci](#) bacteria; characterized by fever and rash

Erythema- redness of the skin

Erythrocyte- a [red blood cell](#)

Erythrocyte sedimentation rate- a measure of the time it takes for [red blood cells](#) to collect at the bottom of a sample of blood; an elevated rate may mean that there is inflammation somewhere in the body

Erythroplakia- red patches in the [mucous membranes](#) of the mouth, throat, or voice box (larynx) that can become cancerous; risk factors include smoking pipes and chewing tobacco

Esophageal spasm- irregular contractions of the muscles in the [esophagus](#), which lead to difficulty swallowing

Esophageal varices- swollen veins in the lower esophagus and possibly the upper part of the stomach; can cause vomiting of blood and passing of black stool

Esophagus- a tube-shaped canal in the digestive tract, connecting the throat to the stomach

Estrogen- a group of [hormones](#) (produced mainly in the [ovaries](#)) that are necessary for female sexual development and reproductive functioning

Estrogen replacement therapy- treatment with synthetic estrogen drugs to relieve symptoms of [menopause](#) and to help protect women against [osteoporosis](#) and heart disease

Eustachian tube- the tube that connects the middle ear and the back of the nose, draining the middle ear and regulating air pressure

Euthanasia- painlessly ending the life of a patient with an incurable disease who requests to die

Excision- the surgical removal of diseased tissue

Excretion- the process by which the body rids itself of waste

Exercise stress test- the monitoring of the heart during strenuous exercise, usually on a treadmill or exercise bicycle, to evaluate how the heart responds to stress

Exercise thallium test- an imaging test performed during and after an exercise stress test to evaluate functioning of the heart muscles

Exogenous- arising from outside of the body

Expectorant- a medication used to promote the coughing up of [phlegm](#) from the respiratory tract

Extensor muscle- a muscle that causes a joint or limb to straighten

External version- external repositioning of the [fetus](#) in the womb to the correct birth position

Extracorporeal shock wave lithotripsy- a procedure performed to destroy [kidney stones](#) using external shock waves

Extradural anesthesia- [injection](#) of an [anesthetic](#) into the space outside the dura mater, the fibrous membrane that envelops the [spinal cord](#)

E

Facial palsy- inability to move the muscles of the face, usually on only one side, due to inflammation of a [nerve](#)

Failure to thrive- describes a baby who grows and gains weight slower than expected

Fallopian tube- either of two long, slender ducts connecting a woman's [uterus](#) to her [ovaries](#), where eggs are transported from the ovaries to the uterus and sperm may fertilize an egg

Familial- a term describing a disorder or characteristic (such as male pattern baldness) that occurs within a family more often than would be expected

Fasciitis- inflammation of the layer of [connective tissue](#) that covers, separates, and supports muscles

Fatty acid- any of a number of carbon-, oxygen-, and hydrogen-containing molecules that make up fats

Febrile- a term used to describe something related to a fever, such as febrile [seizures](#) (seizures occurring in a child who has a fever)

Fecal occult blood test- a test that uses a piece of chemically sensitive paper to detect blood in a stool sample; used to screen for possible signs of [cancer](#) in the [large intestine](#) or [rectum](#)

Femoral artery- the main [artery](#) that supplies blood to the leg

Femur- the bone located between the hip and the knee; the thighbone

Fertility- the ability to produce a child

Fertility drug- a drug used to treat [infertility](#) that contains [hormones](#) or substances associated with hormones

Fertilization- the joining of an egg and a sperm, creating the first cell of a new life

Fetal alcohol syndrome- a combination of defects in a [fetus](#) as a result of the mother drinking alcohol during pregnancy

Fetal distress- physical distress experienced by a [fetus](#) because of lack of [oxygen](#)

Fetal monitoring- the use of an instrument to record or listen to a [fetus'](#) heartbeat during pregnancy and labor

Fetal tissue transplant- an experimental procedure in which [cells](#) are taken from an aborted fetus and placed into the brain of a person with a brain disease such as [Parkinson's](#)

Fetus- the term used to refer to an unborn child from 8 weeks after [fertilization](#) to birth

Fiber- a constituent of plants that cannot be digested, which helps maintain healthy functioning of the bowels

Fiberoptics- thin, flexible instruments that transmit light and images, allowing structures inside of the body to be viewed

Fibrillation- rapid, inefficient contraction of muscle fibers of the heart caused by disruption of [nerve](#) impulses

Fibroadenoma- a noncancerous tumor commonly found in the breast

Fibrocystic breast disease- the most common cause of breast lumps

Fibroid- a noncancerous tumor of the [uterus](#) made up of smooth muscle and [connective tissue](#)

Fibroma- a noncancerous tumor of [connective tissue](#)

Fibrosis- abnormal formation of connective or scar tissue

Fifth disease- a childhood infection caused by a [virus](#), which often starts as a rash on the cheeks and spreads

Fissure- a groove or slit on the body or in an organ

Fistula- an abnormal passageway from one organ to another or from an organ to the body surface

Fitness- a measure of a person's physical strength, flexibility, and endurance

Flatulence- excessive air or gas in the intestines, which is expelled through the [anus](#)

Floatters- small spots that float across the field of vision, caused by debris floating in the gel-like substance that fills the eye

Flu- see [Influenza](#)

Fluke- a parasitic flatworm that can infest humans

Fluoride- a mineral that helps protect teeth against decay

Fluoroscopy- a method used to view organ structure and function by passing X-rays through the body and monitoring the resulting image on a fluorescent screen

Folic acid- a vitamin essential to the production of [red blood cells](#); plays an important role in the growth a developing [fetus](#)

Follicle- a tiny pouchlike cavity in a structure of the body, such as a hair follicle

Follicle stimulating hormone- a [hormone](#) produced by the [pituitary gland](#) in the brain that stimulates the testicles to produce sperm in males and causes eggs to mature in females

Folliculitis- the inflammation of [hair follicles](#) due to a bacterial infection, causing boils or tiny blisters containing [pus](#)

Fontanelles- the two soft spots on a baby's scalp that are the result of gaps in the skull where bones have not yet fused

Food poisoning- stomach pain, diarrhea, and/or vomiting caused by eating contaminated food

Forceps- instruments resembling tweezers that are used to handle objects or tissue during surgery

Forceps delivery- the use of an instrument that cups the baby's head (called an obstetric forceps), to help deliver a baby

Foreign body- an object in an organ or body cavity that is not normally present

Foreskin- the loose skin that covers the head of the [penis](#)

Fracture- a bone break

Fraternal twins- twins that develop from two different eggs fertilized by two different sperm; are not identical

Free radical- see [Oxygen free radical](#)

Frostbite- damage to body tissue as a result of freezing

FSH- see [Follicle stimulating hormone](#)

Fulminant- describes a disorder that begins suddenly and worsens quickly

Fungus- an organism that is dependent on another organism for nourishment

G

Galactocele- a milk-filled tumor in a blocked breast milk duct

Galactorrhea- breast milk production by a woman who is not pregnant and has not just given birth

Galactose- a sugar that is formed from the breakdown of lactose

Galactosemia- a [genetic disorder](#) in which galactose cannot be converted into glucose

Gallbladder- a small, pear-shaped sac positioned under the [liver](#), which concentrates and stores [bile](#)

Gallstone- a round, hard mass of [cholesterol](#), [bile](#), or calcium salts that is found in the gallbladder or a [bile duct](#)

Gallstone ileus- an abnormal condition in which a gallstone passes from the gallbladder into the [intestines](#) through an abnormal passage and blocks the intestine

Gamete intrafallopian transfer- a method of treating [infertility](#) in which eggs are taken from a woman's [ovaries](#) and fertilized with sperm and then the fertilized egg is injected into one of her [fallopian tubes](#)

Gamma globulin- a substance prepared from blood that carries [antibodies](#) to most common infections; also used in immunizations

Ganglion- a fluid-filled [cyst](#) attached to a tendon sheath or joint

Gangrene- death of a tissue because of a lack of blood supply

Gastrectomy- surgical removal of all or part of the stomach

Gastric acid- the digestive acid in the stomach

Gastric juice- digestive fluids produced by the lining of the stomach that break down [proteins](#) and destroy harmful organisms

Gastric lavage- washing out of the stomach with water, often to treat poisoning; commonly called "stomach pumping"

Gastric ulcer- a [peptic ulcer](#)

Gastrin- a [hormone](#) that stimulates the release of [gastric acid](#) in the stomach

Gastrinoma- a [tumor](#) that produces gastrin, making the stomach and [duodenum](#) more acidic

Gastritis- inflammation of the [mucous membrane](#) lining of the stomach; can have a number of causes, including viruses, bacteria, and use of alcohol and other drugs

Gastroenteritis- inflammation of the stomach and intestines

Gastrointestinal series- a set of X-rays, taken at different intervals after a barium sulfate solution is swallowed, to examine the gastrointestinal tract

Gastrointestinal tract- the part of the digestive system that includes the mouth, [esophagus](#), stomach, and [intestines](#)

Gastroscopy- examination of the [esophagus](#), stomach, and the first part of the small intestine (duodenum) using an [endoscope](#) inserted through the mouth

Gastrectomy- the surgical creation of an opening in the abdominal wall into the stomach for drainage or a feeding tube

Gaucher's disease- a [genetic disorder](#) in which [lipids](#) cannot be properly broken down and build up in certain cells; causes enlargement of the spleen and liver, bone damage, and [anemia](#)

Gavage- an artificial feeding technique in which liquids are passed into the stomach by way of a tube inserted through the nose

Gene- the basic unit of [DNA](#), which is responsible for passing genetic information; each gene contains the instructions for the production of a certain [protein](#)

General anesthesia- a method of preventing pain in which the patient is induced to lose consciousness

Generic drug- a drug marketed under its chemical name, instead of a brand name

Gene therapy- an experimental procedure in which disease-causing [genes](#) are replaced by normal, healthy genes

Genetic analysis- examination of [DNA](#) in a laboratory to diagnose [genetic disorders](#)

Genetic counseling- information and advice given to persons considering pregnancy about the risk that a child will have an inheritable [birth defect](#) or genetic disorder

Genetic disorder- a disorder caused partly or completely by a defect in [genes](#), which carry hereditary information

Genetic engineering- the alteration of genetic information to change an organism; mainly used to produce [vaccines](#) and drugs such as [insulin](#)

Genital herpes- an infection caused by the [herpes simplex](#) virus, which causes a painful rash of fluid-filled blisters on the genitals; transmitted through sexual contact

Genital tract- the organs that make up the [reproductive system](#)

Genital wart- a growth on the skin in or around the vagina, penis, or anus, transmitted by sexual contact; can cause [cancer](#) of the [cervix](#)

Genome- the complete set of an organism's [genes](#)

Geographic tongue- a condition in which the tongue is patchy where surface cells break down

German measles- the common name for [Rubella](#)

Germ cell- a sperm or egg cell, or the immature form of either

Gestation- the period of time between [fertilization](#) of an egg by a sperm and birth of a baby

Giardiasis- [infection](#) with a single-celled parasite, causing abdominal cramps, diarrhea, and nausea

GIFT- see [Gamete intrafallopian transfer](#)

Gingivectomy- surgical removal of a diseased part of the gums

Gingivitis- inflammation of the gums, typically caused by a buildup of [plaque](#) due to poor hygiene

GI series- see [Gastrointestinal series](#)

Gland- a group of cells or an organ that produces substances (such as [hormones](#) and [enzyme](#)) that are used by the body

Glaucoma- a disease in which eye damage is caused by an increase in the pressure of the fluid within the eye

Glioblastoma multiforme- a fast-growing, cancerous brain [tumor](#)

Glioma- a brain [tumor](#) arising from cells that support nerve cells

Glomerulonephritis- inflammation of the filtering structures in the [kidneys](#), hindering removal of waste products from the blood

Glomerulosclerosis- scarring of the filtering structures in the [kidneys](#) due to damage

Glossectomy- surgical removal of all or part of the tongue

Glucagon- a [hormone](#) produced by the [pancreas](#) that converts stored carbohydrates (glycogen) into glucose, the body's energy source

Glucose- a sugar that is the main source of energy for the body

Glucose tolerance test- a test that evaluates the body's response to glucose after a period of fasting; used to check for [diabetes mellitus](#)

Glycogen- the main form that glucose, the body's energy source, takes when it is stored

Glycosuria- [glucose](#) in the urine

Goiter- enlargement of the [thyroid gland](#), which produces a swelling on the neck

Gonadotropic hormones- [hormones](#) that stimulate activity in the [ovaries](#) and [testicles](#)

Gonorrhea- a common sexually transmitted disease, characterized by painful urination or a discharge from the penis or vagina

Gout- a disorder marked by high levels of uric acid in the blood; usually experienced as [arthritis](#) in one joint

Graft- healthy tissue that is used to replace diseased or defective tissue

Grand mal- a type of [seizure](#) occurring with [epilepsy](#), producing loss of consciousness and involuntary jerking movements

Granuloma- a mass of tissue that forms at a site of inflammation, injury, or infection as a part of the healing process

Graves' disease- an [autoimmune disease](#) that causes [goiter](#), overproduction of thyroid hormones, and sometimes bulging eyeballs

Guillain-Barré syndrome- a [peripheral nervous system](#) disease in which nerve inflammation causes weakness, loss of movement, and loss of sensation in the arms and legs

Guthrie test- a blood test performed on babies to test for [phenylketonuria](#)

H

Hair follicle- a tiny opening in the skin from which a hair grows

Halitosis- the clinical term for bad breath; commonly caused by poor oral hygiene or eating certain foods; if persistent it can be a sign of illness

Hallucination- a perception that occurs when there is actually nothing there to cause it (such as hearing voices when there are none)

Hammer toe- an abnormality in the [tendons](#) of the toe that causes the toe to be flexed at all times

Hamstring muscle- a muscle located at the back of the thigh that bends the leg at the knee and moves the leg backward

Hardening of the arteries- the common name for [arteriosclerosis](#)

Hashimoto's disease- a disease in which the body's [immune system](#) attacks cells of the [thyroid gland](#), resulting in a decrease in thyroid hormones

Hay fever- the common name for [allergic rhinitis](#)

HDL- see [High-density lipoprotein](#)

Heart attack- see [Myocardial infarction](#)

Heart block- a disorder of the heart caused by a blockage of the [nerve](#) impulses to the heart that regulate heartbeat; may lead to dizziness, fainting, or stroke

Heartburn- a burning sensation experienced in the center of the chest up to the throat; may be caused by overeating, eating spicy food, or drinking alcohol; recurrent heartburn may be caused by [acid reflux](#)

Heart disease- see [Coronary heart disease](#)

Heart failure- the inability of the heart to pump blood effectively

Heart-lung machine- a machine that takes over the functions of the heart and lungs during certain types of surgery

Heart rate- the rate at which the heart pumps blood, measured in the number of heartbeats per minute

Heart valve- the structure at each exit of the four chambers of the heart that allows blood to exit but not to flow back in

Heat exhaustion- fatigue, dizziness, and [nausea](#) experienced because of overexposure to heat; if not treated it can result in heat stroke

Heat stroke- a life-threatening condition resulting from extreme overexposure to heat, which disrupts the body's system of regulating temperature

Heel spur- an abnormal, often painful outgrowth of bone on the back of the heel

Heimlich maneuver- a first-aid technique for choking; dislodges an object that is blocking a person's airway

Helper T cells- [white blood cells](#), responsible for regulating other cells in the body's [immune system](#), that are the main targets of the AIDS virus; also called CD4 cells

Hemangioma- a purple-red mark on the skin, caused by an excess of blood vessels

Hemarthrosis- bleeding into and swelling of a joint

Hematemesis- vomiting of blood

Hematocrit- the percentage of total blood volume that consists of [red blood cells](#), which is determined by laboratory testing; can be an indicator of disease or injury

Hematoma- an accumulation of blood from a broken blood vessel

Hematuria- blood in the urine, which can be caused by urinary tract disorders (such as [cysts](#), [tumor](#), or stones) or by an [infection](#)

Hemochromatosis- a [genetic disorder](#) in which too much [iron](#) is absorbed from food

Hemodialysis- a method used to treat kidney failure, in which blood is passed through a machine that purifies it and returns it to the body

Hemoglobin- the pigment in [red blood cells](#) that is responsible for carrying [oxygen](#); hemoglobin bound to oxygen gives blood its red color

Hemoglobinuria- hemoglobin in the urine

Hemolysis- the breakdown of red blood cells in the [spleen](#), which is normal but can cause [jaundice](#) and [anemia](#) when the red blood cells are broken down too quickly

Hemophilia- an inherited disorder in which a person's blood lacks a certain [protein](#) important in forming blood clots, leading to excessive bleeding

Hemorrhage- the medical term for bleeding

Hemorrhoid- a bulging [vein](#) either at the opening of the [anus](#) or just inside the anus, often caused by childbirth or straining during bowel movements

Hemospermia- blood in the [semen](#)

Hemostasis- the stopping of bleeding by the body's mechanisms

Hemothorax- an accumulation of blood between the chest wall and the lungs

Hepatectomy- surgical removal of all or part of the [liver](#)

Hepatic- a term used to describe something that is related to the [liver](#)

Hepatitis- inflammation of the [liver](#), which may be caused by a viral [infection](#), poisons, or the use of alcohol or other drugs

Hepatitis A- a form of hepatitis caused by the hepatitis A virus, usually transmitted by contact with contaminated food or water

Hepatitis B- a form of hepatitis (generally more serious than hepatitis A) caused by the hepatitis B virus, which is transmitted through sexual contact or contact with infected blood or body fluids

Hepatitis C- a form of hepatitis caused by the hepatitis C virus, which is transmitted through sexual contact or contact with infected blood or body fluids

Hepatitis D- a form of hepatitis that only causes symptoms when the individual is already infected with [hepatitis B](#)

Hepatoma- a cancerous [tumor](#) of the [liver](#)

Hepatomegaly- enlargement of the [liver](#)

Hereditary- describes a genetic trait that is passed from parents to children

Hereditary spherocytosis- a [genetic disorder](#) in which [red blood cells](#) are smaller, rounder, and more fragile than normal, causing hemolytic anemia

Hermaphroditism- a rare condition in which an individual is born with both male and female reproductive organs

Hernia- the bulging of an organ or tissue through a weakened area in the muscle wall

Herniated disk- see [Disk prolapse](#)

Herpes encephalitis- brain inflammation caused by a herpes simplex virus that has spread from another part of the body

Herpes simplex- infection by the herpes simplex virus, which causes blisterlike sores on the face, lips, mouth, or genitals; in rare cases, can also affect the eyes, fingers, or brain

Herpes zoster- see [Shingles](#)

Heterosexuality- being sexually attracted to members of the opposite sex

Hiatal hernia- a type of hernia in which the stomach bulges up into the chest cavity through an opening in the [diaphragm](#)

Hiccup- involuntary sudden contraction of the [diaphragm](#) along with the closing of the [vocal cords](#), producing a "hiccup" sound

High-density lipoprotein- a type of [protein](#) found in the blood that removes [cholesterol](#) from tissues, protecting against heart disease

Hirschsprung's disease- a condition that is present at birth in which nerve cells do not develop in parts of the [intestine](#), causing the intestine to narrow and block the passage of feces

Hirsutism- excessive hair or hair growth in unusual places, especially in women

Histamine- a chemical in some cells of the body that is released during allergic reactions, causing [inflammation](#); also causes production of acid in the stomach and narrowing of the [airways](#)

H₁ (histamine) blocker- a drug that blocks the action of histamine; used to treat inflammation

H₂ (histamine) blocker- a drug used in the treatment of [peptic ulcers](#) that blocks histamine from causing acid production in the stomach

Histoplasmosis- a respiratory disease acquired by inhaling the spores of a [fungus](#) found in soil, especially where there are bird or bat droppings

HIV- see [Human immunodeficiency virus](#)

Hives- the common term for urticaria, an itchy, inflamed rash that results from an allergic reaction

Hodgkin's disease- a [cancer](#) of lymphoid tissue (found in [lymph nodes](#) and the [spleen](#)) that causes the lymph nodes to enlarge and function improperly; may cause illness, fever, loss of appetite, and weight loss

Homeostasis- the body's coordinated maintenance of the stable, internal environment by regulating blood pressure, blood sugar, body temperature, etc

Homocystinuria- a [genetic disorder](#) in which an [enzyme](#) deficiency causes a substance called homocystine to build up in the blood, leading to mental handicap and skeletal abnormalities

Homosexuality- being sexually attracted to members of the same sex

Hookworm- infestation by a small, round, blood-sucking parasite; commonly causes a rash on the foot, but can also cause cough, [pneumonia](#), and [anemia](#)

Hormonal implant- surgical insertion of a small object just under the skin that slowly releases a synthetic hormone for purposes such as [birth control](#)

Hormone- a chemical produced by a gland or tissue that is released into the bloodstream; controls body functions such as growth and sexual development

Hormone replacement therapy- the use of natural or artificial hormones to treat hormone deficiencies

Hospice- a hospital or an area of a hospital dedicated to treating people who are dying, often of a specific cause

Hot flash- a sudden, temporary feeling of heat and sometimes sweating; usually occurs as a result of low [estrogen](#) levels in women because of [menopause](#) or after a [hysterectomy](#)

HTLV- see [Human T-cell lymphotrophic virus](#)

Human immunodeficiency virus- a [retrovirus](#) that attacks [helper T cells](#) of the immune system and causes acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS); transmitted through sexual intercourse or contact with infected blood

Human T-cell lymphotrophic virus- a virus similar to HIV that affects the same [helper T cells](#), but usually accompanies adult [T-cell leukemia](#) or T-cell lymphomas

Hydramnios- an excess of [amniotic fluid](#) in the [uterus](#) during pregnancy

Hydrocele- a painless swelling of the [scrotum](#), caused by a collection of fluid around the [testicle](#); commonly occurs in middle aged men

Hydrocephalus- excess [cerebrospinal fluid](#) within the brain; commonly referred to as "water on the brain"

Hydrocortisone- a [corticosteroid](#) drug that is used to treat inflammation and allergies

Hygiene- the practice, maintenance, and study of health; commonly refers to cleanliness

Hymen- a thin fold of membrane partly closing the opening of the [vagina](#); usually torn during first sexual intercourse or insertion of a tampon

Hyperactivity- a type of behavior characterized by excessive physical activity, sometimes associated with neurological or psychological causes

Hyperalimentation- a method of providing [nutrients](#) by the use of a tube or intravenously to a person who cannot eat food or needs nutrients because of an illness

Hyperbilirubinemia- a condition in which there is too much [bilirubin](#), a substance produced when red blood cells are broken down; can lead to [jaundice](#)

Hypercalcemia- a condition marked by abnormally high levels of [calcium](#) in the blood; can lead to disturbance of cell function in the nerves and muscles and, if not treated, can be fatal

Hypercholesterolemia- an abnormally high level of [cholesterol](#) in the blood, which can be the result of an inherited disorder or a diet that is high in fat

Hyperglycemia- a condition characterized by abnormally high levels of [glucose](#) in the blood, usually as a result of untreated or improperly controlled [diabetes mellitus](#)

Hyperlipidemia- a general term for a group of disorders in which [lipid](#) levels in the blood are abnormally high, including hypercholesterolemia

Hyperparathyroidism- overactivity of the [parathyroid glands](#), which increases calcium levels in the blood (called [hypercalcemia](#)) and decreases calcium in bones (causing [osteoporosis](#))

Hyperplasia- the enlargement of an organ or tissue

Hypersensitivity- an excessive response of the body's [immune system](#) to a foreign [protein](#)

Hypertension- abnormally high [blood pressure](#), even when at rest

Hyperthermia- an abnormally high body temperature

Hyperthyroidism- overactivity of the [thyroid gland](#), causing nervousness, weight loss, fatigue, and diarrhea

Hypertrophy- increase in the size of an organ due to an increase in the size of its cells

Hyperventilation- abnormally rapid breathing

Hypochondriasis- an abnormal condition in which a person is overly concerned with health and believes that he or she is suffering from a major illness despite medical opinion to the contrary

Hypodermic needle- a thin, hollow needle attached to a syringe; used to inject a medication under the skin, into a vein, or into a muscle

Hypoglycemia- abnormally low levels of [glucose](#) in the blood

Hypoplasia- failure of a tissue or organ to develop normally

Hypotension- the medical term for abnormally low [blood pressure](#), which results in reduced blood flow to the brain, causing dizziness and fainting

Hypothermia- an abnormally low body temperature

Hypothyroidism- underactivity of the [thyroid gland](#), causing tiredness, cramps, a slowed heart rate, and possibly weight gain

Hypoventilation- a slower-than-normal breathing rate

Hypoxemia- a reduced level of oxygen in the blood

Hypoxia- a reduced level of oxygen in tissues

Hysterectomy- surgical removal of the uterus

Hysteria- a term used to describe symptoms that are caused by mental stress and occur in someone who does not have a mental disorder

Hysterosalpingography- an X-ray examination performed to examine the inside of the uterus and fallopian tubes, in order to investigate and possibly treat infertility

Hysteroscopy- a method used to examine the inside of the uterus and the cervix using a viewing instrument

I

Iatrogenic- a term used to describe a disease, disorder, or medical condition that is a direct result of medical treatment

Ichthyosis- a variety of diseases in which the skin is dry and scaly

Idiopathic- a term used to describe something that occurs of an unknown cause

Ileostomy- a surgical procedure in which the lower part of the [small intestine](#) (the ileum) is cut and brought to an opening in the abdominal wall, where feces can be passed out of the body

Ileum- the lowest section of the [small intestine](#), which attaches to the large intestine

Ilium- one of the two bones that form the hip on either side of the body

Imaging- the technique of creating pictures of structures inside of the body using X-rays, ultrasound waves, or magnetic fields

Immune deficiency- impairment of the immune system, which reduces protection against infection and illness

Immune system- the cells, substances, and structures in the body that protect against [infection](#) and illness

Immunity- resistance to a specific disease because of the responses of the immune system

Immunization- the process of causing [immunity](#) by injecting [antibodies](#) or provoking the body to make its own antibodies against a certain microorganism

Immunocompromised- weakening of the body's [immune system](#)

Immunodeficiency- failure of the body's [immune system](#) to fight disease

Immunoglobulin- [proteins](#) in blood and tissue fluids that help destroy [microorganisms](#) such as bacteria and viruses

Immunology- the study of the [immune system](#), including how it functions and disorders that affect it

Immunostimulant- a drug that increases the ability of the body's [immune system](#) to fight disease

Immunosuppressant- a drug that inhibits the activity of the [immune system](#); used to prevent rejection of a transplant organ and in disorders where the body's immune system attacks its own tissues

Impacted fracture- a bone break in which the two broken ends have been forced into each other

Imperforate anus- a [birth defect](#) in which the opening of the [anus](#) is not formed normally

Impetigo- a highly contagious skin [infection](#) caused by bacteria, usually occurring around the nose and mouth; commonly occurring in children

Implant- an organ, tissue, or device surgically inserted and left in the body

Impotence- the inability to acquire or maintain an erection of the [penis](#)

Incompetent cervix- an abnormally weak [cervix](#), which widens prematurely during pregnancy as a result of the weight of a developing [fetus](#); may result in a [miscarriage](#)

Incontinence- inability to hold urine or feces inside of the body

Incubation period- the time period between when an infectious organism enters the body and when symptoms occur

Indigestion- uncomfortable symptoms brought on by overeating or eating spicy, rich, or fatty foods; characterized by [heartburn](#), pain in the abdomen, [nausea](#), and gas, and can be more serious if recurrent

Induction of labor- the use of artificial means to start the process of childbirth

Infarction- tissue death due to lack of blood supply

Infection- disease-causing [microorganisms](#) that enter the body, multiply, and damage cells or release [toxins](#)

Infective arthritis- [arthritis](#) caused by bacteria from a wound or the bloodstream entering a joint

Infertility- the inability to have children as a result of sexual intercourse

Inflammation- redness, pain, and swelling in an injured or infected tissue produced as a result of the body's healing response

Inflammatory bowel disease- the general term for two inflammatory disorders affecting the [intestines](#); also known as Crohn's disease and [ulcerative colitis](#)

Inflammatory joint disease- any type of [arthritis](#) that causes a joint to become inflamed

Influenza- a viral [infection](#) characterized by headaches, muscle aches, fever, weakness, and cough; commonly called the "flu"

Informed consent- agreement to undergo a medical procedure after the technique, its risks, and its possible complications have been explained

Infusion- the introduction of a substance, such as a drug or [nutrient](#), into the bloodstream or a body cavity

Ingestion- taking something into the body through the mouth

Ingrown toenail- a painful condition of the big toe in which the nail grows into the skin on either side, causing [inflammation](#) and/or [infection](#)

Inguinal hernia- the bulging of a portion of the [intestines](#) or abdominal tissue into the muscles of the groin (the area just below the abdomen)

Inhaler- a device used to introduce a powdered or misted drug into the lungs through the mouth, usually to treat respiratory disorders such as [asthma](#)

Inheritance- the passing of traits from parent to child through [genes](#)

Injection- the use of a syringe and needle to insert a drug into a vein, muscle, or joint or under the skin

Insemination- the placement of [semen](#) into a woman's [uterus](#), [cervix](#), or [vagina](#)

In situ- "in place"; often describes a cancer that has not spread

Insomnia- difficulty falling or remaining asleep

Insulin- a [hormone](#) made in the [pancreas](#) that plays an important role in the absorption of [glucose](#) (the body's main source of energy) into muscle cells

Insulinoma- a noncancerous [tumor](#) of the insulin-producing cells of the [pancreas](#); the tumor releases excess insulin into the blood, causing [glucose](#) levels to drop dangerously low

Intensive care- close monitoring of a patient who is seriously ill

Interferon- a [protein](#) produced by body cells that fights viral infections and certain cancers

Internal fixation- a method of holding a broken bone in place using surgically inserted screws, rods, or plates

Interstitial- lying between body structures or in the interspaces of tissues

Interstitial cystitis- persistent inflammation of the lining and muscle of the [bladder](#)

Interstitial lung disease- a disease of the [connective tissue](#) surrounding the air sacs of the lungs that causes a dry cough, scarring of lung tissue, and shortness of breath

Interstitial pulmonary fibrosis- scarring of [connective tissue](#) in the lungs that leads to shortness of breath

Interstitial radiation therapy- a treatment for [cancer](#) in which a radioactive material is inserted into or near a [tumor](#) to provide direct radiation

Intervertebral disks- broad, flat [cartilage](#) structures containing a gel-like fluid that cushion and separate [vertebrae](#)

Intestinal bypass- a surgical procedure in which the beginning of the [large intestine](#) is joined to its end so that less food is absorbed; because of serious side effects, usually performed only on seriously obese people

Intestine- a long, tube-shaped organ that extends from the stomach to the [anus](#); absorbs food and water and passes the waste products of digestion as feces

Intra-aortic balloon pump- a small balloon inserted into the [aorta](#) that helps to circulate blood by inflating between heartbeats

Intractable- describes a condition that does not respond to treatment

Intramedullary rod- a strong metal rod that is placed inside of a broken bone to help it heal correctly

Intraocular pressure- the pressure of the fluids within the eye

Intrauterine device- a device inserted into the [uterus](#) that helps to prevent pregnancy

Intravenous- inside of or into a [vein](#)

Intrinsic- a term used to describe something originating from or located in a tissue or organ

Intubation- the passage of a tube into an organ or body structure; commonly used to refer to the passage of a tube down the windpipe for [artificial respiration](#)

Invasive- describes something that spreads throughout body tissues, such as a [tumor](#) or [microorganism](#); also describes a medical procedure in which body tissues are penetrated

In vitro- "in glass"; a biological test or process that is carried out in a laboratory

In vitro fertilization- a treatment for [infertility](#) in which an egg and a sperm are joined outside the woman's body, and the fertilized egg is then inserted into the [uterus](#) or [fallopian tube](#)

In vivo- "in the living body"; a biological process that occurs inside of the body

Involuntary- occurring without a person's control or participation

Iodine- an element for the formation of thyroid hormones

Ionizing radiation- [radiation](#) that damages cells or genes; can be used to treat [cancer](#)

IQ- intelligence quotient; a measure of a person's intelligence as determined by specific tests

Iris- the colored part of the eye

Iron- a [mineral](#) necessary for the formation of important biological substances such as [hemoglobin](#), myoglobin, and certain [enzymes](#)

Iron-deficiency anemia- a type of [anemia](#) caused by a greater-than-normal loss of iron due to bleeding, problems absorbing iron, or a lack of iron in the diet

Irrigation- the cleansing of a wound by flushing it with water, a medicated solution, or some other fluid

Irritable bladder- involuntary contractions of muscles in the bladder, which can cause lack of control of urination

Irritable bowel syndrome- abnormal muscle movement in the [intestines](#), which causes abdominal pain and irregular bowel movements (diarrhea, [constipation](#), or both)

Ischemia- a condition in which a tissue or organ does not receive a sufficient supply of blood

IUD- see [Intrauterine device](#)

IVF- see [In vitro fertilization](#)

J

Jaundice- yellowing of the skin and whites of the eyes because of the presence of excess bilirubin in the blood; usually a sign of a disorder of the liver

Jock itch- an infection in the groin area caused by a fungus

Juvenile rheumatoid arthritis- a rare form of persistent joint inflammation that affects children

K

Kaposi's sarcoma- a skin [cancer](#) that is characterized by purple-red [tumors](#) that start at the feet and spread upward on the body; commonly occurs in people who have AIDS

Kawasaki disease- a childhood disease causing fever, rash, skin peeling, swollen [lymph nodes](#), and possibly complications of the heart and brain

Keloid- a raised, firm, thick scar that forms as a result of a defect in the natural healing process

Keratin- a tough [protein](#) found in skin, nails, and hair

Keratitis- inflammation of the [cornea](#)

Keratolytic- drugs that remove the [keratin](#)-containing outer layer of skin; used to treat skin disorders such as [warts](#) and dandruff

Keratoplasty- surgical replacement or reshaping of the [cornea](#)

Keratosis- a growth on the skin that is the result of overproduction of the protein keratin

Ketoacidosis- the dangerous accumulation of chemicals called ketones in the blood, sometimes occurring as a complication of [diabetes mellitus](#); also called ketosis

Kidney- one of two organs that are part of the urinary tract; responsible for filtering the blood and removing waste products and excess water as urine

Kidney stone- a hard mass composed of substances from the urine that form in the kidneys

Killer T cells- [white blood cells](#) that are part of the immune system and destroy microorganisms and cancer cells

Kilocalorie- a unit of energy; equal to a nutritional calorie

Kimmelstiel-Wilson syndrome- a [kidney](#) disorder that can occur as a complication of [diabetes mellitus](#); can cause swelling, high blood pressure, and kidney failure

Klinefelter's syndrome- a [genetic disorder](#) in which a man has at least 1 extra [X chromosome](#) in his cells, causing [infertility](#) and female characteristics

Knee-jerk reflex- a test for a reflexive extension of the leg to check the functioning of the nervous system; tapping the knee just below the kneecap should cause the lower part of the leg to jerk upward

Kyphosis- excessive curvature of the [spine](#), which usually affects the top part of the spine and causes a hump

L

Labia- the two pairs of skinfolds that protect the opening of the [vagina](#)

Labor- the interval from onset of contractions to birth of a baby

Labyrinthitis- [inflammation](#) of the fluid-containing chamber of the inner ear (called the labyrinth) that maintains balance; can cause a feeling that one's surroundings are spinning around (known as vertigo)

Laceration- a torn or ragged wound

Lactase deficiency- an inherited disorder in which a person does not have the enzyme lactase, which breaks down lactose (the sugar found in dairy products); lactase deficiency leads to lactose intolerance, which means the inability to digest lactose

Lactation- the production of breast milk after giving birth

Lactation suppression- a decrease in milk production during pregnancy as a result of high levels of [estrogen](#) in the blood

Lactic acid- an acid produced by [glucose](#)-burning cells when these cells have an insufficient supply of oxygen

Lactose- the sugar found in dairy products

Lactose intolerance- inability to break down and absorb the sugar lactose

Lamaze method- a method of preparing for childbirth that stresses physical conditioning, relaxation, and breathing exercises

Laminectomy- a surgical procedure that removes part of a [vertebra](#) to relieve pressure on the [spinal cord](#) or a nerve branching from the spinal cord

Laparoscope- a viewing instrument used to examine and treat disorders in the abdominal cavity; consists of a long tube with an eyepiece, a lens, and often a camera, which allows the image to be viewed on a monitor

Laparoscopic cholecystectomy- surgical removal of the [gallbladder](#) using a [laparoscope](#)

Laparoscopy- a procedure done to examine the abdominal cavity using a [laparoscope](#), usually to investigate pelvic pain or gynecologic conditions such as [infertility](#)

Large-cell carcinoma- one of the 4 major types of lung [cancer](#)

Large intestine- the part of the digestive tract that is located between the [small intestine](#) and the [anus](#)

Laryngectomy- surgical removal of all or part of the voice box (larynx) as a treatment for [cancer](#)

Laryngitis- [inflammation](#) of the voice box, usually caused by a viral infection; characterized by a hoarse voice

Larynx- the medical term for the voice box, the organ in the throat that produces voice and also prevents food from entering the airway

Laser treatment- the use of a laser (a concentrated beam of light) to perform medical procedures, such as the destruction of [tumors](#)

Latent infection- an [infection](#) that lies dormant in the body for months or years but can reappear

Lateral- on one side

Laxatives- drugs used to clear feces from the [intestines](#); commonly used to treat [constipation](#)

Lazy eye- the common name for the visual defect resulting from untreated strabismus, in which the eyes are not correctly aligned

LDL- see [Low-density lipoprotein](#)

Lead poisoning- damage to the brain, [nerves](#), [red blood cells](#), or digestive system because of ingestion of lead

Learning disability- any of a variety of disorders, including [hyperactivity](#), dyslexia, and hearing problems, that can interfere with a person's ability to learn

Legionnaires' disease- a form of [pneumonia](#) that is mainly spread through air-conditioning systems and water

Leiomyoma- a noncancerous [tumor](#) of smooth muscle

Leishmaniasis- a group of parasitic diseases affecting the skin, [mucous membranes](#), and internal organs; transmitted by the bite of a sandfly

Leptospirosis- [infection](#) by a spiral-shaped bacterium that affects the skin, eyes, muscles, kidneys, and liver; leptospirosis is carried by rodents

Lesch-Nyhan syndrome- a [genetic disorder](#) affecting only men that causes mental handicap, self-mutilation, and aggressive behavior

Lesion- an abnormality of structure or function in the body

Leukemia- a group of bone marrow [cancers](#) in which [white blood cells](#) divide uncontrollably, affecting the production of normal white blood cells, red blood cells, and platelets

Leukocyte- another name for a [white blood cells](#)

Leukocyte count- the number of [white blood cells](#) in the blood, which is used as a measure of health and possible infection

Leukodystrophy- a group of childhood [genetic disorders](#) in which the protective coverings of the [nerves](#) are destroyed

Leukoplakia- white patches that can develop in the mouth or on the [penis](#) or the opening of the [vagina](#) and are potentially cancerous

LH- see [Luteinizing hormone](#)

Lichen planus- a common skin disease in which itchy, small, pink or purple spots appear on the arms or legs

Ligament- a tough, elastic band of tissue that connects bones and supports organs

Ligation- the process of closing a blood vessel or duct by tying it off

Lipid-lowering drugs- drugs taken to lower the levels of specific fats called [lipids](#) in the blood in order to reduce the risk of narrowing of the arteries

Lipidosis- any disorder in which fats cannot be properly broken down by the digestive system

Lipids- a group of fats stored in the body and used for energy

Lipoma- a noncancerous [tumor](#) of fatty tissue

Lipoproteins- substances containing [lipids](#) and [proteins](#), comprising most fats in the blood

Liposarcoma- a cancerous [tumor](#) of fatty tissue

Liposuction- a surgical procedure in which fat is removed from areas of the body using a suction pump

Listeriosis- a rare bacterial [infection](#) acquired by eating undercooked infected meat or from infected live animals; can be dangerous to newborns and the elderly

Lithotripsy- a procedure done to break up stones in the urinary tract using ultrasonic shock waves, so that the fragments can be easily passed from the body

Liver- the largest organ in the body, producing many essential chemicals and regulating the levels of most vital substances in the blood

Liver failure- the final stage of liver disease, in which liver function becomes so impaired that other areas of the body are affected, most commonly the brain

Lobe- a well-defined, separate part of an organ

Lobectomy- surgical removal of a [lobe](#)

Local anesthesia- a method of preventing pain by inducing the loss of sensation in a certain area of the body while the patient remains awake

Locked joint- a joint that cannot be moved because of a disease or a lodged piece of bone or [cartilage](#)

Lockjaw- a spasm of the jaw muscles that prevents the mouth from opening, such as that caused by [tetanus](#)

Locomotor system- the structures of the body that are responsible for its movement

Lordosis- the inward curvature of the [spine](#) at the lower back, which is normal to a certain degree; abnormal as a result of certain medical conditions, being overweight, or having muscle problems

Lou Gehrig's disease- see [Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis](#)

Low-density lipoprotein- a type of [lipoprotein](#) that is the major carrier of [cholesterol](#) in the blood, with high levels associated with narrowing of the arteries and heart disease

Lumbago- dull, aching pain in the lower back

Lumbar puncture- a procedure in which a needle is inserted into the lower region of the spinal canal to take out a sample of spinal fluid or to inject a drug

Lumbar spine- the lower part of the [spine](#) between the lowest pair of ribs and the pelvis; made up of five [vertebrae](#)

Lumpectomy- surgical removal of a section of breast containing [cancer](#)

Lung collapse- a condition in which all or part of a lung cannot expand and fill with air

Lungs- two organs in the chest that take in [oxygen](#) from the air and release [carbon dioxide](#)

Lupus erythematosus- a disorder of the [immune system](#) that causes inflammation of [connective tissue](#)

Luteinizing hormone- a [hormone](#) produced by the [pituitary gland](#) that causes the [ovaries](#) and [testicles](#) to release sex hormones and plays a role in the development of eggs and sperm

Lyme disease- a disease caused by bacteria transmitted through the bite of a tick; characterized by fever, rash, and [inflammation](#) of the heart and joints

Lymph- a milky fluid containing [white blood cells](#), [proteins](#), and fats; plays an important role in absorbing fats from the intestine and in the functioning of the [immune system](#)

Lymphadenopathy- swollen [lymph nodes](#)

Lymphangiography- an X-ray procedure that creates images of the lymphatic system

Lymphatic system- a network of vessels that drain lymph back into the blood

Lymph node- a small gland that is part of the immune system; contains white blood cells and antibodies and helps fight against the spread of infection

Lymphocyte- a white blood cell that is an important part of the body's immune system, helping to destroy invading microorganisms

Lymphocytic leukemia- a disease in which white blood cells called lymphocytes divide uncontrollably

Lymphogranuloma venereum- a sexually transmitted chlamydial infection; common in countries with a tropical climate

Lymphomas- a group of cancer of the lymph nodes and spleen that can spread to other parts of the body

Lymphosarcoma- another name for a non-Hodgkin's sarcoma; a cancerous tumor in lymphoid tissue

M

Macula- the area of the [retina](#) that allows fine details to be observed at the center of vision; also refers to any small, flat spot on the skin

Macular degeneration- gradual loss of vision due to deterioration of nerve tissue in the [retina](#)

Magnesium- a [mineral](#) that is essential for many body functions, including [nerve](#) impulse transmission, formation of bones and teeth, and muscle contraction

Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI)- a technique that uses magnetic fields and radio waves to create high-quality cross-sectional images of the body without using [radiation](#)

Malabsorption- an impaired ability of the lining of the [small intestine](#) to absorb [nutrients](#) from food

Malaria- a parasitic disease spread by mosquitos that causes chills and fever; potentially fatal complications in the liver, kidneys, blood, and brain are possible

Malformation- abnormal development of an organ or tissue

Malignant- a word used to describe a condition that is characterized by uncontrolled growth and/or that can be fatal, such as a cancerous tumor

Malignant hyperthermia- a reaction to certain anesthesia gases involving intense muscle contractions and a high fever

Malignant melanoma- the most serious type of skin [cancer](#), in which a [mole](#) changes shape, darkens, becomes painful, and/or bleeds easily

Mallory-Weiss syndrome- a condition associated with alcoholism in which the lower end of the [esophagus](#) tears, causing vomiting of blood

Mammography- an X-ray procedure done to detect breast [cancer](#)

Mammoplasty- a general term for a cosmetic operation on the breasts; includes breast reduction, enlargement, and reconstruction after a [mastectomy](#)

Mandible- another term for the lower jaw

Mania- a mental disorder characterized by extreme excitement, happiness, overactivity, and agitation; usually refers to the high of the highs and lows experienced in manic-depressive disorder

Manic-depressive disorder- a mental disorder characterized by extreme mood swings, including either mania, [depression](#), or a continuing shift between the two extremes

MAO inhibitor- see [Monoamine oxidase inhibitor antidepressant](#)

Marfan's syndrome- a rare [genetic disorder](#) that affects [connective tissue](#), leading to abnormalities of joints, bones, tendons, ligaments, arteries, and/or the heart

Mast cell- a type of [cell](#) present in most body tissues that releases substances in response to an allergen, which causes symptoms such as [inflammation](#)

Mastectomy- a surgical procedure in which all or part of the breast is removed to prevent the spread of [cancer](#)

Mastitis- [inflammation](#) of the breast, which is usually caused by a bacterial infection

Maxilla- one of two bones that form the upper jaw, the roof of the mouth, and the center portion of the face

Measles- an illness caused by a viral [infection](#), causing a characteristic rash and a fever; primarily affects children

Meconium- thick, sticky, greenish-brown [stool](#) passed by a postmature fetus, or one experiencing [fetal distress](#), into the amniotic fluid, or by an infant during the first couple of days after birth

Medial- a term used to describe something situated on or near the midline of the body or a body structure

Median nerve- a [nerve](#) running down the arm to the hand; controls muscle movement in the forearm and hand and conveys sensation from part of the hand

Mediastinoscopy- investigation of the central chest compartment using an [endoscope](#) that is inserted through an incision in the neck

Medulla- the center part of an organ or body structure; sometimes used to refer to the lower part of the brain stem

Medulloblastoma- a type of cancerous [tumor](#), occurring in the section of the brain that controls posture and balance; found mainly in children

Megacolon- a severely swollen [large intestine](#), causing severe [constipation](#) and abdominal bloating; may be present at birth or develops later

Megaloblastic anemia- a type of [anemia](#) in which a lack of the [vitamin B12](#) or folic acid interferes with red blood cells and causes them to be enlarged and deformed, resulting in tiredness and weight loss

Meiosis- the type of cell division that occurs only in the [ovaries](#) and [testicles](#), producing cells with half the genes of the original cell; these cells then form eggs and sperm

Melanin- the pigment that gives skin, hair, and eyes their coloring

Melanocytes- cells that produce the pigment [melanin](#)

Melanocyte-stimulating hormone- a [hormone](#) that coordinates pigmentation of the skin, eyes, and hair

Melanoma- a skin [tumor](#) composed of cells called [melanocytes](#)

Menarche- the beginning of [menstruation](#)

Meniere's disease- a disorder of the inner ear, causing hearing loss, ringing in the ear, and the sensation that one's surroundings are spinning

Meninges- the three membranes that surround and protect the [spinal cord](#) and brain

Meningioma- a rare noncancerous [tumor](#) developing in the protective membranes covering the brain called the meninges; can cause headaches and problems with vision and mental function

Meningitis- [inflammation](#) of the [meninges](#); usually caused by infection by a [microorganism](#) (meningitis caused by bacteria is life-threatening; viral meningitis is milder)

Meningocele- a protrusion of the [meninges](#) through an opening in the skull or [spinal cord](#) due to a genetic defect

Meniscectomy- surgical removal of all or part of a [cartilage](#) disk from a joint

Meniscus- a crescent-shaped pad of [cartilage](#) in joints that helps to reduce friction

Menopause- the period in a woman's life when [menstruation](#) stops, resulting in a reduced production of [estrogen](#) and cessation of egg production

Menorrhagia- excessive loss of blood during [menstruation](#), which can be caused by disorders of the [uterus](#)

Menstrual cycle- the periodic discharge of blood and mucosal tissue from the [uterus](#), occurring from [puberty](#) to [menopause](#) in a woman who is not pregnant

Menstruation- the shedding of the lining of the [uterus](#) during the menstrual cycle

Mesenteric infarction- death of tissue in the [intestine](#) due to lack of blood supply to that tissue

Mesenteric lymphadenitis- inflammation of [lymph nodes](#) in an abdominal membrane

Mesothelioma- a cancerous [tumor](#) occurring in the lining of the lungs and chest cavity, often associated with exposure to asbestos dust

Mesothelium- a tissue layer that lines the heart, abdomen, chest cavity, and lungs

Messenger RNA- an [RNA](#) molecule that transports the information stored in [DNA](#) out of a cell's nucleus in order to make [proteins](#)

Metabolic rate- the speed at which the body uses energy

Metabolism- a general term for all of the chemical processes that occur in the body

Metabolite- any substance that takes part in a chemical reaction in the body

Metastasis- the spreading of a cancerous [tumor](#) to another part of the body through [lymph](#), blood, or across a cavity; also sometimes refers to a tumor that has been produced in this way

Metered-dose inhaler- an [inhaler](#) that gives a specific amount of medication with each use

Microbe- another term for a [microorganism](#), especially one that causes disease

Microbiology- the study of [microorganisms](#)

Microcephaly- an abnormally small head

Microdisectomy- surgical removal of the protruding part of a [prolapsed disk](#)

Microorganism- any tiny, single-celled organism (such as a [bacterium](#), [virus](#), or [fungus](#))

Microsurgery- a surgical technique that uses a special binocular microscope to operate on tiny, delicate, or hard-to-reach tissues

Micturition syncope- fainting or feeling weak while standing at the toilet; caused by an abnormal heartbeat or a drop in blood pressure

Middle ear- the small cavity between the [eardrum](#) and inner ear; contains three tiny, linked bones that transmit sound to the inner ear

Middle ear effusion- the buildup of fluid in the middle ear, which can affect hearing

Midwifery- a profession concerned with providing care to a mother and baby during pregnancy and childbirth

Migraine- a severe headache, usually accompanied by vision problems and/or [nausea](#) and vomiting, and that typically recurs

Mineral- a substance that is a necessary part of a healthy diet (such as [potassium](#), [calcium](#), [sodium](#), [phosphorus](#), and [magnesium](#))

Minipill- an [oral contraceptive](#) containing only the synthetic hormone progesterone (birth control pills contain [estrogen](#) and [progesterone](#))

Miotic- a drug that causes the [pupil](#) to constrict

Miscarriage- expulsion of a [fetus](#) before it has developed sufficiently to survive on its own

Mites- small eight-legged animals, many of which burrow and feed on blood

Mitosis- the process by which most [cells](#) divide in order to reproduce

Mitral insufficiency- a problem with the ability of the [mitral valve](#) in the heart to close, which causes the heart to pump harder and reduces its efficiency

Mitral stenosis- a condition in which the mitral valve in the heart becomes narrowed, making the heart work harder to pump blood; can lead to symptoms such as shortness of breath

Mitral valve- the valve in the heart that allows blood to flow from the left atrium to the left ventricle, but prevents blood from flowing back in

Mitral valve prolapse- a common condition in which the mitral valve in the heart is deformed, causing blood to leak back across the valve; characterized by a heart [murmur](#) and sometimes chest pain and disturbed heart rhythm

Modified radical mastectomy- a treatment for breast [cancer](#) in which the entire breast, a section of the chest muscle, and [lymph nodes](#) in the chest and underarm are removed

Molar tooth- large, strong teeth at the back of the jaw, primarily used to grind food

Mole- a brown to dark-brown spot on the skin that can be flat or raised

Molecule- the smallest unit of a substance that possesses its characteristics

Molluscum contagiosum- a viral [infection](#) that causes white bumps on the skin; usually clears up in a few months

Mongolian spot- a brown to blue-black spot on the lower back and buttocks at birth, caused by a concentration of pigment-producing cells; usually disappears by the age of 3 or 4 years

Monoamine oxidase inhibitor antidepressant- a substance that works by stopping an [enzyme](#) that breaks down stimulating chemicals in the brain; used to treat [depression](#)

Monoclonal antibodies- an [antibody](#) that is produced in the laboratory so that it will react with only one specific foreign protein; used to help diagnose certain kinds of [cancer](#)

Mononucleosis- an infection caused by a [virus](#) that invades a type of [white blood cell](#) called a monocyte, causing fever, sore throat, and swollen [lymph nodes](#)

Monounsaturated fat- a type of fat that is thought to be beneficial in the prevention of [coronary heart disease](#); found in foods such as olive oil and peanut oil

Morbidity- the state of being ill or having a disease

Morning sickness- [nausea](#) and vomiting experienced early in a pregnancy, affecting about half of all pregnant women

Mortality- the death rate, measured as the number of deaths per a certain population; may describe the population as a whole, or a specific group within a population (such as infant mortality)

Motor nerve- a [nerve](#) that carries messages to a muscle that cause the muscle to contract

Motor neuron disease- degeneration of the [nerves](#) in the [spinal cord](#) and brain that are responsible for muscle movement, causing weakness and muscle deterioration

Mouth-to-mouth resuscitation- a method of artificial breathing in which someone rhythmically forces air into the lungs of a person who has stopped breathing

MRI - see [Magnetic resonance imaging](#)

MS- see [Multiple sclerosis](#)

Mucocele- a sac or body cavity that is swollen because of the production of [mucus](#) by the cells in its lining

Mucolytic- a drug that lessens the sticky quality of [phlegm](#) and makes it easier to cough up

Mucous membrane- the soft, pink layer of cells that produce mucus in order to keep body structures lubricated; found in structures such as the eyelids, respiratory tract, and urinary tract

Mucus- a slippery fluid produced by mucous membranes that lubricates and protects the internal surfaces of the body

Multi-infarct dementia- [dementia](#) caused by multiple [strokes](#)

Multiple-gated acquisition scan- a technique for evaluating heart efficiency by measuring blood flow into and out of the heart

Multiple myeloma- a [cancer](#) that causes uncontrolled production of white blood cells in the [bone marrow](#)

Multiple pregnancy- the presence of more than one [fetus](#) in the uterus, such as occurs with twins

Multiple sclerosis- a disease in which the protective coverings (myelin) of nerve fibers in the brain are gradually destroyed; symptoms vary from numbness to paralysis and loss of control of bodily function

Mumps- a viral infection that causes [inflammation](#) of salivary glands; primarily affects children

Murmur- a characteristic sound (heard through a stethoscope) of blood flowing irregularly through the heart; can be harmless or may be an indication of disease

Muscle fibers- specialized, contracting [cells](#) that are bundled together to form muscles

Muscle relaxants- a group of drugs used to relieve muscle spasm and to treat conditions such as [arthritis](#), back pain, and nervous system disorders such as [stroke](#) and [cerebral palsy](#)

Muscle tone- the natural tension in resting muscles

Muscle wasting- the degeneration of a muscle (loss of bulk), caused by disease or starvation

Muscular dystrophy- a rare [genetic disorder](#) in which muscles degenerate gradually and strength is lost

Mutagen- anything that can increase the rate of abnormal change in cells, which can lead to [cancer](#)

Mutation- a change in the genetic information within a cell

Myalgia- the medical term for muscle pain

Myasthenia gravis- a disease in which the muscles, mainly those in the face, eyes, throat, and limbs, become weak and tire quickly; caused by the body's [immune system](#) attacking the receptors in the muscles that pick up nerve impulses

Mycobacterium- a type of slow-growing [bacterium](#); resistant to the body's defense mechanisms and are responsible for diseases such as [tuberculosis](#) and leprosy

Mycoplasma- the smallest free-living [microorganisms](#)

Mycosis- any disease caused by a [fungus](#)

Mydriatic- a drug that causes the [pupil](#) to dilate (widen)

Myelin sheath- the fat- and protein-containing material that surrounds and protects some [nerves](#)

Myelitis- [inflammation](#) of the [spinal cord](#), which can cause headaches, fever, muscle stiffness, pain, weakness, and eventually paralysis

Myelocele- protrusion of the [spinal cord](#) and its coverings out from the spine; one of the more severe forms of [spina bifida](#)

Myeloma- a [cancer](#) affecting cells in the [bone marrow](#); sometimes used as an abbreviation for multiple myeloma

Myelosclerosis- buildup of fibrous [connective tissue](#) in the [bone marrow](#), affecting the production of blood components

Myocardial infarction- the death of an area of heart muscle as a result of being deprived of its blood supply; characterized by severe pain in the chest; commonly called a heart attack

Myocarditis- inflammation of the heart muscle, which can be caused by a virus, certain drugs, or radiation therapy

Myocardium- the medical term for heart muscle

Myomectomy- the surgical removal of a noncancerous tumor from muscle

Myopathy- a muscle disease, usually one that results in the deterioration of muscle

Myopia- the medical term for nearsightedness

Myositis- muscle inflammation, causing pain and weakness

Myringotomy- a surgical opening in the eardrum that allows for drainage

Myxoma- a noncancerous tumor made of mucous material and fibrous connective tissue

N

Narcolepsy- a disorder that causes excessive sleepiness during the day and frequent and uncontrollable episodes of falling asleep

Narcosis- a drug (or other chemical)-induced drowsiness or stupor

Narcotic- an addictive substance that blunts the senses; can cause confusion, stupor, coma, and death with increased dosages

Narcotic analgesics- a type of painkiller that blocks the transmission of pain signals in the brain; often cause tolerance (the need for higher amounts of the drug to produce the same effect) and drug dependence

Nasal septum- the section of the nose that divides the left and right nostrils; made of cartilage and bone and covered by a mucous membrane

Nasogastric tube- a thin, plastic tube that is inserted through the nose, down the esophagus, and into the stomach; used to drain, wash, or take samples from the stomach, or to feed very sick patients who cannot eat

Nasopharynx- the passageway connecting the back of the nose to the top of the throat

Natural childbirth- a technique of giving birth that stresses relaxation techniques so that the use of pain-relieving drugs can be minimized; also called prepared childbirth

Natural methods of family planning- methods of planning a family that focus on a woman's time of ovulation, either so that pregnancy can be avoided or conception is likely

Nausea- feeling the need to vomit

Nebulizer- an instrument that provides a drug in its misted form through a face mask; used for severe asthma attacks and for children who have asthma but cannot use an inhaler

Necrosis- the medical term for the death of tissue cells

Needle aspiration- the use of a thin, hollow needle and syringe to remove body fluid for examination

Needle biopsy- the use of a hollow, wide-diameter needle to remove a sample of tissue for examination

Neonate- a term used to describe a newborn infant from birth to 1 month of age

Neoplasm- another term for a tumor

Nephrectomy- the surgical removal of one or both kidneys

Nephritis- inflammation of one or both kidneys because of an [infection](#), an abnormal [immune system](#) response, or a disorder of [metabolism](#)

Nephroblastoma- a fast-growing [cancer](#) of the kidneys that occurs most commonly in children under 4 years of age

Nephrolithotomy- surgical removal of a [kidney stone](#)

Nephrons- the tiny filtering units of the [kidney](#)

Nephrosclerosis- the replacement of normal kidney structures with scar tissue

Nephrostomy- the surgical placement of a tube into the [kidney](#) to drain urine

Nephrotic syndrome- symptoms that result from damage to the filtering units of the [kidney](#)

Nerve- a bundle of fibers that transmit electrical messages between the brain and areas of the body; these messages convey sensory or motor function information

Nerve block- the dulling of sensation in an area of the body by injecting a painkiller into or around a nerve leading to that section of the body

Nerve cell- the basic unit of the nervous system; transmits chemical messages throughout the body

Nerve compression- pressure on a [nerve](#), which can cause nerve damage and muscle weakness

Neuralgia- pain along the course of a [nerve](#) caused by irritation or damage to the nerve

Neural tube- the tube located along the back of an [embryo](#) that later develops into the [spinal cord](#) and brain

Neural tube defects- problems in the development of the [spinal cord](#) and brain in an [embryo](#), such as the failure of the spine to enclose the spinal cord ([spina bifida](#)) and the failure of the brain to develop (anencephaly)

Neuritis- inflammation of a [nerve](#), often characterized by pain, numbness, or tingling; also used to describe nerve damage and disease from causes other than inflammation

Neuroblastoma- a cancerous childhood tumor located in the [adrenal glands](#) or the [sympathetic nervous system](#)

Neurofibrillary tangles- abnormal spiral filaments on nerve cells in the brain; characteristic of [Alzheimer disease](#)

Neurofibromatosis- a condition in which connective tissue [tumors](#) occur on [nerves](#) in the skin

Neuroleptic- an [antipsychotic](#) drug

Neuroma- a noncancerous [tumor](#) occurring in [nerve](#) tissue

Neuron- another term for a [nerve](#) cell

Neuropathy- disease, inflammation, or damage to the [nerves](#) connecting the brain and [spinal cord](#) to the rest of the body

Neurosis- relatively mild emotional disorders (such as mild [depression](#) and [phobias](#))

Neurotoxins- chemicals that attack and damage [nerve](#) cells

Neurotransmitters- chemicals that transfer messages from one [nerve](#) cell to another or from a nerve cell to a muscle cell

Neutrophil- a type of [white blood cell](#)

Nevus- a marking on the skin; can be present at birth (birthmark) or develop later (such as a [mole](#))

Newborn respiratory distress syndrome- a disorder in which premature babies lack [surfactant](#), a substance that stops the lungs from collapsing

Niacin- a vitamin important in many chemical processes in the body; also known as vitamin B3

Night terrors- a form of nightmare causing abrupt awakening in terror; occurs mostly in children

Nitrates- a group of drugs that widen blood vessels; used to treat insufficient blood supply to the heart ([angina pectoris](#)) and reduced pumping efficiency of the heart ([heart failure](#))

Nocturia- urination or a sleep-disturbing need to urinate during the night

Nocturnal emission- ejaculation of [semen](#) during sleep, which is normal in adolescent males; commonly called a wet dream

Node- a small, rounded tissue mass

Nodule- a small lump of tissue that is usually abnormal; can form under the skin or protrude

Nondisjunction- an error that occurs during the division of sex chromosomes, causing either too much or too little genetic information to be placed in an egg or sperm when it is formed

Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma- any cancer in lymphoid tissue (found mostly in the spleen and lymph glands) that is not [Hodgkin's disease](#)

Non-insulin-dependent diabetes- a type of [diabetes mellitus](#) that occurs mainly in those over 40 who are overweight; it is usually treated with diet changes and drugs that increase production of [insulin](#) by the [pancreas](#) (also known as type II diabetes mellitus)

Noninvasive- a term that is used to describe medical procedures that do not enter or penetrate the body; also refers to noncancerous [tumors](#) that do not spread to other sections of the body

Nonnarcotic analgesic- a drug that relieves pain by blocking the production of chemicals that stimulate pain-sensing [nerves](#)

Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs- a group of drugs that relieve pain and reduce [inflammation](#)

Norepinephrine- a [hormone](#) that regulates [blood pressure](#) by causing blood vessels to narrow and the heart to beat faster when blood pressure drops

Norwalk virus- a virus that causes acute [gastroenteritis](#)

Nosocomial infection- an infection acquired in a hospital

NSAID- see [Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug](#)

Nucleic acids- substances found in every living organism that provide the instructions for development; includes [DNA](#) and [RNA](#)

Nucleotide bases- molecules that form nucleic acids

Nucleus- the center or most important point of an object

Numbness- the lack of sensation in a part of the body because of interruption of [nerve](#) impulses

Nurse-midwife- a registered nurse who specializes in the care of a mother and child during pregnancy, labor, and delivery

Nutrient- any substance that the body can use to maintain its health

Nystagmus- persistent, rapid, involuntary movement of the eyes

O

Oat cell carcinoma- another term for [small-cell carcinoma](#)

Obesity- a condition in which there is an excess of body fat; used to describe those who weigh at least 20 percent more than the maximum amount considered normal for their age, sex, and height

Obsessive-compulsive disorder- a mental disorder in which a person is obsessed with certain thoughts, leading them to repeatedly perform specific acts; for example, constantly washing the hands out of fear of germs and dirt

Obstructive sleep apnea- the blockage of the [airways](#) during sleep, which causes breathing to stop for very short periods of time, commonly caused by excessive relaxation of muscles at the back of the throat

Occlusion- the blocking of an opening or passageway in the body

Occult blood- blood in the feces that can be detected only by chemical tests

Occupational disease- a disease that occurs as a result of factors in the workplace

Occupational therapy- treatment to relearn physical skills lost as a result of an illness or accident

Ocular- describes something related to the eyes

Oculomotor nerves- [nerves](#) that stimulate movement of the eyeball

Olfactory nerves- [nerves](#) that play a role in the sense of smell

Oligodendrogloma- a rare type of cancerous brain [tumor](#) that occurs most commonly in the [cerebrum](#)

Oligohydramnios- an unusually small amount of [amniotic fluid](#) surrounding the [fetus](#) in the uterus, which can lead to complications with the pregnancy

Oligospermia- a low level of sperm in the [semen](#); one of the main causes of [infertility](#) in men

Oncogenes- [genes](#) that, when altered by environmental factors or viruses, can cause abnormal cell growth

Oocyte- an egg cell that has not developed completely

Oophorectomy- the surgical removal of one or both [ovaries](#); used to treat the growth of ovarian [cysts](#) or [tumors](#)

Open heart surgery- any operation in which the heart is stopped temporarily and a machine is used to take over its function of pumping blood throughout the body

Ophthalmia- severe [inflammation](#) of the eyes

Ophthalmologist- a doctor who specializes in care of the eyes; treats eye diseases and disorders

Ophthalmoplegia- partial or total loss of the ability to move the eyes

Ophthalmoscopy- examination of the inside of the eye using a lighted viewing instrument

Opportunistic infection- [infection](#) by organisms that would be harmless to a healthy person, but cause infection in those with a weakened [immune system](#) (for example, persons with AIDS or chemotherapy patients)

Optic- pertaining to the eyes

Optician- a person who specializes in the making and adjustment of eyeglasses and contact lenses

Optic nerves- the pair of [nerves](#) that carry visual information from the [retina](#) to the brain

Optic neuritis- inflammation of the optic nerve, often causing a partial loss of vision

Oral contraceptives- drugs taken in pill form to prevent pregnancy; contain synthetic [progesterone](#) and [estrogen](#) hormones

Orbit- the socket in the skull that contains the eyeball, along with its blood vessels, nerves, and muscles

Orchiectomy- the surgical removal of one or both of the [testicles](#)

Orchiopexy- an operation to correct an [undescended testicle](#)

Orchitis- [inflammation](#) of a [testicle](#), which can be caused by infection with the mumps virus

Organ donation- an agreement to allow one or more organs to be removed and transplanted into someone else

Organism- any single, functioning form of life

Orgasm- involuntary contraction of genital muscles experienced at the peak of sexual excitement

Orphan drugs- drugs used to treat rare diseases; not normally produced because potential sales are small

Orthopnea- breathing difficulty experienced while lying flat; can be a symptom of [heart failure](#) or [asthma](#)

Orthotic- a device used to correct or control deformed bones, muscles, or joints

Osgood-Schlatter disease- painful enlargement and inflammation of the area of the shinbone just below the knee, usually occurring in adolescent boys

Osmosis- the process of passage of the solvent portion of a lesser-concentrated solution through a semipermeable membrane into a higher-concentrated solution until the two solutions are equal in concentration; plays an important role in water distribution in the body

Ossification- the formation and maintenance of bone

Osteitis- [inflammation](#) of bone

Osteitis deformans- another name for [Paget's disease](#)

Osteoarthritis- see [Degenerative arthritis](#)

Osteoblast- a [cell](#) that forms bone

Osteochondritis dissecans- bone degeneration inside of a joint, causing small pieces of bone and [cartilage](#) to become detached

Osteochondritis juvenilis- [inflammation](#) of a growing section of bone in a child or adolescent

Osteochondroma- a noncancerous [tumor](#) made up of bone and [cartilage](#)

Osteoclast- a [cell](#) that breaks down unwanted bone tissue; also refers to a device for fracturing a bone to correct a deformity

Osteodystrophy- defective bone formation

Osteogenesis imperfecta- a [genetic disorder](#) in which bones are abnormally fragile, leading to multiple breaks and deformity

Osteolysis- the softening and destruction of bone

Osteoma- a noncancerous bone [tumor](#)

Osteomalacia- the loss of [minerals](#) and softening of bones because of a lack of [vitamin D](#); called [rickets](#) in children

Osteomyelitis- the [inflammation](#) of bones and [bone marrow](#) because of an [infection](#), usually caused by bacteria

Osteopetrosis- a rare [hereditary](#) disorder in which bones become harder and more dense, causing them to break more easily

Osteophyte- an outgrowth of bone near a joint

Osteoporosis- a condition in which bones become less dense, more brittle, and fracture easily

Osteosarcoma- a cancerous bone [tumor](#)

Osteosclerosis- an abnormal increase in density and hardness of bone

Otalgia- the medical term for an earache

OTC remedy- see [Over-the-counter remedy](#)

Otitis externa- [inflammation](#) of the outer ear due to an [infection](#); commonly called swimmer's ear

Otitis media- [inflammation](#) of the middle ear (between the eardrum and inner ear) because of the spread of an [infection](#) from the nose, sinuses, and throat

Otorrhea- a discharge from an inflamed ear

Otosclerosis- progressive deafness caused by bone formation around structures in the middle ear

Ototoxicity- harmful effect that some drugs have on the organs or nerves in the ears, which can lead to hearing and balance problems

Outpatient treatment- medical attention that does not include an overnight stay at a hospital

Ovaries- two almond-shaped glands located at the opening of the [fallopian tubes](#) on both sides of the [uterus](#); produce eggs and the sex hormones [estrogen](#) and [progesterone](#)

Overdose- an excessively large dose of a drug, which can lead to [coma](#) and death

Over-the-counter remedy- a medication that can be purchased without a physician's prescription

Ovulation- the development and release of the egg from the ovary, which usually occurs halfway through a woman's [menstrual cycle](#)

Ovum- another term for an egg cell

Oxidation- a chemical reaction involving active sources of oxygen (called [oxygen free radicals](#)) that damages cells

Oximetry- determination of the amount of oxygen in the blood by measuring the amount of light transmitted through an area of skin

Oxygen- a gas that is colorless, odorless, and tasteless; essential to almost all forms of life

Oxygen free radicals- active forms of oxygen found in pollution, cigarette smoke, and radiation that can damage cells and are believed to play a role in the aging process and cancer

Oxytocin- a hormone produced in the pituitary gland that causes contraction of the uterus during childbirth and stimulation of milk flow during breast-feeding

Ozone- a poisonous form of oxygen that is present in the earth's upper atmosphere, where it helps to screen the earth from damaging ultraviolet rays

P

Pacemaker- a small electronic device that is surgically implanted to stimulate the heart muscle to provide a normal heartbeat

Paget's disease- a disorder occurring in the middle-aged and elderly in which bone does not form properly, causing bone weakening, thickening, and deformity

Palate- the roof of the mouth

Palliative treatment- treatment that relieves the symptoms of a disorder without curing it

Pallor- abnormally pale skin; usually refers to the skin of the face

Palpation- the use of the hands to feel parts of the body to check for any abnormalities

Palpitation- an abnormally rapid and strong heartbeat

Palsy- loss of sensation or ability to move

Pancreas- a long [gland](#) located behind the stomach that produces [enzymes](#) that help to break down food and hormones ([insulin](#) and glucagon) that help to regulate [glucose](#) levels in the blood

Pancreatitis- [inflammation](#) of the pancreas, which is often caused by alcohol abuse

Pandemic- a widespread [epidemic](#)

Panic disorder- an emotional disorder characterized by attacks of anxiety that have no normal causes; usually made worse by stress

Papilloma- a [tumor](#) occurring on the skin or [mucous membranes](#); usually not cancerous

Pap smear- a test in which cells are scraped off the [cervix](#) and examined for abnormalities; used to detect changes that might precede cervical cancer and to diagnose viral infections such as [herpes simplex](#)

Paracentesis- the insertion of a needle into a body cavity to relieve pressure, inject a drug, or remove a sample for analysis

Paralysis- the inability to use a muscle because of injury to or disease of the [nerves](#) leading to the muscle

Paramedic- a person trained to give first aid and other emergency medical care

Paranoia- a disorder in which a person becomes overly suspicious and emotionally sensitive

Paraphimosis- strangulation of the head of the [penis](#) by a tight or inflamed [foreskin](#) that has been pulled back

Paraplegia- complete or partial loss of sensation and movement of the legs

Parasite- an organisms that lives on or in other organisms, from which it obtains [nutrients](#)

Parasympathetic nervous system- the part of the [autonomic nervous system](#) that is stimulated during times of relaxation

Parathyroidectomy- the surgical removal of one or more of the [parathyroid glands](#)

Parathyroid glands- small [glands](#) located in the neck that produce a [hormone](#) that regulates the levels of [calcium](#) in the blood

Parathyroid hormone- a hormone released by the [parathyroid glands](#) that plays a role in controlling [calcium](#) levels in the blood

Parentral- the introduction of a substance into the body by any route other than the digestive tract, such as through a vein or muscle

Paresis- partial [paralysis](#)

Paresthesia- numbness or tingling in the skin; commonly referred to as "pins and needles"

Parkinson's disease- a brain disorder in which there is a lack of the chemical messenger dopamine, which helps control muscle movement; leads to muscle stiffness, weakness, and trembling

Paronychia- a bacterial or yeast [infection](#) of the skin around the nail

Parotid glands- [salivary glands](#) located in the mouth near the ears

Paroxysm- a sudden attack or worsening of a disease's symptoms

Partial mastectomy- a treatment for breast [cancer](#) in which a [tumor](#) is removed, along with the skin covering it and some of the surrounding tissues and muscles

Partial seizure- an abnormal electrical discharge in a certain area of the brain, affecting only certain functions

Passive exercise- exercise of an injured part of the body involving no effort from that injured part

Passive smoking- a nonsmoker inhaling the cigar, cigarette, or pipe smoke of others (called second-hand smoke) in the same area, which increases the nonsmoker's risk of [cancer](#) and respiratory disorders

Patella- the medical term for the kneecap

Patent- not obstructed; open

Patent ductus arteriosus- a [genetic disorder](#) of the heart in which a channel connecting the [pulmonary artery](#) and the [aorta](#) fails to close and the heart must work harder to supply the body with blood

Paternity testing- use of blood tests to match up [DNA](#) or specific blood [proteins](#) to determine whether a man is the father of a child

Pathogen- any substance capable of causing a disease; usually refers to a disease-causing [microorganism](#)

Pathogenesis- the production and development of a disease or disorder

Pathology- the study of disease

Patient-controlled analgesia- a system for administering pain-killing drugs in which the amount of drug delivered is controlled by the patient

Peak flow measurement- the maximum speed that air is exhaled from the lungs; used to diagnose [asthma](#) or to determine the effectiveness of asthma medications

Pectoral muscles- the muscles of the upper part of the chest that move the arm across the body, raise some of the ribs, and move the shoulders

Pellagra- a deficiency of the vitamin [niacin](#); causes [dermatitis](#), diarrhea, and mental disorders

Pelvic examination- an examination of a woman's reproductive organs

Pelvic inflammatory disease- [inflammation](#) of a woman's internal reproductive organs, usually as a result of a bacterial infection; one of the most common causes of pelvic pain and [infertility](#) in women

Pelvis- the group of bones in the lower part of the trunk that support the upper body and protect the abdominal organs

Penile function tests- tests used to determine the cause of [impotence](#), including blood tests and nerve function tests

Penile implant- an inflatable device surgically inserted into the penis that allows a man with [impotence](#) to have sexual intercourse

Penis- the external male reproductive organ, which passes urine and [semen](#) out of the body

Pepsin- the [enzyme](#) found in [gastric juice](#) that helps digest protein

Peptic ulcer- an erosion in the lining of the esophagus, stomach, or small intestine, usually caused in part by the corrosive action of [gastric acid](#)

Percutaneous- a procedure that is performed through the skin, such as an injection

Perforation- a hole in an organ or body structure caused by disease or injury

Periarteritis nodosa- inflammation and weakening of small and medium [arteries](#)

Pericardial effusion- fluid buildup inside of the [pericardium](#), affecting the performance of the heart

Pericarditis- [inflammation](#) of the membranous sac that covers the heart, causing chest pain and fever

Pericardium- the membranous sac that covers the heart and the base of the blood vessels that are attached to the heart

Perinatal- occurring just before or just after birth

Periosteum- the tissue covering bones, except the surfaces in joints

Periostitis- inflammation of the [periosteum](#)

Peripheral nervous system- the [nerves](#) that branch out from the brain and spinal cord to the rest of the body

Peripheral vascular disease- the narrowing of blood vessels in the legs or arms, causing pain and possibly tissue death ([gangrene](#)) as a result of a reduced flow of blood to areas supplied by the narrowed vessels

Peristalsis- wavelike movement of smooth muscle-containing tubes, such as the digestive tract

Peritoneum- the membrane that lines the abdominal cavity and covers the abdominal organs

Peritonitis- inflammation of the [peritoneum](#)

Pernicious anemia- an [anemia](#) caused by a failure to absorb [vitamin B₁₂](#); which is essential in the production of normal red blood cells

Perthes' disease- inflammation of the growing head of a [femur](#); a type of [osteochondritis juvenilis](#)

Pertussis- a bacterial [infection](#) of the respiratory tract characterized by short, convulsive coughs that end in a whoop sound when breath is inhaled (commonly called whooping cough); mainly affects children

Petit mal- a [seizure](#) characterized by loss of awareness for brief periods

PET scanning- see [Positron emission tomography scanning](#)

Peutz-Jeghers syndrome- a [genetic disorder](#) in which there are [polyps](#) in the small intestine and brown melanin spots on the lips, mouth, fingers, and toes

pH- a measure of the acidic or basic character of a substance

Phagocyte- an [immune system](#) cell that can surround and digest foreign bodies, unwanted cellular material, and [microorganisms](#)

Phantom limb- the sensation of a limb after it has been amputated

Pharmacology- the study of medications, including drug development

Pharyngitis- [inflammation](#) of the throat (the pharynx), causing sore throat, fever, earache, and swollen glands

Pharynx- the throat; the tube connecting the back of the mouth and nose to the [esophagus](#) and windpipe

Phenothiazines- a group of drugs used as [antipsychotics](#), [antihistamines](#), and [antiemetics](#)

Phenylketonuria- a hereditary disorder in which the [enzyme](#) that converts the amino acid phenylalanine into another amino acid is defective, meaning phenylalanine must be kept out of the diet

Pheochromocytoma- a noncancerous [tumor](#) of cells that produce [epinephrine](#) and [norepinephrine](#), causing higher levels of these hormones in the blood and an increase in blood pressure

Phimosis- tightness of the foreskin, which prevents it from being moved back over the head of the [penis](#)

Phlebitis- [inflammation](#) of a [vein](#)

Phlebothrombosis- formation of a blood clot in a [vein](#)

Phlegm- [mucus](#) and other material produced by the lining of the respiratory tract; also called sputum

Phobia- a persisting fear of and desire to avoid something

Phosphates- salts containing [phosphorus](#); essential to some body functions such as the bones and teeth

Phospholipids- fatty substances that make up the membranes surrounding [cells](#)

Phosphorus- a [mineral](#) that is an important part of structures such as bones, teeth, and membranes in the body; also involved in numerous other chemical reactions

Photocoagulation- tissue destruction using a focused beam of light

Photophobia- an abnormal sensitivity of the eyes to light

Photosensitivity- an abnormal reaction to sunlight, which usually occurs as a [rash](#)

Phototherapy- treatment with some form of light

Physical therapy- the treatment of injuries or disorders using physical methods, such as exercise, massage, or the application of heat

Physiology- the study of the body's functions

Phytochemicals- chemicals in plants that might help protect against disorders such as cancer

Pica- a desire to eat materials that are not food

Pickwickian syndrome- extreme [obesity](#) along with shallow breathing, [sleep apnea](#), excessive sleepiness, and [heart failure](#)

PID- see [Pelvic inflammatory disease](#)

Pigmentation- the coloration of the skin, hair, and eyes by the pigment [melanin](#)

Pinkeye- [inflammation](#) of the membrane that covers the white of the eyes and lines the eyelids, causing redness, discomfort, and a discharge; can be caused by infection or allergies

Pinworm- a small [parasite](#) worm that can live in the [intestines](#); commonly affects children

Pituitary adenoma- a noncancerous [tumor](#) of the pituitary gland

Pituitary gland- a small, round [gland](#) located at the base of the brain that releases [hormones](#) that control other glands and body processes

Pityriasis alba- a common childhood or adolescent disorder in which there are pale, scaly patches on the skin of the face

Pityriasis rosea- a mild skin condition in which flat, scaly spots occur on the trunk and upper arms

Pivot joint- a joint designed for rotational movement

PKU- see [Phenylketonuria](#)

Placebo- a chemically inactive substance given in place of a drug to test how much of a drug's effectiveness can be attributed to a patient's expectations that the drug will have a positive effect

Placebo effect- the positive or negative response to a drug that is caused by a person's expectations of a drug rather than the drug itself

Placenta- an organ formed in the [uterus](#) during pregnancy that links the blood of the mother to the blood of the [fetus](#); provides the fetus with nutrients and removes waste

Placental abruption- the separation of the placenta from the wall of the [uterus](#) before childbirth, which causes severe bleeding that threatens the life of the mother and the [fetus](#)

Placental insufficiency- a disorder occurring during pregnancy in which the [placenta](#) does not function properly, causing the [fetus](#) to be deprived of nutrients

Placenta previa- a disorder in which the [placenta](#) develops at the lower section of the [uterus](#) (close to or covering the cervix); varies in severity, from no effect on a pregnancy to vaginal bleeding and danger to the mother and the [fetus](#)

Plague- a serious infectious disease transmitted to humans through bites of rodent fleas

Plantar reflex- the normal curling of the toes downward when the sole of the foot is stroked

Plantar wart- a rough-surfaced, hard spot on the sole of the foot that is caused by a [virus](#)

Plaque- an area of buildup of fat deposits in an [artery](#), causing narrowing of the artery and possibly heart disease; dental plaque refers to a coating on the teeth, consisting of saliva, bacteria, and food debris, which causes tooth decay

Plasma- the liquid part of the blood, containing substances such as nutrients, salts, and [proteins](#)

Plasma cell- a [white blood cell](#) that makes [antibodies](#)

Plasmapheresis- a procedure for removing unwanted substances from the blood in which blood is drawn, its [plasma](#) is separated and replaced, and the cleansed blood is returned to the body

Platelet- the smallest particle found in the blood, which plays a major role in forming [blood clots](#)

Pleura- the double-layered membrane that lines the lungs and chest cavity and allows for lung movement during breathing

Pleural effusion- a buildup of fluid between the membranes that line the lungs and chest cavity (the pleura); causes compression of the lungs, which leads to breathing difficulty

Pleural membranes- the [pleura](#)

Pleural rub- a rubbing sound produced by inflamed pleural membranes that can be heard when breathing

Pleural space- the space between the two layers of the [pleura](#)

Pleurisy- [inflammation](#) of the lining of the lungs and chest cavity, usually caused by a lung [infection](#); characterized by sharp chest pain

Pleurodynia- pain in the chest caused by a [virus](#)

Plummer-Vinson syndrome- difficulty swallowing due to an abnormal web of tissue across the upper part of the [esophagus](#)

PMS- see [Premenstrual syndrome](#)

Pneumoconiosis- a respiratory disease caused by dust inhalation

Pneumocystis pneumonia- an [opportunistic infection](#) of the lungs caused by a single-celled [parasite](#)

Pneumonectomy- surgical removal of a lung

Pneumonia- [inflammation](#) of the lungs due to a bacterial or viral [infection](#), which causes fever, shortness of breath, and the coughing up of [phlegm](#)

Pneumothorax- a condition in which air enters the space between the chest wall and the lungs, causing chest pain and shortness of breath; may occur spontaneously or be the result of a disease or an accident

Poliomyelitis- an infectious disease caused by a [virus](#); usually causes only mild symptoms but in rare cases can attack the brain and spinal cord and cause [paralysis](#) or death

Polyarthritis- [arthritis](#) occurring in more than one joint

Polycystic kidney disease- a condition in which there are multiple, slow-growing [cysts](#) on both [kidneys](#)

Polycystic ovary syndrome- a hereditary disease characterized by multiple [cysts](#) on the [ovaries](#), obesity, excessive hairiness, [infertility](#), and irregular menstruation

Polycythemia- an increased amount of [red blood cells](#) in the blood

Polydactyly- the presence of an excessive number of fingers or toes

Polydipsia- excessive thirst

Polymyalgia rheumatica- a rare disease of the elderly, characterized by muscle stiffness and pain in the hips, thighs, shoulders, and neck

Polymyositis- an [autoimmune disease](#) of [connective tissue](#) in which muscles weaken and become inflamed

Polyp- a growth that occurs on [mucous membranes](#) such as those in the nose and [intestine](#); bleeds easily and can become cancerous

Polysaccharide- a complex [carbohydrate](#) composed of three or more simple carbohydrate molecules joined together

Polyunsaturated fat- a fat or oil that contains well below the maximum number of hydrogen atoms possible; thought to reduce the risk of [coronary heart disease](#)

Polyuria- the excessive production of urine; can be a symptom of various diseases, most notably [diabetes mellitus](#)

Porphyria- a group of [genetic disorders](#) in which substances called porphyrins build up in the blood, often causing rashes brought on by exposure to sunlight and reactions to certain drugs

Portal hypertension- increased blood pressure in the portal vein

Portal vein- the [vein](#) connecting the stomach, intestines, and spleen to the liver

Positron emission tomography scanning- an imaging method in which substances emitting positrons (positively charged particles) are introduced into the body, and detectors connected to a computer are used to form images of the tissues

Postcoital contraception- the prevention of pregnancy after sexual intercourse has occurred

Posterior- describes something that is located in or relates to the back of the body

Postmenopausal bleeding- bleeding from the [vagina](#) that occurs after [menopause](#)

Postmortem examination- examination of a body after death to determine the cause of death; commonly called an autopsy

Postmyocardial infarction syndrome- a condition that occurs following a heart attack or heart surgery; characterized by fever, chest pain, [pericarditis](#), and [pleurisy](#)

Postnatal- describes something that occurs after birth, usually to the baby

Postpartum- a term that describes something that occurs after childbirth, usually to the mother

Post-traumatic stress disorder- feelings of anxiety experienced after a particularly frightening or stressful event, which include recurring dreams, difficulty sleeping, and a feeling of isolation

Postural drainage- drainage of [mucus](#) from specific areas of the lungs by placing the body in a specific position

Postural hypotension- unusually low [blood pressure](#) that occurs after suddenly standing or sitting up

Potassium- a [mineral](#) that plays an important role in the body, helping to maintain water balance, normal heart rhythm, conduction of nerve impulses, and muscle contraction

Precancerous- describes a condition from which cancer is likely to develop

Precordial movement- movement of the heart that is seen and felt through the chest wall

Preeclampsia- a serious disorder that occurs in the second half of pregnancy, in which a woman experiences high blood pressure, fluid retention, nausea, and headaches; if not treated it can lead to [eclampsia](#)

Premature labor- [labor](#) that begins before the full term of pregnancy (about 37 weeks)

Premature rupture of membranes- the rupture of the sac that holds the fluid surrounding the [fetus](#) before the full term of pregnancy (about 37 weeks)

Premedication- drugs, usually painkillers, taken 1 to 2 hours before surgery

Premenopausal- a term that describes the period of a few years in a woman's life just before [menopause](#)

Premenstrual syndrome- physical and emotional changes that occur in a woman 1 or 2 weeks before [menstruation](#), at or after [ovulation](#); characterized by irritability, tension, [depression](#), and fatigue

Prenatal care- medical care of a pregnant woman and the [fetus](#)

Prenatal diagnosis- techniques used to diagnose abnormalities in a [fetus](#)

Prenatal testing- tests performed on a pregnant woman or her [fetus](#) to prevent or diagnose abnormalities

Prepared childbirth- a technique in which a pregnant woman tries to minimize use of pain-relief medications during childbirth by learning relaxation techniques

Prepuce- the [foreskin](#)

Presbycusis- the loss of hearing that occurs naturally with age

Presbyopia- the loss of the ability to focus the eyes on near objects that occurs naturally with age, as a result of loss of elasticity of the lens of the eyes

Pressure point- specific points on the body where external pressure can be applied to prevent excessive arterial bleeding

Pressure sore- an [ulcer](#) (erosion) on the skin that is a result of being bedridden; commonly called a bedsore

Priapism- a painful, persistent erection without sexual arousal, requiring emergency treatment

Prickly heat- a rash involving small, red, itchy spots and a prickly sensation that usually appears where sweat builds up

Primary- a disease that began in the affected location

Prion- an agent that is believed to cause several degenerative brain diseases

Procidentia- severe [prolapse](#) of an organ

Proctalgia- pain in the [rectum](#)

Proctitis- [inflammation](#) of the [rectum](#), which causes soreness and sometimes [mucus](#) and/or [pus](#) in the stool

Proctoscopy- examination of the [rectum](#) using a viewing instrument

Productive cough- a cough that brings up [phlegm](#), which is the body's natural way of clearing blocked airways

Progeria- an extremely rare condition in which the body ages prematurely

Progesterone- a female sex [hormone](#) that plays many important roles in reproduction, including the thickening of the lining of the uterus during the [menstrual cycle](#); and during pregnancy, the functioning of the [placenta](#), and the initiation of labor

Prognosis- a doctor's probable forecast of the effects and outcome of a disease

Progressive muscular atrophy- gradual degeneration and weakening of muscles due to a degenerative spinal cord

Prolactin- a [hormone](#) released by the [pituitary gland](#) that is responsible for the development of breasts and milk production in females

Prolapse- the displacement of an organ from its normal position to a new one

Prolapsed disk- see [Disk prolapse](#)

Prophylactic- anything used to prevent disease

Proprioception- the body's system for determining its position relative to the outside world

Prostatectomy- the partial or complete surgical removal of the [prostate gland](#)

Prostate gland- an organ located under the bladder that produces a large part of the [semen](#)

Prostatism- symptoms caused by an enlarged [prostate gland](#), including difficulty with urination

Prostatitis- [inflammation](#) of the [prostate gland](#), usually due to a bacterial infection spread from the [urethra](#)

Prosthesis- an artificial replacement for a missing part of the body

Proteins- large molecules made up of amino acids that play many major roles in the body, including forming the basis of body structures such as skin and hair, and important chemicals such as [enzymes](#) and [hormones](#)

Prothrombin time- the time it takes for a sample of blood to clot after substances that speed clotting time have been added; used to measure the effect of [anticoagulants](#)

Proton pump inhibitor- a drug used to treat [peptic ulcers](#) that reduces the amount of gastric acid produced

Proto-oncogene- a [gene](#) that is normally inactive but can become a cancer-causing oncogene if made active

Protozoan- a simple, single-celled organism

Proximal- located nearer to a central point of reference on the body, such as the trunk

Pruritus- the medical term for itching

Pseudogout- a form of [arthritis](#) with symptoms similar to gout that results from the depositing of calcium salts in a joint

Pseudomembranous enterocolitis- severe inflammation of the [colon](#) as a result of antibiotic use by an [immunocompromised](#) individual

Psittacosis- a chlamydial [infection](#) resembling influenza that is spread to humans by the droppings of infected birds

Psoralens- drugs that contain chemicals derived from plants; used to treat the skin disorders psoriasis and [vitiligo](#)

Psoriasis- a skin disorder characterized by patches of thick, red skin often covered by silvery scales

Psoriatic arthritis- a form of [arthritis](#) that develops as a complication of the skin disorder psoriasis

Psychogenic- resulting from psychological or emotional disorders

Psychological- relating to the mind and the processes of the mind

Psychosis- a mental disorder in which a serious inability to think, perceive, and judge clearly causes loss of touch with reality

Psychosomatic- describes a physical condition that is influenced by psychological or emotional factors

Psychotherapy- the treatment of mental and emotional disorders using [psychological](#) methods, such as counseling, instead of physical means

Psychotic- relating to [psychosis](#)

Psychotropic drug- a drug that has a [psychological](#) effect

Ptosis- the drooping of the upper eyelid

Puberty- the period of time (usually between the ages of 10 and 15) during which sexual development occurs, allowing reproduction to become possible

Pubic louse- a small insect that lives in pubic hair, feeds on blood, and is usually spread by sexual contact; pubic lice are popularly called "crabs"

Pudendal block- a local [anesthesia](#) procedure used during childbirth, causing the lower part of the [vagina](#) to be insensitive to pain

Pudendum- the external genitals, usually referring to the female

Puerperal sepsis- infection of the female genital tract following childbirth, abortion, or miscarriage

Puerperium- the time period after childbirth (about 6 weeks) during which a woman's body returns to its normal physical state

Pulmonary artery- the [artery](#) that supplies the lungs with blood from the heart

Pulmonary edema- the buildup of fluid in lung tissue, which is usually caused by [heart failure](#)

Pulmonary embolism- blockage of the [pulmonary artery](#) by a floating mass in the blood

Pulmonary fibrosis- a condition in which the tissue of the lungs has become thick and scarred, usually because of [inflammation](#) caused by lung conditions such as [pneumonia](#) or [tuberculosis](#)

Pulmonary heart valve- the heart valve that stops blood pumped to the lungs from leaking back into the heart

Pulmonary hypertension- increased blood pressure in the [arteries](#) supplying blood to the lungs; caused by increased resistance to blood flow in the lungs, usually a result of a lung disease

Pulmonary insufficiency- a rare defect in the [pulmonary heart valve](#) in which it fails to close properly after each muscle contraction, allowing blood to leak back into the heart; weakens the heart's pumping ability

Pulmonary stenosis- obstruction of the flow of blood from the heart to the lungs

Pulp- the soft tissue inside of a tooth that contains blood vessels and [nerves](#)

Pulse- the expansion and contraction of a blood vessel due to the blood pumped through it; determined as the number of expansions per minute

Pupil- the opening at the center of the [iris](#) in the eye that constricts (contracts) and dilates (widens) in response to light

Purpuric rash- areas of purple or reddish-brown spots on the skin, which are caused by bleeding from underlying tissues

Pus- a thick, yellowish or greenish fluid that contains dead [white blood cells](#), tissues, and bacteria; occurs at the site of a bacterial [infection](#)

Pustule- a small blister containing pus

PUVA- a form of [phototherapy](#) that combines the use of [psoralens](#) and ultraviolet light to treat skin disorders

Pyelolithotomy- surgical removal of a [kidney stone](#)

Pyelonephritis- [inflammation](#) of the [kidney](#), usually due to a bacterial [infection](#)

Pyloric sphincter- a circular muscle located at the junction of the stomach and [small intestine](#) that controls the passage of food into the small intestine

Pyloric stenosis- narrowing of the outlet located at the junction of the stomach and [small intestine](#)

Pyloroplasty- surgical widening of the outlet between the stomach and [small intestine](#)

Pyrexia- a body temperature of above 98.6°F in the mouth or 99.8°F in the [rectum](#)

Pyrogen- any substance that causes a fever

Pyuria- the presence of [white blood cells](#) in the urine; usually an indication of kidney or urinary tract [infection](#)

Q

Quadriceps muscle- the muscle (consisting of 4 distinct parts) located at the front of the thigh that straightens the leg

R

Rabies- an infectious viral disease primarily affecting animals; can be transmitted to humans through an infected animal's bite; if untreated, can result in paralysis and death

Radial keratotomy- a surgical procedure for correcting nearsightedness in which tiny cuts are made in the cornea to change its shape and focusing properties

Radiation- a variety of types of energy, such as X-rays and ultraviolet

Radiation therapy- treatment of a disease, such as cancer, using forms of radioactivity that damage or destroy abnormal cells

Radical surgery- treatment of disease by surgically removing all tissue that is or may be affected

Radiculopathy- any disease of the nerve roots; can be caused by disk prolapse, arthritis, and other problems

Radioallergosorbent test- a blood test performed to help determine the cause of an allergy by detecting the presence of antibodies to various allergens

Radiography- the formation of images of the inside of the body using radiation projected through the body and onto film; a radiograph is also called an X-ray

Radionuclide scanning- an imaging technique in which a radioactive substance is introduced into the body and its emitted radiation is detected; specific organs can be studied according to the amount of the radioactive substance that they absorb

Radius- one of the two long bones of the forearm, located on the thumb side of the arm

Radon- a colorless, odorless, tasteless radioactive gas that is produced by materials in soil, rocks, and building materials; suspected of causing cancer

Rales- abnormal crackling or bubbling sounds heard in the lungs during breathing

Rash- an area of inflammation or a group of spots on the skin

Raynaud's disease- a condition in which the fingers and toes become pale when exposed to cold or emotional stress, owing to sudden narrowing of the arteries that supply them with blood

Receptor- a nerve cell that responds to a stimulus and produces a nerve impulse; also refers to the area on the surface of a cell that a chemical must bind to in order to have its effect

Recessive gene- a gene that does not produce its effect when it occurs with a dominant gene, but produces its effect only when there are two copies of it

Reconstructive surgery- surgery to rebuild part of the body that has been damaged or defective from birth

Rectal prolapse- bulging of the lining of the [rectum](#) through the [anus](#), usually due to straining during a bowel movement

Rectum- a short tube located at the end of the [large intestine](#), which connects the intestine to the [anus](#)

Red blood cell- a doughnut-shaped blood cell that carries [oxygen](#) from the lungs to body tissues

Reduction of fracture- the realignment of the broken ends of a bone

Referred pain- pain felt in a part of the body remote from the site where pain originates

Reflex- an automatic, involuntary response of the nervous system to a stimulus

Reflux esophagitis- the backflow of [gastric acid](#) from the stomach to the lower [esophagus](#), owing to a defect in the valve that separates them

Regurgitation- the backflow of fluid; can refer to food and drink flowing back up from the stomach into the mouth or blood flowing back into the heart through a defective [heart valve](#)

Rehabilitation- treatment for an injury or illness aimed at restoring physical abilities

Rehydration- treatment for dehydration (an abnormally low level of water in the body) in which levels are restored by taking fluids containing water, salt, and glucose by mouth or, if severe, through a [vein](#)

Reiter's syndrome- a disorder characterized by [inflammation](#) of the joints, [urethra](#), and sometimes the [conjunctiva](#)

Relapse- the return of a disease or symptom after it had disappeared

Remission- the temporary disappearance of a disease or its symptoms, either partially or completely; also refers to the time period in which this occurs

REM sleep- rapid eye movement sleep; the stage of sleep in which dreaming occurs

Renal cell carcinoma- the most common type of kidney cancer

Renal colic- severe pain on one side of the lower back, usually as a result of a [kidney stone](#)

Renal tubular acidosis- inability of the [kidneys](#) to remove sufficient amounts of acid from the body, making the blood more acidic than normal

Renin- an [enzyme](#) that plays a role in increasing a low blood pressure

Repetitive strain injury- an injury that occurs when the same movement is repeated continuously

Reproductive system- the organs and structures that allow men and women to have sexual intercourse and produce children

Resection- partial or complete surgical removal of a diseased organ or structure

Respiration- the process by which [oxygen](#) is taken in and used by tissues in the body and carbon dioxide is released

Respirator- another term for a [ventilator](#)

Respiratory arrest- a condition in which a person suddenly stops breathing

Respiratory distress syndrome- a condition experienced after an illness or injury damages the lungs, causing severe breathing difficulty and resulting in a life-threatening lack of [oxygen](#) in the blood

Respiratory failure- the failure of the body to exchange gases properly, which leads to a buildup of [carbon dioxide](#) and a lack of [oxygen](#) in the blood

Respiratory system- the organs that carry out the process of [respiration](#)

Resting pulse- the [pulse](#) rate when a person is not experiencing any physical activity or mental stress

Reticulocyte- an immature [red blood cell](#)

Retina- a membrane lining the inside of the back of the eye that contains light-sensitive [nerve](#) cells that convert focused light into nerve impulses, making vision possible

Retinal artery occlusion- obstruction of an [artery](#) that supplies blood to the [retina](#), resulting in some degree of temporary or permanent blindness

Retinitis pigmentosa- gradual loss of the field of vision, owing to a degeneration of the light-sensitive nerve cells of the [retina](#)

Retinoblastoma- a hereditary, cancerous [tumor](#) of the [retina](#) affecting infants and children

Retinoid- a substance resembling vitamin A that is used to treat skin conditions such as [acne](#) and has been reported to reduce skin wrinkling

Retinopathy- any disease or disorder of the [retina](#); usually refers to damage to the retina caused by high blood pressure or [diabetes mellitus](#)

Retinoscopy- a method of determining focusing errors of the eye in which light is shined through the [pupil](#) and the reflected beam is measured

Retroviruses- a group of viruses that are made up of RNA instead of DNA, including HIV and the virus that causes T-cell leukemia

Reye's syndrome- a rare disorder mainly affecting those under the age of 15 that is characterized by brain and liver damage following a viral infection such as chickenpox or the flu; may be linked to taking aspirin to treat a viral infection

Rh blood group- a blood group classifying whether the substances called Rhesus (Rh) factors are present on the surface of red blood cells; the "positive" or "negative" designation in blood classification (for example, "O negative")

Rheumatic fever- a disorder that follows a throat infection by the streptococcus bacteria and causes inflammation in body tissues

Rheumatoid arthritis- a condition in which joints in the body become inflamed, stiff, painful, and sometimes deformed because of the body's own immune system attacking the tissues

Rheumatoid factors- antibodies that are present in about 80% of people with rheumatoid arthritis; their detection through blood testing can help to diagnose the disorder

Rh immunoglobulin- a substance used to prevent a woman who is Rh incompatible with her fetus from becoming Rh sensitized

Rh incompatibility- a condition in which a pregnant woman's Rh factor does not match that of the fetus; can lead to the production of antibodies by the mother that destroy the fetus' red blood cells

Rhinitis- inflammation of the mucous membrane lining the nose, which can cause sneezing, runny nose, congestion, and pain; when caused by substances in the air, it is called allergic rhinitis or hay fever

Rhinophyma- a bulb-shaped deformity and redness of the nose as a result of severe rosacea

Rhinoplasty- surgery that changes the structure of the nose, either to improve appearance or to correct a deformity or injury

Rh sensitized- a condition in which a woman who has a negative Rh factor develops permanent antibodies against Rh-positive blood as a result of exposure to the blood of her fetus; can cause fetal hemolysis in subsequent pregnancies

Rhythm method- a method of preventing pregnancy in which a couple does not have sexual intercourse during the days of the menstrual cycle during which fertilization can occur

Riboflavin- a vitamin belonging to the vitamin B complex that is important in many processes in the body and helps to maintain healthy skin

Rickets- a childhood disease in which bones lack [calcium](#) and are deformed as a result of [vitamin D](#) deficiency (vitamin D helps the body absorb [calcium](#))

Rigor mortis- the stiffness that occurs in the body after death

Ringworm- a skin [infection](#) caused by a [fungus](#) that spreads out in an even circle, characterized by ring-like, scaly patches of red skin

Rinne's test- a test that uses a tuning fork to diagnose hearing loss resulting from poor conduction of sound from the outer to the inner ear

RNA- ribonucleic acid, which helps to decode and process the information contained in [DNA](#)

Rocky mountain spotted fever- a rare disease transmitted to humans through the bites of ticks; characterized by small pink spots on the wrists and ankles that spread to other parts of the body, become larger, and bleed

Rosacea- a skin disorder that is characterized by patches of red skin on the nose and cheeks and acne-like bumps; most commonly occurs in middle-aged women

Roseola infantum- a common disease in young children characterized by a sudden fever and rash

Rotator cuff- a structure made up of four muscle [tendons](#) that reinforces the shoulder joint

Roundworm- a group of worms that includes many of the major human [parasites](#)

Rubella- a mild viral infection (also known as German measles) that produces a rash and fever; dangerous when it infects a woman during the early stages of pregnancy, when it can spread causing [birth defects](#) in the fetus

Rubeola- another term for [measles](#)

Rupture- a tear or break in an organ or tissue

S

Saccharides- a group of [carbohydrates](#), including sugars and starches

Sacroiliac joints - the pair of joints located in the [pelvis](#) between the [sacrum](#) and the hipbones

Sacroiliitis- [inflammation](#) of the sacroiliac joints, which causes pain in the lower body

Sacrum- the triangular bone located at the bottom of the spine that is connected to the tailbone, the hipbones near the [sacroiliac joints](#), and the rest of the spine

SADS- see [Seasonal affective disorder syndrome](#)

Safe sex- measures taken to reduce the risk of acquiring a sexually transmitted disease, such as the use of a condom

Saline- a salt solution or any substance that contains salt

Salivary glands- a group of [glands](#) that secrete saliva into the mouth

Salmonella- a group of bacteria; includes a species that causes food poisoning and another responsible for [typhoid fever](#)

Salmonellosis- [infection](#) by salmonella bacteria

Salpingectomy- surgical removal of one or both [fallopian tubes](#)

Salpingitis- [inflammation](#) of a [fallopian tube](#)

Salpingography- X-ray examination of the [fallopian tubes](#)

Salpingolysis- removal of abnormal scar tissue between a [fallopian tube](#) and nearby tissue

Salpingo-oophorectomy- the surgical removal of one or both of the [fallopian tubes](#) and one or both of the [ovaries](#)

Salpingostomy- surgical opening of a [fallopian tube](#) for drainage or removal of an obstruction

Sarcoidosis- a rare disease with no known cause that leads to [inflammation](#) in tissues throughout the body, including the [lymph nodes](#), lungs, [liver](#), skin, and eyes

Sarcoma- a [cancer](#) in connective tissue, fibrous tissue, or blood vessels

Saturated fat- fats that contain the maximum amount of hydrogen possible, such as those found in meats and dairy products; can contribute to [coronary heart disease](#) and the development of some [cancers](#)

Saturday night palsy- temporary [paralysis](#) of the arm after extended pressure on a nerve in the armpit

Scabies- a highly contagious skin disorder caused by a mite that burrows into the skin and produces an intense, itchy rash

Scarlet fever- an infectious childhood disease, caused by a streptococcus bacteria, that leads to a sore throat, fever, and rash

Schistosomiasis- infestation by a parasitic blood worm that can damage the liver, bladder, and intestines

Schizophrenia- a group of mental disorders characterized by abnormal thoughts, moods, and actions; sufferers have a distorted sense of reality, and a split personality (thoughts do not logically fit together)

Schönlein-Henoch purpura- inflammation and leakage of blood vessels, causing a rash

Sciatica- pain along the sciatic nerve, which runs down the length of the leg to the foot; usually caused by pressure on the nerve due to [disk prolapse](#) or a [tumor](#), [abscess](#), or [blood clot](#)

Sclera- the tough, white coating that covers and protects the inner structures of the eye

Scleroderma- an [immune system](#) disorder of varying degree that can affect many areas of the body

Sclerotherapy- treatment of [varicose veins](#) by injection of a solution that destroys them

Scoliosis- a condition in which the spine curves to one side and usually curves toward the opposite side in another section to compensate, producing a characteristic S shape

Screening- the testing of an otherwise healthy person in order to diagnose disorders at an early stage

Scrotum- the sac containing the [testicles](#)

Scurvy- a disease caused by a lack of [vitamin C](#), characterized by weakness, bleeding and pain in joints and muscles, bleeding gums, and abnormal bone and tooth growth

Seasonal affective disorder syndrome- a type of [depression](#) that seems to be linked to shorter periods of daylight during the fall and winter

Sebaceous cyst- a swelling that occurs under the skin, most commonly on the scalp, face, ears, and genitals; although usually harmless, can grow very large and become painful if infected

Seborrhea- excessive oiliness of the face and scalp

Sebum- the oily, lubricating substance that is secreted by glands in the skin

Secondary- describes a disease or disorder that follows or is caused by another one

Sedatives- a group of drugs that have a calming effect; used to treat anxiety and pain, bring on sleep, and help relax a person before surgery

Seizure- sudden uncontrolled waves of electrical activity in the brain, causing involuntary movement or loss of consciousness

Selenium- an element needed by the body only in very small amounts that helps maintain tissue elasticity

Semen- fluid released during ejaculation that contains [sperm](#) along with fluids produced by the prostate gland and the [seminal vesicles](#)

Semen analysis- a procedure in which a semen sample is examined to determine the amount of sperm present, along with their shape and ability to move; commonly used in the treatment of male [infertility](#)

Seminal vesicles- two saclike [glands](#) in men that produce part of the fluid in [semen](#)

Seminiferous tubules- coiled tubes inside of the [testicle](#) that are the site of sperm production

Seminoma- a type of testicular [cancer](#) that is made up of only a single type of [cell](#)

Senile plaques- abnormal deposits of a protein called amyloid in the brain; characteristic of [Alzheimer disease](#)

Sensorineural hearing loss- deafness caused by damage to the inner ear or the nerve that conducts signals from the ear to the brain

Sensory nerve- nerves that carry information about the body's senses toward the brain

Sensory organ- an organ that receives and relays information about the body's senses to the brain

Sepsis- the infection of a wound or tissue with bacteria, causing the spread of the bacteria into the bloodstream; now also known as [systemic inflammatory response syndrome](#) caused by a [microbe](#)

Septal defect- a [birth defect](#) in which a hole is present in the wall that separates the left and right sides of the heart

Septic arthritis- joint inflammation caused by a bacterial [infection](#)

Septicemia- a life-threatening condition in which bacteria multiply in the blood and produce toxic materials; commonly known as blood poisoning; now also known as [systemic inflammatory response syndrome](#).

Septic shock- a life-threatening condition in which tissues become damaged and [blood pressure](#) drops due to bacteria multiplying and producing poisons in the blood

Serotonin- a chemical that transmits [nerve](#) impulses in the brain, causes blood vessels to constrict (narrow) at sites of bleeding, and stimulates smooth muscle movement in the [intestines](#)

Serum- the clear, watery fluid that separates from clotted blood

Sex chromosomes- the X and Y chromosomes that determine a person's gender; women normally have two X chromosomes and men normally have one X and one Y

Sex hormones- [hormones](#) responsible for producing sex characteristics and controlling sexual functions

Sex-linked disorder- a disorder that is caused by [genes](#) located on the [sex chromosomes](#)

Sexually transmitted disease- infections that are most commonly spread through sexual intercourse or genital contact

Shigellosis- a bacterial [infection](#) of the [intestines](#), causing abdominal pain and diarrhea

Shingles- a nerve [infection](#) caused by the chickenpox [virus](#), causing areas of painful rash covered with blisters

Shin splints- pain and tenderness experienced in the lower leg as a result of damage or strain to leg muscles and [tendons](#); usually caused by exercise

Shock- a reduced flow of blood throughout the body, usually caused by severe bleeding or a weak heart; without treatment, can lead to a collapse, [coma](#), and death

Shunt- an artificially constructed or an abnormal passage connecting two usually separate structures in the body

Sickle cell anemia- a [genetic disorder](#) in which the [red blood cells](#) are abnormal and deformed, causing anemia (reduced ability to transport [oxygen](#) in the blood) and clogging of blood vessels; bouts of fever, headache, and weakness result

Sickle cell trait- a less serious form of [sickle cell anemia](#)

Sick sinus syndrome- abnormal functioning of the structure that regulates the heartbeat, causing episodes of abnormal heart rhythm

SIDS- see [Sudden infant death syndrome](#)

Sigmoidoscopy- an examination of the [rectum](#) and the lowest part of the [large intestine](#) using a flexible viewing tube inserted through the [anus](#)

Silicone- a group of compounds of silicon and oxygen; commonly used as implants in cosmetic surgery because they resist body fluids and are not rejected by the body

Silicosis- a respiratory disease caused by inhalation of dust containing the mineral silica

Single photon emission computed tomography- an imaging technique in which a radioactive substance is introduced into the body and the [radiation](#) emitted by the substance is detected by a camera and is transformed into cross-sectional images by a computer

Sinoatrial node- the structure that regulates the heartbeat; a natural "pacemaker"

Sinus- a cavity within bone or a channel that contains blood; also refers to an abnormal tract in the body

Sinus bradycardia- a regular heart rate of less than 60 beats per minute

Sinusitis- [inflammation](#) of the lining of the cavities in the bone surrounding the nose (the sinuses), usually as a result of a bacterial [infection](#) spreading from the nose

Sinus rhythm- normal heart rhythm

Sinus tachycardia- a regular heart rate of over 100 beats per minute

Sjögren's syndrome- a condition characterized by dryness of the eyes, mouth, and [vagina](#) that tends to occur along with certain disorders of the [immune system](#)

Skin graft- a method of treating damaged or lost skin in which a piece of skin is taken from another area of the body and transplanted in a damaged or missing section

Skin patch- a sticky patch attached to the surface of the skin that releases drugs into the bloodstream

Skin patch test- a diagnostic test in which different [allergens](#) are taped to the skin to determine which causes an allergic reaction

Skin prick test- a test performed to determine a person's sensitivity to a certain [allergen](#) by applying it to a small needle and using that needle to pierce the skin

Skull- the bones that form the framework of the head and enclose and protect the brain and other sensory organs

Sleep apnea- a condition in which breathing stops for very short periods of time during sleep

Sleeping sickness- an infectious disease in Africa spread by the bite of a tsetse fly that causes a fever and weakness

Slipped disk- the common term for [disk prolapse](#)

Small-cell carcinoma- the most serious form of lung cancer

Small intestine- the long tube running from the stomach to the [large intestine](#) that is involved in digestion of foods and absorption of nutrients

Smallpox- a highly contagious and often fatal viral [infection](#) that has been completely eradicated by [immunization](#)

Smear- a sample of [cells](#) spread across a glass slide to be examined through a microscope

Sodium- a [mineral](#) that plays a role in the body's water balance, heart rhythm, nerve impulses, and muscle contraction; present in table salt (sodium chloride)

Sodium bicarbonate- a substance used as an [antacid](#)

Solar plexus- the largest network of [nerves](#) in the body, located behind the stomach

Somatic- pertaining to the body

Spasm- an involuntary muscle contraction; can sometimes be powerful and painful

Spasticity- muscle stiffness caused by an increase in contractions of the muscle fibers

Spastic paralysis- [spasticity](#) involving partial [paralysis](#)

SPECT- see [Single photon emission computed tomography](#)

Speculum- an instrument that holds an opening of the body open so that an examination can be performed or a sample can be taken

Speech therapy- treatment to help someone overcome a problem communicating verbally

Sperm- the male sex cell produced in the [testicles](#)

Sperm antibody- an [antibody](#) against sperm that can be produced by a woman's [immune system](#)

Spermatocele- a harmless [cyst](#) containing fluid and sperm that occurs in the tube through which sperm travel from the [testicles](#)

Sperm count- the amount of normally functioning sperm per some unit of [semen](#); used to determine a man's [fertility](#)

Spermicide- a contraceptive substance that kills [sperm](#)

Sphincter- a ring of muscle fibers located around a naturally occurring passage or opening in the body that opens and closes to regulate passage of substances

Sphygmomanometer- an instrument used to measure [blood pressure](#)

Spider nevus- a collection of dilated (widened) [capillaries](#) on the skin that creates a patch resembling a spider

Spina bifida- a [birth defect](#) in which a section of the baby's spine fails to develop completely, leaving the [spinal cord](#) exposed in that section

Spina bifida occulta- the least dangerous form of [spina bifida](#), in which bones in the spine fail to close but there is no protrusion of the [spinal cord](#) or its fluid cushion out of the body

Spinal cord- a long tube of [nerve](#) tissue inside the spinal column, running from the brain down the length of the back inside of the [spine](#)

Spinal fusion- the surgical joining of two or more adjacent [vertebrae](#) using bone fragments; used to help severe back pain or prevent damage to the spinal cord

Spinal tap- another term for a [lumbar puncture](#)

Spine- the column of bones and [cartilage](#) running along the midline of the back that surrounds and protects the [spinal cord](#) and supports the head

Spiral fracture- a coiled break in a bone, resembling a corkscrew

Spirometry- a test of lung condition; a person breathes into a machine called a spirometer that measures the volume of air exhaled

Spleen- an organ located in the upper left abdomen behind the ribs that removes and destroys old [red blood cells](#) and helps fight [infection](#)

Splenectomy- surgical removal of the [spleen](#)

Splint- a device that is used to immobilize a part of the body

Splinter hemorrhage- a splinter-shaped area of bleeding under a fingernail or toenail

Spondylitis- [inflammation](#) of the joints between the bones of the [spine](#)

Spondylolisthesis- the slipping of a [vertebra](#) in the [spine](#) over the one below it

Spondylosis- a disorder in which the lower part of the [spine](#) is weakened by an abnormally soft [vertebra](#)

Sporotrichosis- an infection with a [fungus](#) acquired through a skin wound; causes an [ulcer](#) at the site of infection and small, rounded masses of tissue near it

Sprain- the tearing or stretching of the [ligaments](#) in a joint, characterized by pain, swelling, and an inability to move the joint

Sprue- a digestive disorder in which [nutrients](#) cannot be properly absorbed from food, causing weakness and loss of weight

Sputum- [mucus](#) and other material produced by the lining of the respiratory tract; also called phlegm

Squamous cell carcinoma- a type of skin cancer arising from flat cells of the [epithelium](#); can also affect the lungs, [cervix](#), and [esophagus](#)

Stapedectomy- surgical removal of a stapes (a sound-conducting bone in the middle ear) that cannot move to transmit sound; performed to treat hearing loss caused by [otosclerosis](#)

Staphylococci- common bacteria that cause skin [infections](#) and a number of other disorders

Status asthmaticus- a life-threatening [asthma](#) attack requiring immediate treatment

Status epilepticus- a life-threatening succession of epileptic [seizures](#)

STD- see [Sexually transmitted disease](#)

Stein-Leventhal syndrome- see [Polycystic ovary syndrome](#)

Stem cells- cells that give rise to the different types of blood cells

Stenosis- narrowing of a body passageway

Stent- a device used to hold tissues in place, such as to support a skin graft

Stereotaxic surgery- brain surgery done through a small opening in the skull and guided by X-rays or computer-aided imaging techniques

Sterilization- a surgery performed to make a person incapable of reproducing; also refers to the process of killing [microorganisms](#) on objects such as surgical instruments

Sternum- the long, flat bone located at the center of the chest

Steroids- a group of drugs that includes [corticosteroids](#), which resemble hormones produced by the adrenal glands, and [anabolic steroids](#), which are similar to the hormones produced by the male sex organs

Stillbirth- a baby that is born dead after the 28th week of pregnancy; also called late fetal death

Stoma- a surgically formed opening on a body surface

Stomach bypass- a surgical procedure to treat an obstructed stomach or severe [obesity](#) in which the passage of food is diverted around the stomach and directly into the [small intestine](#)

Stomach stapling- a procedure in which the stomach is made smaller by partitioning it off using metal staples; used as an extreme treatment of severe [obesity](#)

Stool- another term for feces

Strabismus- a condition in which the eyes are not aligned correctly, such as cross-eye (one eye points inward) and walleye (one eye points outward)

Straight-leg raising- a simple test performed in a doctor's office to check for [disk prolapse](#)

Strain- muscle damage resulting from excessive stretching or forceful contraction

Strangulated hernia- a [hernia](#) in which the protruding organ or tissue loses its blood supply, requiring emergency surgery

Strawberry nevus- a bright red, raised [birthmark](#) that usually disappears without treatment

Strep throat- a throat [infection](#) caused by streptococcus bacteria; characterized by a sore throat, fever, and enlarged [lymph nodes](#) in the neck

Streptococci- bacteria that cause a variety of diseases, including [pneumonia](#) and [strep throat](#)

Stress fracture- a bone break resulting from repeated pressure on the bone

Stretch marks- lines on the skin that occur when the inner skin layer is stretched thin and loses its elasticity

Stroke- damage to part of the brain because of a lack of blood supply (due to a blockage in an [artery](#)) or the rupturing of a blood vessel; leads to complete or partial loss of function in the area of the body that is controlled by the damaged part of the brain

Stye- a pus-filled [abscess](#) in the follicle of an eyelash; caused by a bacterial [infection](#)

Subcutaneous- a medical term meaning "beneath the skin"

Submucosa- the layer of [connective tissue](#) under a [mucous membrane](#)

Suction lipectomy- see [Liposuction](#)

Sudden infant death syndrome- the unexpected, sudden death of an apparently healthy baby, the cause of which cannot be found; also called crib death

Suppository- a solid cone or bullet-shaped object made up of a chemically inactive substance and a drug that is inserted into the [rectum](#) or [vagina](#); used to administer a drug

Suppuration- the production of [pus](#)

Surfactant- a mixture of substances secreted by the air sacs of the lungs that prevents the air sacs from collapsing during exhalation

Surrogate- a woman who agrees to become pregnant and give her baby to someone else when the child is born

Suture- a surgical stitch that helps close an incision or wound so that it can heal properly

Sweat glands- tiny structures in the skin that secrete sweat

Sweat test- a measure of the saltiness of sweat to help diagnose [cystic fibrosis](#)

Swimmer's ear- see [Otitis externa](#)

Sycosis barbae- a bacterial [infection](#) of the hair follicles in the beard area

Sympathetic nervous system- the part of the [autonomic nervous system](#) that raises [blood pressure](#) and heart rate in response to stress

Syndactyly- a condition in which fingers or toes are fused together

Syndrome- a group of symptoms that indicate a certain disorder when they occur together

Synovectomy- surgical removal of the [synovial membrane](#)

Synovial fluid- a lubricating fluid secreted by the [synovial membrane](#)

Synovial membrane- the thin membrane that lines the inside of a joint capsule

Synovitus- [inflammation](#) of the membrane lining a joint capsule as a result of injury or infection or due to a chronic illness such as [rheumatoid arthritis](#); characterized by redness, swelling, stiffness, and pain

Syphilis- a [sexually transmitted disease](#); initially causes only painless sores on the genitals but can be life-threatening if untreated

Systemic- affecting the whole body

Systemic inflammatory response syndrome- a condition characterized by having two of the following four clinical criteria: fever, rapid breathing, increased heart rate, and abnormal [white blood cell count](#)

Systemic lupus erythematosus- a disease of the [immune system](#) that causes inflammation of [connective tissue](#) in many areas of the body, including the skin, lungs, heart, joints, and kidneys

Systolic pressure- the blood pressure measured while the heart is contracting

I

Tachycardia- a rapid heart rate (over 100 beats per minute)

Tapeworm- a parasitic worm that lives in the [intestines](#); causes diarrhea and abdominal discomfort

Tar- the sticky, brown substance in cigarettes that coats the lungs; causes lung and other [cancers](#)

Tarsorrhaphy- a procedure in which the eyelids are sewn shut; performed to protect the [corneas](#)

Tartar- the hard deposit formed on teeth when mineral salts in saliva combine with [plaque](#); can cause dental problems such as gum disease if not controlled

Tay-Sachs disease- a severe [genetic disorder](#) that causes nervous system disturbances and death, usually before the age of 3

TB- see [Tuberculosis](#)

T cell- see [T-lymphocyte](#)

T-cell leukemia- a type of [leukemia](#) caused by a [virus](#) in which [T-lymphocytes](#) divide uncontrollably

Tear duct- a tiny passageway that drains lubricating tears from the surface of the eye to the back of the nose

Telangiectasia- redness of an area of skin, caused by enlargement and proliferation of the underlying small blood vessels

Temperature method- a natural method of family planning in which a woman determines her time of [ovulation](#) by changes in her daily temperature

Temporal arteritis- inflammation and narrowing of [arteries](#) in the head and neck, including those in the scalp near the temple, which can cause blindness if untreated

Temporomandibular joint syndrome- headache, facial pain, and jaw tenderness caused by irregularities in the way the joints, muscles, and ligaments in the jaw work together

Tendinitis- [inflammation](#) of a tendon, usually caused by injury, characterized by pain, tenderness, and sometimes limited movement in the attached muscle

Tendon- strong [connective tissue](#) cords that attach muscle to bone or muscle to muscle

Tendon transfer- surgical cutting and repositioning of a tendon so that the muscle attached to it has a new function

Tennis elbow- a form of [tendinitis](#) that causes pain and tenderness in the elbow and forearm

Tenosynovitis- inflammation of the inner lining of the sheath that covers a [tendon](#)

Tenovaginitis- inflammation of the fibrous wall of the sheath that covers a [tendon](#)

TENS- see [Transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation](#)

Tension headache- a headache caused by emotional strain or tension in the muscles of the head and neck

Teratogen- anything that causes abnormalities in a developing [embryo](#) or [fetus](#), such as a drug or virus

Teratoma- a [tumor](#) composed of cells not normally found in the part of the body when the tumor occurred

Termination of pregnancy- see [Abortion](#)

Testicles- the two male sex organs that produce sperm and the sex hormone testosterone

Testicular feminization factor- a [genetic disorder](#) in which an individual who is genetically male has the external appearance of a female because the body is unresponsive to testosterone

Testicular torsion- severe pain and swelling of a testicle, due to twisting of the spermatic cord

Testosterone- the sex hormone that stimulates development of male sex characteristics and bone and muscle growth; produced by the [testicles](#) and in small amounts by the [ovaries](#)

Tetanus- a sometimes fatal disease affecting the brain and [spinal cord](#); caused by [infection](#) with bacterium present in soil and manure

Tetracyclines- a group of [antibiotic](#) drugs used to treat a wide variety of infections, including [bronchitis](#) and some types of [pneumonia](#)

Tetralogy of Fallot- a genetic heart disease involving four structural defects in the heart, which result in insufficient levels of [oxygen](#) in the blood

Thalamus- a structure in the brain that relays and processes incoming sensory information from the eyes and ears and from pressure and pain receptors

Thalassemia- a group of genetic blood disorders characterized by a defect in the ability to produce [hemoglobin](#), leading to the rupturing of [red blood cells](#) (called hemolytic anemia)

Thallium scanning- a type of [radionuclide scanning](#) used to assess the heart

Therapeutic range- the range of doses of a drug that will produce beneficial results without side effects

Thoracoscopy- examination of the membranes covering the lungs using an [endoscope](#)

Thoracotomy- a procedure in which the chest is surgically opened to operate on an organ in the chest cavity

Thorax- the chest

Thrill- a vibration felt when the hand is placed flat on the chest; caused by abnormal blood flow through the heart as a result of disease

Thrombectomy- removal of a [blood clot](#)

Thrombocytopenic purpura- a decrease in the number of [platelets](#) in the blood, causing abnormal bleeding of blood vessels into the skin

Thromboembolism- blockage of a blood vessel by a blood clot fragment that has broken off and traveled from another area of the body

Thrombophlebitis- inflammation of a [vein](#), along with clot formation in the affected area

Thrombosis- a condition in which a blood clot (thrombus) has formed inside a blood vessel

Thrombus- a blood clot in a blood vessel

Thrush- a [candidiasis](#) infection

Thymoma- a tumor of the [thymus gland](#)

Thymus gland- an immune system [gland](#) located in the upper part of the chest that plays an important role in the production of [T-lymphocytes](#)

Thyroglossal cyst- a swelling at the front of the neck; forms from a duct that fails to disappear during embryonic development

Thyroid gland- a [gland](#) located in the front of the neck below the voice box that plays an important role in metabolism (the chemical processes in the body) and growth; the gland produces thyroid hormone

Thyroiditis- inflammation of the [thyroid gland](#)

Thyrotoxicosis- a toxic condition resulting from overactivity of the [thyroid gland](#)

Thyroxin- a hormone produced by the [thyroid gland](#) that helps regulate energy production in the body

TIA- see [Transient ischemic attack](#)

Tibia- the thicker of the two long bones in the lower leg; commonly called the shin

Tic- an involuntary, repetitive movement such as a twitch

Tic douloureux- see [Trigeminal neuralgia](#)

Ticks- small, eight-legged animals that can attach to humans and animals and feed on blood; sometimes spread infectious organisms via their bites

Tietze's syndrome- inflammation of the [cartilage](#) that joins ribs to the breastbone, causing chest pain

Tinea- a group of common infections occurring on the skin, hair, and nails that are caused by a [fungus](#); commonly referred to as [ringworm](#)

Tinnitus- a persistent ringing or buzzing sound in the ear

Tipped uterus- an abnormal condition in which the [uterus](#) is tilted backward instead of slightly forward

Tissue plasminogen activator- a substance produced by the body and as a genetically engineered drug to prevent abnormal blood clotting

Tissue typing- tests used to determine the compatibility of tissues used in [grafts](#) and [transplants](#)

T-lymphocyte- a type of [white blood cell](#) that fights infections and destroys abnormal cells directly; as compared with releasing [antibodies](#) to fight [infection](#)

T-lymphocyte killer cell- a type of T-lymphocyte white blood cell that attaches to abnormal cells and releases chemicals that destroy them

TMJ syndrome- see [Temporomandibular joint syndrome](#)

Tolerance- decreased sensitivity of the body to a certain drug, usually either because the [liver](#) becomes more efficient at breaking down the drug or the body's tissues become less sensitive to it; increased tolerance creates a need for a higher dose of the drug in order to have the same effects

Tonometry- the procedure used to measure the pressure within the eye; is useful in detecting [glaucoma](#)

Tonsillectomy- surgical removal of the tonsils, usually to treat [tonsillitis](#)

Tonsillitis- [infection](#) and [inflammation](#) of the tonsils

Tonsils- masses of lymphoid tissue located at either side of the back of the throat

Tourette's syndrome- a movement disorder characterized by involuntary [tics](#) and noises, and in some cases uncontrollable shouting of obscenities

Tourniquet- a device placed tightly around an arm or leg in order to stop blood flow; can be used to locate [veins](#) in order to take a blood sample or to control blood flow during some operations

Toxemia- the presence of bacterial [toxins](#) in the blood

Toxic epidermal necrolysis- a severe rash in which the outer layers of skin blister and peel off

Toxicity- the extent to which a substance is poisonous

Toxic shock syndrome- a life-threatening condition caused by a staphylococci toxin

Toxin- a poisonous substance

Toxocariasis- human infestation with the larvae of a worm found in the intestines of dogs

Toxoplasmosis- a common [protozoan](#) infection that is usually only dangerous to a [fetus](#) in early pregnancy or a person who is [immunocompromised](#)

TPA- see [Tissue plasminogen activator](#)

Trachea- the tube running from the larynx (the voice box) down the neck and into the upper part of the chest, where it divides to form the two bronchi of the lungs; commonly called the windpipe

Tracheitis- inflammation of the [trachea](#)

Tracheotomy- insertion of a tube through a surgical opening in the [trachea](#) to maintain an open airway

Trachoma- a persistent, contagious form of [conjunctivitis](#) that can lead to complications such as blindness if untreated

Traction- the use of tension to hold a body part in place or to correct or prevent an alignment problem

Transcutaneous- through the skin

Transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation- a method of relieving pain by applying tiny electrical impulses to [nerve](#) endings beneath the skin

Transferrin- a substance in the blood that transports [iron](#) throughout the body

Transient ischemic attack- a temporary block in the supply of blood to the brain, resulting in temporary loss of sensation, movement, vision, or speech; often called mini-strokes and can be precursors to a real [stroke](#)

Transmissible- able to be passed from one organism to another

Transplant- transferring a healthy tissue or organ to replace a damaged tissue or organ; also refers to the tissue or organ transplanted

Transurethral prostatectomy- removal of cancerous tissue from the [prostate gland](#) using a resectoscope (a long, narrow instrument passed up the [urethra](#)), which allows the surgeon to simultaneously view the prostate and cut away the cancerous tissue

Trauma- physical injury or emotional shock

Travelers' diarrhea- diarrhea when traveling in a foreign country, caused by contaminated food or water

Tremor- an involuntary, rhythmic, shaking movement caused by alternating contraction and relaxation of muscles; can be the normal result of age or the abnormal effect of a disorder

Triage- a system used to classify sick or injured people according to the severity of their conditions

Trichiasis- growth of the eyelashes inward toward the [cornea](#), causing persistent irritation of the eyeball

Trichinosis- infestation by the larvae of the parasitic worm *Trichinella spiralis*, usually acquired by eating undercooked pork

Trichomoniasis- infection of the [vagina](#) by the single-celled [parasite](#) *Trichomonas vaginalis*, which may cause inflammation, itchiness, and discharge from the vagina

Tricuspid valve- the valve located between the two left chambers of the heart (the left atrium and the left ventricle)

Tricyclic antidepressants- drugs used in the treatment of clinical [depression](#)

Trigeminal neuralgia- a disorder of the trigeminal [nerve](#) (a cranial nerve) that causes brief attacks of severe pain in the lips, cheeks, gums, or chin on one side of the face

Triglyceride- the main form of fat in the blood; determining levels of triglyceride is useful in diagnosing and treating diabetes, high blood pressure, and heart disease

Trimester- one of three periods lasting about 3 months each; the stages into which pregnancy is divided

Triple X syndrome- the presence of an extra X chromosome in a woman, which may cause some degree of mental retardation

Trismus- the medical term for [lockjaw](#)

Trisomy- the presence in the cells of three copies of a certain chromosome instead of the normal two copies

Trisomy 21- see [Down syndrome](#)

Tubal ligation- a procedure in which the [fallopian tubes](#) are cut and tied off; usually a permanent form of [sterilization](#)

Tubal pregnancy- a pregnancy that occurs in the [fallopian tubes](#), with a fertilized egg implanting in the tube instead of the [uterus](#); severely painful and can be fatal if not detected and treated

Tuberculin test- skin tests performed to determine previous infection with [tuberculosis](#); can help rule out the possibility of being currently infected with tuberculosis

Tuberculosis- an infectious bacterial disease transmitted through the air that mainly affects the lungs

Tuberous sclerosis- a [genetic disorder](#) of the skin and nervous system characterized by [epilepsy](#), mental retardation, and a skin condition resembling acne

Tuboplasty- surgical repair of a damaged [fallopian tube](#) to treat [infertility](#)

Tumor- an abnormal mass that occurs when [cells](#) in a certain area reproduce unchecked; can be cancerous (malignant) or noncancerous (benign)

Tunnel vision- loss of peripheral vision so that only objects directly ahead can be seen; most commonly due to damage caused by increased pressure within the eye (glaucoma)

Turner's syndrome- a [genetic disorder](#) in women in which only one X chromosome is present, or both chromosomes are present but one is defective

Tympanic membrane- the medical term for the [eardrum](#)

Tympanoplasty- a surgical procedure used to treat hearing loss in which the [eardrum](#) or structures in the middle ear are repaired

Typhoid fever- an acute bacterial [infection](#) causing fever, headache, abdominal discomfort, and enlargement of the [liver](#) and [spleen](#)

Typhus- a group of diseases caused by the microorganism rickettsia, spread by the bites of fleas, mites, or ticks; symptoms include headache, fever, rash, and a series of complications if untreated

U

Ulcer- an open sore that occurs on the skin or on a [mucous membrane](#) because of the destruction of surface tissue

Ulcerative colitis- a chronic condition in which ulcers occur on the [mucous membrane](#) lining of the colon (the end of the large intestine) and the [rectum](#)

Ultrasound scanning- an imaging procedure used to examine internal organs in which high-frequency sound waves are passed into the body, reflected back, and used to build an image; also sometimes called sonography

Ultraviolet light- a form of invisible light in sunlight that is responsible for the tanning and burning of skin and can cause [cataracts](#) and skin [cancer](#)

Umbilical cord- the tubal structure (consisting of two arteries and one vein) that connects the [fetus](#) to the [placenta](#), supplying the fetus with [oxygen](#) and [nutrients](#) and removing some waste products

Umbilical hernia- a condition present at birth in which a part of the baby's [intestines](#) bulge through a weak area of the abdominal wall, creating a swelling around the navel

Unconsciousness- a temporary or prolonged loss of awareness of self and of surroundings

Undescended testicle- a [testicle](#) that has not moved down from the abdomen, where it develops, into the [scrotum](#)

Unsaturated fat- a fat or oil found mainly in vegetables; thought to reduce the risk of [coronary heart disease](#)

Urea- a waste product of the metabolism of [proteins](#) that is formed by the [liver](#) and secreted by the kidneys

Uremia- abnormally high levels of waste products such as [urea](#) in the blood

Ureters- two tubes that carry urine from the [kidneys](#) to the [bladder](#)

Urethra- the tube by which urine is released from the [bladder](#)

Urethritis- inflammation of the [urethra](#)

Urethrocele- a bulging of the [urethra](#) into the [vagina](#)

Urethrocystitis- inflammation of the [urethra](#) and the [bladder](#)

Urinalysis- a group of physical and chemical tests done on a sample of urine to check for various disorders, including those of the [kidneys](#) and [urinary tract](#)

Urinary diversion- an operation to allow urine passage when the [bladder](#) or [urethra](#) has become blocked or been removed

Urinary incontinence- the involuntary release of urine because of the inability to control [bladder](#) muscles; may occur as a natural part of the aging process or be caused by an injury or disorder

Urinary tract- the structures in the body that are responsible for the production and release of urine, including the kidneys, ureters, bladder, and urethra

Urticaria- an allergic reaction in which itchy white lumps surrounded by areas of inflammation appear on the skin; commonly called "hives"

Uterine prolapse- a condition in which the uterus moves downward into the [vagina](#) due to a weakness of the [ligaments](#) and muscles that hold the uterus in place

Uterus- the hollow female reproductive organ in which a fertilized egg is implanted and a [fetus](#) develops

Uvea- a structure consisting of the colored area of the eye and the middle layer of the eye that contains blood vessels

Uveitis- inflammation of the [uvea](#)

V

Vaccination- a form of immunization in which killed or weakened [microorganisms](#) are placed into the body, where [antibodies](#) against them are developed; if the same types of microorganisms enter the body again, they will be destroyed by the antibodies

Vaccine- a preparation of weakened [microorganisms](#) given to create resistance to a certain disease

Vacuum aspiration- removal of the contents of the [uterus](#) using a suction device

Vacuum extraction- a technique used to facilitate childbirth using a suction device to help move the baby through the birth canal

Vagina- the muscular passage connecting the [uterus](#) with the outside genitals; a component of the female reproductive system

Vaginismus- an involuntary muscle spasm at the opening of the vagina when sexual intercourse is attempted; can be quite painful and may make sexual intercourse nearly impossible

Vaginitis- [inflammation](#) of the [vagina](#), which can be the result of infection, aging, a hormone deficiency, or a foreign object (such as a tampon)

Valve- a structure that allows fluid flow in only one direction

Valvotomy- surgical correction of a narrowed [heart valve](#)

Valvular heart disease- a [heart valve](#) defect

Valvuloplasty- reconstruction or repair of a narrowed [heart valve](#)

Varicella- the medical term for [chickenpox](#)

Varices- enlarged or twisted blood or lymph vessels

Varicocele- the appearance of varicose veins around the [testicles](#); commonly occurs and is harmless, but may cause discomfort

Varicose veins- enlarged, twisted [veins](#) just below the surface of the skin, caused by defective [valves](#) in the veins

Variola- another term for [smallpox](#)

Vascular- pertaining to blood vessels

Vasculitis- inflammation of blood vessels

Vas deferens- a thin tube that stores and transports [sperm](#)

Vasectomy- a usually permanent method of [sterilization](#) in which the tubes carrying sperm from the [testicles](#) (the vas deferens) are cut and tied off; as a result, the [semen](#) will no longer contain sperm

Vasoconstriction- narrowing of blood vessels

Vasodilation- widening of blood vessels

Vasovagal attack- a sudden slowing of the heart, causing fainting

VD- see [Venereal disease](#)

Vein- a blood vessel that carries blood toward the heart

Venereal disease- any disease that is usually spread through sexual intercourse or genital contact

Venipuncture- piercing of a [vein](#) with a hollow needle to inject fluid or withdraw blood

Venography- an X-ray procedure for viewing [veins](#)

Venom- a poisonous substance produced by certain animals

Ventilation- the process through which [oxygen](#) and [carbon dioxide](#) are exchanged between the lungs and the air; also refers to the use of a machine to carry out this process in someone who cannot breathe on his or her own

Ventilator- a machine used to take over breathing when a person cannot breathe on his or her own

Ventricle- a small cavity or chamber; there are four ventricles in the brain that circulate [cerebrospinal fluid](#) through it, and two in the heart that pump blood throughout the body

Ventricular fibrillation- rapid, irregular contractions of the heart

Ventricular septal defect- a hole in the wall that separates the two lower chambers of the heart (called the ventricles)

Vernix- the thick, greasy substance that covers the skin of a newborn baby

Version- a shift in the position of the [fetus](#) inside of the [uterus](#), either occurring naturally or as performed by a doctor to facilitate delivery

Vertebra- any one of the 33 bones that make up the [spine](#)

Vertebral arteries- a pair of [arteries](#) running up the neck to supply the brain with blood

Vertebrobasilar insufficiency- episodes of dizziness and weakness caused by insufficient blood flow to the brain

Vertex presentation- the usual, head-first presentation of the [fetus](#) during delivery

Vertigo- the feeling that one or one's surroundings are spinning

Very low-density lipoprotein- a class of blood proteins, a high level of which is associated with [coronary heart disease](#)

Vesicle- a small skin blister, or any sac in the body, that contains fluid

Vestibular glands- two small [glands](#) located at the opening of the [vagina](#) that secrete a lubricating fluid during sexual stimulation

Villi- the millions of fingerlike projections on the lining of the [small intestine](#) that aid in the absorption of food

Viral- a term describing something related to or caused by a [virus](#)

Viremia- the presence of [viruses](#) in the blood

Virilization- the process by which a woman develops male characteristics; caused by overproduction of male [sex hormones](#)

Virulence- the relative ability of an organism to cause disease

Virus- the smallest known disease-causing [microorganism](#); viruses are very simple in structure and can only multiply when they are inside the cell of another organism

Visual acuity- a measure of the sharpness of a person's vision

Visual field- the area on both sides that can be seen while looking straight ahead

Vital sign- any sign, such as a [pulse](#), that indicates that a person is alive

Vitamin A- a vitamin essential for normal growth and development of the body (most notably the bones and teeth), protection of [mucous membranes](#) from infection, normal vision, and healthy skin and hair

Vitamin B complex- a group of vitamins including thiamine, niacin, riboflavin, pantothenic acid, pyridoxine, biotin, and folic acid; plays a variety of important roles in the body, including in hormone production, metabolism, and functioning of the nerves, muscle, heart, and digestive system

Vitamin B₆- a vitamin that plays an important role in the breakdown and use of energy sources, production of [red blood cells](#) and [antibodies](#), and normal functioning of the nervous system

Vitamin B₁₂- a vitamin that is essential to the production of [DNA](#) (the genetic material in cells) and [red blood cells](#) and in the functioning of the nervous system

Vitamin C- a vitamin with many essential roles, including in maintaining healthy bones, teeth, gums, ligaments, and blood vessels and in the [immune system's](#) response to infection

Vitamin D- a vitamin that plays a role in the absorption of [calcium](#) by the intestines and is essential for healthy bones and teeth

Vitamin E- a vitamin that protects tissues from damage by [oxygen free radicals](#), helps to form [red blood cells](#), maintains the function of enzymes, and maintains cell structure

Vitamin K- a vitamin that is essential for normal blood clotting and the body's absorption of [calcium](#)

Vitamins- complex substances that are necessary in small amounts to maintain health and ensure proper development and functioning of the body

Vitiligo- a condition in which patches of skin on the body lose their color; thought to be caused by the [immune system](#) attacking the skin tissues, causing the absence of [melanin](#)

Vitreous humor- the clear, watery fluid that fills the cavity of the eye behind the lens

VLDL- see [Very low-density lipoprotein](#)

Vocal cords- two strips of tissue in the voice box that have the ability to produce sound when air passing through them causes the tissues to vibrate

Volvulus- twisting and obstruction of an area of [intestine](#)

Von Willebrand's disease- a [genetic disorder](#) characterized by excessive bleeding

V/Q lung scans- images produced by [radionuclide scanning](#) of the lungs; used to help diagnose a [pulmonary embolism](#)

Vulva- the outer, visible portion of the female genitals

Vulvitis- inflammation of the [vulva](#)

Vulvovaginitis- inflammation of the [vulva](#) and [vagina](#)

W

Walleye- a condition in which one eye turns outward

Wart- a contagious, harmless growth caused by a [virus](#) that occurs on the skin or a [mucous membrane](#)

Weber's test- a test in which a vibrating tuning fork is held against the forehead to help determine the cause of hearing loss

Wegener's granulomatosis- a disorder in which nodules associated with inflammation of blood vessels develop in the lungs, kidneys, and nasal passageways

Weight-bearing exercise- exercise that puts stress on bones, such as walking, which helps build up bone density and prevent the bones from becoming brittle

Wernicke's encephalopathy- a brain disorder characterized by abnormal eye movements, difficulties with muscle coordination, and confusion; usually the result of chronic alcoholism

Wheeze- a high-pitched sound produced during breathing because of narrowing of the [airways](#); common sign of [asthma](#)

Whiplash injury- injury to the [ligaments](#), joints, and soft tissues of the neck region of the spine because of a sudden, violent jerking motion of the head

Whipple's disease- a rare disorder that has widespread effects on the body, including impaired absorption of [nutrients](#), weight loss, joint pain, and [anemia](#)

Whipworm- a small, parasitic worm that can live in the [intestines](#) of a human and may cause diarrhea, abdominal pain, and anemia

White blood cell- a group of colorless blood cells that are part of the [immune system](#), helping prevent and fight [infection](#)

White blood cell count- the number of white blood cells present in a blood sample; useful in diagnosing and evaluating various diseases and infections

Whitehead- a painless, small, white bump; usually occurs in groups on the nose, cheeks, or around the eyes

Whitlow- an [abscess](#) on the end of a finger or a toe that is caused by the [herpes simplex virus](#) or a bacterial infection

Whooping cough- see [Pertussis](#)

Wilms tumor- a type of kidney [cancer](#) that usually affects children under the age of 5

Wilson's disease- a rare [genetic disorder](#) in which copper builds up in the liver and is released into other parts of the body, eventually causing damage to the [liver](#) and brain

Withdrawal bleeding- bleeding from the [vagina](#) that occurs when [hormone](#) levels drop, such as [menstruation](#) or the bleeding that occurs at the end of each cycle of the combined [oral contraceptive pill](#)

X

Xanthelasma- fatty deposits around the eyes that are common in elderly people and are associated with high levels of [cholesterol](#) in the blood

Xanthine- a [bronchodilator](#) drug that is used to treat [asthma](#)

Xanthomatosis- a condition in which fatty deposits occur in various parts of the body, possibly leading to [atherosclerosis](#)

X chromosome- one of the two sex chromosomes; determines female sex characteristics

Xeroderma pigmentosum- a [genetic disorder](#) in which the skin is extremely sensitive to sunlight, causing it to age prematurely and leaving the individual particularly susceptible to skin [cancer](#)

Xerophthalmia- excessive dryness of the [cornea](#) and [conjunctiva](#) due to a lack of vitamin A

X-linked disorder- a [genetic disorder](#) in which the abnormal gene is located on the X chromosome; those affected are almost always men

X-ray- see [Radiography](#)

XYY syndrome- a disorder in which a man has an extra [Y chromosome](#), causing him to be unusually tall and to have behavioral disorders

Y

Y chromosome- one of the two sex chromosomes; determines male sex characteristics

Yeast infection- a term usually referring to a [candidiasis](#) infection

Yellow fever- a life-threatening viral infection transmitted by mosquitoes that causes [jaundice](#), fever, headache, and vomiting

Z

ZIFT- see [Zygote intrafallopian transfer](#)

Zinc chloride- a white powder used as an [antiseptic](#) and antiperspirant

Zollinger-Ellison syndrome- a rare disorder in which tumors form in the pancreas and secrete the hormone gastrin, which causes increased production of [gastric acid](#) and recurrent [peptic ulcers](#)

Zoonosis- a parasite-caused or infectious disease in animals that can be transferred to humans

Zygote- the cell that results when an egg is fertilized by a [sperm](#)

Zygote intrafallopian transfer- a method used to treat [infertility](#) in which an egg fertilized outside the body is placed into a woman's [fallopian tube](#)

fourth edition

Dictionary of Medical Terms

OVER 16,000 TERMS CLEARLY DEFINED

Dictionary of Medical Terms

Specialist dictionaries

Dictionary of Accounting	978 0 7136 8286 1
Dictionary of Agriculture	978 0 7136 7778 2
Dictionary of Aviation	978 0 7136 8734 7
Dictionary of Banking and Finance	978 0 7136 7739 3
Dictionary of Business	978 0 7136 7918 2
Dictionary of Computing	978 0 7475 6622 9
Dictionary of Economics	978 0 7136 8203 8
Dictionary of Environment and Ecology	978 0 7475 7201 5
Dictionary of Food Science and Nutrition	978 0 7136 7784 3
Dictionary of Human Resources and Personnel Management	978 0 7136 8142 0
Dictionary of ICT	978 0 7475 6990 9
Dictionary of Information and Library Management	978 0 7136 7591 7
Dictionary of Law	978 0 7136 8318 9
Dictionary of Leisure, Travel and Tourism	978 0 7136 8545 9
Dictionary of Marketing	978 0 7475 6621 2
Dictionary of Media Studies	978 0 7136 7593 1
Dictionary of Nursing	978 0 7136 8286 8
Dictionary of Politics and Government	978 0 7475 7220 6
Dictionary of Publishing and Printing	978 0 7136 7589 4
Dictionary of Science and Technology	978 0 7475 6620 5
Dictionary of Sport and Exercise Science	978 0 7136 7785 0

Easier English™ titles

Easier English Basic Dictionary	978 0 7475 6644 1
Easier English Basic Synonyms	978 0 7475 6979 4
Easier English Intermediate Dictionary	978 0 7475 6989 3
Easier English Student Dictionary	978 0 7475 6624 3

Check Your English Vocabulary workbooks

Academic English	978 0 7136 8285 4
Banking and Finance	978 0 7136 8250 2
Business and Administration	978 0 7136 7916 8
Computers and Information Technology	978 0 7136 7917 5
Human Resources	978 0 7475 6997 8
IELTS	978 0 7136 7604 4
Law	978 0 7136 7592 4
Living in the UK	978 0 7136 7914 4
Medicine	978 0 7136 7590 0
PET	978 0 7475 6627 4
Phrasal Verbs and Idioms	978 0 7136 7805 5
TOEFL®	978 0 7136 8414 8
TOEIC®	978 0 7136 7508 5

Visit our website for full details of all our books: www.acblack.com

Dictionary of
Medical Terms

fourth edition

A & C Black • London

While every effort has been made to be as accurate as possible, the author, advisers, editors and publishers of this book cannot be held liable for any errors and omissions, or actions that may be taken as a consequence of using it.

First published in Great Britain in 1987
as *English Medical Dictionary*

Second edition published 1993
Third edition published 2000
Fourth edition published 2004
Reprinted 2005, 2007

A & C Black Publishers Ltd
37 Soho Square, London W1D 3QZ

© P. H. Collin 1987, 1993, 2000
© Bloomsbury Publishing Plc 2004
© A & C Black Publishers Ltd 2005

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form or by any means without the permission of the publishers

A CIP record for this book is available from the British Library

eISBN-13: 978-1-4081-0209-1

Text Production and Proofreading
Heather Bateman, Ruth Hillmore, Daisy Jackson, Sarah Lusznat,
Katy McAdam, Charlotte Regan

This book is produced using paper that is made from wood grown in managed, sustainable forests. It is natural, renewable and recyclable. The logging and manufacturing processes conform to the environmental regulations of the country of origin.

Text computer typeset by A & C Black
Printed in Spain by Graphycems

Preface

This dictionary provides the user with the basic vocabulary currently being used in a wide range of healthcare situations. The areas covered include the technical language used in diagnosis, patient care, surgery, pathology, general practice, pharmacy, dentistry and other specialisations, as well as anatomical and physiological terms. Informal, everyday and sometimes euphemistic terms commonly used by people in discussing their condition with healthcare professionals are also included, as are common words used in reading or writing reports, articles or guidelines.

The dictionary is designed for anyone who needs to check the meaning or pronunciation of medical terms, but especially for those working in health-related areas who may not be healthcare professionals or for whom English is an additional language. Each headword is explained in clear, straightforward English. Pronunciations, uncommon plurals and uncommon verb forms are provided. Illustrations of some basic anatomical terms are also included.

Very many people have helped or advised on the compilation and checking of the dictionary in its various editions. In particular, thanks are due to Dr Judith Harvey for her helpful comments and advice on this fourth edition and to Dr Marie Condon for some revisions and clarification. Also to Lesley Bennun, Lesley Brown and Margaret Baker who copy-edited the text and Dinah Jackson who revised the pronunciations.

Pronunciation Guide

The following symbols have been used to show the pronunciation of the main words in the dictionary.

Stress is indicated by a main stress mark (') and a secondary stress mark (,). Note that these are only guides, as the stress of the word changes according to its position in the sentence.

<i>Vowels</i>		<i>Consonants</i>	
æ	back	b	buck
ɑ:	harm	d	dead
ɒ	stop	ð	other
ai	type	dʒ	jump
au	how	f	fare
aɪə	hire	g	gold
aʊə	hour	h	head
ɔɪ	course	j	yellow
ɔɪ	annoy	k	cab
e	head	l	leave
eə	fair	m	mix
eɪ	make	n	nil
eo	go	ŋ	sing
ɜ:	word	p	print
i:	keep	r	rest
i	happy	s	save
ə	about	ʃ	shop
ɪ	fit	t	take
ɪə	near	tʃ	change
u	annual	θ	theft
u:	pool	v	value
ʊ	book	w	work
ʊə	tour	x	loch
ʌ	shut	ʒ	measure
		z	zone

A

A /eɪ/ *noun* a human blood type of the ABO system, containing the A antigen (NOTE: Someone with type A can donate to people of the same group or of the AB group, and can receive blood from people with type A or type O.)

AA *abbr* Alcoholics Anonymous

A & E /eɪ ənd 'i:/, **A & E department** /eɪ ənd 'i: dɪ,pa:tment/ *noun* same as **accident and emergency department**

A & E medicine /eɪ ənd 'i: ,med(ə)sɪn/ *noun* the medical procedures used in A & E departments

AB /eɪ 'bi:/ *noun* a human blood type of the ABO system, containing the A and B antigens (NOTE: Someone with type AB can donate to people of the same group and receive blood from people with type O, A, AB or B.)

ab- /æb/ *prefix* away from

ABC /eɪ bi: 'sɪz/ *noun* the basic initial checks of a casualty's condition. Full form **airway, breathing and circulation**

abdomen /'æbdəmən/ *noun* a space inside the body below the diaphragm, above the pelvis and in front of the spine, containing the stomach, intestines, liver and other vital organs ○ **pain in the abdomen** (NOTE: For other terms referring to the abdomen, see words beginning with **coeli-, coelio-.**)

COMMENT: The abdomen is divided for medical purposes into nine regions: at the top, the right and left hypochondriac regions with the epigastrum between them; in the centre, the right and left lumbar regions with the umbilical between them; and at the bottom, the right and left iliac regions with the hypogastrium between them.

abdomin- /æbdəmɪn/ *prefix* same as **abdomino-** (*used before vowels*)

abdominal /æb'dɒmɪn(ə)l/ *adjective* located in the abdomen, or relating to the abdomen

abdominal aorta /æb,dɒmɪn(ə)l e'rtə:tə/ *noun* the part of the aorta which lies between the diaphragm and the point where the aorta divides into the iliac arteries. See illustration at **KIDNEY** in Supplement

abdominal cavity /æb,dɒmɪn(ə)l 'kævɪtɪ/ *noun* the space in the body below the chest

abdominal distension /æb'dɒmɪn(ə)l dɪs 'tenʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a condition in which the abdomen is stretched because of gas or fluid

abdominal pain /æb'dɒmɪn(ə)l peɪn/ *noun* pain in the abdomen caused by indigestion or more serious disorders

abdominal viscera /æb,dɒmɪn(ə)l 'vɪsərə/ *plural noun* the organs which are contained in the abdomen, e.g. the stomach, liver and intestines

abdominal wall /æb'dɒmɪn(ə)l wɔ:l/ *noun* muscular tissue which surrounds the abdomen

abdomino- /æbdəmɪnəʊ/ *prefix* referring to the abdomen

abdominopelvic /æb,dɒmɪnəʊ'pelvɪk/ *adjective* referring to the abdomen and pelvis

abdominoperineal /æb,dɒmɪnəʊ'perɪ 'ni:əl/ *adjective* referring to the abdomen and perineum

abdominoperineal excision /æb,dɒmɪnəʊ'perɪ 'ni:əl ek'sɪz(ə)n/ *noun* a surgical operation that involves cutting out tissue in both the abdomen and the perineum

abdominoposterior /æb,dɒmɪnəʊ'pə:stɪ'reɪə/ *adjective* referring to a position of a fetus in the uterus, where the fetus's abdomen is facing the mother's back

abdominoscopy /æb,dɒmɪn'ɒnskəpi/ *noun* an internal examination of the abdomen, usually with an endoscope

abdominothoracic /æb,dɒmɪnəʊθɔ:rə'sɪk/ *adjective* referring to the abdomen and thorax

abduce /æb'dju:s/ *verb* same as **abduct**

abducens nerve /æb'dju:s(ə)nz ,nɜ:v/ *noun* the sixth cranial nerve, which controls the muscle which makes the eyeball turn outwards

abducent /æb'dju:s(ə)nt/ *adjective* referring to a muscle which brings parts of the body away from each other or moves them away from the central line of the body or a limb. Compare **adductor**

abducent nerve /æb'dju:sənt ,nɜ:v/ *noun* same as **abducens nerve**

abduct /æb'dukt/ *verb* (*of a muscle*) to pull a leg or arm in a direction which is away from

the centre line of the body, or to pull a toe or finger away from the central line of a leg or arm. Compare **adduct**

abduction /æb'dʌkʃən/ *noun* the movement of a part of the body away from the centre line of the body or away from a neighbouring part. Opposite **adduction**. See illustration at **ANATOMICAL TERMS** in Supplement

'Mary was nursed in a position of not more than 90° upright with her legs in *abduction*.' [British Journal of Nursing]

abductor /æb'dʌktə/, **abductor muscle** /æb'dʌktə ,mʌs(ə)l/ *noun* a muscle which pulls a part of the body away from the centre line of the body or away from a neighbouring part. Opposite **adductor**

aberrant /æ'berənt/ *adjective* not usual or expected

aberration /,æbə'reɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* an action or growth which is not usual or expected

ablation /æ'bleɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the removal of an organ or of a part of the body by surgery

abnormal /æb'nɔ:m(ə)l/ *adjective* not usual ○ *abnormal behaviour* ○ *an abnormal movement*

'...the synovium produces an excess of synovial fluid, which is abnormal and becomes thickened. This causes pain, swelling and immobility of the affected joint.' [Nursing Times]

abnormality /,æbno:tɪ'ærəlti/ *noun* a form or condition which is not usual (NOTE: For other terms referring to abnormality, see words beginning with **terat-**, **terato-**.)

'Even children with the milder forms of sickle-cell disease have an increased frequency of pneumococcal infection. The reason for this susceptibility is a profound abnormality of the immune system in children with SCD.' [Lancet]

abocclusion /,æbə'klju:ʒ(ə)n/ *noun* a condition in which the teeth in the top and bottom jaws do not touch

aboral /æ'bɔ:rəl/ *adjective* situated away from or opposite the mouth

abort /ə'bɔ:t/ *verb* to eject an embryo or fetus, or to cause an embryo or fetus to be ejected, and so end a pregnancy before the fetus is fully developed

abortifacient /ə,bɔ:tɪ'feɪʃ(ə)nt/ *noun* a drug or instrument which provokes an abortion

abortion /ə'bɔ:ʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a situation where a fetus leaves the uterus before it is fully developed, especially during the first 28 weeks of pregnancy, or a procedure which causes this to happen □ **to have an abortion** to have an operation to make a fetus leave the uterus during the first period of pregnancy

COMMENT: In the UK, an abortion can be carried out legally if two doctors agree that the mother's life is in danger, that she risks grave permanent injury to the physical or mental health of herself or her children, or that the fetus is likely to be born with severe disabilities.

abortionist /ə'bɔ:ʃ(ə)nɪst/ *noun* a person who helps a woman abort, usually a person who performs an illegal abortion

abortion pill /ə'bɔ:ʃ(ə)n pɪl/ *noun* a drug that causes an abortion to occur very early in pregnancy

abortion trauma syndrome /ə,bɔ:ʃ(ə)n 'trɔ:mə ,sɪndrəʊm/ *noun* a set of symptoms sometimes experienced in the period after an abortion including guilt, anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, eating and sleeping disorders and suicidal thoughts

abortive /ə'bɔ:tɪv/ *adjective* not successful ○ *an abortive attempt*

abortive poliomyelitis /ə,bɔ:tɪv ,pəliə'meɪtɪs/ *noun* a mild form of polio which only affects the throat and intestines

abortus /ə'bɔ:təs/ *noun* a fetus which is expelled during an abortion or miscarriage

abortus fever /ə'bɔ:təs ,fɪ:və/ *noun* same as **brucellosis**

ABO system /,eɪ bi: 'eʊ ,sɪstəm/ *noun* a system of classifying blood groups. ♦ **blood group**

abrasion /ə'breɪʒ(ə)n/ *noun* a condition in which the surface of the skin has been rubbed off by a rough surface and bleeds

COMMENT: As the intact skin is an efficient barrier to bacteria, even minor abrasions can allow infection to enter the body and thus should be cleaned and treated with an antiseptic.

abreact /,æbri'æk't/ *verb* to release unconscious psychological tension by talking about or regularly remembering the events that caused it

abreaction /,æbri'ækʃən/ *noun* the treatment of a person with a neurosis by making him or her think again about past bad experiences

abruptio placentae /ə,bræptɪə plə'sentɪ:/ *noun* an occasion when the placenta suddenly comes away from the uterus earlier than it should, often causing shock and bleeding

abscess /'æbses/ *noun* a painful swollen area where pus forms ○ *She had an abscess under a tooth.* ○ *The doctor decided to lance the abscess.* (NOTE: The formation of an abscess is often accompanied by a high temperature. The plural is **abscesses**.)

COMMENT: An acute abscess can be dealt with by opening and draining when it has reached the stage where sufficient pus has been formed. A chronic abscess is usually treated with drugs.

absolute alcohol /,æbsəlu:t 'ælkəhɒl/ *noun* alcohol which contains no water

absorb /ə'bɔ:b/ *verb* to take up or soak up something, especially a liquid, into a solid ○ *Cotton wads are used to absorb the discharge from the wound.*

absorbable suture /əb,zɔ:bəb(ə)l 'su:tʃə/ *noun* a suture which will eventually be ab-

sorbed into the body, and does not need to be removed

absorbent cotton /əb'zɔ:bənt 'kɒt(ə)n/ *noun* a soft white material used as a dressing to put on wounds

absorption /əb'zɔ:pʃən/ *noun* 1. the process by which a liquid is taken into a solid 2. the process of taking into the body substances such as proteins or fats which have been digested from food and enter the bloodstream from the stomach and intestines □ **absorption rate** the rate at which a liquid is absorbed by a solid

abstainer /əb'steɪnə/ *noun* a person who does not drink alcohol

abstinence /'æbstɪnəns/ *noun* a deliberate act of not doing something over a period of time, especially not eating or drinking ○ *abstinence from alcohol*

abulia /ə'bʊliə/ *noun* a lack of willpower

abuse *noun* 1. the act of using something wrongly ○ *the abuse of a privilege* 2. the illegal use of a drug or overuse of alcohol ○ *substance abuse* 3. same as **child abuse** 4. bad treatment of a person ○ *physical abuse* ○ *sexual abuse* ■ *verb* /ə'bju:z/ 1. to use something wrongly ○ *Heroin and cocaine are drugs which are commonly abused.* □ **to abuse one's authority** to use one's powers in an illegal or harmful way 2. to treat someone badly ○ *sexually abused children* ○ *He had physically abused his wife and child.*

a.c. *adverb (used on prescriptions)* before food. Full form **ante cibum**

acanthosis /ə,kænθ'θəʊsɪs/ *noun* a disease of the prickle cell layer of the skin, where warts appear on the skin or inside the mouth

acapnia /eɪ'kæpnɪə/ *noun* the condition of not having enough carbon dioxide in the blood and tissues

acariasis /,ækə'ræɪəsɪs/ *noun* the presence of mites or ticks on the skin

acaricide /ə'kærɪsaɪd/ *noun* a substance which kills mites or ticks

acarophobia /,ækərə'fəʊbiə/ *noun* an unusual fear of mites or ticks

acatalasia /eɪ,kætə'lɛɪzɪə/ *noun* an inherited condition which results in a lack of catalase in all tissue

accessory /ək'sesəri/ *noun* something which helps something else to happen or operate, but may not be very important in itself ■ *adjective* helping something else to happen or operate

accessory nerve /ək'sesəri ,nɜ:v/ *noun* the eleventh cranial nerve which supplies the muscles in the neck and shoulders

accessory organ /ək'sesəri 'ɔ:gən/ *noun* an organ which has a function which is controlled by another organ

accident /'æksɪd(ə)nt/ *noun* 1. an unpleasant event which happens suddenly and harms someone's health ○ *She had an accident in the kitchen and had to go to hospital.* ○ *Three people were killed in the accident on the motorway.* 2. chance, or something which happens by chance ○ *I met her by accident at the bus stop.*

accidental injury /,æksɪdənt(ə)l 'ɪndʒəri/ *noun* an injury that happens to someone in an accident

accident and emergency department /,æksɪd(ə)nt ənd ɪ'mɜ:dʒənsɪ dɪ,pɑ:tment/ *noun* the part of a hospital which deals with people who need urgent treatment because they have had accidents or are in sudden serious pain. Abbr **A & E**

accident form /'æksɪd(ə)nt fɔ:m/, **accident report form** /,æksɪd(ə)nt rɪ'pɔ:t fɔ:m/ *noun* a form to be filled in with details of an accident

accident prevention /,æksɪd(ə)nt p्रɪ'venʃən/ *noun* the work of taking action or changing procedures to prevent accidents from happening

accident ward /'æksɪd(ə)nt wɔ:d/ *noun* a ward for urgent accident victims. Also called **casualty ward**

accommodation /ə,kɒmə'deɪʃ(ə)n/, **accommodation reflex** /ə,kɒmə'deɪʃ(ə)n ri:fleks/ *noun (of the lens of the eye)* the ability to focus on objects at different distances, using the ciliary muscle

accommodative squint /ə,kɒmədeɪtɪv 'skwɪnt/ *noun* a squint when the eye is trying to focus on an object which is very close

accouchement /ə'ku:ʃmən/ *noun* the time when a woman is being looked after because her baby is being born, or has just been born

accretion /ə'kri:ʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a gradual increase in size, as through growth or external addition ○ *an accretion of calcium around the joint*

ACE /eɪs/ *noun* an enzyme that increases blood pressure

acebutolol /,æsɪ'bju:təlɒl/ *noun* a drug which reduces both the heart rate and how strongly the heart muscles contract, used in the treatment of high blood pressure and irregular heart rhythms

ACE inhibitor /'eɪs ɪn,hɪbɪtə/ *noun* same as **angiotensin-converting enzyme inhibitor**

acephalus /eɪ'sefələs/ *noun* a fetus born without a head

acetabuloplasty /,æsɪ'tæbjʊləplæsti/ *noun* a surgical operation to repair or rebuild the acetabulum

acetabulum /,æsɪ'tæbjʊləm/ *noun* the part of the pelvic bone, shaped like a cup, into which the head of the femur fits to form the hip joint. Also called **cotyloid cavity** (NOTE: The plural is **acetabula**.)

acetaminophen /ə,sɪ:tə'mɪnəfən/ *noun US*
same as **paracetamol**

acetazolamide /ə,sɪ:tə'zɒləməɪd/ *noun* a drug which helps a person to produce more urine, used in the treatment of oedema, glaucoma and epilepsy

acetonaemia /ə,sɪ:təʊ'nɪ:miə/ same as **ketonaemia**

acetone /'æsɪt əʊn/ *noun* a colourless volatile substance formed in the body after vomiting or during diabetes. ☞ **ketone**

acetonuria /ə,sɪ:təʊ'nju:riə/ *noun* the presence of acetone in the urine, shown by the fact that the urine gives off a sweet smell

acetylcholine /,æsɪtaɪl'kɔ:lɪ:n/ *noun* a substance released from nerve endings, which allows nerve impulses to move from one nerve to another or from a nerve to the organ it controls

COMMENT: Acetylcholine receptors are of two types, muscarinic, found in parasympathetic post-ganglionic nerve junctions, and nicotinic, found at neuromuscular junctions and in autonomic ganglia. Acetylcholine acts on both types of receptors, but other drugs act on one or the other.

acetylcoenzyme A /,æsɪtaɪlkɔ:enzaɪm 'eɪ/ *noun* a compound produced in the metabolism of carbohydrates, fatty acids and amino acids

acetylsalicylic acid /,æsɪtaɪl'sæləsɪlik 'æsɪd/ *noun* ♦ **aspirin**

achalasia /,ækə'lɛzɪə/ *noun* the condition of being unable to relax the muscles

ache /eɪk/ *noun* a pain which goes on for a time, but is not very severe ○ *He complained of various aches and pains.* ■ *verb* to have a pain in part of the body ○ *His tooth ached so much he went to the dentist.*

Achilles tendon /ə,kili:z 'tendən/ *noun* a tendon at the back of the ankle which connects the calf muscles to the heel and which acts to pull up the heel when the calf muscle is contracted

achillorrhaphy /,ækɪ'lɔ:rəfi/ *noun* a surgical operation to stitch a torn Achilles tendon

achillotomy /,ækɪ'lɒtəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to divide the Achilles tendon

aching /'eɪkɪŋ/ *adjective* causing someone a continuous mild pain ○ *aching legs*

achlorhydria /,ækɪlɔ:'haɪdrɪə/ *noun* a condition in which the gastric juices do not contain hydrochloric acid, a symptom of stomach cancer or pernicious anaemia

acholia /eɪ'kaʊliə/ *noun* the absence or failure of the secretion of bile

acholuria /,eɪkə'lʊ:ri:riə/ *noun* the absence of bile colouring in the urine

acholuric jaundice /,eɪkəlu:ri:k 'dʒɔ:ndɪs/ *noun* a disease where unusually round red blood cells form, leading to anaemia, an en-

larged spleen and the formation of gallstones.
Also called **hereditary spherocytosis**

achondroplasia /,eɪkɒndrə'pleɪzɪə/ *noun* an inherited condition in which the long bones in the arms and legs do not grow fully while the rest of the bones in the body grow as usual, resulting in dwarfism

achromatopsia /,eɪkrəʊmə'tɒpsiə/ *noun* a rare condition in which a person cannot see any colours, but only black, white and shades of grey

achy /'eɪki/ *adjective* feeling aches all over the body (*informal*)

aciclovir /eɪ'saɪkləʊvɪr/ *noun* a drug that is effective against herpesviruses. Also called **acyclovir**

acid /'æsɪd/ *noun* a chemical compound containing hydrogen, which reacts with an alkali to form a salt and water

acidæmia /,æsɪ'di:miə/ *noun* a state in which the blood has too much acid in it. It is a feature of untreated severe diabetes.

acid-base balance /,æsɪd 'beɪs ,bæləns/ *noun* the balance between acid and base, i.e. the pH level, in plasma

acidity /'o:sɪdɪti/ *noun* 1. the level of acid in a liquid ○ *The alkaline solution may help to reduce acidity.* 2. same as **hyperacidity**

acidosis /,æsɪ'doʊsɪs/ *noun* 1. a condition when there are more acid waste products such as urea than usual in the blood because of a lack of alkali 2. same as **acidity**

acidotic /,æsɪ'dɒtɪk/ *adjective* relating to acidosis

acid reflux /,æsɪd 'ri:fλəks/ *noun* a condition caused by a faulty muscle in the oesophagus allowing the acid in the stomach to pass into the oesophagus

acid stomach /,æsɪd 'stʌmæk/ *noun* same as **hyperacidity**

aciduria /,æsɪ'djuəriə/ *noun* a condition in which there is a higher level of acidity of the urine than is desirable

acinus /'æsɪnəs/ *noun* 1. a tiny sac which forms part of a gland 2. part of a lobule in the lung (NOTE: The plural is **acini**.)

acne /'ækni/ *noun* an inflammation of the sebaceous glands during puberty which makes blackheads appear on the skin, usually on the face, neck and shoulders. These blackheads often then become infected. ○ *She is using a cream to clear up her acne.*

acne rosacea /,ækni rəʊ'zeɪʃə/ *noun* same as **rosacea**

acne vulgaris /,ækni vʊl'gə:ris/ *noun* same as **acne**

acoustic /ə'ku:stɪk/ *adjective* relating to sound or hearing

acoustic nerve /ə'ku:stɪk nɜ:v/ *noun* the eighth cranial nerve which governs hearing and balance

acoustic neurofibroma /ə'ku:stɪk 'njuərəʊfərə'brœmə/, **acoustic neuroma** /ə'ku:stɪk njuə'rəʊmə/ *noun* a tumour in the sheath of the auditory nerve, causing deafness

acoustic trauma /ə'ku:stɪk 'trɔ:mə/ *noun* physical damage caused by sound waves, e.g. hearing loss, disorientation, motion sickness or dizziness

acquired /ə'kwaɪəd/ *adjective* referring to a condition which is neither congenital nor hereditary and which a person develops after birth in reaction to his or her environment

acquired immunity /ə'kwaɪəd ɪ'mju:nɪti/ *noun* an immunity which a body acquires from having caught a disease or from immunisation, not one which is congenital

acquired immunodeficiency syndrome /ə'kwaɪəd, ɪm'ju:nəʊdɪ'fɪʃ(ə)nɪ, 'sɪndrəʊm/, **acquired immune deficiency syndrome** /ə'kwaɪəd ɪm'ju:n ɪ'dɪ'fɪʃ(ə)nɪ, 'sɪndrəʊm/ *noun* a viral infection which breaks down the body's immune system. Abbr **AIDS**

acrivastine /ə'krɪvə sti:n/ *noun* a drug which reduces the amount of histamine produced by the body. It is used in the treatment of rhinitis, urticaria and eczema.

acro- /ækruə/ *prefix* referring to a point or tip

acrocephalia /ækruəsə'feilɪə/ *noun* same as **oxycephaly**

acrocephaly /ækruə'sefəlɪ/ *noun* same as **oxycephaly**

acrocyanosis /ækruəsaɪə'nəʊsɪs/ *noun* a blue coloration of the extremities, i.e. the fingers, toes, ears and nose, which is due to poor circulation

acrodynia /ækruə'dɪniə/ *noun* a children's disease, caused by an allergy to mercury, where the child's hands, feet and face swell and become pink, and the child is also affected with fever and loss of appetite. Also called **erythroedema, pink disease**

acromegaly /ækruə'megəli/ *noun* a disease caused by excessive quantities of growth hormone produced by the pituitary gland, causing a slow enlargement of the hands, feet and jaws in adults

acromial /ə'krəʊmiəl/ *adjective* referring to the acromion

acromioclavicular /ækruəməiəuklu'veɪklə/ *adjective* relating to the acromion and the clavicle

acromion /ə'krəʊmiən/ *noun* the pointed top of the scapula, which forms the tip of the shoulder

acronyx /'ækruːnɪks, 'eɪkruːnɪks/ *noun* a condition in which a nail grows into the flesh

acroparaesthesia /ækruəpærɪəs'θi:ziə/ *noun* a condition in which the patient experiences sharp pains in the arms and numbness in the fingers after sleep

acrophobia /ækro'fəʊbiə/ *noun* a fear of heights

acrosclerosis /ækruəsklə'rəʊsɪs/ *noun* sclerosis which affects the extremities

ACTH *abbr* adrenocorticotrophic hormone

actinomycin /æktɪnə'mai:sɪn/ *noun* an antibiotic used in the treatment of children with cancer

actinomycosis /æktɪnəʊmətɪ'kəʊsɪs/ *noun* a fungal disease transmitted to humans from cattle, causing abscesses in the mouth and lungs (pulmonary actinomycosis) or in the ileum (intestinal actinomycosis)

action potential /'ækʃən pə'tenʃəl/ *noun* a temporary change in electrical potential which occurs between the inside and the outside of a nerve or muscle fibre when a nerve impulse is sent

active /'æktyv/ *adjective* 1. *(of a person)* lively and energetic ○ *Although she is over eighty she is still very active.* Opposite **passive** 2. *(of a disease)* having an effect on a patient ○ *experienced two years of active rheumatoid disease* Compare **dormant** 3. *(of a drug)* having medicinal effect

active immunity /'æktyv ɪ'mju:nɪti/ *noun* immunity which is acquired by catching and surviving an infectious disease or by vaccination with a weakened form of the disease, which makes the body form antibodies

active ingredient /'æktyv ɪn'grɪ:dɪənt/ *noun* the main medicinal ingredient of an ointment or lotion, as opposed to the base

active movement /'æktyv 'mu:vment/ *noun* movement made by a person using his or her own willpower and muscles

active principle /'æktyv 'prɪnsɪp(ə)l/ *noun* the main medicinal ingredient of a drug which makes it have the required effect on a person

activities of daily living /æk'trɪvɪtɪz əv 'deili 'lɪvɪŋ/ *noun* a scale used by geriatricians and occupational therapists to assess the capacity of elderly or disabled people to live independently. Abbr **ADLs**

activity /æk'trɪvɪtɪ/ *noun* 1. what someone does ○ *difficulty with activities such as walking and dressing* 2. the characteristic behaviour of a chemical ○ *The drug's activity only lasts a few hours.* □ **antibacterial activity** effective action against bacteria

act on /'æk tɒn/, **act upon** /'æk tə,pɒn/ *verb*

1. to do something as the result of something which has been said ○ *He acted on his doctor's advice and gave up smoking.* 2. to have an effect on someone or something ○ *The antibiotic acted quickly on the infection.*

act out /'æk t'aut/ *verb* to express negative feelings by behaving in a socially unacceptable way

acuity /ə'kjū:ti/ *noun* keenness of sight, hearing or intellect

acupressure /'ækjʊp'resʃə/ *noun* a treatment which is based on the same principle as acupuncture in which, instead of needles, fingers are used on specific points on the body, called pressure points

acupuncture /'ækjʊpʌŋktʃə/ *noun* a treatment based on needles being inserted through the skin into nerve centres in order to relieve pain or treat a disorder

acupuncturist /'ækju:pʌŋktʃərist/ *noun* a person who practises acupuncture

acute /'ækjūt/ *adjective* 1. referring to a disease or condition which develops rapidly and can be dangerous □ *an acute abscess* Opposite **chronic** 2. referring to pain which is sharp and intense (*informal*) □ *He felt acute chest pains.*

acute abdomen /'ækjūt 'æbdəmən/ *noun* any serious condition of the abdomen which requires surgery

acute bed /'ækjūt bed/ *noun* a hospital bed reserved for people requiring immediate treatment

'...the survey shows a reduction in acute beds in the last six years. The bed losses forced one hospital to send acutely ill patients to hospitals up to sixteen miles away.' [Nursing Times]

acute care /'ækjūt keə/ *noun* medical or surgical treatment in a hospital, usually for a short period, for a patient with a sudden severe illness or injury

acute disseminated encephalomyelitis /'ækjūt di'seimeneɪtɪd en,kefələ'maɪətɪs/ *noun* an encephalomyelitis or myelitis believed to result from an autoimmune attack on the myelin of the central nervous system

acute glaucoma /'ækjūt glɔ:/ 'kəumə/ *noun* same as **angle-closure glaucoma**

acute hospital /'ækjūt 'hɒspɪt(ə)l/ *noun* a hospital where people go for major surgery or intensive care of medical or surgical conditions

acutely /'ækjūtli/ *adverb* 1. having or causing a suddenly developing medical condition □ *acutely ill patients* □ *acutely toxic chemicals* 2. extremely (*informal*)

acute lymphocytic leukaemia /'ækjūt ,limfəsɪtɪk lu:'kɪmɪə/ *noun* a form of leukaemia that is the commonest cancer affecting children

acute nonlymphocytic leukaemia /'ækjūt ,nɒnlɪmfəsɪtɪk lu:'kɪmɪə/ *noun* a form of leukaemia that affects adults and children and is usually treated with chemotherapy

acute pancreatitis /'ækjūt ,pænkrɪə'taɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation after pancreatic enzymes have escaped into the pancreas, causing symptoms of acute abdominal pain

acute respiratory distress syndrome /'ækjūt rɪ'spirət(ə)rɪ dɪ'stres ,sɪndrəʊm/ *noun* an infection of the lungs, often following injury, which prevents them functioning properly. Abbr **ARDS**

acute rheumatism *noun* same as **rheumatic fever**

acute rhinitis /'ækjūt rai'naitɪs/ *noun* a virus infection which causes inflammation of the mucous membrane in the nose and throat

acute suppurative arthritis /'ækjūt ,səpjurətɪv arθ'rartɪs/ *noun* same as **pyarthrosis**

acute toxicity /'ækjūt tɒk'sisɪti/ *noun* a level of concentration of a toxic substance which makes people seriously ill or can cause death

acute yellow atrophy /'ækjūt ,jeləʊ 'ætrəfi/ □ **yellow atrophy**

acyclovir /eɪ'saɪkləʊvɪə/ *noun* same as **aciclovir**

acystia /eɪ'sistɪə/ *noun* a condition in which a baby is born without a bladder

AD abbr Alzheimer's disease

Adam's apple /,ædəmz 'æpəl/ *noun* a part of the thyroid cartilage which projects from the neck below the chin in a man. Also called **laryngeal prominence**

adapt /'ædæpt/ *verb* 1. to change one's ideas or behaviour to fit into a new situation □ *She has adapted very well to her new job in the children's hospital.* 2. to change something to make it more useful □ *The brace has to be adapted to fit the patient.*

adaptation /'ædæp'teɪʃən/ *noun* 1. a change which has been or can be made to something 2. the act of changing something so that it fits a new situation 3. the process by which sensory receptors become accustomed to a sensation which is repeated

ADD abbr attention deficit disorder

addicted /'ædɪktɪd/ *adjective* physically or mentally dependent on a harmful substance □ **addicted to alcohol or drugs** needing to take alcohol or a harmful drug regularly

addictive /'ædɪktɪv/ *adjective* referring to a drug which is habit-forming and which people can become addicted to

Addison's anaemia /,ædɪs(ə)nz ə'nɪ:miə/ same as **pernicious anaemia** [Described 1849. After Thomas Addison (1793–1860), from Northumberland, founder of the science of endocrinology.]

Addison's disease /'ædɪs(ə)nz dɪ,zɪ:z/ *noun* a disease of the adrenal glands, causing a change in skin colour to yellow and then to dark brown and resulting in general weakness, anaemia, low blood pressure and wasting away. Treatment is with corticosteroid injections. [Described 1849. After Thomas Addison (1793–1860), from Northumberland, founder of the science of endocrinology.]

adducent /'ædjʊ:s(ə)nt/ *adjective* referring to a muscle which brings parts of the body together or moves them towards the central line of the body or a limb. Compare **abducent**

adduct /ə'dʌkt/ *verb (of a muscle)* to pull a leg or arm towards the central line of the body, or to pull a toe or finger towards the central line of a leg or arm. Opposite **abduct**

adducted /ə'dʌktɪd/ *adjective* referring to a body part brought towards the middle of the body

adduction /ə'dʌkʃən/ *noun* the movement of a part of the body towards the midline or towards a neighbouring part. Compare **abduction**. See illustration at **ANATOMICAL TERMS** in Supplement

adductor /ə'dʌktə/, **adductor muscle** /ə'dʌktə ,mʌs(ə)l/ *noun* a muscle which pulls a part of the body towards the central line of the body. Opposite **abductor**

aden- /'ædɪn/ *prefix* same as **adeno-** (*used before vowels*)

adenectomy /'ædɪ'nektəmi/ *noun* the surgical removal of a gland

adenine /'ædənī:n/ *noun* one of the four basic chemicals in DNA

adenitis /'ædɪ'naitɪs/ *noun* inflammation of a gland or lymph node. ♦ **lymphadenitis**

adeno- /'ædɪnəʊ/ *prefix* referring to glands

adenocarcinoma /'ædɪnəʊkɑ:sɪ'nəʊmə/ *noun* a malignant tumour of a gland

adenohypophysis /'ædɪnəʊhaɪ'pɔfɪsɪs/ *noun* the front lobe of the pituitary gland which secretes most of the pituitary hormones

adenoid /'ædɪnɔɪd/ *adjective* like a gland

adenoidal /'ædɪnɔɪd(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to the adenoids

adenoidal expression /'ædɪnɔɪd(ə)l ɪk'spreʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a common symptom of a child suffering from adenoids, where his or her mouth is always open, the nose is narrow and the top teeth appear to project forward

adenoidal tissue /'ædɪnɔɪd(ə)l 'tɪsʃu:/ *noun* same as **adenoids**

adenoidectomy /'ædɪnɔɪd(ə)l'dektəmi/ *noun* the surgical removal of the adenoids

adenoidism /'ædɪnɔɪdɪz(ə)m/ *noun* the condition of a person with adenoids

adenoids /'ædɪnɔɪdz/ *plural noun* a mass of tissue at the back of the nose and throat that can restrict breathing if enlarged. Also called **pharyngeal tonsils**

adenoid vegetation /'ædɪnɔɪd ,vedʒə'teɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a condition in children where the adenoidal tissue is covered with growths and can block the nasal passages or the Eustachian tubes

adenolymphoma /'ædɪnəʊlɪm'fəʊmə/ *noun* a benign tumour of the salivary glands

adenoma /'ædɪ'nəʊmə/ *noun* a benign tumour of a gland

adenoma sebaceum /'ædɪnəʊmə sə'bɛ:səm/ *noun* a skin condition of the face shown by raised red vascular bumps appearing in late childhood or early adolescence

adenomyoma /'ædɪnəʊmətə'əʊmə/ *noun* a benign tumour made up of glands and muscle

adenopathy /'ædɪ'nɒpəθi/ *noun* a disease of a gland

adenosclerosis /'ædɪnəʊsklə'rəʊsɪs/ *noun* the hardening of a gland

adenosine /'ædɪnəʊsɪ:n/ *noun* a drug used to treat an irregular heartbeat

adenosine diphosphate /'ædɪnəʊsɪ:n daɪ'fɒsfɪt/ *noun* a chemical compound which provides energy for processes to take place within living cells, formed when adenosine triphosphate reacts with water. Abbr **ADP**

adenosine triphosphate /'ædɪnəʊsɪ:n tra'fɒsfɪt/ *noun* a chemical which occurs in all cells, but mainly in muscle, where it forms the energy reserve. Abbr **ATP**

adenosis /'ædɪ'nəʊsɪs/ *noun* any disease or disorder of the glands

adenovirus /'ædɪnəʊ,vairəs/ *noun* a virus which produces upper respiratory infections and sore throats and can cause fatal pneumonia in infants

ADH abbr antidiuretic hormone

ADHD noun full form **attention deficit hyperactivity disorder**. ♦ **hyperactivity**

adhesion /'æd̩hi:ʒ(ə)n/ *noun* a stable connection between two parts in the body, either in a healing process or between parts which are not usually connected

adhesive dressing /'æd̩hi:sɪv 'dresɪŋ/ *noun* a dressing with a sticky substance on the back so that it can stick to the skin

adhesive strapping /'æd̩hi:sɪv 'stræpɪŋ/ *noun* overlapping strips of adhesive plaster used to protect a lesion

adipo- /'ædɪpəʊ/ *prefix* referring to fat

adipose /'ædɪpəʊs/ *adjective* containing fat, or made of fat

COMMENT: Fibrous tissue is replaced by adipose tissue when more food is eaten than is necessary.

adipose degeneration /'ædɪpəʊs di'zɛnə'reɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* an accumulation of fat in the cells of an organ such as the heart or liver, which makes the organ less able to perform its proper function. Also called **fatty degeneration**

adipose tissue /'ædɪpəʊs 'tɪsʃu:/ *noun* a tissue where the cells contain fat

adiposis /'ædɪ'pəʊsɪs/ *noun* a state where too much fat is accumulated in the body

adiposis dolorosa /'ædɪ,pəʊsɪs ,dɒlə'rəʊsəl/ *noun* a disease of middle-aged women in which painful lumps of fatty substance form in the body. Also called **Dercum's disease**

adiposogenitalis /'ædɪ,pəʊsəʊ,dʒen'teɪlɪs/ *noun* same as **Fröhlich's syndrome**

adiposuria /'ædɪpsəʊ'jurɪə/ *noun* the presence of fat in the urine

adiposus /ædɪ'pəʊsəs/ ♦ **panniculus adiposus**

aditus /'ædɪtəs/ *noun* an opening or entrance to a passage

adjustment /ə'dʒʌstmənt/ *noun* a specific directional high-speed movement of a joint performed by a chiropractor

adjvant /'ædʒuvənt/ *adjective* referring to treatment by drugs or radiation therapy after surgery for cancer ■ *noun* a substance added to a drug to enhance the effect of the main ingredient

adjvant therapy /'ædʒuvənt θerəpi/ *noun* therapy using drugs or radiation after cancer surgery

ADLs *abbr* activities of daily living

administer /'æd'mіnіstər/ *verb* to give someone medicine or a treatment □ **to administer orally** to give a medicine by mouth

admission /'æd'mіʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the act of being registered as a hospital patient

admit /'æd'mіt/ *verb* to register a patient in a hospital ○ *He was admitted to hospital this morning.*

'80% of elderly patients admitted to geriatric units are on medication' [Nursing Times]

'...ten patients were admitted to the ICU before operation, the main indications being the need for evaluation of patients with a history of severe heart disease' [Southern Medical Journal]

adnexa /æd'neksə/ *plural noun* structures attached to an organ

adolescence /,ædə'les(ə)ns/ *noun* the period of life when a child is developing into an adult

adolescent /,ædə'les(ə)nt/ *noun* a person who is at the stage of life when he or she is developing into an adult ■ *adjective* developing into an adult, or occurring at that stage of life ○ *adolescent boys and girls* ○ *adolescent fantasies*

adopt /ə'dɒpt/ *verb* 1. to decide to use a particular plan or idea or way of doing something ○ *The hospital has adopted a new policy on visiting.* 2. to become the legal parent of a child who was born to other parents

adoptive /ə'dɒptɪv/ *adjective* 1. taking over the role of something else 2. referring to people who have adopted a child or a child that has been adopted ○ *adoptive parents*

adoptive immunotherapy /ə,dɒptɪv ɪm jūnə'θerəpi/ *noun* a treatment for cancer in which the patient's own white blood cells are used to attack cancer cells

COMMENT: This technique can halt the growth of cancer cells in the body but it can have distressing toxic side-effects.

ADP *abbr* adenosine diphosphate

adrenal /ə'dri:n(ə)l/ *adjective* situated near the kidney ■ *noun* same as **adrenal gland**

adrenal body /ə'dri:n(ə)l ,bɒdɪ/ *noun* same as **adrenal gland**

adrenal cortex /ə,dri:n(ə)l 'kɔ:tɛks/ *noun* the firm outside layer of an adrenal gland, which secretes a series of hormones affecting the metabolism of carbohydrates and water

adrenalectomy /ə,dri:nə'lektəmi/ *noun* the surgical removal of one of the adrenal glands

adrenal gland /ə'dri:n(ə)l glænd/ *noun* one of two endocrine glands at the top of the kidneys which secrete cortisone, adrenaline and other hormones. Also called **adrenal body**, **adrenal**. See illustration at **KIDNEY** in Supplement
adrenaline /ə'drenəlin/ *noun* a hormone secreted by the medulla of the adrenal glands which has an effect similar to stimulation of the sympathetic nervous system (NOTE: The US term is **epinephrine**.)

COMMENT: Adrenaline is produced when a person experiences surprise, shock, fear or excitement and it speeds up the heartbeat and raises blood pressure. It is administered as an emergency treatment of acute anaphylaxis and in cardiopulmonary resuscitation.

adrenal medulla /ə,dri:n(ə)l me'dʌlə/ *noun* the inner part of the adrenal gland which secretes adrenaline and noradrenaline. Also called **suprenal medulla**

adrenergic /,ædrə'nɪ:s:dʒɪk/ *adjective* referring to a neurone or receptor which is stimulated by adrenaline. ♦ **beta blocker**

adrenergic receptor /,ædrənɪ:s:dʒɪk rɪ'septə/ *noun* same as **adrenoceptor**

COMMENT: Three types of adrenergic receptor act in different ways when stimulated by adrenaline. Alpha receptors constrict the bronchi, beta 1 receptors speed up the heart-beat and beta 2 receptors dilate the bronchi.

adrenoceptor /ə,drenəʊ'septə/ *noun* a cell or neurone which is stimulated by adrenaline. Also called **adrenoreceptor**, **adrenergic receptor**

adrenocortical /ə,dri:nəʊ'kɔ:tɪk(ə)l/ *adjective* relating to the cortex of the adrenal glands

adrenocorticotrophic hormone /ə,dri:nəʊ,kɔ:təkɔ:ttrɒfɪk 'hɔ:məʊn/ *noun* a hormone secreted by the pituitary gland, which makes the cortex of the adrenal glands produce corticosteroids. Abbr **ACTH**. Also called **corticotrophin**

adrenogenital syndrome /ə,dri:nəʊ'dʒenɪt(ə)l ,sɪndrəm/ *noun* a condition caused by overproduction of male sex hormones, where boys show rapid sexual development and females develop male characteristics

adrenoleukodystrophy /ə,dri:nə'lju:kədɪs'trofi/ *noun* an inherited disorder of the adrenal glands in boys

adrenolytic /ə'dri:nə'lɪtɪk/ *adjective* acting against the secretion of adrenaline

adrenoreceptor /ə,drenəʊrɪ'septə/ *noun* same as **adrenoceptor**

adsorbent /æd'sɔ:bənt/ *adjective* being capable of adsorption

adsorption /æd'sɔ:pʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the attachment of one substance to another, often the bonding of a liquid with a gas or vapour which touches its surface

adult /'ædʌlt, ə'dʌlt/ *adjective* grown-up ○ Adolescents reach the adult stage about the age of eighteen or twenty. ■ *noun* someone who is no longer a child

adult coeliac disease /,ædʌlt 'si:liæk dɪ'zi:z/ *noun* a condition in adults where the villi in the intestine become smaller and so reduce the surface which can absorb nutrients

adult dentition /,ædʌlt den'tɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the 32 teeth which an adult has

adulteration /ə,dʌltə'refɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the act of making something less pure by adding another substance

adult-onset diabetes /,ædʌlt ,ɒnset ,daɪət'bɪ:tɪz/ *noun* a form of diabetes mellitus that develops slowly in older people as the body becomes less able to use insulin effectively

adult respiratory distress syndrome /,ædʌlt rɪ'spirat(ə)ri dr'stres ,sɪndrəʊm/ *noun* a description of various lung infections which reduce the lungs' efficiency. Abbr ARDS

advanced trauma life support /ad've:nst ,trə:ma 'laif sə,pɔ:t/ *noun* the management of a trauma patient during the critical first hour after injury. Abbr ATLS

adventitia /,ædvɛn'tɪʃə/ *noun* same as **tunica adventitia**

adventitious /,ædvən'tɪʃəs/ *adjective* on the outside or in an unusual place

adventitious bursa /,ædvəntɪʃəs 'bɜ:sə/ *noun* a bursa which develops as a result of continued pressure or rubbing

adverse /'ædvɜ:s/ *adjective* harmful or unfavourable □ **the treatment had an adverse effect on his dermatitis** the treatment made the dermatitis worse

adverse occurrence /,ædvɜ:s ə'kʌrəns/ *noun* a harmful event which occurs during treatment

adverse reaction /,ædvɜ:s rɪ'ækʃən/ *noun* a situation where someone experiences harmful effects from the application of a drug

advocacy /'ædvəkəsi/ *noun* active support for something, especially in order to help people who would have difficulty in gaining attention without your help

dynamic ileus /eɪ,dɪna'metɪk 'ɪliəs/ *noun* same as **paralytic ileus**

aegophony /i:'gɒfəni/ *noun* a high sound of the voice heard through a stethoscope, where there is fluid in the pleural cavity

aer- /eə/ *prefix* same as **aero-** (*used before vowels*)

aeration /eə'reɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the adding of air or oxygen to a liquid

aero- /eərəʊ/ *prefix* referring to air

aeroba /eə'rəʊba/, **aerobe** /'eərəʊb/ *noun* a tiny organism which needs oxygen to survive

aerobic /eə'rəʊbɪk/ *adjective* needing oxygen to live, or taking place in the presence of oxygen

aerobic respiration /eə,rəʊbɪk,respə'reɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the process where the oxygen which is breathed in is used to conserve energy as ATP

aeroembolism /,eərəʊ'embəlɪz(ə)m/ *noun* same as **air embolism**

aerogenous /eə'rəʊdʒənəs/ *adjective* referring to a bacterium which produces gas

aerophagia /,eərə'feɪdʒɪə/, **aerophagy** /eə'rə'fədʒɪ/ *noun* the habit of swallowing air when suffering from indigestion, so making the stomach pains worse

aerosol /'eərəsɒl/ *noun* tiny particles of a liquid such as a drug or disinfectant suspended in a gas under pressure in a container and used as a spray

aetiological agent /i:tɪəlodʒɪk(ə)l 'eɪdʒ(ə)nt/ *noun* an agent which causes a disease

aetiology /i:ti'lɒdʒɪ/ *noun* 1. the cause or origin of a disease 2. the study of the causes and origins of diseases (NOTE: [all senses] The US spelling is **etiology**)

'...a wide variety of organs or tissues may be infected by the Salmonella group of organisms, presenting symptoms which are not immediately recognised as being of Salmonella aetiology' [Indian Journal of Medical Sciences]

afebrile /eɪ'fi:b्रɪl/ *adjective* with no fever

affect /'æfekt/ *verb* to make something or someone change, especially to have a bad effect on something or someone ○ Some organs are rapidly affected if the patient lacks oxygen for even a short time. ■ *noun* same as **affection**

affection /'æfekʃən/, **affect** /'æfekt/ *noun* the general state of a person's emotions

'Depression has degrees of severity, ranging from sadness, through flatness of affection or feeling, to suicide and psychosis' [British Journal of Nursing]

affective /'æf'ektɪv/ *adjective* relating to a person's moods or feelings

affective disorder /'æf'ektɪv dɪs,ɔ:də/ *noun* a condition which changes someone's mood, making him or her depressed or excited

afferent /'æf(ə)rənt/ *adjective* conducting liquid or electrical impulses towards the inside. Opposite **efferent**

afferent nerve *noun* same as **sensory nerve**

afferent vessel /'æf(ə)rənt ,ves(ə)l/ *noun* a tube which brings lymph to a gland

affinity /ə'fɪnitɪ/ *noun* an attraction between two substances

aflatoxin /,æflə'tɒksɪn/ *noun* a poison produced by some moulds in some crops such as peanuts

African trypanosomiasis /æfrɪkən trɪpənəʊsəʊ'maɪəsɪs/ noun same as **sleeping sickness**

afterbirth /'ɑːftəbɜːθ/ noun the tissues, including the placenta and umbilical cord, which are present in the uterus during pregnancy and are expelled after the birth of a baby

aftercare /'ɑːftəkeər/ noun 1. the care of a person who has had an operation. Aftercare treatment involves changing dressings and helping people to look after themselves again. 2. the care of a mother who has just given birth

after-effect /'ɑːftər ɪ'fekt/ noun a change which appears only some time after the cause

○ *The operation had some unpleasant after-effects.*

after-image /'ɑːftər ,ɪmɪdʒ/ noun an image of an object which remains in a person's sight after the object itself has gone

afterpains /'ɑːftəpeɪnz/ plural noun regular pains in the uterus which are sometimes experienced after childbirth

afunctional /eɪ 'fʌŋkʃən(ə)l/ adjective which does not function properly

agalactia /,eɪgə'lækʃə/ noun a condition in which a mother is unable to produce milk after childbirth

agammaglobulinaemia /eɪ,ɡæmæglɒbjuːlɪ 'niːmiːə/ noun a deficiency or absence of immunoglobulins in the blood, which results in a reduced ability to provide immune responses

agar /'eɪgə:/, **agar agar** /,eɪgər: 'eɪgə:/ noun a culture medium based on an extract of seaweed used for growing microorganisms in laboratories

age /eɪdʒ/ noun the number of years which a person has lived ○ *What's your age on your next birthday?* ○ *He was sixty years of age.* ○ *The size varies according to age.* ■ verb to grow old

age group /'eɪdʒ gruːp/ noun all the people of a particular age or within a particular set of ages ○ *The age group 20–25*

ageing /'eɪdʒɪŋ/, **aging** noun the fact of growing old

COMMENT: Changes take place in almost every part of the body as the person ages. Bones become more brittle and skin becomes less elastic. The most important changes affect the blood vessels which are less elastic, making thrombosis more likely. This also reduces the supply of blood to the brain, which in turn reduces the mental faculties.

ageing process /'eɪdʒɪŋ ,prəses/ noun the physical changes which take place in a person as he or she grows older

agency /eɪdʒənsi/ noun 1. an organisation which carries out work on behalf of another organisation, e.g. one which recruits and employs nurses and supplies them to hospitals temporarily when full-time nursing staff are unavailable 2. the act of causing something to

happen ○ *The disease develops through the agency of bacteria present in the bloodstream.*

'The cost of employing agency nurses should be no higher than the equivalent full-time staff.' [Nursing Times]

'Growing numbers of nurses are choosing agency careers, which pay more and provide more flexible schedules than hospitals.' [American Journal of Nursing]

agenesis /eɪ'dʒenəsɪs/ noun the absence of an organ, resulting from a failure in embryonic development

agent /'eɪdʒənt/ noun 1. a chemical substance which makes another substance react 2. a substance or organism which causes a disease or condition 3. a person who acts as a representative of another person or carries out some kinds of work on his or her behalf

agglutinate /ə'gluːtɪneɪt/ verb to form into groups or clusters, or to cause things to form into groups or clusters

agglutination /ə'gluːtɪneɪʃ(ə)n/ noun the act of coming together or sticking to one another to form a clump, as of bacteria cells in the presence of serum, or blood cells when blood of different types is mixed ◇ **agglutination test** 1. a test to identify bacteria 2. a test to identify if a woman is pregnant

agglutinin /ə'gluːtɪnɪn/ noun a factor in a serum which makes cells stick together in clumps

agglutinogen /ægluː'tɪnədʒən/ noun a factor in red blood cells which reacts with a specific agglutinin in serum

aggravate /'ægrəveɪt/ verb to make something worse ○ *Playing football only aggravates his knee injury.* ○ *The treatment seems to aggravate the disease.*

aggression /ə'gresʃ(ə)n/ noun the state of feeling violently angry towards someone or something

aggressive /ə'gresɪv/ adjective referring to treatment which involves frequent high doses of medication

aging /'eɪdʒɪŋ/ noun another spelling of **ageing**

agitated /'ædʒɪteɪtɪd/ adjective moving about or twitching nervously because of worry or another psychological state ○ *The person became agitated and had to be given a sedative.*

agitation /,ædʒɪ'teɪʃ(ə)n/ noun a state of being very nervous and anxious

aglossia /eɪ'glɒsɪə/ noun the condition of not having a tongue from birth

agnosia /æg'nəʊzɪə/ noun a brain disorder in which a person fails to recognise places, people, tastes or smells which they used to know well

agonist /'ægənɪst/ noun 1. a muscle which causes part of the body to move and another muscle to relax when it contracts. Also called

prime mover **2.** a substance which produces an observable physiological effect by acting through specific receptors. ◊ **antagonist**

agony /'ægəni/ **noun** a very severe physical or emotional pain ◊ *He lay in agony on the floor.* ◊ *She suffered the agony of waiting for weeks until her condition was diagnosed.*

agoraphobia /,æg(ə)rə'fəʊbiə/ **noun** a fear of being in open spaces. Compare **claustrophobia**

agoraphobic /,æg(ə)rə'fəʊbɪk/ **adjective** afraid of being in open spaces. Compare **claustrophobic**

agranulocytosis /ə,grænju'ləʊsəsɪt'əʊsɪs/ **noun** a usually fatal disease where the number of granulocytes, a type of white blood cell, falls sharply because of a bone marrow condition

agraphia /eɪ'græfiə/ **noun** the condition of being unable to put ideas into writing

AHF abbr antihæmophilic factor

aid /eɪd/ **noun** **1.** help **2.** a machine, tool or drug which helps someone do something ◊ *He uses a walking frame as an aid to exercising his legs.* ■ **verb** to help someone or something ◊ *The procedure is designed to aid the repair of tissues after surgery.*

AID /eɪ əɪ 'di:/ **noun** full form **artificial insemination by donor.** now called **DI**

AIDS /eɪdz/, **Aids** **noun** a viral infection which breaks down the body's immune system. Full form **acquired immunodeficiency syndrome, acquired immune deficiency syndrome**

COMMENT: AIDS is a disease caused by the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). It is spread mostly by sexual intercourse and can affect anyone. It is also transmitted through infected blood and plasma transfusions, through using unsterilised needles for injections, and can be passed from a mother to a fetus. The disease takes a long time, usually years, to show symptoms, and many people with HIV are unaware that they are infected. It causes a breakdown of the body's immune system, making the patient susceptible to any infection and often results in the development of rare skin cancers. It is not curable.

AIDS dementia /,eɪdz dɪ'menʃə/ **noun** a form of mental degeneration resulting from infection with HIV

AIDS-related complex /,eɪdz rɪ,leɪtɪd 'kɒmplɛks/, **AIDS-related condition** /,eɪdz rɪ ,leɪtɪd kən'dɪʃ(ə)n/ **noun** early symptoms shown by someone infected with the HIV virus, e.g. weight loss, fever and herpes zoster. Abbr **ARC**

AIH abbr artificial insemination by husband **ailment** /'eɪlmənt/ **noun** an illness, though not generally a very serious one ◊ *Chickenpox is one of the common childhood ailments.*

ailurophobia /,aɪlu'rəfəʊbiə/ **noun** a fear of cats

air /eə/ **noun** a mixture of gases, mainly oxygen and nitrogen, which cannot be seen, but which exists all around us and which is breathed ◊ *Open the window and let some fresh air into the room.* ◊ *He breathed the polluted air into his lungs.*

air bed /'eə bed/ **noun** a mattress which is filled with air, used to prevent the formation of bedsores. ◊ **conduction**

airborne infection /,eəbɔ:n ɪn'fekʃən/ **noun** an infection which is carried in the air

air conduction /'eə kən,dʌkʃən/ **noun** the process by which sounds pass from the outside to the inner ear through the auditory meatus

air embolism /eər 'embəlɪz(ə)m/ **noun** a blockage caused by bubbles of air, that stops the flow of blood in vessels

air hunger /'eə ,hʌŋgə/ **noun** a condition in which the patient needs air because of lack of oxygen in the tissues

air passage /'eə ,pæsɪdʒ/ **noun** any tube which takes air to the lungs, e.g. the nostrils, pharynx, larynx, trachea and bronchi

air sac /'eə sæk/ **noun** a small sac in the lungs which contains air. ◊ **alveolus**

airsick /'eəsɪk/ **adjective** feeling sick because of the movement of an aircraft

airsickness /'eəsɪknəs/ **noun** a queasy feeling, usually leading to vomiting, caused by the movement of an aircraft

airway /'eəwei/ **noun** a passage through which air passes, especially the trachea

airway clearing /'eəwei ,klɪəriŋ/ **noun** making sure that the airways in a newborn baby or an unconscious person are free of any obstruction

airway obstruction /,eəwei əb'strækʃ(ə)n/ **noun** something which blocks the air passages

akathisia /,eɪkə'θɪsiə/ **noun** restlessness

akinesia /,eɪkɪ'nɪzɪə/ **noun** a lack of voluntary movement, as in Parkinson's disease

akinetic /,eɪkɪ'nɛtɪk/ **adjective** without movement

alacrima /eɪ'lækrimə/ **noun** same as **xerosis**

alactasia /,eɪlæk'teɪziə/ **noun** a condition in which there is a deficiency of lactase in the intestine, making the patient incapable of digesting lactose, the sugar in milk

alalia /eɪ'lɛlɪə/ **noun** a condition in which a person completely loses the ability to speak

alanine /'ælənī:n/ **noun** an amino acid

alanine aminotransferase /,ælənī:n ə ,mi:nəʊ'trænsfəreɪz/ **noun** an enzyme which is found in the liver and can be monitored as an indicator of liver damage. Abbr **ALT**

alar cartilage /,eɪlər 'ka:tɪlɪdʒ/ **noun** cartilage in the nose

alba /'ælbə/ ♀ **linea alba**

Albee's operation /'ɔ:lbɪ:z əpə,reɪʃ(ə)n/ **noun** **1.** a surgical operation to fuse two or more vertebrae **2.** a surgical operation to fuse

the femur to the pelvis [After Frederick Houdlett Albee (1876–1945), US surgeon]

albicans /'ælbɪkænz/ ▶ **corpus albicans**

albinism /'ælbɪnɪz(ə)m/ *noun* a condition in which a person lacks the pigment melanin and so has pink skin and eyes and white hair. It is hereditary and cannot be treated. ◇ **vitiligo**

albino /æl'bɪ:nəʊ/ *noun* a person who is deficient in melanin and has little or no pigmentation in the skin, hair or eyes

albuginea /,ælbɪju'dʒɪniə/ *noun* a layer of white tissue covering a part of the body

albuginea oculi /,ælbɪjudʒɪniə 'ɒkjulai/ *noun* same as **sclera**

albuminometer /,ælbɪjومɪ'nɒmɪtə/ *noun* an instrument for measuring the level of albumin in the urine

albuminuria /,ælbɪjومɪ'njuəriə/ *noun* a condition in which albumin is found in the urine, usually a sign of kidney disease, but also sometimes of heart failure

albumose /'ælbɪju:məʊz/ *noun* an intermediate product in the digestion of protein

alcohol /'ækθəhol/ *noun* a pure colourless liquid which is formed by the action of yeast on sugar solutions and forms part of drinks such as wine and whisky

COMMENT: Alcohol is used medicinally to dry wounds or harden the skin. When drunk, alcohol is rapidly absorbed into the bloodstream. It is a source of energy, so any carbohydrates taken at the same time are not used by the body and are stored as fat. Alcohol is a depressant, not a stimulant, and affects the way the brain works.

alcohol abuse /'ækθəhol ə,bju:s/ *noun* the excessive use of alcohol adversely affecting a person's health

alcohol addiction /'ækθəhol ə,dɪkʃən/ *noun* a condition in which a person is dependent on the use of alcohol

alcohol-fast /'ækθəhol fa:st/ *adjective* referring to an organ stained for testing which is not discoloured by alcohol

alcoholic /,ælkə'holɪk/ *adjective* 1. containing alcohol 2. caused by alcoholism ◇ *alcoholic poisoning* ■ *noun* a person who is addicted to drinking alcohol and shows changes in behaviour and personality

alcoholic cardiomyopathy /,ælkəhɒlɪk ,ku:dɪəmətə'ɒpθɪ/ *noun* a disease of the heart muscle arising as a result of long-term heavy alcohol consumption

alcoholic cirrhosis /,ælkəhɒlɪk sɪ'rəʊsɪs/ *noun* cirrhosis of the liver caused by alcoholism

alcoholic hepatitis /,ælkəhɒlɪk ,hepə'taɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the liver as a result of long-term heavy alcohol consumption, often leading to cirrhosis

Alcoholics Anonymous /,ælkəhɒlɪks ə'nɒmɪməs/ *noun* an organisation of former al-

coholics which helps people to overcome their dependence on alcohol by encouraging them to talk about their problems in group therapy.

Abbr AA

alcoholicum /,ælkə'hɒlɪkəm/ ▶ **delirium alcoholicum**

alcoholism /'ækθəholɪz(ə)m/ *noun* excessive drinking of alcohol which becomes addictive

alcohol poisoning /'ækθəhol ,pɔɪz(ə)nɪŋ/ *noun* poisoning and disease caused by excessive drinking of alcohol

alcohol rub /'ækθəhol rəb/ *noun* the act of rubbing a bedridden person with alcohol to help protect against bedsores and as a tonic

alcoholuria /,ækθəhɒ'ljuəriə/ *noun* a condition in which alcohol is present in the urine (NOTE: The level of alcohol in the urine is used as a test for drivers who are suspected of driving while drunk.)

aldosterone /æl'dɒstərəʊn/ *noun* a hormone secreted by the cortex of the adrenal gland, which regulates the balance of sodium and potassium in the body and the amount of body fluid

aldosteronism /æl'dɒst(ə)rənɪz(ə)m/ *noun* a condition in which a person produces too much aldosterone, so that there is too much salt in the blood. This causes high blood pressure and the need to drink a lot of liquids.

alert /ə'lɜ:t/ *adjective* referring to someone who takes an intelligent interest in his or her surroundings ◇ *The patient is still alert, though in great pain.*

aleukaemic /eɪlu:'ki:mɪk/ *adjective* 1. referring to a state where leukaemia is not present 2. referring to a state where leucocytes are not normal

Alexander technique /,ælɪg'zə:ndə tek'nɪk/ *noun* a method of improving the way a person stands and moves, by making them much more aware of how muscles behave

alexia /eɪ'leksiə/ *noun* a condition in which the patient cannot understand printed words. Also called **word blindness**

alfacalcidol /,ælfə'kælsɪdɒl/ *noun* a substance related to vitamin D, used by the body to maintain the right levels of calcium and phosphate, and also as a drug to help people who do not have enough vitamin D

algesimeter /,ældʒɪ'sɪmɪtə/ *noun* an instrument to measure the sensitivity of the skin to pain

-**algia** /ældʒiə/ *suffix* a word ending that indicates a painful condition

algid /'ældʒɪd/ *adjective* referring to a stage in a disease that causes fever during which the body becomes cold

algophobia /,ælgəʊ'fəʊbiə/ *noun* an unusually intense fear of pain

alienation /ə'lɪə'nɛf(ə)n/ *noun* a psychological condition in which a person develops the feeling of not being part of the everyday world, and as a result often becomes hostile to other people

alignment /ə'laɪnmənt/ *noun* the arrangement of something in a straight line, or in the correct position in relation to something else

alimentary /ə'lɪ'ment(ə)ri/ *adjective* providing food, or relating to food or nutrition

alimentary canal /ə'lɪ'ment(ə)ri kæ'næl/ *noun* a tube in the body going from the mouth to the anus and including the throat, stomach and intestine, through which food passes and is digested

alimentary system /ə'lɪ'ment(ə)ri ,sɪstəm/ *noun* same as **digestive system**

alimentation /ə'lɪmen'teɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the act of providing food or nourishment

aliquot /'ælkwɔ:t/ *noun* a part of a larger thing, especially a sample of something which is taken to be examined

alive /ə'lɑ:v/ *adjective* living, not dead ○ *The man was still alive, even though he had been in the sea for two days.* (NOTE: **Alive** cannot be used in front of a noun: *The person is alive* but a *living person*. Note also that **live** can be used in front of a noun: *The person was injected with live vaccine.*)

alkalaemia /'ælkə'lɪ:miə/ *noun* an excess of alkali in the blood

alkali /'ælkə'lætɪ/ *noun* one of many substances which neutralise acids and form salts (NOTE: The UK plural is **alkalis**, but the US plural is **alkalies**.)

alkaline /'ælkə'læɪn/ *adjective* containing more alkali than acid

alkalinity /,ælkə'lɪnɪtɪ/ *noun* the level of alkali in a body ○ *Hyperventilation causes fluctuating carbon dioxide levels in the blood, resulting in an increase of blood alkalinity.*

COMMENT: Alkalinity and acidity are measured according to the pH scale. pH7 is neutral, and pH8 and upwards are alkaline. Alkaline solutions are used to counteract the effects of acid poisoning and also of bee stings. If strong alkali, such as ammonia, is swallowed, the patient should drink water and an acid such as orange juice.

alkaloid /'ælkəlɔɪd/ *noun* one of many poisonous substances found in plants and used as medicines, e.g. atropine, morphine or quinine

alkalosis /,ælkə'ləʊsɪs/ *noun* a condition in which the alkali level in the body tissue is high, producing cramps

alkaptonuria /,ælkæptə'njuəriə/ *noun* a hereditary condition where dark pigment is present in the urine

allantoin /ə'læntəʊɪn/ *noun* powder from the herb comfrey, used to treat skin disorders

allantois /ə'læntəʊɪs/ *noun* one of the membranes in the embryo, shaped like a sac, which grows out of the embryonic hindgut

allele /ə'li:/ *noun* one of two or more alternative forms of a gene, situated in the same area on each of a pair of chromosomes and each producing a different effect

allergen /'ælədʒən/ *noun* a substance which produces hypersensitivity

COMMENT: Allergens are usually proteins and include foods, dust, hair of animals, as well as pollen from flowers. Allergic reaction to serum is known as **anaphylaxis**. Treatment of allergies depends on correctly identifying the allergen to which the patient is sensitive. This is done by patch tests in which drops of different allergens are placed on scratches in the skin. Food allergens discovered in this way can be avoided, but other allergens such as dust and pollen can hardly be avoided and have to be treated by a course of desensitising injections.

allergenic /,ælə'dʒenɪk/ *adjective* producing an allergic reaction ○ *the allergenic properties of fungal spores*

allergenic agent /,ælədʒenɪk 'eɪdʒənt/ *noun* a substance which produces an allergy

allergic /ə'lɪ:s:dʒɪk/ *adjective* having an allergy to something ○ *She is allergic to cats.* ○ *I'm allergic to penicillin.*

allergic agent /ə'lɪ:s:dʒɪk ,eɪdʒənt/ *noun* a substance which produces an allergic reaction

allergic purpura /ə,lɪ:s:dʒɪk 'pɜ:pjʊrə/ *noun* a form of the skin condition purpura, found most often in children

allergic reaction /ə,lɪ:s:dʒɪk ri'ækʃən/ *noun* an effect produced by a substance to which a person has an allergy, such as sneezing or a skin rash

allergic rhinitis /ə,lɪ:s:dʒɪk rai'naitɪs/ *noun* inflammation in the nose and eyes caused by an allergic reaction to plant pollen, mould spores, dust mites or animal hair. ♀ **hayfever**

allergist /'ælədʒɪst/ *noun* a doctor who specialises in the treatment of allergies

allergy /'ælədʒɪ/ *noun* an unusual sensitivity to some substances such as pollen or dust, which cause a physical reaction such as sneezing or a rash in someone who comes into contact with them ○ *She has an allergy to household dust.* ○ *He has a penicillin allergy.* (NOTE: You **have an allergy** or you **are allergic to** something.)

allergy bracelet /'ælədʒɪ ,breɪslət/ *noun* ♀ **medical alert bracelet**

alleviate /ə'lɪ:vɪet/ *verb* to make pain or discomfort less severe ○ *The drug is effective in alleviating migraine headaches.*

allied health professional /,æliaɪd 'helθ prə,fesʃ(ə)n(ə)l/ *noun* a professional working in medicine who is not a doctor or nurse, e.g. a physiotherapist or paramedic

allo- /æləʊ/ *prefix* different

allodynia /'ælə'dɪniə/ *noun* pain of the skin caused by something such as clothing which usually does not cause pain

allogeneic /'ælədʒə'nēɪk/ *adjective* ((of body tissues)) genetically different and therefore incompatible when transplanted

allograft /'æləʊgræft/ *noun* same as **homograft**

allopathy /'ælɒpəθi/ *noun* the treatment of a condition using drugs which produce opposite symptoms to those of the condition. Compare **homeopathy**

allopurinol /,æləʊ'pjjuərɪnɒl/ *noun* a drug which helps to stop the body producing uric acid, used in the treatment of gout

all or none law /,ɔ:l ɔ: 'nʌn lɔ:/ *noun* the rule that the heart muscle either contracts fully or does not contract at all

allylestrenol /,æləl'estrənl/ *noun* a steroid used to encourage pregnancy

alopecia /,æləp'si:pɪ:sə/ *noun* a condition in which hair is lost. Compare **hypotrichosis**

alopecia areata /æləp'si:pɪ:sə ,ærɪ'eɪtə/ *noun* a condition in which the hair falls out in patches

alpha /'ælfə/ *noun* the first letter of the Greek alphabet

alpha-adrenoceptor antagonist /,ælfə ə ,dri:nəʊrɪ'septə æn,tægənɪst/, **alpha-adrenoceptor blocker** /'ælfə ə ,dri:nəʊrɪ'septə ,blɒkə/ *noun* a drug which can relax smooth muscle, used to treat urinary retention and hypertension. Also called **alpha blocker**

alpha cell /'ælfə sel/ *noun* a type of cell found in the islets of Langerhans, in the pancreas, which produces glucagon, a hormone that raises the level of glucose in the blood. ◊ **beta cell**

alpha-fetoprotein /,ælfə ,fi:tə'prəʊtɪ:n/ *noun* a protein produced by the liver of the human fetus, which accumulates in the amniotic fluid. A high or low concentration is tested for by amniocentesis in the antenatal diagnosis of spina bifida or Down's syndrome, respectively.

alpha rhythm /'ælfə ,rɪðəm/ *noun* the pattern of electrical activity in the brain of someone who is awake but relaxed or sleepy, registering on an electroencephalograph at 8–13 hertz

Alport's syndrome /'ɔ:lpo:təs ,sɪndrəʊm/ *noun* a genetic disease of the kidneys which sometimes causes a person to lose his or her hearing and sight

alprostadil /æ'l prɒstədɪl/ *noun* a drug which makes blood vessels wider, used to treat impotence, prevent coagulation, and maintain babies with congenital heart conditions

ALS abbr 1. amyotrophic lateral sclerosis 2. antilymphocytic serum

ALT abbr alanine aminotransferase

alternative medicine /ɔ:l'tɜ:nətɪv 'med(ə)sɪn/ *noun* the treatment of illness using therapies such as homoeopathy or naturopathy which are not considered part of conventional Western medicine. ◊ **complementary medicine**

altitude sickness /'æltɪtjʊd ,sɪknəs/ *noun* a condition caused by reduced oxygen in the air above altitudes of 7000 to 8000 feet (3600 metres). Symptoms include headaches, breathlessness, fatigue, nausea and swelling of the face, hands and feet. Also called **high-altitude sickness, mountain sickness**

aluminium /,ælə'miniəm/ *noun* a metallic element extracted from the ore bauxite (NOTE: The US spelling is **aluminum**. The chemical symbol is Al.)

aluminium hydroxide /ælə'miniəm haɪ'droksaɪd/ *noun* a chemical substance used as an antacid to treat indigestion. Formula: Al(OH)₃ or Al₂O₃·3H₂O.

alveolar /,ælvɪ'ələ, æl've:i:ələ/ *adjective* referring to the alveoli

alveolar bone /,ælvɪ'ələ bən/ *noun* part of the jawbone to which the teeth are attached

alveolar duct /,ælvɪ'ələ dʌkt/ *noun* a duct in the lung which leads from the respiratory bronchioles to the alveoli. See illustration at **LUNGS** in Supplement

alveolar wall /,ælvɪ'ələ wɔ:l/ *noun* one of the walls which separate the alveoli in the lungs

alveolitis /,ælvɪə'laitɪs/ *noun* inflammation of an alveolus in the lungs or the socket of a tooth

alveolus /,ælvɪ'ələs, æl've:i:ələs/ *noun* a small cavity, e.g. an air sac in the lungs or the socket into which a tooth fits. See illustration at **LUNGS** in Supplement (NOTE: The plural is **alveoli**.)

Alzheimer plaque /'æltʃaɪmə plæk/ *noun* a disc-shaped plaque of amyloid found in the brain in people who have Alzheimer's disease

Alzheimer's disease /'æltʃaɪməz dɪ,zi:z/ *noun* a disease where a person experiences progressive dementia due to nerve cell loss in specific brain areas, resulting in loss of mental faculties including memory [Described 1906. After Alois Alzheimer (1864–1915), Bavarian physician.]

COMMENT: No single cause of Alzheimer's disease has been identified, although an early onset type occurs more frequently in some families, due to a mutation in a gene on chromosome 21. Risk factors include age, genes, head injury, lifestyle and environment.

amalgam /ə'mælgəm/ *noun* a mixture of metals, based on mercury and tin, used by dentists to fill holes in teeth

amaurosis /,æməʊ'rəʊsɪs/ *noun* blindness caused by disease of the optic nerve

amaurosis fugax /'æməʊrəʊsɪs 'fju:gæks/ noun temporary blindness in one eye, caused by problems of circulation

amaurotic familial idiocy /'æmə:rɒtɪk fə'milɪəl 'ɪdɪəsɪ/, **amaurotic family idiocy** /'æmə:rɒtɪk, fæm(ə)li 'ɪdɪəsɪ/ noun same as **Tay-Sachs disease**

amb- /'æmb/ prefix same as **ambi-** (used before vowels)

ambi- /'æmbi/ prefix both

ambidextrous /'æmbi'dekstrəs/ adjective referring to a person who can use both hands equally well and who is not right- or left-handed

ambiguous genitalia /'æm,bɪgjuəs ,dʒenɪəl'teɪliə/ noun a congenital condition in which the outer genitals do not look typical of those of either sex

ambisexual /'æmbɪ'sekʃuəl/ adjective, noun same as **bisexual**

amblyopia /'æmblɪ'əʊpiə/ noun a lack of normal vision without a structural cause. A common example is squint and other forms may be caused by the cyanide in tobacco smoke or by drinking methylated spirits.

amblyopic /'æmblɪ'ɒpɪk/ adjective affected by amblyopia

amblyoscope /'æmbliəʊskəʊp/ noun an instrument for measuring the angle of a squint and how effectively someone uses both their eyes together. Also called **orthoptoscope**

ambulance /'æmbjuləns/ noun a van for taking sick or injured people to hospital ◎ *The injured man was taken away in an ambulance.* ◎ *The telephone number of the local ambulance service is in the phone book.* ♦ **St John Ambulance Association and Brigade**

ambulant /'æmbbjələnt/ adjective able to walk

ambulation /'æmbju'lɛɪʃ(ə)n/ noun walking ◻ **early ambulation is recommended** patients should try to get out of bed and walk about as soon as possible after the operation

ambulatory /'æmbju'leɪt(ə)rɪ/ adjective referring to a patient who is not confined to bed but is able to walk

‘...ambulatory patients with essential hypertension were evaluated and followed up at the hypertension clinic’ [British Medical Journal]

ambulatory care /'æmbju,leɪt(ə)rɪ 'keə/ noun treatment of a patient which does not involve staying in hospital during the night

ambulatory fever /'æmbju'leɪt(ə)rɪ ,fi:və/ noun a mild fever where the patient can walk about and can therefore act as a carrier, e.g. during the early stages of typhoid fever

ameba /'ɑ:mī:bə/ noun US same as **amoeba**

amelia /'ə:mī:liə/ noun the absence of a limb from birth, or a condition in which a limb is short from birth

amelioration /ə'mi:lɪə'reɪʃ(ə)n/ noun the process of getting better

ameloblastoma /'æmələʊblæ'stəʊmə/ noun a tumour in the jaw, usually in the lower jaw

amenorrhoea /'eɪmenə'rɪ:ə/ noun the absence of one or more menstrual periods, usual during pregnancy and after the menopause

ametropia /'æmətrəʊpiə/ noun a condition in which the eye cannot focus light correctly onto the retina, as in astigmatism, hypermetropia and myopia. Compare **emmetropia**

amphetamine /'æm'fetəmī:n/ noun an addictive drug, similar to adrenaline, used to give a feeling of wellbeing and wakefulness. Also called **amphetamine**

amikacin /'æmɪkə'sɪn/ noun a type of antibiotic used to treat infections caused by aerobic bacteria

amiloride /'æmɪləraɪd/ noun a drug which helps to increase the production of urine and preserve the body’s supply of potassium

amino acid /ə,mī:nəʊ 'æsɪd/ noun a chemical compound which is broken down from proteins in the digestive system and then used by the body to form its own protein

COMMENT: Amino acids all contain carbon, hydrogen, nitrogen and oxygen, as well as other elements. Some amino acids are produced in the body itself, but others have to be absorbed from food. The eight essential amino acids are: isoleucine, leucine, lysine, methionine, phenylalanine, threonine, tryptophan and valine.

aminobutyric acid /ə,mī:nəʊbju:tɪrɪk 'æsɪd/ noun ♦ **gamma aminobutyric acid**

aminoglycoside /ə,mī:nəʊ'glaikəsɔɪd/ noun a drug used to treat many Gram-negative and some Gram-positive bacterial infections (NOTE: Aminoglycosides include drugs with names ending in -cin: **gentamicin**.)

aminophylline /'æmɪ'nɒfɪli:n/ noun a drug that makes the bronchial tubes wider, used in the treatment of asthma

amiodarone /'æmɪ'bɒrəʊn/ noun a drug that makes the blood vessels wider, used in the treatment of irregular heartbeat

amitosis /'æmɪ'təʊsɪs/ noun the multiplication of a cell by splitting of the nucleus

amitriptyline /'æmɪ't्रɪptɪli:n/ noun a sedative drug used to treat depression and persistent pain

amlodipine /'æm'lɒdɪpi:n/ noun a drug that helps to control the movement of calcium ions through cell membranes. It is used to treat hypertension and angina.

ammonia /'ə:mōniə/ noun a gas with a strong smell, a compound of nitrogen and hydrogen, which is a usual product of human metabolism

ammonium /'ə:mōniəm/ noun an ion formed from ammonia

amnesia /'ə:m'ni:ziə/ noun loss of memory

amnia /'æmnɪə/ plural of **amnion**

amnihook /'æmnihök/ *noun* a hooked instrument used to induce labour by pulling on the amniotic sac

amnio /'æmniəʊ/ *noun* same as **amniocentesis** (*informal*)

amniocentesis /,æmniəʊsən'tɪ:sɪs/ *noun* a procedure which involves taking a test sample of the amniotic fluid during pregnancy using a hollow needle and syringe

COMMENT: Amniocentesis and amnioscopy, the examination and testing of the amniotic fluid, give information about possible congenital disorders in the fetus as well as the sex of the unborn baby.

amniography /,æmni'ɒgrəfi/ *noun* an X-ray of the womb

amnion /'æmniən/ *noun* the thin sac containing the amniotic fluid which covers an unborn baby in the uterus. Also called **amniotic sac**

amioscope /'æmniəskəʊp/ *noun* an instrument used to examine a fetus through the cervical channel, before the amniotic sac is broken

amnioscopy /,æmni'ɒskəpi/ *noun* an examination of the amniotic fluid during pregnancy

amniotic /,æmni'ɒtɪk/ *adjective* relating to the amnion

amniotic cavity /,æmniotɪk 'kævɪtɪ/ *noun* a space formed by the amnion, full of amniotic fluid

amniotic fluid /,æmniotɪk 'flu:ɪd/ *noun* the fluid contained in the amnion which surrounds an unborn baby

amniotic sac /,æmniotɪk 'sæk/ *noun* same as **amnion**

amniotomy /,æmni'ɒtəmi/ *noun* a puncture of the amnion to help induce labour

amoeba /ə'mi:bə/ *noun* a form of animal life, made up of a single cell (NOTE: The plural is amoebae.)

amoebiasis /,æmni'bæɪəsɪs/ *noun* an infection caused by amoebae which can result in amoebic dysentery in the large intestine (intestinal amoebiasis) and sometimes affects the lungs (pulmonary amoebiasis)

amoebic /ə'mi:bɪk/ *adjective* relating to or caused by amoebae

amoebic dysentery /ə'mi:bɪk 'dɪs(ə)ntri/ *noun* a form of dysentery mainly found in tropical areas that is caused by *Entamoeba histolytica* which enters the body through contaminated water or unwashed food

amoebicide /ə'mi:bɪsaɪd/ *noun* a substance which kills amoebae

amorphous /ə'mɔ:fəs/ *adjective* with no regular shape

amoxicillin /ə'mɒksɪsɪlɪn/ *noun* an antibiotic

Amoxil /ə'mɒksɪl/ a trade name for amoxicillin

amphetamine /æm'fetəmī:n/ *noun* same as **amfetamine**

amphetamine abuse /æm'fetəmī:n ə,bju:sɪ/ *noun* the repeated addictive use of amphetamines which in the end affects the mental faculties

amphiarthrosis /,æmfɪə:'θrəʊsɪs/ *noun* a joint which only has limited movement, e.g. one of the joints in the spine

amphotericin /,æmfəʊ'terɪsɪn/ *noun* an antifungal agent, used against *Candida*

ampicillin /,æmpɪ'sɪlɪn/ *noun* a type of penicillin, used as an antibiotic

ampoule /'æmpu:l/, **ampule** /'æmpju:l/ *noun* a small glass container, closed at the neck, used to contain sterile drugs for use in injections

ampulla /æm'pʊlə/ *noun* a swelling of a canal or duct, shaped like a bottle (NOTE: The plural is **ampullae**.)

amputate /'æmpjʊteɪt/ *verb* to remove a limb or part of a limb in a surgical operation ○ *The patient's leg needs to be amputated below the knee.* ○ *After gangrene set in, surgeons had to amputate her toes.*

amputation /,æmpjʊ'teɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the surgical removal of a limb or part of a limb

amputee /,æmpjʊ'ti:/ *noun* someone who has had a limb or part of a limb removed in a surgical operation

amygdala /'æmgdələ/ *noun* an almond-shaped body in the brain, at the end of the caudate nucleus of the thalamus. Also called **amygdaloid body**

amygdaloid body /'æmgdələɪd ˌbɒdi/ *noun* same as **amygdala**

amyl- /æm(ə)l/ *prefix* referring to starch

amylase /'æməlæz/ *noun* an enzyme which converts starch into maltose

amyl nitrate /,æm(ə)l 'naitrətɪ/ *noun* a drug used to reduce blood pressure (NOTE: Amyl nitrate is also used as a recreational drug.)

amyloid /'æmɪləɪd/ *noun* a waxy protein that forms in some tissues during the development of various diseases, e.g. forming disc-shaped plaques in the brain in Alzheimer's disease

amyloid disease /'æmɪləɪd dɪ,zɪ:z/ *noun* same as **amyloidosis**

amyloidosis /,æmɪləɪd'dəʊsɪs/ *noun* a disease of the kidneys and liver, where amyloid develops in the tissues. Also called **amyloid disease**

amyloid precursor protein /,æmɪləɪd pri 'kɜ:sə ,prə'trəʊtɪn/ *noun* a compound found in cell membranes from which beta amyloid is derived. A mutation of the gene causes early-onset Alzheimer's disease in a few families.

amylopsin /,æmɪ'lɒpsɪn/ *noun* an enzyme which converts starch into maltose

amylose /'æmɪləʊz/ *noun* a carbohydrate of starch

amyotonia /,eɪmaɪə'təʊniə/ *noun* a lack of muscle tone

amyotonia congenita /,eɪmətənɪətənɪə kən'dʒenɪtə/ *noun* a congenital disease of children in which the muscles lack tone. Also called **floppy baby syndrome**

amyotrophia /eɪ'maɪə'trəʊfiə/ *noun* a condition in which a muscle wastes away

amyotrophic lateral sclerosis /eɪ'maɪətrɒfɪk 'lætərə(ł) sklə'rəʊsɪs/ *noun* a motor neurone disease in which the limbs twitch and the muscles gradually waste away. Also called **Gehrig's disease**. Abbr **ALS**

amyotrophy /eɪ'maɪə'trəfɪ/ same as **amyotrophia**

an- /æn/ *prefix* same as **ana-** (*used before vowels*)

ana- /ænə/ *prefix* without or lacking

anabolic /,ænə'bɒlɪk/ *adjective* referring to a substance which synthesises protein

'...insulin, secreted by the islets of Langerhans, is the body's major anabolic hormone, regulating the metabolism of all body fuels and substrates' [Nursing Times]

anabolic steroid /ænə'bɒlɪk 'stɪərɔɪd/ *noun* a drug which encourages the synthesis of new living tissue, especially muscle, from nutrients

anabolism /æ'næbəlɪz(ə)m/ *noun* the process of building up complex chemical substances on the basis of simpler ones

anacrotism /'a'nakrətɪz(ə)m/ *noun* a second stroke in the pulse

anaemia /'a'ni:mɪə/ *noun* a condition in which the level of red blood cells is less than usual or where the haemoglobin is less, making it more difficult for the blood to carry oxygen. The symptoms are tiredness and pale colour, especially pale lips, nails and the inside of the eyelids. The condition can be fatal if not treated. (NOTE: The US spelling is **anemia**.)

anaemic /'a'ni:mɪk/ *adjective* having anaemia (NOTE: The US spelling is **anemic**.)

anaerobe /'ænərəʊb, æn'eərəʊb/ *noun* a microorganism which lives without oxygen, e.g. the tetanus bacillus

anaerobic /,ænə'rəʊbɪk/ *adjective* 1. not needing oxygen for metabolism ○ *anaerobic bacteria* 2. without oxygen ○ *anaerobic conditions*

anaesthesia /,ænəs'θi:ziə/ *noun* 1. a state, deliberately produced in a patient by a medical procedure, in which he or she can feel no pain, either in a part or in the whole of the body 2. a loss of feeling caused by damage to nerves (NOTE: The US spelling is **anesthesia**.)

anaesthesiologist /,ænəs'θi:zɪ'lɒðəzɪst/ *noun* US a specialist in the study of anaesthetics

anaesthetic /,ænəs'θetɪk/ *adjective* inducing loss of feeling ■ *noun* a substance given to someone to remove feeling, so that he or she can undergo an operation without pain

'Spinal and epidural anaesthetics can also cause gross vasodilation, leading to heat loss' [British Journal of Nursing]

anaesthetic induction /,ænəsθetɪk ɪn'dʌkʃən/ *noun* a method of inducing anaesthesia in a patient

anaesthetic risk /,ænəsθetɪk 'rɪsk/ *noun* the risk that an anaesthetic may cause serious unwanted side effects

anaesthetise /'a'ni:sθətaɪz/, **anaesthetize** *verb* to produce a loss of feeling in a person or in part of the person's body

anaesthetist /'a'ni:sθətɪst/ *noun* a specialist who administers anaesthetics

anal /'eɪn(ə)l/ *adjective* relating to the anus

anal canal /'eɪn(ə)l kə'næl/ *noun* a passage leading from the rectum to the anus

analeptic /,ænə'leptɪk/ *noun* a drug used to make someone regain consciousness or to stimulate a patient

anal fissure /'eɪn(ə)l 'fɪsʃə/ *noun* a crack in the mucous membrane of the wall of the anal canal

anal fistula /'eɪn(ə)l 'fɪstjʊlə/ *noun* a fistula which develops between the rectum and the outside of the body after an abscess near the anus. Also called **fistula in ano**

analgesia /,æn(ə)l'dʒi:ziə/ *noun* a reduction of the feeling of pain without loss of consciousness

analgesic /,æn(ə)l'dʒi:zɪk/ *adjective* relating to analgesia ■ *noun* a painkilling drug which produces analgesia and reduces pyrexia

COMMENT: There are two types of analgesic: non-opioid such as paracetamol and aspirin (acetylsalicylic acid), and opioid such as codeine phosphate. Opioid analgesics are used for severe pain relief such as in terminal care, as cough suppressants and to reduce gut motility in cases of diarrhoea. Analgesics are commonly used as local anaesthetics, for example in dentistry.

anally /'eɪn(ə)li/ *adverb* through the anus ○ *The patient is not able to pass faeces anally.*

anal passage /,eɪn(ə)l 'pæsɪdʒ/ *noun* same as anus

anal sphincter /,eɪn(ə)l 'sfɪŋktə/ *noun* a strong ring of muscle which closes the anus

anal triangle /,eɪn(ə)l 'traɪæŋg(ə)l/ *noun* the posterior part of the perineum. Also called **rectal triangle**

analyse /'ænəlaɪz/ *verb* to examine something in detail ○ *The laboratory is analysing the blood samples.* ○ *When the food was analysed it was found to contain traces of bacteria.* (NOTE: The US spelling is **analyze**.)

analyser /'ænəlaɪzə/ *noun* a machine which analyses blood or tissue samples automatically (NOTE: The US spelling is **analyzer**.)

analysis /'ænələsɪs/ *noun* an examination of a substance to find out what it is made of (NOTE: The plural is **analyses**.)

analyst /'ænəlist/ *noun* 1. a person who examines samples of substances or tissue, to find out what they are made of 2. same as **psycho-analyst**

anamnesis /,ænæm'ni:sɪs/ *noun* someone's medical history, especially given in their own words

anamnestic /,ænæm'nestɪk/ *adjective* showing a secondary immunological response to an antigen some time after immunisation
anaphase /'ænəfeɪz/ *noun* a stage in cell division, after the metaphase and before the telophase

anaphylactic /,ænəfɪ'læktɪk/ *adjective* relating to or caused by extreme sensitivity to a substance

anaphylactic shock /,ænəfɪlæktɪk 'ʃɒk/ *noun* a sudden severe reaction, which can be fatal, to something such as an injected substance or a bee sting

anaphylaxis /,ænəfɪ'læksɪs/ *noun* 1. extreme sensitivity to a substance introduced into the body 2. same as **anaphylactic shock**

anaplasia /,ænæ'plæziə/ *noun* the loss of a cell's typical characteristics, caused by cancer

anaplastic /,ænæ'plæstɪk/ *adjective* referring to anaplasia

anaplastic neoplasm /,ænəplæstɪk 'ni:əoplæz(ə)m/ *noun* a cancer where the cells are not similar to those of the tissue from which they come

anarthria /æn'ɑ:tθriə/ *noun* the loss of the ability to speak words properly

anasarca /,ænə'sa:kə/ *noun* the presence of fluid in the body tissues. ☐ **oedema**

anastomose /'ænæstəməuz/ *verb* to join two blood vessels or tubular structures together

anastomosis /,ænæstə'məʊsɪs/ *noun* a connection made between two blood vessels or tubular structures, either naturally or by surgery

anat. abbr 1. anatomical 2. anatomy
anatomical /,ænæ'tɒmɪk(ə)l/ *adjective* relating to the anatomy ○ *the anatomical features of a fetus*

anatomical position /,ænætɒmɪk(ə)l pə'zɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* in anatomy, the standard position of the body from which all directions and positions are derived. The body is assumed to be standing, with the feet together, the arms to the side, and the head, eyes and palms facing forward.

anatomy /'ænætəmi/ *noun* 1. the structure, especially the internal structure, of the body 2. the branch of science that studies the structure of the bodies of humans, animals and plants ○ *They are studying anatomy.* □ **the anatomy of a bone** a description of the structure and shape of a bone

ancillary staff /æn'sɪləri stu:f/ *noun* the staff in a hospital who are not administrators,

doctors or nurses, e.g. cleaners, porters, kitchen staff

ancillary worker /æn'sɪlərɪ ,wɜ:kə/ *noun* someone who does a job for patients such cooking or cleaning which is supplementary to medical care

anconeus /æŋ'kɔnɪəs/ *noun* a small triangular muscle at the back of the elbow

Ancylostoma /,ænsɪlə'stəʊmə/ *noun* a parasitic worm in the intestine which holds onto the wall of the intestine with its teeth and lives on the blood and protein of the carrier

ancylostomiasis /,ænsɪləʊstə'maɪəsɪs/ *noun* a disease of which the symptoms are weakness and anaemia, caused by a hook-worm which lives on the blood of the carrier. In severe cases the person may die.

androgen /'ændrədʒən/ *noun* a male sex hormone, testosterone or androsterone, which increases the male characteristics of the body

androgenic /,ændrə'dʒenɪk/ *adjective* producing male characteristics

androgynous /,æn'drɒdʒənəs/ *adjective* same as **hermaphrodite**

andrology /æn'drɒlədʒi/ *noun* the study of male sexual characteristics and subjects such as impotence, infertility and the male menopause

androstosterone /æn'drɒstərəʊn/ *noun* one of the male sex hormones

anemia /ə'ni:miə/ *noun* US same as **anaemia**

anencephalous /,ænen'kefələs/ *adjective* having no brain

anencephaly /,ænen'kefəlɪ/ *noun* the absence of a brain, which causes a fetus to die a few hours after birth

anergy /'ænədʒi/ *noun* 1. a state of severe weakness and lack of energy 2. lack of immunity

anesthesia, etc /,ænəs'θi:zə/ US same as **anaesthesia, etc**

aneurine /'æn'juərɪn/ *noun* same as **Vitamin B₁**

aneurysm /'ænjərɪz(ə)m/ *noun* a swelling caused by the weakening of the wall of a blood vessel

COMMENT: Aneurysm usually occurs in the wall of the aorta, 'aortic aneurysm', and is often due to atherosclerosis, and sometimes to syphilis.

angi- /ændʒi/ *prefix* same as **angio-** (used before vowels)

angiectasis /,ændʒi'ektəsɪs/ *noun* a swelling of the blood vessels

angitis /,ændʒi'aitɪs/ *noun* an inflammation of a blood vessel

angina /æn'dʒaɪnə/ *noun* a pain in the chest following exercise or eating, which is caused by an inadequate supply of blood to the heart muscles because of narrowing of the arteries.

It is commonly treated with nitrates or calcium channel blocker drugs.

anginal /æn'dʒaɪnl/ *adjective* referring to angina □ *He suffered anginal pains.*

angina pectoris /æn,dʒaɪnə 'pektərɪs/ *noun* same as **angina**

angio- /ændʒiəʊl/ *prefix* referring to a blood vessel

angiogram /,ændʒiəʊ'ka:diəgræm/ *noun* a series of pictures resulting from angiography

angiography /,ændʒiə'ɒku:di'bgrəfi/ *noun* an X-ray examination of the cardiac system after injection with an opaque dye so that the organs show up clearly on the film

angiomyolysis /,ændʒiə'ɒdɪs'pleɪzɪə/ *noun* a condition where the blood vessels in the colon dilate, resulting in loss of blood

angiogenesis /,ændʒiəʊ'dʒenəsɪs/ *noun* the formation of new blood vessels, e.g. in an embryo or as a result of a tumour

angiogram /'ændʒiəʊgram/ *noun* an X-ray picture of blood vessels

angiography /,ændʒi'i'bgrəfi/ *noun* an X-ray examination of blood vessels after injection with an opaque dye so that they show up clearly on the film

angiology /,ændʒi'i'ɒlədʒi/ *noun* the branch of medicine which deals with blood vessels and the lymphatic system

angioma /,ændʒi'i'əʊmə/ *noun* a benign tumour formed of blood vessels, e.g. a naevus

angioneurotic oedema /,ændʒiə'ɒnju,rɒtɪk'ɪ:dɪ:mə/ *noun* a sudden accumulation of liquid under the skin, similar to nettle rash

angiopathy /,ændʒi'i'ɒpəθi/ *noun* a disease of vessels such as blood and lymphatic vessels

angioplasty /'ændʒiəʊ,plæsti/ *noun* plastic surgery to repair a blood vessel, e.g. a narrowed coronary artery

angiosarcoma /,ændʒiə'səʊ:kəmə/ *noun* a malignant tumour in a blood vessel

angioscope /'ændʒiəʊskəʊp/ *noun* a long thin surgical instrument threaded into a patient's blood vessels to allow surgeons to observe and perform operations without making large incisions

angiospasm /'ændʒiəʊspæz(ə)m/ *noun* a spasm which constricts blood vessels

angiotensin /'ændʒiə'tensɪn/ *noun* a polypeptide which affects blood pressure by causing vasoconstriction and increasing extracellular volume

COMMENT: The precursor protein, alpha-2-globulin is converted to angiotensin I, which is inactive. A converting enzyme changes angiotensin I into the active form, angiotensin II. Drugs which block the conversion to the active form, ACE inhibitors, are used in the treatment of hypertension and heart failure.

angiotensin-converting enzyme inhibitor /,ændʒiə'tensɪn kən,vɜ:tɪŋ 'enzaim ɪn

,hɪbɪtə/ *noun* a drug which inhibits the conversion of angiotensin I to angiotensin II, which constricts arteries, used in the treatment of hypertension and heart failure. Also called **ACE inhibitor** (NOTE: ACE inhibitors have names ending in -pril: **captopril**.)

COMMENT: Contraindications include use with diuretics, when hypotension can occur and should be avoided in patients with renovascular disease.

angle-closure glaucoma /,æŋgəl,k्लəʊzəgɪlɔ:'kəʊmə/ *noun* an unusually high pressure of fluid inside the eyeball caused by pressure of the iris against the lens, trapping the aqueous humour. Also called **acute glaucoma**

angular stomatitis /,æŋgjulə, stəʊmə'taɪtɪs/ *noun* a condition of the lips, mouth and cheeks characterised by cracks and fissures and caused by a bacterial infection

angular vein /'ængjulə veɪn/ *noun* a vein which continues the facial vein at the side of the nose

anhedonia /,ænhrɪ'dəʊniə/ *noun* a psychological condition in which a person is unable to enjoy all the experiences that most people enjoy

anhidrosis /,ænhi'drəʊsɪs/ *noun* a condition in which sweating by the body is reduced or stops completely

anhidrotic /,ænhi'drɒtɪk/ *adjective* referring to a drug which reduces sweating

anhydramia /,ænhaɪ'dri:miə/ *noun* a lack of sufficient fluid in the blood

anhydrous /æn'haidrəs/ *adjective* referring to compounds or crystals that contain no water

anhydrous alcohol /,ænhaɪdrəs 'ælkəhɒl/ *noun* same as **absolute alcohol**

anidrosis /,ænɪ'drəʊsɪs/ *noun* same as **anhidrosis**

aniridia /,ænɪ'rɪdiə/ *noun* a congenital absence of the iris

anisocytosis /,ænaisəʊsəsɪt'əʊsɪs/ *noun* a variation in size of red blood cells

anisomelia /,ænaisəmə'mi:liə/ *noun* a difference in length of the legs

anisometropia /,ænaisəʊmə'trəʊpiə/ *noun* a state where the refraction in the two eyes is different

ankle /'æŋkəl/ *noun* the part of the body where the foot is connected to the leg □ **he twisted his ankle, he sprained his ankle** he hurt it by stretching it or bending it

anklebone /'æŋkəl,bəʊn/ *noun* same as **talus**

ankle jerk /'æŋkəl dʒɔ:kl/ *noun* a sudden jerk as a reflex action of the foot when the back of the ankle is tapped

ankle joint /'æŋkəl dʒoint/ *noun* a joint which connects the bones of the lower leg (the tibia and fibula) to the talus

ankyloblepharon /æŋkɪləʊ'blefərɒn/ *noun* a state where the edges of the eyelids are stuck together

ankylose /æŋkɪləʊz/ *verb* to fuse together, or to cause bones to fuse together

ankylosing spondylitis /æŋkɪləʊzɪŋ spɒndɪ'lætɪs/ *noun* a condition occurring more frequently in young men, in which the vertebrae and sacroiliac joints are inflamed and become stiff

ankylosis /æŋkɪl'əʊsɪs/ *noun* a condition in which the bones of a joint fuse together

Ankylostoma /æŋkɪl'stəʊmə/ *noun* same as *Ancylostoma*

ankylostomiasis /æŋkɪləʊstə'maɪəsɪs/ *noun* same as *ancylostomiasis*

ANLL *abbr* acute nonlymphocytic leukaemia

annular /'ænjurəl/ *adjective* shaped like a ring

annulus /'ænjuləs/ *noun* a structure shaped like a ring

ano- /ænəʊ/ *prefix* referring to the anus

anococcygeal /ænəkɒksɪ'dʒiːəl/ *adjective* referring to both the anus and coccyx

anodyne /'ænədæɪn/ *noun* a drug which reduces pain, e.g. aspirin or codeine ■ *adjective* referring to drugs that bring relief from pain or discomfort

anomalous /ə'nɒmələs/ *adjective* different from what is usual

anomalous pulmonary venous drainage /ə,nɒmələs, pʌlmən(ə)rɪ 'vi:nəs, dreɪnɪŋz/ *noun* a condition in which oxygenated blood from the lungs drains into the right atrium instead of the left

anomaly /ə'nɒməli/ *noun* something which is different from the usual

anomie /'ænəmi/ *noun* a psychological condition in which a person develops the feeling of not being part of the everyday world, and behaves as though they do not have any supporting social or moral framework

anonychia /,ænə'nɪkiə/ *noun* a congenital absence of one or more nails

anopheles /ə'noflə:z/ *noun* a mosquito which carries the malaria parasite

anoplasty /eɪnəʊplæsti/ *noun* surgery to repair the anus, as in treating haemorrhoids

anorchism /æn'ɔ:kɪz(ə)m/ *noun* a congenital absence of testicles

anorectal /eɪnəʊ'rekt(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to both the anus and rectum

anorectic /,ænə'rektɪk/ *noun* a medicine that suppresses the appetite ■ *adjective* relating to life-threatening loss of appetite

anorexia /,ænə'reksiə/ *noun* loss of appetite

anorexia nervosa /ænə'reksɪə nɔ:vəsə/ *noun* a psychological condition, usually found in girls and young women, in which a person refuses to eat because of a fear of becoming fat

anorexic /,ænə'reksɪk/ *adjective* 1. referring to anorexia 2. having anorexia ○ *The school*

has developed a programme of counselling for anorexic students.

anosmia /æn'ɒzmiə/ *noun* the lack of the sense of smell

anovulant /æn'ɒvju:lənt/ *noun* a drug that prevents ovulation, e.g. a birth-control pill

anovular /æn'ɒvju:lər/ *adjective* without an ovum

anovular bleeding /æn'ɒvju:lər 'blɪ:dɪŋ/ *noun* bleeding from the uterus when ovulation has not taken place

anovulation /æn'ɒvju'leɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a condition in which a woman does not ovulate and is therefore infertile

anoxaemia /ænɒk'si:miə/ *noun* a reduction of the amount of oxygen in the blood

anoxia /æn'ɒksiə/ *noun* a lack of oxygen in body tissue

anoxic /æn'ɒksɪk/ *adjective* referring to anoxia or lacking oxygen

anserina /,ænsə'rɪnə/ ♦ *cutis anserina*

antacid /ænt'æsɪd/ *adjective* preventing too much acid forming in the stomach or altering the amount of acid in the stomach ■ *noun* a substance that stops too much acid forming in the stomach, used in the treatment of gastrointestinal conditions such as ulcers, e.g. calcium carbonate or magnesium trisilicate

antagonism /æn'tægənɪz(ə)m/ *noun* 1. the opposing force that usually exists between pairs of muscles 2. the interaction between two or more chemical substances in the body that reduces the effect that each substance has individually

antagonist /æn'tægənɪst/ *adjective* 1. referring to a muscle which opposes another muscle in a movement 2. referring to a substance which opposes another substance ■ *noun* a substance which acts through specific receptors to block the action of another substance, but which has no observable physiological effect itself ○ *Atropine is a cholinergic antagonist and blocks the effects of acetylcholine.*

ante- /æntɪ/ *prefix* before

ante cibum /,æntɪ 'tʃɪbəm, ,æntɪ 'sɪbəm/ *adverb* full form of *a.c.*

anteflexion /,æntɪ'flekʃən/ *noun* the curving forward of an organ, e.g. the usual curvature of the uterus

antegrade amnesia /,æntɪg'reɪd æm 'ni:zɪə/ *noun* a form of memory loss relating to the things that happen after a traumatic event

antemortem /,æntɪ'mɔ:təm/ *noun* the period before death

antenatal /,æntɪ'nætɪ'lneɪt(ə)l/ *adjective* during the period between conception and childbirth

antenatal clinic /,æntɪ'nætɪ'lneɪt(ə)l ,klinɪk/ *noun* a clinic where expectant mothers are taught how to look after babies, do exercises and have medical checkups. Also called **maternity clinic**

antenatal diagnosis /,ænti'neɪt(ə)l ,daɪəg̩ 'nəʊsɪs/ *noun* a medical examination of a pregnant woman to see if the fetus is developing in the usual way. Also called **prenatal diagnosis**

antepartum /,ænti'pa:təm/ *noun* the period of three months before childbirth ■ *adjective* referring to the three months before childbirth **antepartum haemorrhage** /,ænti'pa:təm 'hemərɪdʒ/ *noun* bleeding from the vagina before labour. Abbr APH

anterior /æn'tiəriə/ *adjective* in front. Opposite **posterior**

anterior aspect /æn,tɪəriə 'æspekt/ *noun* a view of the front of the body, or of the front of part of the body. See illustration at **ANATOMICAL TERMS** in Supplement

anterior chamber /æn,tɪəriə 'tʃeɪmbə/ *noun* part of the aqueous chamber of the eye which is in front of the iris

anterior fontanelle /æn,tɪəriə fɔntə'nel/ *noun* the cartilage at the top of the head where the frontal bone joins the two parietals

anterior jugular /æn,tɪəriə 'dʒʌgjʊlə/ *noun* a small jugular vein in the neck

anterior nares /æn,tɪəriə 'neəri:z/ *plural noun* the two nostrils. Also called **external nares**

anterior superior iliac spine /æn,tɪəriə su,pɪəriə 'iliæk spæɪn/ *noun* a projection at the front end of the iliac crest of the pelvis

anterior synechia /æn,tɪəriə sɪ'nekiə/ *noun* a condition of the eye, where the iris sticks to the cornea

anterograde amnesia /,æntərəʊg'reɪd æm 'ni:ziə/ *noun* a brain condition in which the person cannot remember things which happened recently

anteversion /,ænti'vɜ:s(j(ə)n/ *noun* the tilting forward of an organ, whether usual, as of the uterus, or unusual

anthelmintic /,ænθəl'mɪntɪk/ *noun* a substance which removes worms from the intestine ■ *adjective* removing worms from the intestine

anthracosis /,ænθrə'kəʊsɪs/ *noun* a lung disease caused by breathing coal dust

anthrax /'ænθræks/ *noun* a disease of cattle and sheep which can be transmitted to humans

COMMENT: Caused by *Bacillus anthracis*, anthrax can be transmitted by touching infected skin, meat or other parts of an animal, including bone meal used as a fertiliser. It causes pustules on the skin or in the lungs, 'woolsorter's disease'.

anthrop- /,ænθrəp/ *prefix* referring to human beings

anthropometry /,ænθra'pɒmətri/ *noun* the study of human body measurements (NOTE: The uses of anthropometry include the design of ergonomic furniture and the examination and comparison of populations.)

anti-/ænti/ *prefix* against

antiallergenic /,æntiælə'dʒenɪk/ *adjective* referring to something such as a cosmetic which will not aggravate an allergy

antiarrhythmic /,æntiə'rɪðmɪk/ *adjective* referring to a drug which corrects an irregular heartbeat

antiasthmatic /,æntiæs'mætɪk/ *adjective* referring to a drug that is used to treat asthma

antibacterial /,æntibæk'tɪriəl/ *adjective* destroying bacteria

antibiogram /,ænti'baiəgræm/ *noun* a laboratory technique which establishes to what degree an organism is sensitive to an antibiotic

antibiotic /,æntibɪə'tɒtɪk/ *adjective* stopping the spread of bacteria ■ *noun* a drug which is developed from living substances and which stops the spread of bacteria, e.g. penicillin ○ *He was given a course of antibiotics.* ○ *Antibiotics have no effect against viral diseases.*

COMMENT: Penicillin is one of the commonest antibiotics, together with streptomycin, tetracycline, erythromycin and many others. Although antibiotics are widely and successfully used, new forms of bacteria have developed which are resistant to them.

antibody /'æntɪbɒdi/ *noun* a protein that is stimulated by the body to produce foreign substances such as bacteria, as part of an immune reaction ○ *Tests showed that he had antibodies in his blood.*

antibody-negative /,æntɪbɒdi 'negatɪv/ *adjective* showing none of a particular antibody in the blood ○ *The donor tested antibody-negative.*

antibody-positive /,æntɪbɒdi 'pozɪtɪv/ *adjective* showing the presence of particular antibodies in the blood ○ *The patient is HIV antibody-positive.*

anti-cancer drug /,ænti 'kænsə dræg/ *noun* a drug which can control or destroy cancer cells

anticholinergic /,æntikəʊlɪ'nɜ:dʒɪk/ *adjective* blocking nerve impulses which are part of the stress response ■ *noun* one of a group of drugs which are used to control stress

anticholinesterase /,æntikəʊlɪ'n'estəreɪz/ *noun* a substance which blocks nerve impulses by reducing the activity of the enzyme cholinesterase

anticoagulant /,æntikəʊ'ægjʊlənt/ *adjective* slowing or stopping the clotting of blood ■ *noun* a drug which slows down or stops the clotting of blood, used to prevent the formation of a thrombus (NOTE: Anticoagulants have names ending in -parin: **heparin**.)

anticonvulsant /,æntikən'vel's(ə)nt/ *adjective* acting to control convulsions ■ *noun* a drug used to control convulsions, as in the treatment of epilepsy, e.g. carbamazepine

anti-D /,ænti 'di/, **anti-D gamma-globulin** /,ænti ,di:, ,gæmə 'globjʊlɪn/ *noun* Rh D im-

munoglobulin, used to treat pregnant women who develop antibodies when the mother is Rh-negative and the fetus is Rh-positive

antidepressant /,æntidi'pres(ə)nt/ *adjective* acting to relieve depression ■ *noun* a drug used to relieve depression by stimulating the mood of a depressed person. Examples are tricyclic antidepressants, selective serotonin re-uptake inhibitors and monoamine oxidase inhibitors.

antidiabetic /,æntidaiə'tetik/ *noun* a drug used in the treatment of diabetes ■ *adjective* referring to an antidiabetic drug

antidiarrhoeal /,æntidaɪə'rɪ:əl/ *noun* a drug used in the treatment of diarrhoea ■ *adjective* referring to an antidiarrhoeal drug (NOTE: [all senses] The US spelling is **antidiarrheal**.)

anti-D immunoglobulin /ænti ,di: im jʊnəʊ'glɒbjʊlɪn/ *noun* immunoglobulin administered to Rh-negative mothers after the birth of an Rh-positive baby, to prevent haemolytic disease of the newborn in the next pregnancy

antidiuretic /,æntidai̯rɔ:retik/ *noun* a substance which stops the production of excessive amounts of urine ○ *hormones which have an antidiuretic effect on the kidneys* ■ *adjective* preventing the excessive production of urine

anti-diuretic hormone /,æntidai̯rɔ:,retik 'hɔ:mən/ *noun* a hormone secreted by the posterior lobe of the pituitary gland which acts on the kidneys to regulate the quantity of salt in body fluids and the amount of urine excreted by the kidneys. Also called **vasopressin**

antidote /'æntɪdəut/ *noun* a substance which counteracts the effect of a poison ○ *There is no satisfactory antidote to cyanide.*

antiembolic /,ænti'embolɪk/ *adjective* preventing embolism

antiemetic /,ænti'emetɪk/ *noun* a drug which prevents vomiting ■ *adjective* acting to prevent vomiting

antiepileptic drug /,æntiepi'lɛptɪk dræg/ *noun* a drug used in the treatment of epilepsy and convulsions, e.g. carbamazepine

antifibrinolytic /,æntifaɪbrɪnə'lɪtɪk/ *adjective* acting to reduce fibrosis

antifungal /,ænti'fʌŋgəl/ *adjective* referring to a substance which kills or controls fungal and yeast infections, e.g. candida and ringworm (NOTE: Antifungal drugs have names ending in **-conazole**: **fluconazole**.)

antigen /'æntɪdʒən/ *noun* a substance that stimulates the body to produce antibodies, e.g. a protein on the surface of a cell or microorganism

antigenic /,æntɪ'dʒenɪk/ *adjective* referring to a substance which stimulates the formation of antibodies

antihaemophilic factor /,æntihī:mə'fɪlɪk ,fæktə/ *noun* factor VIII, used to encourage blood-clotting in haemophiliacs. Abbr **AHF**

antihelminthic /,æntihel'minθɪk/ *noun* a drug used in the treatment of worm infections such as threadworm, hookworm or roundworm

antihistamine /,ænti'hɪstəmɪ:n/ *noun* a drug used to control the effects of an allergy which releases histamine, or reduces gastric acid in the stomach for the treatment of gastric ulcers (NOTE: Antihistamines have names ending in **-tidine**: **loratidine** for allergies, **cimetidine** for gastric ulcers.)

anti-HIV antibody /,ænti ,eɪtʃ aɪ vɪ: 'ænti bndɪ/ *noun* an antibody which attacks HIV

antihypertensive /,æntihaɪpə'tensɪv/ *adjective* acting to reduce blood pressure ■ *noun* a drug used to reduce high blood pressure

anti-inflammatory /,ænti in'flæmət(ə)rɪ/ *adjective* referring to a drug which reduces inflammation

antilymphocytic serum /,æntilimfə'sʊ'sitɪk ,sɪrəm/ *noun* a serum used to produce immunosuppression in people undergoing transplant operations. Abbr **ALS**

antimalarial /,æntimə'leəriəl/ *noun* a drug used to treat malaria and in malarial prophylaxis ■ *adjective* treating or preventing malaria

antimetabolite /,æntimə'tæbəlaɪt/ *noun* a substance which can replace a cell metabolism, but which is not active

antimicrobial /,æntimə'krəʊbiəl/ *adjective* acting against microorganisms that cause disease

antimigraine /,ænti'maɪgrین/ *noun* a drug used in the treatment of migraine

antimitotic /,æntimai'totɪk/ *adjective* preventing the division of a cell by mitosis

antimuscarinic /,æntimaskə'rɪnɪk/ *adjective* referring to a drug which blocks acetylcholine receptors found on smooth muscle in the gut and eye

antimycotic /,æntimai'kɒtɪk/ *adjective* destroying fungi

antinauseant /,ænti'nɔ:zɪənt/ *adjective* referring to a drug which helps to suppress nausea

antioxidant /,ænti'oksɪd(ə)nt/ *noun* a substance which makes oxygen less damaging, e.g. in the body or in foods or plastics ○ **antioxidant vitamins**

antiperistalsis /,æntipər'i'sælsɪs/ *noun* a movement in the oesophagus or intestine which causes their contents to move in the opposite direction to usual peristalsis, so leading to vomiting

antiperspirant /,ænti'pɜ:sp(ə)rənt/ *noun* a substance which prevents sweating ■ *adjective* preventing sweating

antipruritic /æntipro'rɪtɪk/ *noun* a substance which prevents itching ■ *adjective* preventing itching

antipsychotic /æntisar'kɒtɪk/ *noun* a neuroleptic or major tranquilliser drug which calms disturbed people without causing sedation or confusion by blocking dopamine receptors in the brain

COMMENT: Extrapiramidal side-effects can occur from the use of antipsychotics, including Parkinsonian symptoms and restlessness.

antipyretic /æntipai'retɪk/ *noun* a drug which helps to reduce a fever ■ *adjective* reducing fever

anti-Rh body /ænti ə:r 'eɪtʃ bɒdi/ *noun* an antibody formed in a mother's blood in reaction to a Rhesus antigen in the blood of the fetus

antisepsis /ænti'septɪs/ *noun* a procedure intended to prevent sepsis

antiseptic /ænti'septɪk/ *adjective* preventing harmful microorganisms from spreading ○ *She gargled with an antiseptic mouthwash.* ■ *noun* a substance which prevents germs growing or spreading ○ *The nurse painted the wound with antiseptic.*

antisera /ænti'sɪərəm/ *noun* ♦ *serum* (NOTE: The plural is **antisera**.)

antisocial /ænti'səʊʃ(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to behaviour which is harmful to other people

antispasmodic /æntispæz'mɒdɪk/ *noun* a drug used to prevent spasms

antitetanus serum /ænti'tetənəs, sɪərəm/ *noun* a serum which protects a patient against tetanus. Abbr **ATS**

antithrombin /ænti'θrɒmbɪn/ *noun* a substance present in the blood which prevents clotting

antitoxic serum /ænti'tɒksɪk, sɪərəm/ *noun* an immunising agent, formed of serum taken from an animal which has developed antibodies to a disease, used to protect a person from that disease

antitoxin /ænti'tɒksɪn/ *noun* an antibody produced by the body to counteract a poison in the body

antitragus /ænti'treɪgəs/ *noun* a small projection on the outer ear opposite the tragus

antituberculous drug /æntɪtju'bɜ:kjʊləs dræg/ *noun* a drug used to treat tuberculosis, e.g. Isoniazid or rifampicin

antitussive /ænti'tʌsɪv/ *noun* a drug used to reduce coughing

antivenin /ænti'venɪn/, **antivenom** /ænti'venəm/, **antivenene** /ænti'venə'nɪ:n/ *noun* a substance which helps the body to fight the effects of a particular venom from a snake or insect bite

antiviral /ænti'veɪrəl/ *adjective* referring to a drug or treatment which stops or reduces the

damage caused by a virus ■ *noun* same as **antiviral drug**

antiviral drug /ænti'veɪrəl dræg/ *noun* a drug which is effective against a virus (NOTE: Antiviral drugs have names ending in **-ciclovir**.)

antra /'æntrə/ plural of **antrum**

antral /'æntrəl/ *adjective* referring to an antrum

antral puncture /,æntrəl 'pʌŋktʃə/ *noun* making a hole in the wall of the maxillary sinus to remove fluid

antrectomy /æn'trek्टəmɪ/ *noun* the surgical removal of an antrum in the stomach to prevent gastrin being formed

antroscopy /æn'trɒskəpi/ *noun* an examination of an antrum

antrostomy /æn'trɒstəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to make an opening in the maxillary sinus to drain an antrum

antrum /'æntrəm/ *noun* any cavity inside the body, especially one in bone (NOTE: The plural is **antra**.)

anuria /æn'juəriə/ *noun* a condition in which the patient does not make urine, either because of a deficiency in the kidneys or because the urinary tract is blocked

anus /'eɪnəs/ *noun* a short passage after the rectum at the end of the alimentary canal, leading outside the body between the buttocks and through which faeces are passed. See illustration at **DIGESTIVE SYSTEM** in Supplement, **UROGENITAL SYSTEM (MALE)** in Supplement (NOTE: For other terms referring to the anus, see **anal** and words beginning with **ano-**.)

anvil /'ænvɪl/ *noun* same as **incus**

anxiety /æŋ'zaiəti/ *noun* the state of being very worried and afraid

anxiety disorder /æŋ'zaiəti dɪsɔ:də/ *noun* a mental disorder where someone is very worried and afraid, e.g. a phobia

anxiety neurosis /æŋ'zaiəti nju,rəʊsɪs/ *noun* a neurotic condition where the patient is anxious and has morbid fears

anxiolytic /æŋksɪə'lɪtɪk/ *noun* a drug used in the treatment of anxiety ■ *adjective* treating anxiety

anxious /æŋkʃəs/ *adjective* 1. very worried and afraid ○ *My sister is ill – I am anxious about her.* 2. eager ○ *She was anxious to get home. ○ I was anxious to see the doctor.*

aorta /eɪ'ɔ:tə/ *noun* the main artery in the body, which sends blood containing oxygen from the heart to other blood vessels around the body. See illustration at **HEART** in Supplement

COMMENT: The aorta is about 45 centimetres long. It leaves the left ventricle, rises where the carotid arteries branch off, then goes downwards through the abdomen and divides into the two iliac arteries. The aorta is the blood vessel which carries all arterial blood from the heart.

aortic /eɪr'ɔ:tɪk/ *adjective* relating to the aorta
aortic aneurysm /eɪr'ɔ:tɪk 'ænju:ri,z(ə)m/ *noun* a serious aneurysm of the aorta, associated with atherosclerosis

aortic arch /eɪr'ɔ:tɪk ɑ:tʃ/ *noun* a bend in the aorta which links the ascending aorta to the descending aorta

aortic hiatus /eɪr'ɔ:tɪk haɪ'etɪəs/ *noun* an opening in the diaphragm through which the aorta passes

aortic incompetence /eɪr'ɔ:tɪk 'ɪnkəmپɪٹ(ə)n̩s/ *noun* a condition in which the aortic valve does not close properly, causing regurgitation

aortic regurgitation /eɪr'ɔ:tɪk rɪ,gz:dʒɪ 'teɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a backward flow of blood caused by a malfunctioning aortic valve

aortic sinuses /eɪr'ɔ:tɪk 'sainəsɪz/ *plural noun* swellings in the aorta from which the coronary arteries lead back into the heart itself

aortic stenosis /eɪr'ɔ:tɪk ste'nəʊsɪs/ *noun* a condition in which the aortic valve is narrow, caused by rheumatic fever

aortic valve /eɪr'ɔ:tɪk 'vælv/ *noun* a valve with three flaps, situated at the opening into the aorta

aortitis /eɪr'ɔ:tɪs'taɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the aorta

aortography /eɪr'ɔ:tɪs'toɡrəfi/ *noun* an X-ray examination of the aorta after an opaque substance has been injected into it

a.p. *adverb* before a meal. Full form *ante prandium*

apathetic /'æpə'θetɪk/ *adjective* referring to a person who takes no interest in anything

apathy /'æpəθi/ *noun* the condition of not being interested in anything, or of not wanting to do anything

aperient /ə'pɪrɪənt/ *noun* a substance which causes a bowel movement, e.g. a laxative or purgative ■ *adjective* causing a bowel movement

aperistalsis /eɪpər'ɪstælsɪs/ *noun* a lack of the peristaltic movement in the bowel

Apert's syndrome /'æpɜ:ts ,sɪnd्रəʊm/ *noun* a condition in which the skull grows tall and the lower part of the face is underdeveloped

aperture /'æpətʃə/ *noun* a hole

apex /eɪpeks/ *noun* 1. the top of the heart or lung 2. the end of the root of a tooth

apex beat /eɪpeks bi:t/ *noun* a heartbeat which can be felt if the hand is placed on the heart

Apgar score /'æpgə: skɔ:/ *noun* a method of judging the condition of a newborn baby in which the baby is given a maximum of two points on each of five criteria: colour of the skin, heartbeat, breathing, muscle tone and reaction to stimuli [Described 1952. After Virginia Apgar (1909–74), US anaesthesiologist.]

'...in this study, babies having an Apgar score of four or less had 100% mortality. The lower the Apgar score, the poorer the chance of survival' [Indian Journal of Medical Sciences]

APH abbr antepartum haemorrhage

aphagia /eɪ'feɪdʒɪə/ *noun* a condition in which a person is unable to swallow

aphakia /eɪ'feɪkiə/ *noun* the absence of the crystalline lens in the eye

aphakic /eɪ'feɪkɪk/ *adjective* referring to aphakia

aphasia /eɪ'feɪziə/ *noun* a condition in which a person is unable to speak or write, or to understand speech or writing because of damage to the brain centres controlling speech

apheresis /,æfə'rɪsɪs/ *noun* the transfusion of blood, from which some components have been removed, back into a patient

aphonia /eɪ'fəniə/ *noun* a condition in which a person is unable to make sounds

aphrodisiac /,æfrə'dɪziək/ *noun* a substance which increases sexual urges ■ *adjective* increasing sexual desire

aphtha /'æfθə/ *noun* a small white ulcer which appears in groups in the mouth in people who have the fungal condition thrush (NOTE: The plural is *aphthae*.)

aphthous stomatitis /,æfθəs ,stəʊmə 'taɪtɪs/ *noun* cancer sores which affect the mucous membrane in the mouth

aphthous ulcer /,æfθəs 'ʌlsə/ *noun* same as mouth ulcer

apical /'æpɪk(ə)l/ *adjective* situated at the top or tip of something

apical abscess /,æpɪk(ə)l 'æbses/ *noun* an abscess in the socket around the root of a tooth

apicectomy /,æpi'sektəmɪ/ *noun* the surgical removal of the root of a tooth

aplasia /eɪ'pleɪzɪə/ *noun* a lack of growth of tissue

aplastic /eɪ'plæstɪk/ *adjective* unable to develop new cells or tissue

aplastic anaemia /eɪ,plæstɪk ə'nɪ:mɪə/ *noun* anaemia caused by the bone marrow failing to form red blood cells

apnea /æp'nɪə/ *noun* US same as *apnoea*

apneusis /'æp'nju:sɪs/ *noun* a breathing pattern caused by brain damage, in which each breath is held for a long time

apnoea /æp'nɪə/ *noun* the stopping of breathing (NOTE: The US spelling is *apnea*.)

apnoeic /æp'nɪ:ɪk/ *adjective* where breathing has stopped (NOTE: The US spelling is *apneic*.)

apocrine /'æpəkrain/ *adjective* referring to apocrine glands

apocrine gland /'æpəkrain glænd/ *noun* a gland producing body odour where parts of the gland's cells break off with the secretions, e.g. a sweat gland

apocrinitis /,æpəkrɪ'naitɪs/ *noun* the formation of abscesses in the sweat glands

apolipoprotein E /ə,pɒlɪpəprəʊtɪn 'i:/ noun a compound found in three varieties which transport lipids within the cell and across cell membranes, the genes for two of which are linked with increased risk of Alzheimer's disease. Abbr **ApoE**

apomorphine /,æpə'mɔ:fɪ:n/ noun a substance that comes from morphine, used to make a person cough, sleep or be sick (NOTE: It is administered under the skin and is used to treat drug overdose, accidental poisoning and Parkinson's disease.)

aponeurosis /,æpə'nju'rəʊsɪs/ noun a band of tissue which attaches muscles to each other

apophyseal /æpə'fɪzɪəl/ adjective referring to apophysis

apophysis /'æpəfɪsɪs/ noun a growth of bone, not at a joint

apophysitis /æpəfɪ'saɪtɪs/ noun inflammation of an apophysis

apoplexy /'æpəpleksi/ noun same as cerebrovascular accident (dated)

apoptosis /ə'pɒptəsɪs/ noun a form of cell death that is necessary both to make room for new cells and to remove cells whose DNA has been damaged and which may become cancerous

APP abbr amyloid precursor protein

apparatus /,æpə'reɪtəs/ noun equipment used in a laboratory or hospital ○ *The hospital has installed new apparatus in the physiotherapy department.* ○ *The blood sample was tested in a special piece of apparatus.* (NOTE: No plural: use a piece of apparatus; some new apparatus.)

appendage /'æpendɪdʒ/ noun a part of the body or piece of tissue which hangs down from another part

appendectomy /,æpən'dektəmɪ/ noun US same as **appendicectomy**

appendiceal /,æpən'dɪsiəl/ adjective relating to the appendix ○ *There is a risk of appendiceal infection.*

appendiceal colic /,æpəndɪsiəl 'kɒlɪk/ noun colic caused by an inflamed appendix

appendicectomy /,æpən'dektəmɪ/ noun the surgical removal of an appendix

appendicitis /ə,pɛndɪ'saɪtɪs/ noun inflammation of the veriform appendix

COMMENT: Appendicitis takes several forms. In **acute appendicitis** there is a sudden attack of severe pain in the right lower part of the abdomen, accompanied by a fever. Acute appendicitis usually requires urgent surgery. In **chronic appendicitis**, the appendix is slightly inflamed, giving a dull pain or a feeling of indigestion over a period of time (a 'grumbling appendix').

appendicular /,æpən'dɪkjʊlər/ adjective 1. referring to body parts which are associated with the arms and legs 2. relating to the appendix

appendicular skeleton /æpən'dɪkjʊlər 'skelɪt(ə)n/ noun part of the skeleton, formed of the pelvic girdle, pectoral girdle and the bones of the arms and legs. Compare **axial skeleton**

appendix /ə'pendiks/ noun 1. a small tube attached to the caecum which serves no function but can become infected, causing appendicitis. Also called **vermiform appendix**. See illustration at **DIGESTIVE SYSTEM** in Supplement 2. any small tube or sac hanging from an organ

apperception /,æpə'septʃ(ə)n/ noun the conscious recognition of a stimulus

appetite /'æpitɪt/ noun the feeling of wanting food □ **good appetite** interest in eating food □ **loss of appetite** becoming uninterested in eating food

applanation tonometry /æplə,nɛf(ə)n tə 'nmotrɪ/ noun the measuring of the thickness of the cornea

appliance /ə'plaɪəns/ noun a piece of apparatus used on the body ○ *He was wearing a surgical appliance to support his neck.*

application /,æplɪk'keʃ(ə)n/ noun 1. the process of putting a medication or bandage on a body part ○ *Two applications of the lotion should be made each day.* 2. the process of asking officially for something, usually in writing ○ *If you are applying for the job, you must fill in an application form.*

applicator /'æplɪkɪtər/ noun an instrument for applying a substance

appointment /ə'pɔɪntmənt/ noun an arrangement to see someone at a particular time ○ *I have an appointment with the doctor or to see the doctor on Tuesday.*

apposition /,æpə'zɪʃ(ə)n/ noun 1. the relative positioning of two things 2. cell growth in which layers of new material are deposited on existing ones

appraisal /ə'preɪz(ə)l/ noun a judgment or opinion on something or somebody, especially one which decides how effective or useful they are

apprehension /,æpri'hɛnʃən/ noun a feeling of anxiety or fear that something bad or unpleasant will happen

approach /ə'prəʊʃ/ noun 1. a way of dealing with a problem ○ *The authority has adopted a radical approach to the problem of patient waiting lists.* 2. a method used by a surgeon when carrying out an operation

approve /ə'pru:v/ verb □ **to approve of something** to think that something is good ○ *I don't approve of patients staying in bed.* ○ *The Medical Council does not approve of this new treatment.*

apraxia /eɪ'præksɪə/ noun a condition in which someone is unable to make proper movements

apyprexia /,eɪpər'reksiə/ *noun* the absence of fever

apyprexiāl /,eɪpər'reksɪəl/ *adjective* no longer having any fever

aqua /'ækwə/ *noun* water

aqueduct /'ækwidʌkt/ *noun* a tube which carries fluid from one part of the body to another

aqueduct of Sylvius /,ækwidʌkt əv 'sɪlvɪəs/ *noun* same as **cerebral aqueduct**

aqueous /'eɪkwɪəs, 'ækwɪəs/ *adjective* referring to a solution made with water ■ *noun* a fluid in the eye between the lens and the cornea

aqueous humour /,eɪkwɪəs 'hju:mə/ *noun* same as **aqueous**. see illustration at **EYE** in Supplement

AR *abbr* attributable risk

arachidonic acid /ə,rækɪdɒnɪk 'æsɪd/ *noun* an essential fatty acid

arachnidism /'ə'ræknɪdɪz(ə)m/ *noun* poisoning by the bite of a spider

arachnodactyly /ə,ræknəʊ'dæktɪli/ *noun* a congenital condition in which the fingers and toes are long and thin

arachnoid /ə'ræknɔɪd/ *noun* the middle of the three membranes covering the brain. ♀ **dura mater**

arachnoiditis /ə,ræknɔɪ'daɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the arachnoid

arachnoid mater /ə'ræknɔɪd ,meɪtə/, **arachnoid membrane** /ə'ræknɔɪd ,membreɪn/ *noun* same as **arachnoid**

arachnoid villi /ə,ræknɔɪd 'vɪlɪ/ *plural noun* villi in the arachnoid which absorb cerebrospinal fluid

arborisation /,a:bərəɪ'zeɪʃ(ə)n/, **arborization** *noun* the branching ends of some nerve fibres, of a motor nerve in muscle fibre or of venules, capillaries and arterioles

arbor vitae /,a:bə 'vaitɪ/ *noun* the structure of the cerebellum or of the uterus which looks like a tree

arbovirus /'a:bəvəs,vairəs/ *noun* a virus transmitted by blood-sucking insects

arc /a:k/ *noun* 1. a nerve pathway 2. part of a curved structure in the body

ARC *abbr* AIDS-related complex or AIDS-related condition

arc eye /'a:k aɪ/ *noun* temporary painful blindness caused by ultraviolet rays, especially in arc welding

arch /a:tʃ/ *noun* a curved part of the body, especially under the foot

arch- /a:tʃ/ *prefix* chief, most important

arcuate /'a:kjʊət/ *adjective* arched

arcuate artery /'a:kjʊət ,a:təri/ *noun* a curved artery in the foot or kidney

arcuate ligaments /'a:kjʊət ,a:təri/ *plural noun* three ligaments forming a fibrous arch to which the diaphragm is attached

arcus /'ɑ:kəs/ *noun* an arch

arcus senilis /,ɑ:kəs sə'nailɪs/ *noun* an opaque circle around the cornea of the eye which can develop in old age

ARDS /a:dz/ *abbr* adult respiratory distress syndrome

areata /,æri'eɪtə/ *noun* ♀ **alopecia areata**

areola /'ə:rɪ'ələ/ *noun* 1. the coloured part round a nipple 2. in the eye, the part of the iris closest to the pupil

areolar tissue /'ə:rɪ'ələ ,tɪ'sju:/ *noun* a type of connective tissue

arginine /'a:dʒɪnɪ:n/ *noun* an amino acid which helps the liver form urea

argon laser /'a:gɒn ,leɪzə/ *noun* a laser used in sealing blood vessels and destroying specific lesions

Argyll Robertson pupil /a:,garl 'rɒbətson ,pjʊ:p(ə)/ *noun* a condition of the eye, in which the lens is able to focus but the pupil does not react to light. It is a symptom of tertiary syphilis or of locomotor ataxia.

arboflaviosis /eɪ,raibəfleɪvɪ'nəʊsɪs/ *noun* a condition caused by not having enough vitamin B₂. The symptoms are very oily skin and hair and small cuts in the mouth.

arm /a:m/ *noun* the part of the body from the shoulder to the hand, formed of the upper arm, the elbow and the forearm ○ *She broke her arm* skiing. ○ *Lift your arms up above your head.* (NOTE: For other terms referring to the arm see words beginning with **brachi-**, **brachio-**.)

arm bones /'a:m bəonz/ *plural noun* the humerus, the ulna and the radius

armpit /'a:mpɪt/ *noun* the hollow under the shoulder, between the upper arm and the body, where the upper arm joins the shoulder, containing several important blood vessels, lymph nodes and sweat glands. Also called **axilla**

arm sling /'a:m slɪŋ/ *noun* a support for an injured arm that prevents it from moving by tying it against the chest

Arnold-Chiari malformation /,a:nəld ki 'eəri mælfɔ:,meɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a congenital condition in which the base of the skull is malformed, allowing parts of the cerebellum into the spinal canal [Described 1894. After Julius A. Arnold (1835–1915), Professor of Pathological Anatomy at Heidelberg, Germany, and Hans von Chiari (1851–1916), Professor of Pathological Anatomy at Strasbourg and later at Prague, Czech Republic.]

aromatherapist /ə,rəʊmə'θerəpɪst/ *noun* a person specialising in aromatherapy

aromatherapy /ə,rəʊmə'θerəpi/ *noun* treatment to relieve tension and promote wellbeing in which fragrant oils and creams containing plant extracts are massaged into the skin

arousal /ə'raʊz(ə)/ *noun* 1. feelings and physical signs of sexual desire 2. the act of

waking up from sleep, unconsciousness or a drowsy state

arrector pili /ə,rek'tər 'pailə ,mʌs(ə)/ noun a small muscle which contracts and makes the hair on the skin stand up when someone is cold or afraid

arrest /ə'rest/ noun the stopping of a bodily function. ◊ **cardiac arrest**

arrhythmia /ə'rɪðmɪə/ noun a variation in the rhythm of the heartbeat

'Cardiovascular effects may include atrial arrhythmias but at 30°C there is the possibility of spontaneous ventricular fibrillation' [British Journal of Nursing]

arrhythmic /ə'rɪðmɪk/ adjective (of a heart-beat or breathing) rhythmically irregular. ◊ **antiarrhythmic**

arsenic /'ɑ:snɪk/ noun a chemical element which forms poisonous compounds such as arsenic trioxide and which was formerly used in some medicines (NOTE: The chemical symbol is As.)

ART abbr assisted reproductive technology

artefact /'ɑ:tɪfækt/ noun something which is made or introduced artificially

arter- /ə:tə/ prefix same as **arterio-** (used before vowels)

arterial /ə:'tɪəriəl/ adjective relating to arteries □ **arterial supply to the brain** the supply of blood to the brain by the internal carotid arteries and the vertebral arteries

arterial bleeding /ə:,tɪəriəl 'bli:dɪŋ/ noun bleeding from an artery

arterial block /ə:'tɪəriəl blɒk/ noun the blocking of an artery by a blood clot

arterial blood /ə:'tɪəriəl blæd/ noun same as oxygenated blood

arterial haemorrhage /ə:,tɪəriəl 'hem(ə)rɪdʒ/ noun a haemorrhage of bright red blood from an artery

arterectomy /ə:,tɪəri'ektəmi/ noun the surgical removal of an artery or part of an artery

arterio- /ə:tɪəriəu/ prefix referring to arteries

arteriogram /ə:'tɪəriəgræm/ noun an X-ray photograph of an artery, taken after injection with an opaque dye

arteriography /ə:,tɪəri'ɒgrəfi/ noun the work of taking X-ray photographs of arteries after injection with an opaque dye

arteriole /ə:tɪəriələ/ noun a very small artery

arteriopathy /ə:,tɪəri'ɒpəθi/ noun a disease of an artery

arterioplasty /ə:'tɪəriəplæsti/ noun plastic surgery to make good a damaged or blocked artery

arteriorrhaphy /ə:,tɪəri'ɔ:rəfɪ/ noun the act of stitching an artery

arteriosclerosis /ə:,tɪəriəsklə'rəʊsɪs/ noun the arterial disease atherosclerosis (dated)

arteriosus /ə:,tɪəri'əʊsəs/ noun ♀ **ductus arteriosus**

arteriotomy /ə:,tɪəri'ɒtəmi/ noun a puncture made in the wall of an artery

arteriovenous /ə:,tɪəriəv'vi:nəs/ adjective referring to both an artery and a vein

arteritis /ə:tə'raɪtɪs/ noun inflammation of the walls of an artery

artery /ə:təri/ noun a blood vessel taking blood from the heart to the tissues of the body

COMMENT: In most arteries the blood has been oxygenated in the lungs and is bright red in colour. In the pulmonary artery, the blood is deoxygenated and so is darker. The arterial system begins with the aorta which leaves the heart and from which all the arteries branch.

arthr- /ə:θrə/ prefix same as **arthro-** (used before vowels)

arthralgia /ə:'θrældʒə/ noun pain in a joint

arthrectomy /ə:'θrektəmɪ/ noun the surgical removal of a joint

arthritic /ə:'θrɪtɪk/ adjective affected by or relating to arthritis □ *She has an arthritic hip.*

■ noun a person suffering from arthritis

arthritis /ə:'θraɪtɪs/ noun a painful inflammation of a joint. ◊ **osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, reactive arthritis**

arthro- /ə:θrə/ prefix referring to a joint

arthroclasis /ə:θrə'u'kleɪzə/ noun removal of ankylosis in a joint

arthrodesis /ə:θrə'u'di:sɪs/ noun a surgical operation in which a joint is fused in position, so preventing pain from movement

arthrodynia /ə:θrə'u'dɪniə/ noun pain in a joint

arthrogram /'ə:θrəugræm/ noun an X-ray of the inside of a damaged joint

arthrography /ə:'θrəgrəfi/ noun X-ray photography of a joint

arthrogryposis /,ə:θrəugrɪ'pəʊsɪs/ noun a group of disorders in which movement becomes progressively restricted

arthropathy /ə:'θrəpəθi/ noun a disease in a joint

arthroplasty /'ə:θrəoplæsti/ noun a surgical operation to repair or replace a joint

arthroscope /'ə:θrəʊskəp/ noun an instrument which is inserted into the cavity of a joint to inspect it

arthroscopy /'ə:θrəskəpi/ noun a procedure to examine the inside of a joint by means of an arthroscope

arthrosis /ə:'θrəʊsɪs/ noun the degeneration of a joint

arthrotomy /ə:'θrətəmɪ/ noun a procedure that involves cutting into a joint to drain pus

articular /ə:'tɪkjʊlə/ adjective referring to joints

articular cartilage /ə:tɪkjʊlə 'kɑ:təlɪdʒ/ noun a layer of cartilage at the end of a bone where it forms a joint with another bone. See

illustration at **BONE STRUCTURE** in Supplement, **SYNOVIAL JOINT** in Supplement

articular facet /ə:tɪkjʊlət 'fæsɪt/ *noun* the point at which a rib articulates with the spine
articular process /ə:tɪkjʊlət 'prəʊses/ *noun* a piece of bone which sticks out of the neural arch in a vertebra and links with the next vertebra

articulate /ə:tɪkju:lət/ *verb* to be linked with another bone in a joint

articulating bone /ə:tɪkju:lətɪŋ bəun/ *noun* a bone which forms a joint

articulating process /ə:tɪkju:lətɪŋ ,prəʊses/ *noun* same as **articular process**

articulation /ə:tɪkju'lɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a joint or series of joints

artificial /ə:tɪfɪʃ(ə)l/ *adjective* 1. made by humans and not a natural part of the body ○ **artificial cartilage** ○ **artificial kidney** ○ **artificial leg** 2. happening not as a natural process but through action by a doctor or another person or a machine ○ **artificial feeding**

artificial insemination /ə:tɪfɪʃ(ə)n/ in ,sem'i:nɛʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the introduction of semen into a woman's uterus by artificial means

artificial insemination by donor /ə:tɪfɪʃ(ə)l insemi,nɛʃ(ə)n bər 'dəʊnər/ *noun* same as **donor insemination**. Abbr **AID**

artificial insemination by husband /ə:tɪfɪʃ(ə)l insemi,nɛʃ(ə)n bər 'hæzbənd/ *noun* artificial insemination using the semen of the husband. Abbr **AIH**

artificial lung /ə:tɪfɪʃ(ə)l 'lʌŋ/ *noun* a machine through which a person's deoxygenated blood is passed to absorb oxygen to take back to the bloodstream

artificial pneumothorax /ə:tɪfɪʃ(ə)l ,nu:ju:məʊθ'θə:ræks/ *noun* a former method of treating tuberculosis, in which air was introduced between the layers of the pleura to make the lung collapse

artificial respiration /ə:tɪfɪʃ(ə)l ,respi'reɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a way of reviving someone who has stopped breathing, e.g. mouth-to-mouth resuscitation

artificial rupture of membranes /ə:tɪfɪʃ(ə)l ,ræptʃər əv 'membrænz/ *noun* the breaking of the amniotic sac with an amni-hook, so releasing the amniotic fluid

artificial ventilation /ə:tɪfɪʃ(ə)l ,ventɪ 'leɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* breathing which is assisted or controlled by a machine

arytenoid /ərɪ'ti:nɔɪd/ *adjective* located at the back of the larynx

arytenoid cartilage /ərɪ'ti:nɔɪd ,kɑ:tɪlɪdʒ/ *noun* a small cartilage at the back of the larynx

arytenoidectomy /ərɪ'ti:nɔɪd'ektəmɪ/ *noun* an operation to remove the arytenoid cartilage

asbestosis /æsbe'stəʊsis/ *noun* a disease of the lungs caused by inhaling asbestos dust

COMMENT: Asbestos was formerly widely used in cement and cladding and other types of fire-proof construction materials. It is now recognised that asbestos dust can cause many lung diseases, leading in some cases to forms of cancer.

ascariasis /,æskə'sræsɪs/ *noun* a disease of the intestine and sometimes the lungs, caused by infestation with *Ascaris lumbricoides*

Ascaris lumbricoides /,æskərɪs ləmbrɪ 'kɔ:di:z/ *noun* a type of large roundworm which is a parasite in the human intestine

ascending /ə'sendɪŋ/ *adjective* going upwards

ascending aorta /ə,sendɪŋ eɪ'ɔ:tə/ *noun* the first section of the aorta as it leaves the heart and turns upwards. Compare **descending aorta**

ascending colon /ə,sendɪŋ 'kəʊlon/ *noun* the first part of the colon which goes up the right side of the body from the caecum. Compare **descending colon**. See illustration at **DIGESTIVE SYSTEM** in Supplement

Aschoff nodules /'æʃof ,nɒdju:lz/, **Aschoff's nodules** /'æʃɒfs ,nɒdju:lz/ *plural noun* nodules which are formed mainly in or near the heart in rheumatic fever

ascites /ə'saitɪz/ *noun* an unusual accumulation of fluid from the blood in the peritoneal cavity, occurring in heart and kidney failure or as a result of malignancy

ascorbic acid /ə,skɔ:bɪk 'æsɪd/ *noun* same as **Vitamin C**

COMMENT: Ascorbic acid is found in fresh fruit, especially oranges and lemons and in vegetables. Lack of Vitamin C can cause anaemia and scurvy.

ASD abbr autistic spectrum disorders

-ase /eɪz, eɪs/ *suffix* enzyme

asepsis /eɪ'sepsi:s/ *noun* the absence of microorganisms which cause infection, usually achieved by sterilisation

aseptic /eɪ'septɪk/ *adjective* sterilised, or involving sterilisation, and therefore without infection

aseptic surgery /eɪ,septɪk 'sɜ:dʒəri/ *noun* surgery using sterilised equipment, rather than relying on antisceptic drugs to kill harmful microorganisms. Compare **antisептическая хирургия**

aseptic technique /eɪ,septɪk tek'nɪ:k/s/ *noun* a method of doing something using sterilised equipment

asexual /eɪ'seクʃuəl/ *adjective* not sexual, not involving sexual intercourse

asexual reproduction /eɪ,sekʃuəl ,rɪ:p्रे 'dʌkʃ(ə)n/ *noun* reproduction of a cell by cloning

Asian flu /,eɪzɪən 'flu:/ *noun* ♦ **flu**

-asis /ə'sɪs/ ♦ **-iasis**

asleep /ə'slɪp/ *adjective* sleeping ○ *The patient is asleep and must not be disturbed.*
(NOTE: Asleep cannot be used in front of a noun:

the patient is asleep but a sleeping patient.) □ she fell asleep she began to sleep □ **fast asleep** sleeping deeply

asparagine /ə'spærədʒɪ:n/ *noun* an amino acid

aspartame /ə'spa:tēm/ *noun* a protein produced from aspartic acid, used to make substances sweeter

aspartate aminotransferase /ə'spa:tēt ə'mi:nəʊ'trænsfəreɪz/ *noun* an enzyme found in heart muscle, liver cells, skeletal muscle cells and some other tissues. It is used in the diagnosis of liver disease and heart attacks.

aspartic acid /ə'spa:tik 'æsɪd/ *noun* an amino acid

aspect /'æspekt/ *noun* a direction from which the body is viewed, e.g. the view from above is the 'superior aspect'

Asperger's syndrome /'æspɜ:dʒəz ,sɪn drəʊm/ *noun* a developmental disorder characterised by difficulty in social interaction and a restricted range of interests, more common in boys than girls [Described 1944. After Hans Asperger (1906–80), Austrian psychiatrist.]

aspergillosis /,æspɜ:dʒɪ'ləʊsɪs/ *noun* infection of the lungs with the fungus *Aspergillus*

aspermia /eɪ'spɜ:mɪə/ *noun* the absence of sperm in semen

asphyxia /æs'fɪksiə/ *noun* a condition in which someone is prevented from breathing, e.g. by strangulation or breathing poisonous gas, and therefore cannot take oxygen into the bloodstream

asphyxia neonatorum /æs,fɪksɪə ,ni:əʊnərūt'ɔ:rəm/ *noun* failure to breathe in a newborn baby

asphyxiate /æs'fɪksɪeɪt/ *verb* to prevent someone from breathing, or be prevented from breathing □ An unconscious patient may become asphyxiated or may asphyxiate if left lying on his back. □ **suffocate**

asphyxiation /æs,fɪksɪ'eɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the state of being prevented from breathing, or the act of preventing someone from breathing. □ **suffocation**

aspire /'æspɪ'reɪt/ *verb* 1. to remove liquid or gas by suction from a body cavity 2. to inhale something, especially a liquid, into the lungs

aspiration /,æspɪ'reɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* 1. the act of removing fluid from a cavity in the body, often using a hollow needle 2. same as **vacuum suction**

aspiration pneumonia /,æspɪ'reɪʃ(ə)n nju:'məʊnɪə/ *noun* a form of pneumonia in which infected matter is inhaled from the bronchi or oesophagus

aspirator /'æspɪ'reɪtə/ *noun* an instrument used to suck fluid out of a cavity such as the mouth or the site of an operation

aspirin /'æsprɪn/ *noun* a common pain-killer drug, or a tablet containing this drug. Also called **acetylsalicylic acid**

assay /'æsei, ə'sei/ *noun* the testing of a substance. □ **bioassay, immunoassay**

assimilate /ə'simi,leɪt/ *verb* to take into the body's tissues substances which have been absorbed into the blood from digested food

assimilation /ə'simi'læʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the action of assimilating food substances

assistance /ə'sist(ə)ns/ *noun* help

assistant /ə'sist(ə)nt/ *noun* a person who helps someone, usually as a job

assisted conception /ə,sistɪd kən 'sepʃ(ə)n/, **assisted reproduction** /ə,sistɪd ,ri:prou'dʌkʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the use of a technique such as in vitro fertilisation to help someone to become pregnant

assisted respiration /ə,sistɪd ,respa'reɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the use of a machine to help breathing

assisted suicide /ə,sistɪd 'su:isaid/ *noun* the suicide of someone who is terminally ill with the help of a doctor or friend at the request of the person who is dying

associate /ə'səusɪet/ *verb* to be related to or connected with something □ *side effects which may be associated with the drug* □ *The condition is often associated with diabetes.*

associate nurse /ə,səʊsi:t 'nɜ:s/ *noun* a nurse who assists a primary nurse by carrying out agreed care for someone based on a plan designed by a primary nurse

association area /ə,səʊsi'eɪʃ(ə)n ,eəriə/ *noun* an area of the cortex of the brain which is concerned with relating stimuli coming from different sources

association neuron /ə,səʊsi'eɪʃ(ə)n ,njuərən/ *noun* a neuron which links an association area to the main parts of the cortex

association tract /ə,səʊsi'eɪʃ(ə)n trækɪt/ *noun* one of the tracts which link areas of the cortex in the same cerebral hemisphere

asthenia /æs'θi:nɪə/ *noun* a condition in which someone is weak and does not have any strength

asthenic /æs'θenɪk/ *adjective* referring to a general condition in which someone has no strength and no interest in things

asthenopia /æsθi'nəʊpiə/ *noun* same as **eyestrain**

asthma /'æsmə/ *noun* a lung condition characterised by narrowing of the bronchial tubes, in which the muscles go into spasm and the person has difficulty breathing. □ **cardiac asthma**

asthmatic /æs'mætɪk/ *adjective* having the lung disease asthma, or relating to asthma □ *He has an asthmatic attack every spring.* □ **acute asthmatic attack** a sudden attack of asthma ■ *noun* a person who has asthma

asthmatic bronchitis /æs'mætɪk brɒn'kɑ:tɪs/ *noun* asthma associated with bronchitis

asthmaticus /æs'mætɪkəs/ *adjective* □ **status asthmaticus**

astigmatic /æstɪg'mætɪk/ *adjective* referring to astigmatism □ **he is astigmatic** he has astigmatism

astigmatism /æ'stɪg'mætɪz(ə)m/ *noun* a condition in which the eye cannot focus vertical and horizontal lines simultaneously, leading to blurring of vision

astragalus /æ'strægələs/ *noun* an old name for the talus (anklebone)

astringent /ə'strɪndʒənt/ *noun* a substance which makes the skin tissues contract and harden ■ *adjective* referring to an astringent

astrocyte /'æstrəsait/ *noun* a star-shaped cell of the connective tissue of the nervous system

astrocytoma /,æstrəsai'təʊmə/ *noun* a type of brain tumour which develops slowly in the connective tissue of the nervous system

asymmetric /,æsɪ'metrik/ *adjective* shaped or arranged so that the two sides do not match or balance each other

asymmetry /æ'simətri/ *noun* a state in which the two sides of the body or of an organ do not resemble each other

asymptomatic /,eɪsɪmptə'mætɪk/ *adjective* not showing any symptoms of disease

asyncitism /æ'sɪŋklɪtɪz(ə)m/ *noun* in childbirth, a situation in which the head of the baby enters the vagina at an angle

asynergia /,æsɪ'nɜ:dʒə/, **asynergy** /æ'sɪnədʒɪ/ *noun* awkward movements and bad coordination, caused by a disorder of the cerebellum. Also called **dyssynergia**

asytole /eɪ'sistəli/ *noun* a state in which the heart has stopped beating

ataractic /ætə'rækτɪk/ *noun* a drug which has a calming effect ■ *adjective* calming

ataraxia /,ætə'ræksiə/, **ataraxis** /,ætə'ræksɪs/ *noun* the state of being calm and not worrying

ataraxic /ætə'ræksɪk/ *noun*, *adjective* same as **ataractic**

ataxia /ə'tæksiə/ *noun* a failure of the brain to control movements

ataxic /ə'tæksɪk/ *adjective* having ataxia, or relating to ataxia

ataxic gait /ə,tæksɪk 'geɪt/ *noun* a way of walking in which the person walks unsteadily due to a disorder of the nervous system

ataxy /ə'tæksi/ *noun* same as **ataxia**

atelectasis /,ætə'lektəsɪs/ *noun* the failure of a lung to expand properly

atenolol /ə'tenəlɒl/ *noun* a drug used in controlling blood pressure and angina

arteriovenous malformation /ɑ:tɪəriəvən'vi:nəs mælfɔ:r'meɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a condition in

which the arteries and veins in the brain are not properly formed, leading to strokes or epilepsy. Abbr **AVM**

atherogenesis /,æθərəʊ'dʒenəsɪs/ *noun* the formation of fatty deposits (**atheromas**) in arteries

atherogenic /,æθərəʊ'dʒenɪk/ *adjective* referring to something which may produce atheroma

atheroma /,æθə'rəʊmə/ *noun* thickening of the walls of an artery by deposits of a fatty substance such as cholesterol

atheromatous /,æθə'rɒmətəs/ *adjective* referring to atheroma

atherosclerosis /,æθərəʊsklə'rəʊsɪs/ *noun* a condition in which deposits of fats and minerals form on the walls of an artery, especially the aorta or one of the coronary or cerebral arteries, and prevent blood from flowing easily

atherosclerotic /,æθərəʊsklə'rɒtɪk/ *adjective* referring to atherosclerosis

atherosclerotic plaque /,æθərəʊsklərɒtɪk 'plæk/ *noun* a deposit on the walls of arteries

athetosis /,æθə'təʊsɪs/ *noun* repeated slow movements of the limbs, caused by a brain disorder such as cerebral palsy

athlete's foot /,æθəli:t's 'fʊt/ *noun* an infectious skin disorder between the toes, caused by a fungus. Also called **tinea pedis**

atlas /'ætləs/ *noun* the top vertebra in the spine, which supports the skull and pivots on the axis or second vertebra

atmospheric pressure /,ætməsferɪk 'pre:sɪ/ *noun* the pressure of the air on the surface of the Earth

COMMENT: Disorders due to variations in atmospheric pressure include mountain sickness and caisson diseases.

atomic cocktail /ə,tɒmɪk 'kɒkteil/ *noun* a radioactive substance in liquid form, used to diagnose or treat cancer (*informal*)

atomiser /'ætəmaɪzə/ *noun* an instrument which sprays liquid in the form of very small drops like mist. Also called **nebuliser**

tonic /eɪ'tonɪk/ *adjective* referring to lack of muscle tone or tension

atonny /'ætəni/ *noun* a lack of tone or tension in the muscles

atopen /'ætəpen/ *noun* an allergen which causes an atopy

atopic /eɪ'tɒpɪk/ *adjective* referring to conditions arising from an inherited tendency to react to specific allergens, as in hay fever, some skin conditions and asthma

atopic eczema /eɪ,tɒpɪk 'eksɪmə/, **atopic dermatitis** /eɪ,tɒpɪk dɜ:ma'taɪtɪs/ *noun* a type of eczema often caused by a hereditary allergy

atopy /'ætəpi/ *noun* a hereditary allergic reaction

ATP abbr adenosine triphosphate

atracurium /æ'trə'kjʊəriəm/ *noun* a drug used as a relaxant

atresia /ə'tri:ziə/ *noun* an unusual closing or absence of a tube in the body

atretic /ə'tretɪk/ *adjective* referring to atresia

atretic follicle /ə'tretɪk 'fɒlik(ə)l/ *noun* the scarred remains of an ovarian follicle

atri- /eɪtri/ *prefix* referring to an atrium

atria /eɪtrɪə/ plural of **atrium**

atrial /'eɪtriəl/ *adjective* referring to one or both of the atria of the heart

atrial fibrillation /'eɪtriəl fai'bri'lɛf(ə)n/ *noun* a rapid uncoordinated fluttering of the atria of the heart, which causes an irregular heartbeat

atrial septal defect /,eɪtriəl 'sept(ə)l ,di:fekt/ *noun* a congenital condition in which a hole in the wall between the two atria of the heart allows blood to flow through the heart and lungs. Compare **ventricular septal defect**

atrioventricular /,eɪtriə'ven'trɪkjʊlə/ *adjective* referring to the atria and ventricles

atrioventricular bundle /,eɪtriə'ven'trɪkjʊlə 'bʌnd(ə)l/ *noun* a bundle of modified cardiac muscle which conducts impulses from the atrioventricular node to the septum and then divides to connect with the ventricles. Also called **AV bundle, bundle of His**

atrioventricular groove /,eɪtriə'ven'trɪkjʊlə 'gru:v/ *noun* a groove round the outside of the heart, showing the division between the atria and ventricles

atrioventricular node /ætriə'ven'trɪkjʊlə nəd/ *noun* a mass of conducting tissue in the right atrium of the heart, which continues as the atrioventricular bundle and passes impulses from the atria to the ventricles. Also called **AV node**

at-risk /ət 'rɪsk/ *adjective* exposed to danger or harm of some kind ○ *at-risk children*

atrium /'eɪtriəm/ *noun* 1. one of the two upper chambers in the heart. See illustration at **HEART** in Supplement 2. 2. a cavity in the ear behind the eardrum (NOTE: The plural is **atria**.)

COMMENT: The two atria in the heart both receive blood from veins. The right atrium receives venous blood from the superior and inferior vena cavae and the left atrium receives oxygenated blood from the pulmonary veins.

atrophic cirrhosis /æ'trɒfɪk sɪ'rəʊsɪs/ *noun* advanced portal cirrhosis in which the liver has become considerably smaller and clumps of new cells are formed on the surface of the liver where fibrous tissue has replaced damaged liver cells. Also called **hobnail liver**

atrophic gastritis /æ'trɒfɪk gæ'straitɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the stomach caused by being unable to produce enough acid to kill bacteria

atrophic vaginitis /æ'trɒfɪk, vædʒɪ'nɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation, thinning and shrinking of

the tissues of the vagina caused by a lack of oestrogen

atrophy /'ætrəfi/ *noun* the wasting of an organ or part of the body ■ *verb (of an organ or part of the body)* to waste away

atropine /'ætrəpi:n/ *noun* an alkaloid substance derived from the poisonous plant belladonna and used, among other things, to enlarge the pupil of the eye, to reduce salivary and bronchial secretions during anaesthesia and as a muscarinic antagonist

ATS /eɪ ti: 'es/ *abbr* antitetanus serum

attack /ə'tæk/ *noun* a sudden occurrence of an illness ○ *He had an attack of fever. ○ She had two attacks of laryngitis during the winter.*

attempted suicide /ə'temptɪd 'su:said/ *noun* an unsuccessful attempt to kill oneself

attending physician /,ə,tendɪŋ fɪ'zɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a doctor who is looking after a particular patient ○ *He was referred to the hypertension unit by his attending physician.*

attention deficit disorder /ə,tenshən 'de:fɪsɪt ,dɪs/ *noun* a condition in which a person is unable to concentrate, does things without considering their actions properly and has little confidence. It occurs mainly in children. Abbr **ADD**

attention deficit hyperactivity disorder /ə,tenshən ,defɪsɪt ,haɪpəræk'tɪviti dɪs ,sɔ:də/ *noun* a condition in which a child has an inability to concentrate and shows disruptive behaviour. Abbr **ADHD**

attention deficit syndrome /ə,tenshən 'sɪndrəʊm/ *noun* same as **attention deficit disorder**

attenuation /ə,tenju'eɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a reduction in the effect or strength of something such as a virus, either because of environmental conditions or as a result of a laboratory procedure

atticotomy /,ætɪ'kɒtəmɪ/ *noun* the removal of the wall in the inner ear. Also called **cortical mastoidectomy**

attitude /'ættɪtju:d/ *noun* 1. an opinion or general feeling about something ○ *a positive attitude towards the operation* 2. a way of standing or sitting

attributable risk /ə,tribjʊtəb(ə)l 'rɪsk/ *noun* a measure of the excess risk of disease due to exposure to a particular risk. The excess risk of bacteriuria in oral contraceptive users attributable to the use of oral contraceptives is 1,566 per 100,000. Abbr **AR**

attrition /ə'trɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the condition of being worn away, as may be caused by friction ○ *Examination showed attrition of two extensor tendons.*

atypical /eɪ'tipi:k(ə)l/ *adjective* not usual or expected ○ *an atypical renal cyst*

audi- /ɔ:di/ *prefix* same as **audio-** (*used before vowels*)

audible limits /ə:dəb(ə)l 'limits/ *plural noun* upper and lower limits of the sound frequencies which can be heard by humans

audio- /ə:diəʊ/ *prefix* referring to hearing or sound

audiogram /'ɔ:diəʊgræm/ *noun* a graph drawn by an audiometer

audiologist /,ɔ:di'ɒlədʒɪst/ *noun* a specialist who deals in the treatment of hearing disorders

audiology /,ɔ:di'ɒlədʒi/ *noun* the scientific study of hearing, especially for diagnosing and treating hearing loss

audiometer /,ɔ:di'ɒmɪtə/ *noun* an apparatus for testing hearing, especially for testing the range of sounds that the human ear can detect
audiometry /,ɔ:di'ɒmətri/ *noun* the science of testing hearing

audit /'ɔ:dit/ *noun* a check on figures, scientific data or procedures ◻ *a medical audit regarding the outpatient appointment system*

audit cycle /'ɔ:dit ,sərk(ə)l/ *noun* the cycle in which medical topics are selected for review, observation and comparison with agreed standards and changes are decided on

auditory /'ɔ:dit(ə)ri/ *adjective* relating to hearing

auditory acuity /,ɔ:dit(ə)ri ə'kjy:utɪ/ *noun* the ability to hear sounds clearly

auditory canals /,ɔ:dit(ə)ri kə'nelz/ *plural noun* the external and internal passages of the ear

auditory nerve /'ɔ:dit(ə)ri nɜ:v/ *noun* the eighth cranial nerve which governs hearing and balance. See illustration at **EAR** in Supplement. Also called **vestibulocochlear nerve**

auditory ossicles /,ɔ:dit(ə)ri 'ɒsɪk(ə)lz/ *plural noun* the three little bones, the malleus, incus and stapes, in the middle ear

Auerbach's plexus /auərbɑ:ks 'pleksəs/ *noun* a group of nerve fibres in the intestine wall [Described 1862. After Leopold Auerbach (1828–97), Professor of Neuropathology at Breslau, now in Poland.]

aura /'ɔ:rə/ *noun* a warning sensation which is experienced before an attack of epilepsy, migraine or asthma

aural /'ɔ:rəl/ *adjective* referring to the ear

aural polyp /,ɔ:rəl 'polip/ *noun* a polyp in the middle ear

aural surgery /,ɔ:rəl 'sɜ:dʒəri/ *noun* surgery on the ear

auricle /'ɔ:rik(ə)l/ *noun* the tip of each atrium in the heart

auriculae /ɔ:'rikjʊli:/ ♦ **concha auriculae**

auricular /ɔ:'rikjʊlər/ *adjective* 1. referring to the ear 2. referring to an auricle

auricular vein /ɔ:'rikjʊlər vɪn/ *noun* a vein which leads into the posterior facial vein

auriscope /'ɔ:riskəʊp/ *noun* an instrument for examining the ear and eardrum. Also called **otoscope**

auscultation /,ɔ:skəl'teɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the act of listening to the sounds of the body using a stethoscope

auscultatory /ɔ:'skʌltət(ə)rɪ/ *adjective* referring to auscultation

Australia antigen /ɔ:'streiliə ,æntɪdʒən/ *noun* an antigen produced on the surface of liver cells infected with the hepatitis B virus

autism /'ɔ:tɪz(ə)m/ *noun* a condition developing in childhood, characterised by difficulty in social interaction, language and communication problems, learning difficulties and obsessional repetitive behaviour (NOTE: Autism is more common in boys than in girls.)

autistic /ɔ:'tɪstɪk/ *adjective* affected by, or relating to, autism

autistic spectrum disorders /ɔ:,tɪstɪk ,spekt्रəm dɪs'ɔ:dzəz/ *plural noun* autism in all its different forms and degrees of severity. Abbreviation **ASD**

auto- /ɔ:təʊ/ *prefix* self

autoantibody /,ɔ:təʊ'æntɪbɒdi/ *noun* an antibody formed to attack antigens in the body's own cells

autoclavable /'ɔ:təʊ,kleɪvəb(ə)l/ *adjective* able to be sterilised in an autoclave ◻ *Waste should be put into autoclavable plastic bags.*

autoclave /'ɔ:təʊklɛɪv/ *noun* equipment for sterilising surgical instruments using heat under high pressure █ *verb* to sterilise equipment using heat under high pressure ◻ *Autoclaving is the best method of sterilisation.*

autogenous /ɔ:'tɒdʒənəs/, **autogenic** /,ɔ:təʊ'dʒenɪk/ *adjective* produced either in the person's body, or using tissue from the person's own body ◻ *an autogenous vein graft*

autograft /'ɔ:təgræft/ *noun* a transplant made using parts of the person's own body

autoimmune /,ɔ:təʊ'mju:n/ *adjective* referring to an immune reaction in a person against antigens in their own cells

autoimmune disease /,ɔ:təʊ,mju:n ɪd'zi:z/ *noun* a disease in which the person's own cells are attacked by autoantibodies ◻ *Rheumatoid arthritis is thought to be an autoimmune disease.*

autoimmunisation /,ɔ:təʊ,imjʊnɪzə'zeɪʃ(ə)n/, **autoimmunization** *noun* the process leading to an immune reaction in a person to antigens produced in their own body

autoimmunity /,ɔ:təʊ'mju:nɪti/ *noun* a condition in which a person's own cells are attacked by autoantibodies

autoinfection /,ɔ:təʊfɪn'ekʃ(ə)n/ *noun* an infection by a microorganism already in the body, or infection of one part of the body by another part

autointoxication /ɔ:təʊntɒksɪ'keɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the poisoning of the body by toxins produced in the body itself

autologous /ɔ:t'ɒləgəs/ *adjective* referring to a graft or other material coming from the same source

autologous transfusion /ɔ:t, trələgəs træns'fju:z(ə)n/ *noun* a blood transfusion in which the blood is removed from the body for later transfusion after an operation. ◇ **transfusion**

autolysis /ɔ:t'ɒləsɪs/ *noun* a situation in which cells destroy themselves with their own enzymes

automatic /ɔ:tə'mætɪk/ *adjective* 1. done without conscious thought ◇ *an automatic reaction* 2. *(of a machine or process)* able to work by itself, without anyone giving instructions

automatism /ɔ:t'ɒmætɪz(ə)m/ *noun* a state in which a person acts without consciously knowing that he or she is acting

COMMENT: Automatic acts can take place after concussion or epileptic fits. In law, automatism can be a defence to a criminal charge when the accused states that he or she acted without knowing what they were doing.

autonomic /ɔ:tə'nɒmɪk/ *adjective* governing itself independently

autonomic nervous system /ɔ:tə,nɒmɪk 'nɜ:vəs ,sɪstəm/ *noun* the nervous system formed of ganglia linked to the spinal column. It regulates the automatic functioning of the main organs such as the heart and lungs and works when a person is asleep or even unconscious. ◇ **parasympathetic nervous system, sympathetic nervous system**

autonomy /ɔ:t'nəməti/ *noun* the state of being free to act as one wishes

autoplasty /ɔ:təplæsti/ *noun* the repair of someone's body using tissue taken from another part of their body

autopsy /'ɔ:tɒpsi/ *noun* the examination of a dead body by a pathologist to find out the cause of death ◇ *The autopsy showed that he had been poisoned.* Also called **post mortem**

autosomal /,ɔ:təʊ'səʊm(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to an autosome

autosome /'ɔ:təʊsəʊm/ *noun* a chromosome that is not a sex chromosome

autotransfusion /,ɔ:tətræns'fju:z(ə)n/ *noun* an infusion into a person of their own blood

auxiliary /ɔ:g'ziliəri/ *adjective* providing help ◇ *The hospital has an auxiliary power supply in case the electricity supply breaks down.* ■ *noun* an assistant

avascular /eɪ'veskjʊlər/ *adjective* with no blood vessels, or with a deficient blood supply

avascular necrosis /eɪ'veskjʊlər ne 'krəʊsɪs/ *noun* a condition in which tissue cells die because their supply of blood has been cut

AV bundle /eɪ 'vi: 'bʌnd(ə)l/ *noun* same as **atrioventricular bundle**

average /'æv(ə)rɪdʒ/ *noun* 1. the usual amount, size, rate, etc. ◇ *Her weight is above (the) average.* 2. a value calculated by adding together several quantities and then dividing the total by the number of quantities ■ *adjective* 1. usual ◇ *Their son is of above average weight.* 2. calculated by adding together several quantities and then dividing the total by the number of quantities ◇ *The average age of the group is 25.*

aversion therapy /ə'vɜ:sʃ(ə)n, ə'verəpi/ *noun* a treatment by which someone is cured of a type of behaviour by making him or her develop a great dislike for it

avitaminosis /eɪ,vitə'mi:n'əʊsɪs/ *noun* a disorder caused by a lack of vitamins

AVM *abbr* arteriovenous malformation

AV node /,eɪ 'vi: nəd/ *noun* same as **atrioventricular node**

AVPU *noun* a method of rating if a person is conscious: A = alert; V = verbal, responding to verbal commands; P = pain, responding to pain; U = unconscious

avulse /ə'vʌls/ *verb* to tear tissue or a body part away by force

avulsion /ə'vʌlʃən/ *noun* an act of pulling away tissue or a body part by force

avulsion fracture /ə, vʌlf(ə)n 'frækʃə/ *noun* a fracture in which a tendon pulls away part of the bone to which it is attached

awake /ə'weɪk/ *adjective* not asleep ◇ *He was still awake at 2 o'clock in the morning.* □ **wide awake** very awake

aware /ə'weə/ *adjective* 1. conscious enough to know what is happening ◇ *She is not aware of what is happening around her.* 2. knowing about something ◇ *The surgeon became aware of a problem with the heart-lung machine.*

awareness /ə'weənəs/ *noun* the fact of being aware, especially of a problem

'...doctors should use the increased public awareness of whooping cough during epidemics to encourage parents to vaccinate children' [Health Visitor]

axial /'æksiəl/ *adjective* referring to an axis

axial skeleton /,æksiəl 'skelɪt(ə)n/ *noun* the bones that make up the vertebral column and the skull. Compare **appendicular skeleton**

axilla /æk'sɪlə/ *noun* same as **armpit (technical)** (NOTE: The plural is **axillae**.)

axillary /æk'sɪləri/ *adjective* referring to the armpit

axillary artery /æk,sɪləri 'a:təri/ *noun* an artery leading from the subclavian artery in the armpit

axillary nodes /æk'sɪləri nəʊdz/ *plural noun* part of the lymphatic system in the arm

axillary temperature /æk,sɪləri 'temprɪ 'tʃə/ *noun* the temperature in the armpit

axis /'ækſɪs/ *noun* 1. an imaginary line through the centre of the body 2. a central vessel which divides into other vessels 3. the second vertebra on which the atlas sits (NOTE: The plural is **axes**.)

axodendrite /,æksəʊ'dendrɪt/ *noun* an appendage like a fibril on the axon of a nerve

axolemma /,æksə'lɛmə/ *noun* a membrane covering an axon

axon /'ækſən/ *noun* a nerve fibre which sends impulses from one neurone to another, linking with the dendrites of the other neurone. See illustration at **NEURONE** in Supplement

axon covering /'ækſən ,kʌv(ə)rɪŋ/ *noun* the myelin sheath which covers a nerve

Ayurvedic medicine /,aɪrveɪdɪk 'med(ə)s(ə)n/ *noun* a traditional Hindu system of healing that reviews a person's state of health and lifestyle and recommends treatment based on herbal products, dietary control and spiritual practices

azathioprine /,eɪzə'θaɪəpri:n/ *noun* a drug which suppresses the immune response, used after transplant surgery to prevent rejection

-azepam /æzɪpæm/ *suffix* used in names of benzodiazepines ◉ **diazepam**

azidothymidine /,eɪzɪdəʊ'θaɪmɪdɪ:n/ *noun* a drug used in the treatment of AIDS. Abbr **AZT**. Also called **zidovudine**

azo- /eɪzəʊ/ *prefix* containing a nitrogen group

azoospermia /,eɪzəʊə'spɜ:mɪə/ *noun* the absence of sperm

azotaemia /,eɪzəʊ'u'ti:miə/ *noun* the presence of urea or other nitrogen compounds in the blood

azoturia /,eɪzəʊ'tjuəriə/ *noun* the presence of urea or other nitrogen compounds in the urine, caused by kidney disease

AZT abbr azidothymidine

azygous /'æzɪgəs/ *adjective* single, not one of a pair

azygous vein /'æzɪgəs veɪn/ *noun* a vein which brings blood back into the vena cava from the abdomen

B

babesiosis /ba:bis'iəʊsis/ *noun* a disease caused by infection of red blood cells by a protozoan introduced by a tick bite

Babinski reflex /ba:binski 'ri:fleks/, **Babinski's reflex** /ba:binskiz 'ri:fleks/ *noun* an unusual curling upwards of the big toe when a finger is lightly run across the sole of the foot, while the others turn down and spread out, a sign of hemiplegia and pyramidal tract disease. Compare **plantar reflex** [Described 1896. After Joseph François Félix Babinski (1857–1932), French-born son of Polish refugees. A pupil of Charcot, he was head of the Neurological clinic at Hôpital de la Pitié, 1890–1927.]

Babinski test /ba:binski test/ *noun* a test for a Babinski reflex

baby /'beɪbi/ *noun* a very young child who is not yet old enough to talk or walk ○ *Babies start to walk when they are about 12 months old.* (NOTE: If you do not know the sex of a baby you can refer to the child as *it*: *The baby was sucking its thumb*)

baby blues /'beɪbi blu:z/ *plural noun* same as **postnatal depression** (*informal*)

baby care /'beɪbi keə/ *noun* the act of looking after babies

baby clinic /'beɪbi ,klinɪk/ *noun* a special clinic which deals with babies

bacillaemia /,bæst'lɪ:mɪə/ *noun* an infection of the blood by bacilli

bacillary /ba:sɪlərɪ/ *adjective* referring to bacilli

bacillary dysentery /ba:sɪlərɪ 'dɪs(ə)ntri/ *noun* dysentery caused by the bacillus *Shigella* in contaminated food

bacille Calmette-Guérin /bæ:silə 'kælmɛt 'gærən/ *noun* full form of **BCG** [After A. Calmette (1863–1933) and C. Guérin (1872–1961), French bacteriologists.]

bacilluria /,bæst'ljuərɪə/ *noun* the presence of bacilli in the urine

bacillus /ba:siləs/ *noun* a bacterium shaped like a rod (NOTE: The plural is **bacilli**)

back /bæk/ *noun* 1. the part of the body from the neck downwards to the waist, which is made up of the spine and the bones attached to it (NOTE: For other terms referring to the back,

see **dorsal** and words beginning with **dorsi-**, **dorso-**) 2. the other side from the front ○ *She has a swelling on the back of her hand.* ◊ **dorsum**

backache /'bækək/ *noun* pain in the back, often without a specific cause

COMMENT: Backache can result from bad posture or muscle strain, but it can also be caused by rheumatism (lumbago), fevers such as typhoid fever and osteoarthritis. Pains in the back can also be referred pains from gallstones or kidney disease.

backbone /'bækbaʊn/ *noun* a series of bones, the vertebrae, linked together to form a flexible column running from the pelvis to the skull. Also called **rachis, spine**

background carboxyhaemoglobin level /,bækgraʊnd 'ka:bɔksi hɪ:mə'gləʊbɪn 'lev(ə)l/ *noun* the level of carboxyhaemoglobin in the blood of a person who is not exposed to high levels of carbon monoxide

back muscles /'bæk ,mʌs(ə)lz/ *plural noun* the strong muscles in the back which help hold the body upright

back pain /'bæk peɪn/ *noun* pain in the back, especially long-lasting or severe pain

backside /'bæksaɪd/ *noun* someone's buttocks (*informal*)

back strain /'bæk streɪn/ *noun* a condition in which the muscles or ligaments in the back have been strained

baclofen /'bæklaʊfən/ *noun* a drug that relaxes skeletal muscles which are in spasm, either because of injury or as a result of multiple sclerosis

bacteraemia /,bæk'tə'rɪ:mɪə/ *noun* the fact of having bacteria in the blood. Bacteraemia is not necessarily a serious condition. Compare **septicaemia**. ◊ **blood poisoning**

bacteria /bæk'tɪəriə/ *plural* of **bacterium**

bacterial /bæk'tɪəriəl/ *adjective* relating to bacteria or caused by bacteria ○ *Children with sickle-cell anaemia are susceptible to bacterial infection.*

bacterial plaque /bæk'tɪəriəl ,plæk/ *noun* a hard smooth bacterial deposit on teeth

bacterial pneumonia /bæk'tɪəriəl nju: 'mənjuɪə/ *noun* a form of pneumonia caused by pneumococcus. ♦ **bronchopneumonia**

bacterial strain /bæk'tɪəriəl 'streɪn/ *noun* a group of bacteria which are different from others of the same general type

bactericidal /bæk'tɪərɪ'saɪd(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to a substance which destroys bacteria

bactericide /bæk'tɪərɪsaɪd/ *noun* a substance which destroys bacteria

bacteriological /bæk'tɪəriə'lɒdʒɪk(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to bacteriology

bacteriologist /bæk'tɪərɪ'ɒlədʒɪst/ *noun* a doctor who specialises in the study of bacteria

bacteriology /bæk'tɪəri'ɒlɒdʒɪ/ *noun* the scientific study of bacteria

bacteriolysin /bæk'tɪərɪ'ɒlɪsɪn/ *noun* a protein, usually an immunoglobulin, which destroys bacterial cells

bacteriolytic /bæk'tɪərɪ'ɒltɪk/ *adjective* referring to a substance which can destroy bacteria

bacteriophagy /bæk'tɪəriəfæɪdʒ/ *noun* a virus which affects bacteria

bacteriostasis /bæk'tɪəriə'u'steɪsɪs/ *noun* the action of stopping bacteria from multiplying

bacteriostatic /bæk'tɪəriə'u'stætɪk/ *adjective* referring to a substance which does not kill bacteria but stops them from multiplying

bacterium /bæk'tɪəriəm/ *noun* a microscopic organism. Some types are permanently present in the gut and can break down food tissue, but many can cause disease. (NOTE: The plural is **bacteria**.)

COMMENT: Bacteria can be shaped like rods (bacilli), like balls (cocci) or have a spiral form (spirochaetes). Bacteria, especially bacilli and spirochaetes, can move and reproduce very rapidly.

bacteruria /bæk'tɪəri'juəriə/ *noun* a condition in which bacteria are present in the urine

Bactrim /'bæktrɪm/ a trade name for co-trimoxazole

bad breath /'bæd 'breθ/ *noun* same as **halitosis** (*informal*)

Baghdad boil /,baegdæd 'boɪl/, **Baghdad sore** /,baegdæd 'sɔ:/ *noun* a skin disease of tropical countries caused by the parasite *Leishmania*. Also called **Oriental sore**

bag of waters /,baeg əv 'wɔ:təz/ *noun* part of the amniotic fluid which covers an unborn baby in the uterus and contains the amniotic fluid

BAHA *abbr* bone anchored hearing aid

Baker's cyst /,berkəz 'sist/ *noun* a swelling filled with synovial fluid, at the back of the knee, caused by weakness of the joint membrane [Described 1877. After William Morrant

Baker (1838–96), member of staff at St Bartholomew's Hospital, London, UK.]

baker's itch /,berkəz 'ɪtʃ/, **baker's dermatitis** /'berkəz də'ma'taitɪs/ *noun* an irritation of the skin caused by handling yeast

BAL *abbr* British anti-lewisite

balance /'bæləns/ *noun* 1. the act of staying upright, not falling □ **he stood on top of the fence and kept his balance** he did not fall off 2. the proportions of substances in a mixture, e.g. in the diet □ **to maintain a healthy balance of vitamins in the diet**

balanced diet /,bælənst 'daɪət/ *noun* a diet which provides all the nutrients needed in the correct proportions

balance of mind /,bæləns əv 'maɪnd/ *noun* someone's mental state □ **disturbed balance of mind** a state of mind when someone is for a time incapable of reasoned action, because of illness or depression

balanitis /,bælə'naitɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the glans of the penis

balanoposthitis /,bælənəʊpɒs'thaɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the foreskin and the end of the penis

balantidiasis /,bæləntɪdɪ'sɪsɪs/ *noun* an infestation of the large intestine by a parasite *Balantidium coli*, which causes ulceration of the wall of the intestine, leading to diarrhoea and finally dysentery

balanus /'bælənəs/ *noun* the round end of the penis. ♦ **glans**

bald /bɔ:lɪd/ *adjective* with no hair, especially on the head □ **he is going bald or he is becoming bald** he is beginning to lose his hair

baldness /'bɔ:ldnəs/ *noun* the state of not having any hair

COMMENT: Baldness in men is hereditary; it can also occur in both men and women as a reaction to an illness or to a drug.

Balkan frame /,bɔ:lkən 'freɪm/, **Balkan beam** /,bɔ:lkən 'bi:m/ *noun* a frame fitted above a bed to which a leg in plaster can be attached. ♦ **Pearson bed**

ball /bɔ:l/ *noun* 1. the soft part of the hand below the thumb 2. the soft part of the foot below the big toe

ball and cage valve /,bɔ:l ən 'keɪdʒ vəlv/ *noun* an artificial heart valve, formed of a silicon ball which moves inside a metal cage to open and shut the valve

ball and socket joint /,bɔ:l ən 'spɒkɪt dʒɔ:nt/ *noun* a joint where the round end of a long bone is attached to a cup-shaped hollow in another bone in such a way that the long bone can move in almost any direction. Compare **ginglymus**

balloon /bə'lju:n/ *noun* a bag of light material inflated with air or a gas, used to unblock arteries

balloon angioplasty /bə'lju:n ,ændʒiə'plæsti/ *noun* same as **percutaneous angioplasty**

balloon catheter /bə'lju:n ,kæθɪtə/ *noun* a tube that can be inserted into a blood vessel or other body part and then inflated, e.g. to widen a narrow artery

ballottement /bə'lɒtmənt/ *noun* a method of examining the body by tapping or moving a part, especially during pregnancy

balneotherapy /,bælniəʊ'θerəpi/ *noun* the treatment of diseases by bathing in hot water or water containing beneficial natural chemicals

balsam /'bɔ:ls(ə)m/ *noun* a mixture of resin and oil, used to rub on sore joints or to put in hot water and use as an inhalant. ♦ **friar's balsam**

ban /bæn/ *verb* to say that something is not permitted ◎ *Smoking is banned throughout the building.* ◎ *Use of this drug has been banned.*

bandage /'bændɪdʒ/ *noun* a piece of cloth which is wrapped around a wound or an injured limb ◎ *His head was covered with bandages.* ■ *verb* to wrap a piece of cloth around a wound ◎ *She bandaged his leg.* ◎ *His arm is bandaged up.*

Bandl's ring /'bænd(ə)lz rɪŋ/ same as **retraction ring** [After Ludwig Bandl (1842–92), German obstetrician]

bank /bæŋk/ *noun* a place where blood or organs from donors can be stored until needed. ♦ **blood bank**

Bankart's operation /'bæŋkə:ts ɒpə'reɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* an operation to repair a recurrent dislocation of the shoulder [First performed 1923. After Arthur Sydney Blundell Bankart (1879–1951), first orthopaedic surgeon at the Middlesex Hospital, London, UK.]

Banti's syndrome /'bæntiz ,sɪndrəʊm/, **Banti's disease** /'bæntiz dɪ,zɪz/ *noun* same as **splenetic anaemia** [Described 1882. After Guido Banti (1852–1925), Florentine pathologist and physician.]

Barbados leg /ba:,beɪdbəs 'leg/ *noun* a form of elephantiasis, a large swelling of the leg due to a Filaria worm

barber's itch /,bə:bəz 'ɪtʃ/, **barber's rash** /,bə:bəz 'ræʃ/ *noun* same as **sycosis barbae**

barbital /bə:bɪtəl/ *noun* US same as **barbitone**

barbitone /'bə:bɪtən/ *noun* a type of barbiturate

barbiturate /ba:'bitʃʊrət/ *noun* a sedative drug

barbiturate abuse /ba:'bitʃʊrət ə,bju:s/ *noun* repeated addictive use of barbiturates which in the end affects the brain

barbiturate dependence /ba:'bitʃʊrət di,pɛndəns/ *noun* being dependent on regularly taking barbiturate tablets

barbiturate poisoning /ba:'bitʃʊrət ,pɔɪzɪng/ *noun* poisoning caused by an overdose of barbiturates

barbotage /,bə:bə'ta:ʒ/ *noun* a method of spinal analgesia by which cerebrospinal fluid is withdrawn and then injected back

bare /bəə/ *adjective* with no covering □ **bare area of the liver** a large triangular part of the liver not covered with peritoneum

bariatrics /,bærɪ'tætriks/ *noun* the medical treatment of obesity

barium /'bærɪəm/ *noun* a chemical element, forming poisonous compounds, used as a contrast medium when taking X-ray photographs of soft tissue (NOTE: The chemical symbol is Ba.)

barium enema /,bærɪəm 'enɪmə/ *noun* a liquid solution containing barium sulphate which is put into the rectum to increase the contrast of an X-ray of the lower intestine

barium meal /,bærɪəm 'mi:l/, **barium solution** /,bærɪəm sə'lju:s(ə)n/ *noun* a liquid solution containing barium sulphate which someone drinks to increase the contrast of an X-ray of the alimentary tract

barium sulphate /,bærɪəm 'sʌlfət/ *noun* a salt of barium not soluble in water and which shows as opaque in X-ray photographs

Barlow's disease /'bɑ:ləʊz dɪ,zɪz/ *noun* scurvy in children, caused by a lack of vitamin C [Described 1882. After Sir Thomas Barlow (1845–1945), physician at various London hospitals and to Queen Victoria, King Edward VII and King George V.]

Barlow's sign /'bɑ:ləʊz sain/ *noun* a test for congenital dislocation of the hip, in which a sudden movement is felt and sometimes a sound is heard when the joint is manipulated

baroreceptor /bærəʊ'rɪ'septə/ *noun* one of a group of nerves near the carotid artery and aortic arch, which senses changes in blood pressure

barotitis /bærəʊ'taitɪs/ *noun* pain in the ear caused by differences in air pressure, e.g. during air travel

barotrauma /,bærəʊ'trɔ:mə/ *noun* an injury caused by a sharp increase in pressure

Barr body /'bə: ,bərdi/ *noun* a dense clump of chromatin found only in female cells, which can be used to identify the sex of a baby before birth [Described 1949. After Murray Llewellyn Barr (1908–95), head of the Department of Anatomy at the University of Western Ontario, Canada.]

Barre-Guillain syndrome /,bærə 'gi: jæn ,sɪndrəʊm/ ♦ **Guillain-Barré syndrome**

barrel chest /,bærəl 'tʃest/ *noun* a chest formed like a barrel, caused by asthma or emphysema

barrier cream /'bærɪə kri:m/ *noun* a cream put on the skin to prevent the skin coming into contact with irritating substances

barrier method /'bærɪə ,meθəd/ *noun* a method of contraception in which the entry of sperm to the womb is blocked by a protective device such as a condom or diaphragm

barrier nursing /'bærɪə ,nɜ:sɪŋ/ *noun* the nursing of someone who has an infectious disease. It involves keeping them away from other patients and making sure that faeces and soiled bedclothes do not carry the infection to other patients.

'...those affected by salmonella poisoning are being nursed in five isolation wards and about forty suspected sufferers are being barrier nursed in other wards' [Nursing Times]

bartholinitis /,ba:θəlɪ'naitɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the Bartholin's glands

Bartholin's glands /ba:θəlɪnz glændz/ *plural noun* two glands at the side of the vagina and between it and the vulva, which secrete a lubricating substance. Also called **greater vestibular glands** [After Caspar Bartholin (1655–1748), Danish anatomist]

basal /'beɪs(ə)l/ *adjective* located at the bottom of something, or forming its base

basal cell /'beɪs(ə)l sel/ *noun* a cell from the stratum germinativum. ♦ **stratum**

basal cell carcinoma /,beɪs(ə)l sel ,ka:sɪ 'næma:/ *noun* same as **rodent ulcer**

basale /ba'seɪlɪ/ *adjective* ♦ **stratum**

basal ganglia /,beɪs(ə)l 'gængglɪə/ *noun* masses of grey matter at the base of each cerebral hemisphere which receive impulses from the thalamus and influence the motor impulses from the frontal cortex

basalis /ba'seɪlɪs/ ♦ **decidua**

basal metabolic rate /,beɪs(ə)l metə'bɒlɪk reɪt/ *noun* the amount of energy used by the body in exchanging oxygen and carbon dioxide when at rest. It was formerly used as a way of testing thyroid gland activity. Abbr **BMR**

basal metabolism /,beɪs(ə)l mæ'tæbə ,lɪz(ə)m/ *noun* the minimum amount of energy needed to keep the body functioning and the temperature standard when at rest

basal narcosis /,beɪs(ə)l nɑ:'kəʊsɪs/ *noun* the administration a narcotic before a general anaesthetic

basal nuclei /,beɪs(ə)l 'nu:kliə/ *plural noun* masses of grey matter at the bottom of each cerebral hemisphere

base /beɪs/ *noun* 1. the bottom part ○ **the base of the spine** □ **base of the brain** the bottom surface of the cerebrum 2. the main ingredient of an ointment, as opposed to the active ingredient 3. a substance which reacts with an acid to form a salt ■ *verb* to use something as a base □ **cream based on zinc oxide** cream which uses zinc oxide as a base

Basedow's disease /'bæzɪdəuz dɪ,zi:z/ *noun* a form of hyperthyroidism [Described 1840. After Carl Adolph Basedow (1799–1854), general practitioner in Mersburg, Germany.]

basement membrane /'beɪsmənt ,mem brɛɪn/ *noun* a membrane at the base of an epithelium

basic /'beɪsɪk/ *adjective* 1. very simple, from which everything else comes □ **basic structure of the skin** the two layers of skin, the inner dermis and the outer epidermis 2. referring to a chemical substance which reacts with an acid to form a salt

basic salt /,beɪsɪk 'sɔ:lt/ *noun* a chemical compound formed when an acid reacts with a base

basilar /'bæzɪlə/ *adjective* referring to a base

basilar artery /,bæzɪlə 'a:təri/ *noun* an artery which lies at the base of the brain

basilar membrane /,bæzɪlə 'membreɪn/ *noun* a membrane in the cochlea which transmits nerve impulses from sound vibrations to the auditory nerve

basilic /ba'sɪlɪk/ *adjective* important or prominent

basilic vein /ba'zɪlɪk 'veɪn/ *noun* a large vein running along the inside of the arm

basin /'beɪs(ə)n/ *noun* a large bowl

basophil /'beɪsəfɪl/ *noun* a type of white blood cell which has granules in its cytoplasm and contains histamine and heparin

basophilia /,beɪsə'fɪliə/ *noun* an increase in the number of basophils in the blood

basophilic granulocyte /,beɪsəfɪlɪk 'grænju:ləsət/ *noun* same as **basophil**

basophilic leucocyte /,beɪsəfɪlɪk 'lu:kəsət/ *noun* same as **basophil**

Bachelor plaster /'bætʃələr ,pla:stə/ *noun* a plaster cast which keeps both legs apart [After J.S. Bachelor (b. 1905), British orthopaedic surgeon]

bathe /beɪð/ *verb* to wash a wound ○ *He bathed the grazed knee with boiled water.*

Batten's disease /'bæt(ə)nz dɪ,zi:z/ *noun* a hereditary disease which affects the enzymes of the brain, causing cells in the brain and eye to die

battered baby syndrome /'bætəd ,berbi ,sɪndrəm/, **battered child syndrome** /'bætəd 't'saɪld 'sɪndrəm/ *noun* a condition in which a baby or small child is frequently beaten, usually by one or both of its parents, sustaining injuries such as multiple fractures

battledore placenta /'bæt(ə)ldə: plə ,sentə/ *noun* a placenta where the umbilical cord is attached at the edge and not at the centre

Bazin's disease /'beɪzɪnз dɪ,zi:z/ *noun* same as **erythema induratum** [Described 1861. After Pierre Antoine Ernest Bazin (1807–78), dermatologist at Hôpital St Louis, Paris, France.]

He was an expert in parasitology associated with skin conditions.]

BC abbr bone conduction. ♦ **osteophony**

BCC abbr Breast Cancer Campaign

B cell /'bi: sel/ noun same as **beta cell**

BCG /,bi: si: 'dʒi: ,væksi:n/, **BCG vaccine** noun a vaccine which immunises against tuberculosis. Full form **bacille Calmette-Guérin**

BCh abbr Bachelor of Surgery

BDA abbr British Dental Association

bearing down /,beərɪŋ 'daʊn/ noun a stage in childbirth when the woman starts to push out the baby from the uterus

bearing-down pain /,beərɪŋ 'daʊn peɪn/ noun pain felt in the uterus during the second stage of labour (NOTE: Bearing-down pain is also associated with uterine prolapse.)

beat joint /'bi:t dʒɔɪnt/ noun an inflammation of a joint such as the elbow (beat elbow) or knee (beat knee) caused by frequent sharp blows or other pressure

Beck inventory of depression /,bek ,ɪnvɛnt(ə)rɪ əv di'pref(ə)n/ noun one of the rating scales for depression, in which a series of 21 questions refers to attitudes frequently shown by people suffering from depression

beclomethasone /,beklə'meθəsən/, noun a steroid drug usually used in an inhaler to treat asthma or hay fever

becquerel /'bekrəel/ noun an SI unit of measurement of radiation. Abbr **Bq** (NOTE: Now used in place of the **curie**.)

bed bath /'bed bɑ:θ/ noun an act of washing the whole body of someone who is unable to get up to wash. Also called **blanket bath**

bed blocker /'bed ,blkɒkə/ noun a patient who does not need medical attention but continues to stay in hospital because suitable care is not available elsewhere

bed blocking /'bed ,blkɒkɪŋ/ noun the fact of people being kept in hospital because other forms of care are not available, which means that other people cannot be treated

bedbug /'bedbʌg/ noun a small insect which lives in dirty bedclothes and sucks blood

bed occupancy /'bed ,ɒkju:pənsi/ noun the percentage of beds in a hospital which are occupied

bed occupancy rate /bed 'ɒkju:pənsi ,reɪt/ noun the number of beds occupied in a hospital shown as a percentage of all the beds in the hospital

bedpan /'bedpæn/ noun a dish into which someone can urinate or defecate without getting out of bed

bed rest /'bed rest/ noun a period of time spent in bed in order to rest and recover from an illness

bedridden /'bed,rɪd(ə)n/ adjective referring to someone who has been too ill to get out of bed over a long period of time

bedside manner /,bedsaɪd 'mænə/ noun the way in which a doctor behaves towards a patient, especially a patient who is in bed □ **a good bedside manner** the ability to make patients feel comforted and reassured

bedsore /'bedsɔ:/ noun an inflamed patch of skin on a bony part of the body, which develops into an ulcer, caused by pressure of the part on the mattress after lying for some time in one position. Special beds such as air beds, ripple beds and water beds are used to try to prevent the formation of bedsores. Also called **pressure sore, decubitus ulcer**

bedtable /'bedteɪb(ə)l/ noun a specially designed table which can be used by a person sitting up in bed

bedwetting /'bedwetɪŋ/ noun same as **nocturnal enuresis** (NOTE: This term is used mainly about children.)

Beer's knife /'bɪəz naɪf/ noun a knife with a triangular blade, used in eye operations [After George Joseph Beer (1763–1821), German ophthalmologist]

behaviour /bɪ'hɛviʊrɪ/ noun a way of acting ○ His behaviour was very aggressive. (NOTE: The US spelling is **behavior**.)

behavioural /bɪ'hɛviʊrəl/ adjective relating to behaviour (NOTE: The US spelling is **behavioral**.)

behavioural scientist /bɪ,hɛviʊrəl 'saɪəntɪst/ noun a person who specialises in the study of behaviour

behaviourism /bɪ'hɛviʊrɪz(ə)m/ noun a psychological theory proposing that only someone's behaviour should be studied to discover their psychological problems

behaviourist /bɪ'hɛviʊrɪst/ noun a psychologist who follows behaviourism

behaviour therapy /bɪ,hɛviʊrɪ 'θerəpi/ noun a form of psychiatric treatment in which someone learns how to improve their condition

Behcet's syndrome /'beɪsets ,sɪndrəʊm/ noun a chronic condition of the immune system with no known cause, experienced as a series of attacks of inflammation of small blood vessels accompanied by mouth ulcers and sometimes genital ulcers, skin lesions and inflamed eyes [Described 1937. After Halushi Behcet (1889–1948), Turkish dermatologist.]

behind /bɪ'haind/ noun same as **buttock** (*informal*)

bejel /'bedʒəl/ noun a non-venereal form of syphilis which is endemic among children in some areas of the Middle East and elsewhere and is caused by a spirochaete strain of bacteria

belch /bɛltʃ/ noun the action of allowing air in the stomach to come up through the mouth ■ verb to allow air in the stomach to come up through the mouth

belching /'beltʃɪŋ/ *noun* the action of allowing air in the stomach to come up through the mouth. Also called **eructation**

belladonna /,belə'dɒnə/ *noun* 1. a poisonous plant with berries containing atropine. Also called **deadly nightshade** 2. a form of atropine extracted from the belladonna plant

belle indifférence /,bel æn'difərəns/ *noun* an excessively calm state in a person, in a situation which would usually produce a show of emotion

Bellocq's cannula /be,lɒks 'kaenjʊlə/, **Bellocq's sound** /be,lɒks 'saʊnd/ *noun* an instrument used to control a nosebleed [After Jean Jacques Bellocq (1732–1807), French surgeon]

Bell's mania /,belz 'meiniə/ *noun* a form of acute mania with delirium [After Luther Vose Bell (1806–62), American physiologist]

Bell's palsy /,belz 'pɔ:lzi/ *noun* paralysis of the facial nerve on one side of the face, preventing one eye being closed. Also called **facial paralysis** [Described 1821. After Sir Charles Bell (1774–1842), Scottish surgeon. He ran anatomy schools, first in Edinburgh and then in London. Professor of Anatomy at the Royal Academy.]

belly /'beli/ *noun* 1. same as **abdomen** 2. the fatter central part of a muscle

bellyache /'beliæk/ *noun* a pain in the abdomen or stomach

belly button /'beli ,bat(ə)n/ *noun* the navel (*informal*)

Bence Jones protein /,bens 'dʒənz ˌprəti:n/ *noun* a protein found in the urine of people who have myelomatosis, lymphoma, leukaemia and some other cancers [Described 1848. After Henry Bence Jones (1814–73), physician at St George's Hospital, London, UK.]

bends /'bendz/ *plural noun* □ **the bends** ↗ **caisson disease**

Benedict's solution /'benɪdɪkts sə ,lu:ʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a solution used to carry out Benedict's test

Benedict's test /'benɪdɪkts test/ *noun* a test to see if sugar is present in the urine [Described 1915. After Stanley Rossiter Benedict (1884–1936), physiological chemist at Cornell University, New York, USA.]

benign /bə'nain/ *adjective* generally harmless

benign growth /bə'nain grəʊθ/ *noun* same as **benign tumour**

benign pancreatic disease /bə,nain ,pænkrɪ'ætik dɪ,zi:z/ *noun* chronic pancreaticitis

benign prostatic hypertrophy /bɪ,nain pr,stætɪk haɪ'pɔ:tropɪ/ *noun* a nonmalignant enlargement of the prostate. Abbr **BPH**

benign tumour /bə,nain 'tju:mə/ *noun* a tumour which will not grow again or spread to other parts of the body if it is removed surgically

but which can be fatal if not treated. Also called **benign growth**. Opposite **malignant tumour**

Bennett's fracture /,benɪts 'frækʃə/ *noun* a fracture of the first metacarpal, the bone between the thumb and the wrist [Described 1886. After Edward Halloran Bennett (1837–1907), Irish anatomist, later Professor of Surgery at Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland.]

bent /bent/ *adjective* □ **bent double** bent over completely so that the face is towards the ground □ *He was bent double with pain.*

benzocaine /'benzəkeɪn/ *noun* a drug with anaesthetic properties used in some throat lozenges and skin creams

benzodiazepine /,benzəʊdə'æzəpi:n/ *noun* a drug which acts on receptors in the central nervous system to relieve symptoms of anxiety and insomnia, although prolonged use is to be avoided (NOTE: Benzodiazepines have names ending in **-azepam**: **diazepam**.)

benzoin /'benzəʊɪn/ *noun* a resin used to make friar's balsam

benzyl benzoate /,benzɪl 'benzəʊeɪt/ *noun* a colourless oily liquid which occurs naturally in balsams, used in medicines and perfumes

benzylpenicillin /,benzɪl pen'i:silɪn/ *noun* an antibacterial drug used against streptococcal infections, meningococcal meningitis and other serious infections

bereavement /'bɪ:rɪ:vment/ *noun* the loss of someone, especially a close relative or friend, through death

beriberi /,beri'beri/ *noun* a disease of the nervous system caused by lack of vitamin B₁

COMMENT: Beriberi is prevalent in tropical countries where the diet is mainly formed of white rice, which is deficient in thiamine.

berylliosis /bə,rɪlɪ'əʊsɪs/ *noun* poisoning caused by breathing in particles of the poisonous chemical compound beryllium oxide

Besnier's prigo /,benieɪz pr'u:raɪgəu/ *noun* an itchy skin rash on the backs of the knees and the insides of the elbows [After Ernest Besnier (1831–1909), French dermatologist]

beta /'bi:tə/ *noun* the second letter of the Greek alphabet

beta-adrenergic receptor /,bi:tə ,ædrɛ 'nɜ:dʒɪk/ *noun* one of two types of nerve endings that respond to adrenaline by speeding up the heart rate or dilating the bronchi

beta amyloid /,bi:tə 'æmɪlɔɪd/ *noun* a wax-like protein formed from amyloid precursor protein in nerve cells which aggregates in Alzheimer's disease to form plaques

beta blocker /'bi:tə ,blɒkə/ *noun* a drug which reduces the activity of the heart (NOTE: Beta blockers have names ending in **-olol**: **atenolol**, **propranolol hydrochloride**.)

beta cell /'bi:tə sel/ *noun* a type of cell found in the islets of Langerhans, in the pancreas,

which produces insulin. Also called **B cell**. ♀ **alpha cell**

Betadine /'bi:tə'di:n/ *noun* a trade name for a form of iodine

betamethasone /,bi:tə'meθəsən/ *noun* a very strong corticosteroid drug

beta rhythm /'bi:tə,rɪθəm/ *noun* a pattern of electrical waves in the brain of someone who is awake and active, registering on an electroencephalograph at 18–30 hertz

betaxolol /'bɪ'tæksəlɒl/ *noun* a beta blocker drug used in the treatment of high blood pressure and glaucoma

bethanechol /be'θænɪkɒl/ *noun* an agonist drug used to increase muscle tone after surgery

Betnovate /'bɛtnəvæt/ *noun* a trade name for an ointment containing betamethasone

bi- /baɪ/ *prefix* two or twice

bias /'baɪəs/ *noun* a systematic error in the design or conduct of a study which could explain the results

bicarbonate of soda /baɪ'ka:bənət əv 'səʊdə/ *noun* same as **sodium bicarbonate**

bicellular /baɪ'seljʊlə/ *adjective* having two cells

biceps /'baɪsəps/ *noun* any muscle formed of two parts joined to form one tendon, especially the muscles in the front of the upper arm (biceps brachii) and the back of the thigh (biceps femoris). ♀ **triceps** (NOTE: The plural is **biceps**.)

bicipital /baɪ'sɪpɪtl(ə)s/ *adjective* 1. referring to a biceps muscle 2. with two parts

biconcave /baɪ'kɒŋkeɪv/ *adjective* referring to a lens which is concave on both sides

biconvex /baɪ'kɒnveks/ *adjective* referring to a lens which is convex on both sides

bicornuate /baɪ'kɔ:nju:t/ *adjective* divided into two parts (NOTE: The word is sometimes applied to a malformation of the uterus.)

bicuspid /baɪ'kʌspɪd/ *adjective* with two points ■ *noun* a premolar tooth

bicuspid valve /,baɪ'kʌspɪd ,vælv/ *noun* same as **mitral valve**. see illustration at **HEART** in Supplement

b.i.d. *adverb* (*used on prescriptions*) twice daily. Full form **bis in die**

bitifid /'baɪfɪd/ *adjective* in two parts

bitifida /'baɪfɪdə/ ♀ **spina bifida**

bifocal /baɪ'fəʊk(ə)s/ *adjective* referring to lenses made with two sections which have different focal lengths, one for looking at things which are near, the other for looking at things which are far away

bifocal glasses /baɪ'fəʊk(ə)s/ 'gla:sɪz/ **bifocal lenses** /baɪ'fəʊk(ə)s/ 'lenzɪz/, **bifocals** /baɪ'fəʊk(ə)s/ɪz/ *plural noun* spectacles with lenses which have two types of lens combined in the same piece of glass, the top part being used for seeing at a distance and the lower part for reading

bifurcate /'baɪfəkət/ *adjective* separating or branching off into two parts ■ *verb* to split or branch off into two parts

bifurcation /,baɪfə'keɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a place where something divides into two parts

bigeminy /baɪ'dʒemɪni/ *noun* same as **pulse bigeminus**

big toe /bɪg 'təʊ/ *noun* the largest of the five toes, on the inside of the foot. Also called **great toe**

biguanide /baɪ'gwā:naid/ *noun* a drug which lowers blood sugar, used in the treatment of Type II diabetes

bilateral /baɪ'læt(ə)rəl/ *adjective* affecting both sides

bilateral adrenalectomy /baɪ'læt(ə)rəl ə,dri:nə'lektəmɪ/ *noun* the surgical removal of both adrenal glands

bilateral pneumonia /baɪ'læt(ə)rəl nju:'məniə/ *noun* pneumonia affecting both lungs

bilateral vasectomy /baɪ'læt(ə)rəl və'sektəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to cut both vasa deferentia and so make a man sterile

bile /baɪl/ *noun* a thick bitter brownish yellow fluid produced by the liver, stored in the gall bladder and used to digest fatty substances and neutralise acids (NOTE: For other terms referring to bile, see words beginning with **chol-**.)

COMMENT: In jaundice, excess bile pigments flow into the blood and cause the skin to turn yellow.

bile acid /'baɪl ,æsɪd/ *noun* an acid found in the bile, e.g. cholic acid

bile canal /'baɪl kə,næl/ *noun* a very small vessel leading from a hepatic cell to the bile duct

bile duct /'baɪl dʌkt/ *noun* a tube which links the cystic duct and the hepatic duct to the duodenum

bile pigment /'baɪl ,pɪgmənt/ *noun* colouring matter in bile

bile salts /'baɪl sɔ:ltz/ *plural noun* sodium salts of bile acids

bilharzia /bi'lha:tsiə/ *noun* 1. a fluke which enters the bloodstream and causes bilharziasis. Also called **Schistosoma** 2. same as **bilharziasis** (NOTE: Although strictly speaking, **bilharzia** is the name of the fluke, it is also generally used for the name of the disease: **bilharzia patients; six cases of bilharzia**.)

bilharziasis /,bi'lha:tsiə'sɪs/ *noun* a tropical disease caused by flukes in the intestine or bladder. Also called **bilharzia, schistosomiasis**

COMMENT: The larvae of the fluke enter the skin through the feet and lodge in the walls of the intestine or bladder. They are passed out of the body in stools or urine and return to water, where they lodge and develop in the water snail, the secondary host, before going back into humans. Patients experience fever and anaemia.

bili-/bili/ *prefix referring to bile* (NOTE: For other terms referring to bile, see words beginning with **chol-**, **chole-**)

biliary /'biliərɪ/ *adjective referring to bile*

biliary colic /,biliərɪ 'kɒlkɪk/ *noun* pain in the abdomen caused by gallstones in the bile duct or by inflammation of the gall bladder

biliary fistula /,biliərɪ 'fɪstʃʊlə/ *noun* an opening which discharges bile on to the surface of the skin from the gall bladder, bile duct or liver

bilious /'biliəs/ *adjective* 1. referring to bile 2. referring to nausea (*informal*)

biliousness /'biliəsnəs/ *noun* a feeling of indigestion and nausea (*informal*)

bilirubin /,bili'rʊ:bɪn/ *noun* a red pigment in bile

bilirubinaemia /,bili'rū:bɪ'nī:miə/ *noun* an excess of bilirubin in the blood

biluria /,bili'juəriə/ *noun* the presence of bile in the urine. Also called **choluria**

biliverdin /,bili'verdɪn/ *noun* a green pigment in bile, produced by oxidation of bilirubin

Billings method /'biliŋz ,meθəd/ *noun* a method of birth control which uses the colour and consistency of the cervical mucus as guides to whether ovulation is taking place

Billroth's operations /bilrɒθs ɒpə'reɪʃ(ə)nズ/ *plural noun* surgical operations in which the lower part of the stomach is removed and the part which is left is linked to the duodenum (Billroth I) or jejunum (Billroth II) [Described 1881. After Christian Albert Theodore Billroth (1829–94), Prussian surgeon.]

bilobate /baɪ'ləbət/ *adjective* with two lobes

bimanual /baɪ'mænjuəl/ *adjective* done with two hands, or needing both hands to be done

binary /'bainərɪ/ *adjective* made of two parts

binary fission /,bainərɪ 'fɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the process of splitting into two parts in some types of cell division

binaural /bain'ɔ:rəl/ *adjective* using, or relating to, both ears

binder /'baɪndə/ *noun* a bandage which is wrapped round a limb to support it

Binet's test /'bīneɪz test/ *noun* an intelligence test for children [Originally described 1905 but later modified at Stanford University, California, USA. After Alfred Binet (1857–1911), French psychologist and physiologist.]

binocular /bɪ'nɒkjʊlə/ *adjective* referring to the two eyes

binocular vision /bɪ,nɒkjʊlə 'vɪʒ(ə)n/ *noun* ability to see with both eyes at the same time, which gives a stereoscopic effect and allows a person to judge distances. Compare **monocular**

binocular /bɪ'nɒvjʊlə/ *adjective* referring to twins who develop from two different ova

bio- /baɪəʊ/ *prefix referring to living organisms*

bioactive /,baɪəʊ'æktyv/ *adjective* producing an effect in living tissue or in a living organism

bioassay /,baɪəʊə'seɪ/ *noun* a test of the strength of a drug, hormone, vitamin or serum, by examining the effect it has on living animals or tissue

bioavailability /,baɪəʊə'veɪlə'biliti/ *noun* the extent to which a nutrient or medicine can be taken up by the body

biochemical /,baɪəʊ'kemɪk(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to biochemistry

biochemistry /,baɪəʊ'kemɪstri/ *noun* the chemistry of living tissues

biocide /'baɪəʊsaɪd/ *noun* a substance which kills living organisms

biocompatibility /,baɪəʊkəmpætə'biliti/ *noun* the compatibility of a donated organ or artificial limb with the living tissue into which it has been introduced or with which it is brought into contact

biodegradable /,baɪəʊdrɪ'greɪdəb(ə)l/ *adjective* easily decomposed by organisms such as bacteria or by the effect of sunlight, the sea, etc.

bioengineering /,baɪəʊendʒɪ'nɪərɪŋ/ *noun* same as **biomedical engineering**

bioethics /'baɪəʊ,eθɪks/ *noun* the study of the moral and ethical choices in medical research and treatment of patients, especially when advanced technology is available

biofeedback /,baɪəʊ'fi:dbæk/ *noun* the control of the autonomic nervous system by someone's conscious thought, as he or she sees the results of tests or scans

biogenesis /,baɪəʊ'dʒenəsɪs/ *noun* a theory that living organisms can only develop from other living organisms

biohazard /'baɪəʊ,hæzəd/ *noun* a danger to human beings or their environment, especially one from a poisonous or infectious agent

bioinstrumentation /,baɪəʊnstrə'mēn'teɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* instruments used to record and display information about the body's functions, or the use of such instruments

biological /,baɪə'lɒdʒɪk(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to biology

biological clock /,baɪəlɒdʒɪk(ə)l 'klɒk/ *noun* the rhythm of daily activities and bodily processes such as eating, defecating or sleeping, frequently controlled by hormones, which repeats every twenty-four hours. Also called **circadian rhythm**

biological parent /,baɪə,lɒdʒɪk(ə)l 'peərənt/ *noun* a parent who was physically involved in producing a child

biologist /baɪ'ɒlədʒɪst/ *noun* a scientist who specialises in biology

biology /baɪ'ɒlədʒɪ/ *noun* the study of living organisms

biomaterial /baɪəʊmə'trɪərɪəl/ *noun* a synthetic material which can be used as an implant in living tissue

biomedical engineering /baɪəʊmedɪk(ə)l, endʒɪ'nɪərɪŋ/ *noun* the application of engineering science such as robotics and hydraulics to medicine

biomedicine /'baɪəʊ,med(ə)s(ə)n/ *noun* 1. the use of the principles of biology, biochemistry, physiology and other basic sciences to solve problems in clinical medicine 2. the study of the body's ability to withstand unusual or extreme environments

biometry /baɪ'ɒmətri/ *noun* the science which applies statistics to the study of living things □ **biometry of the eye** measurement of the eye by ultrasound □ **biometry of a fetus** the measurement of the key parameters of growth of a fetus by ultrasound

biomonitoring /'baɪəʊ,mɔnɪt(ə)rɪŋ/ *noun* the measurement and tracking of a chemical substance in a living organism or biological material such as blood or urine, usually to check environmental pollution or chemical exposure

bionic ear /baɪ'ɒnɪk ɪə/ *noun* a cochlear implant (*informal*)

bionics /baɪ'ɒnɪks/ *noun* the process of applying knowledge of biological systems to mechanical and electronic devices

biopharmaceutical /,baɪəʊfɑ:mə'su:tɪk(ə)l/ *noun* a drug produced by biotechnological methods

biophysical profile /,baɪəʊfɪzɪk(ə)l 'prəʊfəl/ *noun* a profile of a fetus, based on such things as its breathing movement and body movement

biopsy /'baɪəpsi/ *noun* the process of taking a small piece of living tissue for examination and diagnosis □ *The biopsy of the tissue from the growth showed that it was benign.*

biorhythm /baɪəʊrɪθ(ə)m/ *noun* a regular process of change which takes place within living organisms, e.g. sleeping, waking or the reproductive cycle (NOTE: Some people believe that biorhythms affect behaviour and mood.)

biosensor /'baɪəʊ,sensə/ *noun* a device that uses a biological agent such as an enzyme or organelle to detect, measure or analyse chemicals (NOTE: Biosensors are increasingly used in tests to diagnose medical conditions such as blood pressure.)

biostatistics /,baɪəʊstə'tɪstɪks/ *plural noun* statistics used in medicine and the study of disease

biosurgery /'baɪəʊ,sɜ:dʒəri/ *noun* the use of living organisms in surgery and post-surgical treatment, especially the use of maggots or leeches to clean wounds

biotechnology /,baɪəotek'nɒlədʒi/ *noun* 1. the use of biological processes in industrial

production, e.g. in the production of drugs 2. same as **genetic modification**

biotherapy /'baɪəʊ,θerəpi/ *noun* the treatment of disease with substances produced through the activity of living organisms such as sera, vaccines or antibiotics

biotin /'baɪətɪn/ *noun* a type of vitamin B found in egg yolks, liver and yeast

biparietal /,baɪpə'ræjət(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to the two parietal bones

biparous /'bɪpərəs/ *adjective* producing twins

bipennate /baɪ'peneɪt/ *adjective* referring to a muscle with fibres which rise from either side of the tendon

bipolar /baɪ'pəʊlə/ *adjective* with two poles. See illustration at **NEURONE** in Supplement

bipolar disorder /,baɪ,pəʊlə dis'ɔ:də/ *noun* a psychological condition in which someone moves between mania and depression and experiences delusion. Also called **manic-depressive illness, manic depression**

bipolar neurone /baɪ,pəʊlə 'njuərəʊn/ *noun* a nerve cell with two processes, a dendrite and an axon, found in the retina. See illustration at **NEURONE** in Supplement. Compare **multipolar neurone, unipolar neurone**

birth /bɜ:θ/ *noun* the act of being born □ **to give birth** to have a baby □ *She gave birth to twins.*

birth canal /'bɜ:θ kə,næl/ *noun* the uterus, vagina and vulva

birth control /'bɜ:θ kən,trəʊl/ *noun* same as **contraception**

birth control pill /'bɜ:θ kən,trəʊl pil/ *noun* same as **oral contraceptive**

birth defect /'bɜ:θ ,di:fekt/ *noun* same as **congenital anomaly** (NOTE: The word 'defect' is now avoided.)

birthing /'bɜ:θɪŋ/ *noun* the process of giving birth using natural childbirth methods ■ *adjective* designed to help in childbirth

birthing chair /'bɜ:θɪŋ tʃeəl/ *noun* a special chair in which a woman sits to give birth

birthing pool /'bɜ:θɪŋ pu:l/ *noun* a special large bath in which pregnant women can relax before and when giving birth

birthing room /'bɜ:θɪŋ ru:m/ *noun* an area set up for childbirth in a hospital or other building to provide comfortable and homely surroundings

birth injury /'bɜ:θ ,ɪndʒəri/ *noun* an injury which a baby experiences during a difficult birth, e.g. brain damage

birthmark /'bɜ:θmɑ:k/ *noun* an unusual coloured or raised area on the skin which someone has from birth. Also called **naevus**

birth mother /'bɜ:θ ,mʌðə/ *noun* the woman who gave birth to a child

birth parent /'bɜ:θ ,peərənt/ *noun* one of the parents that physically produced a child

birth plan /bɜːθ plæn/ *noun* a list of a pregnant woman's wishes about how the birth of her baby should take place, e.g. whether she wants a natural birth and what pain relief she should be given

birth rate /'bɜːθ reɪt/ *noun* the number of births per year, shown per thousand of the population ◎ *a birth rate of 15 per thousand* ◎ *There has been a severe decline in the birth rate.*

birth trauma /'bɜːθ ,trɔːmə/ *noun* an injury caused to a baby during delivery

birth weight /'bɜːθ weɪt/ *noun* the weight of a baby at birth

bisacodyl /,baɪsə'kəʊdɪl/ *noun* a laxative drug

bisexual /baɪ'sɛksjʊəl/ *noun* someone who has both male and female sexual partners ■ *adjective* referring to a person who is sexually attracted to both males and females. Compare **heterosexual, homosexual**

bisexuality /baɪ'sɛksjʊə'lɪti/ *noun* the state of being sexually attracted to both males and females

bis in die /,bɪs in 'di:ə/ *adverb* full form of **b.i.d.**

bismuth /'bɪzməθ/ *noun* a chemical element (NOTE: The chemical symbol is **Bi**.)

bismuth salts /'bɪzməθ sɔ:lts/ *plural noun* salts used to treat acid stomach and formerly used in the treatment of syphilis

bistoury /'bɪstɔːri/ *noun* a sharp thin surgical knife

bite /baɪt/ *verb* 1. to cut into something with the teeth ◎ *He bit a piece out of the apple.* □ **to bite on something** to hold onto something with the teeth ◎ *The dentist told him to bite on the bite wing.* 2. (of an insect) to puncture someone's skin ■ *noun* 1. the action of biting or of being bitten 2. a place or mark where someone has been bitten ◎ *a dog bite* ◎ *an insect bite*

bite wing /'baɪt wɪŋ/ *noun* a holder for dental X-ray film, which a person clenches between the teeth, so allowing an X-ray of both upper and lower teeth to be taken

Bitot's spots /bi:təʊz 'spɒts/ *plural noun* small white spots on the conjunctiva, caused by vitamin A deficiency [Described 1863. After Pierre A. Bitot (1822–88), French physician.]

bivalve /'baɪvælv/ *noun* an organ which has two valves ■ *adjective* referring to a bivalve organ

black eye /blæk 'aɪ/ *noun* bruising and swelling of the tissues round an eye, usually caused by a blow

blackhead /'blæk'hed/ *noun* same as **comedo** (*informal*)

black heel /'blæk ,hi:l/ *noun* a haemorrhage inside the heel, characterised by black spots

black out /blæk 'aʊt/ *verb* to have sudden loss of consciousness ◎ *I suddenly blacked out and I can't remember anything more*

blackout /'blæktaʊt/ *noun* a sudden loss of consciousness (*informal*) ◎ *She must have had a blackout while driving.* Also called **fainting fit**

black spots /,blæk 'spɒts/ *plural noun* □ **black spots in front of the eyes** moving black dots seen when looking at something, more noticeable when a person is tired or run-down, and more common in shortsighted people

blackwater fever /'blækwɔːtə ,fɪrvə/ *noun* a form of malaria where haemoglobin from red blood cells is released into plasma and makes the urine dark

bladder /'blaɪdə/ *noun* any sac in the body, especially the sac where the urine collects before being passed out of the body ◎ *He is suffering from bladder trouble.* ◎ *She is taking antibiotics for a bladder infection.*

Blalock's operation /'bleɪlɔks ɒpə'reɪʃn/, **Blalock-Taussig operation** /'bleɪlɔk 'tɔ:sɪg ɒpə'reɪʃn/ *noun* a surgical operation to connect the pulmonary artery to the subclavian artery, in order to increase blood flow to the lungs of someone who has tetralogy of Fallot

bland /blaɪnd/ *adjective* referring to food which is not spicy, irritating or acid

bland diet /,blaɪnd 'daɪət/ *noun* a diet in which someone eats mainly milk-based foods, boiled vegetables and white meat, as a treatment for peptic ulcers

blanket bath /'blænkɪt ba:θ/ *noun* same as **bed bath**

blast /bla:st/ *noun* 1. a wave of air pressure from an explosion which can cause concussion 2. an immature form of a cell before distinctive characteristics develop

-**blast** /bla:st/ *suffix* referring to a very early stage in the development of a cell

blast injury /'bla:st ,ɪndʒəri/ *noun* a severe injury to the chest following a blast

blast- /bla:stəʊ/ *prefix* referring to a germ cell

blastocoele /'bla:stəʊsɪl/ *noun* a cavity filled with fluid in a morula (NOTE: The US spelling is **blastocoele**.)

blastocyst /'bla:stəʊsɪst/ *noun* an early stage in the development of an embryo

Blastomyces /,bla:stəʊ'maɪsɪz/ *noun* a type of parasitic fungus which affects the skin

blastomycosis /,bla:stəʊ'maɪkəʊ'sɪs/ *noun* an infection caused by *Blastomyces*

blastula /'bla:stjʊlə/ *noun* the first stage of the development of an embryo in animals

bleb /bleb/ *noun* a blister. Compare **bulla**

bled /bled/ ♦ **bleed**

bleed /'bli:d/ *verb* to lose blood ○ *His knee was bleeding.* ○ *He was bleeding from a cut on the head.* (NOTE: **bleeding – bled**)

bleeder /'bli:də/ *noun* 1. a blood vessel which bleeds during surgery 2. a person who has haemophilia (*informal*)

bleeding /'bli:dɪŋ/ *noun* an unusual loss of blood from the body through the skin, through an orifice or internally

COMMENT: Blood lost through bleeding from an artery is bright red and can rush out because it is under pressure. Blood from a vein is darker red and flows more slowly.

bleeding point /'bli:dɪŋ pɔɪnt/, **bleeding site** /'bli:dɪŋ saɪt/ *noun* a place in the body where bleeding is taking place

bleeding time /'bli:dɪŋ taim/ *noun* a test of the clotting ability of someone's blood, by timing the length of time it takes for the blood to congeal

blenno- /'blɛnəʊ/ *prefix* referring to mucus

blennorrhagia /,blɛnəʊ'reɪdʒə/ *noun* 1. the discharge of mucus 2. gonorrhoea

blennorrhœa /,blɛnə'rɪ:a/ *noun* 1. the discharge of watery mucus 2. gonorrhœa

bleomycin /'bli:əʊ'maɪsɪn/ *noun* an antibiotic used to treat forms of cancer such as Hodgkin's disease

blephar- /'blefər/ *prefix* same as **blepharo-** (*used before vowels*)

blepharitis /,blefə'rɪtaɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the eyelid

blepharo- /'blefərəʊ/ *prefix* referring to the eyelid

blepharoconjunctivitis /,blefərəʊkən'dʒʌŋktɪvɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the conjunctiva of the eyelids

blepharon /'blefərɒn/ *noun* an eyelid

blepharospasm /'blefərəʊspæz(ə)m/ *noun* a sudden contraction of the eyelid, as when a tiny piece of dust gets in the eye

blepharotosis /,blefərəʊ'təʊsɪs/ *noun* a condition in which the upper eyelid is half closed because of paralysis of the muscle or nerve

blind /'blaɪnd/ *adjective* not able to see ■ *plural noun* □ **the blind** people who are blind. ♀ **visually impaired** ■ *verb* to make someone blind ○ *He was blinded in the accident.*

blind gut /,blaɪnd 'gʌt/ *noun* same as **caecum**

blind loop syndrome /'blaɪnd 'lu:p ,sɪn drəʊm/ *noun* a condition which occurs in cases of diverticulosis or of Crohn's disease, with steatorrhœa, abdominal pain and megaloblastic anaemia

blindness /'blaɪndnəs/ *noun* the fact of not being able to see

blind spot /'blaɪnd spɒt/ *noun* the point in the retina where the optic nerve joins it, which does not register light

blind study /'blaɪnd 'stʌdi/ *noun* an investigation to test an intervention such as giving a drug, in which a person does not know if he or she has taken the active medicine or the placebo

blink /'blɪŋk/ *verb* to close and open the eyelids rapidly several times or once ○ *He blinked in the bright light.*

blister /'blɪstə/ *noun* a swelling on the skin containing serum from the blood, caused by rubbing, burning or a disease such as chicken-pox ■ *verb* to produce blisters

bloated /'bləutɪd/ *adjective* experiencing the uncomfortable sensation of a very full stomach

block /'blɒk/ *noun* 1. the stopping of a function 2. something which obstructs 3. a large piece of something ○ *A block of wood fell on his foot.* 4. a period of time ○ *The training is in two three-hour blocks.* 5. one of the different buildings forming a section of a hospital ○ *The patient is in Block 2, Ward 7.* ○ *She is having treatment in the physiotherapy block.* ■ *verb* to fill the space in something and stop other things passing through it ○ *The artery was blocked by a clot.* ○ *He swallowed a piece of plastic which blocked his oesophagus.*

blockage /'blɒkɪdʒ/ *noun* 1. something which obstructs ○ *There is a blockage in the rectum.* 2. the act of being obstructed ○ *The blockage of the artery was caused by a blood clot.*

blocker /'blɒkə/ *noun* a substance which blocks an action. ♀ **beta blocker**

blocking /'blɒkɪŋ/ *noun* a psychiatric disorder, in which someone suddenly stops one train of thought and switches to another

blood /blɒd/ *noun* a red liquid moved around the body by the pumping action of the heart (NOTE: For other terms referring to blood, see words beginning with **haem-**, **haemo-**, **haemato-**) ◇ **blood chemistry or chemistry of the blood** 1. the substances which make up blood can be analysed in blood tests, the results of which are useful in diagnosing disease 2. the record of changes which take place in blood during disease and treatment

COMMENT: Blood is formed of red and white cells, platelets and plasma. It circulates round the body, going from the heart and lungs along arteries, and returns to the heart through the veins. As it moves round the body it takes oxygen to the tissues and removes waste material which is cleaned out through the kidneys or exhaled through the lungs. It also carries hormones produced by glands to the various organs which need them. The body of an average adult contains about six litres or ten pints of blood.

blood bank /'blɒd bænk/ *noun* a section of a hospital or a special centre where blood given by donors is stored for use in transfusions

blood blister /'blʌd ,blɪstə/ *noun* a swelling on the skin with blood inside, caused by nipping the flesh

blood-borne virus /,blʌd bɔ:n 'vairəs/ *noun* a virus carried by the blood

blood-brain barrier /,blʌd breɪn 'bærɪər/ *noun* the process by which some substances, which in other parts of the body will diffuse from capillaries, are held back by the endothelium of cerebral capillaries, preventing them from coming into contact with the fluids round the brain

blood casts /'blʌd ku:sts/ *plural noun* pieces of blood cells which are secreted by the kidneys in kidney disease

blood cell /'blʌd sel/ *noun* a red or a white cell in the blood

blood clot /'blʌd klɒt/ *noun* a soft mass of coagulated blood in a vein or an artery. Also called **thrombus**

blood clotting /'blʌd ,klɒtɪŋ/ *noun* the process by which blood changes from being liquid to being semi-solid and so stops flowing

blood corpuscle /'blʌd ,kɔ:pəs(ə)l/ *noun* ♦ **blood cell**

blood count /'blʌd kaʊnt/ *noun* a test to count the number and types of different blood cells in a sample of blood, in order to give an indication of the condition of the person's blood as a whole

blood culture /'blʌd ,kʌltʃə/ *noun* a method of testing a sample of blood by placing it on a culture medium to see if foreign organisms in it grow

blood donor /'blʌd ,dəʊnə/ *noun* a person who gives blood which is then used in transfusions to other people

blood dyscrasia /,blʌd dis'kreɪzɪə/ *noun* any unusual blood condition such as a low cell count or platelet count

blood formation /'blʌd fɔ:,meɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* same as **haemopoiesis**

blood-glucose level /,blʌd 'glu:kəʊəz ,lev(ə)l/ *noun* the amount of glucose present in the blood. The usual blood-glucose level is about 60–100 mg of glucose per 100 ml of blood.

blood group /'blʌd gru:p/ *noun* one of the different groups into which human blood is classified. Also called **blood type**

COMMENT: Blood is classified in various ways. The most common classifications are by the agglutinogens (factors A and B) in red blood cells and by the Rhesus factor. Blood can therefore have either factor (Group A and Group B) or both factors (Group AB) or neither (Group O) and each of these groups can be Rhesus negative or positive.

blood grouping /'blʌd ,gru:piŋ/ *noun* the process of classifying people according to their blood groups

blood-letting /'blʌd ,letɪŋ/ *noun* same as **phlebotomy**

blood loss /'blʌd lɒs/ *noun* loss of blood from the body by bleeding

blood picture /'blʌd ,piktʃə/ *noun* US a full blood count

blood pigment /'blʌd ,pɪg'mənt/ *noun* same as **haemoglobin**

blood plasma /'blʌd ,plæzmə/ *noun* a yellow watery liquid which makes up the main part of blood

blood platelet /'blʌd ,plentlət/ *noun* a small blood cell which releases thromboplastin and which multiplies rapidly after an injury, encouraging the coagulation of blood

blood poisoning /'blʌd ,pɔɪz(ə)nɪŋ/ *noun* a condition in which bacteria are present in the blood and cause illness (*informal*) ◇ **septicaemia, bacteraemia, toxæmia**

blood pressure /'blʌd ,preʃə/ *noun* the pressure, measured in millimetres of mercury, at which the blood is pumped round the body by the heart ◇ **high blood pressure or raised blood pressure** a level of blood pressure which is higher than usual

... raised blood pressure may account for as many as 70% of all strokes. The risk of stroke rises with both systolic and diastolic blood pressure in the normotensive and hypertensive ranges. Blood pressure control reduces the incidence of first stroke and aspirin appears to reduce the risk of stroke after TIAs' [British Journal of Hospital Medicine]

COMMENT: Blood pressure is measured using a sphygmomanometer. A rubber tube is wrapped round the patient's arm and inflated and two readings of blood pressure are taken: the systolic pressure, when the heart is contracting and so pumping out, and the diastolic pressure, which is always a lower figure, when the heart relaxes. Healthy adult values are considered to be 160/95, unless the patient is diabetic or has heart disease, when lower target values are set.

blood product /'blʌd ,prɒdʌkt/ *noun* a substance such as plasma taken out of blood and used in the treatment of various medical conditions

blood relationship /,blʌd ri'leɪʃ(ə)nʃɪp/ *noun* a relationship between people who come from the same family and have the same parents, grandparents or ancestors, as opposed to a relationship by marriage

blood sample /'blʌd ,sæmplə/ *noun* a sample of blood, taken for testing

blood serum /'blʌd ,sɪərəm/ *noun* ♦ **serum**

bloodshot /'blʌdʃɒt/ *adjective* referring to an eye with small specks of blood in it from a small damaged blood vessel

bloodstained /'blʌdsteɪnd/ *adjective* having blood in or on it ◇ *He coughed up blood-stained sputum.*

bloodstream /'blʌdstri:m/ *noun* the blood flowing round the body ◇ *Hormones are secreted by the glands into the bloodstream.*

blood sugar /'blʌd 'ʃʊgə/ *noun* glucose present in the blood

blood sugar level /,blʌd 'ʃʊgə ,lev(ə)l/ *noun* the amount of glucose in the blood, which is higher after meals and in people with diabetes

blood test /'blʌd test/ *noun* a laboratory test of a blood sample to analyse its chemical composition ◎ *The patient will have to have a blood test.*

blood transfusion /'blʌd træns,fju:z(ə)n/ *noun* a procedure in which blood given by another person or taken from the patient at an earlier stage is transferred into the patient's vein

blood type /'blʌd taɪp/ *noun* same as **blood group**

blood typing /'blʌd ,taɪpɪŋ/ *noun* the analysis of blood for transfusion factors and blood group

blood urea /'blʌd ju'rɪə/ *noun* urea present in the blood. A high level occurs following heart failure or kidney disease.

blood vessel /'blʌd ,ves(ə)l/ *noun* any tube which carries blood round the body, e.g. an artery, vein or capillary (NOTE: For other terms referring to blood vessels, see words beginning with **angi-**, **angio-**)

blood volume /'blʌd ,vɒlvju:m/ *noun* the total amount of blood in the body

blotch /blɒtʃ/ *noun* a reddish patch on the skin

blot test /'blɒt test/ *noun* ▶ **Rorschach test**

blue baby /'blu: 'beɪbɪ/ *noun* a baby who has congenital cyanosis, born either with a congenital heart condition or with a collapsed lung, which prevents an adequate supply of oxygen reaching the tissues, giving the baby's skin a slight blue colour (*informal*)

blue disease /'blu: di'zi:z/, **blueness** /'blu:nəs/ *noun* ▶ **cyanosis**

blue litmus /'blu: 'lɪtməs/ *noun* treated paper which indicates the presence of acid by turning red

blurred vision /,blɜ:d 'vɪʒ(ə)n/ *noun* a condition in which someone does not see objects clearly

blush /blʌʃ/ *noun* a rush of red colour to the skin of the face, caused by emotion ■ *verb* to go red in the face because of emotion

bm abbr bowel movement

BM abbr Bachelor of Medicine

BMA abbr British Medical Association

BMI abbr body mass index

BMJ abbr British Medical Journal

BMR abbr basal metabolic rate

BMR test /'bi: ,em 'a: test/ *noun* a test of thyroid function

BNF abbr British National Formulary

bodily /'bɒdili/ *adjective* referring to the body

◎ *The main bodily functions are controlled by the sympathetic nervous system.*

body /'bɒdi/ *noun* 1. the physical structure of a person, as opposed to the mind 2. the main part of a person's body, not including the head or arms and legs 3. a dead person ■ an amount of something □ *noun* 1. the main part of something □ **body of sternum** the main central part of the breastbone □ **body of vertebra** the main part of a vertebra which supports the weight of the body □ **body of the stomach** main part of the stomach between the fundus and the pylorus. See illustration at **STOMACH** in Supplement 2. ▶ **foreign body**

body cavity /'bɒdi ,kævɪti/ *noun* an opening in the body, e.g. the mouth, oesophagus, vagina, rectum or ear

body fat /'bɒdi fæt/ *noun* tissue where the cells contain fat which replaces the fibrous tissue when too much food is eaten

body fluid /'bɒdi ,flu:ɪd/ *noun* a liquid in the body, e.g. water, blood or semen

body image /,bɒdi 'ɪmɪdʒ/ *noun* the mental image which a person has of their own body. Also called **body schema**

body language /'bɒdi ,læŋgwɪdʒ/ *noun* the expression on your face, or the way you hold your body, interpreted by other people as unconsciously revealing your feelings

body mass index /,bɒdi 'mæs ,ɪndeks/ *noun* a figure obtained by dividing someone's weight in kilos by the square of his or her height in metres. 19–25 is considered usual. Abbr **BMI**

COMMENT: If a person is 1.70m (5ft 7in.) and weighs 82kg (180 lbs), his or her BMI is 28 and so above average.

body odour /,bɒdi 'əʊdə/ *noun* an unpleasant smell caused by perspiration

body scan /'bɒdi skæn/ *noun* an examination of the whole of the body using ultrasound or other scanning techniques

body schema /,bɒdi 'ski:mə/ *noun* same as **body image**

body substance isolation /'bɒdi ,sə'bstəns ɪsə,leɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* making sure that a trauma victim is kept isolated from the possibility of infection from moist body substances

body temperature /'bɒdi ,temprɪ,tʃə/ *noun* the internal temperature of the human body, usually about 37°C

Boeck's disease /'beks di'zi:z/, **Boeck's sarcoid** /'beks ,sa:kɔɪd/ *noun* same as **sarcoidosis** [Described 1899. After Caesar Peter Moeller Boeck (1845–1913), Professor of Dermatology at Oslo, Norway.]

Bohn's nodules /,bo:nz 'nɒdju:lz/, **Bohn's epithelial pearls** plural *noun* tiny cysts found in the mouths of healthy infants

boil /bɔɪl/ *noun* a tender raised mass of infected tissue and skin, usually caused by infection of a hair follicle by the bacterium *Staphylococcus aureus*. Also called **furuncle**

bolus /'bəʊləs/ *noun* 1. a mass of food which has been chewed and is ready to be swallowed 2. a mass of food passing along the intestine

bonding /'bɒndɪŋ/ *noun* the process by which a psychological link is formed between a baby and its mother ○ *In autistic children bonding is difficult.*

bone /bəʊn/ *noun* 1. calcified connective tissue 2. one of the calcified pieces of connective tissue which make the skeleton ○ *There are several small bones in the human ear.* See illustration at **SYNOVIAL JOINT** in Supplement ○ **bone structure** 1. the system of jointed bones forming the body 2. the arrangement of the various components of a bone

COMMENT: Bones are formed of a hard outer layer (compact bone) which is made up of a series of layers of tissue (Haversian systems) and a softer inner part (cancellous bone or spongy bone) which contains bone marrow.

bone-anchored hearing aid /,bəʊn ,æŋkəd 'hɪərɪŋ eɪd/ *noun* a hearing aid that is fitted surgically into the skull, usually behind the ear. Abbr **BAHA**

bone conduction /'bəʊn kən,dʌkʃ(ə)n/ *noun* same as **osteophony**

bone damage /'bəʊn ,dæmɪdʒ/ *noun* damage caused to a bone ○ *extensive bruising but no bone damage*

bone graft /'bəʊn grɑ:ft/ *noun* a piece of bone taken from one part of the body to repair a another bone

bone marrow /'bəʊn ,mærəʊ/ *noun* soft tissue in cancellous bone (NOTE: For other terms referring to bone marrow, see words beginning with **myel-**, **myelo-**)

COMMENT: Two types of bone marrow are to be found: red bone marrow or myeloid tissue, which forms red blood cells and is found in cancellous bone in the vertebrae, the sternum and other flat bones. As a person gets older, fatty yellow bone marrow develops in the central cavity of long bones.

bone marrow transplant /,bəʊn 'mærəʊ ,tra:nspλə:tnt/ *noun* the transplant of marrow from a donor to a recipient

bone scan *noun* a scan which tracks a radioactive substance injected into the body to find areas where a bone is breaking down or repairing itself

Bonney's blue /,bɔ:niz 'blu:/ *noun* a blue dye used as a disinfectant [After William Francis Victor Bonney (1872–1953), British gynaecologist]

bony /'bəʊni/ *adjective* 1. relating to bones, or made of bone 2. referring to a part of the body where the structure of the bones underneath can be seen ○ *thin bony hands*

bony labyrinth /,bəʊni 'læbərɪnθ/ *noun* a hard part of the temporal bone surrounding the membranous labyrinth in the inner ear. Also called **osseous labyrinth**

booster /'bu:stər/ *noun* in, dʒækʃ(ə)n/, **booster injection** *noun* a repeat injection of vaccine given some time after the first injection to maintain the immunising effect

boracic acid /bə,ræsɪk 'æsɪd/ *noun* a soluble white powder used as a general disinfectant. Also called **boric acid**

borax /'bɔ:ræks/ *noun* a white powder used as a household cleaner and disinfectant

borborygmus /,bɔ:bə'rɪgməs/ *noun* a rumbling noise in the abdomen, caused by gas in the intestine (NOTE: The plural is **borborygmi**.)

borderline /'bɔ:dəlaine/ *adjective* 1. not clearly belonging to either one of two categories ○ *a borderline case* 2. referring to a medical condition likely to develop in someone unless an effort is made to prevent it 3. characterised by emotional instability and self-destructive behaviour ○ *a borderline personality*

Bordetella /,bɔ:də'tela/ *noun* a bacterium of the family *Brucellaceae* (NOTE: *Bordetella pertussis* causes whooping cough.)

boric acid /,bɔ:rik 'æsɪd/ *noun* same as **boracic acid**

born /bɔ:n/ *verb* □ **to be born** to begin to live outside the mother's uterus

Bornholm disease /'bɔ:nhaʊm dr,zi:z/ *noun* same as **epidemic pleurodynia**

bottle-fed /'bɒt(ə)fɪd/ *adjective* referring to a baby which is fed from a bottle. Compare **breast-fed**

bottle feeding /,bɒt(ə)fɪd/ 'fi:dɪŋ/ *noun* the act of giving a baby milk from a bottle, as opposed to breast feeding. Compare **breast feeding**

bottom /'bɒtəm/ *noun* 1. the part of the body on which you sit. ♀ **buttock** 2. the anus (*informal*)

bottom shuffling /'bɒtəm ,ʃʌf(ə)lɪŋ/ *noun* the process by which a baby who cannot yet walk moves around by moving itself along on its hands and buttocks

botulinum toxin /,bɒtju'lainəm ,tɒksɪn/ *noun* a poison produced by the bacterium *Clostridium botulinum* and used, in small doses, to treat muscular cramps and spasms

botulism /'bɒtju'lɪz(ə)m/ *noun* a type of food poisoning, often fatal, caused by a toxin of *Clostridium botulinum* in badly canned or preserved food. Symptoms include paralysis of the muscles, vomiting and hallucinations.

buogie /'bu:ʒi:/ *noun* a thin tube which can be inserted into passages in the body such as the oesophagus or rectum, either to allow liquid to be introduced or to dilate the passage

bout /baʊt/ *noun* a sudden attack of a disease, especially one which recurs ○ *He is recovering from a bout of flu.* □ **bout of fever** a period

when someone is feverish ○ *She has recurrent bouts of malaria fever.*

bovine spongiform encephalopathy /'bəuvain ,spɒndʒɪfɔ:m en,kefə'lɒpəθi/ noun a fatal brain disease of cattle. Abbr **BSE**.

◊ **Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease**. Also called **mad cow disease**

bowel /'baʊəl/ noun the intestine, especially the large intestine (NOTE: **Bowel** is often used in the plural in everyday language.) □ **to open the bowels** to have a bowel movement

bowel movement /'baʊəl ,mu:vment/ noun 1. an act of passing faeces out of the body through the anus ○ *The patient had a bowel movement this morning.* Also called **motion**. ◊ **defecation** 2. the amount of faeces passed through the anus

bowels /'baʊəlz/ plural noun same as **bowel**

Bowen's disease /'bəʊin̩z dɪ,zi:z/ noun a form of carcinoma, appearing as red plaques on the skin

bowl /bəʊl/ noun a wide shallow container used for holding liquids

bow-legged /bəʊ 'legɪd/ adjective with bow legs

bow legs /bəʊ 'legz/ noun a state where the ankles touch and the knees are apart when a person is standing straight. Also called **genu varum**

Bowman's capsule /,bəʊmən̩z 'kæpsju:l/ noun the expanded end of a renal tubule, surrounding a glomerular tuft in the kidney, which filters plasma in order to reabsorb useful foodstuffs and eliminate waste. Also called **Malpighian glomerulus, glomerular capsule** [Described 1842. After Sir William Paget Bowman (1816–92), surgeon in Birmingham and later in London, who was a pioneer in work on the kidney and in ophthalmology.]

BP abbr 1. blood pressure 2. British Pharmacopoeia

BPH abbr benign prostatic hypertrophy

Bq symbol becquerel

brace /breɪs/ noun any type of splint or appliance worn for support, e.g. a metal support used on children's legs to make the bones straight or on teeth which are forming badly ○ *She wore a brace on her front teeth.*

bracelet /'breɪslət/ noun ♦ **identity bracelet, medical alert bracelet**

brachi- /breɪki:/ prefix same as **brachio-** (used before vowels)

brachial /'breɪkiəl/ adjective referring to the arm, especially the upper arm

brachial artery /'breɪkiəl ,a:təri/ noun an artery running down the arm from the axillary artery to the elbow, where it divides into the radial and ulnar arteries

brachialis muscle /,breɪki'eɪlɪs ,mʌs(ə)/ noun a muscle that causes the elbow to bend

brachial plexus /,breɪkiəl 'pleksəs/ noun a group of nerves at the armpit and base of the neck which lead to the nerves in the arms and hands. Injury to the brachial plexus at birth leads to Erb's palsy.

brachial pressure point /,breɪkiəl 'preʃə point/ noun the point on the arm where pressure will stop bleeding from the brachial artery

brachial vein /'breɪkiəl veɪn/ noun a vein accompanying the brachial artery, draining into the axillary vein

brachio- /breɪkiəʊ/ prefix referring to the arm

brachiocephalic artery /,breɪkiəʊsə ,fælkɪk 'a:təri/ noun the largest branch of the arch of the aorta, which continues as the right common carotid and right subclavian arteries

brachiocephalic vein /,breɪkiəʊsə,fælkɪk 'veɪn/ noun one of a pair of large veins on opposite sides of the neck that join to form the superior vena cava. Also called **innominate vein**

brachium /'breɪkiəm/ noun an arm, especially the upper arm between the elbow and the shoulder (NOTE: The plural is **brachia**.)

brachy- /brækɪ/ prefix short

brachycephaly /,brækɪ'sefəli/ noun a condition in which the skull is shorter than usual

brachytherapy /,brækɪ'θerəpi/ noun a radioactive treatment in which the radioactive material actually touches the tissue being treated

Bradford's frame /'brædfədz freɪm/ noun a frame of metal and cloth, used to support a patient [After Edward Hickling Bradford (1848–1926), US orthopaedic surgeon]

brady- /brædi/ prefix slow

bradycardia /,brædɪ'ka:dɪə/ noun a slow rate of heart contraction, shown by a slow pulse rate of less than 70 beats per minute

bradykinesia /,brædkai'nizɪə/ noun a condition in which the someone walks slowly and makes slow movements because of disease

bradykinin /,brædɪ'kainɪn/ noun a chemical produced in the blood when tissues are injured, that plays a role in inflammation. ◊ **kinin**

bradypnoea /,brædɪp'nɪ:ə/ noun unusually slow breathing (NOTE: The US spelling is **bradypnea**.)

Braille /breɪl/ noun a system of writing using raised dots on the paper to indicate letters which a blind person can read by passing their fingers over the page ○ *The book has been published in Braille.* [Introduced 1829–30. After Louis Braille (1809–52), blind Frenchman and teacher of the blind; he introduced the system which had originally been proposed by Charles Barbier in 1820.]

brain /breɪn/ noun the part of the central nervous system situated inside the skull. Also called **encephalon**. See illustration at **BRAIN** in Supplement

COMMENT: The main part of the brain is the cerebrum, formed of two sections or hemi-

spheres, which relate to thought and to sensations from either side of the body. At the back of the head and beneath the cerebrum is the cerebellum which coordinates muscle reaction and balance. Also in the brain are the hypothalamus which governs body temperature, hunger, thirst and sexual urges, and the tiny pituitary gland which is the most important endocrine gland in the body.

brain covering /'breɪn ,kʌv(ə)rɪŋ/ *noun* ▶ meninges

brain damage /'breɪn ,dæmɪdʒ/ *noun* damage caused to the brain as a result of oxygen and sugar deprivation, e.g. after a haemorrhage, accident, or though disease

brain-damaged /'breɪn ,dæmɪdʒd/ *adjective* referring to someone who has experienced brain damage

brain death /'breɪn deθ/ *noun* a condition in which the nerves in the brain stem have died, and the person can be certified as dead, although the heart may not have stopped beating

brain haemorrhage /'breɪn 'hem(ə)rɪdʒ/ *noun* same as **cerebral haemorrhage**

brain scan /'breɪn skæn/ *noun* an examination of the inside of the brain, made by passing X-rays through the head, using a scanner, and reconstituting the images on a computer monitor

brain scanner /'breɪn ,skænə/ *noun* a machine which scans the interior of the body, used to examine the brain

brain stem /'breɪn stem/ *noun* the lower narrow part of the brain which connects the brain to the spinal cord

brain tumour /'breɪn tju:mə/ *noun* a tumour which grows in the brain

COMMENT: Tumours may grow in any part of the brain. The symptoms of brain tumour are usually headaches and dizziness, and as the tumour grows it may affect the senses or mental faculties. Operations to remove brain tumours can be very successful.

brain wave /'breɪn stem/ *noun* a rhythmic wave of voltage produced by electrical activity in the brain tissue

bran /bræn/ *noun* the outside covering of the wheat seed, removed when making white flour, but an important source of roughage in the diet

branch /'bra:nʃ/ *noun* any part which grows out of a main part □ *verb* to split out into smaller parts ○ *The radial artery branches from the brachial artery at the elbow.*

branchia /'bræŋkiə/ *noun* a breathing organ similar to the gill of a fish found in human embryos in the early stages of development (NOTE: The plural is **branchiae**.)

branchial /'bræŋkiəl/ *adjective* referring to the branchiae

branchial cyst /,bræŋkiəl 'sist/ *noun* a cyst on the side of the neck of an embryo

branchial pouch /,bræŋkiəl 'paʊtʃ/ *noun* a pouch on the side of the neck of an embryo

Braun's frame /,braʊnz 'freɪm/, **Braun's splint** /,braʊnz 'splɪnt/ *noun* a metal splint and frame to which pulleys are attached, used for holding up a fractured leg while the person is lying in bed [After Heinrich Friedrich Wilhelm Braun (1862–1934), German surgeon]

Braxton-Hicks contractions /,brækstən 'hɪks kən,trækʃənz/ *plural noun* contractions of the uterus which occur throughout a pregnancy and become more frequent and stronger towards the end [After Dr Braxton-Hicks, 19th century British physician]

break /breɪk/ *noun* the point at which a bone has broken □ **clean break** a break in a bone which is not complicated and where the two parts will join again easily

breakbone fever /'breɪkbəʊn ,fi:və/ *noun* same as **dengue**

break down /,breɪk 'daʊn/ *verb* 1. to experience a sudden physical or psychological illness (*informal*) ○ *After she lost her husband, her health broke down.* 2. to start to cry and become upset (*informal*) ○ *She broke down as she described the symptoms to the doctor.* 3. to split or cause to split into smaller chemical components, as in the digestion of food

breakdown /'breɪkdaʊn/ *noun* ▶ **nervous breakdown**

breakdown product /'breɪkdaʊn ,prɒdʌkt/ *noun* a substance which is produced when a compound is broken down into its parts

breast /'brest/ *noun* one of two glands in a woman which secrete milk. Also called **mamma** (NOTE: For other terms referring to breasts, see words beginning with **mamm-**, **mammo-**, **mast-**, **masto-**.)

breast augmentation /'brest ,ɔ:g'men teɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a surgical procedure to increase the size of the breast for cosmetic purposes

breastbone /'brestbəʊn/ *noun* a bone which is in the centre of the front of the thorax and to which the ribs are connected. Also called **sternum**

breast cancer /'brest ,kænsə/ *noun* a malignant tumour in a breast

breast-fed /'brest fed/ *adjective* referring to a baby which is fed from the mother's breasts ○ *She was breast-fed for the first two months.*

breast feeding /'brest ,fi:dɪŋ/ *noun* feeding a baby from the mother's breasts as opposed to from a bottle. Compare **bottle feeding**

breast implant /'brest ,impla:nt/ *noun* a sac containing silicone, implanted to improve the appearance of a breast

breast milk /'brest milk/ *noun* the milk produced by a woman who has recently had a baby

breast palpation /'brest pæl,pelʃ(ə)n/ noun feeling a breast to see if a lump is present which might indicate breast cancer

breast pump /'brest pʌmp/ noun an instrument for taking milk from a breast

breast reconstruction noun the construction of a new breast for a woman who has had a breast removed because of cancer

breast reduction /'brest rɪ,dʌkʃ(ə)n/ noun a reduction of the size of the breast for cosmetic purposes

breath /breθ/ noun air which goes in and out of the body when you breathe ○ *He ran so fast he was out of breath.* ○ *Stop for a moment to get your breath back.* ○ *She took a deep breath and dived into the water.* □ **to hold your breath** to stop breathing out, after having inhaled deeply

breathe /bri:ð/ verb to take air in and blow air out through the nose or mouth ○ *The patient has begun to breathe normally.* □ **to breathe in** to take air into your lungs □ **to breathe out** to let the air out of your lungs ○ *He breathed in the smoke from the fire and it made him cough.* ○ *The doctor told him to take a deep breath and breathe out slowly.*

COMMENT: Children breathe about 20 to 30 times per minute, men 16–18 per minute, and women slightly faster. The breathing rate increases if the person is taking exercise or has a fever. Some babies and young children hold their breath and go blue in the face, especially when crying or during a temper tantrum.

breath-holding attack /'breθ ,həʊldɪŋ ə ,teɪk/ noun a period when a young child stops breathing, usually because he or she is angry

breathing /'bri:ðɪŋ/ noun same as **respiration** ○ *If breathing is difficult or has stopped, begin artificial ventilation immediately.* (NOTE: For other terms referring to breathing see words beginning with **pneum-**, **pneumo-**, **pneumat-**, **pneumato-**.)

breathing rate /'bri:ðɪŋ reɪt/ noun the number of times a person breathes in and out in a specific period

breathless /'breθləs/ adjective referring to someone who finds it difficult to breathe enough air ○ *After running upstairs she became breathless and had to sit down.*

breathlessness /'breθləsnəs/ noun difficulty in breathing enough air

'26 patients were selected from the outpatient department on grounds of disabling breathlessness present for at least five years' [Lancet]

breath sounds /'breθ saʊndz/ noun hollow sounds made by the lungs and heard through a stethoscope placed on a person's chest, used in diagnosis

breach /bri:tʃ/ noun the buttocks, especially of a baby

breach birth /'bri:tʃ ,bɜ:θ/, **breech delivery** /'bri:tʃ di,lv(ə)rɪ/ noun a birth in which the baby's buttocks appear first rather than its head

breech presentation /bri:tʃ ,prez(ə)n/ /'teɪʃ(ə)n/ noun a position of the baby in the uterus in which the buttocks will appear first during childbirth

breed /bri:d/ verb to reproduce, or reproduce animals or plants ○ *The bacteria breed in dirty water.* ○ *Insanitary conditions help to breed disease.*

bregma /'bregmə/ noun the point at the top of the head where the soft gap between the bones of a baby's skull hardens

bretilyium tosylate /brə,tɪliəm 'tɒsɪleɪt/ noun an agent used to block adrenergic transmitter release

bridge /brɪdʒ/ noun 1. the top part of the nose where it joins the forehead 2. an artificial tooth or set of teeth which is joined to natural teeth which hold it in place 3. a part joining two or more other parts

Bright's disease /'braɪts dɪ,zɪ:z/ noun inflammation of the kidneys, characterised by albuminuria and high blood pressure. Also called **glomerulonephritis** [Described 1836. After Richard Bright (1789–1858), physician at Guy's Hospital, London, UK.]

bring up /brɪŋ 'ʌp/ verb 1. to look after and educate a child 2. to cough up material such as mucus from the lungs or throat 3. to vomit (*informal*)

British anti-lewisite /,brɪtɪʃ ,ænti'lju:isait/ noun an antidote for gases which cause blistering, also used to treat cases of poisoning such as mercury poisoning. Abbr **BAL**

British Dental Association /,brɪtɪʃ 'dent(ə)l əsəusi,eɪʃ(ə)n/ noun in the UK, a professional association of dentists. Abbr **BDA**

British Medical Association /,brɪtɪʃ 'medɪk(ə)l əsəusi,eɪʃ(ə)n/ noun in the UK, a professional association of doctors. Abbr **BMA**

British National Formulary /,brɪtɪʃ ,næf(ə)nəl 'fɔ:mjulərɪ/ noun a book listing key information on the prescribing, dispensing and administration of prescription drugs used in the UK. Abbr **BNF**

British Pharmacopoeia /,brɪtɪʃ ,fɑ:məkə 'piə/ noun a book listing drugs approved in the UK and their dosages. Abbr **BP**

COMMENT: Drugs listed in the British Pharmacopoeia have the letters BP written after them on labels.

brittle /'brit(ə)l/ adjective easily broken ○ *The people's bones become brittle as they get older.*

brittle bone disease /,brɪt(ə)l 'bəʊn di,zɪ:z/ noun 1. same as **osteogenesis imperfecta** 2. same as **osteoporosis**

Broadbent's sign /'brɔ:dbents sam/ noun a movement of someone's left side near the lower ribs at each beat of the heart, indicating adhesion between the diaphragm and pericardium in cases of pericarditis [After Sir William

Henry Broadbent (1835–1907), British physician]

broad ligament /'bro:d 'lɪgəmənt/ *noun* peritoneal folds supporting the uterus on each side

broad-spectrum antibiotic /,brɔ:d ,spektrəm ,sen'trəbəl 'ɒtɪk/ *noun* an antibiotic used to control many types of microorganism

Broca's aphasia /,brəʊkəz ə'feziə/ *noun* a condition in which someone is unable to speak or write, as a result of damage to Broca's area

Broca's area /'brəʊkəz ,eəriə/ *noun* an area on the left side of the brain which governs the motor aspects of speaking [Described 1861. After Pierre Henri Paul Broca (1824–80), French surgeon and anthropologist. A pioneer of neurosurgery, he also invented various instruments, described muscular dystrophy before Duchenne, and recognised rickets as a nutritional disorder before Virchow.]

Brodie's abscess /,brəudɪz 'æbses/ *noun* an abscess of a bone, caused by staphylococcal osteomyelitis [Described 1832. After Sir Benjamin Collins Brodie (1783–1862), British surgeon.]

bromhidrosis /,brɒmhi'drəʊsɪs/ *noun* a condition in which body sweat has an unpleasant smell

bromide /'brəʊmaɪd/ *noun* a bromine salt (NOTE: Bromides are used as sedatives.)

bromine /'brəʊmi:n/ *noun* a chemical element (NOTE: The chemical symbol is Br.)

bromism /'brəʊmɪz(ə)m/ *noun* chronic ill health caused by excessive use of bromides

bromocriptine /,brəʊməʊ'kripti:n/ *noun* a drug which functions like dopamine, used to treat excessive lactation, breast pain, some forms of infertility, growth disorder and Parkinson's disease

bronch- /brɒŋk/, **bronchi-** /brɒŋki/ *prefix* same as **broncho-** (*used before vowels*)

bronchi /'brɒŋkai/ plural of **bronchus**

bronchial /'brɒŋkiəl/ *adjective* referring to the bronchi

bronchial asthma /,brɒŋkiəl 'æsmə/ *noun* a type of asthma mainly caused by an allergen or by exertion

bronchial breath sounds /,brɒŋkiəl 'breθ ,saʊndz/ *plural noun* distinctive breath sounds from the lungs which help diagnosis

bronchial pneumonia /,brɒŋkiəl nju: 'məʊniə/ *noun* same as **bronchopneumonia**

bronchial tree /'brɒŋkɪəl trɪ:/ *noun* a system of tubes (bronchi and bronchioles) which take the air from the trachea into the lungs

bronchiectasis /,brɒŋki'ektəsɪs/ *noun* a disorder of the bronchi which become wide, infected and filled with pus (NOTE: Bronchiectasis can lead to pneumonia.)

bronchio- /brɒŋkiəl/ *prefix* referring to the bronchioles

bronchiolar /,brɒŋki'əʊlə/ *adjective* referring to the bronchioles

bronchiole /'brɒŋkiəl/ *noun* a very small air tube in the lungs leading from a bronchus to the alveoli. See illustration at **LUNGS** in Supplement

bronchiolitis /,brɒŋkiəl'laɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the bronchioles, usually in small children

bronchitic /brɒŋ'kɪtɪk/ *adjective* 1. referring to bronchitis 2. referring to a person who has bronchitis

bronchitis /brɒŋ'kaitɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the mucous membrane of the bronchi □

acute bronchitis an attack of bronchitis caused by a virus or by exposure to cold and wet

broncho- /brɒŋkəʊl/ *prefix* referring to the windpipe

bronchoconstrictor /,brɒŋkəʊkən'strɪktə/ *noun* a drug which narrows the bronchi

bronchodilator /,brɒŋkəʊdəl'leɪtə/ *noun* a drug which makes the bronchi wider, used in the treatment of asthma and allergy (NOTE: Bronchodilators usually have names ending in -terol; however, the most common bronchodilator is **salbutamol**.)

'19 children with mild to moderately severe perennial bronchial asthma were selected. These children gave a typical history of exercise-induced asthma and their symptoms were controlled with oral or aerosol bronchodilators' [Lancet]

bronchogram /'brɒŋkəʊgræm/ *noun* an X-ray picture of the bronchial tubes obtained by bronchography

bronchography /brɒŋ'kɒgrəfi/ *noun* an X-ray examination of the lungs after an opaque substance has been put into the bronchi

bronchomedastinal trunk /,brɒŋkəʊ mɪdɪə,stain(ə)l 'trʌŋk/ *noun* the set of lymph nodes draining part of the chest

bronchomycosis /,brɒŋkəʊmət'kəʊsɪs/ *noun* an infection of the bronchi by a fungus

bronchophony /brɒŋ'kɒfəni/ *noun* vibrations of the voice heard over the lungs, indicating solidification in the lungs

bronchopleural /,brɒŋkəʊ'pluərəl/ *adjective* referring to a bronchus and the pleura

bronchopneumonia /,brɒŋkəʊnju: 'məʊniə/ *noun* an infectious inflammation of the bronchioles, which may lead to general infection of the lungs

bronchopulmonary /,brɒŋkəʊ'pʌlmən(ə)ri/ *adjective* referring to the bronchi and the lungs

bronchorrhoea /,brɒŋkəʊ'rɪ:ə/ *noun* the secretion of mucus by the bronchi

bronchoscope /'brɒŋkəʊskəp/ *noun* an instrument which is passed down the trachea into the lungs, which a doctor can use to inspect the inside passages of the lungs

bronchoscopy /brɒn'kɒskəpi/ *noun* an examination of a person's bronchi using a bronchoscope

bronchospasm /'brɒŋkəʊspæz(ə)m/ *noun* a tightening of the bronchial muscles which causes the tubes to contract, as in asthma

bronchspirometer /,brɒŋkəʊspai'rɒmɪtə/ *noun* an instrument for measuring the volume of the lungs

bronchspirometry /,brɒŋkəʊspai'rɒmɪtri/ *noun* a procedure for measuring the volume of the lungs

bronchostenosis /,brɒŋkəʊstə'nəʊsɪs/ *noun* an unusual constriction of the bronchial tubes

bronchotracheal /,brɒŋkəʊtrə'ki:əl/ *adjective* referring to the bronchi and the trachea
bronchus /'brɒŋkəs/ *noun* one of the two air passages leading from the trachea into the lungs, where they split into many bronchioles. See illustration at LUNGS in Supplement (NOTE: The plural is **bronchi**.)

bronze diabetes /,brɒnz daɪə'bɪ:tɪ:z/ *noun* same as **haemochromatosis**

Brovian catheter /'braʊviæk ,kæθɪtə/ *noun* a type of thin catheter used to insert into a vein

brow /braʊ/ *noun* 1. same as **forehead** 2. same as **eyebrow**

brown fat /braʊn 'fæt/ *noun* dark-coloured body fat that can easily be converted to energy and helps to control body temperature

Brown-Séquard syndrome /,braʊn 'sɛ:kɑ: ,sɪndrəʊm/ *noun* a condition in which the spinal cord has been partly severed or compressed, with the result that the lower half of the body is paralysed on one side and loses feeling in the other side [Described 1851. After Charles Edouard Brown-Séquard (1817–94), French physiologist.]

Brucella /bru:'selə/ *noun* a type of rod-shaped bacterium

brucellosis /,bru:sɪ'ləʊsɪs/ *noun* a disease which can be caught from cattle or goats or from drinking infected milk, spread by a species of the bacterium *Brucella*. The symptoms include tiredness, arthritis, headache, sweating, irritability and swelling of the spleen. Also called **abortus fever**, **Malta fever**, **mountain fever**, **undulant fever**

Brufen /'bru:fən/ a trade name for ibuprofen
bruise /bru:z/ *noun* a dark painful area on the skin, where blood has escaped under the skin following a blow. □ **black eye** □ *verb* to cause a bruise on part of the body ○ *She bruised her knee on the corner of the table.* □ **she bruises easily** even a soft blow will give her a bruise

bruised /bru:zd/ *adjective* painful after a blow or showing the marks of a bruise ○ *a badly bruised leg*

bruising /'bru:zɪŋ/ *noun* an area of bruises ○ *The baby has bruising on the back and legs.*

bruit /bru:t/ *noun* an unusual noise heard through a stethoscope

Brunner's glands /'brʊnəz ,glændz/ *plural noun* glands in the duodenum and jejunum [Described 1687. After Johann Konrad Brunner (1653–1727), Swiss anatomist at Heidelberg, then at Strasbourg.]

bruxism /'brʌksɪz(ə)m/ *noun* the action of grinding the teeth, as a habit

BSE abbr bovine spongiform encephalopathy

bubo /'bju:bəʊ/ *noun* a swelling of a lymph node in the groin or armpit

bubonic plague /bju:,bɒnɪk 'pleɪg/ *noun* a usually fatal infectious disease caused by *Yersinia pestis* in the lymph system, transmitted to humans by fleas from rats

COMMENT: Bubonic plague was the Black Death of the Middle Ages. Its symptoms are fever, delirium, vomiting and swelling of the lymph nodes.

buccal /'bʌk(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to the cheek or mouth

buccal cavity /'bʌk(ə)l ,kævɪtɪ/ *noun* the mouth

buccal fat /'bʌk(ə)l fæt/ *noun* a pad of fat separating the buccinator muscle from the masseter

buccal smear /'bʌk(ə)l smɪə/ *noun* a gentle scraping of the inside of the cheek with a spatula to obtain cells for testing

buccinator /'bʌksɪneɪtə/ *noun* a cheek muscle which helps the jaw to move when chewing

Budd-Chiari syndrome /,bʌd k'reəri ,sɪndrəʊm/ *noun* a disease of the liver, where thrombosis has occurred in the hepatic veins [Described 1845. After George Budd (1808–82), Professor of Medicine at King's College Hospital, London; Hans von Chiari (1851–1916), Viennese pathologist who was Professor of Pathological Anatomy at Strasbourg and later at Prague.]

budesonide /bju:'desənɔɪd/ *noun* a corticosteroid drug taken by inhalation or in tablets, used in the treatment of hay fever and nasal polyps

Buerger's disease /'bɜ:gə dɪ,zɪ:z/ *noun* same as **thromboangiitis obliterans** [Described 1908. After Leo Buerger (1879–1943), New York physician of Viennese origin.]

buffer /'bʌfə/ *noun* 1. a substance that keeps a constant balance between acid and alkali 2. a solution where the pH is not changed by adding acid or alkali ■ *verb* to prevent a solution from becoming acid

buffer action /'bʌfə ,ækʃən/ *noun* the balancing process between acid and alkali

buffered /'bʌfəd/ *adjective* prevented from becoming acid ○ **buffered aspirin**

bug /bʌg/ *noun* an infectious disease (*informal*) ○ *He caught a bug on holiday.* ○ *Half the staff have got a stomach bug.*

build /bɪld/ *noun* the general size and shape of a person's body ○ *He has a heavy build for his height.* ○ *The girl is of slight build.*

build up /bɪld 'ʌp/ *verb* to form gradually by being added to, or to form something in this way (NOTE: **building – built**)

build-up /'bɪld ʌp/ *noun* a gradual process of being added to ○ *a build-up of fatty deposits on the walls of the arteries*

built /bɪlt/ *adjective* referring to the general size of a person's body ○ *a heavily built man* ○ *She's slightly built.*

bulb /bʌlb/ *noun* a round part at the end of an organ or bone □ **bulb of the penis** the round end of the penis. Also called **glans penis**

bulbar /'bʌlbər/ *adjective* 1. referring to a bulb 2. referring to the medulla oblongata

bulbar paralysis /,bʌlbər pe'ræləsɪs/, **bulbar palsy** /,bʌlbər 'pɔ:lɪzɪ/ *noun* a form of motor neurone disease which affects the muscles of the mouth, jaw and throat

bulbar poliomyelitis /,bʌlbər ,pəʊliəʊməlɪ'taɪtɪs/ *noun* a type of polio affecting the brain stem, which makes it difficult for a person to swallow or breathe

bulbospongiosus muscle /,bʌlbəsɒŋgjəsəs ,mʌsəl/ *noun* a muscle in the perineum behind the penis

bulbourethral gland /,bʌlbəʊrəʊjən'ri:θrəl ,glænd/ *noun* one of two glands at the base of the penis which secrete into the urethra. ♀

gland

bulge /bʌldʒ/ *verb* to push out ○ *The wall of the abdomen becomes weak and part of the intestine bulges through.*

bulging /'bʌldʒɪŋ/ *adjective* sticking out ○ *bulging eyes*

bulimia /bu'lɪmɪə/, **bulimia nervosa** /bu'lɪmɪə nə'veʊsə/ *noun* a psychological condition in which a person eats too much and is incapable of controlling his or her eating. The eating is followed by behaviour designed to prevent weight gain, e.g. vomiting, use of laxatives or excessive exercise.

bulimic /bu'lɪmɪk/ *adjective* 1. referring to bulimia 2. having bulimia ■ *noun* someone who has bulimia

bullea /'bʊla/ *noun* a large blister (NOTE: The plural is **buliae**.)

bumetanide /bju:'metənaɪd/ *noun* a drug which helps a patient to produce urine, used in the treatment of swelling caused by fluid accumulating in the tissues

bump /bʌmp/ *noun* a slightly swollen part on the skin, caused by something such as a blow or sting

bumper fracture /'bʌmpər ,frækʃə/ *noun* a fracture in the upper part of the tibia (NOTE: It has this name because it can be caused by a blow from the bumper of a car.)

bundle /'bʌnd(ə)l/ *noun* a group of nerves running in the same direction

bundle branch block /'bʌnd(ə)l bra:nɒk ,blk/ *noun* an unusual condition of the heart's conduction tissue

bundle of His /,bʌnd(ə)l əv 'hɪs/ *noun* same as **atrioventricular bundle** [Described 1893. After Ludwig His (1863–1934), Professor of Anatomy successively at Leipzig, Basle, Göttingen and Berlin.]

bunion /'bʌnjən/ *noun* an inflammation and swelling of the big toe, caused by tight shoes which force the toe sideways so that a callus develops over the joint between the toe and the metatarsal

buphthalmos /bʌf'θælməs/ *noun* a type of congenital glaucoma occurring in infants

bupivacaine /bju:'pɪvəkeɪn/ *noun* a powerful local anaesthetic, used in epidural anaesthesia

buprenorphine /bju:'prenəfɪ:n/ *noun* an opiate drug used in the relief of moderate to severe pain, and as an opioid substitute in treating drug addiction

Burkitt's tumour /,bɜ:kɪts 'tju:mər/, **Burkitt's lymphoma** /,bɜ:kɪts lim'foumə/ *noun* a malignant tumour, usually on the maxilla, found especially in children in Africa [Described 1957. After Denis Parsons Burkitt (1911–93), formerly Senior Surgeon, Kampala, Uganda; later a member of the Medical Research Council (UK).]

burn /bɜ:n/ *noun* an injury to skin and tissue caused by light, heat, radiation, electricity or chemicals ■ *verb* to harm or destroy something by fire ○ *She burnt her hand on the hot frying pan.* ○ *Most of his hair or his skin was burnt off.* (NOTE: **burning – burnt or burned**)

COMMENT: The modern classification of burns is into two categories: deep and superficial. Burns were formerly classified as first, second or third degree and are still sometimes referred to in this way.

burning /'bɜ:nɪŋ/ *adjective* referring to a feeling similar to that of being hurt by fire ○ *She had a burning pain or in her chest.*

burnout /'bɜ:naut/ *noun* a feeling of depression, fatigue and lack of energy caused by stress and being overworked ○ *He suffered a burnout and had to go on leave.*

burns unit /'bɜ:nz ,ju:nɪt/ *noun* a special department in a hospital which deals with burns

burp /bɜ:p/ (*informal*) *noun* an act of allowing air in the stomach to come up through the mouth ■ *verb* to allow air in the stomach to come up through the mouth □ **to burp a baby** to pat a baby on the back until it burps

burr /bɜ:/ *noun* a bit used with a drill to make holes in a bone such as the cranium or in a tooth

bursa /'bɜ:sə/ *noun* a sac containing fluid, forming part of the usual structure of a joint

such as the knee and elbow, where it protects against frequent pressure and rubbing (NOTE: The plural is **bursae**.)

bursitis /bɜː'saɪtɪs/ *noun* the inflammation of a bursa, especially in the shoulder

Buscopan /'bʌskəpæn/ a trade name for a form of hyoscine

butobarbitone /,bju:təʊ'ba:bɪtəʊn/ *noun* a barbiturate drug used as a sedative and hypnotic

buttock /'bʌtək/ *noun* one of the two fleshy parts below the back, on which a person sits,

made up mainly of the gluteal muscles. Also called **nates**

buttonhole surgery /'bʌt(ə)nhol ,sɜːdʒəri/ *noun* a surgical operation through a small hole in the body, using an endoscope

bypass /'baɪpɑːs/ *noun* 1. a surgical operation to redirect the blood, usually using a grafted blood vessel and usually performed when one of the person's own blood vessels is blocked 2. a new route for the blood created by a bypass operation

byssinosis /,bɪsɪ'nəʊsɪs/ *noun* a lung disease which is a form of pneumoconiosis caused by inhaling cotton dust

C

c symbol centi-

C symbol Celsius

CABG abbr coronary artery bypass graft

cachet /'kæʃət/ noun a quantity of a drug wrapped in paper, to be swallowed

cachexia /kæ'keksɪə/ noun a state of ill health characterised by wasting and general weakness

cadaver /kə'dævər/ noun a dead body, especially one used for dissection

cadaveric /kə'dævərɪk/, **cadaverous** /kə'dæv(ə)rəs/ adjective referring to a person who is thin or wasting away

caeca /'si:kə/ plural of **caecum**

caecal /'si:k(ə)l/ adjective referring to the caecum

caecosigmoidostomy /,si:kəʊ,sɪgmɔɪd'stəmɪ/ noun an operation to open up a connection between the caecum and the sigmoid colon

caecostomy /si:'kɒstəmɪ/ noun a surgical operation to make an opening between the caecum and the abdominal wall to allow faeces to be passed without going through the rectum and anus

caecum /'si:kəm/ noun the wider part of the large intestine in the lower right-hand side of the abdomen at the point where the small intestine joins it and which has the appendix attached to it. See illustration at **DIGESTIVE SYSTEM** in Supplement. Also called **cecum** (NOTE: The plural is **caeca**.)

caesarean /sɪ'zeəriən/, **caesarean section** /sɪ'zeəriən ,sek'seɪn/ noun a surgical operation to deliver a baby by cutting through the abdominal wall into the uterus. Compare **vaginal delivery** (NOTE: The US spelling is **cesarean**.)

COMMENT: A caesarean section is performed only when it appears that natural childbirth is impossible or might endanger mother or child, and only after the 28th week of gestation.

caesium /'si:ziəm/ noun a radioactive element, used in treatment by radiation (NOTE: The chemical symbol is **Cs**.)

caesium-137 /,si:ziəm wʌn θri: 'sev(ə)n/ noun a radioactive substance used in radiology

café au lait spots /,kæfeɪ əʊ 'leɪ spɔts/ plural noun brown spots on the skin, which are an indication of von Recklinghausen's disease

caffeine /'kæfi:n/ noun an alkaloid found in coffee, tea and chocolate, which acts as a stimulant

COMMENT: Apart from acting as a stimulant, caffeine also helps in the production of urine. It can be addictive, and exists in both tea and coffee in about the same percentages as well as in chocolate and other drinks.

caisson disease /'keɪs(ə)n dɪ,zi:z/ noun a condition in which a person experiences pains in the joints and stomach, and dizziness caused by nitrogen in the blood. Also called **the bends, compressed air sickness, decompression sickness**

COMMENT: The disease occurs in a person who has moved rapidly from high atmospheric pressure to a lower pressure area, such as a diver who has come back to the surface too quickly after a deep dive. The first symptoms, pains in the joints, are known as 'the bends'. The disease can be fatal.

calamine /'kæləmain/, **calamine lotion** /'kæləmain ,ləʊf(ə)n/ noun a lotion, based on zinc oxide, which helps relieve skin irritation, caused e.g. by sunburn or chickenpox

calc- /kæk'l/ prefix same as **calci-** (used before vowels)

calcaemia /kæl'si:miə/ noun a condition in which the blood contains an unusually large amount of calcium

calcaneal /kæl'keiniəl/ adjective referring to the calcaneus

calcaneal tendon /kæl,keiniəl 'tendən/ noun the Achilles tendon, the tendon at the back of the ankle which connects the calf muscles to the heel and which acts to pull up the heel when the calf muscle is contracted

calcaneus /kæl'keiniəs/, **calcaneum** /kæl'keiniəm/ noun the heel bone, situated underneath the talus. See illustration at **FOOT** in Supplement

calcareous degeneration /kæl,keəriəs di,dʒənə'reɪʃ(ə)n/ noun the formation of calcium on bones or at joints in old age

calci- /kælsɪ/ prefix referring to calcium

calcification /,kælsfɪʃ'keɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a process of hardening caused by the formation of deposits of calcium salts

COMMENT: Calcification can be expected in the formation of bones, but can occur unusually in joints, muscles and organs, where it is known as calcinosis.

calcified /'kælsfɪfaɪd/ *adjective* made hard ○ *Bone is calcified connective tissue.*

calcinosis /,kælsɪ'nəʊsɪs/ *noun* a medical condition where deposits of calcium salts form in joints, muscles and organs

calcitonin /,kæltɪ'ənɪn/ *noun* a hormone produced by the thyroid gland, which is believed to regulate the level of calcium in the blood. Also called **thyrocalcitonin**

calcium /'kælsiəm/ *noun* a metallic chemical element which is a major component of bones and teeth and which is essential for various bodily processes such as blood clotting (NOTE: The chemical symbol is **Ca**.)

COMMENT: Calcium is an important element in a balanced diet. Milk, cheese, eggs and certain vegetables are its main sources. Calcium deficiency can be treated by injections of calcium salts.

calcium antagonist /'kælsiəm æn'tægənɪst/ *noun* a drug which makes the arteries wider and slows the heart rate. It is used in the treatment of angina.

calcium channel blocker /'kælsiəm tʃænl(blo)kər/, **calcium blocker** /'kælsiəm 'blkər/ *noun* a drug which affects the smooth muscle of the cardiovascular system, used in the treatment of angina and hypertension (NOTE: Calcium channel blockers have names ending in **-dipine**: **nifedipine**. Not to be used in heart failure as they reduce cardiac function further.)

calcium deficiency /'kælsiəm dɪ,fɪʃ(ə)nsi/ *noun* a lack of calcium in the bloodstream

calcium phosphate /,kælsiəm 'fɒfəfɪt/ *noun* the main constituent of bones

calcium supplement /'kælsiəm, sʌplɪmənt/ *noun* the addition of calcium to the diet, or as injections, to improve the level of calcium in the bloodstream

calculosis /,kæklu'leʊsɪs/ *noun* a condition in which calculi exist in an organ

calculus /'kæklu'jʊləs/ *noun* a hard mass like a little piece of stone, which forms inside the body. Also called **stone** (NOTE: The plural is **calculi**.)

COMMENT: Calculi are formed of cholesterol and various inorganic substances, and are commonly found in the bladder, the gall bladder (gallstones) and various parts of the kidney.

Caldwell–Luc operation /,kɔ:ldwel 'lu:kɒpə,reɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a surgical operation to drain the maxillary sinus by making an incision above the canine tooth [Described 1893. After George Walter Caldwell (1834–1918), US

physician; Henri Luc (1855–1925), French laryngologist.]

calf /kɑ:f/ *noun* a muscular fleshy part at the back of the lower leg, formed by the gastrocnemius muscles (NOTE: The plural is **calves**.)

caliber /'kælbɪbər/ *noun* US same as **calibre**

calibrate /'kælibreɪt/ *verb* 1. to measure the inside diameter of a tube or passage 2. to measure the sizes of two parts of the body to be joined together in surgery 3. to adjust an instrument or piece of equipment against a known standard

calibrator /'kælibreɪtər/ *noun* 1. an instrument used to enlarge a tube or passage 2. an instrument for measuring the diameter of a tube or passage

calibre /'kælbɪbər/ *noun* the interior diameter of a tube or of a blood vessel

caliectasis /,keɪli'ektəsɪs/ *noun* swelling of the calyces

caliper /'kælɪpər/ *noun* 1. an instrument with two legs, used for measuring the width of the pelvic cavity 2. an instrument with two sharp points which are put into a fractured bone and weights attached to cause traction 3. a leg splint made of rods and straps and usually fastened to the lower leg to enable the hip bone rather than the foot to support the person's weight when walking

calliper /'kælɪpər/ *noun* same as **caliper** 3

callisthenic, /kælɪs'θenɪk/ *adjective* relating to callisthenics

callisthenics, /kælɪs'θenɪks/ *plural noun* energetic physical exercises for improving fitness and muscle tone, including push-ups, sit-ups and star jumps

callosity /kæ'lɒsɪtɪ/ *noun* a hard patch on the skin, e.g. a corn, resulting from frequent pressure or rubbing. Also called **callus**

callosum /kæ'ləsəm/ ▶ **corpus callosum**

callus /'kæləs/ *noun* 1. same as **callosity** 2. tissue which forms round a broken bone as it starts to mend, leading to consolidation ○ *Callus formation is more rapid in children and young adults than in elderly people.*

calm /kæ:m/ *adjective* quiet, not upset ○ *The patient was delirious but became calm after the injection.*

calomel /'kæləmel/ *noun* mercurous chloride, a poisonous substance used to treat pinworms in the intestine. Formula: Hg_2Cl_2 .

calor /'kælər/ *noun* heat

caloric /kæ'lɔrɪk/ *adjective* referring to calories or to heat

caloric energy /kæ'lɔrɪk 'enədʒi/ *noun* the amount of energy shown as a number of calories

caloric requirement /kæ'lɔrɪk rɪ'kwaɪəmənt/ *noun* the amount of energy shown in calories which a person needs each day

calorie /'kæləri/ *noun* 1. a unit of measurement of heat or energy, equivalent to the amount of heat needed to raise the temperature of 1g of water by 1°C. Now called **joule** 2. also **Calorie** a unit of measurement of energy in food (*informal*) ○ *a low-calorie diet* Now called **joule** □ **to count calories** to be careful about how much you eat

calvaria /kæl'veəriə/, **calvarium** /kæl'veəriəm/ *noun* the top part of the skull

calyx /'keɪlɪks/ *noun* a part of the body shaped like a cup especially the tube leading to a renal pyramid. See illustration at **KIDNEY** in Supplement (NOTE: The plural is **calyces**.)

COMMENT: The renal pelvis is formed of three major calyces, which themselves are formed of several smaller minor calyces.

CAM *abbr* complementary and alternative medicine

camphor /'kæmpfə/ *noun* white crystals with a strong smell, made from a tropical tree, used to keep insects away or as a liniment

camphor oil /'kæmpfə ɔɪl/, **camphorated oil** /'kæmfəreɪtɪd ɔɪl/ *noun* a mixture of 20% camphor and oil, used as a rub

Campylobacter /'kæmplo'bækter/ *noun* a bacterium which is a common cause of food poisoning in humans and of spontaneous abortion in farm animals

canal /kə'næl/ *noun* a tube along which something flows

canalicitis /,kænəlɪkju'lætɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the tear duct canal

canalicolotomy /,kænəlɪkju'lɒtəmi/ *noun* a surgical operation to open up a little canal

canaliculus /,kænə'lɪkjʊləs/ *noun* a little canal, e.g. a canal leading to the Haversian systems in compact bone, or a canal leading to the lacrimal duct (NOTE: The plural is **canaliculi**.)

cancellous bone /'kænsələs, 'bəun/ *noun* a light spongy bone tissue which forms the inner core of a bone and also the ends of long bones. See illustration at **BONE STRUCTURE** in Supplement

cancer /'kænsə/ *noun* a malignant growth or tumour which develops in tissue and destroys it, which can spread by metastasis to other parts of the body and which cannot be controlled by the body itself ○ *Cancer cells developed in the lymph.* ○ *She has been diagnosed as having lung cancer or as having cancer of the lung.* (NOTE: For other terms referring to cancer, see words beginning with **carcin-**.)

COMMENT: Cancers can be divided into cancers of the skin (**carcinomas**) or cancers of connective tissue such as bone or muscle (**sarcomas**). They have many causes. Many are curable by surgery, by chemotherapy or by radiation, especially if they are detected early.

cancerophobia /,kænsə'rəʊ'fəʊbiə/ *noun* a fear of cancer

cancerous /'kænsərəs/ *adjective* referring to cancer ○ *The X-ray revealed a cancerous growth in the breast.*

cancer phobia /'kænsə ,fəʊbiə/ *noun* same as **cancerophobia**

cancrum oris /,kæŋkrəm 'ɔ:ris/ *noun* severe ulcers in the mouth, leading to gangrene. Also called **noma**

Candida /'kændɪdə/ *noun* a type of fungus which causes mycosis. Also called **Monilia**

'It is incorrect to say that oral candida is an infection.

Candida is easily isolated from the mouths of up to 50% of healthy adults and is a normal commensal.' [Nursing Times]

Candida albicans /,kændɪdə 'ælbɪkænz/ *noun* one type of Candida which is usually present in the mouth and throat without causing any illness, but which can cause thrush

candidate /'kændɪdæit/ *noun* someone who could have an operation ○ *These types of patients may be candidates for embolisation.*

candidate vaccine /'kændɪdæit ,vækseɪn/ *noun* a vaccine which is being tested for use in immunisation

candidiasis /,kændɪ'daɪəsɪs/, **candidosis** /,kændɪ'dəʊsɪs/ *noun* infection with a species of the fungus Candida

COMMENT: When the infection occurs in the vagina or mouth it is known as 'thrush'. Thrush in the mouth usually affects small children.

canicula fever /kə'nɪkələ ,fi:və/ *noun* a form of leptospirosis, giving high fever and jaundice

canine /'keɪnain/, **canine tooth** /'keɪnain ,tuθ/ *noun* a pointed tooth next to an incisor. See illustration at **TEETH** in Supplement

COMMENT: There are four canines in all, two in the upper jaw and two in the lower. Those in the upper jaw are referred to as the 'eyeteeth'.

canities /kə'nɪjii:z/ *noun* a loss of pigments, which makes the hair turn white

canker sore /'kæŋkə ,sɔ:/ *noun* same as **mouth ulcer**

cannabis /'kænəbɪs/ *noun* a drug made from the dried leaves or flowers of the Indian hemp plant. Recreational use of cannabis is illegal and its use to relieve the pain associated with conditions such as multiple sclerosis is controversial. Also called **hashish, marijuana**

COMMENT: Cannabis has analgesic properties, and the possibility that it should be legalised for therapeutic use in conditions of chronic pain is being debated.

cannabis resin /,kænəbɪs 'rezɪn/ *noun* an addictive drug, a purified extract made from the flowers of the Indian hemp plant

cannula /'kænju:lə/ *noun* a tube with a trocar or blunt needle inside, inserted into the body to introduce fluids

cannulate /'kænjuleɪt/ *verb* to put a cannula into a vein or cavity to give drugs or to drain away fluid

canthal /'kænθəl/ *adjective* referring to the corner of the eye

cantholysis /kæn'θɒləsɪs/ *noun* same as **canthoplasty**

canthoplasty /'kænθəplæsti/ *noun* 1. an operation to repair the canthus of the eye 2. an operation to cut through the canthus to enlarge the groove in the eyelid

canthus /'kænθəs/ *noun* a corner of the eye

canula *noun* another spelling of **cannula**

canulate *verb* another spelling of **cannulate**

cap /kæp/ *noun* 1. a covering which protects something 2. an artificial hard covering for a damaged or broken tooth

CAPD *abbr* continuous ambulatory peritoneal dialysis

capeline bandage /'kæpəlайн, bændīdʒ/ *noun* a bandage shaped like a cap, either for the head, or to cover a stump after amputation

capillary /kə'piləri/ *noun* 1. a tiny blood vessel between the arterioles and the venules, which carries blood and nutrients into the tissues 2. any tiny tube carrying a liquid in the body

capillary bleeding /kə,piləri 'bli:dɪŋ/ *noun* bleeding where blood oozes out from small blood vessels

capita /'kæpɪtə/ plural of **caput**

capitate /'kæpɪteɪt/, **capitate bone** /'kæpɪteɪt, bən/ *noun* the largest of the eight small carpal bones in the wrist. See illustration at **HAND** in Supplement

capitellum /'kæpɪ'teləm/ *noun* a rounded enlarged part at the end of a bone, especially this part of the upper arm bone, the humerus, that forms the elbow joint with one of the lower bones, the radius. Also called **capitulum of humerus** (NOTE: The plural is **capitella**.)

capitis /kə'paɪtɪs/ ♀ **corona capitis**

capitular /kə'pitjulər/ *adjective* describing the rounded end (**capitulum**) of a bone

capitulum /kə'pitjuləm/ *noun* the rounded end of a bone which articulates with another bone, e.g. the distal end of the humerus (NOTE: The plural is **capitula**.)

capitulum of humerus /kə,pitjuləm əv 'hju:mrəs/ *noun* same as **capitellum**

caplet /'kæplət/ *noun* a small oblong tablet with a covering that dissolves easily and which usually cannot be broken in two

caps. *abbr* capsule

capsular /'kæpsjulər/ *adjective* referring to a capsule

capsule /'kæpsjul:/ *noun* 1. a membrane round an organ or joint 2. a small hollow digestible case filled with a drug that is taken by swallowing ○ *She swallowed three capsules of painkiller.* ○ *The doctor prescribed the drug in capsule form.*

capsulectomy /,kæpsjø'lektəmi/ *noun* the surgical removal of the capsule round a joint

capsulitis /,kæpsjø'laitɪs/ *noun* inflammation of a capsule

capsulotomy /,kæpsjø'lɒtəmi/ *noun* a surgical procedure involving cutting into the capsule around a body part, e.g. cutting into the lens of the eye during the removal of a cataract

captoril /'kæptəprɪl/ *noun* a drug which helps to prevent the arteries from being made narrower by an angiotensin. It is used to control high blood pressure.

caput /'kæpət/ *noun* 1. the head 2. the top of part of something (NOTE: [all senses] The plural is **capita**.)

carbamazepine /,ka:bə'mæzəpi:n/ *noun* a drug which reduces pain and helps to prevent convulsions. It is used in the treatment of epilepsy, pain and bipolar disorder.

carbenoxolone /,ka:bə'nɒksələn/ *noun* a liquorice agent, used to treat stomach ulcers

carbidopa /,ka:bɪ'dəʊpə/ *noun* an inhibitor used to enable levodopa to enter the brain in larger quantities in the treatment of Parkinson's disease

carbimazole /ka:'bɪməzələ/ *noun* a drug which helps to prevent the formation of thyroid hormones, used in the management of hyperthyroidism

carbohydrate /,ka:bəʊ'haidrət/ *noun* 1. a biological compound containing carbon, hydrogen and oxygen. Carbohydrates derive from sugar and are an important source of food and energy. 2. food containing carbohydrates ○ *high carbohydrate drinks*

carbolic acid /ka:,bɒlɪk 'æsɪd/ *noun* same as **phenol**

carbon /'ka:bən/ *noun* one of the common non-metallic elements, an essential component of living matter and organic chemical compounds (NOTE: The chemical symbol is **C**.)

carbon dioxide /,ka:bən daɪ'bɒksaɪd/ *noun* a colourless gas produced by the body's metabolism as the tissues burn carbon, and breathed out by the lungs as waste (NOTE: The chemical symbol is **CO₂**.)

COMMENT: Carbon dioxide can be solidified at low temperatures and is known as 'dry ice' or 'carbon dioxide snow', being used to remove growths on the skin.

carbon dioxide snow /,ka:bən daɪ'bɒksaɪd 'snəʊ/ *noun* solid carbon dioxide, used in treating skin growths such as warts, or to preserve tissue samples

carbonic anhydrase /ku:bɒnɪk æn'haidrɪz/ *noun* an enzyme which acts as a buffer and regulates the body's water balance, including gastric acid secretion and aqueous humour production

carbon monoxide /,ka:bən mə'nɒksaɪd/ *noun* a poisonous gas found in fumes from car engines, from burning gas and cigarette smoke (NOTE: The chemical symbol is **CO**.)

COMMENT: Carbon monoxide is dangerous because it is easily absorbed into the blood and takes the place of the oxygen in the blood, combining with haemoglobin to form carboxyhaemoglobin, which has the effect of starving the tissues of oxygen. Carbon monoxide has no smell and people do not realise that they are being poisoned by it. They become unconscious, with a characteristic red colouring to the skin. Poisoning with car exhaust fumes is sometimes used as a method of suicide. The treatment for carbon monoxide poisoning is very rapid inhalation of fresh air together with carbon dioxide if this can be provided.

carbon monoxide poisoning /,kɑ:bən mə'nɔksaɪd ,pɔɪz(ə)nɪŋ/ *noun* poisoning caused by breathing carbon monoxide

carboxyhaemoglobin /kɑ:,bɒksi'hæm'gləʊbɪn/ *noun* a compound of carbon monoxide and haemoglobin formed when a person breathes in carbon monoxide from tobacco smoke or car exhaust fumes

carboxyhaemoglobinaemia /kɑ:,bɒksi hɪ:mæ,glæubr'ni:mɪə/ *noun* the presence of carboxyhaemoglobin in the blood

carbuncle /'kɑ:bʌŋkəl/ *noun* a localised staphylococcal infection, which goes deep into the tissue

carcin- /kɑ:sɪn/ *prefix* same as **carcino-** (*used before vowels*)

carcino- /kɑ:sɪnə/ *prefix* referring to carcinoma or cancer

carcinogen /kɑ:'sɪnədʒən/ *noun* a substance which produces a carcinoma or cancer
COMMENT: Carcinogens are found in pesticides such as DDT, in asbestos, tobacco, aromatic compounds such as benzene and radioactive substances.

carcinogenesis /,kɑ:sɪnə'dʒenəsɪs/ *noun* the process of forming a carcinoma in tissue

carcinogenic /,kɑ:sɪnə'dʒenɪk/ *adjective* causing a carcinoma or cancer

carcinoid /'kɑ:sɪnɔɪd/ *noun* an intestinal tumour, especially in the appendix, which causes diarrhoea

carcinoid syndrome /'kɑ:sɪnɔɪd ,sɪndrəʊm/ *noun* a group of symptoms which are associated with a carcinoid tumour

carcinoid tumour /'kɑ:sɪnɔɪd ,tju:mə/ *same as carcinoid*

carcinoma /,kɑ:sɪ'nəʊmə/ *noun* a cancer of the epithelium or glands

carcinoma in situ /,kɑ:sɪ,nəʊmə in 'sɪtju:/ *noun* the first stage in the development of a cancer, where the epithelial cells begin to change

carcinomatosis /,kɑ:sɪnəʊmə'təʊsɪs/ *noun* a carcinoma which has spread to many sites in the body

carcinomatous /,kɑ:sɪ'nɒmətəs/ *adjective* referring to carcinoma

carcinosarcoma /,kɑ:sɪnəʊsə:'kəʊmə/ *noun* a malignant tumour containing elements of both a carcinoma and a sarcoma

cardi- /kɑ:di/ *prefix* same as **cardio-** (*used before vowels*)

cardia /'kɑ:diə/ *noun* 1. an opening at the top of the stomach which joins it to the gullet 2. the heart

cardiac /'kɑ:diæk/ *adjective* 1. referring to the heart 2. referring to the cardia

cardiac achalasia /,kɑ:diæk ,ækə'lɛziə/ *noun* a condition in which the patient is unable to relax the cardia, the muscle at the entrance to the stomach, with the result that food cannot enter the stomach. ♦ **cardiomotomy**

cardiac arrest /,kɑ:diæk ə'rest/ *noun* a condition in which the heart muscle stops beating

cardiac asthma /,kɑ:diæk 'æsmə/ *noun* difficulty in breathing caused by heart failure

cardiac catheter /,kɑ:diæk 'kæθətər/ *noun* a catheter passed through a vein into the heart, to take blood samples, to record pressure or to examine the interior of the heart before surgery

cardiac catheterisation /,kɑ:diæk ,kæθətərɪzə'seɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a procedure which involves passing a catheter into the heart

cardiac cirrhosis /,kɑ:diæk sɪ'rəʊsɪs/ *noun* cirrhosis of the liver caused by heart disease

cardiac compression /,kɑ:diæk kəm 'preʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the compression of the heart by fluid in the pericardium

cardiac conducting system /,kɑ:diæk kən'dʌktɪŋ ,sɪstəm/ *noun* the nerve system in the heart which links an atrium to a ventricle, so that the two beat at the same rate

cardiac cycle /,kɑ:diæk 'saɪk(ə)l/ *noun* the repeated beating of the heart, formed of the diastole and systole

cardiac decompression /,kɑ:diæk ,dɪk'mən'preʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the removal of a haematoma or constriction of the heart

cardiac failure /,kɑ:diæk 'feɪljə/ *noun* same as heart failure

cardiac glycoside /,kɑ:diæk 'glaɪkəsайд/ *noun* a drug used in the treatment of tachycardia and atrial fibrillation, e.g. digoxin

cardiac impression /,kɑ:diæk ɪm 'preʃ(ə)n/ *noun* 1. a concave area near the centre of the upper surface of the liver under the heart 2. a depression on the mediastinal part of the lungs where they touch the pericardium

cardiac index /,kɑ:diæk 'indeks/ *noun* the cardiac output per square metre of body surface, usually between 3.1 and 3.8 l/min/m² (litres per minute per square metre)

cardiac infarction /,kɑ:diæk in'fə:kʃən/ *noun* same as myocardial infarction

cardiac monitor /,kɑ:diæk 'mɒnɪtə/ *noun* same as electrocardiograph

cardiac murmur /,kɑ:diæk 'mɜ:mə/ *noun* same as heart murmur

cardiac muscle /'ka:diæk ,mʌs(ə)l/ *noun* a muscle in the heart which makes the heart beat

cardiac neurosis /,ka:diæk nju'rəʊsɪs/ *noun* same as **disordered action of the heart**

cardiac notch /,ka:diæk 'nɒtʃ/ *noun* 1. a point in the left lung, where the right inside wall is bent. See illustration at **LUNGS** in Supplement 2. a notch at the point where the oesophagus joins the greater curvature of the stomach

cardiac orifice /,ka:diæk 'ɔrifɪs/ *noun* an opening where the oesophagus joins the stomach

cardiac output /,ka:diæk 'aʊtpʊt/ *noun* the volume of blood expelled by each ventricle in a specific time, usually between 4.8 and 5.3 l/min (litres per minute)

cardiac pacemaker /,ka:diæk 'peɪsmeɪkə/ *noun* an electronic device implanted on a patient's heart, or which a patient wears attached to the chest, which stimulates and regulates the heartbeat

cardiac patient /'ka:diæk ,peɪʃ(ə)nt/ *noun* a patient who has a heart disorder

cardiac reflex /,ka:diæk 'ri:fleks/ *noun* the reflex which controls the heartbeat automatically

cardiac surgery /,ka:diæk 'sɜ:dʒəri/ *noun* surgery to the heart

cardiac tamponade /,ka:diæk ,tæmpə'nɛd/ *noun* pressure on the heart when the pericardial cavity fills with blood. Also called **heart tamponade**

cardiac vein /'ka:diæk veɪn/ *noun* one of the veins which lead from the myocardium to the right atrium

cardinal /'ka:dɪn(ə)l/ *adjective* most important

cardinal ligaments /,ka:dɪn(ə)l 'lɪgəmənts/ *plural noun* ligaments forming a band of connective tissue that extends from the uterine cervix and vagina to the pelvic walls. Also called **Mackenrodt's ligaments**

cardio- /'ka:diəʊ/ *prefix* referring to the heart

cardiogenic /,ka:di'a:dʒenɪk/ *adjective* resulting from activity or disease of the heart

cardiogram /'ka:di'græm/ *noun* a graph showing the heartbeat, produced by a cardiograph

cardiograph /'ka:di'græfɪ/ *noun* an instrument which records the heartbeat

cardiographer /,ka:di'ngrəfə/ *noun* a technician who operates a cardiograph

cardiography /,ka:di'bgrəfi/ *noun* the action of recording the heartbeat

cardiologist /,ka:di'ɒlədʒɪst/ *noun* a doctor who specialises in the study of the heart

cardiology /,ka:di'ɒlədʒɪ/ *noun* the study of the heart, its diseases and functions

cardiomegaly /,ka:diəʊ'megəli/ *noun* an enlarged heart

cardiomyopathy /,ka:diəʊmətɪ'ɒpəθi/ *noun* a disease of the heart muscle

cardiomyoplasty /,ka:diəʊ'maɪəʊ,plæsti/ *noun* an operation to improve the functioning of the heart, by using the latissimus dorsi as a stimulant

cardiomyotomy /,ka:diəʊmətɪ'ɒtəmɪ/ *noun* an operation to treat cardiac achalasia by splitting the ring of muscles where the oesophagus joins the stomach. Also called **Heller's operation**

cardiopathy /,ka:di'ɒpəθi/ *noun* any kind of heart disease

cardiophone /'ka:diəfəʊn/ *noun* a microphone attached to a patient to record sounds, usually used to record the heart of an unborn baby

cardioplegia /,ka:diəʊ'pli:dʒiə/ *noun* the stopping of a patient's heart, by chilling it or using drugs, so that heart surgery can be performed

cardiopulmonary /,ka:diəʊ'palmən(ə)ri/ *adjective* relating to both the heart and the lungs

cardiopulmonary bypass /,ka:diəʊ,palmən(ə)ri 'baɪpɔ:s/ *noun* a machine or method for artificially circulating the patient's blood during open-heart surgery. The heart and lungs are cut off from the circulation and replaced by a pump.

cardiopulmonary resuscitation /,ka:diəʊ,palmən(ə)ri rɪ,səsɪ'teɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* an emergency technique to make a person's heart start beating again. It involves clearing the airways and then alternately pressing on the chest and breathing into the mouth. Abbr **CPR**

cardiopulmonary system /,ka:diəʊ'palmən(ə)ri ,sɪstəm/ *noun* the heart and lungs considered together as a functional unit

cardiorespiratory /,ka:diəʊrɪ'spirɪt(ə)ri/ *adjective* referring to both the heart and the respiratory system

cardioscope /'ka:diəskəʊp/ *noun* an instrument formed of a tube with a light at the end, used to inspect the inside of the heart

cardiospasm /'ka:diəospæz(ə)m/ *noun* same as **cardiac achalasia**

cardiothoracic /,ka:diəʊθə'ræsɪk/ *adjective* referring to the heart and the chest region

○ *a cardiothoracic surgeon*

cardiotocography /,ka:diəʊtɒk'ɒgrəfi/ *noun* the recording of the heartbeat of a fetus

cardiotomy /,ka:di'təmə/ *noun* an operation that involves cutting the wall of the heart

cardiotomy syndrome /,ka:di'təmə ,sɪnd्रəʊm/ *noun* fluid in the membranes round the heart after cardiotomy

cardiotoxic /,ka:diəʊ'tɒksɪk/ *adjective* which is toxic to the heart

cardiovascular /kə:dɪəʊ'væskjʊlə/ **adjective** referring to the heart and the blood circulation system

cardiovascular disease /kə:dɪəʊ'væskjʊlə dɪ,zɪ:z/ **noun** any disease which affects the circulatory system, e.g. hypertension
‘...cardiovascular diseases remain the leading cause of death in the United States’ [Journal of the American Medical Association]

cardiovascular system /kə:dɪəʊ'væskjʊlə,sɪstəm/ **noun** the system of organs and blood vessels by means of which the blood circulates round the body and which includes the heart, arteries and veins

cardioversion /kə:dɪəʊ'vɜ:ʃ(ə)n/ **noun** a procedure to correct an irregular heartbeat by applying an electrical impulse to the chest wall. ◊ **defibrillation**

carditis /kə:dɪtɪs/ **noun** inflammation of the connective tissue of the heart

caregiver /'keə,gɪvə/ **noun** same as **carer**

care pathway /'keə ,pa:θwei/ **noun** the entire process of diagnosis, treatment and care that a patient goes through

care plan /'keə plæn/ **noun** a plan drawn up by the nursing staff for the treatment of an individual patient

‘...all relevant sections of the nurses’ care plan and nursing process had been left blank’ [Nursing Times]

carer /'keərə/, **caregiver** /'keə,gɪvə/ **noun** someone who looks after a sick or dependent person

‘...most research has focused on those caring for older people or for adults with disability and chronic illness. Most studied are the carers of those who might otherwise have to stay in hospital for a long time’ [British Medical Journal]

caries /'keərɪz/ **noun** decay in a tooth or bone

carina /kə'rɪ:nə/ **noun** a structure shaped like the bottom of a boat, e.g. the cartilage at the point where the trachea branches into the bronchi

cariogenic /,keəriəʊ'dʒenɪk/ **adjective** referring to a substance which causes caries

carminative /'kə:minətɪv/ **noun** a substance which relieves colic or indigestion ■ **adjective** relieving colic or indigestion

carneous mole /,kə:nɪəs 'məʊl/ **noun** matter in the uterus after the death of a fetus

carotenaemia /,kærətə'nɪ:miə/ **noun** an excessive amount of carotene in the blood, usually as a result of eating too many carrots or tomatoes, which gives the skin a yellow colour. Also called **xanthaemia**

carotene /'kærəti:n/ **noun** an orange or red pigment in carrots, egg yolk and some oils, which is converted by the liver into vitamin A

carotid /kə'rɒtid/, **carotid artery** /kə,rɒtid 'a:təri/ **noun** either of the two large arteries in the neck which supply blood to the head

COMMENT: The common carotid artery is in the lower part of the neck and branches upwards

into the external and internal carotids. The ca-

rotid body is situated at the point where the carotid divides.

carotid artery thrombosis /kə,rɒtid 'a:təri θrɒm'bəʊsɪs/ **noun** the formation of a blood clot in the carotid artery

carotid body /kæ,rɒtid 'bɒdi/ **noun** tissue in the carotid sinus which is concerned with cardiovascular reflexes

carotid pulse /kə,rɒtid 'pɔ:l/ **noun** a pulse felt in the carotid artery at the side of the neck

carotid sinus /kæ,rɒtid 'saɪnəs/ **noun** an expanded part attached to the carotid artery, which monitors blood pressure in the skull

carp- /kə:p/ **prefix** same as **carpo-** (used before vowels)

carpal /'kə:p(ə)l/ **adjective** referring to the wrist

carpal bones /'kə:p(ə)l bəʊnz/, **carpals** /'kə:p(ə)lz/ **plural noun** the eight bones which make up the carpus or wrist. See illustration at **HAND** in Supplement

carpal tunnel release /,kə:p(ə)l 'tʌn(ə)l rɪ ,lɪ:s/ **noun** an operation to relieve the compression of the median nerve

carpal tunnel syndrome /,kə:p(ə)l 'tʌn(ə)l ,sɪnd्रəm/ **noun** a condition, usually affecting women, in which the fingers tingle and hurt at night. It is caused by compression of the median nerve.

carphology /kə:'fɒlədʒi/ **noun** the action of pulling at the bedclothes, a sign of delirium in typhoid and other fevers. Also called **floccitation**

carpi /'kə:pi:/ **plural of carpus**

carpo- /kə:pəu/ **prefix** referring to the wrist

carpometacarpal joint /,kə:pə'me:təpəl dʒɔ:nt/ **noun** one of the joints between the carpals and metacarpals. Also called **CM joint**

carpopedal spasm /,kə:pəpədəl dʒə:m/ 'spæz(ə)m/ **noun** a spasm in the hands and feet caused by lack of calcium

carpus /'kə:pəs/ **noun** the bones by which the lower arm is connected to the hand. Also called **wrist**. See illustration at **HAND** in Supplement (NOTE: The plural is **carpi**.)

COMMENT: The carpus is formed of eight small bones (the carpals): the capitate, hamate, lunate, pisiform, scaphoid, trapezium, trapezoid and triquetral.

carrier /'kærɪə/ **noun** 1. a person who carries bacteria of a disease in his or her body and who can transmit the disease to others without showing any signs of being infected with it ○ *Ten per cent of the population are believed to be unwitting carriers of the bacteria.* 2. an insect which carries disease and infects humans

3. a healthy person who carries a chromosome variation that gives rise to a hereditary disease such as haemophilia or Duchenne muscular dystrophy

carry /'kæri/ *verb* to have a disease and be capable of infecting others

cartilage /'ka:tɪlɪdʒ/ *noun* thick connective tissue which lines and cushions the joints and which forms part of the structure of an organ. Cartilage in small children is the first stage in the formation of bones.

cartilaginous /,kə:tɪ'lædʒɪnəs/ *adjective* made of cartilage

cartilaginous joint /,kə:tɪ'lædʒɪnəs dʒɔɪnt/ *noun* 1. **primary cartilaginous joint** same as **synchondrosis**. 2. **secondary cartilaginous joint** same as **sympathesis**

caruncle /kə'rʌŋkəl/ *noun* a small swelling

cascara /kæ'skʊ:rə/, **cascara sagrada** /kæ'skʊ:rə sə'grā:də/ *noun* a laxative made from the bark of a tropical tree

case /keɪs/ *noun* 1. a single occurrence of a disease ○ *There were two hundred cases of cholera in the recent outbreak.* 2. a person who has a disease or who is undergoing treatment ○ *The hospital is only admitting urgent cases.*

caseation /,keɪsɪ'eɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the process by which dead tissue decays into a firm and dry mass. It is characteristic of tuberculosis.

case control study /keɪs kən'trəʊl ,stʌdi/ *noun* an investigation in which a group of patients with a disease are compared with a group without the disease in order to study possible causes

case history /'keɪs ,hist(ə)ri/ *noun* details of what has happened to a patient undergoing treatment

casein /'keɪsi:n/ *noun* one of the proteins found in milk

caseinogen /'keɪsi:'ɪnədʒən/ *noun* the main protein in milk, from which casein is formed

Casey's model /'keɪsɪz ,mɒd(ə)l/ *noun* a model for the care of child patients, where the parents are involved in the treatment

cast /kə:st/ *noun* a mass of material formed in a hollow organ or tube and excreted in fluid

castor oil /,kə:stər 'ɔɪl/ *noun* a plant oil which acts as a laxative

castration /kæ'streʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the surgical removal of the sexual organs, usually the testicles, in males

casualty /'kæzjʊəlti/ *noun* 1. a person who has had an accident or who is suddenly ill ○ *The fire caused several casualties.* ○ *The casualties were taken by ambulance to the nearest hospital.* 2. also **casualty department** same as **accident and emergency department** ○ *The accident victim was rushed to casualty.*

casualty ward /'kæzjʊəlti wɔ:d/ *noun* same as **accident ward**

CAT /kæt/ *noun* same as **computerised axial tomography**

cata- /kætə/ *prefix* downwards

catabolic /,kætə'bɒlik/ *adjective* referring to catabolism

catabolism /kə:tæbəlɪz(ə)m/ *noun* the process of breaking down complex chemicals into simple chemicals

catalase /'kætəleɪz/ *noun* an enzyme present in the blood and liver which catalyses the breakdown of hydrogen peroxide into water and oxygen

catalepsy /'kætəlepsi/ *noun* a condition often seen associated with schizophrenia, where a person becomes incapable of sensation, the body is rigid and he or she does not move for long periods

catalyse /'kætəlaɪz/ *verb* to act as a catalyst and help make a chemical reaction take place
(NOTE: The US spelling is **catalyze**.)

catalysis /'kætəlaɪsɪs/ *noun* a process where a chemical reaction is helped by a substance (the catalyst) which does not change during the process

catalyst /'kætəlist/ *noun* a substance which produces or helps a chemical reaction without itself changing ○ *an enzyme which acts as a catalyst in the digestive process*

catalytic /,kætə'lɪtɪk/ *adjective* referring to catalysis

catalytic reaction /,kætəlɪtɪk ri'ækʃən/ *noun* a chemical reaction which is caused by a catalyst which does not change during the reaction

catamenia /,kætə'mi:nɪə/ *noun* menstruation (technical)

cataplexy /'kætəpleksi/ *noun* a condition in which a person's muscles become suddenly rigid and he or she falls without losing consciousness, possibly caused by a shock

cataract /'kætərækt/ *noun* a condition in which the lens of the eye gradually becomes hard and opaque

COMMENT: Cataracts form most often in people after the age of 50. They are sometimes caused by a blow or an electric shock. Cataracts can easily and safely be removed by surgery.

cataract extraction /'kætərækt ɪk ,strækʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the surgical removal of a cataract from the eye

cataractic lens /kætə'ræktəs lenz/ *noun* a lens on which a cataract has formed

catarrh /kə'tɑ:r/ *noun* inflammation of the mucous membranes in the nose and throat, creating an excessive amount of mucus

catarrhal /kə'tɑ:rəl/ *adjective* referring to catarrh ○ *a catarrhal cough*

catatonica /,kætə'tənɪə/ *noun* a condition in which a psychiatric patient is either motionless or shows violent reactions to stimulation

catatonic /,kætə'tɒnɪk/ *adjective* referring to behaviour in which a person is either motionless or extremely violent

catatonic schizophrenia /,kætətɒnɪk ,skɪtsə'u:fri:nɪə/ *noun* a type of schizophrenia

where the patient is alternately apathetic or very active and disturbed

catching /'kætʃɪŋ/ *adjective* infectious
(informal) ○ *Is the disease catching?*

catchment area /'kætmənt'ærɪə/ *noun* an area around a hospital which is served by that hospital

catecholamines /kætə'kɒləmi:nz/ *plural noun* the hormones adrenaline and noradrenaline which are released by the adrenal glands
category /'kætɪg(ə)rɪ/ *noun* a classification, the way in which things can be classified ○ *His condition is of a non-urgent category.*

catgut /'kætgʌt/ *noun* a thread made from part of the intestines of sheep, now usually artificially hardened, used to sew up cuts made during surgery

COMMENT: Catgut is slowly dissolved by fluids in the body after the wound has healed and therefore does not need to be removed. Ordinary catgut will dissolve in five to ten days; hardened catgut takes up to three or four weeks.

catharsis /kæθə:sɪs/ *noun* purgation of the bowels

cathartic /kæθə:tɪk/ *adjective* laxative or purgative

catheter /'kæθɪtə/ *noun* a tube passed into the body along one of the passages in the body

catheterisation /,kæθɪtə'reɪz'zeɪʃ(ə)n/, **catheterization** *noun* the act of putting a catheter into a patient's body

...high rates of disconnection of closed urine drainage systems, lack of hand washing and incorrect positioning of urine drainage bags have been highlighted in a new report on urethral catheterisation' [Nursing Times]

...the technique used to treat aortic stenosis is similar to that for any cardiac catheterisation. A catheter introduced through the femoral vein is placed across the aortic valve and into the left ventricle.' [Journal of the American Medical Association]

catheterise /'kæθɪtə'reɪz/, **catheterize** *verb* to insert a catheter into a patient

CAT scan /'kæt skæn/, **CT scan** /,sɪ: 'ti: skæn/ *noun* same as **CT scan**

cat-scratch disease /'kæt skrætʃ dɪ,zi:z/, **cat-scratch fever** /'kæt skrætʃ ,fi:və/ *noun* an illness in which the patient has a fever and swollen lymph glands, thought to be caused by a bacterium transmitted to humans by the scratch of a cat. It may also result from scratching with other sharp points.

cauda equina /,kɔ:də r'kwainə/ *noun* a group of nerves which go from the spinal cord to the lumbar region and the coccyx

caudal /'kɔ:d(ə)l/ *adjective* (in humans) referring to the cauda equina

caudal anaesthetic /,kɔ:d(ə)l ,ænəs'θetɪk/ *noun* an anaesthetic, injected into the base of the spine to remove feeling in the lower part of the body. It is often used in childbirth.

caudal analgesia /,kɔ:d(ə)l ,æn(ə)l 'dʒi:zɪə/ *noun* a method of pain relief that involves injecting an anaesthetic into the base of the spine to remove feeling in the lower part of the body

caudal block /'kɔ:d(ə)l blɒk/ *noun* a local analgesia of the cauda equina nerves in the lower spine

caudate /'kɔ:deɪt/ *adjective* like a tail

caudate lobe /'kɔ:deɪt lob/ *noun* a lobe at the back of the liver, behind the right and left lobes. Also called **posterior lobe**

caul /kɔ:l/ *noun* 1. a membrane which sometimes covers a baby's head at birth 2. same as **omentum**

cauliflower ear /,kɒlɪflaʊər 'ɪə/ *noun* a permanently swollen ear, caused by blows in boxing

causalgia /kɔ:'zældʒə/ *noun* burning pain in a limb, caused by a damaged nerve

causal organism /,kɔ:z(ə)l 'ɔ:gənɪz(ə)m/ *noun* an organism that causes a particular disease

caustic /'kɔ:stɪk/ *noun* a chemical substance that destroys tissues that it touches ■ *adjective* corrosive and destructive

cauterisation /,kɔ:tərəɪz'zeɪʃ(ə)n/, **cauterization** *noun* the act of cauterising ○ *The growth was removed by cauterisation.*

cauterise /'kɔ:tərəɪz/, **cauterize** *verb* to use burning, radiation or laser beams to remove tissue or to stop bleeding

cautery /'kɔ:tərɪ/ *noun* a surgical instrument used to cauterise a wound

cava /'keɪvə/ ♦ **vena cava**

cavernosum /,kævə'nəsəm/ ♦ **corpus cavernosum**

cavernous breathing sounds /,kævənəs 'brɪ:ðɪŋ ,saʊndz/ *plural noun* hollow sounds made by the lungs and heard through a stethoscope placed on a patient's chest, used in diagnosis

cavernous haemangioma /,kævənəs ,haɪ'mændʒɪ'əʊmə/ *noun* a tumour in connective tissue with wide spaces which contain blood

cavernous sinus /,kævənəs 'saɪnəs/ *noun* one of two cavities in the skull behind the eyes, which form part of the venous drainage system

cavitation /,kævɪ'teɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the forming of a cavity

cavity /'kævɪtɪ/ *noun* a hole or space inside the body

cc abbr cubic centimetre

CCU abbr coronary care unit

CD4 /,sɪ: di: 'fɔ:/ *noun* a compound consisting of a protein combined with a carbohydrate which is found in some cells and helps to protect the body against infection □ **CD4 count** a test used to monitor how many CD4 cells have been destroyed in people with HIV

CDH abbr congenital dislocation of the hip
cecum /'sɪkəm/ noun US same as **caecum**
cefactor /'sefəkləʊ/ noun an antibacterial drug used to treat septicaemia
cefotaxime /,sefə'tæksɪm/ noun a synthetic cephalosporin used to treat bacterial infection by pseudomonads
-cele /'si:l/ suffix referring to a swelling
celiac /'si:liæk/ adjective US same as **coeliac**
cell /sel/ noun a tiny unit of matter which is the base of all plant and animal tissue (NOTE: For other terms referring to cells, see words beginning with **cyt-**, **cyto-**)

COMMENT: The cell is a unit which can reproduce itself. It is made up of a jelly-like substance (cytoplasm) which surrounds a nucleus and contains many other small structures which are different according to the type of cell. Cells reproduce by division (mitosis) and their process of feeding and removing waste products is metabolism. The division and reproduction of cells is the way the human body is formed.

cell body /'sel ,bodi/ noun the part of a nerve cell which surrounds the nucleus and from which the axon and dendrites begin

cell division /'sel dɪ,viʒ(ə)n/ noun the way in which a cell reproduces itself. ♦ **mitosis, meiosis**

cell membrane /'sel ,membrēn/ noun a membrane enclosing the cytoplasm of a cell. ♦ **columnar cell, target cell**

cellular /'seljulər/ adjective 1. referring to cells, or formed of cells 2. made of many similar parts connected together

cellular tissue /,seljulər 'tɪʃu:/ noun a form of connective tissue with large spaces

cellulite /'seljulait/ noun lumpy deposits of subcutaneous fat, especially in the thighs and buttocks

cellulitis /'selju'laitɪs/ noun a usually bacterial inflammation of connective tissue or of the subcutaneous tissue

cellulose /'seljuləʊs/ noun a carbohydrate which makes up a large percentage of plant matter

COMMENT: Cellulose is not digestible and is passed through the digestive system as roughage.

Celsius /'selsiəs/ noun a metric scale of temperature on which 0° is the point at which water freezes and 100° is the point at which water boils under average atmospheric conditions. Also called **centigrade**. ♦ **Fahrenheit** (NOTE: It is usually written as a C after the degree sign: 52°C (say: 'fifty-two degrees Celsius').) [Described 1742. After Anders Celsius (1701–44), Swedish astronomer and scientist.]

COMMENT: To convert Celsius temperatures to Fahrenheit, multiply by 1.8 and add 32. So 20°C is equal to 68°F. Celsius is used in many countries, though not in the US, where the Fahrenheit system is still preferred.

Celsius temperature /'selsiəs ,temprɪtʃə/ noun temperature as measured on the Celsius scale

CEMACH /'si:mæʃ/ noun a UK research project investigating the causes of infant deaths and stillbirths. Full form **Confidential Enquiry into Maternal and Child Health**

cement /si'ment/ noun 1. an adhesive used in dentistry to attach a crown to the base of a tooth 2. same as **cementum**

cementum /si'mentəm/ noun a layer of thick hard material which covers the roots of teeth

census /'sensəs/ noun a systematic count or survey

center /'sentə/ noun US same as **centre**

-centesis /'sentɪ:sɪs/ suffix puncture

centi- /'sentɪ/ prefix one hundredth (10^{-2}). Symbol c

centigrade /'sentɪgred/ noun same as **Celsius**

centile chart /'sentɪal tʃa:t/ noun a chart showing the number of babies who fall into each percentage category, as regards, e.g., birth weight

centilitre /'sentɪlɪ:tə/, **centiliter** noun a unit of measurement of liquid equal to one hundredth of a litre. Symbol cl

centimetre /'sentɪmi:tə/, **centimeter** noun a unit of measurement of length equal to one hundredth of a metre. Symbol cm

central /'sentrəl/ adjective referring to the centre

central canal /,sentrəl kə'næl/ noun a thin tube in the centre of the spinal cord containing cerebrospinal fluid

central line /'sentrəl laɪn/ noun a catheter inserted through the neck, used to monitor central venous pressure in conditions such as shock where fluid balance is severely upset

central nervous system /,sentrəl 'nɜ:vəs ,sɪstəm/ noun the brain and spinal cord which link together all the nerves

central sulcus /,sentrəl 'sʌlkəs/ noun one of the grooves which divide a cerebral hemisphere into lobes

central temperature /,sentrəl 'temprɪtʃə/ noun the temperature of the brain, thorax and abdomen, which is constant

central vein /,sentrəl 'veɪn/ noun a vein in the liver

central venous pressure /,sentrəl 'vi:nəs ,preʃə/ noun blood pressure in the right atrium of the heart, which can be measured by means of a catheter

centre /'sentə/ noun 1. the middle point, or the main part of something ○ *The aim of the examination is to locate the centre of infection.*

2. a large building 3. the point where a group of nerves come together (NOTE: [all senses] The US spelling is **center**.)

centrifugal /'sentri'fju:g(ə)l, sen'trif(jug(ə))l/ *adjective* moving away from the centre

centrifugation /'sentrifju:'geʃ(ə)n/, **centrifuging** /'sentrifju:dʒɪŋ/ *noun* the process of separating the components of a liquid in a centrifuge

centrifuge /'sentrifju:dʒ/ *noun* a device to separate the components of a liquid by rapid spinning

centriole /'sentriəʊl/ *noun* a small structure found in the cytoplasm of a cell, which involved in forming the spindle during cell division

centripetal /,sentri'pi:t(ə)l, sen'tripit(ə)l/ *adjective* moving towards the centre

centromere /'sentrəmɪə/ *noun* a constricted part of a chromosome, seen as a cell divides

centrosome /'sentrəsəʊm/ *noun* the structure in the cytoplasm of a cell, near the nucleus, and containing the centrioles

centrum /'sentrəm/ *noun* the central part of an organ (NOTE: The plural is **centra**.)

cephal- /sefəl/ *prefix* same as **cephalo-** (*used before vowels*)

cephalalgia /,sefə'lældʒɪə/ *noun* same as headache

cephalexin /,sefə'leksɪn/ *noun* an antibiotic used to treat infections of the urinary system or respiratory tract

cephalhaematoma /,sefəlhī:mə'təʊmə/ *noun* a swelling found mainly on the head of babies delivered with forceps

cephalic /sə'fælik/ *adjective* referring to the head

cephalic index /sə,fælik 'ɪndeks/ *noun* a measurement of the shape of the skull

cephalic presentation /sə,fælik ,prez(ə)n 'teɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the usual position of a baby in the uterus, where the baby's head will appear first

cephalic version /sə,fælik 'vɜ:ʃ(ə)n/ *noun* turning a wrongly positioned fetus round in the uterus, so that the head will appear first at birth

cephalo- /sefə'ləʊ/ *prefix* referring to the head

cephalocele /'sefə'ləʊsɪ:l/ *noun* a swelling caused by part of the brain passing through a weak point in the bones of the skull

cephalogram /'sefə'ləʊgraem/ *noun* an X-ray photograph of the bones of the skull

cephalomentry /,sefa'lɒmɪtri/ *noun* measurement of the head

cephalopelvic /,sefə'ləʊ'pelvik/ *adjective* referring to the head of the fetus and the pelvis of the mother

cephalopelvic disproportion /,sefə'ləʊ'pelvik ,disproportion/ *noun* a condition in which the pelvic opening of the mother is not large enough for the head of the fetus

cephalosporin /,sefə'ləʊ'spɔ:rɪn/ *noun* a drug used in the treatment of bacterial infection

cephradine /'sefrədɪ:n/ *noun* an antibacterial drug used to treat sinusitis and urinary tract infections

cerclage /sɜ:klæ:ʒ/ *noun* the act of tying things together with a ring

cerea /'sɪəriə/ ♀ **flexibilitas cerea**

cerebellar /,serəbelər/ *adjective* referring to the cerebellum

cerebellar ataxia /,serəbelər ə'tæksiə/ *noun* a disorder where a person staggers and cannot speak clearly, due to a disease of the cerebellum

cerebellar cortex /,serəbelər 'kɔ:tɛks/ *noun* the outer covering of grey matter which covers the cerebellum

cerebellar gait /,serəbelər 'geɪt/ *noun* a way of walking where a person staggers along, caused by a disease of the cerebellum

cerebellar peduncle /,serəbelər pi'dʌŋk(ə)l/ *noun* a band of nerve tissue connecting parts of the cerebellum

cerebellar syndrome /,serəbelər 'sɪndrəʊm/ *noun* a disease affecting the cerebellum, the symptoms of which are lack of muscle coordination, spasms in the eyeball and impaired speech

cerebellum /,serə'beləm/ *noun* a section of the hindbrain, located at the back of the head beneath the back part of the cerebrum. See illustration at **BRAIN** in Supplement

COMMENT: The cerebellum is formed of two hemispheres with the vermis in the centre. Fibres go into or out of the cerebellum through the peduncles. The cerebellum is the part of the brain where voluntary movements are co-ordinated and is associated with the sense of balance.

cerebr- /serəbr/ *prefix* same as **cerebro-** (*used before vowels*)

cerebra /sə'rɪ:bɪə/ plural of **cerebrum**

cerebral /'serəbrəl/ *adjective* referring to the cerebrum or to the brain in general

cerebral aqueduct /,serəbrəl 'ækwidʌkt/ *noun* a canal connecting the third and fourth ventricles in the brain. Also called **aqueduct of Sylvius**

cerebral artery /,serəbrəl 'a:təri/ *noun* one of the main arteries which take blood into the brain

cerebral cavity /,serəbrəl 'kævɪti/ *noun* one of the four connected fluid-filled spaces in the brain

cerebral cortex /,serəbrəl 'kɔ:tɛks/ *noun* the outer layer of grey matter which covers the cerebrum

cerebral decompression /,serəbrəl ,dɪk'mə:p'ref(ə)n/ *noun* the removal of part of the skull to relieve pressure on the brain

cerebral dominance /,serəbrəl 'dɒminəns/ *noun* the usual condition where the centres for various functions are located in one cerebral hemisphere

cerebral haemorrhage /,serəbrəl 'hem(ə)rɪdʒ/ noun bleeding inside the brain from a cerebral artery. Also called **brain haemorrhage**

cerebral hemisphere /,serəbrəl 'hemisfɪə/ noun one of the two halves of the cerebrum

cerebral infarction /,serəbrəl in'fə:kʃən/ noun the death of brain tissue as a result of reduction in the blood supply to the brain

cerebral ischaemia /,serəbrəl i'ski:mɪə/ noun failure in the blood supply to the brain

cerebral palsy /,serəbrəl 'pɔ:lzi/ noun a disorder mainly due to brain damage occurring before birth, or due to lack of oxygen during birth, associated with poor coordination of muscular movements, impaired speech, hearing and sight, and sometimes mental impairment (NOTE: Premature babies are at higher risk.)

cerebral peduncle /,serəbrəl pi'dʌŋk(ə)l/ noun a mass of nerve fibres connecting the cerebral hemispheres to the midbrain. See illustration at **BRAIN** in Supplement

cerebral thrombosis /,serəbrəl θrɒm'bəʊsɪs/ noun same as **cerebrovascular accident**

cerebral vascular accident /,serəbrəl ,væskjulər 'æksɪd(ə)nt/ noun same as **cerebrovascular accident**

cerebration /,serə'breɪʃ(ə)n/ noun brain activity

cerebro- /serəbrəʊ/ prefix referring to the cerebrum

cerebrospinal /,serəbrəʊ'spaɪn(ə)l/ adjective referring to the brain and the spinal cord

cerebrospinal fever /,serəbrəʊ'spaɪn(ə)l 'fi:və/ noun same as **meningococcal meningitis**

cerebrospinal fluid /,serəbrəʊ'spaɪn(ə)l 'flu:d/ noun fluid which surrounds the brain and the spinal cord. Abbr **CSF**

COMMENT: CSF is found in the space between the arachnoid mater and pia mater of the brain, within the ventricles of the brain and in the central canal of the spinal cord. It consists mainly of water, with some sugar and sodium chloride. Its function is to cushion the brain and spinal cord and it is continually formed and absorbed to maintain the correct pressure.

cerebrospinal meningitis /,serəbrəʊ'spaɪn(ə)l ,menɪn'dʒaɪtɪs/ noun same as **meningococcal meningitis**

cerebrospinal tract /,serəbrəʊ'spaɪn(ə)l 'trækٹ/ noun one of the main motor pathways in the anterior and lateral white columns of the spinal cord

cerebrovascular /,serəbrəʊ'væskjulə/ adjective referring to the blood vessels in the brain

cerebrovascular accident /,serəbrəʊ ,væskjulər 'æksɪd(ə)nt/ noun a sudden

blocking of or bleeding from a blood vessel in the brain resulting in temporary or permanent paralysis or death. Also called **stroke**

cerebrovascular disease /,serəbrəʊ ,væskjulə dɪ'zi:z/ noun a disease of the blood vessels in the brain

cerebrum /sə'rɪ:b्रəm/ noun the largest part of the brain, formed of two sections, the cerebral hemispheres, which run along the length of the head. The cerebrum controls the main mental processes, including the memory. Also called **telencephalon**

certificate /sə'tifikət/ noun an official paper which states something

certify /sɜ:tifai/ verb to make an official statement in writing about something ○ *He was certified dead on arrival at hospital.*

cerumen /sə'ru:men/ noun wax which forms inside the ear. Also called **earwax**

ceruminous gland /sə'ru:minəs ,glænd/ noun a gland which secretes earwax. See illustration at **EAR** in Supplement

cervic- /sɜ:vɪk/ prefix same as **cervico-** (used before vowels)

cervical /sɜ:vɪk(ə)l, sə'vaɪk(ə)l/ adjective 1. referring to the neck 2. referring to any part of the body which is shaped like a neck, especially the cervix of the uterus

cervical canal /sɜ:vɪk(ə)l kə'næl/ noun a tube running through the cervix, from the point where the uterus joins the vagina to the entrance of the uterine cavity. Also called **cervicouterine canal**

cervical cancer /sɜ:vɪk(ə)l 'kænsər/ noun a cancer of the cervix of the uterus

cervical collar /,sɜ:vɪk(ə)l 'kɒlə/ noun a special strong orthopaedic collar to support the head of a person with neck injuries or a condition such as cervical spondylosis

cervical erosion /,sɜ:vɪk(ə)l ɪ'rəʊz(ə)n/ noun a condition in which the epithelium of the mucous membrane lining the cervix uteri extends outside the cervix

cervical ganglion /,sɜ:vɪk(ə)l 'gæŋgliən/ noun one of the bundles of nerves in the neck

cervical incompetence /,sɜ:vɪk(ə)l 'ɪnkomplɪt(ə)ns/ noun a dysfunction of the cervix of the uterus which is often the cause of spontaneous abortions and premature births and can be remedied by Shirodkar's operation

cervical intraepithelial neoplasia /,sɜ:vɪk(ə)l intræpi,θi:lɪəl ni:pə'leɪəz/ noun changes in the cells of the cervix which may lead to cervical cancer. Abbr **CIN**

cervical nerve /,sɜ:vɪk(ə)l 'nɜ:rv/ noun spinal nerve in the neck

cervical node /,sɜ:vɪk(ə)l 'nəud/ noun lymph node in the neck

cervical plexus /,sɜ:vɪk(ə)l 'pleksəs/ noun a group of nerves in front of the vertebrae in the neck, which lead to nerves supplying the

skin and muscles of the neck, and also the phrenic nerve which controls the diaphragm

cervical rib /sɜːvɪk(ə)l 'rib/ *noun* an extra rib sometimes found attached to the vertebrae above the other ribs and which may cause thoracic inlet syndrome

cervical smear /sɜːvɪk(ə)l 'smər/ *noun* a test for cervical cancer, where cells taken from the mucus in the cervix of the uterus are examined

cervical spondylosis /sɜːvɪk(ə)l spɒndɪ 'loʊsɪs/ *noun* a degenerative change in the neck bones. ☞ **spondylosis**

cervical vertebrae /sɜːvɪk(ə)l 'vɜːtibri:/ *plural noun* the seven bones which form the neck

cervicectomy /sɜːvɪk'ektəmɪ/ *noun* the surgical removal of the cervix uteri

cervices /sɜːvɪsɪz/ *plural of cervix*

cervicitis /sɜːvɪ'taɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the cervix uteri

cervico- /sɜːvɪkəʊ/ *prefix* 1. referring to the neck 2. referring to the cervix of the uterus

cervicography /sɜːvɪk'ɒgrəfi/ *noun* the act of photographing the cervix uteri, used as a method of screening for cervical cancer

cervicouterine canal /sɜːvɪkəʊnju:təraɪn kə'næl/ *noun* same as **cervical canal**

cervix /sɜːvɪks/ *noun* 1. any narrow neck of an organ 2. the neck of the uterus, the narrow lower part of the uterus leading into the vagina. Also called **cervix uteri**

CESDI *noun* full form **Confidential Enquiry into Stillbirths and Deaths in Infancy**. ☞ **CEMACH**

cesium /'si:ziəm/ *noun* US same as **caesium**

cestode /'sestəd/ *noun* a type of tapeworm

cetrimide /'setrimaɪd/ *noun* a mixture of ammonium compounds, used in disinfectants and antiseptics

CF abbr cystic fibrosis

CFT abbr complement fixation test

chafe /tʃeif/ *verb* to rub something, especially to rub against the skin ☞ *The rough cloth of the collar chafed the girl's neck.*

chafing /'tʃeifɪŋ/ *noun* irritation of the skin due to rubbing ☞ *She was experiencing chafing of the thighs.*

Chagas' disease /'ʃa:gəz dɪ,zi:z/ *noun* a type of sleeping sickness found in South America, transmitted by insect bites which pass trypanosomes into the bloodstream. Children are mainly affected and if untreated the disease can cause fatal heart block in early adult life. [Described 1909. After Carlos Chagas (1879–1934), Brazilian scientist and physician.]

CHAI abbr Commission for Healthcare Audit and Improvement

chalasia /tʃə'lɛzɪə/ *noun* an excessive relaxation of the oesophageal muscles, which causes regurgitation

chalazion /kə'lɛzɪən/ *noun* same as **meibomian cyst**

challenge /'tʃælɪndʒ/ *verb* to expose someone to a substance to determine whether an allergy or other adverse reaction will occur ■ *noun* exposure of someone to a substance to determine whether an allergy or other adverse reaction will occur

chalone /'keɪləʊn, 'kæləʊn/ *noun* a hormone which stops a secretion, as opposed to those hormones which stimulate secretion

chamber /'tʃeɪmbə/ *noun* a hollow space (atrium or ventricle) in the heart where blood is collected

chancere /'fæŋkər/ *noun* a sore on the lip, penis or eyelid which is the first symptom of syphilis

chancroid /'fæŋkrɔɪd/ *noun* a venereal sore with a soft base, situated in the groin or on the genitals and caused by the bacterium *Haemophilus ducreyi*. Also called **soft chancre**

change of life /tʃeɪndʒ əv 'laɪf/ *noun* same as **menopause (dated informal)**

chapped /tʃæpt/ *adjective* referring to skin which is cracked due to cold

characterise /'kærɪktə'reɪz/; **characterize** /'kærɪktə'reɪz/ *verb* to be a typical or special quality or feature of something or someone ☞ *The disease is characterised by the development of lesions throughout the body.*

characteristic /,kærɪktə'rɪstɪk/ *noun* a quality which allows something to be recognised as different ☞ *Cancer destroys the cell's characteristics.* ■ *adjective* being a typical or distinguishing quality ☞ *symptoms characteristic of anaemia* ☞ *The inflammation is characteristic of shingles.*

charcoal /'tʃa:kəʊl/ *noun* a highly absorbent substance, formed when wood is burnt in the absence of oxygen, used to relieve diarrhoea or intestinal gas and in cases of poisoning

COMMENT: Charcoal tablets can be used to relieve diarrhoea or flatulence.

Charcot's joint /,ʃɑ:kəʊz 'dʒɔɪnt/ *noun* a joint which becomes deformed because the patient cannot feel pain in it when the nerves have been damaged by syphilis, diabetes or leprosy [Described 1868. After Jean-Martin Charcot (1825–93), French neurologist.]

Charcot's triad /,ʃɑ:kəʊz 'traɪəd/ *noun* three symptoms of multiple sclerosis: rapid eye movement, tremor and scanning speech

charleyhorse /tʃa:lɪhɔ:s/ *noun* US a painful cramp in a leg or thigh (*informal*)

Charnley clamps /tʃa:nli 'klæmps/ *plural noun* metal clamps fixed to a rod through a bone to hold it tight

chart /tʃɑ:t/ *noun* a record of information shown as a series of lines or points on graph paper ◇ *a temperature chart*

charting /'tʃɑ:tɪŋ/ *noun* the preparation and updating of a hospital patient's chart by nurses and doctors

ChB *abbr* bachelor of surgery

CHC *abbr* 1. child health clinic 2. community health council

CHD *abbr* coronary heart disease

check-up /'tʃek ʌp/ *noun* a general examination by a doctor or dentist ◇ *She went for a check-up.* ◇ *He had a heart check-up last week.*

cheek /tʃi:k/ *noun* 1. one of two fleshy parts of the face on each side of the nose 2. either side of the buttocks (*informal*)

cheekbone /'tʃi:kbaʊn/ *noun* an arch of bone in the face beneath the cheek which also forms the lower part of the eye socket

cheil- /kail/ *prefix* same as **cheilo-** (*used before vowels*)

cheilitis /'kar'laitɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the lips

cheilo- /kailəʊ/ *prefix* referring to the lips

cheiloschisis /kailəʊ'fæsɪs/ *noun* a double cleft upper lip

cheilosis /kar'ləʊsɪs/ *noun* swelling and cracks on the lips and corners of the mouth caused by lack of vitamin B

cheiro- /keɪrəʊ/ *prefix* referring to the hand

cheiropompholyx /,keɪrəʊ'pɒmfəlɪks/ *noun* a disorder of the skin in which tiny blisters appear on the palms of the hand

chelate /'ki:leɪt/ *verb* to treat someone with a chelating agent in order to remove a heavy metal such as lead from the bloodstream

chelating agent /'ki:leɪtɪŋ ,eɪdʒənt/ *noun* a chemical compound which can combine with some metals, used as a treatment for metal poisoning

keloid /'kɪ:lɔɪd/ *noun* same as **keloid**

chemical /'kemɪk(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to chemistry ■ *noun* a substance produced by a chemical process or formed of chemical elements

'The MRI body scanner is able to provide a chemical analysis of tissues without investigative surgery'
[*Health Services Journal*]

chemical composition /,kemɪk(ə)l ,kɒmpo'zɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the chemicals which make up a substance ◇ *They analysed the blood samples to find out their chemical composition.*

chemical symbol /,kemɪk(ə)l 'sɪmbəl/ *noun* letters which represent a chemical substance ◇ *Na is the symbol for sodium.*

chemist /'kemɪst/ *noun* a shop where you can buy medicine, toothpaste, soap and similar items ◇ *Go to the chemist to get some cough*

medicine. ◇ *The tablets are sold at all chemists.* ◇ *There's a chemist on the corner.*

chemistry /'kemɪstri/ *noun* the study of substances, elements and compounds and their reactions with each other ◇ **blood chemistry** or **chemistry of the blood** 1. substances which make up blood, which can be analysed in blood tests, the results of which are useful in diagnosing disease 2. a record of changes which take place in blood during disease and treatment

chemo /'kɪ:məʊ/ *noun* chemotherapy (*informal*)

chemo- /kɪ:məʊ/ *prefix* referring to chemistry

chemoreceptor /,kɪ:məʊrɪ'septə/ *noun* a cell which responds to the presence of a chemical compound by activating a nerve, e.g. a taste bud reacting to food or cells in the carotid body reacting to lowered oxygen and raised carbon dioxide in the blood

chemosis /kɪ:'məʊsɪs/ *noun* swelling of the conjunctiva

chemotaxis /,kɪ:məʊ'tæksɪs/ *noun* the movement of a cell when it is attracted to or repelled by a chemical substance

chemotherapeutic agent /,kɪ:məʊθerə'pju:tɪk ,eɪdʒənt/ *noun* a chemical substance used to treat a disease

chemotherapy /,kɪ:məʊ'θerəpi/ *noun* the use of drugs such as antibiotics, painkillers or antiseptic lotions to fight a disease, especially using toxic chemicals to destroy rapidly developing cancer cells

chest /tʃest/ *noun* 1. the upper front part of the body between the neck and stomach. Also called **thorax** 2. same as **thorax** (NOTE: For other terms referring to the chest, see **pectoral** and words beginning with **steth-**, **thorac-**, **thoraco-**.)

chest cavity /'tʃest ,kævɪtɪ/ *noun* a space in the body containing the diaphragm, heart and lungs

chest examination /'tʃest ɪg,zæmɪneɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* an examination of someone's chest by percussion, stethoscope or X-ray

chest muscle /'tʃest ,mæs(ə)l/ *noun* same as **pectoral muscle**

chest pain /'tʃest peɪn/ *noun* pain in the chest which may be caused by heart disease

chesty /'tʃestɪ/ *adjective* having phlegm in the lungs, or having a tendency to chest complaints

Cheyne–Stokes respiration /,tʃeɪn 'stəʊks rɪspɪ'reɪʃ(ə)n/, **Cheyne–Stokes breathing** /'brɪ:nθɪŋ/ *noun* irregular breathing, usually found in people who are unconscious, with short breaths gradually increasing to deep breaths, then reducing again, until breathing appears to stop

CHI *abbr* Commission for Health Improvement

chiasm /'kaɪəz(ə)m/, **chiasma** /kaɪ'æzma/ noun \blacktriangleleft **optic chiasma**

chickenpox /tʃɪkɪn'pɒks/ noun an infectious disease of children, with fever and red spots which turn into itchy blisters. Also called **varicella**

COMMENT: Chickenpox is caused by a herpes-virus. In later life, shingles is usually a re-emergence of a dormant chickenpox virus and an adult with shingles can infect a child with chickenpox.

Chief Medical Officer /tʃi:f 'medɪk(ə)l, pfi:səl/ noun in the UK, a government official responsible for all aspects of public health. Abbr **CMO**

Chief Nursing Officer /tʃi:f 'nɜ:sɪŋ, pfi:sə/ noun in the UK, an official appointed by the Department of Health to advise Government Ministers and provide leadership to nurses and midwives. Abbr **CNO**

chilblain /'tʃɪlbleɪn/ noun a condition in which the skin of the fingers, toes, nose or ears becomes red, swollen and itchy because of exposure to cold. Also called **erythema pernio**

child /tʃaɪld/ noun a young boy or girl. Child is the legal term for a person under 14 years of age. (NOTE: The plural is **children**. For other terms referring to children, see words beginning with **paed-**, **paedo-** or **ped-**, **pedo-**)

child abuse /'tʃaɪld ə,bju:s/ noun cruel treatment of a child by an adult, including physical and sexual harm

childbearing /'tʃaɪldbeərɪŋ/ noun the act of carrying and giving birth to a child

childbirth /'tʃaɪldbɜ:θ/ noun the act of giving birth. Also called **parturition**

child care /'tʃaɪld keə/ noun the care of young children and study of their special needs

child health clinic /tʃaɪld 'helθ, klinɪk/ noun a special clinic for checking the health and development of small children under school age. Abbr **CHC**

childhood illness /,tʃaɪldhd ɪ'lness/ noun an illness which mainly affects children and not adults

child-proof /'tʃaɪld pru:f/ adjective designed so that a child cannot use it ○ *child-proof containers* ○ *The pills are sold in bottles with child-proof lids or caps.*

child protection /,tʃaɪld prə'tekʃən/ noun the measures taken to avoid abuse, neglect or exploitation of any kind towards children

children /'tʃɪldrən/ plural of **child**

children's hospital /'tʃɪldrənz, hɒspɪt(ə)l/ noun a hospital which specialises in treating children

chill /tʃɪl/ noun a short illness causing a feeling of being cold and shivering, usually the sign of the beginning of a fever, of flu or a cold

chin /tʃɪn/ noun the bottom part of the face, beneath the mouth

Chinese medicine /,tʃaɪni:z 'med(ə)sɪ/ noun a system of diagnosis, treatment and prevention of illness developed in China over many centuries. It uses herbs, minerals and animal products, exercise, massage and acupuncture.

Chinese restaurant syndrome /,tʃaɪni:z 'rest(ə)rənt, sɪndrəʊm/ noun an allergic condition which gives people severe headaches after eating food flavoured with monosodium glutamate (*informal*)

chiro- /kai'rəʊ/ prefix referring to the hand

chiroprivist /kɪ'rɒpədɪst/ noun a person who specialises in treatment of minor disorders of the feet

chiropody /kɪ'rɒpədi/ noun the study and treatment of minor diseases and disorders of the feet

chiropractic /,kai'rəʊ'prækτɪk/ noun the treatment and prevention of disorders of the neuromusculoskeletal system by making adjustments primarily to the bones of the spine

chiropractor /'kai'rəʊ,prækta/ noun a person who treats musculoskeletal disorders by making adjustments primarily to the bones of the spine

chiropracty /'kai'rəʊ,prækty/ noun same as **chiropractic** (*informal*)

Chlamydia /kla'mɪdiə/ noun a bacterium that causes trachoma and urogenital diseases in humans and psittacosis in birds, which can be transmitted to humans. It is currently a major cause of sexually transmitted disease.

chlamydial /kla'mɪdiəl/ adjective referring to infections caused by **Chlamydia**

chloasma /klu:ə'æzma/ noun the presence of brown spots on the skin from various causes

chlor- /klɔ:r/ prefix same as **chloro-** (*used before vowels*)

chlorambucil /klɔ:r'æmbjʊsɪl/ noun a drug which is toxic to cells, used in cancer treatment

chloramphenicol /,klɔ:ræm'fenɪkol/ noun a powerful antibiotic which sometimes causes the collapse of blood cell production, so is used only for treating life-threatening diseases such as meningitis

chloridiazepoxide /,klɔ:dai,æzi'pɒksaɪd/ noun a yellow crystalline powder, used as a tranquilliser and treatment for alcoholism

chlorhexidine /klɔ:hɛksɪdɪn/ noun a disinfectant mouthwash

chloride /'klɔ:raɪd/ noun a salt of hydrochloric acid

chlorination /,klɔ:ri:'neɪʃ(ə)n/ noun sterilisation by adding chlorine

COMMENT: Chlorination is used to kill bacteria in drinking water, in swimming pools and sewage farms, and has many industrial applications such as sterilisation in food processing.

chlorinator /'klɔ:rɪneɪtə/ noun apparatus for adding chlorine to water

chlorine /'klori:n/ *noun* a powerful greenish gas, used to sterilise water (NOTE: The chemical symbol is Cl.)

chlormethiazole /,klor'meθaɪəzəʊl/ *noun* a sedative used in the treatment of people with alcoholism

chloro- /klorɔ:/ *prefix* referring to chlorine

chloroform /'klorfɔ:m/ *noun* a powerful drug formerly used as an anaesthetic

chloroma /klor:'rəʊmə/ *noun* a bone tumour associated with acute leukaemia

chloroquine /'klor:rəkwin/ *noun* a drug used to prevent and treat malaria, but to which resistance has developed in some parts of the world

chlorosis /klor:'rəʊsɪs/ *noun* a type of severe anaemia due to iron deficiency, affecting mainly young girls

chlorothiazide /,klor:rəʊ'θaɪəzaid/ *noun* a drug which helps the body to produce more urine, used in the treatment of high blood pressure, swelling and heart failure

chloroxylenol /,klor:rəʊ'zætlənɒl/ *noun* a chemical used as an antimicrobial agent in skin creams and in disinfectants

chlorpheniramine /,klor:fen'aɪrəmɪ:n/, **chlorpheniramine maleate** /,klor:fenairəmɪ:n'mælɪet/ *noun* an antihistamine drug

chlorpromazine hydrochloride /klor:prouməzai:n ,haɪdrəu'klor:iəd/ *noun* a drug used to treat schizophrenia and other psychoses

chlorpropamide /klor:'prəʊpəməid/ *noun* a drug which lowers blood sugar, used in the treatment of diabetes

chlorthalidone /klor:'θælɪdəʊn/ *noun* a diuretic

ChM abbr Master of Surgery

choana /'kəʊənə/ *noun* any opening shaped like a funnel, especially the one leading from the nasal cavity to the pharynx (NOTE: The plural is *choanae*.)

chocolate cyst /tʃɔ:klt 'sɪst/ *noun* an ovarian cyst containing old brown blood

choke /tʃəuk/ *verb* to stop breathing because the windpipe becomes blocked by a foreign body or by inhalation of water, or to stop someone breathing by blocking the windpipe
 to choke on (something) to take something into the windpipe instead of the gullet, so that the breathing is interrupted
 A piece of bread made him choke or He choked on a piece of bread.

choking /'tʃəukɪŋ/ *noun* a condition in which someone is prevented from breathing. ☞ **asphyxia**

chol- /kɒl/ *prefix* same as **chole-** (*used before vowels*)

cholaemia /kə'lɪ:miə/ *noun* the presence of an unusual amount of bile in the blood

cholagogue /'kɒlægɒg/ *noun* a drug which encourages the production of bile

cholangiocarcinoma /kə,lændʒiəʊ,kɑ:sɪ'nəʊmə/ *noun* a rare cancer of the cells of the bile ducts

cholangiography /kə,lændʒi'ngrafi/ *noun* an X-ray examination of the bile ducts and gall bladder

cholangiolitis /kə,lændʒiəʊ'laitɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the small bile ducts

cholangiopancreatography /kə,læn,dʒiəʊ,pænkrɪə'tɒgrafi/ *noun* an X-ray examination of the bile ducts and pancreas

cholangitis /kə'læn,læn'dʒaɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the bile ducts

chole- /kɒl/ *prefix* referring to bile

cholecalciferol /,kɒlkæk'fərɒl/ *noun* a form of vitamin D found naturally in fish-liver oils and egg yolks

cholecystectomy /,kɒlɪ'stɪ'stektəmɪ/ *noun* the surgical removal of the gall bladder

cholecystitis /,kɒlɪ'stɪ'staɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the gall bladder

cholecystoduodenostomy /,kɒlɪ'stɪsduə'dənəstəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to join the gall bladder to the duodenum to allow bile to pass into the intestine when the main bile duct is blocked

cholecystogram /,kɒlɪ'stɪsgræm/ *noun* an X-ray photograph of the gall bladder

cholecystography /,kɒlɪ'stɪsgrəfɪ/ *noun* an X-ray examination of the gall bladder

cholecystokinin /,kɒlɪ'stɪsə'kaɪnɪn/ *noun* a hormone released by cells at the top of the small intestine. It stimulates the gall bladder, making it contract and release bile.

cholecystotomy /,kɒlɪ'stɒtəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to make a cut in the gall bladder, usually to remove gallstones

choledoch- /kəledək/ *prefix* referring to the common bile duct

choledocholithiasis /kə,ledəkəlɪ'θaɪəsɪs/ *noun* same as **cholelithiasis**

choledocholithotomy /kə,ledɪkəlɪ'θɒtəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to remove a gallstone by cutting into the bile duct

choledochostomy /kə,ledə'kɒstəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to make an opening in a bile duct

choledochotomy /kəledə'kɒtəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to make a cut in the common bile duct to remove gallstones

cholelithiasis /kɒlɪ'lɪ'θaɪəsɪs/ *noun* a condition in which gallstones form in the gall bladder or bile ducts. Also called **choledocholithiasis**

cholelithotomy /kɒlɪ'lɪ'θɒtəmɪ/ *noun* the surgical removal of gallstones by cutting into the gall bladder

cholera /'kɒlərə/ *noun* a serious bacterial disease spread through food or water which has

been infected by *Vibrio cholerae* ○ A cholera epidemic broke out after the flood.

COMMENT: The infected person experiences diarrhoea, cramp in the intestines and dehydration. The disease is often fatal and vaccination is only effective for a relatively short period.

choleresis /kə'lɪərəsɪs/ noun the production of bile by the liver

choleretic /kɒlɪ'retɪk/ adjective referring to a substance which increases the production and flow of bile.

cholestasis /kɒlɪ'steɪsɪs/ noun a condition in which all bile does not pass into the intestine but some remains in the liver and causes jaundice

cholesteatoma /kə'lestɪə'teɪmə/ noun a cyst containing some cholesterol found in the middle ear and also in the brain

cholesterol /kə'lestərɒl/ noun a fatty substance found in fats and oils, also produced by the liver and forming an essential part of all cells

COMMENT: Cholesterol is found in brain cells, the adrenal glands, liver and bile acids. High levels of cholesterol in the blood are found in diabetes. Cholesterol is formed by the body, and high blood cholesterol levels are associated with diets rich in animal fat, such as butter and fat meat. Excess cholesterol can be deposited in the walls of arteries, causing arteriosclerosis.

cholesterolaemia /kə'lestərə'leɪmɪə/ noun a high level of cholesterol in the blood

cholesterosis /kə'lestə'rəʊsɪs/ noun inflammation of the gall bladder with deposits of cholesterol

cholic acid /kəʊlɪk 'æsɪd/ noun one of the bile acids

choline /'kəʊli:n/ noun a compound involved in fat metabolism and the precursor for acetyl-choline

cholinergic /kəʊlɪ'nɜ:dʒɪk/ adjective referring to a neurone or receptor which responds to acetylcholine

cholinesterase /kəʊlɪ'nestəreɪz/ noun an enzyme which breaks down a choline ester

choluria /kəʊ'ljuəriə/ noun same as **biliuria**

chondr- /kɒndr/ prefix referring to cartilage

chondritis /kɒn'draɪtɪs/ noun inflammation of a cartilage

chondroblast /'kɒndrəʊblæst/ noun a cell from which cartilage develops in an embryo

chondrocalcinosis /'kɒndrəʊsɪs, kælsɪ'nəʊsɪs/ noun a condition in which deposits of calcium phosphate are found in articular cartilage

chondrocyte /'kɒndrəʊsait/ noun a mature cartilage cell

chondrodysplasia /,kɒndrəʊdɪs'pleɪzɪə/ noun a hereditary disorder of cartilage which is linked to dwarfism

chondrodystrophy /,kɒndrəʊ'dɪstrəfɪ/ noun any disorder of cartilage

chondroma /kɒn'drəʊmə/ noun a tumour formed of cartilaginous tissue

chondromalacia /,kɒndrəʊmə'lɛʃə/ noun degeneration of the cartilage of a joint

chondrosarcoma /,kɒndrəʊsə:'kɑ:mə/ noun a malignant, rapidly growing tumour involving cartilage cells

chorda /'kɔ:də/ noun a cord or tendon (NOTE: The plural is **chordae**.)

chordae tendinae /,kɔ:dæ:tɛndɪneɪ/ plural noun tiny fibrous ligaments in the heart which attach the edges of some of the valves to the walls of the ventricles

chorddee /'kɔ:di:/ noun a painful condition where the erect penis is curved, a complication of gonorrhoea

chorditis /kɔ:'daitɪs/ noun inflammation of the vocal cords

chordotomy /kɔ:'dɒtəmɪ/ noun a surgical operation to cut a cord such as a nerve pathway in the spinal cord in order to relieve intractable pain

chorea /kɔ:'ri:ə/ noun a sudden severe twitching, usually of the face and shoulders, which is a symptom of disease of the nervous system

chorion /'kɔ:rɪən/ noun a membrane covering the fertilised ovum

chorionic /,kɔ:ri'ɒnɪk/ adjective referring to the chorion

chorionic gonadotrophin /kɔ:ri,pnɪk ɡənədəʊ'ntrəʊfin/ noun ♀ **human chorionic gonadotrophin**

chorionic villi /kɔ:ri,pnɪk 'vɪlɪ/ plural noun tiny finger-like folds in the chorion

chorionic villus sampling /kɔ:ri,pnɪk 'vɪlʊs ,sə:mplɪŋ/ noun an antenatal screening test carried out by examining cells from the chorionic villi of the outer membrane surrounding an embryo, which have the same DNA as the fetus

choroid /'kɔ:rɔɪd/ noun the middle layer of tissue which forms the eyeball, between the sclera and the retina. See illustration at **EYE** in Supplement

choroiditis /,kɔ:rɔɪ'daitɪs/ noun inflammation of the choroid in the eyeball

choroidocyclitis /kɔ:,rɔɪdəʊsər'klaitɪs/ noun inflammation of the choroids and ciliary body

choroid plexus /,kɔ:rɔɪd 'pleksəs/ noun part of the pia mater, a network of small blood vessels in the ventricles of the brain which produce cerebrospinal fluid. See illustration at **EYE** in Supplement

Christmas disease /'krɪsməs dɪ,zɪ:z/ noun same as **haemophilia B** [After Mr Christmas, the person in whom the disease was first studied in detail]

Christmas factor /'krɪsməs ,fæktə/ *noun*
same as **Factor IX**

chrom- /krəʊm/ *prefix* same as **chromo-**
(used before vowels)

-chromasia /krə'meziə/ *suffix* referring to colour

chromatid /'krəʊmətɪd/ *noun* one of two parallel filaments making up a chromosome

chromatin /'krəʊmətɪn/ *noun* a network which forms the nucleus of a cell and can be stained with basic dyes

chromatography /,krəʊmə'tɒgrəfi/ *noun* a method of separating chemicals through a porous medium, used in analysing compounds and mixtures

chromatophore /krə'o'mætəfɔ:/ *noun* any pigment-bearing cell in the eyes, hair and skin
chromic acid /,krəʊmɪk 'æsɪd/ *noun* an unstable acid existing only in solution or in the form of a salt, sometimes used in the removal of warts

chromicised catgut /,krəʊmɪsɪzd 'kætgʌt/ *noun* catgut which is hardened with chromium to make it slower to dissolve in the body

chromium /'krəʊmɪəm/ *noun* a metallic trace element (NOTE: The chemical symbol is Cr.)

chromo- /krəʊməʊ/ *prefix* referring to colour

chromosomal /,krəʊmə'səʊm(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to chromosomes

chromosomal aberration /,krəʊməsəʊm(ə)l ,æbə'reɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* same as **chromosome aberration**

chromosome /'krəʊməsəʊm/ *noun* a rod-shaped structure in the nucleus of a cell, formed of DNA, which carries the genes

COMMENT: Each human cell has 46 chromosomes, 23 inherited from each parent. The female has one pair of X chromosomes, and the male one pair of XY chromosomes, which are responsible for the sexual difference. Sperm from a male have either an X or a Y chromosome. If a Y chromosome sperm fertilises the female's ovum the child will be male.

chromosome aberration /'krəʊməsəʊm ,æbə'reɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a change from the usual number or arrangement of chromosomes

chromosome mapping /'krəʊməsəʊm ,mæpɪŋ/ *noun* a procedure by which the position of genes on a chromosome is established
chronic /'krɒnɪk/ *adjective* 1. referring to a disease or condition which lasts for a long time ○ *He has a chronic chest complaint.* Opposite **acute** 2. referring to serious pain (*informal*)

chronic abscess /,krɒnɪk 'æbses/ *noun* an abscess which develops slowly over a period of time

chronic appendicitis /,krɒnɪk ə'pendi'saitɪs/ *noun* a condition in which the vermiform appendix is always slightly inflamed. ♀ **grumbling appendix**

chronic catarrhal rhinitis /,krɒnɪk kə'ta:rəl rai'naitɪs/ *noun* a persistent form of inflammation of the nose where excess mucus is secreted by the mucous membrane

chronic fatigue syndrome /,krɒnɪk fə'ti:g ,sɪndrəʊm/ *noun* same as **myalgic encephalomyelitis**

chronic glaucoma /,krɒnɪk glɔ:'kəʊmə/ *noun* same as **open-angle glaucoma**

chronic granulomatous disease /,krɒnɪk ,grænju'ləmætəs dɪ,zi:z/ *noun* a type of inflammation where macrophages are converted into epithelial-like cells as a result of infection, as in tuberculosis or sarcoidosis

chronic obstructive airways disease /,krɒnɪk ə'bstræktyv 'eəweɪz dɪ,zi:z/ *noun* Abbr **COAD**. Now called **chronic obstructive pulmonary disease**

chronic obstructive pulmonary disease /,krɒnɪk ə'bstræktyv 'pʌlmən(ə)ri dɪ,zi:z/ *noun* any of a group of progressive respiratory disorders where someone experiences loss of lung function and shows little or no response to steroid or bronchodilator drug treatments, e.g. emphysema and chronic bronchitis. Abbr **COPD**

chronic pancreatitis /,krɒnɪk pænkrɪə'ta:tɪs/ *noun* a persistent inflammation occurring after repeated attacks of acute pancreatitis, where the gland becomes calcified

chronic periarthritis /,krɒnɪk peria:θraɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of tissues round the shoulder joint. Also called **scapulohumeral arthritis**

chronic pericarditis /,krɒnɪk perika:dɪtɪs/ *noun* a condition in which the pericardium becomes thickened and prevents the heart from functioning normally. Also called **constrictive pericarditis**

Chronic Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 /,krɒnɪk ,sɪk ən dɪs,eɪb(ə)ld 'pɜ:zɪs(ə)nz ækt/ *noun* an Act of Parliament in the UK which provides benefits such as alterations to their homes for people with long-term conditions

chronic toxicity /,krɒnɪk tɒk'sisɪtɪ/ *noun* exposure to harmful levels of a toxic substance over a period of time

chrysotherapy /,kraɪsəʊ'θerəpi/ *noun* treatment which involves gold injections

Chvostek's sign /tʃe'vesteks sain/ *noun* an indication of tetany, where a spasm is produced if the facial muscles are tapped

chyle /kaɪl/ *noun* a fluid in the lymph vessels in the intestine, which contains fat, especially after a meal

chylomicron /kailəʊ'maɪkron/ *noun* a particle of chyle present in the blood

chluria /kaɪljuəriə/ *noun* the presence of chyle in the urine

chyme /kaim/ *noun* a semi-liquid mass of food and gastric juices, which passes from the stomach to the intestine

chymotrypsin /,kaɪməʊ'truːpsɪn/ *noun* an enzyme which digests protein

Ci abbr curie

cicatrise /'sɪkətraɪz/, **cicatrize** *verb* to heal and form scar, or to cause a wound to heal and form a scar

cicatrix /'sɪkətriks/ *noun* same as **scar**

-ciclovir /sɪkləvɪr/ *suffix* used in the names of antiviral drugs

-cide /saɪd/ *suffix* referring to killing

cilia /'siliə/ plural of **cilium**

ciliary /'siliəri/ *adjective* 1. referring to the eyelid or eyelashes 2. referring to cilia

ciliary body /'siliəri_,bɒdi/ *noun* the part of the eye which connects the iris to the choroid. See illustration at **EYE** in Supplement

ciliary ganglion /,siliəri_ 'gæŋgliən/ *noun* a parasympathetic ganglion in the orbit of the eye, supplying the intrinsic eye muscles

ciliary muscle /'siliəri_,mæs(ə)l/ *noun* a muscle which makes the lens of the eye change its shape to focus on objects at different distances. See illustration at **EYE** in Supplement

ciliary processes /,siliəri_ 'prəʊsesɪz/ *plural noun* the ridges behind the iris to which the lens of the eye is attached

ciliated epithelium /,siliətɪd epi'ti:lɪəm/ *noun* simple epithelium where the cells have tiny hairs or cilia

cilium /'siliam/ *noun* 1. an eyelash 2. one of many tiny hair-like processes which line cells in passages in the body and by moving backwards and forwards drive particles or fluid along the passage (NOTE: The plural is **cilia**.)

-illin /sɪlɪn/ *suffix* used in the names of penicillin drugs ○ *amoxycillin*

cimetidine /'sɪmetɪdɪn/ *noun* a drug which reduces the production of stomach acid, used in peptic ulcer treatment

cimex /'saimeks/ *noun* a bedbug or related insect which feeds on birds, humans and other mammals (NOTE: The plural is **cimices**.)

CIN abbr cervical intraepithelial neoplasia

-cin /sɪn/ *suffix* referring to aminoglycosides ○ *gentamicin*

cinematics /,sɪn'mætɪks/ *noun* the science of movement, especially of body movements

cineplasty /'sinplæsti/ *noun* an amputation where the muscles of the stump of the amputated limb are used to operate an artificial limb

cineradiography /,sɪnɪ'reɪdɪ'bgrəfɪ/ *noun* the practice of taking a series of X-ray photographs for diagnosis, or to show how something moves or develops in the body

cinesiology /sɪ,ni:si:b'lædʒi/ *noun* the study of muscle movements, particularly in relation to treatment

cingulectomy /,sɪngju'lektəmi/ *noun* a surgical operation to remove the cingulum

cingulum /'singjuləm/ *noun* a long curved bundle of nerve fibres in the cerebrum (NOTE: The plural is **cingula**.)

cinnarizine /'sɪnərəzɪ:n/ *noun* an antihistaminic used to treat Ménière's disease

ciprofloxacin /,saɪprəʊ'fləksəsɪn/ *noun* a powerful antibiotic used in eye drops to treat corneal ulcers and surface infections of the eye, and in the treatment of anthrax in humans

circadian /sɜː'keɪdiən/ *adjective* referring to a pattern which is repeated approximately every 24 hours

circadian rhythm /sɜː'keɪdiən 'rɪð(ə)m/ *noun* same as **biological clock**

circle of Willis /,sɜːk(ə)l əv 'wɪlɪs/ *noun* a circle of branching arteries at the base of the brain formed by the basilar artery, the anterior and posterior cerebral arteries, the anterior and posterior communicating arteries and the internal carotid arteries [Described 1664. After Thomas Willis (1621–75), English physician and anatomist.]

circular fold /'sɜːkjʊlə fəuld/ *noun* a large transverse fold of mucous membrane in the small intestine

circulation /,sɜːkju'leɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* □ **circulation (of the blood)** movement of blood around the body from the heart through the arteries to the capillaries and back to the heart through the veins ○ *She has poor circulation in her legs.* ○ *Rub your hands to get the circulation going.*

COMMENT: Blood circulates around the body, carrying oxygen from the lungs and nutrients from the liver through the arteries and capillaries to the tissues. The capillaries exchange the oxygen for waste matter such as carbon dioxide which is taken back to the lungs to be expelled. At the same time the blood obtains more oxygen in the lungs to be taken to the tissues. The circulation pattern is as follows: blood returns through the veins to the right atrium of the heart. From there it is pumped through the right ventricle into the pulmonary artery, and then into the lungs. From the lungs it returns through the pulmonary veins to the left atrium of the heart and is pumped from there through the left ventricle into the aorta and from the aorta into the other arteries.

circulatory /,sɜːkju'leɪt(ə)rɪ/ *adjective* referring to the circulation of the blood

circulatory system /,sɜːkju'leɪt(ə)rɪ ,sɪstəm/ *noun* a system of arteries and veins, together with the heart, which makes the blood circulate around the body

circum- /sɜː:kəm/ *prefix* around

circumcise /'sɜː:kəmsaɪz/ *verb* to remove the foreskin of the penis

circumcision /,sɜː:kəm'sɪs(ə)n/ *noun* the surgical removal of the foreskin of the penis

circumduction /'sɜ:kəm'dʌkʃən/ *noun* the action of moving a limb so that the end of it makes a circular motion

circumflex /'sɜ:kəmfleks/ *adjective* bent or curved

circumflex artery /'sɜ:kəmfleks ə:təri/ *noun* a branch of the femoral artery in the upper thigh

circumflex nerve /'sɜ:kəmfleks nɜ:v/ *noun* a sensory and motor nerve in the upper arm

circumoral /'sɜ:kəm'ɔ:rəl/ *adjective* referring to rashes surrounding the lips

circumvallate papillae /'sɜ:kəm, væləlt pə'pili:/ *plural noun* large papillae at the base of the tongue, which have taste buds

cirrhosis /'sɜ:rʊsɪs/ *noun* a progressive disease of the liver, often associated with alcoholism, in which healthy cells are replaced by scar tissue □ **cirrhosis of the liver** hepatocirrhosis, a condition where some cells of the liver die and are replaced by hard fibrous tissue

COMMENT: Cirrhosis can have many causes: the commonest cause is alcoholism (alcoholic cirrhosis or Laennec's cirrhosis). It can also be caused by heart disease (cardiac cirrhosis), by viral hepatitis (postnecrotic cirrhosis), by autoimmune disease (primary biliary cirrhosis) or by obstruction or infection of the bile ducts (biliary cirrhosis).

cirrhotic /'sɜ:rɒtɪk/ *adjective* referring to cirrhosis ○ *The patient had a cirrhotic liver.*

cirs- /'sɜ:s/ *prefix* referring to dilation

cirsoid /'sɜ:sɔɪd/ *adjective* referring to a varicose vein which is dilated

cirsoid aneurysm /'sɜ:sɔɪd 'ænjərɪz(ə)m/ *noun* a condition in which arteries become swollen and twisted

cisplatin /'sɪs'pleɪtɪn/ *noun* a chemical substance which may help fight cancer by binding to DNA. It is used in the treatment of ovarian and testicular cancer.

cistern /'sistən/, **cisterna** /sɪ'stɜ:nə/ *noun* a space containing fluid

cisterna magna /sɪ,stɜ:nə 'mægnə/ *noun* a large space containing cerebrospinal fluid, situated underneath the cerebellum and behind the medulla oblongata

citric acid /'sitrik 'æsɪd/ *noun* an acid found in fruit such as oranges, lemons and grapefruit

citric acid cycle /'sitrik 'æsɪd ,saɪk(ə)l/ *noun* an important series of events concerning amino acid metabolism, which takes place in the mitochondria in the cell. Also called **Krebs cycle**

citrullinaemia /'sitrɒl'nɪ:miə/ *noun* a deficiency of an enzyme which helps break down proteins

citrulline /'sitrɒli:n, 'sitrəlайн/ *noun* an amino acid

CJD abbr Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease

cl abbr centilitre

clamp /klæmp/ *noun* a surgical instrument to hold something tightly, e.g. a blood vessel during an operation ■ *verb* to hold something tightly

clap /klæp/ *noun* same as **gonorrhoea** (*slang*)

classic /'klæsɪk/ *adjective* referring to a typically well-known symptom ○ *She showed classic heroin withdrawal symptoms: sweating, fever, sleeplessness and anxiety.*

classification /'klæsifi'keɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the work of putting references or components into order so as to be able to refer to them again and identify them easily ○ *the ABO classification of blood*

classify /'klæsɪfaɪ/ *verb* to put references or components into order so as to be able to refer to them again and identify them easily ○ *The medical records are classified under the surname of the patient.* ○ *Blood groups are classified according to the ABO system.*

claudication /,klo:drɪ'keɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the fact of limping or being lame

COMMENT: At first, the person limps after having walked a short distance, then finds walking progressively more difficult and finally impossible. The condition improves after rest.

claustrophobia /,klo:st्रə'fəʊbiə/ *noun* a fear of enclosed spaces or crowded rooms. Compare **agoraphobia**

claustrophobic /klo:st्रə'fəʊbɪk/ *adjective* afraid of being in enclosed spaces or crowded rooms. Compare **agoraphobic**

clavicle /'klævɪk(ə)l/ *noun* same as **collarbone**

clavicular /klə'veɪkju:lə/ *adjective* referring to the clavicle

clavus /'kleɪvəs/ *noun* 1. a corn on the foot 2. severe pain in the head, like a nail being driven in

claw foot /,klo: 'fʊt/ *noun* a deformed foot with the toes curved towards the instep and with a very high arch. Also called **pes cavus**

claw hand /,klo: 'hænd/ *noun* a deformed hand with the fingers, especially the ring finger and little finger, bent towards the palm, caused by paralysis of the muscles

clean /kli:n/ *adjective* 1. free from dirt, waste products or unwanted substances 2. sterile or free from infection ○ *a clean dressing* ○ *a clean wound* 3. not using recreational drugs

cleanliness /'klenlɪnəs/ *noun* the state of being clean ○ *The report praised the cleanliness of the hospital kitchen.*

clear /klɪə/ *adjective* 1. easily understood ○ *The doctor made it clear that he wanted the patient to have a home help.* ○ *The words on the medicine bottle are not very clear.* 2. not cloudy and easy to see through ○ *a clear glass bottle* ○ *The urine sample was clear.* 3. □ **clear of** free from ○ *The area is now clear of infection.* ■ *verb* to take away a blockage ○ *The inhalant will clear your blocked nose.* ○ *He is on*

antibiotics to try to clear the congestion in his lungs.

clear up /,klɪər 'ʌp/ *verb* to get better ○ *His infection should clear up within a few days. ○ I hope your cold clears up before the holiday.*

cleavage /'kli:vɪdʒ/ *noun* the repeated division of cells in an embryo

cleavage lines *plural noun* same as **Langer's lines**

cleft /klef/ *noun* a small opening or hollow place in a surface or body part ■ *adjective* referring to a surface or body part which has separated into two or more sections

cleft foot /,kleft 'fʊt/ *noun* same as **talipes**

cleft lip /,kleft 'lɪp/ *noun* a congenital condition in which the upper lip fails to form in the usual way during fetal development. Also called **harelip**

cleft palate /,kleft 'pælət/ *noun* a congenital condition in which the palate does not fuse during fetal development, causing a gap between the mouth and nasal cavity in severe cases

COMMENT: A cleft palate is usually associated with a cleft lip. Both can be successfully corrected by surgery.

cleido- /klaɪdəʊ/ *prefix* referring to the clavicle

cleidocranial dysostosis /,klaɪdəʊkraɪniəl ,dɪsɔ:s'təʊsɪs/ *noun* a hereditary bone malformation, with protruding jaw, lack of collarbone and malformed teeth

clerkling /'kla:kɪŋ/ *noun* the practice of writing down the details of a person on admission to a hospital (*informal*)

client /'klaɪənt/ *noun* a person visited by a health visitor or social worker

climacteric /'klai'mækტərik/ *noun* 1. same as **menopause** 2. a period of diminished sexual activity in a man who reaches middle age

climax /'klaimæks/ *noun* 1. an orgasm 2. the point where a disease is at its worst ■ *verb* to have an orgasm

clindamycin /,klɪndə'maɪsɪn/ *noun* a powerful antibiotic used to treat severe infections and acne

clinic /'klinik/ *noun* 1. a small hospital or a department in a large hospital which deals only with out-patients or which specialises in the treatment of particular medical conditions ○ *He is being treated in a private clinic. ○ She was referred to an antenatal clinic.* 2. a group of students under a doctor or surgeon who examine patients and discuss their treatment

clinical /'klinik(ə)l/ *adjective* 1. referring to the physical assessment and treatment of patients by doctors, as opposed to a surgical operation, a laboratory test or experiment 2. referring to instruction given to students at the bedside of patients as opposed to class instruction with no patient present 3. referring to a clinic

'...we studied 69 patients who met the clinical and laboratory criteria of definite MS' [Lancer]

'...the allocation of students to clinical areas is for their educational needs and not for service requirements' [Nursing Times]

clinical audit /,klinɪk(ə)l 'ɔ:dɪt/ *noun* an evaluation of the standard of clinical care

clinical care /,klinɪk(ə)l 'keə/ *noun* the care and treatment of patients in hospital wards or in doctors' surgeries

clinical effectiveness /,klinɪk(ə)l ɪ'fek tɪvəs/ *noun* the ability of a procedure or treatment to achieve the desired result

clinical governance /,klinɪk(ə)l 'gavən(ə)nəns/ *noun* the responsibility given to doctors to coordinate audit, research, education, use of guidelines and risk management to develop a strategy to raise the quality of medical care

clinically /'klinɪkli/ *adverb* using information gathered from the treatment of patients in a hospital ward or in the doctor's surgery ○ *Smallpox is now clinically extinct.*

clinical medicine /,klinɪk(ə)l 'med(ə)s(ə)n/ *noun* the study and treatment of patients in a hospital ward or in the doctor's surgery, as opposed to in the operating theatre or laboratory

clinical nurse manager /,klinɪk(ə)l 'nɜ:s ,mænɪdʒə/ *noun* the administrative manager of the clinical nursing staff of a hospital

clinical nurse specialist /,klinɪk(ə)l nɜ:s 'speʃ(ə)list/ *noun* a nurse who specialises in a particular branch of clinical care

clinical pathology /,klinɪk(ə)l pə'θɒlədʒɪ/ *noun* the study of disease as applied to the treatment of patients

clinical psychologist /,klinɪk(ə)l saɪ 'kɒlɒdʒɪst/ *noun* a psychologist who studies and treats sick patients in hospital

clinical thermometer /,klinɪk(ə)l θə 'mɒmɪtə/ *noun* a thermometer used in a hospital or by a doctor for measuring a person's body temperature

clinical trial /,klinɪk(ə)l 'traɪəl/ *noun* a trial carried out in a medical laboratory on a person or on tissue from a person

clinician /'kli'nɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a doctor, usually not a surgeon, who has considerable experience in treating patients

clinodactyly /,klaɪnəʊ'dæktɪli/ *noun* the permanent bending of a finger to one side

clip /klip/ *noun* a piece of metal with a spring, used to attach things together

clitoris /'klɪtərɪs/ *noun* a small erectile female sex organ, situated at the anterior angle of the vulva, which can be excited by sexual activity. See illustration at **UROGENITAL SYSTEM (FEMALE)** in Supplement

cloaca /kləʊ'ərkə/ *noun* the end part of the hindgut in an embryo

clomipramine /kləʊ'mɪprəmī:n/ *noun* a drug used to treat depression, phobias and obsessive-compulsive disorder

clonazepam /kləʊ'næzɪpæm/ *noun* a drug used to treat epilepsy

clone /kləʊn/ *noun* a group of cells derived from a single cell by asexual reproduction and so identical to the first cell ■ *verb* to reproduce an individual organism by asexual means

clonic /'klɒnɪk/ *adjective* 1. referring to clonus 2. having spasmodic contractions

clonic spasms /,klɒnɪk 'spæz(ə)mz/ *plural noun* spasms which recur regularly

clonidine /'klɒnidi:n/ *noun* a drug which relaxes and widens the arteries, used in the treatment of hypertension, migraine headaches and heart failure

cloning /'kləʊnɪŋ/ *noun* the reproduction of an individual organism by asexual means

clonorchiiasis /kləʊnə'skaɪəsɪs/ *noun* a liver condition, common in the Far East, caused by the fluke *Clonorchis sinensis*

clonus /'kləʊnəs/ *noun* the rhythmic contraction and relaxation of a muscle, usually a sign of upper motor neurone lesions

close /kləʊz/ *verb* 1. to become covered with new tissue as part of the healing process 2. to fix together the sides of a wound after surgery to allow healing to take place

closed fracture /,kləʊzd 'frækɪʃə/ *noun* same as **simple fracture**

Clostridium /klɒ'strɪdiəm/ *noun* a type of bacteria

COMMENT: Species of *Clostridium* cause botulism, tetanus and gas gangrene.

clot /klɒt/ *noun* a soft mass of coagulated blood in a vein or an artery ○ *The doctor diagnosed a blood clot in the brain.* ○ *Blood clots occur in thrombosis.* ■ *verb* to change from a liquid to a semi-solid state, or to cause a liquid to do this ○ *His blood does not clot easily.* (NOTE: **clotting – clotted**)

clotrimazole /klɒ'trɪməzəʊl/ *noun* a drug used to treat yeast and fungal infections

clotting /'klɒtɪŋ/ *noun* the action of coagulating

clotting factors /,klɒtɪŋ 'fæktəz/ *plural noun* substances in plasma, called Factor I, Factor II, and so on, which act one after the other to make the blood coagulate when a blood vessel is damaged

COMMENT: Deficiency in one or more of the clotting factors results in haemophilia.

clotting time /'klɒtɪŋ taɪm/ *noun* the time taken for blood to coagulate under usual conditions. Also called **coagulation time**

cloud /klaʊd/ *noun* the disturbed sediment in a liquid

cloudy /'klaudi/ *adjective* referring to liquid which is not transparent but which has an opaque substance in it

clubbing /'klʌbɪŋ/ *noun* a thickening of the ends of the fingers and toes, a sign of many different diseases

club foot /,klʌb 'fʊt/ *noun* same as **talipes**

cluster /'klʌstə/ *noun* 1. a group of small items which cling together 2. a significant subset in a statistical sample, e.g. of numbers of people affected by a particular disease or condition

cluster headache /'klʌstə ,hedeɪk/ *noun* a headache which occurs behind one eye for a short period

Clutton's joint /'klʌt(ə)nz ,dʒɔɪnt/ *noun* a swollen knee joint occurring in congenital syphilis [Described 1886. After Henry Hugh Clutton (1850–1909), surgeon at St Thomas's Hospital, London, UK.]

cm abbr centimetre

CMHN abbr community mental health nurse

CM joint /,sɪ: 'em dʒɔɪnt/ *plural noun* same as **carpometacarpal joint**

CMO abbr Chief Medical Officer

CMV abbr cytomegalovirus

C/N abbr charge nurse

CNS abbr central nervous system

COAD abbr chronic obstructive airways disease

coagulant /kəʊ'ægjulənt/ *noun* a substance which can make blood clot

coagulase /kəʊ'ægjulæs/ *noun* an enzyme produced by a staphylococcal bacteria which makes blood plasma clot

coagulate /kəʊ'ægjuleɪt/ *verb* to change from liquid to semi-solid, or to cause a liquid to do this ○ *His blood does not coagulate easily.*

◊ *comment:* Blood coagulates when fibrinogen, a protein in the blood, converts into fibrin under the influence of the enzyme thrombokinase.

coagulation /kəʊ,ægjʊ'lɛɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the action of clotting

coagulation time /kəʊægjʊ'lɛɪʃ(ə)n taim/ *noun* same as **clotting time**

coagulum /kəʊ'ægjuləm/ *noun* same as **blood clot** (NOTE: The plural is **coagula**.)

coalesce /,kəʊə'les/ *verb* to combine, or to cause things to combine, into a single body or group

coalescence /,kəʊə'les(ə)ns/ *noun* the process by which wound edges come together when healing

coarctation /,kəʊə:k'teɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the process of narrowing □ **coarctation of the aorta** congenital narrowing of the aorta, which results in high blood pressure in the upper part of the body and low blood pressure in the lower part

coarse tremor /,kɔ:s 'tremə/ *noun* severe trembling

coat /kəʊt/ *noun* a layer of material covering an organ or a cavity ■ *verb* to cover something with something else

coated tongue /,kəʊtɪd 'tʌŋ/ *noun* same as **furred tongue**

coating /'kəʊtɪŋ/ *noun* a thin covering ○ *a pill with a sugar coating*

cobalt /'kəʊbɔ:lt/ *noun* a metallic element (NOTE: The chemical symbol is **Co**.)

cobalt 60 /,kəʊbɔ:lt 'sɪkssti/ *noun* a radioactive isotope which is used in radiotherapy to treat cancer

cocaine /kəʊ'keɪn/ *noun* a narcotic drug not generally used in medicine because its use leads to addiction, but sometimes used as a surface anaesthetic

cocci /'kɒki/ plural of **coccus**

coccidioidomycosis /kɒk'sɪdiəd'maɪkəsɪs/ *noun* a lung disease, caused by inhaling spores of the fungus *Coccidioides immitis*

coccus /'kɒkəs/ *noun* a bacterium shaped like a ball (NOTE: The plural is **cocci**.)

COMMENT: Cocci grow together in groups: either in clusters (staphylococci) or in long chains (streptococci).

coccy- /'kɒksi/ *prefix* referring to the coccyx

coccydynia /,kɒk'si'dɪniə/ *noun* a sharp pain in the coccyx, usually caused by a blow. Also called **coccygodynia**

coccygeal vertebrae /kɒk'sɪdʒiəl 'vɜ:tɪbrɪ/ *plural noun* the fused bones in the coccyx

coccyges /kɒk'saɪdʒi:z/ plural of **coccyx**

coccygodynia /,kɒk'sigəʊ'dɪniə/ *noun* same as **coccydynia**

coccyx /'kɒksɪks/ *noun* the lowest bone in the backbone (NOTE: The plural is **coccyges**.)

COMMENT: The coccyx is a rudimentary tail made of four bones which have fused together into a bone in the shape of a triangle.

cochlea /'kɒklɪə/ *noun* a spiral tube inside the inner ear, which is the essential organ of hearing. See illustration at **EAR** in Supplement (NOTE: The plural is **cochleae**.)

COMMENT: Sounds are transmitted as vibrations to the cochlea from the ossicles through the oval window. The lymph fluid in the cochlea passes the vibrations to the organ of Corti which in turn is connected to the auditory nerve.

cochlear /'kɒklɪə/ *adjective* referring to the cochlea

cochlear duct /'kɒklɪə dʌkt/ *noun* a spiral channel in the cochlea

cochlear implant /,kɒklɪə 'implə:nt/ *noun* a type of hearing aid for profound hearing loss

cochlear nerve /'kɒklɪə nɜ:v/ *noun* a division of the auditory nerve

Cochrane database /,kɒkrən 'deɪta:bɛɪs/ *noun* a database of regular reviews carried out on research

code /kəʊd/ *noun* 1. a system of numbers, letters or symbols used to represent language or

information 2. same as **genetic code** ■ *verb* 1. to convert instructions or data into another form 2. (of a codon or gene) to provide the genetic information which causes a specific amino acid to be produced ○ *Genes are sections of DNA that code for a specific protein sequence.*

codeine /'kəʊdɪn/, **codeine phosphate** /,kəʊdɪn: 'fɒsfət/ *noun* a common painkilling drug that can also be used to suppress coughing and in the treatment of diarrhoea

code of conduct /,kəʊd əv 'kɒndʌkt/ *noun* a set of general rules showing how a group of people such as doctors or nurses should work
cod liver oil /,kɒd lɪvər 'ɔ:l/ *noun* a fish oil which is rich in calories and vitamins A and D

-**coele** /si:l/ *suffix* referring to a hollow (NOTE: The US spelling is usually -**cele**.)

coeli- /si:li:/ *prefix* same as **coelio-** (used before vowels) (NOTE: The US spelling is usually **celi-**)

coeliac /'si:liæk/ *adjective* referring to the abdomen

coeliac artery /,si:liæk 'ɑ:təri/, **coeliac axis** /,si:liæk 'æk'sɪs/ *noun* the main artery in the abdomen leading from the abdominal aorta and dividing into the left gastric, hepatic and splenic arteries. Also called **coeliac trunk**

coeliac disease /,si:liæk dɪ'zi:z/ *noun* same as **gluten-induced enteropathy**

coeliac ganglion /,si:liæk 'gængliən/ *noun* a ganglion on each side of the origins of the diaphragm, connected with the coeliac plexus

coeliac plexus /,si:liæk 'pleksəs/ *noun* a network of nerves in the abdomen, behind the stomach

coeliac trunk /,si:liæk 'trʌŋk/ *noun* same as **coeliac artery**

celio- /si:liəu/ *prefix* referring to a hollow, usually the abdomen (NOTE: The US spelling is usually **celio-**.)

coelioscopy /,si:li'ɒskəpi/ *noun* an examination of the peritoneal cavity by inflating the abdomen with sterile air and passing an endoscope through the abdominal wall (NOTE: The plural is **coelioscopies**.)

coelom /'si:ləm/ *noun* a body cavity in an embryo, which divides to form the thorax and abdomen (NOTE: The plural is **coeloms** or **coelomata**.)

coffee ground vomit /'kɒfi graond ,vɒmɪt/ *noun* vomit containing dark pieces of blood, indicating that the person is bleeding from the stomach or upper intestine

cognition /kɒgnɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the mental action or process of gaining knowledge by using your mind or your senses, or knowledge gained in this way

cognitive /'kɒgnɪtɪv/ *adjective* referring to the mental processes of perception, memory, judgment and reasoning ○ *a cognitive impairment*

cognitive disorder /kəgnɪtɪv dɪs'ɔ:də/ noun impairment of any of the mental processes of perception, memory, judgment and reasoning

cognitive therapy /,kəgnɪtɪv 'θerəpi/ noun a treatment of psychiatric disorders such as anxiety or depression which encourages people to deal with their negative ways of thinking

cohort /'kəohɔ:t/ noun a group of people sharing a particular characteristic such as age or gender who are studied in a scientific or medical investigation

cohort study /'kəohɔ:t ,stʌdi/ noun an investigation in which a group of people are classified according to their exposure to various risks and studied over a period of time to see if they develop a specific disease, in order to evaluate the links between risk and disease

coil /kɔɪl/ noun a device fitted into a woman's uterus as a contraceptive

coinfection /,kəʊnɪn'fekʃ(ə)n/ noun infection with two or more diseases or viruses at the same time

coital /'kəʊt(ə)l/ adjective referring to sexual intercourse

coitus /'kəʊtəs/, **coition** /kə'u'tɪʃ(ə)n/ noun same as **sexual intercourse**

coitus interruptus /,kəʊtəs intə'raptəs/ noun removal of the penis from the vagina before ejaculation, sometimes used as a method of contraception although it is not very efficient

cold /kəuld/ adjective not warm or hot ■ noun an illness, with inflammation of the nasal passages, in which someone sneezes and coughs and has a blocked and running nose ○ *She had a heavy cold.* Also called **common cold**, **coryza**

COMMENT: A cold usually starts with a virus infection which causes inflammation of the mucous membrane in the nose and throat. Symptoms include running nose, cough and loss of taste and smell. Coronaviruses have been identified in people with colds, but there is no cure for a cold at present.

cold burn /'kəuld bɜ:n/ noun an injury to the skin caused by exposure to extreme cold or by touching a very cold surface

cold cauterity /kəuld 'kɔ:təri/ noun the removal of a skin growth using carbon dioxide snow

cold compress /kəuld 'kɒmpres/ noun a wad of cloth soaked in cold water, used to relieve a headache or bruise

cold pack /'kəuld pæk/ noun a cloth or a pad filled with gel or clay which is chilled and put on the body to reduce or increase the temperature

cold sore /'kəuld sɔ:/ noun a painful blister, usually on the lips or nose, caused by herpes simplex Type I

colectomy /kə'lektəmi/ noun a surgical operation to remove the whole or part of the colon (NOTE: The plural is **colectomies**.)

colic /'kɒlik/ noun 1. pain in any part of the intestinal tract. Also called **enteralgia**, **tormina** 2. crying and irritability in babies, especially from stomach pains

COMMENT: Although colic can refer to pain caused by indigestion, it can also be caused by stones in the gall bladder or kidney.

colicky /'kɒlikɪ/ adjective referring to colic ○ *She had colicky pains in her abdomen.*

coliform bacterium /,kəʊlɪfɔ:m bæk'tɪrɪəm/ plural noun any bacterium which is similar to *Escherichia coli*

colistin /kɒ'lɪstɪn/ noun an antibiotic which is effective against a wide range of organisms and is used to treat gastrointestinal infections

colitis /kə'laitɪs/ noun inflammation of the colon. Also called **colonitis**

collagen /kɒlædʒən/ noun a thick protein fibre forming bundles, which make up the connective tissue, bone and cartilage

collagen disease /'kɒlædʒən dɪ,zɪ:z/ noun any disease of the connective tissue

COMMENT: Collagen diseases include rheumatic fever, rheumatoid arthritis, periarthritis nodosa, scleroderma and dermatomyositis.

collagenous /kə'lædʒɪnəs/ adjective 1. containing collagen 2. referring to collagen disease

collapse /kə'læps/ noun 1. a condition in which someone is extremely exhausted or semi-conscious ○ *She was found in a state of collapse.* 2. a condition in which an organ becomes flat or loses air ○ **lung collapse** ■ verb

1. to fall down in a semi-conscious state ○ *After running to catch his train he collapsed.* 2. to become flat, or lose air

collapsed lung /kə'læpsd lʌŋ/ noun same as **pneumothorax**

collarbone /'kɒləbəʊn/ noun one of two long thin bones which join the shoulder blades to the breastbone. Also called **clavicle** (NOTE: Collarbone fracture is one of the most frequent fractures in the body.)

collateral /kə'læt(ə)rəl/ adjective secondary or less important

'...embolisation of the coeliac axis is an effective treatment for severe bleeding in the stomach or duodenum, localized by endoscopic examination. A good collateral blood supply makes occlusion of a single branch of the coeliac axis safe.' [British Medical Journal]

collateral circulation /kə'læt(ə)rəl,sə:kju'leɪʃ(ə)n/ noun an enlargement of some secondary blood vessels as a response when the main vessels become slowly blocked

collection chamber /kə'lekʃən ,feɪmbə/ noun a section of the heart where blood collects before being pumped out

Colles' fracture /'kɒlis(ɪz) ,frækʃə/ noun a fracture of the lower end of the radius with

displacement of the wrist backwards, usually when someone has stretched out a hand to try to break a fall [After Abraham Colles (1773–1843), Irish surgeon]

colliculus /kə'lɪkjʊləs/ *noun* one of four small projections (**superior colliculi** and **inferior colliculi**) in the midbrain. See illustration at **BRAIN** in Supplement (NOTE: The plural is **colliculi**.)

collodion /kə'lədiən/ *noun* a liquid used for painting on a clean wound, where it dries to form a flexible covering

colloid /'kɒlɔɪd/ *noun* 1. a mass of tiny particles of one substance dispersed in another substance 2. the particles which are suspended in a colloid 3. a thick jelly-like substance which stores hormones, produced in the thyroid gland ■ *adjective* relating to or resembling a colloid ○ **colloid acne**

collyrium /kə'lɪriəm/ *noun* a solution used to bathe the eyes (NOTE: The plural is **collyria**.)

colo- /kɒləʊ/ *prefix* referring to the colon

cobloboma /kɒləʊ'bəʊmə/ *noun* a condition in which part of the eye, especially part of the iris, is missing

colon /'kælbən/ *noun* the main part of the large intestine, running from the caecum at the end of the small intestine to the rectum

COMMENT: The colon is about 1.35 metres in length, and rises from the end of the small intestine up the right side of the body, then crosses beneath the stomach and drops down the left side of the body to end as the rectum. In the colon, water is extracted from the waste material which has passed through the small intestine, leaving only the faeces which are pushed forward by peristaltic movements and passed out of the body through the rectum.

colonic /kə'lɒnik/ *adjective* referring to the colon

colonic irrigation /kə'lɒnik ɪrɪ'geɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the washing out of the contents of the large intestine using a tube inserted in the anus

colonitis /kɒlə'naitɪs/ *noun* same as **colitis**

colonoscope /kə'lɒnaskoʊp/ *noun* a surgical instrument for examining the interior of the colon

colonoscopy /kɒlə'nɒskəpi/ *noun* an examination of the inside of the colon, using a colonoscope passed through the rectum (NOTE: The plural is **colonoscopies**.)

colony /'kɒləni/ *noun* a group or culture of microorganisms

colorectal /kɒləʊ'rekt(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to both the colon and rectum

colostomy /kə'lɒstəmi/ *noun* a surgical operation to make an opening between the colon and the abdominal wall to allow faeces to be passed out without going through the rectum (NOTE: The plural is **colostomies**.)

COMMENT: A colostomy is carried out when the colon or rectum is blocked, or where part of the colon or rectum has had to be removed.

colostomy bag /kə'lɒstəmi bæg/ *noun* a bag attached to the opening made by a colostomy, to collect faeces as they are passed out of the body

colostrum /kə'lɒstrəm/ *noun* a fluid rich in antibodies and low in fat, secreted by the mother's breasts at the birth of a baby, before the true milk starts to flow

colour blindness /'kʌlər blaɪndnəs/ *noun* a condition of being unable to tell the difference between specific colours

COMMENT: Colour blindness is a condition which almost never occurs in women. The commonest form is the inability to tell the difference between red and green. The Ishihara test is used to test for colour blindness.

colour index /'kʌlərɪŋ ,ɪndeks/ *noun* the ratio between the amount of haemoglobin and the number of red blood cells in a specific amount of blood

colouring /'kʌlərɪŋ ,mætə/, **colouring matter** *noun* a substance which colours an organ

cop- /kɒpl/ *prefix* same as **colpo-** (used before vowels)

colpitis /kɒpl'paɪtɪs/ *noun* same as **vaginitis**

coplo- /kɒlpəʊ/ *prefix* referring to the vagina

copocele /'kɒlpəsɪ:l/ *noun* same as **colpopatosis**

colpocystitis /,kɒlpəʊsɪ'staɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of both the vagina and the urinary bladder

colpocystopexy /,kɒlpə'sɪstəpeksi/ *noun* a surgical operation to lift and stitch the vagina and bladder to the abdominal wall (NOTE: The plural is **colpocystoxies**.)

colpohysterectomy /,kɒlpəʊhɪstəktə'mi/ *noun* a surgical operation in which the womb is removed through the vagina (NOTE: The plural is **colpohysterectomies**.)

colpopexy /'kɒlpəpeksi/ *noun* a surgical operation to fix a prolapsed vagina to the abdominal wall (NOTE: The plural is **colpopexies**.)

coloplasty /'kɒlpəplæsti/ *noun* a surgical operation to repair a damaged vagina (NOTE: The plural is **coloplasties**.)

coloptosis /,kɒlpə'təʊsɪs/ *noun* a prolapse of the walls of the vagina. Also called **colpocoele** (NOTE: The plural is **coloptoses**.)

colporrhaphy /kɒl'pɒrəfi/ *noun* a surgical operation to stitch a prolapsed vagina (NOTE: The plural is **colporraphies**.)

colposcope /'kɒlpəʊskoʊp/ *noun* a surgical instrument used to examine the inside of the vagina. Also called **vaginoscope**

colposcopy /kɒl'ɒpskəpi/ *noun* an examination of the inside of the vagina (NOTE: The plural is **colposcopies**.)

colposuspension /,kɒlpəsʊsə'spenʃən/ *noun* a surgical operation to strengthen the pelvic floor muscles to prevent incontinence

colpotomy /kɒpl'pɒtəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to make a cut in the vagina (NOTE: The plural is **colpotomies**.)

column /'kɒləm/ *noun* □ **vertebral column**

columnar /kə'lʌmnr/ *adjective* shaped like a column

columnar cell /kə'lʌmnr sel/ *noun* a type of epithelial cell shaped like a column

coma /'kəʊmə/ *noun* a state of unconsciousness from which a person cannot be awakened by external stimuli

COMMENT: A coma can have many causes: head injuries, diabetes, stroke or drug overdose. A coma is often fatal, but a patient may continue to live in a coma for a long time, even several months, before dying or regaining consciousness.

comatose /'kəʊmətəs/ *adjective* 1. unconscious or in a coma 2. like a coma

combined therapy /kəm'baind θerəpi/ *noun* the use of two or more treatments at the same time

comedo /'kɒmɪdəʊ/ *noun* a small point of dark, hard matter in a sebaceous follicle, often found associated with acne on the skin of adolescents (NOTE: The plural is **comedones**.)

come down with /,kʌm 'daʊn wɪθ/ *verb* to catch a cold, flu or other minor illness (*informal*)

come out in /,kʌm 'aut in/ *verb* to have something such as spots or a rash appear on the skin (*informal*)

come round /,kʌm 'raʊnd/ *verb* to regain consciousness, e.g. after being knocked out

comfort /'kʌmfət/ *verb* to help make someone less anxious or unhappy, especially when something bad has just happened

comfortable /'kʌmfθəbl/ *adjective* in a stable physical condition

comforter /'kʌmfətə/ *noun* 1. someone who helps to make another person less anxious or unhappy 2. a baby's dummy

commando operation /kə'ma:ndəʊ ,ɒpəreɪʃ(ə)n/, **commando procedure** /kə'ma:ndəʊ prə,si:dʒə/ *noun* a major operation to combat cancer of the face and neck. It involves the removal of facial features, which are later rebuilt.

commensal /kə'mens(ə)l/ *noun* an animal or plant which lives on another animal or plant but does not harm it in any way. Both may benefit from the association. ○ *Candida is a commensal in the mouths of 50% of healthy adults.* (NOTE: If a commensal causes harm, it is a **parasite**.) ■ *adjective* living on another animal or plant

communited fracture /,kɒmɪnju:tɪd 'frækɪtʃə/ *noun* a fracture where the bone is broken in several places

Commission for Health Improvement in the UK, the independent inspection body for the National Health Service, with the role of

helping to raise standards of patient care. It aims to identify where improvement is required and share good practice. Abbr **CHI**

commissure /'kɒmɪsʃuə/ *noun* a structure which joins two similar tissues, e.g. a group of nerves which crosses from one part of the central nervous system to another. □ **corpus callosum, grey commissure, white commissure**

commit /kə'mit/ *verb* to arrange legally for someone to enter a mental health facility, perhaps without the person's consent

commitment /kə'mɪtmənt/ *noun* an act of legally making someone enter a mental health facility

Committee on Safety of Medicines /kə'mɪti ɒn ,sefti əv 'med(ə)sɪnz/ *noun* the official body which advises the British Government on the safety and quality of medicines

commode /kə'moʊd/ *noun* a special chair with a removable basin used as a toilet by people with limited mobility

common /'kɒmən/ *adjective* 1. frequently occurring 2. shared □ **(in) common** belonging to more than one thing or person ○ *The viral diseases have several symptoms in common.*

common bile duct /,kɒmən 'baɪl dʌkt/ *noun* a duct leading to the duodenum, formed of the hepatic and cystic ducts

common carotid artery /,kɒmən kə'rɒtɪd ,a:təri/ *noun* the main artery running up each side of the lower part of the neck. Also called **carotid**

common cold /,kɒmən 'kəuld/ *noun* same as **cold**

common hepatic duct /,kɒmən hɪ'pætɪk dʌkt/ *noun* a duct from the liver formed when the right and left hepatic ducts join

common iliac artery /,kɒmən 'iliæk ,a:təri/ *noun* one of two arteries which branch from the aorta in the abdomen and in turn divide into the internal iliac artery, leading to the pelvis, and the external iliac artery, leading to the leg

common iliac vein /,kɒmən 'iliæk veɪn/ *noun* one of the veins draining the legs, pelvis and abdomen, which unite to form the inferior vena cava

common salt /,kɒmən 'sɔ:lt/ *noun* a white powder used to make food, especially meat, fish and vegetables, taste better. Also called **sodium chloride**

COMMENT: Too much salt in the diet is to be avoided, as it is implicated in hypertension. Persistent diarrhoea or vomiting can lead to a dangerous loss of salt from the body.

common wart /,kɒmən 'wɔ:t/ *noun* a wart which appears mainly on the hands

communicable disease /kə'mju:nɪkəb(ə)l dɪ'se:z/ *noun* a disease which can be passed from one person to another or from an animal to a person. □ **contagious disease, infectious disease**

communicating artery /kə'mju:nɪkeɪtɪŋ ,ə:təri/ *noun* one of the arteries which connect the blood supply from each side of the brain, forming part of the circle of Willis

community /kə'mju:niti/ *noun* a group of people who live and work in a district ○ *The health services serve the local community.*

community care /kə,mju:niti 'keə/ *noun* the providing of help to people such as those who are elderly or mentally ill in order to allow them to stay in their own homes, rather than requiring them to be cared for in hospitals or care homes

community health /kə,mju:niti 'helθ/ *noun* the health of a local community, or provision of services for a local community

community health council /kə,mju:niti 'helθ,kaʊnsəl/ *noun* a statutory body of interested people from outside the medical professions charged with putting forward the patients' point of view on local health issues. Abbr **CHC**

community hospital /kə'mju:niti ,hɒspɪt(ə)l/ *noun* a hospital serving a local community

community medicine /kə'mju:niti 'med(ə)s(ə)n/ *noun* the study of medical practice which examines groups of people and the health of the community, including housing, pollution and other environmental factors

community mental health nurse /kə,mju:niti ,ment(ə)n 'helθ ,nɜ:s/ *noun* a specialist nurse who works in a particular district visiting people in the area with mental health problems. Abbr **CMHN**

community midwife /kə,mju:niti 'mɪdʃwa:f/ *noun* a midwife who works in a community as part of a primary health care team

community nurse /kə,mju:niti 'nɜ:s/ *noun* a nurse who treats people in a local community

community psychiatric nurse /kə,mju:niti ,saɪki'ætri:k nɜ:s/ *noun* . Also called **community mental health nurse**. Abbr **CPN**

community services /kə,mju:niti 'sɜ:vɪsɪz/ *plural noun* nursing services which are available to the community

community trust /kə,mju:niti 'trəst/ *noun* an independent non-profit-making body set up to represent an area of public concern

compact bone /kɒmpækɪt 'beən/ *noun* a type of bone tissue which forms the hard outer layer of a bone. See illustration at **BONE STRUCTURE** in Supplement

compatibility /kəm'paetɪ'biliti/ *noun* 1. the ability of two drugs not to interfere with each other when administered together 2. the ability of a body to accept organs, tissue or blood from another person and not to reject them

compatible /kəm'paetɪb(ə)l/ *adjective* able to function together without being rejected ○ *The surgeons are trying to find a compatible*

donor or a donor with a compatible blood group.

compensate /'kɒmpənseɪt/ *verb* 1. to give someone an amount of money or something else to pay for loss or damage 2. (of an organ) to make good the failure of an organ by making another organ, or the undamaged parts of the same organ, function at a higher level ○ *The heart has to beat more strongly to compensate for the narrowing of the arteries.* 3. to emphasise a particular ability or personality characteristic in order to make the lack of another one seem less bad

compensation /kɒmpən'seɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* 1. something which makes something else seem less bad or less serious 2. an amount of money or something else given to pay for loss or damage ○ *The drugs caused him to develop breathing problems, so he thinks he's entitled to medical compensation.* 3. the act of giving money to pay for loss or damage ○ *compensation for loss of a limb* 4. a situation where the body helps to correct a problem in a particular organ by making another organ, or the undamaged parts of the same organ, function at a higher level 5. behaviour that emphasises a particular ability or personality characteristic in order to make the lack of another one seem less bad

competence /'kɒmpit(ə)ns/ *noun* the ability to do something well, measured against a standard, especially ability which you get through experience or training ○ *encouraging the development of professional competence in the delivery of care to patients*

complaint /kəm'pleɪnt/ *noun* 1. an expression of dissatisfaction about something or someone ○ *The hospital administrator wouldn't listen to the complaints of the consultants.* 2. an illness ○ *a chest complaint* ○ *a nervous complaint*

complement *noun* /'kɒmplɪment/ a substance which forms part of blood plasma and is essential to the work of antibodies and antigens ■ *verb* /'kɒmplɪment/ to complete something by providing useful or pleasing qualities which it does not itself have

complementary /,kɒmpli'ment(ə)ri/ *adjective* 1. combining with or adding to something else ○ *Ultrasound and CT provide complementary information.* 2. used in or using complementary medicine ○ *complementary therapies* 3. referring to genes which are necessary to each other and produce their effect only when they are present together

complementary medicine /,kɒmpli'ment(ə)ri 'med(ə)sɪn/ *noun* alternative medicine in the forms which are now accepted by practitioners of conventional Western medicine, e.g. acupuncture and osteopathy

complement fixation test /,kɒmpli'ment fɪk'seɪʃ(ə)n test/ *noun* a test to measure the

amount of complement in antibodies and antigens. Abbr **CFT**

complete abortion /kəm'pli:t ə'bɔ:sʃ(ə)n/ noun an abortion where the whole contents of the uterus are expelled

complete blood count /kəm'pli:t 'bləd kaunt/ noun a test to find the exact numbers of each type of blood cell in a sample of blood. Abbr **CBC**

complex /'kɒmplɛks/ noun 1. (*in psychiatry*) a group of ideas which are based on the experience a person has had in the past and which influence the way he or she behaves 2. a group of items, buildings or organs ○ *He works in the new laboratory complex.* 3. a group of signs and symptoms due to a particular cause. ♦ **syndrome** ■ **adjective** complicated ○ *A gastrointestinal fistula can cause many complex problems, including fluid depletion.*

complexion /kəm'plekʃən/ noun the general colour of the skin on the face ○ *People with fair complexions burn easily in the sun.*

compliance /kəm'plaɪəns/ noun the agreement of a patient to co-operate with a treatment

complicated fracture /'kɒmplɪkɪtɪd 'frækʃə/ noun a fracture with an associated injury of tissue, as when a bone has punctured an artery

complication /kɒmplɪ'keɪʃ(ə)n/ noun 1. a condition in which two or more conditions exist in someone, whether or not they are connected ○ *He was admitted to hospital suffering from pneumonia with complications.* 2. a situation in which someone develops a second condition which changes the course of treatment for the first ○ *She appeared to be improving, but complications set in and she died in a few hours.*

...sickle cell chest syndrome is a common complication of sickle cell disease, presenting with chest pain, fever and leucocytosis' [British Medical Journal]

...venous air embolism is a potentially fatal complication of percutaneous venous catheterization' [Southern Medical Journal]

compos mentis /,kɒmpɒs 'mentɪs/ adjective not affected by a mental disorder (NOTE: The phrase is from Latin and means 'of sound mind'.)

compound /'kɒmpaʊnd/ noun a chemical substance made up of two or more components ■ **adjective** made up of two or more components

compound fracture /,kɒmpaʊnd 'frækʃə/ noun a fracture where the skin surface is damaged or where the broken bone penetrates the surface of the skin. Also called **open fracture**

compress noun /'kɒmpres/ a wad of cloth soaked in hot or cold liquid and applied to the skin to relieve pain or swelling, or to force pus

out of an infected wound ■ **verb** /kəm'pres/ to squeeze or press something

compressed air sickness /kəm',prest 'eə,sɪknəs/ noun same as **caisson disease**

compression /kəm'preʃ(ə)n/ noun 1. the act of squeezing or pressing ○ *The first- aider applied compression to the chest of the casualty.* 2. a serious condition in which the brain is compressed by blood or cerebrospinal fluid accumulating in it or by a fractured skull

compression stocking /kəm',preʃ(ə)n 'stokɪŋ/ noun a strong elastic stocking worn to support a weak joint in the knee or to hold varicose veins tightly

compression syndrome /kəm'preʃ(ə)n ,sɪndrəʊm/ noun pain in muscles after strenuous exercise

compulsion /kəm'pʌlʃən/ noun 1. an act of forcing someone to do something, or the fact of being forced to do something ○ *You are under no compulsion to treat a violent patient.* 2. a strong psychological force which makes someone do something, often unwillingly ○ *She felt a sudden compulsion to wash her hands again.*

compulsive /kəm'pʌlsɪv/ **adjective** referring to a feeling which cannot be stopped ○ *She has a compulsive desire to steal.*

compulsive eating /kəm,pʌlsɪv 'ɪtɪŋ/ noun a psychological condition in which someone has a continual desire to eat. ♦ **bulimia**

compulsive–obsessive disorder /kəm,pʌlsɪv ə'b'sesɪv dɪs,ɔ:dsə/ noun same as **obsessive-compulsive disorder**

compulsory admission /kəm,palsəri əd'mɪʃ(ə)n/ noun the process of admitting someone who is mentally ill to hospital for treatment whether or not they consent

computed tomography /kəm,pju:tɪd tə'mɒgrəfi/ noun same as **computerised axial tomography**. Abbr **CT**

computerised axial tomography /kəm,pju:təraɪzd ,æksiəl tə'mɒgrəfi/ noun a system of examining the body in which a narrow X-ray beam, guided by a computer, photographs a thin section of the body or of an organ from several angles, using the computer to build up an image of the section. Abbr **CAT**. Also called **computed tomography**

-conazole /kɒnæzəʊl/ **suffix** used in the names of antifungal drugs ○ **fluconazole**

concave /'kɒnkeɪv/ **adjective** curving towards the inside ○ *a concave lens*

conceive /kən'si:v/ **verb** 1. (*of a woman*) to become pregnant with a child. ♦ **conception** 2. □ **to be conceived** (*of a child*) to come into existence through the fertilisation of an ovum ○ *Our son was conceived during our holiday in Italy.*

concentrate /'kɒnsəntreɪt/ noun a solution from which water has been removed ■ **verb** 1.

to give full attention to something **2.** □ **to concentrate on** to examine something in particular **3.** to reduce a solution and increase its strength by evaporation

concept /'kɒnsept/ *noun* a thought or idea, or something which someone might be able to imagine

conception /kən'sepʃən/ *noun* the point at which a woman becomes pregnant and the development of a baby starts

COMMENT: Conception is usually taken to be either the moment when the sperm cell fertilises the ovum, or a few days later, when the fertilised ovum attaches itself to the wall of the uterus.

conceptual framework /kən'septʃuəl 'freimwɜːk/ *noun* the theoretical basis on which something is formed

conceptus /kən'septəs/ *noun* an embryo or fetus together with all the tissues that surround it during pregnancy (NOTE: The plural is **conceptuses**)

concha /'kɒŋkə/ *noun* a part of the body shaped like a shell (NOTE: The plural is **conchae**)

concha auriculae /,kɒŋkə ɔ:'rɪkjʊlɪ/ *noun* the depressed part of the outer ear that leads to the inner ear

concordance /kən'kɔ:d(ə)ns/ *noun* **1.** a state in which two or more things are in the correct or expected relationship to each other. For example, the atrioventricular concordance is the relationship between the atria and the ventricles in the heart. **2.** the fact of two related people sharing the same genetic characteristic ○ *the concordance of schizophrenia in identical twins* **3.** an agreement between a professional and a patient on a course of treatment, especially related to use of medicines

concretion /kən'kri:ʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a mass of hard material which forms in the body, e.g. a gallstone or deposits on bone in arthritis

concussed /kən'kʌst/ *adjective* referring to someone who has been hit on the head and has lost and then regained consciousness ○ *He was walking around in a concussed state.*

concussion /kən'kʌʃ(ə)n/ *noun* **1.** the act of applying force to any part of the body **2.** loss of consciousness for a short period, caused by a blow to the head

concussive /kən'kʌsɪv/ *adjective* causing concussion

condensed /kən'denst/ *adjective* made compact or more dense

condition /kən'dɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* **1.** the particular state of someone or something ○ *in poor condition* ○ *Her condition is getting worse.* ○ *The conditions in the hospital are very good.* **2.** a particular illness, injury or disorder ○ *He is being treated for a heart condition.*

conditioned reflex /kən'diʃ(ə)nd 'ri:fleks/ *noun* an automatic reaction by a person to a

stimulus, or an expected reaction to a stimulus which comes from past experience

conditioned response /kən'diʃ(ə)nd rɪ'spɒns/ *noun* a response to a stimulus as a result of associating it with an earlier stimulus

COMMENT: The classic example of a conditioned response is Pavlov's experiment with dogs in which they produced saliva, ready to eat their food, when a bell rang, because on previous occasions they had been fed when the bell was rung.

condom /'kɒndɒm/ *noun* a rubber sheath worn on the penis during intercourse as a contraceptive and also as a protection against sexually transmitted disease

conducting system /kən'dʌktɪŋ ,sistəm/ *noun* the nerve system in the heart which links an atrium to a ventricle, so that the two beat at the same rate

conduction /kən'dʌkʃən/ *noun* the process of passing heat, sound or nervous impulses from one part of the body to another

conduction fibre /kən'dʌkʃən ,faɪbə/ *noun* a fibre which transmits impulses, e.g. in the bundle of His

conductive /kən'dʌktɪv/ *adjective* referring to conduction

conductive deafness /kən'dʌktɪv 'defnəs/, **conductive hearing loss** /kən'dʌktɪv 'hɪərɪŋ lɒs/ *noun* deafness caused by inadequate conduction of sound into the inner ear

conductor /kən'dʌktə/ *noun* **1.** a substance or object which allows heat, electricity, light or sound to pass along it or through it **2.** a tube with a groove in it along which a knife is slid to cut open a sinus

condyle /'kɒndail/ *noun* a rounded end of a bone which articulates with another

condyloid process /'kɒndilɔɪd ,prəses/ *noun* a projecting part at each end of the lower jaw which forms the head of the jaw, joining the jaw to the skull

condyloma /,kɒndɪ'ləʊmə/ *noun* a growth usually found on the vulva (NOTE: The plural is **condylomas** or **condylomata**)

cone /kəʊn/ *noun* **1.** a shape with a circular base or top and a part that tapers to a point, or an object with this shape **2.** one of two types of cell in the retina of the eye which is sensitive to light, used especially in the perception of bright light and colour. ◊ **rod** ■ **verb** to show a rapid change for the worse in neurological condition due to herniation of the midbrain through the foramen magnum in the skull, caused by raised pressure inside the brain (NOTE: **cones – coning – coned**)

cone biopsy /'kəʊn bai,ɒpsi/ *noun* the removing of a cone of tissue from the cervix for examination

confabulation /kən,fæju'læʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the act of making up plausible stories to cover up loss of memory

confidentiality /kɒnfɪdənʃi'ælɪti/ *noun* an obligation not to reveal professional information about a person or organisation

confined /kən'faɪnd/ *adjective* kept in a place ◇ *She was confined to bed with pneumonia.* ◇ *Since his accident he has been confined to a wheelchair.*

confinement /kən'fainmənt/ *noun* the period when a woman giving birth stays in hospital, from the beginning of labour until some time after the birth of her baby. This period is very short nowadays.

confounding factor /kən'faʊndɪŋ, fækta/ *noun* a factor which has an association with both a disease and a risk factor and thus complicates the nature of the relationship between them

confused /kən'fju:zd/ *adjective* unable to think clearly or act rationally ◇ *Many severely confused patients do not respond to spoken communication.*

confusion /kən'fju:ʒ(ə)n/ *noun* the state of being confused

congeal /kən'dʒi:l/ *verb (of fat or blood)* to become solid

congenita /kən'dʒenɪtə/ ♦ **amyotonia congenita**

congenital /kən'dʒenɪt(ə)l/ *adjective* existing at or before birth

congenital aneurysm /kən,dʒenɪt(ə)'ænjərɪz(ə)m/ *noun* a weakening of the arteries at the base of the brain, present at birth

congenital anomaly /kən,dʒenɪt(ə)l ə'nɒməli/ *noun* a medical condition arising during development of the fetus and present at birth. Also called **congenital defect**

COMMENT: A congenital condition is not always inherited from a parent through the genes, as it may be due to factors such as a disease which the mother had during pregnancy, e.g. German measles, or a drug which she has taken.

congenital cataract /kən,dʒenɪt(ə)l 'kætərækt/ *noun* a cataract which is present at birth

congenital defect /kən,dʒenɪt(ə)l 'di:fekt/ *noun* same as **congenital anomaly** (NOTE: The word 'defect' is now avoided.)

congenital dislocation of the hip /kən,dʒenɪt(ə)l dɪslə,keɪʃ(ə)n əv ðə 'hip/ *noun* a condition in which a person is born with weak ligaments in the hip, so that the femur does not stay in position in the pelvis

congenital heart disease /kən,dʒenɪt(ə)l 'ha:t dɪ,ziz:l, **congenital heart defect** /kən,dʒenɪt(ə)l 'ha:t ,di:fekt/ *noun* a heart condition existing at birth

congenital hyperthyroidism *noun* a disease caused by a malfunction of the thyroid before birth or in early life

congenitally /kən'dʒenitli/ *adverb* at or before birth ◇ *The baby is congenitally incapable of absorbing gluten.*

congenital malformation /kən,dʒenɪt(ə)l ,mælfɔ:t'meɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a malformation which is present at birth, e.g. a cleft palate

congenital syphilis /kən,dʒenɪt(ə)l 'sifilɪs/ *noun* syphilis which is passed on from a mother to her unborn child

congenital toxoplasmosis /kən,dʒenɪt(ə)l ,tɒksəplæz'mæosɪs/ *noun* a condition in which a baby has been infected with toxoplasmosis by its mother while still in the uterus

congested /kən'dʒestɪd/ *adjective* with blood or fluid inside ◇ **congested face** a red face, caused by blood rushing to the face

congestion /kən'dʒestʃən/ *noun* an accumulation of blood in an organ. ♦ **nasal congestion**

congestive /kən'dʒestɪv/ *adjective* referring to congestion

congestive heart failure /kən,dʒestɪv 'ha:t ,feɪljur/ *noun* a condition in which the heart is unable to pump away the blood returning to it fast enough, causing congestion in the veins

coni /'kəuni/ plural of **conus**

conisation /,kɒnɪz,eɪʃ(ə)n/, **conization** *noun* the surgical removal of a cone-shaped piece of tissue

conjoined twins /kən,dʒɔɪnd 'twɪnz/ *plural noun* twins who are joined together at birth. Also called **Siamese twins**

COMMENT: Conjoined twins are always identical and can be joined at the head, chest or hip. In some cases they can be separated by surgery, but this is not possible if they share a single important organ such as the heart.

conjugate /'kɒndʒʊgət/, **conjugate diameter** /,kɒndʒʊgət dæt'ærɪtə/ *noun* a measurement of space in a woman's pelvis, used to calculate if it is large enough for a child to be delivered

conjunctiva /,kɒndʒʌŋk'taɪvə/ *noun* a membrane which covers the front of the eyeball and the inside of the eyelids. See illustration at **EYE** in Supplement (NOTE: The plural is **conjunctivas** or **conjunctivae**.)

conjunctival /,kɒndʒʌŋk'l'taɪv(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to the conjunctiva

conjunctivitis /kən,dʒʌŋktɪ'veɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the conjunctiva from a range of causes

connective tissue /kə,nektɪv 'tɪsu:/ *noun* tissue which forms the main part of bones and cartilage, ligaments and tendons, in which a large proportion of fibrous material surrounds the tissue cells

Conn's syndrome /'kɒnɪz,sɪndrəʊm/ *noun* a condition in which excessive production of the hormone aldosterone causes fluid retention and high blood pressure

consanguinity /kɒnsæn'gwɪnɪti/ *noun* a blood relationship between people

conscious /'kɒnʃəs/ *adjective* 1. awake and aware of what is happening ○ *He became conscious in the recovery room two hours after the operation.* 2. deliberate and intended ○ *a conscious choice*

-conscious /kɒnʃəs/ *suffix* giving importance to ○ *health-conscious* ○ *safety-conscious*

consciously /'kɒnʃəslɪ/ *adverb* in a deliberate and knowing way

consciousness /'kɒnʃəsnəs/ *noun* the state of being mentally alert and knowing what is happening □ **to lose consciousness** to become unconscious □ **to regain consciousness** to become conscious after being unconscious

consensus management /kən'sensəs mænɪdʒmənt/ *noun* a form of management which aims to get everyone to agree on what actions should be taken

consent /kən'sent/ *noun* agreement to allow someone to do something ○ *The parents gave their consent for their son's heart to be used in the transplant operation.*

consent form /kən'sent fɔ:m/ *noun* a form which a patient signs to show that he or she agrees to have a particular operation

conservative /kən'sɜ:vətɪv/ *adjective* 1. reluctant to accept new things 2. (of a treatment) designed to help relieve symptoms or preserve health with a minimum of medical intervention or risk ○ *Symptoms usually resolve with conservative treatment.*

consolidation /kən,sɒlɪ'deɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* 1. a stage in mending a broken bone in which the callus formed at the break changes into bone 2. a condition in which part of the lung becomes solid, e.g. in pneumonia

constipated /'kɒnstɪpeɪtɪd/ *adjective* unable to pass faeces often enough

constipation /,kɒnstɪ'peɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* difficulty in passing faeces

COMMENT: Constipated bowel movements are hard and may cause pain in the anus. Constipation may be caused by worry or by a diet which does not contain enough roughage or by lack of exercise, as well as by more serious diseases of the intestine.

constituent /kən'stitjʊənt/ *noun* a substance which forms part of something ○ *the chemical constituents of nerve cells*

constitution /,kɒnstɪ'tju:ʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the general health and strength of a person ○ *She has a strong constitution or a healthy constitution.* ○ *He has a weak constitution and is often ill.*

constitutional /,kɒnstrɪ'tju:ʃ(ə)nəl/ *adjective* referring to a person's constitution ■ *noun* a short walk taken for health reasons

constitutionally /,kɒnstrɪ'tju:ʃ(ə)n(ə)li/ *adverb* because of a person's constitution

constrict /kən'strɪkt/ *verb* 1. to make a passage narrower ○ *a constricted bowel* 2. to slow down or stop the flow of something such as blood

constriction /kən'strɪkʃən/ *noun* the process of becoming narrow, or the state of being narrow. ♀ **stenosis**

constrictive /kən'strɪktɪv/ *adjective* restricting

constrictive pericarditis /kən'strɪktɪv pərɪkɑ:'daitɪs/ *noun* same as **chronic pericarditis**

constrictor /kən'strɪktə/ *noun* a muscle which squeezes an organ or which makes an organ contract

consult /kən'salt/ *verb* to ask someone for his or her opinion ○ *He consulted an eye specialist.*

consultancy /kən'saltənsi/ *noun* the post of consultant ○ *She was appointed to a consultancy at a London hospital.*

consultant /kən'saltənt/ *noun* a doctor who is a senior specialist in a particular branch of medicine and who is consulted by GPs ○ *She was referred to a consultant at the orthopaedic hospital.*

consultation /,kɒnsəl'teɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* 1. a discussion between two doctors about a case 2. a meeting between a doctor and a patient, in which the doctor may examine the patient, discuss his or her condition and prescribe treatment

consulting room /kən'saltɪŋ ru:m/ *noun* a room where a doctor sees his or her patients

consumption /kən'sʌmpʃən/ *noun* 1. the act of taking food or liquid into the body ○ *the patient's increased consumption of alcohol* 2. a former name for pulmonary tuberculosis

contact /'kɒntækt/ *noun* 1. an act of touching someone or something, or the state of touching □ **to have (physical) contact with someone** or something to actually touch someone or something □ **to be in or come into contact with someone** to be near to or touching someone ○ *The hospital is anxious to trace anyone who may have come into contact with the patient.* 2. an act of getting in touch or communicating with someone 3. a person who has been in contact with a person suffering from an infectious disease ○ *Now that Lassa fever has been diagnosed, the authorities are anxious to trace all contacts which the patient may have met.* ■ *verb* to meet or get in touch with someone

contact dermatitis /,kɒntækt də'mæ'taɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the skin caused by touch, e.g. by touching some types of plant, soap or chemical. Also called **irritant dermatitis**

contact lens /'kɒntækt lenz/ *noun* a tiny plastic lens which fits over the eyeball and is worn instead of spectacles to improve eyesight

contact tracing /'kɒntækt ,treɪsɪŋ/ *noun* the process of tracing people with whom someone with an infectious disease has been in contact

contagion /kən'teɪdʒən/ *noun* 1. the process of spreading a disease by touching an infected person or objects which an infected person has touched 2. a disease spread by touch ○ *The contagion spread through the whole school.*

contagious /kən'teɪdʒəs/ *adjective* able to be transmitted by touching an infected person or objects which an infected person has touched □ **contagious stage** the period when a disease such as chickenpox is contagious and can be transmitted to someone else

contagious disease /kən'teɪdʒəs dɪ'zi:z/ *noun* a disease which can be transmitted by touching an infected person or objects which an infected person has touched. ◇ **communicable disease, infectious disease**

containment /kən'teinmənt/ *noun* 1. action taken to restrict the spread of something undesirable or dangerous such as a disease ○ *government policy of containment of the SARS virus* 2. the eradication of a global disease such as smallpox by removing it region by region

contaminant /kən'tæminənt/ *noun* a substance which contaminates something

contaminate /kən'tæmɪneɪt/ *verb* 1. to make something impure by touching it or by adding something to it ○ *Supplies of drinking water were contaminated by refuse from the factories.* ○ *The whole group of tourists fell ill after eating contaminated food.* 2. to spread infection to someone or something

contamination /kən,tæmɪ'nейʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the action of contaminating something, or the state of being contaminated ○ *The contamination resulted from polluted water.*

continence /'kɒntɪnəns/ *noun* 1. the ability to control the discharge of urine and faeces 2. self-restraint

continent /'kɒntɪnənt/ *adjective* able to exercise control over the discharge of urine and faeces

continuing education /kən,tɪnjuɪŋ edju'keɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* regular courses or training designed to bring professional people up to date with the latest developments in their particular field

continuous ambulatory peritoneal dialysis /kən,tinjuəs ,æmbjʊlət(ə)ri pərɪtə'ni:əl dəɪ'ələsɪs/ *noun* a method of dialysis of people while they are walking about. Abbr **CAPD**

continuous positive airways pressure /kən,tinjuəs,pɒzɪtɪv 'eəwεɪz ,preʃə/ *noun* a method used in intensive care which forces air into the lungs of someone with lung collapse. Abbr **CPAP**

contra- /kəntrə/ *prefix* against, opposite, contrasting

contraception /,kɒntrə'sepfən/ *noun* the prevention of pregnancy, e.g. by using devices such as a condom or an IUD, or drugs in the form of contraceptive pills or injections at regular intervals. Also called **birth control**

contraceptive /,kɒntrə'septɪv/ *adjective* preventing conception ○ *a contraceptive device or drug* ■ *noun* a drug or device which prevents pregnancy

contraceptive sheath /,kɒntrə'septɪv ſi:θ/ *noun* same as **condom**

contraceptive sponge /,kɒntrə'septɪv ſpɒndʒ/ *noun* a piece of synthetic sponge impregnated with spermicide, which is inserted into the vagina before intercourse

contract /kən'trækt/ *verb* 1. to become smaller and tighter, or make a muscle or part of the body smaller and tighter ○ *As the muscle contracts the limb moves.* ○ *The diaphragm acts to contract the chest.* 2. to catch a disease ○ *He contracted Lassa fever.* 3. to make a formal or legally binding agreement with someone to do something ○ *An outside firm is contracted to do the hospital cleaning.* ■ *noun* a formal or legally binding agreement

contractibility /'kɒntræktilɪbɪlɪti/ *noun* the capacity to contract

contractile tissue /kən,træktaɪl 'tɪʃu:/ *noun* the tissue in muscle which makes the muscle contract

contraction /kən'trækʃən/ *noun* 1. the act of making something smaller or of becoming smaller ○ *the contraction of dental services* 2. a tightening movement which makes a muscle shorter, which makes the pupil of the eye smaller or which makes the skin wrinkle 3. a movement of the muscles of the uterus occurring during childbirth ○ *Her contractions began at one o'clock.*

contracture /kən'træktʃə/ *noun* a permanent tightening of a muscle caused by fibrosis

contraindication /,kɒntrəɪndɪkeɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* something which suggests that someone should not be treated with a specific drug or not continue with a specific treatment because circumstances make that treatment unsuitable

contralateral /,kɒntrə'lætərəl/ *adjective* located on or affecting the opposite side of the body. Opposite **ipsilateral**

contrast medium /'kontra:st ,mi:dɪəm/ *noun* a radio-opaque dye, or sometimes gas, put into an organ or part of the body so that it will show clearly in an X-ray photograph ○ *In an MRI scan no contrast medium is required; in a CAT scan iodine-based contrast media are often required.*

contre-coup /'kɒntrəku:/ *noun* an injury to one point of an organ such as the brain, caused by a blow received on an opposite point of the organ

control *verb* 1. to have the ability or authority to direct someone or something ○ *Sometimes*

we need help to control people who think they have waited too long. 2. to limit or restrain something ○ **administered drugs to control the pain** ■ **noun** 1. the ability or authority to control something ○ *After her stroke she had no control over her left arm.* ○ *The administrators are in control of the admissions policy.* 2. a person or group whose test data are used as a comparison in a study 3. a comparison in a study

control group /kən'trəʊl gru:p/ *noun* a group of people who are not being treated but whose test data are used as a comparison in a study

controlled drug /kən'trəʊld 'drʌg/ *noun* a drug which is not freely available, which is restricted by law and classified as A, B, or C and of which possession may be an offence. Also called **controlled substance**

controlled respiration /kən'trəʊld ,rɛspə'reɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the control of a person's breathing by an anaesthetist during an operation, when regular breathing has stopped

controlled substance /kən'trəʊld 'sʌbstəns/ *noun* same as **controlled drug**

controlled trial /kən'trəʊld 'traɪəl/ *noun* a trial in which members of one group are treated with a test substance and those of another group are treated with a placebo as a control

controls assurance /kən'trəʊlz ə,fjuərəns/ *noun* a process designed to provide evidence that NHS organisations are doing their best to manage themselves both in order to meet their objectives and to protect patients, staff and the public against risks of all kinds

contused wound /kən,tju:zd 'wʊnd/ *noun* a wound caused by a blow where the skin is bruised as well as torn and bleeding

contusion /kən'tju:ʒ(ə)n/ *noun* same as **bruise**

conus /'kəʊnəs/ *noun* a structure shaped like a cone (NOTE: The plural is **coni**.)

convalesce /,kɒnvə'les/ *verb* to get back to good health gradually after an illness or operation

convalescence /,kɒnvə'les(ə)ns/ *noun* a period of time when someone is convalescing

convalescent /,kɒnvə'les(ə)nt/ *adjective* referring to convalescence ■ **noun** someone who is convalescing

convalescent home /,kɒnvə'les(ə)nt həʊm/ *noun* a type of hospital where people can recover from illness or surgery

convergent strabismus /kən,vɜ:dʒənt strə'bɪzməs/, **convergent squint** /kən,vɜ:dʒənt 'skwɪnt/ *noun* a condition in which one or both of a person's eyes look towards the nose. Also called **cross eye**

conversion /kən'vezʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the process of changing one thing into another ○ *the conversion of nutrients into tissue*

convex /'kɒnvɛks/ *adjective* curving towards the outside ○ *a convex lens*

convoluted /'kɒnvəlju:tɪd/ *adjective* folded and twisted

convoluted tubule /,kɒnvəlju:tɪd 'tju:bjʊ:l/ *noun* a coiled part of a nephron

convolution /,kɒnvə'lju:ʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a twisted shape ○ *the convolutions of the surface of the cerebrum*

convulse /kən'vels/ *verb* to shake violently and uncontrollably

convulsion /kən'velʃən/ *noun* the rapid involuntary contracting and relaxing of the muscles in several parts of the body ○ *The child had convulsions.* ♦ **fit** (NOTE: Often used in the plural.)

COMMENT: Convulsions in children may be caused by brain disease such as meningitis but can also often be found at the beginning of a disease such as pneumonia which is marked by a sudden rise in body temperature. In adults, convulsions are usually associated with epilepsy.

convulsive /kən'velsɪv/ *adjective* referring to convulsions ○ *He had a convulsive seizure.*

♦ **electroconvulsive therapy**

Cooley's anaemia /'ku:li:z ə,ni:mɪə/ *noun* same as **thalassaemia** [Described 1927. After Thomas Benton Cooley (1871–1945), Professor of Paediatrics at Wayne College of Medicine, Detroit, USA.]

Coombs' test /'ku:mz test/ *noun* a test for antibodies in red blood cells, used as a test for erythroblastosis foetalis and other haemolytic syndromes [Described 1945. After Robin Royston Amos Coombs (1921–), Quick Professor of Biology, and Fellow of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, UK.]

coordinate /kəʊ'ɔ:dɪneɪt/ *verb* 1. to make things work together ○ *He was unable to coordinate the movements of his arms and legs.* 2. to organise a complex procedure

'...there are four recti muscles and two oblique muscles in each eye, which coordinate the movement of the eyes and enable them to work as a pair' [Nursing Times]

coordination /kəʊ',ɔ:di'nɛɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* 1. the combining of two or more things as an effective unit, or the way things combine effectively ○ *requires coordination between nursing staff and doctors* 2. the ability to use two or more parts of the body at the same time to carry out a movement or task ○ *The patient showed lack of coordination between eyes and hands.*

'Alzheimer's disease is a progressive disorder which sees a gradual decline in intellectual functioning and deterioration of physical coordination' [Nursing Times]

COPD abbr chronic obstructive pulmonary disease

coping mechanism /'kəʊpiŋ ,mɛkə'menɪz(ə)m/ *noun* a method of dealing with situations which cause psychological stress

copper /'kɒpə/ *noun* a metallic trace element (NOTE: The chemical symbol is Cu.)

copr- /'kɒprə/ *prefix* faeces

coprolith /'kɒprəlɪθ/ *noun* a lump of hard faeces in the bowel

coproporphyrin /,kɒprə'pɔ:fərɪn/ *noun* porphyrin excreted by the liver

copulate /'kɒpjuleɪt/ *verb* to have sexual intercourse

copulation /,kɒpjʊlə'leɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* same as sexual intercourse

cor /kɔ:/ *noun* the heart

coraco-acromial /,kɔ:rəkəʊ ə'krəumiəl/ *adjective* referring to the coracoid process and the acromion

coracobrachialis /,kɔ:rəkəʊbrækɪ'lɪəlɪs/ *noun* a muscle on the medial side of the upper arm, below the armpit

coracoid process /'kɔ:rəkɔɪd ,præ:ses/ *noun* a projecting part on the shoulder blade

cord /kɔ:d/ *noun* a long flexible structure in the body like a thread

cordectomy /kɔ:'dektəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to remove a vocal cord (NOTE: The plural is **cordectomies**.)

cordon sanitaire /,kɔ:dn̩,sænɪ'teə/ *noun* a restriction of movement to and from an area to control the spread of a disease

cordotomy /kɔ:'dɒtəmɪ/ *noun* another spelling of **chordotomy**

corectopia /,kɔ:rek'təʊpiə/ *noun* ectopia of the pupil of the eye

corium /'kɔ:riəm/ *noun* same as **dermis**

corn /kɔ:n/ *noun* a hard painful lump of skin usually on a foot, where something such as a tight shoe has rubbed or pressed on the skin. Also called **heloma**

cornea /'kɔ:nɪə/ *noun* a transparent part of the front of the eyeball. See illustration at **EYE** in Supplement (NOTE: The plural is **cornea**e. For other terms referring to the cornea, see words beginning with **kerat-**, **kerato-**)

corneal /'kɔ:nɪəl/ *adjective* relating to a cornea

corneal abrasion /,kɔ:nɪəl ə'breɪz(ə)n/ *noun* a scratch on the cornea, caused by something sharp getting into the eye

corneal bank /'kɔ:nɪəl bæŋk/ *noun* a place where eyes of dead donors can be kept ready for use in corneal grafts

corneal graft, /,kɔ:nɪəl 'gra:fɪt/ *noun* 1. a surgical operation to graft corneal tissue from a donor or from a dead person to replace diseased tissue. Also called **corneal transplant**, **keratoplasty** 2. a piece of corneal tissue used in a graft

corneal reflex /,kɔ:nɪəl 'ri:fleks/ *noun* a reflex from touching or hitting the cornea which makes the eyelid close

corneal transplant /,kɔ:nɪəl ,trænspla:nt/ *noun* same as **corneal graft**

cornification /,kɔ:nifɪ'keɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* same as **keratinisation**

cornu /'kɔ:njʊ:/ *noun* 1. a structure in the body which is shaped like a horn 2. each of the four processes of the thyroid cartilage (NOTE: The plural is **cornua**.)

corona /kɔ:tənə/ *noun* a structure in the body which is shaped like a crown

corona capititis /kə,tənə 'kæpitɪs/ *noun* the crown of the head or top part of the skull

coronal /'kɔ:rən(ə)l, kə'rən(ə)l/ *adjective* 1. referring to a corona 2. referring to the crown of a tooth

coronal plane /,kɔ:rən(ə)l 'pleɪn/ *noun* a plane at right angles to the median plane, dividing the body into dorsal and ventral halves. See illustration at **ANATOMICAL TERMS** in Supplement

coronal suture /,kɔ:rən(ə)l 'su:tʃə/ *noun* a horizontal joint across the top of the skull between the parietal and frontal bones

coronary /'kɔ:rən(ə)ri/ *noun* same as **coronary thrombosis** (*informal*) ■ *adjective* referring to any structure shaped like a crown, but especially to the arteries which supply blood to the heart muscles

coronary artery /'kɔ:rən(ə)ri ,a:tərɪ/ *noun* one of the two arteries which supply blood to the heart muscles

coronary artery bypass graft /,kɔ:rən(ə)ri ,a:tərɪ 'baɪpɔ:s gra:fɪt, **coronary artery bypass** /,kɔ:rən(ə)ri 'a:tərɪ ,baɪpɔ:s/ *noun* a surgical operation to treat angina by grafting pieces of vein around the diseased part of a coronary artery

coronary care unit /,kɔ:rən(ə)ri 'keə ,ju:nɪt/ *noun* the section of a hospital caring for people who have heart disorders or who have had heart surgery. Abbr **CCU**

coronary circulation /,kɔ:rən(ə)ri ,sɜ:kjʊ 'leɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* blood circulation through the arteries and veins of the heart muscles

coronary heart disease /,kɔ:rən(ə)ri 'ha:t dɪ,zɪ:z/ *noun* any disease affecting the coronary arteries, which can lead to strain on the heart or a heart attack. Abbr **CHD**

‘...coronary heart disease (CHD) patients spend an average of 11.9 days in hospital. Among primary health care services, 1.5% of all GP consultations are due to CHD.’ [Health Services Journal]

‘...apart from death, coronary heart disease causes considerable morbidity in the form of heart attack, angina and a number of related diseases’ [Health Education Journal]

coronary ligament /,kɔ:rən(ə)ri 'lɪgəmənt/ *noun* folds of peritoneum connecting the back of the liver to the diaphragm

coronary obstruction /,kɔ:rən(ə)ri əb 'strækʃ(ə)n, **coronary occlusion** /,kɔ:rən(ə)ri ə'bklu:ʒ(ə)n/ *noun* a thickening of the walls of the coronary arteries or a blood clot in the coronary arteries which prevents

blood from reaching the heart muscles and leads to heart failure

coronary sinus /kɔ:rən(ə)ri 'saɪnəs/ *noun* a vein which takes most of the venous blood from the heart muscles to the right atrium

coronary thrombosis /kɔ:rən(ə)ri θrɒm'bəʊsɪs/ *noun* a blood clot which blocks the coronary arteries, leading to a heart attack. Also called **coronary**

coronary vein /'kɔ:rən(ə)ri veɪn/ *noun* a vein that drains blood from the muscles of the heart

coronavirus /kə'rəʊnə,vairəs/ *noun* a type of virus which has been identified in people who have the common cold

coroner /'kɔ:rənə/ *noun* a public official, either a doctor or a lawyer, who investigates sudden or violent deaths

COMMENT: Coroners investigate deaths which are caused by poison, violence, neglect or deprivation, deaths from unnatural causes, during the post-operative recovery period and when the doctor feels unable to give a reliable cause of death. They also investigate deaths of prisoners and deaths involving the police.

coronoid process /'kɔ:rənɔɪd,prə'ses/ *noun* 1. a projecting piece of bone on the ulna
2. a projecting piece on each side of the lower jaw

corpora plural of **corpus**

corpse /kɔ:ps/ *noun* the body of a dead person

cor pulmonale /kɔ: ,palmə'nelɪ/ *noun* pulmonary heart disease in which the right ventricle is enlarged

corpus /kɔ:ps/ *noun* any mass of tissue (NOTE: The plural is **corpora**.)

corpus albicans /kɔ:psə 'ælbɪkænz/ *noun* scar tissue which replaces the corpus luteum in the ovary

corpus callosum /kɔ:psəs kə'ləsəm/ *noun* the thick band of nerve fibres that connects the two hemispheres of the brain and allows them to communicate. See illustration at **BRAIN** in Supplement (NOTE: The plural is **corpora callosa**.)

corpus cavernosum /kɔ:psəs ,kævə'nəʊsəm/ *noun* a part of the erectile tissue in the penis and clitoris. See illustration at **UROGENITAL SYSTEM (MALE)** in Supplement (NOTE: The plural is **corpora cavernosa**.)

corpuscle /'kɔ:psl(ə)/ *noun* 1. a small round mass 2. a cell in blood or lymph

corpus haemorrhagicum /kɔ:psəs ,hemə'rædʒɪkəm/ *noun* a blood clot formed in an ovary where a Graafian follicle has ruptured (NOTE: The plural is **corpora haemorrhagica**.)

corpus luteum /kɔ:psəs 'lu:tɪəm/ *noun* a body which forms in each ovary after a Graafian follicle has ruptured. The corpus luteum secretes the hormone progesterone to prepare

the uterus for implantation of the fertilised ovum. (NOTE: The plural is **corpora lutea**.)

corpus spongiosum /kɔ:pəs spɒnʒi'əʊsəm/ *noun* the part of the penis round the urethra, forming the glans. See illustration at **UROGENITAL SYSTEM (MALE)** in Supplement (NOTE: The plural is **corpora spongiosa**.)

corpus striatum /,kɔ:pəs ,strai'eɪtəm/ *noun* a mass of nervous tissue in each cerebral hemisphere (NOTE: The plural is **corpora striata**.)

corrective /kə'rektɪv/ *adjective* intended to correct an irregularity or problem ◇ **corrective lenses** ■ *noun* a drug which changes the harmful effect of another drug

Corrigan's pulse /,kɔ:riɡənəs 'pʌls/ *noun* a condition occurring in the arterial pulse in the neck in which there is a visible rise in pressure followed by a sudden collapse, caused by aortic regurgitation. Also called **water-hammer pulse**

corrosive /kə'rəʊsɪv/ *adjective* destroying tissue ■ *noun* a substance which destroys tissue, e.g. acid or alkali

corrugator muscle /'kɔ:regeɪtə ,mʌs(ə)l/ *noun* one of the muscles which produce vertical wrinkles on the forehead when someone frowns

corset /'kɔ:sɪt/ *noun* a piece of stiff clothing worn on the chest or over the trunk to support the body, e.g. after a back injury

cortex /'kɔ:teksts/ *noun* the outer layer of an organ, as opposed to the soft inner medulla (NOTE: The plural is **cortices** or **cortexes**.)

Corti /'kɔ:ti/ ♀ **organ of Corti**

cortical /'kɔ:tɪk(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to a cortex

cortical mastoidectomy /,kɔ:tɪk(ə)l ,mæstɔ:tɪ'dektəmɪ/ *noun* same as **atticotomy**

cortices plural of **cortex**

corticospinal /,kɔ:tɪkəspɪnəl/ *adjective* referring to both the cerebral cortex and the spinal cord

corticosteroid /,kɔ:tɪkəst'ɪrəʊɪd/ *noun* 1. any steroid hormone produced by the cortex of the adrenal glands 2. a drug which reduces inflammation, used in asthma, gastro-intestinal disease and in adrenocortical insufficiency

corticosterone /,kɔ:tɪkəst'ɔ:riən/ *noun* a hormone secreted by the cortex of the adrenal glands

corticotrophin /,kɔ:tɪkət'rɔ:fɪn/ *noun* same as **adrenocorticotropic hormone** (NOTE: The US spelling is **corticotropin**.)

cortisol /'kɔ:tɪsɒl/ *noun* same as **hydrocortisone**

cortisone /'kɔ:tɪzən/ *noun* a hormone secreted in small quantities by the adrenal cortex ◇ *The doctor gave her a cortisone injection in the ankle.*

COMMENT: Synthetic cortisone was used in the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis, asthma and skin disorders, but it is now replaced by other drugs.

Corynebacterium /kəʊ,raɪnibæk'tɪərɪəm/ noun a genus of bacteria which includes the bacterium which causes diphtheria

coryza /kə'raɪzə/ noun an illness, with inflammation of the nasal passages, in which someone sneezes and coughs and has a blocked and running nose (*technical*) Also called **cold, common cold**

cosmetic surgery /kɒzɪtɪk 'sɜːdʒəri/ noun a surgical operation to improve a person's appearance

COMMENT: Whereas plastic surgery may be prescribed by a doctor to correct skin or bone conditions or the effect of burns or after a disfiguring operation, cosmetic surgery is carried out on the instructions of the patient to remove wrinkles, enlarge breasts or make some other perceived improvement.

cost- /kɒst/ prefix same as **costo-** (used before vowels)

costal /kɒst(ə)l/ adjective referring to the ribs

costal cartilage /,kɒst(ə)l 'ku:təlɪdʒ/ noun cartilage which forms the end of each rib and either joins the rib to the breastbone or to the rib above

costal pleura /,kɒst(ə)l 'pluərə/ noun a part of the pleura lining the walls of the chest

costive /'kɒstɪv/ adjective same as **constipated** ■ noun a drug which causes constipation

costo- /kɒstəʊ/ prefix referring to the ribs

costocervical trunk /,kɒstəʊsəvə:vi:k(ə)l 'trʌŋk/ noun a large artery in the chest

costodiaphragmatic /,kɒstəʊdəɪfræg'mætɪk/ adjective referring to both the ribs and the diaphragm

costovertebral joint /,kɒstəʊvə:tibr(ə)l 'dʒɔɪnt/ noun a joint between the ribs and the vertebral column

cot death /'kɒt deθ/ noun ♦ **sudden infant death syndrome** (NOTE: The US term is **crib death**.)

co-trimoxazole /kəʊ trɪ'mɒksəzəʊl/ noun a drug used to combat bacteria in the urinary tract

cottage hospital /,kɒtɪdʒ 'hɒspɪt(ə)l/ noun a small local hospital that admits patients under the care of a general practitioner

cotton bud /'kɒtən bʌd/ noun a little stick with some cotton wool usually at both ends, used for cleaning cavities

cotton wool /kɒtən 'wʊl/ noun purified fibres from the cotton plant used to clean the skin or as padding ○ *She dabbed the cut with cotton wool soaked in antiseptic.* (NOTE: The US term is **absorbent cotton**.)

cotyledon /,kɒtɪ'lɪ:d(ə)n/ noun one of the divisions of a placenta

cotyloid cavity /'kɒtɪlɔɪd ,kævɪtɪ/ noun same as **acetabulum**

couch /kaʊtʃ/ noun a long bed on which a person lies when being examined by a doctor in a surgery

couching /'kaʊtʃɪŋ/ noun a surgical operation to displace the opaque lens of an eye as a treatment for cataracts

cough /kɒf/ noun a reflex action, caused by irritation in the throat, when the glottis is opened and air is sent out of the lungs suddenly □ **barking cough** a loud noisy dry cough □ **dry cough** a cough where no phlegm is produced □ **hacking cough** a continuous short dry cough ■ an infection that causes coughing

○ *She has a bad cough and cannot make the speech.* ■ verb to send air out of the lungs suddenly because the throat is irritated ○ *The smoke made him cough.* ○ *She has a cold and keeps on coughing and sneezing.*

coughing fit /'kɒfɪŋ fit/ noun a sudden attack of coughing

cough medicine /'kɒf ,med(ə)sɪn/, **cough linctus** /'kɒf ,lɪŋktəs/, **cough mixture** noun a liquid taken to soothe the irritation which causes a cough

cough suppressant /'kɒf sə,presənt/ noun an opioid or sedative antihistamine drug such as pholcodine which suppresses the cough reflex

cough up /,kɒf 'ʌp/ verb to cough hard to expel a substance from the trachea ○ *He coughed up phlegm.* ○ *She became worried when the girl started coughing up blood.*

counselling /'kaʊnsəlɪŋ/ noun a method of treating especially psychiatric disorders in which a specialist talks with a person about his or her condition and how to deal with it

counsellor /'kaʊnsələ/ noun a person who advises and talks with someone about his or her problems

counteract /,kaʊntər'æk/ verb to act against something or reduce the effect of something ○ *The lotion should counteract the irritant effect of the spray on the skin.*

counteraction /,kaʊntər'ækʃən/ noun the action of one drug which acts against another drug

counterextension /,kaʊntərɪk'stenʃən/ noun an orthopaedic treatment in which the upper part of a limb is kept fixed and traction is applied to the lower part of it

counterirritant /,kaʊntər'ɪrit(ə)nt/ noun a substance which alleviates the pain in an internal organ by irritating an area of skin whose sensory nerves are close to those of the organ in the spinal cord

counterirritation /,kaʊntərɪrɪ'teɪʃ(ə)n/ noun a skin irritant applied artificially to alleviate the pain in another part of the body

counterstain /'kaʊntəsteɪn/ *noun* a stain used to identify tissue samples, e.g. red dye used to identify Gram-negative bacteria after having first stained them with violet dye ■ *verb* to stain specimens with a counterstain

coupling /'kʌplɪŋ/ *noun* 1. an act of joining together or linking two people, things or processes 2. something which joins two things, especially a device for connecting two pieces of pipe, hose or tube

course /kɔ:s/ *noun* 1. a programme of study or training ○ *went on a course to update his nursing skills* 2. a series of drugs to be taken, or a series of sessions of treatment ○ *We'll put you on a course of antibiotics.*

course of treatment /,kɔ:s əv 'tri:tment/ *noun* a series of applications of a treatment, e.g. a series of injections or physiotherapy

cover test /'kʌvər test/ *noun* a test for a squint in which an eye is covered and its movements are checked when the cover is taken off

Cowper's glands /'ku:pəz glændz/ *plural noun* two glands at the base of the penis which secrete into the urethra. Also called **bulbourethral glands** [Described 1700. After William Cowper (1666–1709), English surgeon.]

cowpox /'kaʊpɒks/ *noun* an infectious viral disease of cattle which can be transmitted to humans. It was used as a constituent of the first vaccines for smallpox.

cox- /kɒks/ *prefix* the hip joint

coxa /'kɒksə/ *noun* the hip joint (NOTE: The plural is **coxae**.)

coxalgia /kɒk'sældʒə/ *noun* pain in the hip joint

coxa vara /,kɒksə 'veərə/ *noun* an unusual development of the hip bone, making the legs bow

Coxsackie virus /kɒk'sækki ,vaɪrəs/ *noun* one of a group of enteroviruses which enter the cells of the intestines and can cause diseases such as aseptic meningitis and Bornholm disease [After Coxsackie, New York, where the virus was first identified]

CPAP *abbr* continuous positive airways pressure

CPN *abbr* community psychiatric nurse

CPR *abbr* cardiopulmonary resuscitation

crab /kræb/, **crab louse** /'kræb laʊs/ *noun* a louse, *Phthirus pubis*, which infests the pubic region and other parts of the body with coarse hair. Also called **pubic louse**

crack /kræk/ *noun* a thin break ○ *There's a crack in one of the bones in the skull.* ■ *verb* to make a thin break in something, or become split ○ *She cracked a bone in her leg.* □ **cracked lip** a lip where the skin has split because of cold or dryness

cradle /'kreɪd(ə)l/ *noun* a metal frame put over a person in bed to keep the weight of the bedclothes off the body ■ *verb* to carry a child

with one arm under the thigh and the other under the upper back

cradle cap /'kreɪd(ə)l kæp/ *noun* a yellow deposit on the scalp of babies, caused by seborrhoea

cramp /kræmp/ *noun* a painful involuntary spasm in the muscles, in which the muscle may stay contracted for some time

cran-i- /'kreɪni/ *prefix* same as **cranio-** (used before vowels)

cranial /'kreɪniəl/ *adjective* referring to the skull

cranial bone /'kreɪniəl bəʊn/ *noun* one of the bones in the skull

cranial cavity /'kreɪniəl ,kævɪtɪ/ *noun* a space inside the bones of the cranium, in which the brain is situated

cranial nerve /'kreɪniəl nɜ:v/ *noun* each of the nerves, twelve on each side, which are connected directly to the brain, governing mainly the structures of the head and neck

COMMENT: The cranial nerves are the olfactory, optic, oculomotor, trochlear, trigeminal, (ophthalmic, maxillary and mandibular), abducent, facial, auditory (vestibular and cochlear), glossopharyngeal, vagus, accessory and hypoglossal.

cranio- /'kreɪniəʊ/ *prefix* the skull

craniometry /,kreɪni'ɒmtrɪ/ *noun* the process of measuring skulls to find differences in size and shape

craniopharyngioma /,kreɪniəufə,rɪndʒi 'əʊmə/ *noun* a tumour in the brain originating in the hypophyseal duct (NOTE: The plural is **craniopharyngiomas** or **craniopharyngioma-ta.**)

craniostenosis /,kreɪniəʊst'e:nəsɪs/, **craniostostosis** /,kreɪniəʊ,sɪnəʊ'stəʊsɪs/ *noun* the early closing of the bones in a baby's skull, so making the skull contract

craniotubes /,kreɪniəʊ'teɪbɪ:z/ *noun* thinness of the bones in the occipital region of a child's skull, caused by rickets, marasmus or syphilis

craniotomy /,kreɪni'ɒtəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation on the skull, especially one cutting away part of the skull (NOTE: The plural is **craniotomies**.)

cranium /'kreɪniəm/ *noun* same as **skull** (NOTE: The plural is **craniums** or **crania**.)

COMMENT: The cranium consists of the occipital bone, two parietal bones, two temporal bones and the frontal, ethmoid and sphenoid bones.

cream /kri:m/ *noun* a medicinal oily substance, used to rub on the skin

creatine /'kri:tɪ:n/ *noun* a compound of nitrogen found in the muscles, produced by protein metabolism and excreted as creatinine

creatine phosphate /,kri:tɪ:n 'fɒsfəfeɪt/ *noun* a store of energy-giving phosphate in muscles

creatinine /kri'ætənɪ:n/ *noun* a substance which is the form in which creatine is excreted

creatinine clearance /kri,ætənɪ:n 'klɪərəns/ *noun* removal of creatinine from the blood by the kidneys

creatinuria /kri,ætɪ'njuəri:a/ *noun* excess creatine in the urine

creatorrhoea /kri:ətə'ri:a/ *noun* the presence of undigested muscle fibre in the faeces, occurring in some pancreatic diseases

Credé's method /kred'eɪθ ,mɛθəd/ *noun* 1. a method of extracting a placenta by massaging the uterus through the abdomen 2. the putting of silver nitrate solution into the eyes of a baby born to a mother who has gonorrhoea, in order to prevent gonococcal conjunctivitis [Described 1860. After Karl Sigmund Franz Credé (1819–92), German gynaecologist.]

creeping eruption /kri:pɪŋ ɪ'ræpfən/ *noun* an itching skin complaint, caused by larvae of various parasites which creep under the skin

crepitation /krepɪ'teɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* an unusual soft crackling sound heard in the lungs through a stethoscope. Also called **raze**

crepitus /'kreptɪs/ *noun* 1. a harsh crackling sound heard through a stethoscope in a person with inflammation of the lungs 2. a scratching sound made by a broken bone or rough joint

crest /krest/ *noun* a long raised part on a bone

crest of ilium /krest əv 'iliəm/ *noun* same as **iliac crest**

cretinism /'kretɪnɪz(ə)m/ *noun* now called **congenital hyperthyroidism** (NOTE: This term is regarded as offensive.)

Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease /kraʊtsfēlt 'jækdb dʒi,zi:z/ *noun* a disease of the nervous system caused by a slow-acting prion which eventually affects the brain. It may be linked to BSE in cows. Abbr **CJD**. ◊ **variant CJD** [Described 1920 by H.G. Creutzfeldt (1885–1964); 1921 by A.M. Jakob (1884–1931), German psychiatrists]

cribiform /'krɪbrɪfɔ:m/ *adjective* having small holes like a sieve

cribiform plate /'krɪbrɪfɔ:m pleɪt/ *noun* the top part of the ethmoid bone which forms the roof of the nasal cavity and part of the roof of the eye sockets

crick /krik/ *noun* a painful stiffness in the neck or back (*informal*)

cricoid /'kraɪkɔɪd/ *adjective* relating to the lowest part of the cartilage of the larynx

cricoid cartilage /'kraɪkɔɪd 'kɑ:təlɪdʒ/ *noun* ring-shaped cartilage in the lower part of the larynx. See illustration at **LUNGS** in Supplement

cri-du-chat syndrome /kri: dʒu: 'ʃu: ,sɪn drəʊm/ *noun* a congenital condition, caused by loss of part of chromosome 5, which is

characterised in babies by a cry suggestive of that of a cat

Crigler-Najjar syndrome /,krɪglə 'nædʒə:n/ /sɪndrəʊm/ *noun* a genetically controlled condition in which bilirubin cannot be formed, leading to jaundice or even brain damage

criminal abortion /,krɪmin(ə)l ə'bɔ:ʃ(ə)n/ *noun* an abortion which is carried out illegally

crisis /'kraɪəsɪs/ *noun* 1. a situation or period of difficultly demanding action ◊ *Is there a crisis in the health service?* 2. a turning point in a disease, after which the person may start to become better or very much worse

COMMENT: Many diseases progress to a crisis and then the patient rapidly gets better. The opposite situation where the patient gets better very slowly is called **lysis**.

crista /'krɪstə/ *noun* 1. a ridge, e.g. the border of a bone 2. a fold in the inner membrane of a mitochondrion (NOTE: The plural is **cristae**.)

crista galli /,krɪstə 'gæləɪ/ *noun* a projection from the ethmoid bone

criterion /kraɪ'tɪriən/ *noun* an accepted standard used in making a decision or judgment about something (NOTE: The plural is **criteria**.)

critical /'kritɪk(ə)l/ *adjective* 1. referring to a crisis 2. extremely serious ◊ *He was taken to hospital in a critical condition* 3. which criticises ◊ *The report was critical of the state of aftercare provision.*

critical list /'kritɪk(ə)l lɪst/ *noun* the list of patients in a hospital whose condition is medically life-threatening

CRNA abbr certified registered nurse anaesthetist

Crohn's disease /'kraʊnz di,zi:z/ *noun* a persistent inflammatory disease, usually of the lower intestinal tract, characterised by thickening and scarring of the intestinal wall and obstruction [Described 1932. After Burrill Bernard Crohn (1884–1983), New York physician.]

COMMENT: No certain cause has been found for Crohn's disease, where only one section of the intestine becomes inflamed and can be blocked.

cromolyn sodium /,kraʊməlin 'səʊdiəm/ *noun* a drug that helps to prevent the release of histamine and other substances which cause many of the symptoms of asthma and hay fever

cross-dresser *noun* someone who wears clothes usually worn by people of the opposite sex, e.g. a transvestite

cross-dressing /'krɒps 'dresɪŋ/ *noun* the practice of wearing clothes usually worn by people of the opposite sex, e.g. by transvestites

cross eye /'krɒps aɪ/ *noun* same as **convergent strabismus** (*informal*)

cross-eyed /,krɒps 'aɪd/ *adjective* having convergent strabismus (*informal*)

cross-infection /krɒs ɪn'fekʃən/ *noun* an infection passed from one patient to another in hospital, either directly or from nurses, visitors or equipment

crossmatch /krɒs'mætʃ/ *verb (in transplant surgery)* to match a donor to a recipient as closely as possible to avoid tissue rejection. ♀ **blood group**

crossmatching /kros'mætʃɪŋ/ *noun* the process of matching a transplant donor to a recipient as closely as possible to avoid tissue rejection

cross-resistance /,krɒs rɪ'zɪstəns/ *noun* the development by a disease agent of resistance to a number of similar drugs or chemicals of the same class

cross-section /'krɒs ,sekʃən/ *noun* 1. a small part of something, taken to be representative of the whole ○ *The team consulted a cross-section of hospital ancillary staff.* 2. a sample cut across a specimen for examination under a microscope ○ *He examined a cross-section of the lung tissue.*

crotamiton /krə'tæmɪt(ə)n/ *noun* a chemical that kills mites, used to treat scabies

crotch /krɒtʃ/ *noun* the point where the legs meet the body, where the genitals are. Also called **crutch**

croup /kru:p/ *noun* acute infection of the upper respiratory passages which blocks the larynx, affecting children

COMMENT: The patient's larynx swells, and he or she breathes with difficulty and has a barking cough. Attacks usually occur at night. They can be fatal if the larynx becomes completely blocked.

crown /kraʊn/ *noun* 1. the top part of a tooth above the level of the gums 2. an artificial top attached to a tooth 3. the top part of the head ■ *verb* to put an artificial crown on a tooth

crowning /'kraʊnɪŋ/ *noun* 1. the act of putting an artificial crown on a tooth 2. a stage in childbirth in which the top of the baby's head becomes visible

cruciate /'kru:sjət/ *adjective* shaped like a cross

cruciate ligament /,kru:sjət 'lɪgəmənt/ *noun* any ligament shaped like a cross, especially either of two ligaments behind the knee which prevent the knee from bending forwards

crude death rate /kru:d 'deθ reɪt/ *noun* the number of deaths in a year, divided by the total population

crura /'kruərə/ plural of **crus**

crural /'kruərəl/ *adjective* referring to the thigh, leg or shin

crura of the diaphragm /,kruərə əv ðə 'daɪəfræm/ *plural noun* the long muscle fibres joining the diaphragm to the lumbar vertebrae

crus /krʌs/ *noun* a long projecting part (NOTE: The plural is **crura**.)

crus cerebri /krʌs 'seribraɪ/ *noun* each of the nerve tracts between the cerebrum and the medulla oblongata (NOTE: The plural is **crura cerebri**.)

crush fracture /'krʌʃ ,frækʃə/ *noun* a fracture by compression of the bone

crush syndrome /'krʌʃ ,sɪnd्रəʊm/ *noun* a condition in which a limb has been crushed, as in an accident, causing kidney failure and shock

crus of penis /,krʌs əv 'pi:nɪs/ *noun* a part of a corpus cavernosum attached to the pubic arch

crust /krʌst/ *noun* a dry layer of blood, pus or other secretion that forms over a cut or sore

crutch /krʌtʃ/ *noun* 1. a strong support for someone with an injured leg, formed of a stick with a T-bar which fits under the armpit, especially formerly, or a holding bar and elbow clasp 2. same as **crotch**

cry- /kraɪ/ *prefix* same as **cryo-** (*used before vowels*)

cryaesthesia /,kraɪə:sɪs'θi:ziə/ *noun* the fact of being sensitive to cold

cryo- /kraɪəʊ/ *prefix* cold

cryobank /kraɪəʊbæŋk/ *noun* a place where biological material such as semen and body tissues can be stored at extremely low temperatures

cryoprecipitate /,kraɪəʊprɪ'sɪpɪtət/ *noun* a precipitate such as from blood plasma, which separates out on freezing and thawing

COMMENT: Cryoprecipitate from blood plasma contains Factor VIII and is used to treat haemophilia.

cryoprobe /'kraɪəʊprəʊb/ *noun* an instrument used in cryosurgery with a tip that is kept very cold to destroy tissue

cryosurgery /,kraɪəʊ'sɜ:dʒərɪ/ *noun* surgery which uses extremely cold instruments to destroy tissue

cryotherapy /,kraɪəʊ'θerəpɪ/ *noun* treatment using extreme cold, as in removing a wart with dry ice

crypt /kript/ *noun* a small cavity in the body

crypto- /kriptəʊ/ *prefix* hidden

cryptococci /,kriptə'kɒki/ plural of **cryptococcus**

cryptococcal meningitis /,kriptəkɒk(ə)l menɪn'dʒaɪtɪs/ *noun* a form of meningitis that is a feature of cryptococcosis

cryptococcosis /,kriptəkɒk'kəʊsɪs/ *noun* an infection mainly affecting the brain or nervous system, caused by the fungus *Cryptococcus neoformans*. It occurs most often in people with HIV infection.

cryptococcus /,kriptə'kɒkəs/ *noun* one of several single-celled yeasts which exist in the soil and can cause disease (NOTE: The plural is **cryptococci**.)

cryptomenorrhoea /kriptəʊmənə'ri:ə/ noun the retention of menstrual flow, usually caused by an obstruction

cryptorchidism /krip'tɔ:kɪdɪz(ə)m/, **cryptorchism** /krip'tɔ:kɪz(ə)m/ noun a condition in a young male in which the testicles do not move down into the scrotum

cryptosporidia /,kriptəʊspə'rɪdiə/ plural of **cryptosporidium**

cryptosporidiosis /,kriptəʊspə'rɪdiə'sɪəs/ noun an infectious condition of humans and domestic animals, spread by an intestinal parasite *Cryptosporidium parvum*. Its symptoms are fever, diarrhoea and stomach cramps.

cryptosporidium /,kriptəʊspə'rɪdiəm/ noun a parasite which contaminates drinking water supplies, causing intestinal infection (NOTE: The plural is **cryptosporidia**.)

crypts of Lieberkühn /,kripts əv 'lɪbəku:n/ plural noun tubular glands found in the mucous membrane of the small and large intestine, especially those between the bases of the villi in the small intestine. Also called **Lieberkühn's glands** [Described 1745. After Johann Nathaniel Lieberkühn (1711–56), Berlin anatomist and physician.]

crystal /'krɪstəl/ noun a chemical formation of hard regular-shaped solids

crystalline /'krɪstəlɪn/ adjective clear like pure crystal

crystal violet /,krɪst(ə)l 'vaɪələt/ noun same as **gentian violet**

CSF abbr cerebrospinal fluid

CT abbr computed tomography

CT scan /,si: 'ti: skæn/ noun a computer picture of a slice of the body or an organ produced by a CT scanner. Also called **CAT scan**

CT scanner /,si: 'ti: ,skænəl/ noun a device which directs a narrow X-ray beam at a thin section of the body from various angles, using a computer to build up a complete picture of the cross-section. Also called **CAT scanner**

cubital /'kju:bit(ə)l/ adjective referring to the ulna

cubital fossa /,kju:bit(ə)l 'fɒsə/ noun a depression in the front of the elbow joint

cubitus /'kju:bitəs/ noun same as **ulna**

cuboid /'kju:bɔɪd/, **cuboid bone** /'kju:bɔɪd bən/ noun one of the tarsal bones in the foot. See illustration at **FOOT** in Supplement

cuboidal cell /'kju:bɔɪd(ə)l sel/ noun a cube-shaped epithelial cell

cuff /kʌf/ noun 1. an inflatable ring put round the arm and inflated when blood pressure is being measured 2. an inflatable ring put round an endotracheal tube to close the passage

cuirass respirator /kwi:ræs 'respirētə/ noun a type of artificial respirator which surrounds only the chest

culdoscope /'kʌldəʊskəp/ noun an instrument used to inspect the interior of a woman's pelvis, introduced through the vagina

culdoscopy /kʌl'dɒpskəpi/ noun an examination of the interior of a woman's pelvis using a culdoscope

culture /'kʌltʃə/ noun 1. the shared values and behaviour of a group 2. microorganisms or tissues grown in a culture medium in a laboratory ■ verb to grow microorganisms or tissues in a culture medium

culture medium /'kʌltʃə ,mi:dɪəm/ noun a substance in which a culture of microorganisms or tissue is grown in a laboratory, e.g. agar

cumulative /'kjū:mjʊlətɪv/ adjective growing by adding

cumulative action /,kjū:mjʊlətɪv 'ækʃən/ noun an effect of a drug which is given more often than it can be excreted and so accumulates in the tissues

cuneiform /'kjū:nɪfɔ:m/, **cuneiform bone** /'kjū:nɪfɔ:m bən/ noun one of the three tarsal bones in the foot. See illustration at **FOOT** in Supplement

cupola /'kjupələ/ noun 1. a dome-shaped structure 2. a piece of cartilage in a semicircular canal which is moved by the fluid in the canal and connects with the vestibular nerve

curable /'kjʊərəb(ə)l/ adjective able to be cured ○ a *curable form of cancer*

curare /'kjʊ'rə:ri/ noun a drug derived from South American plants, antagonist to acetylcholine and used surgically to paralyse muscles during operations without causing unconsciousness (NOTE: Curare is the poison used to make poison arrows.)

curative /'kjʊərətɪv/ adjective able to cure

cure /kjoo:/ noun a particular way of making someone well or of stopping an illness ○ *Scientists are trying to develop a cure for the common cold.* ■ verb to make someone healthy ○ *She was completely cured.* ○ *Can the doctors cure his bad circulation?*

curettage /kjoo'retɪdʒ/ noun the procedure of scraping the inside of a hollow organ, often the uterus, to remove a growth or tissue for examination. Also called **curettement**

curette /kjoo'ret/ noun a surgical instrument like a long thin spoon, used for scraping the inside of an organ (NOTE: The US spelling is **curet**.) ■ verb to scrape an organ with a curette (NOTE: **curettes** – **curetting** – **curetted**. The US spelling is **curet**.)

curettement same as **curettage**

curie /'kjooəri/ noun a former unit of measurement of radioactivity, replaced by the becquerel. Symbol Ci

Curling's ulcer /,kɜ:lɪŋz 'alsə/ noun an ulcer of the duodenum following severe injury to the body

curvature /'kɜ:vətʃə/ *noun* the way in which something bends from a straight line ○ *greater or lesser curvature of the stomach*

curvature of the spine /,kɜ:vətʃəfər əv ðə 'spæn/ *noun* an unusual bending of the spine forwards or sideways

cushingoid /'kuʃɪnɔɪd/ *adjective* showing symptoms of Cushing's disease

Cushing's disease /'kuʃɪnɪz dɪ,zi:z/, **Cushing's syndrome** /'kuʃɪnɪz, 'sɪnd्रəʊm/ *noun* a condition in which the adrenal cortex produces too many corticosteroids [Described 1932. After Harvey Williams Cushing (1869–1939), surgeon, Boston, USA.]

COMMENT: The syndrome is caused either by a tumour in the adrenal gland, by excessive stimulation of the adrenals by the basophil cells of the pituitary gland, or by a corticosteroid-secreting tumour. The syndrome causes swelling of the face and trunk, weakening of the muscles, raised blood pressure and retention of salt and water in the body.

cusp /kʌsp/ *noun* 1. the pointed tip of a tooth 2. a flap of membrane forming a valve in the heart

cuspid /'kʌspɪd/ *noun* same as **canine**

cut /kʌt/ *noun* 1. a reduction in the number or amount of something 2. a place where the skin has been penetrated by a sharp instrument ○ *She had a bad cut on her left leg. ○ The nurse will put a bandage on your cut.* ■ *verb* 1. to make an opening in something using a knife, scissors or other sharp thing ○ *The surgeon cut the diseased tissue away with a scalpel. ○ She cut her finger on the broken glass.* 2. to reduce the number or amount of something ○ *Accidents have been cut by 10%.* (NOTE: **cutting – cut**)

cut- *prefix* referring to the skin

cutaneous /kju:'teɪnɪəs/ *adjective* referring to the skin

cutaneous leishmaniasis /kju,teɪnɪəs li:fɪsm'naɪəsɪs/ *noun* a form of skin disease caused by the tropical parasite *Leishmania*. Also called **Delhi boil**

cutdown /'kʌtdaʊn/ *noun* the procedure of cutting a vein to insert a cannula or administer an intravenous drug

cuticle /'kju:tɪk(ə)l/ *noun* 1. same as **epidermis** 2. a strip of epidermis attached at the base of a nail

cutis /'kju:tɪs/ *noun* the skin

cutis anserina /,kju:tɪs 'ænsərɪnə/ *noun* a reaction of the skin when someone is cold or frightened, the skin being raised into many little bumps by the action of the arrector pili muscles. Also called **goose bumps**

CVA abbr cerebrovascular accident

cyan- /saɪən/ *prefix* same as **cyno-** (used before vowels)

cyanide /'saɪənайд/ *noun* a poison which kills very rapidly when drunk or inhaled

cyno- /saɪənəʊ/ *prefix* blue

cyanocobalamin /,saɪənəʊkəbə'læmɪn/ same as **Vitamin B₁₂**

cyanosed /'saɪənəʊst/ *adjective* with blue skin ○ *The patient was cyanosed round the lips.*

cyanosis /,saɪə'nəʊsɪs/ *noun* a condition characterised by a blue colour of the peripheral skin and mucous membranes, a symptom of lack of oxygen in the blood, e.g. in heart or lung disease

cyanotic /,saɪə'nɒtɪk/ *adjective* referring to or having cyanosis

cyclandelate /sɪ'klændəleɪt/ *noun* a drug used to treat cerebrovascular disease

cycle /'saɪk(ə)l/ *noun* a series of events which recur regularly

cyclic /'sɪklɪk, 'sɪrklik/ *adjective* 1. occurring or repeated in cycles 2. referring to organic compounds composed of a closed ring of atoms

cyclical /'sɪklɪkl(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to cycles

cyclical vomiting /,sɪklɪkl(ə)l 'vɒmɪtɪŋ/ noun repeated attacks of vomiting

-**cycline** /saɪklɪn/ *suffix* used in names of antibiotics ○ **tetracycline**

cyclitis /sɪ'klaitɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the ciliary body in the eye

cyclizine /'saɪklɪzɪn/ *noun* an antihistamine drug that can be used to control nausea and vomiting

cyclo- /saɪkləʊ/ *prefix* cycles

cyclodialysis /,saɪklə'daɪəl'æləsɪs/ *noun* a surgical operation to connect the anterior chamber of the eye and the choroid, as a treatment of glaucoma

cyclopentolate /,saɪkləʊ'pentəleɪt/ *noun* a drug used to paralyse the ciliary muscle

cyclophosphamide /,saɪkləʊ'fɒsfə'maɪd/ *noun* a drug which suppresses immunity, used in the treatment of leukaemia, lymphoma, Hodgkin's disease and tumours

cycloplegia /,saɪkləʊ'plɪdʒɪə/ *noun* paralysis of the ciliary muscle which makes it impossible for the eye to focus properly

cyclopropane /,saɪkləʊ'prəʊpeɪn/ *noun* a flammable hydrocarbon gas used as a general anaesthetic and in organic synthesis

cyclothymia /,saɪkləʊ'θarmiə/ *noun* a mild form of bipolar disorder in which the person experiences alternating depression and excitement

cyclotomy /saɪ'klɒtəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to make a cut in the ciliary body (NOTE: The plural is **cyclotomies**.)

-**cyclovir** /sɑɪkləʊvɪr/ *suffix* used in the names of antiviral drugs

cysis /saɪ'sɪs/ *noun* same as **pregnancy (technical)**

cylinder /'sɪlɪndə/ *noun* ♦ **oxygen cylinder**

cyst /sist/ *noun* an unusual growth in the body shaped like a pouch, containing liquid or semi-liquid substances

cyst- /sist/ *prefix* the bladder

cystadenoma /,sistədə'nəʊmə/ *noun* an adenoma in which fluid-filled cysts form (NOTE: The plural is **cystadomas** or **cystadonomas**.)

cystalgia /si'stældʒə/ *noun* pain in the urinary bladder

cystectomy /si'stektəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to remove all or part of the urinary bladder (NOTE: The plural is **cystectomies**.)

cystic /sistɪk/ *adjective* 1. referring to cysts 2. referring to a bladder

cystic artery /sistɪk 'a:tərɪ/ *noun* an artery leading from the hepatic artery to the gall bladder

cystic duct /sistɪk dʌkt/ *noun* a duct which takes bile from the gall bladder to the common bile duct

cysticercosis /,sistɪsɔ:'kəʊsɪs/ *noun* a disease caused by infestation of tapeworm larvae from pork

cysticercus /sistɪ'sɔ:kəs/ *noun* the larva of a tapeworm of the genus *Taenia*, found in pork, which is enclosed in a cyst (NOTE: The plural is **cysticerci**.)

cystic fibrosis /sistɪk fai'b्रeʊsɪs/ *noun* a hereditary disease in which there is malfunction of the exocrine glands such as the pancreas, in particular those which secrete mucus, causing respiratory difficulties, male infertility and malabsorption of food from the gastrointestinal tract. Also called **fibrocystic disease**, **mucoviscidosis**

COMMENT: The thick mucous secretions cause blockage of ducts and many serious secondary effects in the intestines and lungs. Symptoms include loss of weight, abnormal faeces and bronchitis. If diagnosed early, cystic fibrosis can be controlled with vitamins, physiotherapy and pancreatic enzymes.

cystic vein /sistɪk veɪn/ *noun* a vein which drains the gall bladder

cystine /'sistɪ:n/ *noun* an amino acid. It can cause stones to form in the urinary system of people who have a rare inherited metabolic disorder.

cystinosis /,sistɪ'nəʊsɪs/ *noun* a disorder affecting the absorption of amino acids, resulting in excessive amounts of cystine accumulating in the kidneys

cystinuria /,sistɪ'njuəriə/ *noun* cystine in the urine

cystitis /si'staɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the urinary bladder, which makes someone pass water often and with a burning sensation

cystocele /'sistəsə:l/ *noun* a hernia of the urinary bladder into the vagina

cystogram /sistəgræm/ *noun* an X-ray photograph of the urinary bladder

cystography /si'stɒgrəfi/ *noun* an examination of the urinary bladder by X-rays after radio-opaque dye has been introduced

cystolithiasis /,sistəlɪ'θaɪəsɪs/ *noun* a condition in which stones are formed in the urinary bladder

cystometer /si'stɒmɪtə/ *noun* an apparatus which measures the pressure in the bladder

cystometry /si'stɒmɪtri/ *noun* measurement of the pressure in the bladder

cystopexy /si'stɒpeksi/ *noun* a surgical operation to fix the bladder in a different position. Also called **vesicofixation** (NOTE: The plural is **cystopexies**.)

cystoplasty /sistə,plæsti/ *noun* a surgical operation on the bladder (NOTE: The plural is **cystoplasties**)

cystoscope /'sistəskəʊp/ *noun* an instrument made of a long tube with a light at the end, used to inspect the inside of the bladder

cystoscopy /si'stɒskəpi/ *noun* an examination of the bladder using a cystoscope (NOTE: The plural is **cystoscopies**.)

cystostomy /si'stɒstəmɪ/, **cystotomy** /si'stɒtəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to make an opening between the bladder and the abdominal wall to allow urine to pass without going through the urethra. Also called **vesicostomy** (NOTE: The plurals are **cystostomies** and **cystotomies**.)

cystourethrography /sistəu,jʊərɪ'θrɒgrəfi/ *noun* X-ray examination of the bladder and urethra

cystourethroscope /,sistəu,jʊ'ri:θrəs̩kəʊp/ *noun* an instrument used to inspect the bladder and urethra

cyt- /saɪt/ *prefix* same as **cyto-** (used before vowels)

cyto- /saɪtəʊ/ *prefix* cell

cytochemistry /,saɪtəʊ'kemɪstri/ *noun* the study of the chemical activity of cells

cytodiagnosis /saɪtəudərəg'nəʊsɪs/ *noun* diagnosis after examination of cells

cytogenetics /,saɪtəudʒə'netɪks/ *noun* a branch of genetics which studies the function of cells, especially chromosomes, in heredity

cytokine /'saɪtəkain/ *noun* a protein secreted by cells of the lymph system which is involved in controlling response to inflammation

cytokinesis /,saɪtə'kɪni'sɪs/ *noun* changes in the cytoplasm of a cell during division

cytological smear /,saɪtəlɒdʒɪk(ə)l 'smɪə/ *noun* a sample of tissue taken for examination under a microscope

cytology /saɪ'tɒlədʒɪ/ *noun* the study of the structure and function of cells

cytolysis /saɪ'tɒləsɪs/ *noun* the breaking down of cells

cytomegalovirus /,saɪtəʊ'megələʊ,vairəs/ *noun* one of the herpesviruses which can cause

serious congenital disorders in a fetus if it infects the pregnant mother. Abbr **CMV**

cytometer /saɪ'tɒmɪtə/ *noun* an instrument attached to a microscope, used for measuring and counting the number of cells in a specimen

cytopenia /,saɪtə'pi:nɪə/ *noun* a deficiency of cellular elements in blood or tissue

cytoplasm /'saɪtəplæz(ə)m/ *noun* a substance inside the cell membrane which surrounds the nucleus of a cell

cytoplasmic /,saɪtə'plæzmɪk/ *adjective* referring to the cytoplasm of a cell

cytosine /'saɪtəʊsɪ:n/ *noun* one of the four basic chemicals in DNA

cytosome /'saɪtəsəʊm/ *noun* the body of a cell, not including the nucleus

cytotoxic /,saɪtə'otrɒksɪk/ *adjective* 1. referring to a drug or agent which prevents cell division 2. referring to cells in the immune system which destroy other cells

cytotoxic drug /,saɪtə'otrɒksɪk 'drʌg/ *noun* a drug which reduces the reproduction of cells, used to treat cancer

cytotoxin /,saɪtə'u'trɒksɪn/ *noun* a substance which has a toxic effect on cells

D

d /di:/ *symbol* deci-

da symbol deca-

dab /dæb/ *verb* to touch something lightly ○ *He dabbed around the cut with a piece of cotton wool.*

da Costa's syndrome /də: 'kɒstəz ,sɪn drəʊm/ *noun* same as **disordered action of the heart** [Described 1871. After Jacob Mendes da Costa (1833–1900), Philadelphia surgeon, who described this condition in soldiers in the American Civil War.]

dacryo- /dækriəʊ/ *prefix* tears

dacryoadenitis /,dækriəʊə'nedɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the lacrimal gland

dacryocystitis /,dækriəʊsɪ'taɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the lacrimal sac when the tear duct, which drains into the nose, becomes blocked

dacryocystography /,dækriəʊsɪ'stɒgrəfɪ/ *noun* contrast radiography to determine the site of an obstruction in the tear ducts

dacryocystorhinostomy /,dækriəʊ ,sɪstəraɪn'nostəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to bypass a blockage from the tear duct which takes tears into the nose. Abbr **DCR** (NOTE: The plural is **dacryocystorhinostomies**.)

dacryolith /'dækriəʊlɪθ/ *noun* a stone in the lacrimal sac

dacryoma /,dækri'əʊmə/ *noun* a benign swelling in one of the tear ducts (NOTE: The plural is **dacryomas** or **dacryomata**.)

dactyl /'dæktɪl/ *noun* a finger or toe

dactyl- /'dæktɪl/ *prefix* same as **dactylo-** (used before vowels)

dactylitis /,dæktɪl'laɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the fingers or toes, caused by bone infection or rheumatic disease

dactylo- /'dæktɪləʊ/ *prefix* referring to the fingers or toes

dactylography /,dæktri'ɒplædʒi/ *noun* signs made with the fingers in place of words when talking to a person who is unable to hear, or when a person who is unable to hear or speak wants to communicate

dactylomegaly /,dæktɪləʊ'megəli/ *noun* a condition in which a person has longer fingers than usual

DAH *abbr* disordered action of the heart

daily /'deɪli/ *adverb* every day ○ *Take the medicine twice daily.*

Daltonism /də:ltonɪz(ə)m/ *noun* the commonest form of colour blindness, in which someone cannot see the difference between red and green. Also called **protanopia** [Described 1794. After John Dalton (1766–1844), English chemist and physician. Founder of the atomic theory, he himself was colour-blind.]

damage /'dæmɪdʒ/ *noun* harm done to things ○ *The disease caused damage to the brain cells.* ■ *verb* to harm something ○ *His hearing or his sense of balance was damaged in the accident.*

damp /dæmp/ *adjective* slightly wet ○ *You should put a damp compress on the bruise.*

D & C /di: ən/ *abbr* dilatation and curettage

dander /'dændə/ *noun* very small fragments that fall from the feathers, hair or skin of animals or people

dandruff /'dændrəf/ *noun* pieces of dead skin from the scalp which fall out when the hair is combed. Also called **pityriasis capitis, scurf**

D and V /,di: ən 'vi:/ *abbr* diarrhoea and vomiting

Dandy-Walker syndrome /,dændi 'wɔ:kə ,sɪndrəʊm/ *noun* a congenital condition in which there is no Magendie's foramen in the brain

danger /'deɪndʒər/ *noun* the possibility of harm or death ○ *Unless the glaucoma is treated quickly, there's a danger that the patient will lose his eyesight or a danger of the patient losing his eyesight.* □ **out of danger** no longer likely to die

dangerous /'deɪndʒərəs/ *adjective* causing harm or death

dangerous drug /,deɪndʒərəs 'dræg/ *noun*
1. a drug which is harmful and is not available to the general public, e.g. morphine or heroin
2. a poison which can only be sold to specific persons

dark adaptation /dɑ:k ,ædæp'teɪʃ(ə)n/ noun the reflex changes which enable the eye to continue to see in dim light. For example, the pupil becomes larger and the rods in the retina become more active than the cones.

darkening /'da:kniŋ/ noun the act of becoming darker in colour ◎ *Darkening of the tissue takes place after bruising.*

data /'deɪtə/ plural noun information in words or figures about a particular subject, especially information which is available on computer (NOTE: In scientific usage, **data** is used with a plural verb: *The data are accurate.* In everyday language, **data** is often used with a singular verb: *The recent data supports our case.)*

data bank /'deɪtə bænk/ noun a store of information in a computer ◎ *The hospital keeps a data bank of information about possible kidney donors.*

database noun a structured collection of information in a computer that can be automatically retrieved and manipulated

Data Protection Act /,deɪtə prə'tekʃ(ə)n/ noun a parliamentary act intended to protect information about individuals that is held on computers. It ensures that all information is stored securely and allows people to have access to their entries.

daughter /'dɔ:tə/ noun a female child of a parent ◎ *They have two sons and one daughter.*

daughter cell /'dɔ:tə sel/ noun any of the cells which develop by mitosis from a single parent cell

day blindness /'deɪ ,blaindnəs/ noun same as **hemeralopia**

day care /'deɪ keə/ noun supervised recreation or medical care provided during the day for people who need special help, e.g. some elderly people or small children

day case /'deɪ keɪs/ noun same as **day patient**

day case surgery /'deɪ keɪs ,s3:dʒəri/ noun same as **day surgery**

day centre /'deɪ ,sentə/ noun a place providing day care

day hospital /'deɪ ,hɒspɪt(ə)l/ noun a hospital where people are treated during the day and go home in the evenings

day nursery /'deɪ ,nɜ:s(ə)ri/ noun a place where small children can be looked after during the daytime while their parents or guardians are at work

day patient /'deɪ ,peɪʃ(ə)nt/ noun a patient who is in hospital for treatment for a day and does not stay overnight. Also called **day case**

day patient care /'deɪ peɪʃ(ə)nt keə/ noun care for patients who are resident in a hospital during the daytime only

day recovery ward /'deɪ ri'kʌv(ə)ri wɔ:d/ noun a ward where day patients who have had

minor operations can recover before going home

day surgery /'deɪ ,s3:dʒəri/ noun a surgical operation which does not require the patient to stay overnight in hospital. Also called **day case surgery**

dazed /deɪzd/ adjective confused in the mind ◎ *She was found walking about in a dazed condition.* ◎ *He was dazed after the accident.*

dB abbr decibel

DCR abbr dacryocystorhinostomy

DDS abbr US doctor of dental surgery

DDT abbr dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane

de- /di:/ prefix removal or loss

dead /ded/ adjective 1. no longer alive ◎ *My grandparents are both dead* ◎ *The woman was rescued from the crash, but was certified dead on arrival at the hospital* 2. not sensitive ◎ *The nerve endings are dead.* ◎ *His fingers went dead.*

deaden /'ded(ə)n/ verb to make something such as pain or noise less strong ◎ *The doctor gave him an injection to deaden the pain.*

dead fingers /'ded fɪŋgəz/ noun same as **Raynaud's disease**

deadly nightshade /,dedli 'naitʃeɪd/ noun same as **belladonna**

dead man's fingers /,ded mænz 'fɪngəz/ noun same as **Raynaud's disease**

dead space /'ded speɪs/ noun a breath in the last part of the process of breathing in air which does not get further than the bronchial tubes

deaf /def/ adjective not able to hear in circumstances where most people would ◎ *You have to speak slowly and clearly when you talk to Mr Jones because he's quite deaf.* ◇ **hearing-impaired** ■ plural noun ◇ **the deaf** people who are deaf

deaf and dumb /,def æn 'dʌm/ noun not able to hear or to speak (NOTE: This term is regarded as offensive.)

deafen /'def(ə)n/ verb to make someone deaf for a time ◎ *He was deafened by the explosion.*

deafness /'defnəs/ noun the fact of being unable to hear in circumstances where most people would ◇ **partial deafness** 1. the condition of being able to hear some tones, but not all 2. a general dulling of the whole range of hearing

COMMENT: Deafness has many degrees and many causes: old age, viruses, exposure to continuous loud noise or intermittent loud explosions, and diseases such as German measles.

deaminiate /di:'æmɪneɪt/ verb to remove an amino group from an amino acid, forming ammonia

deamination /di:,æmɪ'nейʃ(ə)n/ noun the process by which amino acids are broken down in the liver and urea is formed

COMMENT: After deamination, the ammonia which is formed is converted to urea by the liv-

er, while the remaining carbon and hydrogen from the amino acid provide the body with heat and energy.

death /deθ/ *noun* the permanent end of all natural functions

death certificate /'deθ sə,tifikət/ *noun* an official document signed by a doctor stating that a person has died and giving details of the person and the cause of death

death rate /'deθ reɪt/ *noun* the number of deaths per year per thousand of population ○ *The death rate from cancer of the liver has remained stable.*

debilitate /dɪ'bɪlɪteɪt/ *verb* to make someone or something weak ○ *He was debilitated by a long illness.*

debilitating disease /dɪ'bɪlɪteɪtɪŋ dɪ'zɪ:z/ *noun* a disease which makes the person weak

debility /dɪ'bɪlɪtɪ/ *noun* general weakness

debridement /dɪ'bri:dment/ *noun* the removal of dirt or dead tissue from a wound to help healing

deca- /dɛkə/ *prefix* ten. Symbol **da**

Decadron /'dekədrɒn/ a trade name for dexamethasone

decalcification /dɪ:kælsfɪ'tkeɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the loss of calcium salts from teeth and bones

decanutation /dɪ:kænjʊ'leɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the removal of a tracheostomy tube

decapitation /dɪ:kæpɪ'teɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the act or process of cutting off the head of a person or animal

decapsulation /dɪ:kæpsju'leɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a surgical operation to remove a capsule from an organ, especially from a kidney

decay /dɪ'keɪ/ *noun* 1. the process by which tissues become rotten, caused by the action of microorganisms and oxygen 2. damage caused to tissue or a tooth by the action of microorganisms, especially bacteria ■ *verb (of tissue)* to rot ○ *The surgeon removed decayed matter from the wound.*

deci- /dɛsi/ *prefix* one tenth (10^{-1}) ○ *decigram* Symbol **d**

decibel /'desɪbel/ *noun* a unit of measurement of the loudness of sound, used to compare different levels of sound. Symbol **dB**

COMMENT: Normal conversation is at about 50dB. Very loud noise with a value of over 120dB, e.g. that of aircraft engines, can cause pain.

decidua /dɪ'sɪdjʊə/ *noun* a membrane which lines the uterus after fertilisation (NOTE: The plural is **deciduas** or **deciduae**.)

COMMENT: The decidua is divided into several parts: the **decidua basalis**, where the embryo is attached, the **decidua capsularis**, which covers the embryo and the **decidua vera** which is the rest of the decidua not touching the embryo. It is expelled after the birth of the baby.

decidual /dɪ'sɪdjʊəl/ *adjective* referring to the decidua

deciduoma /dɪ'sɪdjʊə'mə/ *noun* a mass of decidual tissue remaining in the uterus after birth (NOTE: The plural is **deciduomas** or **deciduomata**.)

deciduous /dɪ'sɪdjʊəs/ *adjective* referring to teeth discarded at a later stage of development

deciduous dentition /dɪ,sɪdjʊəs den'tɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the set of twenty teeth which are gradually replaced by the permanent teeth as a child grows older

deciduous tooth /dɪ'sɪdjʊəs tu:θ/ *noun* same as **primary tooth**

decilitre /'desilɪ:tə/ *noun* a unit of measurement of liquid equal to one tenth of a litre. Symbol **dl** (NOTE: The US spelling is **deciliter**.)

decimetre /'desɪmɪ:tə/ *noun* a unit of measurement of length equal to one tenth of a metre. Symbol **dm** (NOTE: The US spelling is **decimeter**.)

decompensation /dɪ:kəmpə'nseɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a condition in which an organ such as the heart cannot cope with extra stress placed on it and so is unable to perform its function properly

decompose /,di:kəm'pəʊz/ *verb* to rot or become putrefied (NOTE: **decomposing** – **decomposed**)

decomposition /,di:kəmpə'zɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the process where dead matter is rotted by the action of bacteria or fungi

decompression /,di:kəm'preʃ(ə)n/ *noun* 1. reduction of pressure 2. a controlled reduction of atmospheric pressure which occurs as a diver returns to the surface

decompression sickness /,di:kəm',preʃ(ə)n 'sɪknəs/ *noun* same as **caisson disease**

decongest /,di:kən'dʒest/ *verb* to loosen or disperse mucus in the nasal passages, sinuses or bronchi

decongestant /,di:kən'dʒestənt/ *adjective* reducing congestion and swelling ■ *noun* a drug which reduces congestion and swelling, sometimes used to unblock the nasal passages

decontamination /,di:kəntæmə'nɪseɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the removal of a contaminating substance such as radioactive material

decortication /dɪ:,kɔ:tɪ'keɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the surgical removal of the cortex of an organ □

decortication of a lung a surgical operation to remove part of the pleura which has been thickened or made stiff by chronic empyema

decrudescence /,di:kru:'des(ə)ns/ *noun* a reduction in the symptoms of a disease

decubitus /dr'kjʊ:bɪtəs/ *noun* the position of a person who is lying down

decubitus ulcer /dr,kjʊ:bɪtəs 'ʌlsə/ *noun* same as **bedsores**

decussation /,di:kʌ'seɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the crossing of nerve fibres in the central nervous system. Also called **chiasm**

deep /di:p/ *adjective* located, coming from or reaching relatively far inside the body. Opposite **superficial**

deep cervical vein /di:p 'sɜ:vɪk(ə)l vein/ *noun* a vein in the neck which drains into the vertebral vein

deep dermal burn /di:p 'dɜ:m(ə)l bɜ:n/ *noun* a burn which is so severe that a graft will be necessary to repair the skin damage. Also called **full thickness burn**

deep facial vein /di:p 'feɪʃ(ə)l vein/ *noun* a small vein which drains from the pterygoid process behind the cheek into the facial vein

deeply /'di:pli/ *adverb* so as to take in a large amount of air ○ *He was breathing deeply.*

deep plantar arch /di:p 'plæntər ɑ:tʃ/ *noun* a curved artery crossing the sole of the foot

deep vein /di:p 'veɪn/ *noun* a vein which is inside the body near a bone, as opposed to a superficial vein near the skin

deep-vein thrombosis /,di:p veɪn θrɒm 'baʊəsɪs/ *noun* a condition arising when a thrombus formed in the deep veins of a leg or the pelvis travels to a lung where it may cause death. The condition may affect anyone who is inactive for long periods. Also called **phlebothrombosis**. Abbr **DVT**

defecate /'defekeɪt/, **defaecate** *verb* to pass faeces out from the bowels through the anus
(NOTE: **defecating – defecated**)

defecation /,defə'keɪʃ(ə)n/, **defaecation** *noun* the act of passing out faeces from the bowels

defect /'di:fekt/ *noun* 1. an unsatisfactory or imperfect feature of something 2. a lack of something which is necessary

defective /dr'fektɪv/ *adjective* working badly or wrongly formed ○ *The surgeons operated to repair a defective heart valve.* ■ *noun* a person suffering from severe mental impairment
(NOTE: The noun use is regarded as offensive.)

defence /dr'fens/ *noun* 1. resistance against an attack of a disease 2. behaviour of a person which is aimed at protecting him or her from harm (NOTE: The US spelling is **defense**)

defence mechanism /dr'fens ,mekənɪz(ə)m/ *noun* a subconscious reflex by which a person prevents himself or herself from showing emotion

defense /dr'fens/ *noun* US same as **defence**

defensive medicine /di,fɛnsɪv 'med(ə)s(ə)n/ *noun* extensive diagnostic testing before treatment to minimise the likelihood of a patient suing the doctor or hospital for negligence

deferent /'defrənt/ *adjective* 1. going away from the centre 2. referring to the vas deferens

defervescence /,defə'ves(ə)ns/ *noun* a period during which a fever is subsiding

defibrillation /di:fɪbrɪ'leɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a procedure to correct an irregular heartbeat by applying a large electrical impulse to the chest wall, especially in potentially life-threatening circumstances. Also called **cardioversion**

defibrillator /di:fɪbrɪleɪtə/ *noun* an apparatus used to apply an electric impulse to the heart to make it beat regularly

defibrination /di:faɪbrɪ'nɛɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the removal of fibrin from a blood sample to prevent clotting

deficiency /dr'fɪʃ(ə)nsi/ *noun* a lack of something necessary

deficiency disease /dr'fɪʃ(ə)nsi dr,zi:z/ *noun* a disease caused by lack of an essential element in the diet such as vitamins or essential amino and fatty acids

deficient /dr'fɪʃ(ə)nt/ *adjective* not meeting the required standard □ **deficient in something** not containing the necessary amount of something ○ *His diet is deficient in calcium or he has a calcium-deficient diet.*

deficit /'defɪsɪt/ *noun* the amount by which something is less than it should be

defloration /,di:flo:rə'reɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the act of breaking the hymen of a virgin, usually at the first sexual intercourse

deflorescence /,di:flo:'res(ə)ns/ *noun* the disappearance of a rash

deformans /di:'fɔ:mənz/ ♦ **osteitis deformans**

deformation /,di:fɔ:'meɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the process of becoming deformed, or the state of being deformed ○ *The later stages of the disease are marked by bone deformation.*

deformed /dr'fɔ:md/ *adjective* not shaped or formed in the expected way

deformity /di:fɔ:miti/ *noun* an unusual shape of part of the body

degenerate /dr'dʒenəreɪt/ *verb* to change so as not to be able to function ○ *His health degenerated so much that he was incapable of looking after himself.*

degeneration /dr,dʒenə'reɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a change in the structure of a cell or organ so that it no longer works properly

degenerative disease /di,dʒen(ə)rətɪv di 'zɪz/, **degenerative disorder** /di ,dʒen(ə)rətɪv dɪs'ɔ:də/ *noun* a disease or disorder in which there is progressive loss of function of a part of the body, or in which a part of the body fails to repair itself

degenerative joint disease /di ,dʒen(ə)rətɪv 'dʒoint di,zi:z/ *noun* same as **osteoarthritis**

deglutition /,di:glu:'tɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the action of passing food or liquid, and sometimes also air, from the mouth into the oesophagus (technical) Also called **swallowing**

dehisced /di'hɪst/ *adjective* referring to a wound which has split open after being closed

dehiscence /dɪ'his(ə)ns/ *noun* the act of opening wide

dehydrate /,di:haɪ'dreɪt/ *verb* to lose water, or cause someone or something to lose water ○ *During strenuous exercise it's easy to become dehydrated. (NOTE: dehydrating – dehydrated)*

dehydration /,di:haɪ'dreɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* loss of water

'...an estimated 60–70% of diarrhoeal deaths are caused by dehydration' [Indian Journal of Medical Sciences]

COMMENT: Water is more essential than food for a human being's survival. If someone drinks during the day less liquid than is passed out of the body in urine and sweat, he or she begins to dehydrate.

dehydrogenase /,di:haɪ'drɒndʒeɪnəs/ *noun* an enzyme that transfers hydrogen between chemical compounds

déjà vu /dejɑ:vu:/ *noun* an illusion that a new situation is a previous one being repeated, usually caused by a disease of the brain

Déjerine-Klumpke's syndrome *noun* same as **Klumpke's paralysis**

deleterious /,delɪ'tɪriəs/ *adjective* damaging or harmful

Delhi boil /,dɛli 'bɔɪl/ *noun* same as **cutaneous leishmaniasis**

delicate /'delɪkət/ *adjective* 1. easily broken or harmed ○ *The bones of a baby's skull are very delicate.* ○ *The eye is covered by a delicate membrane.* 2. easily falling ill ○ *His delicate state of health means that he is not able to work long hours.* 3. requiring great care or sensitivity ○ *The surgeons carried out a delicate operation to join the severed nerves.*

delirious /dɪ'lɪriəs/ *adjective* affected by delirium. A person can become delirious because of shock, fear, drugs or fever.

delirium /dɪ'lɪriəm/ *noun* a mental state in which someone is confused, excited and restless and has hallucinations

delirium tremens /dɪ'lɪriəm 'tri:mɛnz/, **delirium alcoholicum** /dɪ'lɪriəm ,ælkə'hɒlkə'məʊn/ *noun* a state of mental illness usually found in long-term alcoholics who attempt to give up alcohol consumption. It includes hallucinations about insects, trembling and excitement. Abbr **DTs**

delivery /drɪ'lɪv(ə)ri/ *noun* the birth of a child

delivery bed /drɪ'lɪv(ə)ri bed/ *noun* a special bed on which a mother lies to give birth

delivery room /drɪ'lɪv(ə)ri ru:m/ *noun* a room in a hospital specially equipped for women to give birth

delta /'deltə/ *noun* the fourth letter of the Greek alphabet

delta hepatitis /,deltə ,hepə'tartɪs/ *noun* a severe form of hepatitis caused by an RNA virus in conjunction with the hepatitis B virus. Also called **hepatitis delta**

delta virus /deltə 'vairəs/ *noun* the RNA virus which causes delta hepatitis

delta wave /'deltə weɪv/ *noun* a slow brain wave which is produced in the front of the brain by adults in deep sleep, registering a frequency of 3.5 hertz

deltoid /'deltɔɪd/, **deltoid muscle** /'deltɔɪd ,mʌs(ə)l/ *noun* a big triangular muscle covering the shoulder joint and attached to the humerus, which lifts the arm sideways

deltoid tuberosity /,deltɔɪd ,tju:bə'rəʊsɪtɪ/ *noun* a raised part of the humerus to which the deltoid muscle is attached

delusion /dɪ'lju:ʒ(ə)n/ *noun* a false belief which a person holds which cannot be changed by reason ○ *He suffered from the delusion that he was wanted by the police.*

dementia /dɪ'menʃə/ *noun* the loss of mental ability and memory due to organic disease of the brain, causing disorientation and personality changes

'AIDS dementia is a major complication of HIV infection, occurring in 70–90% of patients' [British Journal of Nursing]

dementia of the Alzheimer's type /dɪ'menʃə ev ði 'æltʃaiməz ,taɪp/ *noun* a form of mental degeneration probably due to Alzheimer's disease

dementia paralytica /dɪ'menʃə ,pærə'lɪtɪkə/ *noun* mental degeneration due to the tertiary stage of syphilis

dementia praecox /dɪ'menʃə 'pri:kɒks/ *noun* same as **schizophrenia (old)**

dementing /dɪ'mentɪŋ/ *adjective* referring to someone with dementia

demi- /dēmi/ *prefix* half

demographic forecast /,deməgræfɪk 'fɔ:rkəst/ *noun* a forecast of the numbers of people of different ages and sexes in an area at some time in the future

demography /drɪ'mɒgræfi/ *noun* the study of populations and environments or changes affecting populations

demulcent /drɪ'malsənt/ *noun* a soothing substance which relieves irritation in the stomach

demyelinating /di:'maɪəlɪneɪtɪŋ/ *adjective* relating to the destruction of the myelin sheath round nerve fibres

demyelination /di:,maɪəlɪ'nɛf(ə)n/ *noun* the destruction of the myelin sheath round nerve fibres, caused, e.g. by injury to the head, or as the main result of multiple sclerosis

denatured alcohol /di:,neɪtʃəd 'ælkəhɒl/ *noun* ethyl alcohol such as methylated spirit, rubbing alcohol or surgical spirit with an additive, usually methyl alcohol, to make it unpleasant to drink

dendrite /'dendraɪt/ *noun* a branched structure growing out from a nerve cell, which receives impulses from the nerve endings of oth-

er nerve cells at synapses. See illustration at **NEURONE** in Supplement. Also called **dendron**

dendritic /dən'drɪtɪk/ *adjective* referring to a dendrite

dendritic ulcer /dən'drɪtɪk 'alsə/ *noun* a branching ulcer on the cornea, caused by a herpesvirus

dendron /'dendrən/ *noun* same as **dendrite**

denervation /,di:nə'veɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the stopping or cutting of the nerve supply to a part of the body

dengue /'dɛŋgwe/ *noun* a tropical disease caused by an arbovirus transmitted by mosquitoes, characterised by high fever, pains in the joints, headache and rash. Also called **break-bone fever**

denial /dɪ'naiəl/ *noun* a person's refusal to accept that he or she has a serious medical problem

Denis Browne splint /,dɛnis braʊn 'splɪnt/ *noun* a metal splint used to correct a club foot [Described 1934. After Sir Denis John Wolko Browne (1892–1967), Australian orthopaedic and general surgeon working in Britain.]

dens /dɛnz/ *noun* a tooth, or something shaped like a tooth

dent- /dent/ *prefix* referring to a tooth or teeth

dental /'dɛnt(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to teeth or to the treatment of teeth ○ **dental caries** ○ **dental surgeon**

dental care /'dɛnt(ə)l keə/ *noun* the examination and treatment of teeth

dental caries /,dɛnt(ə)l 'keərɪz/ *noun* the rotting of a tooth. Also called **dental decay**

dental cyst /,dɛnt(ə)l 'sist/ *noun* a cyst near the root of a tooth

dental decay /,dɛnt(ə)l dɪ'keɪ/ *noun* same as **dental caries**

dental floss /'dɛnt(ə)l flɒs/ *noun* a soft thread which can be pulled between the teeth to help keep them clean

dental hygiene /,dɛnt(ə)l 'haɪdʒi:n/ *noun* procedures to keep the teeth clean and healthy

dental impaction /,dɛnt(ə)l ɪm'pækʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a condition in which a tooth is closely pressed against other teeth and cannot grow normally

dental plaque /,dɛnt(ə)l 'plæk/ *noun* a hard smooth bacterial deposit on teeth, which is the probable cause of caries

dental plate /'dɛnt(ə)l pleɪt/ *noun* a prosthesis made to the shape of the mouth, which holds artificial teeth

dental prosthesis /,dɛnt(ə)l prɒs'thɪ:sɪs/ *noun* one or more false teeth

dental pulp /,dɛnt(ə)l 'pʌlp/ *noun* soft tissue inside a tooth

dental surgeon /'dɛnt(ə)l ,sɜ:dʒən/ *noun* a person who is qualified to practise surgery on teeth

dental surgery /'dɛnt(ə)l ,sɜ:dʒəri/ *noun* 1.

the office and operating room of a dentist 2. surgery carried out on teeth

dentine /'dɛntaɪn/ *noun* a hard substance which surrounds the pulp of teeth, beneath the enamel (NOTE: The US spelling is **dentin**.)

dentist /'dɛntɪst/ *noun* a person who is qualified to look after teeth and gums

dentistry /'dɛntɪstri/ *noun* the profession of a dentist, or the branch of medicine dealing with teeth and gums

dentition /dɛn'tɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the number, arrangement and special characteristics of all the teeth in a person's jaws

COMMENT: Children have incisors, canines and molars, which are replaced over a period of years by the permanent teeth: eight incisors, four canines, eight premolars and twelve molars, the last four molars being called the wisdom teeth.

dentoid /'dɛntɔɪd/ *adjective* shaped like a tooth

denture /'dɛntʃə/ *noun* a set of false teeth, fixed to a device which fits inside the mouth

deodorant /di:'əʊd(ə)rənt/ *noun* a substance which hides or prevents unpleasant smells ■ *adjective* hiding or preventing odours

deontology /,di:ən'tɒnlədʒi/ *noun* the ethics of duty and of what is morally right or wrong

deoxygenate /di:'bksɪdʒəneɪt/ *verb* to remove oxygen from something

deoxygenated blood /di:pksɪdʒəneɪt 'blʌd/ *noun* blood from which most of the oxygen has been removed by the tissues. It is darker than arterial oxygenated blood. Also called **venous blood**. Compare **deoxygenated blood**

deoxyribonucleic acid /di:,nksɪ,raɪbənju:kli:k 'æsɪd/ *noun* full form of **DNA**

Department of Health /di:pɑ:tment əv 'heɪlθ/ *noun* in the UK, the government department in charge of health services. Abbr **DH**

dependant /dr'pendənt/ *noun* a person who is looked after or supported by someone else ○ *He has to support a family of six children and several dependants.*

dependence /dr'pendəns/, **dependency** /di'pendənsi/ *noun* the fact of needing the support of something or someone such as a carer, nurse or doctor, or of being addicted to a drug

dependent /dr'pendənt/ *adjective* 1. needing the support of someone or something 2. addicted to a drug 3. referring to a part of the body which is hanging down

dependent relative /dr'pendənt 'relatɪv/ *noun* a person who is looked after by another member of the family

depersonalisation /di:pəzɪs(ə)n(ə)laɪz'zeɪʃ(ə)n/; **depersonalization** *noun* a psychiatric state in which someone does not believe he or she is real

depilation /dɪ'pɪlɪeɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the removal of hair

depilatory /dɪ'pɪlət(ə)ri/ *noun* a substance which removes hair ■ *adjective* removing hair

depletion /dɪ'pli:ʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the act or process of something being reduced

Depo-Provera a trademark for a progestrone derivative used in birth control and the treatment of endometriosis which is administered by three-monthly injection

deposit /dɪ'pozɪt/ *noun* a substance which is attached to part of the body ○ *Some foods leave a hard deposit on teeth.* ○ *A deposit of fat forms on the walls of the arteries.* ■ *verb* to attach a substance to part of the body ○ *Fat is deposited on the walls of the arteries.*

depressant /dɪ'pres(ə)nt/ *noun* a drug which reduces the activity of part of the body, e.g. a tranquilliser

depressed /dɪ'prest/ *adjective* 1. experiencing a mental condition that prevents someone from carrying out the normal activities of life in the usual way □ **clinically depressed** Same as **depressed** 2. feeling miserable and worried (*informal*) ○ *He was depressed after his exam results.* 3. referring to something such as a metabolic rate which is below the usual level

depressed fracture /dɪ'prest 'frækɪʃə/ *noun* a fracture of a flat bone such as those in the skull where part of the bone has been pushed down lower than the surrounding parts

depression /dɪ'preʃ(ə)n/ *noun* 1. a mental condition that prevents someone from carrying out the normal activities of life in the usual way 2. a hollow on the surface of a part of the body

depressive /dɪ'presɪv/ *adjective* relating to, causing, or experiencing mental depression ○ *He is in a depressive state.* ■ *noun* 1. a substance which causes depression 2. someone experiencing depression

depressor /dɪ'presər/ *noun* 1. a muscle which pulls part of the body downwards 2. a nerve which reduces the activity of an organ such as the heart and lowers blood pressure

deprivation /dɪpr'veɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* 1. the fact of not being able to have something that you need or want ○ *sleep deprivation* 2. the lack of basic necessities of life

deradenitis /dɪ'rædɪ'nætɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the lymph nodes in the neck

Dercum's disease /dɜ:kəmz dɪ'zi:z/ *noun* same as **adiposis dolorosa** [Described 1888. After François Xavier Dercum (1856–1931), Professor of Neurology at Jefferson Medical College, Philadelphia, USA.]

derealisation /di:rɪəlɪz'zeɪʃ(ə)n/, **derealization** *noun* a psychological state in which someone feels the world around him or her is not real

derivative /dɪ'rɪvətɪv/ *noun* a substance which is derived from another substance

derm- /dɜ:m/ *prefix* same as **derma-** (*used before vowels*)

-**derm** /dɜ:m/ *suffix* skin

derma- /dɜ:mə/ *prefix* skin

dermal /dɜ:m(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to the skin

dermatitis /dɜ:mə'taitɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the skin

‘...various types of dermal reaction to nail varnish have been noted. Also contact dermatitis caused by cosmetics such as toothpaste, soap, shaving creams.’
[Indian Journal of Medical Sciences]

dermatitis artefacta /dɜ:mətaitɪs ə:tɪ:fæk'tə/ *noun* injuries caused by someone to their own skin

dermatitis herpetiformis /dɜ:mətaitɪs hə:pət'fɔ:mis/ *noun* a type of dermatitis where large itchy blisters form on the skin

dermato- /dɜ:mətəʊ/ *prefix* referring to the skin

dermatochalasis /dɜ:mətəʊkə'læsɪs/ *noun* a condition where a fold of skin moves down over the eyelid, common in older people

dermatographia /dɜ:mətəʊ'græfiə/ *noun* same as **dermographia**

dermatological /dɜ:mətə'lɒdʒɪk(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to dermatology

dermatologist /dɜ:mət'ɒplədʒɪst/ *noun* a doctor who specialises in the study and treatment of the skin and its diseases

dermatology /dɜ:mət'ɒlədʒɪ/ *noun* the study and treatment of the skin and its diseases

dermatome /dɜ:mətəʊm/ *noun* 1. a special knife used for cutting thin sections of skin for grafting 2. an area of skin supplied by one spinal nerve

dermatomycosis /dɜ:mətəʊmar'kəʊsɪs/ *noun* a skin infection caused by a fungus that is not a dermatophyte

dermatomyositis /dɜ:mətəʊmar'ə'sɪtɪs/ *noun* a collagen disease with a wasting inflammation of the skin and muscles

dermatophyte /dɜ:mətə'fəʊtaɪt/ *noun* a fungus belonging to one of three genera which affect the skin or hair, causing tinea

dermatophytosis /dɜ:mətə'fəʊtaɪ'təʊsɪs/ *noun* a fungal infection of the skin caused by a dermatophyte

dermatoplasty /dɜ:mətə'plæsti/ *noun* a skin graft, replacing damaged skin by skin taken from another part of the body or from a donor

dermatosis /dɜ:mətə'əʊsɪs/ *noun* a disease of the skin

dermis /dɜ:mɪs/ *noun* a thick layer of living skin beneath the epidermis. Also called **corium**

dermo- /dɜ:mə/ *prefix* same as **derma-**

dermographia /dɜːmə'græfiə/ *noun* a swelling on the skin produced by pressing with a blunt instrument, usually an allergic reaction. Also called **dermatographia**

dermoid /dɜːmɔɪd/ *adjective* 1. referring to the skin 2. like skin

dermoid cyst /dɜːmɔɪd sɪst/ *noun* a cyst found under the skin, usually in the midline, containing hair, sweat glands and sebaceous glands

Descemet's membrane /deʃe'mets ,membrin/ *noun* one of the deep layers of the cornea [Described 1785. After Jean Descemet (1732–1810), French physician; Professor of Anatomy and Surgery in Paris.]

descending aorta /dɪ,sendɪŋ eɪ'ɔ:tə/ *noun* the second section of the aorta, which turns downwards. Compare **ascending aorta**

descending colon /dɪ,sendɪŋ 'kɔ:lən/ *noun* the third section of the colon which goes down the left side of the body. Compare **ascending colon**. See illustration at **DIGESTIVE SYSTEM** in Supplement

descending tract /dɪ,sendɪŋ 'trækɪt/ *noun* a set of nerves which takes impulses away from the head

desensitisation /dɪ:sensɪta'zeɪʃ(ə)n/, **desensitization** *noun* 1. the act of making someone or something no longer sensitive to something such as an allergen 2. the treatment of an allergy by giving a person injections of small quantities of the substance to which he or she is allergic over a period of time until they become immune to it

desensitise /dɪ:sensətɪz/, **desensitize** *verb* 1. to deaden a nerve and remove sensitivity ○ *The patient was prescribed a course of desensitising injections.* 2. to treat someone suffering from an allergy by giving graduated injections of the substance to which he or she is allergic over a period of time until they become immune to it

designer drug /dɪ'zainə dræg/ *noun* a drug that has been modified to enhance its properties (*informal*)

desogestrel /dɛsə'dʒestrəl/ *noun* a hormone used as an oral contraceptive

desquamate /deskwə'meɪt/ *verb (of skin)* to peel off, or be removed in layers

desquamation /deskwa'meɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* 1. the continual process of losing the outer layer of dead skin 2. peeling off of the epithelial part of a structure

detach /dɪ'tætʃ/ *verb* to separate one thing from another ○ *an operation to detach the cusps of the mitral valve*

detached retina /dɪ,tætʃt 'retɪnə/ *noun* a condition in which the retina becomes partially separated from the eyeball, causing loss of vision. Also called **retinal detachment**

COMMENT: A detached retina can be caused by a blow to the eye, or simply is a condition

occurring in old age. If left untreated the eye will become blind. A detached retina can sometimes be attached to the choroid again using lasers.

detect /dɪ'tekt/ *verb* to sense or to notice, usually something which is very small or difficult to see ○ *an instrument to detect microscopic changes in cell structure* ○ *The nurses detected a slight improvement in the patient's condition.*

detection /dɪ'tekʃən/ *noun* the action of detecting something ○ *the detection of sounds by nerves in the ears* ○ *the detection of a cyst using an endoscope*

detergent /dɪ:tɜː:dʒənt/ *noun* a cleaning substance which removes grease and bacteria

COMMENT: Most detergents are not allergenic but some biological detergents which contain enzymes to remove protein stains can cause dermatitis.

deteriorate /dɪ:tɪəri'reɪt/ *verb* to become worse ○ *The patient's condition deteriorated rapidly.*

deterioration /dɪ:tɪəriə'reɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the fact of becoming worse ○ *The nurses were worried by the deterioration in the patient's reactions.*

determine /dɪ:tɜː'mɪn/ *verb* to find out something by examining the evidence ○ *Health inspectors are trying to determine the cause of the outbreak of Salmonella poisoning.*

detox /dɪ:tɒks/ *noun* same as **detoxification (informal)**

detoxification /dɪ:tɒksi'keɪʃ(ə)n/, **detoxification** /dɪ:tɒksɪfɪ'keɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the removal of toxic substances to make a poisonous substance harmless

detrition /dɪ'trɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the fact of wearing away by rubbing or use

detritus /dɪ'traɪtəs/ *noun* rubbish produced when something disintegrates

detrusor muscle /dɪ'tru:zə ,mʌs(ə)l/ *noun* the muscular coat of the urinary bladder

Dettol /'detɒl/ *noun* a trade name for a disinfectant containing chloroxylenol

detumescence /,dɪ:tju:mes(ə)n/ *noun* 1. (of the penis or clitoris after an erection or orgasm) the process of becoming limp 2. (of a swelling) the process of disappearing

deuteranopia /,dju:tərə'nəʊpiə/ *noun* a form of colour blindness in which someone cannot see green

develop /dɪ'veləp/ *verb* 1. to become larger and stronger, or more complex ○ *The embryo is developing normally.* ○ *A swelling developed under the armpit.* ○ *The sore throat developed into an attack of meningitis.* 2. to make something start to happen ○ *We're developing a new system for dealing with admission to A & E.* 3. to make something start to grow or become larger, stronger or more complex ○ *He does exercises to develop his muscles.* 4. to start to have an illness ○ *The baby*

may be developing a cold. ○ He developed complications and was rushed to hospital.

‘...rheumatoid arthritis is a chronic inflammatory disease which can affect many systems in the body, but mainly the joints. 70% of sufferers develop the condition in the metacarpophalangeal joints.’ [Nursing Times]

development /dɪ'veləpmənt/ *noun* 1. the process of growing, or of becoming larger and stronger, or more complex ○ *The development of the embryo takes place in the uterus.* 2. something which happens and causes a change in a situation ○ *Report any developments to me at once.*

developmental /dɪ'veləp'ment(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to the development of an embryo

developmental delay /dɪ'veləpmənt(ə)l dɪ'leɪ/ *noun* the fact of being later than usual in developing, either physically or psychologically

deviance /'di:vɪəns/ *noun* sexual behaviour which is considered unusual

deviated nasal septum /,dɪ'veɪtɪd 'neɪz(ə)l 'septəm/, **deviated septum** /,dɪ'veɪtɪd 'septəm/ *noun* an unusual position of the septum of the nose which may block the nose and cause nosebleeds

deviation /,di:vɪ'eɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* 1. the fact of being different from what is usual or expected or something which is different from what is usual or expected 2. an unusual position of a joint or of the eye, as in strabismus

Devic's disease /də'veɪks dɪ'zi:z/ *noun* same as **neuromyelitis optica** [Described 1894. After Devic, a French physician who died in 1930.]

dexamethasone /,deksə'meθəsəʊn/ *noun* a synthetic steroid drug that is used to treat inflammation and hormonal imbalances

Dexa scan *noun* a technique to assess changes in someone's bone density, as in osteoporosis or in Paget's disease. Full form **Dual Energy X-Ray Absorptiometry**

dextro- /dekstrəʊ/ *prefix* referring to the right, or the right side of the body

dextrocardia /,dekstrəʊ'kɑ:dɪə/ *noun* a congenital condition in which the apex of the heart is towards the right of the body instead of the left. Compare **laevocardia**

dextromoramide /,dekstrə'mɔ:rəmaɪd/ *noun* an opioid drug used to reduce pain

dextrose /'dekstrəʊz/ *noun* same as **glucose**

DH abbr Department of Health

dhobie itch /,dəʊbi 'ɪtʃ/ *noun* same as **tinea cruris**

DI abbr donor insemination

di- /dai/ *prefix* two, double

dia- /daiə/ *prefix* 1. through or throughout 2. across 3. in different or opposite directions 4. apart

diabetes /,daɪə'bɪ:tɪ:z/ *noun* 1. one of a group of diseases which cause the body to pro-

duce large amounts of urine. ○ **gestational diabetes** 2. same as **diabetes mellitus**

diabetes insipidus /daɪə'bɪ:tɪz in'sɪpɪdəs/ *noun* a rare disorder of the pituitary gland causing an inadequate amount of the hormone vasopressin, which controls urine production, to be produced, leading to excessive passing of urine and extreme thirst

diabetes mellitus /daɪə'bɪ:tɪ:z 'melɪtəs/ *noun* a disease where the body cannot control sugar absorption because the pancreas does not secrete enough insulin

COMMENT: Diabetes mellitus has two forms:

Type I may have a viral trigger caused by an infection which affects the cells in the pancreas which produce insulin; Type II is caused by a lower sensitivity to insulin, is common in older people, and is associated with obesity. Symptoms of diabetes mellitus are tiredness, unusual thirst, frequent passing of water and sweet-smelling urine. Blood and urine tests show high levels of sugar. Treatment for Type II diabetes involves keeping to a strict diet and reducing weight, and sometimes the use of oral hypoglycaemic drugs such as glibenclamide. Type II diabetes is treated with regular injections of insulin.

diabetic /,daɪə'bɛtɪk/ *adjective* 1. referring to diabetes mellitus 2. referring to food which contains few carbohydrates and sugar ○ **diabetic chocolate** ■ *noun* a person who has diabetes

diabetic cataract /,daɪə'bɛtɪk 'kætərækt/ *noun* a cataract which develops in people who have diabetes

diabetic coma /,daɪə'bɛtɪk 'kəʊmə/ *noun* a state of unconsciousness caused by untreated diabetes

diabetic diet /,daɪə'bɛtɪk 'daɪət/ *noun* a diet which is low in carbohydrates and sugar

diabetic retinopathy /,daɪə'bɛtɪk retɪ 'nɒpəθɪ/ *noun* a disease of the retina, caused by diabetes

diabetogenic /,daɪə'bɛtə'gjenɪk/ *adjective* which causes diabetes

diabetologist /,daɪə'bɛtə'tɒplədʒɪst/ *noun* a doctor specialising in the treatment of diabetes mellitus

diaclasia /,daɪə'kleɪzɪə/ *noun* a fracture made by a surgeon to repair an earlier fracture which has set badly, or to correct a deformity

diadochokinesis /dai,ædəkəʊkar'i:nɪsɪs/ *noun* the natural ability to make muscles move limbs in opposite directions

diagnose /'daɪəgnəʊz/ *verb* to identify a condition or illness, by examining the person and noting symptoms ○ *The doctor diagnosed appendicitis.* ○ *The patient was diagnosed with rheumatism.*

diagnosis /,daɪə'gəʊsɪs/ *noun* the act of diagnosing a condition or illness ○ *The doctor's diagnosis was a viral infection, but the child's parents asked for a second opinion.* ○ *They*

*found it difficult to make a diagnosis. Compare **prognosis** (NOTE: The plural is **diagnoses**.)*

diagnostic /daiəg'nɒstɪk/ *adjective* referring to diagnosis

diagnostic and treatment centre /daiəgnɒstɪk ən 'tri:tment ,sentə/ *noun* a facility mainly for day surgery or short-term stay, where a range of planned operations such as joint replacements, hernia repair and cataract removal can be undertaken. Abbr **DTC**

diagnostic imaging /daiəgnɒstɪk 'ɪmɪdʒɪŋ/ *noun* scanning for the purpose of diagnosis, e.g. of a pregnant woman to see if the fetus is healthy

diagnostic process /,daiəg,nɒstɪk 'prəses/ *noun* the series of steps taken in making a diagnosis

diagnostic radiographer *noun* ♦ **radiographer**

diagnostic test /daiəgnɒstɪk 'test/ *noun* a test which helps a doctor diagnose an illness

dialysate /dai'ælsɪt/ *noun* material which is subjected to dialysis

dialyse /'daiələɪz/ *verb* to treat someone using a kidney machine

dialyser /'daiəlaɪzəl/ *noun* an apparatus which uses a membrane to separate solids from liquids, e.g. a kidney machine

dialysis /dai'æləsɪs/ *noun* 1. a procedure in which a membrane is used as a filter to separate soluble waste substances from the blood 2. same as **renal dialysis**

diapedesis /,daiəpə'di:sɪs/ *noun* the movement of white blood cells through the walls of the capillaries into tissues in the development of inflammation

diaphoresis /,daiəfə'rɪ:sɪs/ *noun* excessive perspiration

diaphoretic /,daiəfə'retɪk/ *noun* a drug which causes sweating ■ *adjective* causing sweating

diaphragm /'daiəfræm/ *noun* 1. a thin layer of tissue stretched across an opening, especially the flexible sheet of muscle and fibre which separates the chest from the abdomen and moves to pull air into the lungs in respiration 2. same as **vaginal diaphragm**

COMMENT: The diaphragm is a muscle which, in breathing, expands and contracts with the walls of the chest. The average rate of respiration is about 16 times a minute.

diaphragmatic /,daiəfræg'mætɪk/ *adjective* referring to a diaphragm, or like a diaphragm

diaphragmatic hernia /,daiəfrægmætɪk 'hɜ:nɪə/ *noun* a condition in which a membrane and organ in the abdomen pass through an opening in the diaphragm into the chest

diaphragmatic pleura /,daiəfrægmætɪk 'plʊərə/ *noun* part of the pleura which covers the diaphragm

diaphragmatic pleurisy /,daiəfrægmætɪk 'plʊərɪsɪ/ *noun* inflammation of the pleura which covers the diaphragm

diaphyseal /,daiə'fɪzɪəl/ *adjective* referring to a diaphysis

diaphysis /dai'æfɪsɪs/ *noun* the long central part of a long bone. Also called **shaft**. See illustration at **BONE MARROW** in Supplement

diaphysitis /,daiəfə'saitɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the diaphysis, often associated with rheumatic disease

diarrhoea /,daiə'rɪə/ *noun* a condition in which someone frequently passes liquid faeces ○ attack of diarrhoea ○ mild/severe diarrhoea (NOTE: The US spelling is **diarrhea**.)

COMMENT: Diarrhoea can have many causes: types of food or allergy to food; contaminated or poisoned food; infectious diseases, such as dysentery; sometimes worry or other emotions.

diarrhoeal /,daiə'rɪəl/ *adjective* referring to or caused by diarrhoea

diarthrosis /,daiər'θrəʊsɪs/ *noun* same as **synovial joint**

diastase /'daiəstæz/ *noun* an enzyme which breaks down starch and converts it into sugar

diastasis /,daiə'steɪsɪs/ *noun* 1. a condition in which a bone separates into parts 2. dislocation of bones at an immovable joint

diastema /,daiə'sti:mə/ *noun* 1. an unusually wide space between adjacent teeth 2. an unusual gap in any body part or organ

diastole /dai'æstəl/ *noun* the part of the process involved in each beat of the heart when its chambers expand and fill with blood. The period of diastole (usually 95 mmHg) lasts about 0.4 seconds in an average heart rate. Compare **systole**

diastolic /,daiə'stɒlɪk/ *adjective* relating to the diastole

diastolic pressure /,daiəstɒlɪk 'pre:sə/ *noun* blood pressure taken at the diastole (NOTE: Diastolic pressure is always lower than systolic.)

diathermy /,daiə'θɜ:mi/ *noun* the use of high-frequency electric current to produce heat in body tissue

COMMENT: The difference between medical and surgical uses of diathermy is in the size of the electrodes used. Two large electrodes will give a warming effect over a large area (**medical diathermy**); if one of the electrodes is small, the heat will be concentrated enough to coagulate tissue (**surgical diathermy**).

diathermy knife /,daiə'θɜ:mi naɪf/ *noun* a knife used in surgical diathermy

diathermy needle /,daiə'θɜ:mi 'ni:d(ə)l/ *noun* a needle used in surgical diathermy

diathermy snare /,daiə'θɜ:mi sneə/ *noun* a snare which is heated by electrodes and burns away tissue

diathesis /dai'æθəsɪs/ *noun* the general inherited constitution of a person in relation to

their susceptibility to specific diseases or allergies

diazepam /dai'æzəpæm/ *noun* a tranquilliser used in the short term to treat anxiety and as a muscle relaxant. In the long term it is potentially addictive.

diazoxide /dai'zɒksaɪd/ *noun* a drug used as a vasodilator, to reduce hypertension

DIC *abbr* disseminated intravascular coagulation

dicephalus /dai'sefələs/ *noun* a fetus with two heads

dichlorphenamide /,daɪklɔː'fɛnəmaɪd/ *noun* a drug used to treat glaucoma

dichromatism /,daɪkrəʊ'mætɪz(ə)m/ *noun* colour blindness in which only two of the three primary colours can be seen. Compare **monochromatism, trichromatism**

diclofenac sodium /,daɪkləfənæk 'soʊdiəm/ *noun* an anti-inflammatory drug used to treat rheumatic disease

dicrotic pulse /dai,krɒtɪk 'pəls/, **dicrotic wave** /dai,krɒtɪk 'weɪv/ *noun* a pulse which occurs twice with each heartbeat

dicrotism /'daɪkrɒtɪz(ə)m/ *noun* a condition in which the pulse occurs twice with each heartbeat

die /dai/ *verb* to stop living ○ *His father died last year. ○ She died in a car crash. (NOTE: dying – died)*

diencephalon /,daiən'sefələn, ,daien 'kefələn/ *noun* the central part of the forebrain, formed of the thalamus, hypothalamus, pineal gland and third ventricle

diet /'daɪət/ *noun* the amount and type of food eaten ○ *a balanced diet* ■ *verb* to reduce the quantity of food you eat, or to change the type of food you eat, in order to become thinner or healthier ○ *He is dieting to try to lose weight.*

dietary /'daɪət(ə)ri/ *noun* a system of nutrition and energy ○ *The nutritionist supervised the dietaries for the patients.* ■ *adjective* referring to a diet

dietary fibre /'daɪət(ə)ri ,faɪbə/ *noun* fibrous matter in food, which cannot be digested. Also called **roughage**

COMMENT: Dietary fibre is found in cereals, nuts, fruit and some green vegetables. There are two types of fibre in food: insoluble fibre, e.g. in bread and cereals, which is not digested, and soluble fibre, e.g. in vegetables and pulses. Foods with the highest proportion of fibre include wholemeal bread, beans and dried apricots. Fibre is thought to be necessary to help digestion and avoid developing constipation, obesity and appendicitis.

dietetic /daiə'tetɪk/ *adjective* referring to diets

dietetic principles /daiətetɪk 'prɪnsəp(ə)lz/ *noun* rules concerning the body's needs in food, vitamins or trace elements

dietetics /,daɪə'tetɪks/ *noun* the study of food, nutrition and health, especially when applied to people's food intake

dieting /'daɪətɪŋ/ *noun* the act of attempting to reduce weight by reducing the amount of food eaten ○ *Eat sensibly and get plenty of exercise, then there should be no need for dieting.*

dietitian /,daɪə'tɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* someone who specialises in the study of diet, especially someone in a hospital who supervises dietaries as part of the medical treatment of patients. ○ **nutritionist**

Dietl's crisis /'di:t(ə)lz ,kraɪəsɪs/ *noun* a painful blockage of the ureter, causing back pressure on the kidney which fills with urine and swells [After Joseph Dietl (1804–78), Polish physician]

diet sheet /'daɪət si:t/ *noun* a list of suggestions for quantities and types of food given to someone to follow

differential /,dɪfə'renʃəl/ *adjective* referring to a difference

differential blood count /,dɪfə'renʃəl 'blæd ,kaʊnt/, **differential white cell count** /,dɪfə'renʃəl 'waɪt sel ,kaʊnt/ *noun* a test that shows the amounts of different types of white blood cell in a blood sample

differential diagnosis /,dɪfə'renʃəl dəɪəg'nəʊsɪs/ *noun* the identification of one disease from a number of other similar diseases by comparing the range of symptoms of each

differentiation /,dɪfə'renʃən'etɪf(ə)n/ *noun* the development of specialised cells during the early embryo stage

diffuse *verb* /'dɪfju:z/ to spread through tissue, or cause something to spread ○ *Some substances easily diffuse through the walls of capillaries.* ■ *adjective* /'dɪfju:s/ referring to a disease which is widespread in the body, or which affects many organs or cells

diffusion /'dɪfju:ʒ(ə)n/ *noun* 1. the process of mixing a liquid with another liquid, or a gas with another gas 2. the passing of a liquid or gas through a membrane

digest /'daɪ'dʒest/ *verb* to break down food in the alimentary canal and convert it into components which are absorbed into the body

digestible /daɪ'dʒestib(ə)l/ *adjective* able to be digested ○ *Glucose is an easily digestible form of sugar.*

digestion /daɪ'dʒestʃən/ *noun* the process by which food is broken down in the alimentary canal into components which can be absorbed by the body

digestive /daɪ'dʒestɪv/ *adjective* relating to digestion

digestive enzyme /daɪ,dʒestɪv 'enzaim/ *noun* an enzyme which encourages digestion

digestive juice /dɪ'gɛstɪv ju:s/ *noun* ↗ **gastric juice, intestinal juice (usually plural)**

digestive system /dɪ'gɛstɪv ,sɪstəm/ *noun* the set of organs such as the stomach, liver and pancreas which are associated with the digestion of food. Also called **alimentary system**

digestive tract /dɪ'gɛstɪv trækt/ *noun* same as **alimentary canal**

digestive tube /dɪ'gɛstɪv tju:b/ *adjective* US same as **alimentary canal**

digit /'dɪdʒɪt/ *noun* 1. a finger or a toe 2. a number

digital /'dɪdʒɪtl/ *adjective* 1. referring to fingers or toes 2. representing data or physical quantities in numerical form

digitalin /,dɪdʒɪ'teɪlɪn/, **digitalis** /,dɪdʒɪ'teɪlɪs/ *noun* a drug derived from foxglove leaves, used in small doses to treat heart conditions

digitalise /'dɪdʒɪtəlaɪz/, **digitalize** *verb* to treat someone who has heart failure with digoxin

digital palpation /,dɪdʒɪt(ə)l pæl'peɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* an examination of part of the body by feeling it with the fingers

digital vein /'dɪdʒɪt(ə)l veɪn/ *noun* a vein draining the fingers or toes

digitoxin /,dɪdʒɪ'tɒksɪn/ *noun* an extract of foxglove leaves, used as a drug to stimulate the heart in cases of heart failure or irregular heartbeat

digoxin /dai'dʒɒksɪn/ *noun* an extract of foxglove leaves, which acts more rapidly than digitoxin when used as a heart stimulant

dihydrocodeine tartrate /dai,haidrəʊ,kɔ:dɪn: 'ta:tret/ *noun* an analgesic used to treat severe pain

dilatation /,daɪleɪt'eɪʃ(ə)n/, **dilation** /dai'leɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* 1. the act of making a hollow space or a passage in the body bigger or wider ○ *dilatation of the cervix during labour* 2. expansion of the pupil of the eye as a reaction to bad light or to drugs

dilatation and curettage /daɪleɪt,eɪf(ə)n ən kju:a'retɪdʒ/ *noun* a surgical operation to scrape the interior of the uterus to obtain a tissue sample or to remove products of miscarriage. Abbr **D & C**

dilate /dai'leɪt, dr'leɪt/ *verb* to become wider or larger, or make something become wider or larger ○ *The veins in the left leg have become dilated.* ○ *The drug is used to dilate the pupil of the eye.*

dilator /dai'leɪtə/ *noun* 1. an instrument used to widen the entrance to a cavity 2. a drug used to make part of the body expand

dilator pupillae muscle /dai,leɪtə pjū:pili:mas(ə)/ *noun* a muscle in the iris which pulls the iris back and so makes the pupil expand

diltiazem hydrochloride /dil'taɪəzəm,haɪdrə'klɔ:raɪd/ *noun* a calcium channel blocker used to treat hypertension

diluent /'dɪljuənt/ *noun* a substance which is used to dilute a liquid, e.g. water

dilute /dai'lju:t/ *adjective* with water added ■ *verb* to add water to a liquid to make it less concentrated ○ *Dilute the disinfectant in four parts of water.*

dilution /dai'lju:f(ə)n/ *noun* 1. the action of diluting 2. a liquid which has been diluted

dimenhydrinate /,daɪmen'haidrəneɪt/ *noun* an antihistamine drug that relieves travel sickness

dimetria /dai'mi:t्रɪə/ *noun* a condition in which a woman has a double uterus

dioptrē /dai'bɒptə/ *noun* a unit of measurement of the refraction of a lens (NOTE: The US spelling is **dioptrē**)

COMMENT: A one dioptrē lens has a focal length of one metre; the greater the dioptrē, the shorter the focal length.

dioxide /dai'ɒksaɪd/ ↗ **carbon dioxide**

dioxin /dai'ɒksɪn/ *noun* an extremely poisonous gas

DIP abbr distal interphalangeal joint

diphenoxalate /,daɪfen'ɒksileɪt/ *noun* a drug related to pethidine that is used to treat diarrhoea, sometimes mixed with a little atropine in commercial preparations

diphtheria /dɪfθə'rɪə/ *noun* a serious infectious disease of children, caused by the bacillus *Corynebacterium diphtheriae*, characterised by fever and the formation of a fibrous growth like a membrane in the throat which restricts breathing

COMMENT: Symptoms of diphtheria are a sore throat, followed by a slight fever, rapid pulse and swelling of glands in the neck. The 'membrane' which forms can close the air passages, and the disease is often fatal, either because the patient is asphyxiated or because the heart becomes fatally weakened. The disease is also highly infectious, and all contacts of the patient must be tested. The Schick test is used to test if a person is immune or susceptible to diphtheria. In countries where infants are immunised the disease is rare.

diphtheroid /dɪfθə'rɔɪd/ *adjective* referring to a bacterium similar to the diphtheria bacterium

-**dipine** /dɪpɪn/ *suffix* used in the names of calcium channel blockers ○ *nifedipine*

dipi- /dɪpl/ *prefix* same as **diplo-** (used before vowels)

diplacusis /,dɪplə'kju:sɪs/ *noun* a disorder of the cochlea in which a person hears one sound as two sounds of different pitch

diplegia /dai'pli:dʒə/ *noun* paralysis of a similar part on both sides of the body, e.g. paralysis of both arms. Compare **hemiplegia**

diplegic /dai'pli:dʒɪk/ *adjective* referring to diplegia

diplo- /dɪpləʊ/ *prefix double*

diplococcus /dɪpləʊ'kɒkəs/ *noun* a bacterium which usually occurs in pairs as a result of incomplete cell division, e.g. a pneumococcus (NOTE: The plural is **diplococci**.)

diploe /dɪpləʊɪ/ *noun* a layer of spongy bone tissue filled with red bone marrow, between the inner and outer layers of the skull

diploid /dɪplɔɪd/ *adjective* referring to a cell where there are two copies of each chromosome, except the sex chromosome. In humans the diploid number of chromosomes is 46.

diplopia /dɪpləʊpiə/ *noun* a condition in which someone sees single objects as double. Also called **double vision**

dipsomania /dɪpsəʊ'meɪniə/ *noun* an uncontrollable desire to drink alcohol

direct contact /dɪ'rektənt/ *noun* a situation where someone or something physically touches an infected person or object

directions /dɪ'rekʃənz/ *noun* □ **directions for use** (*on a bottle of medicine, etc.*) instructions showing how to use something and how much of it to use

director /dɪ'rektər/ *noun* an instrument used to limit the incision made with a surgical knife

dis- /dɪs/ *prefix 1.* undoing or reversal *2.* removal from *3.* lacking or deprived of

disability /dɪsə'bɪlɪti/ *noun* a condition in which part of the body does not function in the usual way and makes some activities difficult or impossible. ◇ **learning disability**

'...disability – any restriction or lack (resulting from an impairment) of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being' [WHO]

disable /dɪs'eib(ə)l/ *verb* to make someone unable to do some activity ◇ *He was disabled by a lung disease.*

disabled /dɪs'eib(ə)ld/ *noun* people suffering from a physical or mental condition which makes some activities difficult or impossible

Disabled Living Foundation /dɪs'erb(ə)ld 'lɪvɪŋ faʊn,dेɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a charity which aims to help disabled people live independently

disablement /dɪs'erb(ə)lmēnt/ *noun* a condition which makes some activities difficult or impossible

disabling disease /dɪs,eiblɪŋ dr'zɪ:z/ *noun* a disease which makes some activities difficult or impossible

disarticulation /dɪs'a:tɪkju'lēf(ə)n/ *noun* the amputation of a limb at a joint, which does not involve dividing a bone

disc /dɪsk/ *noun* a flat round structure. ◇ **intervertebral disc**

discharge *noun* /dɪstʃə:dʒ/ **1.** the secretion of liquid from an opening **2.** the process of sending a patient away from a hospital because the treatment has ended ■ *verb* /dɪ'stʃə:dʒ/ **1.** to secrete liquid out of an opening ◇ *The*

wound discharged a thin stream of pus. **2.** to send a patient away from hospital because the treatment has ended ◇ *He was discharged from hospital last week.* ◇ **to discharge yourself** to decide to leave hospital and stop taking the treatment provided

discharge planning /dɪstʃə:pλænɪŋ/ *noun* the work of making a plan for when a patient leaves hospital to live at home

discharge rate /dɪstʃə:dʒ reɪt/ *noun* the number of patients with a particular type of disorder who are sent home from hospitals in a particular area (shown as the number per 10,000 of population)

discoloration /dɪs,kʌlə'reɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a change in colour

discolour /dɪs'kʌlə/ *verb* to change the colour of something ◇ *His teeth were discoloured from smoking cigarettes.* (NOTE: The US spelling is **discolor**.)

COMMENT: Teeth can be discoloured in fluorosis. If the skin on the lips is discoloured it may indicate that the person has swallowed a poison.

discomfort /dɪs'kʌmfət/ *noun* a feeling of mild pain ◇ *You may experience some discomfort after the operation.*

discrete /dɪ'skrɪ:t/ *adjective* separate, not joined together

discrete rash /dɪ'skrɪ:t 'ræʃ/ *noun* a rash which is formed of many separate spots, which do not join together into one large red patch

disease /dr'i:zɪ:z/ *noun* a condition that stops the body from functioning in the usual way ◇ *an infectious disease* ◇ *She is suffering from a very serious disease of the kidneys or from a serious kidney disease.* ◇ *He is a specialist in occupational diseases.* (NOTE: The term **disease** is applied to all physical and mental reactions which make a person ill. Diseases with distinct characteristics have individual names. For other terms referring to disease, see words beginning with **path-**, **patho-**.)

diseased /dɪ'zɪ:zd/ *adjective* affected by a disease ◇ *The surgeon cut away the diseased tissue.*

disfigure /dɪs'fɪgə/ *verb* to change someone's appearance so as to make it less pleasant to look at ◇ *Her legs were disfigured by scars.*

dish /dɪʃ/ *noun* a shallow open container

disinfect /dɪsɪn'fekt/ *verb* to make the surface of something or somewhere free from microorganisms ◇ *She disinfected the skin with surgical spirit.* ◇ *All the patient's clothes have to be disinfected.*

disinfectant /dɪsɪn'fektənt/ *noun* a substance used to kill microorganisms on the surface of something

disinfection /dɪsɪn'fekʃən/ *noun* the removal of microorganisms on the surface of something

COMMENT: The words **disinfect**, **disinfectant**, and **disinfection** are used for substances which destroy microorganisms on instruments, objects or the skin. Substances used to kill microorganisms inside infected people are **antibiotics**.

disinfest /dɪsɪn'fɛst/ *verb* to free a place, person or animal from insects or other pests
disinfestation /dɪsɪnfə'steɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the removal of insects or other pests from a place, person or animal

dislocate /'dɪsləkeɪt/ *verb* to displace a bone from its usual position at a joint, or to become displaced ○ *He fell and dislocated his elbow.* ○ *The shoulder joint dislocates easily.*

dislocation /dɪslə'keɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a condition in which a bone is displaced from its usual position at a joint. Also called **luxation**

dismember /dɪs'membər/ *verb* to cut off or pull off someone's arms or legs, often violently or in an accident

dismemberment /dɪs'membəmənt/ *noun* the state of being dismembered

disorder /dɪs'ɔ:də/ *noun* a condition in which part of the body is not functioning correctly ○ *The doctor specialises in disorders of the kidneys or in kidney disorders.*

disordered /dɪs'ɔ:dəd/ *adjective* not functioning correctly

disordered action of the heart /dɪs'ɔ:dəd 'ækʃən əv ði: ha:t/ *noun* a condition in which someone has palpitations, breathlessness and dizziness, caused by effort or worry. Also called **da Costa's syndrome**, **cardiac neurosis**. Abbr **DAH**

disorientated /dɪs'ɔ:riən,tetɪtɪd/ *adjective* referring to someone who is confused and does not know where he or she is

disorientation /dɪsɔ:riən'teɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a condition in which someone is confused and does not know where he or she is

dispensary /dɪ'spensəri/ *noun* a place where drugs are prepared or mixed and given out according to a doctor's prescription, e.g. part of a chemist's shop or a department in a hospital

dispense /dɪ'spens/ *verb* to supply medicine according to a prescription

dispenser /dɪ'spensə/ *noun* someone who supplies medicine according to a prescription, especially in a hospital

dispensing optician /dɪ'spensɪŋ ɒp'tɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a person who fits and sells glasses but does not test eyes

dispensing practice /dɪ'spensɪŋ ,præktɪs/ *noun* a doctor's practice which dispenses prescribed medicines to its patients

displace /dɪs'pleɪs/ *verb* to put something out of its usual place

displaced intervertebral disc /dɪs'plaɪsd intə,vɜ:tɪbr(ə)l 'disk/ *noun* a disc which has moved slightly, so that the soft interior passes

through the tougher exterior and causes pressure on a nerve

displacement /dɪs'pleɪsmənt/ *noun* the fact of being moved out of the usual position ○ *fracture of the radius together with displacement of the wrist*

disposable /dɪs'poʊzəb(ə)l/ *adjective* designed to be thrown away after use ○ *disposable syringes*

disposition /dɪspə'zɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a person's general character or tendency to act in a particular way

disproportion /dɪsprə'pɔ:ʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a lack of proper relationships between two things

dissecans /'dɪsəkænz/ ♀ **osteochondritis dissecans**

dissect /dɪs'ekt/ *verb* to cut and separate tissues in a body to examine them

dissecting aneurysm /,dɪsɛktɪŋ 'ænjə ,rɪz(ə)m/ *noun* an aneurysm which occurs when the inside wall of the aorta is torn and blood enters the membrane

dissection /dɪ'sekʃən/ *noun* the action of cutting and separating parts of a body or an organ as part of a surgical operation, an autopsy or a course of study

'...renal dissection usually takes from 40–60 minutes, while liver and pancreas dissections take from one to three hours. Cardiac dissection takes about 20 minutes and lung dissection takes 60 to 90 minutes.' [Nursing Times]

disseminated /dɪ'semɪneɪtɪd/ *adjective* occurring in every part of an organ or in the whole body

disseminated intravascular coagulation /dɪ,semɪneɪtɪd intrə,væskulə kəʊ ,ægju'leɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a disorder that causes extensive clot formation in the blood vessels, followed by severe bleeding. Abbr **DIC**

disseminated lupus erythematosus /dɪ ,semɪneɪtɪd ,lu:pəs ,erɪθɪ:mə'təʊsɪs/ *noun* an inflammatory disease where a skin rash is associated with widespread changes in the central nervous system, the cardiovascular system and many organs. Abbr **DLE**

disseminated sclerosis /dɪ,semɪneɪtɪd sklə'rəʊsɪs/ *noun* same as **multiple sclerosis**

dissemination /dɪ,semɪ'nɛɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the fact of being widespread throughout the body

dissociate /dɪ'səʊsiæt/ *verb* 1. to separate parts or functions 2. in psychiatry, to separate part of the conscious mind from the rest

dissociated anaesthesia /dɪ,səʊsi,etɪd ,ænə'seɪθiəzɪə/ *noun* a loss of sensitivity to heat, pain or cold

dissociation /dɪ,səʊfi'eɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* 1. the separation of parts or functions 2. (in psychiatry) a condition in which part of the consciousness becomes separated from the rest and becomes independent

dissociative disorder /dɪ'səʊsiətɪv dɪsɔːdər/ *noun* a type of hysteria in which someone shows psychological changes such as a split personality or amnesia rather than physical ones

dissolve /dɪ'zɒlv/ *verb* to absorb or disperse something in liquid ◦ *The gut used in sutures slowly dissolves in the body fluids.*

distal /'dɪst(ə)l/ *adjective* further away from the centre of a body

distal convoluted tubule /,dɪst(ə)l ,kɒnvəlju:tɪd tju:bju:l/ *noun* a part of the kidney filtering system before the collecting ducts

Distalgic /,dɪst(ə)l'dʒi:zɪk/ a trade name for the analgesic co-proxamol

distal interphalangeal joint /,dɪst(ə)l ,ɪntəfə'lændʒiəl ,dʒɔɪnt/ *noun* a joint nearest the end of the finger or toe. Abbr DIP

distally /'dɪst(ə)li/ *adverb* placed further away from the centre or point of attachment. Opposite **proximally**. See illustration at ANATOMICAL TERMS in Supplement

distal phalanges /,dɪst(ə)l fə'lændʒi:z/ *noun* bones nearest the ends of the fingers and toes

distended /dɪ'stendɪd/ *adjective* made larger by gas such as air, by liquid such as urine, or by a solid

distended bladder /dɪ,stendɪd 'blædər/ *noun* a bladder which is full of urine

distension /dɪs'tenʃən/ *noun* a condition in which something is swollen ◦ *Distension of the veins in the abdomen is a sign of blocking of the portal vein.*

distichiasis /,dɪstɪ'kaɪəsɪs/ *noun* the presence of extra eyelashes, sometimes growing on the meibomian glands

distil /dɪ'stɪl/ *verb* to separate the component parts of a liquid by boiling and collecting the condensed vapour

distillation /,dɪstɪl'leɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the action of distilling a liquid

distilled water /dɪ,stɪld 'wɔ:tə/ *noun* water which has had impurities by distillation

distort /dɪ'stɔ:t/ *verb* to twist something into an unusual shape ◦ *His lower limbs were distorted by the disease.*

distortion /dɪ'stɔ:sʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the act of twisting part of the body out of its usual shape

distraction /dɪ'strækʃən/ *noun* 1. something that takes a person's attention away from something else 2. a state where someone is very emotionally and mentally troubled

distress /dɪ'stres/ *noun* unhappiness caused by pain or worry ◦ *mental distress*

district general hospital /,dɪstrikt ,dʒen(ə)rəl 'hɒspɪt(ə)l/ *noun* a hospital which serves the needs of the population of a specific district

district nurse /,dɪstrikt 'nɜ:s/ *noun* a nurse who visits and treats people in their homes

disturb /dɪ'stɜ:b/ *verb* 1. to interrupt what someone is doing ◦ *Her sleep was disturbed by the other patients in the ward.* 2. to upset or worry someone

disturbed /dɪ'stɜ:bd/ *adjective* affected by a psychiatric disorder ◦ *severely disturbed children*

disulfiram /dɪs'ɔlfɪræm/ *noun* a drug used to treat alcoholism by causing severe nausea if alcohol is consumed with it

dithranol /dɪθrænəl/ *noun* an anti-inflammatory drug used to treat dermatitis and psoriasis

diuresis /,daɪərə'sɪs/ *noun* an increase in the production of urine

diuretic /,daɪərə'tɪk/ *adjective* causing the kidneys to produce more urine ■ *noun* a substance which makes the kidneys produce more urine and, in the treatment of oedema and hypertension

diurnal /dɪ'ɜ:n(ə)l/ *adjective* 1. happening in the daytime 2. happening every day

divarication /dai,væri'keɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* 1. separation into widely spread branches 2. the point at which a structure forks or divides

divergence /dai've:ʒəns/ *noun* 1. a condition in which one eye points directly at the object of interest but the other does not 2. the process of moving apart to follow different courses 3. the amount of difference between two quantities, especially where the difference is unexpected 4. a deviation from a typical behaviour pattern or expressed wish

divergent strabismus /dai,vɜ:dʒənt strə'bɪzməs/, **divergent squint** /dai,vɜ:dʒənt 'skwɪnt/ *noun* a condition in which a person's eyes both look away from the nose. Opposite **convergent strabismus**

diverticula /,daɪvə'tɪkjʊlə/ plural of **diverticulum**

diverticular disease /,daɪvə'tɪkjʊlə di,zi:z/ *noun* a disease of the large intestine, where the colon thickens and diverticula form in the walls, causing pain in the lower abdomen

diverticulitis /,daɪvə'tɪkjʊ'lætɪs/ *noun* inflammation of diverticula formed in the wall of the colon

diverticulosis /,daɪvə'tɪkjʊ'ləʊsɪs/ *noun* a condition in which diverticula form in the intestine but are not inflamed. In the small intestine, this can lead to blind loop syndrome

diverticulum /,daɪvə'tɪkjʊləm/ *noun* a little sac or pouch which develops in the wall of the intestine or another organ (NOTE: The plural is **diverticula**)

division /dɪ'veɪʒ(ə)n/ *noun* the action of cutting or splitting into parts

divulsa /dɪ'vʌlsə/ *noun* a surgical instrument used to expand a passage in the body

dizygotic /daɪzətɪk/ *adjective* developed from two separately fertilised eggs

dizygotic twins /daɪzægɪptɪk 'twɪnz/ *plural noun* twins who are not identical and not always of the same sex because they come from two different ova fertilised at the same time. Also called **fraternal twins**

dizziness /'dɪzɪnəs/ *noun* the feeling that everything is going round because the sense of balance has been affected

dizzy /'dizi/ *adjective* feeling that everything is going round because the sense of balance has been affected ○ *The ear infection made her feel dizzy for some time afterwards.* ○ *He experiences dizzy spells.*

dl abbr decilitre

DLE abbr disseminated lupus erythematosus
dm abbr decimetre

DMD abbr US doctor of dental medicine

DNA /di: en eɪ/ *noun* one of the nucleic acids, the basic genetic material present in the nucleus of each cell. Full form **deoxyribonucleic acid**

DNA fingerprint /di: en eɪ 'fɪngəprɪnt/ *noun* same as **genetic fingerprint**

DNA fingerprinting /di: en eɪ 'fɪngə,prɪntɪŋ/ *noun* same as **genetic fingerprinting**

DNR abbr do not resuscitate

DOA abbr dead on arrival

dobutamine /dəʊ'bju:təmī:n/ *noun* a drug used to stimulate the heart

doctor /'dɒktə/ *noun* 1. a person who has trained in medicine and is qualified to examine people when they are ill to find out what is wrong with them and to prescribe a course of treatment 2. a title given to a qualified person who is registered with the General Medical Council (NOTE: **Doctor** is shortened to **Dr** when written before a name.)

COMMENT: In the UK surgeons are traditionally not called 'Doctor', but are addressed as 'Mr', 'Mrs', etc. The title 'doctor' is also applied to persons who have a higher degree from a university in a non-medical subject. So 'Dr Jones' may have a degree in music, or in any other subject without a connection with medicine.

doctor-assisted suicide /'dɒktə ə,sɪstɪd/ /su:isaɪd/ *noun* the suicide of someone with an incurable disease carried out with the help of a doctor (NOTE: Doctor-assisted suicide is illegal in most countries.)

Döderlein's bacillus /də:dəlæinz bækɪləs/ *noun* a bacterium usually found in the vagina [After Albert Siegmund Gustav Döderlein (1860–1941), German obstetrician and gynaecologist]

dolicho- /dɒlɪkəʊ/ *prefix* long

dolichocephalic /dɒlɪkəʊs'fælɪk/ *adjective* referring to a person with an unusually long skull

dolichocephaly /dɒlɪkəʊ'sefəlɪ/ *noun* a condition of a person who has a skull which is

longer than usual, the measurement across the skull being less than 75% of the length of the head from front to back

dolor /'dɒlə/ *noun* pain

dolorimetry /dɒlə'rɪmətri/ *noun* the measurement of pain

dolorosa /dɒlə'rəʊsə/ ♀ **adiposis dolorosa**

domiciliary /dɒmɪ'lɪərɪ/ *adjective* at home or in the home

domiciliary care /dɒmɪ'lɪərɪ keə/ *noun* personal, domestic, or nursing care provided at home for people who need it

domiciliary midwife /dɒmɪslɪərɪ 'mɪdwɪft/ *noun* a nurse with special qualification in midwifery, who can assist in childbirth at home

domiciliary services /dɒmɪ'lɪərɪ ,sɜːvɪsɪz/ *plural noun* nursing services which are available to people in their homes

domiciliary visit /dɒmɪslɪərɪ 'vɪzɪt/ *noun* a visit to the patient's home

dominance /dɒmɪnəns/ *noun* the characteristic of a gene form (**allele**) that leads to the trait which it controls being shown in any individual carrying it

dominant /dɒmɪnənt/ *adjective* important or powerful ■ *noun (of an allele)* having the characteristic that leads to the trait which it controls being shown in any individual carrying it. Compare **recessive**

COMMENT: Since each physical trait is governed by two genes, if one is recessive and the other dominant, the resulting trait will be that of the dominant gene.

domino booking /'dɒmɪnəʊ ,bʊkɪŋ/ *noun* an arrangement for the delivery of a baby, where the baby is delivered in hospital by a midwife and the mother and child return home soon afterwards

Donald-Fothergill operation /,dɒnləd 'fʊðəgɪl əpə,reɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* an operation to close the neck of the vagina

donate /dəʊ'næt/ *verb* to agree to give blood, tissue, organs, or reproductive material to be used to treat another person

donor /'dəʊnər/ *noun* a person who gives blood, tissue, organs or reproductive material to be used to treat another person

donor card /'dəʊnər kɑ:d/ *noun* a card carried by people stating that they give permission for their organs to be transplanted into other people after they have died

donor insemination /,dəʊnər insemɪ'nætɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* artificial insemination using the sperm of an anonymous donor. Abbr **DI**

dopa /'dəʊpə/ *noun* a chemical related to adrenaline and dopamine. It occurs naturally in the body and in the form levodopa is used to treat Parkinson's disease.

dopamine /'dəʊpəmī:n/ *noun* a substance found in the medulla of the adrenal glands, which also acts as a neurotransmitter. Lack of

dopamine is associated with Parkinson's disease.

dopaminergic /dəʊpəmēn'ɪk/ *adjective* referring to a neurone or receptor stimulated by dopamine

Doppler transducer /'dɒplə trænz,dju:sə/noun a device to measure blood flow, commonly used to monitor fetal heart rate

Doppler ultrasound /'dɒplə 'ʌltrəsaʊnd/noun the use of the Doppler effect in ultrasound to detect red blood cells

Doppler ultrasound flowmeter /,dɒplə ,ʌltrəsaʊnd 'floʊmi:tə/noun a device which measures the flow of blood and detects steady or irregular flow, allowing abnormalities or blockages to be detected

dormant /'dɔ:mənt/ *adjective* inactive for a time ○ *The virus lies dormant in the body for several years.*

dorsa /'dɔ:sə/ plural of **dorsum**

dorsal /'dɔ:s(ə)l/ *adjective* 1. referring to the back. Opposite **ventral** 2. referring to the back of the body

dorsal vertebrae /,dɔ:s(ə)l 'vɜ:tibrəl/ *plural noun* the twelve vertebrae in the back between the cervical vertebrae and the lumbar vertebrae

dorsi- /dɔ:sɪ/ *prefix* referring to the back

dorsiflexion /,dɔ:sɪ'fleksʃən/ *noun* flexion towards the back of part of the body, e.g. raising the foot at the ankle. Compare **plantar flexion**

dorso- /dɔ:səʊ/ *prefix* same as **dorsi-**

dorsoventral /,dɔ:səʊ'ventrəl/ *adjective* 1. referring to both the front and the back of the body 2. extending from the back of the body to the front

dorsum /'dɔ:səm/ *noun* the back of any part of the body (NOTE: The plural is **dorsa**.)

dosage /'dəʊsɪdʒ/ *noun* a measured quantity of a drug calculated to be necessary for someone ○ *a low dosage* ○ *The doctor decided to increase the dosage of antibiotics.* ○ *The dosage for children is half that for adults.*

dose /dəʊs/ *noun* 1. a measured quantity of a drug or radiation which is to be given to someone at one time ○ *It is dangerous to exceed the prescribed dose.* 2. a short period of experiencing a minor illness (*informal*) ○ *a dose of flu* 3. an infection with a sexually transmitted disease (*informal*) ■ *verb* to provide someone with medication (*informal*) ○ *She has been dosing herself with laxatives.*

dosimeter /dəʊ'sɪmɪtə/ *noun* an instrument which measures the amount of X-rays or other radiation received

dosimetry /dəʊ'sɪmətri/ *noun* the act of measuring the amount of X-rays or radiation received, using a dosimeter

double-blind randomised controlled trial /,dʌb(ə)l blænd ,rændəmaɪzd kən,trəʊld

'trɪəl/ *noun* a trial used to test new treatments in which patients are randomly placed in either the treatment or the control group without either the patient or doctor knowing which group any particular patient is in

double blind study /,dʌb(ə)l 'blænd ,stʌdi/ *noun* an investigation to test an intervention in which neither the patient nor the doctor knows if the patient is receiving active medication or a placebo

double-jointed /,dʌb(ə)l 'dʒɔɪntɪd/ *adjective* able to bend joints to an unusual degree (*informal*)

double pneumonia /,dʌb(ə)l nju:'məuniə/noun same as **bilateral pneumonia**

double uterus /,dʌb(ə)l 'ju:t(ə)rəs/ *noun* a condition in which the uterus is divided into two sections by a membrane. Also called **uterus didelphys**. ♀ **dimetria**

double vision /,dʌb(ə)l 'vɪʒ(ə)n/ *noun* same as **diplopia** (*informal*)

douche /du:tʃ/ *noun* a liquid forced into the body to wash out a cavity, or a device used for washing out a cavity

Douglas bag /'dʌgləs bæg/ *noun* a bag used for measuring the volume of air breathed out of the lungs

Douglas' pouch /'dʌgləs pəʊtʃ/ *noun* the rectouterine peritoneal recess

down below /daʊn bɪ'ləʊ/ *adverb* used to refer politely to the genital area (*informal*)

Down's syndrome /'daʊnz ,sɪndrəʊm/noun a condition due to the existence of an extra copy of chromosome 21, in which a baby is born with slanting eyes, a wide face, speech difficulties and usually some degree of learning difficulty [Described 1866. After John Langdon Haydon Down (1828–96), British physician at Normansfield Hospital, Teddington, UK.]

downstairs /daʊn'steəz/ *adverb* used to refer politely to the genital area (*informal*)

down there /daʊn ðeə/ *adverb* used to refer politely to the genital area (*informal*)

doxepin /'dɒksɪpɪn/ *noun* a drug used as a sedative and antidepressant

doxycycline /,dɒksi'saɪklɪn/ *noun* a widely used antibiotic derived from tetracycline

doze /dəʊz/ *verb* to sleep lightly for a short time

dozy /'dəʊzi/ *adjective* sleepy ○ *These anti-histamines can make you feel dozy.*

DPT abbr diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus

DPT vaccine /,di:pɪ:t'i:væksi:n/, **DPT immunisation** /,di:pɪ:t'i:imjʊnəi,zeɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a combined vaccine or immunisation against the three diseases, diphtheria, whooping cough and tetanus

Dr abbr doctor (NOTE: used when writing someone's name: *Dr Smith*)

drachm /dræm/ *noun* a measure used in pharmacy, equal to 3.8g dry weight or 3.7ml liquid measure

dracontiasis /drækən'taɪəsɪs/, **dracunculiasis** /dræk'ʌŋkjʊ'læɪəsɪs/ *noun* a tropical disease caused by the guinea worm *Dracunculus medinensis* which enters the body from infected drinking water and forms blisters on the skin, frequently leading to secondary arthritis, fibrosis and cellulitis

Dracunculus /dræk'ʌŋkjʊləs/ *noun* a parasitic worm which enters the body and rises to the skin to form a blister. The infection frequently leads to secondary arthritis, fibrosis and cellulitis. Also called **guinea worm**

dragee /dræ'ʒeɪ/ *noun* a sugar-coated tablet or pill

drain /dreɪn/ *noun* a tube to remove liquid from the body ■ *verb* to remove liquid from the body ○ *an operation to drain the sinus* ○ *They drained the pus from the abscess.*

drainage /'dreɪnɪdʒ/ *noun* the removal of liquid from the site of an operation or pus from an abscess by means of a tube or wick left in the body for a time

drape /drɛɪp/ *noun* a thin material used to place over someone about to undergo surgery, leaving the operation site uncovered

draw /dro:/ *verb* to drain a liquid such as blood, pus or water from a wound or incision

drawn /drɔ:n/ *adjective* appearing tired and careworn, usually as a result of anxiety, grief or illness

draw-sheet /drɔ: sɪ:t/ *noun* a sheet under a person in bed, folded so that it can be pulled out as it becomes soiled

drepanocyte /'drepənəʊsət/ *noun* same as sickle cell

drepanocytosis /,drepənəʊsət'ɪəsɪs/ *noun* same as **sickle-cell anaemia**

dress /dres/ *verb* 1. to put on clothes, or put clothes on someone 2. to clean a wound and put a covering over it ○ *Nurses dressed the wounds of the accident victims.*

dresser /'dresə/ *noun* someone who assists a surgeon during operations

dressing /'dresɪŋ/ *noun* a covering or bandage applied to a wound to protect it ○ *The patient's dressings need to be changed regularly.*

dribble /'drɪb(ə)l/ *verb* to let liquid flow slowly out of an opening, especially saliva out of the mouth

dribbling /'drɪblɪŋ/ *noun* 1. the act of letting saliva flow out of the mouth 2. same as **incontinence** (*informal*)

drill /drɪl/ *noun* a tool which rotates very rapidly to make a hole, especially a surgical instrument used in dentistry to remove caries ■ *verb* to make a hole with a drill ○ *A small hole is drilled in the skull.* ○ *The dentist drilled one of her molars.*

Drinker respirator /'drɪŋkə ,rɪspɪ'reɪtə/ *noun* a machine which encloses the whole of the body except the head, and in which air pressure is increased and decreased, so forcing the person to breathe in and out. Also called **iron lung**

drip /drɪp/ *noun* a system for introducing liquid slowly and continuously into the body, by which a bottle of liquid is held above a person and the fluid flows slowly down a tube into a needle in a vein or into the stomach ○ *After her operation, the patient was put on a drip.*

drip feed /'drɪp fi:d/ *noun* a drip containing nutrients

drop /drɒp/ *noun* 1. a small quantity of liquid 2. a sudden reduction or fall in the quantity of something ○ *a drop in pressure* ■ *plural noun*

drops liquid medicine for the eye, nose, or ear administered with a dropper ■ *verb* 1. to fall or let something fall ○ *Pressure in the artery dropped suddenly.* 2. to reduce suddenly

drop attack /'drɒp ə,tæk/ *noun* a condition in which a person suddenly falls down, though he or she is not unconscious, caused by sudden weakness of the spine

droperidol /'drɒpərɪdɒl/ *noun* a drug used to keep someone in a calm state before an operation

drop foot /'drɒp fot/ *noun* a condition, caused by a muscular disorder, in which the ankle is not strong and the foot hangs limp

droplet /'drɒplət/ *noun* a very small quantity of liquid

droplet infection /'drɒplət ɪn,fekʃən/ *noun* an infection developed by inhaling droplets containing a virus, e.g. from a sneeze

drop off /'drɒp 'ɒf/ *verb* (*informal*) 1. to fall asleep 2. to get less

dropper /'drɒpə/ *noun* a small glass or plastic tube with a rubber bulb at one end, used to suck up and expel liquid in drops

dropsy /'drɒpsi/ *noun* same as **oedema** (*dated*)

drop wrist /'drɒp 'rist/ *noun* a condition caused by a muscular disorder, in which the wrist is not strong and the hand hangs limp

drown /draʊn/ *verb* to die by inhaling liquid

drowning /'draʊnɪŋ/ *noun* death as a result of inhaling liquid

drowsiness /'drauzinəs/ *noun* sleepiness ○ *The medicine is likely to cause drowsiness.*

drowsy /'drauzi/ *adjective* sleepy ○ *The injection will make you feel drowsy.*

drug /drʌg/ *noun* 1. a natural or synthetic chemical substance which is used in medicine and affects the way in which organs or tissues function ○ *She was prescribed a course of pain-killing drugs.* ○ *The drug is being monitored for possible side-effects.* 2. a substance taken by choice which produces a strong effect

on a person's feelings and state of mind ○ **recreational drug** ○ **controlled drugs**

COMMENT: There are three classes of controlled drugs: **Class 'A'** drugs such as cocaine, heroin, crack and LSD; **Class 'B'** drugs such as amphetamines and codeine; and **Class 'C' drugs** such as cannabis and benzphetamine. The drugs are covered by five schedules under the Misuse of Drugs Regulations: **Schedule 1:** drugs which are not used medicinally, such as cannabis and LSD, for which possession and supply are prohibited. **Schedule 2:** drugs which can be used medicinally such as heroin, morphine, cocaine, and amphetamines; these are fully controlled as regards prescriptions by doctors, safe custody in pharmacies, registering of sales, etc. **Schedule 3:** barbiturates, which are controlled as regards prescriptions, but need not be kept in safe custody; **Schedule 4:** benzodiazepines, which are controlled as regards registers of purchasers; **Schedule 5:** other substances for which invoices showing purchasers; **Schedule 5:** other substances for which invoices showing purchase must be kept.

drug abuse /'dræg ə,bju:s/ *noun* ♦ **substance abuse**

drug abuser /'dræg ə,bju:zə/ *noun* a person who regularly uses drugs for non-medical purposes

drug addict /'dræg ,ædikt/ *noun* a person who is physically and mentally dependent on taking a particular drug regularly ○ *a heroin addict* ○ *a morphine addict*

drug addiction /'dræg ə,dkʃən/ *noun* the fact of being mentally and physically dependent on taking a particular drug regularly. Also called **drug dependence**

drug allergy /'dræg ,ælədʒi/ *noun* a reaction to a particular drug

drug dependence /'dræg drɪ,pendəns/ *noun* same as **drug addiction**

drug-related /'dræg ri,leɪtɪd/ *adjective* associated with the taking of drugs

drug tolerance /'dræg ,tələrəns/ *noun* a condition in which a drug has been given to someone for so long that his or her body no longer reacts to it, and the dosage has to be increased

drunk /dræŋk/ *adjective* intoxicated with too much alcohol

dry /draɪ/ *adjective* 1. not wet ○ *The surface of the wound should be kept dry.* 2. containing only a small amount of moisture ○ *She uses a cream to soften her dry skin.* (NOTE: **drier – driest**) ■ *verb* to remove moisture from something (NOTE: **dries – drying – dried**)

dry beriberi /,draɪ beri'beri/ *noun* beriberi associated with loss of feeling and paralysis

dry burn /,draɪ 'bɜ:n/ *noun* an injury to the skin caused by touching a very hot dry surface

dry drowning /,draɪ 'draʊnɪŋ/ *noun* death in which someone's air passage has been constricted by being under water, though he or she does not inhale any water

dry-eye syndrome /draɪ 'aɪ ,sɪndrəm/ *noun* same as **xerosis**

dry gangrene /,draɪ 'gæŋgrɪ:n/ *noun* a condition in which the blood supply to a limb has been cut off and the tissue becomes black

dry ice /,draɪ 'ais/ *noun* solid carbon dioxide

dryness /'drainəs/ *noun* the state of being dry ○ *dryness in the eyes, accompanied by rheumatoid arthritis* ○ *She complained of dryness in her mouth.*

dry out /,draɪ 'aut/ *verb* 1. same as **dry 2.** to treat someone for alcoholism, or undergo treatment for alcoholism (*informal*)

dry socket /,draɪ 'spəkit/ *noun* inflammation of the socket of a tooth which has just been removed

DTC *abbr* diagnostic and treatment centre

DTs *abbr* delirium tremens

Duchenne muscular dystrophy /du:,ʃen ,mʌskjulə 'distrəfi/, **Duchenne's muscular dystrophy** /du:,ʃenz ,mʌskjulə 'distrəfi/, **Duchenne**/du:,ʃen/ *noun* an inherited form of muscular dystrophy that weakens the muscles of the upper respiratory and pelvic areas. It usually affects boys and causes early death. [Described 1849. After Guillaume Benjamin Arnaud Duchenne (1806–75), French neurologist.]

Ducray's bacillus /du:,kreɪz bæ'siləs/ *noun* a type of bacterium found in the lungs, causing chancroid [Described 1889. After Augusto Ducray (1860–1940), Professor of Dermatology in Pisa, then Rome, Italy.]

duct /dʌkt/ *noun* a tube which carries liquids, especially one which carries secretions

duct gland /dʌkt glænd/ *noun* same as **exocrine gland**

ductless /dʌktləs/ *adjective* without a duct

ductless gland /dʌktləs 'glænd/ *noun* same as **endocrine gland**

ductule /'dʌktju:l/ *noun* a very small duct

ductus /'dʌktəs/ *noun* same as **duct**

ductus arteriosus /,dʌktəs ə:t,teri'əʊsəs/ *noun* in a fetus, the blood vessel connecting the left pulmonary artery to the aorta so that blood does not pass through the lungs

ductus deferens /,dʌktəs 'defərəns/ *noun* one of two tubes along which sperm pass from the epididymus to the seminal vesicles near the prostate gland. Also called **vas deferens**. See illustration at **UROGENITAL SYSTEM (MALE)** in Supplement

ductus venosus /,dʌktəs vɪ'nəʊsəs/ *noun* in a fetus, the blood vessel connecting the portal sinus to the inferior vena cava

dull /dʌl/ *adjective* referring to pain which is not strong but which is continuously present ○ *She complained of a dull throbbing pain in her head.* ○ *He felt a dull pain in the chest.* ■ *verb* to make a sensation or awareness of a sensation less sharp ○ *The treatment dulled the pain for a while.* ○ *The drug had dulled her senses.*

dumb /dʌm/ *adjective* not able to speak

dumbness /'dʌməns/ *noun* same as **mutism**

dumping syndrome /'dæmpɪŋ ,sɪndrəʊm/ *noun* same as **postgastrectomy syndrome**

duo- /dju:əʊ/ *prefix* two

duoden- /dju:əʊdən/ *prefix* referring to the duodenum

duodenal /,dju:əʊ'di:n(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to the duodenum

duodenal papillae /dju:əʊ,dɪ:n(ə)l pə'pili:/ *plural noun* small projecting parts in the duodenum where the bile duct and pancreatic duct open

duodenal ulcer /dju:əʊ,dɪ:n(ə)l 'ʌlsə/ *noun* an ulcer in the duodenum

duodenoscope /,dju:əʊ'di:nəʊskəʊp/ *noun* an instrument used to examine the inside of the duodenum

duodenostomy /,dju:əʊdɪ'nɒstəmɪ/ *noun* a permanent opening made between the duodenum and the abdominal wall

duodenum /,dju:ə'di:nəm/ *noun* the first part of the small intestine, going from the stomach to the jejunum. See illustration at **DIGESTIVE SYSTEM** in Supplement

COMMENT: The duodenum is the shortest part of the small intestine, about 250 mm long. It takes bile from the gall bladder and pancreatic juice from the pancreas and continues the digestive processes started in the mouth and stomach.

duplex imaging /,dju:pleks 'ɪmɪdʒɪŋ/ *noun* a type of ultrasonic imaging where the speed of the flow of blood is measured

Dupuytren's contracture /du:,pwɪ:t्रənз kən'træktʃə/ *noun* a condition in which the palmar fascia becomes thicker, causing the fingers, usually the middle and fourth fingers, to bend forwards [Described 1831. After Baron Guillaume Dupuytren (1775–1835), French surgeon.]

dura /'djuərə/ *noun* same as **dura mater**

dural /'djuər(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to the dura mater

dura mater /,djuərə 'meɪtə/ *noun* the thicker outer membrane of the three covering the brain. Also called **dura**, **pachymeninx**. ☞ **arachnoid**

duty /'dju:tɪ/ *noun* the activities which a person has to do as part of their job ☚ *What are the duties of a night sister?* (NOTE: The plural is **duties**). ☚ **to be on duty** to be working ☚ *She's on duty from 2 p.m. till 10 p.m.* ☚ **a duty of care** the requirement to treat a patient in an appropriate way, as part of the work of being a health professional

duty nurse /'dju:tɪ nɜ:s/ *noun* a nurse who is on duty

duty rota /'dju:tɪ ,rəʊtə/ *noun* a list of duties which have to be done and the names of the people who will do them

d.v.t., DVT abbr deep-vein thrombosis

dwarfism /'dwɔ:fɪz(ə)m/ *noun* a condition in which the growth of a person has stopped, leaving him or her much smaller than average

COMMENT: Dwarfism may be caused by achondroplasia, where the long bones in the arms and legs do not develop fully but the trunk and head are of average size. Dwarfism can have other causes such as rickets or deficiency in the pituitary gland.

dynamic splint /dai,næmɪk 'splint/ *noun* a splint which uses springs to help the person move

dynamometer /,dai'nə'mɒmɪtə/ *noun* an instrument for measuring the force of muscular contraction

-dynia /dɪniə/ *suffix* pain

dys- /dɪs/ *prefix* difficult or impaired

dysaesthesia /,dɪsɪs'θi:ziə/ *noun* 1. the impairment of a sense, in particular the sense of touch 2. an unpleasant feeling of pain experienced when the skin is touched lightly

dysarthria /dɪs'ɑ:θriə/, **dysarthrosis** /,dɪsə:θrəʊsɪs/ *noun* difficulty in speaking words clearly, caused by damage to the central nervous system

dysbarism /'dɪsbə:rɪz(ə)m/ *noun* any disorder caused by differences between the atmospheric pressure outside the body and the pressure inside

dysbasia /'dɪs'beɪziə/ *noun* difficulty in walking, especially when caused by a lesion to a nerve

dyschezia /dɪs'keɪziə/ *noun* difficulty in passing faeces

dyschondroplasia /,dɪskɒndrəʊ'pleɪziə/ *noun* a condition in which the long bones are shorter than usual

dyschromatopsia /,dɪskrəʊmə'tɒpsɪə/ *noun* a condition where someone cannot distinguish colours

dyscoria /dɪs'kɔ:riə/ *noun* 1. an unusually shaped pupil of the eye 2. an unusual reaction of the pupil

dyscrasia /dis'kreɪziə/ *noun* any unusual body condition (*dated*)

dysdiadochokinesia /,dɪsdaɪə,ædəkəʊkai'nɪsiə/, **dysdiadochokinesis** /,dɪsdaɪə,ædəkəʊkai'nɪsɪs/ *noun* the inability to carry out rapid movements, caused by a disorder or lesion of the cerebellum

dysenteric /,dɪsən'terɪk/ *adjective* referring to dysentery

dysentery /'dɪs(ə)ntri/ *noun* an infection and inflammation of the colon, causing bleeding and diarrhoea

COMMENT: Dysentery occurs mainly in tropical countries. The symptoms include diarrhoea, discharge of blood and pain in the intestines. There are two main types of dysentery: **bacillary dysentery**, caused by the bacterium *Shigella* in contaminated food, and **amoebic dysentery** or amoebiasis, caused by a para-

sitic amoeba *Entamoeba histolytica* spread through contaminated drinking water.

dysfunction /dɪs'fʌŋkʃən/ *noun* an unusual functioning of an organ

dysfunctional /dɪs'fʌŋkʃən(ə)l/ *adjective* 1. not working properly 2. unable to relate to other people emotionally or socially

dysfunctional uterine bleeding /dɪs'fʌŋkʃən(ə)l ,ju:tərəin 'bli:dɪŋ/ *noun* bleeding in the uterus not caused by a menstrual period

dysgenesis /dɪs'dʒenəsɪs/ *noun* unusual development

dysgerminoma /dɪs,dʒɜ:mɪ'nəʊmə/ *noun* a malignant tumour of the ovary or testicle

dysgraphia /dɪs'græfiə/ *noun* difficulty in writing caused by a brain lesion

dyskariosis /dɪs,kærɪ'əʊsɪs/ *noun* the fact of becoming mature in an unusual way

dyskinesia /,dɪskɪn'ni:ziə/ *noun* the inability to control voluntary movements

dyslalia /dɪs'leɪliə/ *noun* a disorder of speech, caused by an unusual development of the tongue

dyslexia /dɪs'leksiə/ *noun* a disorder of development, where a person is unable to read or write properly and confuses letters

dyslexic /dɪs'leksɪk/ *adjective* referring to dyslexia ■ *noun* a person suffering from dyslexia

dyslipidaemia /,dɪslɪpɪ'di:miə/ *noun* an imbalance of lipids

dyslogia /dɪs'ləʊdʒə/ *noun* difficulty in putting ideas into words

dysmaturity /dɪsmə'tjuəriti/ *noun* a condition affecting newborn babies, shown by wrinkled skin, long fingernails and toenails and relatively little body fat

dysmenorrhoea /,dɪsmenə'rɪ:ə/ *noun* pain experienced at menstruation

dysostosis /,dɪsɒst'stəʊsɪs/ *noun* unusual formation of bones

dyspareunia /,dɪspæ'rū:nɪə/ *noun* difficult or painful sexual intercourse in a woman

dyspepsia /dɪs'pepsiə/ *noun* a condition in which a person feels pains or discomfort in the stomach, caused by indigestion

dyspeptic /dɪs'peptɪk/ *adjective* referring to dyspepsia

dysphagia /dɪs'feɪdʒɪə/ *noun* difficulty in swallowing

dysphasia /dɪs'feɪzɪə/ *noun* difficulty in speaking and putting words into the correct order

dysphemia /dɪs'fi:miə/ *noun* same as **stammering**

dysphonia /dɪs'fəʊniə/ *noun* difficulty in speaking caused by impairment of the vocal cords, or by laryngitis

dysplasia /dɪs'pleɪziə/ *noun* an unusual development of tissue

dyspnoea /dɪsp'nɪ:ə/ *noun* difficulty or pain in breathing

dyspnoeic /dɪsp'nɪ:ik/ *adjective* difficult or painful when breathing

dyspraxia /dɪs'præksɪə/ *noun* difficulty in carrying out coordinated movements

dysrhythmia /dɪs'rɪðmɪə/ *noun* an unusual rhythm, either in speaking or in electrical impulses in the brain

dyssocial /dɪs'səʊʃ(ə)l/ *adjective* same as **antisocial**

dysynergia /dɪs'i:nɜ:dʒɪə/ *noun* same as **asynergia**

dystaxia /dɪs'tæksɪə/ *noun* an inability to co-ordinate the muscles

dystocia /dɪs'təʊsiə/ *noun* difficult childbirth

dystonia /dɪs'təʊniə/ *noun* disordered muscle tone, causing involuntary contractions which make the limbs deformed

dystrophy /dɪs't्रəʊfiə/ *noun* the wasting of an organ, muscle or tissue due to lack of nutrients in that part of the body. Also called **dystrophy**

dystrophy adiposogenitalis /dɪs,trəʊfiə ædɪ,pəʊsədʒenɪ'teɪlɪs/ *noun* same as **Frölich's syndrome**

dystrophy myotonica /dɪs,trəʊfiə,maiəʊ'nɔ:tnɪkə/ *noun* same as **myotonic dystrophy**

dystrophy /'distrəfi/ *noun* same as **dystrophy**

dysuria /dɪs'juəriə/ *noun* difficulty in passing urine

E

ear /ɪə/ *noun* an organ on the side of the head which is used for hearing (NOTE: For other terms referring to ears, see **auricular** and words beginning with **ot-**, **oto-**)

COMMENT: The outer ear is shaped in such a way that it collects sound and channels it to the eardrum. Behind the eardrum, the three ossicles in the middle ear vibrate with sound and transmit the vibrations to the cochlea in the inner ear. From the cochlea, the vibrations are passed by the auditory nerve to the brain.

Ear, Nose & Throat /ɪə , nəʊz ən 'θrəut/ *noun* the study of the ear, nose and throat. Abbr ENT. Also called **otorhinolaryngology**

earache /'iərek/ *noun* pain in the ear. Also called **otalgia**

ear canal /'iə kænəl/ *noun* one of several passages in or connected to the ear, especially the external auditory meatus, the passage from the outer ear to the eardrum

eardrum /'iədrʌm/ *noun* the membrane at the end of the external auditory meatus leading from the outer ear, which vibrates with sound and passes the vibrations on to the ossicles in the middle ear. Also called **myringa**, **tympanum** (NOTE: For other terms referring to the eardrum, see words beginning with **tympan-**, **tympano-**)

early /'ɜːli/ *adjective* 1. happening at the beginning of a period of time □ **early diagnosis** diagnosis made at the onset of an illness □ **early treatment** treatment given almost as soon as the illness has started 2. (of a condition or illness) in its first stage □ *early synovitis* □ **during early pregnancy** within the first months of pregnancy ■ *adverb* at the beginning of a period of time □ *The treatment is usually successful if the condition is diagnosed early.*

early onset pre-eclampsia /,ɜːli ,onset ,pri: tklæmpsɪə/ *noun* pre-eclampsia which appears earlier than the 37th week of the pregnancy

ear ossicle /'ɪə ,ɒsɪk(ə)l/ *noun* ♦ **auditory ossicles**

earwax /'iəwæks/ *noun* same as **cerumen**

ease /iːz/ *verb* to make pain or worry less □ *She had an injection to ease the pain in her leg.*

○ *The surgeon tried to ease the patient's fears about the results of the scan.*

eating disorder /'iːtɪŋ dɪsɔːdə/ *noun* an illness that causes the usual pattern of eating to be disturbed, e.g. anorexia or bulimia

eating habits /'iːtɪŋ ,haebɪts/ *plural noun* the types and quantities of food regularly eaten by a person ○ *The dietitian advised her to change her eating habits.*

Ebola virus /ɪ'bəʊlə ,vaɪrəs/ *noun* a highly contagious virus found in West Africa. Patients who are affected with it vomit, have bloody diarrhoea and blood seeps through their skin.

eburnation /,ɪ:bə'nɛf(ə)n/ *noun* the conversion of cartilage into a hard mass with a shiny surface like bone

ecabolic /ek'bɒlik/ *noun* a substance which produces contraction of the uterus and so induces childbirth or abortion ■ *adjective* causing contraction of the uterus

echondroma /,eɪkəndrəʊmə/ *noun* a benign tumour on the surface of cartilage or bone

echymosis /ek'tɪ'məʊsɪs/ *noun* a dark area on the skin made by blood which has escaped into the tissues after a blow. Also called **bruise**, **contusion**

eccrine /'ekrɪn/ *adjective* referring to a gland, especially a sweat gland, which does not disintegrate and remains intact during secretion. Also called **merocrine**

eccyesis /,eksɪs'ɪ:sɪs/ *noun* same as **ectopic pregnancy**

ecdysis /'ekdɪsɪs/ *noun* same as **desquamation**

ECG abbr electrocardiogram

echinococcosis /i,kainəʊkɒn'kaɪəsɪs/, **echinococcosis** /i,kainəʊkə'kəʊsɪs/ *noun* a disorder caused by a tapeworm *Echinococcus granulosus* which forms hydatid cysts in the lungs, liver, kidneys or brain

Echinococcus granulosus /i,kainəʊkɒkəs ,grænju'laʊsəs/ *noun* a type of tapeworm, usually found in animals, but sometimes transmitted to humans, causing hydatid cysts in the lungs, liver, kidneys or brain
echo- /ekəʊ/ *prefix* referring to sound

echocardiogram /,ekəʊ'kɑ:dɪəgræm/ *noun* a record of heart movements made using ultrasound

echocardiography /,ekəʊkə:di'ngrəfi/ *noun* the use of ultrasound to examine the heart

echoencephalography /,ekəʊen,kefə'lɒgrəfi/ *noun* the use of ultrasound to examine the brain

echography /e'knɒgrəfi/ *noun* same as **ultrasonography**

echokinesis /,ekəʊkə'nɪ:sɪs/ *noun* same as **echopraxia**

echolalia /,ekəʊ'leɪliə/ *noun* the repetition of words spoken by another person

echopraxia /,ekəʊ'prækσiə/ *noun* the meaningless imitation of another person's actions

echovirus /'ekəʊ,vairəs/ *noun* one of a group of viruses which can be isolated from the intestine and which can cause serious illnesses such as aseptic meningitis, gastroenteritis and respiratory infection in small children. Compare **reovirus**

eclabium /'kλεɪbiəm/ *noun* the turning outwards of the lips. ◊ **eversion**

clampsia /'klæmpsɪə/ *noun* a serious condition of pregnant women at the end of pregnancy, caused by toxæmia, in which the woman has high blood pressure and may go into a coma. ◊ **pre-clampsia**

ecnesia /ek'nɪ:ziə/ *noun* a condition in which someone is not able to remember recent events, while remembering clearly events which happened some time ago

E. coli /,i: 'kɔ:lə/ *noun* same as **Escherichia coli**

economy class syndrome /i'kɒnəmɪklə:s ,sɪndrəʊm/ *noun* same as **deep-vein thrombosis** (*informal*)

écraseur /,eɪkra:'zɜ:/ *noun* a surgical instrument, usually with a wire loop, used to cut a part or a growth off at its base

ecstasy /'ekstəsi/ *noun* 1. feeling of extreme happiness 2. a powerful stimulant and hallucinatory illegal drug (*informal*) Also called **methylene dioxyamphetamine**

ECT *abbr* electroconvulsive therapy

ect- /ekt/ *prefix* same as **ecto-** (*used before vowels*)

ectasia /ek'teɪziə/ *noun* the dilatation of a passage

ecthyma /ek'θaimə/ *noun* a skin disorder that is a serious form of impetigo which penetrates deep under the skin and leaves scars

ecto- /ektəʊ/ *prefix* outside

ectoderm /'ektəudz:m/ *noun* the outer layer of an early embryo. Also called **embryonic ectoderm**

ectodermal /,ektəʊ'dz:m(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to the ectoderm

-ectomy /ektə'mi/ *suffix* referring to the removal of a part by surgical operation

ectoparasite /,ektəʊ'pærəsait/ *noun* a parasite which lives on the skin. Compare **endoparasite**

ectopia /ek'təupiə/ *noun* a condition in which an organ or part of the body is not in its usual position

ectopic /ek'tɒpɪk/ *adjective* not in the usual position. Opposite **endoptic**

ectopic heartbeat /ek,tɒpɪk 'ha:tbi:t/ *noun* an unusual extra beat of the heart which originates from a point other than the sinoatrial node. Also called **extrasystole, premature beat**

ectopic pacemaker /ek,tɒpɪk 'peɪsmēkə/ *noun* an unusual focus of the heart muscle which takes the place of the sinoatrial node

ectopic pregnancy /ek,tɒpɪk 'pregnənsi/ *noun* a pregnancy where the fetus develops outside the uterus, often in one of the Fallopian tubes. Also called **extrauterine pregnancy, ecysis**

ectro- /ek't्रəʊ/ *prefix* referring to a usually congenital absence or lack of something

ectrodactyly /,ektrəʊ'dæktɪli/ *noun* a congenital absence of all or part of a finger

ectrogeny /ek'trɒdʒənɪ/ *noun* a congenital absence of a part at birth

ectromelia /,ektrəʊ'mi:liə/ *noun* a congenital absence of one or more limbs

ectropion /ek't्रəpiən/ *noun* a turning of the edge of an eyelid outwards. ◊ **eversion**

eczema /'eksɪmə/ *noun* a non-contagious inflammation of the skin, with an itchy rash and blisters

eczematous /ek'semətəs/ *adjective* referring to eczema

eczematous dermatitis /ek,semətəs ,dɜ:ma:tɪtɪs/ *noun* an itchy inflammation or irritation of the skin due to an allergic reaction to a substance which a person has touched or absorbed

EDD *abbr* expected date of delivery

edema /i:dɪ:mə/ *noun* US same as **oedema**

edentulous /i'dentjʊləs/ *adjective* having lost all teeth

edible /'edɪb(ə)l/ *adjective* able to be eaten without causing harm

EDTA *noun* a colourless chemical that can bind to heavy metals to remove them from the bloodstream. Full form **ethylene diamine tetra-acetate**

Edwards' syndrome /'edwədz ,sɪndrəʊm/ *noun* a severe genetic disorder that results in malformations of the brain, kidney, heart, hands and feet. It is caused by an extra copy of chromosome 18 and those people who have it usually die within six months.

EEG *abbr* electroencephalogram

EFA *abbr* essential fatty acid

effacement /'feɪsmənt/ *noun* the thinning of the cervix before it dilates in childbirth

effect /ɪ'fekt/ *noun* a result of a drug, treatment, disease or action ○ *The antiseptic cream has had no effect on the rash.* ■ *verb* to make something happen (*formal*) ○ *They will have to effect a change in procedures.* ○ *In some circumstances these drugs can effect surprising cures.*

effective /ɪ'fektɪv/ *adjective* having an effect ○ *Embolisation is an effective treatment for severe haemoptysis.*

effective dose /ɪ,fektɪv 'dəʊs/ *noun* a size of dose which will produce the effect required

effector /ɪ'fektə/ *noun* a nerve ending in muscles or glands which is activated to produce contraction or secretion

efferens /'efərəns/ ♦ **vas efferens**

efferent /'efərənt/ *adjective* carrying something away from part of the body or from the centre. Opposite **afferent**

efferent duct /'efərənt dʌkt/ *noun* a duct which carries a secretion away from a gland

efferent nerve /'efərənt nɜːv/ *noun* same as motor nerve

efferent vessel /'efərənt ,ves(ə)l/ *noun* a vessel which drains lymph from a gland

effleurage /,efløːz'ruːz/ *noun* a form of massage where the skin is stroked in one direction to increase blood flow

effort syndrome /'efət ,sɪndrəʊm/ *noun* same as **disordered action of the heart**

effusion /ɪ'fjuːʒ(ə)n/ *noun* 1. a discharge of blood, fluid or pus into or out of an internal cavity 2. fluid, blood or pus which is discharged

egg /eg/ *noun* 1. a reproductive cell produced in the female body by an ovary, and which, if fertilised by the male sperm, becomes an embryo 2. an egg with a hard shell, laid by a hen or other bird, which is used for food

egg cell /'eg sel/ *noun* an immature ovum or female cell

ego /'i:gəʊ, 'eɡəʊ/ *noun* (*in psychology*) the part of the mind which is consciously in contact with the outside world and is influenced by experiences of the world

Egyptian ophthalmia /ɪ,dʒɪpʃ(ə)n əf 'θəɪlmɪə/ *noun* same as **trachoma**

EHO abbr Environmental Health Officer

EIA abbr exercise-induced asthma

eidetic imagery /aɪ,detɪk 'ɪmidʒəri/ *noun* the recall of extremely clear pictures in the mind

Eisenmenger syndrome /aɪzənmɛnɛr ,sɪndrəʊm/ *noun* heart disease caused by a septal defect between the ventricles, with pulmonary hypertension [Described 1897. After Victor Eisenmenger (1864–1932), German physician.]

ejaculate /ɪ'dʒækjʊ,leɪt/ *verb* to send out semen from the penis

ejaculation /ɪ,dʒækjʊ'leɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the sending out of semen from the penis

ejaculatio praecox /ɪdʒækjʊ,leɪʃɪəʊ 'pri:kɒks/ *noun* a situation where a man ejaculates too early during sexual intercourse

ejaculatory /ɪ'dʒækjʊlətri/ *adjective* referring to ejaculation

ejaculatory duct /ɪ'dʒækjʊlətri dʌkt/ *noun* one of two ducts leading from the seminal vesicles through the prostate gland to the urethra. See illustration at **UROGENITAL SYSTEM (MALE)** in Supplement

eject /ɪ'dʒekt/ *verb* to send out something with force ○ *Blood is ejected from the ventricle during systole.*

ejection /ɪ'dʒekʃən/ *noun* the act of sending out something with force

EKG abbr US electrocardiogram

elastic /ɪ'læstɪk/ *adjective* which can be stretched and compressed and return to its former shape

elastic bandage /ɪ,læstɪk 'bændɪdʒ/ *noun* a stretchy bandage used to support a weak joint or for the treatment of a varicose vein

elastic cartilage /ɪ,læstɪk 'kɑːtɪlɪdʒ/ *noun* flexible cartilage, e.g. in the ear and epiglottis

elastic fibre /ɪ,læstɪk 'faɪbə/ *noun* fibre which can expand easily and is found in elastic cartilage, the skin and the walls of arteries and the lungs. Also called **yellow fibre**

elastic hose /ɪ'læstɪk həʊz/ *noun* same as **surgical hose**

elasticity /ɪ,læ'sɪsɪti/ *noun* the ability to expand and be compressed and to return to the former shape

elastic tissue /ɪ,læstɪk 'tɪʃu:/ *noun* connective tissue which contains elastic fibres, e.g. in the walls of arteries or of the alveoli in the lungs

elastin /ɪ'læstɪn/ *noun* a protein which occurs in elastic fibres

elation /ɪ'leɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the state of being happy, stimulated and excited

elbow /'elbəʊ/ *noun* a hinged joint where the upper arm bone (**humerus**) joins the forearm bones (**radius** and **ulna**)

elbow crutch /'elbəʊ krʌtʃ/ *noun* a crutch which surrounds the arms at the elbows and has a handle to hold lower down the shaft

elderly /'eldəlɪ/ *adjective* older than 65 ○ *a home for elderly single women* ○ *She looks after her two elderly parents.* ■ *noun* □ **the elderly** people aged over 65

elective /ɪ'lektɪv/ *adjective* 1. referring to a chemical substance which tends to combine with one substance rather others 2. referring to surgery or treatment which someone can choose to have but is not urgently necessary to save their life

elective care /ɪ'lektɪv 'keə/ *noun* hospital care which is planned in advance, rather than a response to an emergency

Electra complex /ɪ'lektrə ,kɒmpleks/ *noun* (*in psychology*) a condition in which a girl feels sexually attracted to her father and sees her mother as an obstacle

electric shock /ɪ'lektrɪk 'ʃɒk/ *noun* a sudden passage of electricity into the body, causing a nervous spasm or, in severe cases, death

electric shock treatment /ɪ'lektrɪk 'ʃɒk ,trɪ:tment/ *noun* same as **electroconvulsive therapy** (*informal*)

electro- /ɪ'lektrəʊ/ *prefix* referring to electricity

electrocardiogram /ɪ'lektrəʊ'ku:dɪgræm/ *noun* a chart which records the electrical impulses in the heart muscle. Abbr **ECG, EKG**

electrocardiograph /ɪ'lektrəʊ'ku:dɪgrəf/ *noun* an apparatus for measuring and recording the electrical impulses of the muscles of the heart as it beats

electrocardiography /ɪ'lektrəʊku:di'grəfi/ *noun* the process of recording the electrical impulses of the heart

electrocardiophonography /ɪ'lektrəʊ ku:diəʊfə'nŋrəfi/ *noun* the process of electrically recording the sounds of the heartbeats

electrocautery /ɪ'lektrəʊ'kɔ:təri/ *noun* same as **galvanocautery**

electrochemical /ɪ'lektrəʊ'kemɪk(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to electricity and chemicals and their interaction

electrocoagulation /ɪ'lektrəʊkəʊægjʊ'leɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the control of haemorrhage in surgery by passing a high-frequency electric current through divided blood vessels

electroconvulsive therapy /ɪ'lektrəʊkən'vel'sɪvθe:rəpi/ *noun* the treatment of severe depression and some mental disorders by giving someone who has been anaesthetised small electric shocks in the brain to make him or her have convulsions. Abbr **ECT**. Also called **electroconvulsions**

electrode /ɪ'lektrəʊd/ *noun* the conductor of an electrical apparatus which touches the body and carries an electric shock

electrodesiccation /ɪ'lektrəʊ'desɪk'seɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* same as **fulguration**

electroencephalogram /ɪ'lektrəʊ'ɛnsefəl'græm/ *noun* a chart on which the electrical impulses in the brain are recorded. Abbr **EEG**

electroencephalograph /ɪ'lektrəʊ'ɛnsefəl'grɑ:f/ *noun* an apparatus which records the electrical impulses in the brain

electroencephalography /ɪ'lektrəʊ'ɛnsefəl'ɪgrəfi/ *noun* the process of recording the electrical impulses in the brain

electrolysis /ɪ'lektrə'ləsɪs/ *noun* the destruction of tissue such as unwanted hair by applying an electric current

electrolyte /ɪ'lektrə'ləйт/ *noun* a chemical solution which can conduct electricity

electrolyte mixture /ɪ'lektrə'ləlait ,mɪkstʃə/ *noun* a pint (0.56 litres) of boiled water with a teaspoonful of sugar and a generous pinch of table salt used for the prevention of diarrhoea

electrolytic /ɪ'lektrə'lɪtɪk/ *adjective* referring to electrolytes or to electrolysis

electromyogram /ɪ'lektrə'maɪəgræm/ *noun* a chart showing the electric currents in active muscles. Abbr **EMG**

electromyography /ɪ'lektrə'ʊmət̬'ɒgrəfi/ *noun* the study of electric currents in active muscles

electronic stethoscope /ɪ'lektrɒnɪk 'stɪθoskəp/ *noun* a stethoscope with an amplifier which makes sounds louder

electronystagmography /e'lektrəʊ ,nɪstæg'mɒgrəfi/ *noun* measuring of nystagmus

electrooculogram /ɪ'lektrəʊ'ɒkjʊləgræm/ *noun* a record of the electric currents round the eye, induced by eye movements

electrooculography /ɪ'lektrəʊ,ɒkjʊləgrəfi/ *noun* recording the electric currents round the eye, induced by eye movements, especially for use in remote control

electrophoresis /ɪ'lektrəfəsɪs/ *noun* the analysis of a substance by the movement of charged particles towards an electrode in a solution

electroplexy /ɪ'lektrəpleksi/ *noun* same as **electroconvulsive therapy**

electroretinogram /ɪ'kektrəʊ'retɪnəgræm/ *noun* the printed result of electroretinography. Abbr **ERG**

electroretinography /ɪ'lektrəʊ'retɪ'nɒgrəfi/ *noun* the process of recording electrical changes in the retina when stimulated by light

electrosurgery /ɪ'lektrəʊ'sɜ:dʒəri/ *noun* an operation in which the surgeon uses an electrical current to cut or cauterise tissue

electrotherapy /ɪ'lektrəʊ'θerəpi/ *noun* the treatment of a disorder such as some forms of paralysis by using low-frequency electric current to try to revive the muscles

element /'el'mēnt/ *noun* a basic simple chemical substance which cannot be broken down into simpler substances. ◊ **trace element**

elephantiasis /elfɪən'taiəsɪs/ *noun* a condition in which parts of the body swell and the skin becomes hardened, frequently caused by infestation with various species of the parasitic worm *Filaria*

elevate /'el'veɪt/ *verb* to raise something or to lift something up ◊ *To control bleeding, apply pressure and elevate the part.*

elevation /elə'veɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a raised part

elevation sling /'elɪ'veɪʃ(ə)n slɪŋ/ *noun* a sling tied round the neck, used to hold an injured hand or arm in a high position to control bleeding

elevator /'elɪvētə/ *noun* 1. a muscle which raises part of the body 2. a surgical instrument used to lift part of a broken bone

eliminate /'lɪmɪneɪt/ *verb* to remove waste matter from the body ◎ *The excess salts are eliminated through the kidneys.*

elimination /lɪ'mɪnɪ'teɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the removal of waste matter from the body

elimination diet /lɪ'mɪnɪ'teɪʃ(ə)n 'daɪət/ *noun* a structured diet where different foods are eliminated one at a time in order to see the effect on symptoms, used in conditions such as allergies and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder

ELISA /'elɪzə/ *noun* a process in which an enzyme binds to an antibody or antigen and causes a colour change that shows the presence or amount of protein in a sample of biological material. Full form **enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay**

elixir /'elɪksə/ *noun* a sweet liquid which hides the unpleasant taste of a drug

elliptocytosis /ɪ'lɪptəʊsɪs/ *noun* a condition in which unusual oval-shaped red cells appear in the blood

emaciated /'eɪmɪsi:tɪd/ *adjective* very thin and extremely underweight

emaciation /'eɪmɪsi'eɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* 1. the fact of being extremely thin and underweight 2. the loss of body tissue

emaculation /ɪ'mækjʊ'l eɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the removal of spots from the skin

emasculcation /ɪ'mæskjʊ'l eɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* 1. the removal of the penis 2. the loss of male characteristics

embalm /'embɔ:m/ *verb* to preserve a dead body by using special antiseptic chemicals to prevent decay

embolectomy /'embə'lektəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to remove a blood clot

emboli /'embəlɪ/ plural of **embolus**

embolisation /'embəlɪzɪ'seɪʃ(ə)n/, **embolization** *noun* the use of emboli inserted down a catheter into a blood vessel to treat internal bleeding

'...once a bleeding site has been located, a catheter is manipulated as near as possible to it, so that embolization can be carried out. Many different materials are used as the embolus.' [British Medical Journal]

embolism /'embəlɪz(ə)m/ *noun* the blocking of an artery by a mass of material, usually a blood clot, preventing the flow of blood

embolus /'embələs/ *noun* 1. a mass of material which blocks a blood vessel, e.g. a blood clot, air bubble or fat globule 2. material inserted into a blood vessel down a catheter to treat internal bleeding (NOTE: The plural is **emboli**.)

embrocation /'embrə'keɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* same as liniment

embryo /'embriəʊ/ *noun* an unborn baby during the first eight weeks after conception (NOTE: After eight weeks, the unborn baby is called a **fetus**.)

embryological /'embriə'lɒdʒɪk(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to embryology

embryology /'embri'ɒlədʒɪ/ *noun* the study of the early stages of the development of an embryo

embryonic /'embri'ɒnɪk/ *adjective* 1. referring to an embryo 2. in an early stage of development

embryonic ectoderm /'embriɒnɪk 'ektədʒm/ *noun* ♦ **ectoderm**

embryonic membrane /'embriɒnɪk 'membrən/ *noun* one of the two layers around an embryo providing protection and food supply, i.e. the **amnion** and the **chorion**

embryonic mesoderm /'embriɒnɪk 'mesəʊdʒm/ *noun* ♦ **mesoderm**

emergency /'emɜːdʒənsɪ/ *noun* a situation where urgent immediate action has to be taken

emergency medical technician /'emɜːdʒənsi ,medɪk(ə)t ek'teknɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* US a trained paramedic who gives care to victims at the scene of an accident or in an ambulance. Abbr **EMT**

emergency medicine /'emɜːdʒənsi 'med(ə)s(ə)n/ *noun* the treatment of patients whose condition is serious and requires urgent immediate action

emergency room /'emɜːdʒənsi ru:m/ *noun* US the part of a hospital where people who need urgent immediate treatment are dealt with

emergency ward /'emɜːdʒənsi wɔ:d/ *noun* the part of a hospital where people who need urgent immediate treatment are dealt with

emesis /'emɪsɪs/ *noun* same as **vomiting**

emetic /'etmɪtɪk/ *noun* a substance which causes vomiting ■ *adjective* causing vomiting

EMG abbr electromyogram

eminence /'emɪnənsɪ/ *noun* something which protrudes from a surface, e.g. a lump on a bone or swelling on the skin

emissary vein /'emɪsəri ,veɪn/ *noun* a vein through the skull which connects the venous sinuses with the scalp veins

emission /'emɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a discharge or release of fluid

emmenagogue /'emɪnəgɔ:g/ *noun* a drug which will help increase menstrual flow

emmetropia /'emɪ'trəʊpiə/ *noun* the correct focusing of light rays by the eye onto the retina giving normal vision. Compare **metropia**

emollient /'emolɪənt/ *noun* a substance which soothes or smooths the skin, e.g. to prevent the development of eczema ■ *adjective* smoothing

emotion /ɪ'meʊʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a strong feeling

emotional disorder /ɪ'meʊʃ(ə)nəl dɪs'ɔ:də/ *noun* a disorder due to worry, stress, grief or other strong emotion

emotional immaturity /ɪ'meʊʃ(ə)nəl ɪm'etʃu:təti/ *noun* lacking in emotional development

empathy /'empəθi/ *noun* the ability to understand the problems and feelings of another person

emphysema /,emfɪ'si:mə/ *noun* a condition in which the walls of the alveoli of the lungs break down, reducing the surface available for gas exchange and resulting in a lower oxygen level in the blood and shortness of breath. It can be caused by smoking, living in a polluted environment, old age, asthma or whooping cough. ♦ **surgical emphysema**

empirical treatment /ɪm'pɪrɪk(ə)l 'tri:tment/ *noun* treatment which is based on symptoms and clinical experience rather than on a thorough knowledge of the cause of the disorder

empowerment /ɪm'paʊəmənt/ *noun* the act of giving someone authority and power to make decisions that will affect them

empyema /,empə'rɪ:mə/ *noun* the collection of pus in a cavity, especially in the pleural cavity. Also called **pyothorax**

EMS *abbr* Emergency Medical Services

EMT *abbr* US emergency medical technician

emulsion /ɪ'mʌlʃən/ *noun* a combination of liquids such as oil and water which do not usually mix

EN *abbr* enrolled nurse

EN(G) *abbr* enrolled nurse (general)

EN(M) *abbr* enrolled nurse (mental)

EN(MH) *abbr* enrolled nurse (mental handicap)

en- /en/, **in-** /in/ *prefix* 1. **in**, into 2. to provide with 3. to cause to be 4. to put into or cover with 5. to go into

enalapril /e'næləprɪl/ *noun* a drug used for the short-term management of high blood pressure

enamel /ɪ'næm(ə)l/ *noun* the hard white shiny outer covering of the crown of a tooth

enanthema /,enən'θi:mə/ *noun* a rash on a mucous membrane, such as that of the mouth or vagina, produced by the action of toxic substances on small blood vessels

enarthrosis /,enə:'θrəʊsɪs/ *noun* a ball and socket joint, e.g. the hip joint

encapsulated /ɪ'nkæpsjuleɪtɪd/ *adjective* enclosed in a capsule or in a sheath of tissue

encephalin /en'kefəlin/ *noun* another spelling of **encephalin**

encephal- /enkefəl/ *prefix* same as **encephalo-** (used before vowels)

encephalin /en'kefəlin/ *noun* a peptide produced in the brain which acts as a natural pain-

killer. ♦ **endorphin** (NOTE: The US spelling is **enkephalin**)

encephalitis /en,kefə'laitɪs, en,sefə'laitɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the brain

COMMENT: Encephalitis is caused by any of several viruses (**viral encephalitis**) and is also associated with infectious viral diseases such as measles or mumps. The variant **St Louis encephalitis** is transmitted by mosquitoes.

encephalitis lethargica /,enkefə'laitɪs lɪ'θa:dʒɪkə/ *noun* same as **lethargic encephalitis**

encephalo- /enkefələ/ *prefix* referring to the brain

encephalocele /en'kefələsɪ:l/ *noun* a condition in which the brain protrudes through a congenital or traumatic gap in the skull bones

encephalogram /en'kefələgræm/, **encephalograph** /en'kefələgrɑ:f/ *noun* an X-ray photograph of the ventricles and spaces of the brain taken after air has been injected into the cerebrospinal fluid by lumbar puncture

encephalography /en,kefə'lɒgrəfi/ *noun* an X-ray examination of the ventricles and spaces of the brain taken after air has been injected into the cerebrospinal fluid by lumbar puncture

COMMENT: The air takes the place of the cerebrospinal fluid and makes it easier to photograph the ventricles clearly. This technique has been superseded by CT and MRI.

encephaloid /en'kefəlɔɪd/ *adjective* like brain tissue

encephaloma /en,kefə'ləʊmə/ *noun* a tumour of the brain

encephalomalacia /en,kefələʊmə'leɪʃə/ *noun* softening of the brain

encephalomyelitis /en,kefələʊməlɪ'taɪtɪs/ *noun* a group of diseases which cause inflammation of the brain and the spinal cord

encephalomyopathy /en,kefələʊmə'lo:pəθi/ *noun* any condition where the brain and spinal cord are diseased

encephalon /en'kefələn/ *noun* same as **brain** (NOTE: The plural is **encephala**.)

encephalopathy /en,kefə'lɒpəθi/ *noun* any disease of the brain

enchondroma /,enkən'draʊmə/ *noun* a tumour formed of cartilage growing inside a bone

enchondromatosis /,enkəndrəmə'təʊsɪs/ *noun* a condition in which a tumour formed of cartilage grows inside a bone

encopresis /en'kəpu'pri:sɪs/ *noun* faecal incontinence not associated with a physical condition or disease

encounter group /ɪn'kaʊntə gru:p/ *noun* a form of treatment of psychological disorders, where people meet and talk about their problems in a group

encysted /en'sɪstɪd/ *adjective* enclosed in a capsule like a cyst

end- /end/ *prefix* same as **endo-** (*used before vowels*)

endanger /ɪn'deɪndʒə/ *verb* to put someone or something at risk ○ *The operation may endanger the life of the patient.*

endarterectomy /'endə:tə'rektəmɪ/ *noun* the surgical removal of the lining of a blocked artery. Also called **reboare**

endarteritis /'endə:tə'raɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the inner lining of an artery

endarteritis obliterans /'endə:tə,raɪtɪs ə'bli:tərənz/ *noun* a condition where inflammation in an artery is so severe that it blocks the artery

end artery /'end ,a:tərɪ/ *noun* the last section of an artery which does not divide into smaller arteries and does not join to other arteries

endaural /end'ɔ:rəl/ *adjective* inside the ear

endemic /en'demɪk/ *adjective* referring to any disease which is very common in specific places ○ *This disease is endemic to Mediterranean countries.*

endemic haemoptysis /en,demɪk hi:'mɒptɪsɪs/ *noun* same as **paragonimiasis**

endemic syphilis /en,demɪk 'sɪfəlɪs/ *adjective* same as **bejel**

endemic typhus /en,demɪk 'taɪfəs/ *noun* fever transmitted by fleas from rats

endemiology /en,di:mi:bɒlədʒɪ/ *noun* the study of endemic diseases

end-expiratory /'end ɪk'spaɪrətri/ *noun* → **positive end-expiratory pressure**

endo- /endəʊ/ *prefix* inside

endobronchial /endəʊ'b्रɒŋkiəl/ *adjective* inside the bronchi

endocardial /'endəʊ'ka:dɪəl/ *adjective* referring to the endocardium

endocardial pacemaker /'endəʊka:dɪəl 'peɪsmeɪkə/ *noun* a pacemaker attached to the lining of the heart

endocarditis /'endəʊka:tɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the membrane lining of the heart

endocardium /'endəʊ'ka:dɪəm/ *noun* a membrane which lines the heart. See illustration at **HEART** in Supplement

endocervicitis /'endəʊsɪz:vɪ'saɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the membrane in the neck of the uterus

endocervix /'endəʊ'sɜ:vɪks/ *noun* a membrane which lines the neck of the uterus

endochondral /'endəʊ'knɒndrəl/ *adjective* inside a cartilage

endocrine /'endəʊkrain/ *adjective* relating to the endocrine glands or the hormones they secrete

endocrine gland /'endəʊkrain glænd/ *noun* a gland without a duct which produces

hormones which are introduced directly into the bloodstream, e.g. the pituitary gland, thyroid gland, the adrenal gland and the gonads. Also called **ductless gland**. Compare **exocrine gland**

endocrine system /'endəʊkrain ,sɪstəm/ *noun* a system of related ductless glands

endocrinologist /'endəʊkrɪ'nɒlədʒɪst/ *noun* a doctor who specialises in the study of endocrinology

endocrinology /'endəʊkrɪ'nɒlədʒɪ/ *noun* the study of the endocrine system, its function and effects

endoderm /'endəʊdɜ:m/ *noun* the inner of three layers surrounding an embryo. Also called **entoderm**

COMMENT: The endoderm gives rise to most of the epithelium of the respiratory system, the alimentary canal, some of the ductless glands the bladder and part of the urethra.

endodermal /'endəʊ'dɜ:m(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to the endoderm. Also called **entodermal**

endodontia /'endəʊ'ɒdnfɪə/ *noun* treatment of chronic toothache by removing the roots of a tooth

endogenous /en'dɒdʒənəs/ *adjective* developing or being caused by something inside an organism. Compare **exogenous**

endogenous depression /en,dɒdʒənəs dɪ'preʃ(ə)n/ *noun* depression caused by no obvious external factor

endogenous eczema /en,dɒdʒənəs 'ek sɪmə/ *noun* eczema which is caused by no obvious external factor

endolymph /'endəʊlɪmf/ *noun* a fluid inside the membranous labyrinth in the inner ear

endolymphatic duct /'endəʊlɪmfætɪk 'dʌkt/ *noun* a duct which carries the endolymph inside the membranous labyrinth

endolysin /'en'dɒltɪsn/ *noun* a substance present in cells, which kills bacteria

endometria /'endəʊ'mi:ttriə/ plural of **endometrium**

endometrial /'endəʊ'mi:ttriəl/ *adjective* referring to the endometrium

endometrial laser ablation /'endəʊmɪ:ttriəl 'leɪzə əb,leɪf(ə)n/ *noun* a gynaecological surgical procedure using a laser to treat fibroids or other causes of thickening of the lining of the uterus

endometriosis /'endəʊmɪ:ttri'əʊsɪs/ *noun* a condition affecting women, in which tissue similar to the tissue of the uterus is found in other parts of the body

endometritis /'endəʊmɪ'traɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the lining of the uterus

endometrium /'endəʊ'mi:ttriəm/ *noun* the mucous membrane lining the uterus, part of which is shed at each menstruation (NOTE: The plural is **endometria**.)

endomyocarditis /,endəʊmaɪərəkə:'daɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the muscle and inner membrane of the heart

endomysium /,endəʊ'mɪsiəm/ *noun* connective tissue around and between muscle fibres

endoneurium /,endəʊ'njuːriəm/ *noun* fibrous tissue between the individual fibres in a nerve

endoparasite /,endəʊ'pærəsait/ *noun* a parasite which lives inside its host, e.g. in the intestines. Compare **ectoparasite**

endophthalmitis /,endɒfəl'maɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the interior of the eyeball

end organ /'end ,ɔ:gən/ *noun* a nerve ending with encapsulated nerve filaments

endorphin /en'dɔ:fɪn/ *noun* a peptide produced by the brain which acts as a natural painkiller. ☈ **encephalin**

endoscope /'endəsko:p/ *noun* an instrument used to examine the inside of the body, made of a thin tube which is passed into the body down a passage. The tube has a fibre optic light, and may have small surgical instruments attached.

endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatology /,endəʊskopɪk ,retrogræd kə'lændʒiəʊpæŋkri:tɔgræfi/ *noun* a method used to examine the pancreatic duct and bile duct for possible obstructions. Abbr **ERCP**

endoscopy /en'dɒskəpi/ *noun* an examination of the inside of the body using an endoscope

endoskeleton /'endəʊ,skelɪt(ə)n/ *noun* the inner structure of bones and cartilage in an animal

endosteum /en'dɒstiəm/ *noun* a membrane lining the bone marrow cavity inside a long bone

endothelial /,endəʊ'θi:lɪəl/ *adjective* referring to the endothelium

endothelioma /,endəʊθi:li'əʊmə/ *noun* a malignant tumour originating inside the endothelium

endothelium /,endəʊ'θi:liəm/ *noun* a membrane of special cells which lines the heart, the lymph vessels, the blood vessels and various body cavities. Compare **epithelium, mesothelium**

endotoxin /,endəʊ'tɒksɪn/ *noun* a toxic substance released after the death of some bacterial cells

endotracheal /,endəʊ'treɪkiəl/ *adjective* same as **intratracheal**

endotracheal tube /,endəʊ'treɪkiəl tju:b/ *noun* a tube passed down the trachea, through either the nose or mouth, in anaesthesia or to help a person breathe

end plate /'end pleɪt/ *noun* the end of a motor nerve, where it joins muscle fibre

end stage renal disease /,end steɪdʒ 'rɪ:n(ə)l dɪ,zɪ:z/ *noun* the stage of kidney disease at which uraemia occurs and dialysis needs to start. Abbr **ESRD**

enema /'enɪmə/ *noun* a liquid substance put into the rectum to introduce a drug into the body, to wash out the colon before an operation or for diagnosis

enema bag /'enəmə bæg/ *noun* a bag containing the liquid for an enema, attached to a tube into the rectum

energy /'enədʒɪ/ *noun* the force or strength to carry out activities ○ *You need to eat certain types of food to give you energy.*

enervation /,enə'veɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* 1. general nervous weakness 2. a surgical operation to remove a nerve

engagement /ɪn'geɪdʒmənt/ *noun* (in *obstetrics*) the moment where part of the fetus, usually the head, enters the pelvis at the beginning of labour

engorged /ɪn'gɔ:dʒd/ *adjective* excessively filled with liquid, usually blood

engorgement /ɪn'gɔ:dʒmənt/ *noun* the excessive filling of a vessel, usually with blood

enkephalin /en'kefəlm/ *noun* US same as **encephalin**

enophthalmos /,enɒf'θælməs/ *noun* a condition in which the eyes are very deep in their sockets

enostosis /,enə'stəʊsɪs/ *noun* a harmless growth inside a bone, usually in the skull or in a long bone

enrolled /ɪn'rəuld/ *adjective* registered on an official list

Enrolled Nurse /ɪn,rəuld 'nɜ:s/ *noun* ♦ **second-level nurse**

ensiform /'ensɪfɔ:m/ *adjective* shaped like a sword

ensiform cartilage /,ensɪfɔ:m 'kɑ:təlɪdʒ/ *noun* same as **xiphoid process**

ENT abbr Ear, Nose & Throat

Entamoeba coli /,entəmø:bə 'kəʊlaɪ/ *noun* a harmless intestinal parasite

Entamoeba gingivalis /,entəmø:bə ,dʒɪndʒɪ'vælɪs/ *noun* an amoeba that lives in the gums and tonsils, and causes gingivitis

Entamoeba histolytica /,entəmø:bə ,hɪstə'litɪkə/ *noun* an intestinal amoeba which causes amoebic dysentery

ENT department /,i: en 'ti: dɪ,pə:tment/ *noun* a department of otorhinolaryngology

ENT doctor /,i: en 'ti: ,dɒktə/ *noun* same as **otorhinolaryngologist**

enter- /'entə/ *prefix* same as **entero-** (used before vowels)

enteral /'entərəl/ *adjective* 1. referring to the intestine. Compare **parenteral** 2. referring to medication or food which is taken by mouth or through a nasogastric tube

enteral feeding /,entərəl 'fi:dɪŋ/ *noun* the feeding of a person by a nasogastric tube or by the infusion of liquid food directly into the intestine. Also called **enteral nutrition**

'Standard nasogastric tubes are usually sufficient for enteral feeding in critically ill patients' [British Journal of Nursing]

enteralgia /,entə'ræl'dʒeɪə/ *noun* same as **colic**

enteral /'entərəli/ *adverb* referring to a method of feeding a person by nasogastric tube or directly into the intestine

'All patients requiring nutrition are fed enteraly, whether nasogastrically or directly into the small intestine' [British Journal of Nursing]

enteral nutrition /,entərəl nju:t'rɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* same as **enteral feeding**

enterectomy /,entə'rektəmə/ *noun* the surgical removal of part of the intestine

enteric /en'terɪk/ *adjective* referring to the intestine

enteric-coated /en'terɪk 'kəʊtɪd/ *adjective* referring to a capsule with a coating which prevents it from being digested and releasing the drug until it reaches the intestine

enteric fever /en'terɪk 'fi:və/ *noun* US 1. any one of three fevers (typhoid, paratyphoid A and paratyphoid B) 2. any febrile disease of the intestines

enteritis /,entə'rɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the mucous membrane of the intestine

entero- /-entərəʊ/ *prefix* referring to the intestine

Enterobacteria /,entərəʊbæk'trɪəriə/ *noun* a family of Gram-negative bacteria, including Salmonella, Shigella, Escherichia and Klebsiella

enterobiasis /,entərəʊ'baiəsɪs/ *noun* a common children's disease, caused by threadworms in the large intestine which cause itching round the anus. Also called **oxyuriasis**

Enterobius /,entə'rəʊbiəs/ *noun* a small thin nematode worm, one species of which, *Enterobius vermicularis*, infests the large intestine and causes itching round the anus. Also called **threadworm, pinworm**

enterocele /'entərəʊsɪ:l/, **enterocoele** /'en terəʊsɪ:l/ *noun* a hernia of the intestine

enterocentesis /,entərəʊs'en'ti:sɪs/ *noun* surgical puncturing of the intestines where a hollow needle is pushed through the abdominal wall into the intestine to remove gas or fluid

enterococcus /,entərəʊ'kɒkəs/ *noun* a streptococcal bacterium that lives in the intestine (NOTE: The plural is **enterococci**)

enterocoele /'entərəʊsɪ:l/ *noun* another spelling of **enterocele**

enterocolitis /,entərəʊkə'laitɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the colon and small intestine

enterogastrone /,entərəʊ'gæstrəʊn/ *noun* a hormone released in the duodenum, which controls secretions of the stomach

enterogenous /,entərəʊ'dʒi:nəs/ *adjective* originating in the intestine

enterolith /'entərəʊlɪθ/ *noun* a stone in the intestine

enteron /'entərən/ *noun* the whole intestinal tract

enteropathy /,entə'rɒpəθi/ *noun* any disorder of the intestine. ☈ **gluten-induced enteropathy**

enteropeptidase /,entərəʊ'peptɪdæz/ *noun* an enzyme produced by glands in the small intestine

enteroptosis /,entərɒp'təʊsɪs/ *noun* a condition in which the intestine is lower than usual in the abdominal cavity

enterorrhaphy /,entər'ɔ:rəfɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to stitch up a perforated intestine

endoscope /'entərəskəʊp/ *noun* an instrument for inspecting the inside of the intestine

enterospasm /'entərəʊ,spæz(ə)m/ *noun* an irregular painful contraction of the intestine

enterostomy /,entə'rɒstəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to make an opening between the small intestine and the abdominal wall

enterotomy /,entə'rɒtəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical incision in the intestine

enterotoxin /,entərəʊ'tɒksɪn/ *noun* a bacterial exotoxin which particularly affects the intestine

enterovirus /,entərəʊ'veɪrʊs/ *noun* a virus which prefers to live in the intestine. Enteroviruses include poliomyelitis virus, Coxsackie viruses and the echoviruses.

enterozoon /,entərəʊ'zæʊn/ *noun* a parasite which infests the intestine (NOTE: The plural is **enterozoa**.)

entoderm /'entəʊdɜ:m/ *noun* same as **endoderm**

entodermal /,entəʊ'dɜ:m(ə)l/ *adjective* same as **endodermal**

Entonox /'entənɒks/ *noun* a gas consisting of 50% oxygen and 50% nitrous oxide that is used as a painkiller during childbirth

entopic /'en'tɒpɪk/ *adjective* located or taking place in the usual position. Opposite **ectopic**

entropion /'en't्रəpiən/ *noun* a turning of the edge of the eyelid towards the inside

enucleate /'en'ju:kli'eɪt/ *verb* to remove something completely

enucleation /,en'ju:kli'eɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* 1. the surgical removal of all of a tumour 2. the surgical removal of the whole eyeball

enuresis /,enju'rɪ:sɪs/ *noun* the involuntary passing of urine

enuretic /,enju'retɪk/ *adjective* referring to enuresis, or causing enuresis

envenomation /in'venə'meɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the use of snake venom as part of a therapeutic treatment

environment /ɪn'vaɪrənmənt/ *noun* the conditions and influences under which an organism lives

environmental /ɪn'veɪrən'ment(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to the environment

Environmental Health Officer /ɪn'veɪrənment(ə)l 'helθ, pfrɪs/ *noun* an official of a local authority who examines the environment and tests for air pollution, bad sanitation, noise pollution and similar threats to public health. Abbr **EHO**

environmental temperature /ɪn'veɪrənment(ə)l 'temprɪtʃə/ *noun* the temperature of the air outside the body

enzymatic /'enzai'mætɪk/ *adjective* referring to enzymes

enzyme /'enzaim/ *noun* a protein substance produced by living cells which aids a biochemical reaction in the body (NOTE: The names of enzymes mostly end with the suffix -ase.)

COMMENT: Many different enzymes exist in the body, working in the digestive system, in the metabolic processes and helping the synthesis of certain compounds.

enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay /'enzi:am lɪŋkt, ɪmju:nəʊ, sɔ:bənt 'æseɪ/ *noun* full form of **ELISA**

eonism /'i:ənɪz(ə)m/ *noun* cross-dressing, when a male wears female dress

eosin /'i:əʊsɪn/ *noun* a red crystalline solid used as a biological staining dye

eosinopenia /,i:əʊsɪnə'pi:nɪə/ *noun* a reduction in the number of eosinophils in the blood

eosinophil /i:əʊ'sɪnəfɪl/ *noun* a type of cell that can be stained with eosin

eosinophilia /,i:əʊsɪnə'fɪliə/ *noun* an excess of eosinophils in the blood

eparterial /,epə:'tɪəriəl/ *adjective* situated over or on an artery

ependyma /'pendɪmə/ *noun* a thin membrane which lines the ventricles of the brain and the central canal of the spinal cord

ependymal /'pendɪm(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to the ependyma

ependymal cell /'pendɪm(ə)l sel/ *noun* one of the cells which form the ependyma

ependymoma /,pendɪ'məʊmə/ *noun* a tumour in the brain originating in the ependyma

ephedrine /'efɪdrɪn/ *noun* a drug that relieves asthma and blocked noses by causing the air passages to widen

ephidrosis /,efɪ'drəʊsɪs/ *noun* an unusual amount of sweat

epi- /epɪ/ *prefix* on or over

epiblepharon /,epɪ'blefərɒn/ *noun* an unusual fold of skin over the eyelid, which may press the eyelashes against the eyeball

epicanthus /,epɪ'kænθəs/, **epicanthic fold** /,epɪkænθɪk 'fəuld/ *noun* a large fold of skin

in the inner corner of the eye, common in babies and also found in adults of some groups such as the Chinese

epicardial /,epɪ'ka:dɪəl/ *adjective* referring to the epicardium

epicardial pacemaker /,epɪkɑ:dɪəl 'peɪs mərkə/ *noun* a pacemaker attached to the surface of the ventricle

epicardium /,epɪ'ka:dɪəm/ *noun* the inner layer of the pericardium which lines the walls of the heart, outside the myocardium. See illustration at **HEART** in Supplement

epicondyle /,epɪ'kɒndɪl/ *noun* a projecting part of the round end of a bone above the condyle

epicondylitis /,epɪkɒndɪ'lætɪs/ *noun* same as **tennis elbow**

epicranium /,epɪ'kreɪniəm/ *noun* the five layers of the scalp, the skin and hair on the head covering the skull

epicranius /,epɪ'kreɪniəs/ *noun* a scalp muscle

epicritic /,epɪ'krɪtɪk/ *adjective* referring to the nerves which govern the fine senses of touch and temperature

epidemic /,epɪ'demɪk/ *adjective* spreading quickly through a large part of the population
○ *The disease rapidly reached epidemic proportions.* ■ *noun* an outbreak of an infectious disease which spreads very quickly and affects a large number of people

epidemic pleurodynia /,epɪdēmɪk, plʊərə'dɪniə/ *noun* a viral disease affecting the intestinal muscles, with symptoms like influenza, such as fever, headaches and pains in the chest. Also called **Bornholm disease**

epidemic typhus /,epɪdēmɪk 'taɪfəs/ *noun* fever with headaches, mental disorder and a rash, caused by lice which come from other humans

epidemiological /,epɪ,di:mɪə'lɒdʒɪk(ə)l/ *adjective* concerning epidemiology

epidemiologist /,epɪ,di:mɪ'lɒdʒɪst/ *noun* a person who specialises in the study of diseases in groups of people

epidemiology /,epɪ,di:mɪ'lɒdʒɪ/ *noun* the study of diseases in the community, in particular how they spread and how they can be controlled

epidermal /,epɪ'dɜ:m(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to the epidermis

epidermis /,epɪ'dɜ:mɪs/ *noun* the outer layer of the skin, including the dead skin on the surface. Also called **cuticle**

epidermoid cyst /,epɪdɜ:mɔɪd 'sɪst/ *noun* same as **sebaceous cyst**

epidermolysis /,epɪdɜ:'mɒləsɪs/ *noun* separation of the epidermis from the tissue underneath, usually forming a blister

epidermolysis bullosa /,epɪdəlɪsɪs, bʊ'ləʊsə/ *noun* a group of disorders where blisters form on the skin

Epidermophyton /,epɪdəlɪt'ɒnfɪtən/ *noun* a fungus which grows on the skin and causes athlete's foot, among other disorders

epidermophytosis /,epɪ'deɪməfətɪsɪs/ *noun* a fungus infection of the skin, e.g. athlete's foot

epididymal /,epɪ'dɪdɪm(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to the epididymis

epididymectomy /,epɪdɪdɪm'ektəmɪ/ *noun* the removal of the epididymis

epididymis /,epɪ'dɪdɪmɪs/ *noun* a long twisting thin tube at the back of the testis, which forms part of the efferent duct of the testis, and in which spermatozoa are stored before ejaculation. See illustration at **UROGENITAL SYSTEM (MALE)** in Supplement

epididymitis /,epɪdɪdɪ'maɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the epididymis

epididymo-orchitis /,epɪ'dɪdɪməʊ'ɔ:tɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the epididymis and the testes

epidural /,epɪ'djuərəl/ *adjective* on the outside of the dura mater. Also called **extradural**

■ *noun* same as **epidural anaesthesia**

epidural anaesthesia /,epɪdjuərəl, ænæs'thɪziə/ *noun* a local anaesthesia in which anaesthetic is injected into the space between the vertebral canal and the dura mater

epidural block /,epɪdjuərəl 'blɒk/ *noun* analgesia produced by injecting an analgesic solution into the space between the vertebral canal and the dura mater

epidural space /,epɪdjuərəl 'speɪs/ *noun* a space in the spinal cord between the vertebral canal and the dura mater

epigastric /,epɪ'gæstriκ/ *adjective* referring to the upper abdomen ○ *The patient complained of pains in the epigastric area.*

epigastrium /,epɪ'gæstriəm/ *noun* the part of the upper abdomen between the ribcage and the navel. Also called **the pit of the stomach**

epigastrocele /,epɪ'gæstrəsūl/ *noun* a hernia in the upper abdomen

epiglottis /,epɪ'glɒtɪs/ *noun* a flap of cartilage at the root of the tongue which moves to block the windpipe when food is swallowed, so that the food does not go down the trachea

epiglottitis /,epɪglɒ'taitɪs/ *noun* inflammation and swelling of the epiglottis

epilation /,epɪ'leɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the process of removing hair by destroying the hair follicles

epilepsy /'epɪlepsi/ *noun* a disorder of the nervous system in which there are convulsions and loss of consciousness due to a disordered discharge of cerebral neurones

COMMENT: The commonest form of epilepsy is major epilepsy or 'grand mal', where a person loses consciousness and falls to the ground with convulsions. A less severe form is minor

epilepsy or 'petit mal', where attacks last only a few seconds, and the person appears simply to be hesitating or thinking deeply.

epileptic /,epɪ'leptɪk/ *adjective* having epilepsy, or relating to epilepsy ■ *noun* a person with epilepsy (NOTE: The word 'epileptic' to describe a person is now avoided.)

epileptic fit /,epɪleptɪk 'fit/ *noun* an attack of convulsions, and sometimes unconsciousness, due to epilepsy

epileptiform /,epɪ'leptɪfɔ:m/ *adjective* being similar to epilepsy

epileptogenic /,epɪ'leptəʊ'dʒenɪk/ *adjective* causing epilepsy

epiloia /,epɪ'liə/ *noun* a hereditary disease of the brain associated with learning disabilities, epilepsy and tumours on the kidney and heart. Also called **tuberose sclerosis**

epimenorrhagia /,epɪmenə'reɪdʒə/ *noun* very heavy bleeding during menstruation occurring at very short intervals

epimenorrhoea /,epɪmenə'rɪə/ *noun* menstruation at shorter intervals than twenty-eight days

epimysium /,epɪ'maɪsɪəm/ *noun* a connective tissue binding striated muscle fibres

epinephrine /,epɪ'nefrɪn/ *noun* US same as **adrenaline**

epineurium /,epɪ'njuəriəm/ *noun* a sheath of connective tissue round a nerve

epiphénoménon /,epɪfə'nominən/ *noun* an unusual symptom which may not be caused by a disease

epiphora /'e:pɪfərə/ *noun* a condition in which the eye fills with tears either because the lacrimal duct is blocked or because excessive tears are being secreted

epiphyseal /,epɪ'fiziəl/ *adjective* referring to an epiphysis

epiphyseal cartilage /,epɪ'fiziəl 'ka:tɪlɪdʒ/ *noun* a type of cartilage in the bones of children and adolescents which expands and hardens as the bones grow to full size

epiphyseal line /,epɪ'fiziəl laɪn/ *noun* a plate of epiphyseal cartilage separating the epiphysis and the diaphysis of a long bone

epiphysis /'e:pɪfəsɪs/ *noun* the area of growth in a bone which is separated from the main part of the bone by cartilage until bone growth stops. See illustration at **BONE STRUCTURE** in Supplement. Compare **diaphysis, metaphysis**

epiphysis cerebri /,e:pɪfəsɪs sə'ri:bri/ *noun* the pineal gland. See illustration at **BONE STRUCTURE** in Supplement

epiphysitis /,epɪfɪ'saɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of an epiphysis

epiplo- /,epɪpləʊ/ *prefix* referring to the omentum

epiplocele /'e:pɪpləsūl/ *noun* a hernia containing part of the omentum

epiploic /epi'pləʊɪk/ *adjective* referring to the omentum

epiploon /e'pipləʊn/ *noun* same as **omentum**

episclera /epɪsklɪərə/ *noun* the outer surface of the sclera of the eyeball

episcleritis /epɪsklə'rātɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the outer surface of the sclera in the eyeball

epi- /ə'pɪzɪə/, **episio-** /ə'pɪzɪ/ *prefix* referring to the vulva

episorrhaphy /ə,pɪzɪ'ɔ:rəfɪ/ *noun* a procedure for stitching torn labia majora

episiotomy /ə,pɪzɪ'ɒtəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical cut of the perineum near the vagina to prevent tearing during childbirth

episode /'epɪsəʊd/ *noun* a separate occurrence of an illness

episodic /epi'sɒdɪk/ *adjective* happening in separate but related incidents, e.g. asthma which occurs in separate attacks

epispadias /epi'speɪdiəs/ *noun* a congenital condition where the urethra opens on the top of the penis and not at the end. Compare **hypospadias**

epispastic /epi'spæstɪk/ *noun* same as **vesicant**

epistaxis /epi'stæksɪs/ *noun* same as **nosebleed**

epithalamus /epi'θæləməs/ *noun* the part of the forebrain containing the pineal body

epithelial /epi'θi:li:lɪəl/ *adjective* referring to the epithelium

epithelialisation /epi,θi:li:lələt'zeɪʃ(ə)n/, **epithelialization** *noun* the growth of skin over a wound

epithelial layer /epi,θi:li:ləl 'leɪəl/ *noun* the epithelium

epithelial tissue /epi,θi:li:ləl 'tɪʃu:/ *noun* epithelial cells arranged as a continuous sheet consisting of one or several layers

epithelioma /epiθi:li:'əʊmə/ *noun* a tumour arising from epithelial cells

epithelium /epi'θi:li:mə/ *noun* the layer or layers of cells covering an organ, including the skin and the lining of all hollow cavities except blood vessels, lymphatics and serous cavities. Compare **endothelium**, **mesothelium**

COMMENT: Epithelium is classified according to the shape of the cells and the number of layers of cells which form it. The types of epithelium according to the number of layers are: **simple epithelium** (epithelium formed of a single layer of cells) and **stratified epithelium** (epithelium formed of several layers of cells). The main types of epithelial cells are:

columnar epithelium (simple epithelium with long narrow cells, forming the lining of the intestines); **ciliated epithelium** (simple epithelium where the cells have little hairs, forming the lining of air passages); **cuboidal epithelium** (with cube-shaped cells, forming the lining of glands and intestines) and **squamous epi-**

thelium

or **pavement epithelium** (with flat cells like scales, forming the lining of the pericardium, peritoneum and pleura).

epituberculosis /,epɪtju:b3:kjʊ'ləʊsɪs/ *noun* swelling of the lymph node in the thorax, due to tuberculosis

eponym /'epənəm/ *noun* a procedure, disease or part of the body which is named after a person

COMMENT: An eponym can refer to a disease or condition such as Dupuytren's contracture, or Guillain-Barré syndrome, a part of the body such as circle of Willis, an organism such as Leishmania, a surgical procedure such as Trendelenburg's operation or an appliance such as Kirschner wire.

Epsom salts /'ɛpsəm 'sɔ:lt̩s/ *noun* same as **magnesium sulphate**

Epstein–Barr virus /epstain 'bə: vairəs/ *noun* a virus which probably causes glandular fever. Also called **EB virus** [Isolated and described 1964. After Michael Anthony Epstein (b. 1921), Bristol pathologist; Murray Llewellyn Barr (1908–95), Canadian anatomist and cytologist, head of the Department of Anatomy at the University of Western Ontario, Canada.]

epulis /'epju:lɪs/ *noun* a small fibrous swelling on a gum

equi- /i:kwɪ/, **ekwi-** *prefix* equal

equilibrium /i:kwɪ'lɪbriəm/ *noun* a state of balance

equinovarus /i,kwainəu'veərəs/ ▶ **talipes**

equipment /ɪ'kwɪpmənt/ *noun* apparatus or tools which are required to do something ○ *The centre urgently needs surgical equipment.* ○ *The surgeons complained about the out-of-date equipment in the hospital.* (NOTE: No plural: for one item say *a piece of equipment*)

ER abbr 1. *US* emergency room 2. endoplasmic reticulum

eradicate /ɪ'rædɪkeɪt/ *verb* to remove something completely ○ *international action to eradicate tuberculosis*

eradication /ɪ,rædɪ'keɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the act of removing something completely

Erb's palsy /,ɜ:bz 'pɔ:lzɪ/, **Erb's paralysis** /,ɜ:bz pɔ'rælɪsɪs/ *noun* a condition in which an arm is paralysed because of birth injuries to the brachial plexus. ◊ **Bell's palsy**

ERCP abbr endoscopic retrograde cholangio-pancreatography

erect /ɪ'rekt/ *adjective* stiff and straight

erectile /ɪ'rektəl/ *adjective* able to become erect

erectile dysfunction /ɪ'rektəl dɪs'fʌŋkʃən/ *noun* a condition in which a man finds it difficult or impossible to have or maintain an erection during intercourse

erectile tissue /ɪ'rektəl, tɪʃu:/ *noun* vascular tissue which can become erect and stiff when engorged with blood, e.g. the corpus cavernosum in the penis

erection /'rekʃən/ *noun* a state where a body part such as the penis becomes swollen because of engorgement with blood

erector /'rektər/ *noun* a small muscle which raises a body part

erector spinae /ɪ,rek'tər 'spɪnə:/ *noun* a large muscle starting at the base of the spine, and dividing as it runs up the spine

erepsin /'rep'sin/ *noun* a mixture of enzymes produced by the glands in the intestine, used in the production of amino acids

erethism /'erəθɪz(ə)m/ *noun* unusual irritability

ERG *abbr* electroretinogram

ergograph /'ɜ:gəgrɑ:f/ *noun* apparatus which records the work of one or several muscles

ergometrine maleate /,ɜ:gəmetri:n 'mæli:tɪ/ *noun* a drug used to speed up the delivery of the placenta in childbirth and to control postnatal bleeding

ergonomics /,ɜ:gə'nɒmɪks/ *noun* the study of humans at work

ergot /'ɜ:gət/ *noun* a disease of rye caused by the fungus *Claviceps purpurea*

ergotamine /ɜ:g'təmi:n/ *noun* a drug that causes narrowing of blood vessels and alleviates migraine, derived from the ergot fungus

ergotism /'ɜ:gətɪz(ə)m/ *noun* poisoning caused by eating rye which has been contaminated with the ergot fungus

COMMENT: The symptoms of ergotism are muscle cramps and dry gangrene in the fingers and toes.

erogenous /ɪ'rɒdʒənəs/ *adjective* producing sexual excitement

erogenous zone /ɪ'rɒdʒənəs zəʊn/ *noun* a part of the body which, if stimulated, produces sexual arousal, e.g. the penis, clitoris or nipples

erosion /ɪ'rəʊʒ(ə)n/ *noun* the action of wearing away tissue or breaking down tissue

erotic /'rɒtɪk/ *adjective* relating to or arousing the feeling of sexual desire

ERPC *abbr* evacuation of retained products of conception

eructation /i:rʌk'teɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* same as belching

erupt /ɪ'rʌpt/ *verb* to break through the skin ○ *The permanent incisors erupt before the premolars.*

eruption /ɪ'rʌpʃən/ *noun* 1. something which breaks through the skin, e.g. a rash or pimple 2. the appearance of a new tooth in a gum

ery- /'erɪ/ *prefix* same as **erythro-**

erysipelas /'erɪ'sɪpələs/ *noun* a contagious skin disease, where the skin on the face becomes hot, red and painful, caused by *Streptococcus pyogenes*

erysipeloid /,erɪ'sɪpəlɔɪd/ *noun* a bacterial skin infection caused by touching infected fish or meat

erythema /,erɪ'θɪ:mə/ *noun* redness on the skin, caused by hyperaemia of the blood vessels near the surface

erythema ab igne /,erɪfɪrmə əb 'igne:/ *noun* a pattern of red lines on the skin caused by exposure to heat

erythema induratum /,erɪθɪ:mə ,ɪndjʊ'retəm/ *noun* a tubercular disease where ulcerating nodules appear on the legs of young women. Also called **Bazin's disease**

erythema multiforme /,erɪθɪ:mə 'mʌltɪfɔ:mɪ/ *noun* the sudden appearance of inflammatory red patches and sometimes blisters on the skin

erythema nodosum /,erɪθɪ:mə nəʊ'dəʊsəm/ *noun* an inflammatory disease where red swellings appear on the front of the legs

erythema pernio /,erɪθɪ:mə 'pɜ:nɪəʊ/ *noun* same as chilblain

erythema serpens /,erɪθɪ:mə 'sɜ:pəns/ *noun* a bacterial skin infection caused by touching infected fish or meat

erythematous /,erɪ'θɪ:mə'teəsɪs/ ♦ **lupus**

erythematous /,erɪ'θɪ:mətəs/ *adjective* referring to erythema

erythr- /'erɪθr/ *prefix* same as **erythro-** (used before vowels)

erythaemia /,erɪ'θrɪ:miə/ *noun* a blood disorder where the number of red blood cells increases sharply, together with an increase in the number of white cells, making the blood thicker and slower to flow. Also called **polycythaemia vera**

erythrasma /,erɪ'θræzmə/ *noun* a persistent bacterial skin infection occurring in a fold in the skin or where two skin surfaces touch, such as between the toes. It is caused by *Corynebacterium*.

erythro- /'erɪθrəʊ/ *prefix* red

erythroblast /ɪ'rɪθrəblæst/ *noun* a cell which forms an erythrocyte or red blood cell

erythroblastosis /ɪ,rɪθrəblæ'stəʊsɪs/ *noun* the presence of erythroblasts in the blood, usually found in haemolytic anaemia

COMMENT: Usually erythroblastosis occurs where the mother is rhesus negative and has developed rhesus positive antibodies, which are passed into the blood of a rhesus positive fetus.

erythroblastosis foetalis /ɪ,rɪθrəblæ'stɪs fi:t'ærɪlis/ *noun* a blood disease affecting newborn babies, caused by a reaction between the rhesus factor of the mother and the fetus

erythrocyanosis /ɪ,rɪθrəsæɪ'nəʊsɪs/ *noun* red and purple patches on the skin of the thighs, often accompanied by chilblains and made worse by cold

erythrocyte /'rɪθrəsait/ *noun* a mature red blood cell

'...anemia may be due to insufficient erythrocyte production, in which case the corrected reticulocyte count will be low, or it may be due to hemorrhage or hemolysis, in which cases there should be reticulocyte response' [Southern Medical Journal]

erythrocyte sedimentation rate /ɪ,rɪθrəsait sedimen'teɪʃ(ə)n reɪt/ *noun* a test that measures how fast erythrocytes settle in a sample of blood plasma, used to confirm whether various blood conditions are present. Abbr ESR

erythrocytosis /ɪ,rɪθrəsai'təʊsis/ *noun* an increase in the number of red blood cells in the blood

erythroderma /ɪ,rɪθrə'dzə:mə/ *noun* a condition in which the skin becomes red and flakes off

erythroedema /ɪ,rɪθrə'di:mə/ *noun* same as acrodynia

erythrogenesis /ɪ,rɪθrə'dʒenəsɪs/, **erythropoiesis** /ɪ,rɪθrə'poɪ'sɪsɪs/ *noun* the formation of red blood cells in red bone marrow

erythromelalgia /ɪ,rɪθrə'mel'ældʒə/ *noun* a painful swelling of blood vessels in the extremities

erythromycin /ɪ,rɪθrə'maɪsɪn/ *noun* an antibacterial drug suitable for people who are sensitive to penicillin

erythropenia /ɪ,rɪθrə'pi:nɪə/ *noun* a condition in which a person has a low number of erythrocytes in their blood

erythroplasia /ɪ,rɪθrə'pleɪzɪə/ *noun* the formation of lesions on the mucous membrane

erythropoiesis /ɪ,rɪθrə'poɪ'sɪsɪs/ *noun* same as erythrogenesis

erythropoietin /ɪ,rɪθrə'poɪətɪn/ *noun* a hormone which regulates the production of red blood cells

COMMENT: Erythropoietin can now be produced by genetic techniques and is being used to increase the production of red blood cells in anaemia.

erythropsia /'erɪθrɒpsɪə/ *noun* a condition in which someone sees things as if coloured red

Esbach's albuminometer /,esbaʊks ,ælbju:mi'nɒmɪtə/ *noun* a glass for measuring albumin in urine, using Esbach's method

eschar /'eska:/ *noun* a dry scab, e.g. one forming on a burn

escharotic /,eskə'rɒtɪk/ *noun* a substance which produces an eschar

Escherichia /,eʃə'rɪkiə/ *noun* a bacterium commonly found in faeces

Escherichia coli /eʃə'rɪkiə 'kəʊləʊɪ/ *noun* a Gram-negative bacterium associated with acute gastroenteritis. Also called **E. coli**

escort nurse /'eskɔ:t ,nɜ:sɪ/ *noun* a nurse who goes with patients to the operating theatre and back again to the ward

Esmarch's bandage /'esma:ks ,bændɪdʒ/ *noun* a rubber band wrapped round a limb as a tourniquet before a surgical operation and left in place during the operation so as to keep the site free of blood [Described 1869. After Johann Friedrich August von Esmarch (1823–1908), Professor of Surgery at Kiel, Germany.]

esophagus /i:'sɒfəgəs/ *noun* US spelling of oesophagus

esotropia /esə't्रəʊpiə/ *noun* a type of squint, where the eyes both look towards the nose. Also called **convergent strabismus**

espundia /i:'spu:ndiə/ ♀ **leishmaniasis**

ESR abbr erythrocyte sedimentation rate

ESRD abbr end-stage renal disease

essence /'es(ə)nsɪ/ *noun* a concentrated oil from a plant, used in cosmetics, and sometimes as analgesics or antiseptics

essential /ɪ'senʃəl/ *adjective* 1. extremely important ○ *It is essential to keep accurate records.* 2. necessary for health ○ **essential nutrients** 3. without obvious cause ○ **essential hypertension** Also called **idiopathic** 4. extracted from a plant ○ **essential oil**

essential amino acid /ɪ,senʃəl ə,mī:nəʊ 'æsɪd/ *noun* an amino acid which is necessary for growth but which cannot be synthesised in the body and has to be obtained from the food supply

COMMENT: The essential amino acids are: isoleucine, leucine, lysine, methionine, phenylalanine, threonine, tryptophan and valine.

essential dysmenorrhoea /ɪ,senʃəl dɪs'me:nə'ri:ə/ *noun* same as **primary dysmenorrhoea**

essential element /ɪ,senʃəl 'elɪmənt/ *noun* a chemical element which is necessary to the body's growth or function, e.g. carbon, oxygen, hydrogen and nitrogen

essential fatty acid /ɪ,senʃəl ,fæti 'æsɪd/ *noun* an unsaturated fatty acid which is necessary for growth and health. Abbr **EFA**

COMMENT: The essential fatty acids are linoleic acid, linolenic acid and arachidonic acid.

essential hyperkinesia /ɪ,senʃəl ,haɪpəkɪ 'ni:ziə/ *noun* a condition of children where their movements are excessive and repeated

essential hypertension /ɪ,senʃəl 'haɪpə ,tenʃən/ *noun* high blood pressure without any obvious cause

essential oil /ɪ,senʃəl 'ɔɪl/ *noun* a medicinal or fragrant oil distilled from some part of a plant

essential tremor /ɪ,senʃəl 'tremə/ *noun* an involuntary slow trembling movement of the hands often seen in elderly people

essential uterine haemorrhage /ɪ,senʃəl ,ju:tərɪn 'hem(ə)rɪdʒ/ *noun* heavy uterine bleeding for which there is no obvious cause

estrogen /'estrədʒən/ *noun* US same as **oestrogen**

ethambutol /'θæmbjʊtɒl/ *noun* a drug that is part of the treatment for bacterial infections such as tuberculosis

ethanol /'eθənɒl/ *noun* a colourless liquid, present in alcoholic drinks such as whisky, gin and vodka, and also used in medicines and as a disinfectant. Also called **ethyl alcohol**. ☀ **pure alcohol**

ethene /'i:θi:n/ *noun* same as **ethylene**

ether /'i:θə/ *noun* an anaesthetic substance, now rarely used

ethical /'eθɪk(ə)l/ *adjective* 1. concerning ethics 2. referring to a drug available on prescription only

ethical committee /'eθɪk(ə)l kə,mɪt̬i/ *noun* a group of specialists who monitor experiments involving human beings or who regulate the way in which members of the medical profession conduct themselves

ethinyloestradiol /,eθɪnɪ'ləstrə'daɪɒl/ *noun* an artificial hormone related to oestrogen that is effective in small doses. It forms part of hormone replacement therapy.

ethmoid /eθ'mɔɪd/, **ethmoidal** /eθ'mɔɪd(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to the ethmoid bone or near to the ethmoid bone

ethmoidal sinuses /eθ'mɔɪd(ə)l 'sɪnʊsɪz/ *plural noun* air cells inside the ethmoid bone

ethmoid bone /'eθmɔɪd bəʊn/ *noun* a bone which forms the top of the nasal cavity and part of the orbits

ethmoidectomy /,eθmɔɪ'dektəmɪ/ *noun* an operation to remove the lining between the sinuses

ethmoiditis /,eθmɔɪ'daɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the ethmoid bone or of the ethmoidal sinuses

ethnic /'eθnɪk/ *adjective* relating to a culturally or racially distinctive group of people

ethyl alcohol /iθəlɒl 'ælkəhɒl/ *noun* same as ethanol

ethylene /'eθeli:n/ *noun* a gas used as an anaesthetic

ethylestrenol /,eθ(ə)l'estrənɒl/ *noun* an anabolic steroid

etiology /i:ti'ɒlədʒi/ *noun* US same as **aetiology**

eu- /ju:/ *prefix* good, well

eubacteria /,ju:bæk'tɪriə/ *noun* true bacteria with rigid cell walls

eucalyptol /,ju:kə'lɪptɒl/ *noun* a substance obtained from eucalyptus oil

eucalyptus /,ju:kə'lɪptəs/ *noun* a genus of tree growing mainly in Australia, from which a strongly smelling oil is distilled

eucalyptus oil /,ju:kə'lɪptəs ɔɪl/ *noun* an aromatic medicinal oil distilled from the leaves of various species of tree in the genus *Eucalyptus*

COMMENT: Eucalyptus oil is used in pharmaceutical products especially to relieve congestion in the respiratory passages.

eugenics /ju:'dʒenɪks/ *noun* the study of how to improve the human race by genetic selection

eunuch /'ju:nək/ *noun* a castrated male

eupepsia /ju:'pepsiə/ *noun* good digestion

euphoria /ju:'fɔ:riə/ *noun* a feeling of extreme happiness

euplastic /ju:'plæstɪk/ *adjective* referring to tissue which heals well

Eustachian canal /ju:'steɪʃ(ə)n kə,næl/ *noun* a passage through the porous bone forming the outside part of the Eustachian tube

Eustachian tube /ju:'steɪʃ(ə)n tju:b/ *noun* the tube which connects the pharynx to the middle ear. See illustration at **EAR** in Supplement [Described 1562, but actually named after Eustachio by Valsalva a century later. Bartolomeo Eustachio (1520–74), physician to the Pope and Professor of Anatomy in Rome.]

COMMENT: The Eustachian tubes balance the air pressure on each side of the eardrum. When a person swallows or yawns, air is allowed into the Eustachian tubes and equalises the pressure with the normal atmospheric pressure outside the body. The tubes can be blocked by an infection, as in a cold, or by pressure differences, as inside an aircraft, and if they are blocked, the hearing is impaired.

euthanasia /ju:θə'neɪzɪə/ *noun* the painless killing of an incurably ill person or someone in a permanent coma in order to end their distress. Also called **mercy killing** (NOTE: This practice is illegal in most countries.)

euthanise /'ju:θənaɪz/, **euthanize** *verb* to kill an incurably ill person or someone in a permanent coma

euthyroid /ju:'θaɪrɔɪd/ *noun* a condition where the thyroid is functioning normally

euthyroidism /ju:'θaɪrɔɪdɪz(ə)m/, **euthyroid state** /ju:'θaɪrɔɪd ,steɪt/ *noun* the fact of having a healthy thyroid gland

eutocia /ju:'təʊsɪə/ *noun* a standard childbirth

evacuant /i'vekjuənt/ *noun* a medicine which makes a person have a bowel movement

evacuate /i'vekju:eɪt/ *verb* to discharge faeces from the bowel, or to have a bowel movement

evacuation /i'vekju'eɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the act of removing the contents of something, especially discharging faeces from the bowel

evacuation of retained products of conception /i'vekju,eɪʃ(ə)n əv rɪ,teɪnd ,prɒdʌktəs əv kən'sepʃən/ *noun* a D & C operation performed after an abortion or miscarriage to ensure the uterus is left empty. Abbr **ERPC**

evacuator /'vækjueɪtə/ *noun* an instrument used to empty a cavity such as the bladder or bowel

evaluate /'væljueɪt/ *verb* 1. to examine and calculate the quantity or level of something ○ *The laboratory is still evaluating the results of the tests.* 2. to examine someone and calculate the treatment required

'...all patients were evaluated and followed up at the hypertension unit' [British Medical Journal]

evaluation /ɪ,vælju'eɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the act of examining and calculating the quantity or level of something ○ *In further evaluation of these patients no side-effects of the treatment were noted.*

'...evaluation of fetal age and weight has proved to be of value in the clinical management of pregnancy, particularly in high-risk gestations' [Southern Medical Journal]

eventration /,eɪ;ven'treɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the pushing of the intestine through the wall of the abdomen

eversion /'ɪ'vɜ:sʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the act of turning towards the outside or turning inside out. See illustration at **ANATOMICAL TERMS** in Supplement □ **eversion of the cervix** a condition after laceration during childbirth, where the edges of the cervix sometimes turn outwards

evertor /'ɪ'vɜ:tə/ *noun* a muscle which makes a limb turn outwards

evidence-based /'evidəns bɛɪst/ *adjective* based on the results of well-designed trials of specific types of treatment for specific conditions ○ *evidence-based practice*

evidence-based medicine /'evid(ə)ns bɛɪst ,med(ə)sin/ *noun* medical practice where findings from research are used as the basis for decisions

evisceration /,eɪsɪə'reɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* 1. the surgical removal of the abdominal viscera. Also called **exenteration** 2. removal of the contents of an organ □ **evisceration of the eye** surgical removal of the contents of an eyeball

evolution /,i:və'lju:s(ə)n/ *noun* a process of change in organisms which takes place over a very long period involving many generations

evulsion /'ɪ'vʌlʃən/ *noun* the act of extracting something by force

Ewing's tumour /'ju:ɪŋz 'tju:mə/, **Ewing's sarcoma** /,ju:ɪŋz sə:'kəʊmə/ *noun* a malignant tumour in the marrow of a long bone [Described 1922. After James Ewing (1866–1943), Professor of Pathology at Cornell University, New York, USA.]

ex- /eks/ prefix same as **exo-** (*used before vowels*)

exacerbate /ɪg'zæsə,bɛɪt/ *verb* to make a condition more severe ○ *The cold damp weather will only exacerbate his chest condition.*

exacerbation /ɪg,zæsə'beɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* 1. the fact of making a condition worse 2. a period when a condition becomes worse

'...patients were re-examined regularly or when they felt they might be having an exacerbation. Exacerbation rates were calculated from the number of exacerbations during the study' [Lancet]

examination /ɪg,zæmɪ'neɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* 1. an act of looking at someone or something carefully ○ *From the examination of the X-ray photographs, it seems that the tumour has not spread.* 2. the act of looking at someone to find out what is wrong with him or her ○ *The surgeon carried out a medical examination before operating.* 3. a written or oral test to see if a student is progressing satisfactorily (NOTE: In this sense, often abbreviated to **exam**.)

examine /ɪg'zæmɪn/ *verb* 1. to look at or to investigate someone or something carefully ○ *The tissue samples were examined in the laboratory.* 2. to look at and test someone to find out what is wrong with him or her ○ *The doctor examined the patient's heart.*

exanthem /ɪg'zænθəm/ *noun* a skin rash found with infectious diseases like measles or chickenpox

exanthematicous /,eksæn'θēmətəs/ *adjective* referring to an exanthem or like an exanthem

exanthem subitum /ɪg,zænθəm 'sobɪtəm/ *noun* same as **roseola infantum**

excavator /'ekskə'veɪtə/ *noun* a surgical instrument shaped like a spoon

excavatum /'ekskə'veɪtəm/ ♦ **pectus excavatum**

exception /ɪk'sepʃən/ *noun* 1. something that does not fit into or is excluded from a general rule or pattern 2. the act or condition of being excluded

excess /ɪk'ses/ *noun* too much of a substance ○ *The gland was producing an excess of hormones.* ○ *The body could not cope with an excess of blood sugar.* □ **in excess of** more than ○ *Short men who weigh in excess of 100 kilos are very overweight.*

excessive /ɪk'sesɪv/ *adjective* more than normal ○ *The patient was passing excessive quantities of urine.* ○ *The doctor noted an excessive amount of bile in the patient's blood.*

excessively /ɪk'sesɪvli/ *adverb* too much ○ *She has an excessively high blood pressure.* ○ *If the patient sweats excessively, it may be necessary to cool his body with cold compresses.*

exchange transfusion /ɪks,tʃeɪndʒ træns 'fju:z(ə)n/ *noun* a method of treating leukaemia or erythroblastosis in newborn babies, where almost all the blood is removed from the body and replaced with healthy blood

excipient /ɪk'sipiənt/ *noun* a substance added to a drug so that it can be made into a pill
excise /ɪk'saɪz/ *verb* to cut something out

excision /ɪk'sɪʒ(ə)n/ *noun* an operation by a surgeon to cut and remove part of the body such as a growth. Compare **incision**

excitation /,eksi'teɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the state of being mentally or physically aroused

excitatory /ɪk'saɪtəri/ *adjective* tending to excite

excite /ɪk'saɪt/ *verb* 1. to stimulate someone or something 2. to give an impulse to a nerve or muscle

excited /ɪk'saɪtɪd/ *adjective* 1. very lively and happy 2. aroused

excitement /ɪk'saɪtmənt/ *noun* 1. the act of being excited 2. the second stage of anaesthesia

excoriation /ɪkskɔ:rɪ'eɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a raw skin surface or mucous membrane after rubbing or burning

excrement /'ekskrɪmənt/ *noun* same as **faeces**

ex crescence /ɪk'skres(ə)ns/ *noun* a growth on the skin

excreta /ɪk'skrɪ:tə/ *plural noun* waste material from the body, especially faeces

excrete /ɪk'skrɪ:t/ *verb* to pass waste matter out of the body, especially to discharge faeces
○ *The urinary system separates waste liquids from the blood and excretes them as urine.*

excretion /ɪk'skrɪ:ʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the act of passing waste matter, e.g. faeces, urine or sweat, out of the body

excruciating /ɪk'skrū:ʃeɪtɪŋ/ *adjective* extremely painful
○ *He had excruciating pains in his head.*

exenteration /ek'sentə'reɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* same as **evisceration**

exercise /'eksəsaɪz/ *noun* 1. physical or mental activity, especially the active use of the muscles as a way of keeping fit, correcting a deformity or strengthening a part
○ *Regular exercise is good for your heart.* ○ *He doesn't do or take enough exercise.* 2. a particular movement or action designed to use and strengthen the muscles
■ *verb* to take exercise, or exert part of the body in exercise
○ *He exercises twice a day to keep fit.*

exercise cycle /'eksəsaɪz ,saɪk(ə)l/ *noun* a type of cycle which is fixed to the floor, so that someone can pedal on it for exercise

exercise-induced asthma /'eksəsaɪz ɪn ,dʒu:st 'æsmə/ *noun* asthma which is caused by exercise such as running or cycling. Abbr **EIA**

exertion /ɪg'zɪ:ʃ(ə)n/ *noun* physical activity

exfoliation /eks,fəʊli'eɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the loss of layers of tissue such as sunburnt skin

exfoliative /eks'fəʊli'eɪtɪv/ *adjective* referring to exfoliation

exfoliative dermatitis /eks,fəʊli'eɪtɪv ,dɜ:ma'taɪtɪs/ *noun* a typical form of dermatiti-

tis where the skin becomes red and comes off in flakes

exhalation /,ekshə'leɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* 1. the act of breathing out 2. air which is breathed out ► opposite **inhalation**

exhale /eks'hel/ *verb* to breathe out. Opposite **inhale**

exhaust /ɪg'zɔ:st/ *verb* to tire someone out

exhaustion /ɪg'zɔ:stʃən/ *noun* extreme tiredness or fatigue

exhibitionism /,eksɪ'bɪʃ(ə)nɪz(ə)m/ *noun* a desire to show the genitals to a person of the opposite sex

exo- /eksəʊ/ *prefix* out of, outside

exocrine /'eksəkrain/ *adjective* □ **exocrine secretions of the pancreas** enzymes carried from the pancreas to the second part of the duodenum

exocrine gland /'eksəkrain glænd/ *noun* a gland with ducts which channel secretions to particular parts of the body such as the liver, the sweat glands, the pancreas and the salivary glands. Compare **endocrine gland**

exogenous /ek'sɒndʒənəs/ *adjective* developing or caused by something outside the organism. Compare **endogenous**

exomphalos /ek'sɒmfələs/ *noun* same as **umbilical hernia**

exophthalmic goitre /,eksɒfθəlmɪk 'goɪtə/ *noun* a form of hyperthyroidism, in which the neck swells and the eyes protrude. Also called **Graves' disease**

exophthalmos /eksɒf'θəlməs/ *noun* protruding eyeballs

exoskeleton /'eksəʊ,skelɪt(ə)n/ *noun* the outer skeleton of some animals such as insects. Compare **endoskeleton**

exostosis /,eksə'stəʊsɪs/ *noun* a benign growth on the surface of a bone

exotic /ɪg'zotɪk/ *adjective* referring to a disease which occurs in a foreign country

exotoxin /,eksəʊ'tɒksɪn/ *noun* a poison, produced by bacteria, which affects parts of the body away from the place of infection, e.g. the toxins which cause botulism or tetanus

COMMENT: Diphtheria is caused by a bacillus.

The exotoxin released causes the generalised symptoms of the disease such as fever and rapid pulse while the bacillus itself is responsible for the local symptoms in the upper throat.

exotropia /eksəʊ't्रəʊpiə/ *noun* same as **divergent strabismus**

expectant mother /ɪk'spektənt 'mʌðə/ *noun* a pregnant woman

expected date of delivery /ɪk'spektɪd ,deɪt əv dɪ'lɪv(ə)ri/ *noun* the day on which a doctor calculates that the birth of a baby will take place

expectorant /ɪk'spekt(ə)rənt/ *noun* a drug which helps someone to cough up phlegm

expectorate /ɪk'spektəreɪt/ *verb* to cough up phlegm or sputum from the respiratory passages

expectoration /ɪk,spɛktə'reɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the act of coughing up fluid or phlegm from the respiratory tract

expel /ɪk'spel/ *verb* to send something out of the body ○ *Air is expelled from the lungs when a person breathes out.*

experiential learning /ɪk,spɪ'reɪəniəl 'ɪz:nɪŋ/ *noun* the process of learning from experience

experiment /ɪk'spərɪmənt/ *noun* a scientific test conducted under set conditions ○ *The scientists did some experiments to try the new drug on a small sample of people.*

expert patient /'ekspɜ:t 'peɪʃ(ə)nt/ *noun* a patient with a long-term illness who has been taught how to manage his or her own medical care

expiration /ekspə'reɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* 1. the act of breathing out, or pushing air out of the lungs ○ *Expiration takes place when the chest muscles relax and the lungs become smaller.* Opposite **inspiration** 2. death 3. dying

expiratory /ek'spirət(ə)ri/ *adjective* referring to the process of breathing out

expire /ɪk'spaɪə/ *verb* 1. to breathe out 2. to die

explant /eks'pla:nt/ *noun* tissue taken from a body and grown in a culture in a laboratory ■ *verb* 1. to take tissue from a body and grow it in a culture in a laboratory 2. to remove an implant

explantation /eksplæ:n'teɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* 1. the act of taking tissue from a body and growing it in a culture in a laboratory 2. the removal of an implant

exploration /eksplɔ:r'eɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a procedure or surgical operation where the aim is to discover the cause of symptoms or the nature and extent of an illness

exploratory /ɪk'splɔ:rət(ə)ri/ *adjective* referring to an exploration

exploratory surgery /ɪk,splɔ:rət(ə)ri 'sɜ:dʒəri/ *noun* a surgical operation in which the aim is to discover the cause of a person's symptoms or the nature and extent of an illness

explore /ɪk'splɔ:/ *verb* to examine a part of the body in order to make a diagnosis

expose /ɪk'spəʊz/ *verb* 1. to show something which was hidden ○ *The operation exposed a generalised cancer.* ○ *The report exposed a lack of medical care on the part of some of the hospital staff.* 2. to place something or someone under the influence of something ○ *He was exposed to the disease for two days.* ○ *She was exposed to a lethal dose of radiation.*

exposure /ɪk'spəʊzə/ *noun* 1. the fact of being exposed to something ○ *his exposure to radiation* 2. the fact of being damp, cold and with

no protection from the weather ○ *The survivors of the crash were all suffering from exposure after spending a night in the snow.*

express /ɪk'spres/ *verb* to squeeze liquid or air out of something, especially to squeeze out breast milk for a baby to feed on later

expression /ɪk'spreʃ(ə)n/ *noun* 1. the look on a person's face which shows what he or she thinks and feels ○ *His expression showed that he was annoyed.* 2. the act of pushing something out of the body ○ *the expression of the fetus and placenta during childbirth*

exquisitely tender /ɪk,skwɪzɪtlɪ 'tendə/ *adjective* producing a sharp localised pain or tenderness when touched

exsanguinate /ɪk'sænggwineɪt/ *verb* to drain blood from the body

exsanguination /ɪk,sænggwɪ'nɛɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the removal of blood from the body

exsufflation /eksə'fleɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* an act of forcing breath out of the body

extend /ɪk'stend/ *verb* to stretch out, or cause something to stretch out ○ *The patient is unable to extend his arms fully.*

extension /ɪk'stenʃən/ *noun* 1. the stretching or straightening out of a joint 2. the stretching of a joint by traction

extensor /ɪk'stensə/, **extensor muscle** /ɪk 'stensə,ma:s(ə)/ *noun* a muscle which makes a joint become straight. Compare **flexor**

exterior /ɪk'striəriə/ *noun* the outside of something

exteriorisation /ɪk,stɪəriərə'seɪʃ(ə)n/, **exteriorization** *noun* a surgical operation to bring an internal organ to the outside surface of the body

externa /ɪk'stɜ:nə/ ♀ **otitis externa**

external /ɪk'stɜ:n(ə)l/ *adjective* on the outside, especially outside the surface of the body. Opposite **internal** □ **the lotion is for external use only** it should only be used on the outside of the body

external auditory canal /ɪk,stɜ:n(ə)l 'ɔ:dɪt(ə)ri kə,næl/, **external auditory meatus** /ɪk,stɜ:n(ə)l ,ɔ:dɪt(ə)ri m'eɪtəs/ *noun* a tube in the skull leading from the outer ear to the eardrum. See illustration at **EAR** in Supplement

external cardiac massage /ɪk,stɜ:n(ə)l ,ku:diæk 'ma:sə:ʒ/ *noun* a method of making someone's heart start beating again by rhythmic pressing on the breastbone

external ear /ɪk,stɜ:n(ə)l 'ɪə/ *noun* same as **outer ear**

external haemorrhoids /ɪk,stɜ:n(ə)l 'hemərɔɪdz/ *plural noun* haemorrhoids in the skin just outside the anus

external iliac artery /ɪk,stɜ:n(ə)l 'iliæk ,a:təri/ *noun* an artery which branches from the aorta in the abdomen and leads to the leg

external jugular /ɪk'stɜ:n(ə)l 'dʒʌgjʊlə/ *noun* the main jugular vein in the neck, leading from the temporal vein

externally /ɪk'stɜ:n(ə)li/ *adverb* on the outside of the body ○ *The ointment should only be used externally.*

external nares *plural noun* same as **anterior nares**

external oblique /ɪk'stɜ:n(ə)l ə'bli:k/ *noun* an outer muscle covering the abdomen

external otitis /ɪk'stɜ:n(ə)l ə'taɪtɪs/ *noun* same as **otitis externa**

external respiration /ɪk'stɜ:n(ə)l ,rɛspɪ'reɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the part of respiration concerned with oxygen in the air being exchanged in the lungs for carbon dioxide from the blood

exteroceptor /ekstə'rəʊ'septə/ *noun* a sensory nerve which is affected by stimuli from outside the body, e.g. in the eye or ear

extinction /ɪk'stɪŋkʃən/ *noun* 1. the destruction or stopping of something 2. the lessening or stopping of a conditioned behavioural response through lack of reinforcement

extirpate /'ekstɜ:t,peɪt/ *verb* to remove something by surgery

extirpation /ekstɜ:t'peɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the total removal of a structure, an organ or growth by surgery

extra- /ekstrə/ *prefix* outside

extracapsular /ekstrə'kæpsjʊlə/ *adjective* outside a capsule

extracapsular fracture /ekstrə,kæpsjʊlə'frækʃə/ *noun* a fracture of the upper part of the femur, which does not involve the capsule round the hip joint

extracellular /ekstrə'seljʊlə/ *adjective* outside cells

extracellular fluid /ekstrə'seljʊlə'flu:ɪd/ *noun* a fluid which surrounds cells

extract *noun* /'ekstrækt/ a preparation made by removing water or alcohol from a substance, leaving only the essence □ **liver extract** concentrated essence of liver ■ *verb* /ɪk'strækt/ to take out something ○ *Adrenaline extracted from the animal's adrenal glands is used in the treatment of asthma.*

'...all the staff are RGNs, partly because they do venesection, partly because they work in plasmapheresis units which extract plasma and return red blood cells to the donor' [Nursing Times]

extraction /ɪk'strækʃən/ *noun* 1. the removal of part of the body, especially a tooth 2. in obstetrics, delivery, usually a breech presentation, which needs medical assistance

extradural /ekstrə'djuərəl/ *adjective* same as **epidural**

extradural haematoma /ekstrə,djuərəl hɪ:mə'təʊmə/ *noun* a blood clot which forms in the head outside the dura mater, caused by a blow

extradural haemorrhage /ekstrə,djuərəl 'hem(ə)rɪdʒ/ *noun* a serious condition where

bleeding occurs between the dura mater and the skull

extraembryonic /,ekstra'embri'ɒnɪk/ *adjective* referring to part of a fertilised ovum, such as the amnion, allantois and chorion which is not part of the embryo

extraembryonic membranes /,ekstra'embri'ɒnɪk 'membreɪnз/ *plural noun* membranes which are not part of the embryo

extrapleural /,ekstrə'pluərəl/ *adjective* outside the pleural cavity

extrapyramidal /,ekstrəpɪ'ræmɪd(ə)l/ *adjective* outside the pyramidal tracts

extrapyramidal system /,ekstrəpɪ,ræmɪd(ə)l 'sɪstəm/ *noun* a motor system which carries motor nerves outside the pyramidal system

extrapyramidal tracts /,ekstrəpɪ,ræmɪd(ə)l 'trækts/ *plural noun* same as **extrapyramidal system**

extrasensory /,ekstrə'sensərɪ/ *adjective* involving perception by means other than the usual five senses

extrasystole /,ekstrə'sistəli/ *noun* same as **ectopic heartbeat**

extrauterine /,ekstrə'jʊtərain/ *adjective* occurring or developing outside the uterus

extrauterine pregnancy /,ekstrəjʊ:tərain/ 'pregnənsi/ *noun* same as **ectopic pregnancy**

extravasation /ek,strævə'seɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a situation where a bodily fluid, such as blood or secretions, escapes into tissue

extraversion /,ekstrə'verʒ(ə)n/ *noun* same as **extroversion**

extravert /'ekstrəvɜ:t/ *noun* same as **extrovert**

extremities /ɪk'stremətɪz/ *plural noun* the parts of the body at the ends of limbs, e.g. the fingers, toes, nose and ears

extremity /ɪk'streməti/ *noun* 1. a limb 2. the part of a limb farthest away from the body, especially the hand or foot 3. a situation or state of great distress or danger 4. the greatest intensity of something

extrinsic /eks'trɪnsɪk/ *adjective* external, originating outside a structure

extrinsic allergic alveolitis /eks,trɪnsɪk ə,lɜ:dʒɪk ,ælvɪa'laitɪs/ *noun* a condition in which the lungs are allergic to fungus and other allergens

extrinsic factor /eks,trɪnsɪk 'fæktə/ *noun* a former term for vitamin B₁₂, which is necessary for the production of red blood cells

extrinsic ligament /eks,trɪnsɪk 'lɪgəmənt/ *noun* a ligament between the bones in a joint which is separate from the joint capsule

extrinsic muscle /eks,trɪnsɪk 'mæs(ə)l/ *noun* a muscle which is some way away from the part of the body which it operates

extroversion /ekstrə'verʒ(ə)n/ *noun* 1. (in psychology) a condition in which a person is

interested in people and things other than themselves **2.** a congenital turning of an organ inside out

extrovert /'ekstrəvɜ:t/ *noun* a person who is interested in people and things in the external world

extroverted /'ekstrəʊ,vɜ:tɪd/ *adjective* **1.** (of a person) interested in people and things other than oneself **2.** (of an organ) turned inside out

extubation /,ekstju:'beɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the removal of a tube after intubation

exudate /'eksjudeɪt/ *noun* fluid which is deposited on the surface of tissue as the result of a condition or disease

exudation /,eksju'deɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the escape of material such as fluid or cells into tissue as a defence mechanism

eye /aɪ/ *noun* the part of the body with which a person sees (NOTE: For other terms referring to the eye, see **ocular**, **optic** and words beginning with **oculo-**, **ophth-**, **ophthalm-**, **ophthalo-**)

eyeball /'aɪbɔ:l/ *noun* the round ball of tissue through which light passes, located in the eye socket and controlled by various muscles

COMMENT: Light rays enter the eye through the cornea, pass through the pupil and are refracted through the aqueous humour onto the lens, which then focuses the rays through the vitreous humour onto the retina at the back of the eyeball. Impulses from the retina pass along the optic nerve to the brain.

eye bank /'aɪ bænk/ *noun* a place where parts of eyes given by donors can be kept for use in grafts

eyebath /'aɪba:θ/ *noun* a small dish into which a solution can be put for bathing the eye

eyebrow /'aɪbraʊ/ *noun* an arch of skin with a line of hair above the eye

eye drops /'aɪ dρɒps/ *plural noun* medicine in liquid form which is put into the eye in small amounts

eyeglasses /'aɪ,gla:sɪz/ *plural noun* US glasses or spectacles for correcting vision

eyelash /'aɪlæʃ/ *noun* a small hair which grows out from the edge of the eyelid

eyelid /'aɪlɪd/ *noun* a piece of skin which covers the eye. Also called **blepharon**, **palpebra** (NOTE: For other terms referring to the eyelids, see words beginning with **blephar-**, **blepharo-**.)

eye ointment /'aɪ ,oɪntmənt/ *noun* an ointment in a special tube to be used in eye treatment

eyesight /'aɪsایt/ *noun* the ability to see ○ He has got very good eyesight. ○ Failing eyesight is common in elderly people.

eye socket /'aɪ ,səkɪt/ *noun* same as **orbit**

eye specialist /'aɪ ,speʃəlist/ *noun* same as **ophthalmologist**

eyestrain /'aɪstreɪn/ *noun* tiredness in the muscles of the eye with a headache, which may be caused by an activity such as reading in bad light or working on a computer screen. Also called **asthenopia**

eye surgeon /'aɪ ,sɜ:dʒ(ə)n/ *noun* a surgeon who specialises in operations on eyes

eye test /'aɪ test/ *noun* an examination of the inside of an eye to see if it is working correctly, and if the person needs glasses

eyetooth /'aɪtu:θ/ *noun* a canine tooth, one of two pairs of pointed teeth next to the incisors (NOTE: The plural is **eyeteeth**.)

F

F abbr Fahrenheit

face /feɪs/ *noun* the front part of the head, where the eyes, nose and mouth are placed ■ *verb* to have your face towards or to look towards something ○ *Please face the screen.*

face delivery /'feɪs dɪ,ɪv(ə)rɪ/ *noun* a birth where the baby's face appears first

face lift /'feɪs lɪft/, **face-lifting operation** /'feɪs ,lɪftɪŋ ɒpə,reɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a surgical operation to remove wrinkles on the face and neck

face mask /'feɪs mɑ:sk/ *noun* 1. a rubber mask that fits over the nose and mouth and is used to administer an anaesthetic 2. a piece of gauze which fits over the mouth and nose to prevent droplet infection

face presentation /'feɪs prez(ə)n,teɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a position of a baby in the uterus where the face will appear first at birth

facet /'fæsɪt/ *noun* a flat surface on a bone

facet syndrome /'fæsɪt ,sɪndrəʊm/ *noun* a condition in which a joint in the vertebrae becomes dislocated

facial /'feɪʃ(ə)l/ *adjective* relating to, or appearing on, the face ○ *The psychiatrist examined the patient's facial expression.*

facial artery /'feɪʃ(ə)l ,a:təri/ *noun* an artery which branches off the external carotid into the face and mouth

facial bone /'feɪʃ(ə)l bəun/ *noun* one of the fourteen bones which form the face

COMMENT: The bones which make up the face are: two maxillae forming the upper jaw; two nasal bones forming the top part of the nose; two lacrimal bones on the inside of the orbit near the nose; two zygomatic or malar bones forming the sides of the cheeks; two palatine bones forming the back part of the top of the mouth; two nasal conchae or turbinate bones which form the sides of the nasal cavity; the mandible or lower jaw; and the vomer in the centre of the nasal septum.

facial nerve /'feɪʃ(ə)l nɜ:v/ *noun* the seventh cranial nerve, which governs the muscles of the face, the taste buds on the front of the tongue and the salivary and lacrimal glands

facial paralysis /,feɪʃ(ə)l pə'ræləsis/ *noun* same as **Bell's palsy**

facial vein /'feɪʃ(ə)l veɪn/ *noun* a vein which drains down the side of the face into the internal jugular vein

-facient /feɪʃənt/ *suffix* making or causing ○ **abortifacient**

facies /'feɪʃi:z/ *noun* someone's facial appearance, used as a guide to diagnosis

facilitation /fə,silɪ'teɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* an act where several slight stimuli help a neurone to be activated

facilities /fə'sɪlɪtɪz/ *plural noun* something such as equipment, accommodation, treatment or help that is provided for people who need them ○ *the provision of aftercare facilities*

factor /'fækٹə/ *noun* 1. something which has an influence or which makes something else take place 2. a substance, variously numbered, e.g. Factor I, Factor II, in the plasma, which makes the blood coagulate when a blood vessel is injured

Factor II /,fæktə 'tu:/ same as **prothrombin**

Factor IX /,fæktə 'naɪn/ *noun* a protein in plasma which promotes the clotting of blood and is lacking in people with haemophilia B. Also called **Christmas factor**

Factor VIII /,fæktər 'eɪt/ *noun* a protein in plasma which promotes the clotting of blood and is lacking in people with haemophilia A

Factor XI /,fæktər ɪ'lev(ə)n/ *noun* a protein in plasma which promotes the clotting of blood and is lacking in people with haemophilia C

Factor XII /,fæktər 'twelv/ *noun* a protein in plasma which promotes the clotting of blood and is lacking in some people with haemophilia. Also called **Hageman factor**

faculty /'fæk(ə)lti/ *noun* the ability to do something

fade away /feɪd ə'weɪ/ *verb* to be in the process of dying (*informal*)

faecal /'fæ:k(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to faeces

faecal impaction /,fi:k(ə)l ɪm'pækʃən/ *noun* a condition in which a hardened mass of faeces stays in the rectum

faecal incontinence /fi:k(ə)l m'kɒntɪnəns/ *noun* an inability to control the bowel movements

faecalith /fi:kəlɪθ/ *noun* same as **coprolith**

faecal matter /fi:k(ə)l 'mætə/ *noun* solid waste matter from the bowels

faeces /'fi:sɪz/ *plural noun* solid waste matter passed from the bowels through the anus. Also called **stools**, **bowel movement** (NOTE: For other terms referring to faeces, see words beginning with **sterco**-.)

Fahrenheit /'færənhaɪt/, **Fahrenheit scale** /'færənhaɪt skeɪl/ *noun* a scale of temperatures where the freezing and boiling points of water are 32° and 212° under standard atmospheric pressure (NOTE: Used in the US, but less common in the UK. Usually written as an F after the degree sign: 32°F (say: 'thirty-two degrees Fahrenheit').)

COMMENT: To convert degrees Fahrenheit into degrees Celsius, subtract 32 and divide the remainder by 1.8.

false /feɪl/ *verb* 1. not to be successful in doing something ○ *The doctor failed to see the symptoms.* ○ *She has failed her pharmacy exams.* ○ *He failed his medical and was rejected by the police force.* 2. to become weaker and less likely to recover

failing /'feɪlin/ *adjective* weakening, or becoming closer to death

failure to thrive /,feɪljə tə 'θraɪv/ *noun* same as **marasmus**

faint /feɪnt/ *verb* to stop being conscious for a short time and, usually, fall down ■ *noun* a loss of consciousness for a short period, caused by a temporary reduction in the blood flow to the brain

fainting fit /'feɪntɪŋ fit/, **fainting spell** /'feɪntɪŋ spel/ *noun* same as **syncope** ○ *She often had fainting fits when she was dieting.*

Fairbanks' splint /'feəbæŋks splɪnt/ *noun* a special splint used for correcting Erb's palsy

faith healing /'feɪθ ,hi:lɪŋ/ *noun* the treatment of pain or illness by a person who prays and may also lay his or her hands on the patient

falciform /'fælsɪfɔ:m/ *adjective* in the shape of a sickle

falciform ligament /,fælsɪfɔ:m 'lɪgəmənt/ *noun* a piece of tissue which separates the two lobes of the liver and attaches it to the diaphragm

fall /fɔ:l/ *verb* □ **to fall pregnant, to fall for a baby** to become pregnant

fall asleep /,fɔ:l ə'sli:p/ *verb* to go to sleep

fallen arches /,fɔ:lən 'ɑ:tʃɪz/ *plural noun* a condition in which the arches in the sole of the foot are not high

fall ill /,fɔ:l 'ɪl/ *verb* to get ill or to start to have an illness ○ *He fell ill while on holiday and had to be flown home.*

Fallopian tube /fə'laopiən tju:b/ *noun* one of two tubes which connect the ovaries to the

uterus. See illustration at **UROGENITAL SYSTEM (FEMALE)** in Supplement. Also called **oviduct**, **salpinx** (NOTE: For other terms referring to Fallopian tubes, see words beginning with **salping-**, **salpingo-**). [Described 1561. After Gabriele Fallopio (1523–63), Italian man of medicine. He was Professor of Surgery and Anatomy at Padua, where he was also Professor of Botany.]

COMMENT: Once a month, ova (unfertilised eggs) leave the ovaries and move down the Fallopian tubes to the uterus. At the point where the Fallopian tubes join the uterus an ovum may be fertilised by a sperm cell. Sometimes fertilisation and development of the embryo take place in the Fallopian tube itself. This is called an ectopic pregnancy, and can be life-threatening if not detected early.

Fallot's tetralogy /,fæləʊz te'trælodʒi/ *noun* same as **tetralogy of Fallot** [Described 1888. After Etienne-Louis Arthur Fallot (1850–1911), Professor of Hygiene and Legal Medicine at Marseilles, France.]

false /fɔ:ls/ *adjective* not true or not real

false pains /,fɔ:ls 'peɪnz/ *plural noun* pains which appear to be labour pains but are not **false pregnancy** /,fɔ:ls 'pregnənsi/ *noun* a condition in which a woman believes wrongly that she is pregnant and displays symptoms and signs of pregnancy

false rib /,fɔ:ls 'ribz/ *noun* one of the bottom five ribs on each side which are not directly attached to the breastbone

false teeth /,fɔ:ls 'ti:θ/ *plural noun* dentures, artificial teeth made of plastic, which fit in the mouth and take the place of teeth which have been extracted

false vocal cords /,fɔ:ls 'vəʊk(ə)l ,kɔ:dz/ *plural noun* same as **vestibular folds**

falk /fælkəs/, **falk cerebri** /,fælkəs 'serəbri/ *noun* a fold of the dura mater between the two hemispheres of the cerebrum

familial /fə'miliəl/ *adjective* referring to a family

familial adenomatous polyposis /fə,mili ədə,nomətəs pɒli'pəʊsɪs/ *noun* a hereditary disorder where polyps develop in the small intestine. Abbr **FAP**

familial disorder /fə,miliəl dɪs'ɔ:də/ *noun* a hereditary disorder which affects several members of the same family

family /'fæm(ə)li/ *noun* a group of people who are related to each other, especially mother, father and children

family doctor /,fæm(ə)li 'dɒktə/ *noun* a general practitioner

family planning /,fæm(ə)li 'plænɪŋ/ *noun* the use of contraception to control the number of children in a family

family planning clinic /,fæm(ə)li 'plænɪŋ ,klɪnik/ *noun* a clinic which gives advice on contraception

family therapy /,fæm(ə)li 'θerəpi/ *noun* a type of psychotherapy where members of the

family of a person with a disorder meet a therapist to discuss the condition and try to come to terms with it

famotidine /fə'mɒtɪdɪ:n/ *noun* a histamine which reduces the secretion of gastric acid and is used to treat ulcers

Fanconi syndrome /fæn'kəʊni,sɪndrəm/ *noun* a kidney disorder where amino acids are present in the urine [Described 1927. After Guido Fanconi (b.1892), Professor of Paediatrics at the University of Zurich, Switzerland.]

fantasise /'fæntəsaɪz/, **fantasize** *verb* to imagine that things have happened

fantasy /'fæntəsi/ *noun* a series of imaginary events which someone believes really took place

FAP *abbr* familial adenomatous polyposis

farcy /'fa:sɪ/ *noun* a form of glanders which affects the lymph nodes

farinaceous /,færɪ'nɛɪʃəs/ *adjective* referring to flour, or containing starch

farmer's lung /,fa:məz 'lʌŋ/ *noun* a type of asthma caused by an allergy to rotting hay

FAS *abbr* fetal alcohol syndrome

fascia /'feɪʃə/ *noun* fibrous tissue covering a muscle or an organ (NOTE: The plural is **fasciae**)

fascia lata /,feɪʃə 'lætə/ *noun* a wide sheet of tissue covering the thigh muscles

fasciculation /fə,sɪkjʊ'lɪsʃən/ *noun* small muscle movements which appear as trembling skin

fasciculus /fə,sɪkjʊləs/ *noun* a bundle of nerve fibres (NOTE: The plural is **fasciculi**)

fascilitis /,fæsfi'artɪs/ *noun* an inflammation of the connective tissue between muscles or around organs

fascioliasis /fə,sɪə'laiəsɪs/ *noun* a disease caused by parasitic liver flukes

Fasciolopsis /,fæsiəʊ'lɒpsɪs/ *noun* a type of liver fluke, often found in the Far East, which is transmitted to humans through contaminated waterplants

fast /fɑ:st/ *noun* a period of going without food, e.g. to lose weight or for religious reasons ■ *verb* to go without food ○ *The patient should fast from midnight of the night before an operation.*

fastigium /fæ'stɪdʒɪəm/ *noun* the highest temperature during a bout of fever

fat /fæt/ *adjective* big and round in the body ○ *You ought to eat less – you're getting too fat.* (NOTE: **fatter** – **fattest**) ■ *noun* 1. a white oily substance in the body, which stores energy and protects the body against cold 2. a type of food which supplies protein and Vitamins A and D, especially that part of meat which is white, and solid substances like lard or butter produced from animals and used for cooking, or liquid substances like oil ○ *If you don't like the fat on the meat, cut it off.* ○ *Fry the eggs in some fat.*

(NOTE: **Fat** has no plural when it means the substance; the plural **fats** is used to mean different types of fat. For other terms referring to fats, see also **lipid** and words beginning with **steato-**)

COMMENT: Fat is a necessary part of the diet because of the vitamins and energy-giving calories which it contains. Fat in the diet comes from either animal fats or vegetable fats. Animal fats such as butter, fat meat or cream, are saturated fatty acids. It is believed that the intake of unsaturated and polyunsaturated fats, mainly vegetable fats and oils, and fish oil, in the diet, rather than animal fats, helps keep down the level of cholesterol in the blood and so lessens the risk of atherosclerosis. A low-fat diet does not always help to reduce body weight.

fatal /'feɪt(ə)l/ *adjective* causing or resulting in death ○ *He had a fatal accident.* ○ *Cases of bee stings are rarely fatal.*

fatality /fə'tæltɪti/ *noun* a death as the result of something other than natural causes ○ *There were three fatalities during the flooding.*

fatally /'feɪt(ə)li/ *adverb* in a way which causes death ○ *His heart was fatally weakened by the lung disease.*

father /'fa:ðə/ *noun* a biological or adoptive male parent

fatigue /fə'ti:g/ *noun* very great tiredness ■ *verb* to tire someone out ○ *He was fatigued by the hard work.*

fatigue fracture /fə'ti:g ,fræktfʃə/ *noun* ♦ *stress fracture*

fat-soluble /,fæt 'spljub(ə)l/ *adjective* able to dissolve in fat ○ *Vitamin D is fat-soluble.*

fatty /'fæti/ *adjective* containing fat

fatty acid /,fæti 'æsɪd/ *noun* an organic acid belonging to a group that occurs naturally as fats, oils and waxes. ♦ **essential fatty acid**

fatty degeneration /,fæti di,dʒənə'reɪʃən/ *noun* same as **adipose degeneration**

fauces /'fɔ:sɪz/ *noun* an opening between the tonsils at the back of the throat, leading to the pharynx

favism /'feɪvɪz(ə)m/ *noun* a type of inherited anaemia caused by an allergy to beans

favus /'feɪvəs/ *noun* a highly contagious type of ringworm caused by a fungus which attacks the scalp

FDA *abbr* US Food and Drug Administration

fear /fɪ:s/ *noun* a state where a person is afraid of something ○ *fear of flying*

febricula /fe'brikjʊlə/ *noun* a low fever

febrifuge /'febrɪfju:dʒ/ *noun* a drug which prevents or lowers a fever, e.g. aspirin ■ *adjective* preventing or lowering fever

febrile /'fɪ:brail/ *adjective* referring to a fever, or caused by a fever

febrile convulsion /,fi:brail kən'veljən/ *noun* a convulsion in a child, lasting a short time, associated with a fever

febrile disease /'fi:brail dɪ,zi:z/ *noun* a disease which is accompanied by fever

fecal /'fi:k(ə)l/ **adjective** US same as **faecal**

fecundation /,fekən'deɪʃ(ə)n/ **noun** the act of bringing male and female reproductive matter together. Also called **fertilisation**

feeble /'fi:b(ə)l/ **adjective** very weak

feed /fi:d/ **verb** to give food to someone ○ *He has to be fed with a spoon.* ○ *The baby has reached the stage when she can feed herself.* (NOTE: **feeding – fed**)

feed back /fi:d 'bæk/ **verb** to give information or comments on something that has been done ○ *The patients' responses were fed back to the students.*

feedback /'fi:dbæk/ **noun** 1. information or comments about something which has been done ○ *The initial feedback from patients on the new service was encouraging.* 2. the linking of the result of an action back to the action itself

feeding /'fi:dɪŋ/ **noun** the action of giving someone something to eat. ▷ **breast feeding, bottle feeding, intravenous feeding**

feeding cup /'fi:dɪŋ kʌp/ **noun** a special cup with a spout, used for feeding people who cannot feed themselves

feel /fi:l/ **verb** 1. to touch someone or something, usually with your fingers ○ *The midwife felt the abdomen gently.* □ **to feel someone's pulse** to establish someone's pulse rate, usually by holding the inner wrist 2. to give a sensation ○ *My skin feels hot and itchy.* 3. to have a sensation ○ *When she got the results of her test, she felt relieved.* ○ *He felt ill after eating the fish.* 4. to believe or think something ○ *The doctor feels the patient is well enough to be moved out of intensive care.* (NOTE: **feeling – felt**)

feeling /'fi:lin/ **noun** 1. a sensation ○ *a prickling feeling* 2. an emotional state or attitude to something

Fehling's solution /'feɪlinz sə,lju:ʃ(ə)n/ **noun** a solution used in Fehling's test to detect sugar in urine [Described 1848. After Hermann Christian von Fehling (1812–85), Professor of Chemistry at Stuttgart, Germany.]

Fehling's test /'feɪlinz test/ **noun** a test for the presence of aldehydes and sugars in a biological sample by means of Fehling's solution

/'felən/ **noun same as **whitlow****

Felty's syndrome /'feltzi: ,sɪndrəʊm/ **noun** a condition, associated with rheumatoid arthritis, in which the spleen is enlarged and the number of white blood cells increases [Described 1924. After Augustus Roi Felty (1895–1963), physician at Hartford Hospital, Connecticut, USA.]

female condom /,fi:meil 'kɒndom/ **noun** a rubber sheath inserted into the vagina before intercourse, covering the walls of the vagina and the cervix

female sex hormone /,fi:meil 'hɔ:məʊn/ **noun** same as **oestrogen**

feminisation /,femɪnɪza'zeɪʃ(ə)n/, **feminization** **noun** the development of female characteristics in a male

femora /'femərə/ plural of **femur**

femoral /'femərəl/ **adjective** referring to the femur or to the thigh

femoral artery /,femərəl 'a:təri/ **noun** a continuation of the external iliac artery, which runs down the front of the thigh and then crosses to the back of the thigh

femoral canal /,femərəl kə'næl/ **noun** the inner tube of the sheath surrounding the femoral artery and vein

femoral head /,femərəl 'hed/ **noun** the head of the femur, the rounded projecting end part of the thigh bone which joins the acetabulum at the hip

femoral hernia /,femərəl 'hɜ:nɪə/ **noun** a hernia of the bowel at the top of the thigh

femoral neck /,femərəl 'nek/ **noun** the narrow part between the head and the diaphysis of the femur. Also called **neck of the femur**

femoral nerve /'femərəl nɜ:v/ **noun** a nerve which governs the muscle at the front of the thigh

femoral pulse /,femərəl 'pəls/ **noun** a pulse taken in the groin

femoral triangle /,femərəl 'traɪængəl/ **noun** a slight hollow in the groin which contains the femoral vessels and nerve. Also called **Scarpa's triangle**

femoral vein /'femərəl veɪn/ **noun** a vein running up the upper leg, a continuation of the popliteal vein

femoris /'feməris/ **noun** ▷ **rectus femoris**

femur /'fi:mər/ **noun** the bone in the top part of the leg which joins the acetabulum at the hip and the tibia at the knee. Also called **thigh-bone**. See illustration at **PELVIS** in Supplement (NOTE: The plural is **femora**.)

-**fen** /fen/ **suffix** used in names of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs ○ **ibuprofen**

fenestra /'fə,nestrə/ **noun** a small opening in the ear

fenestra ovalis /fə,nestrə əʊ've:lis/ **noun** same as **oval window**

fenestra rotunda /fə,nestrə rəʊ'tʌndə/ **noun** same as **round window**

fenestration /,fənə'streɪʃ(ə)n/ **noun** a surgical operation to relieve deafness by making a small opening in the inner ear

fenoprofen /,fənu'prəʊfen/ **noun** a non-steroidal, anti-inflammatory drug that is used to manage the pain of arthritis

fentanyl /'fentənil/ **noun** a narcotic drug that is a powerful painkiller

fermentation /,fɜ:men'teɪʃ(ə)n/ **noun** a process where carbohydrates are broken down

by enzymes from yeast and produce alcohol.
Also called **zymosis**

ferric /'ferɪk/ *adjective* containing iron with a valency of three

ferritin /'ferɪtɪn/ *noun* a protein found in the liver that binds reversibly to iron and stores it for later use in making haemoglobin in red blood cells

ferrous /'ferəs/ *adjective* containing iron with a valency of two

ferrous sulphate /,ferəs 'sʌlfət/ *noun* a white or pale green iron salt that is used in the treatment of iron-deficient anaemia

ferrule /'feru:l/ *noun* a metal or rubber cap or ring that strengthens and protects the lower end of a crutch or walking stick ▶ *verb* to fit a ferrule onto a crutch or walking stick

fertile /'fɜ:təl/ *adjective* able to produce children. Opposite **sterile**

fertilisation /,fɜ:tɪlɪzə'zeɪʃ(ə)n/, **fertilization** *noun* the joining of an ovum and a sperm to form a zygote and so start the development of an embryo

fertilise /'fɜ:tɪlaɪz/, **fertilize** *verb* (of a sperm) to join with an ovum

fertility /fɜ:t'ɪlɪtɪ/ *noun* the fact of being fertile. Opposite **sterility**

fertility drug /fɜ:t'ɪlɪti dræg/ *noun* a drug that stimulates ovulation, given to women undergoing in vitro fertilisation

fertility rate /fɜ:t'ɪlɪti reɪt/ *noun* the number of births per year calculated per 1000 females aged between 15 and 44

FESS *abbr* functional endoscopic sinus surgery

fester /'festə/ *verb* (of an infected wound) to become inflamed and produce pus ○ *His legs were covered with festering sores.*

festination /,festɪ'nɛʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a way of walking in which a person takes short steps, seen in people who have Parkinson's disease

fetal /'fɪ:t(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to a fetus

fetal alcohol syndrome /,fɪ:t(ə)l 'ælkəhɒl ,sɪndrəʊm/ *noun* damage caused to the fetus by alcohol in the blood of the mother, which affects the growth of the embryo, including its facial and brain development. Abbr **FAS**

fetal distress /,fɪ:t(ə)l dɪ'stre:s/ *noun* a condition, e.g. a heart or respiratory problem, in which a fetus may not survive if the condition is not monitored and corrected

fetal dystocia /,fɪ:t(ə)l dɪs'təsɪə/ *noun* a difficult childbirth caused by a malformation or malpresentation of the fetus

fetal heart /,fɪ:t(ə)l 'ha:t/ *noun* the heart of the fetus

fetalis /'fɪ:təlis/ ♀ **erythroblastosis fetalis**

fetal monitor /,fɪ:t(ə)l 'mɒnɪtər/ *noun* an electronic device which monitors the fetus in the uterus

fetal position /'fɪ:t(ə)l pə,zɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a position where a person lies curled up on his or her side, like a fetus in the uterus

fetishism /'fetiʃɪz(ə)m/, **fetichism** *noun* a psychological disorder in which someone gets sexual satisfaction from touching objects

fetishist /'fetiʃɪst/, **fetichist** *noun* a person who has fetishism

feto- /'fɪ:təʊ/ *prefix* fetus

fetoprotein /,fɪ:təʊ'prəʊti:n/ *noun* ♀ **alpha-fetoprotein**

fetor /'fi:tə/ *noun* a bad smell

fetoscope /'fi:təskəʊp/ *noun* a stethoscope used in fetoscopy

fetoscopy /'fi:təskəpi/ *noun* an examination of a fetus inside the uterus, taking blood samples to diagnose blood disorders

fetus /'fi:təs/ *noun* an unborn baby from two months after conception until birth, before which it is called an embryo

FEV *abbr* forced expiratory volume

fever /'fi:və/ *noun* 1. a rise in body temperature ○ *She is running a slight fever.* ○ *You must stay in bed until the fever has gone down.* 2. a condition when the temperature of the body is higher than usual ▶ also called **pyrexia**

COMMENT: Average oral body temperature is about 98.6°F or 37°C and rectal temperature is about 99°F or 37.2°C. A fever often makes the patient feel cold, and is accompanied by pains in the joints. Most fevers are caused by infections. Infections which result in fever include cat-scratch fever, dengue, malaria, meningitis, psittacosis, Q fever, rheumatic fever, Rocky Mountain spotted fever, scarlet fever, septicaemia, typhoid fever, typhus and yellow fever.

fever blister /'fi:və ,blɪstə/ *noun* same as **fever sore**

feverfew /'fi:vəfju:/ *noun* a herb, formerly used to reduce fevers, but now used to relieve migraine

feverish /'fi:vərɪʃ/ *adjective* with a fever ○ *He felt feverish and took an aspirin.* ○ *She is in bed with a feverish chill.*

fever sore /'fi:və sɔ:/ *noun* a cold sore or burning sore, usually on the lips

fiber /'faibəl/ *noun* US same as **fibre**

fibr- /'faibr/ *prefix* referring to fibres, fibrous (used before vowels)

-fibrate /'faibreɪt/ *suffix* used in names of lipid-lowering drugs

fibre /'faibəl/ *noun* 1. a structure in the body shaped like a thread 2. same as **dietary fibre**

fiber optics /'faibər 'ɒptɪks/, **fibroptics** *noun* the use of thin fibres which conduct light and images to examine internal organs

fibrescope /'faibəskəʊp/ *noun* a device made of bundles of optical fibres which is passed into the body, used for examining internal organs

fibril /'faibrɪl/ *noun* a very small fibre

fibrillate /'faɪbrɪleɪt/ *verb* to undergo rapid irregular uncontrolled contractions, or make the heart or muscles undergo this type of contraction

fibrillating /'faɪbrɪleɪtɪŋ/ *adjective* with fluttering of a muscle ○ *They applied a defibrillator to correct a fibrillating heartbeat.*

fibrillation /'faɪbrɪ'læfɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the fluttering of a muscle

'Cardiovascular effects may include atrial arrhythmias but at 30°C there is the possibility of spontaneous ventricular fibrillation' [British Journal of Nursing]

fibrin /'fɪbrɪn/ *noun* a protein produced by fibrinogen, which helps make blood coagulate
COMMENT: Removal of fibrin from a blood sample is called defibrination.

fibrin foam /'fɪbrɪn fəʊm/ *noun* a white material made artificially from fibrinogen, used to prevent bleeding

fibrinogen /'fɪbrɪnədʒən/ *noun* a substance in blood plasma which produces fibrin when activated by thrombin

fibrinolysin /'fɪbrɪ'nɒləsɪn/ *noun* an enzyme which digests fibrin. Also called **plasmin**

fibrinolysis /'fɪbrɪ'nɒləsɪs/ *noun* the removal of blood clots from the system by the action of fibrinolysin on fibrin. Also called **thrombolysis**

fibrinolytic /'fɪbrɪnə'lɪtɪk/ *adjective* referring to fibrinolysis ○ *fibrinolytic drugs* Also called **thrombolytic**

fibro- /'faɪbrəʊ/ *prefix* referring to fibres

fibroadenoma /,faɪbrəʊ,ædɪ'nəʊmə/ *noun* a benign tumour formed of fibrous and glandular tissue

fibroblast /'faɪbrəʊblæst/ *noun* a long flat cell found in connective tissue, which develops into collagen

fibrocartilage /,faɪbrəʊ'kə:təlɪdʒ/ *noun* cartilage and fibrous tissue combined
COMMENT: Fibrocartilage is found in the discs of the spine. It is elastic like cartilage and pliable like fibre.

fibochondritis /,faɪbrəʊkɒn'draɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the fibrocartilage

fibrocyst /'faɪbrəʊsɪst/ *noun* a benign tumour of fibrous tissue

fibrocystic /'faɪbrəʊ'sɪstɪk/ *adjective* referring to a fibrocyst

fibrocystic disease /'faɪbrəʊ'sɪstɪk dɪ,zɪ:z/, **fibrocystic disease of the pancreas** /,faɪbrəʊ,sɪstɪk dɪ,zɪ:z əv ðə 'pæŋkriəs/ *noun* same as **cystic fibrosis**

fibrocyte /'faɪbrəʊsait/ *noun* a cell which derives from a fibroblast and is found in connective tissue

fibroelastosis /,faɪbrəʊ,i:læ'stəʊsɪs/ *noun* a deformed growth of the elastic fibres, especially in the ventricles of the heart

fibroid /'faɪbrɔɪd/ *adjective* like fibre ■ *noun* same as **fibroid tumour**

fibroid degeneration /,faɪbrɔɪd dɪ,dʒenə'reɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the change of healthy tissue to fibrous tissue, e.g. as in cirrhosis of the liver

fibroid tumour /,faɪbrɔɪd 'tju:mə/ *noun* a benign tumour in the muscle fibres of the uterus. Also called **uterine fibroid, fibromyoma**

fibroma /'faɪ'b्रəʊmə/ *noun* a small benign tumour formed in connective tissue

fibromuscular /,faɪbrəʊ'mʌskjʊlə/ *adjective* referring to fibrous tissue and muscular tissue

fibromyoma /,faɪbrəʊmə'ɪəmə/ *noun* same as **fibroid tumour**

fibroplasia /,faɪbrə'u'pleɪzɪə/ *noun* ▶ **retrolental fibroplasia**

fibrosa /'faɪ'b्रəʊsə/ ▶ **osteitis fibrosa cystica**

fibrosarcoma /,faɪbrəʊsə:'kəʊmə/ *noun* a malignant tumour of the connective tissue, most common in the legs

fibrosis /'faɪ'b्रəʊsɪs/ *noun* the process of replacing damaged tissue by scar tissue

fibrositis /,faɪbrə'saɪtɪs/ *noun* a painful inflammation of the fibrous tissue which surrounds muscles and joints, especially the muscles of the back

fibrous /'faɪbrəs/ *adjective* made of fibres, or like fibre

fibrous capsule /,faɪbrəs 'kæpsjulə/ *noun* fibrous tissue surrounding a kidney. Also called **renal capsule**

fibrous joint /'faɪbrəs dʒɔɪnt/ *noun* a joint where fibrous tissue holds two bones together so that they cannot move, as in the bones of the skull

fibrous pericardium /,faɪbrəs ,peri'ka:dɪəm/ *noun* the outer part of the pericardium which surrounds the heart, and is attached to the main blood vessels

fibrous tissue /,faɪbrəs 'tɪsju:/ *noun* strong white tissue which makes tendons and ligaments and also scar tissue

fibula /'fibjʊlə/ *noun* the thinner of the two bones in the lower leg between the knee and the ankle. Compare **tibia** (NOTE: The plural is **fibulae**)

fibular /'fibjʊlə/ *adjective* referring to the fibula

field /fi:ld/ *noun* an area of interest ○ *He specialises in the field of community medicine.* ○ *Don't see that specialist with your breathing problems – his field is obstetrics.*

field of vision /,fi:ld əv 'vɪz(ə)n/ *noun* same as **visual field**

fight or flight reaction /'faɪt ɔ: 'flaɪt ri,ækʃən/ *noun* the theory that an organism which is faced with a threat reacts either by preparing to fight or to escape

fil- /'fil/ *prefix* referring to a thread

filament /'filəmənt/ *noun* a long thin structure like a thread

filamentous /'filə'mentəs/ *adjective* like a thread

Filaria /'fɪlərɪə/ *noun* a thin parasitic worm which is found especially in the lymph system, and is passed to humans by mosquitoes (NOTE: The plural is **Filariae**.)

COMMENT: Infestation with *Filariae* in the lymph system causes elephantiasis.

filariasis /'filə'rɪəsɪs/ *noun* a tropical disease caused by parasitic threadworms in the lymph system, transmitted by mosquito bites

filiform /'filɪfɔ:m/ *adjective* shaped like a thread

filiform papillae /'filɪfɔ:m pə'pili:/ *plural noun* papillae on the tongue which are shaped like threads, and have no taste buds

filipuncture /'filɪpʌŋktʃə/ *noun* the procedure of putting a wire into an aneurysm to cause blood clotting

fill /fɪl/ *verb* □ **to fill a tooth** to put metal into a hole in a tooth after it has been drilled

filling /'fɪlɪŋ/ *noun* 1. a surgical operation carried out by a dentist to fill a hole in a tooth with amalgam 2. amalgam, metallic mixture put into a hole in a tooth by a dentist

film /'fɪlm/ *noun* a very thin layer of a substance covering a surface

filter /'filtə/ *noun* a piece of paper or cloth through which a liquid is passed to remove any solid substances in it ■ *verb* to pass a liquid through a membrane, piece of paper or cloth to remove solid substances □ *Impurities are filtered from the blood by the kidneys.*

filtrate /'filtreɪt/ *noun* a substance which has passed through a filter

filtration /'fil'treɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the action of passing a liquid through a filter

filum /'faɪləm/ *noun* a structure which is shaped like a thread

filum terminale /,faɪlməl, tɜ:mi'nɛli/ *noun* the thin end section of the pia mater in the spinal cord

FIM *abbr* functional independence measure
fimbria /'fimbriə/ *noun* a fringe, especially the fringe of hair-like processes at the end of a Fallopian tube near the ovaries (NOTE: The plural is **fimbriae**.)

final common pathway /,fain(ə)l ,kɒmən 'paʊəθwei/ *noun* linked neurones which take all impulses from the central nervous system to a muscle

fine /fain/ *adjective* 1. healthy □ *He was ill last week, but he's feeling fine now.* 2. referring to something such as hair or thread which is very thin □ *There is a growth of fine hair on the back of her neck.* □ *Fine sutures are used for delicate operations.*

finger /'fɪŋgə/ *noun* one of the five parts at the end of the hand, but usually not including the thumb (NOTE: The names of the fingers are: lit-

tle finger, third finger or ring finger, middle finger, forefinger or index finger.)

COMMENT: Each finger is formed of three finger bones (the **phalanges**), but the thumb has only two.

fingernail /'fɪngəneɪl/ *noun* a hard thin growth covering the end of a finger □ *ridged and damaged fingernails*

finger-nose test /,fɪngə 'nəuz test/ *noun* a test of coordination, where the person is asked to close their eyes, stretch out their arm and then touch their nose with their index finger

fingerprint /'fɪngəprɪnt/ *noun* a mark left by a finger when something is touched. □ **genetic**

fingerstall /'fɪngəstɔ:l/ *noun* a cover for an infected finger, attached to the hand with strings

fireman's lift /,faɪəmənз 'lift/ *noun* a way of carrying an injured person by putting their body over one shoulder

firm /fɜ:m/ *noun* a group of doctors and consultants in a hospital, especially one to which a trainee doctor is attached during clinical studies (*informal*)

first aid /,fɜ:st 'eɪd/ *noun* help given by a non-medical person to someone who is suddenly ill or injured before full-scale medical treatment can be given □ *She gave him first aid in the street until the ambulance arrived.*

first-aider /,fɜ:st 'eɪdə/ *noun* a person who gives first aid to someone who is suddenly ill or injured

first-aid kit /,fɜ:st 'eɪd ,kɪt/ *noun* a box with bandages and dressings kept ready to be used in an emergency

first-aid post /,fɜ:st 'eɪd ,pəʊst/, **first-aid station** /,fɜ:st 'eɪd ,steɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a place where injured people can be taken for immediate care

first-degree burn /,fɜ:st dɪ,gri: 'bɜ:n/ *noun* a former classification of the severity of a burn, where the skin turns red

first-degree haemorrhoids /,fɜ:st dɪ,gri: 'hemərɔɪdz/ *plural noun* haemorrhoids which remain in the rectum

first-degree relative /,fɜ:st dɪ,gri: 'relatɪv/ *noun* a relative with whom an individual shares 50% of their genes, e.g. a father, mother, sibling or child

first-ever stroke /,fɜ:st ,eɪv 'strəuk/ *noun* a stroke which someone has for the first time in his or her life

first intention /,fɜ:st in'tenʃən/ *noun* the healing of a clean wound where the tissue forms again rapidly and no prominent scar is left

first-level nurse /,fɜ:st ,lev(ə)l 'nɜ:s/, **first-level Registered Nurse** /,fɜ:st ,lev(ə)l ,redʒɪ 'stəl 'nɜ:s/ *noun* a nurse who has passed qualifying examinations, is registered as such with the Nursing and Midwifery Council and can

act in an independent decision-making role.
Compare **second-level nurse**

fissile /'fɪsəl/ *adjective* able to split or be split

fission /'fɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the act of dividing into two or more parts

fissure /'fɪʃə/ *noun* a crack or groove in the skin, tissue or an organ □ **horizontal and oblique fissures** grooves between the lobes of the lungs. See illustration at **LUNGS** in Supplement

fist /fɪst/ *noun* a hand which is tightly closed

fistula /'fɪstjʊlə/ *noun* a passage or opening which has been made unusually between two organs, often near the rectum or anus

fistula in ano /'fɪstjʊlə ɪn 'ænəʊ/ *noun* same as **anal fistula**

fit /fɪt/ *adjective* strong and physically healthy
○ *She exercises every day to keep fit.* ○ *The doctors decided the patient was not fit for surgery.* (NOTE: **fitter** – **fittest**) □ **he isn't fit enough to work** he is still too ill to work ■ *noun* a sudden attack of a disorder, especially convulsions and epilepsy ○ *She had a fit of coughing.* ○ *He had an epileptic fit.* ○ *The baby had a series of fits.* ■ *verb* 1. to attach an appliance correctly ○ *The surgeons fitted the artificial hand to the patient's arm or fitted the patient with an artificial hand.* 2. to provide a piece of equipment for someone to wear ○ *She was fitted with temporary support.* 3. to have convulsions ○ *The patient has fitted twice.* (NOTE: **fitting** – **fitted**. Note also: you fit someone **with** an appliance.)

fitness /'fɪtnəs/ *noun* the fact of being strong and healthy ○ *Being in the football team demands a high level of physical fitness.* ○ *He had to pass a fitness test to join the police force.*

fixated /'fɪk'seɪtɪd/ *adjective* referring to a person who has too close an attachment to another person, often to a parent

fixation /'fɪk'seɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a psychological disorder where a person does not develop beyond a particular stage

fixative /'fɪksətɪv/ *noun* a chemical used in the preparation of samples on slides

fixator /'fɪk'seɪtə/ *noun* a metal rod placed through a bone to keep a part of the body rigid

fixed oil /,fɪkst 'ɔɪl/ *noun* 1. an oil which is liquid at 20°C 2. liquid fats, especially those used as food

flab /flæb/ *noun* soft fat flesh (*informal*) ○ *He's doing exercises to try to fight the flab.*

flabby /'flæbi/ *adjective* with soft flesh ○ *She has got flabby from sitting at her desk all day.*

flaccid /'flæksɪd, 'flæsɪd/ *adjective* soft or flabby

flaccidity /'flæk'sɪdɪti, flæ'sɪdɪti/ *noun* the state of being flaccid

flagellate /'flædʒələt/ *noun* a type of parasitic protozoan which uses whip-like hairs to swim, e.g. *Leishmania*

flagellum /flə'dʒeləm/ *noun* a tiny growth on a microorganism, shaped like a whip (NOTE: The plural is **flagella**.)

Flagyl /'flædʒail/ a trade name for metronidazole

flail /'fleɪl/ *verb* to thrash around with uncontrollable or violent movements, particularly of the arms

flail chest /'fleɪl tʃest/ *noun* a condition in which the chest is not stable, because several ribs have been broken

flake /'fleɪk/ *noun* a thin piece of tissue ○ *Dandruff is formed of flakes of dead skin on the scalp.*

flake fracture /'fleɪk ,fræktʃə/ *noun* a fracture where thin pieces of bone come off

flake off /,fleɪk 'ɒf/ *verb* to fall off as flakes

flap /'flæp/ *noun* a flat piece attached to something, especially a piece of skin or tissue still attached to the body at one side and used in grafts

flare /'fleə/ *noun* red colouring of the skin at an infected spot or in urticaria

flashback /'flæʃbæk/ *noun* a repeated and very vivid memory of a traumatic event

flash burn /'flæʃ bɜːn/ *noun* a burn caused when a body part is briefly exposed to a source of intense heat

flat foot /,flæt 'fʊt/, **flat feet** /,flæt 'fɪt/ *noun* a condition in which the soles of the feet lie flat on the ground instead of being arched as usual. Also called **pes planus**

flatline /'flætlайн/ *verb* to fail to show on a monitor any of the electrical currents associated with heart or brain activity ■ *noun* a monitor readout on an EEG or ECG indicating total cessation of brain or cardiac activity, respectively

flatulence /'flætjʊləns/ *noun* gas or air which collects in the stomach or intestines causing discomfort

COMMENT: Flatulence is generally caused by indigestion, but can be made worse if the person swallows air (**aerophagy**).

flatulent /'flætjʊlənt/ *adjective* having flatulence, or caused by flatulence

flatus /'flærətəs/ *noun* air and gas which collects in the intestines and is painful

flatworm /'flætwɜːm/ *noun* any of several types of parasitic worm with a flat body, e.g. a tapeworm. Compare **roundworm**

flea /fli:/ *noun* a tiny insect which sucks blood and is a parasite on animals and humans

COMMENT: Fleas can transmit disease, most especially bubonic plague which is transmitted by infected rat fleas.

flecainide /'fle'keɪnайд/ *noun* a drug that helps to correct an irregular heartbeat

flesh /'fleʃ/ *noun* tissue containing blood, forming the part of the body which is not skin, bone or organs

flesh wound /'fleʃ wu:nd/ *noun* a wound which only affects the fleshy part of the body
○ *She had a flesh wound in her leg.*

fleshy /'fleʃi/ *adjective* 1. made of flesh 2. fat

flex /fleks/ *verb* to bend something □ **to flex a joint** to use a muscle to make a joint bend

flexibilitas cerea /fleksɪ'təbilɪtəs 'sɪəriə/ *noun* a condition in which, if someone's arms or legs are moved, they remain in that set position for some time

flexion /'flekʃən/ *noun* the act of bending a joint

Flexner's bacillus /'fleksnəz bə'siləs/ *noun* a bacterium which causes bacillary dysentery

flexor /'fleksə/, **flexor muscle** /'fleksə'mas(ə)l/ *noun* a muscle which makes a joint bend. Compare **extensor**

flexure /'flekʃə/ *noun* 1. a bend in an organ 2. a fold in the skin

floaters /'fləʊtəz/ *plural noun* same as **muscae volitantes**

floating kidney /'fləʊtiŋ 'kɪdni/ *noun* same as **nephroptosis**

floating rib /'fləʊtiŋ 'rib/ *noun* one of the two lowest ribs on each side, which are not attached to the breastbone

floccillation /'fləksɪ'lɪf(ə)n/ *noun* the action of constantly touching the bedclothes, a sign that someone is approaching death

floccitation /'fləksɪ'teɪf(ə)n/ *noun* same as **carphology**

flooding /'flædɪŋ/ *noun* same as **menorrhagia**

floppy baby syndrome /'flɒpi 'beibi, sɪn drəʊm/ *noun* same as **amyotonia congenita**

flora /'flɔ:rə/ *noun* bacteria which exist in a particular part of the body

florid /'flɒrɪd/ *adjective* with an unhealthily glowing pink or red complexion

floss /flos/ *noun* same as **dental floss** ■ *verb* to clean the teeth with dental floss

flow /fləʊ/ *noun* 1. a movement of liquid or gas ○ *They used a tourniquet to try to stop the flow of blood.* 2. the amount of liquid or gas which is moving ○ *The meter measures the flow of water through the pipe.*

flowmeter /'fləʊmɪ:tə/ *noun* a meter attached to a pipe, e.g. as in anaesthetic equipment, to measure the speed at which a liquid or gas moves in the pipe

flu /flu:/ *noun* 1. same as **influenza** 2. a very bad cold (*informal*) (NOTE: Sometimes written 'flu to show it is a short form of **influenza**.)

flucloxacillin /flu:'klɒksasɪlin/ *noun* a drug related to penicillin and effective against streptococcal infections and pneumonia

fluconazole /flu:'kɒnəzəʊl/ *noun* a drug used to treat fungal infections such as candidiasis

fluctuation /'flʌktʃu'eɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the feeling of movement of liquid inside part of the body or inside a cyst when pressed by the fingers

fluid /'flu:ɪd/ *noun* 1. a liquid 2. any gas, liquid or powder which flows

fluid balance /'flu:ɪd ,bæləns/ *noun* the maintenance of the balance of fluids in the body during dialysis or other treatment

fluke /'flu:k/ *noun* a parasitic flatworm which settles inside the liver, in the bloodstream and in other parts of the body

flunitrazepam /'flu:nai'træzɪpæm/ *noun* a tranquilliser that, because of its association with 'date rape' cases, is a controlled drug in the UK

fluorescence /flu:ə'res(ə)ns/ *noun* the sending out of light from a substance which is receiving radiation

fluorescent /flu:ə'res(ə)nt/ *adjective* referring to a substance which sends out light

fluoridate /'flɔ:ri:dæt/ *verb* to add fluoride to a substance, usually to drinking water, in order to help prevent tooth decay

fluoride /'flɔ:raɪd/ *noun* a chemical compound of fluorine and sodium, potassium or tin

○ **fluoride toothpaste**

COMMENT: Fluoride will reduce decay in teeth and is often added to drinking water or to toothpaste. Some people object to fluoridation and it is thought that too high a concentration, such as that achieved by highly fluoridated water and the use of a highly fluoridated toothpaste, may discolour the teeth of children.

fluorine /'flʊərɪn/ *noun* a chemical element found in bones and teeth (NOTE: The chemical symbol is F.)

fluoroscope /'flʊərɒskəp/ *noun* an apparatus which projects an X-ray image of a part of the body onto a screen, so that the part of the body can be examined as it moves

fluoroscopy /'flʊə'rɒskəpi/ *noun* an examination of the body using X-rays projected onto a screen

fluorosis /'fləʊ'rəʊsɪs/ *noun* a condition caused by excessive fluoride in drinking water

COMMENT: At a low level, fluorosis causes discolouration of the teeth, and as the level of fluoride rises, ligaments can become calcified.

fluoxetine /'flu:ə'ksɛtɪn/ *noun* a drug that increases serotonin in the brain and is used to treat anxiety and depression

flush /'flaʃ/ *noun* a red colour in the skin ■ *verb* 1. to wash a wound with liquid 2. (of person) to turn red

flushed /'flaʃt/ *adjective* with red skin, e.g. due to heat, emotion or overeating ○ *Her face was flushed and she was breathing heavily.*

flutter /'flʌtə/, **fluttering** /'flætərɪŋ/ *noun* a rapid movement, especially of the atria of the

heart, which is not controlled by impulses from the sinoatrial node

flux /'flaks/ *noun* an excessive production of liquid from the body

focal /'fəʊk(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to a focus
focal distance /'fəʊk(ə)l 'dɪstəns/, **focal length** /'fəʊk(ə)l 'leŋθ/ *noun* the distance between the lens of the eye and the point behind the lens where light is focused

focal epilepsy /'fəʊk(ə)l 'epilepsi/ *noun* epilepsy arising from a localised area of the brain
focal myopathy /'fəʊk(ə)l maɪ'ɒpəθi/ *noun* destruction of muscle tissue caused by a substance injected in an intramuscular injection

focus /'fəʊkəs/ *noun* 1. the point where light rays converge through a lens 2. the centre of an infection (NOTE: The plural is **foci**). ■ *verb* 1. to adjust a lens until an image is clear and sharp 2. to see clearly ○ *He has difficulty in focusing on the object.*

focus group /'fəʊkəs gru:p/ *noun* a discussion group of lay people brought together under professional guidance to discuss issues such as care

foetal /'fi:t(ə)l/ *adjective* another spelling of **fetal** (NOTE: The spelling **foetal** is common in general use in British English, but the spelling **fetal** is the accepted international spelling for technical use.)

foetor /'fi:tər/ *noun* another spelling of **fetor**

foetoscope /'fi:təskəʊp/ *noun* another spelling of **fetoscope**

foetoscopy /fi:təskəpi/ *noun* another spelling of **fetoscopy**

foetus /'fi:təs/ *noun* another spelling of **fetus** (NOTE: The spelling **foetus** is common in general use in British English, but the spelling **fetus** is the accepted international spelling for technical use.)

folacin /'fəʊləsɪn/ *noun* same as **folic acid**

fold /'fəuld/ *noun* a part of the body which is bent so that it lies on top of another part

folic acid /'fəʊlik 'æsɪd/ *noun* a vitamin in the Vitamin B complex found in milk, liver, yeast and green vegetables such as spinach, which is essential for creating new blood cells

COMMENT: Lack of folic acid can cause anaemia and neural tube disorders in the developing fetus. It can also be caused by alcoholism.

folie à deux /'fɒli ā 'dø:/ *noun* a rare condition where a psychological disorder is communicated between two people who live together

follicle /'fɒlik(ə)l/ *noun* a tiny hole or sac in the body

COMMENT: An ovarian follicle goes through several stages in its development. The first stage is called a primordial follicle, which then develops into a primary follicle and becomes a mature follicle by the sixth day of the period. This follicle secretes oestrogen until the ovum has developed to the point when it can break out, leaving the corpus luteum behind.

follicle-stimulating hormone /'fɒlik(ə)l 'stimjuleɪtɪŋ 'hɔ:məʊn/ *noun* a hormone produced by the pituitary gland which stimulates ova in the ovaries and sperm in the testes. Abbr **FSH**

follicular /fə'lɪkjʊlər/, **folliculate** /fə'lɪkju:lət/ *adjective* referring to follicles

follicular tumour /fə'lɪkjʊlər 'tju:mə/ *noun* a tumour in a follicle

folliculin /fə'lɪkjʊlin/ *noun* an oestrone, a type of oestrogen ○ *She is undergoing folliculin treatment.*

folliculitis /fə'lɪkju'lɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the hair follicles, especially where hair has been shaved

follow /'fɒləʊ/, **follow up** /'fɒləʊ 'ʌp/ *verb* to check on someone who has been examined before in order to assess the progress of a disease or the results of treatment

follow-up /'fɒləʊ 'ʌp/ *noun* a check on someone who has been examined before

‘...length of follow-ups varied from three to 108 months. Thirteen patients were followed for less than one year, but the remainder were seen regularly for periods from one to nine years’ [New Zealand Medical Journal]

folementation /,fəʊmen'teɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* same as **poultice**

fontites /'fəʊmɪti:z/ *plural noun* objects touched by someone with a communicable disease which can then be the means of passing on the disease to others

fontanelle /,fɒntə'nel/, **fontanel** *noun* the soft cartilage between the bony sections of a baby’s skull

COMMENT: The fontanelles gradually harden over a period of months and by the age of 18 months the bones of the baby’s skull are usually solid.

food allergen /'fu:d ,ælədʒən/ *noun* a substance in food which produces an allergy

food allergy /'fu:d 'ælədʒi/ *noun* an allergy to a specific food such as nuts, which causes a severe reaction that may lead to life-threatening anaphylactic shock

food canal /'fu:d kə,næl/ *noun* the passage from the mouth to the rectum through which food passes and is digested

food intolerance /'fu:d ɪn'tɒlərəns/ *noun* an adverse reaction to some foods such as oranges, eggs, tomatoes and strawberries

food poisoning /'fu:d ,pɔɪz(ə)nɪŋ/ *noun* an illness caused by eating food which is contaminated with bacteria

foot /'fʊt/ *noun* the end part of the leg on which a person stands

COMMENT: The foot is formed of 26 bones: 14 phalanges in the toes, five metatarsals in the main part of the foot and seven tarsals in the heel.

footpump /'fʊtpʌmp/ *noun* a device to reduce the risk of post-operative deep-vein thrombosis by mechanical use of leg muscles

foramen /fə'reɪmən/ *noun* a natural opening inside the body, e.g. the opening in a bone through which veins or nerves pass (NOTE: The plural is **foramina**.)

foramen magnum /fə'reɪmən 'mægnəmən/ *noun* the hole at the bottom of the skull where the brain is joined to the spinal cord

foramen ovale /fə'reɪmən 'əʊ'veɪə'ləʊ/ *noun* an opening between the two parts of the heart in a fetus

COMMENT: The foramen ovale usually closes at birth, but if it stays open the blood from the veins can mix with the blood going to the arteries, causing cyanosis.

foramina /fə'reɪmɪnə/ plural of **foramen**

forced expiratory volume /fɔ:st ek 'spɪrət(ə)ri ,vɒlju:m/ *noun* the maximum amount of air that can be expelled in a given time. Abbr **FEV**

force-feed /fɔ:s 'fi:d/ *verb* to make someone swallow food against their will, e.g. by using a tube to put it directly down their throat

forceps /'fɔ:seps/ *noun* a surgical instrument with handles like a pair of scissors, made in different sizes and with differently shaped ends, used for holding and pulling

forceps delivery /'fɔ:seps dɪ,lɪv(ə)ri/ *noun* childbirth where the doctor uses forceps to help the baby out of the mother's uterus

fore- /fɔ:/ prefix in front

forearm /'fɔ:rəm/ *noun* the lower part of the arm from the elbow to the wrist

forearm bones /'fɔ:rəm bəʊnz/ plural *noun* the ulna and the radius

forebrain /'fɔ:breɪn/ *noun* the front part of the brain in an embryo

forefinger /'fɔ:fɪŋgə/ *noun* the first finger on the hand, next to the thumb

foregut /'fɔ:gat/ *noun* the front part of the gut in an embryo

forehead /'fɔ:hed/ *noun* the part of the face above the eyes

foreign /'fɔ:rɪn/ *adjective* 1. not belonging to your own country □ *foreign visitors* □ *a foreign language* 2. referring to something that is found where it does not naturally belong, especially something found in the human body that comes from a source outside the body □ *a foreign object* □ *foreign matter*

foreign body /'fɔ:rnɪ 'bodi/ *noun* a piece of material which is not part of the surrounding tissue and should not be there, e.g. sand in a cut, dust in the eye or a pin which has been swallowed □ *The X-ray showed the presence of a foreign body.* □ **swallowed foreign bodies** something which should not have been swallowed, e.g. a pin, coin or button

foremilk /'fɔ:mlɪlk/ *noun* the relatively low-fat milk with a high sugar content that is produced by a woman at the beginning of a breast feed

forensic /fə'rensɪk/ *adjective* relating to the use of science in solving criminal investigations or settling legal cases

forensic medicine /fə'rensɪk 'med(ə)sɪn/ *noun* the branch of medical science concerned with finding solutions to crimes against people and which involves procedures such as conducting autopsies on murdered people or taking blood samples from clothes

foreskin /'fɔ:skɪn/ *noun* the skin covering the top of the penis, which can be removed by circumcision. Also called **prepuce**

forewaters /'fɔ:wɔ:təz/ plural *noun* fluid which comes out of the vagina at the beginning of childbirth when the amniotic bursts

forgetful /fə'getf(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to someone who often forgets things □ *She became very forgetful, and had to be looked after by her sister.*

forgetfulness /fə'getf(ə)lnəs/ *noun* a condition in which someone often forgets things □ *Increasing forgetfulness is a sign of old age.*

form /fɔ:m/ *noun* 1. shape 2. a piece of paper with blank spaces which you have to write in □ *You have to fill in a form when you are admitted to hospital.* 3. a state or condition □ *in good form* □ **he's in good form** today he is very amusing, he is doing things well ■ *verb* to make or to be the main part of something □ *Calcium is one the elements which form bones or bones are mainly formed of calcium.* □ *An ulcer formed in his duodenum.* □ *In diphtheria a membrane forms across the larynx.*

formaldehyde /fɔ:mældɪhaɪd/ *noun* a gas with an unpleasant smell that is a strong disinfectant. When dissolved in water to make **formalin**, it is also used to preserve medical specimens.

formalin /'fɔ:məlɪn/ *noun* a solution of formaldehyde in water, used to preserve medical specimens

formation /fɔ:'meɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the action of forming something □ *Drinking milk helps the formation of bones.*

formication /fɔ:mi'keɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* an itching feeling where the skin feels as if it were covered with insects

formula /'fɔ:mjʊlə/ *noun* 1. a way of indicating a chemical compound using letters and numbers, e.g. H₂SO₄. 2. instructions on how to prepare a drug 3. US powdered milk for babies (NOTE: The plural is **formulas** or **formulae**.)

formulary /'fɔ:mjʊləri/ *noun* a book that lists medicines together with their formulae

fornix /'fɔ:nɪks/ *noun* an arch (NOTE: The plural is **fornices**.) □ **fornix of the vagina** space between the cervix of the uterus and the vagina

fornix cerebri /,fɔ:nɪks 'seribrə/ *noun* a section of white matter in the brain between the hippocampus and the hypothalamus. See illustration at **BRAIN** in Supplement

fortification figures /,fɔ:tifi'keɪʃ(ə)n ,frɪgəz/ *plural noun* patterns of coloured light, seen as part of the aura before a migraine attack occurs

foscarnet /'fɒs'kɑ:nɛt/ *noun* an antiviral drug administered by intravenous injection that is effective against herpesviruses that are resistant to acyclovir. It is especially used for people with AIDS.

fossa /'fɒsə/ *noun* a shallow hollow in a bone or the skin

foster children /'fɒstə ,tʃɪldrən/ *plural noun* children brought up by people who are not their own parents

foster parent /'fɒstə ,peərənt/ *noun* a woman or man who brings up a child born to other parents

Fothergill's operation /'fʊðəgɪlz ɒpə,reɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a surgical operation to correct prolapse of the uterus [After W. E. Fothergill (1865–1926), British gynaecologist.]

foundation hospital /'faʊn,dेɪʃ(ə)n 'hɒspɪt(ə)l/ *noun* in the UK, a proposed type of hospital that would be independent of its Local Health Authority in financial matters

fourchette /fu'ɔ:ʃet/ *noun* a fold of skin at the back of the vulva

fovea /'fəʊviə/, **fovea centralis** /,fəʊviə sen'tra:lis/ *noun* a depression in the retina which is the point where the eye sees most clearly. See illustration at **EYE** in Supplement

FP10 /ef pi:/ 'ten/ *noun* in the UK, an NHS prescription from a GP

fracture /'frækʃə/ *verb* 1. (of bone) to break ○ *The tibia fractured in two places.* 2. to break a bone ○ *He fractured his wrist.* ■ *noun* a break in a bone ○ *rib fracture* or *fracture of a rib*

fractured /'frækʃəd/ *adjective* broken ○ *He had a fractured skull.* ○ *She went to hospital to have her fractured leg reset.*

fragile /'frædʒaɪl/ *adjective* easily broken ○ *Elderly people's bones are more fragile than those of adolescents.*

fragile-X syndrome /,frædʒaɪl 'eks ,sɪn drəʊm/ *noun* a hereditary condition in which part of an X chromosome is constricted, causing mental impairment

fragilitas /frə'dʒɪlɪtəs/ *noun* fragility or brittleness

fragilitas ossium /frə,dʒɪlɪtəs 'ɔsiəm/ *noun* a hereditary condition where the bones are brittle and break easily, similar to osteogenesis imperfecta

frail /freɪl/ *adjective* weak, easily broken ○ *Grandfather is getting frail, and we have to look after him all the time.* ○ *The baby's bones are still very frail.*

framboesia /fræm'bɪ:ziə/ *noun* same as **yaws**

frame /freɪm/ *noun* 1. the particular size and shape of someone's body 2. a solid support for something. ♦ **walking frame, Zimmer frame**

framework /'freimwɜ:k/ *noun* the main bones which make up the structure of part of the body

framycetin /fræ'maisətɪn/ *noun* an antibiotic

fraternal twins /frə,tən(ə)l 'twɪnz/ *plural noun* same as **dizygotic twins**

freckle /'frek(ə)l/ *noun* a harmless small brownish patch on the skin that becomes more noticeable after exposure to the sun. Freckles are often found in people with fair hair. Also called **lentigo** ■ *verb* to mark something, or become marked with freckles

freckled /'frek(ə)ld/ *adjective* with brown spots on the skin

freeze /fri:z/ *verb* to anaesthetise part of the body (*informal*) ○ *They froze my big toe to remove the nail.*

freeze dry /,fri:z 'draɪ/ *verb* to freeze something rapidly then dry it in a vacuum

freeze drying /'fri:z ,draɪɪŋ/ *noun* a method of preserving food or tissue specimens by freezing rapidly and drying in a vacuum

Freiberg's disease /'fraɪbə:gz dɪ,zɪ:z/ *noun* osteochondritis of the head of the second metatarsus [Described 1914. After Albert Henry Freiberg (1869–1940), US surgeon.]

Frei test /'fraɪ test/ *noun* a test for the venereal disease lymphogranuloma inguinale [Described 1925. After Wilhelm Siegmund Frei (1885–1943), Professor of Dermatology at Berlin, Germany. He settled in New York, USA.]

fremitus /'fremɪtəs/ *noun* vibrations or trembling in part of someone's body, felt by the doctor's hand or heard through a stethoscope

French letter /,frentʃ 'letə/ *noun* ♦ **condom** (*informal*)

frenectomy /frə'nektəmi/ *noun* an operation to remove a frenum

Frenkel's exercises /frenkəlz ,eksəsaɪzɪz/ *plural noun* exercises for people who have locomotor ataxia, to teach coordination of the muscles and limbs

frenotomy /frə'nɒtəmi/ *noun* an operation to split a frenum

frenum /'fri:nəm/, **frenulum** /'frenjuləm/ *noun* a fold of mucous membrane under the tongue or by the clitoris

frequency /'fri:kwənsi/ *noun* 1. the number of times something takes place in a given time ○ *the frequency of micturition* 2. the rate of vibration in oscillations

fresh air /,fres 'eə/ *noun* open air ○ *They came out of the hospital into the fresh air.*

fresh frozen plasma /,fres ,fraz(ə)n 'plæzma/ *noun* plasma made from freshly donated blood, and kept frozen

fretful /'fretf(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to a baby that cries, cannot sleep or seems unhappy

Freudian /'frɔɪdiən/ *adjective* understandable in terms of Freud's theories, especially with regard to human sexuality ■ *noun* someone who is influenced by or follows Freud's theories or methods of psychoanalysis

friable /'fraɪəb(ə)l/ *adjective* easily broken up into small pieces

friar's balsam /'fraɪəz 'bɔ:lsm/ *noun* a mixture of various plant oils, including benzoin and balsam, which can be inhaled as a vapour to relieve bronchitis or congestion

friction /'frɪkʃən/ *noun* the rubbing together of two surfaces

friction fremitus /,frɪkʃən 'fremɪtəs/ *noun* a scratching sensation felt when the hand is placed on the chest of someone who has pericarditis

friction murmur /,frɪkʃən 'mɜ:mə/ *noun* the sound of two serous membranes rubbing together, heard with a stethoscope in someone who has pericarditis or pleurisy

Friedländer's bacillus /'fri:dłendəz bɛ̄,siləs/ *noun* the bacterium *Klebsiella pneumoniae* which can cause pneumonia [Described 1882. After Carl Friedländer (1847–87), pathologist at the Friedrichshain Hospital, Berlin, Germany.]

Friedman's test /'fri:dmanz test/ *noun* a test for pregnancy [After Maurice H. Friedman (b. 1903), US physician.]

Friedreich's ataxia /,fri:draɪks ə'tæksɪə/ *noun* an inherited nervous disease which affects the spinal cord and is associated with club foot, an unsteady walk and speech difficulties. Also called **dystrophy adiposogenitalis** [Described 1863. After Nicholaus Friedreich (1825–82), Professor of Pathological Anatomy at Würzburg, later Professor of Pathology and Therapy at Heidelberg, Germany.]

frigidity /fri'dʒɪdɪti/ *noun* the fact of being unable to experience orgasm, sexual pleasure or sexual desire

fringe medicine /'frɪŋʒ ,med(ə)sɪm/ *noun* types of medical practice which are not usually taught in medical schools, e.g. homeopathy or acupuncture (*informal*)

frog plaster /'frɒg ,pla:stə/ *noun* a plaster cast made to keep the legs in an open position after an operation to correct a dislocated hip

Fröhlich's syndrome /'frɔ:liks ,sɪndrəʊm/ *noun* a condition in which someone becomes obese and the genital system does not develop, caused by an adenoma of the pituitary gland [Described 1901. After Alfred Fröhlich (1871–1953), Professor of Pharmacology at the University of Vienna, Austria.]

frontal /'frænt(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to the forehead or to the front of the head. Opposite **occipital**

frontal bone /'frænt(ə)l bəʊn/ *noun* a bone forming the front of the upper part of the skull behind the forehead

frontal lobe /'frænt(ə)l ləʊb/ *noun* the front lobe of each cerebral hemisphere

frontal lobotomy /,frænt(ə)l ləʊ'bɒtəmɪ/ *noun* formerly, a surgical operation on the brain to treat mental illness by removing part of the frontal lobe

frontal sinus /,frænt(ə)l 'sainəs/ *noun* one of two sinuses in the front of the face above the eyes and near the nose

front passage /frænt 'pæsɪdʒ/ (*informal*) 1. same as **urethra** 2. same as **vagina**

frostbite /'frɒstbait/ *noun* an injury caused by very severe cold which freezes tissue

frostbitten /'frɒstbit(ə)n/ *adjective* having frostbite

COMMENT: In very cold conditions, the outside tissue of the fingers, toes, ears and nose can freeze, becoming white and numb. Thawing of frostbitten tissue can be very painful and must be done very slowly. Severe cases of frostbite may require amputation because the tissue has died and gangrene has set in.

frozen shoulder /,fræuz(ə)n 'ʃəuldə/ *noun* stiffness and pain in the shoulder, caused by inflammation of the membranes of the shoulder joint after injury or a period of immobility, when deposits may form in the tendons

frozen watchfulness /,fræuz(ə)n 'wɒtʃfəlness/ *noun* an expression of petrified fear on a child's face, especially in children who have been abused

fructose /'frʌktəʊs/ *noun* fruit sugar found in honey and some fruit, which together with glucose forms sucrose

fructosuria /,frʌktʊər'sjuəriə/ *noun* the presence of fructose in the urine

frusemide /'fru:səməɪd/ *noun* same as **furosemide**

FSH abbr follicle-stimulating hormone

fugax /'fju:gækəs/ ♦ **amaurosis fugax**

-**fuge** /'fju:dʒ/ suffix driving away

fugue /'fju:g/ *noun* a condition in which someone loses his or her memory and leaves home

fulguration /,fʌlgə'reɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the removal of a growth such as a wart by burning with an electric needle. Also called **electrodesiccation**

full term /'fol 'tɜ:m/ *noun* a complete pregnancy of forty weeks ○ *She has had several pregnancies but none has reached full term.*

full thickness burn /'fol 'θɪknəs bɜ:n/ *noun* same as **deep dermal burn**

fulminant /'fʊlmɪnənt/, **fulminating** /'fʊlmɪnɪtɪŋ/ *adjective* referring to a dangerous disease which develops very rapidly

'...the major manifestations of pneumococcal infection in sickle-cell disease are septicaemia, meningitis and pneumonia. The illness is frequently fulminant' [*The Lancet*]

fumes /fju:mz/ plural noun gas or smoke

fumigate /fju:migeɪt/ verb to kill insects in an area by using gas or smoke

fumigation /,fju:mɪ'geɪʃ(ə)n/ noun the process of killing insects in an area with gas or smoke

function /fʌŋkʃən/ noun the particular work done by an organ ○ What is the function of the pancreas? ○ The function of an ovary is to form ova. ■ verb to work in a particular way ○ The heart and lungs were functioning normally. ○ His kidneys suddenly stopped functioning.

...insulin's primary metabolic function is to transport glucose into muscle and fat cells, so that it can be used for energy' [Nursing '87]

...the AIDS virus attacks a person's immune system and damages the ability to fight other disease. Without a functioning immune system to ward off other germs, the patient becomes vulnerable to becoming infected'

[Journal of American Medical Association]

functional /'fʌŋkʃən(ə)l/ adjective referring to a disorder or illness which does not have a physical cause and may have a psychological cause, as opposed to an organic disorder

functional endoscopic sinus surgery /,fʌŋkʃən(ə)l ,endeskopik 'saɪnəs ,sɜ:dzəri/ noun the removal of soft tissue in the sinuses using an endoscope. Abbr **FESS**

functional enuresis /,fʌŋkʃən(ə)l ,enju'ri:sɪs/ noun bedwetting which has a psychological cause

functional independence measure /,fʌŋkʃən(ə)l ,ɪndɪ'pendəns ,meʒə/ noun a measure of disability. Abbr **FIM**

fundus /'fʌndəs/ noun 1. the bottom of a hollow organ such as the uterus 2. the top section of the stomach, above the body of the stomach

fungal /'fʌŋgəl/ adjective relating to, or caused by, fungi ○ a fungal skin infection

fungate /'fʌŋgeɪt/ verb (of some skin cancers) to increase rapidly at a late stage of tumour formation

fungicide /'fʌŋgɪsaɪd/ noun a substance used to kill fungi

fungiform papillae /,fʌŋgɪfɔ:m pa'pili:/ noun rounded papillae on the tip and sides of the tongue, which have taste buds

fungoid /'fʌŋgɔɪd/ adjective like a fungus

fungus /'fʌŋgəs/ noun an organism such as yeast or mould, some of which cause disease (NOTE: The plural is **fungi**. For other terms referring to fungi, see words beginning with **myc-**, **myco-**.)

COMMENT: Some fungi can become parasites of man, and cause diseases such as thrush.

Other fungi, such as yeast, react with sugar to form alcohol. Some antibiotics, such as penicillin, are derived from fungi.

fungus disease /'fʌŋgəs dɪ,zɪ:z/ noun a disease caused by a fungus

fungus poisoning /'fʌŋgəs ,pozi:(ə)nɪŋ/ noun poisoning by eating a poisonous fungus

funiculitis /fju:nɪkjʊ'laitɪs/ noun inflammation of the spermatic cord

funiculus /fju:'nɪkjʊləs/ noun one of the three parts of the white matter in the spinal cord ○ The three parts are called the lateral, anterior and posterior funiculus.

funis /'fju:nɪs/ noun an umbilical cord

funnel chest /,fʌn(ə)l 'tʃest/ noun same as pectus excavatum

funny bone /'fʌni bəʊn/ noun same as olecranon (informal)

funny turn /'fʌni tɜ:n/ noun a dizzy spell (informal)

furfuraceous /,fɜ:rfjə'reɪʃəs/ adjective referring to skin which is scaly

Furley stretcher /'fɜ:li ,stretʃə/ noun a stretcher made of a folding frame with a canvas bed, with carrying poles at each side and small feet underneath

furor /'fjuərəs/ noun an attack of wild violence, especially in someone who is mentally unwell

furosemide a drug which causes an increase in urine production, used to relieve water retention in the body. Also called **frusemide**

furred tongue /fɜ:d 'tʌŋ/ noun a condition when the papillae of the tongue are covered with a whitish coating. Also called **coated tongue**

furuncle /'fjuərənklə/ noun same as boil

furunculosis /fjuə,rʌŋkjʊ'ləʊsɪs/ noun a condition in which several boils appear at the same time

fuse /'fju:z/ verb to join together to form a single structure, or to join two or more things together ○ The bones of the joint fused.

fusidic acid /'fju:,sɪdɪk 'æsɪd/ noun an antibiotic used to prevent protein synthesis

fusiform /'fju:zɪfɔ:m/ adjective referring to muscles which are shaped like a spindle, with a wider middle section which becomes narrower at each end

fusion /'fju:z(ə)n/ noun the act of joining, especially a surgical operation to relieve pain in the joint by joining the bones at the joint permanently so that they cannot move

Fybogel /'faɪbəudʒəl/ a trade name for ispaghula

G

g abbr gram

GABA /'gæbə/ abbr gamma aminobutyric acid

gag /gæg/ noun an instrument placed between the teeth to stop the mouth from closing ■ verb to experience a reaction similar to that of vomiting ○ Every time the doctor tries to examine her throat, she gags. ○ He started gagging on the endotracheal tube.

gain /geɪn/ noun an act of adding or increasing something ○ The baby showed a gain in weight of 25g or showed a weight gain of 25g. ■ verb to obtain something, or to increase ○ to gain in weight or to gain weight

gait /geɪt/ noun a way of walking

galact- /gælækτ-/ prefix same as **galacto-** (used before vowels)

galactagogue /gæ'læktəgɒg/ noun a substance which stimulates the production of milk

galacto- /gælækτəʊ/ prefix referring to milk

galactocele /gæ'læktəsɪl/ noun a breast tumour which contains milk

galactorrhoea /gæ'læktə'rɪə/ noun the excessive production of milk

galactosaemia /gæ'læktə'si:miə/ noun a congenital condition where the liver is incapable of converting galactose into glucose, with the result that a baby's development may be affected (NOTE: The treatment is to remove galactose from the diet.)

galactose /gæ'læktəʊs/ noun a sugar which forms part of milk, and is converted into glucose by the liver

galea /'geiliə/ noun 1. any part of the body shaped like a helmet, especially the loose band of tissue in the scalp (NOTE: The plural is **galeae**.) 2. a type of bandage wrapped round the head

gall /gɔ:l/ noun same as **bile**

gall bladder /'gɔ:l,blædə/ noun a sac situated underneath the liver, in which bile produced by the liver is stored. See illustration at **DIGESTIVE SYSTEM** in Supplement

COMMENT: Bile is stored in the gall bladder until required by the stomach. If fatty food is present in the stomach, bile moves from the gall bladder along the bile duct to the stom-

ach. Since the liver also secretes bile directly into the duodenum, the gall bladder is not an essential organ and can be removed by surgery.

Gallie's operation /'gæliz əpə,reɪʃ(ə)n/ noun a surgical operation where tissues from the thigh are used to hold a hernia in place [Described 1921. After William Edward Gallie (1882–1959), Professor of Surgery at the University of Toronto, Canada.]

gallipot /'gælipɒt/ noun a little container for ointment

gallium /'gæliəm/ noun a metallic element a radioisotope of which is used to detect tumours or other tissue disorders (NOTE: The chemical symbol is **Ga**.)

gallop rhythm /'gæləp, rɪð(ə)m/ noun the rhythm of heart sounds, three to each cycle, when someone is experiencing tachycardia

gallstone /'gɔ:lstəʊn/ noun a small stone formed from insoluble deposits from bile in the gall bladder. ♀ **calculus**

COMMENT: Gallstones can be harmless, but some cause pain and inflammation and a serious condition can develop if a gallstone blocks the bile duct. Sudden pain going from the right side of the stomach towards the back indicates that a gallstone is passing through the bile duct.

galvanism /'gælvənɪz(ə)m/ noun a treatment using low voltage electricity

galvanocautery /,gælvənəʊ'kɔ:təri/ noun the removal of diseased tissue using an electrically heated needle or loop of wire. Also called **electrocautery**

gamete /'gæmɪ:t/ noun a sex cell, either a spermatozoon or an ovum

gamete intrafallopian transfer /,gæmɪ:t intrəfə,læpiən 'trænsfɜ:/ noun a technique to combine eggs and sperm outside the body and then insert them into the Fallopian tubes. Abbr **GIFT**

gametocide /gæ'mi:təʊsaɪd/ noun a drug which kills gametocytes

gametocyte /gæ'mi:təʊsait/ noun a cell which is developing into a gamete

gametogenesis /gæ'mi:təʊ'dʒenəsɪs/ noun the process by which a gamete is formed

gamgee tissue /'gæmdʒi: tɪʃu:/ noun a surgical dressing, formed of a layer of cotton wool between two pieces of gauze

gamma /'gæmə/ noun the third letter of the Greek alphabet

gamma aminobutyric acid /,gæmə ə ,mi:nəʊbju:tɪrɪk 'æsɪd/ noun an amino acid neurotransmitter. Abbr **GABA**

gamma camera /'gæmə ,kæm(ə)rə/ noun a camera for taking photographs of parts of the body into which radioactive isotopes have been introduced

gamma globulin /,gæmə 'globjʊlɪn/ noun a protein found in plasma, forming antibodies as protection against infection

COMMENT: Gamma globulin injections are sometimes useful as a rapid source of protection against a wide range of diseases.

gamma ray /'gæmə reɪ/ noun a ray which is shorter than an X-ray and is given off by radioactive substances

gangli- /'gæŋgli/ prefix referring to ganglia
ganglion /'gæŋgliən/ noun 1. a mass of nerve cell bodies and synapses usually covered in connective tissue, found along the peripheral nerves with the exception of the basal ganglia 2. a cyst of a tendon sheath or joint capsule, usually at the wrist, which results in a painless swelling containing fluid (NOTE: [all senses] The plural is **ganglia**)

ganglionectomy /,gæŋglɪə'nektəmɪ/ noun the surgical removal of a ganglion

ganglionic /,gæŋglɪ'ɒnɪk/ adjective referring to a ganglion. ◊ **postganglionic**

gangrene /'gæŋgrɪ:n/ noun a condition in which tissues die and decay, as a result of bacterial action, because the blood supply has been lost through injury or disease of the artery ◊ After she had frostbite, gangrene set in and her toes had to be amputated.

gangrenous /'gæŋgrɪnəs/ adjective referring to, or affected by, gangrene

Ganser state /'gænsə ,steɪt/ noun same as **pseudodementia** [After Sigbert Joseph Maria Ganser (1853–1931), psychiatrist at Dresden and Munich, Germany]

gargle /'gɑ:g(ə)l/ noun a mildly antiseptic solution used to clean the mouth ■ verb to put some antiseptic liquid solution into the back of the mouth and then breathe out air through it

gargoylism /'gɑ:gɔɪlɪz(ə)m/ noun a congenital condition of the metabolism which causes polysaccharides and fat cells to accumulate in the body, resulting in mental impairment, swollen liver and coarse features. Also called **Hurler's syndrome**

gas /gæs/ noun 1. a substance such as nitrogen, carbon dioxide or air, which is neither solid nor fluid at ordinary temperatures and can expand infinitely (NOTE: The plural **gases** is used only when referring to different types of

gas). 2. gas which accumulates in the stomach or alimentary canal and causes pain

gas and air analgesia /,gæs ənd 'eə æn(ə)l,dʒi:zɪə/ noun a form of analgesia used when giving birth, in which a mixture of air and gas is given

gas chromatography /,gæs ,krəʊmə'tɒgrəfi/ noun a method of separating chemicals by passing them through a gas, used in analysing compounds and mixtures

gas exchange /'gæs ɪks,tfeɪndʒ/ noun the process by which oxygen in the air is exchanged in the lungs for waste carbon dioxide carried by the blood

gas gangrene /gæs 'gæŋgrɪ:n/ noun a complication of severe wounds in which the bacterium *Clostridium welchii* breeds in the wound and then spreads to healthy tissue which is rapidly decomposed with the formation of gas

gash /gæʃ/ noun a long deep cut made accidentally by something sharp ◊ She had to have three stitches in the gash in her thigh. ■ verb to make a long deep cut in something accidentally ◊ She gashed her hand on the broken glass.

gasp /gu:sp/ noun a short breath taken with difficulty ◊ His breath came in short gasps. ■ verb to breathe with difficulty taking quick breaths ◊ She was gasping for breath.

gas pain /'gæs peɪn/ noun a pain caused by excessive formation of gas in the stomach or intestine. ◊ **flatus**

gas poisoning /'gæs ,poɪz(ə)nɪŋ/ noun poisoning by breathing in carbon monoxide or other toxic gas

Gasserian ganglion /gæ:sɪriən 'gæŋglɪən/ noun same as **trigeminal ganglion** [After Johann Laurentius Gasser (1723–65), Professor of Anatomy in Vienna, Austria. He left no writings, and the ganglion was given his name by Anton Hirsch, one of his students, in his thesis of 1765.]

gastr- /'gæstr/ prefix same as **gastro-** (used before vowels)

gastralgia /gæ'strældʒə/ noun pain in the stomach

gastrectomy /gæ'strektəmɪ/ noun the surgical removal of the stomach

gastric /'gæstriκ/ adjective referring to the stomach

gastric acid /,gæstriκ 'æsɪd/ noun hydrochloric acid secreted into the stomach by acid-forming cells

gastric artery /,gæstriκ 'a:təri/ noun an artery leading from the coeliac trunk to the stomach

gastric flu /,gæstriκ 'flu:/ noun any mild stomach disorder (*informal*)

gastric juice /,gæstriκ dʒu:s/ noun the mixture of hydrochloric acid, pepsin, intrinsic factor and mucus secreted by the cells of the lin-

ing membrane of the stomach to help the digestion of food (NOTE: Often used in the plural.)

gastric lavage /,gæstriκ 'lævɪdʒ/ *noun* a lavage of the stomach, usually to remove a poisonous substance which has been absorbed. Also called **stomach washout**

gastric pit /,gæstriκ 'pit/ *noun* a deep hollow in the mucous membrane forming the walls of the stomach

gastric ulcer /,gæstriκ 'ʌlsə/ *noun* an ulcer in the stomach. Abbr **GU**

gastric vein /,gæstriκ 'veɪn/ *noun* a vein which follows the gastric artery

gastrin /'gæstriν/ *noun* a hormone which is released into the bloodstream from cells in the lower end of the stomach, stimulated by the presence of protein, and which in turn stimulates the flow of acid from the upper part of the stomach

gastrinoma /,gæstriν'naʊmə/ *noun* a tumour of the islet cells, leading to excessive gastric acid

gastritis /gæ'straitɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the stomach

gastro- /gæstriəʊ/ *prefix* referring to the stomach

gastrocele /'gæstriəʊsɪl/ *noun* a condition in which part of the stomach wall becomes weak and bulges out. Also called **stomach hernia**

gastrocnemius /,gæstriκ'nɪ:mɪəs/ *noun* a large calf muscle

gastrocolic /,gæstriəʊ'kɒlik/ *adjective* referring to the stomach and colon

gastrocolic reflex /,gæstriəʊkɒlik 'ri:fleks/ *noun* a sudden peristalsis of the colon produced when food is taken into an empty stomach

gastroduodenal /,gæstriəʊ,dju:ən(dɪm(ə))l/ *adjective* referring to the stomach and duodenum

gastroduodenal artery /,gæstriəʊ'dju:ən(dɪm(ə))təri/ *noun* an artery leading from the gastric artery towards the pancreas

gastroduodenoscopy /,gæstriəʊ,dju:ən(dɪm(ə))skəpi/ *noun* an examination of the stomach and duodenum

gastroduodenostomy /,gæstriəʊ,dju:ən(dɪm(ə))stəməti/ *noun* a surgical operation to join the duodenum to the stomach so as to bypass a blockage in the pylorus

gastroenteritis /,gæstriəʊnətə'rایtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the membrane lining the intestines and the stomach, caused by a viral infection and resulting in diarrhoea and vomiting

gastroenterologist /,gæstriəʊnətə'rɒlədʒɪst/ *noun* a doctor who specialises in the digestive system and its disorders

gastroenterology /,gæstriəʊnətə'rɒlədʒɪ/ *noun* the study of the digestive system and its disorders

gastroenterostomy /,gæstriəʊnətə'rɒstəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to join the small intestine directly to the stomach so as to bypass a peptic ulcer

gastroepiploic /,gæstriəʊepɪ'plɔɪk/ *adjective* referring to the stomach and greater omentum

gastroepiploic artery /,gæstriəʊepɪ'plɔɪk 'a:təri/ *noun* an artery linking the gastroduodenal artery to the splenic artery

Gastrografin /,gæstriəʊ'græfɪn/ a trade name for an enema used in bowel X-rays

gastroileac reflex /,gæstriəʊ,iliæk 'ri:fleks/ *noun* automatic relaxation of the ileocaecal valve when food is present in the stomach

gastrointestinal /,gæstriəʊn'testɪn(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to the stomach and intestine
○ **gastrointestinal bleeding**. Abbr **GI**

gastrojejunostomy /,gæstriəʊdʒɪndʒu:n'stəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to join the jejunum to the stomach

gastrolith /'gæstriəʊlɪθ/ *noun* a calculus in the stomach

gastrology /,gæ'strɒlədʒɪ/ *noun* the study of the stomach and diseases of the stomach

gastro-oesophageal reflux /,gæstriəʊ ɪ,sfədʒɪəl 'ri:fleks/, **gastro-oesophageal reflux disease** /,gæstriəʊ ɪ,sfədʒɪəl 'ri:fleks dɪ:zɪ:z/ *noun* the return of bitter-tasting, partly digested food from the stomach to the oesophagus

gastropexy /'gæstriəʊpeksi/ *noun* a surgical operation to attach the stomach to the wall of the abdomen

gastroplasty /'gæstriəplæsti/ *noun* surgery to correct a deformed stomach

gastroptosis /,gæstriə'taʊsɪs/ *noun* a condition in which the stomach hangs down

gastorrhoea /,gæstri'rɪə/ *noun* an excessive flow of gastric juices

gastroschisis /,gæstriəʊ'saɪsɪs/ *noun* a split in the wall of the abdomen, with viscera passing through it

gastroscope /'gæstriəskəʊp/ *noun* an instrument formed of a tube or bundle of glass fibres with a lens attached, which a doctor can pass down into the stomach through the mouth to examine the inside of the stomach

gastroscopy /gæ'striːskəpi/ *noun* an examination of the stomach using a gastroscope

gastrostomy /gæ'striːstəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to create an opening into the stomach from the wall of the abdomen, so that food can be introduced without passing through the mouth and throat

gastrotomy /gæ'striːtəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to open up the stomach

gastrula /gæ'stru:lə/ *noun* the second stage of the development of an embryo

gathering /'gæðərɪŋ/ *noun* a swelling that is filled with pus

Gaucher's disease /'gəʊʃərz dɪ,zɪ:z/ *noun* an enzyme disease where fatty substances accumulate in the lymph glands, spleen and liver, causing anaemia, a swollen spleen and darkening of the skin. The disease can be fatal in children. [Described 1882. After Philippe Charles Ernest Gaucher (1854–1918), French physician and dermatologist.]

gauze /gɔ:z/ *noun* a thin light material used to make dressings

gauze dressing /gɔ:z 'dresɪŋ/ *noun* a dressing of thin light material

gavage /gæ've:ʒ/ *noun* the forced feeding of someone who cannot eat or who refuses to eat

gay /geɪ/ *adjective* relating to sexual activity among people of the same sex

GDC *abbr* General Dental Council

Gehrig's disease /'geɪrɪgz dɪ,zɪ:z/ *noun* same as **amyotrophic lateral sclerosis**

Geiger counter /'gaɪgə ,kaʊntə/ *noun* an instrument for the detection and measurement of radiation [Described 1908. After Hans Geiger (1882–1945), German physicist who worked with Rutherford at Manchester University, UK.]

gel /dʒel/ *noun* a suspension that sets into a jelly-like solid

gelatin /'dʒelətɪn/ *noun* a protein found in collagen which is soluble in water, used to make capsules for medicines

gelatinous /dʒə'lætɪnəs/ *adjective* referring to gelatin or something with a texture like jelly

gemellus /dʒɪ'meləs/ *noun* either of the two muscles arising from the ischium. Also called

gemellus superior muscle, gemellus inferior muscle

gender /'dʒendə/ *noun* the fact of being of the male or female sex

gender identity disorder /,dʒendə'ærɪ'denɪt̩ tɪdɪs,ɔ:də/ *noun* a condition in which someone experiences strong discomfort with his or her birth gender

gender reassignment surgery /,dʒendə'ri:ə'sainmənt ,sɜ:dzəri/ *noun* surgery to change someone's sex

gender reorientation /,dʒendə'ri:t̩,ɔ:rɪən'teɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the alteration of a person's sex through surgical and drug treatment

gene /dʒi:n/ *noun* a unit of DNA on a chromosome which governs the synthesis of a protein sequence and determines a particular characteristic

COMMENT: A gene may be dominant, in which case the characteristic it controls is always passed on to the child, or recessive, in which case the characteristic only appears if both parents have contributed the same form of the gene.

general amnesia /,dʒen(ə)rəl æm'nɪ:ziə/ *noun* a sudden and complete loss of memory, to the extent that a person does not even remember who he or she is

general anaesthesia /,dʒen(ə)rəl ,ænæs'θi:zɪə/ *noun* loss of feeling and loss of sensation throughout the body, after being given an anaesthetic

general anaesthetic /,dʒen(ə)rəl ,ænæs'θetɪk/ *noun* a substance given to make someone lose consciousness so that a major surgical operation can be carried out

General Dental Council /,dʒen(ə)rəl 'dent(ə)l ,kaʊnsəl/ *noun* in the UK, the official body that registers and supervises dentists. *Abbr GDC*

general hospital /,dʒen(ə)rəl 'hospɪt(ə)l/ *noun* a hospital which does not specialise in particular types of illness or particular age groups

generalise /'dʒen(ə)rəlaɪz/, **generalize** *verb* to spread to other parts of the body

generalised /'dʒen(ə)rəlaɪzd/, **generalized** *adjective* 1. spreading throughout the body. Opposite **localised** 2. not having a specific cause

generalised anxiety disorder /,dʒen(ə)rəlaɪzd æn'zaiəti dɪs,ɔ:də/ *noun* a state of continual anxiety for which there is no specific cause

General Medical Council /,dʒen(ə)rəl 'medɪk(ə)l ,kaʊnsəl/ *noun* in the UK, the official body that licenses qualified doctors to practise medicine. *Abbr GMC*

General Optical Council /'dʒenərəl 'ɒptɪk(ə)l ,kaʊnsəl/ *noun* in the UK, the official body that registers and supervises opticians

general practice /,dʒen(ə)rəl 'præktsɪs/ *noun* a medical practice where doctors offer first-line medical care for all types of illness to people who live locally, refer them to hospital if necessary and encourage health promotion

general practitioner /,dʒen(ə)rəl præk'tɪʃ(ə)nə/ *noun* a doctor who provides first-line medical care for all types of illness to people who live locally, refers them to hospital if necessary and encourages health promotion. *Abbr GP*

gene replacement therapy /,dʒi:n rɪ'pleɪsmənt ,θerəpi/ *noun* the replacement of missing genes or damaging gene variations in cells by the insertion of appropriate genes to treat a genetic disorder. Also called **gene therapy**

COMMENT: Gene replacement therapy has been used successfully in animals, and is in the early stages of research in humans, but may be useful in the future treatment of cystic fibrosis, thalassaemia and other genetic disorders.

generic /dʒə'nerɪk/ *adjective* 1. referring to medicine which does not have a special trade-

mark or brand name given to it by its manufacturer **2.** referring to a genus ○ *The generic name of this type of bacterium is Staphylococcus.*

-genesis /dʒenəsɪs/ *suffix* production or origin

gene therapy /'dʒi:nɪ,θerəpi/ *noun* same as **gene replacement therapy**

genetic /dʒet'netɪk/ *adjective* referring to genes

genetic code /dʒet'netɪk 'kə:d/ *noun* the characteristics of the DNA of a cell which are passed on when the cell divides and so are inherited by a child from its parents

genetic counselling /dʒet'netɪk 'kaʊnsəlɪŋ/ *noun* advice and support given to people if they or their children might be affected by inherited genetic disorders

genetic disorder /dʒet'netɪk dɪs'ɔ:də/ *noun* a disorder or disease caused by a damaging gene variation that may be inherited

genetic engineering /dʒet'netɪk endʒɪ'nærɪŋ/ *noun* same as **genetic modification** (*informal*)

genetic fingerprint /dʒet'netɪk 'fɪngəprɪnt/ *noun* the pattern of sequences of genetic material unique to an individual. Also called **DNA fingerprint**

genetic fingerprinting /dʒet'netɪk 'fɪngə,prɪntɪŋ/ *noun* a method of revealing an individual's genetic profile, used in paternity queries and criminal investigations. Also called **DNA fingerprinting**

geneticist /dʒet'netɪsɪst/ *noun* a person who specialises in the study of the way in which characteristics and diseases are inherited through the genes

genetic modification, genetic manipulation *noun* the combination of genetic material from different sources to produce organisms with altered characteristics

genetics /dʒet'netɪks/ *noun* the study of genes, and of the way characteristics and diseases are inherited through the genes

genetic screening /dʒet'netɪk 'skrɪnɪŋ/ *noun* the process of testing large numbers of people to see if anyone has a particular genetic disorder

gene tracking /'dʒi:nɪ,traekɪŋ/ *noun* the method used to trace throughout a family the inheritance of a gene such as those causing cystic fibrosis or Huntington's Chorea, in order to diagnose and predict genetic disorders

-genic /dʒenɪk/ *suffix* referring to a product or something which produces

genicular /dʒe'ni:kjʊlər/ *adjective* referring to the knee

genital /'dʒenɪt(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to the reproductive organs ■ *plural noun* **genitals** same as **genital organs**

genitalia /dʒenɪ'terliə/ *noun* the genital organs

genital organs /,dʒenɪt(ə)l 'ɔ:gɔ:nz/ *plural noun* the external organs for reproduction, i.e. the penis and testicles in males and the vulva in females. Also called **genitals, genitalia**

genital wart /,dʒenɪt(ə)l 'wɔ:t/ *noun* a wart in the genital or anal area, caused by a sexually transmitted virus

genito- /dʒenɪtəʊ/ *prefix* referring to the reproductive system

genitourinary /,dʒenɪtəʊ'ju:rɪnəri/ *adjective* referring to both the reproductive and urinary systems. Abbr **GU**

genitourinary system /,dʒenɪtəʊ'ju:rɪnəri,sɪstəm/ *noun* the organs of reproduction and urination, including the kidneys

genome /'dʒi:nəʊm/ *noun* the set of all the genes of an individual

genotype /'dʒenətaɪp/ *noun* the genetic makeup of an individual. Compare **phenotype**

gentamicin /dʒentə'maɪsɪn/ *noun* an antibiotic that is effective against a variety of different disease-causing organisms. Patients usually receive it by injection and it can cause serious side effects.

gentian violet /,dʒenʃən 'værlət/ *noun* an antiseptic blue dye, used to paint on skin infections and also to stain specimens. Also called **crystal violet**

genu /'dʒenju:/ *noun* the knee

genual /'dʒenju:əl/ *adjective* referring to the knee

genucubital position /,dʒenju:kju:bɪtl/ *noun* the position of someone resting on their knees and elbows

genupectoral position /,dʒenju:pɛktərəl/ *noun* the position of someone resting on their knees and upper chest

genus /'dʒi:nəs/ *noun* a category of related living organisms ○ *A genus is divided into different species.* (NOTE: The plural is **genera**.)

genu valgum /,dʒenju:vælgəm/ *noun* same as **knock-knee**

genu varum /,dʒenju:værəm/ *noun* same as **bow legs**

geri- /dʒeri:/ *prefix* referring to old age

geriatric /,dʒeri'ætrɪk/ *adjective* **1.** referring to old people **2.** specialising in the treatment of old people ○ **geriatric unit**

geriatrician /,dʒeri'ætrɪʃən/ *noun* a doctor who specialises in the treatment or study of diseases of old people

geriatrics /dʒeri'ætriks/ *noun* the study of the diseases and disorders of old people. Compare **paediatrics**

germ /dʒɜ:m/ *noun* **1.** a microorganism which causes a disease, e.g. a virus or bacterium (*informal*) ○ *Germs are not visible to the naked*

eye. 2. a part of an organism capable of developing into a new organism

German measles /dʒɜːmən 'miːz(ə)lz/ noun same as **rubella**

germ cell /dʒɜːm sel/ noun a cell which is capable of developing into a spermatozoon or ovum. Also called **gonocyte**

germinal /dʒɜːmɪn(ə)l/ adjective referring to an embryo

germinal epithelium /dʒɜːmɪn(ə)l epi'θiːliəm/ noun the outer layer of the ovary

germ layer /dʒɜːm leɪə/ noun one of two or three layers of cells in animal embryos which form the organs of the body

gerontologist /dʒerən'tɒlədʒɪst/ noun a specialist in gerontology

gerontology /dʒerən'tɒlədʒɪ/ noun the study of the process of ageing and the diseases of old people

Gerstmann's syndrome /'gɜːstmænз 'sɪndrəʊm/ noun a condition in which someone no longer recognises his or her body image, cannot tell the difference between left and right, cannot recognise his or her different fingers and is unable to write

Gesell's developmental chart /gə'zels dɪ'veləpmənt(ə)l tʃa:t/ noun a chart showing the development of motor reactions and growth patterns in children

gestate /dʒe'steɪt/ verb to carry a baby in the womb from conception to birth

gestation /dʒe'steɪʃ(ə)n/ noun 1. the process of development of a baby from conception to birth in the mother's womb 2. same as **gestation period**

'...evaluation of fetal age and weight has proved to be of value in the clinical management of pregnancy, particularly in high-risk gestations' [Southern Medical Journal]

gestational age /dʒe'steɪʃ(ə)n(ə)l 'eɪrdʒ/ noun the age of a fetus, calculated from the mother's last period to the date of birth

gestational diabetes /dʒe'steɪʃ(ə)n(ə)l 'daɪətɪ:bɪ:tɪz/ noun a form of diabetes mellitus which develops in a pregnant woman

gestation period /dʒe'steɪʃ(ə)n ,prɪəriəd/ noun the period, usually of 266 days, from conception to birth, during which the baby develops in the mother's womb. Also called **pregnancy**

gestodene /'dʒestədi:n/ noun an oral contraceptive

get around /,get ə'raund/ verb to move about ○ Since she had the accident she gets around using crutches.

get better /,get 'betə/ verb 1. to become healthy again after being ill ○ He was seriously ill, but seems to be getting better. 2. (of an illness) to stop or become less severe ○ Her cold has got better.

get dressed /,get 'drest/ verb to put your clothes on ○ This patient still needs help to get dressed.

get on with /,get 'ɒn wið/ verb to continue to do some work ○ I must get on with the blood tests.

get over /,get 'əʊvə/ verb to become better after an illness or a shock ○ He got over his cold. ○ She never got over her mother's death.

getting on /,getɪŋ 'ɒn/ adjective becoming elderly ○ Her parents are getting on.

get up /,get 'ʌp/ verb 1. to stand up ○ Try to get up from your chair slowly and walk across the room. 2. to get out of bed ○ What time did you get up this morning?

get well /,get 'wel/ verb to become healthy again after being ill ○ We hope your mother will get well soon.

GFR abbr glomerular filtration rate

GH abbr growth hormone

Ghon's focus /,gɒnз 'fəʊkəs/ noun a spot on the lung produced by the tuberculosis bacillus [Described 1912. After Anton Ghon (1866–1936), Professor of Pathological Anatomy at Prague, Czech Republic.]

GI abbr gastrointestinal

giant cell /,dʒaɪənt 'sel/ noun a very large cell, e.g. an osteoclast or megakaryocyte

giant-cell arteritis /,dʒaɪənt sel ,a:tɪs'ta:ritis/ noun a disease of old people, which often affects the arteries in the scalp

giant hives /,dʒaɪənt 'haɪvz/ noun a large flat white blister caused by an allergic reaction

Giardia /dʒaɪ'di:ədɪə/ noun a microscopic protozoan parasite which causes giardiasis

giardiasis /,dʒaɪ:dɪs'ærɪsɪs/ noun a disorder of the intestine caused by the parasite *Giardia lamblia*, usually with no symptoms, but in heavy infections the absorption of fat may be affected, causing diarrhoea. Also called **lambliasis**

gibbosity /gɪ'bɒsəti/ noun a sharp angle in the curvature of the spine caused by the weakening of a vertebra as a result of tuberculosis of the backbone

gibbus /'gɪbəs/ noun same as **gibbosity**

giddiness /'gɪdɪnəs/ noun a condition in which someone has difficulty in standing up and keeping their balance because of a feeling that everything is turning around ○ He began to experience attacks of giddiness.

giddy /'gɪdi/ adjective feeling that everything is turning round ○ She has had several giddy spells.

GIFT /gɪft/ noun a procedure in which a surgeon removes eggs from a woman's ovary, mixes them with sperm and places them in one of her Fallopian tubes to help her conceive a child. Full form **gamete intrafallopian transfer**

gigantism /dʒæntɪz(ə)m/ *noun* a condition in which someone grows very tall, caused by excessive production of growth hormone by the pituitary gland

Gilbert's syndrome /'gilbəts ,sɪndrəʊm/ *noun* an inherited disorder where the liver does not deal with bilirubin correctly

Gilles de la Tourette syndrome /,ʒi: də læ tu'ret ,sɪndrəʊm/ *noun* same as **Tourette's syndrome**

Gilliam's operation /'giliəmz ɔ:pə,reɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a surgical operation to correct reversion of the uterus [After David Tod Gilliam (1844–1923), physician, Columbus, Ohio, USA]

gingiv- /dʒɪndʒɪv/ *prefix* referring to the gums

gingiva /dʒɪn'dʒaɪvə/ *noun* same as **gum**
(NOTE: The plural is **gingivae**.)

gingival /'dʒɪndʒɪv(ə)l/ *adjective* relating to the gums

gingivectomy /,dʒɪndʒɪ'vektəmɪ/ *noun* the surgical removal of excess gum tissue

gingivitis /,dʒɪndʒɪ'taɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the gums as a result of bacterial infection

ginglymus /'dʒɪnglɪməs/ *noun* a joint which allows movement in two directions only, e.g. the knee or elbow. Also called **hinge joint**. Compare **ball and socket joint**

ginseng /'dʒɪnsɛŋ/ *noun* a plant root widely used as a tonic and a traditional Chinese herbal remedy

gippy tummy /,dʒɪpi 'tʌmi/ *noun* same as **diarrhoea** (*informal*)

girdle /'gɜ:d(ə)l/ *noun* a set of bones making a ring or arch

Girdlestone's operation /'gɜ:dəlstəʊnz ɔ:pə,reɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a surgical operation to relieve osteoarthritis of the hip [After Gathorne Robert Girdlestone (1881–1950), Nuffield Professor of Orthopaedics at Oxford, UK]

give up /'gɪv 'ʌp/ *verb* not to do something any more ○ *He was advised to give up smoking.*

glabella /glə'bɛlə/ *noun* a flat area of bone in the forehead between the eyebrows

gladiolus /,glædi'əʊləs/ *noun* the middle section of the sternum

gland /glænd/ *noun* an organ in the body containing cells that secrete substances such as hormones, sweat or saliva which act elsewhere

glanders /'glændəz/ *noun* a bacterial disease of horses, which can be caught by humans, with symptoms of high fever and inflammation of the lymph nodes

glandular /'glændjʊlə/ *adjective* referring to glands

glandular fever /,glændjʊlə 'fi:və/ *noun* same as **infectious mononucleosis**

glans /glænz/ *noun* a rounded part at the end of the penis or clitoris. See illustration at **UROGENITAL SYSTEM (MALE)** in Supplement

glare /gleə/ *noun* 1. a long stare that expresses a negative emotion such as anger 2. an uncomfortably or dazzlingly bright light 3. scattered bright light when examining something with a microscope ■ *verb* 1. to stare angrily 2. to shine uncomfortably brightly 3. to be very obvious or conspicuous

Glasgow coma scale /,glæ:səʊ ˈkəʊməskel/, **Glasgow scoring system** /,glæ:səʊ 'skɔ:riŋ,sɪstəm/ *noun* a seven-point scale for evaluating someone's level of consciousness

glass eye /glæ:s 'aɪ/ *noun* an artificial eye made of glass

glaucoma /gləʊ'kəʊmə/ *noun* a condition of the eyes, caused by unusually high pressure of fluid inside the eyeball, resulting in disturbances of vision and blindness

gleet /gli:t/ *noun* a thin discharge from the vagina, penis, a wound or an ulcer

glenohumeral /,glɪ:nəʊ'hu:mərəl/ *adjective* referring to both the glenoid cavity and the humerus

glenohumeral joint /,glɪ:nəʊ'hu:mərəl dʒoint/ *noun* the shoulder joint

glenoid /'glɪ:nɔɪd/ *adjective* shaped like a small shallow cup or socket

glenoid cavity /,glɪ:nɔɪd 'kævɪtɪ/, **glenoid fossa** /,glɪ:nɔɪd 'fɒsə/ *noun* a socket in the shoulder joint into which the head of the humerus fits

glia /'gli:ə/ *noun* connective tissue of the central nervous system, surrounding cell bodies, axons and dendrites. Also called **neuroglia**

glial cell /'gli:əl sel/ *noun* a cell in the glia

glial tissue /,gli:əl 'tɪʃu:/ *noun* same as **glia**

glibenclamide /'glɪ'benkləmaɪd/ *noun* a sulphonylurea drug used to treat Type II diabetes mellitus

glyciazide /'glɪkləzɪd/ *noun* an antibacterial drug used to treat Type II diabetes mellitus

gio- /'glɪərəʊ/ *prefix* referring to brain tissue

glioblastoma /,glɪərəʊblæ'stəʊmə/ *noun* a rapidly developing malignant tumour of the glial tissue in the brain or spinal cord. Also called **spongioblastoma**

glioma /glɪə'əʊmə/ *noun* any tumour of the glial tissue in the brain or spinal cord

gliomyoma /,glɪərəʊmə'əʊmə/ *noun* a tumour of both the nerve and muscle tissue

glipizide /'glɪpɪzɪd/ *noun* a drug used to reduce the glucose level in the blood

Glisson's capsule /,glɪs(ə)nz 'kæpsju:l/ *noun* a tissue sheath in the liver containing the blood vessels [After Francis Glisson (1597–1677), philosopher, physician and anatomist at Cambridge and London, UK]

globin /'gləʊbɪn/ *noun* a protein which combines with other substances to form compounds such as haemoglobin and myoglobin
globule /'glɒbju:l/ *noun* a round drop, especially of fat

globulin /'glɒbjʊlɪn/ *noun* a protein, present in blood, belonging to a group that includes antibodies

globulinuria /,glɒbjʊlɪ'nju:əriə/ *noun* the presence of globulins in the urine

globus /'gləʊbəs/ *noun* any ball-shaped part of the body

globus hystericus /,gləʊbəs hɪ'sterɪkəs/ *noun* a feeling of not being able to swallow, caused by worry or embarrassment

glomangioma /glo'mændʒi'əʊmə/ *noun* a tumour of the skin at the ends of the fingers and toes

glomerular /glə'merulə/ *adjective* referring to a glomerulus

glomerular capsule /glə'merulə'kæpsju:l/ *noun* same as **Bowman's capsule**

glomerular filtration rate /glə'merulər fil'treɪʃ(ə)n reɪt/ *noun* the rate at which the kidneys filter blood and remove waste matter

glomerular tuft /glə'merulər 'tuft/ *noun* a group of blood vessels in the kidney which filter the blood

glomeruli /glə'merulɪ/ plural of **glomerulus**

glomerulitis /glə'merul'ɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation causing lesions of glomeruli in the kidney

glomerulonephritis /glə'merulə'nəfɪtɪs/ *noun* same as **Bright's disease**

glomerulus /glə'meruləs/ *noun* a group of blood vessels which filter waste matter from the blood in a kidney (NOTE: The plural is **glomeruli**)

gloss- /glɒs/ *prefix* same as **glosso-** (*used before vowels*)

glossa /'glɒsə/ *noun* same as **tongue**

glossal /'glɒs(ə)l/ *adjective* relating to the tongue

glossectomy /glɒ'sektəmi/ *noun* the surgical removal of the tongue

Glossina /glɒ'sɪnə/ *noun* a genus of African flies which cause trypanosomiasis, e.g. the tsetse fly

glossitis /glɒ'sɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the surface of the tongue

glosso- /'glɒsəʊ/ *prefix* referring to the tongue

glossodynia /,glɒsəʊ'dɪniə/ *noun* pain in the tongue

glossopharyngeal /,glɒsəfə'rɛnɪŋ'dʒi:əl/ *adjective* relating to the tongue and pharynx

glossopharyngeal nerve /,glɒsəfə'rɛnɪŋ'dʒi:əl nɜ:v/ *noun* the ninth cranial nerve which controls the pharynx, the salivary glands and part of the tongue

glossoplegia /,glɒsəʊ'pli:dʒə/ *noun* paralysis of the tongue

glossotomy /glɒ'sɒtəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical incision into the tongue

glottis /'glɒtɪs/ *noun* an opening in the larynx between the vocal cords, which forms the entrance to the main airway from the pharynx

gluc- /glu:k/ *prefix* referring to glucose

glucagon /'glu:kægən/ *noun* a hormone secreted by the islets of Langerhans in the pancreas, which increases the level of blood sugar by stimulating the breakdown of glycogen

glucagonoma /,glu:kæg'nəʊmə/ *noun* a tumour of the cells of the pancreas that produces glucagon

glucocorticoid /,glu:kəʊ'kɔ:tɪkɔɪd/ *noun* any corticosteroid which breaks down carbohydrates and fats for use by the body, produced by the adrenal cortex

gluconeogenesis /,glu:kəʊ,nɪ:əsɪs/ *noun* the production of glucose in the liver from protein or fat reserves

glucose /'glu:kəʊz/ *noun* a simple sugar found in some fruit, but also broken down from white sugar or carbohydrate and absorbed into the body or secreted by the kidneys. Also called **dextrose**

COMMENT: Combustion of glucose with oxygen to form carbon dioxide and water is the body's main source of energy.

glucose tolerance test /'glu:kəʊz 'tolərəns test/ *noun* a test for diabetes mellitus, in which someone eats glucose and his or her urine and blood are tested at regular intervals. Abbr **GTT**

glucosuria /,glu:kəʊ'sjʊəriə/ *noun* same as **glycosuria**

glucuronic acid /,glu:kjʊrənɪk 'æsɪd/ *noun* an acid formed by glucose that acts on bilirubin

glue ear /glu: 'ɪə/ *noun* a condition in which fluid forms behind the eardrum and causes deafness. Also called **secretory otitis media**

glue-sniffing /'glu: ,snifɪŋ/ *noun* ♦ solvent abuse

glutamic acid /glu:,tæmɪk 'æsɪd/ *noun* an amino acid

glutamic oxaloacetic transaminase /glu:,tæmɪk oksələʊə,sɪ:tɪk træns'æmīnæz/ *noun* an enzyme used to test for viral hepatitis

glutamic pyruvic transaminase /glu:,tæmɪk pa,rūvɪk træns'æmīnæz/ *noun* an enzyme produced in the liver and released into the blood if the liver is damaged

glutaminase /glu:tæmīneɪz/ *noun* an enzyme in the kidneys that helps to break down glutamine

glutamine /'glu:təmī:n/ *noun* an amino acid

gluteal /'glu:tɪəl/ *adjective* referring to the buttocks

gluteal artery /'glu:tɪəl ,a:təri/ *noun* one of the two arteries supplying the buttocks, the **inferior gluteal artery** or the **superior gluteal artery**

gluteal muscle /'glu:tɪəl ,mʌs(ə)l/ *noun* a muscle in the buttock. ◊ **gluteus**

gluteal vein /'glu:tɪəl veɪn/ *noun* one of two veins draining the buttocks, the **inferior gluteal vein** and the **superior gluteal vein**

gluten /'glu:t(ə)n/ *noun* a protein found in some cereals, which makes the grains form a sticky paste when water is added

gluten-enteropathy same as **gluten-induced enteropathy**

gluten-free diet /'glu:t(ə)n fri: 'daɪət/ *noun* a diet containing only food containing no gluten

gluten-induced enteropathy /'glu:t(ə)n in,dju:st ,entə'rɒpəθi/ *noun* 1. an allergic disease mainly affecting children, in which the lining of the intestine is sensitive to gluten, preventing the small intestine from digesting fat 2. a condition in adults where the villi in the intestine become smaller and so reduce the surface which can absorb nutrients (NOTE: Symptoms include a swollen abdomen, pale diarrhoea, abdominal pains and anaemia.) ▶ also called **coeliac disease**

gluteus /'glu:tiəs/ *noun* one of three muscles in the buttocks, responsible for movements of the hip. The largest is the **gluteus maximus**, while the **gluteus medius** and **gluteus minimus** are smaller.

glyc- /glairk/ *prefix* same as **glyco-** (*used before vowels*)

glycaemia /glai'si:mia/ *noun* the level of glucose found in the blood. ◊ **hypoglycaemia**, **hyperglycaemia**

glycerin /'glɪsərɪn/, **glycerine**, **glycerol** /'glɪsərɒl/ *noun* a colourless viscous sweet-tasting liquid present in all fats (NOTE: Synthetic glycerin is used in various medicinal preparations and also as a lubricant in items such as toothpaste and cough medicines.)

glycine /'glaisi:n/ *noun* an amino acid

glyco- /glairkəʊ/ *prefix* referring to sugar

glycocholic acid /,glairkəʊkɒlik 'æsɪd/ *noun* one of the bile acids

glycogen /'glairkədʒən/ *noun* a type of starch, converted from glucose by the action of insulin, and stored in the liver as a source of energy

glycogenesis /,glairkə'u'dʒenəsɪs/ *noun* the process by which glucose is converted into glycogen in the liver

glycogenolysis /,glairkəudʒə'nɒləsɪs/ *noun* the process by which glycogen is broken down to form glucose

glycolysis /glai'kɒləsɪs/ *noun* the metabolic breakdown of glucose to release energy

glycoside /'glairkəʊsaɪd/ *noun* a chemical compound of a type which is formed from a simple sugar and another compound (NOTE: Many of the drugs produced from plants are glycosides.)

glycosuria /,glairkəʊ'sjʊəriə/ *noun* a high level of sugar in the urine, a symptom of diabetes mellitus

GMC *abbr* General Medical Council

gnathic /'næθɪk/ *adjective* referring to the jaw

gnathoplasty /'næθəʊ,plæsti/ *noun* surgery on the jaw

gnawing /'nɔ:ɪŋ/ *adjective* referring to a physical or emotional feeling that is persistent and uncomfortable ◊ *a gnawing pain* ◊ *gnawing anxiety*

goblet cell /'gɔ:błət sel/ *noun* a tube-shaped cell in the epithelium which secretes mucus

GOC *abbr* General Optical Council

go down /,gəʊn 'daʊn/ *verb* to become smaller ◊ *The swelling has started to go down.* ◊ *The blood sugar level went down.*

goitre /'gɔ:tə/ *noun* an excessive enlargement of the thyroid gland, seen as a swelling round the neck, caused by a lack of iodine (NOTE: The US spelling is **goiter**.)

goitrogen /'gɔ:t्रædʒən/ *noun* a substance which causes goitre

gold /gəʊld/ *noun* a soft yellow-coloured precious metal, used as a compound in various drugs, and sometimes as a filling for teeth (NOTE: The chemical symbol is **Au**.)

golden eye ointment /,gəuld(ə)n 'aɪ ,ɔ:ntmənt/ *noun* a yellow ointment, made of an oxide of mercury, used to treat inflammation of the eyelids

gold injection /'gəuld in,dʒekʃən/ *noun* an injection of a solution containing gold, used to relieve rheumatoid arthritis

golfer's elbow /,gɔlfəz 'elbəʊ/ *noun* inflammation of the tendons of the elbow

Golgi apparatus /'gɔldʒi æpə,rɛtəs/ *noun* a folded membranous structure inside the cell cytoplasm, which stores and transports enzymes and hormones (Described 1898. After Camillo Golgi (1843–1926), Professor of Histology and later Rector of the University of Pavia, Italy. In 1906 he shared the Nobel Prize with Santiago Ramón y Cajal for work on the nervous system.)

Golgi cell /'gɔldʒi ,sel/ *noun* a type of nerve cell in the central nervous system, either with long axons (Golgi Type 1) or without axons (Golgi Type 2)

gomphosis /'gɒm'fəʊsɪs/ *noun* a joint which cannot move, like that between a tooth and the jaw

gonad /'gəʊnæd/ *noun* a sex gland which produces gametes and also sex hormones, e.g. a testicle in males or an ovary in females

gonadotrophic hormone /'gəʊnədəʊθrɒfɪk 'hɔːməʊn/ noun one of two hormones, the follicle-stimulating hormone and the luteinising hormone, produced by the anterior pituitary gland which have an effect on the ovaries in females and on the testes in males

gonadotrophin /'gəʊnədəʊ'trəʊfɪn/ noun any of a group of hormones produced by the pituitary gland which stimulates the sex glands at puberty. ♦ **human chorionic gonadotrophin** (NOTE: The US spelling is **gonadotropin**.)

gonagra /'gɒnəgrə/ noun a form of gout which occurs in the knees

goni- /'gəʊni/ prefix same as **gonio-** (used before a vowel)

gonio- /'gəʊniəʊ/ prefix referring to an angle

gonion /'gəʊniɒn/ noun the outer point at which the lower jawbone angles upwards

goniopuncture /'gəʊniəpʌnktʃə/ noun a surgical operation for draining fluid from the eyes of someone who has glaucoma

gonioscope /'gəʊniəskəʊp/ noun a lens for measuring the angle of the front part of the eye

goniotomy /'gəʊni'ɒtəmɪ/ noun a surgical operation to treat glaucoma by cutting Schlemm's canal

gonococcal /'gɒnə'kɒkəl(ə)l/ adjective referring to gonococcus

gonococcus /'gɒnə'kɒkəs/ noun a type of bacterium, *Neisseria gonorrhoea*, which causes gonorrhoea (NOTE: The plural is **gonococci**.)

gonocyte /'gɒnəsɔɪt/ noun same as **germ cell**

gonorrhoea /'gɒnə'rɪ:ə/ noun a sexually transmitted disease which produces painful irritation of the mucous membrane and a watery discharge from the vagina or penis

gonorrhoeal /'gɒnə'rɪ:əl/ adjective referring to gonorrhoea

Goodpasture's syndrome /'gʊd'pa:stʃəz, 'sɪndrəʊm/ noun a rare lung disease in which someone coughs up blood, is anaemic, and may have kidney failure [Described 1919. After Ernest William Goodpasture (1886–1960), US pathologist.]

goose bumps /'gu:s bʌmps/, **goose flesh** /'gu:s fles/, **goose pimples** /'gu:s ,pimp(ə)lz/ noun a reaction of the skin when someone is cold or frightened, the skin being raised into many little bumps by the action of the arrector pili muscles. Also called **cutis anserina**

Gordh needle /'gɔ:d ,nið(ə)l/ noun a needle with a bag attached, so that several injections can be made one after the other

gorget /'go:dʒɪt/ noun a surgical instrument used to remove stones from the bladder

gouge /'gaʊdʒ/ noun a surgical instrument like a chisel, used to cut bone

goundou /'gʊndu:/ noun a condition caused by yaws, in which growths form on either side of the nose

gout /gaut/ noun a disease in which unusual quantities of uric acid are produced and form crystals in the cartilage round joints. Also called **podagra**

COMMENT: Gout was formerly associated with drinking strong wines such as port, but is now believed to arise in three ways: excess uric acid in the diet, overproduction of uric acid in the body and inadequate excretion of uric acid. It is likely that both overproduction and inadequate excretion are due to inherited biochemical developments. Excess intake of alcohol can provoke an attack by interfering with the excretion of uric acid.

gown /gaʊn/ noun a long robe worn over other clothes to protect them ○ *The surgeons were wearing green gowns.* ○ *The patient was dressed in a theatre gown, ready to go to the operating theatre.*

GP abbr general practitioner

GP co-op /'dʒi:p/ 'pi: kəʊ ,ɒp/ noun a group of GPs who work together to provide out-of-hours care without making any profit

gr symbol grain

Graafian follicle /'græfiən 'fɒlik(ə)l/ noun same as **ovarian follicle** [After Reijnier de Graaf (1641–73), Dutch physician]

gracilis /'greɪsɪlɪs/ noun a thin muscle running down the inside of the leg from the top of the leg down to the top of the tibia

graduated /'gra:dʒueɪtɪd/ adjective with marks showing various degrees or levels ○ *a graduated measuring jar*

Graefe's knife /'grefəz ,naɪf/ noun a sharp knife used in operations on cataracts [After Friedrich Wilhelm Ernst Albrecht von Graefe (1828–70), Professor of Ophthalmology in Berlin, Germany]

graft /'gra:fɪt/ noun 1. the act of transplanting an organ or tissue to replace one which is not functioning or which is diseased ○ *a skin graft* 2. an organ or tissue which is transplanted ○ *The corneal graft was successful.* ○ *The patient was given drugs to prevent the graft being rejected.* ■ verb to take a healthy organ or tissue and transplant it in place of diseased or malfunctioning organ or tissue ○ *The surgeons grafted a new section of bone at the side of the skull.* ♦ **autograft**, **homograft**

graft versus host disease /,gra:fɪt ,vɜ:səs/ 'həʊst ɒt,zi:z/ noun a condition which develops when cells from the grafted tissue react against the person's own tissue, causing skin disorders. Abbr **GVHD**

grain /'greɪn/ noun 1. a very small piece of something hard such as salt 2. a measure of weight equal to 0.0648 grams. Symbol **gr**

-gram /'græm/ suffix a record in the form of a picture

Gram-negative bacterium /'græm 'negatɪv bæk,tɪriəm/ noun a bacterium which takes up the red counterstain, after the alcohol has washed out the first violet dye

Gram-positive bacterium /græm 'pozɪtɪv bæk'trɔriəm/ *noun* a bacterium which retains violet dye and appears blue-black when viewed under the microscope

Gram's stain /græmz 'stein/ *noun* a method of staining bacteria so that they can be identified [Described 1884. After Hans Christian Joachim Gram (1853–1938), Professor of Medicine in Copenhagen, Denmark. He discovered the stain by accident as a student in Berlin, Germany.]

COMMENT: The tissue sample is first stained with a violet dye, treated with alcohol, and then counterstained with a red dye.

grand mal /,græn 'mæl/ *noun* a type of epilepsy, in which someone becomes unconscious and falls down, while the muscles become stiff and twitch violently

grand multiparity /,græn ,mælti'pærɪti/ *noun* the fact of having given birth to more than four children

granular /'grænju:lə/ *adjective* made up of granules

granular cast /,grænju:lə 'kɑ:st/ *noun* a cast composed of cells filled with protein and fatty granules

granular leucocyte /,grænju:lə 'lu:kəsaɪt/ *noun* same as **granulocyte**

granulation /,grænju'lɛɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the formation of rough red tissue on the surface of a wound or site of infection, the first stage in the healing process

granulation tissue /,grænju'lɛɪʃ(ə)n ,tɪ'su:/ *noun* soft tissue, consisting mainly of tiny blood vessels and fibres, which forms over a wound

granule /'grænju:l/ *noun* a very small piece of something hard

granulocyte /'grænju:ləsərt/ *noun* a type of leucocyte or white blood cell which contains granules, e.g. a basophil, eosinophil or neutrophil

granulocytopenia /,grænju:lə,saitəu 'pi:nɪə/ *noun* a usually fatal disease caused by the lowering of the number of granulocytes in the blood due to bone marrow malfunction

granuloma /,grænju:lə'ɒmə/ *noun* a mass of granulation tissue which forms at the site of bacterial infections (NOTE: The plural is **granulomas** or **granulomas**.)

granuloma inguinale /grænju:lə'ɒmə ,ɪngwi'neɪli/ *noun* a sexually transmitted disease affecting the anus and genitals in which the skin becomes covered with ulcers, usually occurring in the tropics

granulomatosis /,grænju:ləʊmə'təʊsɪs/ *noun* persistent inflammation leading to the formation of nodules

granulopoiesis /,grænju:ləʊpɔ:i'sɪs/ *noun* the normal production of granulocytes in the bone marrow

graph /gra:f/ *noun* a diagram which shows the relationship between quantities as a line

graph- /græf/ *prefix* writing

-graph /græ:f/ *suffix* a machine which records something as pictures

-grapher /græfə/ *suffix* a technician who operates a machine which records

-graphy /græfi/ *suffix* the technique of study through pictures

grattage /gra:tə:ʒ/ *noun* a procedure that involves scraping the surface of an ulcer which is healing slowly to make it heal more rapidly

gravel /'græv(ə)l/ *noun* small stones which pass from the kidney to the urinary system, causing pain in the ureter

Graves' disease /'greivz di:zi:z/ *noun* same as **exophthalmic goitre** [Described 1835. After Robert James Graves (1796–1853), Irish physician at the Meath Hospital, Dublin, Ireland, where he was responsible for introducing clinical ward work for medical students.]

gravid /'grævid/ *adjective* pregnant

gravides multiparae /,grævidi:z ,mælti 'pu:ri:/ *plural noun* women who have given birth to at least four live babies

gravity /'grævɪti/ *noun* the importance or potential danger of a disease or situation

Grawitz tumour /'grævɪts ,tju:ma/ *noun* a malignant tumour in kidney cells [Described 1883. After Paul Albert Grawitz (1850–1932), Professor of Pathology at Greifswald, Germany.]

gray /greɪ/ *noun* an SI unit of measurement of absorbed radiation equal to 100 rads. Symbol Gy. ☰ rad

graze /greɪz/ *noun* a scrape on the skin surface, making some blood flow ■ *verb* to scrape the skin surface accidentally

great cerebral vein /,greɪt 'serəbrəl veɪn/ *noun* a median vein draining the choroid plexuses of the lateral and third ventricles

greater curvature /,greɪtə 'kɔ:vətʃə/ *noun* a convex line of the stomach

greater vestibular glands /,greɪtə ve'stɪbəl jəldz/ *noun* same as **Bartholin's glands**

great toe /'greɪt təʊ/ *noun* same as **big toe**
green monkey disease /,grɪ:n 'mʌŋki dɪ 'zɪz/ *noun* same as **Marburg disease**

greenstick fracture /'grɪ:nstɪk ,fræktʃə/ *noun* a type of fracture occurring in children, where a long bone bends, but is not completely broken

grey commissure /greɪ 'kɒmɪsʃə/ *noun* part of the grey matter nearest to the central canal of the spinal cord, where axons cross over each other

grey matter /'greɪ ,mætə/ *noun* nerve tissue which is of a dark grey colour and forms part of the central nervous system

COMMENT: In the brain, grey matter encloses the white matter, but in the spinal cord, white matter encloses the grey matter.

grief counsellor /'grɪf ,kaʊns(ə)lə/ noun a person who helps someone to cope with the feelings they have when someone such as a close relative dies

Griffith's types /'grɪfɪθs ,taɪps/ noun various types of haemolytic streptococci, classified according to the antigens present in them

gripe water /'graɪp ,wɔ:tə/ noun a solution of glucose and alcohol, used to relieve abdominal pains in babies

gripping /'graɪpɪŋ/ adjective referring to stomach pains that are sudden, sharp and intense

grocer's itch /,grəʊsəz 'ɪtʃ/ noun a form of dermatitis on the hands caused by handling flour and sugar

groin /'grɔɪn/ noun a junction at each side of the body where the lower abdomen joins the top of the thighs ○ *He had a dull pain in his groin.* (NOTE: For other terms referring to the groin, see **inguinal**.)

grommet /'grɒmɪt/ noun a tube which can be passed from the external auditory meatus into the middle ear, usually to allow fluid to drain off, as in someone who has glue ear

gross anatomy /,grəʊs ə'nætəmɪ/ noun the study of the structure of the body that can be seen without the use of a microscope

ground substance /,graʊnd 'sʌbstəns/ noun same as **matrix**

group /gru:p/ noun several people, animals or things which are all close together ○ *A group of patients were waiting in the surgery.* ■ verb to bring things or people together in a group, or come together in a group ○ *The drugs are grouped under the heading 'antibiotics'.*

group practice /,gru:p 'præktsɪ/ noun a medical practice where several doctors or dentists share the same office building and support services

group therapy /,gru:p 'θerəpi/ noun a type of psychotherapy where a group of people with the same disorder meet together with a therapist to discuss their condition and try to help each other

growing pains /'grəʊɪŋ peɪnz/ plural noun pains associated with adolescence, which can be a form of rheumatic fever

growth /grəʊθ/ noun 1. the process of increasing in size ○ *the growth in the population since 1960* ○ *The disease stunts children's growth.* 2. a cyst or tumour ○ *The doctor found a cancerous growth on the left breast.* ○ *He had an operation to remove a small growth from his chin.*

growth factor /'grəʊθ ,fækٹə/ noun a chemical, especially a polypeptide, produced in the body which encourages particular cells to grow ○ *a nerve growth factor*

growth hormone /'grəʊθ ,hɔ:məʊn/ noun a hormone secreted by the pituitary gland during deep sleep, which stimulates growth of the

long bones and protein synthesis. Also called **somatotropin**

grumbling appendix /,grʌmblɪŋ ə'pendiks/ noun a vermiform appendix that is always slightly inflamed (*informal*) ◊ **chronic appendicitis**

GTT abbr glucose tolerance test

GU abbr 1. gastric ulcer 2. genitourinary **guanine** /'gwa:nɪ:n/ noun one of the four basic chemicals in DNA

guardian ad litem /,gu:dɪən əd 'lɪ:təm/ noun a person who acts on behalf of a minor who is a defendant in a court case

guardian Caldicott /,gu:dɪən 'kɔ:ldɪkɒt/ noun in the UK, a person appointed by a hospital or Health Trust to make sure that information about patients is kept confidential, following the Caldicott Report of 1997

gubernaculum /,gu:bə'nækjʊləm/ noun in a fetus, fibrous tissue connecting the testes (the gonads) to the groin

Guillain-Barré syndrome /,gi:jæn 'bærə ,sɪndrəʊm/ noun a nervous disorder in which, after a non-specific infection, demyelination of the spinal roots and peripheral nerves takes place, leading to generalised weakness and sometimes respiratory paralysis. Also called **Landry's paralysis** [Described 1916. After Georges Guillain (1876–1961), Professor of Neurology in Paris, France, Jean Alexandre Barré (1880–1967), Professor of Neurology in Strasbourg, France.]

guillotine /'giləti:n/ noun a surgical instrument for cutting out tonsils

guinea worm /'gini wɜ:m/ noun same as **Dracunculus**

Gulf War syndrome /gʌlf 'wɔ: ,sɪndrəʊm/ noun a collection of unexplained symptoms, including fatigue, skin disorders, and muscle pains, affecting some soldiers who fought in the Gulf War in 1991

gullet /'gʌlt/ noun same as **oesophagus**

gum /gʌm/ noun the soft tissue covering the part of the jaw which surrounds the teeth ○ *Her gums are red and inflamed.* ○ *A build-up of tartar can lead to gum disease.* Also called **gingiva** (NOTE: For other terms referring to the gums, see words beginning with **gingiv-**.)

gumboil /'gʌmbɔɪl/ noun an abscess on the gum near a tooth

gumma /'gʌmə/ noun an abscess of dead tissue and overgrown scar tissue, which develops in the later stages of syphilis

gustation /gʌ'steɪʃ(ə)n/ noun the act of tasting

gustatory /'gʌstət(ə)ri/ adjective referring to the sense of taste

gut /gʌt/ noun 1. the tubular organ for the digestion and absorption of food. Also called **intestine** 2. a type of thread, made from the intestines of sheep. It is used to sew up internal

incisions and dissolves slowly so does not need to be removed. ◊ **catgut**

Guthrie test /'gʌθri test/ *noun* a test used on babies to detect the presence of phenylketonuria [After R. Guthrie (b. 1916), US paediatrician.]

gutta /'gʌtə/ *noun* a drop of liquid, as used in treatment of the eyes (NOTE: The plural is **guttæ**.)

gutter splint /'gʌtə splint/ *noun* a shaped container in which a broken limb can rest without being completely surrounded

GVHD abbr graft versus host disease

gyn- /'gain/ *prefix* same as **gynae-** (*used before a vowel*)

gynae- /'gaini/ *prefix* referring to women (NOTE: In US English words beginning with **gynae-** are spelled **gyne-**.)

gynaecological /,gai'nɪkə'lɒdʒɪk(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to the treatment of diseases of women

gynaecologist /,gai'nɪk'ɒplədʒɪst/ *noun* a doctor who specialises in the treatment of diseases of women

gynaecology /gai'nɪk'ɒlədʒɪ/ *noun* the study of female sex organs and the treatment of diseases of women in general

gynaecomastia /,gai'nɪkə'mæstiə/ *noun* the unusual development of breasts in a male

gyne /'gaini/ same as **gynaecology**, **gynaecological** (*informal*) ◊ a **gyne appointment**

gypsum /'dʒipsəm/ *noun* calcium sulphate, used as plaster of Paris

gyrus /'dʒarərəs/ *noun* a raised part of the cerebral cortex between the sulci

H

H2-receptor antagonist /'eɪtɪʃ təʊrɪnt/ noun a drug that inhibits the production of stomach acid and so relieves indigestion and gastric ulcers

HA abbr health authority

habit /'hæbit/ noun 1. an action which is an automatic response to a stimulus 2. a regular way of doing something □ *He got into the habit of swimming every day before breakfast.* □ *She's got out of the habit of taking any exercise.* □ from force of habit because you do it regularly □ *I wake up at 6 o'clock from force of habit.*

habit-forming /'hæbɪt fɔ:mɪŋ/ adjective making someone addicted

habit-forming drug /'hæbɪt fɔ:mɪŋ drʌg/ noun a drug which is addictive

habitual /hə'bɪtʃuəl/ adjective done frequently or as a matter of habit

habitual abortion /hə'bɪtʃuəl ə'bɔ:ʃ(ə)n/ noun a condition in which a woman has abortions with successive pregnancies

habituation /hə'bɪtʃu'eɪʃ(ə)n/ noun the fact of being psychologically but not physically addicted to or dependent on a drug, alcohol or other substance

habitus /'hæbɪtəs/ noun the general physical appearance of a person, including build and posture

hacking cough /'hækɪŋ 'kɒf/ noun a continuous short dry cough

haem /hɛm/ noun a molecule containing iron which binds proteins to form haemoproteins such as haemoglobin and myoglobin

haem- /hɛm/ prefix same as **haemo-** (used before vowels) (NOTE: In US English, words beginning with the prefix **haem-** are spelled **hem-**.)

haemagglutination /,hi:mæglju:tɪ'næʃ(ə)n/ noun the clumping of red blood cells, often used to test for the presence of antibodies

haemangioma /,hi:mændʒi'əʊma/ noun a harmless tumour which forms in blood vessels and appears on the skin as a birthmark

haemarthrosis /,hi:mɑ:θrəʊsɪs/ noun pain and swelling caused by blood leaking into a joint

haematemesis /,hi:mæ'teməsɪs/ noun a condition in which someone vomits blood, usually because of internal bleeding

haematic /hi:'mætɪk/ adjective referring to blood

haematin /hi:mætɪn/ noun a substance which forms from haemoglobin when bleeding takes place

haematinic /hi:mæ'tɪnɪk/ noun a drug which increases haemoglobin in blood, used to treat anaemia, e.g. an iron compound

haemato- /hi:mætəʊ/ prefix referring to blood

haematocoele /'hi:mætəʊsɪ:l/, **haematocele** noun a swelling caused by blood leaking into a cavity, especially the scrotum

haematocolpos /,hi:mætəʊ'kɒlpəs/ noun a condition in which the vagina is filled with blood at menstruation because the hymen has no opening

haematocrit /'hi:mætəʊkrɪt/ noun 1. same as **packed cell volume** 2. an instrument for measuring haematocrit

haematocyst /'hi:mætəʊsɪst/ noun a cyst which contains blood

haematogenous /,hi:mæ'tɒdʒənəs/ adjective 1. producing blood 2. produced by blood

haematological /,hi:mætəʊ'lɒdʒɪk(ə)l/ adjective referring to haematology

haematologist /,hi:mætə'lɒdʒɪst/ noun a doctor who specialises in haematology

haematology /,hi:mætɒlɒdʒɪ/ noun the scientific study of blood, its formation and its diseases

haematoma /,hi:mætəʊmə/ noun a mass of blood under the skin caused by a blow or by the effects of an operation

haematometra /,hi:mætə'mɒmɪtrɪə/ noun 1. excessive bleeding in the uterus 2. a swollen uterus, caused by haematocolpos

haematomyelia /,hi:mætəʊ'mæliə/ noun a condition in which blood leaks into the spinal cord

haematopoiesis /,hi:mætəʊpɔɪ'sɪsɪs/ noun same as **haemopoiesis**

haematoxanthin /hi:mætəʊ'pɔ:fərɪn/ noun porphyrin produced from haemoglobin

haematosalpinx /,hi:mætəʊ'sælpɪŋks/ noun same as **haemosalpinx**

haematospermia /,hi:mætəʊ'spɜ:miə/ noun the presence of blood in the sperm

haematozoon /,hi:mætəʊ'zœʊzn/ noun a parasite living in the blood (NOTE: The plural is **haematozoa**)

haematuria /,hi:mætə'juəriə/ noun the unusual presence of blood in the urine, as a result of injury or disease of the kidney or bladder

haemin /hi:min/ noun a salt derived from haemoglobin, used in the treatment of porphyria

haemo- /hi:məʊ/ prefix referring to blood

haemochromatosis /,hi:mæʊkrəʊmə'teʊsɪs/ noun an inherited disease in which the body absorbs and stores too much iron, causing cirrhosis of the liver and giving the skin a dark colour. Also called **bronze diabetes**

haemoconcentration /,hi:mæo,kɒnsən'treɪʃ(ə)n/ noun an increase in the percentage of red blood cells because the volume of plasma is reduced. Compare **haemodilution**

haemocytoblast /,hi:mæu'saɪtəblæst/ noun an embryonic blood cell in the bone marrow from which red and white blood cells and platelets develop

haemocytometer /,hi:mæʊsaɪt'ɒmɪtə/ noun a glass jar in which a sample of blood is diluted and the blood cells counted

haemodialyse /,hi:mæo'daɪəlaɪz/ verb to remove waste matter from the blood using a dialysyer (kidney machine)

haemodialysed patient /,hi:mæo'daɪəlaɪzd'peɪsnt/ noun someone who has undergone haemodialysis

haemodialysis /,hi:mæʊdəlai'æləsɪs/ noun same as **kidney dialysis**

haemodilution /,hi:mæʊdəl'ju:ʃ(ə)n/ noun a decrease in the percentage of red blood cells because the volume of plasma has increased. Compare **haemoconcentration**

haemoglobin /hi:mæo'gləʊbɪn/ noun a red respiratory pigment formed of haem and globin in red blood cells which gives blood its red colour. It absorbs oxygen in the lungs and carries it in the blood to the tissues. Abbr **Hb.** ◊ **oxyhaemoglobin, carboxyhaemoglobin**

haemoglobinaemia /,hi:mæʊgləʊbi'nɪ:miə/ noun a condition in which haemoglobin is found in blood plasma

haemoglobinopathy /,hi:mæʊgləʊbɪ'nɒpəθi/ noun an inherited disease of a group which result from damaging variations in the production of haemoglobin, e.g. sickle-cell anaemia

haemoglobinuria /,hi:mæʊgləʊbɪ'njuəriə/ noun a condition in which haemoglobin is found in the urine

haemogram /'hi:mæʊgræm/ noun the printed result of a blood test

haemolysin /,hi:mæo'laisɪn/ noun a protein which destroys red blood cells

haemolysis /hi:mɒləsɪs/ noun the destruction of red blood cells

haemolytic /,hi:mæo'lɪtɪk/ adjective destroying red blood cells ■ noun a substance which destroys red blood cells, e.g. snake venom

haemolytic anaemia /,hi:mælɪtɪk ə'ni:miə/ noun a condition in which the destruction of red blood cells is about six times the usual rate, and the supply of new cells from the bone marrow cannot meet the demand

haemolytic disease of the newborn /,hi:mæolɪtɪk dɪ,zɪ:z əv ðə 'nju:bə:n/ noun a condition in which the red blood cells of the fetus are destroyed because antibodies in the mother's blood react against them

haemolytic jaundice /,hi:mæolɪtɪk 'dʒɔ:ndɪs/ noun jaundice caused by haemolysis of the red blood cells. Also called **prehepatitic jaundice**

haemolytic uraemic syndrome /,hi:mæolɪtɪk ju'rɪ:mɪk ,sɪndrəʊm/ noun a condition in which haemolytic anaemia damages the kidneys

haemopericardium /,hi:mæoperɪ'kɑ:dɪəm/ noun a condition in which blood is found in the pericardium

haemoperitoneum /,hi:mæoperɪtə'ni:əm/ noun a condition in which blood is found in the peritoneal cavity

haemophilia /,hi:mæ'filiə/ noun a disorder linked to a recessive gene on the X-chromosome in which the blood clots much more slowly than usual, resulting in extensive bleeding from even minor injuries. The gene is passed by women to their male children and the disorder is seen almost exclusively in boys.

haemophilia A /,hi:mæfɪlia 'eɪ/ noun the most common type of haemophilia, in which the inability to synthesise Factor VIII, a protein that promotes blood clotting, means that the blood clots very slowly

haemophilia B /,hi:mæfɪliə 'bi:/ noun a less common type of haemophilia, in which the inability to synthesise Factor IX, a protein that promotes blood clotting, means that the blood clots very slowly. Also called **Christmas disease**

haemophiliac /,hi:mæ'filiæk/ noun a person who has haemophilia

haemophilic /,hi:mæo'filɪk/ adjective referring to haemophilia

Haemophilus /hi:'mɒfiləs/ noun a genus of bacteria which needs specific factors in the blood to grow

Haemophilus influenzae /hi:mɒfiləs ,ɪn'flu'enza:/ noun a bacterium which lives in

healthy throats, but which can cause pneumonia if a person's resistance is lowered by a bout of flu

Haemophilus influenzae type b /hi:məfɪləs inflʊənɛz tایپ 'bi:/ noun a bacterium which causes meningitis. Abbr **Hib**

haemophthalmia /,hi:mɒfθælmɪə/ noun a condition in which blood is found in the vitreous humour of the eye

haemopneumothorax /,hi:məʊ,nju:məʊ 'θɔ:ræks/ noun same as **pneumohaemothorax**

haemopoiesis /,hi:məʊpɔɪ'sɪs/ noun the continual production of blood cells and blood platelets in the bone marrow. Also called **blood formation**

haemopoietic /,hi:məʊpɔɪ'etɪk/ adjective referring to the formation of blood in the bone marrow

haemoptysis /hi:'mɒptəsɪs/ noun a condition in which someone coughs blood from the lungs, caused by a serious illness such as anaemia, pneumonia, tuberculosis or cancer

haemorrhage /'hem(ə)rɪdʒ/ noun the loss of a large quantity of blood, especially from a burst blood vessel ○ *He died of a brain haemorrhage.* ■ verb to bleed heavily ○ *The injured man was haemorrhaging from the mouth.*

haemorrhagic /,hemə'rædʒɪk/ adjective referring to heavy bleeding

haemorrhagic disease of the newborn /,hemərædʒɪk dɪ,zɪ:z əv ðə 'nju:bɔ:n/ noun a disease of newly born babies, which makes them haemorrhage easily, caused by temporary lack of prothrombin

haemorrhagic disorder /hemə,rædʒɪk dɪs'ɔ:də/ noun a disorder in which haemorrhages occur, e.g. haemophilia

haemorrhagic fever /,hemərædʒɪk 'fi:və/ noun a viral infection that results in profuse internal bleeding from the capillaries, e.g. dengue or Ebola

haemorrhagic stroke /,hemərædʒɪk 'strəʊk/ noun a stroke caused by a burst blood vessel

haemorrhoidal /,hemə'rɔɪdəl/ adjective referring to haemorrhoids

haemorrhoidectomy /,hemərɔɪ'dektəmi/ noun the surgical removal of haemorrhoids

haemorrhoids /'hemərɔɪdz/ plural noun swollen veins in the anorectal passage. Also called **piles**

haemosalpinx /hi:məʊ'sælpɪŋks/ noun the accumulation of blood in the Fallopian tubes

haemosiderosis /,hi:məʊsɪdə'rəʊsɪs/ noun a disorder in which iron forms large deposits in the tissue, causing haemorrhaging and destruction of red blood cells

haemostasis /,hi:məʊ'steɪsɪs/ noun the process of stopping bleeding or slowing the movement of blood

haemostat /'hi:məʊstæt/ noun a device which stops bleeding, e.g. a clamp

haemostatic /,hi:məʊ'stætɪk/ adjective stopping bleeding ■ noun a drug which stops bleeding

haemothorax /,hi:məʊ'θəʊ:ræks/ noun a condition in which blood is found in the pleural cavity

Hageman factor /'ha:gəmən ,fæktə/ noun same as **Factor XII**

HAI abbr Hospital Acquired Infection

hair cell /'heə sel/ noun a receptor cell which converts fluid pressure changes into nerve impulses carried in the auditory nerve (NOTE: For other terms referring to hair, see words beginning with **pilo-, trich-, tricho-**)

hair follicle /'heə ,fɒlik(ə)l/ noun the cells and tissue that surround the root of a hair

hairline fracture /'heəlæm ,frækɪʃə/ noun a very slight crack in a bone caused by injury

hair papilla /heə pə'pɪlə/ noun a part of the skin containing capillaries which feed blood to the hair

hairy cell leukaemia /,heəri sel lu:kiəmɪə/ noun a form of leukaemia in which white blood cells have fine projections

half-life /'ha:f laɪf/ noun 1. a measurement of the period of time taken before the concentration of a drug has reached half of what it was when it was administered 2. the time taken for half the atoms in a radioactive isotope to decay

halitosis /,hæltɪ'təʊsɪs/ noun a condition in which a person has breath which smells unpleasant. Also called **bad breath**

COMMENT: Halitosis can have several causes: caries in the teeth, infection of the gums, and indigestion are the most usual. The breath can also have an unpleasant smell during menstruation, or in association with certain diseases such as diabetes mellitus and uremia.

hallucaces /'hælʊsi:z/ plural of **hallux**

hallucinate /'hæ'lʊ:sɪneɪt/ verb to have hallucinations ○ *The patient was hallucinating.*

hallucination /,hæ,lʊ:sɪ'nærɪʃən/ noun an experience of seeing an imaginary scene or hearing an imaginary sound as clearly as if it were really there

hallucinatory /'hæ'lʊ:sɪnət(ə)ri/ adjective referring to a drug which causes hallucinations

hallucinogen /,hælu:'sɪnədʒən/ noun a drug which causes hallucinations, e.g. cannabis or LSD

hallucinogenic /,hæ,lʊ:sɪnə'dʒenɪk/ adjective referring to a substance which produces hallucinations ○ *a hallucinogenic fungus*

hallux /'hælkəs/ noun the big toe (NOTE: The plural is **halluces**)

hallux valgus /,hælkəs 'vælgəs/ noun a condition of the foot, where the big toe turns towards the other toes and a bunion is formed

haloperidol /'hæləʊ'pərɪdɒl/ *noun* a tranquilliser used in the treatment of schizophrenia, mania and psychoses

halo splint /'heɪləʊ splɪnt/ *noun* a device used to keep the head and neck still so that they can recover from injury or an operation

halothane /'hæləʊθeɪn/ *noun* a general anaesthetic that is given by inhalation

hamamelis /,hæmə'lɪs/ ♦ **witch hazel**

hamartoma /,hæmə:tə'ʊmə/ *noun* a benign tumour containing tissue from any organ

hamate /'heɪmeɪt/, **hamate bone** /'heɪmeɪt bəʊn/ *noun* one of the eight small carpal bones in the wrist, shaped like a hook. Also called **unciform bone**. See illustration at **HAND** in Supplement

hammer /'hæmə/ *noun* same as **malleus**

hammer toe /'hæmə təʊ/ *noun* a toe which has the middle joint permanently bent downwards

hamstring /'hæmstrɪŋ/ *noun* one of a group of tendons behind the knee, which link the thigh muscles to the bones in the lower leg

hamstring muscles /'hæmstrɪŋ ,mæs(ə)lz/ *plural noun* a group of muscles at the back of the thigh, which flex the knee and extend the gluteus maximus

hand /hænd/ *noun* the part at the end of the arm, beyond the wrist, which is used for holding things □ *He injured his hand with a saw.* ■ *verb* to pass something to someone

COMMENT: The hand is formed of 27 bones: 14 phalanges in the fingers, 5 metacarpals in the main part of the hand, and 8 carpal in the wrist.

hand, foot and mouth disease /,hænd fət ən 'maʊθ dɪ,zɪ:z/ *noun* a mild viral infection in children, causing small blisters

handicap /'hændɪkæp/ *noun* a physical or mental condition which prevents someone from doing some everyday activities ■ *verb* to prevent someone from doing an everyday activity (NOTE: The word 'handicap' is now usually avoided.)

'...handicap – disadvantage for a given individual, resulting from an impairment or a disability, that limits or prevents the fulfilment of a role that is normal for that individual' [WHO]

handicapped /'hændɪkæpt/ *adjective* referring to a person who has a disability (NOTE: The word 'handicapped' is now usually avoided.)

Hand-Schüller Christian disease /,hænt ,sə'lə k'ri:ʃən dɪ,zɪ:z/ *noun* a disturbance of cholesterol metabolism in young children which causes disorders in membranous bone, mainly in the skull, exophthalmos, diabetes insipidus, and a yellow-brown colour of the skin [First described 1893 then 1915 by Schüller and 1920 by Christian. After Alfred Hand Jr. (1868–1949), US paediatrician; Artur Schüller (1874–1958), Austrian neurologist; Henry Asbury Christian (1876–1951), Professor of Medicine at Harvard, USA.]

hangnail /'hægnɛil/ *noun* a piece of torn skin at the side of a nail

hangover /'hæŋəʊvə/ *noun* a condition occurring after a person has drunk too much alcohol, with dehydration caused by inhibition of the antidiuretic hormone in the kidneys. The symptoms include headache, inability to stand noise and trembling of the hands.

Hansen's bacillus /,hænsənз bə'siləs/ *noun* the bacterium which causes leprosy, *Mycobacterium leprae* [Discovered 1873. After Gerhard Henrik Armauer Hansen (1841–1912), Norwegian physician.]

Hansen's disease /'hænsənз dɪ,zirz/ *noun* same as **leprosy**

haploid /'hæplɔɪd/ *adjective* referring to a cell such as a gamete where each chromosome occurs only once. In humans the haploid number of chromosomes is 23.

hapt- /hæpt/ *prefix* relating to the sense of touch

hapten /'hæpten/ *noun* a substance which causes an allergy, probably by changing a protein so that it becomes antigenic

hardening of the arteries /,hɑ:d(ə)nɪŋ əv ðə 'ɑ:tərɪz/ *noun* same as **atherosclerosis**

hard of hearing /,hɑ:d əv 'hɪərɪŋ/ *adjective* same as **hearing-impaired**

hard palate /,hɑ:d 'pælət/ *noun* the front part of the roof of the mouth between the upper teeth

harelip /'heəlɪp/ *noun* same as **cleft lip**

harm /hɑ:m/ *noun* injury or damage as a result of something that you do □ *Walking to work every day won't do you any harm.* □ **there's no harm in taking the tablets only for one week** there will be no side effects from taking the tablets for a week ■ *verb* to damage or hurt someone or something □ *Walking to work every day won't harm you.*

harmful /'ha:mf(ə)l/ *adjective* causing injury or damage □ *Bright light can be harmful to your eyes.* □ *Sudden violent exercise can be harmful.*

harmless /'ha:mləs/ *adjective* causing no injury or damage □ *These herbal remedies are quite harmless.*

Harrison's sulcus /,hærɪsənз 'sʌlk(ə)s/, **Harrison's groove** /,hærɪs(ə)nз 'gru:v/ *noun* a hollow on either side of the chest which develops in children who have difficulty in breathing, seen especially in cases of rickets

Harris's operation /'hærɪsɪz ɒpə,reɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the surgical removal of the prostate gland [After S.H. Harris (1880–1936), Australian surgeon]

Hartmann's solution /'ha:t'mənз sə ,lu:f(ə)n/ *noun* a chemical solution used in drips to replace body fluids lost in dehydration, particularly as a result of infantile gastroenteritis [Described 1932. After Alexis Frank

Hartmann (1898–1964), paediatrician, St Louis, Missouri, USA.]

Hartnup disease /'ha:tnpəd̩ d̩i,zi:z/ *noun* an inherited condition affecting amino acid metabolism and producing thick skin and impaired mental development [After the name of the family in which this hereditary disease was first recorded]

harvest /'ha:vɪst/ *verb* to take something for use elsewhere, e.g. a piece of skin for a graft or eggs for IVF

Hashimoto's disease /hæʃɪ'moʊtəz d̩i,zi:z/ *noun* a type of goitre in middle-aged women, where the woman is sensitive to secretions from her own thyroid gland, and, in extreme cases, the face swells and the skin turns yellow [Described 1912. After Hakuro Hashimoto (1881–1934), Japanese surgeon.]

hashish /'hæʃɪʃ/ *noun* ♦ **cannabis**

hastrum /'hɔ:stri:m/ *noun* a sac on the outside of the colon (NOTE: The plural is **hastra**.)

HAV *abbr* hepatitis A virus

Haversian canal /hə'vezɪ:f̩(ə)n kə,næl/ *noun* a fine canal which runs vertically through the Haversian systems in compact bone, containing blood vessels and lymph ducts [Described 1689. After Clopton Havers (1657–1702), English surgeon.]

Haversian system /hə'vezɪ:f̩(ə)n ,sistəm/ *noun* a unit of compact bone built around a Haversian canal, made of a series of bony layers which form a cylinder. Also called **osteon**

hayfever /'hei,fɪ:və/ *noun* inflammation in the nasal passage and eyes caused by an allergic reaction to plant pollen. ♦ **allergic rhinitis**

HAZ *abbr* health action zone

Hb *abbr* haemoglobin

HBV *abbr* hepatitis B virus

HCG *abbr* human chorionic gonadotrophin

HCHS *abbr* Health and Community Health Services

HDL *abbr* high density lipoprotein

head /hed/ *noun* 1. the round top part of the body, which contains the eyes, nose, mouth, brain, etc (NOTE: For other terms referring to the head, see words beginning with **cephal-**, **cephalo-**.) 2. a rounded top part of a bone which fits into a socket ○ *head of humerus* ○ *head of femur*

headache /'hedeɪk/ *noun* a pain in the head, caused by changes in pressure in the blood vessels feeding the brain which act on the nerves. Also called **cephalgia**

COMMENT: Headaches can be caused by a blow to the head, by lack of sleep or food, by eye strain, sinus infections and many other causes. Mild headaches can be treated with an analgesic and rest. Severe headaches which recur may be caused by serious disorders in the head or nervous system.

head cold /hed kəuld/ *noun* a minor illness, with inflammation of the nasal passages, excess mucus in the nose and sneezing

head louse /'hed laʊs/ *noun* a small insect of the *Pediculus* genus, which lives on the scalp and sucks blood. Also called **Pediculus capitis** (NOTE: The plural is **head lice**.)

Heaf test /'hi:f̩ test/ *noun* a test in which tuberculin is injected into the skin to find out whether a person is immune to tuberculosis. ♦ **Mantoux test**

heal /hi:l/ *verb* 1. (of wound) to return to a healthy state ○ *After six weeks, her wound had still not healed.* ○ *A minor cut will heal faster if it is left without a bandage.* 2. to make someone or something get better

healing /'hi:lin/ *noun* the process of getting better ○ *a substance which will accelerate the healing process*

healing by first intention /,hi:lin baɪ ,f̩ɪrst int'enʃən/ *noun* the healing of a clean wound where the tissue reforms quickly

healing by second intention /,hi:lin baɪ ,sekənd in'tenʃən/ *noun* the healing of an infected wound or ulcer, which takes place slowly and may leave a permanent scar

health /helθ/ *noun* the general condition of the mind or body ○ *He's in good health.* ○ *She had suffered from bad health for some years.* ○ *The council said that fumes from the factory were a danger to public health.* ○ *All cigarette packets carry a government health warning.*

health action zone /,helθ 'ækʃən zən/ *noun* in the UK, an area in which the government has funded specific actions to redress health inequalities. Abbr **HAZ**

Health and Safety at Work Act /,helθ ən 'sefti at 'wɜ:k akt/ *noun* in the UK, an Act of Parliament which rules how the health of workers should be protected by the companies they work for

Health and Safety Executive /,helθ ən 'sefti ɪg,zekjutɪv/ *noun* in the UK, a government organisation responsible for overseeing the health and safety of workers

health authority /helθ ə: 'θrəti/ *noun* ♦ **Strategic Health Authority**

healthcare /'helθkeə/, **health care** *noun* the general treatment of people with medical disorders, especially the use of measures to stop a disease from occurring

healthcare assistant /'helθkeəs̩ ,sɪstənt/ *noun* someone who assists health professionals in looking after a sick or dependent person

healthcare delivery /'helθkeə di,li,v(ə)rɪ/ *noun* the provision of care and treatment by the health service

healthcare professional /'helθkeə pr̩ ,f̩es̩(ə)n(əl)/ *noun* a qualified person who works in an occupation related to health care, e.g. a nurse

healthcare system /'helθkeə ,sistəm/ *noun* any organised set of health services

health centre /'helθ ,sentə/ *noun* a public building in which a group of doctors practise
health education /helθ ,edju'keɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the process of teaching people, both school children and adults, to do things to improve their health, e.g. to take more exercise

Health Education Authority /,helθ ,edju'keɪʃ(ə)nɔ:θəriti/ *noun* a government health promotion agency in England designed to help people make aware of how they can improve their health. Abbr **HEA**

health food /'helθ fu:d/ *noun* food that is regarded as good for health, especially containing ingredients such as cereals, dried fruit and nuts and without additives

health inequality /'helθ ,mɪlkwɒl̩tɪ/ *noun* the differences that exist in health across the social classes, with poorer people tending to experience poorer health

health information service /,helθ ɪnfə'meɪʃ(ə)n ,sɜ:vɪs/ *noun* a nation-wide information service delivered via a free telephone helpline. Abbr **HIS**

health insurance /'helθ ɪnʃʊərəns/ *noun* insurance which pays the cost of treatment for illness

Health Ombudsman /'helθ ,ombudzmən/ *noun* same as **Health Service Commissioner**

'...the HA told the Health Ombudsman that nursing staff and students now received full training in the use of the nursing process' [Nursing Times]

health promotion /'helθ prə'moʊʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the act of improving the health of a particular community or of the public generally, e.g. using health education, immunisation and screening

Health Protection Agency /,helθ prə'tekʃ(ə)n ,erɪdʒənsi/ *noun* a national organisation for England and Wales, established in 2003, dedicated to the protection of people's health, especially by reducing the impact of infectious diseases, chemicals, poisons and radiation. It brings together existing sources of expertise in public health, communicable diseases, emergency planning, infection control, poisons and radiation hazards.

health service /'helθ ,sɜ:vɪs/ *noun* an organisation which is in charge of providing health care to a particular community

Health Service Commissioner /,helθ ,sɜ:vɪs kə'mɪʃ(ə)nə/, **Health Service Ombudsman** /'helθ ,sɜ:vɪs ,ombudzmən/ *noun* in the UK, an official who investigates complaints from the public about the National Health Service

health service manager /,helθ ,sɜ:vɪs 'mænɪdʒə/ *noun* someone who is responsible for the provision of local health care, through the management of hospital, GP, and community health services

health service planning /,helθ ,sɜ:vɪs 'plænɪŋ/ *noun* the process of deciding what the health care needs of a community are, with the help of statistics, and what resources can be provided for that community

health visitor /'helθ ,vɪzɪtə/ *noun* a registered nurse with qualifications in midwifery or obstetrics and preventive medicine, who visits mothers and babies and sick people in their homes and advises on treatment

'...in the UK, the main screen is carried out by health visitors at 6–10 months' [Lancet]

healthy /'helθi/ *adjective* 1. in good physical condition 2. helping you to stay in good physical condition ○ *People are healthier than they were fifty years ago.* ○ *This town is the healthiest place in England.* ○ *If you eat a healthy diet and take plenty of exercise there is no reason why you should fall ill.* (NOTE: **healthier – healthiest**)

hear /hɪə/ *verb* to sense sounds with the ears ○ *I can't hear what you're saying.* (NOTE: **hearing – heard**)

hearing /'hɪərɪŋ/ *noun* the ability to hear, or the function performed by the ear of sensing sounds and sending sound impulses to the brain ○ *His hearing is failing.* (NOTE: For other terms referring to hearing, see words beginning with **audi-**, **audio-**)

hearing aid /'hɪərɪŋ eɪd/ *noun* a small electronic device fitted into or near the ear, to improve someone's hearing by making the sounds louder

hearing-impaired /,hɪərɪŋ ɪm'peəd/ *adjective* having a degree of hearing loss

hearing loss /'hɪərɪŋ lɒs/ *noun* partial or complete loss of the ability to hear

heart /hɑ:t/ *noun* the main organ in the body, which maintains the circulation of the blood around the body by its pumping action ○ *The doctor listened to his heart.* ○ *She has heart trouble.* (NOTE: For other terms referring to the heart, see also words beginning with **cardi-**, **cardio-**)

COMMENT: The heart is situated slightly to the left of the central part of the chest, between the lungs. It is divided into two parts by a vertical septum; each half is itself divided into an upper chamber (the atrium) and a lower chamber (the ventricle). The veins bring blood from the body into the right atrium; from there it passes into the right ventricle and is pumped into the pulmonary artery which takes it to the lungs. Oxygenated blood returns from the lungs to the left atrium, passes to the left ventricle and from there is pumped into the aorta for circulation round the arteries. The heart expands and contracts by the force of the heart muscle (the myocardium) under impulses from the sinoatrial node, and an average heart beats about 70 times a minute. The contracting beat as it pumps blood out (the systole) is followed by a weaker diastole, where the muscles relax to allow blood to flow back into the heart. In a heart attack, part of the myocardium is deprived of blood because of a clot in

a coronary artery. This has an effect on the rhythm of the heartbeat and can be fatal. In heart block, impulses from the sinoatrial node fail to reach the ventricles properly.

heart attack /'ha:t ə,tæk/ *noun* a condition in which the heart has a reduced blood supply because one of the arteries becomes blocked by a blood clot, causing myocardial ischaemia and myocardial infarction (*informal*)

heartbeat /'ha:tbi:t/ *noun* the regular noise made by the heart as it pumps blood

heart block /'ha:t blɒk/ *noun* the slowing of the action of the heart because the impulses from the sinoatrial node to the ventricles are delayed or interrupted. There are either longer impulses (first degree block) or missing impulses (second degree block) or no impulses at all (complete heart block), in which case the ventricles continue to beat slowly and independently of the sinoatrial node.

heartburn /'ha:t bɜ:n/ *noun* indigestion which causes a burning feeling in the stomach and oesophagus, and a flow of acid saliva into the mouth (*informal*)

heart bypass /,ha:t 'baɪpɔ:s/, **heart bypass operation** /,ha:t 'baɪpɔ:s ɒpə,reɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* same as **coronary artery bypass graft**

heart disease /'ha:t dɪ,zi:z/ *noun* any disease of the heart in general

heart failure /'ha:t ,feɪljə/ *noun* the failure of the heart to maintain the output of blood to meet the demands of the body. It may affect the left or right sides of the heart, or both sides.
♦ **congestive heart failure**

heart-lung machine /ha:t 'laŋ mə,fi:n/ *noun* a machine used to pump blood round the body and maintain the supply of oxygen to the blood during heart surgery

heart-lung transplant /ha:t 'laŋ ,træns plɑ:nt/ *noun* an operation to transplant a new heart and lungs into someone

heart massage /'ha:t ,mæsæ:g/ *noun* a treatment which involves pressing on the chest to make a heart which has stopped beating start working again

heart murmur /'ha:t ,mɜ:mə/ *noun* an unusual sound made by turbulent blood flow, sometimes as a result of valve disease

heart rate /'ha:t reɪt/ *noun* the number of times the heart beats per minute

heart sounds /'ha:t saʊndz/ *plural noun* two different sounds made by the heart as it beats.

♦ **lubb-dupp**

heart stoppage /'ha:t ,stɒpidʒ/ *noun* a situation where the heart has stopped beating

heart surgeon /'ha:t ,sɜ:dʒən/ *noun* a surgeon who specialises in operations on the heart

heart surgery /'ha:t ,sɜ:dʒəri/ *noun* a surgical operation to remedy a condition of the heart

heart tamponade /ha:t tæmpə'neɪd/ *noun* same as **cardiac tamponade**

heart transplant /'ha:t ,trænsplɑ:nt/ *noun* a surgical operation to transplant a heart into someone

heat cramp /'ha:t kræmp/ *noun* cramp produced by loss of salt from the body in very hot conditions

heat exhaustion /'ha:t ɪg,zɔ:stʃ(ə)n/ *noun* collapse caused by physical exertion in hot conditions, involving loss of salt and body fluids

heat rash /'ha:t ræʃ/ *noun* same as **miliaria**

heat spots /'ha:t spɒts/ *plural noun* little red spots which develop on the face in very hot weather

heatstroke /'ha:tstrəʊk/ *noun* a condition in which someone becomes too hot and his or her body temperature rises abnormally, leading to headaches, stomach cramps and sometimes loss of consciousness

heat therapy /'ha:t ,θerəpi/, **heat treatment** /'ha:t ,tri:tment/ *noun* same as **thermotherapy**

heavy period /,hevi 'pri:ri:d/ *noun* a monthly period during which a woman loses an unusually large amount of blood. It is often painful and sometimes indicates possible health problems, such as fibroids or hypothyroidism.

hebephrenia /,he:bɪ'bri:nɪə/, **hebephrenic schizophrenia** /,he:bɪ'brefnɪk skɪtsəʊ'fri:nɪə/ *noun* a condition in which someone, usually an adolescent, has hallucinations, delusions and deterioration of personality, talks rapidly and generally acts in a strange manner

Heberden's node /,he:bədənз 'nəud/ *noun* a small bony lump which develops on the end joints of fingers in osteoarthritis [Described 1802. After William Heberden (1767–1845), British physician, specialist in rheumatic diseases.]

hebetude /'hebitju:d/ *noun* dullness of the senses during acute fever, which makes the person uninterested in his or her surroundings and unable to respond to stimuli

hectic /'hektrɪk/ *adjective* recurring regularly
hectic fever /,hektɪk 'fi:və/ *noun* an attack of fever which occurs each day in someone who has tuberculosis

heel /hi:l/ *noun* the back part of the foot

heel bone /'hi:l bəʊn/ *noun* the bone forming the heel, beneath the talus. Also called **calcaneus**

Hegar's sign /'hergəz ,sain/ *noun* a way of detecting pregnancy, by inserting the fingers into the uterus and pressing with the other hand on the pelvic cavity to feel if the neck of the uterus has become soft [After Alfred Hegar (1830–1914), Professor of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at Freiburg, Germany]

Heimlich manoeuvre /'haɪmlɪk mə,nu:və/ *noun* an emergency treatment for choking, in which a strong upward push beneath the

breastbone of a patient clasped from behind forces the blockage out of the windpipe

helco- /helkəʊ/ *prefix* relating to an ulcer

helcoplasty /'helkəoplæsti/ *noun* a skin graft to cover an ulcer to aid healing

Helicobacter pylori /helɪkə'bækٹərɪ'paɪləri/ *noun* a bacterium found in gastric secretions, strongly associated with duodenal ulcers and gastric carcinoma

helicopter-based emergency medical services /helikoptər'beɪsɪt̬ ɪ'medɪkl'sɜːvɪsɪz/ *plural noun* full form of **HEMS**

helio- /hi:lɪəʊ/ *prefix* relating to the sun

heliotherapy /hi:lɪəʊ'θerəpɪ/ *noun* treatment by sunlight or sunbathing

helium /'hi:lɪəm/ *noun* a very light gas used in combination with oxygen, especially to relieve asthma or sickness caused by decompression (NOTE: The chemical symbol is **He**)

helix /'hi:lɪks/ *noun* the curved outer edge of the ear

Heller's operation /'heləz əpə'reɪʃn/ *noun* same as **cardiomotomy** [After E. Heller (1877–1964), German surgeon.]

Heller's test /'heləz test/ *noun* a test for protein in the urine [After Johann Florenz Heller (1813–71), Austrian physician]

Hellin's law /helɪnz 'lɔ:/ *noun* a finding which states that twins should occur naturally once in 90 live births, triplets once in 8,100 live births, quadruplets once in 729, 000 live births, and quintuplets once in 65, 610, 000 live births (NOTE: Since the 1960s the numbers have changed due to fertility treatment. For example, twins now occur once in only 38 births.)

HELLP syndrome /'help ,sɪndrəʊm/ *noun* a serious pre-eclamptic disorder which makes it necessary to terminate a pregnancy. Full form **haemolysis-elevated liver enzymes-low platelet count syndrome**

helminth /'helmɪnθ/ *noun* a parasitic worm, e.g. a tapeworm or fluke

helminthiasis /,helmɪnθ'əraɪsɪs/ *noun* infestation with parasitic worms

heloma /hi'ləʊmə/ *noun* same as **corn**

helper /'helpə/ *noun* a person who helps someone to do something, especially without payment

helper T-cell /'helpə 'ti: sel/ *noun* a type of white blood cell that stimulates the production of cells that destroy antigens

hemeralopia /hemə'rələʊpiə/ *noun* a usually congenital condition in which someone is able to see better in bad light than in ordinary daylight. Also called **day blindness**

hemi- /hemi/ *prefix* half

hemianopia /,hemiə'nəʊpiə/ *noun* a state of partial blindness in which someone has only half the usual field of vision in each eye

hemiarthroplasty /,hemi'a:θrəoplæsti/ *noun* an operation to repair a joint which replaces one of its surfaces with an artificial substance, often metal

hemiatrophy /,hemi'ætrəfɪ/ *noun* a condition in which half of the body or half of an organ or part is atrophied

hemiballismus /,hemibə'lizməs/ *noun* a sudden movement of the limbs on one side of the body, caused by a disease of the basal ganglia

hemicolecotomy /,hemikə'lektəmɪ/ *noun* the surgical removal of part of the colon

hemicrania /,hemi'kreiniə/ *noun* a headache in one side of the head, as in migraine

hemimelia /,hemi'mi:liə/ *noun* a congenital condition in which someone has absent or extremely short arms or legs

hemiparesis /,hemipə'ri:sɪs/ *noun* slight paralysis of the muscles of one side of the body

hemiplegia /,hemi'pli:dʒə/ *noun* severe paralysis affecting one side of the body due to damage of the central nervous system. Compare **diplegia**

hemiplegic /,hemi'pli:dʒɪk/ *adjective* referring to paralysis of one side of the body

hemisphere /'hemisfɪə/ *noun* half of a sphere

hemo- /hi:məʊ/ *prefix* US spelling of **haemo-**

HEMS /hemz/ *plural noun* a system of delivering a paramedic crew to the scene of an accident or medical emergency by helicopter and then transporting patients to the nearest major hospital or specialist unit. Full form **helicopter-based emergency medical services**

Henderson's model /'hendəs(ə)nz ,mɒd(ə)l/ *noun* a model of nurse-patient relationships based on 14 basic principles of nursing. The main idea is that ‘the nurse does for others what they would do for themselves if they had the strength, the will, and the knowledge...but that the nurse makes the patient independent of him or her as soon as possible’.

Henle's loop /,henlɪ:z 'lu:p/ *noun* same as **loop of Henle** [Described 1862. After Friedrich Gustav Jakob Henle (1809–85), Professor of Anatomy at Göttingen, Germany.]

Henoch-Schönlein purpura /,henək ,ʃənlain 'pɜːpjʊrə/, **Henoch's purpura** /,henəks 'pɜːpjʊrə/ *noun* a condition in which blood vessels become inflamed and bleed into the skin, causing a rash called purpura and also pain in the stomach and the joints, vomiting and diarrhoea. It often occurs after an upper respiratory infection, mostly in children aged two to 11. [Described 1832 by Schönlein and 1865 by Henoch. Eduard Heinrich Henoch (1820–1910), Professor of Paediatrics at Berlin, Germany; Johannes Lukas Schönlein (1793–1864), physician and pathologist at Würzburg, Zürich and Berlin.]

hep /hep/ *noun* same as **hepatitis** (*informal*)

heparin /'hepərɪn/ *noun* an anticoagulant substance found in the liver and lungs, and also produced artificially for use in the treatment of thrombosis

hepat- /'hi:pət/ *prefix* same as **hepato-** (*used before vowels*)

hepatalgia /,hepə'tældʒə/ *noun* pain in the liver

hepatectomy /,hepə'tektəmɪ/ *noun* the surgical removal of part of the liver

hepatic /hi'pætɪk/ *adjective* referring to the liver

hepatic artery /hi,pætɪk 'a:təri/ *noun* an artery which takes the blood to the liver

hepatic cell /hi,pætɪk 'sel/ *noun* an epithelial cell of the liver acini

hepatic duct /hi,pætɪk 'dʌkt/ *noun* a duct which links the liver to the bile duct leading to the duodenum

hepatic flexure /hi,pætɪk 'flekʃə/ *noun* a bend in the colon, where the ascending and transverse colons join

hepaticostomy /hi,pætɪk'kɒstəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to make an opening in the hepatic duct taking bile from the liver

hepatic portal system /hi,pætɪk 'pɔ:t(ə)l'sɪstəm/ *noun* a group of veins linking to form the portal vein, which brings blood from the pancreas, spleen, gall bladder and the abdominal part of the alimentary canal to the liver

hepatic vein /hi,pætɪk 'veɪn/ *noun* a vein which takes blood from the liver to the inferior vena cava

hepatitis /'hepətɪs/ ♦ **porta hepatitis**

hepatitis /,hepə'taitɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the liver through disease or drugs

COMMENT: Infectious hepatitis and serum hepatitis are caused by different viruses called A and B, and having had one does not give immunity against an attack of the other. Hepatitis A is less serious than the B form, which can cause severe liver failure and death. Other hepatitis viruses have also been identified.

hepatitis A /,hepətaitɪs 'eɪ/ *noun* a relatively mild form of viral hepatitis that is transmitted through contaminated food and water

hepatitis A virus /,hepətaitɪs 'eɪ ,vairəs/ *noun* a virus which causes hepatitis A. Abbr **HAV**

hepatitis B /,hepətaitɪs 'bi:/ *noun* a severe form of viral hepatitis that is transmitted by contact with infected blood or other body fluids

hepatitis B virus /,hepətaitɪs 'bi: ,vairəs/ *noun* a virus which causes hepatitis B. Abbr **HBV**

hepatitis C *noun* a form of viral hepatitis that is transmitted by contact with infected blood or other body fluids but is often without symptoms (NOTE: It was formerly called non-A, non-B hepatitis.)

hepatitis C virus *noun* a virus which causes hepatitis C. Abbr **HCV**

hepatitis delta /,hepə,taitɪs 'deltə/ *noun* same as **delta hepatitis**

hepato- /'hepətəʊ/ *prefix* referring to the liver

hepatoblastoma /,hepətəbləstə'məʊmə/ *noun* a malignant tumour in the liver, made up of epithelial-type cells often with areas of immature cartilage and embryonic bone

hepatocoele /'hepətəʊsɪl/ *noun* a hernia of the liver through the diaphragm or the abdominal wall

hepatocellular /,hepətəʊ'seljʊlə/ *adjective* referring to liver cells

hepatocellular jaundice /,hepətəʊ ,seljʊlə 'dʒaʊndɪs/ *noun* jaundice caused by injury to or disease of the liver cells

hepatocirrhosis /,hepətəʊsɪ'rəʊsɪs/ *noun* same as **cirrhosis**

hepatocolic ligament /,hepətəʊkɒplɪk 'lɪgəmənt/ *noun* a ligament which links the gall bladder and the right bend of the colon

hepatocyte /'hepətəʊsait, hi'pætəsait/ *noun* a liver cell which synthesises and stores substances, and produces bile

hepatogenous /,hepə'tɒdʒənəs/ *noun* referring to or originating in the liver ○ *hepatogenous jaundice*

hepatolenticular degeneration /,hepətəʊlen,tɪkju:lə dɪ,dʒənə'reɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* same as **Wilson's disease**

hepatoma /,hepətə'ʊmə/ *noun* a malignant tumour of the liver formed of mature cells, especially found in people with cirrhosis

hepatomegaly /,hepətəʊ'megəli/ *noun* a condition in which the liver becomes very large

hepatosplenomegaly /,hepətəʊ,spli:nəʊ 'megali/ *noun* enlargement of both the liver and the spleen, as occurs in leukaemia or lymphoma

hepatotoxic /,hepətəʊ'tɒksɪk/ *adjective* destroying the liver cells

herald patch /'herald ,pætʃ/ *noun* a small spot of a rash such as pityriasis rosea which appears some time before the main rash

herb /hɜ:b/ *noun* a plant which can be used in preparing medicines

herbal /hɜ:b(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to plants which are used as medicines

herbalism /hɜ:bəlɪz(ə)m/ *noun* ♦ **herbal medicine**

herbalist /hɜ:bəlist/ *noun* a person who treats illnesses or disorders with substances extracted from plants

herbal medicine /,hɜ:b(ə)l 'med(ə)sɪn/ *noun* a system of medical treatment involving the use of substances extracted from plants

herbal remedy /,hɜ:b(ə)l 'remədi/ *noun* a medicine made from plants, e.g. an infusion made from dried leaves or flowers in hot water

herd immunity /'hɜ:d ɪ,mju:nɪti/ *noun* the fact of a group of people being resistant to a specific disease, because many individuals in the group are immune to or immunised against the microorganism which causes it

hereditary /hə'redɪt(ə)rɪ/ *adjective* passed as from parents to children through the genes

hereditary spherocytosis /hə'redit(ə)rɪ ,sferəʊsəsɪ'teəsɪs/ *noun* same as **acholuric jaundice**

heredity /hə'redɪtɪ/ *noun* the process by which genetically controlled characteristics pass from parents to children

Hering-Breuer reflexes /'hərɪŋ 'brɔɪə ,rɪfleksɪz/ *plural noun* the reflexes which maintain the usual rhythmic inflation and deflation of the lungs

hermaphrodite /hɜ:t'mæfrədait/ *noun* a person with both male and female characteristics

hermaphroditism /hɜ:t'mæfrədaitɪz(ə)m/ *noun* a condition in which a person has both male and female characteristics

hernia /'hɜ:nɪə/ *noun* a condition in which an organ bulges through a hole or weakness in the wall which surrounds it. Also called **rupture** □ **reduction of a hernia** putting a hernia back into the correct position

hernial /'hɜ:nɪəl/ *adjective* referring to a hernia

hernial sac /,hɜ:nɪəl 'sæk/ *noun* a sac formed where a membrane has pushed through a cavity in the body

herniated /hɜ:nieɪtɪd/ *adjective* referring to an organ which has developed a hernia

herniated disc /,hɜ:nieɪtɪd 'dɪsk/ *noun* □ **displaced intervertebral disc**

herniation /,hɜ:nɪ'eɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the development of a hernia

hernio- /hɜ:nɪəʊ/ *prefix* relating to a hernia

hernioplasty /'hɜ:nɪəʊ,plæsti/ *noun* a surgical operation to reduce a hernia

herniorrhaphy /,hɜ:nɪ'ɔ:rəfi/ *noun* a surgical operation to remove a hernia and repair the organ through which it protruded

herniotomy /,hɜ:nɪ'tɒmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to remove a hernial sac

heroin /'herəʊɪn/ *noun* a narcotic drug in the form of a white powder derived from morphine

herpangina /,hɜ:pæŋ'dʒaɪnə/ *noun* an infectious disease of children, where the tonsils and back of the throat become inflamed and ulcerated, caused by a Coxsackie virus

herpes /'hɜ:pi:z/ *noun* inflammation of the skin or mucous membrane, caused by a virus, where small blisters are formed

herpes simplex /,hɜ:pi:z 'simpleks/ *noun*

1. (*Type I*) a virus that produces a painful blister, called a cold sore, usually on the lips 2. (*Type II*) a sexually transmitted disease which

forms blisters in the genital region. Also called **genital herpes**

herpesvirus /'hɜ:pi:z,vairəs/ *noun* one of a group of viruses which cause herpes and chickenpox (herpesvirus Type I), and genital herpes (herpesvirus Type II)

COMMENT: Because the same virus causes herpes and chickenpox, anyone who has had chickenpox as a child carries the dormant herpesvirus in his or her bloodstream and can develop shingles in later life. It is not known what triggers the development of shingles, though it is known that an adult suffering from shingles can infect a child with chickenpox.

herpes zoster /,hɜ:pi:z 'zɔstə/ *noun* inflammation of a sensory nerve, characterised by pain along the nerve and causing a line of blisters to form on the skin, usually found mainly on the abdomen or back, or on the face. Also called **shingles, zona**

herpetic /hɜ:'petɪk/ *adjective* referring to herpes

herpetiformis /hɜ:,petɪ'fɔ:mɪs/ □ **dermatitis herpetiformis**

hetero- /hetərəʊ/ *prefix* different

heterochromia /,hetərəʊ'krəʊmɪə/ *noun* a condition in which the irises of the eyes are different colours

heterogametic /,hetərəʊgə'metɪk/ *adjective* producing gametes with different sex chromosomes, as in the human male

heterogeneous /,hetərəʊ'dʒɪ:nɪəs/ *adjective* having different characteristics or qualities (NOTE: Do not confuse with **heterogenous**.)

heterogenous /,hetə'rɒndʒɪnəs/ *adjective* coming from a different source (NOTE: Do not confuse with **heterogeneous**.)

heterograft /'hetərəʊgrɑ:fɪ/ *noun* tissue taken from one species and grafted onto an individual of another species. Compare **homograft**

heterologous /hetə'rɒləgʊs/ *adjective* of a different type

heterophoria /,hetərəʊ'fɔ:riə/ *noun* a condition in which if an eye is covered it tends to squint

heteroplasty /'hetərəʊplæsti/ *noun* same as **heterograft**

heteropsia /,hetə'rɒpsɪə/ *noun* a condition in which the two eyes see differently

heterosexual /,hetərəʊ'sekshuəl/ *adjective* attracted to people of the opposite sex or relating to relations between males and females ■ *noun* a person who is sexually attracted to people of the opposite sex. Compare **bisexual, homosexual**

heterosexuality /,hetərəʊsekshu'ælɪti/ *noun* sexual attraction towards persons of the opposite sex

heterotopia /,hetərəʊ'təʊpiə/ *noun* 1. a state where an organ is placed in a different position from usual or is malformed or deformed

2. the development of tissue which is not natural to the part in which it is produced

heterotropia /hetərəʊ't्रॉpiə/ *noun* same as strabismus

heterozygous /,hetərəʊ'zaɪgəs/ *adjective* having two or more different versions of a specific gene. Compare **homozygous**

hex- /heks/ *prefix* same as **hexa-** (NOTE: used before vowels)

hexa- /hekṣə/ *prefix* six

HFEA *abbr* Human Fertilization and Embryology Authority

hGH *abbr* human growth hormone

HGPRT *abbr* hypoxanthine guanine phosphoribosyl transferase. ↗ **HPRT**

HI *abbr* hearing-impaired

hiatus /haɪ'etəs/ *noun* an opening or space

hiatus hernia /haɪ,etəs 'hɜːniə/, **hiatal hernia** /haɪ,eɪt(ə)l 'hɜːniə/ *noun* a hernia where the stomach bulges through the opening in the diaphragm muscle through which the oesophagus passes

Hib /hib/ *abbr* *Haemophilus influenzae* type B

Hib vaccine /'hbɪv ,vækseɪn/ *noun* a vaccine used to inoculate against the bacterium *Haemophilus influenzae* that causes meningitis

hiccup /'hɪkʌp/, **hiccough** *noun* a spasm in the diaphragm which causes a sudden inhalation of breath followed by sudden closure of the glottis which makes a characteristic sound
○ *She had an attack of hiccups or had a hiccupping attack or got the hiccups.* Also called **singultus** ■ *verb* to make a hiccup

COMMENT: Many cures have been suggested for hiccups, but the main treatment is to try to get the patient to think about something else. A drink of water, holding the breath and counting, breathing into a paper bag, are all recommended.

Hickman catheter /,hɪkmən 'kæθɪtə/, **Hickman line** /,hɪkmən 'laɪn/ *noun* a plastic tube which is put into the large vein above the heart so that drugs can be given and blood samples can be taken easily

hidr- /haɪdr/ *prefix* referring to sweat

hidradenitis /,haɪdrədə'naitɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the sweat glands

hidrosis /haɪ'drəʊsɪs/ *noun* sweating, especially when it is excessive

hidrotic /haɪ'drɒtɪk/ *adjective* referring to sweating ■ *noun* a substance which makes someone sweat

Higginson's syringe /hɪgɪnsənз sɪ,rɪŋз/ *noun* a syringe with a rubber bulb in the centre that allows flow in one direction only, used mainly to give enemas [After Alfred Higginson (1808–84), British surgeon]

high-altitude sickness /hai 'æltɪtju:d ,sɪknəs/ *noun* same as **altitude sickness**

high blood pressure /hai 'blʌd ,prɛfə/ *noun* same as **hypertension**

high-calorie diet /haɪ ,kæləri 'daɪət/ *noun* a diet containing over 4000 calories per day

high-density lipoprotein /haɪ ,densɪtɪ lɪpəʊ'prəʊtɪn/ *noun* a lipoprotein with a low percentage of cholesterol. Abbr **HDL**

high-energy food /,haɪ ,enədʒɪ 'fu:d/ *noun* food such as fats or carbohydrates which contain a large number of calories and give a lot of energy when they are broken down in the body

high-fibre diet /haɪ ,faɪbə 'daɪət/ *noun* a diet which contains a high percentage of cereals, nuts, fruit and vegetables

high-protein diet /haɪ ,prəʊti:n 'daɪət/ *noun* a diet containing mostly foods high in protein and low in carbohydrates and saturated fat, adopted by people who are trying to lose weight

high-risk /haɪ 'rɪsk/ *adjective* referring to someone who is very likely to catch or develop a disease, develop a cancer or have an accident

high-risk patient /,haɪ rɪsk 'peɪtɪnt/ *noun* a patient who has a high risk of catching an infection or developing a disease

hilari /'haɪlə/ *adjective* referring to a hilum

hilum /'haɪləm/ *noun* a hollow where blood vessels or nerve fibres enter an organ such as a kidney or lung (NOTE: The plural is **hila**.)

hindbrain /'haɪndbreɪn/ *noun* the part of brain of an embryo from which the medulla oblongata, the pons and the cerebellum eventually develop

hindgut /'haɪndgʌt/ *noun* part of an embryo which develops into the colon and rectum

hinge joint /'hɪndʒ dʒɔɪnt/ *noun* same as **ginglymus**

hip /hɪp/ *noun* a ball and socket joint where the thigh bone or femur joins the acetabulum of the hip bone

hip bone /'hip bəʊn/ *noun* a bone made of the ilium, the ischium and the pubis which are fused together, forming part of the pelvic girdle. Also called **innominate bone**

hip fracture /'hip ,frækɪtʃə/ *noun* a fracture of the ball at the top of the femur

hip girdle /'hip ,gɜːd(ə)l/ *noun* same as **pelvic girdle**

hip joint /'hip dʒɔɪnt/ *noun* the place where the hip is joined to the upper leg. See illustration at **PELVIS** in Supplement

Hippel-Lindau /,hɪpəl 'lɪndau/ ↗ **von Hippel-Lindau syndrome**

hippocampal formation /,hɪpəkæmp(ə)l fɔ:'meɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* curved pieces of cortex inside each part of the cerebrum

hippocampus /,hipəu'kæmpəs/ *noun* a long rounded elevation projecting into the lateral ventricle in the brain

Hippocratic oath /,hipəkrætɪk 'əʊθ/ *noun* an ethical code observed by doctors, by which they will treat patients equally, put patients'

welfare first and not discuss openly the details of a patient's case

hippus /'hipəs/ *noun* alternating rapid contraction and dilatation of the pupil of the eye
hip replacement /'hip rɪ,pleɪsmənt/ *noun* a surgical operation to replace the whole ball and socket joint at the hip with an artificial one

Hirschsprung's disease /'hɪəʃsprʌŋz dɪ'zi:z/ *noun* a congenital condition where parts of the lower colon lack nerve cells, making peristalsis impossible, so that food accumulates in the upper colon which becomes swollen [Described 1888. After Harald Hirschsprung (1830–1916), Professor of Paediatrics in Copenhagen, Denmark.]

hirsute /'hɜ:sju:t/ *adjective* with a lot of hair
hirsutism /'hɜ:sju:tɪz(ə)m/ *noun* the condition of having excessive hair, especially a condition in which a woman grows hair on the body in the same way as a man

hirudin /hɪ'rʊ:dɪn/ *noun* an anticoagulant substance produced by leeches, which is injected into the bloodstream while the leech is feeding on a body

HIS *abbr* Health Information Service

hist- /hɪst/ same as **histo-** (NOTE: used before vowels)

histamine /'hɪstəmī:n/ *noun* a substance released in response to allergens from mast cells throughout the body. Histamines dilate blood vessels, constrict the cells of smooth muscles and cause an increase in acid secretions in the stomach.

histamine headache /'hɪstəmī:n ,hedeɪk/ *noun* ♦ **Horton's syndrome**

histamine receptor /'hɪstəmī:n rɪ,septə/ *noun* a cell which is stimulated by histamine. H1 receptors in blood vessels are involved in allergic reactions, H2 receptors in the stomach are involved in gastric acid secretion.

histamine test /'hɪstəmī:n test/ *noun* a test to determine the acidity of gastric juice

histaminic /,hɪstə'minɪk/ *adjective* referring to histamines

histaminic headache /,hɪstəmīnɪk 'heɪdɛk/ *noun* ♦ **Horton's syndrome**

histidine /'hɪstədī:n/ *noun* an amino acid from which histamine is derived

histiocyte /'hɪstɪəʊsait/ *noun* a macrophage of the connective tissue, involved in tissue defence

histiocytoma /,hɪstɪəʊsər'təʊmə/ *noun* a tumour containing histiocytes

histiocytosis /'hɪstɪəʊsər'təʊsɪs/ *noun* a condition in which histiocytes are present in the blood

histiocytosis X /,hɪstɪəʊsər,təʊsɪs 'eks/ *noun* any form of histiocytosis where the cause is not known, e.g. Hand-Schüller-Christian disease

histo- /hɪstə/ *prefix* relating to the body's tissue ◇ **histology**

histochemistry /,hɪstəʊ'kemɪstri/ *noun* the study of the chemical constituents of cells and tissues and also their function and distribution, using a light or electron microscope to evaluate the stains

histocompatibility /,hɪstəʊkəmpætə'bİLİ̄ti/ *noun* compatibility between the antigens of tissues from two individuals, important in transplants

histocompatible /,hɪstəʊkəm'paṭɪb(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to tissues from two individuals which have compatible antigens

histogenesis /,hɪstəʊ'dʒenəsɪs/ *noun* the formation and development of tissue from the embryological germ layer

histogram /'hɪstəgræm/ *noun* a way of displaying frequency values as columns whose height is proportional to the corresponding frequency ◇ *a histogram showing numbers of patients with the condition in each age group*

histoid /'hɪstɔɪd/ *adjective* 1. made of or developed from a particular tissue 2. like standard tissue

histological /,hɪstə'lɒdʒɪk(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to histology

histological grade /,hɪstəlɒdʒɪk(ə)l 'greɪd/ *noun* a system of classifying tumours according to how malignant they are

histology /hɪ'stɒlədʒɪ/ *noun* the study of the anatomy of tissue cells and minute cellular structure

histolysis /hɪ'stɒləsɪs/ *noun* the disintegration of tissue

histolytica /,hɪstə'lɪtɪkə/ ♦ **Entamoeba histolytica**

histoplasmosis /,hɪstəplæz'məʊsɪs/ *noun* a lung disease caused by infection with the fungus *Histoplasma*

history /'hɪst(ə)rɪ/ *noun* the background information on someone's illness. ♦ **case history, medical history** ◇ **to take a patient's history** to ask someone to tell what has happened to them in their own words on being admitted to hospital

'...these children gave a typical history of exercise-induced asthma' [*Lancet*]

'...the need for evaluation of patients with a history of severe heart disease' [*Southern Medical Journal*]

histotoxic /,hɪstəʊ'tɒksɪk/ *adjective* referring to a substance which is poisonous to tissue

HIV *abbr* human immunodeficiency virus

'HIV-associated dementia is characterized by psychomotor slowing and inattentiveness' [*British Journal of Nursing*]

COMMENT: HIV is the virus which causes AIDS. Three strains of HIV virus have been identified: HIV-1, HIV-2 and HIV-3.

hives /haɪvz/ *noun* same as **urticaria** (NOTE: Takes a singular verb.)

HIV-negative /'eɪtʃ' aɪ ,vi: 'neɡətɪv/ *adjective* referring to someone who has been tested and shown not to have HIV

HIV-positive /'eɪtʃ' aɪ ,vi: 'pozɪtɪv/ *adjective* referring to someone who has been tested and shown to have HIV

HLA *abbr* human leucocyte antigen

HLA system /'eɪtʃ' el 'eɪ ,sistəm/ *noun* a system of HLA antigens on the surface of cells which need to be histocompatible to allow transplants to take place

COMMENT: HLA-A is the most important of the antigens responsible for rejection of transplants.

HMO *abbr US* Health Maintenance Organization

hoarse /hɔ:s/ *adjective* referring to a voice which is harsh and rough

hoarseness /'hɔ:snəs/ *noun* a harsh and rough sound of the voice, often caused by laryngitis

hobnail liver /'hɒbneɪl 'lɪvə/ *noun* same as **atrophic cirrhosis**

Hodgkin's disease /'hɒdʒkɪnз dɪ,zi:z/ *noun* a malignant disease in which the lymph glands are enlarged and there is an increase in the lymphoid tissues in the liver, spleen and bone marrow. It is frequently fatal if not treated early. [Described 1832. After Thomas Hodgkin (1798–1866), British physician.]

hoist /hɔɪst/ *noun* a device with pulleys and wires for raising a bed or a patient

hole in the heart /'həʊl ɪn ðə 'ha:t/ *noun* same as **septal defect (informal)**

Holger-Nielsen method /hɒlѓe 'nilsən ,meθəd/ *noun* a formerly used method of giving artificial respiration by pressing a person's back and raising their arms backwards

holism /'həʊlɪz(ə)m/ *noun* the theory that all of a person's physical, mental and social conditions should be considered in the treatment of his or her illness

holistic /həʊ'lɪstɪk/ *adjective* referring to a method of treatment involving all of someone's mental and family circumstances rather than just dealing with the condition from which he or she is suffering

holistic care /həʊ,lɪstɪk 'keə/ *noun* the care and treatment of a whole person rather than just of his or her medical symptoms

holo- /hɒləʊ/ *prefix* entire, complete

holocrine /'hɒləkrɪn/ *adjective* referring to a gland where the secretions are made up of disintegrated cells of the gland itself

Homans' sign /'həʊmənz sain/ *noun* pain in the calf when the foot is bent back, a sign of deep-vein thrombosis [Described 1941. After John Homans (1877–1954), Professor of Clinical Surgery at Harvard, USA.]

homeo- /həʊmiəʊ/ *prefix* like or similar

homeopathic /,həʊmiə'pæθɪk/, **homoeopathic** /həʊmiə'pæθɪk/ *adjective* 1. referring to homeopathy ○ a **homeopathic clinic** ○ She is having a course of homeopathic treatment. 2. referring to a drug which is given in very small quantities

homeopathist /,həʊmi'ɒpəθɪst/, **homoeopathist** /həʊmi'ɒpəθɪst/ *noun* a person who practises homeopathy

homeopathy /,həʊmi'ɒpəθi/, **homoeopathy** /həʊmi'ɒpəθi/ *noun* the treatment of a condition by giving the person very small quantities of a substance which, when given to a healthy person, would cause symptoms like those of the condition being treated. Compare **allopathy**

homeostasis /,həʊmiəʊ'steɪsɪs/ *noun* the process by which the functions and chemistry of a cell or internal organ are kept stable, even when external conditions vary greatly

homo- /həʊməʊ/ *prefix* the same

homoeo- /həʊmiəʊ/ *prefix* another spelling of **homeo-** (*used before vowels*)

homogenise /hə'mɒndʒənaɪz/, **homogenize** *verb* to give something a uniform nature

homograft /'hɒməgra:f/ *noun* the graft of an organ or tissue from a donor to a recipient of the same species, e.g. from one person to another. Also called **allograft**. Compare **heterograft**

homolateral /,hɒmə'læt(ə)rəl/ *adjective* same as **ipsilateral**

homologous /hɒ'mɒləgəs/ *adjective* 1. of the same type 2. referring to chromosomes which form a pair

homonymous /hə'mɒnɪməs/ *adjective* affecting the two eyes in the same way

homonymous hemianopia /hə,mɒnɪməs hemi'naʊpiə/ *noun* a condition in which the same half of the field of vision is lost in each eye

homoplasty /'həʊməoplæsti/ *noun* surgery to replace lost tissues by grafting similar tissues from another person

homosexual /,həʊməʊ'sekʃuəl/ *adjective* referring to homosexuality ■ *noun* a person who is sexually attracted to people of the same sex. Compare **bisexual**, **heterosexual** (NOTE: Although **homosexual** can apply to both males and females, it is commonly used for males only, and **lesbian** is used for females.)

homosexuality /,həʊməʊsektʃu'æltɪti/ *noun* sexual attraction to people of the same sex or sexual relations with people of the same sex

homozygous /,həʊməʊ'zaɪgəs/ *adjective* having two identical versions of a specific gene. Compare **heterozygous**

hook /huk/ *noun* a surgical instrument with a bent end used for holding structures apart in operations

hookworm /'hukwɜːm/ *noun* a parasitic worm

hookworm disease /'hukwɜːm dɪ,zi:z/ *noun* \blacktriangleright **ancylostomiasis**

hordeolum /hɔː'diːələm/ *noun* an infection of the gland at the base of an eyelash. Also called **sty**

horizontal /'hɔːrɪ'zɒnt(ə)l/ *adjective* lying flat or at a right angle to the vertical

horizontal fissure /,hɔːrɪ,zfɪs(ə)r/ *noun* ANAT a horizontal groove between the superior and middle lobes of a lung. See illustration at **LUNGS** in Supplement

horizontal plane /,hɔːrɪzɒnt(ə)l 'pleɪn/ *adjective* same as **transverse plane**. see illustration at **ANATOMICAL TERMS** in Supplement

hormonal /hɔː'moʊnl(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to hormones

hormone /'hɔːməʊn/ *noun* a substance which is produced by one part of the body, especially the endocrine glands and is carried to another part of the body by the bloodstream where it has particular effects or functions

hormone replacement therapy /,hɔːməʊn ri'pleɪsmənt ,θerəpi/, **hormone therapy** /'hɔːməʊn ,θerəpi/ *noun* 1. treatment for someone whose endocrine glands have been removed 2. treatment to relieve the symptoms of the menopause by supplying oestrogen and reducing the risk of osteoporosis ► Abbr **HRT**

horn /hɔːn/ *noun* 1. (in humans) tissue which grows out of an organ 2. (in humans) one of the H-shaped limbs of grey matter seen in a cross-section of the spinal cord 3. (in humans) an extension of the pulp chamber of a tooth towards the cusp

Horner's syndrome /'hɔːnəz ,sɪnd्रəʊm/ *noun* a condition caused by paralysis of the sympathetic nerve in one side of the neck, making the eyelids hang down and the pupils contract [Described 1869. After Johann Friedrich Horner (1831–86), Professor of Ophthalmology in Zürich, Switzerland.]

horny /'hɔːni/ *adjective* referring to skin which is very hard (NOTE: For terms referring to horny tissue, see words beginning with **kerat-**, **kerato-**.)

horseshoe kidney /,hɔːsʃu: 'kɪdni/ *noun* a congenital condition of the kidney, where sometimes the upper but usually the lower parts of both kidneys are joined together

Horton's syndrome /'hɔːt(ə)nз ,sɪn drəʊm/ *noun* a severe headache, often with constant pain around one eye, which starts usually within a few hours of going to sleep. It is caused by the release of histamine in the body. [After Bayard Taylor Horton (b. 1895), US physician]

hose /həʊz/ *noun* 1. a long rubber or plastic tube 2. \blacktriangleright **support hose**

hospice /'hɒspɪs/ *noun* a hospital which offers palliative care for terminally ill people

hospital /'hɒspɪt(ə)l/ *noun* a place where sick or injured people are looked after ◇ **hospital bed** 1. a special type of bed used in hospitals, usually adjustable in many ways for the comfort of the patient ◇ A hospital bed is needed if the patient has to have traction. 2. a place in a hospital which can be occupied by a patient ◇ There will be no reduction in the number of hospital beds.

hospital-acquired infection /,hɒspɪt(ə)l ə ,kwaɪəd in'fekʃən/ *noun* a disease caught during a stay in hospital

Hospital Activity Analysis /,hɒspɪt(ə)l æk'tɪviti ə,næləsɪs/ *noun* a regular detailed report on patients in hospitals, including information about treatment, length of stay and outcome

hospital care /'hɒspɪt(ə)l keə/ *noun* treatment in a hospital

hospital chaplain /,hɒspɪt(ə)l 'tʃæplɪn/ *noun* a religious minister attached to a hospital, who visits and comforts patients and their families and gives them the sacraments if necessary

hospital corner /,hɒspɪt(ə)l 'kɔːnə/ *noun* a way of folding the overlapping bedding at each corner of a bed that keeps it tight

hospital doctor /,hɒspɪt(ə)l 'dɒktə/ *noun* a doctor who works only in a hospital and does not receive people in his or her own surgery

hospital gangrene /,hɒspɪt(ə)l 'gæŋgrɪ:n/ *noun* gangrene caused by insanitary hospital conditions

hospital infection /'hɒspɪt(ə)l ɪn,fekʃən/ *noun* an infection which someone gets during a hospital visit, or one which develops among hospital staff

COMMENT: Hospital infection is an increasingly common problem due to growing antimicrobial resistance and inappropriate antibiotic use. Strains of bacteria such as MRSA have evolved which seem to be more easily transmitted between patients and are difficult to treat.

hospitalisation /,hɒspɪt(ə)laɪ'zeɪʃ(ə)n/, **hospitalization** *noun* the act of sending someone to hospital ◇ The doctor recommended immediate hospitalisation.

hospitalise /'hɒspɪt(ə)laɪz/, **hospitalize** *verb* to send someone to hospital ◇ He is so ill that he has had to be hospitalised.

hospital orderly /,hɒspɪt(ə)l 'ɔːdɪlɪ/ *noun* a person who does heavy work in a hospital, such as wheeling patients into the operating theatre or moving equipment about

hospital trust /'hɒspɪt(ə)l trаст/ *noun* same as **self-governing hospital**

host /'həʊst/ *noun* a person or animal on which a parasite lives

hot /hɒt/ *adjective* very warm or having a high temperature

hot flush /,hɒt 'flaʃ/ *noun* a condition in menopausal women, in which the woman becomes hot and sweats, and which is often accompanied by redness of the skin

hotpack /'hɒtpæk/ *noun* a cloth bag or a pad filled with gel or grains which can be heated and applied to the skin to relieve pain or stiffness

hot wax treatment /,hɒt 'wæks ,tri:tment/ *noun* a treatment for arthritis in which the joints are painted with hot liquid wax

hourglass contraction /'aʊəglɑ:s kən ,trækʃən/ *noun* a condition in which an organ such as the stomach is constricted in the centre

hourglass stomach /'aʊəglɑ:s ,stʌmæk/ *noun* a condition in which the wall of the stomach is pulled in so that it is divided into two cavities, cardiac and pyloric

hourly /'aʊəli/ *adjective, adverb* happening every hour

houseman /'haʊsmən/ *noun* same as **house officer**

house mite /haʊs mait/, **house dust mite** /'haʊs dʌst ,maɪt/ *noun* a tiny insect living mainly in bedding and soft furnishings, that can cause an allergic reaction

house officer /'haʊs ,oʊfɪsə/ *noun* a doctor who works in a hospital as a house surgeon or house physician during the final year of training before registration by the General Medical Council (NOTE: The US term is **intern**.)

HPRT *noun* an enzyme that is lacking in children, usually boys, who have Lesch-Nyhan disease. Full form **hypoxanthine phosphoribosyl transferase**. Also called **HGPRT (hypoxanthine guanine phosphoribosyl transferase)**

HPV *abbr* human papillomavirus

HRT *abbr* hormone replacement therapy

Huhner's test /'hu:nəz ,test/ *noun* a test carried out several hours after sexual intercourse to determine the number and motility of spermatozoa [After Max Huhner (1873–1947), US urologist]

human /'hju:mən/ *adjective* referring to any man, woman or child ■ *noun* a person ○ *Most animals are afraid of humans.*

human anatomy /,hju:mən ə'nætəmɪ/ *noun* the structure, shape and functions of the human body

human being /,hju:mən 'bi:ɪŋ/ *noun* a person

human chorionic gonadotrophin /,hju:mən kɔ:rɪ,gnɒk ɡəʊnədə't्रəʊfɪn/ *noun* a hormone produced by the placenta, which suppresses the mother's usual menstrual cycle during pregnancy. It is found in the urine during pregnancy, and can be given by

injection to encourage ovulation and help a woman to become pregnant. Abbr **hCG**

human crutch /,hju:mən 'krʌtʃ/ *noun* a method of helping an injured person to walk, where they rest one arm over the shoulders of the person helping

human immunodeficiency virus /,hju:mən ,ɪmju:nədɪfɪ'sjൻ(ə)nsi ,vairəs/ *noun* a virus which causes AIDS. Abbr **HIV**

human leucocyte antigen /,hju:mən 'lu:kəsait ,æntɪdʒ(ə)n/ *noun* any of the system of antigens on the surface of cells which need to be histocompatible to allow transplants to take place. Abbr **HLA**. ♦ **HLA system**

human nature /,hju:mən 'neɪtʃə/ *noun* the general behavioural characteristics of human beings

human papillomavirus /,hju:mən pæpi'ləʊmə ,vairəs/ *noun* a virus that causes genital warts in humans. Abbr **HPV**

humectant /hju:'mektənt/ *adjective* able to absorb or retain moisture ■ *noun* a substance that can absorb or retain moisture, e.g. a skin lotion

humero-ulnar joint /,hju:mərəʊ'ʌlnədʒoint/ *noun* part of the elbow joint, where the trochlea of the humerus and the trochlear notch of the ulna move next to each other

humerus /'hju:mərəs/ *noun* the top bone in the arm, running from the shoulder to the elbow (NOTE: The plural is **humeri**.)

humid /'hju:mid/ *adjective* damp, containing moisture vapour

humoral /'hju:mərəl/ *adjective* relating to human body fluids, in particular blood serum

humour /'hju:mə/, **humor** *noun* a fluid in the body

hunchback /'hʌntʃbæk/ *noun* ♦ **kyphosis**

hunger /'hʌŋgə/ *noun* a need to eat

hunger pains /'hʌŋgə peɪns/ *plural noun* pains in the abdomen when a person feels hungry, sometimes a sign of a duodenal ulcer

Hunter's syndrome /'hʌntəz ,sɪndrəʊm/ *noun* an inherited disorder caused by an enzyme deficiency, which leads to learning difficulties

Huntington's chorea /,hʌntɪntən z kö:ri:ə/ *noun* a progressive hereditary disease which affects adults, where the outer layer of the brain degenerates and the person makes involuntary jerky movements and develops progressive dementia [Described 1872. After George Sumner Huntington (1850–1916), US physician.]

Hurler's syndrome /'hɜ:ləz ,sɪndrəʊm/ *noun* same as **gargoylism** [Described 1920. After Gertrud Hurler, German paediatrician.]

hurt /hɜ:t/ *noun* 1. emotional pain 2. a painful area (used by children) ○ *She has a hurt on her knee.* ■ *verb* 1. to have pain ○ *He's hurt his hand.* 2. to cause someone pain ○ *His arm is*

hurting so much he can't write. ○ She fell down and hurt herself. (NOTE: **hurting – hurt**)

■ **adjective** 1. feeling physical pain ○ *He was slightly hurt in the car crash. ○ Two players got hurt in the football game.* 2. feeling emotional pain ○ *Her parents' divorce hurt her deeply.*

husky /'haʊski/ **adjective** slightly hoarse

Hutchinson's tooth /'hatʃɪnsənθ ,tu:θ/ **noun** a narrow upper incisor tooth, with notches along the cutting edge, a symptom of congenital syphilis but also occurring naturally (NOTE: The plural is **Hutchinson's teeth**.) [After Sir Jonathan Hutchinson (1828–1913), British surgeon]

hyal- /haɪəl/ **prefix** like glass (*used before vowels*)

hyalin /'haɪəlin/ **noun** a transparent substance produced from collagen and deposited around blood vessels and scars when some tissues degenerate

hyaline /'haɪəlin/ **adjective** nearly transparent like glass

hyaline cartilage /'haɪəlin 'ka:tɪlɪdʒ/ **noun** a type of cartilage found in the nose, larynx and joints. It forms most of the skeleton of the fetus. See illustration at **CARTILAGINOUS JOINT** in Supplement

hyaline membrane disease /,haɪəlin 'membreɪn dɪ,zi:z/ **noun** same as **respiratory distress syndrome**

hyalitis /,haɪə'laitɪs/ **noun** inflammation of the vitreous humour or the hyaloid membrane in the eye. Also called **vitreitis**

hyaloid membrane /'haɪəlɔɪd ,membreɪn/ **noun** a transparent membrane round the vitreous humour in the eye

hyaluronic acid /,haɪəlʊrɒnɪk 'æsɪd/ **noun** a substance which binds connective tissue and is found in the eyes

hyaluronidase /,haɪəlu'rɒnɪdaɪz/ **noun** an enzyme which destroys hyaluronic acid

hybrid /'haɪbrɪd/ **noun** an organism that is a result of a cross between individuals that are not genetically the same as each other

HYCOSY *abbr* hysterosalpingo-contrast sonography

hydatid /'haɪdətɪd/ **noun** any cyst-like structure

hydatid cyst /'haɪdətɪd 'sist/ **noun** the larval form of the tapeworms of the genus *Echinococcus*

hydatid disease /'haɪdətɪd di,zi:z/, **hydatidosis** /'haɪdətɪd'ðəʊsɪs/ **noun** an infection, usually in the lungs or liver, caused by expanding hydatid cysts that destroy the tissues of the infected organ

hydatid mole /'haɪdətɪd 'məʊl/ **noun** an abnormal pregnancy from a pathologic ovum, resulting in a mass of cysts shaped like a bunch of grapes

hydr- /haɪdr/ **prefix** same as **hydro-** (*used before vowels*)

hydraemia /haɪ'dri:miə/ **noun** an excess of water in the blood

hydragogue /'haɪdrəgɒg/ **noun** a laxative or substance which produces watery faeces

hydralazine /haɪ'drælæzɪn/ **noun** a drug that lowers blood pressure. People usually receive it in combination with other drugs that increase the output of urine.

hydramnios /haɪ'dræmnɪəs/ **noun** an unusually large amount of amniotic fluid surrounding the fetus

hydrarthrosis /,haɪdra:θrəʊsɪs/ **noun** swelling caused by excess synovial liquid at a joint

hydrate /'haɪdrɪteɪt/ **verb** to give water to someone so as to re-establish or maintain fluid balance ■ **noun** a chemical compound containing water molecules that can usually be driven off by heat without altering the compound's structure

hydro- /haɪdrəʊ/ **prefix** referring to water

hydroa /haɪ'drəʊə/ **noun** an eruption of small itchy blisters, e.g. those caused by sunlight

hydrocalycosis /,haɪdrəʊ,kælɪ'kəʊsɪs/ **noun** same as **caliectasis**

hydrocele /'haɪdrəsɪ:l/ **noun** the collection of watery liquid found in a cavity such as the scrotum

hydrocephalus /,haɪdrəʊ'kefələs/ **noun** an excessive quantity of cerebrospinal fluid in the brain

hydrochloric acid /haɪdrəʊ'klɔ:rɪk 'æsɪd/ **noun** an acid found in the gastric juices which helps to break apart the food

hydrocolloid strip /,haɪdrəʊkɒləɪd 'strip/ **noun** a waterproof gel dressing that seals a wound, retaining moisture and preventing access to germs and dirt

hydrocolpos /,haɪdrəʊ'kɒlpəs/ **noun** a cyst in the vagina containing clear fluid

hydrocortisone /,haɪdrəʊ'kɔ:tɪzən/ **noun** a steroid hormone secreted by the adrenal cortex or produced synthetically, used in the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis and inflammatory and allergic conditions

hydrocyanic acid /,haɪdrəʊsaiənɪk 'æsɪd/ **noun** an acid which forms cyanide. Abbr **HCN**

hydrogen /haɪdrədʒən/ **noun** a chemical element, a gas which combines with oxygen to form water, and with other elements to form acids, and is present in all animal tissue (NOTE: The chemical symbol is H.)

hydrogen peroxide /,haɪdrədʒən pe'rɒk said/ **noun** a solution used as a disinfectant

hydrolysis /haɪ'drɒləsɪs/ **noun** the breaking down of a chemical compound when it reacts with water to produce two or more different compounds, as in the conversion of starch to glucose

hydroma /haɪ'drəʊmə/ *noun* same as **hygroma**

hydrometer /haɪ'dromɪtə/ *noun* an instrument which measures the density of a liquid

hydromyelia /haɪdrəʊmɪ'li:ə/ *noun* a condition in which fluid swells the central canal of the spinal cord

hydronephrosis /haɪdrəʊ'nɛfrəʊsɪs/ *noun* swelling of the pelvis of a kidney caused by accumulation of water due to infection or a kidney stone blocking the ureter

hydropathy /haɪ'dropəθi/ *noun* the treatment of injuries or disease by bathing in water or drinking mineral waters

hydropericarditis /haɪdrəʊ,peɪrɪkɑ:dɪtɪs/, **hydropericardium** /haɪdrəʊ,peɪrɪ'kærdiəm/ *noun* an accumulation of liquid round the heart

hydroperitoneum /haɪdrəʊ,peɪrɪtə'ni:əm/ *noun* a build-up of fluid in the peritoneal cavity
(NOTE: The plural is **hydroperitoneums** or **hydroperitonea**.)

hydrophobia /haɪdrə'fəʊbiə/ *noun* same as **rabies**

COMMENT: Hydrophobia affects the mental balance, and the symptoms include difficulty in breathing or swallowing and a horror of water.

hydropneumoperitoneum /haɪdrəʊ,nju:məʊ,peɪrɪtə'ni:əm/ *noun* a condition in which watery fluid and gas collect in the peritoneal cavity

hydropneumothorax /haɪdrəʊ,nju:məʊ'θɔ:ræks/ *noun* a condition in which watery fluid and gas collect in the pleural cavity
(NOTE: The plural is **hydropneumothoraces** or **hydropneumothorases**.)

hydrops /haɪdrəps/ *noun* same as **oedema**
(NOTE: The plural is **hydropses**.)

hydrorrhoea /haɪdrəʊ'rɪə/ *noun* a discharge of watery fluid (NOTE: The US spelling is **hydrorhea**.)

hydrosalpinx /haɪdrəʊ'sælpɪŋks/ *noun* an occasion when watery fluid collects in one or both of the Fallopian tubes, causing swelling
(NOTE: The plural is **hydrosalpinges**.)

hydrotherapy /haɪdrəʊ'θerəpi/ *noun* a type of physiotherapy involving treatment in water, where people are put in hot baths or are encouraged to swim

hydrothorax /haɪdrəʊ'θɔ:ræks/ *noun* the collection of liquid in the pleural cavity

hydrotubation /haɪdrəʊtju:'beɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* an act of putting a fluid through the neck of the uterus and the Fallopian tubes under pressure to check whether the tubes are blocked

hydroureter /haɪdrəʊju'rɪ:tə/ *noun* a condition in which water or urine collect in the ureter because it is blocked

hydroxide /haɪ'drɒksaɪd/ *noun* a chemical compound containing a hydroxyl group

hydroxyproline /haɪ'drɒksi'prəʊlɪ:n/ *noun* an amino acid present in some proteins, especially in collagen

hygiene /haɪdʒi:n/ *noun* 1. the procedures and principles designed to keep things clean and to keep conditions healthy ○ *Nurses have to maintain a strict personal hygiene.* 2. the science of health

hygienic /haɪ'dʒi:nɪk/ *adjective* 1. clean ○ *Don't touch the food with dirty hands – it isn't hygienic.* 2. producing healthy conditions

hygienist /haɪdʒi:nɪst/ *noun* a person who specialises in hygiene and its application

hygr- /haɪgr/ *prefix* same as **hygro-** (used before vowels)

hygro- /haɪgrəʊ/ *prefix* relating to moisture

hygroma /haɪ'grəʊmə/ *noun* a kind of cyst which contains a thin fluid

hymen /haɪ'men/ *noun* a membrane which partially covers the vaginal passage in a female who has never had sexual intercourse

hymenectomy /haɪmə'nektaʊmɪ/ *noun* 1. the surgical removal of the hymen, or an operation to increase the size of the opening of the hymen 2. the surgical removal of any membrane

hymenotomy /haɪmə'nɒtəmɪ/ *noun* an incision of the hymen during surgery

hyo- /haɪəʊ/ *prefix* relating to the hyoid bone

hyoglossus /haɪəʊ'glosəs/ *noun* a muscle which is attached to the hyoid bone and depresses the tongue

hyoid /haɪəʊɪd/ *adjective* relating to the hyoid bone

hyoid bone /'haɪəʊɪd bəʊn/ *noun* a small U-shaped bone at the base of the tongue

hyoscine /haɪəʊsi:n/ *noun* a drug used as a sedative, in particular for treatment of motion sickness

hyp- /haɪp/ *prefix* same as **hypo-** (used before vowels)

hypaemia /haɪ'pi:miə/ *noun* an insufficient amount of blood in the body

hypalgesia /haɪpæl'dʒi:ziə/ *noun* low sensitivity to pain

hyper- /haɪpə/ *prefix* higher or too much. Opposite **hypo-**

hyperacidity /haɪpərə'sɪdɪti/ *noun* the production of more acid in the stomach than is usual. Also called **acidity, acid stomach**

hyperacusia /haɪpərə'kjuziə/ *noun* same as **hyperacusis**

hyperactive /haɪpər'æktyv/ *adjective* very or unusually active

hyperactivity /haɪpəræk'tɪvɪtɪ/ *noun* a condition in which something or someone, e.g. a gland or a child, is too active

hyperacusis /haɪpərə'kjusɪs/ *noun* a condition in which someone is very sensitive to sounds

hyperadrenalinism /haɪpərə'dri:n(ə)lɪz(ə)m/ noun a disorder in which too many adrenal hormones are produced, e.g. because of pituitary gland malfunction, a tumour of the adrenal gland or high doses of steroids

hyperaemia /haɪpə'rɪ:miə/ noun excess blood in any part of the body

hyperaesthesia /haɪpə'rei:əs'θi:ziə/ noun an extremely high sensitivity in the skin

hyperalgesia /haɪpə'ræl'dʒi:ziə/ noun an increased sensitivity to pain

hyperalimentation /haɪpə'rælɪmən'teɪʃ(ə)n/ noun the feeding of large amounts of nutrients by mouth or intravenously to someone with serious nutritional deficiency

hyperandrogenism /haɪpəræ'drɒndʒənɪz(ə)m/ noun a condition in which a woman produces too many androgens, associated with many problems such as hirsutism, acne, infertility and polycystic ovarian disease

hyperbaric /haɪpə'bærɪk/ adjective referring to a treatment in which someone is given oxygen at high pressure, used to treat carbon monoxide poisoning

hypercalcaemia /haɪpəkæl'si:miə/ noun an excess of calcium in the blood

hypercalcinuria /haɪpəkælsɪ'njuəriə/ noun a condition in which an unusually high amount of calcium occurs in the urine

hypercapnia /haɪpə'kæpnɪə/ noun an unusually high concentration of carbon dioxide in the bloodstream

hypercatabolism /haɪpəkæ'tæbəlɪz(ə)m/ noun a condition in which the body breaks down its own tissues or a particular substance too much. It causes weight loss and wasting.

hyperchloraemia /haɪpəkłɔ:'ri:miə/ noun a condition in which there is too much chloride in the blood

hyperchlorhydria /haɪpəkłɔ:'haɪdrɪə/ noun an excess of hydrochloric acid in the stomach

hyperdactylysm /haɪpə'dæktrɪlɪz(ə)m/ noun the condition of having more than the usual number of fingers or toes. Also called polydactylysm

hyperemesis /haɪpə'r'emɪsɪs/ noun excessive vomiting (NOTE: The plural is hyperemesis.)

hyperemesis gravidarum /haɪpəremɪsɪs'grævɪ'deərəm/ noun uncontrollable vomiting in pregnancy

hyperextension /haɪpərɪk'stenʃən/ noun the act of stretching an arm or leg beyond its usual limits of movement

hyperflexion /haɪpə'fleksjən/ noun the act of flexing a joint beyond the usual limit ○ a hyperflexion injury

hyperfunction /haɪpə,fʌŋkj(ə)n/ noun excessive activity of a gland or other organ of the body

hypergalactia /haɪpəgæ'læktiə/, **hypergalactosis** /haɪpə,gælkət'əʊsɪs/ noun a condition in which too much milk is secreted

hyperglycaemia /haɪpəglət'si:miə/ noun an excess of glucose in the blood

hyperhidrosis /haɪpəhar'drəʊsɪs/ noun a condition in which too much sweat is produced

hyperinsulinism /haɪpər'ɪnsjʊlɪnɪz(ə)m/ noun the reaction of a diabetic to an excessive dose of insulin or to hypoglycaemia

hyperkalaemia /haɪpəkæ'lɪ:miə/ noun a condition in which too much potassium occurs in the blood, which can result in cardiac arrest. Various possible causes include kidney failure and chemotherapy.

hyperkeratosis /haɪpəkərə'təʊsɪs/ noun a condition in which the outer layer of the skin becomes unusually thickened

hyperkinesia /haɪpəkɪ'ni:ziə/ noun a condition in which there is unusually great strength or movement

hyperkinetic syndrome /haɪpəkɪ'netɪk,sɪndrəʊm/ noun a condition in which someone experiences fatigue, shortness of breath, pain under the heart and palpitation

hyperlipidaemia /haɪpəlɪpɪ'di:miə/ noun the pathological increase of the amount of lipids, or fat, in the blood

hypermenorrhoea /haɪpəmənə'rɪ:ə/ noun menstruation in which the flow is excessive

hypermetropia /haɪpəmə'trəʊpiə/, **hyperopia** /haɪpə'rəʊpiə/ noun a condition in which someone sees more clearly objects which are a long way away, but cannot see objects which are close. Also called longsightedness, hyperopia

hypernatraemia /haɪpənæ'trɪ:miə/ noun a serious condition occurring most often in babies or elderly people, in which too much sodium is present in the blood as a result of loss of water and electrolytes through diarrhoea, excessive sweating, not drinking enough or excessive salt intake

hypernephroma /haɪpənə'frəʊmə/ noun same as Grawitz tumour

hyperopia /haɪpə'rəʊpiə/ noun same as hypermetropia

hyperostosis /haɪpər'stəʊsɪs/ noun excessive overgrowth on the outside surface of a bone, especially the frontal bone

hyperparathyroidism /haɪpə,pærə'θaɪrədɪz(ə)m/ noun an unusually high concentration of parathyroid hormone in the body. It causes various medical problems including damage to the kidneys.

hyperphagia /haɪpə'feɪdʒiə/ noun long-term compulsive overeating

hypertnesia /haɪpəpə'lɪ:ziə/ noun same as hypertension

hyperplesia /haɪpə'pɛliə/ *noun* unusually high pressure, especially of the blood

hyperpituitarism /haɪpə'pɪtju:tərɪz(ə)m/ *noun* a condition in which the pituitary gland is overactive

hyperplasia /haɪpə'pleɪzɪə/ *noun* a condition in which there is an increase in the number of cells in an organ

hyperpnoea /haɪpə'pnɪə/ *noun* unusually deep or fast breathing, e.g. after physical exercise

hyperpyrexia /haɪpə'pærɪk'riksɪə/ *noun* a body temperature of above 41.1°C

hypersecretion /haɪpə'se:kri:ʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a condition in which too much of a substance is secreted

hypersensitive /haɪpə'sensɪtɪv/ *adjective* referring to a person who reacts more strongly than usual to an antigen

hypersensitivity /haɪpə'sensɪ'tɪvɪtɪ/ *noun* a condition in which someone reacts very strongly to something such as an allergic substance ◎ *her hypersensitivity to dust ◯ Anaphylactic shock shows hypersensitivity to an injection.*

hypersplenism /haɪpə'splenɪz(ə)m/ *noun* a condition in which too many red blood cells are destroyed by the spleen, which is often enlarged

hypertelorism /haɪpə'telərɪz(ə)m/ *noun* a condition in which there is too much space between two organs or parts of the body

hypertension /haɪpə'tenʃən/ *noun* arterial blood pressure that is higher than the usual range for gender and age. Also called **high blood pressure, hyperplesia**. Compare **hypotension**

COMMENT: Hypertension is without a specific cause in more than 50% of cases (**essential hypertension**) but may be associated with other diseases. It is treated with drugs such as beta blockers, ACE inhibitors, diuretics and calcium channel blockers.

hypertensive /haɪpə'tensɪv/ *adjective* referring to high blood pressure

hypertensive headache /haɪpə'tensɪv 'hedeɪk/ *noun* a headache caused by high blood pressure

hypertensive retinopathy /haɪpə'tensɪv ,retɪn'ɒpθɪ/ *noun* changes in the retina caused by local bleeding and a restricted blood supply that threaten eyesight, as the condition indicates that the blood pressure is excessively high

hyperthermia /haɪpə'θɜ:mɪə/ *noun* a very high body temperature

hyperthyroidism /haɪpə'θaɪrɔɪdɪz(ə)m/ *noun* a condition in which the thyroid gland is too active and releases unusual amounts of thyroid hormones into the blood, giving rise to a rapid heartbeat, sweating and trembling. It

can be treated with carbimazole. Also called **thyrotoxicosis**

hypertonia /haɪpə'tənɪə/ *noun* an increased rigidity and spasticity of the muscles

hypertonic /haɪpə'tɒnɪk/ *adjective* 1. referring to a solution which has a higher osmotic pressure than another specified solution 2. referring to a muscle which is under unusually high tension

hypertrichosis /haɪpə'trɪk'keəsɪs/ *noun* a condition in which someone has excessive growth of hair on the body or on part of the body

hypertrophic /haɪpə'trɒfɪk/ *adjective* associated with hypertrophy

hypertrophic rhinitis /haɪpətrɒfɪk rai'naitɪs/ *noun* a condition in which the mucous membranes in the nose become thicker

hypertrophy /haɪpə'trɔfi/ *noun* an increase in the number or size of cells in a tissue

hypertropia /haɪpə't्रॉپɪə/ *noun* US same as **hypermetropia**

hyperventilate /haɪpə'ventɪleɪt/ *verb* to breathe very fast ◎ *We hyperventilate as an expression of fear or excitement.*

hyperventilation /haɪpə'ventɪl'eɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* very fast breathing which can be accompanied by dizziness or tetany

hypervitaminosis /haɪpə,vitə'mɪnəʊsɪs/ *noun* a condition caused by taking too many synthetic vitamins, especially Vitamins A and D

hypervolaemia /haɪpəvɒ'lɪ:miə/ *noun* a condition in which there is too much plasma in the blood

hyphaema /haɪ'fi:miə/ *noun* bleeding into the front chamber of the eye

hypn- /hɪpn/ *prefix* referring to sleep

hypnosis /hɪp'nəʊsɪs/ *noun* a state like sleep, but caused artificially, where a person can remember forgotten events in the past and will do whatever the hypnotist tells him or her to do

hypnotherapist /hɪpnəʊ'θerəpɪst/ *noun* a person who practises hypnotherapy

hypnotherapy /hɪpnəʊ'θerəpɪ/ *noun* treatment by hypnosis, used in treating some addictions

hypnotic /hɪp'nɒtɪk/ *adjective* 1. relating to hypnosis and hypnotism 2. referring to a state which is like sleep but which is caused artificially 3. referring to a drug which causes sleep

hypnotise /hɪpnətaɪz/, **hypnotize** *verb* to make someone go into a state where he or she appears to be asleep, and will do whatever the hypnotist suggests ◎ *He hypnotises his patients, and then persuades them to reveal their hidden problems.*

hypnotism /hɪpnətɪz(ə)m/ *noun* the techniques used to induce hypnosis

hypnotist /'haɪpnətɪst/ *noun* a person who hypnotises other people ◎ *The hypnotist passed his hand in front of her eyes and she went immediately to sleep.*

hypo /'haɪpəʊ/ *noun (informal)* 1. same as **hypodermic syringe** 2. an attack of hypoglycaemia, experienced, e.g., by people who are diabetic

hypo- /haɪpəʊ/ *prefix* less, too little or beneath

hypoaesthesia /,haɪpəʊi:s̩/θi:ziə/ *noun* unusually low acidity, especially in the stomach

hypoaesthesia /,haɪpəʊi:s̩/θi:ziə/ *noun* a condition in which someone has a diminished sense of touch

hypoallergenic /,haɪpəʊlədʒenɪk/ *adjective* not likely to cause an allergic reaction

hypocalcaemia /,haɪpəʊkæl'si:miə/ *noun* an unusually low amount of calcium in the blood, which can cause tetany

hypocapnia /,haɪpə'kæpnɪə/ *noun* a condition in which there is not enough carbon dioxide in the blood

hypochloraemia /,haɪpəʊklɔ:ri:miə/ *noun* a condition in which there are not enough chlorine ions in the blood

hypochlorhydria /,haɪpəʊklɔ:haidriə/ *noun* a condition in which there is not enough hydrochloric acid in the stomach

hypochondria /,haɪpəʊ'kɒndriə/ *noun* a condition in which a person is too worried about his or her own health and believes he or she is ill

hypochondriac /,haɪpəʊ'kɒndriæk/ *noun* a person who worries about his or her health too much

hypochondriac region /,haɪpəʊ'kɒndriæk/ ,ri:dʒən/ *noun* one of two parts of the upper abdomen, on either side of the epigastrium below the floating ribs

hypochondrium /,haɪpəʊ'kɒndriəm/ *noun* one of the two hypochondriac regions in the upper part of the abdomen

hypochromic /,haɪpəʊ'krəʊmɪk/ *adjective* referring to blood cells or body tissue which do not have the usual amount of pigmentation ◎ *hypochromic scars*

hypochromic anaemia /,haɪpəʊkrəʊmɪk ə'ni:miə/ *noun* anaemia where haemoglobin is reduced in proportion to the number of red blood cells, which then appear very pale

hypodermic /,haɪpə'dɛ:mɪk/ *adjective* beneath the skin ■ *noun* a hypodermic syringe, needle or injection (*informal*)

hypodermic injection /,haɪpədɛ:mɪk ɪn'dɛkʃn/ *noun* an injection of a liquid, e.g. a painkilling drug, beneath the skin. Also called **subcutaneous injection**

hypodermic needle /,haɪpədɛ:mɪk 'ni:d(ə)/ *noun* a needle for injecting liquid under the skin

hypodermic syringe /haɪpədɛ:mɪk sɪ'rɪndʒ/ *noun* a syringe fitted with a hypodermic needle for injecting liquid under the skin
hypofibrinogenaemia /,haɪpə,fibrɪnədʒə'ni:miə/ *noun* a condition in which there is not enough fibrinogen in the blood, e.g. because of several blood transfusions or as an inherited condition

hypogammaglobulinaemia /,haɪpəgæmægglɒbjʊln'i:miə/ *noun* an unusually low concentration of gamma globulin in the blood that causes an immune deficiency. It may be present from birth or acquired later in life.

hypogastrum /,haɪpə'gæstriəm/ *noun* the part of the abdomen beneath the stomach

hypoglossal /,haɪpə'glɒsəl/ *adjective* 1. underneath or on the lower side of the tongue 2. relating to the hypoglossal nerve

hypoglossal nerve /haɪpə'glɒs(ə)l nɜ:v/ *noun* the twelfth cranial nerve which governs the muscles of the tongue

hypoglycaemia /,haɪpəʊglər'i:si:miə/ *noun* a low concentration of glucose in the blood

COMMENT: Hypoglycaemia affects diabetics who feel weak from lack of sugar. A hypoglycaemic attack can be prevented by eating glucose or a lump of sugar when feeling faint.

hypoglycaemic /,haɪpəoglər'i:si:mɪk/ *adjective* having hypoglycaemia

hypoglycaemic coma /,haɪpəoglər'i:si:mɪk'kəʊmə/ *noun* a state of unconsciousness affecting diabetics after taking an overdose of insulin

hypohidrosis /,haɪpəuhərɪ'drəʊsɪs/, **hyposudorism** /haɪpərɪ'drəʊsɪs/ *noun* a condition in which someone produces too little sweat

hypoinsulinism /,haɪpə'ɪnsjʊlɪnɪz(ə)m/ *noun* a condition in which the body does not have enough insulin, often because of a problem with the pancreas

hypokalaemia /,haɪpəukæ'lɪ:miə/ *noun* a deficiency of potassium in the blood

hypomania /,haɪpə'meiniə/ *noun* a state of mild mania or overexcitement, especially when part of a manic-depressive cycle

hypomenorrhoea /,haɪpəmənə'ri:ə/ *noun* the production of too little blood at menstruation

hypometropia /,haɪpəʊmɪ'trəʊpiə/ *noun* same as **myopia**

hyponatraemia /,haɪpənæ'trɪ:miə/ *noun* a lack of sodium in the body

hypoparathyroidism /,haɪpəʊ,pærə'θaɪrədɪz(ə)m/ *noun* a condition in which the parathyroid glands do not secrete enough parathyroid hormone, leading to low blood calcium and muscle spasms

hypopharynx /,haɪpə'færiŋks/ *noun* the part of the pharynx between the hyoid bone and the bottom of the cricoid cartilage (NOTE: The plural is **hypopharynxes** or **hypopharynges**.)

hypophyseal /haɪpə'fɪziəl/ *adjective* referring to the pituitary gland

hypophyseal stalk /haɪpəfɪziəl 'stɔ:k/ *noun* a funnel-shaped stem which attaches the pituitary gland to the hypothalamus

hypophsectomy /haɪpə'fektəmɪ/ *noun* the surgical removal of the pituitary gland

hypophysis cerebri /haɪpəfɪzɪs 'serəbri/ *noun* same as pituitary gland

hypopessis /haɪpə'pəsi:zɪs/ *noun* a condition in which the blood pressure is too low

hypopituitarism /haɪpə'pju:tjʊ:tɪrɪzəm/ *noun* a condition in which the pituitary gland is underactive

hypoplasia /haɪpə'plæzɪə/ *noun* a lack of development or incorrect formation of a body tissue or an organ

hypoplastic left heart /haɪpə'plæstɪk left 'ha:t/ *noun* a serious heart disorder in which the left side of the heart does not develop properly, leading to death within six weeks of birth unless surgery is performed

hypopnoea /haɪpə'u:pni:ə/ *noun* unusually shallow and slow breathing

hypoproteinaemia /haɪpə'prəʊtə'nɪ:miə/ *noun* a condition in which there is not enough protein in the blood

hypoprothrombinaemia /haɪpə'prəʊθrɒmbɪ'ni:miə/ *noun* a condition in which there is not enough prothrombin in the blood, so that the person bleeds and bruises easily

hypopyon /haɪpə'paɪən/ *noun* an accumulation of pus in the aqueous humour in the front chamber of the eye

hyposensitise /haɪpə'u:sensɪtaɪz/, **hyposensitize** *verb* to reduce someone's sensitivity to something, e.g. in the treatment of allergies

hyposensitive /haɪpə'u:sensɪtɪv/ *adjective* being less sensitive than usual

hyposensitivity /haɪpə'u:sensi'tɪviti/ *noun* an unusually low sensitivity to stimuli such as allergens

hypospadias /haɪpə'speɪdɪəs/ *noun* a congenital condition of the wall of the male urethra or the vagina, so that the opening occurs on the under side of the penis or in the vagina. Compare **epispadias**

hypostasis /haɪ'pɒstəsɪs/ *noun* a condition in which fluid accumulates in part of the body because of poor circulation

hypostatic /haɪpə'u:stætɪk/ *adjective* referring to hypostasis

hypostatic eczema /haɪpəstætɪk 'eksɪmə/ *noun* same as varicose eczema

hypostatic pneumonia /haɪpəstætɪk nju:'məniə/ *noun* pneumonia caused by fluid accumulating in the lungs of a bedridden person with a weak heart

hypostenia /haɪpsə'θi:nɪə/ *noun* a condition of unusual bodily weakness

hypotension /haɪpə'u:tenʃən/ *noun* a condition in which the pressure of the blood is unusually low. Also called **low blood pressure**. Compare **hypertension**

hypotensive /haɪpə'u:tensɪv/ *adjective* having low blood pressure

hypothalamic /haɪpəθæ'læmɪk/ *adjective* referring to the hypothalamus

hypothalamic hormone /haɪpəθæ'læmɪk 'hɔ:mən/ *noun* same as **releasing hormone**

hypothalamus /haɪpə'u:θæləməs/ *noun* the part of the brain above the pituitary gland, which controls the production of hormones by the pituitary gland and regulates important bodily functions such as hunger, thirst and sleep. See illustration at **BRAIN** in Supplement

hypothalamus /haɪpə'u:θæləməs/ *noun* same as **hypothalamus** (NOTE: The plural is **hypothalmuses** or **hypothalmi**.)

hypothenar /haɪ'pɒθɪnə/ *adjective* referring to the soft fat part of the palm beneath the little finger

hypothenar eminence /haɪ,pɒθɪnə 'eminəns/ *noun* a lump on the palm beneath the little finger. Compare **thenar**

hypothermal /haɪpə'u:θɔ:m(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to hypothermia

hypothermia /haɪpə'u:θɔ:miə/ *noun* a reduction in body temperature below normal, for medical purposes taken to be below 35°C

'...inadvertent hypothermia can readily occur in patients undergoing surgery when there is reduced heat production and a greater potential for heat loss to the environment' [British Journal of Nursing]

hypothermic /haɪpə'u:θɔ:mɪk/ *adjective* suffering from hypothermia ○ *Examination revealed that she was hypothermic, with a rectal temperature of only 29.4°C.*

hypothermic perfusion /haɪpə'u:θɔ:mɪk pə'fju:z(ə)n/ *noun* a method of preserving a donor organ by introducing a preserving solution and storing the organ at a low temperature

hypothesis /haɪ'pɒθəsɪs/ *noun* a suggested explanation for an observation or experimental result, which is then refined or disproved by further investigation

hypothyroidism /haɪpə'u:θaɪrɔɪdɪz(ə)m/ *noun* underactivity of the thyroid gland

hypotonia /haɪpə'u:tənɪə/ *noun* reduced tone of the skeletal muscles

hypotonic /haɪpə'u:tɒnɪk/ *adjective* 1. showing hypotonia 2. referring to a solution with a lower osmotic pressure than plasma

hypotrichosis /haɪpə'u:trɪ'kæsɪs/ *noun* a condition in which less hair develops than usual. Compare **alopecia** (NOTE: The plural is **hypotrichoses**.)

hypotropia /haɪpə'u:t्रəpiə/ *noun* a form of squint where one eye looks downwards

hypoventilation /haɪpə'ventɪl'eɪʃən/ *noun* very slow breathing

hypovitaminosis /haɪpə'vɪtəmɪ'nəʊsɪs/ *noun* a lack of vitamins

hypoxaemia /haɪpɒk'si:mɪə/ *noun* an inadequate supply of oxygen in the arterial blood

hypoxanthine phosphoribosyl transferase *noun* full form of **HPRT**

hypoxia /haɪ'pɒksiə/ *noun* 1. an inadequate supply of oxygen to tissue as a result of a lack of oxygen in the arterial blood 2. same as **hypoxaemia**

hyster- /hɪstə/ *prefix* same as **hystero-** (*used before vowels*)

hysteralgia /hɪstər'ældʒə/ *noun* pain in the uterus

hysterectomy /hɪstə'rektəmɪ/ *noun* the surgical removal of the uterus, often either to treat cancer or because of the presence of fibroids

hysteria /hɪ'stɪəriə/ *noun* a term formerly used in psychiatry, but now informally used for a condition in which the person appears unstable, and may scream and wave their arms about, but also is repressed, and may be slow to react to outside stimuli (*dated*)

hysterical /hɪ'sterɪk(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to a reaction showing hysteria (*informal*)

hysterically /hɪ'sterɪklɪ/ *adverb* in a hysterical way (*informal*)

hysterical personality /hɪ'sterɪk(ə)l pɜ:sə'næltɪ/ *noun* the mental condition of a person who is unstable, lacks usual feelings and is dependent on others (*dated*)

hysterics /hɪ'sterɪks/ *noun* an attack of hysteria (*dated*)

hystericus /hɪ'sterɪkəs/ ▶ **globus hystericus**

hystero- /hɪstərəʊ/ *prefix* referring to the uterus

hysterocele /'hɪstərəsɪl/ *noun* same as **uterocoele**

hystero-oophorectomy /,hɪstərəʊ ,oʊfər'ektəmɪ/ *noun* the surgical removal of the uterus, the uterine tubes and the ovaries

hysteroptosis /,hɪstərɒp'təʊsɪs/ *noun* prolapse of the uterus

hysterosalpingo-contrast sonography /,hɪstərəʊ,sælpɪŋgəʊ ,kɒntrɑ:st sən'bɒgrəfi/ *noun* examination of the uterus and Fallopian tubes by ultrasound. Abbr **HYCOSY**

hysterosalpingography /,hɪstərəʊ,sælpɪŋ 'gɒgrəfi/ *noun* an X-ray examination of the uterus and Fallopian tubes following injection of radio-opaque material. Also called **uterosalpingography**

hysterosalpingostomy /,hɪstərəʊ,sælpɪŋ 'gɒstəmɪ/ *noun* an operation to remake an opening between the uterine tube and the uterus, to help with infertility problems

hysteroscope /'hɪstərəskəʊp/ *noun* a tube for inspecting the inside of the uterus

hysteroscopy /,hɪstə'rɒskəpɪ/ *noun* an examination of the uterine cavity using a hysteroscope or fibrescope

hysterotomy /,hɪstə'rɒtəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical incision into the uterus, as in caesarean section or for some types of abortion

hysterotrachelorrhaphy /,hɪstərəʊ,trækɪə'lɒrəfi/ *noun* an operation to repair a tear in the cervix

-asis /ə'sɪsɪs/ *suffix* disease caused by something
○ *amoebiasis*

iatro- /aɪə'trəʊ/ *prefix* relating to medicine or doctors

iatrogenesis /aɪ,ætrəʊ'dʒenəsɪs/ *noun* any condition caused by the actions of doctors or other healthcare professionals

iatrogenic /aɪ,ætrə'dʒenɪk/ *adjective* referring to a condition which is caused by a doctor's treatment for another disease or condition
○ *an iatrogenic infection*

COMMENT: An iatrogenic condition can be caused by a drug, i.e. a side effect, by infection from the doctor or simply by worry about possible treatment.

IBS *abbr* irritable bowel syndrome

Ibuprofen /'aɪbju:'prəʊfən/ *noun* a nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug that relieves pain and swelling, especially in arthritis and rheumatism. It is also widely used as a household painkiller.

ice bag /'aɪs bæg/, **icebag**, **ice pack** /'aɪs pæk/ *noun* a cold compress made of lumps of ice wrapped in a cloth or put in a special bag and held against an injured part of the body to reduce pain or swelling

ichthamol /ɪk'θæmɒl/ *noun* a thick dark red liquid which is a mild antiseptic and analgesic, used in the treatment of skin diseases

ichthyosis /'ɪkθɪ'əʊsɪs/ *noun* a hereditary condition in which the skin does not form properly, resulting in a dry, non-inflammatory and scaly appearance

ICM *abbr* International Confederation of Midwives

ICN *abbr* 1. International Council of Nurses 2. infection control nurse

ICP *abbr* intracranial pressure

ICRC *abbr* International Committee of the Red Cross

ICSH *abbr* interstitial cell stimulating hormone

icteric /ɪk'terɪk/ *adjective* referring to someone with jaundice

icterus /'ɪktərəs/ *noun* same as **jaundice**

icterus gravis neonatorum /,ɪktərəs,grævɪs,nɪə'nə:tɔ:rəm/ *noun* jaundice associated with erythroblastosis fetalis

ictus /'ɪktəs/ *noun* a stroke or fit

ICU *abbr* intensive care unit

id /ɪd/ *noun* (in Freudian psychology) the basic unconscious drives which exist in hidden forms in a person

ideation /,aɪdi'eɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the act or process of imagining or forming thoughts and ideas

identical twins /aɪ'dentɪk(ə)l/twinz/ *plural noun* twins who are exactly the same in appearance because they developed from the same ovum. Also called **monozygotic twins**, **uniovular twins**

identification /aɪ,dentɪf'keɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the act of discovering or stating who someone is or what something is □ **identification with someone** the act of associating with and unconsciously taking on the viewpoints and behaviours of one or more other people

identity bracelet /aɪ'dentɪtี้,breɪslət/,
identity label /aɪ'dentɪtี้,leɪb(ə)l/ *noun* a label attached to the wrist of a newborn baby or patient in hospital, so that he or she can be identified

ideo- /aɪdiəʊ/ *prefix* involving ideas

idio- /ɪdiəʊ/ *prefix* referring to one particular person

idiopathic /,ɪdiə'pæθɪk/ *adjective* 1. referring to a disease with no obvious cause 2. referring to idiopathy

idiopathic epilepsy /,ɪdiəpæθɪk 'epɪ,lepsi/ *noun* epilepsy not caused by a brain disorder, beginning during childhood or adolescence

idiopathy /,ɪdi'ɒpəθɪ/ *noun* a condition which develops without any known cause

idiosyncrasy /,ɪdiəʊ'sɪŋkrəsɪ/ *noun* a way of behaving which is particular to one person

idiot savant /,ɪdiəʊ 'sævənt/ *noun* a person with learning difficulties who also possesses a single particular mental ability, such as the ability to play music by ear, to draw remembered objects or to do mental calculations, which is very highly developed

edioventricular /'idiəʊven'trikjʊlə/ *adjective* relating to the ventricles of the heart

edioventricular rhythm /'idiəʊven,trikjʊlə'rið(ə)m/ *noun* a slow natural rhythm in the ventricles of the heart, but not in the atria

IDK abbr internal derangement of the knee

Ig abbr immunoglobulin

Ig A antiendomysial antibody /aɪ dʒi: eɪ æntiendəməs,maɪsɪəl 'æntɪbodi/ *noun* a serological screening test for coeliac disease

IHD abbr ischaemic heart disease

IL-1 abbr interleukin-1

IL-2 abbr interleukin-2

ile- /'ili/ *prefix* same as **ileo-** (*used before vowels*)

ilea /'iliə/ plural of **ileum**

ileac /'iliæk/ *adjective* 1. relating to an ileus 2. relating to the ileum

ileal /'iliəl/ *adjective* referring to the ileum

ileal bladder /'iliəl 'blædə/, **ileal conduit** /'iliəl 'kʌndjuɪt/ *noun* an artificial tube formed when the ureters are linked to part of the ileum, and that part is linked to an opening in the abdominal wall

ileal pouch /'iliəl 'pautʃ/ *noun* a part of the small intestine which is made into a new rectum in a surgical operation, freeing someone from the need for an ileostomy after their colon is removed

ileectomy /'iliːktəmɪ/ *noun* the surgical removal of all or part of the ileum

ileitis /'ili'aitɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the ileum

ileo- /'iliəʊ/ *prefix* relating to the ileum

ileocaecal /'iliəʊ'si:k(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to the ileum and the caecum

ileocaecal orifice /'iliəʊsi:k(ə)l 'ɔrɪfɪs/ *noun* an opening where the small intestine joins the large intestine

ileocaecal valve /'iliəʊsi:k(ə)l 'vælv/ *noun* a valve at the end of the ileum, which allows food to pass from the ileum into the caecum

ileocaecostoplasty /'iliəʊ,sɪ:kəʊ'sa:təʊplæsti/ *noun* an operation to reconstruct the bladder using a piece of the combined ileum and caecum

ileocolic /'iliəʊ'kɒlɪk/ *adjective* referring to both the ileum and the colon

ileocolic artery /'ili:əkɒlɪk 'a:tərɪ/ *noun* a branch of the superior mesenteric artery

ileocolitis /'iliəkə'laitɪs/ *noun* inflammation of both the ileum and the colon

ileocolostomy /'iliəkə'lɒstəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to make a link directly between the ileum and the colon

ileoproctostomy /'iliəprɒk'tɒstəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to create a link between the ileum and the rectum

ileorectal /'iliəʊ'rekt(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to both the ileum and the rectum

ileosigmoidostomy /'iliəʊsɪgmɔɪ'dɒstəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to create a link between the ileum and the sigmoid colon

ileostomy /'ili:pstəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to make an opening between the ileum and the abdominal wall to act as an artificial opening for excretion of faeces

ileostomy bag /'ili:pstəmɪ bæg/ *noun* a bag attached to the opening made by an ileostomy, to collect faeces as they are passed out of the body

ileum /'iliəm/ *noun* the lower part of the small intestine, between the jejunum and the caecum. Compare **ilium**. See illustration at **DIGESTIVE SYSTEM** in Supplement (NOTE: The plural is **ilea**.)

COMMENT: The ileum is the longest section of the small intestine, being about 2.5 metres long.

ileus /'iliəs/ *noun* obstruction of the intestine, usually distension caused by loss of muscular action in the bowel. ♦ **paralytic ileus**

ili- /'ili/ *prefix* same as **ilio-** (*used before vowels*)

ilia /'iliə/ plural of **ilium**

iliac /'iliæk/ *adjective* referring to the ilium

iliac crest /'iliæk 'krest/ *noun* a curved top edge of the ilium. See illustration at **PELVIS** in Supplement

iliac fossa /'iliæk 'fɒsə/ *noun* a depression on the inner side of the hip bone

iliac region /'iliæk ,rɪdʒən/ *noun* one of two regions of the lower abdomen, on either side of the hypogastrum

iliac spine /'iliæk spайн/ *noun* a projection at the posterior end of the iliac crest

iliacus /'ili'ækəs/ *noun* a muscle in the groin which flexes the thigh

ilio- /'iliəʊ/ *prefix* relating to the ilium

iliococcygeal /'iliəʊkɒk'si:dʒiəl/ *adjective* referring to both the ilium and the coccyx

iliolumbar /'iliəʊ'lʌmbə/ *adjective* referring to the iliac and lumbar regions

iliopectineal /'iliəʊpek'tɪniəl/ *adjective* referring to both the ilium and the pubis

iliopectineal eminence /'iliəʊpektɪniəl 'eminəns/ *noun* a raised area on the inner surface of the innominate bone

iliopsoas /'iliəʊ'səʊəs/ *noun* a muscle formed from the iliacus and psoas muscles

iliopubic /'iliəʊ'pjʊ:bɪk/ *adjective* same as **iliopectineal**

iliopubic eminence /'iliəʊ,pjʊ:bɪk 'eminəns/ *noun* same as **iliopectineal eminence**

iliotibial tract /'iliəʊ'tibɪəl ,trækt/ *noun* a thick fascia which runs from the ilium to the tibia

ilium /'iliəm/ *noun* the top part of each of the hip bones, which form the pelvis. Compare **ileum**. See illustration at **PELVIS** in Supplement (NOTE: The plural is **ilia**.)

ill /ɪl/ **adjective** not well ○ *If you feel very ill you ought to see a doctor.*

illegal abortion /ɪ'li:g(ə)l ə'bɔ:f(ə)n/ **noun** same as **criminal abortion**

ill health /ɪl 'helθ/ **noun** the fact of not being well ○ *He has been in ill health for some time.* ○ *She has a history of ill health.* ○ *He had to retire early for reasons of ill health.*

illness /'ɪlnəs/ **noun** 1. a state of not being well ○ *Most of the children stayed away from school because of illness.* 2. a type of disease ○ *Scarlet fever is no longer considered to be a very serious illness.* ○ *He is in hospital with an infectious tropical illness.*

illusion /'ɪlu:ʒ(ə)n/ **noun** a condition in which a person has a wrong perception of external objects

i.m., IM *abbr* intramuscular

image /'ɪmɪdʒ/ **noun** a sensation, e.g. a smell, sight or taste, which is remembered clearly

imagery /'ɪmɪdʒəri/ **noun** visual sensations clearly produced in the mind

imaginary /'ɪmædʒɪn(ə)ri/ **adjective** referring to something which does not exist but is imagined

imaginary playmate /ɪ'mædʒɪnəri 'pleɪmet/ **noun** a friend who does not exist but who is imagined by a small child to exist

imagination /ɪ'mædʒɪ'nɛʃ(ə)n/ **noun** the ability to see or invent things in your mind ○ *In her imagination she saw herself sitting on a beach in the sun.*

imagine /ɪ'mædʒɪn/ **verb** to see, hear or feel something in your mind ○ *Imagine yourself sitting on the beach in the sun.* ○ *I thought I heard someone shout, but I must have imagined it because there is no one there.* □ **to imagine things** to have delusions ○ *She keeps imagining things.* ○ *Sometimes he imagines he is swimming in the sea.*

imaging /'ɪmɪdʒɪŋ/ **noun** a technique for creating pictures of sections of the body, using scanners attached to computers

imbalance /ɪm'bæləns/ **noun** a situation in which things are unequal or in the wrong proportions to one another, e.g. in the diet

imipramine /'ɪmɪprəmɪn/ **noun** a drug that is used as a treatment for depression

immature /,ɪmə'tjuər/ **adjective** not mature, lacking insight and emotional stability

immature cell /,ɪmətjuər 'sel/ **noun** a cell which is still developing

immaturity /,ɪmə'tʃʊərti/ **noun** behaviour which is lacking in maturity

immersion foot /ɪm'mɜ:ʃ(ə)n 'fʊt/ **noun** same as **trench foot**

immiscible /'ɪmɪsəb(ə)l/ **adjective** (of liquids) not able to be mixed

immobile /ɪ'məubəl/ **adjective** not moving, which cannot move

immobilisation /ɪmə'bɪlɪzeɪʃ(ə)n/, **immobilization** **noun** the act of preventing somebody or something from being able to move

immobilise /ɪmə'bɪlɪzeɪz/, **immobilize** **verb** 1. to keep someone from moving 2. to attach a splint to a joint or fractured limb to prevent the bones from moving

immovable /ɪ'mu:vəb(ə)l/ **adjective** referring to a joint which cannot be moved

immune /'ɪmju:n/ **adjective** protected against an infection or allergic disease ○ *She seems to be immune to colds.* ○ *The injection should make you immune to yellow fever.*

immune deficiency /,ɪmju:n dr'fɪʃ(ə)nsi/ **noun** a lack of immunity to a disease. □ **AIDS**

immune reaction /,ɪmju:n rɪ'ækʃən/, **immune response** /,ɪmju:n ri'spɒns/ **noun** a reaction of a body to an antigen

immune system /'ɪmju:n ,sɪstəm/ **noun** a complex network of cells and cell products, which protects the body from disease. It includes the thymus, spleen, lymph nodes, white blood cells and antibodies.

'...the reason for this susceptibility is a profound abnormality of the immune system in children with sickle-cell disease' [Lancet]

'...the AIDS virus attacks a person's immune system and damages his or her ability to fight other diseases' [Journal of the American Medical Association]

immunisation /,ɪmju:nətɪ'zeɪʃ(ə)n/, **immunization** **noun** the process of making a person immune to an infection, either by injecting an antiserum, passive immunisation or by inoculation

'...vaccination is the most effective way to prevent children getting the disease. Children up to 6 years old can be vaccinated if they missed earlier immunization' [Health Visitor]

immunise /'ɪmju:nəɪz/, **immunize** **verb** to give someone immunity from an infection. □ **vaccinate** (NOTE: You immunise someone against a disease.)

COMMENT: In the UK, infants are immunised routinely against diphtheria, pertussis, polio, tetanus, Hib, mumps, measles and rubella, unless there are contra-indications or the parents object.

immunity /'ɪmju:nɪti/ **noun** the ability to resist attacks of a disease because antibodies are produced ○ *The vaccine gives immunity to tuberculosis.*

immuno- /ɪm'jʊnəʊ/, **imju:nəʊ/ prefix** immune, immunity

immunoassay /,ɪmju:nəʊə'æ'seɪ/ **noun** a test for the presence and strength of antibodies

immunocompetence /,ɪmju:nəʊ'kɒmpɪtəns/ **noun** the ability to develop an immune response following exposure to an antigen

immunocompromised /,ɪmju:nəʊ'kɒmprəmaɪzd/ **adjective** not able to offer resistance to infection

immunodeficiency /,im'ju:nəʊdɪ'fɪʃ(ə)nsi/ noun a lack of immunity to a disease

immunodeficiency virus /,im'ju:nəʊdɪ'fɪʃ(ə)nsi 'vairəs/ noun a retrovirus which attacks the immune system

immunodeficient /,im'ju:nəʊdɪ'fɪʃ(ə)nt/ adjective lacking immunity to a disease ◎ *This form of meningitis occurs in persons who are immunodeficient.*

immunolectrophoresis /,im'ju:nəʊ'lɛktrəfɔ:rɪ'sɪs/ noun a method of identifying antigens in a laboratory, using electrophoresis

immunogenic /,im'ju:nəʊ'gjenɪk/ adjective producing an immune response

immunogenicity /,im'ju:nəʊdʒə'nɪsɪtɪ/ noun the property which makes a substance able to produce an immune response in an organism

immunoglobulin /,im'ju:nə'glɒbjʊlɪn/ noun an antibody, a protein produced in blood plasma as protection against infection, the commonest being gamma globulin. Abbr Ig
(NOTE: The five main classes are called: **immunoglobulin G, A, D, E and M** or **IgG, IgA, IgD, IgE and IgM**.)

immunological /,im'ju:nə'lɒdʒɪk(ə)l/ adjective referring to immunology

immunological staining /,im'ju:nə'lɒdʒɪk(ə)l 'steɪnɪŋ/ noun the process of checking if cancer is likely to return after someone has been declared free of the disease, by staining cells

immunological tolerance /,im'ju:nə'lɒdʒɪk(ə)l 'tolərəns/ noun tolerance of the lymphoid tissues to an antigen

immunologist /,im'ju:nɒplədʒɪst/ noun a specialist in immunology

immunology /,im'ju:nɒplədʒɪ/ noun the study of immunity and immunisation

immunosuppressant /,im'ju:nəʊ'se:p'res(ə)nt/ noun a drug used to act against the response of the immune system to reject a transplanted organ

immunosuppression /,im'ju:nəʊ'se:p'reʃn/ noun the suppression of the body's natural immune system so that it will not reject a transplanted organ

immunosuppressive /,im'ju:nəʊ'se:p'resɪv/ adjective counteracting the immune system

immunotherapy /,im'ju:nəʊ'θerəpi/ noun ♦ **adoptive immunotherapy**

immunotransfusion /,im'ju:nəʊ'træfən/ noun a transfusion of blood, serum or plasma containing immune bodies

Imodium /'ɪməʊdiəm/ a trade name for Ioperamide hydrochloride

impacted /'ɪmpækɪtɪd/ adjective tightly pressed or firmly lodged against something

impacted faeces /,ɪmpækɪtɪd 'fi:siz/ plural noun extremely hard dry faeces which cannot

pass through the anus and have to be surgically removed

impacted fracture /ɪm'pæktɪd 'fræktʃə/ noun a fracture where the broken parts of the bones are pushed into each other

impacted tooth /ɪm'pæktɪd 'tu:θ/ noun a tooth which is held against another tooth and so cannot grow normally

impacted ureteric calculus /ɪm'pæktɪd ,ju:ərɪtɪk 'kælkjʊləs/ noun a small hard mass of mineral salts which is lodged in a ureter

impaction /ɪm'pækʃən/ noun a condition in which two things are impacted

impair /ɪm'peə/ verb to harm a sense or function so that it does not work properly

impaired hearing /ɪm'peəd 'hɪərɪŋ/ noun hearing which is not clear and sharp

impaired vision /ɪm'peəd 'vɪz(ə)n/ noun eyesight which is not fully clear

impairment /ɪm'peəmənt/ noun a condition in which a sense or function is harmed so that it does not work properly ◎ *His hearing impairment does not affect his work. ◎ The impairment was progressive, but she did not notice that her eyesight was getting worse.*

...impairment – any loss or abnormality of psychological, physical or anatomical structure or function' [WHO]

impalpable /ɪm'pælpəb(ə)l/ adjective not able to be felt when touched

impediment /ɪm'pedɪmənt/ noun an obstruction

imperforate /ɪm'pɜ:f(ə)rət/ adjective without an opening

imperforate anus /ɪm'pɜ:f(ə)rət 'eɪnəs/ noun same as **proctatresia**

imperforate hymen /ɪm'pɜ:f(ə)rət 'haɪmen/ noun a membrane in the vagina which is missing the opening for the menstrual flow

impermeable /ɪm'pɜ:miəb(ə)l/ adjective not allowing liquids or gases to pass through

impetigo /,ɪmpɪ'taɪgəʊ/ noun an irritating and very contagious skin disease caused by staphylococci, which spreads rapidly and is easily passed from one child to another, but can be treated with antibiotics

implant noun /'implænt/ something grafted or inserted into a person, e.g. tissue, a drug, inert material or a device such as a pacemaker ■ **verb** /ɪm'plænt/ 1. to fix into something ◎ *The ovum implants in the wall of the uterus.* 2. to graft or insert tissue, a drug, inert material or a device ◎ *The site was implanted with the biomaterial.*

implantation /,ɪmplæ:n'teɪʃ(ə)n/ noun 1. the act of grafting or inserting tissue, a drug, inert material or a device into a person, or the introduction of one tissue into another surgically 2. same as **nidation**

implant material /'impla:nt mə,tɪəriəl/ *noun* a substance grafted or inserted into a person

implant site /'impla:nt sait/ *noun* a place in or on the body where the implant is positioned

impotence /'impot(ə)ns/ *noun* the inability in a male to have an erection or to ejaculate, and so have sexual intercourse

impotent /'impot(ə)nt/ *adjective* (of a man) unable to have sexual intercourse

impregnate /'impregneɪt/ *verb* 1. to make a female pregnant 2. to soak a cloth with a liquid ◇ *a cloth impregnated with antiseptic*

impregnation /,impreg'nɛɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the action of impregnating

impression /im'preʃ(ə)n/ *noun* 1. a mould of a person's jaw made by a dentist before making a denture 2. a depression on an organ or structure into which another organ or structure fits ◇ **cardiac impression** 1. concave area near the centre of the upper surface of the liver under the heart 2. depression on the mediastinal part of the lungs where they touch the pericardium

improve /im'pru:v/ *verb* to get better, or make something better ◇ *She was very ill, but she is improving now.*

improvement /im'pru:vment/ *noun* the act of getting better ◇ *The patient's condition has shown a slight improvement.* ◇ *Doctors have not detected any improvement in her asthma.*

impulse /'impʌls/ *noun* 1. a message transmitted by a nerve 2. a sudden feeling of wanting to act in a specific way

impure /im'pjʊər/ *adjective* not pure

impurity /im'pjʊəriti/ *noun* a substance which is not pure or clean ◇ *The kidneys filter impurities out of the blood.*

in- /in/ *prefix* 1. in, into, towards 2. not

inaccessible /,inæk'sesib(ə)l/ *adjective* 1. physically difficult or impossible to reach 2. very technical and difficult to understand

inactive /m'æktrɪv/ *adjective* 1. not being active, not moving ◇ *Patients must not be allowed to become inactive.* 2. not working ◇ *The serum makes the poison inactive.*

inactivity /,inæk'trɪviti/ *noun* a lack of activity

inanition /,inə'nɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a state of exhaustion caused by starvation

inarticulate /,inə:tɪkju:lət/ *adjective* 1. without joints or segments, as in the bones of the skull 2. unable to speak fluently or intelligibly 3. not understandable as speech or language

in articulo mortis /in ə:tɪkju:ləʊ 'mɔ:tɪs/ *adverb* a Latin phrase meaning 'at the onset of death'

inborn /in'bɔ:n/ *adjective* congenital, which is in the body from birth ◇ *A body has an inborn tendency to reject transplanted organs.*

inbreeding /'ɪnbri:dɪŋ/ *noun* a situation where closely related males and females, or those with very similar genetic make-up, have children together, so allowing congenital conditions to be passed on

incapacitated /,ɪnkə'pæsɪteɪtɪd/ *adjective* not able to act or work ◇ *He was incapacitated for three weeks by his accident.*

incarcerated /in'kær:səreɪtɪd/ *adjective* referring to a hernia which cannot be corrected by physical manipulation

incest /'ɪnsest/ *noun* an act of sexual intercourse or other sexual activity with so close a relative, that it is illegal or culturally not allowed

incidence /'ɪnsid(ə)ns/ *noun* the number of times something happens in a specific population over a period of time ◇ *the incidence of drug-related deaths* ◇ *Men have a higher incidence of strokes than women.*

incidence rate /'ɪnsid(ə)ns reɪt/ *noun* the number of new cases of a disease during a given period, per thousand of population

incipient /in'sipiənt/ *adjective* just beginning or in its early stages ◇ *He has an incipient appendicitis.* ◇ *The tests detected incipient diabetes mellitus.*

incise /in'saɪz/ *verb* to cut into something

incised wound /in'saɪzd wu:nd/ *noun* a wound with clean edges, caused by a sharp knife or razor

incision /in'sɪz(ə)n/ *noun* a cut in a person's body made by a surgeon using a scalpel, or any cut made with a sharp knife or razor ◇ *The first incision is made two millimetres below the second rib.* Compare **excision**

incisional /in'sɪz(ə)n(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to an incision

incisional hernia /in,sɪz(ə)n(ə)l 'hɜ:nɪə/ *noun* a hernia which breaks through the abdominal wall at a place where a surgical incision was made during an operation

incisor /in'saɪzə/, **incisor tooth** /in'saɪzə tu:θ/ *noun* one of the front teeth, of which there are four each in the upper and lower jaws, which are used to cut off pieces of food. See illustration at **TEETH** in Supplement

inclusion /in'klu:ʒ(ə)n/ *noun* something enclosed inside something else

inclusion bodies /in'klu:ʒ(ə)n ,bndiz/ *plural noun* very small particles found in cells infected by a virus

inclusive /in'klu:sɪv/ *adjective* (of health services) provided whether or not someone has a disability or special needs

incoherent /,ɪnkə'u'hɪərənt/ *adjective* not able to speak in a way which makes sense

incompatibility /,ɪnkəmpætɪ'biliti/ *noun* the fact of being incompatible ◇ *the incompatibility of the donor's blood with that of the patient*

incompatible /ɪn'kɒməp'tib(ə)l/ *adjective*
 1. referring to something which does not go together with something else 2. referring to drugs which must not be used together because they undergo chemical change and the therapeutic effect is lost or changed to something undesirable 3. referring to tissue which is genetically different from other tissue, making it impossible to transplant into that tissue

incompatible blood /ɪn'kəmɒpətəb(ə)l 'blɒd/ *noun* blood from a donor that does not match the blood of the person receiving the transfusion

incompetence /ɪn'kɒmpit(ə)ns/ *noun* the inability to do a particular act, especially a lack of knowledge or skill which makes a person unable to do particular job

incompetent cervix /ɪn,kɒmpit(ə)nt 'sɜːvɪks/ *noun* a dysfunctional cervix of the uterus which is often the cause of spontaneous abortions and premature births and can be remedied by purse-string stitching

incomplete abortion /ɪn'kəmplɪt ə 'bɔːʃ(ə)n/ *noun* an abortion where part of the contents of the uterus is not expelled

incomplete fracture /ɪn'kəmplɪt 'frækɪtʃə/ *noun* a fracture that does not go all the way through a bone

incontinence /ɪn'kɒntɪnəns/ *noun* the inability to control the discharge of urine or faeces (NOTE: Single incontinence is the inability to control the bladder. Double incontinence is the inability to control both the bladder and the bowels.)

incontinence pad /ɪn'kɒntɪnəns pæd/ *noun* a pad of material to absorb urine

incontinent /ɪn'kɒntɪnənt/ *adjective* unable to control the discharge of urine or faeces

incoordination /ɪn'kɔːdɪnə:dɪ'nɛf(ə)n/ *noun* a situation in which the muscles in various parts of the body do not act together, making it impossible to carry out some actions

incubation /ɪn'kjʊə'bɛf(ə)n/ *noun* 1. the development of an infection inside the body before the symptoms of the disease appear 2. the keeping of an ill or premature baby in a controlled environment in an incubator 3. the process of culturing cells or microorganisms under controlled conditions

incubation period /ɪn'kjʊə'bɛf(ə)n 'piːriəd/ *noun* the time during which a virus or bacterium develops in the body after contamination or infection, before the appearance of the symptoms of the disease. Also called **stadium invasionis**

incubator /ɪn'kjübətə/ *noun* 1. an apparatus for growing bacterial cultures 2. an enclosed container in which a premature baby can be kept, within which conditions such as temperature and oxygen levels can be controlled

includes /ɪn'kjuːdɪz/ plural of **incus**

incus /'ɪŋkəs/ *noun* one of the three ossicles in the middle ear, shaped like an anvil. See illustration at **EAR** in Supplement

independent /ɪn'dɪpɛndənt/ *adjective* not controlled by someone or something else

independent nursing function /ɪn'dɪpendənt 'nɜːsɪng ,fʌŋkʃən/ *noun* any part of the nurse's job for which the nurse takes full responsibility

Inderal /'ɪndəræl/ a trade name for propranolol

index finger /'ɪndeks ,fɪŋgə/ *noun* the first finger next to the thumb

indican /'ɪndɪkæn/ *noun* potassium salt

indication /ɪndɪ'keɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a situation or sign which suggests that a specific treatment should be given or that a condition has a particular cause ◇ Sulpha drugs have been replaced by antibiotics in many indications. ◇ **contra-indication**

indicator /'ɪndɪkeɪtə/ *noun* 1. a substance which shows something, e.g. a substance secreted in body fluids which shows which blood group a person belongs to 2. something that serves as a warning or guide

indigenous /ɪn'dɪdʒɪnəs/ *adjective* 1. natural or inborn 2. native to or representative of a country or region

indigestion /ɪn'dɪdʒestʃən/ *noun* a disturbance of the normal process of digestion, where the person experiences pain or discomfort in the stomach ◇ *He is taking tablets to relieve his indigestion* or *He is taking indigestion tablets.* ◇ **dyspepsia**

indigo carmine /,ɪndɪgəʊ 'kuːmaɪn/ *noun* a blue dye which is injected into a person to test how well their kidneys are working

indirect contact /,ɪndɪ'rekt ˈkɒntrækt/ *noun* the fact of catching a disease by inhaling germs or by being in contact with a vector

indisposed /ɪndɪ'spəʊzd/ *adjective* slightly ill ◇ *My mother is indisposed and cannot see any visitors.*

indisposition /,ɪndɪspə'zɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a slight illness

individualise /,ɪndɪ'vɪdʒuə,laɪz/, **individualize** *verb* to provide something that matches the needs of a specific person or situation ◇ *individualised care*

individualised nursing care /,ɪndɪ,vɪdjuːləraɪzd 'nɜːsɪng keə/ *noun* care which is designed to provide exactly what one particular patient needs ◇ *The home's staff are specially trained to provide individualised nursing care.*

Indocid /'ɪndəsɪd/ a trade name for indomethacin

indolent /ɪn'dələnt/ *adjective* 1. causing little pain 2. referring to an ulcer which develops slowly and does not heal

indomethacin /ɪndəʊ'meθəsɪn/ *noun* a drug that reduces pain, fever and inflammation, especially that caused by arthritis

indrawing /ɪn'drɔ:ɪŋ/ *noun* the act of pulling towards the inside

indrawn /ɪn'drɔ:n/ *adjective* pulled inside

induce /ɪn'dju:s/ *verb* to make something happen □ **to induce labour** to make a woman go into labour

induced abortion /ɪn,dju:st ə'bɔ:ʃ(ə)n/ *noun* an abortion which is deliberately caused by drugs or by surgery

induction /ɪn'dʌkʃən/ *noun* 1. the process of starting or speeding up the birth of a baby 2. the stimulation of an enzyme's production when the substance on which it acts increases in concentration 3. a process by which one part of an embryo influences another part's development 4. information and support given to new employees in an organisation

induction of labour /ɪn,dʌkʃən əv 'leɪbə/ *noun* the action of starting childbirth artificially

induration /ɪndjʊə'reɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the hardening of tissue or of an artery because of pathological change

induratum /ɪndjʊə'reɪtəm/ ♀ **erythema**

industrial disease /ɪn'dʌstriəl dɪ,zɪ:z/ *noun* a disease which is caused by the type of work done by a worker or by the conditions in which he or she works, e.g. by dust produced or chemicals used in the factory

indwelling catheter /ɪn,dwelɪŋ 'kæθətə/ *noun* a catheter left in place for a period of time after its introduction

inebriation /ɪ,ni:bri'eʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a state where a person is drunk, especially habitually drunk

inert /ɪ'nɜ:t/ *adjective* 1. (of person) not moving 2. (of chemical, etc.) not active or not producing a chemical reaction

inertia /ɪ'nɜ:zə/ *noun* a lack of activity in the body or mind

in extremis /ɪn ɪks'tri:mɪs/ *adverb* at the moment of death

infant /ɪnfənt/ *noun* a child under two years of age

infanticide /ɪnfæntɪsaɪd/ *noun* 1. the act of killing an infant 2. a person who kills an infant

infantile /ɪnfəntɪl/ *adjective* 1. referring to small children 2. referring to a disease which affects children

infantile convulsions /ɪnfəntɪl kən 'vælʃənz/, **infantile spasms** /ɪnfəntɪl 'speɪzəmz/ *plural noun* convulsions or minor epileptic fits in small children

infantile paralysis /ɪnfəntɪl pə'ræləsɪs/ *noun* a former name for poliomyelitis

infantilism /ɪnfæntɪlɪz(ə)m/ *noun* a condition in which a person keeps some characteris-

tics of an infant when he or she becomes an adult

infant mortality rate /ɪnfənt mɔ:tæltɪ rεɪt/ *noun* the number of infants who die per thousand births

infant respiratory distress syndrome /ɪnfənt rɪ'spirɪt(ə)rɪ dr'stres ,sɪnd्रəʊm/ *noun* a condition of newborn babies in which the lungs do not function properly. Abbr **IRDS**

infarct /ɪnfəkt/ *noun* an area of tissue which is killed when the blood supply is cut off by the blockage of an artery

infarction /ɪn'fɑ:kʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a condition in which tissue is killed by the cutting off of the blood supply

'...cerebral infarction accounts for about 80% of first-ever strokes' [British Journal of Hospital Medicine]

infect /ɪnfekt/ *verb* to contaminate someone or something with microorganisms that cause disease or toxins □ *The disease infected her liver.* □ *The whole arm soon became infected.*

infected wound /ɪnfektɪd 'wʊ:nd/ *noun* a wound into which bacteria have entered

infection /ɪn'fekʃən/ *noun* 1. the entry or introduction into the body of microorganisms, which then multiply □ *As a carrier he was spreading infection to other people in the office.* 2. an illness which is caused by the entry of microbes into the body □ *She is susceptible to minor infections.*

infectious /ɪn'fekʃəs/ *adjective* referring to a disease which is caused by microorganisms and can be transmitted to other persons by direct means □ *This strain of flu is highly infectious.* □ *Her measles is at the infectious stage.*

infectious disease /ɪn,fekʃəs dɪ'zi:z/ *noun* a disease caused by microorganisms such as bacteria, viruses or fungi. ♀ **communicable disease, contagious disease**

infectious hepatitis /ɪn,fekʃəs ,hepə'taitɪs/ *noun* hepatitis A, transmitted by a carrier through food or drink. Also called **infective hepatitis**

infectious mononucleosis /ɪn,fekʃəs ,mɒnənʊ,nu:kli'əʊsɪs/ *noun* an infectious disease where the body has an excessive number of white blood cells. Also called **glandular fever**

infectious parotitis /ɪn,fekʃəs ,pærə'taitɪs/ *noun* same as **mumps**

infectious virus hepatitis /ɪn,fekʃəs 'vairəs ,hepətaitɪs/ *noun* hepatitis transmitted by a carrier through food or drink

infective /ɪnfektɪv/ *adjective* referring to a disease caused by a microorganism, which can be caught from another person but which may not always be directly transmitted

infective enteritis /ɪn,fekٹɪv ,entə'rætɪs/ *noun* enteritis caused by bacteria

infective hepatitis /ɪn,fekٹɪv ,hepə'taitɪs/ *noun* same as **infectious hepatitis**

infectivity /ɪnfek'tɪvɪtɪ/ *noun* the fact of being infective ○ *The patient's infectivity can last about a week.*

inferior /ɪn'fɪərɪə/ *adjective* referring to a lower part of the body. Opposite **superior**

inferior aspect /ɪn,fɪərɪər 'æspekt/ *noun* a view of the body from below

inferiority /ɪn,fɪərɪ'brɪtɪ/ *noun* the fact of being lower in value or quality, substandard. Opposite **superiority**

inferiority complex /ɪn,fɪərɪ'brɪtɪ kɒmpleks/ *noun* a mental disorder arising from a combination of wanting to be noticed and fear of humiliation. The resulting behaviour may either be aggression or withdrawal from the external world.

inferior mesenteric artery /ɪn,fɪərɪə mesen,terɪk 'a:təri/ *noun* one of the arteries which supply the transverse colon and rectum

inferior vena cava /ɪn,fɪərɪə ,vɪ:nə 'ka:və/ *noun* the main vein carrying blood from the lower part of the body to the heart. See illustration at **HEART** in Supplement, **KIDNEY** in Supplement

infertile /ɪn'fɜ:təl/ *adjective* not fertile, not able to reproduce

infertility /ɪnfə'tɪlɪtɪ/ *noun* the fact of not being fertile, not able to reproduce

infest /ɪn'fest/ *verb* (of parasites) to be present somewhere in large numbers ○ *The child's hair was infested with lice.*

infestation /ɪnf'e'steɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the fact of having large numbers of parasites, or an invasion of the body by parasites ○ *The condition is caused by infestation of the hair with lice.*

infiltrate /'ɪnfɪltreɪt/ *verb* (of liquid or waste) to pass from one part of the body to another through a wall or membrane and be deposited in the other part ■ *noun* a substance which has infiltrated a part of the body

'...the chest roentgenogram often discloses interstitial pulmonary infiltrates, but may occasionally be normal' [Southern Medical Journal]

infiltration /ɪnfɪl'treɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* 1. the process where a liquid passes through the walls of one part of the body into another part 2. a condition in which waste is brought to and deposited around cells

'...the lacrimal and salivary glands become infiltrated with lymphocytes and plasma cells. The infiltration reduces lacrimal and salivary secretions which in turn leads to dry eyes and dry mouth' [American Journal of Nursing]

infirm /ɪn'fɜ:m/ *adjective* old and weak

infirmary /ɪn'fɜ:məri/ *noun* 1. a room in a school or workplace where people can go if they are ill 2. a former name for a hospital (NOTE: **Infirmary** is still used in the names of some hospitals: the **Glasgow Royal Infirmary**.)

infirmity /ɪn'fɜ:mitɪ/ *noun* a lack of strength and energy because of illness or age (*formal*)

inflame /ɪn'fleɪm/ *verb* to make an organ or a tissue react to an infection, an irritation or a blow by becoming sore, red and swollen

inflamed /ɪn'fleɪmd/ *adjective* sore, red and swollen ○ *The skin has become inflamed around the sore.*

inflammation /,ɪnflə'meɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the fact of having become sore, red and swollen as a reaction to an infection, an irritation or a blow ○ *She has an inflammation of the bladder or a bladder inflammation.* ○ *The body's reaction to infection took the form of an inflammation of the eyelid.*

inflammatory /ɪn'flæmət(ə)ri/ *adjective* causing an organ or a tissue to become sore, red and swollen

inflammatory bowel disease /ɪn,flæmət(ə)ri 'baʊəl dɪ,zi:z/ *noun* any condition, e.g. Crohn's disease, colitis or ileitis, in which the bowel becomes inflamed

inflammatory response /ɪn,flæmət(ə)ri rɪ 'spɒns/, **inflammatory reaction** /ɪn,flæmət(ə)ri rɪ 'ækʃn/ *noun* any condition where an organ or a tissue reacts to an external stimulus by becoming inflamed ○ *She showed an inflammatory response to the ointment.*

inflate /ɪn'fleɪt/ *verb* to fill something with air, or be filled with air ○ *The abdomen is inflated with air before a coelioscopy.* ○ *In valvuloplasty, a balloon is introduced into the valve and inflated.*

influenza /,ɪflu'enzə/ *noun* an infectious disease of the upper respiratory tract with fever and muscular aches, which is transmitted by a virus and can occur in epidemics. Also called **flu**

COMMENT: The influenza virus is spread by droplets of moisture in the air, so the disease can be spread by coughing or sneezing. Influenza can be quite mild, but virulent strains occur from time to time, such as Spanish influenza or Hong Kong flu, and can weaken the person so much that he or she becomes susceptible to pneumonia and other more serious infections.

informal patient /ɪn,fɔ:ml 'peɪʃ(ə)nt/ *noun* a patient who has admitted himself or herself to a hospital, without being referred by a doctor

information /,ɪnfə'meɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* facts about something ○ *Have you any information about the treatment of sunburn?* ○ *The police won't give us any information about how the accident happened.* ○ *You haven't given me enough information about when your symptoms started.* ○ *That's a very useful piece or bit of information.* (NOTE: No plural: **some information; a piece of information**)

informed /ɪn'fɔ:md/ *adjective* having the latest information

informed consent /ɪn,fɔ:md kə'n'sent/ *noun* an agreement to allow a procedure to be carried out, given by a patient, or the guardian

of a patient, who has been provided with all the necessary information

infra- /'ɪnf्रə/ prefix below

infracostal /,ɪnf्रə'kɒst(ə)l/ *adjective* lying below the ribs

infraorbital nerve /,ɪnf्रə'ɔ:bɪt(ə)l 'nɜ:v/ *noun* a continuation of the maxillary nerve below the orbit of the eye

infraorbital vein /,ɪnfրə'ɔ:bɪt(ə)l 'veɪn/ *noun* a vessel draining the face through the infraorbital canal to the pterygoid plexus

infrared /,ɪnfրə'red/ *adjective* relating to infrared radiation ■ *noun* invisible electromagnetic radiation between light and radio waves

infrared radiation /,ɪnfրə'red ,reɪdi'eɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* same as **infrared rays**

infrared rays /,ɪnfրə'red 'reɪz/ *plural noun* long invisible rays, below the visible red end of the colour spectrum, used to produce heat in body tissues in the treatment of traumatic and inflammatory conditions. ♦ **light therapy**

infundibulum /,ɪnfʌn'dibjʊləm/ *noun* any part of the body shaped like a funnel, especially the stem which attaches the pituitary gland to the hypothalamus

infuse /ɪn'fju:z/ *verb* to introduce a solution such as saline, sucrose or glucose using a drip into a vein, body cavity or the intestinal tract in order to treat or feed someone

infusion /ɪn'fju:z(ə)n/ *noun* 1. a drink made by pouring boiling water on a dry substance such as herb tea or a powdered drug 2. the process of putting of liquid into someone's body, using a drip

ingesta /ɪn'dʒestə/ *plural noun* food or liquid that enters the body via the mouth

ingestion /ɪn'dʒestʃən/ *noun* 1. the act of taking in food, drink or medicine by the mouth 2. the process by which a foreign body such as a bacillus is surrounded by a cell

ingredient /ɪn'grɪ:dɪənt/ *noun* a substance which is used with others to make something

ingrowing toenail /,ɪng्रəʊɪŋ 'təʊneɪl/, *ingrowing nail* /,ɪng्रəʊɪŋ 'neɪl/, **ingrown toenail** /,ɪng्रəʊɪŋ 'təʊneɪl/ *noun* a toenail which is growing into the skin at the side of the nail, causing pain and swelling. The toenail cuts into the tissue on either side of it, creating inflammation and sometimes sepsis and ulceration.

inguinal /'ɪngwɪn(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to the groin

inguinal canal /,ɪngwɪn(ə)l kə'næl/ *noun* a passage in the lower abdominal wall, carrying the spermatic cord in the male and the round ligament of the uterus in the female

inguinale /,ɪngwɪ'lneɪl/ ♦ **granuloma inguinale**

inguinal hernia /,ɪngwɪn(ə)l 'hɜ:nɪə/ *noun* a hernia where the intestine bulges through the muscles in the groin

inguinal ligament /,ɪngwɪn(ə)l 'ɪɡmənət/ *noun* a ligament in the groin, running from the spine to the pubis. Also called **Poupart's ligament**

inguinal region /,ɪngwɪn(ə)l 'rɪ:dʒən/ *noun* the part of the body where the lower abdomen joins the top of the thigh. ♦ **groin**

INH abbr isoniazid

inhalant /ɪn'heɪlənt/ *noun* a medicinal substance which is breathed in

inhalation /,ɪnhə'lɛʃ(ə)n/ *noun* 1. the act of breathing in. Opposite **exhalation** 2. the action of breathing in a medicinal substance as part of a treatment

inhale /ɪn'heɪl/ *verb* 1. to breathe in, or breathe something in ○ *She inhaled some toxic gas fumes and was rushed to hospital.* 2. to breathe in a medicinal substance as part of a treatment. Opposite **exhale**

inhaler /ɪn'heɪlə/ *noun* a small device for administering medicinal substances into the mouth or nose so that they can be breathed in

inherent /ɪn'hɪərənt/ *adjective* referring to a thing which is part of the essential character of a person or a permanent characteristic of an organism

inherit /ɪn'herit/ *verb* to receive genetically controlled characteristics from a parent ○ *She inherited her father's red hair.* ○ *Haemophilia is a condition which is inherited through the mother's genes.*

inheritance /ɪn'herit(ə)ns/ *noun* 1. the process by which genetically controlled characteristics pass from parents to offspring ○ *the inheritance of chronic inflammatory bowel disease* 2. all of the qualities and characteristics which are passed down from parents ○ *an unfortunate part of our genetic inheritance*

inherited /ɪn'heritɪd/ *adjective* passed on from a parent through the genes ○ *an inherited disorder of the lungs*

inhibit /ɪn'hibit/ *verb* to prevent an action happening, or stop a functional process ○ *Aspirin inhibits the clotting of blood.* □ **to have an inhibiting effect on something** to block something, to stop something happening

inhibition /,ɪnhi'bɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* 1. the action of blocking or preventing something happening, especially of preventing a muscle or organ from functioning properly 2. (in psychology) the suppression of a thought which is associated with a sense of guilt 3. (in psychology) the blocking of a spontaneous action by some mental influence

inhibitor /ɪn'hibɪtə/ *noun* a substance which inhibits

inhibitory nerve /ɪn'hibɪtəri ,nɜ:v/ *noun* a nerve which stops a function taking place ○ *The vagus nerve is an inhibitory nerve which slows down the action of the heart.*

inion /'ɪniən/ *noun* a part of the occipital bone that can be felt as a slight lump at the back of the skull just above the neck

inject /ɪn'dʒekt/ *verb* to put a liquid into someone's body under pressure, by using a hollow needle inserted into the tissues ○ *He was injected with morphine. ○ She injected herself with a drug.*

injected /ɪn'dʒektɪd/ *adjective* 1. referring to a liquid or substance introduced into the body 2. referring to surface blood vessels which are swollen

injection /ɪn'dʒekʃən/ *noun* 1. the act of injecting a liquid into the body ○ *He had a penicillin injection.* 2. a liquid introduced into the body

injure /'ɪndʒə/ *verb* to hurt someone or a part of the body ○ *Six people were injured in the accident.*

injured /'ɪndʒəd/ *adjective* referring to someone who has been hurt ■ plural noun □ **the injured** people who have been injured ○ *All the injured were taken to the nearest hospital.*

injury /'ɪndʒəri/ *noun* damage or a wound caused to a person's body ○ *His injuries required hospital treatment. ○ He received severe facial injuries in the accident.*

injury scoring system /,ɪndʒəri 'skɔ:riŋ ,sɪstəm/ *noun* any system used for deciding how severe an injury is ○ *a standard lung injury scoring system* Abbr **ISS**

inlay /'ɪnlæɪ/ *noun* (in dentistry) a type of filling for teeth

inlet /'ɪnlet/ *noun* a passage or opening through which a cavity can be entered

INN abbr international nonproprietary name

innards /'ɪnədz/ *plural noun* the internal organs of the body, especially the intestines

innate /'ɪneɪt/ *adjective* inherited, which is present in a body from birth

inner /'ɪnə/ *adjective* referring to a part which is inside

inner ear /,ɪnər 'ɪə/ *noun* the part of the ear inside the head, behind the eardrum, containing the semicircular canals, the vestibule and the cochlea

inner pleura /,ɪnə 'pluərə/ *noun* same as **visceral pleura**

innervate /'ɪnɜ:vɪt/ *verb* to cause a muscle, organ or other part of the body to act

innervation /,ɪnɜ:'veɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the nerve supply to an organ, including both motor nerves and sensory nerves

innocent /'ɪnəs(ə)nt/ *adjective* referring to a growth which is benign, not malignant

innominate /ɪ'nɒmɪnət/ *adjective* with no name

innominate artery /ɪ,nɒmɪnət 'a:təri/ *noun* the largest branch of the arch of the aorta, which continues as the right common carotid and right subclavian arteries

innominate bone /ɪ,nɒmɪnət 'bəʊn/ *noun* same as **hip bone**

innominate vein /ɪ,nɒmɪnət 'veɪn/ *noun* same as **brachiocephalic vein**

inoculant /ɪ'nɒkjʊlənt/ *noun* same as **inoculum**

inoculate /ɪ'nɒkjuleɪt/ *verb* to introduce vaccine into a person's body in order to make the body create its own antibodies, so making the person immune to the disease ○ *The baby was inoculated against diphtheria.* (NOTE: You inoculate someone **with** or **against** a disease.)

inoculation /ɪ,nɒkjʊ'ləʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the action of inoculating someone ○ *Has the baby had a diphtheria inoculation?*

inoculum /ɪ'nɒkjʊləm/ *noun* a substance used for inoculation, e.g. a vaccine (NOTE: The plural is **inocula**.)

inoperable /ɪ'nɒpər(ə)b(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to a condition which cannot be operated on ○ *The surgeon decided that the cancer was inoperable.*

inorganic /,ɪnɔ:gænɪk/ *adjective* referring to a substance which is not made from animal or vegetable sources

inorganic acid /,ɪnɔ:gænɪk 'æsɪd/ *noun* an acid which comes from minerals, used in dilute form to help indigestion

inotropic /,ɪnəʊ'tropɪk/ *adjective* affecting the way muscles contract, especially those of the heart

inpatient /'ɪn,peɪʃ(ə)nt/ *noun* someone who stays overnight or for some time in a hospital for treatment or observation. Compare **outpatient**

inquest /'ɪŋkwɛst/ *noun* an inquiry by a coroner into the cause of a death

COMMENT: An inquest has to take place where death is violent or not expected, where death could be murder or where a prisoner dies and when police are involved.

insane /'ɪnsen/ *adjective* mentally unwell (dated, informal)

insanitary /ɪ'nseɪnɪt(ə)ri/ *adjective* not hygienic ○ *Cholera spread rapidly because of the insanitary conditions in the town.*

insect /'ɪnsekt/ *noun* a small animal with six legs and a body in three parts

insect bite /'ɪnsekt baɪt/ *noun* a sting caused by an insect which punctures the skin to suck blood, and in so doing introduces irritants

COMMENT: Most insect bites are simply irritating. Others can be more serious, as insects can carry the organisms which produce typhus, sleeping sickness, malaria, filariasis and many other diseases.

insecticide /ɪn'sektɪsaɪd/ *noun* a substance which kills insects

insemination /ɪn,semɪ'neɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the introduction of sperm into the vagina

insensible /ɪn'sensib(ə)l/ *adjective* 1. lacking feeling or consciousness 2. not aware of or

responding to a stimulus **3.** too slight to be perceived by the senses

insert /ɪn'sɜ:t/ *verb* to put something into something ○ *The catheter is inserted into the passage.*

insertion /ɪn'sɜ:ʃ(ə)n/ *noun* **1.** the point of attachment of a muscle to a bone **2.** the point where an organ is attached to its support **3.** a change in the structure of a chromosome, where a segment of the chromosome is introduced into another member of the complement

insides /ɪn'saɪdz/ *plural noun* internal organs, especially the stomach and intestines (*informal*) ○ *He says he has a pain in his insides.* ○ *You ought to see the doctor if you think there is something wrong with your insides.*

insidious /ɪn'sɪdiəs/ *adjective* causing harm without showing any obvious signs

insidious disease /ɪn'sɪdiəs dɪ'zi:z/ *noun* a disease which causes damage before being detected

insight /'ɪnsaɪt/ *noun* the ability of a person to realise that he or she is ill or has particular problems or characteristics

insipidus /ɪn'sɪpɪdəs/ ♦ **diabetes insipidus**

in situ /ɪn 'sɪtju:/ *adverb* in place

insoluble /ɪn'sɒlju:b(ə)l/ *adjective* not able to be dissolved in liquid

insoluble fibre /ɪn'sɒlju:b(ə)l 'faɪbə/ *noun* the fibre in bread and cereals, which is not digested but which swells inside the intestine

insomnia /ɪn'sɒmniə/ *noun* the inability to sleep ○ *She experiences insomnia.* ○ *What does the doctor give you for your insomnia?*

Also called **sleeplessness**

insomniac /ɪn'sɒmniæk/ *noun* a person who has insomnia

inspiration /'ɪnspɪ'reɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the act of taking air into the lungs. Opposite **expiration**

COMMENT: Inspiration takes place when the muscles of the diaphragm contract, allowing the lungs to expand.

inspiratory /ɪn'spaɪrət(ə)ri/ *adjective* referring to breathing in

inspire /ɪn'spaɪə/ *verb* to inhale air or a gas into the lungs

inspissated /ɪn'spɪseɪtɪd/ *adjective* referring to a liquid which is thickened by removing water from it

inspissation /ɪn'spɪ'seɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the act of removing water from a solution to make it thicker

instep /'ɪnstep/ *noun* an arched top part of the foot

instil /ɪn'stɪl/, **instill** *verb* to put a liquid in something drop by drop ○ *Instil four drops in each nostril twice a day.*

instillation /ɪn'stɪl'eɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* **1.** the process of putting a liquid in drop by drop **2.** a liquid put in drop by drop

instinct /'ɪnstɪŋkt/ *noun* a tendency or ability which the body has from birth and does not need to learn ○ *The body has a natural instinct to protect itself from danger.*

instinctive /ɪn'stɪŋktɪv/ *adjective* automatic or unconscious rather than planned ○ *an instinctive reaction*

institution /'ɪnstɪ'tju:s(ə)n/ *noun* a place where people are cared for, e.g. a hospital or clinic, especially a psychiatric hospital or children's home

institutionalisation /,ɪn'stɪ,ti'ju:s(ə)nəlɪzəʃ(ə)n/, **institutionalization**, **institutional**

neurosis /,ɪn'stitju:s(ə)n(ə)l nju'rəʊsɪs/ *noun* a condition in which someone has become so adapted to life in an institution that it is impossible for him or her to live outside it

institutionalise /,ɪn'stɪ'tju:s(ə)nəlaɪz/, **institutionalize** *verb* to put someone into an institution

instructions /ɪn'strʌkʃənz/ *plural noun* spoken or written information which explains how something is used or how to do something ○ *She gave the taxi driver instructions on how to get to the hospital.* ○ *The instructions are written on the medicine bottle.* ○ *We can't use this machine because we have lost the book of instructions.*

instrument /'ɪnstrʊmənt/ *noun* a piece of equipment or a tool ○ *The doctor had a box of surgical instruments.*

instrumental /,ɪnstrʊ'ment(ə)l/ *adjective* □ **instrumental in** helping to do something ○ *She was instrumental in developing the new technique.*

instrumental delivery /,ɪn'strʊment(ə)l dɪ'liv(ə)rɪ/ *noun* childbirth where the doctor uses forceps to help the baby out of the mother's uterus

insufficiency /,ɪn'sa'fɪʃ(ə)nsi/ *noun* **1.** the fact of not being strong or large enough to perform usual functions ○ *The patient is suffering from a renal insufficiency.* **2.** the incompetence of an organ

insufflate /'ɪn'saflɪt/ *verb* to blow gas, vapour or powder into the lungs or another body cavity as a treatment

insufflation /,ɪn'sa'fleɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the act of blowing gas, vapour or powder into the lungs or another body cavity as a treatment

insula /'ɪnσjʊlə/ *noun* part of the cerebral cortex which is covered by the folds of the sulcus

insulin /'ɪnσjʊlɪn/ *noun* a hormone produced by the islets of Langerhans in the pancreas

COMMENT: Insulin controls the way in which the body converts sugar into energy and regulates the level of sugar in the blood. A lack of insulin caused by diabetes mellitus makes the level of glucose in the blood rise. Insulin injections are regularly used to treat diabetes mellitus, but care has to be taken not to exceed the dose as this will cause hyperinsulinism and hypoglycaemia.

insulinase /'insjʊlɪnɛz/ *noun* an enzyme which breaks down insulin

insulin dependence /,insjʊlin dɪ'pendəns/ *noun* the fact of being dependent on insulin injections

insulin-dependent diabetes /,insjʊlin di'pendənt daɪə'bɪtɪz/ *noun* same as **Type I diabetes mellitus**

insulinoma /,insjʊlɪ'nəʊmə/ *noun* a tumour in the islets of Langerhans

insulin-resistant /,insjʊlin rɪ'zɪst(ə)nt/ *adjective* referring to a condition in which the muscle and other tissue cells respond inadequately to insulin, as in Type II diabetes

insulin shock /'insjʊlin ʃɒk/ *noun* a serious drop in blood sugar, caused by too much insulin accompanied by sweating, dizziness, trembling and eventually coma

insuloma /,insjʊ'ləʊmə/ *noun* same as **insulinoma**

insult /'insʌlt/ *noun* 1. a physical injury or trauma 2. something that causes a physical injury or trauma

intact /ɪn'teɪkt/ *adjective* having all body parts present and undamaged

intake /'ɪntek/ *noun* 1. the amount of a substance taken in ○ a high intake of alcohol ○ She was advised to reduce her intake of sugar. 2. the process of taking in a substance

Intal /'ɪntæl/ a trade name for a preparation of cromolyn sodium

integrated service /,ɪntɪg'reɪtɪd 'sɜːvɪs/ *noun* a broad care service provided by health and social agencies acting together

integrative medicine /,ɪntɪgr'eɪtɪv 'med(ə)(s)ən/ *noun* the combination of mainstream therapies and those complementary or alternative therapies for which there is scientific evidence of efficacy and safety

integument /ɪn'tegjumənt/ *noun* a covering layer, e.g. the skin

intellect /'ɪntɪlekt/ *noun* a person's ability to think, reason and understand

intelligence /ɪn'telɪdʒəns/ *noun* the ability to learn and understand quickly

intelligence quotient /ɪn'telɪdʒəns 'kwɔːf(ə)nt/ *noun* the ratio of the mental age, as given by an intelligence test, to the chronological age of the person. Abbr **IQ**

intense /ɪn'tens/ *adjective* referring to a very strong pain ○ She is suffering from intense post herpetic neuralgia.

intensity /ɪn'tensiti/ *noun* the strength of e.g. pain

intensive care /ɪn'tensɪv 'keə/ *noun* 1. the continual supervision and treatment of an extremely ill person in a special section of a hospital ○ The patient was put in intensive care. ♀ **residential care** 2. same as **intensive care unit**

intensive care unit /ɪn'tensɪv 'keə ,ju:nɪt/ *noun* a section of a hospital equipped with life-

saving and life-support equipment in which seriously ill people who need constant medical attention are cared for. Abbr **ICU**

intention /ɪn'tenʃən/ *noun* a plan to do something

intention tremor /ɪn'tenʃən ,tremə/ *noun* a trembling of the hands seen when people suffering from particular brain diseases make voluntary movements to try to touch something

inter- /ɪn'tə/ *prefix* between

interaction /,ɪntər'ækʃən/ *noun* an effect which two or more substances such as drugs have on each other

interatrial septum /,ɪntər'eɪtriəl ,septəm/ *noun* a membrane between the right and left atria in the heart

intercalated /ɪn'tɜːkəleɪtɪd/ *adjective* inserted between other tissues

intercalated disc /ɪn,tɜː:kəleɪtɪd 'disk/ *noun* closely applied cell membranes at the end of adjacent cells in cardiac muscle, seen as transverse lines

intercellular /,ɪntə'seljʊlə/ *adjective* between the cells in tissue

intercostal /,ɪntə'kɒst(ə)l/ *adjective* between the ribs ■ *noun* same as **intercostal muscle**

intercostal muscle /ɪntə,kɒst(ə)l 'mæs(ə)l/ *noun* one of the muscles between the ribs

COMMENT: The intercostal muscles expand and contract the thorax, so changing the pressure in the thorax and making the person breathe in or out. There are three layers of intercostal muscle: external, internal and innermost or intercostalis intimis.

intercourse /'ɪntəkɔːs/ *noun* same as **sexual intercourse**

intercurrent disease /,ɪntəkɑːrənt dr'i:zɪz/ , **intercurrent infection** /,ɪntəkɑːrənt ɪn'fekʃən/ *noun* a disease or infection which affects someone who has another disease

interdigital /,ɪntə'dɪdʒɪt(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to the space between the fingers or toes

interdisciplinary /,ɪntə,dɪsɪ'plɪnəri/ *adjective* combining two or more different areas of medical or scientific study

interferon /ɪntə'fɪərən/ *noun* a protein produced by cells, usually in response to a virus, and which then reduces the spread of viruses

COMMENT: Although it is now possible to synthesise interferon outside the body, large-scale production is extremely expensive and the substance has not proved as successful at combating viruses as had been hoped, though it is used in multiple sclerosis with some success.

interior /ɪn'trɪərɪə/ *noun* a part which is inside ■ *adjective* inside

interleukin /,ɪntə'lju:kɪn/ *noun* a protein produced by the body's immune system

interleukin-1 /,ɪntəlu:kɪn 'wʌn/ *noun* a protein which causes high temperature. Abbr **IL-1**

interleukin-2 /,intəlu:kɪn 'tu:/ noun a protein which stimulates T-cell production, used in the treatment of cancer. Abbr **IL-2**

interlobar /,intə'ləʊbər/ adjective between lobes

interlobar artery /,intə'ləʊbər 'a:təri/ noun an artery running towards the cortex on each side of a renal pyramid

interlobular /intə'lɒbjʊlər/ adjective between lobules

interlobular artery /intə'lɒbjʊlər ,a:təri/ noun one of the arteries running to the glomeruli of the kidneys

intermediate care /,intə'mi:dɪət 'keə/ noun care following surgery or illness that can be delivered in special units attached to a hospital or in the person's home by a special multidisciplinary team

intermedius /,intə'mi:diəs/ ♦ **vastus intermedius**

intermenstrual /,intə'menstruəl/ adjective between the menstrual periods

intermittent /,intə'mɪt(ə)nt/ adjective occurring at intervals

intermittent claudication /,intə'mɪt(ə)nt ,kləʊ:di'keɪʃ(ə)n/ noun a condition of the arteries causing severe pain in the legs which makes the person limp after having walked a short distance (NOTE: The symptoms increase with walking, stop after a short rest and recur when the person walks again.)

intermittent fever /,intə'mɪt(ə)nt 'fi:və/ noun fever which rises and falls regularly, as in malaria

intermittent self-catheterisation /,intə'mɪt(ə)nt self,kæθitə'reɪ'zeɪʃ(ə)n/ noun a procedure in which someone puts a catheter through the urethra into their own bladder from time to time to empty out the urine. Abbr **ISC**

intern /'ɪntə:n/ noun US a medical graduate who is working in a hospital before being licensed to practise medicine. ♦ **house officer**

externa /'ɪntə:nə/ ♦ **otitis interna**

internal /'ɪntə:n(ə)l/ adjective inside the body or a body part. Opposite **external** □ **the drug is for internal use only** it should not be used on the outside of the body

internal auditory meatus /ɪn,tɜ:n(ə)l ɔ:dit(ə)ri mi'eɪtəs/ noun a channel which takes the auditory nerve through the temporal bone

internal bleeding /ɪn,tɜ:n(ə)l 'bli:dɪŋ/ noun loss of blood inside the body, e.g. from a wound in the intestine

internal capsule /ɪn,tɜ:n(ə)l 'kæpsju:l/ noun a bundle of fibres linking the cerebral cortex and other parts of the brain

internal cardiac massage /ɪn,tɜ:n(ə)l ,ka:dɪæk 'mæsæ:g/ noun a method of making

the heart start beating again by pressing on the heart itself

internal carotid /ɪn,tɜ:n(ə)l kæ'rɒtid/ noun an artery in the neck, behind the external carotid, which gives off the ophthalmic artery and ends by dividing into the anterior and middle cerebral arteries

internal derangement of the knee /ɪn,tɜ:n(ə)l di'renɡərmənt əv ðə 'ni:/ noun a condition in which the knee cannot function properly because of a torn meniscus. Abbr **IDK**

internal ear /ɪn,tɜ:n(ə)l 'ɪə/ noun the part of the ear inside the head, behind the eardrum, containing the semicircular canals, the vestibule and the cochlea

internal haemorrhage /ɪn,tɜ:n(ə)l 'hem(ə)rɪdʒ/ noun a haemorrhage which takes place inside the body

internal haemorrhoids /ɪn,tɜ:n(ə)l 'hemorroidz/ plural noun swollen veins inside the anus

internal iliac artery /ɪn,tɜ:n(ə)l 'ɪliæk ,a:təri/ noun an artery which branches from the aorta in the abdomen and leads to the pelvis

internal injury /ɪn,tɜ:n(ə)l 'ɪndʒəri/ noun damage to one of the internal organs

internal jugular /ɪn,tɜ:n(ə)l 'dʒʌgjʊlə/ noun the largest jugular vein in the neck, leading to the brachiocephalic veins

internally /ɪn'tɜ:n(ə)lɪ/ adverb inside the body ○ *He was bleeding internally.*

internal medicine /ɪn,tɜ:n(ə)l 'med(ə)s(ə)n/ noun US the treatment of diseases of the internal organs by specialists

internal nares /ɪn,tɜ:n(ə)l 'neərɪz/ plural noun the two openings shaped like funnels leading from the nasal cavity to the pharynx. Also called **posterior nares**

internal oblique /ɪn,tɜ:n(ə)l ə'bli:k/ noun the middle layer of muscle covering the abdomen, beneath the external oblique

internal organ /ɪn,tɜ:n(ə)l 'ɔ:ga:n/ noun an organ situated inside the body

internal respiration /ɪn,tɜ:n(ə)l ,respi'reɪʃ(ə)n/ noun the part of respiration concerned with the passage of oxygen from the blood to the tissues, and the passage of carbon dioxide from the tissues to the blood

International Committee of the Red Cross /ɪntə'næʃ(ə)n(ə)l kæ'mit̬i əv ðə 'red 'krɒs/ noun an international organisation which provides mainly emergency medical help, but also relief to victims of earthquakes, floods and other disasters, or to prisoners of war. Abbr **ICRC**

International Council of Nurses /,intə'næʃ(ə)n(ə)l ,kaʊnsəl əv 'nɜ:siz/ noun an organisation founded in 1899 which now represents nurses in more than 120 countries. Its aims are to bring nurses together, to ad-

vance nursing worldwide and to influence health policies. Abbr **ICN**

international nonproprietary name /ˌintənæʃ(ə)nəl ,nɒnprəpriət(ə)ri 'neɪm/ noun each of 8,000 names selected by the World Health Organization that are the legally required generic names for pharmaceutical product labelling for most countries in the world, including all EU countries. Abbr **INN**

international unit /ˌintənæʃ(ə)nəl 'ju:nɪt/ noun an internationally agreed standard used in pharmacy as a measure of a substance such as a drug or hormone. Abbr **IU**

interneurone /ˌintə'nju:rəʊn/ noun a neurone with short processes which is a link between two other neurones in sensory or motor pathways

internist /'ɪntɜ:nɪst/ noun a specialist who treats diseases of the internal organs by non-surgical means

internodal /,ɪntə'nəʊd(ə)l/ adjective between two nodes

internuncial neurone /ˌintənʌns(ə)l 'nju:rəʊn/ noun a neurone which links two other nerve cells

internus /ɪn'tɜ:nəs/ noun medial rectus muscle in the orbit of the eye

interoceptor /,ɪntərəʊ'u:septə/ noun a nerve cell which reacts to a change taking place inside the body

interosseous /,ɪntə'rɔ:sɪəs/ adjective between bones

interparietal /,ɪntəpə'raɪət(ə)l/ adjective between parietal parts, especially between the parietal bones ■ noun same as **interparietal bone**

interparietal bone /,ɪntəpə'raɪət(ə)l ,baʊn/ noun a triangular bone in the back of the skull, rarely present in humans

interpeduncular cistern /,ɪntəpə'dʌŋkjʊlər ,sistən/ noun subarachnoid space between the two cerebral hemispheres beneath the midbrain and the hypothalamus

interphalangeal joint /,ɪntəfə'lændʒiəl dʒɔɪnt/ noun a joint between the phalanges. Also called **IP joint**

interphase /'ɪntəfeɪz/ noun a stage of a cell between divisions

interpubic joint /,ɪntəpəju:bɪk 'dʒɔɪnt/ noun a piece of cartilage which joins the two sections of the pubic bone. Also called **pubic symphysis**

interruptus /,ɪntə'ræptəs/ ♦ **coitus interruptus**

intersex /'ɪntəsɛks/ noun an organism that has both male and female characteristics

intersexuality /,ɪntəsɛk'su'əlɪti/ noun a condition in which a baby has both male and female characteristics, as in Klinefelter's syndrome and Turner's syndrome

interstice /ɪn'tɪ:sɪs/ noun a small space between body parts or within a tissue

interstitial /,ɪntə'stɪʃ(ə)l/ adjective referring to tissue located in the spaces between parts of something, especially between the active tissues in an organ

interstitial cell /,ɪntə'stɪʃ(ə)l sel/ noun a testosterone-producing cell between the tubules in the testes. Also called **Leydig cell**

interstitial cell stimulating hormone /,ɪntə,s्टɪʃ(ə)l sel 'stimjuleɪtɪŋ ,hɔ:məʊn/ noun a hormone produced by the pituitary gland which stimulates the formation of corpus luteum in females and testosterone in males. Abbr **ICSH**. Also called **luteinising hormone**

interstitial cystitis /,ɪntəstɪʃ(ə)l sɪ'staɪtɪs/ noun a persistent nonbacterial condition in which someone has bladder pain and wants to pass urine frequently. It is often associated with Hunner's ulcer.

intertrigo /,ɪntə'traɪgəʊ/ noun an irritation which occurs when two skin surfaces rub against each other, as in the armpit or between the buttocks

intertubercular plane /,ɪntətju:b3:kjʊlə 'pleɪn/ noun same as **transtubercular plane**

intervention /,ɪntə'venʃən/ noun a treatment

interventional radiology /,ɪntəvenʃən(ə)l ,reidi'blədʒi/ noun the area of medicine which uses X-rays, ultrasound and computer-assisted tomography to guide small instruments into the body for procedures such as biopsies, draining fluids or widening narrow vessels

interventricular /,ɪntə'ven'trɪkjʊlər/ adjective between ventricles in the heart or brain

interventricular foramen /,ɪntə'ven ,trɪkjʊlər fə'remən/ noun an opening in the brain between the lateral ventricle and the third ventricle, through which the cerebrospinal fluid passes

interventricular septum /,ɪntə'ven ,trɪkjʊlər 'sepٹəm/ noun a membrane between the right and left ventricles in the heart

intervertebral /,ɪntə've:z:tibr(ə)l/ adjective between vertebrae

intervertebral disc /,ɪntə,v3:tibrəl 'disk/ noun a round plate of cartilage which separates two vertebrae in the spinal column. See illustration at **CARTILAGINOUS JOINT** in Supplement. Also called **vertebral disc**

intervertebral foramen /,ɪntə,v3:tibrəl fə'remən/ noun a space between two vertebrae

intestinal /ɪn'testɪn(ə)l/ adjective referring to the intestine

intestinal anastomosis /ɪn'testɪn(ə)l ə,næstə'məʊsɪs/ noun a surgical operation to join one part of the intestine to another, after a section has been removed

intestinal flora /ɪn'testɪn(ə)l 'flɔ:rə/ *plural noun* beneficial bacteria which are always present in the intestine

intestinal glands /ɪn'testɪn(ə)l glændz/ *plural noun* tubular glands found in the mucous membrane of the small and large intestine, especially those between the bases of the villi in the small intestine. Also called **Lieberkühn's glands, crypts of Lieberkühn**

intestinal infection /ɪn'testɪn(ə)l ɪn'fekʃ(ə)n/ *noun* an infection in the intestines

intestinal juice /ɪn'testɪn(ə)l dʒu:s/ *noun* alkaline liquid secreted by the small intestine which helps to digest food

intestinal obstruction /ɪn'testɪn(ə)l əb'strʌkʃən/ *noun* a blocking of the intestine

intestinal villi /ɪn'testɪn(ə)l 'vɪləɪ/ *plural noun* projections on the walls of the intestine which help in the digestion of food

intestinal wall /ɪn'testɪn(ə)l 'wɔ:l/ *noun* the layers of tissue which form the intestine

intestine /ɪn'testɪn/ *noun* the part of the digestive system between the stomach and the anus that digests and absorbs food. ☞ **large intestine, small intestine** (NOTE: For other terms referring to the intestines, see words beginning with **entero-**.)

intima /'ɪntɪmə/ ♦ **tunica intima**

intolerance /ɪn'tɒlərəns/ *noun* the fact of being unable to endure something such as pain or to take a medicine without an adverse reaction ☞ *He developed an intolerance to penicillin.*

intoxicant /ɪn'tɒksɪkənt/ *noun* a substance which induces a state of intoxication or poisoning, e.g. an alcoholic drink

intoxicate /ɪn'tɒksɪkeɪt/ *verb* to make someone incapable of controlling his or her actions, because of the influence of alcohol on the nervous system ☞ *He drank six glasses of whisky and became completely intoxicated.*

intoxication /ɪn'tɒksi'keɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a condition which results from the absorption and diffusion in the body of a substance such as alcohol ☞ *She was driving in a state of intoxication.*

intra- /ɪntrə/ *prefix* inside

intra-abdominal /ɪntrə əb'domɪn(ə)l/ *adjective* inside the abdomen

intra-articular /ɪntrə ə:tɪkju:lə/ *adjective* inside a joint

intracellular /ɪntrə'selju:lə/ *adjective* inside a cell

intracerebral haematoma /ɪntrə 'serəbrəl ,hɪ:mə'təʊma/ *noun* a blood clot inside a cerebral hemisphere

intracranial /ɪntrə'kreɪniəl/ *adjective* inside the skull

intracranial pressure /ɪntrə'kreɪniəl 'preʃə/ *noun* the pressure of the subarachnoid

fluid, which fills the space between the skull and the brain. Abbr **ICP**

intractable /ɪn'træktəb(ə)l/ *adjective* not able to be controlled ☞ *an operation to relieve intractable pain*

intracutaneous /,intrækju:'teɪniəs/ *adjective* inside layers of skin tissue

intracutaneous injection /,intrækju:,teɪniəs ɪn'dækʃən/ *noun* an injection of a liquid between the layers of skin, as for a test for an allergy

intradermal /,intrə'dɜ:m(ə)l/ *adjective* within or introduced between the layers of the skin
intradermal test /,intrə'dɜ:m(ə)l tɛst/ *noun* a test requiring an injection into the thickness of the skin, e.g. a Mantoux test or an allergy test

intradermic /,intrə'dɜ:mɪk/ *adjective* same as **intradermal**

intradural /,intrə'djʊərəl/ *adjective* inside the dura mater

intramedullary /,intrə'med'lərɪ/ *adjective* inside the bone marrow or spinal cord

intramural /,intrə'mjuərəl/ *adjective* inside the wall of an organ

intramuscular /,intrə'mʌskju:lə/ *adjective* inside a muscle

intramuscular injection /,intrə'mʌskju:lə ɪn'dækʃən/ *noun* an injection of liquid into a muscle, e.g. for a slow release of a drug

intranasal /,intrə'neɪz(ə)l/ *adjective* inside or into the nose

introcular /,intrə'ɒkjʊlə/ *adjective* inside the eye

intraocular lens /,intrə'ɒkjʊlə 'lenz/ *noun* an artificial lens implanted inside the eye. Abbr **IOL**

intracular pressure /,intrə'ɒkjʊlə 'preʃə/ *noun* the pressure inside the eyeball (NOTE: If the pressure is too high, it causes glaucoma.)

intraoperative ultrasound *noun* high-resolution imaging used in surgery. Abbr **IOUS**

intraorbital /,intrə'ɔ:bit(ə)l/ *adjective* within the orbit of the eye

intraosseous /,intrə'ɒsiəs/ *adjective* within a bone

intrathecal /,intrə'θi:k(ə)l/ *adjective* inside a sheath, especially inside the intradural or subarachnoid space

intratracheal /,intrə'træ'ki:l/ *adjective* within the trachea. Also called **endotracheal**

intratubercular plane /,intrə'tju:b3:kju:lə 'pleɪn/ *noun* a plane at right angles to the sagittal plane, passing through the tubercles of the iliac crests

intruterine /,intrə'ju:tərain/ *adjective* inside the uterus

intruterine contraceptive device /,intrə ju:tərain ,kɒntrə'septɪv dɪ'veɪs/, **intruterine device** /,intrəju:tərain dɪ'veɪs/ *noun* a

plastic coil placed inside the uterus to prevent pregnancy. Abbr **IUCD, IUD**

intravascular /,intrə'veæskjʊlə/ *adjective* inside the blood vessels

intravenous /,intrə'venəs/ *adjective* into a vein. Abbr **IV**

intravenous drip /,intrəvi:nəs 'drɪp/ *noun* a thin tube that is inserted into a vein and is used to very gradually give a person fluids, either for rehydration, feeding or medication purposes

intravenous feeding /,intrəvi:nəs 'fi:dɪŋ/ *noun* the procedure of giving someone liquid food by means of a tube inserted into a vein

intravenous injection /,intrəvi:nəs ɪn 'dʒekʃən/ *noun* an injection of liquid into a vein, e.g. for the fast release of a drug

intravenously /,intrə'venəsli/ *adverb* into a vein ○ *a fluid given intravenously*

intravenous pyelogram /,intrəvi:nəs 'paɪələgræm/, **intravenous urogram** /,intrəvi:nəs 'juərəgræm/ *noun* a series of X-ray photographs of the kidneys using pyelography.

Abbr **IVP**

intravenous pyelography /,intrəvi:nəs ,paɪə'lɒgrəfi/, **intravenous urography** /,intrəvi:nəs ju:rɒgrəfi/ *noun* an X-ray examination of the urinary tract after opaque liquid has been injected intravenously into the body and taken by the blood into the kidneys

intraventricular /,intrə'ventrɪkjʊlər/ *adjective* inside or placed into a ventricle in the heart or the brain

intra vitam /,intrə 'vaitəm/ *adverb* during life

intrinsic /in't्रɪnsɪk/ *adjective* belonging to the essential nature of an organism, or entirely within an organ or part

intrinsic factor /in',trɪnsɪk 'fækٹə/ *noun* a protein produced in the gastric glands which reacts with the extrinsic factor, and which, if lacking, causes pernicious anaemia

intrinsic ligament /in',trɪnsɪk 'lɪgəmənt/ *noun* a ligament which forms part of the capsule surrounding a joint

intrinsic muscle /in',trɪnsɪk 'mʌs(ə)l/ *noun* a muscle lying completely inside the part or segment, especially of a limb, which it moves

intro- /,intrəʊ/ *prefix* inward

introduce /,intrə'dju:s/ *verb* 1. to put something into something ○ *He used a syringe to introduce a medicinal substance into the body.* ○ *The nurse introduced the catheter into the vein.* 2. to present two people to one another when they have never met before ○ *Can I introduce my new assistant?* 3. to start a new way of doing something ○ *The hospital has introduced a new screening process for cervical cancer.*

introduction /,intra'dækʃən/ *noun* 1. the act of putting something inside something ○ *the*

introduction of semen into the woman's uterus

○ *the introduction of an endotracheal tube into the patient's mouth* 2. the act of starting a new process

introitus /in't्रूɪtəs/ *noun* an opening into any hollow organ or canal

introduction /,intrə'dʒekʃən/ *noun* a person's unconscious adoption of the attitudes or values of another person whom he or she wants to impress

introspection /,intrə'spekcʃən/ *noun* a detailed and sometimes obsessive mental self-examination of feelings, thoughts and motives

introversion /,intrə'vez:ʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a condition in which a person is excessively interested in himself or herself and his or her own mental state. Compare **extroversion**

introvert /'intrəvɜ:t/ *noun* a person who thinks only about himself or herself and his or her own mental state. Compare **extrovert**

introverted /'intrəvɜ:tɪd/ *adjective* referring to someone who thinks only about himself or herself

intubate /'intju:bət/ *verb* to insert a tube into any organ or part of the body. Also called **catheterise**

intubation /,intju:'beɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the therapeutic insertion of a tube into the larynx through the glottis to allow the passage of air. Also called **catheterisation**

intumescence /,intju:'mes(ə)ns/ *noun* the swelling of an organ

intussusception /,intə'sə'sepʃən/ *noun* a condition in which part of the gastrointestinal tract becomes folded down inside the part beneath it, causing an obstruction and strangulation of the folded part

inunction /in'ʌŋkʃən/ *noun* 1. the act of rubbing an ointment into the skin so that the medicine in it is absorbed 2. an ointment which is rubbed into the skin

in utero /in 'ju:tərəʊ/ *adverb, adjective* in, or while still inside, a woman's womb

invade /in'veɪd/ *verb* to enter and spread gradually throughout a part of the body, e.g. the entry of a microorganism that causes disease

invagination /in,vædʒɪ'næʃ(ə)n/ *noun* 1. same as **intussusception** 2. the surgical treatment of hernia, in which a sheath of tissue is made to cover the opening

invalid /'invlɪd/ *(dated) noun* someone who has had an illness and has not fully recovered from it or who has been permanently disabled

■ *adjective* weak or disabled

invalidity /,in'velɪdɪti/ *noun* the condition of being disabled

invasion /in'veɪz(ə)n/ *noun* the entry of bacteria into a body, or the first attack of a disease

invasive /in'veɪsɪv/ *adjective* 1. referring to cancer which tends to spread throughout the

body 2. referring to an inspection or treatment which involves entering the body by making an incision. ◊ **non-invasive**

inverse care law /ɪn'versɪs 'keə ləʊ/ *noun* the idea that the people who most need care and services are least likely or able to access them
inversion /ɪn'versʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the fact of being turned towards the inside ◊ *inversion of the foot* See illustration at **ANATOMICAL TERMS** in Supplement ◊ **inversion of the uterus** a condition in which the top part of the uterus touches the cervix, as if it were inside out, which may happen after childbirth

invertase /ɪn'verteɪz/ *noun* an enzyme in the intestine which splits sucrose

investigation /ɪn'vestɪg'eɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* an examination to find out the cause of something which has happened ◊ *The Health Authority ordered an investigation into how the drugs were stolen.*

investigative surgery /ɪn'vestɪgætɪv 'sɜːdʒəri/ *noun* surgery to investigate the cause of a condition

in vitro /ɪn 'viːtrəʊ/ *adjective, adverb* a Latin phrase meaning 'in a glass', i.e. in a test tube or similar container used in a laboratory ◊ **in vitro activity, in vitro experiment** experiment which takes place in the laboratory

in vitro fertilisation /ɪn 'viːtrəʊ ,fɜːtəlai 'zeɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the fertilisation of an ovum in the laboratory. ◊ **test-tube baby.** Abbr **IVF**

in vivo *adjective, adverb* a Latin phrase meaning 'in living tissue', i.e. referring to an experiment which takes place on the living body

in vivo experiment /ɪn 'viːvəʊ ɪk'sperɪmənt/ *noun* an experiment on a living body, e.g. that of an animal

involutcrum /ɪnvə'lu:k्रəm/ *noun* a covering of new bone which forms over diseased bone

involuntary /ɪn'velənt(ə)ri/ *adjective* done automatically, without any conscious thought or decision-making being involved ◊ *Patients are advised not to eat or drink, to reduce the risk of involuntary vomiting while on the operating table.*

involuntary action /ɪn'velənt(ə)ri 'ækʃən/ *noun* an action which someone does without thinking or making a conscious decision

involuntary muscle /ɪn'velənt(ə)ri 'mʌsl(ə)l/ *noun* a muscle supplied by the autonomic nervous system, and therefore not under voluntary control, e.g. the muscle which activates a vital organ such as the heart

involution /ɪnvə'lu:s(ə)n/ *noun* 1. the return of an organ to its usual size, e.g. the shrinking of the uterus after childbirth 2. a period of decline of organs which sets in after middle age

involutional /ɪnvə'lu:s(ə)n(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to involution

involutional melancholia /ɪnvə'lu:s(ə)n(ə)l melən'kəuliə/ *noun* a depression

which occurs in people, mainly women, after middle age, probably caused by a change of endocrine secretions

iodine /'aɪədɪn/ *noun* a chemical element which is essential to the body, especially to the functioning of the thyroid gland (NOTE: Lack of iodine in the diet can cause goitre. The chemical symbol is I.)

IOL *abbr* intraocular lens

ion /'aɪən/ *noun* an atom that has an electric charge (NOTE: Ions with a positive charge are called cations and those with a negative charge are called anions.)

COMMENT: It is believed that living organisms, including human beings, react to the presence of ionised particles in the atmosphere. Hot dry winds contain a higher proportion of positive ions than usual and these winds cause headaches and other illnesses. If negative ionised air is introduced into an air-conditioning system, the incidence of headaches and nausea among people working in the building may be reduced.

ionise /'aɪənaɪz/, **ionize** *verb* to give an atom an electric charge

ioniser /'aɪənaɪzə/, **ionizer** *noun* a machine that increases the amount of negative ions in the atmosphere of a room, so counteracting the effect of positive ions

ionotherapy /aɪənəθə'rəpɪ/ *noun* treatment by ions introduced into the body via an electric current

iontophoresis /aɪəntəʊfə'rɪ:sɪs/ *noun* the movement of ions through a biological material when an electric current passes through it

Ious *abbr* intraoperative ultrasound

IPAV *abbr* intermittent positive airway ventilation. ◊ **positive pressure ventilation**

ippecacuanha /,ɪpɪkækjʊ'aːnə/ *noun* a drug made from the root of an American plant, used as a treatment for coughs, and also as an emetic (NOTE: The US term is **ippecac**.)

IP joint /,aɪ 'pi: dʒɔɪnt/ *noun* same as **interphalangeal joint**

IPPV *abbr* intermittent positive pressure ventilation. ◊ **positive pressure ventilation**

ipratropium /aɪprə'traʊpiəm/, **ipratropium bromide** /aɪprə,traʊpiəm'brəʊmaɪd/ *noun* a drug which helps to relax muscles in the airways, used in the treatment of conditions such as asthma, bronchitis and emphysema

ipsilateral /,ɪpsɪ'lætərəl/ *adjective* located on or affecting the same side of the body. Also called **homolateral**. Opposite **contralateral**

IQ *abbr* intelligence quotient

IRDS *abbr* infant respiratory distress syndrome

irid- /ɪrid/ *prefix* referring to the iris

iridectomy /,ɪrɪ'dektəmɪ/ *noun* the surgical removal of part of the iris

iridencleisis /,ɪriden'kləsɪs/ *noun* an operation to treat glaucoma, where part of the iris

is used as a drainage channel through a hole in the conjunctiva

iridocyclitis /ɪrɪdəʊsɪ'klraɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the iris and the tissues which surround it

iridodialysis /ɪrɪdəʊdai'læsɪs/ *noun* the separation of the iris from its insertion

iridoplegia /ɪrɪdəʊ'pli:dʒə/ *noun* paralysis of the iris

iridoptosis /ɪrɪdəʊ'təʊsɪs/ *noun* the pushing forward of the iris through a wound in the cornea

iridotomy /ɪrɪ'dɒtəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical incision into the iris

iris /'aɪrɪs/ *noun* a coloured ring in the eye, with the pupil at its centre. See illustration at EYE in Supplement

COMMENT: The iris acts like the aperture in a camera shutter, opening and closing to allow more or less light through the pupil into the eye.

iritis /aɪ'rɪtaɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the iris

iron /'aɪrən/ *noun* 1. a chemical element essential to the body, present in foods such as liver and eggs 2. a common grey metal (NOTE: The chemical symbol is Fe.)

COMMENT: Iron is an essential part of the red pigment in red blood cells. Lack of iron in haemoglobin results in iron-deficiency anaemia. Storage of too much iron in the body results in haemochromatosis.

iron-deficiency anaemia /,aɪrən dɪ'fɪʃ(ə)nseɪ ə,nī:mi:ə/ *noun* anaemia caused by a lack of iron in red blood cells

iron lung /,aɪrən 'laɪŋ/ *noun* same as Drinker respirator

irradiation /ɪ,rɪədɪ'eɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* 1. the process of spreading from a centre, as e.g., nerve impulses do 2. the use of radiation to treat people or to kill bacteria in food

irreducible hernia /ɪrɪ,dju:səb(ə)l 'hɜ:nɪə/ *noun* a hernia where the organ cannot be returned to its usual position

irregular /ɪ'regjʊlə/ *adjective* not regular or normal ○ *The patient's breathing was irregular.* ○ *The nurse noted that the patient had developed an irregular pulse.* ○ *He has irregular bowel movements.*

irrigate /'ɪrɪgeɪt/ *verb* to wash out a cavity in the body

irrigation /,ɪrɪ'geɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the washing out of a cavity in the body

irritability /ɪrɪtə'bilitɪ/ *noun* the state of being irritable

irritable /'ɪrɪtəb(ə)l/ *adjective* 1. easily able to become inflamed and painful 2. feeling annoyed and impatient

irritable bowel syndrome /,ɪrɪtəb(ə)l 'baʊəl ,sɪndrəʊm/ *noun* → mucous colitis. Abbr IBS

irritable colon /,ɪrɪtəb(ə)l 'kəʊlon/ *noun* → mucous colitis

irritable hip /,ɪrɪtəb(ə)l 'hɪp/ *noun* a condition of pain in the hip which is caused by swelling of the synovium. Treatment involves bed rest, traction and anti-inflammatory drugs.

irritant /'ɪrit(ə)nt/ *noun* a substance which can irritate

irritant dermatitis /,ɪrit(ə)nt ,dɜ:mə'taɪtɪs/ *noun* same as contact dermatitis

irritate /'ɪriteɪt/ *verb* to cause a painful reaction in part of the body, especially to make it inflamed ○ *Some types of wool can irritate the skin.*

irritation /,ɪri'teɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a feeling of being irritated ○ *an irritation caused by the ointment*

ISC abbr intermittent self-catheterisation

isch- /ɪsk/ *prefix* too little

ischaemia /'ɪski:mɪə/ *noun* a deficient blood supply to a part of the body

ischaemic /'ɪski:mɪk/ *adjective* lacking in blood

...the term stroke does not refer to a single pathological entity. Stroke may be haemorrhagic or ischaemic; the latter is usually caused by thrombosis or embolism' [British Journal of Hospital Medicine]

ischaemic heart disease /,ɪski:mɪk 'ha:t dɪ,zi:z/ *noun* a disease of the heart caused by a failure in the blood supply, as in coronary thrombosis. Abbr IHD

ischio- /ɪskiə/ *prefix* same as ischio- (used before vowels)

ischia /'ɪskiə/ plural of ischium

ischial /'ɪskiəl/ *adjective* referring to the ischium or hip joint

ischial tuberosity /,ɪskiəl ,tju:bə'rɒsɪti/ *noun* a lump of bone forming the ring of the ischium

ischio- /ɪskiə/ *prefix* referring to the ischium

ischiocavernosus muscle /,ɪskiəkəvə'neʊsəs ,mʌs(ə)l/ *noun* a muscle along one side of the perineum

ischiorectal /,ɪskiə'rekta(l)/ *adjective* referring to both the ischium and the rectum

ischiorectal abscess /,ɪskiə'rekta(l) 'æbses/ *noun* an abscess which forms in fat cells between the anus and the ischium

ischiorectal fossa /,ɪskiə'rekta(l) 'fɒsə/ *noun* a space on either side of the lower end of the rectum and anal canal

ischium /'ɪskiəm/ *noun* the lower part of the hip bone in the pelvis. See illustration at PELVIS in Supplement (NOTE: The plural is ischia.)

Ishihara colour charts /,ɪʃi'hā:rə 'kʌlər ,tʃɑ:tɪs/ *plural noun* charts used in a test for colour vision in which numbers or letters are shown in dots of primary colours with dots of other colours around them. People with normal colour vision can see them, but people who are colour-blind cannot.

Ishihara test /,ɪʃi'hā:rə test/ *noun* a test using Ishihara colour charts

islets of Langerhans /aɪləts əv 'læŋəhæns/, **islands of Langerhans** /aɪləndz əv 'læŋəhænz/, **islet cells** /'aɪlət selz/ **plural noun** groups of cells in the pancreas which secrete the hormones glucagon, insulin and gastrin [Described 1869. After Paul Langerhans (1847–88), Professor of Pathological Anatomy at Freiburg, Germany.]

iso- /aɪsəʊ/ **prefix** equal

isoantibody /aɪsəʊ'æntɪbədi/ **noun** an antibody which forms in one person as a reaction to antigens from another person (NOTE: The plural is **isoantibodies**.)

isograft /'aɪsəʊgra:f/ **noun** a graft of tissue from an identical twin. Also called **syngraft**

isoimmunisation /,aɪsəʊ,ɪmju:nɪz'eɪʃ(ə)n/, **isoimmunization** **noun** immunisation of a person with antigens derived from another person

isolate /aɪsəleɪt/ **verb** 1. to keep one person apart from others because he or she has a dangerous infectious disease 2. to identify a single virus, bacterium or other pathogen among many ○ *Scientists have been able to isolate the virus which causes Legionnaires' disease.* ○ *Candida is easily isolated from the mouths of healthy adults.*

isolation /,aɪsə'leɪʃ(ə)n/ **noun** the separation of a person, especially one with an infectious disease, from others

isolation ward /,aɪsə'leɪʃ(ə)n wɔ:d/ **noun** a special ward where people who have dangerous infectious diseases can be kept isolated from others

isolator /'aɪsəleɪtə/ **noun** 1. a large clear plastic bag in which a person can be nursed, or operated on, in a sterile environment 2. a room or piece of equipment which keeps people or substances separated from others which may contaminate them ○ *an isolator stretcher* ○ *an isolator cabinet*

isoleucine /aɪsəʊ'lʊsi:n/ **noun** an essential amino acid

isometric /aɪsəʊ'metrik/ **adjective** 1. involving equal measurement ○ *an isometric view of the system* 2. referring to muscle contraction in which tension occurs with very little shortening of muscle fibres 3. referring to exercises in which the muscles are put under tension but not contracted

isometrics /,aɪsəʊ'metriks/ **plural noun** exercises to strengthen the muscles, in which the muscles contract but do not shorten

isoniazid /,aɪsə'naɪəzɪd/ **noun** a colourless crystalline compound that is used in the treatment of tuberculosis. Abbr INH

isoprenaline /,aɪsəʊ'prenəlɪ:n/, **isoproterenol** **noun** a drug that relieves asthma by widening the bronchial tubes in the lungs

isosorbide dinitrate /,aɪsəʊ,sɔ:baid daɪ'naitrɛt/ **noun** a compound which causes widening or relaxation of the blood vessels, used in the treatment of angina pectoris

isotonic /,aɪsəʊ'tɒnɪk/ **adjective** referring to a solution, e.g. a saline drip, which has the same osmotic pressure as blood serum and which can therefore be passed directly into the body. Compare **hypertonic**, **hypotonic**

isotonicity /,aɪsətɒ'nɪsɪti/ **noun** the equal osmotic pressure of two or more solutions

isotonic solution /,aɪsətɒnɪk sə'l[u:s(ə)n/ **noun** a solution which has the same osmotic pressure as blood serum, or as another liquid it is compared with

isotope /'aɪsətəʊp/ **noun** a form of a chemical element which has the same chemical properties as other forms but a different atomic mass

isotretinoin /,aɪsəʊtre'tɪnɔɪn/ **noun** a drug used in the treatment of severe acne and several other skin diseases

ispaghula /,ɪspə'gu:lə/, **ispaghula husk** /,ɪspa'gu:lə hʌsk/ **noun** a natural dietary fibre used to treat constipation, diverticulitis and irritable bowel syndrome

ISS **abbr** injury scoring system

isthmus /'ɪsməs/ **noun** 1. a short narrow canal or cavity 2. a narrow band of tissue joining two larger masses of similar tissue, e.g. the section in the centre of the thyroid gland, which joins the two lobes (NOTE: The plural is **isthmi** or **isthmuses**.)

itch /ɪtʃ/ **noun** 1. an irritated place on the skin which makes a person want to scratch 2. **the itch** same as **scabies** (*informal*) ■ **verb** to produce an irritating sensation, making someone want to scratch

itching /'ɪtʃɪŋ/ **noun** same as **pruritus**

itchy /'ɪtʃi/ **adjective** making a person want to scratch ○ *The main symptom of the disease is an itchy red rash.*

-itis /aɪtɪs/ **suffix** inflammation

ITU **abbr** intensive therapy unit

IU **abbr** international unit

IUCD **abbr** intrauterine contraceptive device

IUD **abbr** 1. intrauterine death 2. intrauterine device

IUS **abbr** intrauterine system

IV **abbr** intravenous

IVF **abbr** in vitro fertilisation

IVP **abbr** intravenous pyelogram

IVU **abbr** intravenous urography

J

J /dʒeɪ/ *abbr* joule

jab /dʒæb/ *noun* an injection or inoculation (*informal*) ○ *a tetanus jab*

Jacksonian epilepsy /dʒæk,səniən 'epɪlɛpsi/ *noun* a form of epilepsy in which the jerking movements start in one part of the body before spreading to others [Described 1863. After John Hughlings Jackson (1835–1911), British neurologist.]

Jacquemier's sign /'dʒækəmɪəz ,sain/ *noun* a sign of early pregnancy in which the vaginal mucosa becomes slightly blue due to an increased amount of blood in the arteries [After Jean Marie Jacquemier (1806–79), French obstetrician]

jactitation /,dʒæktrɪ'teɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the action of constantly moving the body around in a restless way, especially because of mental illness

jag /dʒæg/ *noun* in Scotland, an injection or inoculation (*informal*)

jargon /'dʒa:gɒn/ *noun* 1. the words used by people who have a particular area of knowledge, which are usually only understood by those people ○ *medical jargon* 2. a stream of words that makes no sense, produced by someone with aphasia or a severe mental disorder

jaundice /'dʒɔ:ndɪs/ *noun* a condition in which there is an excess of bile pigment in the blood, and in which the pigment is deposited in the skin and the whites of the eyes, which have a yellow colour. Also called **icterus**

COMMENT: Jaundice can have many causes, usually relating to the liver: the most common are blockage of the bile ducts by gallstones or by disease of the liver and Weil's disease.

jaw /dʒɔ:/ *noun* the bones in the face which hold the teeth and form the mouth ○ *He fell down and broke his jaw.* ○ *The punch on his mouth broke his jaw.*

COMMENT: The jaw has two parts, the upper (the maxillae) being fixed parts of the skull, and the lower (the mandible) being attached to the skull with a hinge so that it can move up and down.

jawbone /'dʒɔ:bəʊn/ *noun* one of the bones which form the jaw, especially the lower jaw or mandible

jejun- /dʒɪdʒu:n/ *prefix* same as **jejuno-** (*used before vowels*)

jejunal /dʒɪ'dʒu:n(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to the jejunum

jejunal ulcer /dʒɪ,dʒu:n(ə)l 'ʌlsə/ *noun* an ulcer in the jejunum

jejunectomy /,dʒɪdʒu:'nektəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to remove all or part of the jejunum (NOTE: The plural is **jejunectomies**.)

jejuno- /dʒɪ:dʒu:nəʊ/ *prefix* referring to the jejunum

jejunoileostomy /dʒɪ,dʒu:nəʊ,ɪlɪ'ɒstəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to make an artificial link between the jejunum and the ileum (NOTE: The plural is **jejunoileostomies**.)

jejunostomy /,dʒɪdʒu'nɒstəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to make an artificial passage to the jejunum through the wall of the abdomen (NOTE: The plural is **jejunostomies**.)

jejunitomy /,dʒɪdʒu'nɒtəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to cut into the jejunum (NOTE: The plural is **jejunitomies**.)

jejunum /dʒɪ'dʒu:nəm/ *noun* the part of the small intestine between the duodenum and the ileum, about 2 metres long. See illustration at **DIGESTIVE SYSTEM** in Supplement

jerk /dʒɜ:k/ *noun* a sudden movement of part of the body which indicates that the local reflex arc is intact ■ *verb* to make sudden movements, or cause something to make sudden movements ○ *In some forms of epilepsy the limbs jerk.*

jet lag /'dʒet læg/ *noun* a condition suffered by people who travel long distances in planes, caused by rapid changes in time zones which affect sleep patterns and meal times and thus interfere with the body's metabolism ○ *We had jet lag when we flew from Australia.*

jet-lagged /'dʒet lægd/ *adjective* experiencing jet lag ○ *jet-lagged travellers* ○ *We were jet-lagged for a week.*

joint /dʒɔɪnt/ *noun* a structure at a point where two or more bones join, especially one which allows movement of the bones ○ *The elbow is a joint in the arm.* ○ *Arthritis is accompanied by stiffness in the joints.* ♦ **Charcot's**

joint (NOTE: For other terms referring to joints, see words beginning with **arthr-**, **arthro-**.)

joint-breaker fever /'dʒɔɪnt ,breɪkə ,fɪ:və/ noun same as **o'nyong-nyong fever**

joint capsule /'dʒɔɪnt ,kæpsju:l/ noun white fibrous tissue which surrounds and holds a joint together. See illustration at **SYNOVIAL JOINT** in Supplement

joint investment plan /,dʒɔɪnt ɪn 'vestmənt plæn/ noun a plan that health and social services draw up together for specific areas of care

joint mouse /'dʒɔɪnt maʊs/ plural noun a loose piece of bone or cartilage in the knee joint, making the joint lock

joule /dʒu:l/ noun the SI unit of measurement of work or energy. 4.184 joules equals one calorie. Symbol J

jugular /'dʒʌgjʊlə/ adjective referring to the throat or neck ■ noun same as **jugular vein**

COMMENT: There are three jugular veins on each side: the **internal jugular** is large and leads to the brachiocephalic vein, the **external jugular** is smaller and leads to the subclavian vein and the **anterior jugular** is the smallest.

jugular nerve /'dʒʌgjʊlə nɜ:v/ noun one of the nerves in the neck

jugular trunk /'dʒʌgjʊlə trʌŋk/ noun a terminal lymph vessel in the neck, draining into the subclavian vein

jugular vein /'dʒʌgjʊlə veɪn/ noun one of the veins which pass down either side of the neck. Also called **jugular**

juice /dʒu:s/ noun 1. liquid from a fruit or vegetable □ a glass of *orange juice* or *tomato juice* 2. a natural fluid of the body. ♦ **gastric juice**

jumper's knee /,dʒʌmpəz 'ni:/ noun a painful condition suffered by athletes and dancers in which inflammation develops in the knee joint

junction /'dʒʌŋkʃən/ noun a joining point

junior doctor /,dʒu:nɪə 'dɒktə/ noun a doctor who is completing his or her training in hospital

junk food /'dʒʌŋk fu:d/ noun food of little nutritional value, e.g. high-fat processed snacks, eaten between or instead of meals

juvenile /'dʒu:vənɪəl/ adjective relating to or affecting children or adolescents

juxta- /dʒʌkstə/ prefix beside or near

juxta-articular /,dʒʌkstə ə:tɪkjʊlə/ adjective occurring near a joint

juxtaposition /,dʒʌkstə'zɪʃ(ə)n/ noun the placing of two or more things side by side so as to make their similarities or differences more obvious

K

k symbol kilo-

Kahn test /kɑ:n/ *test/ noun* a test of blood serum to diagnose syphilis [Described 1922. After Reuben Leon Kahn, Lithuanian-born serologist who worked in the USA.]

kala-azar /,kə:lə ə'zə:/ *noun* an often fatal form of leishmaniasis caused by the infection of the intestines and internal organs by a parasite, *Leishmania*, spread by flies. Symptoms are fever, anaemia, general wasting of the body and swelling of the spleen and liver.

kalium /'keɪliəm/ *noun* same as **potassium**

kaolin /'keɪəlɪn/ *noun* a fine soft clay used in the making of medical preparations, especially for the treatment of diarrhoea

Kaposi's sarcoma /kə,pəʊɪz sə:'kəʊmə/ *noun* a cancer which takes the form of many haemorrhagic nodes affecting the skin, especially on the extremities [Described 1872. After Moritz Kohn Kaposi (1837–1902), Professor of Dermatology at Vienna, Austria.]

COMMENT: Formerly a relatively rare disease, found mainly in tropical countries, Kaposi's sarcoma is now more common as it is one of the diseases associated with AIDS.

Kartagener's syndrome /,kɑ:tɪn'dʒɪ:nəz, sɪndrəʊm/ *noun* a hereditary condition in which all the organs in the chest and abdomen are positioned on the opposite side from the usual one, i.e. the heart and stomach are on the right

karyo- /kærɪəʊ/ *prefix* relating to a cell nucleus

karyotype /'kærɪəʊtaɪp/ *noun* the chromosome complement of a cell, shown as a diagram or as a set of letters and numbers

Kawasaki disease /,kə:wə'sa:kiz dɪ,zɪ:z/ *noun* a retrovirus infection that often occurs in small children and causes a high temperature, rash, reddened eyes, peeling skin and swollen lymph nodes

Kayser-Fleischer ring /,kaɪzə 'flaɪʃə ,rɪŋ/ *noun* a brown ring on the outer edge of the cornea, which is a diagnostic sign of hepatolenticular degeneration [Described 1902 by Kayser, 1903 by Fleischer. Bernard Kayser (1869–

1954), German ophthalmologist; Bruno Richard Fleischer (1848–1904), German physician.]

kcal abbr kilocalorie

Kegel exercises /'keɪg(ə)l ,eksəsərзɪz/ *plural noun* exercises which strengthen the muscles of the pelvic floor in women and help to prevent any accidental leakage of urine when they cough, sneeze or lift things

Keller's operation /'keləz əpə,reɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a surgical operation on the big toe to remove a bunion or to correct an ankylosed joint [Described 1904. After William Lordan Keller (1874–1959), US surgeon.]

keloid /'ki:lɔɪd/ *noun* an excessive amount of scar tissue at the site of a skin injury

kerat- /kerət/ *prefix* same as **kerato-** (*used before vowels*)

keratalgia /,kerə'tældʒɪə/ *noun* pain felt in the cornea

keratectasia /,kerətek'terɪzɪə/ *noun* a condition in which the cornea bulges

keratectomy /,kerə'tektəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to remove the whole or part of the cornea (NOTE: The plural is **keratectomies**.)

keratic /kə'rætɪk/ *adjective* 1. relating to horny tissue or to keratin 2. relating to the cornea

keratin /'kerətɪn/ *noun* a protein found in horny tissue such as fingernails, hair or the outer surface of the skin

keratinisation /,kerətɪnəz'ɪʃ(ə)n/, **keratinization** *noun* the appearance of horny characteristics in tissue. Also called **cornification**

keratinise /'kerətɪnaɪz, kə'rætɪnaɪz/, **keratinize** *verb* to convert something into keratin or into horny tissue (NOTE: **keratinising – keratinised**)

keratinocyte /,kerə'tɪnəʊsait/ *noun* a cell which produces keratin

keratitis /,kərə'taɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the cornea

kerato- /kerətəʊ/ *prefix* referring to horn, horny tissue or the cornea

keratoacanthoma /,kerətəʊ,ækən'θəʊmə/ *noun* a type of benign skin tumour which dis-

appears after a few months (NOTE: The plural is **keratoacanthomas** or **keratoacanthomata**.)

keratoconjunctivitis /'kerətəʊkən'dʒʌŋktɪvɪtɪs/ noun inflammation of the cornea with conjunctivitis

keratoconus /'kerətəʊ'kənəs/ noun a cone-shaped lump on the cornea

keratoglobus /'kerətəʊ'gləʊbəs/ noun swelling of the eyeball

keratoma /'kerətəʊmə/ noun a hard thickened growth due to hypertrophy of the horny zone of the skin (NOTE: The plural is **keratomas** or **keratomata**.)

keratomalacia /'kerətəʊmə'leɪʃə/ noun 1. a softening of the cornea frequently caused by Vitamin A deficiency 2. softening of the horny layer of the skin

keratome /'kerətəʊm/ noun a surgical knife used for operations on the cornea

keratometer /'kerətəʊmɪtər/ noun an instrument for measuring the curvature of the cornea

keratometry /'kerətəʊmətri/ noun the process of measuring the curvature of the cornea

keratopathy /'kerətəpəθi/ noun any non-inflammatory disorder of the cornea (NOTE: The plural is **keropathies**.)

keratoplasty /'kerətəplæsti/ noun a surgical operation to graft corneal tissue from a donor in place of diseased tissue (NOTE: The plural is **keratoplasties**.)

keratoprosthesis /'kerətəʊprɒsɪs/ noun 1. a surgical operation to replace the central area of a cornea with clear plastic, when it has become opaque 2. a piece of clear plastic put into the cornea (NOTE: The plural is **keratoprostheses**.)

keratoscope /'kerətəskəʊp/ noun an instrument for examining the cornea to see if it has an unusual curvature. Also called **Placido's disc**

keratosis /'kerətəʊsɪs/ noun a lesion of the skin (NOTE: The plural is **keratoses**.)

keratotomy /'kerətətəmɪ/ noun a surgical operation to make a cut in the cornea, the first step in many intraocular operations (NOTE: The plural is **keratomies**.)

kerion /'kɪəriən/ noun a painful soft mass, usually on the scalp, caused by ringworm

kernicterus /kə'nɪktərəs/ noun yellow pigmentation of the basal ganglia and other nerve cells in the spinal cord and brain, found in children with icterus

Kernig's sign /'kɜ:nɪgz sain/ noun a symptom of meningitis in which the knee cannot be straightened if the person is lying down with the thigh brought up against the abdomen [Described 1882. After Vladimir Mikhailovich Kernig (1840–1917), Russian neurologist.]

ketamine /'ketəmɪn/ noun a white crystalline powder that is a general anaesthetic, used in human and veterinary medicine

ketoacidosis /,ki:təʊ,æsɪ'deʊsɪs/ noun an accumulation of ketone bodies in tissue in diabetes, causing acidosis

ketoconazole /,ki:təʊ'kɒnəzəʊl/ noun a drug which is effective against a wide range of fungal infections such as cryptococcosis and thrush

ketogenesis /,ki:təʊ'dʒenəsɪs/ noun the production of ketone bodies

ketogenic /,ki:təʊ'dʒenɪk/ adjective forming ketone bodies

ketogenic diet /,ki:təʊdʒenɪk 'daɪət/ noun a diet with a high fat content, producing ketosis

ketonaemia /,ki:təʊ'ni:mɪə/ noun a morbid state in which ketone bodies exist in the blood

ketone /'kɪ:təʊn/ noun a chemical compound produced when glucose is unavailable for use as energy, as in untreated diabetes, and fats are used instead, leading to ketosis

ketone bodies /'kɪ:təʊn,bo:bɪz/ plural noun ketone compounds formed from fatty acids

ketone group /'kɪ:təʊn gru:p/ noun a chemical group characteristic of ketones, with carbon atoms doubly bonded to an oxygen atom and to the carbon atoms of two other organic groups

ketonuria /,ki:təʊ'njuəriə/ noun a state in which ketone bodies are excreted in the urine

ketoprofen /,ki:təʊ'prəʊfən/ noun an anti-inflammatory drug used in the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis and osteoarthritis

ketosis /ki:təʊsɪs/ noun a state in which ketone bodies such as acetone and acetic acid accumulate in the tissues, a late complication of Type I diabetes mellitus

ketosteroid /,ki:təʊ'stɪərɔɪd/ noun a steroid such as cortisone which contains a ketone group

keyhole surgery /'ki:həʊl,sɜ:dʒəri/ noun surgery carried out by inserting tiny surgical instruments through an endoscope (*informal*) Also called **laparoscopic surgery**

kg abbr kilogram

kidney /'kɪdnɪ/ noun either of two organs situated in the lower part of the back on either side of the spine behind the abdomen, whose function is to maintain the usual concentrations of the main constituents of blood, passing the waste matter into the urine. See illustration at **KIDNEY** in Supplement

COMMENT: A kidney is formed of an outer cortex and an inner medulla. The nephrons which run from the cortex into the medulla filter the blood and form urine. The urine is passed through the ureters into the bladder. Sudden sharp pain in back of the abdomen, going downwards, is an indication of a kidney stone passing into the ureter.

kidney dialysis /'kɪdnɪ dai,æləsɪs/ noun the process of removing waste matter from blood by passing it through a kidney machine. Also called **haemodialysis**

kidney donor /'kɪdnɪ ,dəʊnər/ *noun* a person who gives one of his or her kidneys as a transplant

kidney failure /'kɪdnɪ ,feɪljə/ *noun* a situation in which the kidneys do not function properly

kidney machine /'kɪdnɪ mæ,ʃɪn/ *noun* an apparatus through which blood is passed to be cleaned by dialysis if the person's kidneys have failed

kidney stone /'kɪdnɪ stəʊn/ *noun* a hard mass of calcium like a little piece of stone which forms in the kidney

kidney transplant /'kɪdnɪ ,trænsplɑ:tnt/ *noun* a surgical operation to give someone with a diseased or damaged kidney a kidney from another person

kill /kɪl/ *verb* to make someone or something die ○ *She was killed in a car crash.* ○ *Heart attacks kill more people every year.* ○ *Antibodies are created to kill bacteria.*

killer /'kɪlə/ *noun* a person or disease which kills ○ *In the winter, bronchitis is the killer of hundreds of senior citizens.* ○ *Virulent typhoid fever can be a killer disease.* ♀ **painkiller**

killer cell /'kɪlə sel/, **killer T cell** *noun* a type of immune cell that recognises and destroys cells that have specific antigens on their surface, e.g. virus-infected or cancerous cells

Killian's operation /'kiliənz ɔ:pə,reɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a surgical operation to clear the frontal sinus by curetting in which the incision is made in the eyebrow [After Gustav Killian (1860–1921), German laryngologist]

kilo- /'kɪləʊ/ *prefix* one thousand (10^3). Symbol **k**

kilogram /'kɪləgræm/ *noun* an SI unit of measurement of weight equal to 1000 grams ○ *She weighs 62 kilos (62 kg).* Symbol **kg**

kilojoule /'kɪləʊdʒu:l/ *noun* an SI unit of measurement of energy or heat equal to 1000 joules. Symbol **kJ**

kilopascal /'kɪləʊpæskəl/ *noun* an SI unit of measurement of pressure equal to 1000 pascals. Symbol **kPa**

Kimmelstiel-Wilson disease /,kɪməl'sti:l 'wɪlsən dɪ,zi:z/, **Kimmelstiel-Wilson syndrome** /,kɪməl'sti:l 'wɪlsən ,sɪndrəʊm/ *noun* a form of nephrosclerosis found in people with diabetes [Described 1936. After Paul Kimmelstiel (1900–70), US pathologist; Clifford Wilson (1906–98), Professor of Medicine, London University, UK.]

kin /kɪn/ *noun* relatives or close members of the family

kin- /kɪn/ *prefix* same as **kine-** (used before vowels)

kinaesthesia /,kɪni:s'θi:ziə/ *noun* the fact of being aware of the movement and position of parts of the body (NOTE: The US spelling is **kinesthesia**.)

COMMENT: Kinaesthesia is the result of information from muscles and ligaments which is passed to the brain and which allows the brain to recognise movements, touch and weight.

kinanaesthesia /,kɪnæni:s'θi:ziə/ *noun* the fact of not being able to sense the movement and position of parts of the body (NOTE: The US spelling is **kinanesthesia**.)

kinase /'kaɪneɪz/ *noun* an enzyme belonging to a large family of related substances that bind to the energy-providing molecule ATP and regulate functions such as cell division and signalling between cells

kine- /kɪni/ *prefix* movement

kinematics /,kɪnɪ'mætɪks/ *noun* the science of movement, especially of body movements

kineplasty /'kɪnɪplæsti/ *noun* an amputation in which the muscles of the stump of the amputated limb are used to operate an artificial limb (NOTE: The plural is **kineplasties**.)

kinesi- /kɪni:s'i/ *prefix* movement (NOTE: used before vowels)

kinesiology /,kɪnɪsi'ɒplədʒi/ *noun* the study of human movements, particularly with regard to their use in treatment

kinesis *noun* the movement of a cell in response to a stimulus. Compare **taxis**

-**kinesis** /kɪni:sɪs/ *suffix* 1. activity or motion

2. a change in the movement of a cell, though not in any particular direction. Examples are a change in its speed or in its turning behaviour.

kinesitherapy /,kɪni:s'i'θeərəpi/ *noun* therapy involving movement of parts of the body

kinetic /kɪ'nɛtɪk, kai'nɛtɪk/ *adjective* relating to movement

King's Fund /'kɪŋz fʌnd/ *noun* a major independent health charity in London

King's model /'kɪŋz ,mod(ə)l/ *noun* a model of nurse-patient relationships based on ten principles: interaction, perception, communication, transaction, role, stress, growth and development, time, self and space. Through an exchange of information nurses and patients work together to help individuals and groups attain, maintain and restore health.

kinin /'kainin/ *noun* a polypeptide that makes blood vessels widen and smooth muscles contract

Kirschner wire /,kɜ:ʃfənə 'waɪə/, **Kirschner's wire** *noun* a wire attached to a bone and tightened to provide traction to a fracture [Described 1909. After Martin Kirschner (1879–1942), Professor of Surgery at Heidelberg, Germany.]

kiss of life /,kɪs əv 'laɪf/ *noun* same as **cardiopulmonary resuscitation (informal)**

kJ abbr kilojoule

Klebsiella /,klebsi'elə/ *noun* a Gram-negative bacterium, one form of which, *Klebsiella pneumoniae*, can cause pneumonia

Klebs-Loeffler bacillus /,klebz 'lefle bə,siləs/ *noun* the bacterium which causes diph-

theria, *Corynebacterium diphtheriae* [After Theodor Albrecht Klebs (1834–1913), bacteriologist in Zürich, Switzerland, and Chicago, USA; Friedrich August Loeffler (1852–1915), bacteriologist in Berlin, Germany]

Kleihauer test /'kleɪhaʊə test/, **Kleihauer-Betke test** noun a test used to check whether there has been any blood loss from a fetus to the mother across the placenta. It is usually done immediately after delivery.

klepto- /'kleptəʊ/ prefix stealing or theft

kleptomania /,kleptəʊ'meɪniə/ noun a form of mental disorder in which someone has a compulsive desire to steal things, even things of little value

kleptomaniac /,kleptəʊ'meɪniæk/ noun a person who has a compulsive desire to steal
Klinefelter's syndrome /'klainfɛltəz ,sɪndrəʊm/ noun a genetic disorder in which a male has an extra female chromosome, making an XXY set, giving sterility and partial female characteristics [Described 1942. After Harry Fitch Klinefelter Jr. (b. 1912), Associate Professor of Medicine, John Hopkins Medical School, Baltimore, USA.]

Klumpke's paralysis /,klu:mpkəz pə'reæləsɪs/ noun a form of paralysis due to an injury during birth, affecting the forearm and hand. Also called **Déjerine-Klumpke's syndrome** [Described 1885. After Augusta Klumpke (Madame Déjerine-Klumpke) (1859–1937), French neurologist, one of the first women to qualify in Paris in 1888.]

knee /ni:/ noun a joint in the middle of the leg, joining the femur and the tibia (NOTE: For other terms referring to the knee, see **genu**.)

kneecap /'nɪkæp/ noun same as **patella**

knee jerk /'ni: dʒɜ:k/ noun same as **patellar reflex**

knee joint /ni: dʒɔɪnt/ noun a joint where the femur and the tibia are joined, covered by the kneecap

knit /nit/ verb (of broken bones) to join together again ○ *Broken bones take longer to knit in elderly people than in children.* (NOTE: **knitting – knitted – knit**)

knock-knee /nɒk 'ni:/ noun a state in which the knees touch and the ankles are apart when a person is standing straight. Also called **genu valgum**

knock-kneed /nɒk 'ni:d/ adjective referring to a person whose knees touch when he or she stands straight with feet slightly apart

knock out /nɒk 'aut/ verb to hit someone so hard that he or she is no longer conscious ○ *He was knocked out by a blow on the head.*

knuckle /'nʌk(ə)l/ noun the back of each joint on a person's hand

Kocher manoeuvre /'kɒkə mə,nu:və/ noun a method for realigning a dislocated shoulder in which the arm is raised and a sud-

den change is made between inward and outward rotation of the head of the joint

Koch's bacillus /,kəʊks bə'siləs/ noun the bacterium which causes tuberculosis, *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* [Described 1882. After Robert Koch (1843–1910), Professor of Hygiene in Berlin, Germany, later Director of the Institute for Infectious Diseases. (Nobel Prize 1905).]

Koch-Weeks bacillus /,kəʊk 'wɪks bə'siləs/ noun the bacillus which causes conjunctivitis

Köhler's disease /kɔ:ləz dɪ,sɪz/ noun a degeneration of the navicular bone in children. Also called **scaphoiditis** [Described 1908 and 1926. After Alban Köhler (1874–1947), German radiologist.]

koilonychia /,kɔɪləʊ'nɪkiə/ noun a condition in which the fingernails are brittle and concave, caused by iron-deficiency anaemia

Koplik's spots /'kɒplɪks spɒts/ plural noun small white spots with a blue tinge surrounded by a red areola, found in the mouth in the early stages of measles [Described 1896. After Henry Koplik (1858–1927), US paediatrician.]

Korotkoff's method /'kɔ:rətκɒfs ,mɛθəd/ noun a method of finding a person's blood pressure by inflating a cuff around his or her upper arm to a pressure well above the systolic blood pressure and then gradually decreasing it

Korsakoff's syndrome /'kɔ:səkɒfɪs ,sɪndrəʊm/ noun a condition, caused usually by chronic alcoholism or disorders in which there is a deficiency of vitamin B, in which a person's memory fails and he or she invents things which have not happened and is confused [Described 1887. After Sergei Sergeyevich Korsakoff (1854–1900), Russian psychiatrist.]

kraurosis penis /krɔ:,rəʊsɪs 'pi:nɪs/ noun a condition in which the foreskin becomes dry and shrivelled

kraurosis vulvae /krɔ:,rəʊsɪs 'vʌlvə/ noun a condition in which the vulva becomes thin and dry due to lack of oestrogen, found usually in elderly women

Krause corpuscles /'kraʊzə ,kɔ:pʊs(ə)lz/ plural noun encapsulated nerve endings in the mucous membrane of the mouth, nose, eyes and genitals [Described 1860. After Wilhelm Johann Friedrich Krause (1833–1910), German anatomist.]

Krebs cycle /'krebz ,saɪk(ə)l/ noun same as **citric acid cycle** [Described 1937. After Sir Hans Adolf Krebs (1900–81), German biochemist who emigrated to England in 1934. Shared the Nobel prize for Medicine 1953 with F.A. Lipmann.]

Krukenberg tumour /'kru:kənbə:g ,tju:mə/ noun a malignant tumour in the ovary secondary to a tumour in the stomach [After Friedrich Krukenberg (1871–1946), German gynaecologist.]

Kuntscher nail /'kʌntʃər neɪl/, **Küntscher nail** noun a long steel nail used in operations to pin fractures of long bones, especially the femur, through the bone marrow [Described 1940. After Gerhard Kuntscher (1900–72), German surgeon.]

Kupffer's cells /'kʊpfəz selz/, **Kupffer cells** plural noun large specialised liver cells which break down haemoglobin into bile [Described 1876. After Karl Wilhelm von Kupffer (1829–1902), German anatomist.]

Kveim test /'kvaim test/ noun a skin test to confirm the presence of sarcoidosis [After Morten Ansgar Kveim (b. 1892), Swedish physician]

kwashiorkor /kwaʃi'ɔ:kɔ:/ noun malnutrition of small children, mostly in tropical countries, causing anaemia, wasting of the body and swollen liver

kypho- /kaɪfəʊ/ prefix a hump

kyphoscoliosis /kaɪfəʊ,skɒli'əʊsɪs/ noun a condition in which someone has both backward and lateral curvature of the spine

kyphosis /kaɪ'fəʊsɪs/ noun an excessive backward curvature of the top part of the spine
(NOTE: The plural is **kyphoses**.)

kyphotic /kaɪ'fɒtɪk/ adjective referring to kyphosis

L

I, L symbol **litre**

lab /læb/ *noun* same as **laboratory** (*informal*) ○ *The samples have been returned by the lab.* ○ *We'll send the specimens away for a lab test.*
lab- /leɪb/ *prefix* same as **labio-** (*used before vowels*)

label /'leɪb(ə)l/ *noun* piece of paper or card attached to an object or person for identification ■ *verb* to attach a label to an object ○ *The bottle is labelled 'poison'.* (NOTE: **labelling** – **labelled**. The US spellings are **labeling** – **labelled**.)

labia /'leɪbiə/ plural of **labium**

labial /'leɪbiəl/ *adjective* referring to the lips or to labia

labia majora /,leɪbiə mə'dʒɔ:rə/ *plural noun* two large fleshy folds at the outside edge of the vulva. See illustration at **UROGENITAL SYSTEM (FEMALE)** in Supplement

labia minora /,leɪbiə mi'nɔ:rə/ *plural noun* two small fleshy folds on the inside edge of the vulva. See illustration at **UROGENITAL SYSTEM (FEMALE)** in Supplement. Also called **nymphae**

labile /'leɪbəl/ *adjective* referring to a drug which is unstable and likely to change if heated or cooled

ability of mood /lə'biliti əv 'mu:d/ *noun* a tendency for a person's mood to change suddenly

labio- /leɪbiəʊ/ *prefix* referring to the lips or to labia

labioplasty /'leɪbiəʊ,plæsti/ *noun* a surgical operation to repair damaged or deformed lips (NOTE: The plural is **labioplasties**.)

labium /'leɪbiəm/ *noun* 1. any of the four fleshy folds which surround the female genital organs 2. a structure which looks like a lip (NOTE: The plural is **labia**.)

labor /'leɪbə/ *noun* US spelling of **labour**

laboratory /lə'bɒrət(ə)rɪ/ *noun* a special room or place where scientists can do specialised work such as research, the testing of chemical substances or the growing of tissues in culture ○ *The samples of water from the hospital have been sent to the laboratory for testing.* ○ *The new drug has passed its laboratory tests.* (NOTE: The plural is **laboratories**.)

laboratory officer /lə'bɒrət(ə)ri ,pfɪsə/ *noun* a qualified person in charge of a laboratory

laboratory technician /lə'bɒrət(ə)ri tek'nɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a person who does practical work in a laboratory and has particular care of equipment

laboratory techniques /lə'bɒrət(ə)ri tek'nɪkz/ *plural noun* the methods or skills needed to perform experiments in a laboratory

laboratory test /lə'bɒrət(ə)ri test/ *noun* a test carried out in a laboratory

labour /'leɪbə/ *noun* childbirth, especially the contractions in the uterus which take place during childbirth □ **in labour** experiencing the physical changes such as contractions in the uterus which precede the birth of a child ○ *She was in labour for 14 hours.* □ **to go into labour** to start to experience the contractions which indicate the birth of a child is imminent ○ *She went into labour at 6 o'clock.*

COMMENT: Labour usually starts about nine months, or 266 days, after conception. The cervix expands and the muscles in the uterus contract, causing the amion to burst. The muscles continue to contract regularly, pushing the baby into, and then through, the vagina.

laboured breathing /,leɪbəd 'bri:ðɪŋ/ *noun* difficult breathing, which can be due to various causes such as asthma

labour pains /'leɪbə peɪnz/ *plural noun* the pains felt at regular intervals by a woman as the muscles of the uterus contract during childbirth

labrum /'leɪbrəm/ *noun* a ring of cartilage around the rim of a joint (NOTE: The plural is **labra**.)

labyrinth /'læbərɪnθ/ *noun* a series of interconnecting tubes, especially those in the inside of the ear

COMMENT: The labyrinth of the inner ear is in three parts: the three semicircular canals, the vestibule and the cochlea. The osseous labyrinth is filled with a fluid (perilymph) and the membranous labyrinth is a series of ducts and canals inside the osseous labyrinth. The membranous labyrinth contains a fluid (endolymph). As the endolymph moves about in the membranous labyrinth it stimulates the vestib-

ular nerve which communicates the sense of movement of the head to the brain. If a person turns round and round and then stops, the endolymph continues to move and creates the sensation of giddiness.

labyrinthectomy /læbərɪnθ'æk'təmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to remove the labyrinth of the inner ear (NOTE: The plural is **labyrinthectomies**.)

labyrinthitis /læbərɪnθ'θaɪtɪs/ *noun* same as **otitis interna**

lacerated /'læsəreɪtɪd/ *adjective* torn or with a rough edge

lacerated wound /'læsəreɪtɪd 'wʊnd/ *noun* a wound where the skin is torn, as by a rough surface or barbed wire

laceration /'læsə'reɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* 1. a wound which has been cut or torn with rough edges, and is not the result of stabbing or pricking 2. the act of tearing tissue

lacrymal /lækrim(ə)l/ *adjective* same as **lacrimal**

lacrimal /lækrim(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to tears, the tear ducts or the tear glands. ◊ **nasolacrimal**

lacrimal apparatus /lækrim(ə)l ,æpə'reɪtəs/ *noun* the arrangement of glands and ducts which produce and drain tears. Also called **lacrimal system**

lacrimal bone /lækrim(ə)l bəun/ *noun* one of two little bones which join with others to form the orbits

lacrimal canaliculus /lækrim(ə)l kænə'lɪkjʊləs/ *noun* a small canal draining tears into the lacrimal sac

lacrimal caruncle /lækrim(ə)l kə'rʌŋk(ə)l/ *noun* a small red point at the inner corner of each eye

lacrimal duct /lækrim(ə)l dʌkt/ *noun* a small duct leading from the lacrimal gland. Also called **tear duct**

lacrimal gland /lækrim(ə)l glænd/ *noun* a gland beneath the upper eyelid which secretes tears. Also called **tear gland**

lacrimal puncta /lækrim(ə)l 'pʌŋktə/ *plural noun* small openings of the lacrimal canaliculus at the corners of the eyes through which tears drain into the nose

lacrimal sac /lækrim(ə)l 'sæk/ *noun* a sac at the upper end of the nasolacrimal duct, linking it with the lacrimal canaliculus

lacrimal system /lækrim(ə)l ,sɪstəm/ *noun* same as **lacrimal apparatus**

lacrimation /lækri'tmeɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the production of tears

lacrimator /lækri'meɪtə/ *noun* a substance which irritates the eyes and makes tears flow

lacrymal /lækriml/, **lachrymal** /lækrim(ə)l/ *adjective* another spelling of **lacrimal**

lact- /lækt/ *prefix* same as **lacto-** (*used before vowels*)

lactase /'lækteɪz/ *noun* an enzyme, secreted in the small intestine, which converts milk sugar into glucose and galactose

lactate /læk'teɪt/ *verb* to produce milk in the body (NOTE: **lactating – lactated**)

lactation /læk'teɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* 1. the production of milk in the body 2. the period during which a mother is breastfeeding a baby

COMMENT: Lactation is stimulated by the production of the hormone prolactin by the pituitary gland. It starts about three days after childbirth, before which period the breasts secrete colostrum.

lacteal /'læktiəl/ *adjective* referring to milk ■ *noun* a lymph vessel in a villus which helps the digestive process in the small intestine by absorbing fat

lactic /læktɪk/ *adjective* relating to milk

lactic acid /læktɪk 'æsɪd/ *noun* a sugar which forms in cells and tissue, and also in sour milk, cheese and yoghurt

COMMENT: Lactic acid is produced as the body uses up sugar during exercise. Excessive amounts of lactic acid in the body can produce muscle cramp.

lactiferous /læk'tɪfərəs/ *adjective* producing, secreting or carrying milk

lactiferous duct /læk'tɪfərəs 'dʌkt/ *noun* a duct in the breast which carries milk

lactiferous sinus /læk'tɪfərəs 'saɪnəs/ *noun* a dilatation of the lactiferous duct at the base of the nipple

lacto- *prefix* referring to milk

Lactobacillus /læk'təbækə'siləs/ *noun* a genus of Gram-positive bacteria which produces lactic acid from glucose and may be found in the digestive tract and the vagina

lactogenic hormone /læktə'gənɪk 'hɔ:məʊn/ *noun* same as **prolactin**

lactose /læk'təs/ *noun* a type of sugar found in milk

lactose intolerance /'læk'təs ɪn'tələrəns/ *noun* a condition in which a person cannot digest lactose because lactase is absent in the intestine or because of an allergy to milk, causing diarrhoea

lactosuria /,læk'təs'juəriə/ *noun* the excretion of lactose in the urine

lactovegetarian /,læk'təvə'getərɪən/ *noun* a person who does not eat meat, but eats vegetables, fruit, dairy produce and eggs and sometimes fish ◊ *He has been a lactovegetarian for twenty years. Compare vegan, vegetarian*

lactulose /'læk'tjʊləs/ *noun* an artificially produced sugar used as a laxative

lacuna /læ'kjū:nə/ *noun* a small hollow or cavity (NOTE: The plural is **lacunae**.)

lacunar /læ'kjū:nər/ *adjective* relating to hollows or cavities in tissue such as in bone or cartilage, especially ones that are unusual

Laënnec's cirrhosis /leɪnɛks sə'rəʊsɪs/ *noun* the commonest form of alcoholic cirrhosis of the liver [Described 1819. After René Théophile Hyacinthe Laennec (1781–1826), Professor of medicine at the Collège de France, and inventor of the stethoscope.]

laevocardia /li:və'ku:dɪə/ *noun* the condition of having the heart in the usual position, with the apex towards the left side of the body. Compare **dextrocardia**

-lalia /leɪliə/ *suffix* speech or a speech disorder

lambda /'læmðə/ *noun* 1. the 11th letter of the Greek alphabet 2. the point at the back of the skull where the sagittal suture and lambdoidal suture meet

lambdoid /'læmðɔɪd/ *adjective* shaped like the capital Greek letter lambda, like an upside down V or y

lambdoid suture /læm,dɔɪd 'sʊ:tʃə/; **lambdoidal suture** /læm,dɔɪd(ə)l 'sʊ:tʃə/ *noun* a horizontal joint across the back of the skull between the parietal and occipital bones

lamblia /'læmlbiə/ *noun* same as **Giardia**

lambliasis /læm'blaɪəsɪs/ *noun* same as **giardiasis**

lame /leɪm/ *adjective* not able to walk easily because of pain, stiffness or damage in a leg or foot (NOTE: This term is regarded as offensive.)

lamella /lə'melə/ *noun* 1. a thin sheet of tissue 2. a thin disc placed under the eyelid to apply a drug to the eye (NOTE: The plural is **lamellae**.)

lameness /'leɪməns/ *noun* the inability to walk normally because of pain, stiffness or damage in a leg or foot

lamina /'læmɪnə/ *noun* 1. a thin membrane 2. a side part of the posterior arch in a vertebra (NOTE: The plural is **laminae**.)

lamina propria /,læmɪnə 'prəʊprɪə/ *noun* the connective tissue of mucous membranes containing, e.g., blood vessels and lymphatic tissues

laminectomy /,læmɪ'nektəmi/ *noun* a surgical operation to cut through the lamina of a vertebra in the spine to get to the spinal cord. Also called **rachiotomy** (NOTE: The plural is **laminectomies**.)

lamotrigine /lə'mɒtrɪdʒɪn/ *noun* a drug that helps to control petit mal epilepsy

lance /la:n̩s/ *verb* to make a cut in a boil or abscess to remove the pus

lancet /'la:nsit/ *noun* 1. a sharp two-edged pointed knife formerly used in surgery 2. a small pointed implement used to take a small capillary blood sample, e.g. to measure blood glucose levels

lancinate /'la:nsɪneɪt/ *verb* to lacerate or cut something (NOTE: **lancinating – lancinated**)

lancinating /'la:nsɪneɪtɪŋ/ *adjective* referring to pain which is sharp and cutting

Landry's paralysis /lændrɪz pə'ræləsɪs/ *noun* same as **Guillain-Barré syndrome** (see)

[After Jean-Baptiste Octave Landry (1826–65), French physician]

Landsteiner's classification /,lændstainəz ,klæsifi'keɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* same as **ABO system**

Langerhans' cells /'læŋəhæns selz/ *plural noun* cells on the outer layers of the skin

Langer's lines /'læŋəz laɪnz/ *plural noun* the arrangement of collagen protein fibres which causes the usual skin creases. Cuts made along these lines sever fewer fibres and heal better than other cuts. Also called **cleavage lines**

Lange test /'læŋgə test/ *noun* a method of detecting globulin in the cerebrospinal fluid [Described 1912. After Carl Friedrich August Lange (b. 1883), German physician.]

lanolin /'lænəlɪn/ *noun* grease from sheep's wool which absorbs water and is used to rub on dried skin, or in the preparation of cosmetics

lanugo /lə'nju:gəʊ/ *noun* 1. soft hair on the body of a fetus or newborn baby 2. soft hair on the body of an adult, except on the palms of the hands, the soles of the feet and the parts where long hair grows

laparo- /læpərəʊ/ *prefix* the lower abdomen

laparoscope /'læpərəskəp/ *noun* a surgical instrument which is inserted through a hole in the abdominal wall to allow a surgeon to examine the inside of the abdominal cavity. Also called **peritoneoscope**

laparoscopic /,læpərə'skɒpɪk/ *adjective* using a laparoscope

laparoscopic surgery /,læpərə,skɒpɪk 'sɜ:dʒəri/ *noun* same as **keyhole surgery**

laparoscopy /,læpə'rɒskəpi/ *noun* a procedure in which a laparoscope is used to examine the inside of the abdominal cavity. Also called **peritoneoscopy** (NOTE: The plural is **laparoscopies**.)

laparotomy /,læpə'rɒtəmi/ *noun* a surgical operation to cut open the abdominal cavity (NOTE: The plural is **laparotomies**.)

large intestine /la:dʒ ɪn'testɪn/ *noun* the section of the digestive system from the caecum to the rectum

Lariam /'lærɪəm/ a trade name for mefloquine hydrochloride

larva /'lɑ:rvə/ *noun* a stage in the development of an insect or tapeworm, after the egg has hatched but before the animal becomes adult (NOTE: The plural is **larvae**.)

laryng- /lərɪndʒ/ *prefix* same as **laryng-** (*used before vowels*)

laryngeal /la'rɪndʒɪəl/ *adjective* referring to the larynx

laryngeal inlet /lə,rɪndʒiəl 'ɪnlət/ *noun* the entrance from the laryngopharynx leading through the vocal cords to the trachea

laryngeal prominence /lə,rɪndʒiəl 'prɒmɪnəns/ *noun* same as **Adam's apple**

laryngeal reflex /lə,rɪndʒiəl 'ri:fleks/ *noun* the reflex that makes a person cough

laryngectomy /'lærɪn'dʒɛktəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to remove the larynx, usually as treatment for throat cancer (NOTE: The plural is **laryngectomies**.)

larynges /lə'rɪndʒi:z/ plural of **larynx**

laryngismus /'lærɪn'dʒɪzməs/, **laryngismus stridulus** /'lærɪn,dʒɪzməs 'strɪdʒʊləs/ *noun* a spasm of the throat muscles with a sharp intake of breath which occurs when the larynx is irritated, as in children who have croup

laryngitis /'lærɪn'dʒaɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the larynx

laryngo- /lərɪŋgəʊ/ *prefix* larynx

laryngofissure /lə,rɪŋgəʊ'fɪʃə/ *noun* a surgical operation to make an opening into the larynx through the thyroid cartilage

laryngologist /'lærɪn'gɒlədʒɪst/ *noun* a doctor who specialises in diseases of the larynx, throat and vocal cords

laryngology /'lærɪn'gɒlədʒɪ/ *noun* the study of diseases of the larynx, throat and vocal cords

laryngomalacia /lə,rɪŋgəmə'læfɪə/ *noun* a condition in which breathing is made difficult by softness of the larynx, occurring mainly in children under the age of two

laryngopharyngeal /lə,rɪŋgəfə'rɪn dʒiəl/ *adjective* referring to both the larynx and the pharynx

laryngopharynx /lərɪŋgəʊ'færɪŋks/ *noun* the part of the pharynx below the hyoid bone

laryngoscope /lə'rɪŋgɔskəʊp/ *noun* an instrument for examining the inside of the larynx using a light and mirrors

laryngoscopy /'lærɪn'gɔskəpi/ *noun* an examination of the larynx with a laryngoscope (NOTE: The plural is **laryngoscopies**.)

laryngospasm /lə'rɪŋgəspæzəm/ *noun* a muscular spasm which suddenly closes the larynx

laryngostenosis /lə,rɪŋgəstə'nəʊsɪs/ *noun* narrowing of the lumen of the larynx

laryngostomy /'lærɪn'gɔstəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to make a permanent opening from the neck into the larynx (NOTE: The plural is **laryngostomies**.)

laryngotomy /'lærɪn'gɔtəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to make an opening in the larynx through the membrane, especially in an emergency, when the throat is blocked (NOTE: The plural is **laryngotomies**.)

laryngotracheal /lə,rɪŋgəʊ'treɪkiəl/ *adjective* relating to both the larynx and the trachea ○ *laryngotracheal stenosis*

laryngotracheobronchitis /lə,rɪŋgəʊ',treɪkiəbrɒnθɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the larynx, trachea and bronchi, as in croup

larynx /'lærɪŋks/ *noun* the organ in the throat which produces sounds. Also called **voice box**

(NOTE: The plural is **larynges** or **larynxes**.)

COMMENT: The larynx is a hollow passage made of cartilage, containing the vocal cords, situated behind the Adam's apple. It is closed by the epiglottis when swallowing or before coughing.

laser /'leɪzə/ *noun* an instrument which produces a highly concentrated beam of light which can be used to cut or attach tissue, as in operations for a detached retina

laser laparoscopy /'leɪzə ləpə'rɒskəpi/ *noun* surgery performed through a laparoscope using a laser

laser probe /'leɪzə prəʊb/ *noun* a metal probe which is inserted into the body and through which a laser beam can be passed to remove a blockage in an artery

laser surgery /'leɪzə ,sɜ:dʒəri/ *noun* surgery using lasers, e.g. for the removal of tumours, sealing blood vessels, or the correction of shortsightedness

Lasix /'leɪzɪks/ a trade name for frusemide

Lassa fever /'læsə ,fɪvə/ *noun* a highly infectious and often fatal virus disease found in Central and West Africa, causing high fever, pains, and ulcers in the mouth [After a village in northern Nigeria where the fever was first reported]

Lassar's paste /'læsəz ,peɪst/ *noun* an ointment made of zinc oxide, used to treat eczema [After Oskar Lassar (1849–1907), German dermatologist]

lassitude /'læsɪtju:d/ *noun* a state where a person does not want to do anything, sometimes because he or she is depressed

lata /'lætə/ ♀ **fascia lata**

latent /'leɪt(ə)nt/ *adjective* referring to a disease which is present in the body but does not show any signs ○ *The children were tested for latent viral infection.*

lateral /'læt(ə)rəl/ *adjective* 1. further away from the midline of the body 2. referring to one side of the body

lateral aspect /,læt(ə)rəl 'æspekt/ *noun* a view of the side of part of the body. Also called **lateral view**. See illustration at **ANATOMICAL TERMS** in Supplement

lateral epicondyle /,læt(ə)rəl ,epɪ 'kɒndail/, **lateral epicondyle of the humerus** /,læt(ə)rəl epi,kɒndail əv ðə 'hju:mərəs/ *noun* a lateral projection on the rounded end of the humerus at the elbow joint

lateral epicondylitis /,læt(ə)rəl ,epɪkɒndɪ 'lætɪs/ *noun* same as **tennis elbow**

lateral fissure /,læt(ə)rəl 'fɪʃə/ *noun* a groove along the side of each cerebral hemisphere

laterally /'lætrəli/ *adverb* towards or on the side of the body. See illustration at **ANATOMICAL TERMS** in Supplement

lateral malleolus /'læt(ə)rəl mə'lɪ:ələs/ *noun* the part of the end of the fibula which protrudes on the outside of the ankle

lateral view /'læt(ə)rəl 'vju:/ *noun* same as **lateral aspect**

lateroversion /'læt(ə)rəʊ'vezʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a condition in which an organ is turned to one side

latissimus dorsi /lə,tɪ'sɪməs 'dɔ:si:/ *noun* a large flat triangular muscle covering the lumbar region and the lower part of the chest

laudanum /'lə:d(ə)nəm/ *noun* a solution of opium in alcohol that was formerly in widespread use for pain relief

laughing gas /'la:fɪŋ gæs/ *noun* same as **nitrous oxide (informal)**

lavage /'lævɪdʒ, lə'vɑ:ʒ/ *noun* the act of washing out or irrigating an organ such as the stomach

laxative /'læksətɪv/ *adjective* causing a bowel movement ■ *noun* a medicine which causes a bowel movement, e.g. bisacodyl, which stimulates intestinal motility, or lactulose which alters fluid retention in the bowel ► also called (all senses) **purgative**

COMMENT: Laxatives are very commonly used without prescription to treat constipation, although they should only be used as a short term solution. Change of diet and regular exercise are better ways of treating most types of constipation.

lazy eye /'leɪzi 'aɪ/ *noun* an eye which does not focus properly without an obvious cause (*informal*) ◊ **amblyopia**

LD abbr lethal dose

LDL abbr low-density lipoprotein

L-dopa /el 'daʊpə/ *noun* same as **levodopa**

LE abbr lupus erythematosus

lead /lɛd/ *noun* a very heavy soft metallic element, which is poisonous in compounds (NOTE: The chemical symbol is **Pb**.)

lead-free /'led 'fri:/ *adjective* with no lead in it ◊ **lead-free paint** ◊ **lead-free petrol**

lead line /'led laɪn/ *noun* a blue line seen on the gums in cases of lead poisoning

lead poisoning /'led 'pɔɪz(ə)nɪŋ/ *noun* poisoning caused by taking in lead salts. Also called **plumbism, saturnism**

COMMENT: Lead salts are used externally to treat bruises or eczema, but if taken internally produce lead poisoning. Lead poisoning can also be caused by paint (children's toys must be painted in lead-free paint) or by lead fumes from car engines not using lead-free petrol.

learning /'lɜ:nɪŋ/ *noun* the act of gaining knowledge of something or of how to do something

learning disability /'lɜ:nɪŋ 'dɪsə'biliti/, **learning difficulty** /'lɜ:nɪŋ ,dɪfɪk(ə)'lti/ *noun* a condition that results in someone finding it difficult to learn skills or information at the same rate as others of similar age ◊ *children with learning disabilities*

LE cells /'el 'i: selz/ *plural noun* white blood cells which show that someone has lupus erythematosus

lecithin /'lesɪθɪn/ *noun* a chemical which is a constituent of all animal and plant cells and is involved in the transport and absorption of fats

leech /li:tʃ/ *noun* a blood-sucking parasitic worm which lives in water, occasionally used in specialist procedures

COMMENT: Leeches were formerly commonly used in medicine to remove blood from a patient. Today they are used in special cases, where it is necessary to make sure that blood does not build up in part of the body, e.g. in a severed finger which has been sewn back on.

left-handed /,left 'hændɪd/ *adjective* using the left hand in preference to the right in most everyday tasks

left-handedness /,left 'hændɪdnəs/ *noun* the fact of being left-handed

leg /leg/ *noun* a part of the body with which a person or animal walks and stands

COMMENT: The leg is formed of the thigh, with the thighbone or femur, the knee with the kneecap or patella, and the lower leg, with two bones – the tibia and fibula.

legal abortion /,lɪg(ə)n /'læbə:f(ə)n/ *noun* an abortion which is carried out legally

Legg-Calvé disease /,leg 'kælvər dɪ,zi:z/, **Legg-Calvé-Perthes disease** /,leg 'kælvər 'pɜ:tɪz dɪ,zi:z/ *noun* degeneration of the upper end of the thighbone in young boys, which prevents the bone growing properly and can result in a permanent limp [Described 1910 separately by all three workers. Arthur Thornton Legg (1874–1939), American orthopaedic surgeon; Jacques Calvé (1875–1954), French orthopaedic surgeon; Georg Clemens Perthes (1869–1927), German surgeon.]

Legionnaires' disease /lɪ:dʒə'nɛz dɪ,zi:z/ *noun* a bacterial disease similar to pneumonia

COMMENT: The disease is thought to be transmitted in droplets of moisture in the air, and so the bacterium is found in central air-conditioning systems. It can be fatal to elderly or sick people, and so is especially dangerous if present in a hospital.

leio- /'leɪəʊ/ *prefix* smooth or smoothness

leiomyoma /,laɪəʊ'maɪ'əʊmə/ *noun* a tumour of smooth muscle, especially the smooth muscle coating the uterus (NOTE: The plural is **leiomyomas** or **leiomyomata**.)

leiomyosarcoma /,laɪəʊ'maɪəsəʊ'ma:kəʊmə/ *noun* a sarcoma in which large bundles of smooth muscle are found (NOTE: The plural is **leiomyosarcomas** or **leiomyosarcomata**.)

Leishmania /li:ʃ'meɪniə/ *noun* a tropical parasite which is passed to humans by the bites of sandflies and causes the group of infections known as leishmaniasis

leishmaniasis /li:ʃmə'naiəsɪs/ *noun* a disease caused by the parasite *Leishmania*, one

form of which causes disfiguring ulcers, while another attacks the liver and bone marrow

Lembert's suture /'lə:mbeɪz ,sʊ:tʃə/ noun a suture used to close a wound in the intestine which includes all the coats of the intestine [Described 1826. After Antoine Lembert (1802–51), French surgeon.]

lens /lenz/ noun 1. the part of the eye behind the iris and pupil, which focuses light coming from the cornea onto the retina. See illustration at **EYE** in Supplement 2. a piece of shaped glass or plastic which forms part of a pair of spectacles or microscope 3. same as **contact lens**

COMMENT: The lens in the eye is elastic, and can change its shape under the influence of the ciliary muscle, to allow the eye to focus on objects at different distances.

lens implant /lenz 'implə:nt/ noun an artificial lens implanted in the eye when the natural lens is removed, as in the case of cataract

lenticular /len'tɪkjʊlə/ adjective referring to or like a lens

lentigo /len'tɪgəʊ/ noun a small brown spot on the skin often caused by exposure to sunlight. Also called **freckle** (NOTE: The plural is **lentigines**.)

leontiasis /li:dɒn'taɪəsɪs/ noun a rare disorder in which the skull bones become enlarged and may give the appearance of a lion's head. It occurs if Paget's disease is not treated.

lepidosis /lepi'doʊsɪs/ noun a skin eruption in which pieces of skin fall off in flakes

leroma /le'prəʊmə/ noun a lesion of the skin caused by leprosy (NOTE: The plural is **leromas** or **lepromata**.)

leprosy /'leprəsɪ/ noun an infectious bacterial disease of skin and peripheral nerves caused by *Mycobacterium leprae*, which destroys the tissues and causes severe disfigurement if left untreated. Also called **Hansen's disease**

COMMENT: Leprosy attacks the nerves in the skin, and finally the patient loses all feeling in a limb, and parts such as fingers or toes can drop off.

leptin /'leptɪn/ noun a hormone produced by fat cells that signals the body's level of hunger to the hypothalamus of the brain

lepto- /leptəʊ/ prefix thin

leptocyte /'leptəsait/ noun a thin red blood cell found in anaemia

leptomeninges /leptə'me'nɪndʒi:z/ plural noun the two inner meninges, the pia mater and arachnoid

leptomeningitis /,leptə'menɪnɪdʒaɪtɪs/ noun inflammation of the leptomeninges

Leptospira /leptəʊ'spaɪrə/ noun a genus of bacteria excreted continuously in the urine of rats and many domestic animals. It can infect humans, causing leptospirosis or Weil's disease.

leptospirosis /,leptəʊspɪ'rəʊsɪs/ noun an infectious disease caused by the spirochaete *Leptospira*, transmitted to humans from rat urine, causing jaundice and kidney damage. Also called **Weil's disease**

leresis /lə'rɪ:sɪs/ noun uncoordinated speech, a sign of dementia

lesbian /'lezbɪən/ noun a woman who experiences sexual attraction towards other women

■ **adjective** referring to a lesbian

lesbianism /'lezbɪənɪz(ə)m/ noun sexual attraction in one woman for another. Compare **homosexuality**

Lesch-Nyhan disease /,leʃ 'naɪhən dɪ ,zɪ:z/; **Lesch-Nyhan syndrome** /,leʃ 'naɪhən ,sɪndrəʊm/ noun a rare genetic disorder in boys caused by a lack of the enzyme HPRT. Symptoms include uncontrolled muscle movements and learning disabilities, and life expectancy is 20 – 25.

lesion /'li:ʒ(ə)n/ noun a wound, sore or damage to the body (NOTE: Used to refer to any damage to the body, from the fracture of a bone to a cut on the skin.)

lesser /'lesə/ adjective smaller

lesser circulation /,lesə ,sɜ:kju'leɪʃ(ə)n/ noun same as **pulmonary circulation**

lesser trochanter /,lesə trə'kæntə/ noun a projection on the femur which is the insertion of the psoas major muscle

lesser vestibular gland /,lesə ve'stɪbjʊlə gl̩nd/ noun the more anterior of the vestibular glands

lethal /'li:θ(ə)l/ adjective killing or able to kill ○ *These fumes are lethal if inhaled.*

lethal dose /'li:θəl dəʊs/ noun the amount of a drug or other substance which will kill the person who takes it ○ *She took a lethal dose of aspirin.* Abbreviation **LD**

lethal gene /,li:θ(ə)l 'dʒi:n/, **lethal mutation** /,li:θ(ə)l mju:'teɪʃ(ə)n/ noun a gene, usually recessive, that results in the premature death of an individual who inherits it, e.g. the gene controlling sickle-cell anaemia

lethargic /lɪ'θə:dʒɪk/ adjective showing lethargy

lethargic encephalitis /lə,θə:dʒɪk en ,kefə'laitɪs/ noun a common type of virus encephalitis occurring in epidemics in the 1920s. Also called **encephalitis lethargica, sleepy sickness**

lethargy /'leθə:dʒɪ/ noun a state in which someone is not mentally alert, has slow movements and is almost inactive

Letterer-Siwe disease /,letərə 'si:wei dɪ ,zɪ:z/ noun a usually fatal disease, most common in infants, caused by the overproduction of a specialised type of immune cell

leucine /'lu:si:n/ noun an essential amino acid

leuco- /'lu:kəʊ/, **leuko-** /lu:kəʊ/ prefix white

leucocyte /lu:kə'sait/, **leukocyte** *noun* a white blood cell which contains a nucleus but has no haemoglobin

COMMENT: In average conditions the blood contains far fewer leucocytes than erythrocytes (red blood cells), but their numbers increase rapidly when infection is present in the body. Leucocytes are either granular (with granules in the cytoplasm) or nongranular. The main types of leucocyte are: lymphocytes and monocytes which are nongranular, and neutrophils, eosinophils and basophils which are granular (granulocytes). Granular leucocytes are produced by the bone marrow, and their main function is to remove foreign particles from the blood and fight infection by forming antibodies.

leucocytolysis /lu:kə'saʊt'ɒləsɪs/, **leukocytolysis** /lu:kə'saɪt'ɒləsɪs/ *noun* destruction of leucocytes

leucocytosis /lu:kə'saʊt'ɪsɪs/, **leukocytosis** /lu:kə'saɪt'ɪsɪs/ *noun* an increase in the numbers of leucocytes in the blood above the usual upper limit, in order to fight an infection

leucodeplete /lu:kə'du:t'pli:t/, **leukodeplete** *verb* to remove white cells from the blood (NOTE: **leucodepleting** – **leucodepleted**)

leucoderma /lu:kə'deɪmə/, **leukoderma** *noun* same as **vitiligo**

leucolysin /lu:kə'u'laisɪn/, **leukolysin** *noun* a protein which destroys white blood cells

leucoma /lu:kə'ma/, **leukoma** *noun* a white scar of the cornea (NOTE: The plural is **leucomas** or **leucomata**.)

leuconychia /lu:kə'u'nɪkiə/, **leukonychia** *noun* a condition in which white marks appear on the fingernails

leucopenia /lu:kə'pi:nɪə/, **leukopenia** *noun* a reduction in the number of leucocytes in the blood, usually as the result of a disease

leucoplakia /lu:kə'plækɪə/, **leukoplakia** *noun* a condition in which white patches form on mucous membranes, e.g. on the tongue or inside of the mouth

leucopoiesis /lu:kə'pɔɪt'i:sɪs/, **leukopoiesis** *noun* the production of leucocytes

leucorrhoea /lu:kə'rɪ:ə/, **leukorrhoea** *noun* an excessive discharge of white mucus from the vagina. Also called **whites** (NOTE: The US spelling is **leukorrhea**.)

leukaemia /lu:'kī:miə/ *noun* any of several malignant diseases where an unusual number of leucocytes form in the blood (NOTE: The US spelling is **leukemia**.)

COMMENT: Apart from the increase in the number of leucocytes, the symptoms include swelling of the spleen and the lymph glands. There are several forms of leukaemia: the commonest is acute lymphoblastic leukaemia which is the commonest cancer occurring in children and can be treated by radiotherapy.

leuko- /lu:kəʊ/ *prefix* same as **leuco-**

levator /lə'veɪtə/ *noun* 1. a surgical instrument for lifting pieces of fractured bone 2. a muscle which lifts a limb or a part of the body

level of care /,lev(ə)l əv 'keəl/ *noun* any of the planned divisions within the system of health care which is offered by a particular organisation ◎ *Our care homes offer six different levels of care to allow the greatest independence possible.*

levodopa /,li:və'dəʊpə/ *noun* a natural chemical that stimulates the production of dopamine in the brain and is used to treat Parkinson's disease

levonorgestrel /,li:vənɔ:gə:l'ɛstrəl/ *noun* an artificially produced female sex hormone, used mostly in birth control pills or capsules

Lewy body /'lurwi ,bɒdi/ *noun* an unusual deposit of protein in neurons in the brain

Lewy body dementia /,lu:wɪ ,bɒdɪ dɪ 'menʃəl/ *noun* a disease characterised by the presence of Lewy bodies in the brain, which affects the mental processes. It is similar to Alzheimer's disease, but people with it are more prone to hallucinations and delusions.

Leydig cells /'laɪdɪg selz/ *plural noun* testosterone-producing cells between the tubules in the testes. Also called **interstitial cells** [Described 1850. After Franz von Leydig (1821–1908), Professor of Histology at Würzburg, Tübingen and then Bonn, Germany.]

Leydig tumour /'laɪdɪg ,tju:mə/ *noun* a tumour of the Leydig cells of the testis. It often releases testosterone, which makes young boys show early signs of maturing.

I.g.v. *abbr* lymphogranuloma venereum

LH *abbr* luteinising hormone

libido /'lɪ:bɪ:dəʊ/ *noun* 1. the sexual urge 2. (*in psychology*) a force which drives the unconscious mind

Librium /'lɪbriəm/ a trade name for chlordiazepoxide

lice /laɪs/ *plural* of **louse**

licence /'laɪs(ə)ns/ *noun* an official document which allows someone to do something, e.g. one allowing a doctor to practise, a pharmacist to make and sell drugs or, in the USA, a nurse to practise ◎ *He was practising as a doctor without a licence.* ◎ *She is sitting her registered nurse licence examination.* (NOTE: The US spelling is **license**.)

licensure /'laɪsənʃə/ *noun* *US* the act of licensing a nurse to practise nursing

licentiate /laɪ'senʃɪət/ *noun* a person who has been given a licence to practise as a doctor

lichen /'laɪkən/ *noun* a type of skin disease with thick skin and small lesions

lichenification /laɪ,kɛnɪfɪ'keɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a thickening of the skin at the site of a lesion

lichenoid /'laɪkənɔɪd/ *adjective* like lichen

lichen planus /laɪkən 'pleɪnəs/ *noun* a skin disease where itchy purple spots appear on the arms and thighs

lid /lɪd/ *noun* the top which covers a container
○ *a medicine bottle with a child-proof lid*

lidocaine /'laɪdəkeɪn/ *noun* *US* a drug used as a local anaesthetic. Also called **lignocaine**

lie /laɪ/ *noun* same as **lie of fetus** ■ *verb* to be in a flat position ○ *The accident victim was lying on the pavement.* ○ *Make sure the patient lies still and does not move.* (NOTE: **lying – lay – lain**)

Lieberkühn's glands /'li:bəku:nz glændz/ *plural noun* same as **crypts of Lieberkühn**

lien- /laɪən/ *prefix* spleen

lienal /'laɪən(ə)l/ *adjective* relating to or affecting the spleen ○ *the lienal artery*

lienculus /lə'enkjʊləs/ *noun* a small secondary spleen sometimes found in the body (NOTE: The plural is **lienculi**.)

lienorenal /,laɪənərə'lɪ:n(ə)l/ *adjective* relating to or affecting both the spleen and the kidneys

lientery /'laɪəntri/, **lienteric diarrhoea** /,laɪən'terɪk ,daɪ'rə'ri:ə/ *noun* a form of diarrhoea where the food passes through the intestine rapidly without being digested

lie of fetus /,laɪ əv 'fi:təs/ *noun* the position of the fetus in the uterus ○ *Cause of rupture: abnormal lie of fetus.*

life /laɪf/ *noun* the quality that makes a person or thing alive and not dead or inorganic ○ *The surgeons saved the patient's life.* ○ *Her life is in danger because the drugs are not available.* ○ *The victim showed no sign of life.*

life event /'laɪf ɪ'vent/ *noun* a significant event which alters a person's status as regards taxation, insurance or employment benefits, e.g. the birth of a child or the onset of a disability

life expectancy /laɪf ɪk'spektənsi/ *noun* the number of years a person of a particular age is likely to live

life-saving equipment /,laɪf ,sɜ:vɪŋ ɪ 'kwɪpmənt/ *noun* equipment kept ready in case of an emergency, e.g. boats, stretchers or first-aid kits

life-support system /laɪf sə'pɔ:t ,sɪstəm/ *noun* a machine that takes over one or more vital functions such as breathing when someone is unable to survive unaided because of a disease or injury

life-threatening disease /laɪf ,θret(ə)nɪŋ dɪ'zɪ:z/ *noun* a disease which may kill

lift /lɪft/ *noun* 1. a particular way of carrying an injured or unconscious person ○ *a four-handed lift* ○ *a shoulder lift* 2. a cosmetic operation to remove signs of age or to change a body feature ○ *a face lift*

ligament /'lɪgəmənt/ *noun* a thick band of fibrous tissue which connects the bones at a joint and forms the joint capsule

ligate /'laɪgeɪt/ *verb* to tie something with a ligature, e.g. to tie a blood vessel to stop bleeding or to tie the Fallopian tubes as a sterilisation procedure (NOTE: **ligating – ligated**)

ligation /laɪ'geɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a surgical operation to tie up a blood vessel

ligature /'lɪgətʃə/ *noun* a thread used to tie vessels or a lumen, e.g. to tie a blood vessel to stop bleeding ■ *verb* same as **ligate** (NOTE: **ligaturing – ligatured**)

light /laɪt/ *adjective* 1. bright so that a person can see ○ *At six o'clock in the morning it was just getting light.* 2. referring to hair or skin which is very pale ○ *She has a very light complexion.* ○ *He has light-coloured hair.* 3. weighing a comparatively small amount ■ *noun* the energy that makes things bright and helps a person to see ○ *There's not enough light in here to take a photo.*

light adaptation /'laɪt ədæp,tetʃ(ə)n/ *noun* changes in the eye to adapt to an unusually bright or dim light or to adapt to light after being in darkness

lightening /'laɪtənɪŋ/ *noun* a late stage in pregnancy where the fetus goes down into the pelvic cavity

lightning pains /'laɪtnɪŋ peɪnz/ *plural noun* sharp pains in the legs in someone who has tabes dorsalis

light reflex /'laɪt ,rɪ:fleks/ *noun* same as **puillary reaction**

light therapy /'laɪt ,θerəpi/, **light treatment** /'laɪt ,trی:tment/ *noun* the treatment of a disorder by exposing the person to light such as sunlight or infrared light

light wave /'laɪt weɪv/ *noun* a wave travelling in all directions from a source of light which stimulates the retina and is visible

lignocaine /'lɪgnəkeɪn/ *noun* same as **lidocaine**

limb /lim/ *noun* one of the legs or arms

limbi /'limbi/ plural of **limbus**

limbic system /'lɪmbɪk ,sɪstəm/ *noun* a system of nerves in the brain, including the hippocampus, the amygdala and the hypothalamus, which are associated with emotions such as fear and anger

limb lead /'lim ลɪ:d/ *noun* an electrode attached to an arm or leg when taking an electrocardiogram

limb lengthening /'lim ,lɛŋθənɪŋ/ *noun* a procedure in which an arm or a leg is made longer. Its bone is divided in two and new bone forms in the gap between the ends.

limbless /'lmbləs/ *adjective* lacking one or more limbs

limbus /'lɪmbəs/ *noun* an edge, especially the edge of the cornea where it joins the sclera (NOTE: The plural is **limbi**.)

liminal /'lɪmɪn(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to a stimulus at the lowest level which can be sensed

limp /lɪmp/ *noun* a way of walking awkwardly because of pain, stiffness or malformation of a leg or foot ○ *She walks with a limp.* ■ *verb* to walk awkwardly because of pain, stiffness or malformation of a leg or foot ○ *He was still limping three weeks after the accident.*

linctus /'lɪŋktəs/ *noun* a sweet cough medicine

line /laɪn/ ♀ **catheter**

linea /'lɪniə/ *noun* a thin line (NOTE: The plural is **lineae**.)

linea alba /,lɪniə 'ælbə/ *noun* a tendon running from the breastbone to the pubic area, to which abdominal muscles are attached (NOTE: The plural is **lineae albae**.)

linea nigra /,lɪniə 'naɪgrə/ *noun* a dark line on the skin from the navel to the pubis which appears during the later months of pregnancy (NOTE: The plural is **lineae nigrae**.)

linear /'lɪniəl/ *adjective* 1. long and narrow in shape 2. able to be represented by a straight line

lingual /'lɪŋgwəl/ *adjective* referring to the tongue

lingual artery /,lɪŋgwəl 'a:təri/ *noun* an artery which supplies blood to the tongue

lingual tonsil /,lɪŋgwəl 'tɒns(ə)l/ *noun* a mass of lymphoid tissue on the top surface of the back of the tongue

lingual vein /,lɪŋgwəl 'veɪn/ *noun* a vein which takes blood away from the tongue

lingula /'lɪŋgjʊlə/ *noun* a long thin piece of bone or other tissue ○ *the lingula of the left lung* (NOTE: The plural is **lingulae**.)

lingular /'lɪŋgjʊlər/ *adjective* relating to a lingula

liniment /'lɪnimənt/ *noun* an oily liquid rubbed on the skin to ease the pain or stiffness of a sprain or bruise by acting as a vasodilator or counterirritant. Also called **embrocation**

lining /'laɪnɪŋ/ *noun* a substance or tissue on the inside of an organ ○ *the thick lining of the aorta*

link /lɪŋk/ *verb* 1. to join things together ○ *The ankle bone links the bones of the lower leg to the calcaneus.* 2. to be related to or associated with something ○ *Health is linked to diet.*

linkage /'lɪŋkɪdʒ/ *noun* (of genes) the fact of being close together on a chromosome, and therefore likely to be inherited together

linoleic acid /,lɪnəoli:k 'æsɪd/ *noun* one of the essential fatty acids, found in grains and seeds

linolenic acid /lɪnəlenɪk 'æsɪd/ *noun* one of the essential fatty acids, found in linseed and other natural oils

lint /lɪnt/ *noun* thick flat cotton wadding, used as part of a surgical dressing

liothyronine /,laɪəʊ'θaɪrəʊnɪ:n/ *noun* a hormone produced by the thyroid gland which can be artificially synthesised for use as a rapid-acting treatment for hypothyroidism

lip /lɪp/ *noun* 1. each of two fleshy muscular parts round the edge of the mouth ○ *Her lips were dry and cracked.* 2. an edge of flesh round an opening 3. same as **labium**

lipaemia /lɪ'pi:mɪə/ *noun* an excessive amount of fat in the blood (NOTE: The US spelling is **lipemia**.)

lipase /'lɪpeɪz/ *noun* an enzyme which breaks down fats in the intestine. Also called **lipolytic enzyme**

lipid /'lɪpɪd/ *noun* an organic compound which is insoluble in water, e.g. a fat, oil or wax

COMMENT: Lipids are not water soluble. They float in the blood and can attach themselves to the walls of arteries causing atherosclerosis.

lipid-lowering drug /'lɪpɪd,ləʊərɪŋ,d्रag/ *noun* a drug which lowers serum triglycerides and low-density lipoprotein cholesterol and raises high-density lipoprotein cholesterol to reduce the progression of coronary atherosclerosis. Lipid-lowering drugs are used in people with, or at high risk of developing coronary heart disease. (NOTE: Lipid-lowering drugs have names ending in **-fibrate**: **bezafibrate**.)

lipid metabolism /,lɪpɪd mæ'tæbəlɪz(ə)m/ *noun* the series of chemical changes by which lipids are broken down into fatty acids

lipidoses /,lɪpri'dəʊsɪs/ *noun* a disorder of lipid metabolism in which subcutaneous fat is not present in some parts of the body

lipochondrolystrophy /,lɪpəʊ,kɒndrəʊ'distrəfi/ *noun* a congenital disorder affecting lipid metabolism, the bones and the main organs, causing learning difficulties and physical deformity

lipodystrophy /,lɪpəʊ'distrəfi/ *noun* a disorder of lipid metabolism

lipogenesis /,lɪpəʊ'dʒenəsɪs/ *noun* the production or making of deposits of fat

lipoid /'lɪpɔɪd/ *noun* a compound lipid, or a fatty substance such as cholesterol which is like a lipid ■ *adjective* like a lipid

lipoidosis /,lɪpɔɪdə'sɪs/ *noun* a group of diseases with reticuloendothelial hyperplasia and unusual deposits of lipoids in the cells

lipolysis /'lɪpəlɪsɪs/ *noun* the process of breaking down fat by lipase

lipolytic enzyme /,lɪpəlɪtɪk 'enzaɪm/ *noun* same as **lipase**

lipoma /lɪ'pəʊmə/ *noun* a benign tumour formed of fatty tissue (NOTE: The plural is **lipomas** or **lipomata**.)

lipomatosis /lɪpəʊmə'təʊsɪs/ *noun* an excessive deposit of fat in the tissues in tumour-like masses

lipoprotein /lɪpə'prəutɪn/ *noun* a protein which combines with lipids and carries them in the bloodstream and lymph system (NOTE: Lipoproteins are classified according to the percentage of protein which they carry.)

liposarcoma /lɪpəsər'kəʊmə/ *noun* a rare malignant tumour found in fatty tissue (NOTE: The plural is **liposarcomas** or **liposarcomata**.)

liposuction /lɪpəʊ'sʌkʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the surgical removal of fatty tissue for cosmetic reasons

lipotropic /lɪpəʊ'trɒfɪk/ *adjective* referring to a substance which increases the amount of fat present in the tissues

Lipps loop /lɪpz 'lu:p/ *noun* a type of intrauterine device

lapping /'lɪpɪŋ/ *noun* a condition in which bone tissue grows over other bones

lip salve /lɪp səlv/ *noun* an ointment, usually sold as a soft stick, used to rub on lips to prevent them cracking

lipuria /lɪ'pjʊəriə/ *noun* the presence of fat or oily emulsion in the urine

liquid diet /lɪk'wɪd 'daɪət/ *noun* a diet consisting only of liquids ◎ *The clear liquid diet is a temporary diet used in preparation for surgery.*

liquid paraffin /lɪk'wɪd 'pærəfɪn/ *noun* an oil used as a laxative

liquor /'lɪkə/ *noun* (*in pharmacy*) a solution, usually aqueous, of a pure substance

lisp /lɪsp/ *noun* a speech condition in which someone replaces 's' sounds with 'th' ■ *verb* to talk with a lisp

Listeria /lɪ'strɪəriə/ *noun* a genus of bacteria found in domestic animals and in unpasteurised milk products which can cause uterine infection or meningitis

listeriosis /lɪ'stɪəriə'sɪsɪs/ *noun* an infectious disease transmitted from animals to humans by the bacterium *Listeria*

listless /'lɪstləs/ *adjective* weak and tired

listlessness /'lɪstləsnəs/ *noun* the fact of being generally weak and tired

liter /'lɪ:tə/ *noun* US spelling of **litre**

lith- /lɪθ/ *prefix* same as **litho-** (*used before vowels*)

lithaemia /lɪ'θi:mɪə/ *noun* an unusual amount of uric acid in the blood. Also called **uricacidæmia** (NOTE: The US spelling is **lithemia**.)

lithagogue /lɪθ'ægɒg/ *noun* a drug which helps to remove stones from the urine

lithiasis /lɪ'lθiəsɪs/ *noun* the formation of stones in an organ

lithium /'lɪθiəm/ *noun* a soft silver-white metallic element that forms compounds, used as a medical treatment for bipolar disorder

litho- *prefix* referring to a calculus

litholapaxy /lɪ'lθələpæksi/ *noun* the evacuation of pieces of a stone in the bladder after crushing it with a lithotrite. Also called **lithotomy**

lithonephrotomy /lɪθənə'frɒtəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to remove a stone in the kidney (NOTE: The plural is **lithonephromies**.)

lithotomy /lɪ'θɒtəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to remove a stone from the bladder (NOTE: The plural is **lithotomies**.)

lithotomy position /lɪ'θɒtəmɪ pə,zɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a position for some medical examinations in which the person lies on his or her back with the legs flexed and the thighs against the abdomen

lithotripsy /lɪθətrɪpsi/ *noun* the process of breaking up kidney or gall bladder stones into small fragments that the body can eliminate them unaided

lithotrite /lɪθətrɪt/ *noun* a surgical instrument which crushes a stone in the bladder

lithotrity /lɪ'θɒtrɪti/ *noun* same as **litholapaxy**

lithuresis /lɪθju'rɪ:sɪs/ *noun* the passage of small stones from the bladder during urination

lithuria /lɪ'θjuəriə/ *noun* the presence of excessive amounts of uric acid or urates in the urine

litmus /'lɪtməs/ *noun* a substance which turns red in acid and blue in alkali

litmus paper /'lɪtməs ,peɪpə/ *noun* a small piece of paper impregnated with litmus, used to test for acidity or alkalinity

litre /'lɪ:tə/ *noun* a unit of measurement of liquids equal to 1.76 pints. Abbr **I**, **L** (NOTE: With figures, usually written **I** or **L**: 2.5, but it can be written in full to avoid confusion with the numeral **1**. The US spelling is **liter**.)

little finger /'lɪt(ə)l 'fɪŋgə/ *noun* the smallest finger on the hand

Little's area /'lɪt(ə)lz ,eəriə/ *noun* an area of blood vessels in the nasal septum

Little's disease /'lɪt(ə)lz dɪz,zi:z/ *noun* same as **spastic diplegia** [Described 1843. After William John Little (1810–94), physician at the London Hospital, UK.]

little toe /'lɪt(ə)l 'təʊ/ *noun* the smallest toe on the foot ◎ *Her little toe was crushed by the door.*

live *adjective* /lɪv/ 1. living, not dead ◎ *graft using live tissue* ◊ **birth** 2. carrying electricity ◎ *He was killed when he touched a live wire.*

■ *verb*/lɪv/ to be alive ◎ *She is very ill, and the doctor doesn't think she will live much longer.* (NOTE: **living – lived**)

live birth /'laɪv bɜːθ/ *noun* the birth of a baby which is alive ○ *The number of live births has remained steady.*

livedo /'lɪ'vi:dəʊ/ *noun* discoloured spots on the skin

liver /'lɪvə/ *noun* a large gland in the upper part of the abdomen. See illustration at DIGESTIVE SYSTEM in Supplement (NOTE: For other terms referring to the liver, see words beginning with **hepat-**, **hepato-**.)

COMMENT: The liver is situated in the top part of the abdomen on the right side of the body next to the stomach. It is the largest gland in the body, weighing almost 2 kg. Blood carrying nutrients from the intestines enters the liver by the hepatic portal vein; the nutrients are removed and the blood returned to the heart through the hepatic vein. The liver is the major detoxicating organ in the body; it destroys harmful organisms in the blood, produces clotting agents, secretes bile, stores glycogen and metabolises proteins, carbohydrates and fats. Diseases affecting the liver include hepatitis and cirrhosis; the symptom of liver disease is often jaundice.

liver fluke /'lɪvə flu:k/ *noun* a parasitic flatworm which can infest the liver

liver spot /'lɪvə spɒt/ *noun* a little brown patch on the skin of the backs of the hands, attributed to sun damage (NOTE: Liver spots are unconnected with any liver disorder.)

liver transplant /'lɪvə ,trænsplɑːnt/ *noun* a surgical operation to give a person the liver of another person who has died

livid /'lɪvɪd/ *adjective* referring to skin with a blue colour because of being bruised or because of asphyxiation

living will /'lɪvɪŋ 'wɪl/ *noun* a document signed by a person while in good health to specify the decisions he or she wishes to be taken about medical treatment if he or she becomes incapable of making or communicating them

LMC abbr local medical committee

loa loa /'ləʊə 'ləʊə/ *noun* a tropical disease of the eye caused when the threadworm *Loa loa* enters the eye or the skin around the eye

Loa loa /'ləʊə 'ləʊə/ *noun* a tropical threadworm which digs under the skin, especially around and into the eye, causing loa loa and loiasis

lobar /'ləʊbə/ *adjective* referring to a lobe

lobar bronchi /'ləʊbə 'brɒnki:/ *plural noun* air passages supplying a lobe of a lung. Also called **secondary bronchi**

lobar pneumonia /'ləʊbə nju:'məʊniə/ *noun* pneumonia which affects one or more lobes of the lung

lobe /'ləʊb/ *noun* 1. a rounded section of an organ such as the brain, lung or liver. See illustration at LUNGS in Supplement 2. the soft fleshy part at the bottom of the ear 3. a cusp on the crown of a tooth

lobectomy /ləʊ'bektəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to remove one of the lobes of an organ such as the lung ○ *The plural is lobectomies.*

lobotomy /ləʊ'bɒtəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation formerly used to treat mental illness by cutting into a lobe of the brain to cut the nerve fibres (NOTE: The plural is **lobotomies**.)

lobular /'lɒbjʊlə/ *adjective* relating to a lobe ○ *lobular carcinoma*

lobule /'lɒbjʊl:ə/ *noun* a small section of a lobe in the lung, formed of acini

local /'ləʊk(ə)l/ *adjective* 1. referring to a separate place 2. confined to one part ■ *noun* same as **local anaesthetic**

local anaesthesia /,ləʊk(ə)l ænəs'θi:ziə/ *noun* loss of feeling in a single part of the body

local anaesthetic /,ləʊk(ə)l ænəs'θetɪk/ *noun* an anaesthetic such as lignocaine which removes the feeling in a single part of the body only ○ *The surgeon removed the growth under local anaesthetic.*

localise /'ləʊkəlaɪz/, **localize** *verb* 1. to restrict the spread of something to a specific area 2. to find where something is 3. to transfer power from a central authority to local organisations (NOTE: **localising – localised**)

localised /'ləʊkəlaɪzd/, **localized** *adjective* referring to an infection which occurs in one part of the body only. Opposite **generalised**

Local Medical Committee /,ləʊk(ə)l 'medɪk(ə)l kə,miti:/ *noun* a committee responsible for monitoring the interests of providers of primary care such as GPs, dentists and pharmacists in a district. Abbr **LMC**

local supervising authority /,ləʊk(ə)l 'su:pəvaɪzɪŋ ə:t,θəriti/ *noun* an organisation which controls midwife services within its area

lochia /'lkɪə/ *noun* a discharge from the vagina after childbirth or abortion

lochial /'ləʊkiəl/ *adjective* referring to lochia

lochiometra /'lkɪəmɪ:tə/ *noun* a condition in which lochia remains in the uterus after a baby is born, making it swollen

lock /lɒk/ *verb* to fix something in a position

locked-in syndrome /,lɒkt 'ɪn ,sɪndrəʊm/ *noun* a condition in which only the eyes and eyelids can move although the person is fully alert and conscious. It results from severe damage to the brain stem.

locked knee /lɒkt 'ni:/ *noun* a condition in which a piece of the cartilage in the knee slips out of position. The symptom is a sharp pain, and the knee remains permanently bent.

locking joint /,lɒkɪŋ 'dʒɔɪnt/ *noun* a joint which can be locked in an extended position, e.g. the knee or elbow

lockjaw /'lkjkɔ:/ *noun* same as **tetanus** (*dated informal*)

locomotion /ləʊkə'meʊʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the fact of being able to move

locomotor /ləʊkə'moʊtə/ *adjective* relating to locomotion

locomotor ataxia /ləʊkə'moʊtər ə'tæksɪə/ *noun* same as **tabes dorsalis**

loculated /'lɒkjuleɪtɪd/ *adjective* referring to an organ or a growth which is divided into many compartments ◻ *a loculated renal abscess*

locule /'lɒkjʊl/ *noun* same as **loculus**

loculus /'lɒkjʊləs/ *noun* a small space in an organ (NOTE: The plural is **loculi**.)

locum /'ləʊkəm/ *noun* a healthcare professional such as a doctor or pharmacist who takes the place of another for a time. Also called **locum tenens**

locum tenens *noun* same as **locum** (NOTE: The plural is **locum tenentes**.)

locus /'ləʊkəs/ *noun* 1. an area or point where an infection or disease is to be found 2. a position on a chromosome occupied by a gene (NOTE: The plural is **loci**)

lodge /lɒdʒ/ *verb* to stay or stick somewhere, or to stick something somewhere ◻ *The piece of bone lodged in her throat.* ◻ *The larvae of the tapeworm lodge in the walls of the intestine.*

lofepramine /lɒ'feprəmī:n/ *noun* an antidepressant drug

log roll /'lɒg rəʊl/ *noun* a method of turning people in bed onto their side by putting them into a straight position and pulling on the sheet under them

logrolling /'lɒgrəʊlɪŋ/ *noun* the process of moving a person who is lying down into another position using the log roll method

-logy /lədʒi/ *suffix* 1. science or study ◻ *psychology* ◻ *embryology* 2. speech or expression

loiasis /ləʊ'aɪəsɪs/ *noun* a tropical disease of the eye caused when the threadworm *Loa loa* enters the eye or the skin around the eye

loin /lɔɪn/ *noun* the lower back part of the body above the buttocks

Lomotil /ləʊ'məʊtɪl/ a trade name for a preparation containing diphenoxalate

long-acting /lɒŋ 'ækting/ *adjective* referring to a drug or treatment which has an effect that lasts a long time

long bone /'lɒŋ bəʊn/ *noun* any long limb bone that contains marrow and ends in a part that forms a joint with another bone

longitudinal /lɒnggrɪ'tju:dɪn(ə)l/ *adjective* 1. positioned lengthwise 2. in the direction of the long axis of the body

longitudinal arch /lɒnggrɪ'tju:dɪn(ə)l 'a:tʃ/ *noun* same as **plantar arch**

longitudinal fissure /lɒnggrɪ'tju:dɪn(ə)l 'fɪʃə/ *noun* a groove separating the two cerebral hemispheres

longitudinal lie /lɒnggrɪ'tju:dɪn(ə)l 'laɪ/ *noun* the usual position of a fetus, lying along the axis of the mother's body

longitudinal study /lɒnggrɪ'tju:dɪn(ə)l 'stʌdɪ/ *noun* a study of individuals or groups of people and of how some aspect such as their health or education changes over a long time

longsighted /lɒŋ'saɪtɪd/ *adjective* able to see clearly things which are far away but not things which are close

longsightedness /lɒŋ'saɪtɪdnəs/ *noun* the condition of being longsighted. Also called **hypermetropia**

long-stay /lɒŋ stei/ *adjective* referring to staying a long time in hospital ◻ *patients in long-stay units*

long stay patient /lɒŋ stei 'peɪsɪnt/ *noun* a patient who will stay in hospital for a long time

long stay ward /lɒŋ 'steɪ ,wɔ:d/ *noun* a ward for patients who will stay in hospital for a long time

loo /lu:/ *noun* a toilet, or a room containing a toilet (*informal*) ◻ **to go to the loo** to urinate or defecate

look after /lʊk 'a:fɪə/ *verb* to take care of a person and attend to his or her needs ◻ *The nurses looked after him very well* or *He was very well looked after in hospital.* ◻ *She is off work looking after her children who have mumps.*

loop /lu:p/ *noun* 1. a curve or bend in a line, especially one of the particular curves in a fingerprint 2. a curved piece of wire placed in the uterus to prevent contraception

loop of Henle /lʊ:p əv 'henli/ *noun* a curved tube which forms the main part of a nephron in the kidney

loperamide /ləʊ'perəmāɪd/, **loperamide hydrochloride** /ləʊ,perəmāɪd ,haɪdrə'klɔ:raɪd/ *noun* a drug that relieves severe diarrhoea by slowing down the movements of the intestine

loratadine /lɒr'ætɪdɪ:n/ *noun* an antihistamine drug

lorazepam /lɔ:'ræzɪpæm/ *noun* a mild tranquilliser that people often receive before surgery to lessen anxiety

lordosis /lɔ:'dəʊsɪs/ *noun* excessive forward curvature of the lower part of the spine. ◻ **kyphosis**

lordotic /lɔ:'dɒtɪk/ *adjective* referring to lordosis

lotion /'ləʊʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a medicinal liquid used to rub on the skin ◻ *a mild antiseptic lotion*

louse /laʊs/ *noun* a small insect of the *Pediculus* genus, which sucks blood and lives on the skin as a parasite on animals and humans (NOTE: The plural is **lice**.)

COMMENT: There are several forms of louse: the commonest are the body louse, the crab

louse and the head louse. Some diseases can be transmitted by lice.

low /ləʊ/ *adjective* 1. relatively little in height
2. close to the bottom or base of something

low blood pressure /ləʊ 'blæd ,prɛʃə/ *noun* same as **hypotension**

low-calorie diet /ləʊ ,kæləri 'daɪət/ *noun* a diet with few calories, to help a person to lose weight

low-density lipoprotein /ləʊ ,densɪtɪ 'lɪpəoprətɪn/ *noun* a lipoprotein with a large percentage of cholesterol which deposits fats in muscles and arteries. Abbr **LDL**

lower /'laʊə/ *adjective* in a position below another thing

lower jaw /,laʊə 'dʒɔ:/ *noun* same as **mandible**

lower limb /,laʊə 'lim/ *noun* a leg

lower motor neurones /,laʊər 'məʊtə ,njʊərəʊnз/ *plural noun* linked neurones which carry motor impulses from the spinal cord to the muscles

low-fat diet /,laʊ ,fæt 'daɪət/ *noun* a diet with little animal fat, which can help reduce the risk of heart disease and alleviate some skin conditions

low-risk patient /,laʊ rɪsk 'peɪs(ə)nt/ *noun* a person not likely to catch or develop a particular disease

low-salt diet /,laʊ ,sɔ:t 'daɪət/ *noun* a diet with little salt, which has been shown to help reduce high blood pressure

lozenge /'lɒzɪndʒ/ *noun* a sweet medicinal tablet ○ *She was sucking a cough lozenge.*

LPN abbr US licensed practical nurse

LRCP abbr licentiate of the Royal College of Physicians

LSA abbr local supervising authority

LSD abbr lysergic acid diethylamide

lubb-dupp /lʌb'dʌp/ *noun* two sounds made by the heart, which represent each cardiac cycle when heard through a stethoscope

lubricant /'lu:brikiənt/ *noun* a fluid which lubricates

lubricate /'lu:brikeɪt/ *verb* to cover something with a fluid to reduce friction (NOTE: **lubricating – lubricated**)

lubricating jelly /'lu:brikeɪt ,dʒeli/ *noun* a jelly used to make a surface slippery

lucid /'lu:sɪd/ *adjective* with a clearly working mind ○ *In spite of the pain, he was still lucid.*

lucid interval /,lu:sɪd 'ɪntəv(ə)l/ *noun* a period of clear thinking which occurs between two periods of unconsciousness or of mental illness

Ludwig's angina /,lu:dvɪgz æn'dʒaɪnə/ *noun* cellulitis of the mouth and some parts of the neck which causes the neck to swell and may obstruct the airway [Described 1836. After Wilhelm Friedrich von Ludwig (1790–1865), Professor of Surgery and Midwifery at Tübingen,

Germany, and Court Physician to King Frederick II.]

lues /'lu:iz/ *noun* a former name for syphilis or the plague

lumbago /lʌm'bægəʊ/ *noun* pain in the lower back (*informal*) ○ *She has been suffering from lumbago for years. ○ He has had an attack of lumbago.*

lumbar /'lʌmbə/ *adjective* referring to the lower part of the back

lumbar artery /'lʌmbə ,a:təri/ *noun* one of four arteries which supply blood to the back muscles and skin

lumbar cistern /,lʌmbə 'sistən/ *noun* a subarachnoid space in the spinal cord, where the dura mater ends, filled with cerebrospinal fluid

lumbar enlargement /,lʌmbə in 'la:dʒmənt/ *noun* the wider part of the spinal cord in the lower spine, where the nerves of the lower limbs are attached

lumbar plexus /,lʌmbə 'pleksəs/ *noun* the point where several nerves which supply the thighs and abdomen join together, lying in the upper psoas muscle

lumbar puncture /,lʌmbə 'pʌŋktʃə/ *noun* a surgical operation to remove a sample of cerebrospinal fluid by inserting a hollow needle into the lower part of the spinal canal. Also called **spinal puncture** (NOTE: The US term is usually **spinal tap**.)

lumbar region /'lʌmbə ,ri:dʒən/ *noun* the two parts of the abdomen on each side of the umbilical region

lumbar vertebra /,lʌmbə 'vɜ:tib्रə/ *plural noun* each of the five vertebrae between the thoracic vertebrae and the sacrum

lumbo- /lʌmbəʊ/ *prefix* the lumbar region

lumbosacral /,lʌmbəʊ'seɪkrəl/ *adjective* referring to both the lumbar vertebrae and the sacrum

lumbosacral joint /,lʌmbəʊ'seɪkrəl dʒɔ:nt/ *noun* a joint at the bottom of the back between the lumbar vertebrae and the sacrum

lumen /'lu:mɪn/ *noun* 1. an SI unit of light emitted per second 2. the inside width of a passage in the body or of an instrument such as an endoscope 3. a hole at the end of an instrument such as an endoscope

lump /lʌmp/ *noun* a mass of hard tissue which rises on the surface or under the surface of the skin ○ *He has a lump where he hit his head on the low door. ○ She noticed a lump in her right breast and went to see the doctor.*

lumpectomy /lʌm'pektəmi/ *noun* a surgical operation to remove a hard mass of tissue such as a breast tumour, leaving the surrounding tissue intact (NOTE: The plural is **lumpectomies**.)

lunate /'lu:nɪt/, **lunate bone** /'lu:nɪt bən/ *noun* one of the eight small carpal bones in the wrist. See illustration at **HAND** in Supplement

Lund and Browder chart /lʌnd ən 'braudə tʃɑ:t/ noun a chart for calculating the surface area of a burn

lung /lʌŋ/ noun one of two organs of respiration in the body into which air is sucked when a person breathes (NOTE: For other terms referring to the lungs, see words beginning with **bronch-**, **broncho-**, **pneum-**, **pneumo-**, **pneumon-**, **pneumono-**, **pulmo-**.)

COMMENT: The two lungs are situated in the chest cavity, protected by the ribcage. The heart lies between the lungs. The right lung has three lobes, the left lung only two. Air goes down into the lungs through the trachea and bronchi. It passes to the alveoli where its oxygen is deposited in the blood in exchange for waste carbon dioxide which is exhaled (gas exchange). Lung cancer can be caused by smoking tobacco, and is commonest in people who are heavy smokers.

lung cancer /'lʌŋ, kænsə/ noun cancer in the lung

lunula /'lu:njʊlə/ noun a curved white mark at the base of a fingernail (NOTE: The plural is **lunulae**.)

lupus /'lu:pəs/ noun a persistent skin disease, of which there are several unrelated types

lupus erythematosus /'lu:pəs ,erɪθməs 'təʊsəs/ noun an inflammatory disease of connective tissue of which the more serious, systemic, form affects the heart, joints and blood vessels. Abbr **LE**

lupus vulgaris /'lu:pəs vʌl'geərɪs/ noun a form of tuberculosis of the skin in which red spots appear on the face and become infected

lutein /'lu:tɪn/ noun a yellow pigment in the corpus luteum

luteinising hormone /'lu:ti:nɪzɪŋ ,həʊ'moʊn/, **luteinizing hormone** noun a hormone produced by the pituitary gland, which stimulates the formation of the corpus luteum in females and of testosterone in males. Abbr **LH**. Also called **interstitial cell stimulating hormone**

luteo- /lu:tɪəʊ/ prefix 1. yellow 2. corpus luteum

luxation /lʌk'seɪʃ(ə)n/ noun same as **dislocation**

Lyme disease /'laɪm dɪ,zi:z/ noun a viral disease caused by *Borrelia burgdorferi* transmitted by bites from deer ticks. It causes rashes, nervous pains, paralysis and, in extreme cases, death.

lymph /lɪmf/ noun a colourless liquid containing white blood cells which circulates in the lymph system from all body tissues, carrying waste matter away from tissues to the veins. Also called **lymph fluid**

COMMENT: Lymph drains from the tissues through capillaries into lymph vessels. It is formed of water, protein and white blood cells (lymphocytes). Waste matter such as infection in the lymph is filtered out and destroyed as it passes through the lymph nodes, which

then add further lymphocytes to the lymph before it continues in the system. It eventually drains into the brachiocephalic (innominate) veins, and joins the venous bloodstream. Lymph is not pumped round the body like blood but moves by muscle pressure on the lymph vessels and by the negative pressure of the large veins into which the vessels empty. Lymph is an essential part of the body's defence against infection.

lymph- /lɪmf/ prefix meaning same as **lympho-** (used before vowels)

lymphaden- /lɪmfædən/ prefix relating to the lymph nodes

lymphadenectomy /lɪmfædə'nekto:mɪ/ noun the surgical removal of a lymph node (NOTE: The plural is **lymphadenectomies**.)

lymphadenitis /lɪmfædə'naitɪs/ noun inflammation of the lymph nodes

lymphadenoma /lɪmfædə'nəʊmə/ noun same as **lymphoma**

lymphadenopathy /lɪmfædə'nɒpəθɪ/ noun any unusual condition of the lymph nodes (NOTE: The plural is **lymphadenopathies**.)

lymphangi- /lɪmfændʒi:/ prefix lymphatic vessel

lymphangiectasis /lɪmfændʒi'ektəsɪs/ noun swelling of the smaller lymph vessels as a result of obstructions in larger vessels

lymphangiography /lɪmfændʒi'ɒgrəfi/ noun an X-ray examination of the lymph vessels following introduction of radio-opaque material (NOTE: The plural is **lymphangiographies**.)

lymphangioma /lɪmfændʒi'əʊmə/ noun a benign tumour formed of lymph tissues (NOTE: The plural is **lymphangiomas** or **lymphangiomatata**.)

lymphangioplasty /lɪmf'ændʒiəplæstɪ/ noun a surgical operation to make artificial lymph channels (NOTE: The plural is **lymphangioplasties**.)

lymphangiosarcoma /lɪmf,ændʒiəsɔ:kə:mə/ noun a malignant tumour of the endothelial cells lining the lymph vessels (NOTE: The plural is **lymphangiosarcomas** or **lymphangiosarcomata**.)

lymphangitis /lɪmfæn'dʒaɪtɪs/ noun inflammation of the lymph vessels

lymphatic /lɪm'fætɪk/ adjective referring to lymph

lymphatic capillary /lɪm,fætɪk kæ'pɪləri/ plural noun any of the capillaries which lead from tissue and join lymphatic vessels

lymphatic duct /lɪm'fætɪk dʌkt/ noun the main channel for carrying lymph

lymphatic node /lɪm'fætɪk nəd/ noun same as **lymph gland**

lymphatic nodule /lɪm,fætɪk 'nɒdju:l/ noun a small lymph node found in clusters in tissues

lymphatic system /lɪm'fætɪk ,sistəm/ noun a series of vessels which transport lymph

from the tissues through the lymph nodes and into the bloodstream

lymphatic vessel /lɪmf'fætɪk ,ves(ə)l/ *noun* a tube which carries lymph round the body from the tissues to the veins

lymph duct /'lɪmf dʌkt/ *noun* any channel carrying lymph

lymph fluid /'lɪmf ,flu:ɪd/ *noun* same as lymph

lymph gland /'lɪmf glænd/, **lymph node** /'lɪmf nəʊd/ *noun* a mass of lymphoid tissue situated in various points of the lymphatic system, especially under the armpits and in the groin, through which lymph passes and in which lymphocytes are produced. Also called **lymphatic node**

lympho- /lɪmfəʊ/ *prefix meaning lymph*

lymphoblast /'lɪmfəʊblæst/ *noun* an unusual cell which forms in acute lymphoblastic leukaemia as a result of the change which takes place in a lymphocyte on contact with an antigen

lymphoblastic /'lɪmfəʊ'blæstɪk/ *adjective* referring to lymphoblasts, or forming lymphocytes

lymhocele /'lɪmfəsɪ:l/ *noun* a cyst containing lymph from injured or diseased lymph nodes or ducts

lymphocyte /'lɪmfəsait/ *noun* a type of mature leucocyte or white blood cell formed by the lymph nodes and concerned with the production of antibodies

lymphocytopenia /,lɪmfəʊ,saitəʊ'pi:nɪə/ *noun* same as **lymphopenia**

lymphocytosis /,lɪmfəʊsɪ:təʊsɪs/ *noun* an increased number of lymphocytes in the blood

lymphoedema /,lɪmfəʊ'di:mə/ *noun* a swelling caused by obstruction of the lymph vessels or unusual development of lymph vessels (NOTE: The US spelling is **lymphedema**.)

lymphogranuloma inguinale /,lɪmfəʊ grænju:ləʊmə ,ɪngwɪ'nɛli/ *noun* same as **lymphogranuloma venereum**

lymphogranuloma venereum /,lɪmfəʊ ,grænju:ləʊmə və'nɪərəm/ *noun* a sexually transmitted bacterial infection that causes swelling of the genital lymph nodes and, especially in men, a genital ulcer. Abbr **I.g.v.**

lymphography /lɪmf'ɒgrəfi/ *noun* the making of images of the lymphatic system after having introduced a radio-opaque substance

lymphoid /'lɪmfɔɪd/ *adjective* referring to lymph, lymphatic tissue, or the lymphatic system

lymphoid tissue /'lɪmfɔɪd ,tɪʃu:/ *noun* tissue in the lymph nodes, the tonsils and the spleen where masses of lymphocytes are supported by a network of reticular fibres and cells

lymphokine /'lɪmfəʊkain/ *noun* a protein produced by lymphocytes that has an effect on other cells in the immune system. ◇ **cytokine**

lymphoma /'lɪmfəʊmə/ *noun* a malignant tumour arising from lymphoid tissue. Also called **lymphadenoma** (NOTE: The plural is **lymphomas** or **lymphomata**.)

lymphopenia /,lɪmfəʊ'pi:nɪə/ *noun* a reduction in the number of lymphocytes in the blood. Also called **lymphocytopenia**

lymphopoiesis /,lɪmfəʊpɔɪ'sɪsɪs/ *noun* the production of lymphocytes or lymphoid tissue

lymphorrhagia /,lɪmfə'reɪdʒə/, **lymphorrhœa** /,lɪmfə'rɪə/ *noun* escape of lymph from ruptured or severed lymphatic vessels

lymphosarcoma /,lɪmfəsə:kəʊmə/ *noun* a malignant growth arising from lymphocytes and their cells of origin in the lymph nodes (NOTE: The plural is **lymphosarcomas** or **lymphosarcomata**.)

lymphotropic /,lɪmfə'trɒpɪk/ *adjective* affecting the lymphatic system

lymphuria /lɪmf'fjuəriə/ *noun* the presence of lymph in the urine

lymph vessel /'lɪmf ,ves(ə)l/ *noun* one of the tubes which carry lymph round the body from the tissues to the veins

lyophilisation /laɪ'pfiłəz'ɪʃ(ə)n/, **lyophilization** *noun* the act of preserving tissue, plasma or serum by freeze-drying it in a vacuum

lyophilise /laɪ'bfiłəz/, **lyophilize** *verb* to preserve tissue, plasma or serum by freeze-drying in a vacuum (NOTE: **lyophilising** – **lyophilised**)

lysergic acid diethylamide /laɪ'ssə:dʒɪk 'æsɪd daɪ'eθɪləmāɪd/ *noun* a powerful hallucinogenic drug which can cause psychosis. Abbr **LSD**

lysin /'laɪsɪn/ *noun* 1. a protein in the blood which destroys the cell against which it is directed 2. a toxin which causes the lysis of cells

lysine /'laɪsɪn/ *noun* an essential amino acid

lysis /'laɪsɪs/ *noun* 1. the destruction of a cell by a lysin, in which the membrane of the cell is destroyed 2. a reduction in a fever or disease slowly over a period of time. Opposite **crisis**

-lysis /'laɪsɪs/ *suffix* referring to processes which involve breaking up or decaying, or to objects which are doing this ◇ **haemolysis**

lysol /'laɪsəl/ *noun* a strong disinfectant, made of cresol and soap

lysosome /'laɪsəsəmə/ *noun* a particle in a cell which contains enzymes which break down substances such as bacteria which enter the cell

lysozyme /'laɪsəzaim/ *noun* an enzyme found in the whites of eggs and in tears, which destroys specific bacteria

M

m symbol 1. metre 2. milli-

M symbol mega-

MAAG abbr medical audit advisory group

macerate /'mæsə'reɪt/ verb to make something soft by letting it lie in a liquid for a time
(NOTE: **macerating** – **macerated**)

maceration /,mæsə'reɪʃ(ə)n/ noun the process of softening a solid by letting it lie in a liquid so that the soluble matter dissolves

Mackenrodt's ligaments /'mækən'rəʊdz 'lɪgəmənts/ plural noun same as **cardinal ligaments**

Macmillan nurse /mæk'milən nɜːs/ noun a nurse who specialises in cancer care and is employed by the organisation Macmillan Cancer Relief

macro- /mæk'rəʊ/ prefix large. Opposite **micro-**

macrobiotic /,mæk'rəʊbaɪ'tɒtɪk/ adjective referring to food which has been produced naturally without artificial additives or preservatives

COMMENT: Macrobiotic diets are usually vegetarian and are prepared in a special way. They consist of beans, coarse flour, fruit and vegetables. They may not contain enough protein or trace elements, especially to satisfy the needs of children.

macrocephaly /,mæk'rəʊ'kefli/ noun the condition of having an unusually large head

macrocheilia /,mæk'rəʊ'kailiə/ noun the condition of having large lips

macrocyte /'mæk'rəʊsait/ noun an unusually large red blood cell found in people who have pernicious anaemia

macrocythaemia /,mæk'rəʊsai'θi:mia/ noun same as **macrocytosis**

macrocytic /,mæk'rəʊ'sitɪk/ adjective referring to macrocytes

macrocytic anaemia /,mæk'rəʊsítɪk ə 'ni:mia/ noun anaemia in which someone has unusually large red blood cells

macrocytosis /,mæk'rəʊsai'təʊsɪs/ noun the condition of having macrocytes in the blood. Also called **macrocythaemia**

macrodactyly /,mæk'rəʊ'dæktɪli/ noun a condition in which a person has unusually large or long fingers or toes

macrogenitosoma /,mæk'rəʊ,dʒenɪtə 'sɔːmə/ noun premature development of the body with the genitals being of an unusually large size

macroglobulin /,mæk'rəʊ'gləbjʊlɪn/ noun a class of immunoglobulin, a globulin protein of high molecular weight, which serves as an antibody

macroglossia /,mæk'rəʊ'glɒsiə/ noun the condition of having an unusually large tongue

macrognathia /,mæk'rəʊ'neɪθiə/ noun a condition in which the jaw is larger than usual

macrolide drug /'mæk'rələdɪd dræg/ noun a drug used in the treatment of bacterial infection, often in place of penicillin in people sensitive to penicillin (NOTE: Macrolide drugs have names ending in **-omycin**: **erythromycin**.)

macromastia /,mæk'rəʊ'mæstiə/ noun overdevelopment of the breasts

macromelia /,mæk'rəʊ'mi:liə/ noun a condition in which a person has unusually large limbs

macronutrient /'mæk'rəʊ,nju:t्रɪənt/ noun a substance which an organism needs in large amounts for normal growth and development, e.g. nitrogen, carbon or potassium. Compare **micronutrient**

macrophage /'mæk'rəʊfeɪdʒ/ noun any of several large cells which destroy inflammatory tissue, found in connective tissue, wounds, lymph nodes and other parts

macropsia /mæ'krɒpsiə/ noun a condition in which a person sees objects larger than they really are, caused by an unusual development in the retina

macroscopic /,mæk'rəʊ'skɒpɪk/ adjective able to be seen with the naked eye

macrosomia /,mæk'rəʊ'saʊmɪə/ noun a condition in which the body grows too much

macrostomia /,mæk'rəʊ'stəʊmɪə/ noun a condition in which the mouth is too wide because the bones of the upper and lower jaw have not fused, either on one or on both sides

macula /'mækjʊlə/ *noun* 1. same as **macule** 2. a small coloured area, e.g. a macula lutea 3. an area of hair cells inside the utricle and saccule of the ear (NOTE: The plural is **maculae**.)

macula lutea /,mækjʊlə 'lu:tɪə/ *noun* a yellow spot on the retina, surrounding the fovea, the part of the eye which sees most clearly. Also called **yellow spot**

macular /'mækjʊlə/ *adjective* referring to a macula

macular degeneration /,mækjʊlə dɪ ,dʒenə'reɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* an eye disorder in elderly people in which fluid leaks into the retina and destroys cones and rods, reducing central vision

macular oedema /,mækjʊlə t'di:məl/ *noun* a disorder of the eye in which fluid gathers in the fovea

macule /'mækju:l/ *noun* a small flat coloured spot on the skin. Compare **papule**

maculopapular /,mækjʊlə'pæpjʊlə/ *adjective* made up of both macules and papules ○ *maculopapular rash*

mad cow disease *noun* same as **bovine spongiform encephalopathy (informal)**

maduromycosis /mə,djuərəʊ'ma:kəʊsɪs/,

maduromycetoma /mə,djuərəʊ'maɪsə 'təʊmə/, **Madura foot** /mə,djuərə 'fʊt/ *noun* a tropical fungus infection in the feet which can destroy tissue and infect bones

Magendie's foramen /mə,dʒəndɪz fə'reɪmən/ *noun* an opening in the fourth ventricle of the brain which allows cerebrospinal fluid to flow [Described 1828. After François Magendie (1783–1855), French physician and physiologist.]

magna /'mægnə/ ♦ **cisterna magna**

magnesium /mæg'nɪ:ziəm/ *noun* a chemical element found in green vegetables, which is essential especially for the correct functioning of muscles (NOTE: The chemical symbol is Mg.)

magnesium sulphate /mæg,nɪ:ziəm 'sʌfət/ *noun* a magnesium salt used as a laxative. Also called **Epsom salts**

magnesium trisilicate /mæg,nɪ:ziəm traɪ 'sɪlɪkət/ *noun* a magnesium compound used to treat peptic ulcers

magnetic /mæg'netɪk/ *adjective* able to attract objects, like a magnet

magnetic field /mæg,netɪk 'fi:ld/ *noun* an area round an object which is under the influence of the magnetic force exerted by the object

magnetic resonance imaging /mæg,netɪk 'rezənəns ,ɪmɪdʒɪŋ/ *noun* a scanning technique which exposes the body to a strong magnetic field and uses the electromagnetic signals emitted by the body to form an image of soft tissue and cells. Abbr **MRI**

magnum /'mægnəm/ ♦ **foramen magnum**

maim /meɪm/ *verb* to incapacitate someone with a major injury

main bronchi /meɪn 'brɒŋki:/ *plural noun* the two main air passages which branch from the trachea outside the lung. Also called **primary bronchi**

major /'meɪdʒə/ *adjective* 1. important or serious 2. more important or serious than others of the same type ○ *The operation was a major one.* ► opposite **minor**

major surgery /,meɪdʒə 'sɜ:dʒəri/ *noun* surgical operations involving important organs in the body. Compare **minor surgery**

mal /mæl/ *noun* an illness or disease

mal-/mæl-/ *prefix* bad or unusual

malabsorption /,mælə'bɔ:sə:pʃən/ *noun* a situation where the intestines are unable to absorb the fluids and nutrients in food properly

malabsorption syndrome /,mælə'bɔ:sə:pʃən ,sɪndrəʊm/ *noun* a group of symptoms and signs, including malnutrition, anaemia, oedema and dermatitis, which results from steatorrhoea and malabsorption of vitamins, protein, carbohydrates and water

malacia /mə'lɛʃə/ *noun* the pathological softening of an organ or tissue

maladjusted /,mælə'dʒʌstɪd/ *adjective* referring to a person who has difficulty fitting into society or family

maladjustment /,mælə'dʒʌstmənt/ *noun* difficulty experienced in fitting into society or family

malaise /mə'lɛɪz/ *noun* a feeling of discomfort

malaligned /,mælə'laind/ *adjective* not in the correct position relative to other parts of the body

malalignment /,mælə'lainmənt/ *noun* a condition in which something is malaligned, especially in which a tooth is not in its correct position in the mouth

malar /'meɪlə/ *adjective* referring to the cheek

malar bone /'meɪlə bən/ *noun* same as cheekbone

malaria /mə'lɛəriə/ *noun* a mainly tropical disease caused by a parasite *Plasmodium*, which enters the body after a bite from the female anopheles mosquito

COMMENT: Malaria is a recurrent disease. It produces headaches, shivering, vomiting, sweating and sometimes hallucinations which are caused by toxins coming from the waste of the parasite *Plasmodium* in the blood.

malarial /mə'lɛəriəl/ *adjective* referring to malaria

malarial parasite /mə,lɛəriəl 'pærəsait/ *noun* a parasite transmitted into the human bloodstream by the bite of the female anopheles mosquito

malarial therapy /mə'lɛəriə ,θerəpi/ *noun* a treatment in which a person is given a form of malaria in the belief that the high fevers they

experience can stimulate the immune system to fight off serious diseases such as syphilis and HIV

male menopause /'meɪl 'menəpɔ:z/ *noun* a period in middle age when a man may feel insecure and anxious about the fact that his physical powers are declining (*informal*)

male sex hormone /'meɪl 'seks ,hɔ:məʊn/ *noun* same as **testosterone**

male sex organs /'meɪl 'seks ,ɔ:gənz/ *plural noun* the testes, epididymis, vasa deferentia, seminal vesicles, ejaculatory ducts and penis
malformation /'mælfɔ:r'meɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* an unusual variation in the shape, structure or development of something

malformed /'mælfɔ:md/ *adjective* unusual in shape, structure or development

malfuction /'mælfʌŋkʃən/ *noun* a situation in which a particular organ does not work in the usual way ○ *Her loss of consciousness was due to a malfunction of the kidneys or to a kidney malfunction.* ■ *verb* to fail to work correctly ○ *During the operation his heart began to malfunction.*

malignancy /mə'lɪgnənsi/ *noun* 1. the state of being malignant ○ *The tests confirmed the malignancy of the growth.* 2. a cancerous growth (NOTE: The plural is **malignancies**.)

malignant /mə'lɪgnənt/ *adjective* likely to cause death or serious disablement if not properly treated

malignant hypertension /mə'lɪgnənt ,haɪpə'tenʃən/ *noun* dangerously high blood pressure

malignant melanoma /mə'lɪgnənt ,melə'nəʊmə/ *noun* a dark tumour which develops on the skin from a mole, caused by exposure to strong sunlight

malignant pustule /mə'lɪgnənt 'pʌstju:l/ *noun* a pus-filled swelling that results from infection of the skin with anthrax

malignant tumour /mə'lɪgnənt 'tju:mər/ *noun* a tumour which is cancerous and can grow again or spread into other parts of the body, even if removed surgically. Opposite **benign tumour**

malingerer /mə'lɪŋgərə/ *noun* a person who pretends to be ill

malingering /mə'lɪŋgəriŋ/ *adjective* the act of pretending to be ill

malleolar /mə'lɪ:ələr/ *adjective* referring to a malleolus

malleolus /mə'lɪ:ələs/ *noun* one of two bony prominences at each side of the ankle (NOTE: The plural is **malleoli**.)

mallet finger /'mæltɪ 'fɪŋgə/ *noun* a finger which cannot be straightened because the tendon attaching the top joint has been torn

malleus /'mæli:s/ *noun* the largest of the three ossicles in the middle ear, shaped like a hammer. See illustration at **EAR** in Supplement

Mallory bodies /'mæləri ,bɒdɪz/ *plural noun* large irregular masses which occur in the cytoplasm of damaged liver cells, often a sign of an alcohol-related disease

Mallory's stain /'mæləriz steɪn/ *noun* trichrome stain, used in histology to distinguish collagen, cytoplasm and nuclei

Mallory-Weiss syndrome /,mæləri 'vais ,sɪndrəʊm/, **Mallory-Weiss tear** /,mæləri 'vais ,teɪ/ *noun* a condition in which there is a tearing in the mucous membrane where the stomach and oesophagus join, e.g. because of strain on them due to vomiting [Described 1929. After G. Kenneth Mallory (b. 1900), Professor of Pathology, Boston University, USA; Konrad Weiss (1898–1942) US physician.]

malnourished /'mæl'nɔ:rɪʃt/ *adjective* not having enough to eat or having only poor-quality food, leading to ill-health

malnutrition /,mælnju't्रɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* 1. a lack of food or of good-quality food, leading to ill-health 2. the state of not having enough to eat

malocclusion /,mælə'klu:ʒ(ə)n/ *noun* a condition in which the teeth in the upper and lower jaws do not meet properly when the person's mouth is closed

malodorous /'mæl'ədərəs/ *adjective* with a strong unpleasant smell

Malpighian body /mæl'pɪgjən ,bɒdi/, **Malpighian corpuscle** /mæl'pɪgjən ,kɔ:pəs(ə)/ *noun* same as **renal corpuscle** [Described 1666. After Marcello Malpighi (1628–94), anatomist and physiologist in Rome and Bologna, Italy.]

Malpighian glomerulus /mæl,pɪgjən gلو'merولəs/ *noun* same as **Bowman's capsule**

Malpighian layer /mæl'pɪgjən ,leɪə/ *noun* the deepest layer of the epidermis

malposition /,mælpə'zɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* an unusual or unexpected position of something such as a fetus in the uterus or fractured bones

malpractice /'mæl'præktɪs/ *noun* 1. illegal, unethical, negligent or immoral behaviour by a professional person, especially a healthcare professional ○ *The surgeon was found guilty of malpractice.* 2. wrong treatment of a patient for which a healthcare professional may be tried in court

malpresentation /,mælprez(ə)n'teɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* an unusual position of a fetus in the uterus just before it is ready to be born

Malta fever /'mɔ:ltə ,fi:və/ *noun* same as **brucellosis**

malтase /'mɔ:ltæs/ *noun* an enzyme in the small intestine which converts maltose into glucose

malтose /'mɔ:ltəʊs/ *noun* a sugar formed by digesting starch or glycogen

malunion /'mæl'ju:njən/ *noun* a bad join of the pieces of a broken bone

mamilla /mæ'mɪlə/ *noun* another spelling of **mammilla**

mamillary /'mæmɪlərɪ/ *adjective* another spelling of **mammillary**

mamm- *prefix* same as **mammo-** (*used before vowels*)

mamma /'mæmə/ *noun* same as **breast** (*NOTE: The plural is **mammæ.***)

mammary /'mæmərɪ/ *adjective* referring to the breast

mammary gland /'mæmərɪ glænd/ *noun* a gland in female mammals which produces milk

mammilla /mæ'mɪlə/, **mamilla** *noun* the protruding part in the centre of the breast, containing the milk ducts through which the milk flows. Also called **nipple**

mammillary /'mæmɪl(ə)rɪ/, **mamillary** *adjective* referring to the nipple

mammillary body /,mæmɪl(ə)ri 'bɒdi/ *noun* one of two little projections on the base of the hypothalamus

mammo- *prefix* referring to breasts

mammogram /'mæməgræm/ *noun* a picture of a breast made using a special X-ray technique

mammography /mæ'mggrəfi/ *noun* examination of the breast using a special X-ray technique

...mammography is the most effective technique available for the detection of occult (non-palpable) breast cancer. It has been estimated that mammography can detect a carcinoma two years before it becomes palpable.' [Southern Medical Journal]

mammoplasty /'mæməplæsti/ *noun* plastic surgery to alter the shape or size of the breasts

mammothermography /,mæməʊθɜː'mo grəfi/ *noun* thermography of a breast

manage /'mænɪdʒ/ *verb* 1. to be in charge or control of something ○ *She manages the ward very efficiently.* ○ *Bleeding can usually be managed, but sometimes an operation may be necessary.* 2. to be able to do something, or to succeed in doing something ○ *Did you manage to phone the doctor?* ○ *Can she manage to feed herself?* (*NOTE: managing – managed*)

management /'mænɪdʒmənt/ *noun* 1. the organising or running of an organisation such as a hospital, clinic or health authority 2. the organisation of a series of different treatments for a person

manager /'mænɪdʒə/ *noun* a person in charge of a department in the health service or in charge of a group of hospitals

Manchester operation /'mæntʃɪstər ɔpə'reɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a surgical operation to correct downward movement of the uterus, involving removal of the cervix

mandible /'mændɪb(ə)l/ *noun* the lower bone in the jaw. Also called **lower jaw**

COMMENT: The jaw is formed of two bones, the mandible which is attached to the skull with a

hinge joint and can move up and down, and the maxillæ which are fixed parts of the skull.

mandibular /mæn'dɪbjʊlə/ *adjective* referring to the lower jaw

mandibular fossae /mæn,dɪbjʊlə 'fɒsi/ *plural noun* sockets in the skull into which the ends of the lower jaw fit

mandibular nerve /mæn'dɪbjʊlə nɜːv/ *noun* a sensory nerve which supplies the teeth in the lower jaw, the temple, the floor of the mouth and the back part of the tongue

mane /'meini/ *adverb* (*used on prescriptions*) during the daytime. Opposite **nocte**

'...he was diagnosed as having diabetes mellitus at age 14, and was successfully controlled on insulin 15 units mane and 10 units nocte' [British Journal of Hospital Medicine]

manganese /'mænggəni:z/ *noun* a metallic trace element (*NOTE: The chemical symbol is Mn.*)

mania /'meiniə/ *noun* a state of bipolar disorder in which the person is excited, very sure of his or her own abilities and has increased energy

-mania /meiniə/ *suffix* obsession with something

maniac /'meiniæk/ *noun* a person who behaves in an uncontrolled way or is considered to have an obsession (*NOTE: This term is regarded as offensive.*)

manic /'mænɪk/ *adjective* referring to mania

manic depression /,mænɪk dɪ'pres(ə)n/ *noun* same as **bipolar disorder**

manic-depressive /,mænɪk dɪ'presɪv/ *adjective* relating to bipolar disorder ■ *noun* a person with bipolar disorder

manic-depressive illness /,mænɪk dɪ'presɪv ,ɪlnəs/, **manic-depressive psychosis** /,mænɪk dɪ'presɪv saɪ'kəsɪs/ *noun* same as **bipolar disorder**

manifestation /,mænɪfe'steɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a sign, indication or symptom of a disease

'...the reason for this susceptibility is a profound abnormality of the immune system in children with sickle cell disease. The major manifestations of pneumococcal infection in SCD are septicaemia, meningitis and pneumonia.' [Lancet]

manikin /'mænɪkɪn/ *noun* an anatomical model of the human body, used in teaching anatomy

manipulate /mæ'nipjʊ,leɪt/ *verb* to rub or move parts of the body with the hands to treat a joint, a slipped disc or a hernia (*NOTE: manipulating – manipulated*)

manipulation /mæ'nipjʊ'lætʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a form of treatment that involves moving or rubbing parts of the body with the hands, e.g. to treat a disorder of a joint

manner /'mænə/ *noun* a way of doing something or of behaving ○ *He was behaving in a strange manner.* ♦ **bedside manner**

mannitol /'mænɪtlɒl/ *noun* a diuretic drug used in the treatment of oedema of the brain

manometer /mə'nmətər/ *noun* an instrument for comparing pressures

manometry /mə'nmətri/ *noun* the measurement of pressures within organs of the body which contain gases or liquids, e.g. the oesophagus or parts of the brain

Mantoux test /mæntu:/ *test/ noun* a test for tuberculosis, in which a person is given an intracutaneous injection of tuberculin. ◊ **Heaf test** [Described 1908. After Charles Mantoux (1877–1947), French physician.]

manual /'mænjuəl/ *adjective* done by hand

manual examination /,mænjuəl ɪg,zæmɪ'neɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* an examination using the hands and fingers

manubrium /mə'nū:briəm/ *noun* a handle-shaped anatomical part, e.g. part of the inner ear

manubrium sterni /mə,nu:briəm 'stɜ:nəɪ/ *noun* the upper part of the sternum

MAO abbr monoamine oxidase

MAOI abbr monoamine oxidase inhibitor

MAO inhibitor /,em ei 'ɛu in,hɪbitər/ *noun* same as **monoamine oxidase inhibitor**

maple syrup urine disease /,meip(ə)l ˌsɪrɔ:p 'juərɪn dɪ,zɪ:z/ *noun* an inherited condition caused by not having enough of a particular enzyme which helps the body to deal with amino acid. The urine smells like maple syrup. It can be fatal if not treated.

marasmus /mə'ræzməs/ *noun* a wasting disease which affects small children who have difficulty in absorbing nutrients or who are malnourished. Also called **failure to thrive**

marble bone disease /,ma:b(ə)l 'bəʊn dɪ,zɪ:z/ *noun* same as **osteopetrosis**

Marburg disease /'mɑ:bɔ:g dɪ,zɪ:z/, **Marburg virus disease** /'mɑ:bɔ:g ,vairəs dɪ,zɪ:z/ *noun* a severe viral infection causing high fever, bleeding from mucous membranes, vomiting and often death. Also called **green monkey disease**

COMMENT: The disease is transmitted to humans from green monkeys. Because the monkeys are used in laboratory experiments, the disease mainly affects laboratory workers.

march fracture /mə:tʃ 'fræktsəl/ *noun* a fracture of one of the metatarsal bones in the foot, caused by excessive exercise to which the body is not accustomed

Marfan's syndrome /'mærfə:nz ,sɪnd्रəʊm/, **Marfan syndrome** /'mærfə:n ,sɪnd्रəʊm/ *noun* a hereditary condition in which a person has extremely long fingers and toes, with disorders of the heart, aorta and eyes [Described 1896. After Bernard Jean Antonin Marfan (1858–1942), French paediatrician.]

marijuana /,ma:rɪ'wɑ:nə/ *noun* same as **cannabis**

mark /mɑ:k/ *noun* a spot or small area of a different colour ◊ *There's a red mark where you hit your head.* ◊ *The rash has left marks*

on the chest and back. ■ **verb** to make a mark on something ◊ **the door is marked** 'Supervisor' the door has the word 'Supervisor' written on it

marked /mɑ:kt/ *adjective* obvious or noticeable ◊ *There has been a marked improvement in his condition.*

marker /'mɑ:kə/ *noun* 1. something which acts as an indicator of something else 2. a substance introduced into the body to make internal structures clearer to X-rays

marrow /'mærəʊ/ *noun* soft tissue in cancellous bone. In young animals **red marrow** is concerned with blood formation while in adults it becomes progressively replaced with fat and is known as yellow marrow. Also called **bone marrow**. See illustration at **BONE STRUCTURE** in Supplement

marsupialisation /mə:s,piələt'zeɪʃ(ə)n/, **marsupialization** *noun* a surgical procedure in which the inside of a cyst is opened up so that the cyst can be allowed to shrink gradually, because it cannot be cut out

masculinisation /,mæskjulɪnɪz'zeɪʃ(ə)n/, **masculinization** *noun* the development of male characteristics such as body hair and a deep voice in a woman, caused by hormone deficiency or by treatment with male hormones

mask /mu:sk/ *noun* 1. a metal and rubber frame that fits over the nose and mouth and is used to administer an anaesthetic 2. a piece of gauze which fits over the mouth and nose to prevent droplet infection 3. a cover which fits over the face of a person who has suffered facial damage in an accident

masked /mu:skt/ *adjective* used to describe diseases that are present but not observable

Maslow's hierarchy of human needs /,mæzləʊz ,haɪərəki əv ,hju:mən 'ni:dz/ *noun* a system which explains human behaviour by organising human needs in order of priority, from basic ones such as eating to complex ones such as finding self-fulfilment, a higher level of motivation not being activated until the lesser needs have been satisfied

masochism /'mæsəkɪz(ə)m/ *noun* a sexual condition in which a person takes pleasure in being hurt or badly treated

masochist /'mæsəkɪst/ *noun* a person suffering from masochism

masochistic /,mæsə'kɪstɪk/ *adjective* referring to masochism

mass /mæs/ *noun* 1. a large quantity, e.g. a large number of people ◊ *The patient's back was covered with a mass of red spots.* 2. a body of matter with no clear shape 3. a mixture for making pills 4. the main solid part of bone

massage /'mæsəuz/ *noun* a treatment for muscular conditions which involves rubbing, stroking or pressing the body with the hands ■

verb to rub, stroke or press the body with the hands

massetter /'mæsɪtə/, **massetter muscle** /mæ'sɪtə ,mas(ə)l/ **noun** a muscle in the cheek which clenches the lower jaw making it move up, to allow chewing

massive /'maɪsɪv/ **adjective** very large ○ *He was given a massive injection of penicillin.* ○ *She had a massive heart attack.*

mass radiography /'mæs ,reɪdɪ'ngrəfɪ/ **noun** the practice of taking X-ray photographs of large numbers of people to check for tuberculosis

mass screening /'mæs 'skri:nɪŋ/ **noun** the practice of testing large numbers of people for the presence of a disease

mast- /mæst/ **prefix** same as **masto-** (*used before vowels*)

mastalgia /mæ'stældʒɪə/ **noun** pain in the mammary gland

mastatropy /mæ'stætrəfi/ **noun** atrophy of the mammary gland

mast cell /'mæst sel/ **noun** a large cell in connective tissue, which carries histamine and reacts to allergens

mastectomy /mæ'stektəmi/ **noun** the surgical removal of a breast

masticate /'maestrikeɪt/ **verb** to chew food

mastication /,mæstɪ'keɪʃ(ə)n/ **noun** the act of chewing food

mastitis /mæ'ſtaɪtɪs/ **noun** inflammation of the breast

masto- /mæstəʊ/ **prefix** referring to a breast

mastoid /'mæstɔɪd/ **adjective** 1. shaped like a nipple 2. belonging to the part of the temporal bone which protrudes at the side of the head behind the ear ■ **noun** same as **mastoid process**

mastoid air cell /,mæstɔɪd 'eə ſel/, **mastoid cell** /'mæstɔɪd ſel/ **noun** an air cell in the mastoid process

mastoid antrum /,mæstɔɪd 'æntrəm/ **noun** a cavity linking the air cells of the mastoid process with the middle ear

mastoid bone /'mæstɔɪd bəʊn/ **noun** same as **mastoid process**

mastoidectomy /,mæstɔɪ'dektəmi/ **noun** a surgical operation to remove part of the mastoid process, as a treatment for mastoiditis

mastoiditis /,mæstɔɪ'daɪtɪs/ **noun** inflammation of the mastoid process and air cells. The symptoms are fever and pain in the ears.

COMMENT: The mastoid process can be infected by infection from the middle ear through the mastoid antrum. Mastoiditis can cause deafness and can affect the meninges if not treated.

mastoidotomy /,mæstɔɪ'dɒtəmi/ **noun** a surgical operation to make a cut into the mastoid process to treat infection

mastoid process /,mæstɔɪd 'prəʊses/ **noun** part of the temporal bone which protrudes at the side of the head behind the ear

masturbate /'mæstəbeɪt/ **verb** to excite one's own genitals so as to produce an orgasm

masturbation /,mæstə'bɛrɪʃ(ə)n/ **noun** stimulation of one's own genitals to produce an orgasm. Also called **onanism**

match /mætʃ/ **verb** 1. to examine two things to see if they are similar or fit together ○ *They are trying to match the donor to the recipient.*

2. to fit together in a specific way ○ *The two samples don't match.*

'...bone marrow from donors has to be carefully matched with the recipient or graft-versus-host disease will ensue' [Hospital Update]

mater /'meɪtə/ ♀ **dura mater**

material /mæ'trɪəriəl/ **noun** 1. matter which can be used to make something 2. cloth ○ *The wound should be covered with gauze or other light material.* 3. all that is necessary in surgery

materia medica /mætɪəriə 'medɪkə/ **noun** the study of drugs or dosages as used in treatment (NOTE: It comes from a Latin term meaning 'medical substance'.)

maternal /mæ'təzɪn(ə)l/ **adjective** referring to a mother

maternal death /mæ,təzɪn(ə)l 'deθ/ **noun** the death of a mother during pregnancy, childbirth or up to twelve months after childbirth

maternal deprivation /mæ,təzɪn(ə)l ,deprɪ'veɪʃ(ə)n/ **noun** a psychological condition caused when a child does not have a proper relationship with a mother

maternal dystocia /mæ,təzɪn(ə)l dɪs'təʊsiə/ **noun** difficult childbirth caused by a physical problem in the mother

maternal instincts /mæ,təzɪn(ə)l 'ɪn̩stɪnkt̩s/ **plural noun** instinctive feelings in a woman to look after and protect her child

maternity /mæ'tɪnɪti/ **noun** childbirth, the fact of becoming a mother

maternity case /mæ'tɪnɪti keɪs/ **noun** a woman who is about to give birth

maternity clinic /mæ'tɪnɪti ,klɪnik/ **noun** same as **antenatal clinic**

maternity hospital /mæ'tɪnɪti ,hɒspɪt(ə)l/

maternity ward /mæ'tɪnɪti wɔ:d/, **maternity unit** /mæ'tɪnɪti ,ju:nɪt/ **noun** a hospital, ward or unit which deals only with women giving birth

matrix /'meɪtrɪks/ **noun** an amorphous mass of cells forming the basis of connective tissue. Also called **ground substance**

matron /'meɪtrən/ **noun** a title formerly given to a woman in charge of the nurses in a hospital. ♀ **modern matron**

matter /'mætə/ **noun** a substance

mattress /'ma:t̩rəs/ **noun** the thick soft part of a bed for lying on

mattress suture /'mætrəs ,su:tʃə/ *noun* a suture made with a loop on each side of the incision

maturational /,mætʃu'reɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the process of becoming mature or fully developed

mature /mæ'tjuər/ *adjective* fully developed

mature follicle /mætʃuər 'frlik(ə)l/ *noun* a Graafian follicle just before ovulation

maturing /mætʃuərɪŋ/ *adjective* becoming mature

maturing egg /mætʃuərɪŋ 'eg/, **maturing ovum** /'əʊvəm/ *noun* an ovum contained by a Graafian follicle

maturity /mætʃuərɪti/ *noun* 1. being fully developed 2. (in psychology) the state of being a responsible adult

maxilla /mæk'sɪlə/, **maxilla bone** /mæk'sɪlə bən/ *noun* the upper jaw bone (NOTE: The plural is **maxillae**. It is more correct to refer to the upper jaw as the **maxillae**, as it is in fact formed of two bones which are fused together.)

maxillary /mæk'sɪləri/ *adjective* referring to the maxilla

maxillary antrum /mæk'sɪləri 'æntrəm/, **maxillary air sinus** /mæk'sɪləri 'eə ,sainəs/ *noun* one of two sinuses behind the cheekbones in the upper jaw. Also called **antrum of Highmore**

maxillo-facial /mæk'sɪlə'feɪʃ(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to the maxillary bone and the face
○ **maxillo-facial surgery**

MB abbr bachelor of medicine

McBurney's point /mæk,bɜ:nɪz 'poɪnt/ *noun* a point which indicates the usual position of the appendix on the right side of the abdomen, between the hip bone and the navel, which is extremely painful if pressed when the person has appendicitis [Described 1899. After Charles McBurney (1845–1913), US surgeon.]

McNaughten's Rules on Insanity at Law /mæk'nɔ:tənз ,ru:lz ɒn ɪn,sænit̬i ət 'lɔ:z/, **McNaughten's Rules** /mæk'nɔ:tənз ,ru:lz/ *plural noun* a set of principles which explain how people can defend themselves in law by claiming that they committed a murder because they were mentally ill, and therefore not responsible for any of their actions. In 1957 it was adapted to include the idea of knowing that an action is wrong but being unable to stop yourself from committing it because of your mental condition.

MCP joint /'em si: 'pi: ,dʒɔ:nt/ *noun* same as **metacarpophalangeal joint**

MCU, MCUG abbr micturating cysto(-uro-)gram

MD abbr doctor of medicine

ME abbr myalgic encephalomyelitis

meal /mi:l/ *noun* food eaten at a particular time

measles /'mi:z(ə)lz/ *noun* an infectious disease of children, where the body is covered with a red rash ○ *She's in bed with measles.* ○ *He's got measles.* ○ *They caught measles from their friend at school.* ○ *Have you had the measles?* Also called **morbilli, rubella** (NOTE: Takes a singular or plural verb.)

COMMENT: Measles can be a serious disease as it weakens the body's resistance to other diseases, especially bronchitis and ear infections. It can be prevented by immunisation. If caught by an adult it can be very serious.

measure /'meʒə/ *noun* a unit of size, quantity or degree ○ *A metre is a measure of length.* ■ **verb** 1. to find out the size of something ○ *A thermometer measures temperature.* 2. to be a particular size ○ *The room measures 3 metres by 2 metres.*

measurement /'meʒəmənt/ *noun* the size, length, etc. of something which has been measured

meat /mi:t/ *noun* animal flesh which is eaten (NOTE: No plural: *some meat, a piece or a slice of meat; he refuses to eat meat.*)

meat- /mɪ:t-/ *prefix* relating to a meatus

meatus /'mi:etəs/ *noun* an opening leading to an internal passage in the body, e.g. the urethra or the nasal cavity (NOTE: The plural is **meatuses** or **meatus**.)

mechanism /'mekənɪz(ə)m/ *noun* 1. a physical or chemical change by which a function is carried out 2. a system in the body which carries out or controls a particular function ○ *The inner ear is the body's mechanism for the sense of balance.*

mechanism of labour /,mekənɪz(ə)m əv 'lebə/ *noun* all the forces and processes which combine to push a foetus out of the uterus during its birth, together with the ones which oppose it

mechanotherapy /,mekənəʊ'θerəpi/ *noun* the treatment of injuries through mechanical means, such as massage and exercise machines

Meckel's diverticulum /,mekəlз ,daɪvɪk'tru:kjuləm/ *noun* a congenital formation of a diverticulum in the ileum [Described 1809. After Johann Friedrich Meckel II (1781–1833), German surgeon and anatomist.]

meconism /'mekənɪz(ə)m/ *noun* poisoning by opium or morphine

meconium /mɪ'kəʊniəm/ *noun* the first dark green faeces produced by a newborn baby

med. *abbr* 1. medical 2. medicine

media /'mi:diə/ *noun* same as **tunica media**

medial /'mi:diəl/ *adjective* nearer to the central midline of the body or to the centre of an organ. Compare **lateral**

medial arcuate ligament /,mi:diəl 'ɑ:kjut ,lɪgəmənt/ *noun* a fibrous arch to which the diaphragm is attached

medial epicondyle /'mi:dɪəl ,epɪ'kɒndail/ *noun* a medial projection on the condyle of the humerus

medially /'mi:dɪəli/ *adverb* towards or on the sagittal plane of the body. See illustration at ANATOMICAL TERMS in Supplement

medial malleolus /'mi:dɪəl mæ'lɪələs/ *noun* a bone at the end of the tibia which protrudes at the inside of the ankle

medial rectus /'mi:dɪəl 'rektəs/ *noun* a muscle inserted into the sclera of the eyeball

median /'mi:dɪən/ *adjective* towards the central midline of the body, or placed in the middle

median nerve /'mi:dɪən nɜ:v/ *noun* one of the main nerves of the forearm and hand

median plane /'mi:dɪən plen/ *noun* an imaginary flat surface on the midline and at right angles to the coronal plane, which divides the body into right and left halves. See illustration at ANATOMICAL TERMS in Supplement

mediastinal /'mi:dɪə'stɪn(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to the mediastinum ○ the mediastinal surface of pleura or of the lungs

mediastinitis /,mi:dɪəstɪ'naitɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the mediastinum

mediastinoscopy /,mi:dɪəstɪ'nɒskəpi/ *noun* an operation in which a tube is put into the mediastinum so that its organs can be examined

mediastinum /,mi:dɪə'stɪnəm/ *noun* the section of the chest between the lungs, where the heart, oesophagus and phrenic and vagus nerves are situated

medic /'medɪk/ *noun* a doctor or medical student (*informal*)

medical /'medɪk(ə)l/ *adjective* 1. referring to the study of diseases ○ a *medical student* 2. referring to treatment of disease which does not involve surgery ○ *Medical help was provided by the Red Cross.* 3. referring to treatment given by a doctor, as opposed to a surgeon, in a hospital or in his or her surgery ■ *noun* an official examination of a person by a doctor ○ *He wanted to join the army, but failed his medical.* ○ *You will have to have a medical if you take out an insurance policy.*

medical administration /,medɪk(ə)l əd'mɪnɪ'streɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the running of hospitals and other health services ○ *She started her career in medical administration.*

medical aid /'medɪk(ə)l eɪd/ *noun* treatment of someone who is ill or injured, given by a doctor. ♦ **first aid**

medical alert bracelet /,medɪk(ə)l ə'lə:t, 'breɪlslet/ *noun* a band or chain worn around the wrist giving information about the wearer's medical needs, allergies or condition

medical assistance /,medɪk(ə)l ə'sist(ə)ns/ *noun* help provided by a nurse, an ambulance or a member of an association

such as the Red Cross, to a person who is ill or injured

medical assistant /'medɪk(ə)l ə,sist(ə)nt/ *noun* someone who performs routine administrative and clinical tasks to help in the offices and clinics of doctors and other medical practitioners

medical audit /,medɪk(ə)l 'a:dɪt/ *noun* a systematic critical analysis of the quality of medical care provided to a person, which examines the procedures used for diagnosis and treatment, the use of resources and the resulting outcome and quality of life for the person

medical audit advisory group /,medɪk(ə)l ,a:dɪt ə'dvaɪz(ə)ri gru:p/ *noun* a body with the responsibility of advising on medical audit in primary care. Abbr **MAAG**

medical centre /'medɪk(ə)l ,sentr/ *noun* a place where several different doctors and specialists practise

medical certificate /'medɪk(ə)l sə,tifikət/ *noun* an official document signed by a doctor, giving someone permission to be away from work or not to do specific types of work

medical committee /'medɪk(ə)l kə,miti/ *noun* a committee of doctors in a hospital who advise the management on medical matters

medical diathermy /,medɪk(ə)l ,daɪə'θɜ:mɪ/ *noun* the use of heat produced by electricity for treatment of muscle and joint disorders such as rheumatism

medical doctor /'medɪk(ə)l ,dɒktə/ *noun* a doctor who practises medicine, but is not usually a surgeon

medical ethics /,medɪk(ə)l 'eθɪks/ *plural noun* the moral and professional principles which govern how doctors and nurses should work, and, in particular, what type of relationship they should have with their patients

medical examination /,medɪk(ə)l ɪg,zæmɪ'nейʃ(ə)n/ *noun* an examination of a person by a doctor

medical history /,medɪk(ə)l 'hɪst(ə)ri/ *noun* the details of a person's medical condition and treatment over a period of time

medical intervention /,medɪk(ə)l ,ɪntə'venʃən/ *noun* the treatment of illness by drugs

medicalisation /,medɪkələ'seɪʃ(ə)n/, **medicalization** *noun* the act of looking at something as a medical issue or problem

medical jurisprudence /,medɪk(ə)l dʒʊərɪs'pru:d(ə)ns/ *noun* the use of the principles of law as they relate to the practice of medicine and the relationship of doctors with each other, their patients and society. ♦ **forensic medicine**

Medical Officer of Health /,medɪk(ə)l ,ɒfɪsər əv 'helθ/ *noun* formerly, a local government official in charge of the health services in an area. Abbr **MOH**

medical practitioner /'medɪk(ə)l præk'tju:nəl/ noun a person qualified in medicine, i.e. a doctor or surgeon

medical profession /'medɪk(ə)l prə'fes(ə)n/ noun all doctors

medical records /'medɪk(ə)l ,reko:dz/ plural noun information about a person's medical history

Medical Register /'medɪk(ə)l 'redʒɪstər/ noun a list of doctors approved by the General Medical Council ○ *The committee ordered his name to be struck off the Medical Register.*

Medical Research Council /'medɪk(ə)l rɪ'sɜ:tʃ ,kaʊnsəl/ noun a government body which organises and pays for medical research. Abbr MRC

medical school /'medɪk(ə)l sku:l/ noun a section of a university which teaches medicine ○ *He is at medical school.*

medical secretary /'medɪk(ə)l 'sekrit(ə)ri/ noun a qualified secretary who specialises in medical documentation, either in a hospital or in a doctor's surgery

medical social worker /'medɪk(ə)l 'səʊʃ(ə)l ,wɜ:kə/ noun someone who helps people with family problems or problems related to their work which may have an effect on their response to treatment

medical ward /'medɪk(ə)l wɔ:d/ noun a ward for people who do not have to undergo surgical operations

Medicare /'medikeə/ noun a system of public health insurance in the US

medicated /'medikeɪtɪd/ adjective containing a medicinal drug ○ *medicated cough sweet*

medicated shampoo /'medikeɪtɪd ſəməp/ noun a shampoo containing a chemical which is supposed to prevent dandruff

medication /'medi'keɪʃ(ə)n/ noun 1. the treatment of illnesses by giving people drugs. ○ *premedication* 2. a drug used to treat a particular illness ○ *What sort of medication has she been taking? ○ 80% of elderly patients admitted to geriatric units are on medication.*

medicinal /mə'dɪs(ə)n(ə)l/ adjective which has healing properties or a beneficial effect on someone's health ○ *He has a drink of whisky before he goes to bed for medicinal purposes.*

medicinal bath /mə'dɪs(ə)n(ə)l 'ba:θ/ noun treatment in which someone lies in a bath of hot water containing particular chemicals, in hot mud or in other substances

medicinal drug /mə'dɪs(ə)n(ə)l 'drʌg/ noun a drug used to treat a disease as opposed to hallucinatory or addictive drugs

medicinal leech /mə'dɪs(ə)n(ə)l 'li:tʃ/ noun a leech which is raised specially for use in medicine

medicinally /mə'dɪs(ə)n(ə)li/ adverb used as a medicine ○ *The herb can be used medicinally.*

medicine /'med(ə)s(ə)n/ noun 1. a preparation taken to treat a disease or condition, especially one in liquid form ○ *Take some cough medicine if your cough is bad. ○ You should take the medicine three times a day.* 2. the study of diseases and how to cure or prevent them ○ *She is studying medicine because she wants to be a doctor.* 3. the study and treatment of diseases which does not involve surgery

medicine bottle /'med(ə)s(ə)n ,bɒtl(ə)l/ noun a special bottle which contains medicine

medicine cabinet /'med(ə)s(ə)n ,kæbɪnət/, **medicine chest** /'med(ə)s(ə)n tʃest/ noun a cupboard where medicines, bandages, thermometers and other pieces of medical equipment can be left locked up, but ready for use in an emergency

medico /'medɪkəʊ/ noun a doctor (informal) ○ *The medico said I was perfectly fit.*

medico- /'medɪkəʊ/ prefix referring to medicine or to doctors

medicochirurgical /'medɪkəʊkərjʊkl/ 'rɜ:dzɪk(ə)l/ adjective referring to both medicine and surgery

medicolegal /'medɪkəʊ'lɪ:g(ə)l/ adjective referring to both medicine and the law

medicosocial /'medɪkəʊ 'səʊʃ(ə)l/ adjective involving both medical and social factors

medium /'mi:dɪəm/ adjective average, in the middle or at the halfway point ■ noun a substance through which something acts

medroxyprogesterone /mə'drɒksɪprəʊ 'dʒɛstərəʊn/ noun a synthetic hormone used to treat menstrual disorders, in oestrogen replacement therapy and as a contraceptive

medulla /me'dʊlə/ noun 1. the soft inner part of an organ, as opposed to the outer cortex. See illustration at **KIDNEY** in Supplement 2. bone marrow 3. any structure similar to bone marrow

medulla oblongata /me,dʊlə ,ɒbləŋ 'geɪtə/ noun a continuation of the spinal cord going through the foramen magnum into the brain

medullary /me'dʊləri/ adjective 1. similar to marrow 2. referring to a medulla

medullary cavity /me,dʊləri 'kævɪtɪ/ noun a hollow centre of a long bone, containing bone marrow. See illustration at **BONE STRUCTURE** in Supplement

medullary cord /me'dʊləri kɔ:d/ noun an epithelial fibre found near the hilum of the fetal ovary

medullated nerve /'medəleɪtɪd nɜ:v/ noun a nerve surrounded by a myelin sheath

medulloblastoma /me,dʊləbla:stə'məʊmə/ noun a tumour which develops in the medulla oblongata and the fourth ventricle of the brain in children

mefenamic acid /mefənæmɪk 'æsɪd/ noun a drug which reduces inflammation and pain,

used in the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis and menstrual problems

mfloquine /'mefləkwi:n/, **mfloquine hydrochloride** /,mefləkwi:n,haidrəʊ'klɔ:raɪd/ noun a drug used in the prevention and treatment of malaria

mega- /megə/ prefix 1. large. Opposite **micro-** 2. one million, or 10⁶

megacolon /,mɛgə'kəʊlən/ noun a condition in which the lower colon is very much larger than normal, because part of the colon above is constricted, making bowel movements impossible

megajoule /'megədʒu:l/ noun a unit of measurement of energy equal to one million joules. Symbol **Mj**

megakaryocyte /,mɛgə'kærɪəsait/ noun a bone marrow cell which produces blood platelets

megalο- /megələʊ/ prefix large

megaloblast /'megələʊblæst/ noun an unusually large blood cell found in the bone marrow of people who have some types of anaemia caused by Vitamin B₁₂ deficiency

megaloblastic /,megələʊ'błæstɪk/ adjective referring to megaloblasts

megalo- /megələʊ/ prefix anaemia /,megələʊ,blæstɪk ə'nɪ:miə/ noun anaemia caused by Vitamin B₁₂ deficiency

megalocephaly /,megələʊ'kefəli/ noun the condition of having an unusually large head

megacytē /'megələʊsait/ noun an unusually large red blood cell, found in pernicious anaemia

megalomania /,megələʊ'meɪniə/ noun a psychiatric disorder in which a person believes they are very powerful and important

megalomaniac /,megələʊ'meɪniæk/ noun someone who has megalomania ■ adjective having megalomania

-megaly /megəli/ suffix enlargement

megaureter /,megə'ju:rɪ:tə/ noun a condition in which a part of the ureter becomes very wide, above the site of a blockage

meibomian cyst /mai,bəʊmɪən 'sist/ noun the swelling of a sebaceous gland in the eyelid. Also called **chalazion**

meibomian gland /mai'bəʊmɪən,glænd/ noun a sebaceous gland on the edge of the eyelid which secretes a liquid to lubricate the eyelid. Also called **tarsal gland**

meibomianitis /mai,bəʊmɪə'naitɪs/ noun a condition in which the meibomian glands become swollen

Meigs' syndrome /'meɪgz,sɪndrəʊm/ noun a condition in which liquid collects in the chest and abdominal cavities. It is associated with pelvic tumours.

meiosis /mai'əʊsɪs/ noun the process of cell division which results in two pairs of haploid cells, i.e. cells with only one set of chromo-

somes. Compare **mitosis** (NOTE: The US spelling is **miosis**.)

Meissner's corpuscle /,maɪsnəz 'kɔ:pəs(ə)l/ noun a receptor cell in the skin which is thought to be sensitive to touch

Meissner's plexus /,maɪsnəz 'pleksəs/ noun a network of nerve fibres in the wall of the alimentary canal [Described 1853. After Georg Meissner (1829–1905), German anatomist and physiologist.]

melaena /'mə:lɪ:nə/ noun black faeces where the colour is caused by bleeding in the intestine

melan- /melən/ prefix same as **melano-** (used before vowels)

melancholia /,melən'kæliə/ noun 1. a severe depressive illness occurring usually between the ages of 45 and 65 2. a clinical syndrome with a tendency to delusion, fixed personality and agitated movements

melanin /'melənɪn/ noun a dark pigment which gives colour to skin and hair, also found in the choroid of the eye and in some tumours

melanism /'melənɪz(ə)m/ noun 1. the unexpected depositing of dark pigment 2. the staining of all body tissue with melanin in a form of carcinoma

melano- /melənəʊ/ prefix black or dark

melanocyte /'melənəʊsait/ noun any cell which carries pigment

melanocyte-stimulating hormone /,melənəʊsait 'stɪmjo:leɪtɪŋ,haʊ:məʊm/ noun a hormone produced by the pituitary gland which causes darkening in the colour of the skin. Abbr **MSH**

melanoderma /,melənəʊ'də:z:mə/ noun 1. a large amount of melanin in the skin 2. discolouration of patches of the skin

melanoma /,melə'nəʊmə/ noun a tumour formed of dark pigmented cells

COMMENT: ABCD is the key to remember if you want to know if there is a risk of developing a melanoma: A = ASYMMETRY, ie. the two sides are not quite the same, and the mole does not have a perfect shape; B = BORDER, the edge becomes irregular; C = COLOUR, there may be a change in colour, with the mole becoming darker; D = DIAMETER, any change in diameter should be considered an important factor. Among other features, pain is rarely an important feature but itching could be one.

melanophore /'melənəʊfɔ:/ noun a cell which contains melanin

melanoplakia /'melənəʊpləkɪə/ noun areas of pigment in the mucous membrane inside the mouth

melanosis /,melə'nəʊsɪs/ noun same as **melanism**

melanuria /,melə'njuəriə/ noun 1. the presence of dark colouring in the urine 2. a condition in which the urine turns black after being

allowed to stand, e.g. in cases of malignant melanoma

melasma /mə'læzmə/ *noun* the presence of little brown, yellow or black spots on the skin

melatonin /'melə'təʊnɪn/ *noun* a hormone produced by the pineal gland during the hours of darkness, which makes animals sleep during the winter months. It is thought to control the body's rhythms.

melena /mə'lē:nə/ *noun* same as **melaena**

melitus /'mɛltɪs/ ♀ **diabetes mellitus**

membrane /'membreɪn/ *noun* a thin layer of tissue which lines or covers an organ

membrane bone /'membreɪn bəʊn/ *noun* a bone which develops from tissue and not from cartilage

membranous /'memb्रənəs/ *adjective* referring to membranes, or like a membrane

membranous labyrinth /,memb्रənəs læbərɪnθ/ *noun* a series of ducts and canals formed of membrane inside the osseous labyrinth

memory /'mem(ə)ri/ *noun* the ability to remember ○ *He has a very good memory for dates.* ○ *He said the whole list from memory.*

menarche /mə'nɑ:kɪ/ *noun* the start of menstrual periods

mend /mend/ *verb* to repair something ○ *The surgeons are trying to mend the damaged heart valves.*

Mendel's laws /'mendəlz ɬɔ:z/ *plural noun* the laws of heredity, that are the basis of the science of genetics [Described 1865. After Gregor Johann Mendel (1822–84), Austrian Augustinian monk and naturalist of Brno, whose work was rediscovered by de Vries in 1900.]

Mendelson's syndrome /'mendəlsənз, sɪndrəʊm/ *noun* a sometimes fatal condition in which acid fluid from the stomach is brought up into the windpipe and passes into the lungs, occurring mainly in obstetric patients [Described 1946. After Curtis L. Mendelson (b. 1913), US obstetrician and gynaecologist.]

Ménière's disease /meni'eэz dɪ,zi:z/, **Ménière's syndrome** /'sɪndrəʊm/ *noun* a disease of the middle ear, in which someone becomes dizzy, hears ringing in the ears and may vomit, and becomes progressively deaf. The causes may include infections or allergies, which increase the fluid contents of the labyrinth in the middle ear. [Described 1861. After Prosper Ménière (1799–1862) and his son, Emile Antoine Ménière (1839–1905), French physicians.]

mening- /menɪndʒ/ *prefix* same as **meningo-** (used before vowels)

meningeal /me'nɪndʒɪəl/ *adjective* referring to the meninges

meningeal haemorrhage /me,nɪndʒɪəl 'hem(ə)rɪdʒ/ *noun* a haemorrhage from a meningeal artery

meningeal sarcoma /me,nɪndʒɪəl sa:'kœmə/ *noun* a malignant tumour in the meninges

meninges /me'nɪndʒɪ:z/ *plural noun* the membranes which surround the brain and spinal cord (NOTE: The singular is **meninx**.)

COMMENT: The meninges are divided into three layers: the tough outer layer (dura mater) which protects the brain and spinal cord; the middle layer (arachnoid mater) and the delicate inner layer (pia mater) which contains the blood vessels. The cerebrospinal fluid flows in the space (subarachnoid space) between the arachnoid mater and pia mater.

meningioma /,menɪndʒɪ'əʊmə/ *noun* a benign tumour in the meninges

meningism /me'nɪndʒɪz(ə)m/ *noun* a condition in which there are signs of meningeal irritation suggesting meningitis, but where there is no pathological change in the cerebrospinal fluid

meningitis /,menɪn'dʒaɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the meninges, causing someone to have violent headaches, fever, and stiff neck muscles, and sometimes to become delirious

COMMENT: Meningitis is a serious viral or bacterial disease which can cause brain damage and even death. The bacterial form can be treated with antibiotics. The most common forms of bacterial meningitis are Hib and meningococcal.

meningo- /mənɪngəʊ/ *prefix* referring to the meninges

meningocele /mə'nɪngəʊsi:l/ *noun* a condition in which the meninges protrude through the vertebral column or skull

meningococcal /mə,nɪngə'ʊ'kɒk(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to meningococci

meningococcal disease /mə,nɪngəʊ'kɒk(ə)l dɪ,zi:z/ *noun* a disease caused by a meningococcus

meningococcal meningitis /mə,nɪngəʊ',kɒk(ə)l ,menɪn'dʒaɪtɪs/ *noun* the commonest epidemic form of meningitis, caused by a bacterium *Neisseria meningitidis*, where the meninges become inflamed causing headaches and fever

meningococcus /mə,nɪngəʊ'kɒkəs/ *noun* the bacterium *Neisseria meningitidis* which causes meningococcal meningitis (NOTE: The plural is **meningococci**.)

meningoencephalitis /mə,nɪngə'en,kɛfə'lætɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the meninges and the brain

meningoencephalocele /mə,nɪngə'en,kɛfə'læsəl/ *noun* a condition in which part of the meninges and the brain push through a gap in the skull

meningomyelocele /mə,nɪngə'o'maɪələsəl/ *noun* the pushing forward of part of the

meninges and spinal cord through a gap in the spine. Also called **myelomeningocele**, **myelocoele**

meningovascular /mə'niŋgəʊ'veæskjʊlə/ *adjective* referring to the meningeal blood vessels

meninx /'menɪŋks/ *noun* ♦ **meninges**

meniscectomy /,menɪ'sektəmɪ/ *noun* the surgical removal of a cartilage from the knee

meniscus /mə'nɪskəs/ *noun* one of two pads of cartilage, the lateral meniscus and medial meniscus, between the femur and tibia in a knee joint. Also called **semilunar cartilage** (NOTE: The plural is **menisci**.)

meno- /'menəʊ/ *prefix* referring to menstruation

menopausal /,menə'pɔ:z(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to the menopause

menopause /'menəpəʊz/ *noun* a period, usually between 45 and 55 years of age, when a woman stops menstruating and can no longer bear children. Also called **climacteric, change of life**

menorrhagia /,menə'reɪdʒɪə/ *noun* very heavy bleeding during menstruation. Also called **flooding**

menorrhoea /,menə'rɪ:ə/ *noun* normal bleeding during menstruation

menses /'mensɪ:z/ *plural noun* same as **menstruation**

menstrual /'menstruəl/ *adjective* referring to menstruation

menstrual cramp /,menstruəl 'kræmp/ *noun* a cramp in the muscles round the uterus during menstruation

menstrual cycle /'menstruəl ,saɪk(ə)l/ *noun* a period, usually of 28 days, during which a woman ovulates, the walls of the uterus swell and bleeding takes place if the ovum has not been fertilised

menstrual flow /'menstruəl fləʊ/ *noun* the discharge of blood from the uterus during menstruation

menstruate /'menstrueɪt/ *verb* to bleed from the uterus during menstruation

menstruation /,menstru'eɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* bleeding from the uterus which occurs in a woman each month when the lining of the uterus is shed because no fertilised egg is present

menstruum /'menstru:əm/ *noun* a liquid used in the extract of active principles from an unrefined drug

mental /'ment(ə)l/ *adjective* 1. referring to the mind 2. referring to the chin

mental aberration /,ment(ə)l ,ə'bə'reɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* slight forgetfulness or confusion (often humorous) ◇ I thought the meeting was at 11 – I must have had a mental aberration.

mental age /'ment(ə)l 'eɪdʒ/ *noun* a measurement based on intelligence tests that shows

a person's intellectual development, usually compared to standardised data for a chronological age ◇ he's nine, but he has a **mental age of five** although he is nine years old, his level of intellectual development is the same as that of an average child of five

mental block /,ment(ə)l 'blk/ *noun* a temporary inability to remember something, caused by the effect of nervous stress on the mental processes

mental deficiency /,ment(ə)l dɪ'fɪʃ(ə)nsi/ *noun* a former term for learning disability (NOTE: This term is regarded as offensive.)

mental development /,ment(ə)l dɪ'veləpmənt/ *noun* the development of the mind ◇ Her **mental development is higher than usual for her age**.

mental disorder /,ment(ə)l dɪs'ɔ:də/ *noun* a temporary or permanent change in a person's mental state which makes them function less effectively than they would usually, or than the average person would be expected to function

mental faculties /,ment(ə)l 'fækəlti:z/ *plural noun* abilities such as thinking and decision-making ◇ There has been no impairment of the **mental faculties**.

mental handicap /,ment(ə)l 'hændikæp/ *noun* a former term for learning disability (NOTE: This term is regarded as offensive.)

mental health /'ment(ə)l helθ/ *noun* the condition of someone's mind

Mental Health Acts /,ment(ə)l 'helθ əkts/ *plural noun* laws made by a parliament which lay down rules for the care of people with mental illness

Mental Health Review Tribunal /,ment(ə)l helθ ri'veju: trai, bju:n(ə)l/ *noun* a committee which makes decisions about whether people who have been detained under the Mental Health Acts should be released. It consists of medical members, legal experts and lay members, who include people with experience in social services. Abbr **MHRT**

mental hospital /'ment(ə)l ,hospɪt(ə)l/ *noun* a psychiatric hospital (NOTE: This term is regarded as offensive.)

mental illness /,ment(ə)l 'ilnəs/ *noun* any disorder which affects the mind

mental impairment /,ment(ə)l im'peəmənt/ *noun* a temporary or permanent condition which affects a person's mental state, making them function less effectively than they would usually, or than the average person would be expected to function

mentalis muscle /men'teɪlis 'mas(ə)l/ *noun* a muscle attached to the front of the lower jaw and the skin of the chin

mentally /'ment(ə)li/ *adverb* in the mind ◇ Mentally, she is very advanced for her age.

mentally handicapped /,ment(ə)li 'hændikæpt/ *adjective* a former term for

someone with learning disability (NOTE: This term is usually regarded as offensive.)

mentally ill /'ment(ə)li 'il/ *adjective* experiencing mental illness

mental nerve /'ment(ə)l nɜ:v/ *noun* a nerve which supplies the chin

mental patient /'ment(ə)l ,peɪʃ(ə)nt/ *noun* a former term of a patient who has mental illness (NOTE: This term is regarded as offensive.)

mental retardation /'ment(ə)l ,ri:tə:tə:dɪ'retɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a former term for learning disability, a condition that results in someone finding it difficult to learn skills or information at the same rate as others of a similar age (NOTE: This term is regarded as offensive.)

mental subnormality /'ment(ə)l ,sʌbno:mɪ:tɪ/ *noun* a former term for mental impairment (NOTE: This term is usually regarded as offensive.)

menthol /'menθɒl/ *noun* a strongly scented compound, produced from peppermint oil, used in cough medicines and in the treatment of neuralgia

mentholated /'menθəleɪtɪd/ *adjective* impregnated with menthol

mento- /'mentəʊ/ *prefix* relating to the chin

mentor /'mentɔ:/ *noun* somebody who advises and guides a younger, less experienced person ■ *verb* to act as a mentor to somebody

mentum /'mentəm/ *noun* the chin

meralgia /mə'rældʒɪə/; **meralgia paraesthesia** /mə'rældʒɪə,pæərə'sθetɪkə/ *noun* pain in the top of the thigh caused by a pinched nerve

mercurialism /mə'kjuəriəlɪz(ə)m/ *noun* mercury poisoning

mercurochrome /ma'kjʊərəʊkrəʊm/ *noun* a red antiseptic solution

mercury /'mɜ:kjʊri/ *noun* a poisonous liquid metal, used in thermometers (NOTE: The chemical symbol is Hg.)

mercury poisoning /'mɜ:kjʊri,pɔɪzɪŋ/ *noun* poisoning by drinking mercury or mercury compounds or by inhaling mercury vapour

mercy killing /'mɜ:sɪ ,kɪlɪŋ/ *noun* same as euthanasia

meridian /mə'rɪdiən/ *noun* in acupuncture and Chinese medicine, one of the pathways in the body along which its energy is believed to flow

Merkel's cells /'mɜ:kelz selz/, **Merkel's discs** /'mɜ:kelz disks/ *plural noun* epithelial cells in the deeper part of the dermis which form touch receptors [After Friedrich Siegmund Merkel (1845–1919), German anatomist]

merocrine /'merəʊkrain/ *adjective* same as eccrine

mes- /mes/ *prefix* same as **meso-** (*used before vowels*)

mesaortitis /'mesəɔ:tɪ:tɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the media of the aorta

mesarteritis /mes,ɑ:tə'rætɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the media of an artery

mesencephalon /mesen'kefəlon/ *noun* same as **midbrain**

mesenteric /,mesen'terɪk/ *adjective* referring to the mesentery

mesenterica /mesen'terɪkə/ ♦ **tabes mesenterica**

mesenteric artery /,mesenterik 'ɑ:tərɪ/ *noun* one of two arteries, the superior and inferior mesenteric arteries, which supply the small intestine or the transverse colon and rectum

mesenteric ganglion /,mesenterik 'gæŋglɪən/ *noun* a plexus of sympathetic nerve fibres and ganglion cells around the superior mesenteric artery

mesenteric vein /,mesenterik 'veɪn/ *noun* a vein in the portal system running from the intestine to the portal vein

mesentery /'mesent(ə)ri/ *noun* a double-layer peritoneum which attaches the small intestine and other abdominal organs to the abdominal wall

mesial /'mi:sɪəl/ *adjective* 1. in dentistry, relating to the middle of the front of the jaw, or occurring in a place near this 2. relating to or located in the middle part of something

meso- /mesəʊ/ *prefix* middle

mesoappendix /,mesəʊ'pendɪks/ *noun* a fold of peritoneum which links the appendix and the ileum

mesocolon /,mesəʊ'kələn/ *noun* a fold of peritoneum which supports the colon. In an adult it supports the transverse and sigmoid sections only.

mesoderm /'mesəʊdɜ:m/ *noun* the middle layer of an embryo, which develops into muscles, bones, blood, kidneys, cartilages, urinary ducts and the cardiovascular and lymphatic systems

mesodermal /,mesəʊ'dɜ:əm(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to the mesoderm

mesometrium /,mesəʊ'mi:ttriəm/ *noun* a muscle layer of the uterus

mesonephros /,mesəʊ'nefrɒs/ *noun* kidney tissue which exists in a human embryo

mesosalpinx /,mesəʊ'sælpɪŋks/ *noun* the upper part of the broad ligament around the Fallopian tubes

mesotendon /,mesəʊ'tendən/ *noun* synovial membrane connecting the lining of the fibrous sheath to that of a tendon

mesothelioma /,mesəʊti:lɪ'əʊmə/ *noun* a tumour of the serous membrane, which can be benign or malignant

mesothelium /,mesəʊ'ti:liəm/ *noun* a layer of cells lining a serous membrane. Compare **epithelium, endothelium**

mesovarium /,mesəʊ'veəriəm/ *noun* a fold of peritoneum around the ovaries

messenger RNA /'mes(ə)nđzə ,a:r en 'eɪ/ *noun* a type of ribonucleic acid which transmits the genetic code from the DNA to the ribosomes which form the proteins coded on the DNA. Abbr **mRNA**

mestranol /'mi:streñol/ *noun* a synthetically produced oestrogen used in birth control pills

meta- /metə/ *prefix* referring to change

meta analysis /'metə ə,næləsis/ *noun* a statistical procedure to combine the results from many studies to give a single estimate, giving weight to large studies

metabolic /metə'bɒlik/ *adjective* referring to metabolism

metabolic acidosis /metəbɒlik ,æsɪ 'dəʊsɪs/ *noun* acidosis caused by a malfunction of the body's metabolism

metabolic alkalosis /metəbɒlik ælkə 'ləʊsɪs/ *noun* alkalosis caused by a malfunction of the body's metabolism

metabolise /mə'tæbəlaɪz/, **metabolize** *verb* to change the nature of something by metabolism □ *The liver metabolises proteins and carbohydrates.*

metabolism /mə'tæbəlɪz(ə)m/ *noun* the chemical processes which are continually taking place in the human body and which are essential to life, especially the processes that convert food into energy

COMMENT: Metabolism covers all changes which take place in the body: the building of tissue (anabolism); the breaking down of tissue (catabolism); the conversion of nutrients into tissue; the elimination of waste matter and the action of hormones.

metabolite /mə'tæbəlaɪt/ *noun* a substance produced by metabolism, or a substance taken into the body in food and then metabolised

metacarpal bone /,metə'kɑ:p(ə)l bəun/, **metacarpal** /,metə'kɑ:p(ə)l/ *noun* one of the five bones in the metacarpus

metacarpophalangeal /,metə'kɑ:pəfə'lændʒiəl/ *adjective* relating to the part of the hand between the wrist and the fingers

metacarpophalangeal joint /,metə'kɑ:pəfə'lændʒiəl ,dʒɔ:nt/ *noun* a joint between a metacarpal bone and a finger. Also called **MCP joint, MP joint**

'...replacement of the MCP joint is usually undertaken to relieve pain, deformity and immobility due to rheumatoid arthritis' [Nursing Times]

metacarpus /,metə'kɑ:ps/ *noun* the five bones in the hand between the fingers and the wrist. See illustration at **HAND** in Supplement

metal /'met(ə)l/ *noun* material, either an element or a compound, which can carry heat and electricity. Some metals are essential for life.

metallic /me'tælɪk/ *adjective* like a metal, referring to a metal

metallic element /me,tælɪk 'elɪmənt/ *noun* a chemical element which is a metal

metamorphopsia /metəmɔ:'fɒpsɪə/ *noun* a condition in which someone sees objects in distorted form, usually due to inflammation of the choroid

metaphase /'metəfeɪz/ *noun* one of the stages in mitosis or meiosis

metaphysis /me'tæfɪsɪs/ *noun* the end of the central section of a long bone, where the bone grows and where it joins the epiphysis

metaplasia /metə'pleɪzɪə/ *noun* a change of one tissue to another

metastasis /me'tæstəsɪs/ *noun* the spreading of a malignant disease from one part of the body to another through the bloodstream or the lymph system. Also called **secondary growth** (NOTE: The plural is **metastases**.)

'...he suddenly developed problems with his balance and a solitary brain metastasis was diagnosed' [British Journal of Nursing]

metastasise /me'tæstəsaɪz/, **metastasize** *verb* to spread by metastasis

metastatic /metə'stætɪk/ *adjective* relating to, or produced by, metastasis □ *Metastatic growths developed in the liver.*

metatarsal /metə'ta:s(ə)l/ *noun* one of the five bones in the metatarsus ■ *adjective* relating to the metatarsus

metatarsal arch /,metə'ta:s(ə)l a:tʃ/ *noun* an arched part of the sole of the foot, running across the sole of the foot from side to side. Also called **transverse arch**

metatarsalgia /,metəta:lɪ'sældʒɪə/ *noun* pain in the heads of the metatarsal bones

metatarsophalangeal joint /metə,tɑ:səʊfə'lændʒiəl ,dʒɔ:nt/ *noun* a joint between a metatarsal bone and a toe

metatarsus /,metə'ta:səs/ *noun* the five long bones in the foot between the toes and the tarsus. See illustration at **FOOT** in Supplement (NOTE: The plural is **metatarsi**.)

metatarsus adductus /,metəta:səs ə'dʌktəs/ *noun* a condition found in newborn babies or young infants in which the front half of the foot is twisted inwards at an angle to the heel

meteorism /'mi:tɪərɪz(ə)m/ *noun* same as **tympanites**

meter /'mi:tə/ *noun* US same as **metre**

-meter /mi:tə/, mitə/ *suffix* measuring instrument

metformin /met'fɔ:min/ *noun* a drug which reduces the level of the blood sugar levels, used to treat non-insulin dependent diabetes which does not respond to dietary measures

methadone /'meθədəʊn/ *noun* a synthetically produced narcotic drug, used to reduce pain and as a substitute for heroin in the treatment of addiction

methaemoglobin /met,hɪ:məu'gləʊbɪn/ *noun* a dark brown substance formed from haemoglobin which develops during illness, following treatment with some drugs. Methae-

moglobin cannot transport oxygen round the body, and so causes cyanosis.

methaemoglobinæmia /met,hɪməʊ,gloʊbɪ'nɪ:miə/ noun the presence of methaemoglobin in the blood

methane /'mi:θeɪn, 'meθeɪn/ noun a colourless flammable gas with no smell

methanol /'meθənɒl/ noun a colourless poisonous liquid, used as a solvent and a fuel. It changes easily into a gas. Also called **methyl alcohol**

methicillin /,meθɪ'sɪlin/ noun a synthetically produced antibiotic, used in the treatment of infections which are resistant to penicillin

methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus /meθɪ'silin rɪ,zɪstənt stæfɪlkə,kɒkəs 'ɔ:rɪəs/ noun a bacterium resistant to almost all antibiotics and which can cause life-threatening infection in people recovering from surgery. Abbr **MRSA**

methionine /me'θaiəni:n/ noun an essential amino acid

method /'meθəd/ noun a way of doing something

methotrexate /,meθə'trekseɪt/ noun a drug which helps to prevent cells reproducing, used in the treatment of cancer

methyl alcohol /,mi:θaɪl 'ælkəhol/ noun same as **methanol**

methylated spirits /,meθəleɪtɪd 'spirɪts/ plural noun almost pure alcohol, with wood alcohol and colouring added

methylene blue /,meθəli:b/ noun a blue dye, formerly used as a mild urinary antiseptic, now used to treat drug-induced methaemoglobinæmia

methylenedioxymethamphetamine /,meθi:lɛndioks'metfæməti:n/ noun same as **ecstasy**

methylphenidate /,mi:θaɪl'fenɪdeɪt/ noun a drug which stimulates the central nervous system, used in the treatment of narcolepsy and attention deficit disorder

methylprednisolone /,mi:θaɪlpred'nɪsələn/ noun a corticosteroid drug which reduces inflammation, used in the treatment of arthritis, allergies and asthma

metoclopramide /,metəu'kləuprə'maɪd/ noun a drug used to treat nausea, vomiting and indigestion

metoprolol /mi:tɒprɒlɒl/ noun a drug which controls the activity of the heart, used to treat angina and high blood pressure

metr- /metr/ prefix same as **metro-** (used before vowels)

metra /'metrə/ noun the uterus

metralgia /me'trældʒə/ noun pain in the uterus

metre /'mi:tə/ noun an SI unit of length ◎ The room is four metres by three. Symbol **m** (NOTE: The US spelling is **meter**.)

metritis /me'traitɪs/ noun same as **myometritis**

metro- /metrəʊ/ prefix referring to the uterus

metrocolpocele /,metrə'kɒlpəsə:l/ noun a condition in which the uterus protrudes into the vagina

metronidazole /,metrə'nɪdəzəʊl/ noun a yellow antibiotic compound, used especially in the treatment of vaginal infections

metropathia haemorrhagica /,metrəpæθiə'hemə'reɪdʒɪkəl/ noun an essential uterine haemorrhage, where the lining of the uterus swells and there is heavy menstrual bleeding

metroptosis /,metrə'təʊsɪs/ noun a condition in which the uterus has moved downwards out of its usual position. Also called **prolapse of the uterus**

metrorrhagia /,mi:tɪrəʊ'reɪdʒiə/ noun unusual bleeding from the vagina between the menstrual periods

metrostaxis /,mi:tɪrəʊ'stæksɪs/ noun a continual light bleeding from the uterus

-metry /mətri/ suffix relating to the process of measuring, or to instruments which are used for measuring

mg abbr milligram

MI abbr 1. mitral incompetence 2. myocardial infarction

micelle /mi'sel/ noun a tiny particle formed by the digestion of fat in the small intestine

Michel's clips /mɪ,selz 'klɪps/ plural noun metal clips used to suture a wound [After Gaston Michel (1874–1937), Professor of Clinical Surgery at Nancy, France]

miconazole /maɪ'kɒnəzəʊl/ noun a drug used to treat fungal infections of the skin and nails

micro- /maɪkrəʊ/ prefix 1. very small. Opposite **macro-**, **mega-**, **megalo-** 2. one millionth (10⁻⁶)

microaneurysm /,maɪkrəʊ'ænjərɪz(ə)m/ noun a tiny swelling in the wall of a capillary in the retina

microangiopathy /,maɪkrəʊ,ændʒi'ɒpəθi/ noun any disease of the capillaries

microbe /'maɪkrob/ noun a microorganism which may cause disease and which can only be seen with a microscope, e.g. a bacterium

microbial /maɪ'krobiəl/ adjective referring to microbes

microbial disease /maɪ'krobiəl dɪ'zi:z/ noun a disease caused by a microbe

microbiological /,maɪkrəʊ'bɪəl/ adjective referring to microbiology

microbiologist /,maɪkrəʊ'bɪə'lɒdʒɪst/ noun a scientist who specialises in the study of microorganisms

microbiology /,maɪkrəʊ'bɪə'lɒdʒi/ noun the scientific study of microorganisms

microcephalic /'maɪkroʊke'fælɪk/ *adjective* having microcephaly

microcephaly /'maɪkroʊ'kefəli/ *noun* a condition in which a person has an unusually small head, sometimes caused by the mother having had a rubella infection during pregnancy

microcheilia /'maɪkroʊ'karliə/ *noun* the condition of having unusually small lips

Micrococcus /'maɪkroʊ'kɒkəs/ *noun* a genus of bacterium, some species of which cause arthritis, endocarditis and meningitis

microcyte /'maɪkroʊsait/ *noun* an unusually small red blood cell

microcythaemia /,maɪkroʊsaɪ'θi:miə/ *noun* same as **microcytosis**

microcytic /,maɪkroʊ'sɪtɪk/ *adjective* referring to microcytes

microcytosis /,maɪkroʊsaɪ'təʊsɪs/ *noun* the presence of excess microcytes in the blood

microdactylia /,maɪkrədæk'tɪliə/, **microdactyly** /,maɪkroʊ'dæktɪli/ *noun* a condition in which a person has unusually small or short fingers or toes

microdisectomy /,maɪkroʊdɪsk'ektəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to remove all or part of a disc in the spine which is pressing on a nerve

microdontism /,maɪkroʊ'dɒntɪz(ə)m/, **microdontia** /,maɪkroʊ'dɒntiə/ *noun* the condition of having unusually small teeth

microglia /maɪ'kroglɪə/ *noun* tissue in the central nervous system composed of tiny cells which destroy other cells

microglossia /,maɪkroʊ'glɒsiə/ *noun* a condition in which a person has an unusually small tongue

micrognathia /,maɪkroʊ'nɛɪθiə/ *noun* a condition in which one jaw is unusually smaller than the other

microgram /'maɪkrogræm/ *noun* a unit of measurement of weight equal to one millionth of a gram

micromastia /,maɪkroʊ'mæstɪə/ *noun* a condition in which a person has unusually small breasts

micromelia /,maɪkroʊ'mi:liə/ *noun* a condition in which a person has unusually small arms or legs

micrometer /maɪ'krɒmɪtə/ *noun* 1. an instrument for taking very small measurements, such as the width or thickness of very thin pieces of tissue 2. *US* same as **micrometre**

micrometre /'maɪkroʊ,mɪ:tə/ *noun* a unit of measurement of thickness (= one millionth of a metre) (NOTE: With figures, usually written μm)

micromole /'maɪkroʊ,məʊl/ *noun* a unit of measurement of the amount of substance equal to one millionth of a mole. Symbol μ

micron /'maɪkrɒn/ *noun* same as **micrometre**

micronutrient /'maɪkrəʊ,nju:triənt/ *noun* a substance which an organism needs for normal growth and development, but only in very small quantities, e.g. a vitamin or mineral. Compare **macronutrient**

microorganism /,maɪkroʊ'ɔ:gənɪz(ə)m/ *noun* an organism which can only be seen under a microscope and which may cause disease. Viruses, bacteria and protozoa are microorganisms.

microphthalmia /,maɪkrof'θælmɪə/ *noun* a condition in which the eyes are unusually small

micropsia /maɪ'krɒpsiə/ *noun* a condition in which someone sees objects smaller than they really are, caused by an unusual development in the retina

microscope /'maɪkroʊsko:p/ *noun* a scientific instrument with lenses, which makes very small objects appear larger ○ *The tissue was examined under the microscope.* ○ *Under the microscope it was possible to see the cancer cells.*

COMMENT: In an ordinary or light microscope the image is magnified by lenses. In an electron microscope the lenses are electromagnets and a beam of electrons is used instead of light, thereby achieving much greater magnifications.

microscopic /,maɪkroʊ'skɒpɪk/ *adjective* so small that it can only be seen through a microscope

microscopy /maɪ'kroʊsko:pɪ/ *noun* the science of the use of microscopes

microsecond /'maɪkroʊ,sekənd/ *noun* a unit of measurement of time (= one millionth of a second) (NOTE: With figures, usually written μs .)

Microsporum /'maɪkroʊspɔ:rəm/ *noun* a type of fungus which causes ringworm of the hair, skin and sometimes nails

microsurgery /'maɪkroʊ,sɜ:dʒərɪ/ *noun* surgery using tiny instruments and a microscope. Microsurgery is used in operations on eyes and ears, and also to connect severed nerves and blood vessels.

microvillus /,maɪkroʊ'vɪləs/ *noun* a very small process found on the surface of many cells, especially the epithelial cells in the intestine (NOTE: The plural is **microvilli**.)

microwave therapy /'maɪkroʊweɪv,θerəpi/ *noun* treatment using high-frequency radiation

micturate /'mɪktjoreɪt/ *verb* same as **urinate**

micturating cystogram /,mɪktjoreɪtɪŋ,sɪstəʊgræm/, **micturating cysto-urethrogram** /,mɪktjoreɪtɪŋ,sɪstəʊ'ju:ri:θrəgræm/ *noun* an X-ray of the bladder and urethra taken while the bladder is being filled and then emptied. Abbreviations: **MCU**, **MCUG**

micturition /,mɪktjō'rɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* same as urination

mid-/mɪd/ prefix middle

midazolam /'mɪ'dæzəlæm/ *noun* a drug used to produce sleepiness and to reduce anxiety before surgery or other procedures

midbrain /'mɪdbreɪn/ *noun* the small middle section of the brain stem above the pons and between the cerebrum and the hindbrain. Also called **mesencephalon**

midcarpal /'mɪd'ka:p(ə)l/ *adjective* between the two rows of carpal bones

middle /'mɪd(ə)l/ *noun* 1. the centre or central point of something 2. the waist or stomach area (*informal*)

middle-aged /'mɪd(ə)l 'eɪdʒd/ *adjective* not young and not old, in the middle years of life

○ *a disease which affects middle-aged women*

middle colic /'mɪd(ə)l 'kɒlkɪ/ *noun* an artery which leads from the superior mesenteric artery

middle ear /'mɪd(ə)l 'ɪə/ *noun* a section of the ear between the eardrum and the inner ear

COMMENT: The middle ear contains the three ossicles which receive vibrations from the eardrum and transmit them to the cochlea. The middle ear is connected to the throat by the Eustachian tube.

middle ear infection /'mɪd(ə)l 'ɪər ɪnfek'shən/ *noun* same as **otitis media**

middle finger /'mɪd(ə)l 'fɪŋgə/ *noun* the longest of the five fingers

midgut /'mɪdgʌt/ *noun* the middle part of the gut in an embryo, which develops into the small intestine

mid-life crisis /'mɪd laɪf 'kraɪsɪs/ *noun* a period in early middle age when some people experience feelings of anxiety, insecurity and self-doubt

midline /'mɪdlайн/ *noun* an imaginary line drawn down the middle of the body from the head through the navel to the point between the feet

'...patients admitted with acute abdominal pains were referred for study. Abdominal puncture was carried out in the midline immediately above or below the umbilicus.' [Lancet]

midriff /'mɪdrɪf/ *noun* the diaphragm

midstream specimen /'mɪdstrɪ:m ,spesɪmɪn/, **midstream specimen of urine** /'mɪdstrɪm ,spesɪmɪn əv 'juərɪn/ *noun* a sample of urine collected in a sterile bottle in the middle of a flow of urine, because the first part of the flow may be contaminated with bacteria from the skin. Abbr **MSU**

midtarsal /'mɪd'ta:s(ə)l/ *adjective* between the tarsal bones

midwife /'mɪdwif/ *noun* a professional person who helps a woman give birth to a child, often at home

COMMENT: To become a Registered Midwife (RM), a Registered General Nurse has to take a further 18 month course, or alternatively can follow a full 3 year course.

midwifery /mɪd'wɪfəri/ *noun* 1. the profession of a midwife 2. the study of the practical aspects of obstetrics

midwifery course /mɪd'wɪfəri kɔ:s/ *noun* a training course to teach nurses the techniques of being a midwife

migraine /'mɪ:greɪn, 'maɪgrehɪn/, **migraine headache** /,mɪ:grehɪn 'hedeɪk/ *noun* a very severe throbbing headache which can be accompanied by nausea, vomiting, visual disturbance and vertigo. The cause is not known. Attacks may be preceded by an 'aura', where the patient sees flashing lights, or the eyesight becomes blurred. The pain is usually intense and affects one side of the head only.

migrainous /'maɪgrehɪnəs/ *adjective* referring to someone who is subject to migraine attacks

mild /maɪld/ *adjective* not severe, not cold, gentle ○ *a mild throat infection*

mildly /'maɪldli/ *adverb* slightly, not strongly ○ *a mildly infectious disease* ○ *a mildly anti-septic solution*

milia /'mɪliə/ plural of **milium**

milialia /,mɪli'eəriə/ *noun* itchy red spots which develop on the chest, under the armpits and between the thighs in hot countries, caused by blocked sweat glands. Also called **prickly heat, heat rash**

miliary /'mɪliəri/ *adjective* small in size, like a seed

miliary tuberculosis /,mɪliəri tju:bɔ:kjʊl'əʊsɪs/ *noun* a form of tuberculosis which occurs as little nodes in many parts of the body, including the meninges of the brain and spinal cord

milium /'mɪliəm/ *noun* 1. a white pinhead-sized tumour on the face in adults 2. a retention cyst in infants 3. a cyst on the skin (NOTE: [all senses] The plural is **milia**)

milk /mɪlk/ *noun* 1. a white liquid produced by female mammals to feed their young. Cow's milk and other dairy products are important parts of most diets, especially children's. ○ *The patient can only drink warm milk.* (NOTE: No plural: *some milk, a bottle of milk or a glass of milk.*) 2. the breast milk produced by a woman ○ *The milk will start to flow a few days after childbirth.* (NOTE: For other terms referring to milk, see words beginning with **galact-, galacto-, lact-, lacto-.**)

milk dentition /mɪlk den'tɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* same as **deciduous dentition**

milk leg /'mɪlk leg/ *noun* acute oedema of the leg, a condition which affects women after childbirth, where a leg becomes pale and inflamed as a result of lymphatic obstruction. Also called **white leg, phlegmasia alba dolens**

milk rash /'mɪlk ræʃ/ *noun* a temporary blotchiness of the skin seen in young babies

milk sugar /'mɪlk 'ʃʊgə/ *noun* same as **lactose**

milk tooth /'mɪlk tu:θ/ *noun* same as **primary tooth**

milky /'mɪlkɪ/ *adjective* referring to liquid which is white like milk

Miller-Abbott tube /,mɪlər 'æbət tju:b/ *noun* a tube with a balloon at the end, used to clear the small intestine. The balloon is inflated after the tip of the tube reaches an obstruction.

milli- /'mɪli/ *prefix* one thousandth (10^{-3}). Symbol **m**

milligram /'mɪlɪgræm/ *noun* a unit of measurement of weight equal to one thousandth of a gram. Symbol **mg**

millilitre /'mɪlɪ,li:tə/ *noun* a unit of measurement of liquid equal to one thousandth of a litre. Abbr **ml** (NOTE: The US spelling is **milliliter**)

millimetre /'mɪlɪmɪ:tə/ *noun* a unit of measurement of length equal to one thousandth of a metre. Abbr **mm** (NOTE: The US spelling is **millimeter**)

millimole /'mɪlɪməʊl/ *noun* a unit of measurement of the amount of a substance equal to one thousandth of a mole. Abbr **mmol**

millisievert /'mɪlɪsievət/ *noun* a unit of measurement of radiation □ **millisievert/year** (mSv/year) number of millisieverts per year

...radiation limits for workers should be cut from 50 to 5 millisieverts, and those for members of the public from 5 to 0.25' [Guardian]

Milroy's disease /'mɪlrɔɪz dɪ,zi:z/ *noun* a hereditary condition where the lymph vessels are blocked and the legs swell [Described 1892. After William Forsyth Milroy (1855–1942), Professor of Clinical Medicine in Nebraska, USA.]

Milwaukee brace /'mɪl,wo:kɪ 'breɪs/ *noun* a support for people with unusually curved spines, consisting of a leather or metal pelvic girdle with two bars at the back and one at the front, which connect into a neck ring

mimesis /'mɪ:mɪ:sɪs/ *noun* the appearance of the symptoms of a disease in someone who does not have the disease

Minamata disease /,mɪnə'ma:tə dɪ,zi:z/ *noun* a form of mercury poisoning from eating polluted fish, found first in Japan

mind /maɪnd/ *noun* the part of the brain which controls memory, consciousness or reasoning □ **he's got something on his mind** he's worrying about something □ **let's try to take her mind off her exams** try to stop her worrying about them

miner /'maɪnə/ *noun* a person who works in a coal mine

mineral /'mɪn(ə)rəl/ *noun* an inorganic substance

COMMENT: The most important minerals required by the body are: calcium (found in cheese, milk and green vegetables) which

helps the growth of bones and encourages blood clotting; iron (found in bread and liver) which helps produce red blood cells; phosphorus (found in bread and fish) which helps in the growth of bones and the metabolism of fats; iodine (found in fish) which is essential to the functioning of the thyroid gland.

mineral water /'mɪn(ə)rəl, wɔ:tə/ *noun* a drinking water containing dissolved mineral salts from the ground the water is piped from. It is bottled and sold.

minim /'mɪnɪm/ *noun* a liquid measure used in pharmacy (one sixtieth of a drachm)

minimal /'mɪnɪm(ə)l/ *adjective* very small

minimally invasive surgery /,mɪnɪm(ə)lɪn'veɪsɪv 'sɜ:dʒəri/ *noun* surgery which involves the least possible disturbance to the body. It often uses lasers and other high-tech devices.

mini mental state examination /,mɪni 'ment(ə)l,steɪt ɪgzəmɪn,neɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a test performed mainly by psychiatrists to determine someone's mental ability, used in the diagnosis of dementia

minimum /'mɪnɪməm/ *adjective* smallest possible ■ *noun* the smallest possible amount (NOTE: The plural is **minimums** or **minima**.)

minimum lethal dose /,mɪnɪməm ,li:θ(ə)l'dəʊs/ *noun* the smallest amount of a substance required to kill someone or something. Abbr **MLD**

ministroke /'mɪnistrəʊk/ *noun* same as **transient ischaemic attack**

minitracheostomy /,mɪnɪtræk'ostəmɪ/ *noun* a temporary tracheostomy

minor /'maɪnə/ *adjective* 1. not very serious or life-threatening 2. less important or serious than others of the same type ► opposite **major**

...practice nurses play a major role in the care of patients with chronic disease and they undertake many preventive procedures. They also deal with a substantial amount of minor trauma' [Nursing Times]

minor illness /,maɪnər 'ɪlhəs/ *noun* an illness which is not serious

minor injuries unit /,maɪnər 'ɪndʒərɪz ,ju:nɪt/ *noun* a hospital department which treats most accidents and emergencies. Abbr **MIU**

minor surgery /,maɪnər 'sɜ:dʒəri/ *noun* surgery which can be undertaken even when there are no hospital facilities. Compare **major surgery**

mio- /'maɪəʊ/ *prefix* less

miosis /maɪ'əʊsɪs/ *noun* 1. the contraction of the pupil of the eye, as in bright light 2. *US* same as **meiosis**

miotic /maɪ'ɒtɪk/ *noun* a drug which makes the pupil of the eye become smaller ■ *adjective* causing the pupil of the eye to become smaller

mis- /'mɪs/ *prefix* wrong

miscarriage /'mɪskærɪdʒ/ *noun* a situation in which an unborn baby leaves the uterus before the end of the pregnancy, especially dur-

ing the first seven months of pregnancy ○ *She had two miscarriages before having her first child.* Also called **spontaneous abortion**

miscarry /'mɪs'kærɪ/ *verb* to have a miscarriage ○ *The accident made her miscarry.* ○ *She miscarried after catching the infection.*

misconduct /'mɪs'kɒndʌkt/ *noun* action by a professional person such as a doctor which is considered wrong

misdiagnose /,mɪs'daɪəg,nəʊz/ *verb* to make an incorrect diagnosis of a condition

misdiagnosis /,mɪsdaɪəg'nəʊsɪs/ *noun* an incorrect diagnosis

mismatch /'mɪsmætʃ/ *verb* to match tissues wrongly

'...finding donors of correct histocompatible type is difficult but necessary because results using mismatched bone marrow are disappointing' [Hospital Update]

miso- /'mɪso/ *prefix* indicating hatred of something

missed case /,mɪst 'keɪs/ *noun* someone with an infection or disease which is not identified by a doctor

mist /'mɪst/, **mistura** /mɪs'tjuərə/ ♦ **re. mist.**

misuse *noun* /mɪs'ju:s/ wrong use ○ *He was arrested for misuse of drugs.* ■ *verb* /mɪs'ju:z/ to use something such as a drug wrongly

Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 /mɪs,ju:s əv 'drægz ækt/ *noun* a law relating to all aspects of the supply and possession of dangerous drugs such as morphine, anabolic steroids, LSD and cannabis. In 2002 many new benzodiazepines were added.

mite /maɪt/ *noun* a very small parasite, which causes dermatitis

mitochondrial /,maɪtə'kɒndriəl/ *adjective* referring to mitochondria

mitochondrion /,maɪtə'kɒndriən/ *noun* a tiny rod-shaped part of a cell's cytoplasm responsible for cell respiration (NOTE: The plural is **mitochondria**.)

mitomycin C /,maɪtəʊ'maɪsɪn 'si:/ *noun* an antibiotic which helps to prevent cancer cells from growing, used especially in the chemotherapy treatment of bladder and rectal cancers

mitosis /maɪt'əʊsɪs/ *noun* the process of cell division, where the mother cell divides into two identical daughter cells. Compare **meiosis**

mitral /'maɪtrəl/ *adjective* referring to the mitral valve

mitral incompetence /,maɪtrəl ɪn 'kɒmpit(ə)ns/ *noun* Abbr MI. Now called **mitral regurgitation**

mitral regurgitation /,maɪtrəl rɪ,grɪ:dʒɪ 'teɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a situation in which the mitral valve does not close completely so that blood goes back into the atrium

mitral stenosis /,maɪtrəl ste'nəʊsɪs/ *noun* a condition in which the opening in the mitral valve becomes smaller because the cusps have

fused (NOTE: This condition is almost always the result of rheumatic endocarditis.)

mitral valve /'maɪtrəl vælv/ *noun* a valve in the heart which allows blood to flow from the left atrium to the left ventricle but not in the opposite direction. Also called **bicuspid valve**

mitral valvotomy /,maɪtrəl væ'l'vetəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to separate the cusps of the mitral valve in mitral stenosis

mittelschmerz /'mɪtl̩(ə)l̩f'meəts/ *noun* a pain felt by women in the lower abdomen at ovulation

MIU *abbr* minor injuries unit

mix /mɪks/ *verb* to put things together ○ *The pharmacist mixed the chemicals in a bottle.*

mixture /'mɪkstʃə/ *noun* chemical substances mixed together ○ *The doctor gave me an unpleasant mixture to drink.* ○ *Take one spoonful of the mixture every three hours.*

ml *abbr* millilitre

MLD *abbr* minimum lethal dose

MLSO *abbr* medical laboratory scientific officer

mm *abbr* millimetre

mmol *abbr* millimole

MMR /,em em 'a:/, **MMR vaccine** /,em em 'a:/, 'vækseɪn/ *noun* a single vaccine given to small children to protect them against measles, mumps and rubella

Mn *symbol* manganese

MND *abbr* motor neurone disease

MO *abbr* medical officer

mobile /'məʊbəl/ *adjective* able to move about ○ *It is important for elderly patients to remain mobile.*

mobilisation /,məʊbɪlɪət'zeɪʃ(ə)n/, **mobilization** *noun* the act of making something mobile

mobility /məʊ'biliti/ *noun* (of patients) the ability to move about

mobility allowance /məʊ'biliti ə,laʊəns/ *noun* a government benefit to help disabled people pay for transport

modality /məʊ'dælɪti/ *noun* a method used in the treatment of a disorder, e.g. surgery or chemotherapy

moderate /'mɒd(ə)rət/ *adjective* not high or low

moderately /'mɒd(ə)rətlɪ/ *adverb* not at one or other extreme ○ *The patient had a moderately comfortable night.*

modern matron /,mɒd(ə)rən 'meɪtrən/ *noun* a nursing post which supports the ward sister in ensuring that basic care of patients, including cleanliness of the ward and infection control, is carried out to a high standard

modiolus /məʊ'diələs/ *noun* the central stalk in the cochlea

MODS *abbr* multiple organ dysfunction syndrome

MOF abbr 1. male or female 2. multi-organ failure

Mogadon /'mɒgədən/ a trade name for nitrazepam

MOH abbr Medical Officer of Health

moist /'mɔɪst/ adjective slightly wet or damp
○ *The compress should be kept moist.*

moisten /'mɔɪs(ə)n/ verb to make something damp

moist gangrene /,mɔɪst 'gængri:n/ noun a condition in which dead tissue decays and swells with fluid because of infection and the tissues have an unpleasant smell

moisture /'mɔɪstʃə/ noun water or other liquid

moisture content /'mɔɪstʃə ,kɒntent/ noun the amount of water or other liquid which a substance contains

mol /məʊl/ symbol mole noun 2

molar /'mɔːlər/ adjective 1. referring to the large back teeth 2. referring to the mole, the SI unit of amount of a substance ■ noun one of the large back teeth, used for grinding food. In milk teeth there are eight molars and in permanent teeth there are twelve. See illustration at **TEETH** in Supplement

molarity /məʊ'lærɪtɪ/ noun the strength of a solution shown as the number of moles of a substance per litre of solution

molasses /mə'læsɪz/ noun a dark sweet substance made of sugar before it has been refined
mole /məʊl/ noun 1. a dark raised spot on the skin ○ *She has a large mole on her chin.* ♀ 2. an SI unit of measurement of the amount of a substance. Symbol **mol**

molecular /mə'lekjʊlə/ adjective referring to a molecule

molecular biology /mə'lekjʊlə bai'plædʒi/ noun the study of the molecules of living matter

molecular weight /mə'lekjʊlə 'weɪt/ noun the weight of one molecule of a substance

molecule /'mɒlɪkjʊl:/ noun the smallest independent mass of a substance

molluscum /mə'laskəm/ noun a soft round skin tumour

molluscum contagiosum /mə'laskəm kən'teɪdʒi'məʊsəm/ noun a contagious viral skin infection which gives a small soft sore

molluscum fibrosum /mə'laskəm 'fai'b्रəʊsəm/ noun same as **neurofibromatosis**

molluscum sebaceum /mə'laskəm si'bɛsəm/ noun a benign skin tumour which disappears after a short time

molibdenum /mɒ'lɪbdənəm/ noun a metallic trace element (NOTE: The chemical symbol is **Mo**)

monaural /mən'ɔ:rəl/ adjective referring to the use of one ear only

Mönckeberg's arteriosclerosis /,mʌnkn̩kəbɛgz ,a:tɪ:rɪəsklə'rəʊsɪs/ noun a

condition of elderly people, where the media of the arteries in the legs harden, causing limping [Described 1903. After Johann Georg Mönckeberg (1877–1925), German physician and pathologist.]

mongolism /'mɒŋgəlɪz(ə)m/ noun a former name for Down's syndrome (NOTE: This term is regarded as offensive.)

Monilia /mən'ɪliə/ noun same as **Candida**

moniliasis /mənɪ'laiəsɪs/ noun same as **candidiasis**

monitor /'mɒnɪtə/ noun a screen on a computer ■ verb 1. to check something 2. to examine how someone is progressing

monitoring /'mɒnɪt(ə)rɪŋ/ noun the regular examination and recording of a person's temperature, weight, blood pressure and other essential indicators

mono- /mɒnəʊ/ prefix single or one

monoamine oxidase /,mɒnəʊm,æmi:n 'ɒkɪdzeɪz/ noun an enzyme which breaks down the catecholamines to their inactive forms. Abbr **MAO**

monoamine oxidase inhibitor /,mɒnəʊm,æmi:n 'ɒksɪdeɪz ɪn'hɪbitə/ noun a drug which inhibits monoamine oxidase and is used to treat depression, e.g. phenelzine. Its use is limited, because of the potential for drug and dietary interactions and the necessity for slow withdrawal. It can also cause high blood pressure. Abbr **MAOI**. Also called **MAO inhibitor**

monoblast /mɒnəʊblæst/ noun a cell which produces a monocyte

monochromatism /,mɒnəʊ'krəʊmətɪz(ə)m/ noun colour blindness in which all colours appear to be black, grey or white. Compare **dichromatism, trichromatism**

monoclonal /,mɒnəʊ'kləʊn(ə)l/ adjective referring to cells or products of cells which are formed or derived from a single clone

monoclonal antibody /,mɒnəʊkləʊn(ə)'antɪbɒdɪ/ noun an antibody which can be easily made in the laboratory by a single clone of cells. It may be useful in the treatment of cancer.

monocular /mɒ'nɒkjʊlə/ adjective referring to one eye. Compare **binocular**

monocular vision /mə,nɒkjʊlə 'vɪʒ(ə)n/ noun the ability to see with one eye only, so that the sense of distance is impaired

monocyte /'mɒnəʊsait/ noun a white blood cell with a nucleus shaped like a kidney, which destroys bacterial cells

monocytosis /,mɒnəʊsai'təʊsɪs/ noun a condition in which there is an unusually high number of monocytes in the blood. Symptoms include sore throat, swelling of the lymph nodes and fever. It is probably caused by the Epstein-Barr virus. Also called **glandular fever**

monodactylism /mənəʊ'dæktɪlɪz(ə)m/ *noun* a congenital condition in which only one finger or toe is present on the hand or foot

monomania /mənəʊ'meiniə/ *noun* a state of mental disorder in which a person concentrates attention on one idea

mononeuritis /mənəʊ'nju:raɪtɪs/ *noun* a neuritis which affects one nerve

mononuclear /mənəʊ'nju:kliə/ *adjective* referring to a cell such as a monocyte which has one nucleus

mononucleosis /mənəʊ,nju:kli'əʊsɪs/ *noun* same as **monocytosis**

monoplegia /mənəʊ'pli:dʒə/ *noun* the paralysis of one part of the body only, i.e. one muscle or one limb

monorchism /mənɔ:ksɪz(ə)m/ *noun* a condition in which only one testis is visible

monosaccharide /mənəʊ'sækraɪd/ *noun* a simple sugar which cannot be broken down any further, such as glucose or fructose

monosodium glutamate /mənəʊs'ædju:təmɪt/ *noun* a sodium salt of glutamic acid, often used to make food taste better. ♦ **Chinese restaurant syndrome**

monosomy /mənəʊsəʊmɪ/ *noun* a condition in which a person has a chromosome missing from one or more pairs

monosynaptic /mənəʊsɪ'næptɪk/ *adjective* referring to a nervous pathway with only one synapse

monovalent /mənəʊ'veɪlənt/ *adjective* having a valency of one

monoxide /mə'nɒksaɪd/ ♦ **carbon**

monozygotic twins /mənəʊzɪgətɪk 'twɪnz/ *plural noun* same as **identical twins**

mons /mɒnz/ *noun* a fleshy body part which sticks out, especially the one formed by the pad of flesh where the pubic bones join (NOTE: The plural is **montes**.)

mons pubis /mɒnz 'pjʊ:bɪs/ *noun* a cushion of fat covering the pubis

monster /'mɒnstə/ *noun* a former term for a fetus or infant with severe developmental malformations, usually not able to live

mons veneris /mɒnz və'nɪərɪs/ *noun* same as **mons pubis**

Montezuma's revenge /mɒntɪzu:məz ɪ 'vendʒ/ *noun* a diarrhoea which affects people travelling in foreign countries, often due to eating unwashed fruit or drinking water which has not been boiled (*informal*)

Montgomery's glands /mɒnt'gʌmərɪz glændz/ *plural noun* sebaceous glands around the nipple which become more marked in pregnancy [After William Fetherstone Montgomery (1797–1859), Dublin gynaecologist]

mood /mu:d/ *noun* a person's mental state at a particular time □ *a mood of excitement* □ **in a bad mood** feeling angry or irritable □ **in a good mood** feeling happy

moon face /'mu:n feɪs/ *noun* a condition in which someone has a round red face, occurring in Cushing's syndrome and when there are too many steroid hormones in the body

Mooren's ulcer /'məʊrənз , Alsa/ *noun* a persistent ulcer of the cornea, found in elderly people [After Albert Mooren (1828–99), ophthalmologist in Düsseldorf, Germany]

morbid /'mɔ:bɪd/ *adjective* 1. showing symptoms of being diseased □ *The X-ray showed a morbid condition of the kidneys.* 2. referring to disease 3. referring to an unhealthy mental faculty

morbid anatomy /'mɔ:bɪd ə'nætəmɪ/ *noun* same as **pathology**

morbidity /mɔ:bɪ'dɪtɪ/ *noun* the condition of being diseased or sick

...apart from death, coronary heart disease causes considerable morbidity in the form of heart attack, angina and a number of related diseases' [Health Education Journal]

morbidity rate /mɔ:bɪ'dɪtɪ reɪt/ *noun* the number of cases of a disease per hundred thousand of population

morbilli /mɔ:bɪ'lɪ/ *noun* same as **measles**

morbilliform /mɔ:bɪ'lɪfɔ:m/ *adjective* referring to a rash which is similar to measles

morbus /'mɔ:bəs/ *noun* disease

moribund /'mɔ:rɪbʌnd/ *adjective* dying ■ *noun* a dying person

morning /'mɔ:nɪŋ/ *noun* the first part of the day before 12 o'clock noon

morning-after feeling /,mɔ:nɪŋ 'a:fɪlɪŋ/ *noun* ♦ **hangover** (*informal*)

morning-after pill /,mɔ:nɪŋ 'a:fɪl pɪl/ *noun* a contraceptive pill taken after intercourse. Also called **next-day pill**

morning sickness /'mɔ:nɪŋ ,sɪknəs/ *noun* nausea and vomiting experienced by women in the early stages of pregnancy when they get up in the morning

Moro reflex /'mɔ:rəʊ ,rɪ:fleks/ *noun* a reflex of a newborn baby when it hears a loud noise (NOTE: The baby is laid on a table and observed to see if it raises its arms when the table is struck.) [After Ernst Moro (1874–1951), paediatrician in Heidelberg, Germany]

morphea /mɔ:fɪə/ *noun* a form of scleroderma, a disease where the skin is replaced by thick connective tissue

morphia /'mɔ:fɪə/ same as **morphine**

morphine /'mɔ:fɪn/ *noun* an analgesic derived from opium that is used to treat severe pain and may become addictive with prolonged use

morpho- /mɔ:fəʊ/ *prefix* relating to form, shape or structure

morpheoa /mɔ:fɪə/ *noun* same as **morphea**

morphology /mɔ:fɒlədʒɪ/ *noun* the study of the structure and shape of living organisms

-morphous /mɔ:fəs/ *suffix* relating to form or structure of a particular type

mortality rate /'mɔ:tæləti reɪt/ *noun* the number of deaths per year, shown per hundred thousand of population

mortification /,mɔ:tɪfɪ'keɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* ♦ **necrosis**

mortis /'mɔ:tɪs/ ♦ **rigor**

mortuary /'mɔ:tjʊəri/ *noun* a room in a hospital where dead bodies are kept until removed by an undertaker for burial

morula /'mɔ:rulə/ *noun* an early stage in the development of an embryo, where the cleavage of the ovum creates a mass of cells

mosquito /mɔ:ski:təʊ/ *noun* an insect which sucks human blood, some species of which can pass viruses or parasites into the bloodstream

COMMENT: In northern countries a mosquito bite merely produces an itchy spot. In tropical countries dengue, filariasis, malaria and yellow fever are transmitted by mosquitoes, and are major causes of morbidity and mortality. Mosquitoes breed in water and they spread rapidly in lakes or canals created by dams and other irrigation schemes as well as in containers of water stored for household use.

mother /'mʌðə/ *noun* a biological or adoptive female parent

mother-fixation /'mʌðə fɪk,sɛf(ə)n/ *noun* a condition in which a person's development has been stopped at a stage where he or she remains like a child, dependent on his or her mother

motile /'mɔ:təlɪ/ *adjective* referring to a cell or microorganism which can move spontaneously. *O Sperm cells are extremely motile.*

motility /'mɔ:tɪlɪti/ *noun* 1. (of cells or microbes) the fact of being able to move about 2. (of the gut) the action of peristalsis

motion /'məʊʃ(ə)n/ *noun* 1. movement 2. same as **bowel movement**

motionless /'məʊʃ(ə)n(ə)ləs/ *adjective* not moving. *O Catatonic patients can sit motionless for hours.*

motion sickness /,məʊʃ(ə)n 'sɪknəs/ *noun* illness and nausea felt when travelling. It is caused by the movement of liquid inside the labyrinth of the middle ear and is particularly noticeable in vehicles which are closed, such as planes, coaches or hovercraft. (*informal*)

COMMENT: The movement of liquid inside the labyrinth of the middle ear causes motion sickness, which is particularly noticeable in vehicles which are closed, such as planes, coaches, hovercraft.

motor /'mɔ:tər/ *adjective* referring to movement, which produces movement

motor area /'mɔ:tər ,eəriə/, **motor cortex** /,mɔ:tə 'kɔ:tɛks/ *noun* the part of the cortex in the brain which controls voluntary muscle movement by sending impulses to the motor nerves

motor disorder /'mɔ:tər dɪs,ɔ:də/ *noun* impairment of the nerves or neurons that cause muscles to contract to produce movement

motor end plate /,mɔ:tər 'end plēt/ *noun* the end of a motor nerve where it joins muscle fibre

motor nerve /'mɔ:tə nɜ:v/ *noun* a nerve which carries impulses from the brain and spinal cord to muscles and causes movements. Also called **efferent nerve**

motor neurone /,mɔ:tə 'njʊərən/ *noun* a neurone which is part of a nerve pathway transmitting impulses from the brain to a muscle or gland

motor neurone disease /,mɔ:tə 'njʊərən di,zɪ:z/ *noun* a disease of the nerve cells which control the movement of the muscles. Abbr **MND**

COMMENT: Motor neurone disease has three forms: progressive muscular atrophy (PMA), which affects movements of the hands, lateral sclerosis, and bulbar palsy, which affects the mouth and throat.

motor pathway /,mɔ:tə 'pa:θwei/ *noun* a series of motor neurones leading from the motor cortex to a muscle

mottled /'mɒt(ə)ld/ *adjective* with patches of different colours

mountain fever /'maʊntɪn ,fi:və/ *noun* same as **brucellosis**

mountain sickness /'maʊntɪn ,sɪknəs/ *noun* same as **altitude sickness**

mouth /maʊθ/ *noun* an opening at the head of the alimentary canal, through which food and drink are taken in, and through which a person speaks and can breathe. *O She was sleeping with her mouth open.* (**NOTE:** For other terms referring to the mouth, see **oral** and words beginning with **stomat-**, **stomato-**.)

mouthful /'maʊθfʊl/ *noun* the amount which you can hold in your mouth

mouth-to-mouth /,maʊθ tə 'maʊθ/, **mouth-to-mouth resuscitation** /,maʊθ tə ,maʊθ rɪ'sasɪ'teɪʃ(ə)n/, **mouth-to-mouth ventilation** /,maʊθ tə ,maʊθ ,ventɪ'leɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* same as **cardiopulmonary resuscitation** (*informal*)

mouth ulcer /'maʊθ ,ʌlsə/ *noun* a small white ulcer that appears in groups in the mouth and on the tongue

mouthwash /'maʊθwɒʃ/ *noun* an antiseptic solution used to treat infection in the mouth

move /mu:v/ *verb* to change from one place to another, or change something from one place to another. *O Try to move your arm.* *O He found he was unable to move.*

movement /'mu:vment/ *noun* 1. the act of changing position or the fact of not being still 2. same as **bowel movement**

moxybustion /,mɒksɪ'bʌstʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a treatment used in the Far East, where dried herbs are placed on the skin and set on fire

MP joint /'em 'pi: ,dʒoint/ *noun* same as metacarpophalangeal joint

MPS *abbr* member of the pharmaceutical society

MRC *abbr* Medical Research Council

MRCGP *abbr* Member of the Royal College of General Practitioners

MRCP *abbr* Member of the Royal College of Physicians

MRCS *abbr* Member of the Royal College of Surgeons

MRI *abbr* magnetic resonance imaging

'...during an MRI scan, the patient lies within a strong magnetic field as selected sections of his body are stimulated with radio frequency waves. Resulting energy changes are measured and used by the MRI computer to generate images.' [Nursing 87]

mRNA *abbr* messenger RNA

MRSA *abbr* methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus

MS *abbr* 1. mitral stenosis 2. multiple sclerosis

MSH *abbr* melanocyte-stimulating hormone

MSU *abbr* midstream specimen of urine

mSv *abbr* millisievert

mucin /'mju:sɪn/ *noun* a compound of sugars and protein which is the main substance in mucus

muco- /'mju:kəʊ/ *prefix* referring to mucus

mucocele /'mju:kəʊsɪ:l/ *noun* a cavity containing an accumulation of mucus

mucociliary transport /'mju:kəʊ,siliəri 'trænsپɔ:t/ *noun* the process in which the cilia, the microscopic structures within the nose, move mucus towards the oesophagus, cleansing the nose of dust and bacteria

mucocoele /'mjur:kəʊsɪ:l/ *noun* 1. a condition in which a cavity or organ becomes swollen because there is too much mucus in it 2. the swelling produced by this condition

mucocutaneous /,mju:kəʊkju:'temiəs/ *adjective* referring to both mucous membrane and the skin

mucocutaneous leishmaniasis /,mju:kəʊkjū,teimias ,li:fma'natəsɪs/ *noun* a disorder affecting the skin and mucous membrane

mucoid /'mju:kɔɪd/ *adjective* similar to mucus

mucolytic /,mju:kəʊ'lɪtɪk/ *noun* a substance which dissolves mucus

mucomembranous colitis /,mju:kəʊ,membrənəs kə'laitɪs/ *noun* same as **mucous colitis**

mucoprotein /,mju:kəʊ'prəuti:n/ *noun* a form of protein found in blood plasma

mucopurulent /,mjur:kəʊ'pjʊərulənt/ *adjective* consisting of a mixture of mucus and pus

mucopus /,mju:kəʊ'pɒs/ *noun* a mixture of mucus and pus

mucormycosis /,mju:kə:maɪ'kəʊsɪs/ *noun* a disease of the ear and throat caused by the fungus *Mucor*

mucosa /'mju:kəʊzə/ *noun* same as **mucous membrane** (NOTE: The plural is **mucosae**)

mucosal /'mju:kəʊz(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to a mucous membrane

mucous /'mju:kəs/ *adjective* referring to mucus, covered in mucus

mucous cell /'mju:kəs sel/ *noun* a cell which contains mucinogen which secretes mucus

mucous colic /,mju:kəs 'kolɪk/ *noun* an inflammation of the colon, with painful spasms in the muscles of the walls of the colon

mucous colitis /,mju:kəs kə'laitɪs/ *noun* an inflammation of the mucous membrane in the intestine, in which the person experiences pain caused by spasms in the muscles of the walls of the colon, accompanied by constipation or diarrhoea or alternating attacks of both. Also called **irritable bowel syndrome**

mucous membrane /,mju:kəs 'membrən/ *noun* a wet membrane which lines internal passages in the body, e.g. the nose, mouth, stomach and throat, and secretes mucus. Also called **mucosa**

mucous plug /'mju:kəs plæg/ *noun* a plug of mucus which blocks the cervical canal during pregnancy

mucoviscidosis /,mju:kəʊvɪsɪ'dəʊsɪs/ *noun* same as **cystic fibrosis**

mucus /'mju:kəs/ *noun* a slippery liquid secreted by mucous membranes inside the body, which protects those membranes (NOTE: For other terms referring to mucus, see words beginning with **blenno-**.)

muddled /'mʌd(ə)ld/ *adjective* referring to someone whose thought processes are confused

Müllerian duct /mʌlɪəriən 'dʌkt/ *noun* same as **paramesonephric duct** [Described 1825. After Johannes Peter Müller (1801–58), Professor of Anatomy at Bonn, later Professor of Anatomy and Physiology at Berlin, Germany.]

multi- /mʌlti/ *prefix* many

multicentric /,mʌlti'sentrɪk/ *adjective* in several centres

multicentric trial /,mʌltisentrɪk 'traɪəl/, **multicentric testing** /,mʌltisentrɪk 'testɪŋ/ *noun* trials carried out in several centres at the same time

multidisciplinary /,mʌlti'dɪsiplɪnəri/ *adjective* using or involving several specialised subjects or skills ◉ a multidisciplinary team

multifactorial /,mʌltifæk'tɔ:rɪəl/ *adjective* 1. involving several different factors or elements 2. referring to inheritance which depends on more than one gene. Height and weight are examples of characteristics determined by multifactorial inheritance.

multifocal lens /,mʌlti,fəʊk(ə)l 'lenz/ *noun* a lens in spectacles whose focus changes from top to bottom so that the person wearing the

spectacles can see objects clearly at different distances

multiforme /'mʌltɪfɔ:m/ ♦ **erythema multiforme**

multigravida /'mʌltɪ'grævɪdə/ *noun* a pregnant woman who has been pregnant two or more times before

multi-infarct dementia /'mʌltɪ 'ɪnfə:kɪt dɪ'menʃə/ *noun* dementia caused by a number of small strokes, when the dementia is not progressive as in Alzheimer's disease but increases in steps as new strokes occur

multilocular /'mʌltɪ'lɒkjʊlə/ *adjective* referring to a body part or growth which has a lot of separate compartments or locules

multinucleated /'mʌltɪ'nju:kliɛtɪd/ *adjective* referring to a cell with several nuclei, such as a megakaryocyte

multi-organ failure /'mʌltɪ 'ɔ:gən ,feɪljur/ *noun* an extremely serious condition in which several of the body's organs stop functioning at the same time. The person may survive, depending on how many organs fail and the length of time that the failure lasts. Abbr **MOF**

multipara /'mʌltɪ'tɪpərə/ *noun* a woman who has given birth to two or more live children

multiple /'mʌltɪp(ə)l/ *adjective* occurring several times or in several places

multiple birth /'mʌltɪp(ə)l 'bɪ:tθ/ *noun* a birth where more than one child is born at the same time

multiple fracture /'mʌltɪp(ə)l 'frækʃə/ *noun* a condition in which a bone is broken in several places

multiple myeloma /'mʌltɪp(ə)l 'maɪə'ləʊmə/ *noun* a malignant tumour in bone marrow, most often affecting flat bones

multiple organ dysfunction syndrome /'mʌltɪp(ə)l ,ɔ:gən dis'fʌŋkʃ(ə)n ,sɪnd्रəʊm/ *noun* a state of continuous disturbances and abnormalities in organ systems, rather than true failure, e.g. following trauma and sepsis. It is often fatal. Abbr **MODS**

multiple pregnancy /'mʌltɪp(ə)l 'pregnənsi/ *noun* a pregnancy where the mother is going to give birth to more than one child

multiple sclerosis /'mʌltɪp(ə)l sklə'rəʊsɪs/ *noun* a nervous disease which gets progressively worse, where patches of the fibres of the central nervous system lose their myelin, causing numbness in the limbs and progressive weakness and paralysis. Abbr **MS**. Also called **disseminated sclerosis**. ♦ **arteriosclerosis, atherosclerosis**

multipolar neurone /'mʌltɪ,peələ 'nju:rəʊn/ *noun* a neurone with several processes. See illustration at **NEURONE** in Supplement. Compare **bipolar neurone**, **unipolar neurone**

multiresistant /'mʌltɪrɪ'zɪstənt/ *adjective* resistant to several types of antibiotic

multivitamin /'mʌltɪ,vɪtəmɪn/ *noun* a preparation containing several vitamins and sometimes minerals, used as a dietary supplement ■ *adjective* referring to a preparation containing several vitamins, and sometimes minerals ○ **multivitamin pills** ○ **multivitamin supplement**

mumps /mʌmps/ *noun* an infectious disease of children, with fever and swellings in the salivary glands, caused by a paramyxovirus ○ *He caught mumps from the children next door.* Also called **infectious parotitis** (NOTE: Takes a singular or a plural verb.)

COMMENT: Mumps is a relatively mild disease in children. In adult males it can have serious complications and cause inflammation of the testicles (mumps orchitis).

Münchhausen's syndrome /'mʌntʃaʊz(ə)nz ,sɪnd्रəʊm/ *noun* a mental disorder in which someone tries to get hospital treatment by claiming symptoms of an illness which he or she does not have. Many people will undergo very painful procedures which they do not need. [Described by Richard Asher in 1951, and named after Baron von Münchhausen, a 16th century traveller and inveterate liar]

Münchhausen's syndrome by proxy /'mʌntʃaʊz(ə)nz ,sɪnd्रəʊm bai 'prɔksɪ/ *noun* a mental disorder in which someone tries to get hospital treatment for someone else such as their child or an elderly relative. It is regarded as a form of child abuse, as the person may cause a child to be ill in order to receive attention.

mural thrombus /'mju:ərəl 'θrəmbəs/ *noun* a thrombus which forms on the wall of a vein or artery

murder /'mɜ:də/ *noun* the crime of killing someone intentionally ■ *verb* to kill someone intentionally

murmur /'mɜ:mə/ *noun* a sound, usually the sound of the heart, heard through a stethoscope

Murphy's sign /'mɜ:fɪz sarn/ *noun* a sign of an inflamed gall bladder, where the person will experience pain if the abdomen is pressed while he or she inhales [Described 1912. After John Benjamin Murphy (1857–1916), US surgeon.]

muscae volitantes /'mʌskəv ,vɒlɪ'tæntɪz/ *plural noun* pieces of cellular or blood debris present in the vitreous of the eye, common in old age but, if a sudden event, can be a symptom of retinal haemorrhage. Also called **floaters**

muscarine /'mʌskə'reɪn/ *noun* a poison found in fungi

muscarinic /'mʌskə'rɪnɪk/ *adjective* referring to a neurone or receptor stimulated by acetylcholine and muscarine

muscle /'mʌs(ə)l/ *noun* 1. an organ in the body, which contracts to make part of the body

move ○ If you do a lot of exercises you develop strong muscles. ○ The muscles in his legs were still weak after he had spent two months in bed. ○ She had muscle cramp after going into the cold water. See illustration at **EYE** in Supplement 2. same as **muscle tissue**

COMMENT: There are two types of muscle: voluntary (striated) muscles, which are attached to bones and move parts of the body when made to do so by the brain, and involuntary (smooth) muscles which move essential organs such as the intestines and bladder automatically. The heart muscle also works automatically.

muscle coat /'mʌs(ə)l kəʊt/ *noun* one of two layers of muscle forming part of the lining of the intestine

muscle fatigue /'mʌs(ə)l fə,tɪ:g/, **muscular fatigue** /,mʌskjʊlə fə'tɪ:g/ *noun* tiredness in the muscles after strenuous exercise

muscle fibre /'mʌs(ə)l ,faɪbə/ *noun* a component fibre of muscles (NOTE: There are two types of fibre which form striated and smooth muscles.)

muscle relaxant /'mʌs(ə)l rɪ,læksənt/ *noun* a drug which reduces contractions in the muscles, e.g. baclofen

muscle spasm /'mʌs(ə)l ,spæz(ə)m/ *noun* a sudden contraction of a muscle

muscle spindle /'mʌs(ə)l ,spind(ə)l/ *noun* one of the sensory receptors which lie along striated muscle fibres

muscle tissue /'mʌs(ə)l ,tɪʃu:/, **muscular tissue** /,mʌskjʊlə tɪʃu:/ *noun* the specialised type of tissue which forms the muscles and which can contract and expand

muscle wasting /'mʌs(ə)l ,weɪstɪŋ/ *noun* a condition in which the muscles lose weight and become thin

muscular /'mʌskjʊlə/ *adjective* referring to muscle

muscular branch /'mʌskjʊlə bræntʃ/ *noun* a branch of a nerve to a muscle carrying efferent impulses to produce contraction

muscular defence /,mʌskjʊlə dɪ'fens/ *noun* a rigidity of muscles associated with inflammation such as peritonitis

muscular disorder /'mʌskjʊlə dɪs,ɔ:də/ *noun* a disorder which affects the muscles, e.g. cramp or strain

muscular dystrophy /,mʌskjʊlə 'dɪstrəfi/ *noun* a type of muscle disease where some muscles become weak and are replaced with fatty tissue. ♦ **Duchenne muscular dystrophy**

muscular fatigue /,mʌskjʊlə fə'tɪ:g/ *noun* same as **muscle fatigue**

muscularis /,mʌskjʊ'lɛrɪs/ *noun* muscular layer of an internal organ

muscular relaxant /,mʌskjʊlə rɪ'læksənt/ *noun* a drug which relaxes the muscles

muscular rheumatism /,mʌskjʊlə 'ru:mə,tɪz(ə)m/ *noun* a disease giving pains in the

back or neck, usually caused by fibrosis or inflammation of the muscles

muscular system /'mʌskjʊlə ,sistəm/ *noun* the muscles in the body, usually applied only to striated muscles

muscular tissue /,mʌskjʊlə 'tɪʃu:/ *noun* same as **muscle tissue**

musculo- /,mʌskjʊləʊ/ *prefix* relating to or affecting muscle

musculocutaneous /,mʌskjʊləʊkju:ti:nəs/ *adjective* referring to muscle and skin

musculocutaneous nerve /,mʌskjʊləʊkjur,teɪniəs 'nɜ:v/ *noun* a nerve in the brachial plexus which supplies the muscles in the arm

musculoskeletal /,mʌskjʊləʊ'skelɪt(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to muscles and bone

musculotendinous /,mʌskjʊləʊ'tendɪnəs/ *adjective* referring to both muscular and tendinous tissue

mutant /'mjʊ:t(ə)nt/ *adjective* in which mutation has occurred ■ *noun* an organism carrying a mutant gene

mutant gene /,mjʊ:t(ə)nt 'dʒi:n/ *noun* a gene which has undergone mutation

mutate /mjʊ:'teɪt/ *verb* to undergo a genetic change ○ Bacteria can mutate suddenly, and become increasingly able to infect.

mutation /mjʊ:'teɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a change in DNA which changes the physiological effect of the DNA on the cell

COMMENT: A mutation in the gene for amyloid precursor protein (APP) in some families causes early-onset Alzheimer's disease, when unusual deposits of beta amyloid are formed and dementia occurs.

mute /mjʊ:t/ *adjective* 1. unwilling or unable to speak 2. felt or expressed without speech ■ *noun* somebody who is unable or unwilling to speak (NOTE: This term is sometimes considered offensive.)

mutism /'mjʊ:tɪz(ə)m/ *noun* the condition of being unable to speak. Also called **dumbness**

my- /maɪ/ prefix same as **myo-** (used before vowels)

myalgia /maɪ'ældʒə/ *noun* a muscle pain

myalgic encephalomyelitis /maɪ,ældʒɪk en,kefələʊmætɪs'laɪtɪs/ *noun* a long-term condition affecting the nervous system, in which someone feels tired and depressed and has pain and weakness in the muscles. Abbr **ME**. Also called **chronic fatigue syndrome, postviral fatigue syndrome**

myasthenia /,maɪəs'θi:nɪə/, **myasthenia gravis** /,maɪəs,θi:nɪə 'græ:vɪs/ *noun* a general weakness and dysfunction of the muscles, caused by poor conduction at the motor end plates

myc- /maɪk, maɪs/ *prefix* same as **myco-** (used before vowels)

mycelium /maɪ'si:lɪəm/ *noun* a mass of threads which forms the main part of a fungus

mycetoma /'maɪsɪ:təʊmə/ *noun* same as **maduromycosis**

myco- /markəʊ/ *prefix* referring to fungus

Mycobacterium /'maɪkəbæk'tɪərɪəm/ *noun* one of a group of bacteria including those which cause leprosy and tuberculosis

mycology /maɪ'kɒlədʒɪ/ *noun* the study of fungi

Mycoplasma /'maɪkəplæzma/ *noun* a type of microorganism, similar to a bacterium, associated with diseases such as pneumonia and urethritis

mycosis /maɪ'kəʊsɪs/ *noun* any disease caused by a fungus, e.g. athlete's foot

mycosis fungoides /maɪ,kəʊsɪs fʌŋ'gɔɪdɪz/ *noun* a form of skin cancer, with irritating nodules

mydriasis /maɪ'draɪəsɪs/ *noun* an enlargement of the pupil of the eye

mydriatic /'mɪdrɪ'ætɪk/ *noun* a drug which makes the pupil of the eye become larger

myectomy /maɪ'ektəmi/ *noun* the surgical removal of part or all of a muscle

myel- /maɪəl/ *prefix* same as **myelo-** (*used before vowels*)

myelin /'maɪəlɪn/ *noun* the substance of the cell membrane of Schwann cells that coils into a protective covering around nerve fibres called a myelin sheath

myelinated /'maɪəlɪneɪtɪd/ *adjective* referring to nerve fibre covered by a myelin sheath

myelination /,maɪəl'neɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the process by which a myelin sheath forms around nerve fibres

myelin sheath /'maɪəlɪn ſi:θ/ *noun* a layer of myelin that insulates some nerve cells and speeds the conduction of nerve impulses. See illustration at **NEURONE** in Supplement

myelitis /,maɪə'laitɪs/ *noun* 1. inflammation of the spinal cord 2. an inflammation of bone marrow

myelo- /maɪələʊ/ *prefix* 1. referring to bone marrow 2. referring to the spinal cord

myeloblast /'maɪələblæst/ *noun* a precursor of a granulocyte

myelocite /'maɪələſaɪt/ *noun* same as **meningomyelocite**

myelocyte /'maɪələſaɪt/ *noun* a cell in bone marrow which develops into a granulocyte

myelofibrosis /maɪələfaɪ'b्रəʊſɪs/ *noun* fibrosis of bone marrow, associated with anaemia

myelogram /'maɪələgræm/ *noun* a record of the spinal cord taken by myelography

myelography /,maɪə'lɒgrəfi/ *noun* an X-ray examination of the spinal cord and subarachnoid space after a radio-opaque substance has been injected

myeloid /'maɪəlɔɪd/ *adjective* 1. referring to bone marrow, or produced by bone marrow 2. referring to the spinal cord

myeloid leukaemia /,maɪəlɔɪd lu:'ki:mɪə/ *noun* an acute form of leukaemia in adults

myeloid tissue /'maɪəlɔɪd, tɪʃu:/ *noun* red bone marrow

myeloma /,maɪə'ləʊmə/ *noun* a malignant tumour in bone marrow, at the ends of long bones or in the jaw

myelomalacia /,maɪələʊmə'leɪʃə/ *noun* softening of tissue in the spinal cord

myelomatosis /,maɪələʊmə'təʊſɪs/ *noun* a disease where malignant tumours infiltrate the bone marrow

myelomeningocele /,maɪələʊmə'nɪŋgəu ſi:l/ *noun* same as **meningomyelocole**

myelopathy /,maɪə'lɒpəθɪ/ *noun* any disorder of the spinal cord or bone marrow

myelosuppression /,maɪələʊſə'preʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a condition in which the bone marrow does not produce enough blood cells, often occurring after chemotherapy

myenteron /maɪ'entərən/ *noun* a layer of muscles in the small intestine, which produces peristalsis

myiasis /'maɪəſɪs/ *noun* an infestation by larvae of flies

mylohyoid /,maɪlə'haiſɔɪd/ *noun*, *adjective* referring to the molar teeth in the lower jaw and the hyoid bone

mylohyoid line /,maɪlə'haiſɔɪd, laɪn/ *noun* a line running along the outside of the lower jawbone, dividing the upper part of the bone which forms part of the mouth from the lower part which is part of the neck

myo- /maɪəʊ/ *prefix* referring to muscle

myoblast /'maɪəblæſt/ *noun* an embryonic cell which develops into muscle

myoblastic /,maɪəʊ'blæſtɪk/ *adjective* referring to myoblast

myocardial /,maɪəʊ'ku:dɪəl/ *adjective* referring to the myocardium

myocardial infarction /,maɪəʊ,ku:dɪəl ɪn'fɑ:kʃən/ *noun* the death of part of the heart muscle after coronary thrombosis. Abbr **MI**

myocarditis /,maɪəʊku:dɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the heart muscle

myocardium /,maɪəʊ'ku:dɪəm/ *noun* the middle layer of the wall of the heart, formed of heart muscle. See illustration at **HEART** in Supplement

myocele /'maɪəſi:l/ *noun* a condition in which a muscle pushes through a gap in the surrounding membrane

myoclonic /,maɪəʊ'klɒnɪk/ *adjective* referring to myoclonus

myoclonic epilepsy /,maɪəʊklɒnɪk 'epi lepsi/ *noun* a form of epilepsy where the limbs jerk frequently

myoclonus /maɪ'ɒklənəs/ *noun* a muscle spasm which makes a limb give an involuntary jerk

myocyte /'maɪəʊsaɪt/ *noun* a muscle cell

myodynia /,maɪəʊ'dɪniə/ *noun* a pain in the muscles

myofibril /,maɪəʊ'faɪbrɪl/ *noun* a long thread of striated muscle fibre

myofibrosis /,maɪəʊfaɪ'b्रəʊsɪs/ *noun* a condition in which muscle tissue is replaced by fibrous tissue

myogenic /,maɪəʊ'đženɪk/ *adjective* referring to movement which comes from an involuntary muscle

myoglobin /,maɪəʊ'glēoబିନ/ *noun* a muscle haemoglobin, which takes oxygen from blood and passes it to the muscle

myoglobinuria /,maɪəʊ,glēoబି'njuəriə/ *noun* the presence of myoglobin in the urine

myogram /'maɪəʊgræm/ *noun* a record showing how a muscle is functioning

myograph /'maɪəʊgrɑ:f/ *noun* an instrument which records the degree and strength of a muscle contraction

myography /maɪ'ɒgrəfi/ *noun* the process of recording the degree and strength of a muscle contraction with a myograph

myokymia /,maɪəʊ'kīmɪə/ *noun* twitching of a particular muscle

myology /maɪ'ɒlədʒi/ *noun* the study of muscles and associated structures and diseases

myoma /maɪ'əʊmə/ *noun* a benign tumour in a smooth muscle

myomectomy /,maɪəʊ'mektəmɪ/ *noun* 1. the surgical removal of a benign growth from a muscle, especially removal of a fibroid from the uterus 2. same as **myectomy**

myometritis /,maɪəʊmə'traɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the myometrium. Also called **metritis**

myometrium /,maɪəʊ'mɪtrɪəm/ *noun* the muscular tissue in the uterus

myoneural /,maɪəʊ'njuərəl/ *adjective* relating to or involving both the muscles and the nerves

myoneural junction /,maɪəʊnjuər(ə)l 'dʒəʊnl(ə)n/ *noun* same as **neuromuscular junction**

myopathy /maɪ'ɒpəθi/ *noun* a disease of a muscle, especially one in which the muscle wastes away

myopia /maɪ'əʊpiə/ *noun* a condition in which someone can see clearly objects which are close, but not ones which are further away. Also called **shortsightedness**. Opposite **long-sightedness**

myopic /maɪ'ɒpɪk/ *adjective* able to see close objects clearly, but not objects which are further away. Also called **shortsighted**

myoplasm /'maɪəoplæz(ə)m/ *noun* same as **sarcoplasm**

myoplasty /'maɪəoplæstɪ/ *noun* a form of plastic surgery to repair a muscle

myosarcoma /,maɪəʊsə:'kəʊmə/ *noun* 1. a malignant tumour containing unstriated muscle 2. combined myoma and sarcoma

myosis /maɪ'əʊsɪs/ *noun* another spelling of **miosis**

myositis /,maɪəʊ'saitɪs/ *noun* inflammation and degeneration of a muscle

myotatic /,maɪəʊ'tætɪk/ *adjective* referring to the sense of touch in a muscle

myotatic reflex /,maɪəʊtætɪk 'ri:fleks/ *noun* a reflex action in a muscle which contracts after being stretched

myotic /maɪ'ɒtɪk/ *noun* a drug which causes the pupil of the eye to contract

myotomy /maɪ'ɒtəmi/ *noun* a surgical operation to cut a muscle

myotonia /,maɪəʊ'tənɪə/ *noun* difficulty in relaxing a muscle after exercise

myotonic /,maɪəʊ'tonɪk/ *adjective* referring to tone in a muscle

myotonic dystrophy /,maɪəʊtɒnɪk 'distrəfɪ/ *noun* a hereditary disease with muscle stiffness leading to atrophy of the muscles of the face and neck

myotonus /maɪ'ɒtənəs/ *noun* a muscle tone

myringa /mi'ringə/ *noun* same as **ear drum**

myringitis /,mɪrɪŋ'dʒaɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the eardrum

myringoplasty /mi'ringəoplæsti/ *noun* the surgical repair of a perforated eardrum. Also called **tympanoplasty**

myringotome /mi'ringətəmə/ *noun* a sharp knife used in myringotomy

myringotomy /,mɪrɪŋ'gɔ:təmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to make an opening in the eardrum to allow fluid to escape

myx- /mɪks/, **myxo-** /mɪksəʊ/ *prefix* referring to mucus

myxoedema /,mɪksə'di:mə/ *noun* a condition caused when the thyroid gland does not produce enough thyroid hormone. The person, often a middle-aged woman, becomes overweight, moves slowly and develops coarse skin. It can be treated with thyroxine. (NOTE: The US spelling is **myxedema**)

myxoedematous /,mɪksə'demətəs/ *adjective* referring to myxoedema

myxoid cyst /,mɪksɔɪd 'sist/ *noun* a cyst which develops at the base of a fingernail or toenail

myxoma /mɪk'saʊmə/ *noun* a benign tumour of mucous tissue, usually found in subcutaneous tissue of the limbs and neck

myxosarcoma /,mɪksəʊsə:'kəʊmə/ *noun* a malignant tumour of mucous tissue

myxovirus /,mɪksəʊ'veɪrəs/ *noun* any virus which has an affinity for the mucoprotein receptors in red blood cells. One of these viruses causes influenza.

N

n symbol nano-

nabothian cyst /nə'baʊθiən 'sist/ **nabothian follicle** /nə'baʊθiən 'folik(ə)l/, **nabothian gland** /nə'baʊθiən 'glænd/ *noun* a cyst which forms in the cervix of the uterus when the ducts in the cervical glands are blocked

Naegele rule /'neɪgələ ru:l/ *noun* a method used to determine when a pregnant woman is likely to go into labour, in which nine months and seven days are added to the date on which her last period started. If the woman does not have a 28-day menstrual cycle, an adjustment is made: e.g., if she has a 26-day cycle you would subtract 2 days from the Naegele's estimated due date.

naevus /'ni:vəs/ *noun* same as **birthmark** (NOTE: The plural is **naevi**.)

Naga sore /'na:gə sɔ:/ *noun* same as **tropical ulcer**

ragging pain /,nægrɪŋ 'peɪn/ *noun* a dull, continuous throbbing pain

NAI abbr non-accidental injury

nail /neɪl/ *noun* a hard growth, made of keratin, which forms on the top surface at the end of each finger and toe. Also called **unguis** (NOTE: For terms referring to nail, see words beginning with **onych-**, **onycho-**.)

nail avulsion /'neɪl ə,vʌlʃən/ *noun* the act of pulling away an ingrowing toenail

nail bed /'neɪl bed/ *noun* the part of the finger which is just under the nail and on which the nail rests

nail biting /'neɪl ,baɪtɪŋ/ *noun* the obsessive chewing of the fingernails, usually a sign of stress

nail matrix /neɪl 'meɪtrɪks/ *noun* the internal structure of the nail, the part of the finger from which the nail grows

naloxone /nə'lɒksən/ *noun* a drug resembling morphine, used in the diagnosis of narcotics addiction and to reverse the effects of narcotics poisoning

named nurse /,neɪmd 'nɜ:s/ *noun* a nurse, midwife or health visitor who is responsible for communicating with a particular person and ensuring that his or her needs for care and information are met

nandrolone /'nændrələn/ *noun* an anabolic steroid which builds muscle. Its use is banned by the International Amateur Athletics Federation.

nano- /nænəʊ/ *prefix* one thousand millionth (10^{-9}). Symbol **n**

nanometre /'nænəʊmɪtəl/ *noun* a unit of measurement of length equal to one thousand millionth of a metre. Symbol **nm**

nanomole /'nænəʊməl/ *noun* a unit of measurement of the amount of a substance equal to one thousand millionth of a mole. Symbol **nmol**

nanosecond /'nænəʊ,sekənd/ *noun* a unit of measurement of time equal to one thousand millionth of a second. Symbol **ns**

nape /neɪp/ *noun* the back of the neck. Also called **nucha**

napkin /'næpkɪn/ *noun* a soft cloth, used for wiping or absorbing

nappy /'næpi/ *noun* a cloth used to wrap round a baby's bottom and groin, to keep clothing clean and dry (NOTE: The US term is **diaper**.)

nappy rash /'næpi ræʃ/ *noun* sore red skin on a baby's buttocks and groin, caused by long contact with ammonia in a wet nappy (NOTE: The US term is **diaper rash**.)

naproxen /næ'prɒksən/ *noun* a drug which reduces inflammation and pain, used in the treatment of arthritis

narcissism /'nɑ:sɪsɪz(ə)m/ *noun* in psychiatry, a personality disorder in which someone has a very confident opinion about their own appearance and abilities, and a great need to be admired by other people. It sometimes involves sexual interest in their own body.

narco- /nɑ:kəʊ/ *prefix* referring to sleep or stupor

narcoanalysis /nɑ:kəʊə'næləsɪs/ *noun* the use of narcotics to induce a comatose state in someone about to undergo psychoanalysis which may be emotionally disturbing

narcolepsy /'nɑ:kəlepsi/ *noun* a condition in which someone has an uncontrollable tendency to fall asleep at any time

narcoleptic /nə:kə'leptɪk/ *adjective* 1. causing narcolepsy 2. having narcolepsy ■ *noun* 1. a substance which causes narcolepsy 2. someone who has narcolepsy

narcosis /nə:kə'sɪsɪs/ *noun* a state of lowered consciousness induced by a drug

narcotic /nə:kɒtɪk/ *noun* a pain-relieving drug which makes someone sleep or become unconscious ○ *The doctor put her to sleep with a powerful narcotic.* ■ *adjective* causing sleep or unconsciousness ○ *the narcotic side-effects of an antihistamine*

COMMENT: Although narcotics are used medicinally as painkillers, they are highly addictive. The main narcotics are barbiturates, cocaine and opium, and drugs derived from opium, such as morphine, codeine and heroin. Addictive narcotics are widely used for the relief of pain in terminally ill patients.

nares /'neərɪ:z/ *plural noun* the nostrils (NOTE: The singular is **naris**.)

narrow /'nærəʊ/ *adjective* not wide ○ *The blood vessel is a narrow channel which takes blood to the tissues.* ○ *The surgeon inserted a narrow tube into the vein.* ■ *verb* to make something narrow, or become narrow ○ *The bronchial tubes are narrowed causing asthma.*

nasal /'neɪz(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to the nose

nasal apertures /,neɪz(ə)l 'æpətʃəz/ *plural noun* the two openings shaped like funnels leading from the nasal cavity to the pharynx. ♀ **choana**

nasal bone /'neɪz(ə)l bəʊn/ *noun* one of two small bones which form the bridge at the top of the nose

nasal cartilage /'neɪz(ə)l ,ka:təlɪdʒ/ *noun* one of two cartilages in the nose. The upper is attached to the nasal bone and the front of the maxilla. The lower is thinner and curls round each nostril to the septum.

nasal cavity /,neɪz(ə)l 'kævɪtɪ/ *noun* the cavity behind the nose between the cribriform plates above and the hard palate below, divided in two by the nasal septum and leading to the nasopharynx

nasal conchae /,neɪz(ə)l 'kɒŋki:/ *plural noun* the three ridges of bone, called the superior, middle and inferior conchae, which project into the nasal cavity from the side walls. Also called **turbinate bones**

nasal congestion /,neɪz(ə)l kən'dʒestʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the blocking of the nose by inflammation as a response to a cold or other infection

nasal drops /'neɪz(ə)l drɔ:ps/ *plural noun* drops of liquid inserted into the nose

nasal septum /,neɪz(ə)l 'septəm/ *noun* a wall of cartilage between the two nostrils and the two parts of the nasal cavity

nasal spray /'neɪz(ə)l spreɪ/ *noun* a spray of liquid into the nose

nascent /'næs(ə)nt, 'neɪs(ə)nt/ *adjective* 1. in the process of coming into existence and starting to develop 2. referring to a substance, especially hydrogen, in the process of being created. At this stage it is often in a highly active form.

Naseptin /næ'sepɪtn/ a trade name for a mixture containing chlorhexidine and neomycin, used to treat nasal infection by organisms such as staphylococci

nasion /'neɪziən/ *noun* the place at which the bridge of the nose meets the forehead

naso- /neɪzəʊ/ *prefix* referring to the nose

nasogastric /,neɪzəʊ'gæstrɪk/ *adjective* referring to the nose and stomach

nasogastrically /,neɪzəʊ'gæstrɪklɪ/ *adverb* referring to a method of feeding someone via a tube passed through the nose into the stomach

‘...all patients requiring nutrition are fed enterally, whether nasogastrically or directly into the small intestine’ [British Journal of Nursing]

nasogastric tube /,neɪzəʊ,gæstrɪk 'tju:b/ *noun* a tube passed through the nose into the stomach

nasolacrimal /,neɪzəʊ'lækrim(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to the nose and the tear glands

nasolacrimal duct /,neɪzəʊ,lækrim(ə)l 'dʌkt/ *noun* a duct which drains tears from the lacrimal sac into the nose

nasopharyngeal /,neɪzəʊ,færɪn'dʒi:əl/ *adjective* referring to the nasopharynx

nasopharyngitis /,neɪzəʊ,færɪn'dʒaɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the mucous membrane of the nasal part of the pharynx

nasopharynx /,neɪzəʊ'færɪŋks/ *noun* the top part of the pharynx which connects with the nose

nasosinusitis /,neɪzəʊ,sainə'saɪtɪs/ *noun* a condition in which the nose and sinuses swell up

nasty /'nɑ:sti/ *adjective* unpleasant ○ *This medicine has a nasty taste.* ○ *This new drug has some nasty side-effects.* (NOTE: **nastier** – **nastiest**)

nates /'neitɪ:z/ *noun* same as **buttock**

National Boards /,næʃ(ə)nəl 'bɔ:rdz/ *plural noun* the National Boards for Nursing, Midwifery, and Health Visiting, which were formerly responsible for the education of professionals in these fields in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland

National Council for Vocational Qualifications /,næʃ(ə)nəl ,kaʊns(ə)l fə vəʊ ,keɪʃ(ə)nəl ,kwɒlfɪ'keɪʃ(ə)nz/ *noun* full form of **NCVQ**

National Health Service /,næʃ(ə)nəl 'helθ ,sɜ:vɪs/ *noun* a government service in the UK which provides medical services free of charge at the point of delivery, or at reduced cost, to the whole population. The service is paid for out of tax revenue. Abbr **NHS** □ **on the NHS** paid for by the NHS ○ *He had his operation on*

the NHS. ○ *She went to see a specialist on the NHS. Compare privately*

'...figures reveal that 5% more employees in the professional and technical category were working in the NHS compared with three years before' [Nursing Times]

National Institute for Clinical Excellence /næʃ(ə)n(ə)l̩,ɪn'stitjʊt fə,klinɪk(ə)l̩ 'eksələns/ noun an organisation in the UK which produces recommendations for treatments based on clinical evidence and cost-effectiveness. Abbr NICE

National Insurance /næʃ(ə)nəl̩/ in 'juərəns/ noun a weekly payment from a person's wages, with a supplement from the employer, which pays for state assistance and medical treatment, in the UK

natriuretic /neɪtriyo'retɪk/ noun something which helps sodium to be excreted in the urine

natural /'nætʃ(ə)rəl̩/ adjective 1. usual or expected in particular conditions ○ *It's natural for people to be anxious before an operation.*

2. referring to something which comes from nature and is not made by humans ○ *natural products* 3. relaxed and not consciously changed ○ *His behaviour seemed quite natural.*

natural childbirth /,nætʃ(ə)rəl̩ 'tʃaɪldbɪθ/ noun childbirth where the mother is not given any pain-killing drugs or anaesthetic but is encouraged to give birth after having prepared herself through relaxation and breathing exercises and a new psychological outlook

natural immunity /,nætʃ(ə)rəl̩ 'ɪmjū:nɪti/ noun the immunity from disease which a newborn baby has from birth and which is inherited or acquired in the uterus or from the mother's milk

natural killer cell /,nætʃ(ə)rəl̩ 'kilə sel/ noun a white blood cell which can recognise microorganisms and tumour cells as foreign without any previous exposure to them, and destroy them

natural mother /,nætʃ(ə)rəl̩ 'mʌðə/, **natural parent** /,nætʃ(ə)rəl̩ 'peərənt/ noun same as *birth mother, birth parent*

nature /'neɪtʃənəl̩/ noun 1. the essential quality of something 2. kind or sort 3. the genetic make-up which affects personality, behaviour or risk of disease. ○ **nurture** 4. plants and animals

nature nurture debate /,neɪtʃə'nɜːtʃədɛbət/ noun the arguments put forward about whether human beings behave in the way they do because of their genetic make-up and instincts or because of the way they are educated and the influences they are exposed to when they are young

naturopathy /,neɪtʃə'nrɒpəθi/ noun a method of treatment of diseases and disorders which does not use medical or surgical means, but

natural forces such as light, heat, massage, eating natural foods and using herbal remedies

nausea /'nɔːzɪə/ noun a feeling that you want to vomit ○ *She suffered from nausea in the morning.* ○ *He felt slight nausea after getting onto the boat.*

COMMENT: Nausea can be caused by eating habits, such as eating too much rich food or drinking too much alcohol. It can also be caused by sensations such as unpleasant smells or motion sickness. Other causes include stomach disorders, such as gastritis, ulcers and liver infections. Nausea is commonly experienced by women in the early stages of pregnancy, and is called morning sickness.

nauseated /'nɔːzi:tɪd/ adjective feeling as if you are about to vomit ○ *The casualty may feel nauseated.* (NOTE: The US term is **nauseous**.)

nauseous /'nɔːziəs/ adjective having the feeling in the stomach that precedes the urge to vomit

navel /'neɪvəl̩/ noun the scar with a depression in the middle of the abdomen where the umbilical cord was detached after birth. Also called **umbilicus** (NOTE: For other terms referring to the navel, see words beginning with **omphal-**, **omphalo-**.)

navicular /'nə'vekjurəl̩/ adjective relating to a navicular bone ■ noun same as **navicular bone**

navicular bone /'nə'vekjurəl̩ bəʊn/ noun one of the tarsal bones in the foot. See illustration at **FOOT** in Supplement

NCVQ noun a government body in the UK responsible for setting standards of qualification for specific jobs. Full form **National Council for Vocational Qualifications**

NDU abbr Nursing Development Unit

nearsighted /nɪə'saɪtɪd/ adjective same as **myopic**

nearsightedness /,nɪə'saɪtɪdnəs/ noun same as **myopia**

nebula /'nebju:lə/ noun 1. a slightly cloudy spot on the cornea 2. a spray of medicinal solution, applied to the nose or throat using a nebuliser

nebuliser /'nebju:ləɪzəl̩/, **nebulizer** noun same as **atomiser**

Necator /'ne'keɪtə/ noun a genus of hookworm which infests the small intestine

necatoriasis /ne'keɪtəs'ærɪəsɪs/ noun infestation of the small intestine by the parasite **Necator**

neck /nek/ noun 1. the part of the body which joins the head to the body ○ *He is suffering from pains in the neck.* ○ *The front of the neck is swollen with goitre.* ○ *The jugular veins run down the side of the neck.* 2. a narrow part of a bone or organ □ **neck of the femur, femoral**

neck the narrow part between the head and the diaphysis of the femur □ **neck of a tooth** point where a tooth narrows slightly, between the crown and the root

COMMENT: The neck is formed of the seven cervical vertebrae, and is held vertical by strong muscles. Many organs pass through the neck, including the oesophagus, the larynx and the arteries and veins which connect the brain to the bloodstream. The front of the neck is usually referred to as the throat.

neck collar /nek̩ ,kɒlə/ *noun* a strong high collar to support the head of a person with neck injuries or a condition such as cervical spondylosis

necro- /nekroʊ/ *prefix* referring to death

necrobiosis /,nekroʊbaɪ'əsɪs/ *noun* 1. the death of cells surrounded by living tissue 2. the gradual localised death of a part or tissue

necrology /ne'krɒlədʒi/ *noun* the scientific study of mortality statistics

necrophilia /,nekroʊ'fɪliə/, **necrophilism** /ne'krɒfɪlɪz(ə)m/ *noun* 1. unusual pleasure in corpses 2. sexual attraction to dead bodies

necropsy /'nekrɒpsi/ *noun* same as **post mortem**

necrosed /nekroʊsd/ *adjective* referring to dead tissue or bone

necrosis /ne'krəʊsɪs/ *noun* the death of a part of the body such as a bone, tissue or an organ as a result of disease or injury ◎ *Gangrene is a form of necrosis.*

necrospermia /,nekro'spɜ:mɪə/ *noun* a condition in which dead sperm exist in the semen

necrotic /ne'krɒtɪk/ *adjective* referring to, or affected with, necrosis ◎ *necrotic tissue*

necrotising enterocolitis /,nekrə'taɪzɪŋ ,entərəʊkə'laitɪs/ *noun* a disorder in which patches of dead tissue are found in the small or large intestine as a result of severe bacterial infection. It occurs in babies, especially premature ones.

necrotising fasciitis /,nekrə'taɪzɪŋ ,fæʃi'atɪs/ *noun* a severe bacterial infection that causes cell tissue to decay rapidly (NOTE: It is sometimes referred to in the media as the 'flesh-eating bug'.)

necrotomy /ne'krɒtəmɪ/ *noun* the dissection of a dead body (NOTE: The plural is **necrotomies**.)

needle /ni:d(ə)l/ *noun* 1. a thin metal instrument with a sharp point at one end and a hole at the other for attaching a thread, used for sewing up surgical incisions 2. the hollow pointed end of a hypodermic syringe, or the syringe itself

needle myopathy /,ni:d(ə)l maɪ'pəθi/ *noun* destruction of muscle tissue caused by using a large needle for intramuscular injections

needlestick /'ni:d(ə)lstɪk/ *noun* an accidental pricking of your own skin by a needle, as by a nurse picking up a used syringe

needlestick injury /'ni:d(ə)lstɪk ,ɪndʒəri/ *noun* the real or potential harm resulting from

a prick with a needle previously used to take blood or give an injection. The main concern is the risk of HIV or hepatitis B infection.

needling /'ni:dɪŋ/ *noun* the puncture of a cataract with a needle

needs assessment /'ni:dz ə,sesmənt/ *noun* the investigation of what a particular group of people need in terms of health and social care, so that services can be matched to their needs

needs deprivation /'ni:dz deprɪ'veɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a state in which someone does not have the opportunity or capacity to fulfil his or her basic needs

negative /'negətɪv/ *adjective* 1. meaning or showing 'no' □ **the answer is in the negative** the answer is 'no' 2. indicating that something being tested for is not present ◎ *The test results were negative.* Opposite **positive**

negative feedback /,negətɪv 'fi:dbæk/ *noun* a situation in which the result of a process represses the process which caused it

negativism /'negətɪvɪz(ə)m/ *noun* the attitude of a person who opposes advice or instructions

COMMENT: There are two types of negativism: active, where someone does the opposite of what a doctor tells him or her, and passive, where someone does not do what he or she has been asked to do.

negligence /'neglɪdʒəns/ *noun* the act of causing injury or harm to another person or to property as the result of doing something wrongly or failing to provide a proper level of care

Negri body /'neɪgri ,bodi/ *noun* a round or oval inclusion in the cytoplasm of nerve cells of people or animals who have rabies [Described 1903. After Adelchi Negri (1876–1912), Professor of Bacteriology at Pavia, Italy.]

Neil Robertson stretcher /,ni:l 'rɒbətsən ,stretʃə/ *noun* a stretcher to which a person can be strapped and moved about in an upright position

Neisseria /nɛ:sɪəriə/ *noun* a genus of bacteria which includes gonococcus, which causes gonorrhoea, and meningococcus, which causes meningitis

nematode /'nemətəud/ *noun* a type of parasitic roundworm, e.g. a hookworm, pinworm or roundworm

neo- /ni:əʊ/ *prefix* new

neoadjuvant chemotherapy /,ni:əʊ ,ædʒʊvənt ,ki:məʊ'θerəpi/ *noun* chemotherapy given to people with tumours instead of immediate surgery or radiotherapy, in the hope of reducing the need for these later

neocerebellum /,ni:əʊ'serə'beləm/ *noun* the middle part of the cerebellum (NOTE: The plural is **neocerebellums** or **neocerebella**.)

neomycin /,ni:əʊ'maɪsɪn/ *noun* a drug used externally to treat bacterial infections

neonatal /ni:əʊ'neɪt(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to the first few weeks after birth

‘...one of the most common routes of neonatal poisoning is percutaneous absorption following topical administration’ [Southern Medical Journal]

neonatal death rate /,ni:əʊneɪt(ə)l 'deθ ,reɪt/ *noun* the number of babies who die soon after birth, shown per thousand babies born

neonatal maceration /,ni:əʊneɪt(ə)l 'mæsə'reɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* softening or rotting of fetal tissue after the fetus has died in the uterus and has remained in the amniotic fluid

neonatal screening /,ni:əʊ,neɪt(ə)l 'skrɪ:nɪŋ/ *noun* a set of tests performed on babies soon after birth so that any problems can be treated immediately (NOTE: Tests for certain diseases such as hypothyroidism and phenylketonuria are a legal duty.)

neonate /'ni:əʊneɪt/ *noun* a baby which is less than four weeks old

neonatologist /,ni:ənə'tɒlədʒɪst/ *noun* a specialist who looks after babies during the first few weeks of life, or premature babies and babies with some congenital disorders

neonatology /,ni:ənətə'tɒlədʒɪ/ *noun* the branch of medicine dealing with babies in the first few weeks of life

neonatorum /,ni:əʊneɪt'ɔ:tərəm/ ♦ **asphyxia neonatorum**

neoplasia /,ni:əʊ'pleɪzɪə/ *noun* the formation of tumours

neoplasm /'ni:əʊplæz(ə)m/ *noun* any new and morbid formation of tissue

‘...testicular cancer comprises only 1% of all malignant neoplasms in the male, but it is one of the most frequently occurring types of tumours in late adolescence’ [Journal of American College Health]

neoplastic /,ni:əʊ'plæstɪk/ *adjective* referring to neoplasms, neoplasty or neoplasia

neoplasty *noun* the surgical repair or replacement of damaged tissue

neostigmine /,ni:əʊ'stɪgmi:n/ *noun* a white crystalline compound used in the treatment of muscle fatigue myasthenia and to reverse the effects of muscle relaxant drugs

neph- /nefr/ *prefix* kidney

nephralgia /'nef'rældʒɪə/ *noun* pain in the kidney

nephralgic /ne'frældʒɪk/ *adjective* relating to pain in the kidney

nephrectomy /ne'frektəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to remove the whole kidney (NOTE: The plural is **nephrectomies**.)

nephric /'nefrɪk/, **nephritic** /ne'frɪtɪk/ *adjective* referring to the kidneys

nephritis /ne'fraɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the kidney

COMMENT: Acute nephritis can be caused by a streptococcal infection. Symptoms can include headaches, swollen ankles, and fever.

nephroblastoma /,nefrəoblæ'stəʊmə/ *noun* a malignant tumour in the kidneys in

young children, usually under the age of 10, leading to swelling of the abdomen. It is treated by removal of the affected kidney. Also called **Wilms' tumour** (NOTE: The plural is **nephroblastomas** or **nephroblastomata**.)

nephrocalcinosis /,nefrəʊ,kəlsɪ'nəʊsɪs/ *noun* a condition in which calcium deposits are found in the kidney

nephrocapsulectomy /,nefrəʊ,kæpsjʊ'lektəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to remove the capsule round a kidney (NOTE: The plural is **nephrocapsulectomies**.)

nephrogram /'nefrəgræm/ *noun* a radiographic examination of the kidney

nephrolith /'nefrəlɪθ/ *noun* a stone in the kidney

nephrolithiasis /,nefrəlɪθ'ərəsɪs/ *noun* a condition in which stones form in the kidney

nephrolithotomy /,nefrəlɪθ'ɒtəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to remove a stone in the kidney (NOTE: The plural is **nephrolithotomies**.)

nephrologist /ne'frələdʒɪst/ *noun* a doctor who specialises in the study of the kidney and its diseases

nephrology /ne'frələdʒɪ/ *noun* the study of the kidney and its diseases

nephroma /ne'frəʊmə/ *noun* a tumour in the kidney, or a tumour derived from renal substances (NOTE: The plural is **nephromas** or **nephromata**.)

nephron /'nefrən/ *noun* a tiny structure in the kidney through which fluid is filtered

COMMENT: A nephron is formed of a series of tubules, the loop of Henle, Bowman's capsule and a glomerulus. Blood enters the nephron from the renal artery, and waste materials are filtered out by the Bowman's capsule. Some substances return to the bloodstream by reabsorption in the tubules. Urine is collected in the ducts leading from the tubules to the ureters.

nephropathy /ne'frɒpəθɪ/ *noun* a disease or medical disorder of the kidney (NOTE: The plural is **nephropathies**.)

nephropexy /'nefrəʊpeksi/ *noun* a surgical operation to attach a mobile kidney (NOTE: The plural is **nephropexies**.)

nephroptosis /,nefrɒp'təʊsɪs/ *noun* a condition in which a kidney is mobile. Also called floating kidney

nephrosclerosis /,nefrəʊsklə'rəʊsɪs/ *noun* a kidney disease due to vascular change

nephroscope /'nefrəskəʊp/ *noun* a type of endoscope used to examine the kidneys

nephrosis /ne'frəʊsɪs/ *noun* degeneration of the tissue of a kidney

nephrostomy /ne'frəstəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to make a permanent opening into the pelvis of the kidney from the surface (NOTE: The plural is **nephrostomies**.)

nephrotic /ne'frɒtɪk/ *adjective* relating to or caused by nephrosis

nephrotic syndrome /ne'frɒtɪk 'sɪn drəʊm/ *noun* increasing oedema, albuminuria and raised blood pressure resulting from nephrosis

nephrotomy /ne'frɒtəmi/ *noun* a surgical operation to cut into a kidney (NOTE: The plural is **nephrotomies**)

nephrotoxic /,nefrəʊ'tɒksɪk/ *adjective* poisonous or damaging to kidney cells

nephroureterectomy /,nefrəʊ,jʊərɪtə'ektəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to remove all or part of a kidney and the ureter attached to it. Also called **ureteronephrectomy** (NOTE: The plural is **nephroureterectomies**.)

nerve /nɜ:v/ *noun* 1. a bundle of fibres that can transmit electrochemical impulses and that forms part of the network that connects the brain and spinal cord to the body's organs 2. the sensitive tissue in the root of a tooth (NOTE: For other terms referring to nerves, see words beginning with **neur-**, **neuro-**.)

COMMENT: Nerves are the fibres along which impulses are carried. Motor nerves or efferent nerves take messages between the central nervous system and muscles, making the muscles move. Sensory nerves or afferent nerves transmit impulses such as sight or pain from the sense organs to the brain.

nerve block /nɜ:v blk/ *noun* the act of stopping the function of a nerve by injecting an anaesthetic

nerve centre /'nɜ:v sentə/ *noun* the point at which nerves come together

nerve ending /nɜ:v 'endɪŋ/ *noun* same as **sensory receptor**

nerve entrapment syndrome /,nɜ:v ɪn 'træpmənt ,sɪnd्रəʊm/ *noun* pain caused by pressure on a nerve, especially where nerves occur in narrow passages such as the wrist (NOTE: The most common nerve entrapment syndrome in the body is carpal tunnel syndrome.)

nerve fibre /nɜ:v ,faɪbə/ *noun* a thin structure leading from a nerve cell and carrying nerve impulses, e.g. an axon

nerve gas /nɜ:v gæs/ *noun* a gas which attacks the nervous system

nerve impulse /nɜ:v 'impəls/ *noun* an electrochemical impulse which is transmitted by nerve cells

nerve regeneration /,nɜ:v rɪgenə'refɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the growth of new nerve tissue after damage has occurred

nerve root /nɜ:v ru:t/ *noun* the first part of a nerve as it leaves or joins the spinal column (NOTE: The dorsal nerve root is the entry for a sensory nerve, and the ventral nerve root is the exit for a motor nerve.)

nerve tissue /nɜ:v ,tɪʃu:/ *noun* tissue which forms nerves, and which is able to transmit the nerve impulses

nervosa /nə'veʊsə/ ♦ **anorexia nervosa**

nervous /'nɜ:vəs/ *adjective* 1. referring to nerves 2. very easily worried ◎ *Don't be nervous – the operation is a very simple one.*

nervous breakdown /,nɜ:vəs 'breɪkdaʊn/ *noun* any sudden mental illness (*informal*)

nervous complaint /,nɜ:vəs kəm'pléint/, **nervous disorder** *noun* an emotional or mental illness (*informal*)

nervousness /'nɜ:vəsnəs/ *noun* the state of being nervous

nervous system /'nɜ:vəs ,sɪstəm/ *noun* the nervous tissues of the body, including the peripheral nerves, spinal cord, ganglia and nerve centres

nervy /'nɜ:vi/ *adjective* worried and nervous (*informal*)

nether parts /'neðə pa:ts/, **nether regions** /,neðə 'ri:dʒ(ə)ns/ *plural noun* the lower part of the body, especially the buttocks or genital area (*informal*)

nettle rash /'net(ə)l ræʃ/ *noun* same as **urticaria**

network /'netwɜ:k/ *noun* an interconnecting system of lines and spaces, like a net ◎ *a network of fine blood vessels*

Neuman's model /'nju:mənз ,mɒd(ə)l/ *noun* a modern model for nursing in which prevention is the primary nursing aim (NOTE: Prevention focuses on keeping both the things which cause stress and the patient's response to stress from having a damaging effect on the body.)

neur- /njuər/ *prefix* same as **neuro-** (*used before vowels*)

neural /'njuərəl/ *adjective* referring to a nerve or the nervous system

neural arch /,njuərəl 'ɑ:tʃ/ *noun* a curved part of a vertebra, which forms the space through which the spinal cord passes

neural crest /'njuərəl krest/ *noun* the ridge of cells in an embryo which forms nerve cells of the sensory and autonomic ganglia

neuralgia /nju'rældʒə/ *noun* a spasm of pain which runs along a nerve

neural groove /'njuərəl gru:v/ *noun* a groove on the back of an embryo formed as the neural plate closes to form the neural tube

neural plate /'njuərəl plēt/ *noun* a thickening of an embryonic disc which folds over to form the neural tube

neural tube /'njuərəl tju:b/ *noun* a tube lined with ectodermal cells running the length of an embryo, which develops into the brain and spinal cord

neural tube defect /,njuərəl 'tju:b dɪ'fekt/ *noun* a congenital anomaly which occurs when the edges of the neural tube do not close up properly while the fetus develops in the uterus, e.g. spina bifida (NOTE: There is less risk of a neural tube defect if the mother takes folic acid during her pregnancy.)

neurapraxia /,njuərə'præksiə/ *noun* a lesion of a nerve which leads to paralysis for a very short time, giving a tingling feeling and loss of function

neurasthenia /,njuərəs'θi:nɪə/ *noun* a type of neurosis in which a person is mentally and physically irritable and extremely fatigued

neurasthenic /,njuərəs'θenɪk/ *noun* a person affected by neurasthenia

neurectasis /nju'rektəsɪs/ *noun* a surgical operation to stretch a peripheral nerve (NOTE: The plural is **neurectases**.)

neurectomy /nju'rektəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to remove all or part of a nerve (NOTE: The plural is **neurectomies**.)

neurilemma /,njuərə'lɪmə/ *noun* the outer sheath, formed of Schwann cells, which covers the myelin sheath around a nerve fibre. Also called **neurolemma**. See illustration at **NEURONE** in Supplement

neurilemmoma /,njuərə'lɛməmə/, **neurinoma** /njuərɪ'nɔmə/ *noun* a benign tumour of a nerve, formed from the neurilemma (NOTE: The plurals are **neurilemmomas** or **neurolemmomata** and **neurinomas** or **neurinomata**.)

neuritis /nju'rɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of a nerve, giving a constant pain

neuro- /njuərəʊ/ *prefix* nerve or nervous system

neuroanatomy /,njuərənə'natəmɪ/ *noun* the scientific study of the structure of the nervous system

neuroblast /'njuərəoblæst/ *noun* a cell in the embryonic spinal cord which forms a nerve cell

neuroblastoma /,njuərəublæ'stəmə/ *noun* a malignant tumour formed from the neural crest, found mainly in young children (NOTE: The plural is **neuroblastomas** or **neuroblastomata**.)

neurocranium /,njuərəʊ'keɪniəm/ *noun* a part of the skull which encloses and protects the brain (NOTE: The plural is **neurocranums** or **neurocrania**.)

neurodegenerative /,njuərəʊdɪ'dʒenərətɪv/ *adjective* referring to a disorder such as Alzheimer's disease or Parkinson's disease that causes damage to the nerves

neurodermatitis /,njuərəʊdəz'ma'taɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the skin caused by psychological factors

neurodermatosis /,njuərəʊdəz'mə'təsɪs/ *noun* a nervous condition involving the skin

neuroendocrine system /,njuərəʊ'endəkrɪn ,sistəm/ *noun* a system in which the central nervous system and hormonal systems interact to control the function of organs and tissues

neuroepithelial /,njuərəʊepɪ'thɪəl/ *adjective* referring to the neuroepithelium

neuroepithelioma /,njuərəʊepɪ'thɪ:lɪ'əmə/ *noun* a malignant tumour in the retina (NOTE: The plural is **neuroepitheliomas** or **neuroepitheliomata**.)

neuroepithelium /,njuərəʊepɪ'thɪ:lɪəm/ *noun* the layer of epithelial cells forming part of the lining of the mucous membrane of the nose or the labyrinth of the middle ear

neurofibril /,njuərəʊ'faɪbrɪl/ *noun* a fine thread in the cytoplasm of a neurone

neurofibrilla /,njuərəʊ'fɪbrɪlə/ *noun* same as **neurofibril**. see illustration at **NEURONE** in Supplement (NOTE: The plural is **neurofibrillae**.)

neurofibroma /,njuərəʊfai'b्रəʊmə/ *noun* a benign tumour of a nerve, formed from the neurilemma (NOTE: The plural is **neurofibromas** or **neurofibromata**.)

neurofibromatosis /,njuərəʊ,faibrəʊmə'təsɪs/ *noun* a hereditary condition in which a person has neurofibromata on the nerve trunks, limb plexuses or spinal roots, and pale brown spots appear on the skin. Abbr **NF**. Also called **molluscum fibrosum**, **von Recklinghausen's disease**

neurogenesis /,njuərəʊ'dʒenəsɪs/ *noun* the development and growth of nerves and nervous tissue

neurogenic /,njuərəʊ'dʒenɪk/ *adjective* 1. coming from the nervous system 2. referring to neurogenesis

neurogenic bladder /,njuərəʊdʒenɪk 'bla:də/ *noun* a disturbance of the bladder function caused by lesions in the nerve supply to the bladder

neurogenic shock /,njuərəʊ,dʒenɪk 'ʃɒk/ *noun* a state of shock caused by bad news or an unpleasant surprise

neuroglandular junction /,njuərəʊ,gla:ndjʊlər 'dʒʌŋkʃən/ *noun* the point where a nerve joins the gland which it controls

neuroglia /nju'rɒgliə/ *noun* same as **glia**

neurohormone /,njuərəʊ'hɔ:məʊn/ *noun* a hormone produced in some nerve cells and secreted from the nerve endings

neurohypophysis /,njuərəʊ'ha:t'pɒfəsɪs/ *noun* the lobe at the back of the pituitary gland, which secretes oxytocin and vasopressin (NOTE: The plural is **neurohypophyses**.)

neurolemma /,njuərəʊ'lɪmə/ *noun* same as **neurilemma**

neuroleptic /,njuərəʊ'leptɪk/ *noun* an anti-psychotic drug which calms a person and stops him or her from worrying, e.g. chlorpromazine hydrochloride

neurological /,njuərəl'ɒdʒɪk(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to neurology

neurological assessment /,njuərəlɒndʒɪk(ə)l ə'sesmənt/ *noun* an evaluation of the health of a person with a disorder of the nervous system, using interviews, a

physical examination, and specific diagnostic tests, sometimes with the help of a family member or close friend

neurologist /nju'rpładʒɪst/ *noun* a doctor who specialises in the study of the nervous system and the treatment of its diseases

neurology /nju'rplədʒi/ *noun* the scientific study of the nervous system and its diseases

neuroma /nju'rəʊmə/ *noun* a benign tumour formed of nerve cells and nerve fibres (NOTE: The plural is **neuromas** or **neuromata**.)

neuromuscular /,njuərəʊ'maskjʊlə/ *adjective* referring to both nerves and muscles

neuromuscular junction /,njuərəʊmaskjʊlə 'dʒʌŋkʃən/ *noun* the point where a motor nerve joins muscle fibre. Also called **myoneural junction**

neuromyelitis optica /,njuərəʊmaɪəlaitɪs 'ɒptɪkə/ *noun* a condition, similar to multiple sclerosis, in which a person has acute myelitis and the optic nerve is also affected. Also called **Devic's disease**

neuron /'njuərəʊn/, **neurone** /'njuərən/ *noun* a cell in the nervous system which transmits nerve impulses. Also called **nerve cell**

neuropathic bladder /,njuərəʊpæθɪk 'blædə/ *noun* a condition in which the bladder does not function properly because its nerve supply is damaged, e.g. due to an injury to the spinal cord

neuropathology /,njuərəʊpə'θɒlədʒi/ *noun* the study of diseases of the nervous system

neuropathy /njuə'trɒpəθi/ *noun* a disease involving destruction of the tissues of the nervous system (NOTE: The plural is **neuropathies**.)

neurophysiology /,njuərəʊfɪzi'ɒlədʒi/ *noun* the study of the physiology of nerves

neuroplasty /'njuərəʊplæsti/ *noun* surgery to repair damaged nerves

neuropsychiatric /,njuərəʊsaɪki'ætrɪk/ *adjective* referring to neuropsychiatry

neuropsychiatrist /,njuərəʊsaɪ'kaɪətrɪst/ *noun* a doctor who specialises in the study and treatment of mental and nervous disorders

neuropsychiatry /,njuərəʊsaɪ'karətrɪ/ *noun* the study of mental and nervous disorders

neurorrhaphy /nju'rɔ:rəfɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to join by suture a nerve which has been cut (NOTE: The plural is **neurorrhaphies**.)

neurosarcoma /,njuərəʊsaɪ'kəʊmə/ *noun* a malignant neuroma (NOTE: The plural is **neurosarcomas** or **neurosarcomata**.)

neurosecretion /,njuərəʊsɪ'skrɪ:ʃ(ə)n/ *noun* 1. a substance secreted by a nerve cell 2. the process of secretion of an active substance by nerve cells

neurosis /nju'reʊsɪs/ *noun* a disorder of the personality in which a person experiences obsessive negative emotions towards someone or

something, e.g. fear of empty spaces or jealousy of a sibling. ◊ **psychoneurosis** (NOTE: The plural is **neuroses**.)

neurosurgeon /'njuərəʊn,sɜ:dʒən/ *noun* a surgeon who operates on the nervous system, including the brain and spinal cord

neurosurgery /'njuərəʊn,sɜ:dʒəri/ *noun* surgery on the nervous system, including the brain and spinal cord

neurosyphilis /,njuərəʊ'nɪsfɪlɪs/ *noun* syphilis which attacks the nervous system

neurotic /nju'rɒtɪk/ *adjective* relating to or having neurosis ■ *noun* a person who is worried about or obsessed with something (*informal*)

neurotically /nju'rɒtɪkli/ *adverb* in a neurotic way ○ *She is neurotically obsessed with keeping herself clean.*

neurotmesis /,njuərɒt'mi:sɪs/ *noun* an act of cutting a nerve completely (NOTE: The plural is **neurotmeses**.)

neurotomy /nju'rɒtəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to cut a nerve (NOTE: The plural is **neurotomies**.)

neurotoxic /,njuərəʊ'tɒksɪk/ *adjective* harmful or poisonous to nerve cells

neurotransmitter /,njuərətrən'smɪtə/ *noun* a chemical substance which transmits nerve impulses from one neurone to another
COMMENT: The main neurotransmitters are the catecholamines (adrenaline, noradrenaline and 5-hydroxytryptamine) and acetylcholine. Other neurotransmitters such as gamma aminobutyric acid, glutamine and substance P are less common.

neurotripsy /'njuərəʊtrɪpsi/ *noun* surgical bruising or crushing of a nerve

neurotrophic /,njuərəʊ't्रəfɪk/ *adjective* relating to the nutrition and maintenance of tissue of the nervous system

neotropic /,njuərəʊ'trɒpɪk/ *adjective* referring to a bacterium which is attracted to and attacks nerves

neuter /'nju:tə/ *adjective* neither male nor female

neutral /'nju:tərl/ *adjective* neither acid nor alkali ○ *A pH factor of 7 is neutral.*

neutralise /'nju:t'rəlaɪz/, **neutralize** *verb* 1. to counteract the effect of something ○ *Alkali poisoning can be neutralised by applying acid solution.* (NOTE: **neutralising** – **neutralised**) 2. to form a salt from an acid

neutropenia /,nju:t'rə'pi:nɪə/ *noun* a condition in which there are fewer neutrophils than usual in the blood

neutrophil /'nju:t'rəfɪl/ *noun* a type of white blood cell with an irregular nucleus, which can attack and destroy bacteria. Also called **polymorph**

newborn /'nju:bɔ:n/ *adjective* born recently. ◊ **neonatal** ■ *noun* a recently born baby. ◊ **neonate**

newton /'nu:jt(ə)n/ *noun* an SI unit of measurement of force. Symbol **N**

COMMENT: One newton is the force required to move one kilogram at the speed of one metre per second

new variant CJD /'nu:n ,veəriənt ,si:dʒeɪd/ *noun* ♦ **variant CJD**

next-day pill /'nekst deɪ 'pil/ *noun* same as **morning-after pill**

next of kin /'nekst əv 'kɪn/ *noun* the person or persons who are most closely related to someone ○ *The hospital has notified the next of kin of the death of the accident victim.* (NOTE: Takes a singular or plural verb.)

nexus /'nek'səs/ *noun* 1. a link (NOTE: The plural is **nexus** or **nexus-es**.) 2. a point where two organs or tissues join

NF *abbr* neurofibromatosis

NHS *abbr* National Health Service

NHS Direct /'en eɪtʃ es drɪkt/ *noun* in the UK, a national telephone helpline run by nurses to provide information about health and health services for the public

niacin /'naɪəsɪn/ *noun* a vitamin of the vitamin B complex found in milk, meat, liver, kidney, yeast, beans, peas and bread, lack of which can cause mental disorders and pellagra. Also called **nicotinic acid**

nicardipine /'nɪ:kɑ:dɪpi:n/ *noun* a drug which slows down the movement of calcium ions into smooth muscle cells, used especially to treat angina

NICE /naɪs/ *abbr* National Institute for Clinical Excellence

nick /nɪk/ *noun* a little cut ○ *She had a nick in her ear lobe which bled.* ■ *verb* to make a little cut in something ○ *He nicked his chin while shaving.*

niclosamide /'nɪkləʊsəmaɪd/ *noun* a drug used for removing tapeworms

nicotine /'nɪkəti:n/ *noun* the main alkaloid substance found in tobacco

nicotine addiction /'nɪkəti:n ə,dɪkʃən/ *noun* an addiction to nicotine, derived from smoking tobacco

nicotine patch /'nɪkəti:n pætʃ/ *noun* a patch containing nicotine which is released slowly into the bloodstream, applied to the skin as a method of curing nicotine addiction

nicotine poisoning /'nɪkəti:n ,poɪz(ə)nɪŋ/ *noun* poisoning of the autonomic nervous system with large quantities of nicotine. Also called **nicotinism**

nicotine receptor /'nɪkəti:n rɪ,septə/ *noun* a cholinergic receptor found at the neuromuscular junction on skeletal muscle and in the autonomic ganglia, which responds to nicotine and nicotine-like drugs. Also called **nicotinic receptor**

nicotine replacement /'nɪkəti:n rɪ,pleɪsmənt/ *noun* the use of nicotine patches

or other products to help during an attempt to give up smoking

nicotinic acid /,nɪkətɪnik 'æsɪd/ same as **ni-acin**

nicotinic receptor /nɪkə,tɪnɪk rɪ'septə/ *noun* same as **nicotine receptor**

nicotinism /'nɪkəti:nɪz(ə)m/ *noun* same as **nicotine poisoning**

nictation /'nɪk'teɪʃ(ə)n/, **nictitation** /'nɪktɪ:t'eɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the act of winking

nidation /'nɪd'eɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* 1. the process of building the endometrial layers of the uterus between menstrual periods 2. the point in the development of an embryo at which the fertilised ovum reaches the uterus and implants in the wall of the uterus. Also called **implantation**

nidus /'naɪdəs/ *noun* a site where bacteria can settle and breed, which becomes a centre of infection (NOTE: The plural is **niduses** or **nidi**)

Niemann-Pick disease /,ni:mən 'pɪk di,zɪ:z/ *noun* a rare inherited disease of a group which affect metabolism. Signs in babies include feeding difficulties, a large abdomen within 3 to 6 months, and progressive loss of early motor skills.

nifedipine /'nɪ:fɪdɪpi:n/ *noun* a drug which stops the heart muscles from taking up calcium, used in the treatment of high blood pressure and angina pectoris

night duty /'nait ,djʊ:tɪ/ *noun* the situation of working at night ○ *Nurse Smith is on night duty this week.*

Nightingale ward *noun* an old-fashioned type of long ward with a row of beds along each wall and a centrally placed point for the nurse in charge to work from

nightmare /'naitmeə/ *noun* a dream which frightens the dreamer ○ *The child had a nightmare and woke up screaming.*

night nurse /'nait nɜ:s/ *noun* a nurse who is on duty at night

night sweat /'nait swet/ *noun* heavy sweating when a person is asleep at night

night terror /'nait 'terə/ *noun* a period of disturbed sleep, which a child does not remember afterwards

nigra /'naɪgrə/ ♦ **linea nigra**

nihilism /'naihɪlɪz(ə)m/ *noun* the rejection of all the usual social conventions and beliefs, especially of morality and religion

nihilistic /,naihɪ'lɪstɪk/ *adjective* relating to or showing a belief in nihilism

ninety-nine,na:n̩ti 'na:n̩/ *number* a number which a doctor asks a person to say so that he or she can inspect the back of the throat ○ *The doctor told him to open his mouth wide and say ninety-nine.*

nipple /'nip(ə)l/ *noun* 1. same as **mammilla** 2. *US* a rubber teat on a baby's feeding bottle

Nissl granule /'nɪsl(ə)l ,grænju:l/, **Nissl body** /'nɪsl(ə)l, bɒdi/ *noun* one of the coarse granules surrounding the nucleus in the cytoplasm of nerve cells. See illustration at NEURONE in Supplement [Described 1894. After Franz Nissl (1860–1919), German psychiatrist.]

nit /nɪt/ *noun* an egg or larva of a louse
nitrate /naɪtrɛt/ *noun* 1. a salt or an ester of nitric acid 2. a drug such as glyceryl trinitrate which dilates the vessels leading to the heart muscle and lowers cardiac work by reducing venous return to the heart, for rapid relief of angina and in heart failure (NOTE: Patients can develop tolerance to these drugs.)

-nitrate /naɪtrɛt/ *suffix* used in names of nitrate drugs

nitrazepam /nai'træzɪpaem/ *noun* a tranquilliser used in some sleeping pills

nitrofurantoin /naitrəʊfju'ræntəʊin/ *noun* a drug which helps to prevent the growth of bacteria, used in the treatment of urinary infections

nitrogen /'naɪtrədʒən/ *noun* a chemical element, which is a gas that is the main component of air and is an essential part of protein (NOTE: The chemical symbol is N.)

COMMENT: Nitrogen is taken into the body by digesting protein-rich foods; excess nitrogen is excreted in urine. When the intake of nitrogen and the excretion rate are equal, the body is in nitrogen balance or protein balance.

nitrogen narcosis /,naɪtrədʒ(ə)n nə:sɪs/ *noun* loss of consciousness due to the formation of nitrogen in the tissues, caused by pressure change

nitroglycerin /,naɪtrəʊ'glɪsərin/ *noun* a drug which helps the veins and coronary arteries to become wider

nitrous oxide /,naɪtrəs 'oksaɪd/ *noun* a colourless gas with a sweet smell, used in combination with other gases as an anaesthetic in dentistry and surgery. Also called **laughing gas**

nm abbr nanometre

NMC abbr Nursing and Midwifery Council

nmol abbr nanomole

NMR abbr nuclear magnetic resonance

Nocardia /nə'ɔ:kə:diə/ *noun* a genus of bacteria found in soil, some species of which cause nocardiosis and maduramycosis

nocardiosis /nəʊ,kɔ:dɪ'əʊsɪs/, **nocardiasis** /,nəʊkɔ:kə:'dæriəsɪs/ *noun* a lung infection which may metastasise to other tissue, caused by *Nocardia*

noci- /nəʊsɪ/ *prefix* pain or injury

nociassociation /,nəʊsɪə,səʊsɪ'eɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* an unconscious release of nervous energy, e.g. as a result of shock

nociceptive /,nəʊsɪ'septɪv/ *adjective* referring to nerves which carry pain to the brain

nociceptor /'nəʊsɪ,septə/ *noun* a sensory nerve which carries pain to the brain

noct- /nɒkt/ *prefix* night

noctambulation /,nɒktə'mæbjuleɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* same as **somnambulism**

nocte /'nɒktɪ/ *adverb* at night. Opposite **mane** (NOTE: used on prescriptions)

nocturia /nɒk'tjuəriə/ *noun* the fact of passing an unusually large quantity of urine during the night

nocturnal /nɒk'tɜ:n(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to or taking place at night

nocturnal emission /nɒk,tɜ:n(ə)l ɪ'miʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the production of semen from the penis while a man is asleep

nocturnal enuresis /nɒk,tɜ:n(ə)l enju'ri:sɪs/ *noun* the act of passing urine when asleep in bed at night. Also called **bedwetting**

nodal /'nəʊd(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to nodes

nodal tachycardia /,nəʊd(ə)l tæki'ka:diə/ *noun* a sudden attack of rapid heartbeats. Also called **paroxysmal tachycardia**

node /nəʊd/ *noun* 1. a small mass of tissue 2. a group of nerve cells

node of Ranvier /,nəʊd əv 'rænvɪə/ *noun* one of a series of gaps in the myelin sheath surrounding a nerve fibre. See illustration at NEURONE in Supplement

nod off *verb* to fall asleep (*informal*)

nodosum /nəʊ'deʊsəm/ ♀ **erythema nodosum**

nodular /'nɒdʒʊlə/ *adjective* formed of nodules

nodule /'nɒdju:l/ *noun* 1. a small node or group of cells. ♀ **Bohn's nodules** 2. the anterior or part of the inferior vermis

noma /'nəʊmə/ *noun* same as **cancrum oris**

nomen proprium /,nəʊmən 'prəʊpriəm/ *noun* full form of **n.p.**

non- /nɒn/ *prefix* not

non-A, non-B hepatitis *noun* now called **hepatitis C**

non-absorbable suture /,nɒn əb,zɔ:bəb(ə)l 'su:tʃə/ *noun* a suture made of a substance which cannot be absorbed into the body and which eventually has to be removed

non-accidental injury /,nɒn əkṣɪ,dent(ə)l 'ɪndʒəri/ *noun* an injury which is not caused accidentally

non-allergenic /,nɒn ælə'dʒenɪk/ *adjective* not aggravating an allergy

non-cancerous /,nɒn 'kænsərəs/ *adjective* not malignant

non-clinical /,nɒn 'klinik(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to the wider non-medical aspects of patient care ○ *non-clinical services such as administration and catering* ○ *non-clinical guidelines including confidentiality protocols*

non-compliance /,nɒn kəm'plaɪəns/ *noun* the failure to take drugs at the correct times and in the dosages prescribed, or to take them at all

non compos mentis /,nɒn ,kɒmpəs 'mentɪs/ *adjective* referring to a person who is mentally incapable of managing his or her own affairs (NOTE: From a Latin phrase meaning 'not of sound mind'.)

non-contagious /,nɒn kə'nteɪdʒəs/ *adjective* not contagious

non-drowsy /,nɒn 'draʊzɪ/ *adjective* not causing drowsiness

non-emergency surgery /,nɒn ɪ ,mɜːdʒənsɪ 'sɜːdʒərɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation which does not need to be performed immediately because it is for a condition which is not life-threatening, e.g. joint replacement. Also called **non-urgent surgery**

non-granular leucocyte /,nɒn ,graɪnjuːlə 'lu:kəʊsait/ *noun* a leucocyte which has no granules, e.g. a lymphocyte or monocyte

non-Hodgkins lymphoma /,nɒn ,hɒdʒkɪnz lɪm'fəʊmə/ *noun* a cancer of the lymph nodes which differs from Hodgkin's disease by the absence of a particular type of cell with double nuclei

non-insulin-dependent diabetes /,nɒn ,ɪn'sjʊlɪn dɪ,pendənt ,daɪ'a:bɪ:tɪ:z/ *noun* same as **Type II diabetes mellitus**

non-invasive /,nɒn in'veɪzɪv/ *adjective* referring to treatment which does not involve entering the body by making an incision

non-maleficence /,nɒn mæ'lefɪs(ə)ns/ *noun* the concept that professionals in the health service have a duty to protect the patient from harm (NOTE: Under this principle, professionals' obligations include keeping their knowledge and skills current, realising their own limitations and knowing when to refer a case to a specialist or other professional.)

non-malignant /,nɒn mæ'lɪgnənt/ *adjective* not cancerous, or not life-threatening ○ a *non-malignant growth*

non-medical /,nɒn 'medɪk(ə)l/ *adjective* 1. not relating to medicine ○ **non-medical genetics** 2. not according to medical practice, or not as directed by a doctor ○ **non-medical use of stimulant drugs** 3. not used in specialised medical speech ○ 'Nervous breakdown' is a *non-medical term for a type of sudden mental illness.*

non-nucleated /,nɒn 'nju:kliɪtɪd/ *adjective* referring to a cell with no nucleus

non-official drug /,nɒn ə,fɪʃ(ə)l 'drʌg/ *noun* a drug that is not listed in the national pharmacopoeia

non-palpable /,nɒn 'pælpəb(ə)l/ *adjective* not able to be felt when touched

non-paralytic poliomyelitis /,nɒn ,pærəlɪtɪk ,pələi'meɪtɪs/ *noun* a form of poliomyelitis similar to abortive poliomyelitis but which also affects the muscles to some degree

non-secretor /,nɒn sɪ'krɪ:tə/ *noun* a person who does not secrete substances indicating

ABO blood group into mucous fluids such as semen or saliva

non-smoker /,nɒn 'sməʊkə/ *noun* a person who does not smoke

non-specific /,nɒn spə'sifɪk/ *adjective* not caused by any single identifiable cause

non-specific urethritis /,nɒn spə,sifɪk ,juə'rɪtɪs/ *noun* any sexually transmitted inflammation of the urethra not caused by gonorrhoea (*dated*) Abbr **NSU**

non-sterile /,nɒn 'stɪrəl/ *adjective* not sterile or sterilised

non-steroidal /,nɒn ste'reɪd(ə)l/ *adjective* not containing steroids

non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug /,nɒnste'reɪd(ə)l ,ænti in'flæmət(ə)rɪ dræg/ *noun* a drug used in the treatment of pain associated with inflammation, including rheumatic disease, post-operative analgesia and dysmenorrhoea, by inhibiting the release of prostaglandins. Abbr **NSAID** (NOTE: Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs have names ending in **-fen**: **ibuprofen**.)

COMMENT: Serious gastro-intestinal side effects can occur, especially in the elderly. Asthma can worsen.

non-union /,nɒn 'ju:njən/ *noun* a condition in which the two parts of a fractured bone do not join together and do not heal

non-urgent surgery /,nɒn ,ɜːdʒənt 'sɜːdʒərɪ/ same as **non-emergency surgery**

noradrenaline /,nɔːrə'drenəlɪn/ *noun* a hormone secreted by the medulla of the adrenal glands which acts as a vasoconstrictor and is used to maintain blood pressure in shock, haemorrhage or hypotension (NOTE: The US term is **norepinephrine**.)

norma /'nɔːmə/ *noun* a view of the skull as seen from a particular angle (NOTE: The plural is **normae**.)

normal /'nɔːm(ə)l/ *adjective* usual, ordinary or conforming to a standard ○ *After he took the tablets, his blood pressure went back to normal.* ○ *Her temperature is two degrees above normal.* ○ *He had an above-normal pulse rate.* ○ *Is it normal for a person with myopia to suffer from headaches?*

normally /'nɔːm(ə)li/ *adverb* in an ordinary way, on most occasions or in most circumstances ○ *The patients are normally worried before the operation.* ○ *He was breathing normally.*

normo- /nɔːməʊ/ *prefix* normal, usual or expected

normoblast /'nɔːməʊblæst/ *noun* an early form of a red blood cell, usually found only in bone marrow but occurring in the blood in some types of leukaemia and anaemia

normocyte /'nɔːməʊsait/ *noun* a red blood cell

normocytic /,nɔːməʊ'saɪtɪk/ *adjective* referring to a normocyte

normocytosis /nɔ:məʊsɪs/ *noun* the condition of having the standard number of red blood cells in the peripheral blood

normotension /nɔ:məʊ'tenʃən/ *noun* blood pressure at the usual level

normotensive /nɔ:məʊ'tensɪv/ *adjective* referring to blood pressure at the usual level

Norton score /nɔ:t(ə)n skɔ:/ *noun* a scale for deciding how likely it is that pressure sores will develop, used mostly in assessing elderly patients

nortriptyline /nɔ:'triptəlɪn/ *noun* a drug used to reduce pain and as an antidepressant and tranquilliser

nose /nəʊz/ *noun* an organ through which a person breathes and smells □ **her nose is running** liquid mucus is dripping from her nose □ **he blew his nose** he blew air through his nose into a handkerchief to get rid of mucus in his nose □ **to speak through your nose** to speak as if your nose is blocked, so that you say 'b' instead of 'm' and 'd' instead of 'n'

COMMENT: The nose is formed of cartilage and small bones making the bridge at the top. It leads into two passages, the nostrils, which in turn lead to the nasal cavity, divided in two by the septum. The nasal passages connect with the sinuses, with the ears through the Eustachian tubes, and with the pharynx. The receptors which detect smell are in the top of the nasal passage.

nosebleed /nəʊzbli:d/ *noun* an incident of bleeding from the nose, usually caused by a blow or by sneezing, by blowing the nose hard or by high blood pressure (*informal*) □ *She had a headache, followed by a violent nosebleed.* Also called **epistaxis**

noso- /nɒsəʊ/ *prefix* disease

nosocomial /nɒsəʊ'lə'keʊmɪəl/ *adjective* referring to hospitals

nosocomial infection /nɒsəʊ'lə'keʊmɪəl ɪn'fekʃən/ *noun* an infection which is passed on to a person being treated in a hospital

nosology /nɒ'sɒlədʒi/ *noun* the classification of diseases

nostril /'nɒstrɪl/ *noun* one of the two passages in the nose through which air is breathed in or out □ *His right nostril is blocked.* (NOTE: The nostrils are also referred to as the **nares**.)

notch /nɒtʃ/ *noun* a depression on a surface, usually on a bone, but sometimes on an organ.

◊ **cardiac notch, occipital notch**

notice /'nəʊtɪs/ *noun* 1. a piece of writing giving information, usually put in a place where everyone can see it 2. a warning □ *They had to leave with ten minutes' notice.* 3. attention □ **to take notice (of something or someone)** to give attention (to something or someone) □ *We need to take notice of this feedback.*

■ **verb** to see or be aware of something □ *No-body noticed that she was sweating.* □ *Did you notice the development of any new symptoms?*

(NOTE: **noticing – noticed**)

noticeable /'nəʊtɪsəb(ə)l/ *adjective* able to be noticed □ *The disease has no easily noticeable symptoms.*

noticeboard /'nəʊtɪsbɔ:d/ *noun* a flat piece of wood, or board fixed on a wall, on which notices can be pinned

notifiable disease /'nəʊtfɪərəb(ə)l dɪ'zi:z/ *noun* a serious infectious disease which, in the UK, has to be reported by a doctor to the Department of Health so that steps can be taken to stop it spreading

COMMENT: The following are notifiable diseases: cholera, diphtheria, dysentery, encephalitis, food poisoning, jaundice, malaria, measles, meningitis, ophthalmia neonatorum, paratyphoid, plague, poliomyelitis, relapsing fever, scarlet fever, smallpox, tuberculosis, typhoid, typhus, whooping cough and yellow fever.

notify /'nəʊtfɪə/ *verb* to inform a person or authority officially □ *The local doctor notified the Health Service of the case of cholera.* (NOTE: **notifies – notifying – notified.** You notify a person of something.)

nourish /'nɔ:rɪʃ/ *verb* to give food or nutrients to a person

nourishment /'nɔ:rɪʃmənt/ *noun* 1. the act of supplying nutrients to a person 2. food and the nutrients in it, e.g. proteins, fats or vitamins

noxious /'nɒkʃəs/ *adjective* harmful □ *a noxious gas*

n.p. *noun* the name of the drug written on the label of its container. Full form **nomen proprium**

NPO *abbreviation* used to refer to patients being kept without food □ *The patient should be kept NPO for five hours before the operation.* Full form **ne per os**

NSAID *abbr* non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug

NSU *abbr* non-specific urethritis

nucha /'nju:kə/ *noun* same as **nape** (NOTE: The plural is **nuchae**.)

nuchal /'nju:k(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to the back of the neck

nucle- /'nju:kli/ *prefix* same as **nucleo-** (used before vowels)

nuclear /'nju:kliə/ *adjective* referring to nuclei, e.g. of a cell or an atom

nuclear magnetic resonance /,nju:kliə'mæg.nɛtɪk'rezənəns/ *noun* a scanning technique using magnetic fields and radio waves which reveals abnormalities in soft tissue and body fluids. ◊ **magnetic resonance imaging.**

Abbr **NMR**

nuclear medicine /,nju:kliə'med(ə)s(ə)n/ *noun* the use of radioactive substances for detecting and treating disorders

nuclease /'nju:kliəs/ *noun* an enzyme which breaks down nucleic acids

nucleic acid /nju:kli:k 'æsɪd/ *noun* an organic acid of a type found in all living cells,

which consists of complex nucleotide chains which pass on genetic information, e.g. DNA or RNA

nucleo- /nju:kliəʊ/ *prefix* referring to a cell or atomic nucleus

nucleolus /nju'kli:ələs/ *noun* a structure inside a cell nucleus, containing RNA (NOTE: The plural is **nucleoli**.)

nucleoprotein /,nju:kliəʊ'prəuti:n/ *noun* a compound of protein and nucleic acid, e.g. a chromosome or ribosome

nucleus /'nju:kliəs/ *noun* 1. a central part which has others grouped or built around it 2. the central body in a cell, which contains DNA and RNA and controls the function and characteristics of the cell. See illustration at **NEURONE** in Supplement 3. 3. a group of nerve cells in the brain or spinal cord (NOTE: The plural is **nuclei**.)

nucleus pulposus /,nju:kliəs pol'pəʊsəs/ *noun* a soft central part of an intervertebral disc which disappears in old age (NOTE: The plural is **nuclei pulposi**)

nullipara /nʌ'lɪpərə/ *noun* a woman who has never had a child (NOTE: The plural is **nulliparas** or **nulliparae**.) ■ *adjective* referring to a woman who has never had a child

numb /nʌm/ *adjective* 1. referring to a part of the body which has no feeling 2. unable to feel emotion

numbness /'nʌmənəs/ *noun* a loss of feeling

nurse /nɜ:s/ *noun* a person who looks after sick people in a hospital or helps a doctor in a local surgery. Some nurses may be trained to diagnose and treat patients. ○ *She works as a nurse in the local hospital.* ○ *He's training to be a nurse.* ♀ **nurse practitioner** ■ *verb* 1. to look after a sick person, or to be employed as a nurse ○ *When he was ill his mother nursed him until he was better.* 2. to behave so as not to aggravate a condition ○ *nursing a sprained ankle* (NOTE: **nurses** – **nursing** – **nursed**)

nurse executive director /nɜ:s ɪg'zekjutɪv da'rektə/ *noun* in the UK, a senior nurse who sits on the Board of an NHS Trust and has corporate as well as professional responsibilities in the organisation for nursing and sometimes other aspects such as quality or human resources

nurse manager /,nɜ:s 'mænidʒə/ *noun* a nurse who has administrative duties in a hospital or a health service

nurse practitioner /,nɜ:s præk'tɪʃ(ə)nə/ *noun* a nurse with additional clinical training at degree level who often works independently, assessing, diagnosing and treating patients, particularly in primary care

nurse station /'nɜ:s ,steɪʃ(ə)n/, **nurses' station** /'nɜ:sɪz ,steɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* an area in or near a ward from which nurses work, keep records and control the activities of the ward

nurse tutor /,nɜ:s 'tjur:tə/ *noun* an experienced nurse who teaches student nurses

nursing /'nɜ:sɪŋ/ *noun* 1. the work or profession of being a nurse ○ *He has chosen nursing as his career.* 2. care for sick people provided by a nurse ■ *adjective* providing care as a nurse

'...few would now dispute the need for clear, concise nursing plans to guide nursing practice, provide educational tools and give an accurate legal record' [Nursing Times]

'...all relevant sections of the nurses' care plan and nursing process records had been left blank' [Nursing Times]

Nursing and Midwifery Council /,nɜ:sɪŋ ən ,mɪd'wɪfəri ,kaʊnsəl/ *noun* in the UK, an organisation that sets standards for the education, practice and conduct of nurses, midwives and health visitors. Abbr **NMC**

nursing audit /'nɜ:sɪŋ ,ɔ:dit/ *noun* a formal detailed review of records or observation of nursing actions so that judgments can be made about the quality of nursing care being given (NOTE: The documented evidence is compared with accepted standards and criteria.)

nursing development unit /,nɜ:sɪŋ dɪ'velp'mənt/ *noun* a nurse-led ward or unit that sets out to demonstrate by example innovative high-quality care, to reflect on practice and draw lessons from this experience, and to provide learning opportunities for other nurses. Abbr **NDU**

nursing home /'nɜ:sɪŋ həʊm/ *noun* a house where convalescents or dependent elderly people can live under medical supervision by a qualified nurse

nursing intervention /,nɜ:sɪŋ intə'venʃən/ *noun* the treatment of illness by nursing care, without surgery

nursing model /'nɜ:sɪŋ ,mɒd(ə)l/ *noun* a set of stated principles about nursing which gives professionals a way of formulating a plan of care, assessing its success and addressing any problems which arise from it

nursing mother /,nɜ:sɪŋ 'mʌðə/ *noun* a mother who breast-feeds her baby

Nursing Officer /'nɜ:sɪŋ ,ɒfɪsə/ *noun* in the UK, a nurse employed by the Department of Health to assist the Chief Nursing Officer in providing professional advice to Ministers and policy-makers

nursing practice /'nɜ:sɪŋ ,præk'tɪs/ *noun* treatment given by nurses

nursing process /,nɜ:sɪŋ 'prəʊses/ *noun* a standard method of treatment and documentation of treatment carried out by nurses

nursing sister /,nɜ:sɪŋ 'sistə/ *noun* a hospital sister who has administrative duties

nursing standard /'nɜ:sɪŋ ,stændəd/ *noun* an accepted level of achievement by which nursing care can be assessed or compared

nurture /'nɜ:tʃə/ *noun* care given to a child while it is developing ■ *verb* to bring up and care for children (NOTE: **nurturing – nurtured**)

nutans /'nu:t(ə)ns/ ♀ **spasmus nutans**

nutation /'nu:t'eɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* involuntary nodding of the head

nutrient /'nju:trɪənt/ *noun* a substance in food which is necessary to provide energy or to help the body grow, e.g. protein, fat or a vitamin

nutrition /'nju:'trɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* 1. the study of the supply of nutrients to the body from digesting food 2. nourishment or food

nutritional /'nju:'trɪʃ(ə)n(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to nutrition

nutritional anaemia /'nju:,trɪʃ(ə)n(ə)l ə'nɪ:mɪə/ *noun* anaemia caused by an imbalance in the diet

nutritional disorder /'nju:'trɪʃ(ə)n(ə)l dɪs'ɔ:də/ *noun* a disorder related to food and nutrients, e.g. obesity

nutritionist /'nju:'trɪʃ(ə)nɪst/ *noun* a person who specialises in the study of nutrition and advises on diets. ♀ **dietitian**

nyct- /nɪkt/ *prefix* night or darkness

nyctalopia /nɪk'te'ləʊpiə/ *noun* the condition of being unable to see in bad light. Also called **night blindness**

nyctophobia /nɪk'te'fəʊbiə/ *noun* fear of the dark

nymphae /'nɪmfɪ:/ *plural noun* same as **labia minora**

nympho- /'nɪmfəʊ/ *prefix* 1. female sexuality 2. nymphae

nymphomania /'nɪmfə'meɪniə/ *noun* an obsessive sexual urge in a woman (NOTE: A similar condition in a man is called **satyriasis**.)

nymphomaniac /'nɪmfə'meɪniæk/ *noun* a woman who has an unusually obsessive sexual urge (NOTE: This term is regarded as offensive.)

nystagmus /nɪ'steɪgməs/ *noun* a rapid, involuntary movement of the eyes up and down or from side to side

COMMENT: Nystagmus can be horizontal, vertical, torsional or rotary; it can be congenital, but is also a symptom of multiple sclerosis and Ménieré's disease.

nystatin /naɪ'stætɪn/ *noun* an anti-microbial drug used in the treatment of fungal infections, especially thrush

O

oat cell carcinoma /'əʊt sel kɔ:sɪ,nəʊmə/ *noun* a type of cancer of the bronchi, with distinctive small cells

OB *abbr* obstetrics

obese /'əʊ'bɪ:s/ *adjective* so overweight as to be at risk of several serious illnesses, including diabetes and heart disease

obesity /'əʊ'bɪ:sɪti/ *noun* the condition of being seriously overweight

COMMENT: Obesity is caused by excess fat accumulating under the skin and around organs in the body. It is sometimes due to glandular disorders, but it is usually caused by eating or drinking too much. A tendency to obesity can be hereditary.

obey /'ə'beɪ/ *verb* to do what a person, authority or rule says you should do ○ *You ought to obey the doctor's instructions and go to bed.*

objective /'əb'dʒektɪv/ *noun* an aim or goal
■ *adjective* 1. existing independently of any individual person's mind 2. not influenced by any bias or prejudice caused by personal feelings 3. referring to symptoms of illness which can be observed by somebody other than the person who is ill. Compare **subjective**

oblige /'əblɪ:geɪt/ *adjective* referring to an organism which exists and develops in only one way, e.g. a virus which is a parasite only inside cells

oblique /'ə'blɪ:k/ *adjective* lying at an angle ■ *noun* also called **oblique muscle**

...there are four recti muscles and two oblique muscles in each eye, which coordinate the movement of the eyes and enable them to work as a pair' [Nursing Times]

oblique fissure /'ə,blɪ:k 'fɪʃə/ *noun* a groove between the superior and inferior lobes of a lung. See illustration at **LUNGS** in Supplement

oblique fracture /'ə,blɪ:k 'fræktʃə/ *noun* a fracture in which the bone is broken diagonally

oblique muscle /'ə,blɪ:k 'mʌs(ə)l/ *noun* 1. each of two muscles in the wall of the abdomen 2. each of two muscles which control the movement of the eyeball

obliterate /'əblɪ:təreɪt/ *verb* 1. to destroy something completely 2. to block a cavity completely (NOTE: **obliterating – obliterated**)

obliteration /ə,blɪ:tə'reɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* 1. the complete destruction of something 2. the complete blocking of something such as a cavity

oblongata /'ə,blɒŋgə'teɪʃ(ə)n/ ♫ **medulla oblongata**

observable /'əb'zɜ:vəb(ə)l/ *noun* which can be seen or measured

observation /'ə,bɜ:veɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the process of watching and examining a person or thing over a period of time ○ *She was admitted to hospital for observation.*

observation register /'ə,bɜ:veɪʃ(ə)n,redʒɪstə/ *noun* a record of children who have had problems at birth, or soon after their birth, and so need particular follow-up care from a health visitor, general practitioner or social worker

observe /'əb'zɜ:v/ *verb* 1. to see something ○ *The nurses observed signs of improvement in the patient's condition.* ○ *The girl's mother observed symptoms of anorexia.* 2. to watch a person or thing carefully in order to discover something ○ *Observe the way in which the patient is lying.* 3. to take something into account ○ *You're expected to observe the rules of conduct.*

obsessed /'əb'sest/ *adjective* having an obsession ○ *He is obsessed with the idea that someone is trying to kill him.*

obsession /'əb'seʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a mental disorder in which a person has a fixed idea or emotion which he or she cannot get rid of, even if he or she knows it is wrong or unpleasant ○ *She has an obsession about cats.*

obsessional /'əb'seʃ(ə)n(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to or having an obsession ○ *He is suffering from an obsessional disorder.*

obsessive /'əb'sesɪv/ *adjective* having or showing an obsession ○ *He has an obsessive desire to steal little objects.*

obsessive action /'əb,sesɪv 'ækʃən/ *noun* an action such as washing which is repeated over and over again and indicates a mental disorder

obsessive-compulsive disorder /'əb,sesɪv,kəm'pʌlʃɪv,dɪs,ɔ:də/ *noun* a mental disorder characterised by the need to perform re-

peated ritual acts such as checking or cleaning, which can be treated with psychotherapy and antidepressants. Abbr **OCD**

obstetric /'ɒb'stetrɪk(ə)l/, **obstetrical** /'əb'stetrɪkl/ *adjective* referring to obstetrics

obstetrical forceps /'əb'stetrɪkl 'fɔ:sɛps/ *plural noun* a type of large forceps used to hold a baby's head during childbirth

obstetrician /,ɒbstə'trɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a doctor who specialises in obstetrics

obstetric patient /'əb'stetrɪk ,peɪʃ(ə)nt/ *noun* a woman who is being treated by an obstetrician

obstetrics /'əb'stetrɪks/ *noun* a branch of medicine and surgery dealing with pregnancy, childbirth and the period immediately after childbirth. Abbr **OB**

obstipation /,ɒbstɪ'peɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* severe constipation, often caused by a blockage in the intestines

obstruct /'əb'strʌkt/ *verb* to block something
○ *The artery was obstructed by a blood clot.*

obstruction /'əb'strʌkʃən/ *noun* 1. something which blocks a passage or a blood vessel 2. the blocking of a passage or blood vessel

obstructive /'əb'strʌktɪv/ *adjective* caused by an obstruction

obstructive jaundice /'əb,strʌktɪv 'dʒaʊndɪs/ *noun* jaundice caused by an obstruction of the bile ducts. Also called **posthepatitic jaundice**. ◇ **acholuric jaundice, icterus gravis neonatorum**

obstructive lung disease /'əb,strʌktɪv 'lʌŋ dɪ,zi:z/ *noun* bronchitis and emphysema

obstructive sleep apnoea /'əb,strʌktɪv 'slɪ:p ,æpnɪə/ *noun* the stopping of breathing, or difficulty in breathing, during sleep, resulting in loud snoring

obtain /'əb'teɪn/ *verb* to get something
○ *Some amino acids are obtained from food.* ○ *Where did he obtain the drugs?*

obtrusive /'əb'tru:sɪv/ *adjective* 1. forcing your presence on others 2. referring to a scar which is very noticeable

obturation /,ɒbtju:'reɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the act of obstructing a body passage, or the state of a body passage when it is obstructed, e.g. by hard faeces

obturator /'ɒbtjʊreɪtə/ *noun* 1. one of two muscles in the pelvis which govern the movement of the hip and thigh 2. a device which closes an opening, e.g. a dental prosthesis which covers a cleft palate 3. a metal bulb which fits into a bronchoscope or sigmoidoscope

obturator foramen /,ɒbtjʊreɪtər fə'reɪmən/ *noun* an opening in the hip bone near the acetabulum. See illustration at **PELVIS** in Supplement (NOTE: The plural is **obturator foramina**)

obtusion /'əb'tju:ʒ(ə)n/ *noun* a condition in which perception and feelings become dulled

OC abbr oral contraceptive

occipita /'ɒk'sɪpɪtə/ *plural of occiput*

occipital /'ɒk'sɪpɪtl/ *adjective* referring to the back of the head ■ *noun* same as **occipital bone**

occipital bone /'ɒk'sɪpɪtl bən/ *noun* the bone at the back of the head. Also called **occipital**

occipital condyle /'ɒk'sɪpɪtl 'kɒndɪl/ *noun* a round part of the occipital bone which joins it to the atlas

occipital lobe /'ɒk'sɪpɪtl 'ləub/ *noun* the lobe at the back of each cerebral hemisphere

occipital notch /'ɒk'sɪpɪtl nɒtʃ/ *noun* a point on the lower edge of the cerebral hemisphere where the surface has a notch

occipito-anterior /'ɒk'sɪpɪtə'æntɪriə/ *adjective* referring to a position of a baby during birth, in which the baby faces the mother's back

occipito-posterior /'ɒk'sɪpɪtə'pɒstɪriə/ *adjective* referring to a position of a baby during birth in which the baby faces the front

occiput /'ɒk'sɪpʊt/ *noun* the lower part of the back of the head or skull (NOTE: The plural is **occiputs** or **occipita**.)

occluded /'əklu:dɪd/ *adjective* closed or blocked

occlusion /'əklu:ʒ(ə)n/ *noun* 1. a thing which blocks a passage or which closes an opening 2. the way in which the teeth in the upper and lower jaws fit together when the jaws are closed (NOTE: A bad fit between the teeth is a **malocclusion**.)

occlusive /'əklu:sɪv/ *adjective* referring to occlusion or blocking

occlusive stroke /ə,klu:sɪv 'strəʊk/ *noun* a stroke caused by a blood clot

occlusive therapy /ə,klu:sɪv 'θerəpi/ *noun* a treatment for a squint in which the good eye is covered up in order to encourage the squinting eye to become straight

occult /'ə'kʌlt/ *adjective* 1. not easy to see with the naked eye. Opposite **overt** 2. referring to a symptom or sign which is hidden

occult blood /ə,kʌlt 'blʌd/ *noun* very small quantities of blood in the faeces, which can only be detected by tests

occupancy rate /'ɒkjkjʊpənsɪ reɪt/ *noun* the number of beds occupied in a hospital, shown as a percentage of all the beds

occupation /'ɒkjkjʊ'peɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* 1. a job or work
○ *What is his occupation?* ○ *People in sedentary occupations are liable to digestive disorders.* 2. the state or fact of occupying something or of being occupied

occupational /'ɒkjkjʊ'peɪʃ(ə)nəl/ *adjective* referring to work

occupational asthma /,ɒkju'peɪʃ(ə)n(ə)l 'æsmə/ *noun* asthma caused by materials with which people come into contact at work

occupational dermatitis /,ɒkju'peɪʃ(ə)n(ə)l ,dɜːmə'taitɪs/ *noun* dermatitis caused by materials touched at work

occupational disease /ɒkju'peɪʃ(ə)nəl di'zɪz/ *noun* a disease which is caused by the type of work a person does or the conditions in which a person works, e.g. a disease caused by dust or chemicals in a factory

occupational hazard /,ɒkju'peɪʃ(ə)n(ə)l 'hæzəd/ *noun* a dangerous situation related to the working environment

occupational health nurse /,ɒkju'peɪʃ(ə)n(ə)l 'helθ nɜːs/ *noun* a nurse who deals with health problems of people at work. Abbr OH nurse

occupational medicine /,ɒkju'peɪʃ(ə)n(ə)l 'med(ə)sɪs/ *noun* the branch of medicine concerned with accidents and diseases connected with work

occupational therapist /,ɒkju'peɪʃ(ə)n(ə)l 'θerəpɪst/ *noun* a qualified health professional who offers patients occupational therapy

occupational therapy /,ɒkju'peɪʃ(ə)n(ə)l 'θerəpi/ *noun* light work or hobbies used as a means of treatment, especially for physically challenged or mentally ill people, to promote independence during the recovery period after an illness or operation

occur /ə'kɜː/ *verb* 1. to take place ○ *one of the most frequently occurring types of tumour* ○ *Thrombosis occurred in the artery.* ○ *a form of glaucoma which occurs in infants.* 2. to come into a person's mind ○ *It occurred to her that she might be pregnant.* (NOTE: **occurring – occurred**)

occurrence /ə'kʌrəns/ *noun* something that takes place ○ *Neuralgia is a common occurrence after shingles.*

OCD *abbr* obsessive-compulsive disorder

ochronosis /,ɒkrəʊ'nəʊsɪs/ *noun* a condition in which cartilage, ligaments and other fibrous tissue become dark as a result of a metabolic disorder, and in which the urine turns black on exposure to air

ocular /'ɒkjʊlə/ *adjective* referring to the eye ○ *Opticians are trained to detect all kinds of ocular imbalance.*

ocular dominance /,ɒkjʊlə 'dɒmɪnəns/ *noun* a condition in which a person uses one eye more than the other

ocular prosthesis /,ɒkjʊlə prɒs'θɪ:sɪs/ *noun* a false eye

oculi /'ɒkjʊlaɪ/ ♦ **orbicularis oculi**

oculist /'ɒkjʊlist/ *noun* a qualified physician or surgeon who specialises in the treatment of eye disorders

oculo- /'ɒkjʊləʊ/ *prefix* eye

oculogyric /,ɒkjʊləʊ'dʒaɪrɪk/ *adjective* causing eye movements

oculomotor /,ɒkjʊləʊ'məʊtə/ *adjective* referring to movements of the eyeball

oculomotor nerve /,ɒkjʊləʊ'məʊtə nɜːv/ *noun* the third cranial nerve which controls the eyeballs and eyelids

oculonasal /,ɒkjʊləʊ'nɛɪz(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to both the eye and the nose

oculoplethysmography /,ɒkjʊləʊ,plɛθɪz'mɔːgrəfi/ *noun* measurement of the pressure inside the eyeball

OD *abbr* overdose

o.d. *adverb* (*written on a prescription*) every day. Full form **omni die**

ODA *abbr* operating department assistant

odont- /'ɒdɒnt/ *prefix* same as **odonto-** (*used before vowels*)

odontalgia /,ɒdɒn'tældʒə/ *noun* same as toothache

odontitis /,ɒdɒn'taitɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the pulpy interior of a tooth

odonto- /'ɒdɒntə/ *prefix* tooth

odontoid /'ɒdɒntɔɪd/ *adjective* similar to a tooth, especially in shape

odontoid process /'ɒdɒntɔɪd 'prəsəʊs/ *noun* a projecting part of a vertebra, shaped like a tooth

odontology /,ɒdɒn'tɒlədʒɪ/ *noun* the study of teeth and associated structures, and their disorders

odontoma /,ɒdɒn'təʊmə/, **odontome** /'ɒdɒntəmə/ *noun* 1. a structure like a tooth which has an unusual arrangement of its component tissues 2. a solid or cystic tumour derived from cells concerned with the development of a tooth (NOTE: The plural is **odontomas** or **odontomata**)

odourless /'əʊdələs/ *adjective* with no smell

odyn- /'ɒdɪn/ *prefix* same as **odyno-** (*used before vowels*)

odynia /'ɒdɪniə/ *suffix* pain

odyno- /'ɒdɪnəʊ/ *prefix* pain

odynophagia /,ɒdɪnə'feɪdʒə/ *noun* a condition in which pain occurs when food is swallowed

oedema /'i'diːmə/ *noun* the swelling of part of the body caused by accumulation of fluid in the intercellular tissue spaces ○ *Her main problem is oedema of the feet.* Also called **dropsy**. ♦ **tumescence** (NOTE: The US spelling is **edema**.)

oedematous /i'demətəs/ *adjective* referring to oedema (NOTE: The US spelling is **edematous**.)

Oedipus complex /'iːdɪpəs ,kɒmplɛks/ *noun* (*in Freudian psychology*) a condition in which a boy feels sexually attracted to his mother and sees his father as an obstacle

oesophag- /iːsɒfədʒ/ *prefix* same as **oesophago-** (*used before vowels*)

oesophageal /i:sɒfə'dʒi:əl/ *adjective* referring to the oesophagus (NOTE: The US spelling is **esophageal**.)

oesophageal hiatus /i:sɒfə,dʒi:əl hætʃə'seɪtəs/ *noun* the opening in the diaphragm through which the oesophagus passes

oesophageal varices /i:sɒfə,dʒi:əl 'værɪsɪz/ *plural noun* varicose veins in the oesophagus

oesophagectomy /i:sɒfə'dʒektəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to remove part of the oesophagus (NOTE: The plural is **oesophagectomies**.)

oesophagi /i:sɒfəgɪ/ *plural of oesophagus*

oesophagitis /i:sɒfə'dʒartɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the oesophagus, caused by acid juices from the stomach or by infection

oesophago- /i:sɒfəgəʊ/ *prefix* oesophagus (NOTE: The US spelling is **esophago-**)

oesophagocele /i:sɒfəgəsəʊsɪ:l/ *noun* a condition in which the mucous membrane lining the oesophagus protrudes through the wall

oesophagogastroduodenoscopy /i:sɒfəgəʊ,gaest्रəʊ,dju:əʊdə'noskəpɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation in which a tube is put down into the oesophagus so that the doctor can examine it, the stomach and the duodenum. Abbr **OGD** (NOTE: The plural is **oesophagogastroduodenoscopies**.)

oesophagojejunostomy /i:sɒfəgəʊdʒi:ənɔstəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to create a junction between the jejunum and the oesophagus after the stomach has been removed (NOTE: The plural is **oesophagojejunostomies**.)

oesophagoscope /i:sɒfəgəʊskəʊp/ *noun* a thin tube with a light at the end, which is passed down the oesophagus to examine it

oesophagoscopy /i:sɒfə'gɒskəpɪ/ *noun* an examination of the oesophagus with an oesophagoscope (NOTE: The plural is **oesophagoscopies**.)

oesophagostomy /i:sɒfə'gɒstəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to make an opening in the oesophagus to allow the person to be fed, usually after an operation on the pharynx (NOTE: The plural is **oesophagostomies**.)

oesophagotomy /i:sɒfə'gɒtəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to make an opening in the oesophagus to remove something which is blocking it (NOTE: The plural is **oesophagotomies**.)

oesophagus /i:sɒfəgəs/ *noun* a tube down which food passes from the pharynx to the stomach (NOTE: The plural is **oesophagi**. The US spellings are **esophagus** and **esophagi**.)

oestradiol /i:stri:d'aeɪəl/ *noun* a type of oestrogen secreted by an ovarian follicle, which stimulates the development of secondary sexual characteristics in females at puberty (NOTE: A synthetic form of oestradiol is given as treat-

ment for oestrogen deficiency. The US spelling is **estradiol**.)

oestriol /i:stri'l/ *noun* a placental hormone with oestrogenic properties, found in the urine of pregnant women (NOTE: The US spelling is **estriol**.)

oestrogen /i:stri:dʒən/ *noun* any steroid hormone which stimulates the development of secondary sexual characteristics in females at puberty (NOTE: The US spelling is **estrogen**.)

COMMENT: Synthetic oestrogens form most oral contraceptives, and are also used in the treatment of menstrual and menopausal disorders.

oestrogenic hormone /i:stri:dʒenɪk 'həʊ:mən/ *noun* synthetic oestrogen used to treat conditions which develop during menopause (NOTE: The US spelling is **estrogenic hormone**.)

oestrone /i:stri:ən/ *noun* a type of oestrogen produced in the ovaries (NOTE: The US spelling is **estrone**.)

official /ə'fɪʃ(ə)l/ *adjective* 1. accepted or permitted by an authority ○ *We need to undertake a review of the official procedures.* 2. constituting an authority

official drug /ə,fɪʃ(ə)l 'dræg/ *noun* any drug listed in the national pharmacopoeia

officially /ə'fɪʃ(ə)li/ *adverb* in a way that is approved by an authority ○ *officially listed as a dangerous drug*

OGD abbr oesophagogastroduodenoscopy

OH nurse /əʊ 'eɪtʃ nɜ:s/ *abbr* occupational health nurse

-oid /'ɔɪd/ *suffix* like or related to

oil /ɔɪl/ *noun* a liquid which cannot be mixed with water (NOTE: There are three types of oil: fixed vegetable or animal oils, volatile oils and mineral oils.)

oily /'ɔɪli/ *adjective* containing or resembling oil

ointment /'ɔɪntmənt/ *noun* a smooth oily medicinal preparation which can be spread on the skin to soothe or to protect

old age /əuld eɪdʒ/ *noun* a period in a person's life, usually taken to be after the age of sixty-five

oleaginous /,əʊli'æʒinəs/ *adjective* same as **oily**

olecranon /əʊ'lekrənɒn/, **olecranon process** /əʊ'lekrənɒn 'prəses/ *noun* a curved projecting part at the end of the ulna at the elbow, which gives rise to a painful tingling sensation if hit by accident. Also called **funny bone**

oleic /əʊ'li:ik/ *adjective* referring to oil

oleic acid /əʊ'li:ik 'æsɪd/ *noun* a fatty acid which is present in most oils

oleo- /əʊliəʊ/ *prefix* oil

oleum /'əʊliəm/ *noun* oil (used in pharmacy)

olfaction /ɒl'fækʃən/ *noun* 1. the sense of smell 2. the way in which a person's sensory organs detect smells

olfactory /ɒl'fækt(ə)ri/ *adjective* referring to the sense of smell

olfactory area /ɒl,fækt(ə)ri 'eəriə/ *noun* the part of the brain that registers smell

olfactory bulb /ɒl'fækt(ə)ri bɒlb/ *noun* the end of the olfactory tract, where the processes of the sensory cells in the nose are linked to the fibres of the olfactory nerve

olfactory cortex /ɒl,fækt(ə)ri 'kɔ:tɛks/ *noun* the parts of the cerebral cortex which receive information about smell

olfactory nerve /ɒl'fækt(ə)ri nɜ:v/ *noun* the first cranial nerve which controls the sense of smell

olfactory tract /ɒl'fækt(ə)ri trækɪt/ *noun* a nerve tract which takes the olfactory nerve from the nose to the brain

olig- /ɒlɪg/ *prefix* same as **oligo-** (*used before vowels*)

oligaemia /,ɒlɪ'gi:mɪə/ *noun* a condition in which a person has too little blood in his or her circulatory system (NOTE: The US spelling is **oligemia**.)

oligo- /ɒlɪgəʊ/ *prefix* few or little

oligodactylism /,ɒlɪgəʊ'dæktɪlɪz(ə)m/ *noun* a congenital condition in which a baby is born without some fingers or toes

oligodipsia /,ɒlɪgəʊ'dɪpsiə/ *noun* a condition in which a person does not want to drink

oligodontia /,ɒlɪgəʊ'nɒnɪə/ *noun* a state in which most of the teeth are lacking

oligohydramnios /,ɒlɪgohu'draemniəs/ *noun* a condition in which the amniotic fluid surrounding the fetus contains too little amniotic fluid

oligomenorrhoea /,ɒlɪgə'menərɪə/ *noun* a condition in which a person menstruates infrequently (NOTE: The US spelling is **oligomenorrhea**.)

oligo-ovulation /,ɒlɪgəʊ ,ɒvju'lʊɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* ovulation which does not occur as often as is usual

oligospermia /,ɒlɪgəʊ'spɜ:miə/ *noun* a condition in which there are too few spermatozoa in the semen

oliguria /,ɒlɪ'gjʊəriə/ *noun* a condition in which a person does not produce enough urine

olive /'ɒliv/ *noun* 1. the fruit of a tree, which gives an edible oil 2. a swelling containing grey matter, on the side of the pyramid of the medulla oblongata

-ology /ɒlədʒi/ *suffix* area of study

-olol /ə'lɒl/ *suffix* beta blocker ○ *atenolol* ○ *propranolol hydrochloride*

o.m. *adverb* (*written on a prescription*) every morning. Full form **omni mane**

-oma /əʊmə/ *suffix* tumour

Ombudsman /'ɒmbudzmən/ ♦ **Health Service Commissioner**

oment- /əʊment/ *prefix* omentum

omenta /ə'ʊmentə/ plural of **omentum**

omental /ə'ʊ'ment(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to the omentum

omentectomy /,əʊmen'tektəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to remove part of the omentum (NOTE: The plural is **omentectomies**.)

omentopexy /əʊ'mentəpeksi/ *noun* a surgical operation to attach the omentum to the abdominal wall (NOTE: The plural is **omentopexies**.)

omentum /əʊ'mentəm/ *noun* a double fold of peritoneum hanging down over the intestines. Also called **epiploon** (NOTE: The plural is **omenta**. For other terms referring to the omentum see words beginning with **epiplo-**.)

COMMENT: The omentum is in two sections: the **greater omentum** which covers the intestines, and the **lesser omentum** which hangs between the liver and the stomach and the liver and the duodenum.

omeprazole /əʊ'mepræzəʊl/ *noun* a drug which reduces the amount of acid released in the stomach, used in the treatment of ulcers and heartburn

omphal- /ɒmfəl/ *prefix* same as **omphalo-** (*used before vowels*)

omphali /'ɒmfəli/ plural of **omphalus**

omphalitis /,ɒmfə'laitɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the navel

omphalo- /ɒmfələʊ/ *prefix* navel

omphalocele /'ɒmfələsɪ:l/ *noun* a hernia in which part of the intestine protrudes through the abdominal wall near the navel

omphalus /'ɒmfələs/ *noun* a scar with a depression in the middle of the abdomen where the umbilical cord was detached after birth. Also called **navel**, **umbilicus** (NOTE: The plural is **omphali**.)

-omycin /əʊməsɪn/ *suffix* macrolide drug ○ *erythromycin*

o.n. *adverb* (*written on a prescription*) every night. Full form **omni nocte**

onanism /'əʊnənɪz(ə)m/ *noun* same as **masturbation**

Onchocerca /,ɒnkjəʊ'sɜ:kə/ *noun* a genus of tropical parasitic threadworms

onchocerciasis /,ɒnkjəʊsɪs:'kaɪəsɪs/ *noun* infestation with *Onchocerca* in which the larvae can move into the eye, causing river blindness

onco- /ɒnkjəʊ/ *prefix* tumour

oncogene /'ɒnkjədʒi:n/ *noun* a part of the genetic system which causes malignant tumours to develop

'...all cancers may be reduced to fundamental mechanisms based on cancer risk genes or oncogenes within ourselves. An oncogene is a gene that encodes a protein that contributes to the malignant phenotype of the cell' [British Medical Journal]

oncogenesis /'ɒŋkə'dʒenəsɪs/ *noun* the origin and development of a tumour

oncogenic /'ɒŋkə'dʒenɪk/ *adjective* causing tumours to develop ○ *an oncogenic virus*

oncologist /'ɒŋ'kɒlədʒɪst/ *noun* a doctor who specialises in oncology, especially cancer

oncology /'ɒŋ'kɒlədʒɪ/ *noun* the scientific study of new growths, especially cancers

oncolysis /'ɒŋ'kɒlɪsɪs/ *noun* the destruction of a tumour or of tumour cells

oncometer /'ɒŋ'kɒmɪtə/ *noun* 1. an instrument for measuring swelling in an arm or leg using changes in their blood pressure 2. an instrument for measuring the variations in size of the kidney and other organs of the body

oncotic /'ɒŋ'kɒtɪk/ *adjective* referring to a tumour

ondansetron /'ɒn'dænsɪtron/ *noun* a drug which helps to prevent the production of serotonin, used to control nausea and vomiting caused by drug treatment and radiotherapy for cancer

onset /'ɒnset/ *noun* the beginning of something ○ *The onset of the illness is marked by sudden high temperature.*

ontogeny /'ɒn'tɒdʒəni/ *noun* the origin and development of an individual organism

onych- /'ɒnɪk/ *prefix* same as **onycho-** (*used before vowels*)

onychiaxus /'ɒnɪ'kɔ:kſɪs/ *noun* excessive growth of the nails of the fingers or toes

onychia /'ɒnɪkɪə/ *noun* an irregularity of the nails caused by inflammation of the matrix

onycho- /'ɒnɪkəʊ/ *prefix* nails

onychogryphosis /'ɒnɪkəʊgrɪ'fəʊsɪs/ *noun* a condition in which the nails are bent or curved over the ends of the fingers or toes

onycholysis /'ɒnɪ'kɒlɪsɪs/ *noun* a condition in which a nail becomes separated from its bed, without falling out

onychomadesis /'ɒnɪkəʊməs'di:sɪs/ *noun* a condition in which the nails fall out

onychomycosis /'ɒnɪkəʊmər'kəʊsɪs/ *noun* an infection of a nail with a fungus

onychosis /'ɒnɪ'kəʊsɪs/ *noun* any disease of the nails (NOTE: The plural is **onychooses**.)

o'nyong-nyong fever /'əʊ 'nɪŋgə ,nɪŋgə/ *noun* an infectious virus disease prevalent in East Africa, spread by mosquitoes. The symptoms are high fever, inflammation of the lymph nodes and excruciating pains in the joints. Also called **joint-breaker fever**

oo- /'əʊə/ *prefix* ovum or embryo

oocyesis /'əʊəsɪs'i:sis/ *noun* a pregnancy which develops in the ovary (NOTE: The plural is **oocyteses**.)

oocyte /'əʊəsɪt/ *noun* a cell which forms from an oogonium and becomes an ovum by meiosis

oocyte donation /'əʊəsɪt dəʊ'nɛɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the transfer of oocytes from one woman

to another who cannot produce her own, so that she can have a baby. The oocytes are removed in a laparoscopy and fertilised in vitro. **oogenesis** /'əʊə'dʒenəsɪs/ *noun* the formation and development of ova

COMMENT: In oogenesis, an oogonium produces an oocyte, which develops through several stages to produce a mature ovum. Polar bodies are also formed which do not develop into ova.

oogenetic /'əʊədʒə'netɪk/ *adjective* referring to oogenesis

oogonium /'əʊə'gəʊniəm/ *noun* a cell produced at the beginning of the development of an ovum (NOTE: The plural is **oogonia**.)

oophor- /əʊəfəʊr/ *prefix* same as **oophoro-** (*used before vowels*)

oophoralgia /'əʊəfə'rældʒə/ *noun* pain in the ovaries

oophore /'əʊəfə:/ *noun* same as **ovary**

oophorectomy /'əʊəfə'rektəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to remove an ovary. Also called **ovariectomy** (NOTE: The plural is **oophorectomies**.)

oophoritis /'əʊəfə'rætɪs/ *noun* inflammation in an ovary, which can be caused by mumps. Also called **ovaritis**

oophoro- /'əʊəfərəʊ/ *prefix* ovary

oophorocystectomy /'əʊ,ɒfərəʊsɪt'ektəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to remove an ovarian cyst (NOTE: The plural is **oophorocystectomies**.)

oophorocystosis /'əʊ,ɒfərəʊsɪs'təʊsɪs/ *noun* the development of one or more ovarian cysts

oophroma /'əʊəfə'ræʊmə/ *noun* a rare ovarian tumour, occurring in middle age (NOTE: The plural is **oophromas** or **oophromata**.)

oophoron /'əʊ'ɒfərən/ *noun* same as **ovary** (*technical*) (NOTE: The plural is **oophora**.)

oophoropexy /'əʊ'ɒfərəpɛksɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to attach an ovary (NOTE: The plural is **oophoropexies**.)

oophorosalpingectomy /'əʊ,ɒfərə,sælpɪn'đzektəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to remove an ovary and the Fallopian tube attached to it (NOTE: The plural is **oophorosalpingectomies**.)

ooze /u:z/ *verb* 1. (*of pus, blood or other liquid*) to flow slowly 2. to leak a substance such as pus or blood (NOTE: **oozing – oozed**)

op /ɒp/ *noun* an operation (*informal*)

OP abbr outpatient

opacification /əʊpæsɪfɪ'keɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the fact of becoming opaque, as the lens does in a case of cataract

opacity /'əʊ'pæsɪti/ *noun* 1. the fact of not allowing light to pass through 2. an area in the eye which is not clear (NOTE: The plural is **opacities**.)

opaque /'əʊ'peɪk/ *adjective* not allowing light to pass through. Opposite **transparent**

open /'əʊpən/ *adjective* not closed

open-angle glaucoma /,əʊpən ,æŋg(ə)l glo:'kœmə/ *noun* an unusually high pressure of fluid inside the eyeball caused by a blockage in the channel through which the aqueous humour drains. Also called **chronic glaucoma**

open fracture /,əʊpən 'frækʃə/ *noun* same as **compound fracture**

open-heart surgery /,əʊpən 'ha:t ,sɜ:dʒəri/ *noun* surgery to repair part of the heart or one of the coronary arteries performed while the heart has been bypassed and the blood is circulated by a pump

opening /'əʊp(ə)nɪŋ/ *noun* a place where something opens

open visiting /,əʊpən 'vɪzɪtɪŋ/ *noun* an arrangement in a hospital by which visitors can enter the wards at any time

operable /'ɒp(ə)rəb(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to a condition which can be treated by a surgical operation ○ *The cancer is still operable.*

operant conditioning /'ɒpərənt kən ,dɪʃ(ə)nɪŋ/ *noun* a form of learning which takes place when a piece of spontaneous behaviour is either reinforced by a reward or discouraged by punishment

operate /'ɒpəreɪt/ *verb* 1. to function or work, or to make something function or work 2. to treat a person for a condition by cutting open the body and removing a part which is diseased or repairing a part which is not functioning correctly ○ *The patient was operated on yesterday.* ○ *The surgeons decided to operate as the only way of saving the baby's life.* (NOTE: **operating – operated**)

operating department *noun* a hospital department specialising in surgical operations

operating department assistant /,ɒpərel tɪn di,pɔ:tment ə'sistənt/ *noun* a person who works in an operating department. Abbr **ODA**

operating microscope /'ɒpəreɪtɪŋ ,maɪkroskəʊp/ *noun* a special microscope with two eyepieces and a light, used in very delicate surgery

operating room *US* same as **operating theatre**. Abbr **OR**

operating table /'ɒpəreɪtɪŋ ,teib(ə)/ *noun* a special table on which the patient is placed to undergo a surgical operation

operating theatre /'ɒpəreɪtɪŋ θɪətə/ *noun* a special room in a hospital, where surgical operations are carried out (NOTE: The *US* term is **operating room**.)

operation /,ɒpə'reɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* 1. the way in which something operates 2. a surgical procedure carried out to repair or remove a damaged body part ○ *She's had an operation on her foot.* ○ *The operation to remove the cataract was successful.* ○ *A team of surgeons performed the operation.* ○ *Heart operations are always difficult.* (NOTE: A surgeon **performs** or

carries out an operation **on** a patient.) 3. the way in which a drug acts

operative /'ɒp(ə)rətɪv/ *adjective* taking place during a surgical operation. ○ **peroperative, postoperative, preoperative**

operator /'ɒpəreɪtə/ *noun* 1. someone whose job is to operate a machine or piece of equipment 2. a surgeon who operates on people

operculum /'ɑ:pɜ:kjʊləm/ *noun* 1. a part of the cerebral hemisphere which overlaps the insula 2. a plug of mucus which can block the cervical canal during pregnancy (NOTE: The plural is **opercula** or **operculums**.)

ophth- /ɒfθ, ɒpθ/ *prefix* eye

ophthalm- /ɒfθælm, ɒpθælm/ *prefix* same as **ophthalmo-** (*used before vowels*)

ophthalmectomy /,ɒfθæl'mektəmi/ *noun* a surgical operation to remove an eye (NOTE: The plural is **ophthalmectomies**.)

ophthalmia /'ɒfθælmɪə/ *noun* inflammation of the eye

ophthalmia neonatorum /ɒfθælmɪə ni:əneɪtə'rɔ:m/ *noun* conjunctivitis of a newborn baby, beginning 21 days after birth, caused by infection in the birth canal

ophthalmic /'ɒfθælmɪk/ *adjective* referring to the eye

ophthalmic nerve /'ɒfθælmɪk nɜ:v/ *noun* a branch of the trigeminal nerve, supplying the eyeball, the upper eyelid, the brow and one side of the scalp

ophthalmic optician /'ɒfθælmɪk ɒptɪʃən/, **ophthalmic practitioner** *noun* same as **optician**

ophthalmic surgeon /'ɒfθælmɪk 'sɜ:ʒən/ *noun* a surgeon who specialises in surgery to treat eye disorders

ophthalmitis /,ɒfθæl'maɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the eye

ophthalo- /ɒfθælməʊ, ɒpθælməʊ/ *prefix* eye or eyeball

ophthalmological /'ɒfθælmə'lɒdʒɪk(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to ophthalmology

ophthalmologist /,ɒfθæl'mɒlədʒɪst/ *noun* a doctor who specialises in the study of the eye and its diseases. Also called **eye specialist**

ophthalmology /,ɒfθæl'mɒlədʒɪ/ *noun* the study of the eye and its diseases

ophthalmoplegia /,ɒfθælməpli:dʒə/ *noun* paralysis of the muscles of the eye

ophthalmoscope /'ɒfθælməskəʊp/ *noun* an instrument containing a bright light and small lenses, used by a doctor to examine the inside of an eye

ophthalmoscopy /,ɒfθæl'mɒskəpɪ/ *noun* an examination of the inside of an eye using an ophthalmoscope (NOTE: The plural is **ophthalmoscopies**.)

ophthalmotomy /,ɒfθæl'mɒtəmi/ *noun* a surgical operation to make a cut in the eyeball (NOTE: The plural is **ophthalmotomies**.)

ophthalmometer /'ɒfθælmətər/ noun an instrument which measures pressure inside the eye

-opia /əʊpiə/ suffix eye condition

opiate /'əpiətət/ noun a sedative which is prepared from opium, e.g. morphine or codeine

opinion /ə'pjɪnɪət/ noun what a person thinks about something ○ *What's the surgeon's opinion of the case?* ○ *The doctor asked the consultant for his opinion as to the best method of treatment.*

opioid /'əʊpiəɪd/ adjective based on opium ○ *Cocaine is an opioid analgesic.*

opistho- /'ɒpɪsθəʊ/ prefix backbone

opisthotonus /,ɒpɪs'θɒtənəs/ noun a spasm of the body in which the spine is arched backwards, occurring, e.g., in people with tetanus

opium /'əpiəm/ noun a substance made from poppies which is used in the preparation of codeine and heroin

opponens /'ə'pəʊnənz/ noun one of a group of muscles which control the movements of the fingers, especially one which allows the thumb and little finger to come together

opportunist /,ɒpə'tju:nɪst/, **opportunistic** /,ɒpə'tju:nɪstɪk/ adjective referring to a parasite or microorganism which takes advantage of the host's weakened state to cause infection

opposition /,ɒppə'zɪʃ(ə)n/ noun 1. hostility towards something 2. a movement of the hand muscles in which the tip of the thumb is made to touch the tip of another finger so as to hold something

opsionic index /ɒp'sɔɪnɪk 'ɪndeks/ noun a number which gives the strength of a person's serum reaction to bacteria

opsonin /'ɒpsənɪn/ noun a substance, usually an antibody, in blood which sticks to the surface of bacteria and helps to destroy them

optic /'ɒptɪk/ adjective referring to the eye or to sight

optical /'ɒptɪk(ə)l/ adjective 1. same as **optic** 2. relating to the visible light spectrum

optical fibre /,ɒptɪk(ə)l 'faɪbə/ noun an artificial fibre which can carry light or images

optical illusion /,ɒptɪk(ə)l ɪ'lū:ʒ(ə)n/ noun something which is seen wrongly so that it appears to be something else

optic chiasma /,ɒptɪk kai'æzmə/ noun a structure where some of the optic nerves from each eye partially cross each other in the hypothalamus

optic disc /'ɒptɪk disk/ noun the point on the retina where the optic nerve starts. Also called **optic papilla**

optic fundus /,ɒptɪk 'fʌndəs/ noun the back part of the inside of the eye, opposite the lens

optician /'ɒptɪʃ(ə)n/ noun a qualified person who specialises in making glasses and in testing eyes and prescribing lenses. Also called **ophthalmic optician** (NOTE: In US English, an

optician is a technician who makes lenses and fits glasses, but cannot test patient's eyesight.)

COMMENT: In the UK qualified opticians must be registered by the General Optical Council before they can practise.

optic nerve /'ɒptɪk nɜ:v/ noun the second cranial nerve which transmits the sensation of sight from the eye to the brain. See illustration at **EYE** in Supplement

optic neuritis /,ɒptɪk nju'rætɪs/ noun same as **retrobulbar neuritis**

optic papilla /,ɒptɪk pə'pɪlə/ noun same as **optic disc**

optic radiation /,ɒptɪk ,reɪdi'eɪʃ(ə)n/ noun a nerve tract which takes the optic impulses from the optic tract to the visual cortex

optics /'ɒptɪks/ noun the study of the visible light spectrum and sight

optic tract /,ɒptɪk 'trækt/ noun a nerve tract which takes the optic nerve from the optic chiasma to the optic radiation

proto- /ɒptəʊ/ prefix sight

optometer /'ɒptəmɪtər/ noun same as **refractometer**

optometrist /'ɒptəmətrɪst/ noun mainly US a person who specialises in testing eyes and prescribing lenses

optometry /'ɒptəmətri/ noun the testing of eyes and prescribing of lenses to correct sight

-quine /'əkwɪn/ suffix antimalarial drug ○ *chloroquine*

OR abbr US operating room

ora /'ɔ:rə/ plural noun plural of **os** noun 2

oral /'ɔ:rəl/ adjective 1. referring to the mouth 2. referring to medication that is swallowed ○ *an oral contraceptive* Compare **enteral, parenteral**

oral cavity /,ɔ:rəl 'kævɪtɪ/ noun the mouth

oral contraceptive /,ɔ:rəl ,kɒntrə'septɪv/ noun a contraceptive pill which is swallowed

oral hygiene /,ɔ:rəl 'haɪdʒi:n/ noun the practice of keeping the mouth clean by gargling and mouthwashes

orally /'ɔ:rəlɪ/ adverb by swallowing ○ *not to be taken orally*

oral medication /,ɔ:rəl ,medɪ'keɪʃ(ə)n/ noun medication which is taken by swallowing

oral rehydration solution /,ɔ:rəl ,ri:hæɪ 'dreɪʃ(ə)n sə,lu:s(ə)n/ noun liquid given as a drink to correct the water, mineral and nutritional deficiencies in a person who is affected by dehydration

oral rehydration therapy /,ɔ:rəl ,ri:hæɪ 'dreɪʃ(ə)n ,θeræpɪ/ noun the administration of a simple glucose and electrolyte solution to treat acute diarrhoea, particularly in children, which has greatly reduced the number of deaths from dehydration. Abbr **ORT**

oral thermometer /,ɔ:rəl θə'mətmɪtər/ noun a thermometer which is put into the mouth to take someone's temperature

orbicularis /ɔ:,bɪkju'leərɪs/ *noun* a circular muscle in the face

orbicularis oculi /ɔ:,bɪkju,leərɪs 'ɒkjʊləɪ/ *noun* a muscle which opens and closes the eye

orbicularis oris /ɔ:,bɪkju,leərɪs 'ɔ:ris/ *noun* a muscle which closes the lips tight

orbit /'ɔ:bit/ *noun* the hollow bony depression in the front of the skull in which each eye and lacrimal gland are situated. Also called **eye socket**

orbital /'ɔ:bit(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to the orbit

orchि- /ɔ:kɪ/ *prefix* testis

orchidalgia /,ɔ:kɪ'dældʒɪə/ *noun* a neuralgic-type pain in a testis

orchidectomy /,ɔ:kɪ'dektəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to remove a testis (NOTE: The plural is **orchidectomies**.)

orchidopexy /'ɔ:kɪdəpɛksi/ *noun* a surgical operation to place an undescended testis in the scrotum. Also called **orchiopexy** (NOTE: The plural is **orchidoxies**.)

orchidotomy /,ɔ:kɪ'dɒtəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to make a cut into a testis (NOTE: The plural is **orchidotomies**.)

orchiepididymitis /,ɔ:ki,epɪdɪdɪ'maɪtɪs/ *noun* a condition in which a testicle and its epididymis become swollen

orchiopexy /'ɔ:kiəpɛksi/ *noun* same as **orchidopexy** (NOTE: The plural is **orchiopieses**.)

orchis /'ɔ:kɪs/ *noun* a testis

orchitis /ɔ:kɪ'tɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the testes, characterised by hypertrophy, pain and a sensation of weight

orderly /'ɔ:dəli/ *noun* a person who does general work in a hospital (NOTE: The plural is **orderlies**.)

Orem's model /'ɔ:rəmz ,mɒd(ə)l/ *noun* a modern model for nursing which focuses on a person's ability to perform self-care, defined as activities which individuals initiate and perform on their own behalf to maintain life, health and well-being

organ /'ɔ:gən/ *noun* a part of the body which is distinct from other parts and has a particular function, e.g. the liver, an eye or ovaries

organic /ɔ:'gænɪk/ *adjective* 1. referring to organs in the body 2. coming from an animal, plant or other organism 3. referring to food which has been cultivated naturally, without certain fertilisers or pesticides

organically /ɔ:'gænɪkli/ *adverb* in a natural or apparently natural way

organic disease /ɔ:,gænɪk dɪ'zi:z/, **organic disorder** /ɔ:,gænɪk dɪ'sɔ:ðə/ *noun* a disease or disorder associated with physical changes in one or more organs of the body

organisation /,ɔ:gənɪ'zeɪʃ(ə)n/, **organization** *noun* 1. a group of people set up for a particular purpose 2. the planning or arranging of something ○ *the organisation of the rota* 3. the

way in which the component parts of something are arranged

organism /'ɔ:gənɪz(ə)m/ *noun* any single plant, animal, bacterium, fungus or other living thing

organo- /ɔ:gənəʊ, ɔ:gænəʊ/ *prefix* organ

organ of Corti /,ɔ:gən əv 'kɔ:tɪ/ *noun* a membrane in the cochlea which takes sounds and converts them into impulses sent to the brain along the auditory nerve. Also called **spiral organ** [Described 1851. After Marquis Alfonso Corti (1822–88), Italian anatomist and histologist.]

organotherapy /,ɔ:gənəʊ'θerəpi/ *noun* the treatment of a disease by using an extract from the organ of an animal, e.g. using liver extract to treat anaemia

organ transplant /'ɔ:gən ,trænsplɑ:nt/ *noun* a surgical operation to transplant an organ from one person to another

orgasm /'ɔ:gæz(ə)m/ *noun* the climax of the sexual act, when a person experiences a moment of great excitement

oriental sore /,ɔ:ri'ent(ə)l 'sɔ:/ *noun* a skin disease of tropical countries caused by the parasite *Leishmania*. ○ **leishmaniasis**

orifice /'ɔrifɪs/ *noun* an opening in the body, e.g. the mouth or anus

origin /'ɔ:ri'dʒɪn/ *noun* 1. the source or beginning of something 2. a place where a muscle is attached, or where the branch of a nerve or blood vessel begins

original /'ɔ:ri'dʒən(ə)l/ *adjective* as before a change was made ○ *The surgeon was able to move the organ back to its original position.*

originate /'ɔ:ri'dʒɪneɪt/ *verb* to start in a place, or make something start ○ *drugs which originated in the tropics* ○ *The treatment originated in China.* (NOTE: **originating – originated**)

oris /'ɔ:ri:s/ ○ **cancrum oris, orbicularis oris**

ornithine /'ɔ:nɪθaɪn/ *noun* an amino acid produced by the liver

ornithosis /,ɔ:nɪ'θəʊsɪs/ *noun* a disease of birds which can be passed to humans as a form of pneumonia

oro- /'ɔ:rəʊ/ *prefix* mouth

ogenital /,ɔ:rəʊ'dʒenɪt(ə)l/ *adjective* relating to both the mouth and the genitals

opharynx /,ɔ:rəʊ'færɪŋks/ *noun* a part of the pharynx below the soft palate at the back of the mouth (NOTE: The plural is **opharynxes** or **oropharynges**)

ORT abbr oral rehydration therapy

ortho- /'ɔ:θəʊ/ *prefix* correct or straight

orthodiagraph /,ɔ:θəʊ'daɪəgrɑ:f/ *noun* an X-ray photograph of an organ taken using only a thin stream of X-rays which allows accurate measurements of the organ to be made

orthodontia /,ɔ:θə'dɒntʃə/ *noun* US same as **orthodontics**

orthodontic /,ɔ:θəʊ'dɒntɪk/ *adjective* correcting badly formed or placed teeth ◎ *He had to undergo a course of orthodontic treatment.*

orthodontics /,ɔ:θəʊ'dɒntɪks/ *noun* a branch of dentistry which deals with correcting badly placed teeth (NOTE: The US term is **orthodontia**.)

orthodontist /,ɔ:θəʊ'dɒntɪst/ *noun* a dental surgeon who specialises in correcting badly placed teeth

orthopaedic /,ɔ:θə'pi:dɪk/ *adjective* 1. referring to treatment which corrects badly formed bones or joints 2. referring to or used in orthopaedics (NOTE: The US spelling is **orthopedic**.)

orthopaedic collar /,ɔ:θə,pi:dɪk 'kɒlə/ *noun* a special strong collar to support the head of a person with neck injuries or a condition such as cervical spondylosis

orthopaedic hospital /,ɔ:θəpi:dɪk 'hɒpɪtʃ(ə)l/ *noun* a hospital which specialises in operations to correct badly formed joints or bones

orthopaedics /,ɔ:θə'pi:dɪks/ *noun* a branch of surgery dealing with irregularities, diseases and injuries of the locomotor system (NOTE: The US spelling is **orthopedics**.)

orthopaedic surgeon /,ɔ:θəpi:dɪk 'sɜ:gən/ *noun* a surgeon who specialises in orthopaedics

orthopaedist /,ɔ:θə'pi:dist/ *noun* a surgeon who specialises in orthopaedics (NOTE: The US spelling is **orthopedist**.)

orthopnoea /,ɔ:θəp'nɪ:ə/ *noun* a condition in which a person has great difficulty in breathing while lying down. ◊ **dyspnoea** (NOTE: The US spelling is **orthopnea**.)

orthopnoeic /,ɔ:θəp'nɪ:ɪk/ *adjective* referring to orthopnoea (NOTE: The US spelling is **orthopneic**.)

orthopsychiatry /,ɔ:θəʊsət'kaɪətri/ *noun* the science and treatment of behavioural and personality disorders

orthoptics /,ɔ:'θɒptɪks/ *noun* the study of methods used to treat squints

orthoptist /,ɔ:'θɒptɪst/ *noun* an eye specialist, working in an eye hospital, who treats squints and other disorders of eye movement

orthoscope /,ɔ:'θɒptɪskəp/ *noun* same as **amblyoscope**

orthosis /,ɔ:'θəʊsɪs/ *noun* a device which is fitted to the outside of the body to support a weakness or correct a malformation, e.g. a surgical collar or leg brace (NOTE: The plural is **orthoses**.)

orthostatic /,ɔ:θə'stætɪk/ *adjective* referring to the position of the body when standing up straight

orthostatic hypotension /,ɔ:θəstætɪk haɪpə'u'tenʃən/ *noun* a common condition where the blood pressure drops when a person stands up suddenly, causing dizziness

orthotics /ɔ:'θɒtɪks/ *plural noun* the branch of medical engineering which deals with the design and fitting of devices such as braces in the treatment of orthopaedic disorders

orthotist /'ɔ:θətɪst/ *noun* a qualified person who fits orthoses

Ortolani's sign /,ɔ:tə'læni saɪn/, **Ortolani manoeuvre** /,ɔ:tə'læni mə,nu:və/, **Ortolani's test**, /,ɔ:tə'læ:nɪz tɛst/ *noun* a test for congenital dislocation of the hip in babies aged 6–12, in which the hip makes sharp sounds if the joint is rotated [Described 1937. After Marius Ortolani, Italian orthopaedic surgeon.]

os /ɒs/ *noun (technical)* 1. a bone (NOTE: The plural is **osssa**.) 2. the mouth (NOTE: The plural is **ora**.)

OSA *abbr* obstructive sleep apnoea

oscillation /,ɒsɪ'leɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* 1. the action of moving backwards and forwards between two points at a regular speed 2. a single movement between two points

oscilloscope /'ɒsɪləskəʊp/ *noun* a device which produces a visual record of an electrical current on a screen using a cathode ray tube. It is used in the testing of electronic equipment and in measuring electrical impulses of the heart or the brain.

osculum /'ɒskjʊləm/ *noun* a small opening or pore (NOTE: The plural is **oscula**.)

-osis /ə'sɪsɪs/ *suffix* disease

Osler's nodes /'ɒsləz nəʊdз/ *plural noun* tender swellings at the ends of fingers and toes in people who have subacute bacterial endocarditis [Described 1885. After Sir William Osler (1849–1919), Professor of Medicine in Montreal, Philadelphia, Baltimore and then Oxford.]

osm- /ɒznm/ *prefix* 1. smell 2. osmosis

osmoreceptor /,ɒzməʊrɪ'septə/ *noun* a cell in the hypothalamus which checks the level of osmotic pressure in the blood by altering the secretion of ADH and regulates the amount of water in the blood

osmosis /bz'meʊsɪs/ *noun* the movement of a solvent from one part of the body through a semipermeable membrane to another part where there is a higher concentration of molecules

osmotic pressure /bz'mɒtɪk 'preʃə/ *noun* the pressure required to stop the flow of a solvent through a membrane

ossa /'ɒsə/ *plural of os noun* 1

osseous /'ɒsiəs/ *adjective* referring to or resembling bone

osseous labyrinth /,ɒsiəs 'læbərɪnθ/ *noun* same as **bony labyrinth**

ossicle /'ɒsɪk(ə)l/ *noun* a small bone

COMMENT: The auditory ossicles pick up the vibrations from the eardrum and transmit them through the oval window to the cochlea in the inner ear. The three bones are articulated together; the stapes is attached to the membrane of the oval window, the malleus to

the eardrum, and the incus lies between the other two.

ossification /'ɒsfɪk'keɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the formation of bone. Also called **osteogenesis**

osseum /'ɒsiəm/ ♀ **fragilitas ossium**

ost- /ɒst/ *prefix* same as **oste-** (*used before vowels*)

ostectomy /'ɒstektəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation in which a bone, or a piece of bone, is removed (NOTE: The plural is **ostectomies**.)

osteitis /,ɒsti'aitɪs/ *noun* inflammation of a bone due to injury or infection

osteitis deformans /,ɒsti'aitɪs di:f'ɔ:mənz/ *noun* a disease which gradually softens bones in the spine, legs and skull, so that they become curved. Also called **Paget's disease**

osteitis fibrosis cystica /,ɒsti'aitɪs fai'briəʊsis 'sɪstɪkə/ *noun* a generalised weakness of bones, caused by excessive activity of the thyroid gland and associated with formation of cysts, in which bone tissue is replaced by fibrous tissue. Also called **von Recklinghausen's disease** (NOTE: The localised form is **osteitis fibrosis localista**.)

osteo- /ɒstiə/ *prefix* bone

osteoarthritis /,ɒstiəʊəsθ'rætɪs/ *noun* a degenerative disease of middle-aged and elderly people characterised by inflamed joints which become stiff and painful. Also called **osteoarthritis**

osteopathia /,ɒstiəʊəsθ'θræpəθi/ *noun* a disease of the bone and cartilage at a joint, particularly the ankles, knees or wrists, associated with carcinoma of the bronchi

osteopathosis /,ɒstiəʊəsθ'θræsɪs/ *noun* same as **osteoarthritis**

ostearthrotomy /,ɒstiəʊəsθ'rɒtəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to remove the articular end of a bone (NOTE: The plural is **ostearthrotomies**.)

osteoblast /'ɒstiəblæst/ *noun* a cell in an embryo which forms bone

osteochondritis /,ɒstiəʊkən'draɪtɪs/ *noun* degeneration of the epiphyses

osteochondritis dissecans /,ɒstiəʊkɒn'draɪtɪs 'dɪsɛkənz/ *noun* a painful condition where pieces of articular cartilage become detached from the joint surface

osteochondroma /,ɒstiəʊkən'draʊmə/ *noun* a tumour containing both bony and cartilaginous cells (NOTE: The plural is **osteochondromas** or **osteochondromata**.)

osteochondrosis /,ɒstiəʊkɒn'draʊsɪs/ *noun* a disorder of cartilage and bone formation which affects the joints in children, causing pain and a limp, probably due to circulation disturbances to that part of the bone

osteoclasia /,ɒstiəʊ'klɛzɪə/, **osteoclasis** /,ɒsti'ɒkləsɪs/ *noun* 1. destruction of bone tissue by osteoclasts 2. a surgical operation to

fracture or refracture bone to correct a deformity

osteoclast /'ɒstiəuklæst/ *noun* 1. a cell which destroys bone 2. a surgical instrument for breaking bones

osteoclastoma /,ɒstiəuklæ'stəʊmə/ *noun* a usually benign tumour occurring at the ends of long bones (NOTE: The plural is **osteoclastomas** or **osteoclastomata**.)

osteocyte /'ɒstiəʊsait/ *noun* a bone cell

osteodystrophy /,ɒstiəʊ'distrəfɪ/ *noun* a bone disease, especially one caused by disorder of the metabolism

osteogenesis /,ɒstiəʊ'dʒenəsɪs/ *noun* same as **ossification**

osteogenesis imperfecta /,ɒstiəʊ,dʒenəsɪs im'pækfətə/ *noun* a congenital condition in which bones are brittle and break easily due to unusual bone formation. Also called **brittle bone disease**

osteogenic /,ɒstiəʊ'dʒenɪk/ *adjective* made of or originating in bone tissue

osteology /,ɒsti'ɒlədʒi/ *noun* the study of bones and their structure

osteolysis /,ɒsti'ɒlɪsɪs/ *noun* 1. destruction of bone tissue by osteoclasts 2. loss of bone calcium

osteolytic /,ɒstiə'ɒlɪtɪk/ *adjective* referring to osteolysis

osteoma /,ɒsti'əʊmə/ *noun* a benign tumour in a bone (NOTE: The plural is **osteomas** or **osteomata**.)

osteomalacia /,ɒstiəʊməl'æsɪə/ *noun* a condition in adults in which the bones become soft because of lack of calcium and Vitamin D, or limited exposure to sunlight

osteomyelitis /,ɒstiəʊməl'ætɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the interior of bone, especially the marrow spaces

osteon /'ɒstiən/ *noun* same as **Haversian system**

osteopath /'ɒstiəʊ,pæθ/ *noun* a person who practises osteopathy

osteopathy /,ɒsti'ɒpəθi/ *noun* 1. the treatment of disorders by massage and manipulation of joints 2. any disease of bone (NOTE: The plural is **osteopathies**.)

osteopetrosis /,ɒstiəʊpə't्रəʊsɪs/ *noun* a disease of a group in which bones increase in density. Also called **marble bone disease**

osteophony /,ɒsti'ɒfənɪ/ *noun* the conduction of sound by bone, as occurs in the ear. Also called **bone conduction**

osteophyte /'ɒstiəfait/ *noun* a bony growth

osteoplastic necrotomy /,ɒstiəplæstɪk nek'rɒtəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to remove a piece of dead bone tissue

osteoplasty /'ɒstiəplæstɪ/ *noun* plastic surgery on bones

osteoporosis /'ɒstɪəʊpɔ:s'rəʊsɪs/ *noun* a condition in which the bones become thin, porous and brittle, due to low levels of oestrogen, lack of calcium and lack of physical exercise. Also called **brittle bone disease**

COMMENT: Osteoporosis mainly affects post-menopausal women, increasing the risk of fractures. Hormone replacement therapy is the most effective method of preventing osteoporosis though there are other risks to health from long-term use.

osteosarcoma /'ɔ:stiəʊsəmə:'kəʊməs/ *noun* a malignant tumour of bone cells (NOTE: The plural is **osteosarcomas** or **osteosarcomata**.)

osteosclerosis /'ɒstɪəʊsklə'rəʊsɪs/ *noun* a condition in which the bony spaces become hardened as a result of persistent inflammation

osteotome /'ɒstɪətəʊm/ *noun* a type of chisel used by surgeons to cut bone

osteotomy /'ɒstɪ'ɒtəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to cut a bone, especially to relieve pain in a joint (NOTE: The plural is **osteotomies**.)

ostia /'ɒstɪə/ plural of **ostium**

ostium /'ɒstɪəm/ *noun* an opening into a passage (NOTE: The plural is **ostia**.)

ostomy /'ɒstəmɪ/ *noun* a colostomy or ileostomy (*informal*) (NOTE: The plural is **ostomies**.)

-ostomy /'ɒstəmɪ/ *suffix* operation to make an opening

OT *abbr* occupational therapist

ot- /'əʊt/ *prefix* same as **oto-** (*used before vowels*)

otalgia /'əʊ'tældʒə/ *noun* same as **earache**

OTC *abbreviation* referring to medication which can be bought freely at a chemist's shop, and does not need a prescription. Full form **over the counter**

OTC drug /,əʊ tɪ: 'sɪ: dræg/ *noun* same as **over-the-counter drug**

otic /'əʊtɪk/ *adjective* referring to the ear

otic ganglion /'əʊtɪk 'gæŋglɪən/ *noun* a ganglion associated with the mandibular nerve where it leaves the skull

otitis /'əʊ'taɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the ear

otitis externa /'əʊ,tætɪs ɪk'stɜ:nə/ *noun* inflammation of the external auditory meatus to the eardrum

otitis interna /'əʊ,tætɪs ɪn'tɜ:nə/ *noun* inflammation of the inner ear. Also called **labyrinthitis**

otitis media /əʊ,tætɪs 'mi:dɪə/ *noun* an infection of the middle ear, usually accompanied by headaches and fever. Also called **middle ear infection, tympanitis**

oto- /'əʊtəʊ/ *prefix* ear

otolaryngologist /'əʊtəʊlærɪŋ'gɒlədʒɪst/ *noun* a doctor who specialises in treatment of diseases of the ear and throat

otolaryngology /'əʊtəʊlærɪŋ'gɒlədʒɪ/ *noun* the study of diseases of the ear and throat

otolith /'əʊtəlɪθ/ *noun* a tiny piece of calcium carbonate attached to the hair cells in the saccule and utricle of the inner ear

otolith organ /'əʊtəlɪθ 'ɔ:gən/ *noun* one of two pairs of sensory organs in the inner ear, the saccule and the utricle, which pass information to the brain about the position of the head

otologist /'əʊ'tɒlədʒɪst/ *noun* a doctor who specialises in the study of the ear

otology /'əʊ'tɒlədʒɪ/ *noun* the scientific study of the ear and its diseases

-otomy /'ɒtəmɪ/ *suffix* an act of cutting into an organ or part of the body in a surgical operation

otomycosis /'əʊtəmək'əʊsɪs/ *noun* an infection of the external auditory meatus by a fungus

otoplasty /'əʊtəplæsti/ *noun* plastic surgery of the external ear to repair damage or deformity

otorhinolaryngologist /,əʊtənə,rainəʊlærɪŋ'gɒlədʒɪst/ *noun* a doctor who specialises in the study of the ear, nose and throat

otorhinolaryngology /,əʊtənə,rainəʊlærɪŋ'gɒlədʒɪ/ *noun* the study of the ear, nose and throat. Also called **ENT**

otorrhagia /,əʊtə'reɪdʒə/ *noun* bleeding from the external ear

otorrhoea /,əʊtə'rɪ:ə/ *noun* the discharge of pus from the ear (NOTE: The US spelling is **otorrhhea**.)

otosclerosis /,əʊtəʊsklə'rəʊsɪs/ *noun* a condition in which the ossicles in the middle ear become thicker and the stapes becomes fixed to the oval window leading to deafness

otoscope /'əʊtəskəʊp/ *noun* same as **auriscope**

otospongiosis /,əʊtə,spɒŋgɪəz'əʊsɪs/ *noun* the formation of spongy bone in the labyrinth of the ear which occurs in otosclerosis

Otosporin /'əʊtəspɔ:rɪn/ a trade name for ear drops containing hydrocortisone, neomycin and polymyxin

ototoxic /,əʊtə'tɒksɪk/ *adjective* referring to a drug or an effect which is damaging to organs or nerves involved in hearing or balance

outbreak /'aʊtbreɪk/ *noun* a series of cases of a disease which starts suddenly ○ There was an outbreak of typhoid fever or a typhoid outbreak.

outcome /'autkʌm/ *noun* 1. what happens as the result of something 2. a measure of the result of an intervention or treatment, e.g. the mortality rate following different methods of surgery ○ *medical outcomes*

outer /'aʊtə/ *adjective* outside or external

outer ear /'aʊtər 'ɪə/ *noun* the part of the ear which is on the outside of the head, together with the passage leading to the eardrum. Also called **external ear**

outer pleura /'autər 'pluərə/ *noun* same as **parietal pleura**

outlet /'autlət/ *noun* an opening or channel through which something can go out

out-of-body experience /'aut əv 'bɒdɪ ɪk 'spɪəriəns/ *noun* an occasion when a person feels as though they have left their body and, often, travelled along a tunnel towards a bright light (NOTE: It may happen after anaesthesia, perhaps caused by the brain not having enough oxygen.)

outpatient /'autpeɪʃ(ə)nt/ *noun* someone who comes to a hospital for treatment but does not stay overnight ◇ *She goes for treatment as an outpatient.* Abbr OP. Compare **inpatient**

outpatient department /'autpeɪʃ(ə)nt dɪ ,pɔ:tment/, **outpatients' department** /'aut peɪʃ(ə)nts dɪ,pɔ:tment/, **outpatients' clinic** /'autpeɪʃ(ə)nts ,klɪnik/ *noun* a department of a hospital which deals with outpatients

outreach /'aʊtri:tʃ/ *noun* services provided for patients or the public in general, outside a hospital or clinic

ova /'əʊvə/ plural of **ovum**

oval window /'əʊv(ə)l ,wɪndəʊ/ *noun* an oval opening between the middle ear and the inner ear. Also called **fenestra ovalis**. See illustration at **EAR** in Supplement

ovar- /əʊvərəl/ *prefix* same as **ovari-** (*used before vowels*)

ovinalgia /,əʊvə'rældʒiə/ *noun* pain in the ovaries. Also called **ovarialgia**

ovari- /əʊvərəl/ *prefix* ovaries

ovarialgia /,əʊvərə'i'ældʒiə/ *noun* same as **ovaralgia**

ovarian /ə'u'veəriən/ *adjective* referring to the ovaries

ovarian cancer /əʊ,veəriən 'kænsə/ *noun* a malignant tumour of the ovary, which occurs especially after the menopause

ovarian cycle /əʊ,veəriən 'saɪk(ə)l/ *noun* the regular changes in the ovary during a woman's reproductive life

ovarian cyst /əʊ,veəriən 'sist/ *noun* a cyst which develops in the ovaries

ovarian follicle /əʊ,veəriən 'fɒlik(ə)l/ *noun* a cell which contains an ovum. Also called **Graafian follicle**

ovariectomy /,əʊvərə'i'ektəmi/ *noun* same as **oophorectomy** (NOTE: The plural is **ovariectomies**.)

ovariocele /əʊ'veəriəʊsɪ:l/ *noun* a hernia of an ovary

ovariotomy /,əʊvərə'i'ɒtəmi/ *noun* a surgical operation to remove an ovary or a tumour in an ovary (NOTE: The plural is **ovariotomies**.)

ovaritis /,əʊvə'rætɪs/ *noun* same as **oophoritis**

ovary /'əʊv(ə)ri/ *noun* one of two organs in a woman which produce ova or egg cells and secrete the female hormone oestrogen. Also

called **oophoron**. See illustration at **UROGENITAL SYSTEM (FEMALE)** in Supplement (NOTE: The plural is **ovaries**. For other terms referring to ovaries, see words beginning with **oophor-**, **oophoro-**.)

over- /'əʊvərəl/ *prefix* too much

overbite /'əʊvəbait/ *noun* the usual formation of the teeth, in which the top incisors come down over and in front of the bottom incisors when the jaws are closed

overcome /,əʊvə'kʌm/ *verb* 1. to fight something and win 2. to make a person lose consciousness ◇ *Two people were overcome by smoke in the fire.* (NOTE: **overcoming** – **overcame** – **overcome**)

overcompensate /,əʊvə'kɒmpenset/ *verb* to try too hard to cover the effects of a condition or quality (NOTE: **overcompensating** – **overcompensated**)

overcompensation /,əʊvəkɒmpənəsən/ *noun* an attempt by a person to remove the bad effects of a mistake or a fault in their character in which they make too much effort, and so cause some other problem

overdo /,əʊvə'du:/ *verb* ◻ **to overdo it or to overdo things** to work too hard or to do too much exercise (*informal*) ◇ *She overdid it, working until 9 o'clock every evening.* ◇ *He has been overdoing things and has to rest.*

overdose /'əʊvədəʊs/ *noun* a dose of a drug which is larger than the recommended or usual dose

overeating /,əʊvə'rɪti:n/ *noun* eating too much food

overexertion /,əʊvərɪg'zɜ:f(ə)n/ *noun* doing too much physical work or taking too much exercise

overflow incontinence /,əʊvəfləʊ in'kɒntrɪnəns/ *noun* a leakage of urine because the bladder is too full

overgrow /,əʊvə'grəʊ/ *verb* (*of a tissue*) to grow over another tissue (NOTE: **overgrew** – **overgrown**)

overgrowth /'əʊvəgrəʊθ/ *noun* a growth of tissue over another tissue

overjet /'əʊvədʒɛt/ *noun* a space which separates the top incisors from the bottom incisors when the jaws are closed

overlap /,əʊvə'læp/ *verb* (*of bandages, etc.*) to lie partly on top of another (NOTE: **overlapping** – **overlapped**)

overprescribe /əʊvəpri'skraib/ *verb* to issue too many prescriptions for something ◇ *Some doctors seriously overprescribe tranquillisers.* (NOTE: **overprescribing** – **overprescribed**)

overproduction /,əʊvəprə'dʌlkʃən/ *noun* the act of producing too much of something ◇ *The condition is caused by overproduction of thyroxine by the thyroid gland.*

oversew /'əʊvəsəʊ/ *verb* to sew a patch of tissue over a perforation (NOTE: **oversewing** – **oversewed** – **oversewn**)

overt /əʊ'veɜ:t/ *adjective* easily seen with the naked eye. Opposite **occult**

over-the-counter drug /,əʊvə ðə 'kaʊntə dræg/ *noun* a drug which you can buy from a pharmacy without a doctor's prescription. Also called **OTC drug**

overweight /,əʊvə'weɪt/ *adjective* fatter and heavier than is medically advisable ○ *He is several kilos overweight for his age and height.*

overwork /,əʊvə'wɜ:k/ *noun* too much work ○ *He collapsed from overwork.* ■ *verb* to work too much, or make something work too much ○ *He has been overworking his heart.*

overwrought /,əʊvə'rɔ:t/ *adjective* very tense and nervous

ovi- /əʊvɪ/ *prefix* eggs or ova

oviduct /'əʊvidʌkt/ *noun* same as **Fallopian tube**

ovulate /'ɒvjuleɪt/ *verb* to release a mature ovum into a Fallopian tube (NOTE: **ovulating** – **ovulated**)

ovulation /,ɒvju'lɛɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the release of an ovum from the mature ovarian follicle into the Fallopian tube

ovum /'əʊvəm/ *noun* a female egg cell which, when fertilised by a spermatozoon, begins to develop into an embryo (NOTE: The plural is **ova**. For other terms referring to ova, see words beginning with **oo-**)

-oxacin /ɒksəsɪn/ *suffix* quinolone drug ○ *ciprofloxacin*

oxidase /'ɒksɪdeɪz/ *noun* an enzyme which encourages oxidation by removing hydrogen. ♀ **monoamine oxidase**

oxidation /'ɒksɪ'deɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the action of making oxides by combining with oxygen or removing hydrogen

COMMENT: Carbon compounds form oxides when metabolised with oxygen in the body, producing carbon dioxide.

oxide /'ɒksaɪd/ *noun* a compound formed with oxygen

oximeter /'ɒk'sɪmɪtə/ *noun* an instrument which measures the amount of oxygen in something, especially in blood

oxybutynin /,ɒksi'bju:tənɪn/, **oxybutinin** *noun* a drug which reduces the need to pass urine

oxycephalic /,ɒksɪkə'fælɪk/ *adjective* referring to oxycephaly

oxycephaly /,ɒksi'kefəli/ *noun* a condition in which the skull is shaped into a point, with exophthalmos and poor sight. Also called **turicephaly**

oxygen /'ɒksɪdʒən/ *noun* a chemical element that is a common colourless gas which is

present in the air and essential to human life (NOTE: The chemical symbol is **O**.)

COMMENT: Oxygen is absorbed into the bloodstream through the lungs and is carried to the tissues along the arteries. It is essential to healthy metabolism and given to patients with breathing difficulties.

oxygenate /'ɒksɪdʒəneɪt/ *verb* to combine blood with oxygen (NOTE: **oxygenating** – **oxygenated**)

oxygenated blood /,ɒksɪdʒəneɪtɪd 'blʌd/ *noun* blood which has received oxygen in the lungs and is being carried to the tissues along the arteries. Also called **arterial blood**. Compare **deoxygenated blood** (NOTE: Oxygenated blood is brighter red than venous deoxygenated blood.)

oxygenation /,ɒksɪdʒə'neɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the fact of becoming combined or filled with oxygen ○ *Blood is carried along the pulmonary artery to the lungs for oxygenation.*

oxygenator /'ɒksɪdʒə'neɪtə/ *noun* a machine which puts oxygen into the blood, used as an artificial lung in surgery

oxygen cylinder /'ɒksɪdʒən ,sɪlɪndə/ *noun* a heavy metal tube which contains oxygen and is connected to a patient's oxygen mask

oxygen mask /'ɒksɪdʒən mɑ:sk/ *noun* a mask connected to a supply of oxygen, which can be put over the face to help someone with breathing difficulties

oxygen tent /'ɒksɪdʒən tent/ *noun* a type of cover put over a person so that he or she can breathe in oxygen

oxygen therapy /'ɒksɪdʒən θerəpi/ *noun* any treatment involving the administering of oxygen, e.g. in an oxygen tent or in emergency treatment for heart failure

oxyhaemoglobin /,ɒksi,hi:mə'gləubɪn/ *noun* a compound of haemoglobin and oxygen, which is the way oxygen is carried in arterial blood from the lungs to the tissues. ♀ **haemoglobin** (NOTE: The US spelling is **oxyhemoglobin**.)

oxytic /ɒk'sɪtɪk/ *adjective* referring to glands and cells in the stomach which produce acid

oxytic cell /ɒk'sɪtɪk sel/ *noun* a cell in the gastric gland which secretes hydrochloric acid. Also called **parietal cell**

oxytetracycline /,ɒksi,tet्रə'saɪklɪ:n/ *noun* an antibiotic which is effective against a wide range of organisms

oxytocic /,ɒksi'təʊsɪk/ *noun* a drug which helps to start the process of childbirth, or speeds it up ■ *adjective* starting or speeding up childbirth by causing contractions in the muscles of the uterus

oxytocin /,ɒksi'təʊsɪn/ *noun* a hormone secreted by the posterior pituitary gland, which controls the contractions of the uterus and encourages the flow of milk

COMMENT: An extract of oxytocin is used as an injection to start contractions of the uterus and to assist in the third stage of labour.

oxyuriasis /'ɒksɪjʊ'rائیسیس/ *noun* same as **enterobiasis**

Oxyuris /'ɒksi'juəریس/ *noun* same as **Enterobius**

ozaena /əʊ'zi:nə/ *noun* **1.** a disease of the nose in which the nasal passage is blocked and mucus forms, giving off an unpleasant smell **2.** any unpleasant discharge from the nose (NOTE: The US spelling is **ozena**.)

ozone /'əʊzəən/ *noun* a gas present in the atmosphere in small quantities, which is harmful at high levels of concentration

COMMENT: The maximum amount of ozone which is considered safe for humans to breathe is 80 parts per billion. Even in lower concentrations it irritates the throat, makes people cough and gives headaches and asthma attacks similar to hay fever. The ozone layer in the stratosphere acts as a protection against the harmful effects of the sun's radiation, and the destruction or reduction of the layer has the effect of allowing more radiation to pass through the atmosphere with harmful effects such as skin cancer on humans.

ozone sickness /'əʊzəəن ,sɪکنəس/ *noun* a condition experienced by jet travellers, due to levels of ozone in aircraft

P

P ♦ **substance P**

Pa abbr pascal

pacemaker /'peɪsmēkə/ *noun* 1. a node in the heart which regulates the heartbeat. Also called **sinoatrial node**, **SA node** 2. ♦ **cardiac pacemaker**, **epicardial pacemaker**

COMMENT: An electrode is usually attached to the epicardium and linked to the device which can be implanted in various positions in the chest.

pachy- /pækɪ/ *prefix* thickening

pachydactyly /,pækɪ'dæktlɪ/ *noun* a condition in which the fingers and toes become thicker than usual

pachydermia /,pækɪ'dz:miə/, **pachyderma** /,pækɪ'dz:ma/ *noun* a condition in which the skin becomes thicker than normal

pachymeningitis /,pækɪ'menɪn'dʒaɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the dura mater

pachymeninx /,pækɪ'mi:nɪŋks/ *noun* same as **dura mater**

pachyonychia /,pækɪə'nikiə/ *noun* unusual thickness of the nails

pachysomia /,pækɪ'səmɪə/ *noun* a condition in which soft tissues of the body become unusually thick

pacifier /'pæsɪfaɪə/ *noun* US a child's dummy

pacing /'peɪsɪŋ/ *noun* a surgical operation to implant or attach a cardiac pacemaker

Pacinian corpuscle /pə,sinjən 'kɔ:pʌs(ə)l/ *noun* a sensory nerve ending in the skin which is sensitive to touch and vibrations

pack /pæk/ *noun* 1. a tampon of gauze or cotton wool, used to fill an orifice such as the nose or vagina 2. a piece of wet material folded tightly, used to press on the body 3. a treatment in which a blanket or sheet is used to wrap round the body 4. a box or bag of goods for sale ○ *a pack of sticking plaster* ○ *The cough tablets are sold in packs of fifty.* ■ *verb* 1. to fill an orifice with a tampon ○ *The ear was packed with cotton wool to absorb the discharge.* 2. to put things in cases or boxes ○ *The transplant organ arrived at the hospital packed in ice.*

packed cell volume /,pækɪt 'sel ,vɒlju:m/ *noun* the volume of red blood cells in a person's blood shown against the total volume of blood. Also called **haematocrit**

packing /'pækɪŋ/ *noun* absorbent material put into a wound or part of the body to absorb fluids

pack up /,pæk 'ʌp/ *verb* to stop working (informal) ○ *His heart simply packed up under the strain.*

PACT abbr prescribing analyses and cost

pad /pa:d/ *noun* 1. a piece or mass of soft absorbent material, placed on part of the body to protect it ○ *She wrapped a pad of soft cotton wool round the sore.* 2. a thickening of part of the skin

paed- /pi:d/ *prefix* same as **paedo-** (*used before vowels*) (NOTE: The US spelling is **ped-**)

paediatric /,pi:di'ætrɪk/ *adjective* referring to the treatment of the diseases of children ○ *A new paediatric hospital has been opened.* ○ *Parents can visit children in the paediatric wards at any time.*

'Paediatric day surgery minimizes the length of hospital stay and therefore is less traumatic for both child and parents' [British Journal of Nursing]

paediatrician /,pi:diə'trɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a doctor who specialises in the treatment of diseases of children

paediatrics /,pi:di'ætriks/ *noun* the study of children, their development and diseases. Compare **geriatrics**

paedo- /pi:dəʊ/ *prefix* referring to children
paedodontia *noun* another spelling of **pedodontia**

Paget's disease /'pædʒəts dɪ,zi:z/ *noun* 1. same as **osteitis deformans** 2. a form of breast cancer which starts as an itchy rash round the nipple [Described 1877. After Sir James Paget (1814–99), British surgeon.]

pain /peɪn/ *noun* the feeling of severe discomfort which a person has when hurt ○ *The doctor gave him an injection to relieve the pain.* ○ *She is suffering from back pain.* (NOTE: Pain can be used in the plural to show that it recurs: **She has pains in her left leg.**) □ **to be in great**

pain to have very sharp pains which are difficult to bear

COMMENT: Pain is carried by the sensory nerves to the central nervous system. From the site it travels up the spinal column to the medulla and through a series of neurones which use Substance P as the neurotransmitter to the sensory cortex. Pain is the method by which a person knows that part of the body is damaged or infected, though the pain is not always felt in the affected part. See synalgia.

pain clinic /'peɪn ,klinik/ *noun* a centre which looks after people with severe persistent pain and whose staff include professionals from many specialist areas of medicine

painful /'peɪnf(ə)l/ *adjective* causing pain ○ *She has a painful skin disease.* ○ *His foot is so painful he can hardly walk.* ○ *Your eye looks very red – is it very painful?*

painkiller /'peɪnkɪlə/ *noun* a drug that reduces pain

painless /'peɪnləs/ *adjective* not causing pain ○ *a painless method of removing warts*

pain pathway /'peɪn ,pa:θwei/ *noun* a series of linking nerve fibres and neurones which carry impulses of pain from the site to the sensory cortex

pain receptor /'peɪn rɪ,septə/ *noun* a nerve ending which is sensitive to pain

pain relief /'peɪn rɪ,li:f/ *noun* the act of easing pain by using analgesics

paint /peɪnt/ *noun* a coloured antiseptic, analgesic or astringent liquid which is put on the surface of the body ■ *verb* to cover a wound with an antiseptic, analgesic or astringent liquid or lotion ○ *She painted the rash with calamine.*

painter's colic /,peɪntəz 'kolɪk/ *noun* a form of lead poisoning caused, especially formerly, by working with paint

pain threshold /'peɪn ,θrefθəuld/ *noun* the point at which a person finds it impossible to bear pain without crying

palatal /'pælət(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to the palate

palate /'pælət/ *noun* the roof of the mouth and floor of the nasal cavity, formed of the hard and soft palates

palate bone /'pælət bəʊn/ *noun* one of two bones which form part of the hard palate, the orbits of the eyes and the cavity behind the nose. Also called **palatine bone**

palatine /'pælətəɪn/ *adjective* referring to the palate

palatine arch /'pælətəɪn ə:tʃ/ *noun* a fold of tissue between the soft palate and the pharynx

palatine bone /'pælətəɪn bəʊn/ *noun* same as **palate bone**

palatine tonsil /,pælətəɪn 'tɒns(ə)l/ *noun* same as **tonsil**

palato- /pælətəʊ/ *prefix* the palate

palatoglossal arch /,pælətəʊ,glos(ə)l ə:tʃ/ *noun* a fold between the soft palate and the tongue, anterior to the tonsil

palatopharyngeal arch /,pælətəʊfærɪn ,dʒɪəl ə:tʃ/ *noun* a fold between the soft palate and the pharynx, posterior to the tonsil

palatoplasty /'pælətəplæstɪ/ *noun* plastic surgery of the roof of the mouth, e.g. to repair a cleft palate

palatoplegia /,pælətə'pli:dʒə/ *noun* paralysis of the soft palate

palorrhaphy /,pælə'tɔ:rəfi/ *noun* a surgical operation to suture and close a cleft palate. Also called **staphylorrhaphy**, **urancorraphy**

pale /peɪl/ *adjective* light coloured or white ○ *After her illness she looked pale and tired.* □ **to turn pale** to become white in the face, because the flow of blood is reduced ○ *Some people turn pale at the sight of blood.*

paleness /'peɪlnəs/ *noun* the fact of being pale

pali- /pæli/ *prefix* same as **palin-**

palilalia /,pælɪ'lɛliə/ *noun* a speech disorder in which the person repeats words

palin- /'pælin/ *prefix* repeating

palindromic /,pælin'drəmɪk/ *adjective* recurring ○ *a palindromic disease*

palliative /'pæli:tɪv/ *noun* a treatment or drug which relieves symptoms but does nothing to cure the disease which causes the symptoms. For example, a painkiller can reduce the pain in a tooth, but will not cure the caries which causes the pain. ■ *adjective* providing relief

‘...coronary artery bypass grafting is a palliative procedure aimed at the relief of persistent angina pectoris’ [British Journal of Hospital Medicine]

palliative care /'pæli:tɪv 'keə/, **palliative treatment** /,pæli:tɪv 'trɪtmənt/ *noun* treatment which helps to reduce the symptoms of a disease, especially a terminal or chronic condition, but does not cure it

COMMENT: Palliative care may involve giving antibiotics, transfusions, pain-killing drugs, low-dose chemotherapy and psychological and social support to help the person and their family adjust to the illness. The treatment is often provided in a hospice.

pallidotomy /,pælɪ'dɒtəmi/ *noun* an operation on the brain which can reduce many of the symptoms of Parkinson’s disease, such as tremor, bradykinesia and bent posture

pallium /'pæliəm/ *noun* the layer of grey matter on the surface of the cerebral cortex

pallor /'pælər/ *noun* the condition of being pale

palm /pɑ:m/ *noun* the inner surface of the hand, extending from the bases of the fingers to the wrist

palmar /'pælma/ *adjective* referring to the palm of the hand

palmar arch /'pælmər ɑ:tʃ/ *noun* one of two arches or joins within the palm formed by two arteries which link together

palmar fascia /,pælma 'feɪʃə/ *noun* the tendons in the palm of the hand

palmar interosseous /,pælmər ,inter 'ɔ:sɪəs/ *noun* a deep muscle between the bones in the hand

palmar region /'pælmə ,ri:dʒ(ə)n/ *noun* an area of skin around the palm

palpable /'pælpəb(ə)l/ *adjective* 1. able to be felt when touched 2. able to be examined with the hand

'...mammography is the most effective technique available for the detection of occult (non-palpable) breast cancer. It has been estimated that mammography can detect a carcinoma two years before it becomes palpable' [Southern Medical Journal]

palpate /pæl'peɪt/ *verb* to examine part of the body by feeling it with the hand

palpation /pæl'peɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* an examination of part of the body by feeling it with the hand

palpebra /'pælpib्रə/ *noun* same as **eyelid**
(NOTE: The plural is **palpebrae**.)

palpebral /'pælpib्रəl/ *adjective* referring to the eyelids

palpitate /'pælpitət/ *verb* to beat rapidly or irregularly

palpitation /pælpɪ'teɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* awareness that the heart is beating rapidly or irregularly, possibly caused by stress or by a disease

pan- /pæn/ *prefix* referring to everything

panacea /,pænə'si:ə/ *noun* a medicine which is supposed to cure everything

Panadol /'pænədɒl/ a trade name for paracetamol

panarthritis /,pænəʊ:'θraɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of all the tissues of a joint or of all the joints in the body

pancarditis /,pænku:'dɑ:rtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of all the tissues in the heart, i.e. the heart muscle, the endocardium and the pericardium

pancreas /'pæŋkriəs/ *noun* a gland which lies across the back of the body between the kidneys. See illustration at **DIGESTIVE SYSTEM** in Supplement

COMMENT: The pancreas has two functions: the first is to secrete the pancreatic juice which goes into the duodenum and digests proteins and carbohydrates; the second function is to produce the hormone insulin which regulates the use of sugar by the body. This hormone is secreted into the bloodstream by the islets of Langerhans which are in the pancreas.

pancreatectomy /,pæŋkriə'tektəmɪ/ *noun* the surgical removal of all or part of the pancreas

pancreatic /,pæŋkri'ætɪk/ *adjective* referring to the pancreas

pancreatic duct /,pæŋkri'ætɪk dʌkt/ *noun* a duct leading through the pancreas to the duodenum

pancreatic juice /,pæŋkri'ætɪk dʒu:s/, **pancreatic secretion** /,pæŋkri,ætɪk sɪ'kri:ʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a digestive juice, formed of enzymes produced by the pancreas, which digests fats and carbohydrates

pancreatin /'pæŋkristɪn/ *noun* a substance made from enzymes secreted by the pancreas, used to treat someone whose pancreas does not produce pancreatic enzymes

pancreatitis /,pæŋkriə'taɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the pancreas

pancreatotomy /,pæŋkri'ætəmɪ/, **pancreatotomy** /,pæŋkriə'tɒtəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to open the pancreatic duct

pancytopenia /,pænsaɪta'pi:nɪə/ *noun* a condition in which there are too few red and white blood cells and blood platelets

pandemic /'pæn'demɪk/ *noun* an epidemic disease which affects many parts of the world. Compare **endemic**, **epidemic** ■ *adjective* widespread

pang /pæŋ/ *noun* a sudden sharp pain, especially in the intestine ○ *After not eating for a day, she suffered pangs of hunger.*

panhysterectomy /,pænhɪstə'rektmɪ/ *noun* the surgical removal of all the uterus and the cervix

panic /'pæník/ *noun* a feeling of great fear which cannot be stopped and which sometimes results in irrational behaviour ○ *He was in a panic as he sat in the consultant's waiting room.* ■ *verb* to be suddenly afraid ○ *She panicked when the surgeon told her she might need to have an operation.*

panic attack /'pæník ə,tæk/ *noun* a sudden onset of panic

panic disorder /'pæník dɪs,ɔ:də/ *noun* a condition in which somebody has frequent panic attacks

panniculitis /pə,níkju'lartɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the panniculus adiposus, producing tender swellings on the thighs and breasts

panniculus /pə'níkjuləs/ *noun* a layer of membranous tissue

panniculus adiposus /pə,níkjuləs ,ædɪ'pəsəs/ *noun* a layer of fat underneath the skin

pannus /'pænəs/ *noun* a growth on the cornea containing tiny blood vessels

panophthalmia /,pænfθəl'miə/, **panophthalmitis** /,pænfθæl'maɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the whole of the eye

panosteitis /,pænəsti'aitɪs/, **panostitis** /pænə'staɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the whole of a bone

panotitis /,pænəo'taɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation affecting all of the ear, but especially the middle ear

panproctocolectomy /,pænprɒktəkə'leɪktəmɪ/ *noun* the surgical removal of the whole of the rectum and the colon

pant /paʊnt/ *verb* to take short breaths because of too much exercise, to gasp for breath ○ *He was panting when he reached the top of the stairs.*

pant- /pænt/ *prefix* same as **pan-**

panto- /pæntəʊ/ *prefix* same as **pan-**

pantothenic acid /,pæntə,θenɪk 'æsɪd/ *noun* a vitamin of the vitamin B complex, found in liver, yeast and eggs

pantotropic /,pæntə'trɒpɪk/, **pantropic** /pæn'trɒpɪk/ *adjective* referring to a virus which attacks many different parts of the body

Papanicolaou test /,pæpənɪkə'u:leru:/ *test/noun* a method of staining samples from various body secretions to test for malignancy, e.g. testing a cervical smear sample to see if cancer is present. Also called **Pap test** [Described 1933. After George Nicholas Papanicolaou (1883–1962), Greek anatomist and physician who worked in the USA.]

papaveretum /pə,pævə'rɪ:təm/ *noun* a preparation of opium used to reduce pain

papilla /pə'pɪlə/ *noun* a small swelling which sticks up above the usual surface level ○ *The upper surface of the tongue is covered with papillae.* (NOTE: The plural is **papillae**.)

papillary /pə'pɪlərɪ/ *adjective* referring to papillae

papillitis /,pæpɪ'laitɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the optic disc at the back of the eye

papilloedema /,pæpɪləʊ'di:mə/ *noun* an accumulation of fluid in the optic disc at the back of the eye

papilloma /,pæpɪ'ləʊmə/ *noun* a benign tumour on the skin or mucous membrane (NOTE: The plural is **papillomas** or **papillomata**.)

papillomatosis /,pæpɪləʊmə'təʊsɪs/ *noun* 1. being affected with papillomata 2. the formation of papillomata

papillotomy /,pæpɪ'lɒtəmɪ/ *noun* the operation of cutting into the body at the point where the common bile duct and pancreatic duct meet to go into the duodenum, in order to improve bile drainage and allow any stones to pass out

papovavirus /pə'pəʊvəvairəs/ *noun* a family of viruses which start tumours, some of which are malignant, and some of which, such as warts, are benign

Pap test /'pæp test/, **Pap smear** /'pæp smiə/ *noun* same as **Papanicolaou test**

popular /'pæpjʊlər/ *adjective* referring to a papule

papule /'pæpjʊ:l/ *noun* a small coloured spot raised above the surface of the skin as part of a rash (NOTE: A flat spot is a **macule**.)

patulo- /pæpjʊləʊ/ *prefix* relating to a papule

papulopustular /,pæpjʊləʊ'pʌstjʊlə/ *adjective* referring to a rash with both papules and pustules

papulosquamous /,pæpjʊləʊ'skweməs/ *adjective* referring to a rash with papules and a scaly skin

para- /pærə/ *prefix* 1. similar to or near 2. changed or beyond

parabiosis /,pærəbɪə'əʊsɪs/ *noun* a condition in which two individuals are joined, e.g. conjoined twins

paracentesis /,pærəsēn'ti:sɪs/ *noun* the procedure of draining fluid from a cavity inside the body using a hollow needle, either for diagnostic purposes or because the fluid is harmful. Also called **tapping**

paracetamol /,pærə'si:təməl/ *noun* a common drug used to relieve mild to moderate pain and reduce fever (NOTE: The US name is **acetaminophen**.)

paracolpitis /,pærəkol'paitɪs/ same as **pericolpitis**

paracusis /,pærə'kjū:sɪs/, **paracusia** /,pærə'ku:sɪə/ *noun* a disorder of hearing

paradoxical breathing /,pærədɒksɪk(ə)l'bri:ðɪŋ/, **paradoxical respiration** /,pærədɒkstɪk(ə)l',respi'reɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a condition affecting someone with broken ribs, where the chest appears to move in when he or she breathes in, and appears to move out when he or she breathes out

paradoxical sleep /,pærədɒksɪk(ə)l'sli:p/ *noun* same as **REM sleep**

paradoxus /,pærə'dɒksəs/ ♦ **pulsus paradoxus**

paraesthesia /,pærəsɪs'θɛzɪə/ *noun* an unexplained tingling sensation. ♦ **pins and needles** (NOTE: The plural is **paraesthesiae**.)

‘...the sensory symptoms are paraesthesiae which may spread up the arm over the course of about 20 minutes’ [British Journal of Hospital Medicine]

paraffin /'pærəfin/ *noun* an oil produced from petroleum, forming the base of some ointments, and also used for heating and light

paraffin gauze /'pærəfin ɡɔ:z/ *noun* gauze covered with solid paraffin, used as a dressing

parageusia /,pærə'gju:sɪə/ *noun* 1. a disorder of the sense of taste 2. an unpleasant taste in the mouth

paragonimiasis /,pærəgɒnɪ'maiəsɪs/ *noun* a tropical disease in which the lungs are infested with the fluke of the genus *Paragonimus* and the person has bronchitis and coughs up blood. Also called **endemic haemoptysis**

paragraphia /,pærə'græfɪə/ *noun* the writing of different words or letters from the ones intended, as a result of a stroke or disease

paraguard stretcher /'pærəgɔ:d ,stretʃə/ *noun* a type of strong stretcher to which the injured person is attached securely, so that he or she can be carried upright. It is used for rescu-

ing people from mountains or from tall buildings.

para-influenza virus /pærə ,influ'enzə ,vərəs/ *noun* a virus which causes upper respiratory tract infection. In its structure it is identical to paramyxoviruses and the measles virus.

paralyse /'pærəlaɪz/ *verb* to make a part of the body unable to carry out voluntary movements by weakening or damaging muscles or nerves so that they cannot function, or by using a drug ○ *His arm was paralysed after the stroke.* ○ *She is paralysed from the waist down.* (NOTE: The US spelling is **paralyze**.)

paralysis /pə'ræləsɪs/ *noun* a condition in which part of the body cannot be moved because the motor nerves have been damaged or the muscles have been weakened ○ *The condition causes paralysis of the lower limbs.* ○ *He suffered temporary paralysis of the right arm.*

COMMENT: Paralysis can have many causes: the commonest are injuries to or diseases of the brain or the spinal column.

paralysis agitans /pə,ræləsɪs 'ædʒɪtəns/ *noun* same as **Parkinsonism**

paralytic /pærə'lɪtɪk/ *adjective* 1. referring to paralysis 2. referring to a person who is paralysed

paralytica /pærə'lɪtɪkə/ ♦ **dementia paralytica**

paralytic ileus /,pærəlɪtɪk 'ɪliəs/ *noun* an obstruction in the ileum caused by paralysis of the muscles of the intestine. Also called **adynamic ileus**

paralytic poliomyelitis /,pærəlɪtɪk ,pələiəʊ,maɪ'e'laitɪs/ *noun* poliomyelitis which affects the muscles

paramedian /,pærə'mi:dɪən/ *adjective* near the midline of the body

paramedian plane /,pærə'mi:diən plen/ *noun* a plane near the midline of the body, parallel to the sagittal plane and at right angles to the coronal plane. See illustration at **ANATOMICAL TERMS** in Supplement

paramedic /,pærə'medɪk/ *noun* a person whose work involves the restoration of health and normal functioning (NOTE: **Paramedic** is used to refer to all types of services and staff, from therapists and hygienists, to ambulance drivers and radiographers, but does not include doctors, nurses or midwives.)

paramedical /,pærə'medɪk(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to services linked to those given by nurses, doctors and surgeons

paramesonephric duct /,pærəməsə'nefrɪk ,dʌkt/ *noun* one of the two ducts in an embryo which develop into the uterus and Fallopian tubes. Also called **Müllerian duct**

parameter /pə'ræmɪtə/ *noun* a measurement of something such as blood pressure which may be an important consideration in treating the condition which the person has

parametritis /,pærəmɪ'traɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the parametrium

parametrium /,pærə'mɪtriəm/ *noun* the connective tissue around the uterus

paramnesia /,pærəm'ni:ziə/ *noun* a disorder of the memory in which someone remembers events which have not happened

paramyxovirus /,pærəmɪksə'u'veɪrəs/ *noun* one of a group of viruses, which cause mumps, measles and other infectious diseases

paranasal /,pærə'næs(ə)l/ *adjective* by the side of the nose

paranasal sinus /,pærəneɪz(ə)l 'saɪnəs/, **paranasal air sinus** /,pærəneɪz(ə)l 'eə ,saɪnəs/ *noun* one of the four pairs of sinuses in the skull near the nose, which open into the nasal cavity and are lined with sticky mucus (NOTE: They are the frontal, maxillary, ethmoidal and sphenoidal sinuses.)

paranoia /,pærə'nɔɪə/ *noun* a behaviour characterised by mistaken ideas or delusions of persecution or self-importance

paranoiac /,pærə'nɔɪək/ *noun* a person affected by paranoia

paranoid /'pærənɔɪd/ *adjective* having a fixed delusion

paranoid disorder /,pærənɔɪd dɪ'sɔ:də/ *noun* a mental disorder which causes someone experiencing it to believe strongly that something is not right with them, with someone else or with the world generally and to maintain the belief even when given evidence against it (NOTE: The preferred term is delusional disorder.)

paranoid schizophrenia /,pærənɔɪd ,skɪzəʊ'fri:nɪə/ *noun* a form of schizophrenia in which the person believes he or she is being persecuted

paraparesis /,pærəpə'ri:sɪs/ *noun* incomplete paralysis of the legs

paraphasia /,pærə'feɪziə/ *noun* a speech disorder in which the person uses a wrong sound in the place of the correct word or phrase

paraphimosis /,pærəfaɪ'moʊsɪs/ *noun* a condition in which the foreskin around the penis is tight and may have to be removed by circumcision

paraphrenia /,pærə'fri:nɪə/ *noun* a dated term for a mental disorder involving delusions without severe personality deterioration

paraplegia /,pærə'pli:dʒə/ *noun* paralysis which affects the lower part of the body and the legs, usually caused by an injury to the spinal cord

paraplegic /,pærə'pli:dʒɪk/ *noun* someone who has paraplegia ■ *adjective* paralysed in the lower part of the body and legs

paraprofessional /,pærə'prə'feʃ(ə)n(ə)l/ *noun* somebody with training who acts as an assistant to a professional person

parapsoriasis /,pærəsə'sraɪəsis/ noun a group of skin diseases with scales, similar to psoriasis

parapsychology /,pærəsɔɪ'kɒlədʒi/ noun the study of effects of the mind which appear not to be explained by known psychological or scientific principles, e.g. extrasensory perception and telepathy

Paraquat /'pærəkwaɪt/ a trade name for dimethyl dipyridilium used as a weedkiller

parasagittal /,pærə'sædʒɪtl(ə)l/ adjective near the midline of the body

parasagittal plane /,pærə'sædʒɪtl(ə)l plen/ noun a plane near the midline of the body, parallel to the sagittal plane and at right angles to the coronal plane. Also called **paramedian plane**. See illustration at **ANATOMICAL TERMS** in Supplement

parasitaemia /,pærəsɪ'ti:mɪə/ noun the presence of parasites in the blood

parasite /'pærəsait/ noun a plant or animal which lives on or inside another organism and draws nourishment from that organism

COMMENT: The commonest parasites affecting humans are lice on the skin, and various types of worms in the intestines. Many diseases such as malaria and amoebic dysentery are caused by infestation with parasites.

parasitic /,pærə'sitɪk/ adjective referring to parasites

parasitic cyst /,pærəsɪtɪk 'sist/ noun a cyst caused by the growing larvae of a parasite in the body

parasiticide /,pærə'saɪtɪsaɪd/ noun a substance which kills parasites ■ adjective killing parasites

parasitology /,pærəsətɒ'lɒdʒi/ noun the scientific study of parasites

parasuicide /pærə'su:saɪd/ noun an act where someone tries to kill himself or herself, but without really intending to do so, rather as a way of drawing attention to his or her psychological condition

parasympathetic /,pærəsɪmɒ'θetɪk/ adjective referring to the parasympathetic nervous system

parasympathetic nervous system /,pærəsɪmɒ'θetɪk 'nɜ:vəs ,sɪstəm/, **parasympathetic system** /,pærəsɪmɒ'θetɪk ,sɪstəm/ noun one of two parts of the autonomic nervous system. Its messages reach the organs of the body through the cranial and sacral nerves to the eyes, the gastrointestinal system and other organs. ♦ **sympathetic nervous system**

COMMENT: The parasympathetic nervous system acts in opposition to the sympathetic nervous system, slowing down the action of the heart, reducing blood pressure and increasing the rate of digestion.

parasympatholytic /,pærəsɪm,pæθə'lɪtɪk/ noun a drug which reduces the effects of the parasympathetic nervous system by relax-

ing smooth muscle, reducing the amount of sweat and saliva produced and widening the pupil of the eye. An example is atropine. ■ adjective relating to a parasympatholytic drug

parasympathomimetic /,pærəsɪm,pæθə'mimɪtɪk/ noun a drug which stimulates the parasympathetic nervous system by making smooth muscle more tense, widening the blood vessels, slowing the heart rate, increasing the amount of sweat and saliva produced and contracting the pupil of the eye ■ adjective producing effects similar to those of a parasympathomimetic drug

parathormone /pærə'θɔ:məʊn/ noun the hormone secreted by the parathyroid glands which regulates the level of calcium in blood plasma. Also called **parathyroid hormone**

parathyroid /,pærə'θaɪrɔɪd/ noun same as **parathyroid gland** ■ adjective 1. relating to a parathyroid gland 2. located close to the thyroid gland

parathyroidectomy /,pærə'θaɪrɔɪd'ektəmɪ/ noun the surgical removal of a parathyroid gland

parathyroid gland /pærə'θaɪrɔɪd glænd/ noun one of four small glands which are situated in or near the wall of the thyroid gland and secrete a hormone which controls the way in which calcium and phosphorus are deposited in bones

parathyroid hormone /pærə'θaɪrɔɪd hɔ:məʊn/ noun same as **parathormone**

paratyphoid /,pærə'taɪfɔɪd/, **paratyphoid fever** /,pærə'taɪfɔɪd ,fi:və/ noun an infectious disease which has similar symptoms to typhoid and is caused by bacteria transmitted by humans or animals

COMMENT: There are three forms of paratyphoid fever, known by the letters A, B, and C, caused by three types of bacterium, *Salmonella paratyphi* A, B, and C. TAB injections give immunity against paratyphoid A and B, but not against C.

paravertebral /,pærə've:tɪbrəl/ adjective near the vertebrae, beside the spinal column

paravertebral injection /,pærə,vɜ:tɪbrəl ɪn'dʒekʃən/ noun an injection of local anaesthetic into the back near the vertebrae

parenchyma /pə'reŋkɪmə/ noun tissues which contain the working cells of an organ

parenchymal /pə'reŋkɪməl/ adjective relating to parenchyma

parent /'peərənt/ noun a biological or adoptive mother or father ■ verb to carry out the role of a parent

'...in most paediatric wards today open visiting is the norm, with parent care much in evidence. Parents who are resident in the hospital also need time spent with them' [Nursing Times]

parent cell /'peərənt sel/ noun an original cell which divides into daughter cells by mitosis

parenteral /pæ'rentərəl/ *adjective* referring to medication which is not given by mouth but in the form of injections or suppositories. Compare **enteral, oral**

parenteral nutrition /pæ'rentərəl nju:trɪʃn/, **parenteral feeding** /pæ'rentərəl 'fi:dɪŋ/ *noun* the process of feeding someone by means other than the digestive tract, especially by giving injections of glucose to someone critically ill

parenthood /'peərənθʊd/ *noun* the state of being a parent

parenting /'peərəntɪŋ/ *noun* the activities involved in bringing up children □ **parenting skills** the abilities and experience that make someone a good parent

paresis /pə'ri:sɪs/ *noun* partial paralysis

paresthesia /,pærɪθ'zi:zɪə/ *noun* *US* same as **paraesthesia**

paries /'peəri:z/ *noun* 1. a superficial part of a structure of an organ 2. the wall of a cavity (NOTE: [all senses] The plural is **parietes**.)

parietal /pə'rɪət(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to the wall of a cavity or any organ

parietal bone /pə'rɪət(ə)l bəʊn/, **parietal** /pə'rɪət(ə)l/ *noun* one of two bones which form the sides of the skull

parietal cell /pə'rɪət(ə)l sel/ *noun* same as **oxytic cell**

parietal lobe /pə'rɪət(ə)l lob/ *noun* the middle lobe of the cerebral hemisphere, which is associated with language and other mental processes, and also contains the postcentral gyrus

parietal pericardium /pə'rɪət(ə)l ,peri'kɑ:dɪəm/ *noun* the outer layer of the serous pericardium, not in direct contact with the heart muscle, which lies inside and is attached to the fibrous pericardium

parietal peritoneum /pə'rɪət(ə)l ,perɪ'te'ni:əm/ *noun* part of the peritoneum which lines the abdominal cavity and covers the abdominal viscera

parietal pleura /pə'rɪət(ə)l 'plu:rə/ *noun* a membrane attached to the diaphragm and covering the chest cavity. Also called **outer pleura**. See illustration at **LUNGS** in Supplement

-parin /pə'rɪn/ *suffix* used for anticoagulants □ **heparin**

Paris /'pærɪs/ ♀ **plaster of Paris**

parity /'pærɪti/ *noun* 1. equality of status or position, especially in terms of pay or rank 2. the number of children that a woman has given birth to

parkinsonian /,pærɪn'səʊniən/ *adjective* referring to Parkinson's disease □ *parkinsonian tremor*

Parkinsonism /'pærɪnsənɪz(ə)m/ *noun* a progressive nervous disorder, which may be an effect of some drugs, repeated head injuries or brain tumours. The main symptoms are trem-

bling hands and a slow shuffling walk. Also called **paralysis agitans**

Parkinson's disease /'pærɪksənз dɪ,zɪ:z/ *noun* a progressive nervous disorder without a known cause which is a type of Parkinsonism, the main symptoms of which are trembling hands, a slow shuffling walk and difficulty in speaking [Described 1817. After James Parkinson (1755–1824), English physician.]

COMMENT: Parkinson's disease affects the basal ganglia of the brain which control movement, due to the destruction of dopaminergic neurones. Some cases can be improved by treatment with levodopa, which is the precursor of the missing neurotransmitter dopamine, or by drugs which inhibit the breakdown of dopamine.

paronychia /,pærə'nɪkiə/ *noun* inflammation near the nail which forms pus, caused by an infection in the fleshy part of the tip of a finger. ♀ **whitlow**

parosmia /pə'rɒzmiə/ *noun* a disorder of the sense of smell

parotid /pə'rɒtɪd/ *adjective* near the ear

parotid gland /pə'rɒtɪd glænd/, **parotid** /pə'rɒtɪd/ *noun* one of the glands which produces saliva, situated in the neck behind the joint of the jaw and ear

parotitis /,pærə'taɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the parotid glands

COMMENT: Mumps is the commonest form of parotitis, where the parotid gland becomes swollen and the sides of the face appear fat.

parous /'peərəs/ *adjective* referring to a woman who has given birth to one or more children

paroxetine /pə'rɒksɪtɪ:n/ *noun* an antidepressant drug which prolongs the effects of serotonin in the brain

paroxysm /'pærəksɪz(ə)m/ *noun* 1. a sudden movement of the muscles □ *She suffered paroxysms of coughing during the night.* 2. the sudden re-appearance of symptoms of the disease 3. a sudden attack of coughing or sneezing

paroxysmal /pærək'sɪzm(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to a paroxysm, or similar to a paroxysm

paroxysmal dyspnoea /pærək,sɪzm(ə)l disp'nɪ:ə/ *noun* an attack of breathlessness at night, usually caused by congestive heart failure

paroxysmal tachycardia /pærək,sɪzm(ə)l tæk'tɪk'ɑ:diə/ *noun* same as **nodal tachycardia**

parrot disease /'pærət dɪ,zɪ:z/ *noun* same as **psittacosis**

pars /pɑ:z/ *noun* the Latin word for part

part /pɑ:t/ *noun* a piece, one of the sections which make up a whole organ or body

partial /'pɑ:ʃ(ə)l/ *adjective* not complete, affecting only part of something □ *He only made a partial recovery.*

partial amnesia /'pɑ:ʃ(ə)l æm'nɪ:ziə/ *noun* an inability to remember specific facts, such as names of people

partial deafness /'pɑ:ʃ(ə)l 'defnəs/ *noun* the condition of being able to hear some sounds but not all

partial denture /'pɑ:ʃ(ə)l 'dentʃə/ *noun* part of a set of false teeth, replacing only a few teeth

partial gastrectomy /'pɑ:ʃ(ə)l ɡæt'rektəmi/ *noun* an operation to remove part of the stomach

partially /'pɑ:ʃ(ə)li/ *adverb* not completely ○ *He is partially paralysed in his right side.* □ **partially deaf** able to hear some sounds but not all □ **partially sighted** having only partial vision ○ *Large print books are available for people who are partially sighted.*

partially sighted register /'pɑ:ʃ(ə)li'saɪtɪd, redʒɪstər/ *noun* a list of people who have poor sight but are not blind, and may require some special services

partial mastectomy /'pɑ:ʃ(ə)l mæstektəmi/ *noun* an operation to remove part of a breast

partial pancreatectomy /'pɑ:ʃ(ə)l, pænkrɪə'tektəmi/ *noun* an operation to remove part of the pancreas

partial thickness burn /'pɑ:ʃ(ə)l 'θɪkknəs bɜ:n/ *noun* a burn which leaves enough tissue for the skin to grow again. Also called **superficial thickness burn**

partial vision /'pɑ:ʃ(ə)l 'vɪʒ(ə)n/ *noun* the ability to see only a part of the total field of vision, or not being able to see anything very clearly

particle /'pa:tɪk(ə)l/ *noun* a very small piece of matter

particulate /'pa:tɪkjuːlət/ *adjective* 1. referring to or composed of particles 2. made up of separate particles

particulate matter /'pa:tɪkjuːlət, mætə/ *noun* particles of less than a specified size, usually of carbon, which are used as a measure of air pollution and can affect asthma

partly /'pa:tlɪ/ *adverb* not completely ○ *She is partly paralysed.*

parturient /'pɑ:tjuərɪənt/ *adjective* referring to childbirth ■ *noun* a woman who is in labour

parturifacient /'pɑ:tjuəri'feɪʃənt/ *adjective* starting off birth or making it easier to give birth ■ *noun* a drug that starts off birth or makes it easier to give birth

parturition /'pɑ:tju'rɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* same as childbirth

parulis /pə'rū:lis/ same as **gumboil**

Paschen bodies /'pæʃkən, bɒdɪz/ *plural noun* particles which occur in the skin lesions of people who have smallpox [After Enrique Paschen (1860–1936), German pathologist]

pass /pɑ:s/ *verb* to allow faeces, urine or any other body product to come out of the body ○ *Have you passed anything this morning?* □ **to pass blood** to produce faeces or urine that contain blood □ **to pass water** to urinate (*informal*)

passage /'pæsɪdʒ/ *noun* 1. a long narrow channel inside the body 2. the process of moving from one place to another 3. evacuation of the bowels 4. the introduction of an instrument into a cavity □ **air passage** a tube which takes air to the lungs

pass away /'pɑ:s ə'wei/ *verb* used to avoid saying ‘die’ (*informal*) ○ *Mother passed away during the night.*

passive /'pæsɪv/ *adjective* receiving rather than initiating an action

passive immunity /,pæsɪv ɪ'mju:nɪti/ *noun* immunity which is acquired by a baby in the uterus or by a person through an injection with an antitoxin

passive movement /,pæsɪv 'mu:vment/ *noun* movement of a limb or other body part by a doctor or therapist, not by the person

passive smoking /,pæsɪv 'sməʊkɪŋ/ *noun* the act of breathing in smoke from other people’s cigarettes when you do not smoke yourself

pass on /,pɑ:s 'on/ *verb* 1. to give a disease to someone ○ *Haemophilia is passed on by a woman to her sons.* ○ *The disease was quickly passed on by carriers to the rest of the population.* 2. used to avoid saying ‘die’ ○ *My father passed on two years ago.*

pass out /,pɑ:s 'aut/ *verb* to faint (*informal*) ○ *When we told her that her father was ill, she passed out.*

past /pɑ:st/ *adjective* referring to time which has passed

paste /peɪst/ *noun* a medicinal ointment which is very thick and is spread or rubbed onto the skin

Pasteurella /,pæstərə'relə/ *noun* a genus of parasitic bacteria, one of which causes the plague

pasteurisation /,pɑ:stʃəraɪ'zeɪʃ(ə)n/, **pasteurization** *noun* the process of heating food or food products to destroy bacteria [After Louis Pasteur (1822–95), French chemist and bacteriologist]

COMMENT: Pasteurisation is carried out by heating food for a short time at a lower temperature than that used for sterilisation: the two methods used are heating to 72°C for fifteen seconds (the high-temperature short-time method) or to 65°C for half an hour, and then cooling rapidly. This will kill tuberculosis bacteria that may be present in milk, for example.

pasteurise /'pɑ:stʃəraɪz/, **pasteurize** *verb* to kill bacteria in food by heating it ○ *The government is telling people to drink only pasteurised milk.*

past history /'pɑ:st 'hist(ə)ri/ *noun* records of earlier illnesses ◎ *He has no past history of renal disease.*

pastille /'pæst(ə)l/ *noun* 1. a sweet jelly with medication in it, which can be sucked to relieve a sore throat 2. a small paper disc covered with barium platinocyanide, which changes colour when exposed to radiation

pat /pæt/ *verb* to hit someone or something lightly and gently with the palm of the hand or some other flat surface ◎ *She patted the baby on the back to make it burp.*

patch /pætʃ/ *noun* a piece of sticking plaster with a substance on it, which is stuck to the skin to allow the substance to be gradually absorbed into the system through the skin, e.g. in HRT

COMMENT: Patches are available on prescription for various treatments, especially for administering hormone replacement therapy. They are also used for treating nicotine addiction and can be bought without a prescription.

patch test /'pætʃ tɛst/ *noun* a test for allergies or tuberculosis, where a piece of sticking plaster containing an allergic substance or tuberculin is stuck to the skin to see if there is a reaction

patella /pə'telə/ *noun* the small bone in front of the knee joint. Also called **kneecap**

patellar /pə'telər/ *adjective* referring to the kneecap

patellar reflex /pə,telə 'ri:fleks/ *noun* the jerk made as a reflex action by the knee, when the legs are crossed and the patellar tendon is tapped sharply. Also called **knee jerk**

patellar tendon /pə,telə 'tendən/ *noun* a tendon just below the kneecap

patellectomy /pə:tə'lektəməi/ *noun* a surgical operation to remove the kneecap

patency /'peɪtənsi/ *noun* the condition of being wide open ◎ *A salpingostomy was performed to restore the patency of the Fallopian tube.*

patent /'peɪtənt, 'pætənt/ *adjective* open, exposed ◎ *The presence of a pulse shows that the main blood vessels from the heart to the site of the pulse are patent.*

patent ductus arteriosus /,peɪtənt ,dʌktəs ə:,tɪər'ɪəsəs/ *noun* a congenital condition in which the ductus arteriosus does not close, allowing blood into the circulation without having passed through the lungs

patent medicine /,peɪtənt 'med(ə)sɪn/ *noun* a medicinal preparation which is made and sold under a trade name and is protected by law from being copied or sold by other manufacturers for a certain length of time after its invention. ♦ **proprietary medicine**

paternity /pə'tɜ:nɪti/ *noun* 1. the fact of being or becoming a father ◎ *paternity leave* Compare **maternity** 2. the identity of a father

paternity test /pə'tɜ:nɪti tɛst/ *noun* a test such as blood grouping which makes it possible to determine the identity of the father of a child

COMMENT: DNA fingerprinting may be required in order to identify a man who might be the father according to his blood group and that of the child, but is not in fact the father.

path- /pæθ/, **patho-** /'pæθəʊ/ *prefix* referring to disease

pathogen /'pæθədʒən/ *noun* a microorganism which causes a disease

pathogenesis /,pæθə'dʒenəsɪs/ *noun* the origin, production and development of a morbid or diseased condition

pathogenetic /,pæθədʒə'netɪk/ *adjective* referring to pathogenesis

pathogenic /pæθə'dʒenɪk/ *adjective* causing or producing a disease

pathogenicity /,pæθədʒə'nɪsɪtɪ/ *noun* the ability of a pathogen to cause a disease

pathognomonic /,pæθəgnəʊ'mɒnɪk/ *adjective* referring to a symptom which is typical and characteristic, and which indicates that someone has a particular disease

pathological /,pæθə'lɒdʒɪk(ə)l/, **pathologic** /,pæθə'lɒdʒɪk/ *adjective* 1. referring to a disease, or caused by a disease 2. indicating a disease

pathological depression /,pæθə'lɒdʒɪk(ə)l dɪ'pref(ə)n/ *noun* an unusually severe state of depression, possibly leading to suicide

pathological dislocation /,pæθə'lɒdʒɪk(ə)l ,dɪ'slokj(ə)n/ *noun* the dislocation of a diseased joint

pathological fracture /,pæθə'lɒdʒɪk(ə)l 'frækɪtʃə/ *noun* a fracture of a diseased bone

pathologist /pæ'θɒlədʒɪst/ *noun* 1. a doctor who specialises in the study of diseases and the changes in the body caused by disease, examining tissue specimens from patients and reporting on the presence or absence of disease in them 2. a doctor who examines dead bodies in order to find out the cause of death

pathology /pæ'θɒlədʒɪ/ *noun* the study of diseases and the changes in structure and function which diseases cause in the body. Also called **morbid anatomy**

pathology report /pæ'θɒlədʒɪ rɪ,pɔ:t/ *noun* a report on tests carried out to find the cause of a disease

pathophysiology /,pæθəfɪzi'ɒlədʒɪ/ *noun* the study of unusual or diseased organs

pathway /'pæθweɪ/ *noun* a series of linked neurones along which nerve impulses travel

-**pathy** /pəθi/ *suffix* 1. disease 2. treatment of a disease

patient /'peɪs(ə)nt/ *adjective* being able to wait a long time without becoming annoyed ◎ *You will have to be patient if you are waiting for treatment – the doctor is late with his ap-*

pointments. ■ **noun** a person who is in hospital or who is being treated by a doctor ○ *The patients are all asleep in their beds.* ○ *The doctor is taking the patient's temperature.*

patient allocation /'peɪʃ(ə)nt ,ælə 'keɪʃ(ə)n/ **noun** a system of assigning each patient to a particular nurse for all their care needs

patient identifier /'peɪʃ(ə)nt aɪ'dentɪfɪər/ **noun** a code of letters and numbers attached to the patient's medical records by which all information concerning the patient can be tracked, e.g. cause of death

patulous /'pætjʊləs/ **adjective** stretched open, patent

Paul–Bunnell reaction /,pɔ:l 'bʌn(ə)l ri ,ækʃən/, **Paul–Bunnell test** /,pɔ:l 'bʌn(ə)l ,test/ **noun** a blood test to see if someone has glandular fever, where the person's blood is tested against a solution containing glandular fever bacilli [Described 1932. After John Rodman Paul (b. 1893), US physician; Walls Willard Bunnell (1902–66), US physician.]

Paul's tube /'pɔ:lz tju:b/ **noun** a glass tube used to remove the contents of the bowel after an opening has been made between the intestine and the abdominal wall [Described 1891. After Frank Thomas Paul (1851–1941), British surgeon.]

pavement epithelium /'peɪvmənt epi ,θi:lɪəm/ **noun** same as **squamous epithelium**

Pavlov's method /'pævlɒvz ,meθəd/ **noun** a set of procedures for the study or production of conditioned reflexes

PBI test /,pi: bi: 'aɪ test/ **noun** same as **protein-bound iodine test**

p.c. /,pi: 'si:/ **adverb** (used on prescriptions) after food. Full form **post cibum**

PCC abbr Professional Conduct Committee

PCG abbr primary care group

PCOD abbr polycystic ovary disease

PCOS abbr polycystic ovary syndrome

PCP abbr pneumocystis carinii pneumonia

PCR abbr polymerase chain reaction

PCT abbr primary care trust

p.d.¹ **adverb** (used on prescriptions) per day. Full form **per diem**

p.d.² **abbr** per diem

PE abbr pulmonary embolism

peak /pi:k/ **noun** the highest point

peak expiratory flow rate /,pi:k ɪk ,spærɪ'ret(ə)ri 'fləʊ ,reɪt/ **noun** the rate at which someone can expel air from their lungs when they are full and with no time limit. Abbr **PEFR**

peak period /'pi:k ,pi:riəd/ **noun** the time of the day, days of the month or months of the year, during which something such as a fever, tiredness, infectious disease or cold reaches its highest point or occurs most frequently in a population

peaky /'pi:ki/ **adjective** thin, pale, and sickly in appearance (*informal*)

pearl /pɜ:l/ ♀ **Bohn's nodules**

Pearson bed /'præs(ə)n bed/ **noun** a type of bed with a Balkan frame, a rectangular frame attached to and overhanging the bed, used mainly for people with splints

peau d'orange /,pəʊ du'rɑ:nʒ/ **noun** thickened skin with many little depressions caused by lymphoedema which forms over a breast tumour or in elephantiasis (NOTE: From the French phrase meaning 'orange peel'.)

pecten /'pektən/ **noun** 1. the middle section of the wall of the anal passage 2. a hard ridge on the pubis

pectineal /pek'tɪniəl/ **adjective** 1. referring to the pecten of the pubis 2. referring to a structure with ridges like a comb

pectoral /'pekt(ə)rəl/ **noun** 1. a therapeutic substance which has a good effect on respiratory disease 2. same as **pectoral muscle** ■ **adjective** referring to the chest

pectoral girdle /,pekt(ə)rəl 'gɜ:d(ə)l/ **noun** the shoulder bones, the scapulae and clavicles, to which the upper arm bones are attached. Also called **shoulder girdle**

pectoralis /,pektə'reilɪs/ **noun** a chest muscle

pectoralis major /pektə'reilɪs 'meɪdʒə/ **noun** a large chest muscle which pulls the arm forward or rotates it

pectoralis minor /pektə'reilɪs 'maɪnə/ **noun** a small chest muscle which allows the shoulder to be depressed

pectoral muscle /'pekt(ə)rəl ,məs(ə)l/ **noun** one of two muscles which lie across the chest and control movements of the shoulder and arm. Also called **chest muscle**

pectus /'pektəs/ **noun** the anterior part of the chest

pectus carinatum /,pektəs ,kær'i'nə:təm/ **noun** a condition in which the sternum is unusually prominent. Also called **pigeon breast**

pectus excavatum /,pektəs ,eks'kə'veɪtəm/ **noun** a congenital condition, in which the chest is depressed in the centre because the lower part of the breastbone is curved backwards. Also called **funnel chest**

pedes /'pi:di:z/ plural of **pes**

pediatrics /,pi:di'ætriks/ **noun** US same as **paediatrics**

pedicle /'pedɪk(ə)l/ **noun** 1. a long thin piece of skin which attaches a skin graft to the place where it was growing originally 2. a piece of tissue which connects a tumour to healthy tissue 3. a bridge which connects the lamina of a vertebra to the body

pediculicide /pi'dɪkjʊlɪsaɪd/ **noun** a chemical substance that kills lice

pediculosis /pi'dɪkjʊlə'sɪs/ **noun** a skin disease caused by being infested with lice

Pediculus /pɪ'dɪkju:ləs/ *noun* same as louse
 (NOTE: The plural is **Pediculi**.)

Pediculus capitis /pɪ'dɪkju:ləs kə'paɪtɪs/ *noun* same as head louse

pedo- /pɪ:d/ *prefix* same as paedo-

pedodontia /pɪ:də'dɒntɪə/ *noun* the study of children's teeth

pedodontist /pɪ:də'dɒntɪst/ *noun* a dentist who specialises in the treatment of children's teeth

peduncle /pɪ'dʌŋkəl/ *noun* a stem or stalk

pedunculate /pɪ'dʌŋkjuleɪt/ *adjective* having a stem or stalk. Opposite **sessile**

pee /pi:/ *verb* same as **urinate** (*informal*)

peel /pi:l/ *verb* 1. to take the skin off a fruit or vegetable 2. (of skin) to come off in pieces ○ *After getting sunburnt, his skin began to peel.*

PEEP *abbr* positive end-expiratory pressure

peer review /'pɪə ri,vju:/ *noun* an assessment of a piece of someone's work by people who are experts on the subject

PEFR *abbr* peak expiratory flow rate

Pel-Ebstein fever /'pel 'ebstain ,fɪ:və/ *noun* a fever associated with Hodgkin's disease which recurs regularly [Described 1885. After Pieter Klaases Pel (1852–1919), Professor of Medicine in Amsterdam, Netherlands; Wilhelm Ebstein (1836–1912), Professor of Medicine at Göttingen, Germany.]

pellagra /pə'lægra/ *noun* a disease caused by a deficiency of nicotinic acid, riboflavin and pyridoxine from the vitamin B complex, where patches of skin become inflamed, and the person has anorexia, nausea and diarrhoea

COMMENT: In some cases of pellagra the patient's mental faculties can be affected, with depression, headaches and numbness of the extremities. Treatment is by improving the patient's diet.

Pellegrini–Stieda's disease /pə'lə,gri:nɪ 'stɪ:dəz dɪ,zɪ:z/ *noun* a disease where an injury to the knee causes the ligament to become calcified [Described 1905. After Augusto Pellegrini, surgeon in Florence, Italy; Alfred Stieda (1869–1945), Professor of Surgery at Königsberg, Germany.]

pellet /'pelɪt/ *noun* 1. a small rod- or oval-shaped pill of steroid hormone, usually either oestrogen or testosterone, that is implanted under the skin for slow absorption 2. solid sediment at the base of a container after centrifuging

pellicle /'pelɪk(ə)l/ *noun* a thin layer of skin tissue

pellucida /pɪ'lʊ:sɪdə/ ▶ **zona pellucida**

pelvis /'pelvɪz/ *plural of* **pelvis**

pelvic /'pelvɪk/ *adjective* referring to the pelvis

pelvic brim /'pelvɪk 'brɪm/ *noun* a line on the ilium which separates the false pelvis from the true pelvis

pelvic cavity /,pelvɪk 'kævɪti/ *noun* a space below the abdominal cavity, above the pelvis
pelvic colon /,pelvɪk 'kəʊlən/ *noun* same as sigmoid colon

pelvic diaphragm /,pelvɪk 'daɪəfræm/ *noun* a sheet of muscle between the pelvic cavity and the peritoneum

pelvic floor /,pelvɪk 'flɔ:/ *noun* the lower part of the space beneath the pelvic girdle, formed of muscle

pelvic fracture /,pelvɪk 'frækʃə/ *noun* a fracture of the pelvis

pelvic girdle /,pelvɪk 'gɜ:d(ə)l/ *noun* the ring formed by the two hip bones to which the thigh bones are attached. Also called **hip girdle**

pelvic inflammatory disease /,pelvɪk ɪn 'flæmət(ə)rɪ dɪ,zɪz/ *noun* an inflammation of a woman's reproductive organs in the pelvic area, which can cause infertility

pelvic outlet /,pelvɪk 'aʊtlət/ *noun* an opening at the base of the pelvis

pelvic version /,pelvɪk 'vɜ:ʃ(ə)n/ *noun* turning a fetus around in the uterus by moving the buttocks of the fetus

pelvimeter /pel'vemitə/ *noun* an instrument to measure the diameter and capacity of the pelvis

pelvimetry /pel'vemitrɪ/ *noun* the act of measuring the pelvis, especially to see if the internal ring is wide enough for a baby to pass through in childbirth

pelvis /'pelvɪs/ *noun* 1. the strong basin-shaped ring of bone near the bottom of the spine, formed of the hip bones at the front and sides and the sacrum and coccyx at the back 2. the internal space inside the pelvic girdle
 (NOTE: [all senses] The plural is **pelvises** or **pel·ves**.)

COMMENT: The hip bones are each in three sections: the ilium, the ischium and the pubis and are linked in front by the pubic symphysis.

The pelvic girdle is shaped in a different way in men and women, the internal space being wider in women. The top part of the pelvis, which does not form a complete ring, is called the 'false pelvis'; the lower part is the 'true pelvis'.

pelvis of the kidney /,pelvɪs əv ðə 'kɪdnɪ/ *noun* same as **renal pelvis**. See illustration at **KIDNEY** in Supplement (NOTE: For other terms referring to the pelvis of the kidney, see words beginning with **pyel-**, **pyelo-**.)

pemphigoid /'pemfɪgɔɪd/ *noun* a skin disease which is similar to pemphigus ■ *adjective* referring to a skin disease similar to pemphigus

pemphigus /'pemfɪgʊs/ *noun* a rare disease where large blisters form inside the skin

pendulous /'pendjʊləs/ *adjective* referring to an object or body part which hangs loosely or swings freely

penes /'pi:nɪz/ *plural of* **penis**

penetrate /'penɪtreɪt/ *verb* to go through or into something ○ *The end of the broken bone has penetrated the liver.* ○ *The ulcer burst, penetrating the wall of the duodenum.*

penetration /,penɪ'treɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the act of penetrating ○ *the penetration of the vagina by the penis* ○ *penetration of an ovum by a spermatozoon*

-penia /pi:rniə/ *suffix* meaning a deficiency or not enough of something

penicillamine /,penɪ'siləmi:n/ *noun* a chelating agent which is used to help the body get rid of toxic metals

penicillin /,penɪ'silɪn/ *noun* a common antibiotic originally produced from a fungus (NOTE: Penicillin drugs have names ending in **-cillin**: **amoxicillin**.)

COMMENT: Penicillin is effective against many microbial diseases, but some people can be allergic to it, and this fact should be noted on medical record cards.

penicillinase /,penɪ'silinæz/ *noun* an enzyme produced by some bacteria that inactivates penicillin, used to treat adverse reactions to penicillin

penicillin resistance /,penɪsɪlɪn rɪ'zɪstəns/ *noun* the ability of bacteria to resist penicillin

Penicillium /,penɪ'siliəm/ *noun* the fungus from which penicillin is derived

penile /'pi:nail/ *adjective* referring to the penis

penile urethra /,pi:nail ju'rɪ:θrə/ *noun* a tube in the penis through which urine and semen pass

penis /'pi:nɪs/ *noun* the male genital organ, which also passes urine. See illustration at **UROGENITAL SYSTEM (MALE)** in Supplement. ♀ **kraurosis penis**

COMMENT: The penis is a mass of tissue containing the urethra. When stimulated the tissue of the penis fills with blood and becomes erect.

pentamidine /pen'tæmɪdi:n/ *noun* an antibiotic used in the treatment of African sleeping sickness and of pneumonia in people with AIDS

pentazocine /pen'tæzəsi:n/ *noun* an artificially produced narcotic drug used to reduce pain

pentose /'pentəuz/ *noun* a sugar containing five carbon atoms

pentosuria /,pentə'sjuəriə/ *noun* a condition in which pentose is present in the urine

Pentothal /'pentəθæl/ a trade name for thiopentone

Peplau's model /'pepləʊz ,mɒd(ə)l/ *noun* a model for nursing which describes the individual as a system with physiological, psychological and social components. The nurse and patient work together to define the patient's problems and to understand their reactions to

one another, and the nurse takes on different roles in each phase of the relationship, such as a teacher, counsellor, leader, and technical expert, until the patient no longer needs their care.

pepsin /'pepsɪn/ *noun* an enzyme in the stomach which breaks down the proteins in food into peptones

pepsinogen /pep'sɪnədʒən/ *noun* a secretion from the gastric gland which is the inactive form of pepsin

peptic /'peptɪk/ *adjective* referring to digestion or to the digestive system

peptic ulcer /,peptɪk 'ʌlsə/ *noun* a benign ulcer in the duodenum or in the stomach

peptidase /'peptɪdɛz/ *noun* an enzyme which breaks down proteins in the intestine into amino acids

peptide /'peptɪd/ *noun* a compound formed of two or more amino acids

peptone /'peptəʊn/ *noun* a substance produced by the action of pepsins on proteins in food

peptonuria /,peptə'njuəriə/ *noun* a condition in which peptones are present in the urine

per /pɜ:/, pə/ *preposition* 1. out of each ○ *ten per thousand* 2. by or through ○ *per rectum*

per cent /pə'sent/ *noun, adjective, adverb* in or for every hundred ○ *Fifty per cent (50%) of the tests were positive.* ○ *Seventy-five per cent (75%) of hospital cases remain in hospital for less than four days.* □ **there has been a five per cent increase in applications** the number of applications has gone up by five in every hundred □ **new cases have decreased twenty per cent this year** the number of new cases has gone down by twenty in every hundred

percentage /pə'sentɪdʒ/ *noun* the proportion rate in every hundred or for every hundred ○ *What is the percentage of long-stay patients in the hospital?*

perception /pə'sepʃən/ *noun* an impression formed in the brain as a result of information about the outside world which is passed back by the senses

perceptive deafness /pe,septɪv 'defnəs/ *noun* same as **sensorineural deafness**

percussion /pə'kʌʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a test, usually on the heart and lungs, in which the doctor taps part of the person's body and listens to the sound produced

percutaneous /,pɜ:kjʊ:tɪ'nɪəs/ *adjective* through the skin

percutaneous absorption /,pɜ:kjʊ:tɪ'əbsər'veɪʃn/ *noun* the process of absorbing a substance through the skin

percutaneous angioplasty /,pɜ:kjʊ:tɪ'ənɪəs 'ændʒɪəplæsti/ *noun* the repair of a narrowed artery by passing a balloon into the artery through a catheter and then inflating it. Also called **balloon angioplasty**

percutaneous epididymal sperm aspiration /,pɜ:kju:təniəs ,epɪdɪdɪm(ə)l 'spɜ:m ,æspɪreɪt(ə)n/ noun the removal of sperm from the epididymis by withdrawing it through the skin, usually as part of fertility treatment. Abbr **PESA**

per diem /pɜ: 'di:em/ adverb (written on prescriptions) per day

perennial /pə'reniəl/ adjective which continues all the time, for a period of years □ *She has perennial bronchial asthma.*

perforate /'pɜ:fəreɪt/ verb to make a hole through something □ *The ulcer perforated the duodenum.*

perforated eardrum /,pɜ:fəreɪtɪd 'eədrʌm/ noun an eardrum with a hole in it

perforated ulcer /,pɜ:fəreɪtɪd 'ʌlsə/ noun an ulcer which has made a hole in the wall of the intestine

perforation /,pɜ:fə'reɪʃ(ə)n/ noun a hole through the whole thickness of a tissue or membrane such as the intestine or eardrum

perform /pə'fɔ:m/ verb 1. to do an operation □ *A team of three surgeons performed the heart transplant operation.* 2. to work □ *The new heart has performed very well.* □ *The kidneys are not performing as well as they should.*

performance /pə'fɔ:məns/ noun a way in which something works □ *The doctors are not satisfied with the performance of the transplanted heart.*

performance indicators /pə'fɔ:məns ,ɪndiketəz/ plural noun statistical information needed for analysis of how effectively health organisations are meeting their objectives, produced by health authorities and sent to the government. Abbr **PIs**

perfuse /pə'fju:z/ verb to introduce a liquid into tissue or an organ, especially by circulating it through blood vessels

perfusion /pə'fju:ʒ(ə)n/ noun the process of passing a liquid through vessels, an organ or tissue, e.g. the flow of blood into lung tissue

perfusion scan /pə'fju:ʒ(ə)n skæn/ noun a procedure in which radioactive or radiopaque substances are introduced into the body so that the blood supply of an organ can be traced

peri- /peri/ prefix near, around or enclosing

periadenitis /,periədɪ'naitɪs/ noun inflammation of tissue around a gland

perianal /,peri'eɪn(ə)l/ adjective around the anus

perianal haematoma /,perieɪn(ə)l ,hi:mə'təʊmə/ noun a small painful swelling outside the anus caused by forcing a bowel movement

periarteritis /,peri:tə'rætɪs/ noun inflammation of the outer coat of an artery and the tissue round it

periarteritis nodosa /,peri:tə'rætɪs nəʊ'dəʊsə/ noun same as **polyarteritis nodosa**

periarthritis /,peri:tə'rɑ:tɪs/ noun inflammation of the tissue round a joint

pericard- /peri:kɑ:d/ prefix referring to the pericardium

pericardectomy /,peri:kɑ:'dektəmɪ/ noun the surgical removal of the pericardium

pericardial /peri'kɑ:diəl/ adjective referring to the pericardium

pericardial effusion /,peri:kɑ:diəl ɪ'fju:ʒ(ə)n/ noun an excess of fluid which forms in the pericardial sac

pericardial friction /,peri:kɑ:diəl 'frɪkʃ(ə)n/ noun the rubbing together of the two parts of the pericardium in pericarditis

pericardial sac /,peri:kɑ:diəl 'sæk/ noun the inner part of the pericardium forming a bag-like structure or sac which contains fluid to prevent the two parts of the pericardium rubbing together

pericardiectomy /,peri:kɑ:di'ektəmɪ/ noun same as **pericardectomy**

pericardiocentesis /,peri:kɑ:diə'se:sɪs/ noun the puncture of the pericardium to remove fluid

pericardiorrhaphy /,peri:kɑ:di'ɔ:rəfi/ noun a surgical operation to repair a wound in the pericardium

pericardiotomy /,peri:kɑ:di'ɒstəmɪ/ noun a surgical operation to open the pericardium through the thoracic wall to drain off fluid

pericardiotomy /,peri:kɑ:di'bɒtəmɪ/ noun same as **pericardotomy**

pericarditis /,peri:kɑ:di'tɪtɪs/ noun inflammation of the pericardium □ **acute pericarditis** a sudden attack of fever and pains in the chest, caused by the two parts of the pericardium rubbing together

pericardium /,peri'kɑ:diəm/ noun a membrane which surrounds and supports the heart

pericardotomy /,peri:kɑ:di'ɒtəmɪ/ noun a surgical operation to open the pericardium

perichondritis /,peri:kɒn'draɪtɪs/ noun inflammation of cartilage, especially in the outer ear

perichondrium /,peri'kɒndriəm/ noun the fibrous connective tissue which covers cartilage

pericolpitis /,peri:kɒl'partɪs/ noun inflammation of the connective tissue round the vagina. Also called **paracolpitis**

pericranium /,peri'kreɪniəm/ noun connective tissue which covers the surface of the skull

pericystitis /,peri'si'staɪtɪs/ noun inflammation of the structures round the bladder, usually caused by infection in the uterus

perifolliculitis /,peri,fɒlikju'lætɪs/ noun inflammation of the skin round hair follicles

perihepatitis /,perihepə'tætɪs/ noun inflammation of the membrane round the liver

perilymph /'perilimf/ noun a fluid found in the labyrinth of the inner ear

perimenopause /peri'menəpə:z/ *noun* the few years before the menopause, in which oestrogen levels start to fall

perimeter /pə'rɪmɪtə/ *noun* 1. an instrument to measure the field of vision 2. the length of the outside line around an enclosed area

perimetritis /peri'mə'trɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the perimetrium

perimetrium /peri'mi:ttriəm/ *noun* a membrane round the uterus

perimetry /pə'rɪmɪtri/ *noun* a measurement of the field of vision

perimysium /peri'maɪsiəm/ *noun* a sheath which surrounds a bundle of muscle fibres

perinatal /peri'neit(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to the period just before and after childbirth

perinatal mortality rate /peri'nætl(ə)mɔ:/ 'taeliti reit/ *noun* the number of babies born dead or who die during the period immediately after childbirth, shown per thousand babies born

perinatal period /peri'neit(ə)l ,pɪəriəd/ *noun* the period of time before and after childbirth, from the 28th week after conception to the first week after delivery

perinatologist /peri'nætɒlədʒɪst/ *noun* an obstetrician who is a specialist in perinatology

perinatology /peri'nætɒlədʒɪ/ *noun* a branch of medicine which studies and treats physiological and pathological conditions affecting the mother and/or infant just before and just after the birth of a baby

perineal /peri'nɪ:əl/ *adjective* referring to the perineum

perineal body /peri'mi:əl 'bɒdi/ *noun* the mass of muscle and fibres between the anus and the vagina or prostate

perineal muscle /peri'mi:əl 'mʌs(ə)l/ *noun* one of the muscles which lie in the perineum

perineoplasty /peri'nɪ:əplæsti/ *noun* a surgical operation to repair the perineum by grafting tissue

perineorrhaphy /peri'nɪ:ərəfɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to stitch up a perineum which has torn during childbirth

perinephric /peri'nefrɪk/ *adjective* around the kidney

perinephritis /peri'nfraɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of tissue round the kidney, which spreads from an infected kidney

perinephrium /peri'nefriəm/ *noun* the fatty tissue that is around a kidney

perineum /peri'nɪ:əm/ *noun* the skin and tissue between the opening of the urethra and the anus

perineurium /peri'njuəriəm/ *noun* connective tissue which surrounds bundles of nerve fibres

periocular /peri'ɒkjʊlə/ *adjective* around the eyeball

period /'pɪəriəd/ *noun* 1. a length of time ○ *The patient regained consciousness after a short period of time.* ○ *She is allowed out of bed for two periods each day.* 2. menstruation or the menses, bleeding from the uterus which occurs in a woman each month when the lining of the uterus is shed because no fertilised egg is present ○ *She always has heavy periods.* ○ *Some women experience abdominal pain during their periods.* ○ *She has bleeding between periods.*

periodic /pɪəri'ɒdɪk/ *adjective* occurring from time to time ○ *He has periodic attacks of migraine.* ○ *She has to go to the clinic for periodic checkups.*

periodic fever /pɪəriɒdɪk 'fi:və/ *noun* a disease of the kidneys, common in Mediterranean countries

periodicity /pɪəriə'dɪsɪti/ *noun* the timing of recurrent attacks of a disease

periodic paralysis /pɪəriɒdɪk pə'ræləsɪs/ *noun* recurrent attacks of weakness where the level of potassium in the blood is low

periodontal /periəd'ɒnt(ə)l/, **periodontic** /periəd'ɒntɪk/ *adjective* referring to the area around the teeth

periodontal membrane /periəʊ,dɒnt(ə)l 'membreɪn/, **periodontal ligament** /periəʊ,dɒnt(ə)l 'lɪgəmənt/ *noun* a ligament which attaches a tooth to the bone of the jaw

periodontics /periəʊ'dɒntɪks/, **periodontia** /periəʊ'dɒnʃə/ *noun* the study of diseases of the periodontal membrane

periodontist /periəʊ'dɒntɪst/ *noun* a dentist who specialises in the treatment of gum diseases

periodontitis /periəʊdɒn'taɪtɪs/ *noun* an infection of the periodontal membrane leading to pyorrhoea, and resulting in the teeth falling out if untreated

periodontium /periəʊ'dɒnʃiəm/ *noun* 1. the gums, bone and periodontal membrane around a tooth 2. same as **periodontal membrane**

perionychia /periəʊ'nɪkɪə/, **peronyxis** /periəʊ'nɪksɪs/ *noun* a painful swelling round a fingernail

perionychium /periəʊ'nɪkɪəm/ *noun* the skin that is round a fingernail or toenail

perioperative /peri'ɒp(ə)rətɪv/ *adjective* before and after a surgical operation

'During the perioperative period little attention is given to thermoregulation.' [British Journal of Nursing]

periorbital /periəʊ'ɔ:bɪt(ə)l/ *adjective* around the eye socket

periosteal /peri'ɒstiəl/ *adjective* referring to, or attached to, the periosteum

periosteotome /peri'ɒstiətəm/ *noun* a surgical instrument used to cut the periosteum

periosteum /peri'ɒstiəm/ *noun* a dense layer of connective tissue around a bone. See illustration at **BONE STRUCTURE** in Supplement

periosteum elevator /,peri'ɒstiəl'elɪvətər/ *noun* a surgical instrument used to remove the periosteum from a bone

periostitis /periə'staɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the periosteum

periotic /peri'ɒtɪk/ *adjective* referring to the area around the ear, especially the bones around the inner ear

peripheral /pə'rɪf(ə)rɪəl/ *adjective* at the edge

peripheral nerves /pə'rɪf(ə)rɪəl nɜ:vz/ *plural noun* the parts of motor and sensory nerves which branch from the brain and spinal cord

peripheral nervous system /pə'rɪf(ə)rɪəl 'nɜ:vəs ,sɪstəm/ *noun* all the nerves in different parts of the body which are linked and governed by the central nervous system. Abbr PNS

peripheral resistance /pə'rɪf(ə)rɪəl rɪ'zɪstəns/ *noun* the ability of the peripheral blood vessels to slow down the flow of blood inside them

peripheral vascular disease /pə'rɪf(ə)rɪəl 'væskjʊlə dɪ,zɪz:z/ *noun* a disease affecting the blood vessels which supply the arms and legs

peripheral vasodilator /pə'rɪf(ə)rɪəl ,veɪzədɪ'leɪtər/ *noun* a chemical substance which acts to widen the blood vessels in the arms and legs and so improves bad circulation

periphery /pə'rɪf(ə)ri/ *noun* 1. the regions of the body where the nerves end, such as the sense organs or the muscles 2. the surface of something

periphlebitis /periflə'baitɪs/ *noun* 1. inflammation of the outer coat of a vein 2. an inflammation of the connective tissue round a vein

periproctitis /periprɒk'taɪtɪs/ *noun* swelling of the tissues around the rectum

perisalpingitis /perɪsælpɪn'dʒaɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the peritoneum and other parts round a Fallopian tube

perisplenitis /perisplə'naitɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the peritoneum and other parts round the spleen

peristalsis /peri'staɪlsɪs/ *noun* the movement, like waves, produced by alternate contraction and relaxation of muscles along an organ such as the intestine or oesophagus, which pushes the contents of the organ along it. Compare **antiperistalsis**

peristaltic /peri'stæltɪk/ *adjective* occurring in waves, as in peristalsis

peritendinitis /perɪtendɪ'naitɪs/ *noun* same as **tenosynovitis**

peritomy /pə'ritəmi/ *noun* 1. a surgical operation on the eye, where the conjunctiva is cut in a circle round the cornea 2. circumcision

peritoneal /peri'tə'ni:l/ *adjective* referring to, or belonging to, the peritoneum

peritoneal cavity /,periτə,nɪ:əl 'kævɪtɪ/ *noun* a space between the layers of the peritoneum, containing the major organs of the abdomen

peritoneal dialysis /,periτə,nɪ:əl dai'æləsɪs/ *noun* removing waste matter from someone's blood by introducing fluid into the peritoneum which then acts as a filter, as opposed to haemodialysis

peritoneoscope /,periτə'nɪəskəp/ *noun* same as **laparoscope**

peritoneoscopy /,periτə'nɪəs'kɔpi/ *noun* same as **laparoscopy**

peritoneum /,periτə'nɪ:əm/ *noun* a membrane which lines the abdominal cavity and covers the organs in it

peritonitis /,periτə'naitɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the peritoneum as a result of bacterial infection

COMMENT: Peritonitis is a serious condition and can have many causes. One of its effects is to stop the peristalsis of the intestine so making it impossible for a person to eat and digest.

peritonsillar /,periτən'sɪlər/ *adjective* around the tonsils

peritonsillar abscess /,periτən'sɪlər 'æbsɛs/ *noun* same as **quinsy**

peritrichous /pə'ritrɪkəs/ *adjective* referring to bacteria where the surface of the cell is covered with flagella

perityphlitis /periτɪ'flaɪtɪs/ *noun* swelling of the tissues around the caecum

perumbilical /,periʌm'bilik(ə)l/ *adjective* around the navel

perireteritis /peri'juərɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the tissue round a ureter, usually caused by inflammation of the ureter itself

periurethral /,peri'juərɪθrəl/ *adjective* around the urethra

PERLA *abbreviation* Pupils Equal and Reactive to Light and Accommodation

perle /pɜ:l/ *noun* a soft capsule of medicine

perleche /pɜ:l'leʃ/ *noun* 1. inflammation, with small cracks, at the corners of the mouth, caused by infection, poor diet, or producing too much saliva 2. candidiasis

permanent /'pɜ:mənənt/ *adjective* always existing ○ *The accident left him with a permanent disability.*

permanently /'pɜ:mənəntli/ *adverb* always, forever ○ *He was permanently disabled by the accident.*

permanent teeth /'pɜ:mənənt tɪ:θ/ *noun* the teeth in an adult, which replace the child's milk teeth during childhood

COMMENT: The permanent teeth consist of eight incisors, four canines, eight premolars and twelve molars, the last four molars (one on each side of the upper and lower jaw) being called the wisdom teeth.

permeability /pɜːmɪə'bɪlɪti/ *noun* (of a membrane) the ability to allow some substances to pass through

permeable membrane /pɜːmɪəb(ə)l 'membreɪn/ *noun* a membrane which allows some substances to pass through it

pernicious /pɜːnɪʃəs/ *adjective* harmful or dangerous, or unusually severe and likely to end in death

pernicious anaemia /pɜːnɪʃəs ə'nīːmɪə/ *noun* a disease where an inability to absorb vitamin B₁₂ prevents the production of red blood cells and damages the spinal cord. Also called **Addison's anaemia**

perniosis /pɜːni'əʊsɪs/ *noun* any condition caused by cold which affects blood vessels in the skin

pero- /pərəʊ/ *prefix* malformed or impaired

peromelia /pərəʊ'miːliə/ *noun* a congenital condition in which the limbs have developed unusually

peroneal /pərəʊ'nīːəl/ *adjective* referring to the outside of the leg

peroneal muscle /pərəʊ'nīːəl ,mæs(ə)l/ ,
peroneus /pərəʊ'nīːəs/ *noun* one of three muscles, the peroneus brevis, longus and tertius, on the outside of the lower leg which make the leg turn outwards

peroperative /pə'rɒp(ə)rətɪv/ *adjective* taking place during a surgical operation

peroral /pə'rɔːrəl/ *adjective* through the mouth

per os /pər 'ɒs/ *adverb* referring to a drug or other substance to be taken through the mouth

persecute /pɜːsɪkjuːt/ *verb* to make someone suffer all the time ○ *In paranoia, the patient feels he is being persecuted.*

persecution /pɜːsɪ'tkjʊːʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the act of being made to suffer

perseveration /pɜː'seːvə'ref(ə)n/ *noun* the act of repeating actions or words without any stimulus

persist /pə'sist/ *verb* to continue for some time ○ *The weakness in the right arm persisted for two weeks.*

persistent /pə'sistənt/ *adjective* continuing for some time ○ *treatment aimed at the relief of persistent angina* ○ *She had a persistent cough.*

persistent vegetative state /pə,sɪstənt 'vedʒɪtætɪv stet/ *noun* a condition in which someone is alive and breathes, but shows no brain activity, and will never recover consciousness. Abbr **PVS**

person /'pɜːs(ə)n/ *noun* a man or woman

personal /pɜːs(ə)n(ə)l/ *adjective* referring or belonging to a person ○ *Only certain senior*

members of staff can consult the personal records of the patients.

personal care /'pɜːs(ə)nəl keə/ *noun* the act of washing, toileting and dressing someone who cannot do these things for themselves

personal hygiene /,pɜːs(ə)n(ə)l 'haɪdʒɪːnɪ/ *noun* the standards someone has of looking after parts of their body such as hair, skin, teeth and breath, hands and nails, and keeping them clean

personality /,pɜːsə'næltɪ/ *noun* all the characteristics which are typical of one particular person and the way he or she thinks and behaves, and which make him or her different from other people

'Alzheimer's disease is a progressive disorder which sees a gradual decline in intellectual functioning and deterioration of personality and physical coordination and activity' [Nursing Times]

personality disorder /,pɜːsə'næltɪ dɪs'ɔːdə/ *noun* a disorder which affects the way a person behaves, especially in relation to other people

personnel /,pɜːsə'næl/ *noun* members of staff ○ *All hospital personnel must be immunised against hepatitis.* ○ *Only senior personnel can inspect the patients' medical records.* (NOTE: **Personnel** is singular.)

perspiration /,pɜːspa'ref(ə)n/ *noun* sweat or the action of sweating ○ *Perspiration broke out on her forehead.*

COMMENT: Perspiration is formed in the sweat glands under the epidermis and cools the body as the moisture evaporates from the skin. Sweat contains salt, and in hot countries it may be necessary to take salt tablets to replace the salt lost through perspiration.

perspire /pə'spaɪə/ *verb* to produce moisture through the sweat glands

Perthes' disease /'pɜːtɪz dɪ.ziːz/, **Perthes' hip** /,pɜːtɪz 'hip/ *noun* a disease found in young boys, in which the upper end of the femur degenerates and does not develop as expected, sometimes resulting in a permanent limp

pertussis /pə'tʌsɪs/ *noun* same as **whooping cough**

perversion /pə'verʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a form of behaviour which is thought to be unnatural, dangerous or disgusting ○ *He is suffering from a form of sexual perversion.*

pes /pɛs/ *noun* a foot

PESA abbr percutaneous epididymal sperm aspiration

pes cavus /pes 'keɪvəs/ *noun* same as **claw foot**

pes planus /pes 'pleinəs/ *noun* same as **flat foot**

pessary /'pɛsəri/ *noun* 1. a drug in soluble material which is pushed into the vagina and absorbed into the blood there. Also called **vaginal suppository** 2. a contraceptive device worn inside the vagina to prevent spermatozoa

entering 3. a device like a ring, which is put into the vagina as treatment for prolapse of the uterus

pest /pest/ *noun* an animal which carries disease, attacks plants and animals and harms or kills them ○ a spray to remove insect pests

pesticide /'pestɪsaɪd/ *noun* a substance which kills pests

PET *abbr* positron-emission tomography

petechia /pe'ti:kɪə/ *noun* a small red spot which does not go white when pressed, caused by bleeding under the skin (NOTE: The plural is petechiae.)

petidine /'peθɪdi:n/ *noun* a synthetically produced narcotic drug, used to reduce pain and as a sedative

petit mal /,peti'mæl/ *noun* a less severe form of epilepsy, where loss of consciousness attacks last only a few seconds and the person appears simply to be thinking deeply. Compare **grand mal**

Petri dish /'pɪtri dɪʃ/ *noun* a small glass or plastic dish with a lid, in which a culture is grown

petrissage /,petri'sa:ʒ/ *noun* an action used in massaging the muscles

petrosal /pə't्रəʊs(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to the petrous part of the temporal bone

petrositis /,petrə'o'saitɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the petrous part of the temporal bone

petrous /'petrəs/ *adjective* 1. like stone 2. petrosal

petrous bone /'petrəs bən/ *noun* the part of the temporal bone which forms the base of the skull and the inner and middle ears

PET scan /pet skæn/ *noun* an image of a cross-section, usually of the brain, that shows metabolic processes

-pexy /peksi/ *suffix* referring to fixation of an organ by surgery

Peyer's patches /,paɪəz 'pætʃɪz/ *plural noun* patches of lymphoid tissue on the mucous membrane of the small intestine [Described 1677. After Johann Conrad Peyer (1653–1712), Swiss anatomist.]

Peyronie's disease /'perəni:z di,ziz:/ *noun* a condition associated with Dupuytren's contracture in which hard fibre develops in the penis which becomes painful when erect [Described 1743. After François de la Peyronie (1678–1747), Surgeon to Louis XV in Paris, France.]

PGEA *abbr* postgraduate education allowance

pH /,pi: 'eɪtʃ/ *noun* the concentration of hydrogen ions in a solution, which determines its acidity

COMMENT: The pH factor is shown as a number: pH 7 is neutral, pH 8 and above show that the solution is alkaline and pH 6 and below show that the solution is acid.

phaco- /fækəʊ/ *prefix* referring to the lens of the eye

phacoemulsification /,fækəʊɪ,mlsɪfɪ'keɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* an ultrasonic technique which turns a cataract in the eye into liquid. It is then removed by suction and a plastic lens is put into the eye.

phaeochromocytoma /,fi:əʊ,k्रəʊməʊsət'əʊmə/ *noun* a tumour of the adrenal glands which affects the secretion of hormones such as adrenaline, which in turn results in hypertension and hyperglycaemia

phag- /fæg/ *prefix* same as **phago-** (used before vowels)

phage /feɪdʒ/ *noun* same as **bacteriophage**

-phage /feɪdʒ/ *suffix* referring to something which eats

phagedaena /,fædʒə'di:nə/ *noun* an ulcer that spreads rapidly

-phagia /feɪdʒə/ *suffix* referring to eating

phago- /fægəʊ/ *prefix* referring to eating

phagocyte /'fægəʊ,sait/ *noun* a cell, especially a white blood cell, which can surround and destroy other cells such as bacteria cells

phagocytic /,fægə'sitɪk/ *adjective* 1. referring to phagocytes ○ Monocytes become phagocytic during infection. 2. destroying cells

phagocytosis /,fægəʊsət'əʊsɪs/ *noun* destruction of bacteria cells and foreign bodies by phagocytes

phakic /fækɪk/ *adjective* referring to an eye which has its natural lens

phako- /fækəʊ/ *prefix* same as **phaco-**

phalangeal /fə'lændʒiəl/ *adjective* referring to the phalanges

phalanges /fə'lændʒi:z/ plural of **phalanx**

phalangitis /fælən'dʒaɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the fingers or toes caused by infection of tissue

phalanx /fælæŋks/ *noun* a bone in a finger or toe. See illustration at **HAND** in Supplement, **FOOT** in Supplement

COMMENT: The fingers and toes have three phalanges each, except the thumb and big toe, which have only two.

phalloplasty /'fæləplæstɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to repair a damaged or deformed penis

phantom /'fæntəm/ *noun* 1. a model of the whole body or part of the body, used to practise or demonstrate surgical operations 2. an image not brought about by actual stimuli, something which is not there but seems to be there

phantom limb /,fæntəm 'lɪm/ *noun* a condition in which someone seems to feel sensations in a limb which has been amputated

phantom pregnancy /,fæntəm 'pregnənsɪ/ *noun* same as **pseudocyesis**

phantom tumour /,fæntəm 'tju:ma/ *noun* a condition in which a swelling occurs which imitates a swelling caused by a tumour

Pharm. *abbr* 1. pharmacopoeia 2. pharmacy
3. pharmaceutical

pharmaceutical /,fə:mə'sju:tɪk(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to pharmacy or drugs

pharmaceutical products /,fə:mə'sju:tɪk(ə)l 'prɒdʌktɪs/ *plural noun* medicines, pills, lozenges or creams which are sold in chemists' shops

pharmaceuticals /,fə:mə'sju:tɪk(ə)lz/ *plural noun* drugs prescribed as medicines

Pharmaceutical Society /,fə:mə'sju:tɪk(ə)l sə,saiətɪ/ *noun* a professional association for pharmacists

pharmaceutics /,fə:mə'sju:tɪks/ *noun* the science of the preparation and dispensing of prescribed drugs ■ *plural noun* drugs prescribed as medicines

pharmacist /,fə:məsɪst/ *noun* a trained person who is qualified to prepare medicines according to the instructions on a doctor's prescription

COMMENT: In the UK, qualified pharmacists must be registered by the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain before they can practise.

pharmaco- /fə:məkəʊ/ *prefix* referring to drugs

pharmacodynamic /,fə:məkəʊdæmɪk/ *adjective* referring to a property of a drug which affects the part where it is applied

pharmacodynamics /,fə:məkəʊdæmɪks/ *plural noun* the study of the effects of drugs on living organisms, and especially of how much the body's response changes when you increase the dose of a drug. Compare **pharmacokinetics** (NOTE: Takes a singular verb.)

pharmacogenomics /,fə:məkəʊdʒɪ'nɒmɪks/ *plural noun* the study of the relationship between a person's genetic makeup and response to drug treatments (NOTE: Takes a singular verb.)

pharmacokinetic /,fə:məkəʊkə'nɛtɪk/ *adjective* referring to a property of a drug which has an effect over a period of time

pharmacokinetics /,fə:məkəʊkə'nɛtɪks/ *plural noun* 1. the study of how the body reacts to drugs over a period of time. Compare **pharmacodynamics** (NOTE: Takes a singular verb.) 2. the way in which a drug interacts with the body

pharmacological /,fə:məkə'lɒdʒɪk(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to pharmacology

pharmacologist /,fə:mə'kɒlədʒɪst/ *noun* a scientist who specialises in the study of drugs

pharmacology /,fə:mə'kɒlədʒɪ/ *noun* the study of drugs or medicines, and their actions, properties and characteristics

pharmacopoeia /,fə:məkə'pi:ə/ *noun* an official list of drugs, their methods of preparation, dosages and the ways in which they should be used

COMMENT: The British Pharmacopoeia is the official list of drugs used in the UK. The drugs listed in it have the letters BP after their name. In the US the official list is the United States Pharmacopoeia or USP.

pharmacotherapy /,fə:məkə'θerəpi/ *noun* the use of drugs to treat conditions, especially psychiatric disorders

pharmacy /'fə:məsi/ *noun* 1. the study of the making and dispensing of drugs ○ *He has a qualification in pharmacy.* 2. a shop or department in a hospital where drugs are prepared

Pharmacy Act /'fə:məsi ækt/ *noun* in the UK, one of several Acts of Parliament which regulate the making, prescribing and selling of drugs, e.g. the Pharmacy and Poisons Act 1933, the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 and the Poisons Act 1972

pharyng- /færɪndʒ/ *prefix* same as **pharyngo-** (used before vowels)

pharyngeal /,færɪn'dʒi:əl/ *adjective* referring to the pharynx

pharyngeal pouch /,færɪndʒi:əl 'paʊtʃ/ *noun* one of the pouches on each side of the throat of an embryo. Also called **visceral pouch**

pharyngeal tonsils /,færɪndʒi:əl 'tɔns(ə)lz/ *plural noun* same as **adenoids**

pharyngectomy /,færɪn'dʒektəmi/ *noun* the surgical removal of part of the pharynx, especially in cases of cancer of the pharynx

pharynges /fə'rɪndʒi:z/ *plural* of **pharynx**

pharyngismus /,færɪn'dʒizməs/, **pharyngism** /'færɪndʒɪz(ə)m/ *noun* a spasm which contracts the muscles of the pharynx

pharyngitis /,færɪn'dʒaɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the pharynx

pharyngo- /fə'rɪngəʊ/ *prefix* referring to the pharynx

pharyngocèle /fə'rɪngəʊsɪ:l/ *noun* 1. a cyst which opens off the pharynx 2. a hernia of part of the pharynx

pharyngolaryngeal /,fə'rɪngələrɪndʒi:əl/ *adjective* referring to the pharynx and the larynx

pharyngology /,færɪn'gɒlədʒɪ/ *noun* the specialty in medicine that deals with the throat, its diseases and their treatment

pharyngoscope /fə'rɪngəʊskəp/ *noun* an instrument with a light attached, used by a doctor to examine the pharynx

pharyngotympanic tube /fə'rɪngətɪməpɪnik 'tju:b/ *noun* one of two tubes which connect the back of the throat to the middle ear. Also called **Eustachian tube**

pharynx /'færɪŋks/ *noun* a muscular passage leading from the back of the mouth to the oesophagus (NOTE: The plural is **pharynges** or **pharynxes**.)

COMMENT: The nasal cavity (or nasopharynx) leads to the back of the mouth (or oropharynx) and then into the pharynx itself, which in turn

becomes the oesophagus when it reaches the sixth cervical vertebra. The pharynx is the channel both for air and food; the trachea (or windpipe) leads off it before it joins the oesophagus. The upper part of the pharynx (the nasopharynx) connects with the middle ear through the Eustachian tubes. When air pressure in the middle ear is not equal to that outside, as when going up or down in an aeroplane, the tube becomes blocked and pressure can be reduced by swallowing.

phase /feɪz/ *noun* a stage or period of development ○ *If the cancer is diagnosed in its early phase, the chances of complete cure are much greater.*

phenazopyridine /fə,næzəʊ'pɪrɪdɪ:n/ *noun* a drug used to reduce pain in conditions of the urinary tract, such as cystitis

phenobarbitone /fi:nəʊ'bə:bɪtən/ *noun* a barbiturate drug which is used as a sedative, a hypnotic and an anticonvulsant

phenol /fi:nɒpl/ *noun* a strong disinfectant used for external use. Also called **carbolic acid**

phenomenon /fə'nɒmɪnən/ *noun* 1. a fact or situation which can be observed 2. someone or something that is considered to be extraordinary and marvellous

phenotype /'fɪnəʊtaɪp/ *noun* the particular characteristics of an organism. Compare **genotype**

...all cancers may be reduced to fundamental mechanisms based on cancer risk genes or oncogenes within ourselves. An oncogene is a gene that encodes a protein that contributes to the malignant phenotype of the cell.' [British Medical Journal]

phenylalanine /fi:nail'æləni:n/ *noun* an essential amino acid

phenylketonuria /fi:nail,kɪ:təu'njʊəriə/ *noun* a hereditary condition which affects the way in which the body breaks down phenylalanine, which in turn concentrates toxic metabolites in the nervous system causing brain damage

COMMENT: To have phenylketonuria, a child has to inherit the gene from both parents. The condition can be treated by giving the child a special diet but early diagnosis is essential to avoid brain damage.

phenytoin /'fenɪtɔɪn/ *noun* a drug which helps to prevent convulsions, used in the treatment of epilepsy

pH factor /pi:/ 'eɪtʃ ,fæktə/ *noun* a factor which indicates acidity or alkalinity

phial /'feɪəl/ *noun* a small medicine bottle

-philia /fɪliə/ *suffix* attraction to or liking for something

philtrum /'filtrəm/ *noun* 1. a groove in the centre of the top lip 2. a drug believed to stimulate sexual desire

phimosis /fɪ'moʊsɪs/ *noun* a condition in which the foreskin is tight and has to be removed by circumcision

phleb- /fleb/ *prefix* same as **phlebo-** (used before vowels)

phlebectomy /fɪ'lɪ'bektəmɪ/ *noun* the surgical removal of a vein or part of a vein

phlebitis /fɪ'lɪ'baitɪs/ *noun* inflammation of a vein

phlebo- /flebəʊ/ *prefix* referring to a vein

phlebogram /'flebəgræm/ *noun* an X-ray picture of a vein or system of veins. Also called **venogram**

phlebography /fɪ'lɪ'bɒgræfi/ *noun* an X-ray examination of a vein using a radio-opaque dye so that the vein will show up on the film. Also called **venography**

phlebolith /'flebəlɪθ/ *noun* a stone which forms in a vein as a result of an old thrombus becoming calcified

phlebothrombosis /,flebəʊθrɒm'bəsɪs/ *noun* a blood clot in a deep vein in the legs or pelvis, which can easily detach and form an embolus in a lung

phlebotomise /fɪ'lɪ'bɒtəmaɪz/, **phlebotomize** *verb* to make a cut in a person's vein to take blood for testing

phlebotomy /fɪ'lɪ'bɒtəmɪ/ *noun* an operation where a vein or an artery is cut so that blood can be removed, as when taking blood from a donor

phlegm /flem/ *noun* same as **sputum** ○ *She was coughing up phlegm into her handkerchief.*

phlegmasia alba dolens /fleg,meɪziə ,ælbə 'dəʊləns/ *noun* same as **milk leg**

phyctena /flik'ti:nə/, **phycten** /'flɪktən/ *noun* 1. a small blister caused by a burn 2. a small vesicle on the conjunctiva

phyctenule /flik'tenju:l/ *noun* 1. a tiny blister on the cornea or conjunctiva 2. any small blister

phobia /'fəʊbiə/ *noun* an unusually strong and irrational fear ○ *She has a phobia about or of dogs.* ○ *Fear of snakes is one of the commonest phobias.*

-phobia /fəʊbiə/ *suffix* neurotic fear of something ○ *agoraphobia* ○ *claustrophobia*

phobic /fəʊbɪk/ *adjective* referring to a phobia

-phobic /fəʊbɪk/ *suffix* a person who has a phobia of something

phobic anxiety /,fəʊbɪk æŋ'zaiəti/ *noun* state of worry caused by a phobia

phocomelia /,fəʊkə'miəliə/, **phocomely** /fəʊ'kɒməli/ *noun* 1. a congenital condition in which the upper parts of the limbs are missing or poorly developed, leaving the hands or feet directly attached to the body 2. a congenital condition in which the legs develop as usual, but the arms are absent or underdeveloped

phon- /fəʊn/ *prefix* same as **phono-** (used before vowels)

phonation /fəʊ'nейʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the production of vocal sounds, especially speech

phoniatrics /fəʊni'ɛtriks/ *noun* the study of speech and disorders related to it

phono- /fəʊnəʊ/ *prefix* referring to sound or voice

phonocardiogram /fəʊnəʊ'ku:diəgræm/ *noun* a chart of the sounds made by the heart

phonocardiograph /fəʊnəʊ'ku:diəgræf/ *noun* an instrument that amplifies heart sounds and converts them into a visual display

phonocardiography /fəʊnəʊ'ku:di'ngrəfi/ *noun* the process of recording the sounds made by the heart

phonology /fə'nɒlədʒi/ *noun* the study of the system of speech sounds used in a particular language or in human speech generally

phonosurgery /fəʊnəʊ,sɜ:dʒəri/ *noun* surgery performed to alter the quality of the voice

phosphataemia /fɒsfə'ti:miə/ *noun* the presence of excess phosphates in the blood

phosphatase /fɒsfə'teɪz/ *noun* a group of enzymes which are important in the cycle of muscle contraction and in the calcification of bones

phosphate /fɒsfait/ *noun* a salt of phosphoric acid

phosphaturia /fɒsfə'tjuəriə/ *noun* the presence of excess phosphates in the urine

COMMENT: In phosphaturia the urine becomes cloudy, which can indicate stones in the bladder or kidney.

phospholipid /fɒsfə'u'lipɪd/ *noun* a compound with fatty acids, which is one of the main components of membranous tissue

phoshonecrosis /fɒsfə'ne'krəʊsɪs/ *noun* a necrotic condition affecting the kidneys, liver and bones, usually seen in people who work with phosphorus

phosphorescent /fɒsfə'res(ə)nt/ *adjective* shining without producing heat

phosphoric acid /fɒs,fɔɪrɪk 'æsɪd/ *noun* an acid which is very soluble in water and gives rise to acid, neutral and alkali salts

phosphorus /fɒsf(ə)rəs/ *noun* a toxic chemical element which is present in very small quantities in bones and nerve tissue. It causes burns if it touches the skin, and can poison if swallowed. (NOTE: The chemical symbol is P.)

phosphorylase /fɒs'fɔɪrlaɪz/ *noun* an enzyme that aids the process of carbohydrate metabolism

phossy jaw /fɔsi 'dʒɔ:/ *noun* a type of phosphonecrosis, caused by inhaling phosphorus fumes, which results in disintegration of the bones of the lower jaw. The disease was once common among workers in match factories.

phot- /fət, fəʊt/ *prefix* same as **photo-** (used before vowels)

photalgia /fəʊ'tældʒə/ *noun* 1. pain in the eye caused by bright light 2. severe photophobia

photo- /fəʊtəʊ/ *prefix* referring to light

photoablation /fəʊtəʊə'bлеɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the removal of tissue using lasers

photocoagulation /fəʊtəʊkəʊəgjʊ'leɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the process in which tissue coagulates from the heat caused by light, used to treat a detached retina

photodermatoses /fəʊtəʊ,dɜ:ma'təʊsɪs/ *noun* a lesion of the skin after exposure to bright light

photogenic /fəʊtə'dʒenɪk/ *adjective* 1. produced by the action of light 2. producing light

photograph /fəʊtəgra:f/ *noun* a picture taken with a camera, which uses the chemical action of light on sensitive film ■ *verb* to take a picture of something with a camera

photography /fə'tɒŋgrəfi/ *noun* the act of taking pictures with a camera ○ *The development of X-ray photography has meant that internal disorders can be more easily diagnosed.*

photophobia /fəʊtəʊ'fəʊbiə/ *noun* 1. a condition in which the eyes become sensitive to light and conjunctivitis may be caused (NOTE: It can be associated with measles and some other infectious diseases.) 2. a morbid fear of light

photophobic /fəʊtəʊ'fəʊbɪk/ *adjective* having an unusual fear of light

photophthalmia /fəʊtɒf'θælmɪə/ *noun* inflammation of the eye caused by bright light, as in snow blindness

photopic vision /fəʊ,tɒpɪk 'viʒ(ə)n/ *noun* vision which is adapted to bright light such as daylight, using the cones in the retina instead of the rods, which are used in scotopic vision. ◊ *light adaptation*

photopsia /fəʊ'tɒpsɪə/ *noun* a condition of the eye in which someone sees flashes of light

photoreceptor neurone /fəʊtəʊrəʊtɪ,septə'ni:jərəʊn/ *noun* a rod or cone in the retina, which is sensitive to light or colour

photoretinitis /fəʊtəʊreti'naitɪs/ *noun* damage to a retina caused by looking directly at the sun. Also called **sun blindness**

photosensitive /fəʊtəʊ'sensɪtɪv/ *adjective* sensitive to light, or stimulated by light

photosensitivity /fəʊtəʊsensɪt'ɪviti/ *noun* the fact of being sensitive to light

phototherapy /fəʊtəʊ'θerəpi/ *noun* a treatment for jaundice and vitamin D deficiency, which involves exposing the person to ultraviolet rays

phototoxic /fəʊtəʊ'tɒksɪk/ *adjective* making the skin unusually sensitive to damage by light, as in sunburn

phototoxicity /fəʊtəʊtɒk'sisiti/ *noun* a cause of damage to the retina of the eye due to exposure to too much ultraviolet light or radi-

ation ○ Children's retinas are more likely to experience damage as a result of phototoxicity from excess ultraviolet light than those of adults. ◊ **retinopathy**

photuria /fəʊ'tjuəriə/ *noun* phosphorescent urine

phren- /fren/ *prefix* same as **phreno-** (*used before vowels*)

phrenemphraxis /,frenem'fræksɪs/ *noun* a surgical operation to crush the phrenic nerve in order to paralyse the diaphragm

-**phrenia** /fri:nɪə/ *suffix* disorder of the mind

phrenic /'frenɪk/ *adjective* 1. referring to the diaphragm 2. referring to the mind or intellect

phrenic avulsion /,frenɪk ə'velʃn(ə)n/ *noun* the surgical removal of part of the phrenic nerve in order to paralyse the diaphragm

phrenicectomy /,frenɪ'sektəmɪ/ *noun* the surgical removal of all or part of the phrenic nerve

phreniclasia /,frenɪ'kleɪziə/ *noun* an operation to clamp the phrenic nerve

phrenic nerve /'frenɪk nɜ:vɪ/ *noun* a pair of nerves which controls the muscles in the diaphragm

phrenicotomy /,frenɪ'kɒtəmɪ/ *noun* an operation to divide the phrenic nerve

phreno- /frenəʊ/ *prefix* 1. referring to the brain 2. referring to the phrenic nerve

pH test /pi: 'eɪtʃ test/ *noun* a test to see how acid or alkaline a solution is

phthiriasis /θɪ'rɪəsɪs/ *noun* infestation with the crab louse

Phthirus pubis /,θaɪrɪəs 'pjʊ:bɪs/ *noun* a louse which infests the pubic region. Also called **pubic louse, crab**

phthisis /θaɪsɪs/ *noun* an old term for tuberculosis

phycomycosis /,faɪkə'moʊsɪk'keʊsɪs/ *noun* an acute infection of the lungs, central nervous system and other organs by a fungus

physi- /fɪzɪ/ *prefix* same as **physio-** (*used before vowels*)

physical /'fɪzɪk(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to the body, as opposed to the mind ■ *noun* a physical examination ○ He has to pass a physical before being accepted by the police force.

physical dependence /,fɪzɪk(ə)l dɪ'pendəns/, **physical drug dependence** /,fɪzɪk(ə)l 'drag dɪ'pendəns/ *noun* a state where a person is addicted to a drug such as heroin and suffers physical effects if he or she stops taking the drug

physical education /,fɪzɪk(ə)l ,edju'keɪʃn(ə)n/ *noun* the teaching of sports and exercises in school

physical examination /,fɪzɪk(ə)l ɪg,zæmɪ'nɛɪʃn(ə)n/ *noun* an examination of someone's body to see if he or she is healthy

physical genetic trait /,fɪzɪk(ə)l dʒe'netɪk trɛt/ *noun* a characteristic of the body of a

person, e.g. red hair or big feet, which is inherited

physically /'fɪzɪklɪ/ *adverb* referring to the body ○ Physically he is very weak, but his mind is still alert.

physically challenged /,fɪzɪklɪ 'tʃælɪndʒd/ *adjective* describing someone whose condition makes it difficult to perform some or all of the basic activities of daily life

physical medicine /,fɪzɪk(ə)l 'med(ə)sɪn/ *noun* a branch of medicine which deals with physical disabilities or with treatment of disorders after they have been diagnosed

physical sign /,fɪzɪk(ə)l 'saɪn/ *noun* a symptom which can be seen on someone's body or which can be produced by percussion and palpitation

physical therapy /,fɪzɪk(ə)l 'θerəpi/ *noun* the treatment of disorders by heat, by massage, by exercise and other physical means

physician /fi'zɪʃn(ə)n/ *noun* a registered doctor who is not a surgeon (NOTE: In British English, physician refers to a specialist doctor, though not usually a surgeon, while in US English it is used for any qualified doctor.)

physio /'fɪzɪə/ *noun (informal)* 1. a session of physiotherapy treatment 2. a physiotherapist

physio- /fɪzɪəʊ/ *prefix* 1. referring to physiology 2. physical

physiological /,fɪzɪə'lɒdʒɪk(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to physiology and the regular functions of the body

physiological saline /,fɪzɪə'lɒdʒɪk(ə)l 'sei laɪn/, **physiological solution** /,fɪzɪə'lɒdʒɪk(ə)l sə'lju:s(ə)n/ *noun* any solution used to keep cells or tissue alive

physiological tremor /,fɪzɪə'lɒdʒɪk(ə)l 'tremə/ *noun* a small movement of the limbs which takes place when a person tries to remain still

physiologist /,fɪzɪ'ɒlədʒɪst/ *noun* a scientist who specialises in the study of the functions of living organisms

physiology /,fɪzɪ'ɒlədʒɪ/ *noun* the study of regular body functions

physiotherapist /,fɪzɪəʊ'θerəpɪst/ *noun* a trained specialist who gives physiotherapy

physiotherapy /,fɪzɪəʊ'θerəpi/ *noun* the treatment of a disorder or condition by exercise, massage, heat treatment, infrared lamps or other external means, e.g. to restore strength or function after a disease or injury

physiotherapy clinic /,fɪzɪəʊ'θerəpi ,klinɪk/ *noun* a clinic where people can have physiotherapy

physique /fɪ'zi:k/ *noun* the shape and size of a person's body

physo- /faisəʊ/ *prefix* 1. tending to swell 2. relating to air or gas

physostigmine /,faisəʊ'stɪgmi:n/ *noun* an extract of the dried leaves of the vine that pro-

duces Calabar bean, which is toxic but may be used in the treatment of glaucoma and to counter the effects of anticholinergic drugs on the central nervous system

phyt- /faɪt/, **phyto-** /faɪtəʊ/ *prefix* referring to plants or coming from plants

phytooestrogen /,faɪtəʊ'ɪstrədʒən/ *noun* a substance obtained from cereals, legumes and seeds which has a similar effect on the body as oestrogen, used increasingly as an alternative to hormone replacement therapy

phyto-photo dermatitis /,faɪtəʊ ,fəʊtəʊ ,dʒə'moʊ'taɪtɪs/ *noun* an acute skin reaction due to the combination of plant irritation and sunlight

PI *abbr* pressure index

pia /'paɪə/, **pia mater** /,paɪə 'mɛtə/ *noun* the delicate innermost membrane of the three which cover the brain. ☐ **arachnoid**, **dura mater**

pian /pi'ə:n/ *noun* same as **yaws**

pica /'paɪkə/ *noun* a desire to eat things which are not food, e.g. wood or paper, often found in pregnant women and small children

pick /pɪk/ *verb* to take away small pieces of something with the fingers or with a tool ☐ *She picked the pieces of glass out of the wound with tweezers.*

Pick's disease /'pɪks di,zi:z/ *noun* a rare form of presenile dementia, in which a disorder of the lipid metabolism causes mental impairment, anaemia, loss of weight and swelling of the spleen and liver

pick up /,pɪk 'ʌp/ *verb (informal)* 1. to catch a disease ☐ *She must have picked up the disease when she was travelling in Africa.* 2. to get stronger or better ☐ *He was ill for months, but he's picking up now.*

pico- /pi:kəʊ/ *prefix* one million millionth (10^{-12}). Symbol **p**

picomole /'pi:kəʊməʊl/ *noun* a unit of measurement of the amount of substance equal to one million millionth of a mole. Symbol **pmol**

picornavirus /pi:'kɔ:nə,vairəs/ *noun* a virus containing RNA, e.g. enteroviruses and rhinoviruses

PID *abbr* prolapsed intervertebral disc

PIDS *abbr* primary immune deficiency syndrome

Pierre Robin syndrome /,pjərə rɒ'bæn ,sɪndrəʊm/ *noun* a combination of facial features including a small lower jaw and a cleft palate that exist at birth, causing breathing and feeding problems early in a child's life

pigeon breast /'pɪdʒɪn brest/, **pigeon chest** /'pɪdʒɪn tʃest/ *noun* same as **pectus carinatum**

pigeon toes /'pɪdʒɪn təʊz/ *plural noun* a condition in which the feet turn towards the inside when a person is standing upright

pigment /'pɪgmənt/ *noun* 1. a substance which gives colour to part of the body such as blood, the skin or hair 2. (in *pharmacy*) a paint

COMMENT: The body contains several substances which control colour: melanin gives dark colour to the skin and hair; bilirubin gives yellow colour to bile and urine; haemoglobin in the blood gives the skin a pink colour; carotene can give a reddish-yellow colour to the skin if the patient eats too many tomatoes or carrots. Some pigment cells can carry oxygen and are called 'respiratory pigments'.

pigmentation /,pɪg'meɪtɪʃən/ *noun* the colouring of the body, especially that produced by deposits of pigment

pigmented /pɪg'mentɪd/ *adjective* 1. coloured 2. showing an unusual colour

pigmented epithelium /,pɪg'məntɪd ,epɪ'θi:lɪəm/, **pigmented layer** /,pɪg'məntɪd 'leɪə/ *noun* coloured tissue at the back of the retina

PIH *abbr* pregnancy-induced hypertension

Pilates /'pɪlə:tɪz/ *noun* a holistic form of exercise and postural therapy that develops the deep abdominal muscles to control body movement and protect the back

piles /'pailz/ *plural noun* same as **haemorrhoids**

pili /'pailɪ/ ☐ **arrector pili**

pill /pɪl/ *noun* a small hard round ball of medication that is taken by swallowing ☐ *He has to take the pills twice a day.* ☐ **the pill** an oral contraceptive. ☐ **morning-after pill** ☐ **on the pill** taking a regular course of contraceptive pills

pillar /'pɪlə/ *noun* a part that is long and thin

pillow /'pɪləʊ/ *noun* a soft cushion on a bed which the head lies on when the person is lying down ☐ *The nurse gave her an extra pillow to keep her head raised.*

pill-rolling /'pɪl ,rəʊlɪŋ/ *noun* nervous action of the fingers, in which the person seems to be rolling a very small object, associated with Parkinson's disease

pilo- /'pailəʊ/ *prefix* referring to hair

pilocarpine /,pailəʊ'ku:pɪ:n/ *noun* an organic compound of plant origin which is used in eye drops to treat glaucoma

pilomotor /,pailəʊ'məʊtə/ *adjective* referring to something that moves the hairs of the skin

pilomotor nerve /,pailəʊ'məʊtə nɜ:v/ *noun* a nerve which supplies the arrector pili muscles attached to hair follicles

pilomotor reflex /,pailəʊ'məʊtə ,ri:fleks/ *noun* a reaction of the dermal papillae of the skin to cold and fear which causes the hairs on the skin to become erect

pilonidal /,pailə'naid(ə)l/ *adjective* relating to a cyst or cavity which has a growth of hair

pilonidal cyst /,pailə,naid(ə)l 'sist/ *noun* a cyst containing hair, usually found at the bottom of the spine near the buttocks

pilonidal sinus /,paɪlən,dɪəs/ noun a small depression with hairs at the base of the spine

pilosebaceous /,paɪləʊsə'bɛsɪəs/ adjective referring to the hair follicles and the glands attached to them

pillosity /paɪ'ləsɪsɪs/, **pillosism** /'paɪləsɪz(ə)m/ noun a condition in which someone has an unusual amount of hair or where hair is present in an unusual place

pilot study /'paɪlət ,stʌdi/ noun a small version of a project which is carried out first, in order to discover how well it works and to solve any problems, before going ahead with the full version

pillus /'paɪləs/ noun 1. one hair (NOTE: The plural is *pili*.) 2. hair-like process on the surface of a bacterium

pimple /'pɪmpl/ noun a small swelling on the skin, containing pus ◇ *He had pimples on his neck.*

pimply /'pɪmpli/ adjective covered with pimples

pin /pɪn/ noun 1. a small sharp piece of metal for attaching things together ◇ *The nurse fastened the bandage with a pin.* 2. a metal nail used to attach broken bones ◇ *He has had a pin inserted in his hip.* ■ verb to attach something with a pin ◇ *She pinned the bandages carefully to stop them slipping.* ◇ *The bone had fractured in several places and needed pinning.*

pinch /pɪntʃ/ noun 1. an act of squeezing the thumb and first finger together 2. a quantity of something which can be held between the thumb and first finger ◇ *She put a pinch of salt into the water.* ■ verb 1. to squeeze something tightly between the thumb and first finger 2. to squeeze something ◇ *She developed a sore on her ankle where her shoe pinched.*

pineal /'piːiəl/ adjective relating to or released by the pineal gland

pineal body /'piːiəl ,bɒdi/, **pineal gland** /'piːiəl glænd/ noun a small cone-shaped gland situated below the corpus callosum in the brain, which produces melatonin and is believed to be associated with the circadian rhythm. See illustration at **BRAIN** in Supplement

pinguecula /pɪŋ'gwekju:lə/, **pinguicula** /pɪŋ'gwɪkju:lə/ noun a condition affecting elderly people, in which the conjunctiva in the eyes has small yellow growths near the edge of the cornea, usually on the nasal side

pink disease /'pɪŋk dɪ,zi:z/ noun same as **acrodynia**

pinna /'pɪnə/ noun the outer ear, the part of the ear which is outside the head, connected by a passage to the eardrum. See illustration at **EAR** in Supplement

pinnaplasty /'pɪnəplæsti/ noun a cosmetic surgical procedure to correct the shape of the ear

pinocytosis /,pi:nəʊsəsɪ'təʊsɪs/ noun the process by which a cell surrounds and takes in fluid

pins and needles /,pɪnz ən 'ni:d(ə)lz/ noun an unpleasant tingling sensation, usually occurring after a temporarily restricted blood supply returns to an arm or leg (*informal*) ◇ **par-aesthesia**

paint /paɪnt/ noun a unit of measurement of liquids (= about 0.56 of a litre) ◇ *He lost two pints of blood during the operation.*

pinta /'pɪntə/ noun a skin disease of the tropical regions of America, in which the skin on the hands and feet swells and loses colour, caused by a spirochaete *Treponema*

pinworm /'pɪnwɜ:m/ noun US same as **threadworm**

PIP abbr proximal interphalangeal joint

pipette /'pi:pɪt/ noun a thin glass tube used in the laboratory for taking or measuring samples of liquid

piriform fossae /,pɪrɪfɔ:m 'fɔ:sə/ plural noun the two hollows at the sides of the upper end of the larynx

Piriton /'pɪritɒn/ a trade name for chlorphenamine

piroxicam /pi'rɒksɪkæm/ noun a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug used in the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis and osteoarthritis

Pis abbr performance indicators

pisiform /'pɪsɪfɔ:m/, **pisiform bone** /'pɪsɪfɔ:m bəʊn/ noun one of the eight small carpal bones in the wrist. See illustration at **HAND** in Supplement

pit /pɪt/ noun a hollow place on a surface ◇ **the pit of the stomach** the epigastrium, the part of the upper abdomen between the ribcage above the navel. ◇ **armpit**

pithiatism /pi'θaɪətɪz(ə)m/ noun a way of influencing someone's mind by persuading him or her of something, as when a doctor treats a condition by telling the person that he or she is in fact well

pitted /'pitɪd/ adjective covered with small hollows ◇ *His skin was pitted by acne.*

pitting /'pitɪŋ/ noun the formation of hollows in the skin

pituitary /pi'tju:it(ə)ri/ adjective 1. relating to or produced by the pituitary gland 2. caused by a disturbance of the pituitary gland ■ noun same as **pituitary gland**

pituitary body /pi'tju:it(ə)ri ,bɒdi/ noun same as **pituitary gland**

pituitary fossa /pi'tju:it(ə)ri 'fɒsə/ noun same as **sella turcica**

pituitary gland /pi'tju:it(ə)ri ,glænd/ noun the main endocrine gland in the body which secretes hormones that stimulate other glands.

Also called **pituitary body, hypophysis cerebri**. See illustration at BRAIN in Supplement

COMMENT: The pituitary gland is about the size of a pea and hangs down from the base of the brain, inside the sphenoid bone, on a stalk which attaches it to the hypothalamus. The front lobe of the gland (the adenohypophysis) secretes several hormones (TSH, ACTH) which stimulate the adrenal and thyroid glands, or which stimulate the production of sex hormones, melanin and milk. The posterior lobe of the pituitary gland (the neurohypophysis) secretes the antidiuretic hormone (ADH) and oxytocin.

pituitrin /pi'tju:ɪtrɪn/ *noun* a hormone secreted by the pituitary gland

pityriasis /'pɪtɪ'ræsɪs/ *noun* any skin disease in which the skin develops thin scales

pityriasis alba /'pɪtɪ,ræsɪs 'ælba/ *noun* a disease affecting children which results in flat white patches on the cheeks that usually heal naturally

pityriasis capititis /'pɪtɪ,ræsɪs kə'partɪs/ *noun* ♦ dandruff

pityriasis rosea /'pɪtɪ,ræsɪs 'rəʊzɪə/ *noun* a mild irritating rash affecting young people, which appears especially in the early part of the year and has no known cause

pityriasis rubra /'pɪtɪ,ræsɪs 'ru:bɪə/ *noun* a serious, sometimes fatal, skin disease, a type of exfoliative dermatitis in which the skin turns dark red and is covered with white scales

pivot /'pɪvət/ *noun* a stem used to attach an artificial crown to the root of a tooth ■ *verb* to rest and turn on a point ○ *The atlas bone pivots on the second vertebra.*

pivot joint /'pivot dʒɔɪnt/ *noun* same as **trochoid joint**

PKD abbr polycystic kidney disease

PKU abbr phenylketonuria

placebo /pla'si:bəʊ/ *noun* a tablet which appears to be a drug, but has no medicinal substance in it

COMMENT: Placebos may be given to patients who have imaginary illnesses. Placebos can also help in treating real disorders by stimulating the patient's psychological will to be cured. Placebos are also used on control groups in tests of new drugs (a placebo-controlled study).

placebo effect /plə'si:bəʊ ɪ,fekt/ *noun* the apparently beneficial effect of telling someone that he or she is having a treatment, even if this is not true, caused by the hope that the treatment will be effective

placenta /plə'sentə/ *noun* the tissue which grows inside the uterus during pregnancy and links the baby to the mother

COMMENT: The vascular system of the fetus is not directly connected to that of the mother. The placenta allows an exchange of oxygen and nutrients to be passed from the mother to the fetus to which she is linked by the umbilical cord. It stops functioning when the baby

breathes for the first time and is then passed out of the uterus as the afterbirth.

placental /plə'sent(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to the placenta

placental barrier /plə,sent(ə)l 'bæriə/ *noun* a barrier which prevents the blood of a fetus and that of the mother from mixing, but allows water, oxygen and hormones to pass from mother to fetus

placental insufficiency /plə,sent(ə)l ,ɪnsə'fɪʃ(ə)nſɪ/ *noun* a condition in which the placenta does not provide the fetus with the necessary oxygen and nutrients

placenta praevia /plə,sentə 'pri:vɪə/ *noun* a condition in which the fertilised egg becomes implanted in the lower part of the uterus, which means that the placenta lies across the cervix and may become detached during childbirth and cause brain damage to the baby

placentography /,plæsən'tɒgrəfi/ *noun* an X-ray examination of the placenta of a pregnant woman after a radiopaque dye has been injected

Placido's disc /plə'saɪdəʊz dɪsk/ *noun* same as **keratoscope** [After A. Placido, Portuguese oculist.]

plagiocephaly /,pleɪdʒiə'kefəli/ *noun* a condition in which a person has a distorted head shape, from irregular closure of the cranial sutures

plague /'pleɪg/ *noun* an infectious disease which occurs in epidemics where many people are killed

COMMENT: Bubonic plague was the Black Death of the Middle Ages; its symptoms are fever, delirium, prostration, rigor and swellings on the lymph nodes.

plan /plæn/ *noun* arrangement of how something should be done ■ *verb* to arrange how something is going to be done □ **they are planning to have a family** they expect to have children and so are not taking contraceptives

'...one issue has arisen – the amount of time and effort which nurses need to put into the writing of detailed care plans. Few would now dispute the need for clear, concise nursing plans to guide nursing practice, provide educational tools and give an accurate legal record' [Nursing Times]

plane /pleɪn/ *noun* a flat surface, especially that of the body seen from a specific angle

planned **parenthood** /,plænd 'peərənθod/ *noun* a situation in which two people plan to have a specific number of children, and take contraceptives to control the number of children in the family

planning /'plænɪŋ/ *noun* the work of deciding and arranging how something should be done

planta /'plæntə/ *noun* the sole of the foot

plantar /'plæntə/ *adjective* referring to the sole of the foot

plantar arch /,plæntər 'a:tʃ/ *noun* the curved part of the sole of the foot running

along the length of the foot. Also called **longitudinal arch**

plantar flexion /'plæntər 'fleksʃən/ *noun* the bending of the toes downwards

plantar reflex /'plæntər 'ri:fleks/, **plantar response** /'plæntər rɪ'spɒns/ *noun* the usual downward movement of the toes when the sole of the foot is stroked in the Babinski test

plantar region /'plæntər ,rɪ:dʒən/ *noun* the sole of the foot

plantar surface /'plæntər ,sɜːfɪs/ *noun* the skin of the sole of the foot

plantar wart /'plæntər wɔ:t/ *noun* a wart on the sole of the foot

planus /'pleɪnəs/ ♦ **lichen planus**

plaque /plæk/, plāk/ *noun* 1. a flat area 2. a film of saliva, mucus, bacteria and food residues that builds up on the surface of teeth and can cause gum damage

-plasia /plɛzɪə/ *suffix* referring to something which develops or grows

plasm- /plæz(ə)m/ *prefix* same as **plasmo-** (*used before vowels*)

plasma /'plæzmə/ *noun* 1. a yellow watery liquid which makes up the main part of blood 2. lymph with no corpuscles 3. cytoplasm

COMMENT: If blood does not clot it separates into blood corpuscles and plasma, which is formed of water and proteins, including the clotting agent fibrinogen. If blood clots, the corpuscles separate from serum, which is a watery liquid similar to plasma, but not containing fibrinogen. Dried plasma can be kept for a long time, and is used, after water has been added, for transfusions.

plasma cell /'plæzmə sel/ *noun* a lymphocyte which produces a particular type of antibody

plasmacytoma /plæzməsai'təʊmə/ *noun* a malignant tumour of plasma cells, usually found in lymph nodes or bone marrow

plasmapheresis /,plæzməfə'ri:sɪs/ *noun* an operation to take blood from someone, then to separate the red blood cells from the plasma, and to return the red blood cells suspended in a saline solution to the patient through a transfusion

plasma protein /'plæzmə ,prəuti:n/ *noun* a protein in plasma, e.g. albumin, gamma globulin or fibrinogen

plasmin /'plæzmɪn/ *noun* same as **fibrinolysin**

plasminogen /plæz'mɪnədʒən/ *noun* a substance in blood plasma which becomes activated and forms plasmin

plasmo- /plæzməʊ/ *prefix* referring to blood plasma

Plasmodium /plæz'məudiəm/ *noun* a type of parasite which infests red blood cells and causes malaria

plasmolysis /plæz'mɒlɪsɪs/ *noun* the contraction of a cell protoplasm by dehydration,

where the surrounding cell wall becomes smaller

plaster /'pla:stə/ *noun* a white powder which is mixed with water and used to make a solid support to cover a broken limb ○ *After his accident he had his leg in plaster for two months.*

plaster cast /'pla:stə kɑ:st/ *noun* a hard support made of bandage soaked in liquid plaster of Paris, which is allowed to harden after being wrapped round a broken limb and which prevents the limb moving while the bone heals

plaster of Paris /,pla:stər əv 'pærɪs/ *noun* a fine white plaster used to make plaster casts

plastic /'plæstɪk/ *noun* an artificial material made from petroleum, and used to make many objects, including replacement organs ■ *adjective* able to change shape or develop in different shapes

plastic lymph /'plæstɪk lɪmf/ *noun* a yellow liquid produced by an inflamed wound which helps the healing process

plastic surgeon /,plæstɪk 'sɜː:dʒən/ *noun* a surgeon who specialises in plastic surgery

plastic surgery /,plæstɪk 'sɜː:dʒəri/ *noun* surgery to repair damaged or malformed parts of the body (*informal*) ♦ **reconstructive surgery**

COMMENT: Plastic surgery is especially important in treating accident victims or people who have suffered burns. It is also used to correct congenital disorders such as a cleft palate. When the aim is simply to improve the patient's appearance, it is usually referred to as 'cosmetic surgery'.

plastin /'plæstɪn/ *noun* same as **fibrinolysin**

-plasty /plæsti/ *suffix* referring to plastic surgery

plate /'pleɪt/ *noun* 1. a flat sheet of metal or bone ○ *The surgeon inserted a plate in her skull.* 2. a flat piece of metal attached to a fractured bone to hold the broken parts together

platelet /'pleɪtlet/ *noun* a small blood cell which releases thromboplastin and which multiplies rapidly after an injury, encouraging the coagulation of blood. Also called **thrombocyte**

platelet count /'pleɪt(ə)lət kaʊnt/ *noun* a test to count the number of platelets in a specific quantity of blood

platy- /plæti/ *prefix* flat

platysma /plætɪzma/ *noun* a flat muscle running from the collarbone to the lower jaw

pledget /'pledʒɪt/ *noun* a small piece of gauze or cotton wool used to protect or apply medication to a small enclosed space, such as the ear passage

-plegia /pli:dʒə/ *suffix* paralysis

pleio- /plaɪəʊ/ *prefix* same as **pleo-**

pleo- /pli:əʊ/ *prefix* too many

pleocytosis /pli:əʊsɪs/ *noun* a condition in which there are an unusual number of leucocytes in the cerebrospinal fluid

pleoptics /pli:'ɒptɪks/ *noun* treatment to help the partially sighted

pressor /'plesə/ *noun* a little hammer with a rubber tip, used by doctors to tap tendons to test for reflexes or for percussion of the chest. Also called **plexor**

plethora /'pleθərə/ *noun* too much blood in a part of the body

plethoric /ple'θɒrik/ *adjective* referring to an appearance that is due to dilatation of superficial blood vessels, e.g. a red complexion

plethysmography /,pleθɪz'mɒgrəfi/ *noun* a method of recording the changes in the volume of organs, mainly used to measure blood flow in the limbs

pleur- /pluər/ *prefix* same as **pleuro-** (*used before vowels*)

pleura /'pluərə/ *noun* one of two membranes lining the chest cavity and covering each lung (NOTE: The plural is **pleuras** or **pleurae**.)

pleurocentesis /,pluərəsɛn'ti:sɪs/ *noun* same as **pleurocentesis**

pleural /'pluərəl/ *adjective* referring to the pleura

pleural cavity /,pluərəl 'kævɪtɪ/ *noun* a space between the inner and outer pleura of the chest. See illustration at **LUNGS** in Supplement

pleural effusion /,pluərəl 'fju:ʒ(ə)n/ *noun* an excess of fluid formed in the pleural sac

pleural fluid /,pluərəl 'flu:ɪd/ *noun* a fluid which forms between the layers of the pleura in pleurisy

pleural membrane /,pluərəl 'membrən/ *noun* same as **pleura**

pleural mesothelioma /,pluərəl ,mesəʊθelɪ'əʊmə/ *noun* a tumour of the pleura, caused by inhaling asbestos dust

pleurectomy /pluə'rektəmi/ *noun* the surgical removal of part of the pleura which has been thickened or made stiff by chronic empyema

pleurisy /'pluərɪsɪ/ *noun* inflammation of the pleura, usually caused by pneumonia

COMMENT: The symptoms of pleurisy are coughing, fever, and sharp pains when breathing, caused by the two layers of pleura rubbing together.

pleuritis /pluə'rɪtɪs/ *noun* same as **pleurisy**

pleuro- /pluərəu/ *prefix* referring to the pleura

pleurocele /pluərəsɪ:l/ *noun* 1. a condition in which part of the lung or pleura is herniated 2. fluid in the pleural cavity

pleurocentesis /,pluərəsɛn'ti:sɪs/ *noun* an operation in which a hollow needle is put into the pleura to drain liquid. Also called **pleuracentesis**

pleurodesis /,pluərəu'di:sɪs/ *noun* treatment for a collapsed lung, in which the inner and outer pleura are stuck together

pleurodynia /,pluərəu'dɪniə/ *noun* pain in the muscles between the ribs, due to rheumatic inflammation

pleuron /'pluərən/ *noun* a membrane that encases the lung

pleuropneumonia /,pluərəʊnju'məʊniə/ *noun* acute lobar pneumonia, the classic type of pneumonia

plexor /'pleksə/ *noun* same as **pressor**

plexus /'pleksəs/ *noun* a network of nerves, blood vessels or lymphatics

pliable /'plaɪəb(ə)l/ *adjective* able to be bent easily

plica /'plaɪkə/ *noun* a fold

plicate /'plakɪt/ *adjective* folded

plication /plai'keɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* 1. a surgical operation to reduce the size of a muscle or a hollow organ by making folds in its walls and attaching them 2. the action of folding 3. a fold

ploidy /'plɔɪdi/ *noun* the number of sets of chromosomes within a cell

plombage /plɒm'bæ:ʒ/ *noun* 1. the act of packing bone cavities with antiseptic material 2. the act of packing of the lung or pleural cavities with inert material

PLSS *abbr* portable life-support system

plumbing /'plʌmɪŋ/ *noun* any system of tubes or vessels in the body, but especially the urinary system (*informal humorous*)

plumbism /'plʌmbɪz(ə)m/ *noun* same as **lead poisoning**

Plummer–Vinson syndrome /,plʌmər'veɪnsən/ *noun* a type of iron-deficiency anaemia, in which the tongue and mouth become inflamed and the person cannot swallow [Described 1912 by Plummer, 1919 by Vinson (also described in 1919 by Patterson and Brown Kelly, whose names are frequently associated with the syndrome). Henry Stanley Plummer (1874–1937), US physician; Porter Paisley Vinson (1890–1959), physician at the Mayo Clinic, Minnesota, USA.]

plunger /'plʌndʒə/ *noun* the part of a hypodermic syringe which slides up and down inside the tube, either sucking liquid into the syringe or forcing the contents out

pluri- /pluəri/ *prefix* indicating more than one of something

PM *abbr* 1. particulate matter 2. post mortem

PMA *abbr* progressive muscular atrophy

pmol *symbol* picomole

PMR *abbr* polymyalgia rheumatica

PMS *abbr* premenstrual syndrome

PMT *abbr* premenstrual tension

-pnea /pnɪə/ *suffix* same as **-pnoea**

pneo- /ni:əu/ *prefix* relating to breathing

pneum- /nju:m/ *prefix same as pneumo- (used before vowels)*

pneumat- /nju:mət/ *prefix same as pneumato- (used before vowels)*

pneumato- /nju:mətəʊ/ *prefix relating to air, gas or breath*

pneumatocele /nju:mætəʊsɪ:l/ *noun 1. a sac or tumour filled with gas 2. herniation of the lung*

pneumatonometer /,nju:mətə'nɒmɪtə/ *noun an instrument which measures the air pressure in the eye, used in testing for glaucoma. It blows a puff of air onto the cornea.*

pneumatosis /,nju:mə'tɔːsɪs/ *noun the occurrence of gas in an unusual place in the body*

pneumaturia /,nju:mə'tjʊəriə/ *noun the act of passing air or gas in the urine*

pneumo- /nju:məʊ/ *prefix referring to air, to the lungs or to breathing*

pneumocephalus /,nju:məʊ'kefələs/ *noun the presence of air or gas in the brain*

pneumococcal /,nju:məʊ'kɒk(ə)l/ *adjective referring to pneumococci*

pneumococcus /,nju:məʊ'kɒkəs/ *noun a bacterium which causes respiratory tract infections including pneumonia (NOTE: The plural is pneumococci.)*

pneumoconiosis /,nju:məʊkəni'əʊsɪs/ *noun a lung disease in which fibrous tissue forms in the lungs because the person has inhaled particles of stone or dust over a long period of time*

pneumocystis carinii pneumonia /,nju:məʊsɪstɪs kə,ri:nii nju:'məʊniə/ *noun a form of pneumonia found in people with impaired immune systems after radiotherapy or with AIDS. Abbr PCP*

pneumocyte /'nju:məʊsət/ *noun a cell of the walls between the air sacs in the lung*

pneumoencephalography /,nju:məʊen,kefə'lɒgrəfi/ *noun same as encephalogram*

pneumogastric /,nju:məʊ'gæstriκ/ *adjective referring to the lungs and the stomach*

pneumograph /'nju:məgra:f/ *noun an instrument which records chest movements during breathing*

pneumohaemothorax /,nju:məʊ,hɪ:məʊ'θə:ræks/ *noun blood or air in the pleural cavity. Also called haemopneumothorax*

pneumomycosis /,nju:məʊmət'kəʊsɪs/ *noun an infection of the lungs caused by a fungus*

pneumon- /nju:mən/ *prefix same as pneumo- (used before vowels)*

pneumonectomy /,nju:mə'nekτəmə/ *noun the surgical removal of all or part of a lung. Also called pulmonectomy*

pneumonia /nju:'məʊniə/ *noun inflammation of a lung, where the tiny alveoli of the lung become filled with fluid ○ He developed*

pneumonia and had to be hospitalised. ○ She died of pneumonia.

COMMENT: The symptoms of pneumonia are shivering, pains in the chest, high temperature and sputum brought up by coughing.

pneumonic /nju'mɒnɪk/ *adjective 1. referring to the lungs 2. referring to pneumonia*

pneumonic plague /nju,mɒnɪk 'pleɪg/ *noun a form of bubonic plague which mainly affects the lungs*

pneumonitis /,nju:məʊ'naitɪs/ *noun inflammation of the lungs*

pneumono- /nju:mənəʊ/ *prefix referring to the lungs*

pneumoperitoneum /,nju:mə'perɪtə'ni:əm/ *noun air in the peritoneal cavity*

pneumoradiography /,nju:məʊ,reidi'bɒgrəfi/ *noun an X-ray examination of part of the body after air or a gas has been inserted to make the organs show more clearly*

pneumothorax /,nju:məʊ'θə:ræks/ *noun a condition in which air or gas is in the thorax. Also called collapsed lung*

-pnoea /pni:ə/ *suffix referring to breathing*

PNS abbr *peripheral nervous system*

pock /pɒk/ *noun a localised lesion on the skin, due to smallpox or chickenpox*

pocket /'pɒkit/ *noun a cavity in the body □ pocket of infection place where an infection remains*

pockmark /'pɒkma:k/ *noun a scar left by a pustule, as in smallpox*

pockmarked /'pɒkma:kɪt/ *adjective referring to a face with scars from smallpox*

pod- /'pɒd/ *prefix referring to the foot*

podagra /'pɒd'ɒgrə/ *same as gout*

podalic /pəʊ'dælɪk/ *adjective relating to the feet*

podalic version /pəʊ,dælɪk 'vɜ:ʃən/ *noun the procedure of turning a fetus in the uterus by its feet*

podarthritis /,pəʊdə:tɪs/ *noun the swelling of one or more joints of the foot*

podiatrist /pəʊ'dæztrɪst/ *noun US a person who specialises in the care of the foot and its diseases*

podiatry /pəʊ'dæztri/ *noun US the study of minor diseases and disorders of the feet*

-poiesis /pə'i:sɪs/ *suffix referring to something which forms*

poikilo- /pəɪkɪləʊ/ *prefix irregular or varied*

poikilocyte /pəɪkɪləʊsait/ *noun an unusually large red blood cell with an irregular shape*

poikilocytosis /,pəɪkɪləʊsɪs/ *noun a condition in which poikilocytes exist in the blood*

point /pɔɪnt/ *noun 1. a sharp end ○ Surgical needles have to have very sharp points. 2. the dot used to show the division between whole numbers and parts of numbers (NOTE: 3.256: say 'three point two five six'; his temperature*

was 38.7: say 'thirty-eight point seven') **3.** a mark in a series of numbers ○ *the freezing point of water*

pointed /'pɔɪntɪd/ *adjective* with a sharp point

poison /'pɔɪz(ə)n/ *noun* a substance which can kill or harm body tissues if eaten or drunk

■ **verb** to harm or kill someone with a poison

COMMENT: The commonest poisons, of which even a small amount can kill, are arsenic, cyanide and strichnine. Many common foods and drugs can be poisonous if taken in large doses. Common household materials such as bleach, glue and insecticides can also be poisonous. Some types of poisoning, such as Salmonella, can be passed to other people through lack of hygienic conditions.

poisoning /'pɔɪz(ə)nɪŋ/ *noun* a condition in which a person is made ill or is killed by a poisonous substance

poison ivy /'pɔɪz(ə)n 'aɪvɪ/, **poison oak** /'pɔɪz(ə)n 'oʊk/ *noun* American plants whose leaves can cause a painful rash if touched

poisonous /'pɔɪz(ə)nəs/ *adjective* referring to a substance which is full of poison or which can kill or harm

poisonous gas /,pɔɪz(ə)nəs 'gæs/ *noun* a gas which can kill or can make someone ill

Poisons Act /'pɔɪz(ə)nz ækt/ *noun* in the UK, one of several Acts of Parliament which regulate the making, prescribing and selling of drugs, e.g. the Pharmacy and Poisons Act 1933, Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, or Poisons Act 1972

polar /'pəʊlə/ *adjective* with a pole

polar body /,pəʊlə 'bɒdi/ *noun* a small cell which is produced from an oocyte but does not develop into an ovum

pole /pəʊl/ *noun* **1.** the end of an axis **2.** the end of a rounded organ, e.g. the end of a lobe in the cerebral hemisphere

pole and canvas stretcher /,pəʊl ən 'kænvəs ,stretʃə/ *noun* a simple stretcher made of a piece of canvas and two poles which slide into tubes at the side of the canvas

poli- /'poli/ *prefix* same as **polio-** (*used before vowels*)

polio /'pəʊliəʊ/ *noun* same as **poliomyelitis** (*informal*)

polio- /'pəʊliəʊ/ *prefix* grey matter in the nervous system

polioencephalitis /,pəʊli'ensəfəl'aitɪs/ *noun* a type of viral encephalitis, an inflammation of the grey matter in the brain caused by the same virus as poliomyelitis

polioencephalomyelitis /,pəʊli'ensəfəl'maiə'laitɪs/ *noun* polioencephalitis which also affects the spinal cord

poliomyelitis /,pəʊliəʊ,maiə'laitɪs/ *noun* an infection of the anterior horn cells of the spinal cord caused by a virus which attacks the

motor neurones and can lead to paralysis. Also called **polio, infantile paralysis**

COMMENT: Symptoms of poliomyelitis are paralysis of the limbs, fever and stiffness in the neck. The bulbar form may start with difficulty in swallowing. Poliomyelitis can be prevented by immunisation and two vaccines are used: Sabin vaccine is formed of live polio virus and is taken orally on a piece of sugar; Salk vaccine is given as an injection of dead virus.

poliovirus /'pəʊliəʊ,vairəs/ *noun* a virus which causes poliomyelitis

Politzer bag /'pɒlɪtsə bæg/ *noun* a rubber bag which is used to blow air into the middle ear to unblock a Eustachian tube [Described 1863. After Adam Politzer (1835–1920), Professor of Otology in Vienna, Austria.]

pollen /'pɒlən/ *noun* a powdery substance consisting of male gametes from plants, produced by the flower stamens, which floats in the air in spring and summer, and which causes hay fever

pollen count /'pɒlən kaʊnt/ *noun* a figure which shows the amount of pollen in a sample of air

pollex /'pɒleks/ *noun* the thumb (*technical*) (NOTE: The plural is **pollices**)

pollutant /pə'lju:t(ə)nt/ *noun* a substance which causes pollution

pollute /pə'lju:t/ *verb* to make e.g. the air, a river or the sea dirty, especially with industrial waste (NOTE: **polluting – polluted**)

pollution /pə'lju:ʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the act of making dirty, or substances which make e.g. air or water impure

poly- /'poli/ *prefix* **1.** many or much **2.** touching many organs

polyarteritis /,pɒliə:tə'rætɪs/ *noun* a condition in which a lot of arteries swell up at the same time

polyarteritis nodosa /,pɒliə:tə,rætɪs nə'dəʊsə/ *noun* a collagen disease in which the walls of the arteries in various parts of the body become inflamed, leading to asthma, high blood pressure and kidney failure. Also called **periarteritis nodosa**

polyarthritis /,pɒliə:tɪs'θrætɪs/ *noun* inflammation of several joints, as in rheumatoid arthritis

polycystic /,poli'sistɪk/ *adjective* referring to an organ which has developed more than one cyst, or to a disease caused by the development of cysts

polycystic kidney disease /,poli'sistɪk 'kɪdnɪ di,zɪ:z/ *noun* a condition in which there are multiple cysts on each kidney which grow and multiply over time. Abbr **PKD**

COMMENT: The diseased kidney finally shuts down in over 60% of cases, and dialysis and transplantation are the only forms of treatment.

polycystic ovary disease /,polisistik 'əʊvəri di,zi:z/ *noun* same as **polycystic ovarian syndrome**. Abbr **PCOD**

polycystic ovarian syndrome /,polisistik 'əʊvəri ,sɪndrəm/, **polycystic ovarian syndrome** /,polisistik əʊ'veəriən ,sɪndrəm/ *noun* a hormonal disorder in which a woman's ovaries are enlarged and contain many small painless cysts, hair growth is excessive, acne develops and infertility may occur. Also called **Stein Leventhal syndrome**. Abbr **PCOS**

polycystitis /,polist'aitis/ *noun* a congenital disease in which several cysts form in the kidney at the same time

polycythaemia /,polisat'θi:miə/ *noun* a condition in which the number of red blood cells increases (NOTE: The US spelling is **polycythemia**)

polycythaemia vera /,polisaɪθi:miə 'vɪərə/ *noun* a blood disease in which the number of red blood cells increases, together with an increase in the number of white blood cells, making the blood thicker and slowing its flow. Also called **erythaemia**, **Vaquez-Osler disease**

polydactyl /,poli'dæktɪl/ *adjective* having more than the usual number of fingers or toes

polydactylism /,poli'dæktɪlɪz(ə)m/ *noun* same as **hyperdactylism**

polydipsia /,poli'dipsiə/ *noun* a condition, often caused by diabetes insipidus, in which a person is unusually thirsty

polygraph /'plɪgrɑ:f/ *noun* an instrument which records the pulse in several parts of the body at the same time

polymenorrhoea /,polimēnə'ri:a/ *noun* unusually frequent menstruations (NOTE: The US spelling is **polymenorrhea**.)

polymerase chain reaction /,polimērēz ,tʃeɪn ri'ækʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the technique used to amplify genetic material in order to analyse it for genetic disorders, e.g. material from a single cell in an embryo. Abbr **PCR**

polymorph /'polimo:f/ *noun* same as **neutrophil**

polymyalgia rheumatica /,polimai,ældʒəru:'mætikə/ *noun* a disease of elderly people characterised by pain and stiffness in the shoulder and hip muscles making them weak and sensitive

polymyositis /,polimaiəu'saitis/ *noun* a condition in which a lot of muscles swell up at the same time, especially the ones in the trunk of the body, causing weakness. It is treated with steroid drugs or immunosuppressants, and also exercise.

polyneuritis /,polinju'raɪtis/ *noun* inflammation of many nerves

polyneuropathy /,polinju'rɒpəθi/ *noun* any disease which affects several nerves (NOTE: The plural is **polyneuropathies**.)

polyopia /,polpi'əupiə/, **polyopia** /,polpi'ɒpɪsiə/, **polyopia** /'poliəupi/ *noun* a condition in which a person sees several images of one object at the same time. Compare **diplopia**

polyp /'polip/ *noun* a tumour growing on a stalk in mucous membrane, which can be cauterised. Polyps are often found in the nose, mouth or throat. Also called **polypus**

polypectomy /,poli'pektomɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to remove a polyp (NOTE: The plural is **polpectomies**.)

polypeptide /,poli'peptaid/ *noun* a type of protein formed of linked amino acids

polyphagia /,poli'feɪdʒə/ *noun* 1. a condition in which a person eats too much 2. a compulsive desire for every kind of food

polypharmacy /,poli'fæ:məsi/ *noun* the practice of prescribing several drugs to be taken at the same time

polyploid /'poliplɔɪd/ *adjective* referring to a cell where there are more than two copies of each chromosome, which is not viable in humans

polypoid /'polipɔɪd/ *adjective* looking like a polyp

polyposis /,poli'pəsɪs/ *noun* a condition in which many polyps form in the mucous membrane of the colon. ☺ **familial adenomatous polyposis**

polypus /'polipəs/ *noun* same as **polyp** (NOTE: The plural is **polypi**.)

polyradiculitis /,poliræ,dɪkju'laitɪs/ *noun* a disease of the nervous system which affects the roots of the nerves

polysaccharide /,poli'sækəraɪd/ *noun* a type of carbohydrate made up of a lot of monosaccharides joined together in chains. They include starch and cellulose, are insoluble in water and do not form crystals.

polyserositis /,polisərəu'saitis/ *noun* inflammation of the membranes lining the abdomen, chest and joints and exudation of serous fluid

polysomnograph /,poli'sɒmnəgrɑ:f/ *noun* a record of bodily activity during sleep to identify possible causes of sleep disorders

polyspermia /,poli'spɜ:miə/, **polyspermism** /,poli'spɜ:mi:z(ə)m/, **polyspermy** /,poli'spɜ:mi/ *noun* 1. excessive seminal secretion 2. fertilisation of one ovum by several spermatozoa

polyunsaturated fat /,poliʌnsætʃəreɪtɪd 'fæt/ *noun* a fatty acid capable of absorbing more hydrogen than most others, typical of vegetable and fish oils

polyuria /,poli'juəriə/ *noun* a condition in which a person passes a large quantity of urine, usually as a result of diabetes insipidus

polyvalent /,poli'veɪlənt/ *adjective* having more than one valency

POM abbr prescription-only medicine

pompholyx /'pɒmfəlɪks/ *noun* 1. a type of eczema with many irritating little blisters on the hands and feet 2. a skin condition with bulbous swellings

pons /'pɒnz/ *noun* a bridge of tissue joining parts of an organ. See illustration at **BRAIN** in Supplement (NOTE: The plural is **pontes**)

pons Varolii /,pɒnz və'rəʊliə/ *noun* part of the hindbrain, formed of fibres which continue the medulla oblongata. See illustration at **BRAIN** in Supplement (NOTE: The plural is **pon tes Varolii**). [After Constantino Varolius (1543–75), Italian physician and anatomist, doctor to Pope Gregory XIII]

pon tes /'pɒntɪz/ plural of **pons**

Pontine /'pɒntɪn/ *adjective* referring to a pons

Pontine cistern /,pɒntɪn 'sɪstən/ *noun* a subarachnoid space in front of the pons, containing the basilar artery

poor /pʊə/ *adjective* not very good ○ *He's in poor health.* ○ *She's always had poor circulation.*

poorly /'pɔːli/ *adjective* not very well (*informal*) ○ *Her mother has been quite poorly recently.* ○ *He felt poorly and stayed in bed.*

POP abbr progesterone only pill

popeyes /'pɒpəɪz/ *plural noun* US protruding eyes

popliteal /,pɒplɪ'tiːəl/ *adjective* referring to the back of the knee

popliteal artery /,pɒplɪtiːəl 'aːtəri/ *noun* an artery which branches from the femoral artery behind the knee and leads into the tibial arteries

popliteal fossa /,pɒplɪtiːəl 'fɒsə/ *noun* a space behind the knee between the hamstring and the calf muscle. Also called **popliteal space**

popliteal muscle /,pɒplɪ'tiːəl ,mʌsl(ə)s/ *noun* same as **popliteus**

popliteal space /,pɒplɪtiːəl 'speɪs/ *noun* same as **popliteal fossa**

popliteus /pɒ'lɪtiːəs/ *noun* a muscle at the back of the knee. Also called **popliteal muscle**

population /,pɒpjʊ'leɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* 1. the number of people living in a country or town ○ *Population statistics show that the birth rate is slowing down.* ○ *The government has decided to screen the whole population of the area.* 2. the number of patients in hospital ○ *The hospital population in the area has fallen below 10,000.*

pore /pɔː/ *noun* 1. a tiny hole in the skin through which the sweat passes 2. a small communicating passage between cavities

porencephaly /,pɔː'ren'kefəli/, **porencephalia** /,pɔː'renkefəliə/, **porencephalus** /,pɔː'ren'kefələs/ *noun* a condition in which there are cysts in the cerebral cortex, as a result of unusual development

porous /'pɔːrəs/ *adjective* 1. containing pores

○ *Porous bone surrounds the Eustachian tubes.* 2. referring to tissue which allows fluid to pass through it

porphyria /pɔː'fɪrɪə/ *noun* a hereditary disease affecting the metabolism of porphyrin pigments

COMMENT: Porphyria causes abdominal pains and attacks of mental confusion. The skin becomes sensitive to light and the urine becomes coloured and turns dark brown when exposed to the light.

porphyrin /'pɔːfərɪn/ *noun* a member of a family of metal-containing biological pigments, the commonest of which is protoporphyrin IX

porphyrinuria /,pɔːfɪrɪ'njuːrɪə/ *noun* the presence of excess porphyrins in the urine, a sign of porphyria or of metal poisoning

porta /'pɔːtə/ *noun* an opening which allows blood vessels to pass into an organ (NOTE: The plural is **portae**)

portable /'pɔːtəb(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to something which can be carried ○ *He keeps a portable first aid kit in his car.* ○ *The ambulance team carried a portable blood testing unit.*

Portacath /'pɔːtəkæθ/ *noun* a type of catheter put in place under a person's skin to make it easier to have chemotherapy, transfusions and blood tests. It is accessed by the use of a special needle and flushed regularly with sterile saline.

portacaval /,pɔːtə'keɪvəl/ *adjective* another spelling of **portocaval**

portae /'pɔːtəi/ plural of **porta**

porta hepatis /,pɔːtə 'heptəs/ *noun* an opening in the liver through which the hepatic artery, hepatic duct and portal vein pass (NOTE: The plural is **portae hepatitis**.)

portal /'pɔːt(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to a porta, especially the portal system or the portal vein

portal hypertension /,pɔːt(ə)l ,haɪpərə 'tenʃən/ *noun* high pressure in the portal vein, caused by cirrhosis of the liver or a clot in the vein and causing internal bleeding

portal pyaemia /,pɔːt(ə)l paɪ'əmiə/ *noun* an infection of the portal vein in the liver, giving abscesses

portal system /'pɔːt(ə)l ,sɪstəm/ *noun* a group of veins which have capillaries at both ends and do not go to the heart

portal vein /'pɔːt(ə)l veɪn/ *noun* a vein which takes blood from the stomach, pancreas, gall bladder, intestines and spleen to the liver (NOTE: For other terms referring to the portal vein, see words beginning with **pyl-**, **pyle-**)

porter /'pɔːtə/ *noun* a hospital worker who does general work such as wheeling a patient's trolley into the operating theatre or moving heavy equipment

portocaval /pɔ:təʊ'veɪv(ə)l/ *adjective* linking the portal vein to the inferior vena cava

portocaval anastomosis /pɔ:təʊ'veɪv(ə)l ənæstə'moʊsɪs/ *noun* a surgical operation to join the portal vein to the inferior vena cava and divert blood past the liver

portocaval shunt /pɔ:təʊ'veɪv(ə)l 'ʃʌnt/ *noun* an artificial passage made between the portal vein and the inferior vena cava to relieve portal hypertension

proto-systemic encephalopathy /pɔ:təʊ'veɪsɪs,ti:mɪk ,enkefə'lɒpəθɪ/ *noun* a mental disorder and coma caused by liver disorder due to portal hypertension

port wine stain /pɔ:t 'wain steɪn/ *noun* a purple birthmark

position /pə'zɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* 1. the place where something is ○ *The exact position of the tumour is located by an X-ray.* 2. the way a person's body is arranged ○ *in a sitting position* ○ *The accident victim had been placed in the recovery position.* ■ *verb* to place something in a particular position ○ *The fetus is correctly positioned in the uterus.*

positive /'pozɪtɪv/ *adjective* 1. indicating the answer 'yes' 2. indicating the presence of something being tested for ○ *Her cervical smear was positive.* Opposite **negative**

positive end-expiratory pressure /'pozɪtɪv ,end ɪk'spirɪət(ə)rɪ 'preʃə/ *noun* the procedure of forcing a person to breathe through a mask in cases where fluid has collected in the lungs. Abbr **PEEP**

positive feedback /'pozɪtɪv 'fi:dbæk/ *noun* a situation in which the result of a process stimulates the process which caused it

positively /'pozɪtɪvlɪ/ *adverb* in a positive way ○ *She reacted positively to the test.*

positive pressure respirator /'pozɪtɪv 'preʃə ,respirətə/ *noun* a machine which forces air into the lungs through a tube inserted in the mouth

positive pressure ventilation /'pozɪtɪv 'preʃə ventɪ,leɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the act of forcing air into the lungs to encourage the lungs to expand. Abbr **PPV**

positron-emission tomography /'pozɪtrən 'ɪmɪʃ(ə)n tə,mɔ:gɒfɪ/ *noun* a method of scanning the tissues of the brain, chest and abdomen for unusual metabolic activity after injecting a radioactive substance into the body. Abbr **PET**

posology /pə'sɒlədʒɪ/ *noun* the study of doses of medicine

posseting /'pɒsɪtɪŋ/ *noun* (in babies) the act of bringing up small quantities of curdled milk into the mouth after feeding

Possum /'pɒsəm/ *noun* a device using electronic switches which helps a person who is severely paralysed to work a machine such as a telephone (NOTE: The name is derived from the

first letters of patient-operated selector mechanism.)

post-/pəʊst/ *prefix* after or later

postcentral gyrus /pəʊst,sentrəl 'dʒɜ:zɪəs/ *noun* a sensory area of the cerebral cortex which receives impulses from receptor cells and registers sensations such as pain, heat and touch

post-cibal /pəʊst 'saib(ə)l/ *adjective* after having eaten food

post cibum *adverb* full form of **p.c.**

post-coital /pəʊst 'kɔ:ɪt(ə)l/ *adjective* taking place after sexual intercourse

postconcussion syndrome /,pəʊstkən'kaʃ(ə)n(ə)l ,sɪndrəʊm/ *noun* a set of symptoms which sometimes follow a head injury in which a person lost consciousness, including headache, loss of concentration, memory loss, depression and irritability

post-epileptic /,pəʊst epi'leptɪk/ *adjective* taking place after an epileptic fit

posterior /pə'stɪərɪəl/ *adjective* at the back. Opposite **anterior** □ **posterior to** behind ○ *The cerebellum is posterior to the medulla oblongata.* ■ *noun* same as **buttock** (*informal*)

posterior approach /pə'stɪəriər ə,prəʊtʃ/ *noun* an operation carried out from the back

posterior aspect /pə'stɪəriər ,æspekt/ *noun* a view of the back of the body, or of the back of part of the body. See illustration at **ANATOMICAL TERMS** in Supplement

posterior chamber /pə'stɪəriər 'tʃeimbə/ *noun* a part of the aqueous chamber which is behind the iris. Compare **anterior chamber**

posterior fontanelle /pə'stɪəriər fɔ:ntə'nel/ *noun* a cartilage at the back of the head where the parietal bones join the occipital. ♀ **bregma**

posterior lobe *noun* same as **caudate lobe**

posteriorly /pə'stɪəriəli/ *adverb* in or from a position behind ○ *An artery leads to a posteriorly placed organ.* ○ *Rectal biopsy specimens are best taken posteriorly.*

posterior nares /pə'stɪəriər 'neəri:z/ *plural noun* same as **internal nares**

posterior synechia /pə'stɪəriər sɪ'neksiə/ *noun* a condition of the eye in which the iris sticks to the anterior surface of the lens

postero-/pəstərəʊ/ *prefix* back or behind

posteroanterior /,pəstərəʊən'tɪəriə/ *adjective* lying from the back to the front

post-exposure prophylaxis /,pəʊst ɪk ,spəʊzə ,prəfə'læksɪs/ *noun* a treatment given to a person who has been exposed to a harmful agent, in an effort to prevent or reduce injury or infection

postganglionic /,pəʊstgæŋgli'ɒnɪk/ *adjective* placed after a ganglion

postganglionic fibre /,pəʊstgæŋgli,ɒnɪk 'faɪbə/ *noun* an axon of a nerve cell which starts in a ganglion and extends beyond the ganglion

COMMENT: Postganglionic fibres go to the nose, palate, pharynx and lacrimal glands.

postganglionic neurone /,pəʊstgænggli'nrnɪk 'nju:reən/ *noun* a neurone which starts in a ganglion and ends in a gland or unstriated muscle

postgastrectomy syndrome /,pəʊst gæ'strektəmɪ, sɪndrəʊm/ *noun* a group of symptoms which can occur after eating in people who have had stomach operations. It is caused by a lot of food passing into the small intestine too fast and can cause dizziness, nausea, sweating and weakness. Also called **dumping syndrome**

postgraduate education allowance /'pəʊst'grædjuət edju'keɪʃ(ə)n 'ə'lauəns/ *noun* a payment made to GPs to reward continued education. Abbr **PGEA**

posthepatic /,pəʊsthɪ'pætɪk/ *adjective* positioned behind or coming into effect after the liver

posthepatic bilirubin /,pəʊsthɪ,pætɪk 'bili'rū:bɪn/ *noun* bilirubin which enters the plasma after being treated by the liver

posthepatic jaundice /,pəʊsthɪ,pætɪk 'dʒɔ:nɪdʒ/ *noun* same as **obstructive jaundice**

post herpetic neuralgia /,pəʊst hə'petɪk nju:rældʒə/ *noun* pains felt after an attack of shingles

posthitis /'pɒsθaɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the foreskin

posthumous /'pɒstjuməs/ *adjective* occurring after death ◇ **posthumous birth** 1. the birth of a baby after the death of the father 2. the birth of a baby by caesarean section after the mother has died

post-irradiation /,pəʊst ɪ,ri'eɪdi'eɪʃ(ə)n/ *adjective* referring to pain or disorder caused by X-rays

post-irradiation enteritis /,pəʊst ɪ,reɪdi'eɪʃ(ə)n ,entə'reɪtɪs/ *noun* enteritis caused by X-rays

postmature /,pəʊst'ma:tʃuər/ *adjective* referring to a baby born after the usual gestation period of 42 weeks

postmaturity /,pəʊstmə'tʃuərɪti/ *noun* a pregnancy which lasts longer than the usual gestation period of 42 weeks

postmenopausal /,pəʊst'menəʊ'pɔ:z(ə)l/ *adjective* happening or existing after the menopause ◇ *She experienced some postmenopausal bleeding.*

post mortem /pəʊst 'mɔ:təm/, **post mortem examination** /pəʊst 'mɔ:təm ɪg'zæmɪ,nju:ʃ(ə)n/ *noun* an examination of a dead body by a pathologist to find out the cause of death ◇ *The post mortem showed that he had been poisoned.* Abbr **PM**. Also called **autopsy**

postnasal /pəʊst'nɛɪz(ə)l/ *adjective* situated or happening behind the nose

postnasal drip /pəʊst,nɛɪz(ə)l 'drɪp/ *noun* a condition in which mucus from the nose runs down into the throat and is swallowed

postnatal /,pəʊst'neɪt(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to the period after the birth of a child

postnatal care /pəʊst,neɪt(ə)l 'keɪə/ *noun* the care given to a woman after the birth of her child

postnatal depression /pəʊst,neɪt(ə)l dɪ'preʃ(ə)n/ *noun* depression which sometimes affects a woman after childbirth

postnecrotic cirrhosis /,pəʊstnekrotɪk sɪ'rəʊsɪs/ *noun* cirrhosis of the liver caused by viral hepatitis

post-op /pəʊst 'ɒp/ (*informal*) *adjective* same as **postoperative** ■ *adverb* same as **postoperatively**

postoperative /,pəʊst'ɒp(ə)rətɪv/ *adjective* referring to the period after a surgical operation ◇ *The patient has suffered postoperative nausea and vomiting.* ◇ *Occlusion may appear as postoperative angina pectoris.*

'...the nurse will help ensure that the parent is physically fit to cope with the postoperative child' [British Journal of Nursing]

postoperatively /pəʊst'ɒp(ə)rətɪvli/ *adverb* after a surgical operation

postoperative pain /pəʊst,ɒp(ə)rətɪv 'peɪn/ *noun* pain felt after a surgical operation

postorbital /,pəʊst'ɔ:bɪtl(ə)l/ *adjective* situated behind the eye or the eye socket

postpartum /pəʊst'pa:təm/ *adjective* referring to the period after the birth of a child

postpartum fever /pəʊst,pa:təm 'fi:və/ *noun* same as **puerperal infection**

postpartum haemorrhage /pəʊst,pa:təm 'hem(ə)rɪdʒ/ *noun* heavy bleeding after childbirth. Abbr **PPH**

post-primary tuberculosis /pəʊst,præ'məri tju:,bɜ:kjʊ'ləʊsɪs/ *noun* the reappearance of tuberculosis in a person who has been infected with it before

post-registration education and practice /,pəʊst redʒɪ'streɪʃ(ə)n edju'keɪʃ(ə)n ənd 'præktyk/ *noun* in the UK, the requirement for all registered nurses and midwives to undertake educational activities and keep up with contemporary practice, and also for their employers to address the learning needs of staff. It was started by the UKCC in 1993. Abbr **PREP**

postsynaptic /,pəʊst'sɪ'næptɪk/ *adjective* situated behind a synapse

postsynaptic axon /,pəʊst'sɪ'næptɪk 'æk'sən/ *noun* an axon of the nerves on either side of a synapse

post-traumatic /,pəʊst trɔ:'mætɪk/ *adjective* appearing after a trauma, e.g. after an accident, rape or fire

post-traumatic amnesia /,pəʊst trɔ:'mætɪk əm'nɪ:ziə/ *noun* amnesia which follows a trauma

post-traumatic stress disorder /,pəʊst trɔː, mætɪk 'stres dis,ɔ:də/ *noun* a psychological condition affecting people who have suffered severe emotional trauma, e.g. occasioned by war or natural disaster. Its symptoms include chest pain, dizziness, sleep disturbances, flashbacks, anxiety, tiredness, and depression. Abbr **PTSD**

postural /'pɒstʃərəl/ *adjective* referring to posture ○ *a study of postural disorders*

postural drainage /,pɒstʃərəl 'dreɪnɪdʒ/ *noun* a procedure for removing matter from infected lungs by making the person lie down with the head lower than the feet, so that he or she can cough more easily

postural hypotension /,pɒstʃərəl haɪpəʊn 'tenʃən/ *noun* low blood pressure when standing up suddenly, causing dizziness

posture /'pɒstʃər/ *noun* the position in which a body is arranged, or the way a person usually holds his or her body when standing ○ *Bad posture can cause pain in the back.* ○ *She has to do exercises to correct her bad posture.*

postviral /pəʊst'veɪrəl/ *adjective* occurring after a viral infection

postviral fatigue syndrome /pəʊst,veɪrəl fe'ti:g, sɪndrəʊm/ *noun* same as **myalgic encephalomyelitis**

potassium /pə'tæsiəm/ *noun* a metallic element (NOTE: The chemical symbol is **K**)

potassium permanganate /pə,tæsiəm pə'mæŋgənət/ *noun* a purple-coloured poisonous salt, used as a disinfectant

potentiate /pə'tenʃieɪt/ *verb* to improve the effectiveness of a drug or treatment, especially by adding another drug or agent (NOTE: **potentiating – potentiated**)

Pott's disease /'pɔts di,zi:z/, **Pott's caries** /'pɔts ,keəriz/ *noun* tuberculosis of the spine, causing paralysis [Described 1779. After Sir Percivall Pott (1714–88), London surgeon.]

Pott's fracture /'pɔts ,frækʃə/ *noun* a fracture of the lower end of the fibula together with displacement of the ankle and foot outwards [Described 1765. After Sir Percivall Pott (1714–88), London surgeon.]

pouch /paʊtʃ/ *noun* a small sac or pocket attached to an organ

poultice /'pəʊltɪs/ *noun* a compress made of hot water and flour paste or other substances which is pressed onto an infected part to draw out pus, to relieve pain or to encourage the circulation. Also called **fomentation**

pound /paʊnd/ *noun* a measure of weight equal to about 450 grams ○ *The baby weighed only four pounds at birth.* Abbr **lb** (NOTE: With figures, usually written **lb**: **The baby weighs 6lb.**)

Poupart's ligament /pu:pərts ,lɪgəmənt/ *noun* same as **inguinal ligament** [Described

1705. After François Poupart (1616–1708), French surgeon and anatomist.]

powder /'paʊdə/ *noun* a medicine in the form of a fine dry dust made from particles of drugs ○ *He took a powder to help his indigestion* or *He took an indigestion powder.*

powdered /'paʊdəd/ *adjective* crushed so that it forms a fine dry dust ○ *The medicine is available in tablets or in powdered form.*

pox /pɒks/ *noun* 1. a disease with eruption of vesicles or pustules 2. same as **syphilis (old)**

poxvirus /'pɒks,vairəs/ *noun* any of a group of viruses which cause cowpox, smallpox and related diseases

'Molluscum contagiosum is a harmless skin infection caused by a poxvirus that affects mainly children and young adults' [British Medical Journal]

p.p. *abbreviation* after a meal. Full form **post prandium**. Compare **a.p.**

PPD *abbr* purified protein derivative

PPH *abbr* postpartum haemorrhage

PPV *abbr* positive pressure ventilation

PQRST complex *noun* the set of deflections on an electrocardiogram, labelled P to T, which show ventricular contraction

p.r. *adverb (of an examination)* by the rectum. Full form **per rectum**

practice /'præktɪs/ *noun* 1. the business, or the premises occupied by, a doctor, dentist, or a group of doctors or dentists working together ○ *After qualifying she joined her father's practice.* □ **in practice** doing the work of a doctor or dentist ○ *He has been in practice for six years.* 2. the fact of doing something, as opposed to thinking or talking about it ○ *theory and practice* 3. a usual way of doing something ○ *Such practices are now regarded as unsafe.*

practice nurse /'præktɪs nɜ:s/ *noun* a nurse employed by a GP or primary care trust to work in a GP's practice providing treatment, health promotion, screening and other services to patients of the practice

'...practice nurses play a major role in the care of patients with chronic disease and they undertake many preventative procedures' [Nursing Times]

practise /'præktɪs/ *verb* 1. to work as a doctor ○ *He practises in North London.* ○ *She practises homeopathy.* 2. to work in a particular branch of medicine (NOTE: **practising – practised**. The US spelling is **practice**.)

practitioner /præk'tɪʃ(ə)nə/ *noun* a qualified person who works in the medical profession ◇ **nurse practitioner** US 1. a nurse employed by a clinic or doctor's practice who can give advice to patients 2. a trained nurse who has not been licensed

praecox /'pri:kɒks/ *noun* ♦ **ejaculatio praecox**

praevia /'pri:vɪə/ *noun* ♦ **placenta praevia**

pravastatin /prævə'stætɪn/ *noun* a drug used to reduce unusually high levels of blood cholesterol

prazosin /'præzəsɪn/ *noun* a drug which relaxes or widens the blood vessels, used to treat hypertension

pre- /pri:/ *prefix* before or in front of

preadmission information /,pri:əd'mɪʃ(ə)n ɪnfə'mɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* information given to a person before he or she is admitted to hospital

pre-anaesthetic round /,pri:ənæsɪθetɪk raʊnd/ *noun* an examination of patients by the surgeon before they are anaesthetised

precancer /pri:'kænsər/ *noun* a growth or cell which is not malignant but which may become cancerous

precancerous /pri:'kænsərəs/ *adjective* referring to a growth which is not malignant now, but which can become cancerous later

precaution /pri:'kɔ:sf(ə)n/ *noun* an action taken before something happens ○ *She took the tablets as a precaution against seasickness.*

precede /pri'si:d/ *verb* to happen before or earlier than something ○ *The attack was preceded by a sudden rise in body temperature.* (NOTE: preceding – preceded)

precentral gyrus /pri:sentr(ə)l 'dʒaɪrəs/ *noun* a motor area of the cerebral cortex

preceptor /pri'septər/ *noun* a specialist who gives practical training to a student

preceptorship /pri'septəʃɪp/ *noun* a period of time during which a recently trained nurse, midwife or health visitor can gain practical experience working with a specialist who advises and guides them

precipitate /pri'sipɪtət/ *noun* a substance which is precipitated during a chemical reaction ■ *verb* 1. to make a substance separate from a chemical compound and fall to the bottom of a liquid during a chemical reaction ○ *Casein is precipitated when milk comes into contact with an acid.* 2. to make something start suddenly (NOTE: [all verb senses] **precipitating** – **precipitated**)

...it has been established that myocardial infarction and sudden coronary death are precipitated in the majority of patients by thrombus formation in the coronary arteries' [British Journal of Hospital Medicine]

precipitate labour /pri,sipɪtət 'leɪbər/ *noun* unusually fast labour, lasting two hours or less. It can be dangerous both to the mother and to the child.

precipitation /pri,sɪpɪ'teɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the action of forming a precipitate

precipitin /pri'sipɪtɪn/ *noun* an antibody which reacts to an antigen and forms a precipitate, used in many diagnostic tests

precise /pri'saɪz/ *adjective* very exact or correct ○ *The instrument can give precise measurements of changes in heartbeat.*

preclinical /pri:'klɪnik(ə)l/ *adjective* 1. taking place before diagnosis ○ *the preclinical stage of an infection* 2. referring to the first part of a medical course, before the students are allowed to examine real patients

precocious /pri'kɔʊʃəs/ *adjective* more physically or mentally developed than is usual for a specific age

precocious puberty /pri,kɔʊʃəs'pʌbəti/ *noun* the development of signs of puberty in girls before the age of seven, and in boys before the age of nine. If untreated, affected boys typically grow no taller than 1.6 metres and girls rarely reach 1.5 metres.

precocity /pri'kɒsɪtɪ/ *noun* the state or fact of being precocious

precordia /pri:'kɔ:diə/ *plural noun* plural of **precordium**

precordial /pri:'kɔ:diəl/ *adjective* referring to the precordium

precordium /pri:'kɔ:diəm/ *noun* the part of the thorax over the heart (NOTE: The plural is **precordia**.)

precursor /pri'kɔ:səsə/ *noun* a substance or cell from which another substance or cell is developed, e.g. dopa, the precursor for dopamine, which is converted to dopamine by the enzyme dopa decarboxylase

predict /pri'dikt/ *verb* to say what will happen in the future ○ *Doctors are predicting a rise in cases of whooping cough.*

prediction /pri'dɪkʃn/ *noun* an act of saying what you expect will happen in the future, or what is said ○ *the Health Ministry's prediction of a rise in cases of hepatitis B*

predictive /pri'dɪktɪv/ *adjective* referring to prediction ○ *The predictive value of the test is high.*

predigest /,pri:dat'dʒest/ *verb* to treat food with chemicals or enzymes so that it is more easily digested by people with digestion problems

predigested food /,pri:daɪdʒestɪd 'fu:d/ *noun* food which has undergone predigestion

predigestion /,pri:dat'dʒestʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the artificial starting of the digestive process before food is eaten

predisposed to /,pri:drɪ'spəuzd tō/ *adjective* having a tendency or susceptibility to a condition ○ *All the members of the family are predisposed to vascular diseases.*

predisposing factor /,pri:dispə'zɪf(ə)r/ *noun* a factor which will increase the risk of disease

predisposition /,pri:dispə'zɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a tendency or susceptibility ○ *She has a predisposition to obesity.*

prednisolone /pred'nɪsələʊn/ *noun* a synthetically produced steroid hormone, similar to cortisone, used especially to control inflammatory diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis

prednisone /pred'nɪsəʊn/ *noun* a synthetically produced steroid hormone produced from cortisone, used to treat allergies and rheumatoid arthritis

predominant /pri'domɪnənt/ *adjective* more powerful than others

pre-eclampsia /,pri: t'klæmpsɪə/ *noun* a condition in pregnant women towards the end of the pregnancy which may lead to eclampsia. Symptoms are high blood pressure, oedema and protein in the urine. Also called **pregnancy-induced hypertension**

preemie /'pri:mi:ɪ/ *noun* US a premature baby (*informal*)

prefrontal /pri: 'frənt(ə)l/ *adjective* situated in or affecting the front part of the frontal lobe

prefrontal leucotomy /pri:;frənt(ə)l lui: 'kɒtəmi/ *noun* a surgical operation to divide some of the white matter in the prefrontal lobe, formerly used as a treatment for schizophrenia

prefrontal lobe /pri: 'frənt(ə)l ləʊb/ *noun* an area of the brain in the front part of each hemisphere, in front of the frontal lobe, which is concerned with memory and learning

preganglionic /,pri:gæŋglɪ'ɒnɪk/ *adjective* near to and in front of a ganglion

preganglionic fibre /,pri:gæŋglonɪk 'faɪbə/ *noun* a nerve fibre which ends in a ganglion where it is linked in a synapse to a post-ganglionic fibre

preganglionic neurone /,pri:gængglɪ,ɒnɪk 'nju:ərəʊn/ *noun* a neurone which ends in a ganglion

pregnancy /'pregnənsɪ/ *noun* 1. same as **gestation period** 2. the condition of being pregnant. Also called **cyesis**

pregnancy-associated hypertension /,pregnənsɪ ə,səʊsietɪd̩,haɪpə'tenʃən/ *noun* high blood pressure which is associated with pregnancy

pregnancy-induced hypertension /,pregnənsɪ in'dju:sd̩,haɪpə'tenʃən/ *noun* Abbr PIH. same as **pre-eclampsia**

pregnancy test /'pregnənsɪ test/ *noun* a test to see if a woman is pregnant or not

pregnant /'pregnənt/ *adjective* with an unborn child in the uterus ○ *She is six months pregnant.*

prehepatic /pri:hɪ'pætɪk/ *adjective* in front of or before the liver

prehepatic bilirubin /pri:hɪ,pætɪk bili'rū:bɪn/ *noun* bilirubin in plasma before it passes through the liver

prehepatic jaundice /,pri:hɪ,pætɪk 'dʒɔ:ndɪs/ *noun* same as **haemolytic jaundice**

prem /prem/ (*informal*) *adjective* same as **pre-mature** ■ *noun* a premature baby

premature /'premətʃə/ *adjective* before the expected or desirable time ○ *The baby was five weeks premature.*

COMMENT: Babies can survive even if born several weeks premature. Even babies weighing less than one kilo at birth can survive in an incubator, and develop healthily.

premature baby /,premətʃə 'beɪbɪ/ *noun* a baby born earlier than 37 weeks from conception, or weighing less than 2.5kg, but capable of independent life

premature birth /,premətʃə 'bɜ:θ/ *noun* the birth of a baby earlier than 37 weeks from conception

premature ejaculation /,premətʃə ɪ,dʒækjʊ'lɛɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a situation in which a man ejaculates too early during sexual intercourse

premature labour /,premətʃə 'leɪbə/ *noun* the condition of starting to give birth earlier than 37 weeks from conception ○ *After the accident she went into premature labour.*

prematurely /'premətʃuərlɪ/ *adverb* before the expected or desirable time ○ *The baby was born two weeks prematurely.* ○ *A large number of people die prematurely from ischaemic heart disease.*

prematurity /,premətʃuəritɪ/ *noun* a situation in which something occurs before the expected or desirable time

premed /'pri:med/ *noun* a stage of being given premedication (*informal*) ○ *The patient is in premed.*

premedical /pri:'medɪk(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to the studies that a person must complete before entering medical school

premedication /,pri:medɪ'keɪʃ(ə)n/, **pre-medicant drug** /pri:,medɪkənt 'drʌg/ *noun* a drug given before an operation in order to block the parasympathetic nervous system and prevent vomiting during the operation, e.g. a sedative

premenopausal /,pri:menə'pɔ:z(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to the stage in a woman's life just before the start of the menopause

premenstrual /pri:'menstruəl/ *adjective* happening before menstruation

premenstrual syndrome /pri:,menstruəl 'sɪnd्रəʊm/, **premenstrual tension** /pri:,menstruəl 'tenʃən/ *noun* nervous stress experienced by a woman for one or two weeks before a menstrual period starts. Abbr **PMS, PMT**

premolar /pri:'məʊlə/ *noun* a tooth with two points, situated between the canines and the first proper molar. See illustration at **TEETH** in Supplement

prenatal /pri:'neɪt(ə)l/ *adjective* during the period between conception and childbirth

prenatal diagnosis /pri:,neɪt(ə)l ,daɪəg 'nəʊzɪs/ *noun* same as **antenatal diagnosis**

pre-op /pri: 'ɒp/ *adjective* same as **preoperative** (*informal*)

preoperative /pri:'ɒp(ə)rətɪv/ *adjective* during the period before a surgical operation

preoperatively /pri:'ɒp(ə)rətɪvlɪ/ *adverb* before a surgical operation

preoperative medication /pri:,ɒp(ə)rətɪv,medɪ'keɪʃn/ *noun* a drug given before an operation, e.g. a sedative

preovulatory /pri'ɒv(j)ələt(ə)ri/ *adjective* referring to the 6 to 13 days in the menstrual cycle between menstruation and ovulation

prep /prep/ (*informal*) *noun* same as **preparation** ○ *The prep is finished, so the patient can be taken to the operating theatre.* ■ *verb* same as **prepare** ○ *Has the patient been prepped?* (NOTE: **prepping – prepped**)

PREP *abbr* post-registration education and practice

preparation /,prepo'reɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* 1. the act of getting a person ready for a surgical operation. Also called **prep** 2. a medicine or liquid containing a drug ○ *He was given a preparation containing an antihistamine.*

prepare /pri'peə/ *verb* 1. to get something or someone ready ○ *Six rooms in the hospital were prepared for the accident victims.* ○ *The nurses were preparing him for the operation.* 2. to make something ○ *He prepared a soothing linctus.*

prepatellar bursitis /,pri:pə,telə bɜːs'taɪtɪs/ *noun* a condition in which the fluid sac at the knee becomes inflamed, caused by kneeling on hard surfaces. Also called **housemaid's knee**

prepubertal /pri:'pjju:bət(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to the period before puberty

prepuberty /pri'pjju:bətɪ/ *noun* the period before puberty

prepubescent /,pri:pju:'bɛsənt/ *adjective* referring to a person at the stage of life just before puberty

prepuce /'pri:pju:s/ *noun* same as **foreskin**

presby- /prezbi/ *prefix* same as **presbyo-** (*used before vowels*)

presbyacusis /,prezbi'ku:sɪs/ *noun* a condition in which an elderly person's hearing fails gradually, through degeneration of the internal ear

presbyo- /prezbiəʊ/ *prefix* referring to the last stages of the natural life span

presbyopia /,prezbi'ɔpiə/ *noun* a condition in which an elderly person's sight fails gradually, through hardening of the lens

prescribe /pri'skraɪb/ *verb* to give instructions for a person to get a specific dosage of a drug or a specific form of therapeutic treatment ○ *The doctor prescribed a course of antibiotics.* (NOTE: **prescribing – prescribed**)

prescribed disease /pri:,skraɪbd dt'zi:z/ *noun* an illness caused by the type of work a person does which is on an annually reviewed official list, entitling the person to claim bene-

fit. Examples are deafness, pneumoconiosis and RSI.

prescribed illness /pri:,skraɪbd 'ilnəs/ *noun* an illness developing in the workplace from exposure to chemicals, e.g. mercury poisoning, or to dangerous activities, e.g. decompression sickness

prescribing analyses and cost /pri:,skraɪbɪŋ ə,nælɪsɪz ənd 'kɒst/ *plural noun* data on the prescribing of drugs in primary care. Abbr **FACT**

prescription /pri'skrɪpfən/ *noun* an order written by a doctor to a pharmacist asking for a drug to be prepared and given or sold to a person

prescription drug /pri'skrɪpfən dræg/ *noun* a drug which can only be obtained by having a legally valid prescription

presence /'prez(ə)ns/ *noun* the act or fact of being there ○ *Tests showed the presence of sugar in the urine.*

presenile /pri:s'nail/ *adjective* 1. prematurely showing the effects of advanced age 2. referring to a condition which affects people of early or middle age but has characteristics of a more advanced age

presenile dementia /pri:s'nail dɪ'menʃə/ *noun* mental degeneration affecting adults of around 40–60 years of age (*dated*)

COMMENT: Patients used to be diagnosed with presenile dementia if they showed symptoms of dementia and were under the age of 65, and senile dementia if over 65. However, the terms are no longer often used and instead the type of dementia is used for diagnostic purposes, e.g. Alzheimer's disease, multi-infarct or vascular

presenility /,pri:sə'nɪlɪtɪ/ *noun* the ageing of the body or brain before the expected time, with a person showing symptoms which are usually associated with people of very advanced years

present *verb* /pri'zənt/ 1. (of a patient) to show particular symptoms ○ *The patient presented with severe chest pains.* 2. (of a symptom) to be present ○ *The doctors' first task is to relieve the presenting symptoms.* ○ *The condition may also present in a baby.* 3. (of a baby) to appear in the vaginal channel ■ *adjective* /'prez(ə)nt/ currently existing in a place ○ *All the symptoms of the disease are present.*

'...chlamydia in the male commonly presents a urethritis characterized by dysuria' [Journal of American College Health]

'26 patients were selected from the outpatient department on grounds of disabling breathlessness present for at least five years' [Lancet]

'...sickle cell chest syndrome is a common complication of sickle cell disease, presenting with chest pain, fever and leucocytosis' [British Medical Journal]

'...a 24 year-old woman presents with an influenza-like illness of five days' duration' [British Journal of Hospital Medicine]

'...the presenting symptoms of Crohn's disease may be extremely variable' [New Zealand Medical Journal]

presentation /,prez(ə)n'teɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the way in which a baby will be born, in respect of the part of the baby's body which will appear first in the vaginal channel

presenting part /pri'zentɪŋ pa:t/ *noun* the part of a baby which appears first during birth

preservation /,prezə'veɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the keeping of a tissue sample or donor organ in good condition

preserve /pri'zɜ:v/ *verb* to keep something from rotting (NOTE: **preserving – preserved**)

press /pres/ *verb* to push or squeeze something ○ *The tumour is pressing against a nerve.*

pressor /'pre:sə/ *adjective* 1. referring to a nerve which increases the action of part of the body 2. raising blood pressure

pressure /'pre:sə/ *noun* 1. the action of squeezing or forcing something 2. the force of something on its surroundings 3. mental or physical stress caused by external events

pressure area /'pre:sə,_eəriə/ *noun* an area of the body where a bone is near the surface of the skin, so that if the skin is pressed the circulation will be cut off

pressure bandage /'pre:sə,_bændɪdʒ/ *noun* a bandage which presses on a part of the body
pressure index /'pre:sə,_ɪndeks/ *noun* a method for determining the extent of obstruction to the artery in the leg by measuring the blood pressure in the arms and legs and then dividing the systolic pressure in the leg by that in the arm. Abbr **PI**

pressure point /'pre:sə pɔɪnt/ *noun* a place where an artery crosses over a bone, so that the blood can be cut off by pressing with the finger

presynaptic /,pri:sɪ'næptɪk/ *adjective* situated in front of a synapse

presynaptic axon /,prɪsɪnæptɪk 'nɜ:v/ *noun* a nerve leading to one side of a synapse

presystole /pri:'sistəli/ *noun* the period before systole in the cycle of heartbeats

preterm birth /,pri:'tɜ:m bɜ:θ/ *noun* the birth of a baby before 37 completed weeks of pregnancy, which presents a greater risk of serious health problems (NOTE: About 12 per cent of births in the UK are preterm births.)

prevalence /'prevələns/ *noun* the number of cases of a disease in a specific place at a specific time ○ *the prevalence of malaria in some tropical countries* ○ *the prevalence of cases of malnutrition in large towns* ○ *a high prevalence of renal disease*

prevalent /'prevələnt/ *adjective* common in comparison to something else ○ *The disease is prevalent in some African countries.* ○ *The condition is more prevalent in the cold winter months.*

prevent /pri'vent/ *verb* to stop something from happening, or a person from doing something ○ *The treatment is given to prevent the patient's condition from getting worse.* ○ *Doctors are trying to prevent the spread of the outbreak of Legionnaires' disease.*

preventative /pri'ventətɪv/ *adjective* same as **preventive**

prevention /pri'venʃən/ *noun* action to stop something happening

preventive /pri'ventɪv/ *adjective* referring to an action taken to stop something happening, especially to stop a disease or infection from spreading ○ *preventive treatment* ○ *preventive action*

preventive measure /pri'ventɪv 'meʒə/ *noun* an action taken to prevent a disease from occurring or spreading

COMMENT: Preventive measures include immunisation, vaccination, sterilisation, quarantine and improving standards of housing and sanitation. Health education also has an important role to play in the prevention of disease.

preventive medicine /pri'ventɪv 'med(ə)s(ə)n/ *noun* action carried out to stop disease from occurring, e.g. by education in health-related issues, immunisation and screening for known diseases

prevertebral /pri:'vɜ:tɪbr(ə)l/ *adjective* situated in front of the spinal column or a vertebra

Priadel /'prə:dɛl/ a trade name for lithium

priapism /'priəpɪz(ə)m/ *noun* an erection of the penis without sexual stimulus, caused by a blood clot in the tissue of the penis, injury to the spinal cord or stone in the urinary bladder

prick /prɪk/ *verb* to make a small hole in something with a sharp point ○ *The nurse pricked the patient's finger to take a blood sample.*

prickle cell /'prɪk(ə)l sel/ *noun* a cell with many processes connecting it to other cells, found in the inner layer of the epidermis

prickly heat /'prɪkli hi:t/ *noun* same as **miliaria**

-pril /prɪl/ *suffix* used for ACE inhibitors ○ *Captopril*

prilocaine /'prɪləkeɪn/ *noun* a local anaesthetic used especially in dentistry

primaquine /'praɪməkwi:n/ *noun* a synthetically produced drug used in the treatment of malaria

primary /'praiməri/ *adjective* 1. happening first, and leading to something else 2. most important 3. referring to a condition which comes first and is followed by another. Compare **secondary**

primary amenorrhoea /,praiməri,_eimənə'ri:/ *noun* a condition in which a woman has never had menstrual periods

primary biliary cirrhosis /,praɪməri 'biliəri sɪ'rəʊsɪs/ *noun* cirrhosis of the liver caused by autoimmune disease

primary bronchi /,praɪməri 'brɒŋki:/ *plural noun* same as **main bronchi**

primary care /,praɪməri 'keə/ *noun* in the UK, health services offered directly to individuals by GPs, dentists, opticians and other health professionals who may also refer a patient on to specialists for further treatment. Also called **primary health care**, **primary medical care**. Compare **secondary care**, **tertiary care**

'...primary care is largely concerned with clinical management of individual patients, while community medicine tends to view the whole population as its patient' [Journal of the Royal College of General Practitioners]

primary care group /,praɪməri 'keə gru:p/ *noun* an organisation responsible for overseeing the provision of primary healthcare and the commissioning of secondary care in a district. Key members include GPs, community nurses, social services and lay members. Abbr **PCG**

primary care team /,praɪməri 'keə ti:m/ *noun* same as **primary health care team**

primary care trust /,praɪməri 'keə trəst/ *noun* in the UK, the top level of the primary care group with extra responsibilities such as direct employment of community staff. Abbr **PCT**

primary cartilaginous joint /,praɪməri 'ka:tə'lædʒɪnəs dʒɔɪnt/ *noun* a temporary joint where the intervening cartilage is converted into adult bone

primary complex /,praɪməri 'kɒmplɛks/ *noun* the first lymph node to be infected by tuberculosis

primary dysmenorrhoea /,praɪməri 'dis meno'ri:ə/ *noun* dysmenorrhoea which occurs at the first menstrual period. Also called **essential dysmenorrhoea**

primary haemorrhage /,praɪməri 'hem(ə)rɪdʒ/ *noun* bleeding which occurs immediately after an injury has taken place

primary health care /,praɪməri 'helθ keə/ *noun* same as **primary care**

'...among primary health care services, 1.5% of all GP consultations are due to coronary heart disease' [Health Services Journal]

primary health care team /,praɪməri 'helθ keə,ti:m/ *noun* a group of professional medical workers who have first contact with someone needing medical attention and are responsible for delivering a range of health care services. Abbr **PHCT**

primary medical care /,praɪməri 'medɪk(ə)l keə/ *noun* same as **primary care**

primary nurse /,praɪməri 'nɜ:s/ *noun* a nurse who is responsible for planning a person's nursing care in consultation with that person and his or her family. In the absence of

the primary nurse, associate nurses provide care based on the plan designed by the primary nurse.

primary nursing /,praɪməri 'nɜ:sɪŋ/ *noun* a model of nursing that involves the delivery of comprehensive, continuous, co-ordinated and individualised patient care through a primary nurse, who has autonomy, accountability and authority in relation to his or her patient's care

primary peritonitis /,praɪməri 'perɪtə'nɪtɪs/ *noun* peritonitis caused by direct infection from the blood or the lymph

primary tooth /'praɪməri tu:θ/ *noun* any one of the first twenty teeth which develop in children between about six months and two-and-a-half years of age, and are replaced by the permanent teeth at around the age of six. Also called **milk tooth**, **deciduous tooth**

primary tubercle /,praɪməri 'tju:bæk(ə)l/ *noun* the first infected spot where tuberculosis starts to infect a lung

primary tuberculosis /,praɪməri tju:bək'yūlʊsɪs/ *noun* a person's first infection with tuberculosis

primary tumour /,praɪməri 'tju:mə/ *noun* a site of the original malignant growth from which cancer spreads

prime /praɪm/ *adjective* 1. of the greatest importance or the highest rank 2. of the highest quality ■ *noun* the best state or period of something, especially the most active and enjoyable period in adult life ■ *verb* to make something ready for use, or to become ready for use (NOTE: **priming** – **primed**)

prime mover /praɪm 'mu:və/ *noun* 1. same as **agonist** 2. somebody or something which has the most influence over the starting of a process or activity

primigravida /,praɪmɪ'grævɪdə/, **primigravid patient** /praɪmɪ'grævɪd 'pefɪ(ə)nt/ *noun* a woman who is pregnant for the first time (NOTE: The plural is **primigravidas** or **primigravidæ**)

primipara /praɪ'mɪpərə/ *noun* a woman who has given birth to one child. Also called **uni-parae** (NOTE: The plural is **primiparas** or **primiparæ**)

primordial /prər'mɔ:dɪəl/ *adjective* in the very first stage of development

primordial follicle /prər'mɔ:dɪəl 'fɒlik(ə)l/ *noun* the first stage of development of an ovarian follicle

principle /'prɪnsɪp(ə)l/ *noun* 1. a rule or theory 2. a standard of ethical behaviour

P-R interval /,pi:r 'ɑ:r ,ɪntəv(ə)l/ *noun* the time recorded on an electrocardiogram between the start of atrial activity and ventricular activity

prion /'pri:dn/ *noun* a particle of protein which contains no nucleic acid, does not trigger an immune response and is not destroyed

by extreme heat or cold. Prions are considered to be the agents responsible for scrapie, BSE, and Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease.

priority despatch /pri'ɔrəti dɪ'spætʃ/ *noun* the process of talking to people who need medical help on the telephone in order to make sure that ambulances are sent to the most urgent cases first

priority matrix /pri'ɔrəti 'meitriks/ *noun* a way of trying to make sure that each community has a fair number of services for its particular health needs

private /'praɪvət/ *adjective* not supported by government or paid for by the National Health Service ◎ *He runs a private clinic for alcoholics.*

private hospital /'praɪvət 'hɒspɪt(ə)l/ *noun* a hospital which takes only paying patients

privately /'praɪvətlɪ/ *adverb* by a private practitioner or company, not by the National Health Service ◎ *She decided to have the operation done privately.*

private parts /'praɪvət pɑ:ts/ *plural noun* the genital area (*informal*) Also called **privates**

private patient /'praɪvət 'peɪs(ə)nɪt/ *noun* a patient who is paying for treatment and who is not being treated under the National Health Service

private practice /'praɪvət 'præktsɪs/ *noun* the services of a doctor, surgeon or dentist which are paid for by the patients themselves or by a medical insurance company, but not by the National Health Service

privates /'praɪvəts/ *plural noun* same as **private parts** (*informal*)

p.r.n. *adverb* (*written on a prescription*) as and when required. Full form **pro re nata**

pro- /prəʊ/ *prefix* before or in front of

probang /'prəʊbæŋ/ *noun* a surgical instrument like a long rod with a brush at one end, formerly used to test and find strictures in the oesophagus and to push foreign bodies into the stomach

probe /'prəʊb/ *noun* 1. an instrument used to explore inside a cavity or wound 2. a device inserted into a medium to obtain information ■ *verb* to investigate the inside of something ◎ *The surgeon probed the wound with a scalpel.* (NOTE: **probing – probed**)

problem /'prɒbləm/ *noun* 1. something which is difficult to find an answer to ◎ *Scientists are trying to find a solution to the problem of drug-related disease.* 2. a medical disorder ◎ *heart problems* 3. an addiction to something ◎ *has a drug problem*

problem child /'prɒbləm tʃaɪld/ *noun* a child who is difficult to control

problem drinking /'prɒbləm 'drɪŋkɪŋ/ *noun* alcoholism or heavy drinking which has a bad effect on a person's behaviour or work

problem-oriented record /,prɒbləm ,ɔ:rɪen'tɪd 'rekɔ:d/ *noun* a record of patient care which links patients' clinical data with their problems, so that all aspects of the care process are focused on resolving those problems

problem-solving approach /'prɒbləm ,sɒlvɪŋ ə,prəʊfəs/ *noun* the provision of nursing care based on assessment, problem identification (nursing diagnosis), planning implementation (nursing intervention) and evaluation

procedure /prə'si:dʒə/ *noun* 1. a standard way of doing something 2. a type of treatment ◎ *The hospital has developed some new procedures for treating Parkinson's disease.* 3. a treatment given at one time ◎ *We are hoping to increase the number of procedures carried out per day.*

'...disposable items now available for medical and nursing procedures range from cheap syringes to expensive cardiac pacemakers' [Nursing Times]

'...the electromyograms and CT scans were done as outpatient procedures' [Southern Medical Journal]

process /prə'u'ses/ *noun* 1. a technical or scientific action ◎ *A new process for testing serum samples has been developed in the research laboratory.* 2. a projecting part of the body ■ *verb* 1. to deal with a person or thing according to a standard procedure 2. to examine or test samples ◎ *The blood samples are being processed by the laboratory.*

'...the nursing process serves to divide overall patient care into that part performed by nurses and that performed by the other professions' [Nursing Times]

prochlorperazine /,prəuklɔ:z'peraɪzɪn/ *noun* a drug used to control nausea and vomiting, and to reduce the symptoms of Ménière's disease, migraine and anxiety

procidentia /,prəʊsi:d'ensɪə/ *noun* movement of an organ downwards

proct- /prɒkt/ *prefix* same as **procto-** (*used before vowels*)

proctalgia /prɒk'tældʒə/ *noun* pain in the lower rectum or anus, caused by neuralgia

proctalgia fugax /prɒk'tældʒə 'fju:gæks/ *noun* a condition in which a person has sudden pains in the rectum during the night, usually relieved by eating or drinking

proctoresis /,prɒktə'strɪzɪə/ *noun* a condition in which the anus does not have an opening. Also called **imperforate anus**

proctectasia /prɒktɛk'teɪzɪə/ *noun* a condition in which the rectum or anus is dilated because of continued constipation

proctectomy /prɒk'tektəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to remove the rectum (NOTE: The plural is **proctectomies**.)

proctitis /prɒk'taɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the rectum

procto- /prɒktəʊ/ *prefix* the anus or rectum

proctocoele /'prɒktəsɪ:l/ *noun* same as **rectocele**

proctoclysis /prɒk'tɒklɪsɪs/ *noun* the introduction of a lot of fluid into the rectum slowly
proctocolectomy /,prɒktəʊkɔːlɛktəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to remove the rectum and the colon (NOTE: The plural is **proctocolectomies**.)

proctocolitis /,prɒktəkɔː'laitɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the rectum and part of the colon

proctodynia /,prɒktɒdɪniə/ *noun* a sensation of pain in the anus

proctogram /'prɒktəgræm/ *noun* an X-ray photograph of the rectum taken after a contrast agent is introduced

proctologist /prɒk'tɒlədʒɪst/ *noun* a specialist in proctology

proctology /prɒk'tɒlədʒɪ/ *noun* the scientific study of the rectum and anus and their associated diseases

proctorrhaphy /prɒk'tɔːræfi/ *noun* a surgical operation to stitch up a tear in the rectum or anus (NOTE: The plural is **proctorrhaphies**.)

proctoscope /'prɒktəskoʊp/ *noun* a surgical instrument consisting of a long tube with a light in the end, used to examine the rectum

proctoscopy /prɒk'tɒskəpi/ *noun* an examination of the rectum using a proctoscope (NOTE: The plural is **proctoscopies**.)

proctosigmoiditis /,prɒktəʊ,siɡmoɪd'aitɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the rectum and the sigmoid colon

proctotomy /prɒk'tɒtəmɪ/ *noun* 1. a surgical operation to divide a structure of the rectum or anus 2. an opening of an imperforate anus (NOTE: [all senses] The plural is **proctotomies**.)

prodromal /prəʊ'drəʊml/ *adjective* occurring between the appearance of the first symptoms of a disease and the major effect, e.g. a fever or rash

prodromal rash /prəʊ,drəʊm(ə)l 'ræʃ/ *noun* a rash which appears as a symptom of a disease before the major rash

prodrome /'prəʊdrəʊm/, **prodroma** /prəʊ'drəʊmə/ *noun* an early symptom of an attack of a disease

'...in classic migraine a prodrome is followed by an aura, then a headache, and finally a recovery phase. The prodrome may not be recognised' [British Journal of Hospital Medicine]

produce /prə'dju:s/ *verb* to make or cause something ○ *The drug produces a sensation of dizziness.* ○ *Doctors are worried by the side-effects produced by the new painkiller.* (NOTE: **producing – produced**)

product /'prɒdʌkt/ *noun* 1. something which is produced 2. a result or effect of a process

productive cough /prə,daktɪv 'kɒf/ *noun* a cough where phlegm is produced

proenzyme /prə'enzaim/ *noun* the first mature form of an enzyme, before it develops into an active enzyme. Also called **zymogen**

profession /prə'feʃ(ə)n/ *noun* 1. a type of job for which special training is needed 2. all

people working in a specialised type of employment for which they have been trained ○ *They are both doctors by profession.*

professional /prə'feʃ(ə)n(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to a profession

professional body /prə,feʃ(ə)n(ə)l 'bɒdi/ *noun* an organisation which acts for all the members of a profession

Professional Conduct Committee /prə,feʃ(ə)n(ə)l 'kɒndʌkt kə,mɪti/ *noun* a committee of the General Medical Council which decides on cases of professional misconduct. Abbr **PCC**

professional misconduct /prə,feʃ(ə)n(ə)l mis'kɒndʌkt/ *noun* actions which are considered to be wrong by the body which regulates a profession, e.g. an action by a doctor which is considered wrong by the Professional Conduct Committee of the General Medical Council

profile /'prəʊfaɪl/ *noun* 1. a brief description of the characteristics of a person or thing 2. a set of data, usually in graph or table form, which indicates to what extent something has the same characteristics as a group tested or considered standard 3. the amount that other people notice somebody or something ■ *verb* to give a short description or assessment of somebody or something (NOTE: **profiling – profiled**)

profound /prə'faʊnd/ *adjective* very great or serious ○ *a profound impairment of the immune system*

profunda /prə'fʌndə/ *adjective* referring to blood vessels which lie deep in tissues

profundoplasty /prə'fʌndəplæsti/ *noun* a surgical operation to widen a junction of the femoral artery, in order to relieve narrowing by atherosclerosis (NOTE: The plural is **profundoplasties**.)

profuse /prə'fju:s/ *adjective* existing in very large quantities ○ *fever accompanied by profuse sweating* ○ *pains with profuse internal bleeding*

progeny /'prɒdʒenɪ/ *noun* a person's child or children (NOTE: Takes a singular or plural verb.)

progeria /prə'ðʒɪəriə/ *noun* a condition of premature ageing. Also called **Hutchinson-Gilford syndrome**

progestational /prəʊ,dʒes'teɪʃ(ə)nəl/ *adjective* referring to the stage of the menstrual cycle after ovulation when progesterone is produced

progesterone /prəʊ'dʒestərəʊn/ *noun* a hormone which is produced in the second part of the menstrual cycle by the corpus luteum and which stimulates the formation of the placenta if an ovum is fertilised (NOTE: Progesterone is also produced by the placenta itself.)

progesterogen /prə'dʒestədʒən/ *noun* any substance which has the same effect as progesterone

COMMENT: Because natural progesterones prevent ovulation during pregnancy, synthetically produced progestogens are used to make contraceptive pills.

prognathic jaw /prɒg,næθɪk 'dʒɔ:/ *noun* a jaw which protrudes further than the other

prognathism /prɒnəθɪz(ə)m/ *noun* a condition in which one jaw, especially the lower jaw, or both jaws protrude

prognosis /prɒg'nəʊsɪs/ *noun* an opinion of how a disease or disorder will develop ○ *This cancer has a prognosis of about two years. ○ The prognosis is not good.* (NOTE: The plural is **prognoses**.)

prognostic /prɒg'nɒstɪk/ *adjective* referring to a prognosis

prognostic test /prɒg,nɒstɪk 'test/ *noun* a test to suggest how a disease will develop or how long a person will survive after an operation

programme /'prəʊgræm/ *noun* a series of medical treatments given in a set way at set times ○ *The doctor prescribed a programme of injections. ○ She took a programme of steroid treatment.* (NOTE: The US spelling is **program**.)

progress *noun* /'prəʊgres/ 1. development and improvement ○ *Progress has been made in cutting waiting times.* 2. the way in which a person is becoming well ○ *The doctors seem pleased that she has made such good progress since her operation.* ■ *verb* /prə'gres/ 1. to develop and improve, or to continue to do well ○ *The patient is progressing well.* 2. to move to a more advanced stage ○ *As the disease progressed, he spent more and more time sleeping.*

progression /prəʊ'greʃ(ə)n/ *noun* development ○ *The progression of the disease was swift.*

progressive /prə'gresɪv/ *adjective* developing all the time ○ *Alzheimer's disease is a progressive disorder which sees a gradual decline in intellectual functioning.*

progressive deafness /prə,gresɪv 'defnəs/ *noun* a condition, common in people as they get older, in which a person gradually becomes more and more deaf

progressively /prəʊ'gresɪvli/ *adverb* more and more ○ *He became progressively more disabled.*

progressive muscular atrophy /prə,gresɪv ,maskjʊlə 'ætrəfi/ *noun* muscular dystrophy, with progressive weakening of the muscles, particularly in the pelvic and shoulder girdles

proguanil /prəʊ'gwænɪl/ *noun* a drug used in the prevention and treatment of malaria

proinsulin /prəʊ'u'insulin/ *noun* a substance produced by the pancreas, then converted to insulin

project /prə'dʒekt/ *verb* to protrude or stick out

projection /prə'dʒekʃən/ *noun* 1. a part of the body which sticks out or stands out. Also called **prominence**. Compare **promontory** 2. (in psychology) mental action in which a person blames another person for his or her own faults

projection tract /prə'dʒekʃ(ə)n trækٹ/ *noun* fibres connecting the cerebral cortex with the lower parts of the brain and spinal cord

prolactin /prəʊ'læktɪn/ *noun* a hormone secreted by the pituitary gland which stimulates the production of milk. Also called **lactogenic hormone**

prolapse /'prəʊlæps/ *noun* a condition in which an organ has moved downwards out of its usual position ■ *verb* to move downwards out of the usual position (NOTE: **prolapsing – prolapsed**)

prolapsed intervertebral disc /prəʊ ,læpsɪd intə,vɪz̬təbrəl 'disk/ *noun* a condition in which an intervertebral disc becomes displaced or where the soft centre of a disc passes through the hard cartilage of the exterior and presses onto a nerve. Abbr **PID**. Also called **slipped disc**

prolapse of the rectum /,prəʊlæps əv ðə 'rekٹəm/ *noun* a condition in which mucous membrane of the rectum moves downwards and passes through the anus

prolapse of the uterus /,prəʊlæps əv ðə 'jʊtərəs/, **prolapse of the womb** /,prəʊlæps əv ðə 'wʊm/ *noun* a movement of the uterus downwards due to weakening of the structures of the pelvic floor, e.g. because of age or a difficult childbirth. Also called **metroptosis, prolapsed uterus, uterine prolapse**

proliferate /prə'lifəreɪt/ *verb* to produce many similar cells or parts, and so grow (NOTE: **proliferating – proliferated**)

proliferation /prə,lifə'reɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the process of proliferating

proliferative /prə'lifərətɪv/ *adjective* multiplying

proliferative phase /prə'lifərətɪv feɪz/ *noun* a period when a disease is spreading fast

proline /prəʊlɪn/ *noun* an amino acid found in proteins, especially in collagen

prolong /prə'lɒŋ/ *verb* to make something last longer ○ *The treatment prolonged her life by three years.*

prolonged /prə'lɒnd/ *adjective* very long ○ *She had to undergo a prolonged course of radiation treatment.*

promethazine /prəʊ'meθəzi:n/ *noun* an antihistamine drug used in the treatment of allergies and motion sickness

prominence /'prəmɪnəns/ *noun* a part of the body which sticks out or stands out. Also called **projection**. Compare **promontory**

prominent /'prəmɪnənt/ *adjective* standing out, very visible ○ *She had a prominent scar*

on her neck which she wanted to have removed.

promontory /'prɒmənt(ə)ri/ *noun* a section of an organ, especially the middle ear and sacrum which stands out above the rest. Compare **projection, prominence**

promote /prə'moʊt/ *verb* 1. to help something to take place □ *The drug is used to promote blood clotting.* 2. to raise a person to a more senior job or a higher position (NOTE: **promoting – promoted**)

pronate /'prəʊneɪt/ *verb* 1. to lie face downwards 2. to turn the hand so that palm faces downwards (NOTE: **pronating – pronated**)

pronation /'prəʊ'neɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the act of turning the hand round so that the palm faces downwards. Opposite **supination**. See illustration at **ANATOMICAL TERMS** in Supplement

pronator /prəʊ'nætər/ *noun* a muscle which makes the hand turn face downwards

prone /prəʊn/ *adjective* 1. lying face downwards. Opposite **supine** 2. referring to the arm with the palm facing downwards

pronounced /prə'naʊnst/ *adjective* very obvious or marked □ *She has a pronounced limp.*

propagate /'prɒpəgeɪt/ *verb* to multiply something, or cause something to multiply (NOTE: **propagating – propagated**)

propagation /'prɒpə'geɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* an act of causing something to spread or multiply

properdin /'prəʊpədɪn/ *noun* protein in blood plasma which can destroy Gram-negative bacteria and neutralise viruses when acting together with magnesium

prophase /'prəʊfeɪz/ *noun* the first stage of mitosis when the chromosomes are visible as long thin double threads

prophylactic /'prɒfə'læktɪk/ *noun* a substance which helps to prevent the development of a disease ■ *adjective* preventive

prophylaxis /'prɒfə'læksɪs/ *noun* 1. the prevention of disease 2. a preventive treatment (NOTE: [all senses] The plural is **prophylaxes**.)

proportion /prə'pɔ:ʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a quantity of something, especially as compared to the whole □ *A high proportion of cancers can be treated by surgery.* □ *The proportion of outpatients to inpatients is increasing.*

...the target cells for adult myeloid leukaemia are located in the bone marrow, and there is now evidence that a substantial proportion of childhood leukaemias also arise in the bone marrow' [British Medical Journal]

propranolol /prə'u'pænəlɒl/ *noun* a drug that slows heart rate and heart output, used in the treatment of angina pectoris, irregular heart rhythms, migraine and high blood pressure

proprietary /prə'priət(ə)ri/ *adjective* belonging to a commercial company

proprietary medicine /prə,prɪət(ə)ri 'med(ə)s(ə)n/, **proprietary drug** /prə

,prɪət(ə)ri 'dræg/ *noun* a drug which is sold under a trade name. □ **patent medicine**

proprietary name /prə,prɪət(ə)ri 'neɪm/ *noun* a trade name for a drug

proprioception /,prəʊprio'septʃən/ *noun* the reaction of nerves to body movements and the relaying of information about movements to the brain

proprioceptive /,prəʊprio'septɪv/ *adjective* referring to sensory impulses from the joints, muscles and tendons, which relay information about body movements to the brain

proprioceptor /,prəʊprio'septə/ *noun* the end of a sensory nerve which reacts to stimuli from muscles and tendons as they move

proptosis /prɒp'təʊsɪs/ *noun* forward displacement of the eyeball

prop up /,prɒp 'ʌp/ *verb* to support a person, e.g. with pillows (NOTE: **propping up – propped up**)

prospective /prə'spektɪv/ *adjective* 1. applying to the future. □ **retrospective** 2. following what happens to selected patients

prostaglandin /,prɒstə'glændɪn/ *noun* any of a class of unsaturated fatty acids found in all mammals which control smooth muscle contraction, inflammation and body temperature, are associated with the sensation of pain and have an effect on the nervous system, blood pressure and in particular the uterus at menstruation

prostate /'prɒstɪt/ *noun* same as **prostate gland** (NOTE: Do not confuse with **prostrate**.) □ **prostate trouble** inflammation or enlargement of the prostate gland (*informal*)

prostate cancer /'prɒstɪt, kænsə/ *noun* a malignant tumour of the prostate gland, found especially in men over 55

prostatectomy /,prɒstə'tektəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to remove all or part of the prostate gland (NOTE: The plural is **prostatectomies**.)

prostate gland /'prɒstɪt glænd/ *noun* an O-shaped gland in males which surrounds the urethra below the bladder and secretes a fluid containing enzymes into the sperm. See illustration at **UROGENITAL SYSTEM (MALE)** in Supplement. Also called **prostate**

COMMENT: As a man grows older, the prostate gland tends to enlarge and constrict the point at which the urethra leaves the bladder, making it difficult to pass urine.

prostatic /prɒ'stætɪk/ *adjective* referring to or belonging to the prostate gland

prostatic hypertrophy /prɒ,stætɪk haɪ'pɜ:t̬rəfi/ *noun* an enlargement of the prostate gland

prostatic massage /prɒ,stætɪk 'mæsɪ:ʒ/ *noun* the removal of fluid from the prostate gland through the rectum

prostatic urethra /prə,stætɪk ju'rɪ:θrə/ *noun* a section of the urethra which passes through the prostate gland

prostatic utricle /prə,stætɪk 'ju:t्रɪklə/ *noun* a sac branching off the urethra as it passes through the prostate gland

prostatism /'prɒstɪtɪz(ə)m/ *noun* a disorder of the prostate gland, especially enlargement which blocks or inhibits urine flow

prostatitis /,prɒstə'taɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the prostate gland

prostatocystitis /,prɒstætə'staɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the prostatic urethra and the bladder

prostatorrhoea /,prɒstətə'rɪ:ə/ *noun* discharge of fluid from the prostate gland (NOTE: The US spelling is **prostorrhœa**.)

prosthesis /prɒs'θi:sɪs/ *noun* a device which is attached to the body to take the place of a part which is missing, e.g. an artificial leg or glass eye (NOTE: The plural is **prostheses**.)

'The average life span of a joint prosthesis is 10–15 years' [British Journal of Nursing]

prosthetic /prɒs'θetɪk/ *adjective* replacing a part of the body which has been amputated or removed ○ *He was fitted with a prosthetic hand.*

prosthetic dentistry /prɒs'θetɪk 'dentɪstri/ *noun* the branch of dentistry which deals with replacing missing teeth parts of the jaw, and fitting dentures, bridges and crowns. Also called **prosthodontics**

prosthetics /prɒs'θetɪks/ *noun* the study and making of prostheses

prosthetist /'prɒsθətɪst/ *noun* a qualified person who fits prostheses

prosthodontics /,prɒsθə'dɒntɪks/ *noun* same as **prosthetic dentistry** (NOTE: Takes a singular verb.)

prostrate /'prɒstreɪt/ *adjective* lying face down (NOTE: Do not confuse with **prostate**.)

prostration /prɒ'streɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* extreme tiredness of body or mind

protamine /'prəʊtəmɪn/ *noun* a simple protein found in fish, used with insulin to slow down the insulin absorption rate

protanopia /,prəʊtə'nəʊpiə/ *noun* same as **Daltonism**

protease /'prəutierz/ *noun* a digestive enzyme which breaks down protein in food by splitting the peptide link. Also called **proteolytic enzyme**

protect /prə'tekt/ *verb* to keep a person or thing safe from harm ○ *The population must be protected against the spread of the virus.*

protection /prə'tekʃən/ *noun* 1. the act of keeping a person or thing safe from harm 2. something which protects ○ *Children are vaccinated as a protection against disease.*

Protection of Children Act 1999 /prə,tekʃən əv 'tʃildrən ækt/ *noun* in the UK, an

Act of Parliament to protect children by restricting the employment of certain nurses, teachers or other workers whose jobs bring them into contact with children, on grounds such as misconduct or health

protective /prə'tektɪv/ *adjective* providing protection

protective isolation /prə'tektɪv ,aisə'leɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a set of procedures used to protect people who have impaired resistance to infectious disease, e.g. those with leukaemia and lymphoma, Aids and graft patients. Also called **reverse isolation**

protein /'prəuti:n/ *noun* a nitrogen compound which is present in and is an essential part of all living cells in the body, formed by the linking of amino acids

COMMENT: Proteins are necessary for growth and repair of the body's tissue. They are mainly formed of carbon, nitrogen and oxygen in various combinations as amino acids. Foods such as beans, meat, eggs, fish and milk are rich in protein.

protein balance /'prəuti:n ,bæləns/ *noun* a situation when the nitrogen intake in protein is equal to the excretion rate in the urine

protein-bound iodine /,prəuti:n baund 'aɪdi:n/ *noun* a compound of thyroxine and iodine

protein-bound iodine test /,prəuti:n baund 'aɪdi:n test/ *noun* a test to measure if the thyroid gland is producing adequate quantities of thyroxine. Abbr **PBI test**

protein deficiency /'prəuti:n dɪ,fɪʃ(ə)nsi/ *noun* a lack of enough proteins in the diet

proteinuria /,prəuti'njuəriə/ *noun* a condition in which there are proteins in the urine

proteolysis /,prəuti'lɒsɪs/ *noun* the breaking down of proteins in food into amino acids by enzymes

proteolytic /,prəutiə'lɪtɪk/ *adjective* referring to proteolysis

proteolytic enzyme /,prəutiəlɪtɪk 'enzaɪm/ *noun* same as **protease**

proteose /'prəutiəs/ *noun* a water-soluble compound formed during hydrolytic processes such as digestion

Proteus /'prəutiəs/ *noun* a genus of bacteria commonly found in the intestines

prothrombin /prə'u'θrɒmbɪn/ *noun* a protein in blood which helps blood to coagulate and which needs Vitamin K to be effective. Also called **Factor II**

prothrombin time /prə'u'θrɒmbɪn taɪm/ *noun* the time taken in Quick test for clotting to take place

proto- /prəutəʊ/ *prefix* first or at the beginning

protocol /'prəutəkɒl/ *noun* the set of instructions for the clinical management of a particular condition, including tests, surgery and drug treatments

proton pump /'prəʊtɒn pʌmp/ *noun* an enzyme system within the gastric mucosa that secretes gastric acids ○ *The drug acts on the proton pump mechanism.*

proton-pump inhibitor /'prəʊtɒn pʌmp in'hɪbɪtə/ *noun* a drug which suppresses the final stage of gastric acid secretion by the proton pump in the gastric mucosa

protopathic /,prəʊtəʊ'pæθɪk/ *adjective* 1. referring to nerves which are able to sense only strong sensations 2. referring to a first symptom or lesion 3. referring to the first sign of partially restored function in an injured nerve
► compare **epicritic**

protoplasm /'prəʊtəʊ,plæz(ə)m/ *noun* a substance like a jelly which makes up the largest part of each cell

protoplasmic /,prəʊtəʊ'plæzmɪk/ *adjective* referring to protoplasm

protoporphyrin IX /,prəʊtəʊ,pɔ:fərɪn 'naɪn/ *noun* the commonest form of porphyrin, found in haemoglobin and chlorophyll

protozoa /,prəʊtə'zəʊə/ plural of **protozoon**

protozoan /,prəʊtə'zəʊən/ *adjective* referring to protozoa

protozoon *noun* a tiny simple organism with a single cell (NOTE: The plural is **protozoa** or **protozoons**.)

COMMENT: Parasitic protozoa can cause several diseases, including amoebiasis, malaria and other tropical diseases.

protract /prə'u'trækət/ *verb* 1. to make something last a long time 2. to extend or lengthen a body part

protractor /prə'træktsə/ *noun* a muscle with the function of extending a body part

protrude /prə'tru:d/ *verb* to stick out ○ *She wears a brace to correct her protruding teeth.* ○ *Protruding eyes are associated with some forms of goitre.* (NOTE: **protruding** – **protruded**)

protuberance /prə'tju:b(ə)rəns/ *noun* a rounded part of the body which projects above the rest

proud flesh /,prəud 'fleʃ/ *noun* new vessels and young fibrous tissue which form when a wound, incision or lesion is healing

provide /prə'veɪd/ *verb* to supply something ○ *A balanced diet should provide the necessary proteins required by the body.* ○ *The hospital provides an ambulance service to the whole area.* (NOTE: **providing** – **provided**)

provider /prə'veɪdə/ *noun* a hospital which provides secondary care which is paid for by another body such as a PCG or social services.

◊ **purchaser**

provision /prə'veɪʒ(ə)n/ *noun* 1. the act of providing something ○ *the provision of after-care facilities for patients recently discharged from hospital* 2. something provided

provisional /prə'veɪʒ(ə)n(ə)l/ *adjective* temporary and which may be changed ○ *The hos-*

pital has given me a provisional date for the operation. ○ *The paramedical team attached sticks to the broken leg to act as provisional splints.*

provisionally /prə'veɪʒ(ə)nəli/ *adverb* in a temporary way, not certainly ○ *She has provisionally accepted the offer of a bed in the hospital.*

provitamin /prəʊ'vɪtəmɪn/ *noun* a chemical compound which is converted to a vitamin during usual biochemical processes, e.g. the amino acid tryptophan, which is converted to niacin, and beta carotene, which is converted into vitamin A

provoke /prə'veʊk/ *verb* 1. to make a person angry 2. to make something happen ○ *The medication provoked a sudden rise in body temperature.* ○ *The fit was provoked by the shock of the accident.* 3. to make something be felt ○ *His lack of visitors provoked the nurses' sympathy.* (NOTE: **provokes** – **provoking** – **provoked**)

proximal /'prɒksɪm(ə)l/ *adjective* near the midline, the central part of the body

proximal convoluted tubule /,prɒksɪm(ə)l ,kɒnvɒlʊ:tɪd 'tjʊ:bjʊ:l/ *noun* a part of the kidney filtering system between the loop of Henle and the glomerulus

proximal interphalangeal joint /,prɒksɪm(ə)l intfə'lændʒiəl dʒɔɪnt/ *noun* a joint nearest the point of attachment of a finger or toe. Abbr **PIP**

proximally /'prɒksɪmli/ *adverb* further towards the centre or point of attachment. Opposite **distally**. See illustration at **ANATOMICAL TERMS** in Supplement

Prozac /'prəʊzæk/ a trade name for fluoxetine

prurigo /pruə'rɑ:gəʊ/ *noun* an itchy eruption of papules

pruritus /pruə'rætəs/ *noun* an irritation of the skin which makes a person want to scratch. Also called **itching**

pruritus ani /pruə,rætɪs 'eɪnai/ *noun* itching round the anal orifice

pruritus vulvae /pruə,rætɪs 'vʌlvɪ:/ *noun* itching round the vulva

prussic acid /,prʌsɪk 'æsɪd/ *noun* same as cyanide

PSA test /pi: es 'eɪ test/ *noun* a blood test for prostate cancer which detects a protein produced by prostate cells. Full form **prostatic specific antigen test**

pseudo- /sjʊ:d/ *prefix* same as **pseudo-** (used before vowels)

pseudarthrosis /sju:da:θrəʊsɪs/ *noun* a false joint, as when the two broken ends of a fractured bone do not bind together but heal separately (NOTE: The plural is **pseudarthroses**.)

pseudo- /sju:dəʊ/ *prefix* similar to something but not the same

pseudoangina /,sju:dəʊən'ænɪnə/ *noun* pain in the chest, caused by worry but not indicating heart disease

pseudocoxalgia /,sju:dəʊkɒk'sældʒə/ *noun* the degeneration of the upper end of the femur in young boys which prevents the femur from growing properly and can result in a permanent limp. Also called **Legg-Calvé-Perthes disease**

pseudocrisis /'sju:dəʊ,kraɪəsɪs/ *noun* a sudden fall in the temperature of a person with fever which does not mark the end of the fever

pseudocroup /,sju:dəʊ'kru:p/ *noun* 1. same as **laryngismus** 2. a form of asthma in which contractions take place in the larynx

pseudocyesis /,sju:dəʊsər'i:sɪs/ *noun* a condition in which a woman has the physical symptoms of pregnancy but is not pregnant. Also called **phantom pregnancy**, **pseudo-pregnancy**

pseudocyst /'sju:dəʊsɪst/ *noun* a space which fills with fluid in an organ but without the walls which would form a cyst, as a result of softening or necrosis of the tissue

pseudodementia /,sju:dəʊdə'menʃə/ *noun* a condition of extreme apathy found in hysterical people in which their behaviour corresponds to what they imagine to be insanity, though they show no signs of true dementia

pseudogynaecomastia /,sju:dəʊ,gɪnɪk'əʊ'mæstɪə/ *noun* enlargement of the male breast because of extra fatty tissue (NOTE: The US spelling is **pseudogynecomastia**)

pseudohermaphroditism /,sju:dəʊhæfro'dɪtɪz/ 'mæfrədæɪtɪz(ə)m/ *noun* a condition in which a person has either ovaries or testes but external genitalia that are not clearly of either sex

pseudohypertrophic muscular dystrophy /,sju:dəʊhaɪp'trofɪk, trɔ:fɪk, məskjʊlə'dɪs'trɔ:fɪ/ *noun* a hereditary disease affecting the muscles, which swell and become weak, beginning in early childhood. Also called **Duchenne muscular dystrophy**

pseudohypertrophy /,sju:dəuhɑ:r/p:z:t'ræfɪ/ *noun* an overgrowth of fatty or fibrous tissue in a part or organ, which results in the part or organ being enlarged

pseudomonad /,sju:dəʊ'mæʊnæd/ *noun* a rod-shaped bacterium which lives in soil or decomposing organic material and can cause disease in plants and sometimes in humans

pseudomyxoma /,sju:dəʊmɪk'səʊmə/ *noun* a tumour rich in mucus (NOTE: The plural is **pseudomyxomas** or **pseudomyxomatata**)

pseudo-obstruction /,sju:dəʊ əb'strækʃən/ *noun* a condition in which symptoms such as stomach cramps, nausea and bloating indicate a blockage in the intestines although no blockage exists

pseudoplegia /,sju:dəʊ'pli:dʒə/, **pseudoparalysis** /,sju:dəʊpə'ræləsɪs/ *noun* 1. loss of muscular power in the limbs without true paralysis 2. paralysis caused by hysteria

pseudopolyposis /,sju:dəʊpɒli'pəʊsɪs/ *noun* a condition in which polyps are found in many places in the intestine, usually resulting from an earlier infection

pseudopregnancy /,sju:dəʊ'pregnənsi/ *noun* also called **pseudocyesis**

psilosis /saɪ'ləʊsɪs/ *noun* a disease of the small intestine which prevents a person from absorbing food properly. Also called **sprue**

COMMENT: The condition is often found in the tropics, and results in diarrhoea and loss of weight.

psittacosis /sɪtə'kəʊsɪs/ *noun* a disease of parrots which can be transmitted to humans. It is similar to typhoid fever, but atypical pneumonia is present. Symptoms include fever, diarrhoea and distension of the abdomen. Also called **parrot disease**

psoas /'səʊəs/ *noun* either of two pairs of muscles in the groin, psoas major and psoas minor, which help to move the hip joint

psoas major /'səʊəs 'meɪrɪdʒə/ *noun* a muscle in the groin which flexes the hip

psoas minor /'səʊəs 'maɪnə/ *noun* a small muscle similar to the psoas major but not always present

psoriasis /sə'raɪəsɪs/ *noun* a common inflammatory skin disease where red patches of skin are covered with white scales

psoriatic /,sɔ:ri'ætɪk/ *adjective* referring to psoriasis

psoriatic arthritis /,sɔ:riætɪk ə:'θrætɪs/ *noun* a form of psoriasis which is associated with arthritis

psych- /sɑ:k/ *prefix* same as **psycho-** (*used before vowels*)

psychasthenia /,saɪkæs'θi:nɪə/ *noun* 1. any psychoneurosis other than hysteria 2. psychoneurosis characterised by fears and phobias

psyche /'saɪki/ *noun* the mind

psychedelic /,saɪkə'delɪk/ *adjective* referring to drugs such as LSD which expand a person's consciousness

psychiatric /,saɪkɪ'ætrɪk/ *adjective* referring to psychiatry ○ *He is undergoing psychiatric treatment.*

psychiatric hospital /,saɪkɪ'ætrɪk ,hɒpit(ə)l/ *noun* a hospital which specialises in the treatment of patients with mental disorders

psychiatrist /saɪ'kærətrɪst/ *noun* a doctor who specialises in the diagnosis and treatment of mental and behavioural disorders

psychiatry /saɪ'kærətri/ *noun* a branch of medicine concerned with the diagnosis and treatment of mental and behavioural disorders

psychic /'saɪkɪk/, **psychical** /'saɪkɪk(ə)l/ *adjective* 1. referring to a person who is supposedly able to guess thoughts which people have not expressed, or to foresee the future 2. relating to or originating in the human mind

psycho- /saɪkəʊ/ *prefix* referring to the mind

psychoanalysis /,saɪkəʊə'neələsɪs/ *noun* a form of treatment for mental disorders in which a specialist and patient talk and together analyse the patient's condition and past events which may have contributed to it

psychoanalyst /,saɪkəʊ'æn(ə)list/ *noun* a person who is trained in psychoanalysis

psychodrama /'saɪkəʊ,d्रə:mə/ *noun* a type of psychotherapy in which patients act out roles in dramas illustrating their emotional problems, in front of other patients

psychodynamics /,saɪkəʊdæm'naɪmɪks/ *noun* the study of how the forces which affect human behaviour and mental states work, especially on a subconscious level

psychogenic /,saɪkə'dʒenɪk/, **psychogenetic** /,saɪkəʊdʒə'nɛtɪk/, **psychogenous** /saɪ'kɒdʒənəs/ *adjective* referring to an illness which starts in the mind, rather than in a physical state

psychogeriatrics /,saɪkəʊdʒeri'ætriks/ *noun* the study of the mental disorders of the late stages of the natural life span

psychological /,saɪkə'lɒdʒɪk(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to psychology, or caused by a mental state

psychological dependence /,saɪkə'lɒdʒɪk(ə)l dɪ'pendəns/, **psychological drug dependence** /,saɪkə'lɒdʒɪk(ə)l 'dræg dɪ'pendəns/ *noun* a state in which a person is addicted to a drug such as cannabis or alcohol but does not suffer physical effects if he or she stops taking it

psychologically /,saɪkə'lɒdʒɪkli/ *adverb* in a way which is caused by a mental state ○ *He is psychologically addicted to tobacco.*

psychologist /saɪ'kɒlədʒɪst/ *noun* a person who specialises in the study of the mind and mental processes

psychology /saɪ'kɒlədʒɪ/ *noun* the study of the mind and mental processes

psychometrics /,saɪkə'metriks/ *noun* a way of measuring intelligence and personality in which the result is shown as a number on a scale

psychomotor /,saɪkə'məutə/ *adjective* referring to muscle movements caused by mental activity

psychomotor disturbance /,saɪkəməutə dr'stɔ:bəns/ *noun* muscle movements caused by a mental disorder, e.g. twitching

psychomotor epilepsy /,saɪkəməutə 'epi lepsi/ *noun* epilepsy in which fits are characterised by blurring of consciousness and ac-

companied by coordinated but wrong movements

psychomotor retardation /,saɪkəməutə ,rɪ:tɪə'deɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the slowing of movement and speech, caused by depression

psychoneuroimmunology /,saɪkəʊ ,njuərəʊ,ɪmju'ndlodʒɪ/ *noun* a branch of medicine which deals with how emotions affect the immune system

psychoneurosis /,saɪkənju'rəʊsɪs/ *noun* any of a group of mental disorders in which a person has a faulty response to the stresses of life. ○ **neurosis** (NOTE: The plural is **psychoneuroses**)

psychopath /'saɪkəpæθ/ *noun* a person with a long-term mental disorder characterised by antisocial and often violent behaviour

psychopathic /,saɪkə'pæθɪk/ *adjective* referring to psychopaths or psychopathy

psychopathological /,saɪkəpæθə'lɒdʒɪk(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to psychopathology

psychopathology /,saɪkəpæ'θɒlədʒɪ/ *noun* a branch of medicine concerned with the pathology of mental disorders and diseases

psychopathy /saɪ'kɒpəθi/ *noun* any disease of the mind (NOTE: The plural is **psychopathies**)

psychopharmacology /,saɪkəʊ,fu:mə 'kɒlədʒɪ/ *noun* the study of the actions and applications of drugs which have a powerful effect on the mind and behaviour

psychophysiological /,saɪkəʊ,fizi'ə'lɒdʒɪk(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to psychophysiology

psychophysiology /,saɪkəʊ,fizi'ɒlədʒɪ/ *noun* the physiology of the mind and its functions

psychoses /saɪ'kəʊsi:z/ plural of **psychosis**

psychosexual /,saɪkəʊ'sekʃuəl/ *adjective* relating to the mental and emotional aspects of sexuality and sexual development

psychosexual development /,saɪkəʊ ,sekʃuəl dɪ'veləpmənt/ *noun* the development of human personality in stages based upon the ability to experience sexual pleasure, and the way in which sexuality plays a role in a person's life

psychosis /saɪ'kəʊsɪs/ *noun* any serious mental disorder in which a person has a distorted perception of reality (NOTE: The plural is **psychoses**.)

psychosocial /,saɪkəʊ'səʊʃ(ə)l/ *adjective* relating to the interaction of psychological and social factors

'...recent efforts to redefine nursing have moved away from the traditional medically dominated approach towards psychosocial care and forming relationships with patients' [British Journal of Nursing]

psychosomatic /saɪkəʊsə'mætɪk/ *adjective* referring to the relationship between body and mind

COMMENT: Many physical disorders, including duodenal ulcers and high blood pressure, can be caused by mental conditions like worry or stress, and are then termed psychosomatic in order to distinguish them from the same conditions having physical or hereditary causes.

psychosurgery /saɪkəʊ'sɜːdʒərɪ/ *noun* brain surgery, used as a treatment for psychological disorders

psychosurgical /saɪkəʊ'sɜːdʒɪk(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to psychosurgery

psychotherapeutic /saɪkəʊθεրə'pjū:tɪk/ *adjective* referring to psychotherapy

psychotherapist /saɪkəʊ'θerəpɪst/ *noun* a person trained to give psychotherapy

psychotherapy /saɪkəʊ'θerəpɪ/ *noun* the treatment of mental disorders by psychological methods, as when a psychotherapist encourages a person to talk about his or her problems. ♦ **therapy**

psychotic /saɪ'kɒtɪk/ *adjective* 1. referring to psychosis 2. characterised by mental disorder

psychotropic /saɪkə'trɒpɪk/ *adjective* referring to a drug such as a stimulant or sedative which affects a person's mood

pt abbr pint

pterion /'tɪərɪən/ *noun* the point on the side of the skull where the frontal, temporal parietal and sphenoid bones meet

pteroylglutamic acid /,terəʊarlglu:tæmɪk 'æsɪd/ *noun* same as **folic acid**

pterygium /tə'rɪdʒiəm/ *noun* a degenerative condition in which a triangular growth of conjunctiva covers part of the cornea, with its apex towards the pupil

pterygo- /terɪgəʊ/ *suffix* the pterygoid process

pterygoid plate /terɪgɔɪd 'pleɪt/ *noun* a small flat bony projection on the pterygoid process

pterygoid plexus /terɪgɔɪd 'pleksəs/ *noun* a group of veins and sinuses which join together behind the cheek

pterygoid process /terɪgɔɪd ,præsəs/ *noun* one of two projecting parts on the sphenoid bone

pterygomandibular /terɪgəʊmæn'dibjʊlə/ *adjective* referring to the pterygoid process and the mandible

pterygopalatine fossa /terɪgəʊpælətæn'fəsə/ *noun* the space between the pterygoid process and the upper jaw

pterygopalatine ganglion /terɪgəʊpælətæn 'gæŋglɪən/ *noun* a ganglion in the pterygopalatine fossa associated with the maxillary nerve. Also called **sphenopalatine ganglion**

ptomaine /təʊmeɪn/ *noun* a group of nitrogenous substances produced in rotting food, which gives the food a special smell (NOTE: **Ptomaine poisoning** was the term formerly used to refer to any form of food poisoning.)

ptosis /təʊsɪs/ *noun* 1. prolapse of an organ 2. drooping of the upper eyelid, which makes the eye stay half closed

-**ptosis** /təʊsɪs/ *suffix* prolapse

PTSD abbr post-traumatic stress disorder

ptyal- /taɪəl/ *prefix* same as **ptyalo-** (*used before vowels*)

ptyalin /'taɪəlɪn/ *noun* an enzyme in saliva which cleanses the mouth and converts starch into sugar

ptyalism /'taɪəlɪz(ə)m/ *noun* the production of an excessive amount of saliva

ptyalith /'taɪəlɪθ/ *noun* same as **sialolith**

ptyalo- /taɪələʊ/ *prefix* referring to saliva

ptyalography /,taɪə'lɒgrəfi/ *noun* same as **sialography**

pubertal /'pju:bət(ə)l/, **puberal** /'pju:bərəl/ *adjective* referring to puberty

puberty /'pju:bəti/ *noun* 1. the physical and psychological changes which take place when childhood ends and adolescence and sexual maturity begin and the sex glands become active 2. the time when these changes take place

COMMENT: Puberty starts at about the age of 10 in girls, and slightly later in boys.

pubes¹ /'pju:bɪz/ *noun* the part of the body just above the groin, where the pubic bones are found

pubes² /'pju:bɪz/ plural of **pubis**

pubescent /'pju:'besənt/ *adjective* reaching or having reached puberty

pubic /'pju:bɪk/ *adjective* referring to the area near the genitals

pubic bone /,pju:bɪk 'bəʊn/ *noun* the bone in front of the pelvis. Also called **pubis**. See illustration at **UROGENITAL SYSTEM (MALE)** in Supplement

pubic hair /,pju:bɪk 'hɛə/ *noun* tough hair growing in the genital region

pubic louse /,pju:bɪk 'laus/ *noun* also called **Pediculus pubis**

pubic symphysis /,pju:bɪk 'sɪmfəsɪs/ *noun* a piece of cartilage which joins the two sections of the pubic bone. Also called **symphysis pubis**

COMMENT: In a pregnant woman, the pubic symphysis stretches to allow the pelvic girdle to expand so that there is room for the baby to pass through.

pubiotomy /,pju:bi'ɒtəmi/ *noun* a surgical operation to divide the pubic bone during labour, in order to make the pelvis wide enough for the child to be born safely (NOTE: The plural is **pubiotomies**.)

pubis /'pju:bɪs/ *noun* a bone forming the front part of the pelvis. See illustration at **PELVIS** in Supplement (NOTE: The plural is **pubes**.)

public health /'pʌblɪk 'helθ/ *noun* the study of illness, health and disease in the community

public health laboratory service /,pʌblɪk ,helθ lə'bɒrət(ə)ri ,sɜ:vɪs/ *noun* in the UK, a former service of the NHS which detected, diagnosed and monitored suspected cases of infectious disease in a countrywide network of laboratories. Abbr PHLS

public health medicine /,pʌblɪk ,helθ 'med(ə)s(ə)n/ *noun* the branch of medicine concerned with health and disease in populations, with the responsibilities of monitoring health, identification of health needs, development of policies which promote health and evaluation of health services

public health nurse /,pʌblɪk ,helθ 'nɜ:s/ *noun* a nurse such as a school nurse, health visitor or other community nurse who monitors health and works to prevent illness in community situations

public health physician /,pʌblɪk ,helθ fɪ 'zɪl(ə)n/ *noun* a consultant who has special training in public health medicine

pudenda /pju:'dendə/ plural of **pudendum**
pudendal /pju:'dend(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to the pudendum

pudendal block /pju:,dend(ə)l 'blk/ *noun* an operation to anaesthetise the pudendum during childbirth

pudendum /pju:'dendəm/ *noun* an external genital organ of a woman (NOTE: The plural is **pudenda**.)

puerpera /pju:'z:p(ə)rə/ *noun* a woman who has recently given birth, or is giving birth, and whose uterus is still distended (NOTE: The plural is **puerperae**.)

puerperal /pju:'z:p(ə)rəl/ *adjective* 1. referring to the puerperium 2. referring to childbirth
3. occurring after childbirth

puerperal infection /pju,z:p(ə)rəl ɪn 'fekʃən/, **puerperal fever** /pju,z:p(ə)rəl 'fi:və/ *noun* an infection of the uterus and genital tract after the birth of a baby, which is more common in women who have had a caesarean section. It causes a high fever, and occasionally sepsis, which can be fatal and was commonly so in the past. Also called **postpartum fever**
puerperalism /pju:'z:p(ə)rəlɪz(ə)m/ *noun* an illness of a baby or its mother resulting from or associated with childbirth

puerperal psychosis /pju,z:p(ə)rəl saɪ 'kəʊsɪs/ *noun* a psychiatric disorder that some women may experience in the first two weeks after giving birth

puerperal sepsis /pju,z:p(ə)rəl 'sepsɪs/ *noun* blood poisoning following childbirth, caused by infection of the placental site

puerperium /,pju:ə'pɪəriəm/ *noun* a period of about six weeks which follows immediately after the birth of a child, during which the mother's sexual organs recover from childbirth

puerperous /pju'z:pəs/ *adjective* same as **puerperal**

puke /pju:k/ *verb* same as **vomit** (*informal*)

Pulex /'pju:leks/ *noun* a genus of human fleas

pull /pol/ *verb* to make a muscle move in a wrong direction ○ *He pulled a muscle in his back.* □ **to pull the plug** to switch off life support (*informal*) ■ □ **to pull yourself together** to become calmer ○ *Although he was very angry he soon pulled himself together.*

pulley /'poli/ *noun* a device with rings through which wires or cords pass, used in traction to make wires tense

pull through /,pol 'θru:/ *verb* to recover from a serious illness (*informal*) ○ *The doctor says she is strong and should pull through.*

pulmo- /'palməu/, **pulmon-** /'palmən/ *prefix* referring to the lungs

pulmonale /,palmə'næli/ ♀ **cor pulmonale**

pulmonary /'palmən(ə)rɪ/ *adjective* referring to the lungs

pulmonary artery /,palmən(ə)ri 'a:təri/ *noun* one of the two arteries which take deoxygenated blood from the heart to the lungs for oxygenation. See illustration at **HEART** in Supplement

pulmonary circulation /,palmən(ə)ri ,sɜ:kju'leʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the circulation of blood from the heart through the pulmonary arteries to the lungs for oxygenation and back to the heart through the pulmonary veins. Also called **lesser circulation**

pulmonary embolism /,palmən(ə)ri 'embəlɪz(ə)m/ *noun* a blockage of a pulmonary artery by a blood clot. Abbr **PE**

pulmonary hypertension /,palmən(ə)ri ,haɪpə'tenʃən/ *noun* high blood pressure in the blood vessels supplying blood to the lungs

pulmonary insufficiency /,palmən(ə)ri ,ɪnsə'fɪʃ(ə)nsi/, **pulmonary incompetence** /,palmən(ə)ri in'kɒmpɪt(ə)ns/ *noun* a condition characterised by dilatation of the main pulmonary artery and stretching of the valve ring, due to pulmonary hypertension

pulmonary oedema /,palmən(ə)ri ɪ'di:mə/ *noun* the collection of fluid in the lungs, as occurs in left-sided heart failure

pulmonary stenosis /,palmən(ə)ri ste'neəsɪs/ *noun* a condition in which the opening to the pulmonary artery in the right ventricle becomes narrow

pulmonary tuberculosis /,palmən(ə)ri tju:bɜ:kjʊ'ləʊsɪs/ *noun* tuberculosis in the lungs, which makes the person lose weight, cough blood and have a fever

pulmonary valve /'palmən(ə)ri vælv/ *noun* a valve at the opening of the pulmonary artery

pulmonary vein /'palmən(ə)ri veɪn/ *noun* one of the four veins which carry oxygenated blood from the lungs back to the left atrium of

the heart. See illustration at **HEART** in Supplement (NOTE: The pulmonary veins are the only veins which carry oxygenated blood.)

pulmonectomy /'pʌlmə'nektəmɪ/ *noun* same as **pneumonectomy** (NOTE: The plural is **pulmonectomies**.)

pulmonology /'pʌlmən'ɒlədʒi/ *noun* the branch of medicine that deals with the structure, physiology and diseases of the lungs

pulp /pʌlp/ *noun* soft tissue, especially when surrounded by hard tissue as in the inside of a tooth

pulp cavity /'pʌlp ,kævətɪ/ *noun* the central part of a tooth containing soft tissue

pulpy /'pʌplɪ/ *adjective* made of pulp ○ *the pulpy tissue inside a tooth*

pulsate /'pʌl'seɪt/ *verb* to expand and contract with a strong regular beat (NOTE: **pulsating – pulsated**)

pulsation /'pʌl'seɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the action of beating regularly, e.g. the visible pulse which can be seen under the skin in some parts of the body

pulse /pʌls/ *noun* the regular expansion and contraction of an artery caused by the heart pumping blood through the body, which can be felt with the fingers especially where an artery is near the surface of the body, as in the wrist or neck ○ *Her pulse is very irregular.* □ **to take or feel a person's pulse** to measure a person's pulse rate by pressing on the skin above an artery with the fingers ○ *Has the patient's pulse been taken?*

COMMENT: The standard adult pulse is about 72 beats per minute, but it is higher in children. The pulse is usually taken by placing the fingers on the patient's wrist, at the point where the radial artery passes through the depression just below the thumb.

pulseless /'pʌlsləs/ *adjective* referring to a person who has no pulse because the heart is beating very weakly

pulse oximetry /'pʌls ɒks'metri/ *noun* a method of measuring the oxygen content of arterial blood

pulse point /'pʌls pɔɪnt/ *noun* a place on the body where the pulse can be taken

pulse pressure /'pʌls ,preʃə/ *noun* the difference between the diastolic and systolic pressure. ♫ *Corrigan's pulse*

pulse rate /'pʌls reɪt/ *noun* the number of times the pulse beats per minute

pulsus /'pʌlsəs/ *noun* same as **pulse**

pulsus alternans /,pʌlsəs 'ɔ:ltənænz/ *noun* a pulse with a beat which is alternately strong and weak

pulsus bigeminus /,pʌlsəs baɪ'gɛmɪnəs/ *noun* a double pulse, with an extra ectopic beat

pulsus paradoxus /,pʌlsəs pærə'dɒksəs/ *noun* a condition in which there is a sharp fall in the pulse when the person breathes in

pulvis /'pʌlvɪs/ *noun* powder

pump /pʌmp/ *noun* a machine which forces liquids or air into or out of something ■ *verb* to force liquid or air along a tube ○ *The heart pumps blood round the body.* ○ *The nurses tried to pump the poison out of the stomach.*

pumping chamber /'pʌmpɪŋ ,tʃembə/ *noun* one of the sections of the heart where blood is pumped

punch drunk syndrome /pʌntʃ 'drʌŋk ,sɪnd्रəʊm/ *noun* a condition affecting a person, usually a boxer, who has been hit on the head many times and develops impaired mental faculties, trembling limbs and speech disorders

puncta /'pʌŋktə/ plural of **punctum**

puncta lacrimalia /,pʌŋktə lækrɪ'melɪə/ *plural noun* small openings at the corners of the eyes through which tears drain into the nose

punctate /'pʌŋktet/ *adjective* referring to tissue or a surface which has tiny spots, holes or dents in it

punctum /'pʌŋktəm/ *noun* a point (NOTE: The plural is **puncta**)

puncture /'pʌŋktʃə/ *noun* 1. a neat hole made by a sharp instrument 2. the making of a hole in an organ or swelling to take a sample of the contents or to remove fluid ■ *verb* to make a hole in tissue with a sharp instrument (NOTE: **puncturing – punctured**)

puncture wound /'pʌŋktʃə wu:nd/ *noun* a wound made by a sharp instrument which makes a hole in the tissue

pupil /'pjʊ:p(ə)l/ *noun* the central opening in the iris of the eye, through which light enters the eye. See illustration at **EYE** in Supplement

pupillary /'pjʊ:pɪləri/ *adjective* referring to the pupil

pupillary reaction /,pjʊ:pɪləri ri'ækʃən/ *noun* a reflex of the pupil of the eye which contracts when exposed to bright light. Also called **light reflex**

purchaser /'pɜ:tʃəsə/ *noun* a body, usually a PCG, which commissions health care and manages the budget to pay for the service. ♫ **provider**

pure /pjʊə/ *adjective* 1. not mixed with other substances 2. very clean

pure alcohol /,pjʊə 'ælkəhɒl/ *noun* alcohol BP, alcohol with 5% water

purgation /pɜ:g'eɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the use of a drug to cause a bowel movement

purgative /'pɜ:gətɪv/ *noun* a drug used to empty the bowels. ♫ **laxative**

purge /pɜ:dʒ/ *verb* to induce evacuation of the bowels (NOTE: **purging – purged**)

purified protein derivative /,pjʊərifaid 'prætɪn dɪ,rɪvətɪv/ *noun* a pure form of tuberculin, used in tuberculin tests. Abbr **PPD**

purify /'pjʊərfai/ *verb* to make something pure (NOTE: **purifies – purifying – purified**)

purine /'pjʊərɪn/ *noun* 1. a nitrogen-containing substance derived from uric acid which is the parent compound of several biologically important substances 2. a derivative of purine, especially either of the bases adenine and guanine, which are found in RNA and DNA

Purkinje cells /pʊ'kɪndʒi selz/ *plural noun* neurones in the cerebellar cortex [Described 1837. After Johannes Evangelista Purkinje (1787–1869), Professor of Physiology at Breslau, now in Poland, and then Prague, Czech Republic.]

Purkinje fibres /pʊ'kɪndʒi ,faɪbəz/ *plural noun* a bundle of fibres which form the atrioventricular bundle and pass from the atrioventricular node to the septum [Described 1839. After Johannes Evangelista Purkinje (1787–1869), Professor of Physiology at Breslau, now in Poland, and then Prague, Czech Republic.]

Purkinje shift /pʊ'kɪndʒi ſɪft/ *noun* the change in colour sensitivity which takes place in the eye in low light when the eye starts using the rods in the retina because the light is too weak to stimulate the cones

purpura /'pɜ:pjʊrə/ *noun* a purple colouring on the skin, similar to a bruise, caused by blood disease and not by trauma

pursestring operation /,pɜ:sſtrɪŋ ,ɒpɛ'reɪʃ(ə)n/ same as **Shirodkar's operation**

pursestring stitch /'pɜ:sſtrɪŋ ſtɪtʃ/ *noun* same as **Shirodkar suture**

purulent /'pjʊərulənt/ *adjective* containing or producing pus

pus /pʌs/ *noun* a yellow liquid composed of blood serum, pieces of dead tissue, white blood cells and the remains of bacteria, formed by the body in reaction to infection (NOTE: For other terms referring to pus, see words beginning with **py-** or **pyo-**)

pustular /'pʌſtju:lə/ *adjective* 1. covered with or composed of pustules 2. referring to pustules

pustulate /'pʌſtju:leɪt/ *verb* to become covered with pustules, or cause pustules to appear on the skin (NOTE: **pustulating – pustulated**) ■ *adjective* covered with pustules

pustule /'pʌſtju:l/ *noun* a small pimple filled with pus

putrefaction /,pjʊ:tɪtrɪ'fækʃən/ *noun* the decomposition of organic substances by bacteria, making an unpleasant smell

putrefy /'pjʊ:tɪtrɪfai/ *verb* to rot or decompose (NOTE: **putrefies – putrefying – putrefied**)

put up /,put 'ʌp/ *verb* to arrange something such as a drip (NOTE: **putting up – put up**)

p.v. *adverb* by way of the vagina. Full form **per vaginam**

PVS *abbr* persistent vegetative state

PWA /pi: dəbljoo: 'eɪ/ *noun* a person with AIDS

py- /paɪ/ **pyo-** /paɪəʊ/ *prefix* same as **pyo-** (*used before vowels*)

pyaemia /paɪ'i:miə/ *noun* invasion of blood with bacteria which then multiply and form many little abscesses in various parts of the body (NOTE: The US spelling is **pyemia**.)

pyarthrosis /,paɪəθrəʊsɪs/ *noun* a condition in which a joint becomes infected with pyogenic organisms and fills with pus. Also called **acute suppurative arthritis**

pyel- /,paɪəl/ *prefix* same as **pyelo-** (*used before vowels*)

pyelitis /,paɪə'laitɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the central part of the kidney

pyelo- /,paɪələʊ/ *prefix* referring to the pelvis of the kidney

pyelocystitis /,paɪələʊsɪ'taɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the pelvis of the kidney and the urinary bladder

pyelogram /'paɪələgræm/ *noun* an X-ray photograph of a kidney and the urinary tract

pyelography /,paɪə'lɒgrəfi/ *noun* X-ray examination of a kidney after introduction of a contrast medium

pyelolithotomy /,paɪələʊlɪ'lɒθətəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to remove a stone from the pelvis of the kidney (NOTE: The plural is **pyelolithotomies**)

pyelonephritis /,paɪələʊnɪ'fraɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the kidney and the pelvis of the kidney

pyeloplasty /'paɪələplæsti/ *noun* any surgical operation on the pelvis of the kidney (NOTE: The plural is **pyeloplasties**)

pyelotomy /,paɪə'lɒtəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to make an opening in the pelvis of the kidney (NOTE: The plural is **pyelotomies**)

pyemia /paɪ'i:miə/ *noun* US same as **pyaemia**

pykno- /pɪknəʊ/ *prefix* indicating thickness or density

pyknolepsy /'pɪknə,lepsi/ *noun* a former name for a type of frequent attack of petit mal epilepsy affecting children

pyl- /pail/, **pyle-** /'parli/ *prefix* referring to the portal vein

pylephlebitis /,paɪlfɪlə'baitɪs/ *noun* thrombosis of the portal vein

pylethrombosis /,paɪliθrɒm'bæʊsɪs/ *noun* a condition in which blood clots are present in the portal vein or any of its branches

pylor- /paɪ'lɔ:r/ *prefix* same as **pyloro-** (*used before vowels*)

pylorectomy /,paɪlə'rektəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to remove the pylorus and the antrum of the stomach (NOTE: The plural is **pylorectomies**)

pylori /paɪ'lɔ:ri/ plural of **pylorus**

pyloric /paɪ'lɒbrɪk/ *adjective* referring to the pylorus

pyloric antrum /paɪ,lrɪk 'æntrəm/ *noun* a space at the bottom of the stomach, before the pyloric sphincter

pyloric orifice /paɪ,lrɪk 'ɔrifɪs/ *noun* an opening where the stomach joins the duodenum

pyloric sphincter /paɪ,lrɪk 'sfɪŋktə/ *noun* a muscle which surrounds the pylorus, makes it contract and separates it from the duodenum

pyloric stenosis /paɪ,lrɪk ste'nəʊsɪs/ *noun* a blockage of the pylorus, which prevents food from passing from the stomach into the duodenum

pyloro- /paɪ'lɔ:rəʊ/ *prefix* the pylorus

pyloroplasty /paɪ'lɔ:rəplæsti/ *noun* a surgical operation to make the pylorus larger, sometimes combined with treatment for peptic ulcers (NOTE: The plural is **pyloroplasties**.)

pylorospasm /paɪ'lɔ:rəspæz(ə)m/ *noun* a muscle spasm which closes the pylorus so that food cannot pass through into the duodenum

pylorotomy /paɪ'lɔ:rɒtəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to cut into the muscle surrounding the pylorus to relieve pyloric stenosis. Also called **Ramstedt's operation** (NOTE: The plural is **pylorotomies**.)

pylorus /paɪ'lɔ:rəs/ *noun* an opening at the bottom of the stomach leading into the duodenum (NOTE: The plural is **pylori**.)

pyo- /paɪəʊ/ *prefix* referring to pus

pyocoele /'paɪəsəl/ *noun* an enlargement of a tube or cavity due to accumulation of pus

pyocolpos /,paɪə'kɒlpəs/ *noun* an accumulation of pus in the vagina

pyoderma /,paɪə'dɜ:mə/ *noun* an eruption of pus in the skin

pyoderma gangrenosum /,paɪədɛrə'mə,gaɪ̯ngrɪ'nəʊsəm/ *noun* a serious ulcerating disease of the skin, especially the legs, usually treated with steroid drugs

pyogenesis /,paɪə'dʒenɪsɪs/ *noun* the production or formation of pus

pyogenic /,paɪə'dʒenɪk/ *adjective* producing or forming pus

pyometra /,paɪə'mi:tə/ *noun* an accumulation of pus in the uterus

pyomyositis /,paɪəʊmaɪ'saitɪs/ *noun* inflammation of a muscle caused by staphylococci or streptococci

pyonephrosis /,paɪəʊnə'f्रəʊsɪs/ *noun* the distension of the kidney with pus

pyopericarditis /,paɪəʊperɪku:daitɪs/ *noun* an inflammation of the pericardium due to infection with staphylococci, streptococci or pneumococci

pyopneumothorax /,paɪəʊ,nju:məʊ'θɔ:ræks/ *noun* an accumulation of pus and gas or air in the pleural cavity

pyorrhoea /,paɪə'rɪə/ *noun* discharge of pus (NOTE: The US spelling is **pyorrhea**.)

pyorrhoea alveolaris /,paɪərɪə,ælvɪərɪ'laɪrɪs/ *noun* suppuration from the supporting tissues round the teeth

pyosalpinx /,paɪə'sælpɪnks/ *noun* inflammation and formation of pus in a Fallopian tube

pyothorax /,paɪə'θɔ:ræks/ *noun* same as **empyema**

pyr- /paɪr/ *prefix* same as **pyro-** (*used before vowels*)

pyramid /'pɪrəmid/ *noun* a cone-shaped part of the body, especially a cone-shaped projection on the surface of the medulla oblongata or in the medulla of the kidney. See illustration at **KIDNEY** in Supplement

pyramidal /pɪ'ræmɪd(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to a pyramid

pyramidal cell /pɪ'ræmɪd(ə)l sel/ *noun* a cone-shaped cell in the cerebral cortex

pyramidal system /pɪ'ræmɪd(ə)l'sɪstəm/, **pyramidal tract** /pɪ'ræmɪd(ə)l trækt/ *noun* a group of nerve fibres within the pyramid of the medulla oblongata in the brain. It is thought to be vital in controlling movement and speech.

pyretic /paɪ'retɪk/ *adjective* referring to fever
■ *noun* an agent that causes fever

pyrexia /paɪ'reksiə/ *noun* same as **fever**

pyrexic /paɪ'reksɪk/ *adjective* having fever

pyridostigmine /,pɪrɪdəʊ'stɪgmi:n/ *noun* a drug which stops or delays the action of the enzyme cholinesterase, used to treat myasthenia gravis

pyridoxine /,pɪrɪ'dɒksɪn/ *noun* same as **Vitamin B₆**

pyrimidine /pɪ'rɪmɪdi:n/ *noun* 1. a strong-smelling nitrogenous based compound with a six-sided ring structure that is the parent compound of several biologically important substances 2. a derivative of pyrimidine, especially any of the bases cytosine, thymine, and uracil which are found in RNA and DNA

pyro- /paɪrəʊ/ *prefix* burning or fever

pyrogen /'paɪrədʒən/ *noun* a substance which causes a fever

pyrogenic /,paɪrə'dʒenɪk/ *adjective* causing a fever

pyromania /,paɪrə'meɪniə/ *noun* an uncontrollable desire to start fires

pyrophobia /,paɪrə'fəʊbiə/ *noun* an unusual fear of fire

pyruvic acid /paɪ,ru:vɪk 'æsɪd/ *noun* a substance formed from glycogen in the muscles when it is broken down to release energy

pyuria /paɪ'juəriə/ *noun* pus in the urine

Q

q.d.s. *adverb (written on prescriptions)* to be taken four times a day. Full form **quater in die sumendum**

Q fever /'kju: ,fi:və/ *noun* an infectious rickettsial disease of sheep and cows caused by *Coxiella burnetti* transmitted to humans

COMMENT: Q fever mainly affects farm workers and workers in the meat industry. The symptoms are fever, cough and headaches.

q.i.d. *adverb (written on prescriptions)* four times a day. Full form **quater in die**

q.l. *adverb (written on prescriptions)* as much as you like. Full form **quantum libet**

q.m. *adverb (written on prescriptions)* every morning. Full form **quaque mane**

q.n. *adverb (written on prescriptions)* every night. Full form **quaque nocte**

QRS complex /,kju: ar 'es ,kɒmpleks/ *noun* the deflections on an electrocardiogram, labelled Q, R, and S, which show ventricular contraction. ☞ **PQRST complex**

q.s. *adverb (written on prescriptions)* as much as necessary. Full form **quantum sufficiat**

Q-T interval /,kju: 'ti: ,ɪntəv(ə)l/, **Q-S2 interval** /,kju: es 'tu: ,ɪntəv(ə)l/ *noun* the length of the QRS complex in an electrocardiogram. ☞ **PQRST complex**

quad /kwɒd/ *noun* same as **quadruplet** (*informal*)

quadrant /'kwɒdrənt/ *noun* one of four sectors of the body thought of as being divided by the sagittal plane and the intertubercular plane ☜ *tenderness in the right lower quadrant*

quadrantanopia /,kwɒdræntə'nəʊpiə/ *noun* blindness in a quarter of the field of vision

quadrate lobe /'kwɒdrit̩ laʊb/ *noun* a lobe on the lower side of the liver

quadratus /kwo'dreɪtəs/ *noun* any muscle with four sides

quadratus femoris /kwo'dreɪtəs 'femɔris/ *noun* a muscle at the top of the femur which rotates the thigh

quadri- /kwɒdri/ *prefix* four

quadriceps /'kwɒdrɪseps/, **quadriceps femoris** /,kwɒdrɪseps 'femɔris/ *noun* a large

muscle in the front of the thigh, which extends to the leg

COMMENT: The quadriceps femoris is divided into four parts: the rectus femoris, vastus lateralis, vastus medialis and vastus intermedius. It is the sensory receptors in the quadriceps which react to give a knee jerk when the patellar tendon is tapped.

quadriplegia /,kwɒdri'pli:dʒə/ *noun* paralysis of all four limbs, both arms and both legs

quadriplegic /,kwɒdri'pli:dʒɪk/ *adjective* paralysed in both arms and both legs ■ *noun* a person paralysed in both arms and both legs

quadruple /'kwɒdrop(ə)l/ *adjective* 1. consisting of four times as much 2. having four parts

quadruplet /'kwɒdruplət/ *noun* one of four babies born to a mother at the same time. Also called **quad**

quadruple vaccine /,kwɒdrop(ə)l 'veɪksɪn/ *noun* a vaccine which immunises against four diseases, diphtheria, whooping cough, poliomyelitis and tetanus

quadrupod /'kwɒdropɒd/ *noun* a walking stick which ends in four little legs

qualification /,kwɒlfɪə'keɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* 1. a quality which makes a person suitable to do something 2. an official recognition of a standard of achievement, e.g. a degree or diploma ☜ *She has a qualification in pharmacy.* ☜ *Are his qualifications recognised in Great Britain?*

qualify /'kwɒlɪfaɪ/ *verb* 1. to make a person suitable to do something 2. to pass a course of study and be accepted as being able to practise ☜ *He qualified as a doctor two years ago.* (NOTE: [all senses] **qualifies** – **qualifying** – **qualified**)

qualitative /'kwɒlitətɪv/ *adjective* referring to a study in which descriptive information is collected. Compare **quantitative**

quality /'kwɒlɪti/ *noun* 1. a characteristic of somebody or something 2. the general standard or grade of something 3. the highest or finest standard

quality assurance /'kwɒlɪti ə,ʃʊərəns/ *noun* a set of criteria which are designed to check that people in an organisation maintain

a high standard in the products or services they supply

quality circle /'kwɒləti ,sɜ:k(ə)t/ noun a group of employees from different levels of an organisation who meet regularly to discuss ways of improving the quality of its products or services

Qualpacs /'kwɒlpæks/, **Quality Patient Care Scale** /,kwɒltɪ ,peɪs(ə)nt 'keə skeɪl/ noun a method which guides nurses to evaluate their activity in terms of efficiency of cost, time, use of skill level and workload

quantitative /'kwɒntɪtətɪv/ adjective referring to a study in which numerical information is collected. Compare **qualitative**

quantitative digital radiography /,kwɒn tɪtətɪv ,dɪdʒɪt(ə)l rɛɪdɪ'græfɪ/ noun the use of digital X-ray scans to find out whether a person has a bone disease such as osteoporosis. The levels of calcium in the bones are measured, usually in the spine and hip.

quarantine /'kwɔ:rantɪn/ noun 1. the situation in which a person, animal or ship just arrived in a country is kept isolated in case it carries a serious disease, to allow the disease time to develop and be detected 2. the period of such isolation to prevent the spread of disease ◇ six months' quarantine ■ verb to put a person or animal in quarantine (NOTE: **quarantining – quarantined**)

COMMENT: People who are suspected of having an infectious disease can be kept in quarantine for a period which varies according to the incubation period of the disease. The main diseases concerned are cholera, yellow fever and typhus.

quartan /'kwo:t(ə)n/ adjective referring to a fever which occurs every fourth day, e.g. in some types of malaria

quartan fever /'kwo:t(ə)n ,fi:və/ noun a form of malaria caused by *Plasmodium malariae* in which the fever returns every four days.

◊ **tertian fever**

queasiness /'kwi:zɪnəs/ noun the feeling of being about to vomit

queasy /'kwi:zi/ adjective feeling as though about to vomit

Queckenstedt test /'kwekənstɛt test/ noun a test done during a lumbar puncture in which pressure is applied to the jugular veins to see if the cerebrospinal fluid is flowing correctly [Described 1916. After Hans Heinrich George Queckenstedt (1876–1918), German physician.]

quickening /'kwɪknɪŋ/ noun the first sign of life in an unborn baby, usually after about four months of pregnancy, when the mother can feel it moving in her uterus

Quick test /'kwɪk test/, **Quick's test** noun a test to identify the clotting factors in a blood sample [Described 1932. After Armand James Quick (1894–1978), Professor of Biochemistry, Marquette University, USA.]

quiescent /'kwi'es(ə)nt/ adjective referring to a disease with symptoms reduced either by treatment or in the usual course of the disease **quin** /kwin/ noun same as **quintuplet** (informal) (NOTE: The US term is **quint**.)

quinine /'kwi:nɪ:n/ noun an alkaloid drug made from the bark of cinchona, a South American tree

COMMENT: Quinine was formerly used to treat the fever symptoms of malaria, but is not often used now because of its side-effects. Small amounts of quinine have a tonic effect and are used in tonic water.

quinine poisoning /'kwi'nɪ:nɪŋ/, **quininism** /'kwɪnɪ:nɪz(ə)m/, **quinism** /'kwɪnɪz(ə)m/ noun an illness caused by taking too much quinine, leading to dizziness and noises in the head

quinolone /'kwɪnə'ləʊn/ noun a drug used to treat Gram-negative and Gram-positive bacterial infections of the respiratory and urinary tracts and of the gastro-intestinal system (NOTE: Quinolone drugs have names ending in -oxacin: **ciprofloxacin**)

COMMENT: Contraindications include use in pregnancy, renal disease and for use in children.

quinsy /'kwɪnzi/ noun acute throat inflammation with an abscess round a tonsil. Also called **peritonsillar abscess**

quint /'kwɪnt/ noun US same as **quintuplet**

quintan /'kwɪntən/ adjective referring to a fever that occurs every fifth day

quintuplet /'kwɪntjʊplət/ noun one of five babies born to a mother at the same time. Also called **quin, quint**

quotidian /'kwaʊ'tɪdiən/ adjective recurring daily

quotidian fever /'kwaʊ'tɪdiən 'fi:və/ noun a violent form of malaria in which the fever returns at daily or even shorter intervals

quotient /'kwaʊʃ(ə)nt/ noun the result when one number is divided by another

Q wave /'kju: wɛv/ noun a negative deflection at the start of the QRS complex on an electrocardiogram, going downwards

R

R symbol roentgen

R/ abbreviation prescription. Full form **recipe**

rabbit fever /'ræbit ,fi:və/ noun same as **tularaemia**

rabid /'ræbɪd/ adjective referring to rabies, or affected by rabies ○ *She was bitten by a rabid dog.*

rabid encephalitis /,ræbɪd en,kefə'laitɪs/ noun a fatal form of encephalitis resulting from the bite of a rabid animal

rabies /'reɪbɪz/ noun a frequently fatal viral disease transmitted to humans by infected animals ○ *The hospital ordered a batch of rabies vaccine.* Also called **hydrophobia**

COMMENT: Rabies affects the mental balance, and the symptoms include difficulty in breathing or swallowing and an intense fear of water (hydrophobia) to the point of causing convulsions at the sight of water.

racemose /'ræsɪməʊs/ adjective referring to glands which look like a bunch of grapes

rachi- /reɪki/ prefix same as **rachio-** (used before vowels)

rachianaesthesia /,reɪkiænəs'θi:ziə/ same as **spinal anaesthesia** (NOTE: The US spelling is **rachianesthesia**.)

rachio- /reɪkiəʊ/ prefix referring to the spine

rachiotomy /,reɪki'ɒtəmɪ/ noun same as laminectomy (NOTE: The plural is **rachiotomies**.)

rachis /'reɪkɪs/ noun same as **backbone** (NOTE: The plural is **rachises** or **rachides**.)

rachischisis /'reɪ'kɪskɪsɪs/ noun same as **spina bifida**

rachitic /rə'kitɪk/ adjective referring to rickets

rachitis /rə'kaitɪs/ noun same as **rickets**

rad /red/ noun a unit of measurement of absorbed radiation dose. ♀ **becquerel**, **gray** (NOTE: **Gray** is now used to mean one hundred rads.)

radial /'reɪdiəl/ adjective 1. referring to something which branches 2. referring to the radius bone in the arm

radial artery /'reɪdiəl ə:təri/ noun an artery which branches from the brachial artery, run-

ning near the radius, from the elbow to the palm of the hand

radial nerve /'reɪdiəl nɜ:v/ noun the main motor nerve in the arm, running down the back of the upper arm and the outer side of the forearm

radial pulse /'reɪdiəl pəls/ noun the main pulse in the wrist, taken near the outer edge of the forearm just above the wrist

radial recurrent /,reɪdiəl rɪ'kʌrənt/ noun an artery in the arm which forms a loop beside the brachial artery

radial reflex /,reɪdiəl 'ri:fleks/ noun a jerk made by the forearm when the insertion in the radius of one of the muscles, the brachioradialis, is hit

radiate /'reɪdɪeɪt/ verb 1. to spread out in all directions from a central point ○ *The pain radiates from the site of the infection.* 2. to send out rays ○ *Heat radiates from the body.* (NOTE: **radiating – radiated**)

radiation /,reɪdi'eɪʃ(ə)n/ noun waves of energy which are given off by some substances, especially radioactive substances

COMMENT: Prolonged exposure to many types of radiation can be harmful. Nuclear radiation is the most obvious, but exposure to X-rays, either as a patient being treated or as a radiographer, can cause radiation sickness. First symptoms of the sickness are diarrhoea and vomiting, but radiation exposure can also be followed by skin burns and loss of hair. Massive exposure to radiation can kill quickly, and any person exposed to radiation is more likely to develop certain types of cancer than other members of the population.

radiation burn /,reɪdi'eɪʃ(ə)n bɜ:n/ noun a burn on the skin caused by exposure to large amounts of radiation

radiation enteritis /,reɪdi'eɪʃ(ə)n ,entə'rætɪs/ noun enteritis caused by X-rays

radiation sickness /,reɪdi'eɪʃ(ə)n ,sɪknəs/ noun an illness caused by exposure to radiation from radioactive substances

radiation treatment /,reɪdi'eɪʃ(ə)n ,tri:tment/ noun same as **radiotherapy**

radical /'rædɪk(ə)l/ adjective 1. aiming to deal with the root of a problem, taking thorough action to remove the source of a disease

rather than treat its symptoms **2.** referring to an operation which removes the whole of a part or of an organ, together with its lymph system and other tissue

radical mastectomy /,rædɪk(ə)l mæ'stektəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to remove a breast and the lymph nodes and muscles associated with it

radical mastoidectomy /,rædɪk(ə)l mæstɔ:dɛktəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to remove all of the mastoid process

radical treatment /,rædɪk(ə)l 'trیtmənt/ *noun* treatment which aims at complete eradication of a disease

radicle /'rædɪk(ə)l/ *noun* **1.** a small root or vein **2.** a tiny fibre which forms the root of a nerve

radicular /rə'dɪkju:lə/ *adjective* referring to a radicle

radiculitis /rə'dɪkju'lایtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of a radicle of a cranial or spinal nerve

radio- /reɪdiəʊ/ *prefix* **1.** referring to radiation **2.** referring to radioactive substances **3.** referring to the radius in the arm

radioactive /,reɪdiəʊ'æktyv/ *adjective* with a nucleus which disintegrates and gives off energy in the form of radiation which can pass through other substances

COMMENT: The commonest naturally radioactive substances are radium and uranium. Other substances can be made radioactive for medical purposes by making their nuclei unstable, so forming radioactive isotopes. Radioactive iodine is used to treat conditions such as thyrotoxicosis. Radioactive isotopes of various chemicals are used to check the functioning of, or disease in, internal organs.

radioactive isotope /,reɪdiəʊ'æktyv 'aɪsətəʊp/ *noun* an isotope which sends out radiation, used in radiotherapy and scanning

radioactivity /,reɪdiəʊ'æk'trیvɪtɪ/ *noun* energy in the form of radiation emitted by a radioactive substance

radiobiologist /,reɪdiəʊba'lɒdʒɪst/ *noun* a doctor who specialises in radiobiology

radiobiology /,reɪdiəʊba'lɒdʒɪ/ *noun* the scientific study of radiation and its effects on living things

radiocarpal joint /reɪdiəʊ'ka:p(ə)l dʒɔ:nt/ *noun* the joint where the radius articulates with the scaphoid, one of the carpal bones. Also called **wrist joint**

radiodermatitis /,reɪdiəʊ,dz:mə'taɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the skin caused by exposure to radiation

radiodiagnosis /,reɪdiəʊdaɪəg'nəʊsɪs/ *noun* an X-ray diagnosis

radiograph /'reɪdiəgrɑ:f/ *noun* an image produced on film or another sensitive surface when radiation such as X-rays or gamma rays passes through an object ■ *verb* to make a radiograph of something, especially a part of the body

radiographer /,reɪdi'ɒgrəfə/ *noun* **1.** a person specially trained to operate a machine to take X-ray photographs or radiographs. Also called **diagnostic radiographer** **2.** a person specially trained to use X-rays or radioactive isotopes in the treatment of patients. Also called **therapeutic radiographer**

radiography /,reɪdi'ɒgrəfi/ *noun* the work of examining the internal parts of the body by taking X-ray photographs

radioimmunoassay /,reɪdiəʊ,ɪmju:nəʊ 'æsei/ *noun* the use of radioactive tracers to investigate the presence of antibodies in blood samples, in order to measure the antibodies themselves or the amount of particular substances, such as hormones, in the blood

radioisotope /,reɪdiəʊ'aɪsətəʊp/ *noun* an isotope of a chemical element which is radioactive

COMMENT: Radioisotopes are used in medicine to provide radiation for radiation treatment. Radioactive isotopes of various chemicals are used to check the way organs function or if they are diseased: for example, radioisotopes of iodine are used to investigate thyroid activity.

radiologist /,reɪdi'ɒlədʒɪst/ *noun* a doctor who specialises in radiology

radiology /,reɪdi'ɒlədʒɪ/ *noun* the use of radiation to diagnose disorders, e.g. through the use of X-rays or radioactive tracers, or to treat diseases such as cancer

radiomimetic /,reɪdiəʊ'metɪk/ *adjective* referring to a drug or chemical which produces similar effects to those of radiation, e.g. the nitrogen mustard group of chemicals used in chemotherapy

radionuclide /,reɪdiəʊ'nju:klaɪd/ *noun* an element which gives out radiation

radionuclide scan /,reɪdiəʊ'nju:klaɪd skæn/ *noun* a scan, especially of the brain, where radionuclides are put in compounds which are concentrated in particular parts of the body

radio-opaque /,reɪdiəʊ əʊ'peɪk/ *adjective* absorbing and blocking radiant energy, e.g. X-rays

COMMENT: Radio-opaque substances appear light or white on X-rays and are used to make it easier to have clear radiographs of certain organs.

radio-opaque dye /,reɪdiəʊ əʊ'peɪk 'daɪ/ *noun* a liquid which appears on an X-ray, and which is introduced into soft organs such as the kidney so that they show up clearly on an X-ray photograph

radioopaque /,reɪdiəʊ'peɪk/ *adjective* same as **radio-opaque**

radiopharmaceutical /,reɪdiəʊ,fa:mə'su:tɪk(ə)l/ *noun* a radioisotope used in medical diagnosis or treatment

radio pill /'reɪdiəʊ pil/ *noun* a tablet with a tiny radio transmitter

COMMENT: The person swallows the pill and as it passes through the body it gives off information about the digestive system.

radioscopy /'reɪdɪɒpskəpi/ *noun* an examination of an X-ray photograph on a fluorescent screen

radiosensitive /'reɪdiəʊ'sensɪtɪv/ *adjective* referring to a cancer cell which is sensitive to radiation and can be treated by radiotherapy

radiosensitivity /'reɪdiəʊsensɪ'tɪvɪtɪ/ *noun* sensitivity of a cell to radiation

radiotherapist /'reɪdiəʊ'θerəpɪst/ *noun* a doctor who specialises in radiotherapy

radiotherapy /'reɪdiəʊ'θerəpɪ/ *noun* the treatment of diseases by exposing the affected part to radioactive rays such as X-rays or gamma rays

COMMENT: Many forms of cancer can be treated by directing radiation at the diseased part of the body.

radium /'reɪdiəm/ *noun* a radioactive metallic element (NOTE: The chemical symbol is Ra.)

radius /'reɪdiəs/ *noun* the shorter and outer of the two bones in the forearm between the elbow and the wrist. See illustration at **HAND** in Supplement (NOTE: The plural is **radii**. The other bone in the forearm is the **ulna**.)

radix /'reɪdɪks/ *noun* same as **root** (NOTE: The plural is **radices** or **radixes**.)

radon /'reɪdɒn/ *noun* a radioactive gas, formed from the radioactive decay of radium, and used in capsules called radon seeds to treat cancers inside the body (NOTE: The chemical symbol is Rn.)

COMMENT: Radon occurs naturally in soil, in construction materials and even in ground water. It can seep into houses and causes radiation sickness.

raise /reɪz/ *verb* 1. to lift something ○ *Lie with your legs raised above the level of your head.* 2. to increase something ○ *Anaemia causes a raised level of white blood cells in the body.*

rale /rə:l/ *noun* same as **crepitation**

rally /'relɪ/ *verb* to recover after a period of illness ■ *noun* a sudden recovery after a period of illness

Ramstedt's operation /'rə:mstɛts ɔ:pə, 'reɪf(ə)n/ *noun* same as **pylorotomy** [Described 1912. After Wilhelm Conrad Ramstedt (1867–1963), German surgeon.]

ramus /'reɪməs/ *noun* 1. a branch of a nerve, artery or vein 2. the ascending part on each side of the mandible (NOTE: The plural is **rami**.)

R & D /'a:r ə:n 'di:/ *abbr* research and development

randomised /'rændəmaɪzd/, **randomized** *adjective* involving subjects which have been selected without a prearranged plan and in no particular pattern or order

range /reɪndʒ/ *noun* 1. a series of different but similar things ○ *The drug offers protection against a wide range of diseases.* ○ *Doctors*

have a range of drugs which can be used to treat arthritis. 2. the difference between lowest and highest values in a series of data

ranitidine /ræ'nɪtɪdɪ:n/ *noun* a drug which reduces the amount of acid released by the stomach. It is used to treat peptic ulcers and gastritis.

ranula /'rænjʊlə/ *noun* a small cyst under the tongue, on the floor of the mouth, which forms when a salivary duct is blocked

Ranvier /'rænvɪ,et/ ♦ **node of Ranvier**

rape /reɪp/ *noun* the crime of forcing somebody to have sexual intercourse ■ *verb* to force somebody to have sexual intercourse

raphe /'ræfi/ *noun* a long thin fold which looks like a seam, along a midline such as on the dorsal face of the tongue

rapid /'ræpid/ *adjective* fast

rapid-acting /,ræpid 'ækting/ *adjective* referring to a drug or treatment which has an effect very quickly

rapid eye movement sleep /,ræpid aɪ 'mu:vɪmənt sli:p/ *noun* same as **REM sleep**

rapport /ræ'pɔ:t/ *noun* an emotional bond or friendly relationship between people ○ *a psychiatrist who quickly establishes a rapport with his patients*

rare /reɪə/ *adjective* referring to something such as a disease of which there are very few cases ○ *He is suffering from a rare blood disorder.*

rarefaction /,reərɪ'fækʃən/ *noun* a condition in which bone tissue becomes more porous and less dense because of a lack of calcium

rarefy /'reərifai/ *verb* 1. (of bones) to become less dense 2. to make something less dense

rash /ræʃ/ *noun* a mass of small spots which stays on the skin for a period of time, and then disappears □ **to break out in a rash** to have a rash which starts suddenly ○ *She had a high temperature and then broke out in a rash.*

COMMENT: Many common diseases such as chickenpox and measles have a characteristic rash as their main symptom. Rashes can be very irritating, but the itching can be relieved by applying calamine lotion.

raspatory /'respət(ə)rɪ/ *noun* a surgical instrument like a file, which is used to scrape the surface of a bone

ratbite fever /'rætbait fi:və/, **ratbite disease** /'rætbait dɪ,zɪ:z/ *noun* fever caused by either of two bacteria *Spirillum minor* or *Streptobacillus moniliformis* and transmitted to humans by rats

rate /reɪt/ *noun* 1. the amount or proportion of something compared with something else 2. the number of times something happens in a set time ○ *The heart was beating at a rate of only 59 per minute.*

ratio /'reɪʃiə/ *noun* a number which shows a proportion or which is the result of one number divided by another ○ *An IQ is the ratio*

of the person's mental age to his or her chronological age.

rattle /'ræt(ə)l/ *noun* a harsh noise made in the throat, caused by a blockage to breathing and heard especially near death

Rauwolfia /rɔ:'wʊlfɪə/ *noun* a tranquillising drug extracted from the plant *Rauwolfia serpentine*, sometimes used to treat high blood pressure

raw /rəʊ:/ *adjective* 1. not cooked 2. sensitive ○ *The scab came off leaving the raw wound exposed to the air.* 3. referring to skin scraped or partly removed

ray /reɪ/ *noun* a line of light, radiation or heat

Raynaud's disease /'reɪnəʊz dɪ,zi:z/, **Raynaud's phenomenon** /'reɪnəʊz fi,nomɪnən/ *noun* a condition with various possible causes in which the blood supply to the fingers and toes is restricted and they become cold, white and numb. Also called **dead man's fingers, vasospasm** [Described 1862. After Maurice Raynaud (1834–81), French physician.]

RBC *abbr* red blood cell

RCGP *abbr* Royal College of General Practitioners

RCN *abbr* Royal College of Nursing

RCOG *abbr* Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists

RCP *abbr* Royal College of Physicians

RCPsych /,a: si: 'sa:k/ *abbr* Royal College of Psychiatrists

RCS *abbr* Royal College of Surgeons

RCT *abbr* randomised controlled trial

reabsorb /,ri:ə'b'zɔ:b/ *verb* to absorb or take up something again ○ *Glucose is reabsorbed by the tubules in the kidney.*

reabsorption /,ri:ə'b'zɔ:pʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the process of being reabsorbed ○ *Some substances which are filtered into the tubules of the kidney, then pass into the bloodstream by tubular reabsorption.*

reach /ri:tʃ/ *noun* 1. the distance which one can stretch to get hold of or touch something ○ *Medicines should be kept out of the reach of children.* 2. the distance which one can travel easily ○ *The hospital is in easy reach of the railway station.* ■ *verb* to arrive at a point ○ *The infection has reached the lungs.*

react /ri'ækt/ *verb* 1. □ **to react to something** to act because of something else, to act in response to something ○ *The tissues reacted to the cortisone injection.* ○ *The patient reacted badly to the penicillin.* ○ *She reacted positively to the Widal test.* 2. □ **to react with something** (of a chemical substance) to change because of the presence of another substance

reaction /ri'ækʃən/ *noun* 1. an action which takes place as a direct result of something which has happened earlier ○ *A rash appeared as a reaction to the penicillin injection.* 2. an effect produced by a stimulus ○ *The patient*

experienced an allergic reaction to oranges. 3. the particular response of someone to a test

reactionary /ri'ækʃən(ə)rɪ/ *adjective* same as **reactive**

reactionary haemorrhage /ri'ækʃən(ə)rɪ 'hem(ə)rɪdʒ/ *noun* bleeding which follows an operation

reactivate /ri'æktrɪveɪt/ *verb* to make something active again ○ *His general physical weakness has reactivated the dormant virus.*

reactive /ri'ækтив/ *adjective* taking place as a reaction to something else

reactive arthritis /ri'ækтив ə:'θraɪtɪs/ *noun* arthritis caused by a reaction to something

reactive hyperaemia /ri'ækтив ,haɪpər 'i:miə/ *noun* congestion of blood vessels after an occlusion has been removed

reading /'ri:dɪŋ/ *noun* a note taken of figures, especially of degrees on a scale ○ *The sphygmomanometer gave a diastolic reading of 70.*

reagent /'ri:ɪdʒənt/ *noun* a chemical substance which reacts with another substance, especially one which is used to detect the presence of the second substance

reagin /'ri:ədʒɪn/ *noun* an antibody which reacts against an allergen

real-time imaging /,rɪəl taim 'ɪmɪdʒɪŋ/ *noun* the use of ultrasound information to produce a series of images of a process or changing object almost instantly

reappear /,ri:ə'piər/ *verb* to appear again

rear /riə/, **rear end** /riə end/ *noun* same as **buttock** (*informal*)

reason /'ri:z(ə)n/ *noun* 1. something which explains why something happens ○ *What was the reason for the sudden drop in the patient's pulse rate?* 2. the fact of being mentally stable ○ *Her reason was beginning to fail.*

reassurance /,ri:ə'suərəns/ *noun* an act of reassuring

reassure /,ri:ə'ʃʊər/ *verb* to calm someone who is worried and give them hope ○ *The doctor reassured her that the drug had no unpleasant side-effects.* ○ *He reassured the old lady that she should be able to walk again in a few weeks.*

Reaven's Syndrome /'ri:vənz ,sɪnd्रəʊm/ *noun* a clinical syndrome characterised by Type 2 diabetes, abdominal obesity, hypertension and dyslipidaemia. Insulin resistance may be a key factor. [Described 1988. After Gerald Reaven, US physician.]

rebore /'ri:bɔ:/ *noun* same as **endarterectomy** (*informal*)

rebuild /ri:'brɪld/ *verb* to make good again a damaged structure or part of the body ○ *After the accident, she had several operations to rebuild her pelvis.*

recalcitrant /ri'kælsɪtrənt/ *adjective* not responding to treatment ○ *a recalcitrant condition*

recall /rɪ'kɔ:l/ *noun* the act of remembering something from the past ■ *verb* to remember something which happened in the past

recanalisation /ri:kænələ'seɪʃ(ə)n/, **recanalization** *noun* surgery to unblock a vessel within the body or reconnect a tube or duct

receive /rɪ'siv/ *verb* to get something, especially a transplanted organ ○ *She received six pints of blood in a transfusion.* ○ *He received a new kidney from his brother.*

receptaculum /ri:sep'tækjʊləm/ *noun* part of a tube which is expanded to form a sac

receptor /rɪ'septə/, **receptor cell** /rɪ'septə sel/ *noun* a nerve ending or cell which senses a change such as cold or heat in the surrounding environment or in the body and reacts to it by sending an impulse to the central nervous system

recess /rɪ'ses/ *noun* a hollow part in an organ

recessive /rɪ'sesɪv/ *adjective* (of an allele) having the characteristic that leads to the trait which it controls being suppressed by the presence of the corresponding dominant allele. Compare **dominant**

COMMENT: Since each physical characteristic is governed by two genes, if one is dominant and the other recessive, the resulting trait will be that of the dominant gene. Traits governed by recessive genes will appear if both genes are recessive.

recipient /rɪ'sipiənt/ *noun* a person who receives something such as a transplant or a blood transfusion from a donor

'...bone marrow from donors has to be carefully matched with the recipient or graft-versus-host disease will ensue' [Hospital Update]

recognise /rekə'nایz/, **recognize** *verb* 1. to see or sense something or someone and remember it from an earlier occasion ○ *She did not recognise her mother.* 2. to approve of something officially ○ *The diploma is recognised by the Department of Health.*

recombinant DNA /rɪ:kɒmbɪnənt di:en'eɪ/ *noun* DNA extracted from two or more different sources and joined together to form a single molecule or fragment. This technology is used to produce molecules and organisms with new properties.

recommend /,rekə'mend/ *verb* to suggest that it would be a good thing if someone did something ○ *The doctor recommended that she should stay in bed.* ○ *I would recommend following a diet to try to lose some weight.*

reconstruct /,ri:kən'strʌkt/ *verb* to repair and rebuild a damaged part of the body

reconstruction /,ri:kən'strʌkʃən/ *noun* the process of repairing and rebuilding a damaged part of the body

reconstructive surgery /,ri:kənstrʌktɪv 'sɜ:dʒəri/ *noun* surgery which rebuilds a damaged part of the body. ♦ **plastic surgery**

record /'rekɔ:d/ *verb* /rɪ'kɔ:d/ to note information ○ *The chart records the variations in the patient's blood pressure.* ○ *You must take the patient's temperature every hour and record it in this book.* ■ *noun* a piece of information about something

COMMENT: Patients now have a legal right to have access to their medical records.

recover /rɪ'kʌvə/ *verb* 1. to get better after an illness, operation or accident ○ *She recovered from her concussion in a few days.* ○ *It will take him weeks to recover from the accident.* (NOTE: You recover **from** an illness.) 2. to get back something which has been lost ○ *Will he ever recover the use of his legs?* ○ *She recovered her eyesight even though the doctors had thought she would be permanently blind.*

recovery /rɪ'kʌvəri/ *noun* the process of returning to health after being ill or injured □ **he is well on the way to recovery** he is getting better □ **she made only a partial recovery** she is better, but is not completely well □ **she has made a complete or splendid recovery** she is completely well

recovery position /rɪ'kʌvəri pə,zɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a position in which someone is lying face downwards, with one knee and one arm bent forwards and the face turned to one side

COMMENT: It is called the recovery position because it is recommended for accident victims or for people who are suddenly ill, while waiting for an ambulance to arrive. The position prevents the person from swallowing and choking on blood or vomit.

recovery room /rɪ'kʌvəri ru:m/ *noun* a room in a hospital where patients are cared for after they have had a surgical operation and are recovering from the effects of the anaesthetic. Abbr **RR**

recreational drug /,rekri'eɪʃ(ə)n(ə)l drʌg/ *noun* a drug that is taken for pleasure rather than because of medical need

recrudescence /,ri:kru:'des(ə)ns/ *noun* the reappearance of symptoms of a disease which seemed to have got better

recrudescient /,ri:kru:'des(ə)nt/ *adjective* referring to a symptom which has reappeared

recruit /'rɪkrʊt/ *verb* to get people to join the staff or a group ○ *We are trying to recruit more nursing staff.*

'...patients presenting with symptoms of urinary tract infection were recruited in a general practice surgery' [Journal of the Royal College of General Practitioners]

rect- /rekt/ *prefix* same as **recto-** (used before vowels)

recta /'rektə/ *plural* of **rectum**

rectal /'rekt(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to the rectum

rectal fissure /,rekt(ə)l 'fɪʃə/ *noun* a crack in the wall of the anal canal

rectally /'rekt(ə)li/ *adverb* through the rectum ○ *The temperature was taken rectally.*

rectal prolapse /,rekt(ə)l 'prəʊlæps/ *noun* a condition in which part of the rectum moves downwards and passes through the anus

rectal temperature /,rekt(ə)l 'temprɪtʃə/ *noun* the temperature in the rectum, taken with a rectal thermometer

rectal thermometer /,rekt(ə)l θə'mɒmətə/ *noun* a thermometer which is inserted into the rectum to take the person's temperature

rectal triangle /,rekt(ə)l 'traɪæŋg(ə)l/ *noun* same as **anal triangle**

recti /'rektɪ/ plural of **rectus**

recto- /'rektəʊ/ *prefix* referring to the rectum

rectocoele /'rektəʊsɪ:l/ *noun* a condition associated with prolapse of the uterus, in which the rectum protrudes into the vagina. Also called **proctocele**

rectopexy /'rektəpeksi/ *noun* a surgical operation to attach a rectum which has prolapsed

rectoscope /'rektəskəʊp/ *noun* an instrument for looking into the rectum

rectosigmoid /,rektəʊ'sɪgmɔɪd/ *noun* the part of the large intestine where the sigmoid colon joins the rectum

rectosigmoidectomy /,rektəʊ'sɪgmɔɪ'dektəmɪ/ *noun* the surgical removal of the sigmoid colon and the rectum

rectovaginal /,rektəʊ'veɪdʒaɪn(ə)l/ *adjective* relating to both the rectum and the vagina

rectovaginal examination /,rektəʊ'veɪ,ðzain(ə)l/ *noun* an examination of the rectum and vagina

rectovesical /,rektəʊ'vesɪk(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to the rectum and the bladder

rectum /'rektəm/ *noun* the end part of the large intestine leading from the sigmoid colon to the anus. See illustration at **DIGESTIVE SYSTEM** in Supplement, **UROGENITAL SYSTEM (MALE)** in Supplement (NOTE: For other terms referring to the rectum, see words beginning with **proct-**, **proto-**.)

rectus /'rektəs/ *noun* a straight muscle (NOTE: The plural is **recti**.)

'...there are four recti muscles and two oblique muscles in each eye, which coordinate the movement of the eyes and enable them to work as a pair' [Nursing Times]

rectus abdominis /,rektəs æb'dɒmɪnɪs/ *noun* a long straight muscle which runs down the front of the abdomen

rectus femoris /,rektəs 'femərɪs/ *noun* a flexor muscle in the front of the thigh, one of the four parts of the quadriceps femoris. ☈ **medial**

recumbent /'ri'kʌmbənt/ *adjective* lying down

recuperate /'ri'ku:pə'reɪt/ *verb* to recover, to get better after an illness or accident ○ *He is recuperating after an attack of flu.* ○ *She is going to stay with her mother while she recuperates.*

recuperation /'ri'ku:pə'reɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the process of getting better after an illness ○ *His recuperation will take several months.*

recur /'ri'kɜ:/ *verb* to return ○ *The headaches recurred frequently, but usually after the patient had eaten chocolate.*

recurrence /'ri'kʌrəns/ *noun* an act of returning ○ *He had a recurrence of a fever which he had caught in the tropics.*

recurrent /'ri'kʌrənt/ *adjective* 1. occurring in the same way many times 2. referring to a vein, artery or nerve which forms a loop

recurrent abortion /'ri'kʌrənt ə'bɔ:ʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a condition in which a woman has abortions with one pregnancy after another

recurrent fever /'ri'kʌrənt 'fi:və/ *noun* a fever like malaria which returns at regular intervals

red /red/ *adjective* 1. of a similar colour to blood ○ *Blood in an artery is bright red, but venous blood is darker.* 2. (of an area of skin) with an increased blood flow because of heat or infection ■ *noun* a colour similar to that of blood

red blood cell /red bləd sel/ *noun* a blood cell which contains haemoglobin and carries oxygen to the tissues and takes carbon dioxide from them. Abbr **RBC**. Also called **erythrocyte**

red corpuscle /,red 'kɔ:pʊs(ə)l/ *noun* same as **red blood cell**

Red Crescent /red 'kreɪs(ə)nt/ *noun* in Islamic countries, an international organisation dedicated to the medical care of the sick and wounded in wars and natural disasters (NOTE: It is known as the Red Cross elsewhere.)

Red Cross /red 'krɒs/ *noun* an international organisation dedicated to the medical care of the sick and wounded in wars and natural disasters (NOTE: It is known as the Red Crescent in Islamic countries.)

red-green colourblindness /,red gri:n 'kʌlə,blaindնəs/ *noun* same as **deuteranopia**

ReDivac drain /'redɪvæk dreɪn/, **ReDivac drainage tube** /,redɪvæk 'dreɪnɪdʒ tju:b/ trademark a tube which drains fluid away from the inside of a wound into a bottle, used mainly after operations on the abdomen

red marrow /,red 'mærəʊ/ *noun* the type of bone marrow where red blood cells and some white blood cells are formed

redness /'rednəs/ *noun* 1. an area of skin to which the blood flow is increased because of heat or infection ○ *The redness showed where the skin had reacted to the injection.* 2. a red colour

reduce /'ri'dju:s/ *verb* 1. to make something smaller or lower ○ *They used ice packs to try to reduce the patient's temperature.* 2. to put something such as a dislocated or fractured

bone, a displaced organ or part or a hernia back into its proper position so that it can heal

...blood pressure control reduces the incidence of first stroke and aspirin appears to reduce the risk of stroke after transient ischaemic attacks by some 15% [British Journal of Hospital Medicine]

reducible /rɪ'dju:sɪb(ə)l/ *adjective* capable of being reduced

reducible hernia /rɪ,dju:sɪb(ə)l 'hɜ:nɪə/ *noun* a hernia where the organ can be pushed back into place without an operation

reduction /rɪ'dʌkʃn/ *noun* 1. the lessening of something, the process of becoming less ○ *They noted a reduction in body temperature.* 2. the action of putting a hernia, a dislocated joint or a broken bone back into the correct position

reduction division /rɪ'dʌkʃn dɪ,vɪz(ə)n/ *noun* same as *meiosis*

re-emerge /rɪ: ɪ'mɜ:dʒ/ *verb* to come out again

re-emergence /rɪ: ɪ'mɜ:dʒəns/ *noun* an act of coming out again

refer /rɪ'fɜ:/ *verb* 1. to mention or to talk about something ○ *The doctor referred to the patient's history of sinus problems.* 2. to suggest that someone should consult something ○ *For method of use, please refer to the manufacturer's instructions.* ○ *The user is referred to the page giving the results of the tests.* 3. to pass on information about a patient to someone else ○ *They referred her case to a gynaecologist.* 4. to send someone to another doctor, usually a specialist, for advice or treatment ○ *She was referred to a cardiologist.* □ **the GP referred the patient to a consultant** he or she passed details about the patient's case to the consultant so that the consultant could examine them

'27 adult patients admitted to hospital with acute abdominal pains were referred for study because their attending clinicians were uncertain whether to advise an urgent laparotomy' [Lancet]

...many patients from outside districts were referred to London hospitals by their GPs' [Nursing Times]

referral /rɪ'fɜ:rəl/ *noun* the act of sending someone to a specialist ○ *She asked for a referral to a gynaecologist.*

...he subsequently developed colicky abdominal pain and tenderness which caused his referral' [British Journal of Hospital Medicine]

referred pain /rɪ,fɜ:d 'peɪn/ *noun* same as *sympathetic pain*

reflection /rɪ'fleksʃn/ *noun* 1. the image of somebody or something which is seen in a mirror or still water 2. the process of reflecting something, especially light, sound or heat 3. careful thought 4. a situation in which an anatomical structure bends back upon itself

reflective practice /rɪ'flektɪv 'præktɪs/ *noun* the process of improving professional skills by monitoring your own actions while they are being carried out, and by then later evaluating them by talking or writing about

them and asking other professionals to give their assessments of you

reflex /'ri:fleks/, **reflex action** /'ri:fleks ,ækʃn/ *noun* a physiological reaction without any conscious thought involved, e.g. a knee jerk or a sneeze, which happens in response to a particular stimulus □ **light reflex, pupillary reflex to light** reaction of the pupil of the eye which changes size according to the amount of light going into the eye

reflex arc /'ri:fleks ,ɑ:k/ *noun* the basic system of a reflex action, where a receptor is linked to a motor neurone which in turn is linked to an effector muscle

reflexologist /,rɪflɛk'sɒblədʒɪst/ *noun* a person specialising in reflexology

reflexology /,rɪ:fle:k'splædʒɪ/ *noun* a treatment to relieve tension by massaging the soles of the feet and thereby stimulating the nerves and increasing the blood supply

reflux /'ri:fli:k/s/ *noun* a situation where a fluid flows in the opposite direction to its usual flow ○ *The valves in the veins prevent blood reflux.* □ **vesicoureteric reflux**

reflux oesophagitis /,rɪ:fli:k/s i:,sɒfə'dʒaɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the oesophagus caused by regurgitation of acid juices from the stomach

refract /rɪ'frækt/ *verb* to make light rays change direction as they go from one medium such as air to another such as water at an angle ○ *The refracting media in the eye are the cornea, the aqueous humour, the vitreous humour and the lens.*

refraction /rɪ'frækʃn/ *noun* 1. a change of direction of light rays as they enter a medium such as the eye 2. the measurement of the angle at which the light rays bend, as a test to see if someone needs to wear glasses

refractive /rɪ'fræktɪv/ *adjective* referring to refraction

refractometer /,rɪ:fra:k'tɒmɪtə/ *noun* an instrument which measures the refraction of the eye. Also called *optometer*

refractory /rɪ'frækt(ə)rɪ/ *adjective* difficult or impossible to treat, or not responding to treatment

refractory period /rɪ'frækt(ə)rɪ 'pɪəriəd/ *noun* a short space of time after the ventricles of the heart have contracted, when they cannot contract again

refrigerate /rɪ'frɪdʒəreɪt/ *verb* to make something cold ○ *The serum should be kept refrigerated.*

refrigeration /rɪ,frɪdʒə'reɪʃn/ *noun* 1. the process of making something cold 2. the process of making part of the body very cold, to give the effect of an anaesthetic

refrigerator /rɪ'frɪdʒəreɪtə/ *noun* a machine which cools and keeps things cold

regain /rɪ'geɪn/ **verb** to get back something which was lost □ *He has regained the use of his left arm.* □ *She went into a coma and never regained consciousness.*

regenerate /rɪ'dʒenəreɪt/ **verb** to grow again, or grow something again

regeneration /rɪ,dʒenə'reɪʃ(ə)n/ **noun** the process where tissue that has been destroyed grows again

regenerative medicine /rɪ,dʒenərætɪv 'med(ə)s(ə)n/ **noun** the branch of medicine that deals with the repair or replacement of tissues and organs by using advanced materials and methods such as cloning

regimen /redʒɪmən/ **noun** a fixed course of treatment, e.g. a course of drugs or a special diet

region /'rɪ:dʒən/ **noun** an area or part which is around something □ *She experienced itching in the anal region.* □ *The rash started in the region of the upper thigh.* □ *The plantar region is very sensitive.*

regional /'rɪ:dʒ(ə)nəl/ **adjective** in a particular region, referring to a particular region

regional enteritis /,rɪ:dʒ(ə)nəl ,entə 'raɪtɪs/ **noun** same as **Crohn's disease**

Regional Health Authority /,rɪ:dʒ(ə)nəl 'hɛlθ ɔ:t,θɔ:rɪti/ **noun** an administrative unit in the National Health Service which is responsible for planning the health service in a region. Abbr **RHA**

regional ileitis /,rɪ:dʒ(ə)nəl ,ili'ærɪtɪs/ **noun** compare **ulcerative colitis**. same as **Crohn's disease**

register /'redʒɪstə/ **noun** an official list ■ **verb** to write a name on an official list, especially the official list of patients treated by a GP or dentist, or the list of people with a particular disease □ *He is a registered heroin addict.* □ *They went to register the birth with the Registrar of Births, Marriages and Deaths.* □ **to register with someone** to put your name on someone's official list, especially the list of patients treated by a GP or dentist □ *Before registering with the GP, she asked if she could visit him.* □ *All practising doctors are registered with the General Medical Council.*

registered midwife /,redʒɪstəd 'mɪdwaɪf/ **noun** a qualified midwife who is registered to practise

Registered Nurse /'redʒɪstəd 'nɜ:s/, **Registered General Nurse** /,redʒɪstəd 'dʒen(ə)rəl nɜ:s/, **Registered Theatre Nurse** /,redʒɪstəd 'θɪətrə nɜ:s/ **noun** a nurse who has been registered by the UKCC. Abbr **RN**, **RGN**, **RTN**

Registrar /,redʒɪ'strə:/ **noun** 1. a qualified doctor or surgeon in a hospital who supervises house officers 2. a person who registers something officially

Registrar of Births, Marriages and Deaths /,redʒɪstra: əv ,bɜ:sθs ,mæriðzɪz ən

'deθs/ **noun** an official who keeps the records of people who have been born, married or who have died in a particular area

registration /,redʒɪ'streɪʃ(ə)n/ **noun** the act of registering □ *A doctor cannot practise without registration by the General Medical Council.*

regress /rɪ'gres/ **verb** to return to an earlier stage or condition

regression /rɪ'gres(ə)n/ **noun** 1. a stage where symptoms of a disease are disappearing and the person is getting better 2. (*in psychiatry*) the process of returning to a mental state which existed when the person was younger

regular /'regjʊlə/ **adjective** 1. taking place again and again after the same period of time □ *He was advised to make regular visits to the dentist.* □ *She had her regular six-monthly checkup.* 2. happening at the same time each day

regularly /'regjʊləli/ **adverb** happening repeatedly after the same period of time □ *The tablets must be taken regularly every evening.* □ *You should go to the dentist regularly.*

regulate /'regju:lət/ **verb** to make something work in a regular way □ *The heartbeat is regulated by the sinoatrial node.*

regulation /,regju'leɪʃ(ə)n/ **noun** the act of regulating □ *the regulation of the body's temperature*

regurgitate /rɪ'gɜ:s:dʒɪteɪt/ **verb** to bring into the mouth food which has been partly digested in the stomach

regurgitation /rɪ,gɜ:s:dʒɪ'teɪʃ(ə)n/ **noun** the process of flowing back in the opposite direction to the usual flow, especially of bringing up partly digested food from the stomach into the mouth

rehabilitate /,rɪ:ə'bɪlɪteɪt/ **verb** to make someone fit to work or to lead their usual life

rehabilitation /,rɪ:əbɪlɪ'teɪʃ(ə)n/ **noun** the process of making someone fit to work or to lead an ordinary life again

rehydrate /,rɪ:haɪ'dreɪt/ **verb** to restore body fluids to a healthy level, or cause this to occur

rehydration /,rɪ:haɪ'dreɪʃ(ə)n/ **noun** the act of giving water or liquid to someone who has dehydration

reinfect /,rɪ:in'fekt/ **verb** to infect someone or something again

reinfection /,rɪ:in'fekʃ(ə)n/ **noun** infection of an area for another time after recovery, especially with the same microorganism

Reiter's syndrome /'raɪtəz ,sɪnd्रəm/, **Reiter's disease** /'raɪtəz dɪ'zi:z/ **noun** an illness which may be sexually transmitted and affects mainly men, causing arthritis, urethritis and conjunctivitis at the same time [Described 1916. After Hans Conrad Reiter (1881–1969), German bacteriologist and hygienist.]

reject /rɪ'dʒekt/ *verb* 1. to refuse to accept something 2. to be unable to tolerate tissue or an organ transplanted from another body because it is immunologically incompatible ○ *The new heart was rejected by the body.* ○ *They gave the patient drugs to prevent the transplant being rejected.* 3. to be unable to keep food down and vomit it up again

rejection /rɪ'dʒekʃən/ *noun* the act of rejecting tissue ○ *The patient was given drugs to reduce the possibility of tissue rejection.*

relapse /'ri:læps, rɪ'læps/ *noun* a situation in which someone gets worse after seeming to be getting better, or where a disease appears again after seeming to be cured ■ *verb* to return to an earlier and worse state, especially to get ill again after getting better ○ *She relapsed into a coma.*

relapsing fever /rɪ'læpsɪŋ ,fi:və/ *noun* a disease caused by a bacterium, where attacks of fever recur from time to time

relapsing pancreatitis /rɪ'læpsɪŋ ,pænkrɪə'taɪtɪs/ *noun* a form of pancreatitis where the symptoms recur, but in a less painful form

relate /rɪ'leɪt/ *verb* to connect something to something else ○ *The disease is related to the weakness of the heart muscles.*

-related /rɪleɪtɪd/ *suffix* connected to ○ *drug-related diseases*

relationship /rɪ'leɪʃ(ə)nʃɪp/ *noun* a way in which someone or something is connected to another ○ *The incidence of the disease has a close relationship to the environment.* ○ *He became withdrawn and broke off all relationships with his family.*

relative density /,relətɪv 'densɪtɪ/ *noun* the ratio of the density of a substance to the density of a standard substance at the same temperature and pressure. For liquids and solids the standard substance is usually water, and for gases, it is air.

relative risk /,relətɪv 'risk/ *noun* a measure of the likelihood of developing a disease for people who are exposed to a particular risk, relative to people who are not exposed to the same risk. For example, the relative risk of myocardial infarction for oral contraceptive users is 1.6 times that of non-users. Abbr **RR**

relax /rɪ'læks/ *verb* to become less tense, or cause someone or something to become less tense ○ *He was given a drug to relax the muscles.* ○ *The muscle should be fully relaxed.*

relaxant /rɪ'læksənt/ *noun* a substance which relieves strain ■ *adjective* relieving strain

relaxation /,rɪ:læk'seɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* 1. the process of reducing strain in a muscle 2. the reduction of stress in a person

relaxation therapy /,rɪ:læk'seɪʃ(ə)n ,θerəpi/ *noun* a treatment in which people are encouraged to relax their muscles to reduce stress

relaxative /rɪ'læksətɪv/ *noun US* a drug which reduces stress

relaxin /rɪ'læksɪn/ *noun* a hormone which is secreted by the placenta to make the cervix relax and open fully in the final stages of pregnancy before childbirth

release /rɪ'li:s/ *noun* the process of allowing something to go out ○ *the slow release of the drug into the bloodstream* ■ *verb* to let something out ○ *Hormones are released into the body by glands.*

releasing factor /rɪ'li:sɪf ,fækٹə/ *noun* a substance produced in the hypothalamus which encourages the release of hormones

releasing hormone /rɪ'li:sɪf ,hɔ:məʊn/ *noun* a hormone secreted by the hypothalamus which makes the pituitary gland release particular hormones. Also called **hypothalamic hormone**

relief /rɪ'li:f/ *noun* the process of making something better or easier ○ *The drug provides rapid relief for patients with bronchial spasms.*

'...complete relief of angina is experienced by 85% of patients subjected to coronary artery bypass surgery' [British Journal of Hospital Medicine]

relieve /rɪ'li:v/ *verb* to make something better or easier ○ *Nasal congestion can be relieved by antihistamines.* ○ *The patient was given an injection of morphine to relieve the pain.* ○ *The condition is relieved by applying cold compresses.*

'...replacement of the metacarpophalangeal joint is mainly undertaken to relieve pain, deformity and immobility due to rheumatoid arthritis' [Nursing Times]

rem /rem/ *noun* a unit for measuring amounts of radiation, equal to the effect that one roentgen of X-rays or gamma-rays would produce in a human being. It is used in radiation protection and monitoring.

REM /rem/ *abbr* rapid eye movement. ♦ **REM sleep**

remedial /rɪ'mi:dɪəl/ *adjective* acting as a cure

remedy /'remədi/ *noun* a cure, a drug which will cure ○ *Honey and glycerine is an old remedy for sore throats.*

remember /rɪ'membə/ *verb* to bring back into the mind something which has been seen or heard before ○ *He remembers nothing or he can't remember anything about the accident.*

remission /rɪ'mɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a period when an illness or fever is less severe

re. mist. /,rɪ: 'mɪst/ *adverb* (on a prescription) repeat the same mixture. Full form **repetatur mistura**

remittent /rɪ'mitənt/ *adjective* lessening and then intensifying again at intervals

remittent fever /rɪ'mitənt 'fi:və/ *noun* fever which goes down for a period each day, like typhoid fever

removal /rɪ'mu:v(ə)l/ *noun* the action of removing something □ *An appendicectomy is the surgical removal of an appendix.*

remove /rɪ'mu:v/ *verb* to take something away □ *He will have an operation to remove an ingrowing toenail.*

REM sleep /'rem slɪ:p/ *noun* a stage of sleep which happens several times each night and is characterised by dreaming, rapid eye movement and increased pulse rate and brain activity. Also called **rapid eye movement sleep**

COMMENT: During REM sleep, a person dreams, breathes lightly and has a raised blood pressure and an increased rate of heartbeat. The eyes may be half-open, and the sleeper may make facial movements.

ren- /rɪ:n/ *prefix* same as **reno-** (*used before vowels*)

renal /'rɪ:n(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to the kidneys

renal artery /,rɪ:n(ə)l 'a:təri/ *noun* one of two arteries running from the abdominal aorta to the kidneys

renal calculus /,rɪ:n(ə)l 'kælkjʊləs/ *noun* a small hard mineral mass called a stone in the kidney

renal capsule /,rɪ:n(ə)l 'kæpsjulə/ *noun* same as **fibrous capsule**

renal clearance /'rɪ:n(ə)l ,klɪ:rəns/ *noun* the measurement of the rate at which kidneys filter impurities from blood

renal colic /,rɪ:n(ə)l 'kɒlik/ *noun* a sudden pain caused by a kidney stone or stones in the ureter

renal corpuscle /,rɪ:n(ə)l 'kɔ:pʊs(ə)l/ *noun* part of a nephron in the cortex of a kidney. Also called **Malpighian body**

renal cortex /,rɪ:n(ə)l 'kɔ:tek:s/ *noun* the outer covering of the kidney, immediately beneath the capsule. See illustration at **KIDNEY** in Supplement

renal dialysis /,rɪ:n(ə)l dai'æləsɪs/ *noun* a method of artificially maintaining the chemical balance of the blood when the kidneys have failed, or the process of using this method. Also called **dialysis**

renal hypertension /,rɪ:n(ə)l ,haɪpə'tenʃən/ *noun* high blood pressure linked to kidney disease

renal medulla /,rɪ:n(ə)l me'dʌlə/ *noun* the inner part of a kidney containing no glomeruli. See illustration at **KIDNEY** in Supplement

renal pelvis /,rɪ:n(ə)l 'pelvɪs/ *noun* the upper and wider part of the ureter leading from the kidney where urine is collected before passing down the ureter into the bladder. Also called **pelvis of the kidney**. See illustration at **KIDNEY** in Supplement

renal rickets /,rɪ:n(ə)l 'rikɪts/ *noun* a form of rickets caused by kidneys which do not function properly

renal sinus /,rɪ:n(ə)l 'sainəs/ *noun* a cavity in which the renal pelvis and other tubes leading into the kidney fit

renal transplant /,rɪ:n(ə)l 'trænspla:nt/ *noun* a kidney transplant

renal tubule /,rɪ:n(ə)l 'tju:bju:l/ *noun* a tiny tube which is part of a nephron. Also called **uriniferous tubule**

renew /rɪ'nju:/ *verb* □ **to renew a prescription** to get a new prescription for the same drug as before

reni- /rɪ:nɪ/ *prefix* referring to the kidneys

renin /'rɪ:nɪn/ *noun* an enzyme secreted by the kidney to prevent loss of sodium, and which also affects blood pressure

rennin /'rɪ:nɪn/ *noun* an enzyme which makes milk coagulate in the stomach, so as to slow down the passage of the milk through the digestive system

reno- /rɪ:nəʊ/ *prefix* referring to the kidneys

renogram /'rɪ:nəʊgræm/ *noun* 1. an X-ray image of a kidney 2. a visual record of kidney function that shows how quickly a radioactive substance introduced into the bloodstream is removed by the kidneys

renography /ri:ngrəfi/ *noun* an examination of a kidney after injection of a radioactive substance, using a gamma camera

renovascular /,rɪ:nəʊ'veskjʊlə/ *adjective* relating to the blood vessels of the kidneys

renovascular system /,rɪ:nəʊ'veskjʊlə,sɪstəm/ *noun* the blood vessels associated with the kidney

reorganisation /ri:ɔ:gənər'zeɪʃ(ə)n/, **reorganization** *noun* 1. a change in the way something is organised or done 2. the process of changing the way something is organised or done 3. an occasion when a business or organisation is given a completely new structure

reovirus /'rɪ:əʊ,vairəs/ *noun* a virus which affects both the intestine and the respiratory system, but does not cause serious illness. Compare **echovirus**

rep /rep/ *adverb* (*written on a prescription*) repeat. Full form **repetatur**

repair /rɪ'peə/ *verb* to make something that is damaged good again □ *Surgeons operated to repair a hernia.*

repeat /rɪ'pi:t/ *verb* to say or do something again □ *The course of treatment was repeated after two months.*

repeat prescription /rɪ,pɪ:t pri'skrɪpjən/ *noun* a prescription which is exactly the same as the previous one, and is often given without examination of the person by the doctor and may sometimes be requested by telephone

repel /rɪ'pel/ *verb* to make something go away □ *If you spread this cream on your skin it will repel insects.*

repetitive strain injury /rɪ,petɪtɪv 'streɪn,ɪndʒəri/, **repetitive stress injury** /rɪ,petɪtɪv

'stres ,ɪndʒəri/ noun pain, usually in a limb, felt by someone who performs the same movement many times over a period, e.g. when operating a computer terminal or playing a musical instrument. Abbr **RSI**

replace /rɪ'pleɪs/ verb 1. to put something back ○ *an operation to replace a prolapsed uterus* 2. to exchange one part for another ○ *The surgeons replaced the diseased hip with a metal one.*

replacement /rɪ'plɪsmənt/ noun an operation to replace part of the body with an artificial part

replacement transfusion /rɪ'plɪsmənt ,træns'fju:z(ə)n/ noun an exchange transfusion, a treatment for leukaemia or erythroblastosis where almost all the unhealthy blood is removed from the body and replaced by healthy blood

replant /rɪ:'pla:nt/ verb to reattach or reinsert a body part such as a limb or tooth that has become detached

replantation /rɪ:pla:n'teɪʃ(ə)n/ noun a surgical technique which reattaches parts of the body which have been accidentally cut or torn off

replicate /'repɪleɪt/ verb (of a cell) to make a copy of itself

replication /'repɪ'keɪʃ(ə)n/ noun the process in the division of a cell, where the DNA makes copies of itself

repolarisation /rɪ:pələ'reɪz(ə)n/, repolarization noun the restoration of the usual electrical polarity of a nerve or muscle cell membrane after reversal of its polarity while a nerve impulse or muscle contraction travelled along it

report /rɪ'pɔ:t/ noun an official note stating what action has been taken, what treatment given or what results have come from a test ○ *The patient's report card has to be filled in by the nurse.* ○ *The inspector's report on the hospital kitchens is good.* ■ **verb** to make an official report about something ○ *The patient reported her doctor for misconduct.* ○ *Occupational diseases or serious accidents at work must be reported to the local officials.*

reportable diseases /rɪ:pɔ:təb(ə)l di'zi:zɪz/ plural noun diseases such as asbestos, hepatitis or anthrax which may be caused by working conditions or may infect other workers and must be reported to the District Health Authority

repository /rɪ'pozɪtɔ:/ noun a surgical instrument used to push a prolapsed organ back into its usual position

repress /rɪ'pres/ verb to decide to ignore or forget feelings or thoughts which may be unpleasant or painful

repression /rɪ'preʃ(ə)n/ noun (in psychiatry) the act of ignoring or forgetting feelings or thoughts which might be unpleasant

reproduce /rɪ:p्र'dju:s/ verb 1. to produce children 2. (of microorganisms) to produce new cells 3. to do a test again in exactly the same way

reproduction /rɪ:p्र'dʌkʃən/ noun the process of making new living beings by existing ones, e.g. producing children or derived other descendants

reproductive /rɪ:p्र'dʌktɪv/ adjective referring to reproduction

reproductive organs /,rɪ:p्र'dʌktɪv ,ɔ:gənz/ plural noun parts of the bodies of men and women which are involved in the conception and development of a fetus

reproductive system /,rɪ:p्र'dʌktɪv ,sistəm/ noun the arrangement of organs and ducts in the bodies of men and women which produce spermatozoa or ova

COMMENT: In the human male, the testes produce the spermatozoa which pass through the vasa efferentia and the vasa deferentia where they receive liquid from the seminal vesicles, then out of the body through the urethra and penis on ejaculation. In the female, an ovum, produced by one of the two ovaries, passes through the Fallopian tube where it is fertilised by a spermatozoon from the male. The fertilised ovum moves down into the uterus where it develops into an embryo.

reproductive tract /,rɪ:p्र'dʌktɪv trækt/ noun the series of tubes and ducts which carry spermatozoa or ova from one part of the body to another

require /rɪ'kwaɪə/ verb to need something ○ *His condition may require surgery.* ○ *Is it a condition which requires immediate treatment?* □ **required effect** effect which a drug is expected to have ○ *If the drug does not produce the required effect, the dose should be increased.*

requirement /rɪ'kwaɪəmənt/ noun something which is necessary ○ *One of the requirements of the position is a qualification in pharmacy.*

RES abbr reticuloendothelial system

research /rɪ'sɜ:tʃ/ noun a scientific study which investigates something new ○ *He is the director of a medical research unit.* ○ *She is doing research into finding a cure for leprosy.* ○ *Research workers or Research teams are trying to find a vaccine against AIDS.* ■ **verb** to carry out scientific study ○ *He is researching the origins of cancer.*

research and development /rɪ,sɜ:tʃ ən dɪ'veləpmənt/ noun the process by which pharmaceutical companies find new drugs and test their suitability. Abbr **R & D**

resect /rɪ'sekٹ/ verb to remove any part of the body by surgery

resection /rɪ'sekʃən/ noun the surgical removal of any part of the body

resection of the prostate /rɪ'sekʃən əv ðə 'prɒstetɪ/ *noun* same as **transurethral prostatectomy**

rectoscope /rɪ'septəskəʊp/ *noun* a surgical instrument used to carry out a transurethral resection

reservoir /'rezəvʊər/ *noun* 1. a cavity in an organ or group of tissues in which fluids collect and are stored 2. an organism in which a parasite lives and develops without damaging it, but from which the parasite then passes to another species which is damaged by it 3. a part of a machine or piece of equipment where liquid is stored for it to use

reset /rɪ'set/ *verb* to break a badly set bone and set it again correctly ○ *His arm had to be reset.*

residency /'rezɪd(ə)nsi/ *noun* *US* a period when a doctor is receiving specialist training in a hospital

resident /'rezɪd(ə)nt/ *noun* 1. someone who lives in a place ○ *All the residents of the old people's home were tested for food poisoning.* 2. *US* a qualified doctor who is employed by a hospital and sometimes lives in the hospital. Compare **intern** ■ *adjective* living in a place

resident doctor /,rezɪd(ə)nt 'dɒktə/ *noun* a doctor who lives in a building such as an old people's home

residential /,rezɪ'denʃəl/ *adjective* 1. living in a hospital 2. living at home

residential care /,rezɪ'denʃəl keə/ *noun* the care of patients either in a hospital or at home, but not as outpatients

residual /rɪ'zidʒjuəl/ *adjective* remaining, which is left behind

residual air /rɪ'zidʒjuəl 'eə/, **residual volume** /rɪ'zidʒjuəl 'vɒlvju:m/ *noun* air left in the lungs after a person has breathed out as much air as possible

residual urine /rɪ'zidʒjuəl 'juərɪn/ *noun* urine left in the bladder after a person has passed as much urine as possible

resin /'rezɪn/ *noun* a sticky sap or liquid which comes from some types of tree

resist /rɪ'zɪst/ *verb* to be strong enough to avoid being killed or attacked by a disease ○ *A healthy body can resist some infections.*

resistance /rɪ'zɪstəns/ *noun* 1. the ability of a person not to get a disease 2. the ability of bacteria or a virus to remain unaffected by a drug ○ *The bacteria have developed a resistance to certain antibiotics.* 3. opposition to a force

resistant /rɪ'zɪst(ə)nt/ *adjective* able not to be affected by something ○ *The bacteria are resistant to some antibiotics.*

resistant strain /rɪ'zɪst(ə)nt 'streɪn/ *noun* a strain of bacterium which is not affected by antibiotics

resolution /,rezə'lju:ʃ(ə)n/ *noun* 1. the amount of detail which can be seen in a microscope or on a computer monitor 2. a point in the development of a disease where the inflammation begins to disappear

resolve /rɪ'zɒlv/ *verb* (*of inflammation*) to begin to disappear

'...valve fluttering disappears as the pneumothorax resolves. Always confirm resolution with a physical examination and X-ray' [American Journal of Nursing]

resolvent /rɪ'zɒlvənt/ *adjective* able to reduce inflammation or swelling

resonance /'rez(ə)nəns/ *noun* a sound made by a hollow part of the body when hit. □ **magnetic**

resorption /rɪ'sɔ:pʃən/ *noun* the process of absorbing a substance produced by the body back into the body

respiration /,respə'reɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the act of taking air into the lungs and blowing it out again through the mouth or nose. Also called **breathing**

COMMENT: Respiration includes two stages: breathing in (inhala^{tion}) and breathing out (exhalation). Air is taken into the respiratory system through the nose or mouth, and goes down into the lungs through the pharynx, larynx and windpipe. In the lungs, the bronchi take the air to the alveoli (air sacs) where oxygen in the air is passed to the bloodstream in exchange for waste carbon dioxide which is then breathed out.

respiration rate /,respə'reɪʃ(ə)n reɪt/ *noun* the number of times a person breathes per minute

respirator /'respəreɪtə/ *noun* 1. same as **ventilator** □ **the patient was put on a respirator** the patient was attached to a machine which forced him to breathe 2. a mask worn to prevent someone breathing harmful gas or fumes

respiratory /rɪ'spirət(ə)rɪ/ *adjective* referring to breathing

respiratory allergy /rɪ'spirət(ə)rɪ 'ælədʒɪ/ *noun* an allergy caused by a substance which is inhaled. □ **alveolitis, food allergy**

respiratory bronchiole /rɪ'spirət(ə)rɪ 'brɒŋkiəl/ *noun* the end part of a bronchiole in the lung, which joins the alveoli

respiratory centre /rɪ'spirət(ə)rɪ 'sentə/ *noun* a nerve centre in the brain which regulates the breathing

respiratory distress syndrome /rɪ'spirət(ə)rɪ dɪ'stre:s sɪnd्रəm/ *noun* a condition of newborn babies, and especially common in premature babies, in which the lungs do not expand properly, due to lack of surfactant. Also called **hyaline membrane disease**

respiratory failure /rɪ'spirət(ə)rɪ 'feɪlju:/ *noun* failure of the lungs to oxygenate the blood correctly

respiratory illness /rɪ'spirət(ə)ri 'ilnəs/ *noun* an illness which affects someone's breathing

respiratory pigment /rɪ'spirət(ə)ri 'pɪgmənt/ *noun* blood pigment which can carry oxygen collected in the lungs and release it in tissues

respiratory quotient /rɪ'spirət(ə)ri 'kwəʊʃ(ə)nt/ *noun* the ratio of the amount of carbon dioxide taken into the alveoli of the lungs from the blood to the amount of oxygen which the alveoli take from the air. Abbr **RQ**

respiratory syncytial virus /rɪ'spirət(ə)ri sɪn'sɪtiəl ,vairəs/ *noun* a virus which causes infections of the nose and throat in adults, but serious bronchiolitis in children. Abbr **RSV**

respiratory system /rɪ'spirət(ə)ri 'sistəm/, **respiratory tract** /rɪ'spirət(ə)ri trækt/ *noun* the series of organs and passages which take air into the lungs, and exchange oxygen for carbon dioxide

respite care /'respait keə/ *noun* temporary care provided to people with disabilities, serious conditions or terminal illness, so that their families can have a rest from the daily routine
respond /rɪ'spɒnd/ *verb* 1. to react to something ○ *The cancer is not responding to drugs.* 2. to begin to get better because of a treatment
○ *She is responding to treatment.*

'...many severely confused patients, particularly those in advanced stages of Alzheimer's disease, do not respond to verbal communication' [Nursing Times]

response /rɪ'spons/ *noun* a reaction by an organ, tissue or a person to an external stimulus ○ **immune response** 1. reaction of a body to an antigen 2. reaction of a body which rejects a transplant

'...anaemia may be due to insufficient erythrocyte production, in which case the reticulocyte count will be low, or to haemolysis or haemorrhage, in which cases there should be a reticulocyte response' [Southern Medical Journal]

responsibility /rɪ'sponsɪ'biliti/ *noun* 1. somebody or something which a person or organisation has a duty to take care of ○ *Checking the drip is your responsibility.* 2. the blame for something bad which has happened ○ *She has taken full responsibility for the mix-up.* 3. the position of having to explain to somebody why something was done ○ *Whose responsibility is it to talk to the family?*

responsible /rɪ'spɒnsib(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to something which is the cause of something else ○ *the allergen which is responsible for the patient's reaction.* ○ *This is one of several factors which can be responsible for high blood pressure.*

responsive /rɪ'spɒnsɪv/ *adjective* reacting positively to medical treatment

responsiveness /rɪ'spɒnsɪvnəs/ *noun* the ability to respond to other people or to sensations

rest /rest/ *noun* a period of time spent relaxing or sleeping ○ *What you need is a good night's rest.* ■ *verb* 1. to spend time relaxing or sleeping 2. to use a body part less for a period of time ○ *Rest your arm for a week.*

restenosis /rɪ:tə'nəʊsɪs/ *noun* an occasion when something becomes narrow again, e.g. a coronary artery which has previously been widened by balloon angioplasty (NOTE: The plural is **restenoses**.)

restless /'restləs/ *adjective* not able to relax or be still ○ *restless sleep* ○ *She had a restless night.*

restless leg syndrome /,restləs 'leg ,sɪn↓drəm/ *noun* painful discomfort in the legs when not active that can lead to interrupted sleep and fatigue

restore /rɪ'stɔ:/ *verb* to give something back
○ *She needs vitamins to restore her strength.* ○ *The physiotherapy should restore the strength of the muscles.* ○ *A salpingostomy was performed to restore the patency of the Fallopian tube.*

restrict /rɪ'strɪkt/ *verb* 1. to make something less or smaller ○ *The blood supply is restricted by the tight bandage.* 2. to set limits to something ○ *The doctor suggested she should restrict her intake of alcohol.*

restrictive /rɪ'strɪktɪv/ *adjective* restricting, making something smaller

result /rɪ'zʌlt/ *noun* figures at the end of a calculation, at the end of a test ○ *What was the result of the test?* ○ *The doctor told the patient the result of the pregnancy test.* ○ *The result of the operation will not be known for some weeks.*

resuscitate /rɪ'sʌsɪteɪt/ *verb* to make someone who appears to be dead start breathing again, and to restart the circulation of blood

resuscitation /rɪ'sʌsɪ'teɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the act of reviving someone who seems to be dead, by making him or her breathe again and restarting the heart

COMMENT: The commonest methods of resuscitation are artificial respiration and cardiac massage.

retain /rɪ'teɪn/ *verb* to keep or hold something
○ *He was incontinent and unable to retain urine in his bladder.* ♀ **retention**

retard /rɪ'tɑ:d/ *verb* to make something slower, e.g. to slow down the action of a drug ○ *The drug will retard the onset of the fever.* ○ *The injections retard the effect of the anaesthetic.*

retardation /rɪ:tɑ:'deɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the process of making something slower

retch /retʃ/ *verb* to try to vomit without bringing any food up from the stomach

retching /retʃɪŋ/ *noun* the fact of attempting to vomit without being able to do so

rete /'re:tɪ/ *noun* a network of veins, arteries or nerve fibres in the body. ♀ **reticular** (NOTE: The plural is **retia**.)

retention /rɪ'tenʃən/ *noun* the act of not letting out something, especially a fluid, which is usually released from the body, e.g. holding back urine in the bladder

retention cyst /rɪ'tenʃən sɪst/ *noun* a cyst which is formed when a duct from a gland is blocked

retention of urine /rɪ'tenʃən əv 'juərɪn/ *noun* a condition in which passing urine is difficult or impossible because the urethra is blocked or because the prostate gland is enlarged

rete testis /'rɪ:tɛtɪs/ *'testɪs/ noun* a network of channels in the testis which take the sperm to the epididymis. ☞ **reticular**

retia /'ri:fɪə/ plural of **rete**

reticular /rɪ'tɪkjʊlə/ *adjective* relating to or in the form of a network

reticular fibres /rɪ'tɪkjʊlər 'faɪbəz/ *plural noun* fibres in connective tissue which support, e.g., organs or blood vessels

reticular tissue /rɪ'tɪkjʊlər 'tɪʃu:/ *noun* same as **reticular fibres**

reticulin /rɪ'tɪkjʊlɪn/ *noun* a fibrous protein which is one of the most important components of reticular fibres

reticulocyte /rɪ'tɪkjʊləsɔɪt/ *noun* a red blood cell which has not yet fully developed

reticulocytosis /rɪ'tɪkjʊləsɔɪtə'sɪs/ *noun* a condition in which the number of reticulocytes in the blood increases unusually

reticuloendothelial cell /rɪ'tɪkjʊləθeɪl ,endəʊθɪəlɪəl sel/ *noun* a phagocytic cell in the reticuloendothelial system

reticuloendothelial system /rɪ'tɪkjʊləθeɪl ,endəʊθɪəlɪəl ,sistəm/ *noun* a series of phagocytic cells in the body, found especially in bone marrow, lymph nodes, liver and spleen, which attack and destroy bacteria and form antibodies. Abbr **RES**

reticuloendotheliosis /rɪ'tɪkjʊləθeɪləsɪs/ *noun* a condition in which cells in the RES grow large and form swellings in bone marrow or destroy bones

reticulosclerosis /rɪ'tɪkjʊlə'læsɪs/ *noun* any of several conditions where cells in the reticuloendothelial system grow large and form usually malignant tumours

reticulum /rɪ'tɪkjʊləm/ *noun* a series of small fibres or tubes forming a network

retin- /retɪn/ *prefix* same as **retino-** (*used before vowels*)

retina /'retɪnə/ *noun* the inside layer of the eye which is sensitive to light. ☞ **detached retina**. See illustration at **EYE** in Supplement (NOTE: The plural is **retinae**.)

COMMENT: Light enters the eye through the pupil and strikes the retina. Light-sensitive cells in the retina (cones and rods) convert the light to nervous impulses. The optic nerve sends these impulses to the brain which interprets them as images. The point where the

optic nerve joins the retina has no light-sensitive cells, and is known as the blind spot.

retinaculum /,retɪ'nækjoləm/ *noun* a band of tissue which holds a structure in place, as found in the wrist and ankle over the flexor tendons

retinae /'retɪni/ plural of **retina**

retinal /'retɪn(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to the retina

retinal artery /'retɪn(ə)l ,a:təri/ *noun* the only artery of the retina, which accompanies the optic nerve

retinal detachment /,retɪn(ə)l dɪ'tætʃmənt/ *noun* a condition in which the retina is partly detached from the choroid

retinitis /,retɪ'naitɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the retina

retinitis pigmentosa /,retɪnai'naɪtɪs,pigmen'təʊsə/ *noun* a hereditary condition in which inflammation of the retina can result in blindness

retino- /retɪnəʊ/ *prefix* referring to the retina

retinoblastoma /,retɪnəoblæ:təʊmə/ *noun* a rare tumour in the retina, affecting infants

retinol /'retɪnɒl/ *noun* a vitamin found in liver, vegetables, eggs and cod liver oil which is essential for good vision. Also called **Vitamin A**

retinopathy /,retɪ'nɒpəθi/ *noun* any disease of the retina

retinoscope /'retɪnɔskəp/ *noun* an instrument with various lenses, used to measure the refraction of the eye

retinoscopy /,retɪ'nɒskəpi/ *noun* a method of measuring refractive errors in the eye using a retinoscope

retire /rɪ'taɪə/ *verb* to stop work at a particular age ○ *Most men retire at 65, but women only go on working until they are 60.* ○ *Although she has retired, she still does voluntary work at the clinic.*

retirement /rɪ'taɪəmənt/ *noun* 1. the act of retiring ○ *The retirement age for men is 65.* 2. the act of being retired

retraction /rɪ'trækʃən/ *noun* the fact of moving backwards or becoming shorter ○ *There is retraction of the overlying skin.*

retraction ring /rɪ'trækʃən rɪŋ/ *noun* a groove round the uterus, separating its upper and lower parts, which, in obstructed labour, prevents the baby from moving forward as expected into the cervical canal. Also called **Band's ring**

retractor /rɪ'træktə/ *noun* a surgical instrument which pulls and holds back the edge of the incision in an operation

retro- /ret्रəʊ/ *prefix* at the back, behind

retrobulbar /,ret्रəʊ'bʌlbə/ *adjective* behind the eyeball

retrobulbar neuritis /,ret्रəʊ,bʌlbə nju:ra'tɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the optic nerve

which makes objects appear blurred. Also called **optic neuritis**

retroflexion /'ret्रəʊ'fleksʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the fact of being bent backwards □ **retroflexion of the uterus** a condition in which the uterus bends backwards away from its usual position
retrograde /'ret्रəʊgred/ *adjective* going backwards or deteriorating, getting worse

retrograde pyelography /'ret्रəʊgred ,paɪə'lɒgrəfi/ *noun* an X-ray examination of the kidney where a catheter is passed into the kidney and an opaque liquid is injected directly into it

retrogression /,ret्रəʊ'gresʃ(ə)n/ *noun* returning to an earlier state

retrolental fibroplasia /,ret्रəʊ,lent(ə)l ,faɪbrəʊ'pleɪzɪə/ *noun* a condition in which fibrous tissue develops behind the lens of the eye, resulting in blindness

COMMENT: Retrolental fibroplasia can occur in premature babies if they are treated with large amounts of oxygen immediately after birth.

retro-ocular /,ret्रəʊ 'ɒkjʊlə/ *adjective* at the back of the eye

retroperitoneal /,ret्रəʊ,perɪtə'nī:əl/ *adjective* at the back of the peritoneum

retroperitoneal space /,ret्रəʊ,perɪtə'nī:əl 'speɪs/ *noun* the area between the posterior parietal peritoneum and the posterior abdominal wall, containing the kidneys, adrenal glands, duodenum, ureters and pancreas

retropharyngeal /,ret्रəʊ,færɪn'dʒi:əl/ *adjective* at the back of the pharynx

retropubic /,ret्रəʊ'pjū:bɪk/ *adjective* at the back of the pubis

retropubic prostatectomy /,ret्रəʊpjū:bɪk ,prɔstə'tektəmɪ/ *noun* removal of the prostate gland which is carried out through a suprapubic incision and by cutting the membrane which surrounds the gland

retrospection /,ret्रə'speकʃən/ *noun* the act of recalling what happened in the past

retrospective /,ret्रə'spektɪv/ *adjective* applying to the past, tracing what has happened already to selected people

retroversion /,ret्रəʊ'vɜ:sʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the fact of sloping backwards □ **retroversion of the uterus** Same as **retroverted uterus**

retroverted uterus /,ret्रəʊvɜ:tɪd 'ju:tərəs/ *noun* a condition in which the uterus slopes backwards away from its usual position. Also called **retroversion of the uterus, tipped womb**

retrovirus /'ret्रəʊvʌɪrəs/ *noun* a virus whose genetic material contains RNA from which DNA is synthesised (NOTE: The AIDS virus and many carcinogenic viruses are retroviruses.)

revascularisation /'ri:,væskjʊlərɪz̬/ ,revascularization *noun* 1. the act of restoring an adequate blood supply to an organ or tissue, especially in a surgical operation us-

ing a blood vessel graft 2. the condition of having an adequate blood supply restored

reveal /'ri:vɪ:l/ *verb* to show something □ *Digital palpation revealed a growth in the breast.*

reversal /'ri:vɜ:s(ə)l/ *noun* the procedure to change something back □ *reversal of sterilisation*

reverse isolation /'ri,vɜ:s ,aɪsə'leɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* same as **protective isolation**

revision /'ri:vɪʒ(ə)n/ *noun* an examination of a surgical operation after it has been carried out □ *a revision of a radical mastoidectomy*

revive /'ri:vɪv/ *verb* to bring someone back to life or to consciousness □ *They tried to revive him with artificial respiration.* □ *She collapsed on the floor and had to be revived by the nurse.*

Reye's syndrome /'raɪz ,sɪnd्रəʊm/ *noun* a form of brain disease affecting young children, which is possibly due to viral infection and has a suspected link with aspirin

RGN abbr Registered General Nurse

Rh abbr rhesus

RHA abbr Regional Health Authority

rhabdomyosarcoma /,ræbdəʊ,mæɪəʊsə: 'kœmə/ *noun* a malignant tumour of striated muscle tissue. It occurs mostly in children.

rhabdovirus /'ræbdəʊvʌɪrəs/ *noun* any of a group of viruses containing RNA, one of which causes rabies

rhachio- /reɪkiəʊ/ *prefix* referring to the spine

rhagades /'rægədi:z/ *plural noun* long thin scars in the skin round the nose, mouth or anus, seen in syphilis. □ **fissure**

Rh disease /'aɪ:r 'eɪtʃ dɪ,zɪ:z/ *noun* same as **rhesus factor disease**

rheo- /ri:əʊ/ *prefix* 1. relating to the flow of liquids 2. relating to the flow of electrical current

rheometer /'ri:əmɪtə/ *noun* a device that measures the flow of thick liquids such as blood

rhesus baby /'ri:səs ,beɪbi/ *noun* a baby with erythroblastosis foetalis

rhesus factor /'ri:səs ,fækٹə/ *noun* an antigen in red blood cells, which is an element in blood grouping. Also called **Rh factor**

COMMENT: The rhesus factor is important in blood grouping, because, although most people are Rh-positive, an Rh-negative patient should not receive an Rh-positive blood transfusion as this will cause the formation of permanent antibodies. If an Rh-negative mother has a child by an Rh-positive father, the baby will inherit Rh-positive blood, which may then pass into the mother's circulation at childbirth and cause antibodies to form. This can be prevented by an injection of anti D immunoglobulin immediately after the birth of the first Rh-positive child and any subsequent Rh-positive children. If an Rh-negative mother has formed antibodies to Rh-positive blood in the past, these antibodies will affect the blood

of the fetus and may cause erythroblastosis fetalis.

rhesus factor disease /'ri:səs ,fæktə dɪ zɪ:z/ *noun* a disease which occurs when the blood of a fetus has a different rhesus factor from that of the mother. Also called **Rh disease**

rheumatic /ru:'mætɪk/ *adjective* referring to rheumatism

rheumatic fever /ru:'mætɪk 'fi:və/ *noun* a collagen disease of young people and children, caused by haemolytic streptococci, where the joints and also the valves and lining of the heart become inflamed. Also called **acute rheumatism**

COMMENT: Rheumatic fever often follows another streptococcal infection such as a strep throat or tonsillitis. Symptoms are high fever, pains in the joints, which become red, formation of nodules on the ends of bones and difficulty in breathing. Although recovery can be complete, rheumatic fever can recur and damage the heart permanently.

rheumatism /'ru:mætɪz(ə)m/ *noun* pains and stiffness in the joints and muscles (*informal*) ◇ *She has rheumatism in her hips.* ◇ *He complained of rheumatism in the knees.*

rheumatoid /ru:mætɔɪd/ *adjective* relating to rheumatism

rheumatoid arthritis /,ru:mætɔɪd ə:θraɪtɪs/ *noun* a general painful disabling collagen disease affecting any joint, but especially the hands, feet and hips, making them swollen and inflamed. ◇ **osteoarthritis**

...rheumatoid arthritis is a chronic inflammatory disease which can affect many systems of the body, but mainly the joints. 70% of sufferers develop the condition in the metacarpophalangeal joints' [Nursing Times]

rheumatoid erosion /,ru:mætɔɪd ɪ'rəʊz(ə)n/ *noun* erosion of bone and cartilage in the joints caused by rheumatoid arthritis

rheumatoid factor /ru:mætɔɪd ,fæktə/ *noun* an antibody found in the blood serum of many people who have rheumatoid arthritis

rheumatologist /,ru:mæ'tɒlədʒɪst/ *noun* a doctor who specialises in rheumatology

rheumatology /,ru:ma'tɒlədʒɪ/ *noun* a branch of medicine dealing with rheumatic disease of muscles and joints

Rh factor /,a:r 'eɪtʃ ,fæktə/ *noun* same as **rhesus factor**

rhin- /rain/ *prefix* same as **rhino-** (*used before vowels*)

rhinal /'rain(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to the nose

rhinencephalon /,rainen'kefələn/ *noun* the area of the forebrain that controls the sense of smell

rhinitis /raɪ'nartɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the mucous membrane in the nose, which makes the nose run, caused, e.g., by a virus infection or an allergic reaction to dust or flowers

rhino- /rainəʊ/ *prefix* referring to the nose

rhinology /raɪ'nɒlədʒɪ/ *noun* a branch of medicine dealing with diseases of the nose and the nasal passages

rhinomycosis /,rainəʊmətɪ'kəʊsɪs/ *noun* an infection of the nasal passages by a fungus

rhinopharyngitis /,rainəʊfærɪn'dʒaɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the mucous membranes in the nose and pharynx

rhinophyma /,rainəʊ'faimə/ *noun* a condition caused by rosacea, in which the nose becomes permanently red and swollen

rhinoplasty /'rainəoplæsti/ *noun* plastic surgery to correct the appearance of the nose

rhinorrhoea /,rainəʊ'rɪə/ *noun* a watery discharge from the nose

rhinoscope /'rainəskoʊp/ *noun* an instrument for examining the inside of the nose

rhinoscopy /raɪ'nɒskəpi/ *noun* an examination of the inside of the nose

rhinosinusitis /,rainəʊ,sainə'saɪtɪs/ *noun* swelling of the lining of the nose and paranasal sinuses, as a result of either a viral infection or allergic rhinitis. It is usually treated with antibiotics, antihistamines or steroids.

rhinosporidiosis /,rainəʊ,spɒrɪdi'əʊsɪs/ *noun* an infection of the nose, eyes, larynx and genital organs by the fungus *Rhinosporidium seeberi*

rhinovirus /'rainəʊ,vایریس/ *noun* a group of viruses containing RNA, which cause infection of the nose and include the virus which causes the common cold

rhiz- /raɪz/, **rhizo-** /'raɪzəʊ/ *prefix* referring to a root

rhizotomy /raɪ'zotəmi/ *noun* a surgical operation to cut or divide the roots of a nerve to relieve severe pain

Rh-negative /,a: eɪtʃ 'negətɪv/ *adjective* who does not have the rhesus factor in his or her blood

rhodopsin /rəʊ'dɒpsɪn/ *noun* a light-sensitive purple pigment in the rods of the retina, which makes it possible to see in dim light. Also called **visual purple**

rhombencephalon /,rɒmben'kefələn/ *noun* the hindbrain, the part of the brain which contains the cerebellum, the medulla oblongata and the pons

rhomboid /'rɒmbɔɪd/ *noun* one of two muscles in the top part of the back which move the shoulder blades

rhonchus /'rɒŋkəs/ *noun* an unusual sound in the chest, heard through a stethoscope, caused by a partial blockage in the bronchi (NOTE: The plural is **rhonchi**.)

Rh-positive /,a: eɪtʃ 'pozɪtɪv/ *adjective* who has the rhesus factor in his or her blood

rhythm /'rɪð(ə)m/ *noun* a regular movement or beat

rhythmic /'rɪðmɪk/ *adjective* regular, with a repeated rhythm

rhythm method /'rɪð(ə)m ,meθəd/ *noun* a method of birth control where sexual intercourse should take place only during the safe periods when conception is least likely to occur, i.e. at the beginning and at the end of the menstrual cycle

COMMENT: This method is not as safe or reliable as other methods of contraception because the time when ovulation takes place cannot be accurately calculated if a woman does not have regular periods.

rib /rib/ *noun* one of twenty-four curved bones which protect the chest (NOTE: For other terms referring to the ribs, see words beginning with **cost-**, **costo-**.)

ribavirin /'raɪbə,vairɪn/ *noun* a synthetic drug which helps to prevent the synthesis of viral DNA and RNA, used in the treatment of viral diseases

rib cage /'rib keɪdʒ/ *noun* the ribs and the space enclosed by them

COMMENT: The rib cage is formed of twelve pairs of curved bones. The top seven pairs, the true ribs, are joined to the breastbone in front by costal cartilage. The other five pairs of ribs, the false ribs, are not attached to the breastbone, though the 8th, 9th and 10th pairs are each attached to the rib above. The bottom two pairs, which are not attached to the breastbone at all, are called the floating ribs.

riboflavine /'raɪbə'fleɪvɪn/ same as **Vitamin B₂** (NOTE: The US spelling is **riboflavin**.)

ribonuclease /,raɪbə'u:njʊ:klaɪəz/ *noun* an enzyme which breaks down RNA

ribonucleic acid /,raɪbə'nju:klɪ:k ə'sɪd/ *noun* one of the nucleic acids in the nucleus of all living cells, which takes coded information from DNA and translates it into specific enzymes and proteins. ☐ **DNA**. Abbr **RNA**

ribose /'raɪbaʊs/ *noun* a type of sugar found in RNA

ribosomal /,raɪbə'səʊm(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to ribosomes

ribosome /'raɪbəsəʊm/ *noun* a tiny particle in a cell, containing RNA and protein, where protein is synthesised

ricewater stools /'raɪswɔ:tə stu:lz/ *plural noun* watery faeces that are typically passed by people who have cholera

rich /rɪtʃ/ *adjective* 1. well supplied 2. referring to food which has a high calorific value

'...the sublingual region has a rich blood supply derived from the carotid artery' [Nursing Times]

ricin /'raɪsin/ *noun* a highly toxic albumin found in the seeds of the castor oil plant

rick /rɪk/ *noun* a slight injury to a joint caused by wrenching or spraining it ☐ *verb* to wrench or sprain a joint of the body slightly

rickets /'rɪkɪts/ *noun* a disease of children, where the bones are soft and do not develop

properly due to lack of Vitamin D. Also called **rachitis**

COMMENT: Initial treatment for rickets in children is a vitamin-rich diet, together with exposure to sunshine which causes vitamin D to form in the skin.

Rickettsia /rɪ'kɛtsiə/ *noun* a genus of micro-organisms which causes several diseases including Q fever and typhus

rickettsial /rɪ'kɛtsiəl/ *adjective* referring to Rickettsia

rickettsial pox /rɪ'kɛtsiəl pɒks/ *noun* a disease found in North America, caused by *Rickettsia akari* passed to humans by bites from mites which live on mice

rid /rɪd/ *verb* ☐ **to get rid of something** to make something go away ☐ *He can't get rid of his cold - he's had it for weeks.* ☐ **to be rid of something** not to have something unpleasant any more ☐ *I'm very glad to be rid of my flu.*

ridge /rɪdʒ/ *noun* a long raised part on the surface of a bone or organ

rifampicin /rif'æmpɪsɪn/ *noun* an antibiotic which works by interfering with RNA synthesis in the infecting bacteria, used in the treatment of tuberculosis, leprosy and other bacterial infections

right /raɪt/ *noun* the fact of being legally entitled to do or to have something ☐ *You always have the right to ask for a second opinion.*

right colic /,raɪt 'kɒplɪk/ *noun* an artery which leads from the superior mesenteric artery

right-handed /,raɪt 'hændɪd/ *adjective* using the right hand more often than the left ☐ *He's right-handed.* ☐ *Most people are right-handed.*

right-left shunt /,raɪt left 'ʃʌnt/ *noun* a malformation in the heart, allowing blood to flow from the pulmonary artery to the aorta

right lymphatic duct /,raɪt lɪm,fætɪk 'dʌkt/ *noun* one of the main terminal channels for carrying lymph, draining the right side of the head and neck and entering the junction of the right subclavian and internal jugular veins. It is the smaller of the two main discharge points of the lymphatic system into the venous system, the larger being the thoracic duct.

rigid /'rɪdʒɪd/ *adjective* stiff, not moving

rigidity /rɪ'dʒɪdɪti/ *noun* the fact of being rigid, bent or not able to be moved. ☐ **spasticity**

rigor /'rɪgə/ *noun* an attack of shivering, often with fever

rigor mortis /,rɪgə 'mɔ:tɪs/ *noun* a condition in which the muscles of a dead body become stiff after death and then become relaxed again

COMMENT: Rigor mortis starts about eight hours after death, and begins to disappear several hours later. Environment and temperature play a large part in the timing.

rima /'raɪma/ *noun* a narrow crack or cleft

rima glottidis /,ri:'ma 'glɒtɪdɪs/ *noun* a space between the vocal cords

ring /rɪŋ/ *noun* a circle of tissue, or tissue or muscle shaped like a circle

ring block /'rɪŋ blɒk/ *noun* the process of inserting local anaesthetic all the way round a digit, e.g. a finger, in order to perform a procedure distal to the block.

Ringer's solution /'rɪŋəz sə,lju:s(ə)n/ *noun* a solution of inorganic salts which is used both to treat burns and cuts and to keep cells, tissues or organs alive outside the body

ring finger /'rɪŋ ,fɪŋgə/ *noun* the third finger, the finger between the little finger and the middle finger

ringing in the ear /,rɪŋɪŋ ɪn ðɪ 'ɪə/ ♦ **tinnitus**

ringworm /'rɪŋwɜ:m/ *noun* any of various infections of the skin by a fungus, in which the infection spreads out in a circle from a central point. It is very contagious and difficult to get rid of. Also called **tinea**

Rinne's test /'rɪnɪz test/ *noun* a hearing test in which a tuning fork is hit and its handle placed near the ear, to test for air conduction, and then on the mastoid process, to test for bone conduction. It is then possible to determine the type of lesion which exists by finding if the sound is heard for a longer period by air or by bone conduction. [Described 1855. After Friedrich Heinrich Rinne (1819–68), otologist at Göttingen, Germany.]

rinse out /,rɪns 'aʊt/ *verb* to lightly wash the inside of something to make it clean, e.g. to get rid of soap ◎ *She rinsed out the measuring jar.* ◎ *Rinse your mouth out with mouthwash.*

ripple bed /'rɪp(ə)l bed/ *noun* a type of bed with an air-filled mattress divided into sections, in which the pressure is continuously being changed so that the body can be massaged and bedsores can be avoided

rise /raɪz/ *verb* to go up ◎ *His temperature rose sharply.* (NOTE: **rising – rose – risen**)

risk /rɪsk/ *noun* the possibility of something harmful happening ◎ *There is a risk of a cholera epidemic.* ◎ *There is no risk of the disease spreading to other members of the family.* □ **at risk** in danger of being harmed ◎ *Businessmen are particularly at risk of having a heart attack.* □ **children at risk** children who are more likely to be harmed or to catch a disease ■ *verb* to do something which may possibly cause harm or have bad results ◎ *If the patient is not moved to an isolation ward, all the patients and staff in the hospital risk catching the disease.*

‘...adenomatous polyps are a risk factor for carcinoma of the stomach’ [Nursing Times]

‘...three quarters of patients aged 35–64 on GPs’ lists have at least one major risk factor: high cholesterol, high blood pressure or addiction to tobacco’ [Health Services Journal]

risk factor /rɪsk ,fæktə/ *noun* a characteristic that increases a person’s likelihood of getting a particular disease ◎ *Smoking is a risk*

factor for lung cancer. ◎ *Obesity is a risk factor for diabetes.*

risus sardonicus /,raɪsəs sə:dɒnɪkəs/ *noun* a twisted smile which is a symptom of tetanus

rite of passage /,raɪt əv 'pæsɪdʒ/ *noun* a ceremony which shows that somebody is moving from one stage of their life to another, e.g. from childhood to puberty or from unmarried to married life

river blindness /'rɪvə ,blaɪndnəs/ *noun* blindness caused by larvae getting into the eye in cases of onchocerciasis

RM abbr Registered Midwife

RMN abbr Registered Mental Nurse

RN abbr Registered Nurse

RNA abbr ribonucleic acid

RNMH abbr Registered Nurse for the Mentally Handicapped

Rocky Mountain spotted fever /,rɒkɪ ,maʊntin ,spɒtid 'fi:və/ *noun* a type of typhus caused by *Rickettsia rickettsii*, transmitted to humans by ticks

rod /rɒd/ *noun* 1. a stick shape with rounded ends ◎ *Some bacteria are shaped like rods or are rod-shaped.* 2. one of two types of light-sensitive cell in the retina of the eye. Rods are sensitive to dim light, but not to colour. ♦ **cone**

COMMENT: Rod cells in the eye are sensitive to poor light. They contain rhodopsin or visual purple, which produces the nervous impulse which the rod transmits to the optic nerve.

rodent ulcer /,rəʊd(ə)nt 'ʌlsə/ *noun* a malignant tumour on the face

COMMENT: Rodent ulcers are different from some other types of cancer in that they do not spread to other parts of the body and do not metastasise, but remain on the face, usually near the mouth or eyes. Rodent ulcer is rare before middle age.

roentgen /'rɒntgən/ *noun* a unit of radiation used to measure the exposure of someone or something to X-rays or gamma rays. Symbol **R** [After Wilhelm Konrad von Röntgen (1845–1923), physicist at Strasbourg, Geissen, Würzburg and Munich, and then Director of the physics laboratory at Würzburg where he discovered X-rays in 1895. Nobel prize for Physics 1901.]

roentgenogram /'rɒntgenəgræm/ *noun* an X-ray photograph

roentgenology /,rɒntgə'nɒlədʒi/ *noun* the study of X-rays and their use in medicine

roentgen ray /'rɒntgən reɪ/ *noun* an X-ray or gamma ray which can pass through tissue and leave an image on a photographic film

role /rəʊl/ *noun* 1. the usual or expected function of somebody or something in a particular process or event ◎ *the role of haemoglobin in blood clotting* 2. the characteristic or expected pattern of behaviour of a particular member of a social group ◎ *the eldest child’s role in the family*

role playing /'rəʊl ,pleɪŋ/ *noun* the act of pretending to be somebody else in a situation, so that you have to imagine how that person feels and thinks. It usually involves several people. It is used in many training exercises and psychiatric evaluations.

rolled bandage /,rəʊld 'bændɪdʒ/, **roller bandage** /,rəʊlə 'bændɪdʒ/ *noun* a bandage in the form of a long strip of cloth which is rolled up from one or both ends

Romberg's sign /'rombɜ:gz sain/ *noun* a swaying of the body or falling when standing with the feet close together and the eyes closed, the result of loss of the joint position sense [Described 1846. After Moritz Heinrich Romberg (1795–1873), German physician and pioneer neurologist.]

COMMENT: If a patient cannot stand upright when his or her eyes are closed, this shows that nerves in the lower limbs which transmit joint position sense to the brain are damaged.

rongeur /'rɒnjgɜ:/ *noun* a strong surgical instrument like a pair of pliers, used for cutting bone

roof /ru:f/ *noun* the top part of a cavity □ **roof of the mouth** Same as **palate**

root /ru:t/ *noun* 1. a point from which a part of the body grows □ **root of hair** or **hair root** □ **root of nerve** or **nerve root** 2. part of a tooth which is connected to a socket in the jaw ► also called **radix**

root canal /ru:t kə,næl/ *noun* a canal in the root of a tooth through which the nerves and blood vessels pass

rooting reflex /'ru:tɪŋ ,rifleks/ *noun* the instinct in new babies to turn their heads towards a touch on the cheek or mouth, which is important for breastfeeding

Roper, Logan and Tierney model /,rəʊpə ,ləʊgən ən 'tɪəni ,mɒd(ə)l/ *noun* an important model of nursing developed in the UK in 1980. Various factors such as necessary daily tasks, lifespan and health status are used to assess the relative independence of an individual, which the nurse will help them to increase.

Rorschach test /'rɔ:sɑ:k tɛst/ *noun* the ink blot test, used in psychological diagnosis, where someone is shown a series of blots of ink on paper and is asked to say what each blot reminds him or her of. The answers give information about the person's psychological state. [Described 1921. After Hermann Rorschach (1884–1922), German-born psychiatrist who worked in Bern, Switzerland.]

rosacea /rə'u'zeɪʃə/ *noun* a common skin disease seen from middle age affecting the face, and especially the nose, which becomes red because of enlarged blood vessels. The cause is not known. Also called **acne rosacea** (NOTE: Despite its alternative name, rosacea is not a type of acne.)

rosea /'rəʊzia/ ♀ **pityriasis**

roseola infantum /rəʊ,zi:ələ in'fæntəm/ *noun* a sudden infection of small children, with fever, swelling of the lymph glands and a rash. It is caused by herpesvirus 6. Also called **exanthem subitum**

rostral /'rɒstr(ə)l/ *adjective* like the beak of a bird

rostrum /'rɒstrəm/ *noun* a projecting part of a bone or structure shaped like a beak (NOTE: The plural is **rostra**.)

rot /rɒt/ *verb* to decay, to become putrefied □ *The flesh was rotting round the wound as gangrene set in.* □ *The fingers can rot away in leprosy.*

rotate /rəʊ'teɪt/ *verb* to move in a circle, or make something move in a circle

rotation /rəʊ'teɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the act of moving in a circle. See illustration at **ANATOMICAL TERMS** in Supplement □ **lateral and medial rotation** turning part of the body to the side, towards the midline

rotator /rəʊ'teɪtə/ *noun* a muscle which makes a limb rotate

rotavirus /'rəʊtəvairəs/ *noun* any of a group of viruses associated with gastroenteritis in children

'...rotavirus is now widely accepted as an important cause of childhood diarrhoea in many different parts of the world' [*East African Medical Journal*]

Rothera's test /'rɒðərəz tɛst/ *noun* a test to see if acetone is present in urine, a sign of ketosis which is a complication of diabetes mellitus [After Arthur Cecil Hamel Rothera (1880–1915), biochemist in Melbourne, Australia]

Roth spot /'rəʊt spɒt/ *noun* a pale spot which sometimes occurs on the retina of a person who has leukaemia or some other diseases [After Moritz Roth (1839–1915), Swiss pathologist and physician]

rotunda /rəʊ'tʌndə/ ♀ **fenestra**

rough /rʌf/ *adjective* not smooth □ **rough skin**

roughage /'rʌfɪdʒ/ *noun* same as **dietary fibre**

COMMENT: Roughage is found in cereals, nuts, fruit and vegetables. It is believed to be necessary to help digestion and avoid developing constipation and obesity.

rouleau /ru:ləu/ *noun* a roll of red blood cells which have stuck together like a column of coins (NOTE: The plural is **rouleaux**.)

round /raʊnd/ *adjective* shaped like a circle □ *noun* a regular visit □ **to do the rounds of the wards** to visit various wards in a hospital and talk to the nurses and check on patients' progress or condition □ **a health visitor's rounds** regular series of visits made by a health visitor

round ligament /raʊnd 'lɪgəmənt/ *noun* a band of muscle which stretches from the uterus to the labia

round window /raʊnd 'wɪndəʊ/ *noun* a round opening between the middle ear and the

cochlea, and closed by a membrane. Also called **fenestra rotunda**. See illustration at **EAR** in Supplement

roundworm /'raʊndwɜːm/ *noun* any of several common types of parasitic worms with round bodies, such as hookworms. Compare **flatworm**

Rovsing's sign /'rɒvſɪŋz saɪn/ *noun* pain in the right iliac fossa when the left iliac fossa is pressed, which is a sign of acute appendicitis [Described 1907. After Nils Thorkild Rovsing (1862–1927), Professor of Surgery at Copenhagen, Denmark.]

Royal College of General Practitioners /'rɔɪəl ,kɒplɪdʒ əv 'dʒenə(r)əl/ *noun* a professional association which represents family doctors. Abbr **RCGP**

Royal College of Nursing /'rɔɪəl ,kɒplɪdʒ əv 'nɜːsɪng/ *noun* a professional association which represents nurses. Abbr **RCN**

Roy's model /'rɔɪz ,mɒd(ə)l/ *noun* a model for nursing developed in the US in the 1970s. It describes a person's health as being a state of successful positive adaptation to all those stimuli from the environment which could interfere with their basic need satisfaction. Illness results from an inability to adapt to such stimuli, so nurses should help patients to overcome this.

RQ abbr respiratory quotient

RR abbr 1. recovery room 2. relative risk

-rrhage /'rɪdʒ/, -**rrhagia** /'reɪdʒə/ *suffix* referring to an unusual flow or discharge of blood

-rrhaphy /'rɛfɪ/ *suffix* referring to surgical sewing or suturing

-rrhexis /reksɪs/ *suffix* referring to splitting or rupture

-rhoea /rɪə/ *suffix* referring to an unusual flow or discharge of fluid from an organ

RSCN abbr Registered Sick Children's Nurse

RSI abbr repetitive strain injury

RSV abbr respiratory syncytial virus

RTN abbr Registered Theatre Nurse

rub /rʌb/ *noun* a lotion used to rub on the skin ○ *The ointment is used as a rub.* ■ *verb* 1. to move something, especially the hands, backwards and forwards over a surface ○ *She rubbed her leg after she knocked it against the table.* ○ *He rubbed his hands to make the circulation return.* 2. □ **to rub into** to make an ointment go into the skin by rubbing ○ *Rub the liniment gently into the skin.*

rubber /'rʌbə/ *noun* 1. a material which can be stretched and compressed, made from the thick white liquid called latex, from a tropical tree 2. a condom (*informal*)

rubber sheet /,rʌbə 'ʃɪ:t/ *noun* a waterproof sheet put on hospital beds or on the bed of a child who is prone to bedwetting, to protect the mattress

rubbing alcohol /'rʌbɪŋ ,ælkəhɒl/ *noun* US same as **surgical spirit**

rubefacient /,ru:bɪ'feɪs(ə)nt/ *noun* a substance which makes the skin warm, and pink or red ■ *adjective* causing the skin to become red

rubella /ru:'belə/ *noun* a common infectious viral disease of children with mild fever, swollen lymph nodes and rash. Also called **German measles**

COMMENT: Rubella can cause stillbirth or malformation of an unborn baby if the mother catches the disease while pregnant. One component of the MMR vaccine immunises against rubella.

rubroela /ru:'bi:rələ/ *noun* same as **measles**

Rubin's test /'ru:bɪnз test/ *noun* a test to see if the Fallopian tubes are free from obstruction [After Isador Clinton Rubin (b. 1883), US gynaecologist]

rubor /'ru:bə/ *noun* redness of the skin or tissue

rudimentary /,ru:dɪ'ment(ə)rɪ/ *adjective* existing in a small form, or not developed fully ○ *The child was born with rudimentary arms.*

Ruffini corpuscles /ru:'fi:nɪ ,kɔ:pʊs(ə)lz/, **Ruffini nerve endings** /ru:,fi:nɪ 'nɜːv ,endɪŋz/ *plural noun* branching nerve endings in the skin, which are thought to be sensitive to heat

rusa /'ru:gə/ *noun* a fold or ridge, especially in a mucous membrane such as the lining of the stomach (NOTE: The plural is **rugae**.)

rule out /,ru:l 'aut/ *verb* to state that someone does not have a specific disease ○ *We can rule out shingles.*

rumbling /'rʌmblɪŋ/ *noun* borborygmus, noise in the abdomen, caused by gas in the intestine

rumination /,ru:mɪ'nɛf(ə)n/ *noun* 1. a condition in which someone has constant irrational thoughts which they cannot control 2. the regurgitation of food from the stomach which is then swallowed again

run /rʌn/ *verb* (of the nose) to drip with liquid secreted from the mucous membrane in the nasal passage ○ *His nose is running.* ○ *If your nose is running, blow it on a handkerchief.* ○ *One of the symptoms of a cold is a running nose.*

run-down /,rʌn 'daʊn/ *adjective* exhausted and unwell

running /'rʌnɪŋ/ *adjective* from which liquid is flowing ○ **running eyes**

running sore /,rʌnɪŋ 'sɔ:/ *noun* a sore which is discharging pus

runny nose /,rʌnɪ 'nəʊz/ *noun* a nose which is dripping with liquid from the mucous membrane

runs /rʌnz/ *noun* the runs same as **diarrhoea** (*informal*) ○ *I've got the runs again.* (NOTE: Takes a singular or plural verb.)

rupture /'rʌptʃə/ *noun* 1. the breaking or tearing of an organ such as the appendix 2. same as **hernia** ■ *verb* to break or tear something

ruptured spleen /,rʌptʃəd 'spli:n/ *noun* a spleen which has been torn by piercing or by a blow

Russell traction /'rʌs(ə)l ,trækʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a type of traction with weights and slings used to straighten a femur which has been fractured

[Described 1924. After R. Hamilton Russell (1860–1933), Australian surgeon.]

Ryle's tube /'raɪlz ,tju:b/ *noun* a thin tube which is passed into the stomach through either the nose or mouth, used to pump out the contents of the stomach or to introduce a barium meal in the stomach [Described 1921. After John Alfred Ryle (1882–1950), physician at London, Cambridge and Oxford, UK.]

S

Sabin vaccine /'seɪbɪn ,væksi:n/ *noun* an oral vaccine against poliomyelitis, consisting of weak live polio virus. Compare **Salk vaccine** (NOTE: This is the vaccine used in the UK) [Developed 1955. After Albert Bruce Sabin (1906–93), Russian-born New York bacteriologist.]

sac /sæk/ *noun* a part of the body shaped like a bag

saccades /sæ'keɪdz/ *plural noun* controlled rapid movements of the eyes made when a person is changing the direction in which they are focusing, e.g. when they are reading

sacchar- /sækə\| prefix same as **saccharo-** (used before vowels)

saccharide /'sækəraɪd/ *noun* a form of carbohydrate

saccharin /'sækərɪn/ *noun* a white crystalline substance, used in place of sugar because, although it is nearly 500 times sweeter than sugar, it contains no carbohydrates

saccharine /'sækərɪn/ *adjective* relating to, resembling or containing sugar

saccharo- /sækərəʊ\| prefix referring to sugar

saccule /'sækjʊ:l/, **sacculus** /'sækjʊləs/ *noun* the smaller of two sacs in the vestibule of the inner ear which is part of the mechanism which relates information about the position of the head in space

sacra /'seɪkrə/ plural of **sacrum**

sacral /'seɪkrəl/ *adjective* referring to the sacrum

sacral foramen /,seɪkrəl fə'reɪmən/ *noun* one of the openings in the sacrum through which the sacral nerves pass. See illustration at **PELVIS** in Supplement (NOTE: The plural is **sacral foramina**.)

sacralisation /,sækərələt'zeɪʃ(ə)n/, **sacralization** *noun* a condition in which the lowest lumbar vertebra fuses with the sacrum

sacral nerve /'sækərəl ,nɜ:v/ *noun* one of the nerves which branch from the spinal cord in the sacrum and govern the legs, the arms and the genital area

sacral plexus /,seɪkrəl 'pleksəs/ *noun* a group of nerves inside the pelvis near the sac-

rum which lead to nerves in the buttocks, back of the thigh and lower leg and foot

sacral vertebrae /,seɪkrəl 'vɜ:təbrə/ *plural noun* the five vertebrae in the lower part of the spine which are fused together to form the sacrum

sacro- /seɪkrəʊ\| *prefix* referring to the sacrum

sacrococcygeal /,seɪkrəkɒk'si:dʒiəl/ *adjective* referring to the sacrum and the coccyx

sacroiliac /,seɪkrəu'iliæk/ *adjective* referring to the sacrum and the ilium

sacroiliac joint /,seɪkrəu'iliæk dʒɔɪnt/ *noun* a joint where the sacrum joins the ilium

sacroiliitis /,seɪkrəu'ili'atɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the sacroiliac joint

sacrotuberous ligament /,seɪkrəu'tju:bərəs 'lɪgəmənt/ *noun* the large ligament between the iliac spine, the sacrum, the coccyx and the ischial tuberosity

sacro-uterine ligament /,seɪkrəu'ju:tərɪnəs 'lɪgəmənt/ *noun* a ligament which goes from the neck of the uterus to the sacrum, passing on each side of the rectum

sacrum /'seɪkrəm/ *noun* a flat triangular bone, formed of five sacral vertebrae fused together, located between the lumbar vertebrae and the coccyx. It articulates with the coccyx and also with the hip bones. See illustration at **PELVIS** in Supplement (NOTE: The plural is **sacra**.)

SAD *abbr* seasonal affective disorder

saddle joint /'sæd(ə)l dʒɔɪnt/ *noun* a synovial joint where one element is concave and the other convex, like the joint between the thumb and the wrist

saddle-nose /'sæd(ə)l nəʊz/ *noun* a deep bridge of the nose, usually a sign of injury but sometimes a sign of tertiary syphilis

sadism /'seɪdɪz(ə)m/ *noun* a sexual condition in which a person finds sexual pleasure in hurting others

sadist /'seɪdɪst/ *noun* a person whose sexual urge is linked to sadism

sadistic /sə'dɪstɪk/ *adjective* referring to sadism. Compare **masochism**

SADS abbr seasonal affective disorder syndrome

safe /seɪf/ **adjective** 1. not likely to cause harm ○ *Is it safe to use this drug on someone who is diabetic?* 2. in a protected place or situation and not likely to be harmed or lost ○ *Keep the drugs in a safe place.* ○ *He's safe in hospital being looked after by the doctors and nurses.* (NOTE: safer – safest)

'...a good collateral blood supply makes occlusion of a single branch of the coeliac axis safe' [British Medical Journal]

safe dose /seɪf 'dəʊs/ **noun** the amount of a drug which can be given without being harmful

safely /'seflɪ/ **adverb** without danger, without being hurt ○ *You can safely take six tablets a day without any risk of side-effects.*

safe period /'seɪf ,piəriəd/ **noun** the time during the menstrual cycle, when conception is not likely to occur, and sexual intercourse can take place, used as a method of contraception. ♦ **rhythm method**

safe sex /'seks/ **noun** the use of measures such as a contraceptive sheath and having only one sexual partner to reduce the possibility of catching a sexually transmitted disease

safety /'sefti/ **noun** the fact of being safe □ **to take safety precautions** to do things which make your actions or condition safe

safety pin /'sefti pɪn/ **noun** a special type of bent pin with a guard which protects the point, used for attaching nappies or bandages

sagittal /'sædʒɪt(ə)l/ **adjective** going from the front of the body to the back, dividing it into right and left

sagittal plane /,sædʒɪt(ə)l 'pleɪn/ **noun** the division of the body along the midline, at right angles to the coronal plane, dividing the body into right and left parts. Also called **median plane**. See illustration at ANATOMICAL TERMS in Supplement

sagittal section /,sædʒɪt(ə)l 'sekʃən/ **noun** any section or cut through the body, going from the front to the back along the length of the body

sagittal suture /,sædʒɪt(ə)l 'su:tʃə/ **noun** a joint along the top of the head where the two parietal bones are fused

STHA abbr Strategic Health Authority

St John Ambulance Association and Brigade /sənt ,dʒɒn 'æmbjʊləns ə,səʊns iər(ə)n ən bri'geɪd/ **noun** a voluntary organisation which gives training in first aid and whose members provide first aid at public events such as football matches and demonstrations

St Louis encephalitis /seɪnt ,lu:zɪs en,kefə 'laɪtɪs/ **noun** a sometimes fatal form of encephalitis, transmitted by the ordinary house mosquito, *Culex pipiens* [After St Louis, Missouri, USA, where it was first diagnosed]

St Vitus's dance /sənt 'vaɪtəsɪz dæ:ns/ **noun** a former name for Sydenham's chorea

salbutamol /sæl'bju:təmpl/ **noun** a drug which relaxes and dilates the bronchi, used in the relief of asthma, emphysema and chronic bronchitis

salicylate /sə'lɪsileɪt/ **noun** one of various pain-killing substances derived from salicylic acid, e.g. aspirin

salicylic acid /,sælɪ,siłɪk 'æsɪd/ **noun** a white antiseptic substance which destroys bacteria and fungi and which is used in ointments to treat corns, warts and other skin disorders

salicylism /'sælɪsɪlɪz(ə)m/ **noun** the effects of poisoning due to too much salicylic acid. Symptoms include headache, tinnitus, faintness and vomiting.

saline /'seɪlɪn/ **adjective** referring to or containing salt ○ *The patient was given a saline transfusion.* ■ **noun** same as saline solution

saline drip /,seɪlɪn 'drɪp/ **noun** a drip containing a saline solution

saline solution /'seɪlɪn sə,lu:ʃ(ə)n/ **noun** a solution made of distilled water and sodium chloride, which is introduced into the body intravenously through a drip

saliva /sə'laɪvə/ **noun** a fluid in the mouth, secreted by the salivary glands, which starts the process of digesting food (NOTE: For terms referring to saliva, see words beginning with **ptyal-**, **ptyalo-** or **sial-, sialo-**.)

COMMENT: Saliva is a mixture of a large quantity of water and a small amount of mucus, secreted by the salivary glands. Saliva acts to keep the mouth and throat moist, allowing food to be swallowed easily. It also contains the enzyme ptyalin, which begins the digestive process of converting starch into sugar while food is still in the mouth. Because of this association with food, the salivary glands produce saliva automatically when food is seen, smelt or even simply talked about.

salivary /sə'laɪv(ə)ri/ **adjective** referring to saliva

salivary calculus /sə'laɪv(ə)ri 'kælkjʊləs/ **noun** a stone which forms in a salivary gland

salivary gland /sə'laɪv(ə)ri glænd/ **noun** a gland which secretes saliva, situated under the tongue (the **sublingual gland**), beneath the lower jaw (the **submandibular gland**) and in the neck at the back of the lower jaw joint (the **parotid gland**)

salivate /'sælɪveɪt/ **verb** to produce saliva

salivation /,sælɪ'veɪʃ(ə)n/ **noun** the production of saliva

Salk vaccine /'sɔ:k ,væksi:n/ **noun** an injected vaccine against poliomyelitis, consisting of inactivated polio virus. Compare **Sabin vaccine** [Developed 1954. After Jonas Edward Salk (1914–95), virologist in Pittsburgh, USA.]

salmeterol /sæl'metərɒl/ **noun** a drug which relaxes and widens the airways, used to treat severe asthma

Salmonella /'sælmə'nelə/ *noun* a genus of pathogenic bacteria which live in the intestines and are usually acquired by eating contaminated food, responsible for many cases of gastroenteritis and for typhoid or paratyphoid fever
(NOTE: The plural is **Salmonellae**.)

Salmonella poisoning /'sælmə'nelə,pɔ:zɪn(ə)nɪŋ/ *noun* poisoning caused by *Salmonellae* which develop in the intestines ○ Five people were taken to hospital with *Salmonella* poisoning.

salmonellosis /'sælmənə'ləʊsɪs/ *noun* food poisoning caused by *Salmonella* in the digestive system

salping- /'sælpɪndʒ/ *prefix* same as **salpingo-** (used before vowels)

salpingectomy /'sælpɪn'dʒektəmi/ *noun* a surgical operation to remove or cut a Fallopian tube, used as a method of contraception

salpingitis /'sælpɪn'dʒaɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation, usually of a Fallopian tube

salpingo- /'sælpɪngəu/ *prefix* 1. referring to the Fallopian tubes 2. referring to the auditory meatus

salpingography /'sælpɪnɪ'gɒgrəfi/ *noun* an X-ray examination of the Fallopian tubes

salpingolysis /'sælpɪn'glɪsɪs/ *noun* a surgical operation to open up blocked Fallopian tubes by removing any adhesions near the ovaries

salpingo-oophorectomy /'sælpɪngəu,əʊfə'rektəmi/ *noun* a surgical operation to remove a Fallopian tube and ovary

salpingo-oophoritis /'sælpɪn'əʊfə'rɪtɪs/, **salpingo-oothecitis** /'sælpɪn'əʊθə'rɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of a Fallopian tube and the ovary connected to it

salpingo-oophorocele /'sælpɪngəu əʊ'nfərəʊsɪ:l/, **salpingo-oothecocoele** /'sælpɪngəu əʊ'θi:kəʊsɪ:l/ *noun* a hernia where a Fallopian tube and its ovary pass through a weak point in the surrounding tissue

salpingostomy /'sælpɪn'gɒstəmi/ *noun* a surgical operation to open up a blocked Fallopian tube

salpinx /'sælpɪnɪks/ *noun* same as **Fallopian tube** (NOTE: The plural is **salpinges**.)

salt /sɔ:lt/ *noun* 1. small white crystals mainly of sodium chloride used to flavour and preserve food 2. a crystalline compound, usually containing a metal, formed when an acid is neutralised by an alkali

COMMENT: Salt forms a necessary part of diet, as it replaces salt lost in sweating and helps to control the water balance in the body. It also improves the working of the muscles and nerves. Most diets contain more salt than each person actually needs, and although it has not been proved to be harmful, it is generally wise to cut down on salt consumption. Salt is one of the four tastes, the others being sweet, sour and bitter.

salt depletion /'sɔ:lt dɪpli:ʃ(ə)n/ *noun* loss of salt from the body, by sweating or vomiting, which causes cramp

salt-free diet /'sɔ:lt fri:t'daɪət/ *noun* a diet in which no salt is allowed

salve /sælv/ *noun* an ointment

sample /'sæ:mpl/ *noun* a small quantity of something used for testing ○ *Blood samples were taken from all the staff in the hospital.* ○ *The doctor asked her to provide a urine sample.*

sanatorium /'sænə'tɔ:rɪəm/ *noun* an institution, similar to a hospital, which treats particular types of disorder such as tuberculosis, or offers special treatment such as hot baths or massage (NOTE: The plural is **sanatoria** or **sanatoriums**.)

sandflea /'sændfla:/ *noun* the jigger, a tropical insect which enters the skin between the toes and digs under the skin, causing intense irritation

sandfly fever /'sændfla:fɪvə/ *noun* a virus infection like influenza, which is transmitted by the bite of the sandfly *Phlebotomus papatasii* and is common in the Middle East

sandwich therapy /'sænwɪdʒ'θerəpi/ *noun* a system in which one type of treatment is used between exposures to a different treatment, e.g., chemotherapy given before and after radiation, or radiation given before and after surgery

sangui- /'sæŋgwɪ/ *prefix* relating to blood

sanguineous /sæŋ'gwɪniəs/ *adjective* referring to blood, containing blood

sanies /'seɪnɪts/ *noun* a discharge from a sore or wound which has an unpleasant smell

sanitary /'sænɪt(ə)ri/ *adjective* 1. clean 2. referring to hygiene or to health

sanitary towel /'sænɪt(ə)ri'_taʊəl/ *noun* a disposable pad of absorbent material worn by women to absorb the blood flow during menstruation

sanitation /'sænɪ'teɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the practice of being hygienic, especially referring to public hygiene ○ *Poor sanitation in crowded conditions can result in the spread of disease.*

SA node /'es 'eɪ nəud/, **S-A node** *noun* same as **sinoatrial node**

saphena /'sæfɪ:nə/ *noun* same as **saphenous vein** (NOTE: The plural is **saphenae**.)

saphenous /'sæfɪ:nəs/ *adjective* relating to the saphenous veins

saphenous nerve /'sæfɪ'nəs nɜ:v/ *noun* a branch of the femoral nerve which connects with the sensory nerves in the skin of the lower leg

saphenous opening /'sæfɪ:nəs 'ə:p(ə)nɪŋ/ *noun* a hole in the fascia of the thigh through which the saphenous vein passes

saphenous vein /sə'fi:nəs veɪn/ *noun* one of two veins which take blood from the foot up the leg. Also called **saphena**

COMMENT: The long (internal) saphenous vein, the longest vein in the body, runs from the foot up the inside of the leg and joins the femoral vein. The short (posterior) saphenous vein runs up the back of the lower leg and joins the popliteal vein.

sapphism /'sæfɪz(ə)m/ *noun* same as **lesbianism**

sapraemia /sæ'pri:mɪə/ *noun* blood poisoning by saprophytes

saprophyte /'sæprəfaɪt/ *noun* a microorganism which lives on dead or decaying tissue

saprophytic /sæprə'tɪtɪk/ *adjective* referring to an organism which lives on dead or decaying tissue

sarc- /sɑ:k/, **sarco-** /sə:kəʊ/ *prefix* 1. referring to flesh 2. referring to muscle

sarcoid /'sɑ:kɔɪd/ *noun* a tumour which is like a sarcoma ■ *adjective* like a sarcoma

sarcoidosis /sə:kɔɪ'daʊsɪs/ *noun* a disease causing enlargement of the lymph nodes, where small nodules or granulomas form in certain tissues, especially in the lungs or liver and other parts of the body. Also called **Boeck's disease, Boeck's sarcoid** (NOTE: The Kveim test confirms the presence of sarcoidosis.)

sarcolemma /,sə:kəʊ'lɛmə/ *noun* a membrane surrounding a muscle fibre

sarcoma /sə:kəʊmə/ *noun* a cancer of connective tissue such as bone, muscle or cartilage

sarcomatosis /sə:kəʊmə'təʊsɪs/ *noun* a condition in which a sarcoma has spread through the bloodstream to many parts of the body

sarcomatous /sə:'kɒmətəs/ *adjective* referring to a sarcoma

sarcomere /'sə:kəmɪə/ *noun* a filament in myofibril

sarcoplasm /'sə:kəplæz(ə)m/ *noun* semi-liquid cytoplasm in muscle membrane. Also called **myoplasm**

sarcoplasmic /,sə:kəʊ'plæzmɪk/ *adjective* referring to sarcoplasm

sarcoplasmic reticulum /,sə:kəʊ plæzmɪk rɪ'tɪkjuləm/ *noun* a network in the cytoplasm of striated muscle fibres

sarcoptes /sə:'kɒptɪz/ *noun* a type of mite which causes scabies

sardonicus /sə:'dɒnɪkəs/ ♦ **risus sardonicus**

SARS /sə:z/ *noun* a serious, sometimes fatal, infection affecting the respiratory system, first seen in China. Suspected cases of SARS must be isolated with full barrier nursing precautions. Full form **severe acute respiratory syndrome**

sartorius /sə:'tɔ:rɪəs/ *noun* a very long muscle, the longest muscle in the body, which runs

from the anterior iliac spine, across the thigh down to the tibia

saturated fat /,sætʃə'reɪtɪd 'fæt/ *noun* a fat which has the largest amount of hydrogen possible

COMMENT: Animal fats such as butter and fat meat are saturated fatty acids. It is thought that increasing the amount of unsaturated and polyunsaturated fats, mainly vegetable fats and oils, and fish oil, and reducing saturated fats in the food intake helps reduce the level of cholesterol in the blood, and so lessens the risk of atherosclerosis.

saturnism /'sætənɪz(ə)m/ *noun* lead poisoning

satyriasis /,sætə'ræɪəsɪs/ *noun* an obsessive sexual urge in a man (NOTE: A similar condition in a woman is called **nymphomania**.)

saucerisation /,sə:sərə'zeɪʃ(ə)n/, **saucerization** *noun* 1. a surgical operation in which tissue is cut out in the form of a saucer-like depression, usually in order to help material drain away from infected areas of bone 2. the shallow saucer-like appearance of the upper surface of a vertebra after a compression fracture

save /seɪv/ *verb* 1. to stop someone from being hurt or killed ○ *The doctors saved the little boy from dying of cancer.* □ **the surgeons saved her life** they stopped the patient from dying 2. to stop something from being damaged ○ *The surgeons were unable to save the sight of their patient.*

saw /sɔ:/ *noun* a tool with a long metal blade with teeth along its edge, used for cutting ■ *verb* to cut something with a saw (NOTE: **sawing – sawed – sawn**)

Sayre's jacket /'seɪəz ,dʒækɪt/ *noun* a plaster cast which supports the spine when vertebrae have been deformed by tuberculosis or spinal disease [After Lewis Albert Sayre (1820–1901), US surgeon]

s.c. abbr subcutaneous

scab /skæb/ *noun* a crust of dry blood which forms over a wound and protects it

scabicide /'skeɪbəsایd/ *noun* a solution which kills mites ■ *adjective* killing mites

scabies /'skeɪbi:z/ *noun* a very irritating infection of the skin caused by a mite which lives under the skin

scala /'skʊ:lə/ *noun* a spiral canal in the cochlea

COMMENT: The cochlea is formed of three spiral canals: the **scala vestibuli** which is filled with perilymph and connects with the oval window; the **scala media** which is filled with endolymph and transmits vibrations from the scala vestibuli through the basilar membrane to the **scala tympani**, which in turn transmits the sound vibrations to the round window.

scald /skɔ:ld/ *noun* an injury to the skin caused by touching a very hot liquid or steam. Also called **wet burn** ■ *verb* to injure the skin with a very hot liquid or steam

scalding /'skɔ:ldɪŋ/ *adjective* 1. referring to a liquid which is very hot 2. referring to urine which gives a burning sensation when passed
scale /skeil/ *noun* 1. a thin flat piece of something such as dead skin 2. same as **tartar** 3. a system of measurement or valuation based on a series of marks or levels with regular intervals between them ○ *a pay scale* 4. same as **scales** ■ *verb* to remove the calcium deposits from teeth

scalenus /'skei'lɪ:nəs/, **scalene** /'skei:lɪ:nə/ *noun* one of a group of muscles in the neck which bend the neck forwards and sideways, and also help expand the lungs in deep breathing

scalenus syndrome /'skei'lɪ:nəs 'sɪnd्रəm/ *noun* a pain in an arm, caused by the scalenus anterior muscle pressing the subclavian artery and the brachial plexus against the vertebrae. Also called **thoracic outlet syndrome**

scale off /,skei'l 'ɒf/ *verb* to fall off in scales

scaler /'skei:lə/ *noun* a surgical instrument for scaling teeth

scales /skei:lz/ *noun* a machine for weighing ○ *The nurses weighed the baby on the scales.*

scalp /'skei:p/ *noun* the thick skin and muscle, with the hair, which covers the skull

scalpel /'skei:pəl/ *noun* a small sharp-pointed knife used in surgery

scaly /'skei:li/ *adjective* covered in scales ○ *The pustules harden and become scaly.*

scan /skæn/ *noun* 1. an examination of part of the body using computer-interpreted X-rays to create a picture of the part on a screen 2. a picture of part of the body created on a screen using computer-interpreted X-rays ■ *verb* to examine part of the body using computer-interpreted X-rays to create a picture of the part on a screen

scanner /'skænə/ *noun* 1. a machine which scans a part of the body 2. a person who examines a test slide 3. a person who operates a scanning machine

scanning /'skæniŋ/ *noun* 1. the act of examining an area with the eyes 2. the act of examining internal organs of the body with a piece of electronic equipment

scanning speech /'skæniŋ spɪ:tʃ/ *noun* a disorder in speaking, where each sound is spoken separately and given equal stress

scaphocephalic /,skæfəʊsə'fælɪk/ *adjective* having a long narrow skull

scaphocephaly /,skæfəʊ'kefəli/, ,skæfəʊ' 'sefəli/ *noun* a condition in which the skull is unusually long and narrow

scaphoid /'skæfɔɪd/, **scaphoid bone** /'skæfɔɪd bəʊn/ *noun* one of the carpal bones in the wrist. See illustration at **HAND** in Supplement

scapula /'skæpjʊlə/ *noun* one of two large flat bones covering the top part of the back. Also called **shoulder blade** [NOTE: The plural is **scapulae**.)

scapular /'skæpjʊlər/ *adjective* referring to the shoulder blade

scapulo- /'skæpjʊləʊ/ *prefix* relating to the scapula

scapulohumeral /,skæpjʊləʊ'hju:mərəl/ *adjective* referring to the scapula and humerus

scar /skɑ:/ *noun* the mark left on the skin after a wound or surgical incision has healed ○ *He still has the scar of his appendicectomy.* Also called **cicatrix** ■ *verb* to leave a scar on the skin ○ *The burns have scarred him for life.* ○ *Plastic surgeons have tried to repair the scarred arm.* ○ *Patients were given special clothes to reduce hypertrophic scarring.*

scarification /skærifi'keɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* scratching, making minute cuts on the surface of the skin, e.g. for a smallpox vaccination

scarificator /'skærifɪkətər/ *noun* an instrument used for scarification

scarlatina /,skɔ:la'ti:nə/, **scarlet fever** /,skɔ:ltə 'fi:və/ *noun* an infectious disease with a fever, sore throat and a red rash. It is caused by a haemolytic streptococcus and can sometimes have serious complications if the kidneys are infected.

Scarpa's triangle /,skɑ:rpə:z 'traiæŋgəl/ *noun* same as **femoral triangle** [After Antonio Scarpa (1747–1832), Italian anatomist and surgeon]

scar tissue /'skɑ: ,tɪʃu:/ *noun* fibrous tissue which forms a scar

scat- /'skæt/, **scato-** /'skætəʊ/ *prefix* referring to the faeces

scatole /'skætəʊl/ *noun* a substance in faeces, formed in the intestine, which causes a strong smell [NOTE: Also spelled **skatole**.)

SCC abbr squamous cell carcinoma

scent /'sent/ *noun* 1. a pleasant smell ○ *The scent of flowers makes me sneeze.* 2. a cosmetic substance which has a pleasant smell 3. a smell given off by a substance which stimulates the sense of smell

scented /'sentɪd/ *adjective* with a strong pleasant smell ○ *He is allergic to scented soap.*

schema /'ski:mə/ *noun* same as **body image**

Scheuermann's disease /'ʃeʊərnənz di:zɪ:z/ *noun* inflammation of the bones and cartilage in the spine, usually affecting adolescents [Described 1920. After Holger Werfel Scheuermann (1877–1960), Danish orthopaedic surgeon and radiologist.]

Schick test /'ʃɪk test/ *noun* a test to see if a person is immune to diphtheria [Described 1908. After Bela Schick (1877–1967), paediatrician in Vienna, Austria, and New York, USA.]

COMMENT: In the Schick test, a small amount of diphtheria toxin is injected, and if the point

of injection becomes inflamed it shows the person is not immune to the disease (a positive reaction).

Schilling test /'ʃɪlɪŋ test/ *noun* a test to see if someone can absorb Vitamin B₁₂ through the intestines, to determine cases of pernicious anaemia [After Robert Frederick Schilling (b. 1919), US physician]

-schisis /'skarɪsɪs/ *suffix* referring to a fissure or split

schisto- /'sɪstəʊ/ *prefix* referring to something which is split

Schistosoma /'sɪstə'soʊmə/, **schistosome** /'sɪstəsəʊm/ same as **bilharzia**

schistosomiasis /,sɪstəsəʊ'maɪəsɪs/ *noun* same as **bilharziasis**

schiz- /'skɪtsɪ/, **schizo-** /'skɪtsəʊ/ *prefix* referring to something which is split

schizoid /'skɪtsəɪd/ *adjective* referring to schizophrenia ■ *noun* a person who has a less severe form of schizophrenia

schizoid personality /,skɪtsəɪd ˌpɜːsə'næltɪ/ *noun* a disorder in which someone is cold towards other people, thinks mainly about himself or herself and behaves in an odd way. Also called **split personality**

schizophrenia /,skɪtsəʊ'friːniə/ *noun* a mental disorder in which someone withdraws from contact with other people, has delusions and seems to lose contact with the real world

schizophrenic /,skɪtsəʊ'frenɪk/ *noun* someone who has schizophrenia ■ *adjective* having schizophrenia

schizotypal personality disorder /,skɪtsəʊ'taɪpəl, pɜːsə'næltɪ dɪs, ɔːdə/ *noun* a schizoid personality type disorder

Schlatter's disease /'flætəz dɪ,zi:z/ *noun* inflammation in the bones and cartilage at the top of the tibia [Described 1903. After Carl Schlatter (1864–1934), Professor of Surgery at Zürich, Switzerland.]

Schlemm's canal /'flemz kə,næl/ *noun* a circular canal in the sclera of the eye, which drains the aqueous humour [Described 1830. After Friedrich Schlemm (1795–1858), Professor of Anatomy in Berlin, Germany.]

Schönlein–Henoch purpura /,ʃɔːnlain 'henpɪk, pɜː:pjʊrə/, **Schönlein's purpura** /'ʃɔːnlainz, pɜː:pjʊrə/ *noun* a blood disorder of children, in which the skin becomes purple on the buttocks and lower legs, the joints are swollen and painful and there are gastrointestinal problems

school /sku:l/ *noun* 1. a place where children are taught 2. a specialised section of a university

school health service /sku:l 'helθ ,sɜːvɪs/ *noun* a special service, part of the local health authority, which looks after the health of children in school

school nurse /sku:l 'nɜːs/ *noun* a nurse who works in a school, treating health problems and promoting health and safety

Schwann cells /'svɒn selz/ *plural noun* the cells which form the myelin sheath around a nerve fibre. See illustration at **NEURONE** in Supplement [Described 1839. After Friedrich Theodor Schwann (1810–82), German anatomist.]

schwannoma /'svɒn'naʊmə/ *noun* a neurofibroma, a benign tumour of a peripheral nerve

Schwartze's operation /'svɔːtsɪz ,ɒpəreɪʃn/ *noun* the original surgical operation to drain fluid and remove infected tissue from the mastoid process [After Hermann Schwartze (1837–1910), German otologist]

sciatic /saɪ'ætɪk/ *adjective* 1. referring to the hip 2. referring to the sciatic nerve

sciatica /saɪ'ætɪkə/ *noun* pain along the sciatic nerve, usually at the back of the thighs and legs

COMMENT: Sciatica can be caused by a slipped disc which presses on a spinal nerve, or can simply be caused by straining a muscle in the back.

sciatic nerve /saɪ'ætɪk nɜːv/ *noun* one of two main nerves which run from the sacral plexus into each of the thighs, dividing into a series of nerves in the lower legs and feet. They are the largest nerves in the body.

SCID abbr severe combined immunodeficiency

science /'saɪəns/ *noun* a study based on looking at and recording facts, especially facts arranged into a system

scientific /,saɪəntɪfɪk/ *adjective* referring to science ○ *He carried out scientific experiments.*

scientist /'saɪəntɪst/ *noun* a person who specialises in scientific studies

scintigram /'sɪntɪgræm/ *noun* an image recording radiation from radioactive isotopes injected into the body

scintilloscope /'sɪntɪləskoʊp/ *noun* an instrument which produces a scintigram

scintillator /'sɪntɪleɪtə/ *noun* a substance which produces a flash of light when struck by radiation

scintiscan /'sɪntɪskæn/ *noun* a scintigram which shows the variations in radiation from one part of the body to another

scirrhous /'sɪrəs/ *adjective* hard ○ a *scirrhous tumour*

scirrhous /'sɪrəs/ *noun* a hard malignant tumour, especially in the breast

scissor leg /'sɪzə leg/ *noun* a condition in which someone walks with one leg crossing over the other, usually as a result of spasticity of the leg's adductor muscles

scissor legs /'sɪzə legz/ *plural noun* malformed legs, where one leg is permanently crossed over in front of the other

scissors /'sɪzəz/ *plural noun* an instrument for cutting, made of two blades and two handles fastened together

scissura /'sɪʃʊrə/ *noun* an opening in something or a splitting of something

scler- /sklɪərə/ *prefix* same as **sclero-** (*used before vowels*)

sclera /'sklɪərə/ *noun* the hard white outer covering of the eyeball. See illustration at **EYE** in Supplement. Also called **sclerotic**, **sclerotic coat**, **albuginea oculi**

COMMENT: The front part of the sclera is the transparent cornea, through which the light enters the eye. The conjunctiva, or inner skin of the eyelids, connects with the sclera and covers the front of the eyeball.

scleral /'sklɪərəl/ *adjective* referring to the sclera

scleral lens /'sklɪərəl lənz/ *noun* a large contact lens which covers most of the front of the eye

scleritis /'sklɪə'rɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the sclera

sclero- /'sklɪərəʊ/ *prefix* 1. hard, thick 2. referring to the sclera

scleroderma /,sklɪərə'dz:mə/ *noun* a collagen disease which thickens connective tissue and produces a hard thick skin

scleroma /'sklə'rəʊmə/ *noun* a patch of hard skin or hard mucous membrane

scleromalacia /,sklɪərəʊmə'leɪʃə/ pe 'fɔ:rəns/, **scleromalacia perforans** /,sklɪərəʊmə'leɪʃə/ *noun* a condition of the sclera in which holes appear in it

sclerosant agent /'sklə'rəʊs(ə)nt ,eɪdʒənt/ *noun* an irritating liquid injected into tissue to harden it

sclerosing /'sklə'rəʊsɪŋ/ *adjective* becoming hard, or making tissue hard

sclerosing agent /'sklə'rəʊsɪŋ ,eɪdʒənt/, **sclerosing solution** /'sklə'rəʊsɪŋ sə,lju:s(ə)n/ *noun* same as **sclerosant agent**

sclerosis /'sklə'rəʊsɪs/ *noun* a condition in which tissue becomes hard

sclerotherapy /,sklɪərəʊ'θerəpi/ *noun* the treatment of a varicose vein by injecting a sclerosant agent into the vein, and so encouraging the blood in the vein to clot

sclerotic /'sklə'rɒtɪk/ *adjective* referring to sclerosis, or having sclerosis ■ *noun* same as **sclera**

sclerotic coat /'sklə,rɒtɪk 'kəʊt/ *noun* same as **sclera**

sclerotome /'sklɪərətəʊm/ *noun* a sharp knife used in **sclerotomy**

sclerotomy /'sklə'rɒtəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to cut into the sclera

scolex /'skəuleks/ *noun* the head of a tapeworm, with hooks which attach it to the wall of the intestine (NOTE: The plural is **scolices** or **scolexes**.)

scoliosis /,skəʊlɪə'sɪsɪs/ *noun* a condition in which the spine curves sideways

scoliotic /,skəʊlɪə'bɪtɪk/ *adjective* referring to a spine which curves sideways

scoop stretcher /'sku:p ,stretʃə/ *noun* a type of stretcher formed of two jointed sections which can slide under someone and lock together

-scope /'skəʊp/ *suffix* referring to an instrument for examining by sight

scopolamine /skə'pɒləmɪ:n/ *noun* a colourless thick liquid poisonous alkaloid found in some plants of the nightshade family. It is used especially to prevent motion sickness and as a sedative.

scorbutic /skə:'bju:tɪk/ *adjective* referring to scurvy

scorbutus /skə:'bju:təs/ *noun* same as **scurvy**

scoto- /skəʊtə/ *prefix* dark

scotoma /skə'təʊmə/ *noun* a small area in the field of vision where someone cannot see

scotometer /skə'u'tɒmɪtə/ *noun* an instrument used to measure areas of impaired vision

scotopia /skə'u'təʊpiə/ *noun* the power of the eye to adapt to poor lighting conditions and darkness

scotopic /skə'u'tɒpɪk/ *adjective* referring to scotopia

scotopic vision /skə'u,tɒpɪk 'vɪʒ(ə)n/ *noun* vision in the dark and in dim light, where the rods of the retina are used instead of the cones, which are used for photopic vision. ♦ **dark adaptation**

scrape /skreɪp/ *verb* to remove the surface of something by moving a sharp knife across it

scratch /skrætʃ/ *noun* a slight wound on the skin made when a sharp point is pulled across it ○ *She had scratches on her legs and arms.* ○ *Wash the dirt out of that scratch in case it gets infected.* ■ *verb* to harm the skin by moving a sharp point across it ○ *The cat scratched the girl's face.* ○ *Be careful not to scratch yourself on the wire.*

scratch test /'skrætʃ tɛst/ *noun* a test for allergy, in which a small amount of a substance is placed on a lightly scratched area of skin to see if a reaction occurs

scream /skri:m/ *noun* a loud sharp cry ■ *verb* to make a loud sharp cry

screen /skri:n/ *noun* 1. a light wall, sometimes with a curtain, which can be moved about and put round a bed to shield a person 2. same as **screening** ■ *verb* to examine large numbers of people to test them for a disease ○ *The population of the village was screened for meningitis.*

'...in the UK the main screen is carried out by health visitors at 6–10 months. With adequately staffed and trained community services, this method of screening can be extremely effective' [Lancet]

screening /'skri:nɪŋ/ *noun* the process of testing large numbers of people to see if any of them have a particular type of disease. ◊ **genetic screening**

‘GPs are increasingly requesting blood screening for patients concerned about HIV’ [Journal of the Royal College of General Practitioners]

screening test /'skri:nɪŋ test/ *noun* a test for a particular disease which is given to people who have no symptoms in order to identify how many of them have that disease or are showing early signs of it

script /skrɪpt/ *noun* a doctor’s prescription (*informal*)

scrofula /'skrʊfjʊlə/ *noun* a form of tuberculosis in the lymph nodes in the neck, formerly caused by unpasteurised milk but now rare

scrofuloderma /'skrʊfjʊlədəmə/ *noun* a form of tuberculosis of the skin, forming ulcers, and secondary to tuberculous infection of an underlying lymph gland or structure

scrota /'skrəʊtə/ plural of **scrotum**

scrotal /'skrəʊt(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to the scrotum

scrototomy /'skrəʊ'tɒtəmi/ *noun* a surgical operation to open up and examine the scrotum (NOTE: The plural is **scrototomies**.)

scrotum /'skrəʊtəm/ *noun* a bag of skin hanging from behind the penis, containing the testes, epididymides and part of the spermatic cord. See illustration at **UROGENITAL SYSTEM (MALE)** in Supplement (NOTE: The plural is **scrotums** or **scrota**.)

scrub nurse /'skrab ,nɜ:s/ *noun* a nurse who cleans the operation site on someone’s body before an operation

scrub typhus /'skrab ,taifəs/ *noun* same as **tsutsugamushi disease**

scrub up /'skrab 'ʌp/ *verb (of a surgeon or theatre nurse)* to clean the hands and arms thoroughly before performing surgery (NOTE: **scrubbing up – scrubbed up**)

scrumptox /'skrʌmpɒks/ *noun* a form of herpes simplex found especially in male sports players, passed on easily due to the presence of small cuts in the skin combined with the abrasive effects of facial stubble

scurf /skɜ:f/ *noun* same as **dandruff**

scurvy /'skɜ:vɪ/ *noun* a disease caused by lack of vitamin C or ascorbic acid which is found in fruit and vegetables. Also called **scorbutus**

COMMENT: Scurvy causes general weakness and anaemia, with bleeding from the gums and joints, and under the skin. In severe cases, the teeth drop out. Treatment consists of vitamin C tablets and a change of diet to include more fruit and vegetables.

scybalum /'sibələm/ *noun* very hard faeces

seasick /'si:sɪk/ *adjective* feeling sick because of the movement of a ship ◊ As soon as the ferry started to move she felt seasick.

seasickness /'si:sɪknəs/ *noun* illness, with nausea, vomiting and sometimes headache, caused by the movement of a ship ◊ Take some seasickness tablets if you are going on a long journey.

seasonal affective disorder /,si:z(ə)n(ə)l ə'fektɪv dɪs,ɔ:də/, **seasonal affective disorder syndrome** /,si:z(ə)n(ə)l ə'fektɪv dɪs,ɔ:də ,sɪndrəʊm/ *noun* a condition in which a person becomes depressed and anxious during the winter when there are fewer hours of daylight. Its precise cause is not known, but it is thought that the shortage of daylight may provoke a reaction between various hormones and neurotransmitters in the brain. Abbr **SAD**, **SADS**

seat-belt syndrome /'sɪ:t belt ,sɪndrəʊm/ *noun* a group of injuries between the neck and the abdomen which occur in a car accident when a person is using either a lap belt or a shoulder belt incorrectly, not over the strongest part of the chest

sebaceous /sə'beɪʃəs/ *adjective* 1. referring to sebum 2. producing oil

sebaceous cyst /sə,beɪʃəs 'sɪst/ *noun* a cyst which forms when a sebaceous gland is blocked. ◊ **steatoma**

sebaceous gland /sə,beɪʃəs 'glænd/ *noun* a gland in the skin which secretes sebum at the base of each hair follicle

seborrhoea /,sebə'rɪ:a/ *noun* an excessive secretion of sebum by the sebaceous glands, common in young people at puberty, and sometimes linked to seborrhoeic dermatitis (NOTE: The US spelling is **seborrhea**.)

seborrhoeic /,sebə'rɪ:ik/ *adjective* 1. caused by seborrhoea 2. having an oily secretion (NOTE: [all senses] The US spelling is **seborheic**.)

seborrhoeic dermatitis /,sebə'rɪ:ik ,dʒɜ:mə'taɪtɪs/, **seborrhoeic eczema** /,sebə'rɪ:k ɛk'zɛmə/ *noun* a type of eczema where scales form on the skin

seborrhoeic rash /,sebə'rɪ:ik 'ræʃ/ *noun* ◊ **seborrhoeic dermatitis**

sebum /'sɪ:bəm/ *noun* an oily substance secreted by a sebaceous gland, which makes the skin smooth. It also protects the skin against bacteria and the body against rapid evaporation of water.

second /'sekənd/ *noun* a unit of time equal to 1/60 of a minute ■ *adjective* coming after the first

secondary /'sekənd(ə)rɪ/ *adjective* 1. occurring after the first stage 2. less important than something else 3. referring to a condition which develops from another condition ■ *noun* a malignant tumour which has developed and spread from another malignant tumour. ◊ **primary** (NOTE: The plural is **secondaries**.)

secondary amenorrhoea /,sekənd(ə)rɪ et'menər̩hœə/ *noun* a situation in which a pre-

menopausal woman's menstrual periods have stopped

secondary biliary cirrhosis /,sekənd(ə)ri 'biliəri sə'rəʊsɪs/ noun cirrhosis of the liver caused by an obstruction of the bile ducts

secondary bronchi /,sekənd(ə)ri 'brɒŋki:/ plural noun same as **lobar bronchi**

secondary care /,sekənd(ə)ri 'keə/ noun treatment provided by the professional team in a hospital, rather than by a GP or other primary care provider and the primary health care team. Compare **primary care**, **tertiary care**. Also called **secondary health care**

secondary cartilaginous joint /,sekənd(ə)ri kɑ:tɪ'la:dʒinəs, dʒɔ:nt/ noun a joint where the surfaces of the two bones are connected by a piece of cartilage so that they cannot move, e.g. the pubic symphysis

secondary dysmenorrhoea /,sekənd(ə)ri dɪs'men'ri:a/ noun dysmenorrhoea which starts at some time after the first menstruation

secondary growth /,sekənd(ə)ri 'grəʊθ/ noun same as **metastasis**

secondary haemorrhage /,sekənd(ə)ri 'hem(ə)rɪdʒ/ noun a haemorrhage which occurs some time after an injury, usually due to infection of the wound

secondary health care /,sekənd(ə)ri 'helθ keə/ noun same as **secondary care**

secondary infection /,sekənd(ə)ri ɪn'fekʃən/ noun an infection which affects a person while he or she is weakened through having another infection

secondary medical care /,sekənd(ə)ri 'medɪk(ə)l keə/ noun specialised treatment provided by a hospital

secondary peritonitis /,sekənd(ə)ri ,perɪtə 'naɪtɪs/ noun peritonitis caused by infection from an adjoining tissue, e.g. from the rupturing of the appendix

secondary prevention /,sekənd(ə)ri pri'venʃən/ noun the use of methods such as screening tests which avoid a serious disease by detecting it early

secondary sexual characteristic /,sekənd(ə)ri ,sek'sjuəl kærɪktə'rɪstɪk/ noun a sexual characteristic which develops after puberty, e.g. pubic hair or breasts

second-degree burn /,sekənd dr,grɪ:bɜ:n/ noun a burn where the skin becomes very red and blisters

second-degree haemorrhoids /,sekənd dr,grɪ:'hemərɔɪds/ plural noun haemorrhoids which protrude into the anus but return into the rectum automatically

second intention /,sekənd ɪn'tenʃ(ə)n/ noun healing of an infected wound or ulcer, which takes place slowly and leaves a prominent scar

second-level nurse /,sekənd ,lev(ə)l 'nɜ:s/, **second-level registered nurse** /

,sekənd ,lev(ə)l ,redʒɪstrɪstər 'nɜ:s/ noun a trained person who delivers nursing care under the direction and supervision of a first-level nurse. Compare **first-level nurse**

second molar /,sekənd 'məʊlə/ noun any of the molars at the back of the jaw, before the wisdom teeth, erupting at about 12 years of age

second opinion /,sekənd ə'pɪnjən/ noun a diagnosis or opinion on treatment from a second doctor, often a hospital specialist

secrete /sɪ'kri:t/ verb (of a gland) to produce a substance such as hormone, oil or enzyme (NOTE: **secreting – secreted**)

secretin /sɪ'kri:tɪn/ noun a hormone secreted by the duodenum which encourages the production of pancreatic juice

secretion /sɪ'kri:ʃ(ə)n/ noun 1. the process by which a substance is produced by a gland ○ *The pituitary gland stimulates the secretion of hormones by the adrenal gland.* 2. a substance produced by a gland ○ *Sex hormones are bodily secretions.*

secretor /sɪ'kri:tər/ noun a person who secretes substances indicating ABO blood group into mucous fluids such as semen or saliva

secretory /sɪ'kri:tərɪ/ adjective referring to, accompanied by or producing a secretion

secretory otitis media /sɪ,kri:tərɪ əʊ,tatɪs 'mi:diə/ noun same as **glue ear**

section /'sekʃən/ noun 1. a part of something ○ *the middle section of the aorta* 2. the action of cutting tissue 3. a cut made in tissue 4. a slice of tissue cut for examination under a microscope 5. a part of a document such as an Act of Parliament ○ *She was admitted under section 5 of the Mental Health Act.*

Section 47 /,sekʃən fɔ:ti 'sev(ə)n/ noun a UK law under which a local authority has the power to seek an order from a magistrate's court authorising the removal of a person at severe risk from their home. The authority must have a doctor's certificate that the person is either suffering from a grave and chronic disease or is unable to look after himself or herself and is not receiving proper care and attention from other people.

security blanket /sɪ'kjʊərətɪ ,blæŋkit/ noun a familiar blanket, toy or other object which a child carries around because it makes him or her feel safe

sedate /sɪ'deɪt/ verb to calm a person by giving them a drug which acts on the nervous system and relieves stress or pain, and in larger doses makes the person sleep ○ *Elderly or confused patients may need to be sedated to prevent them wandering.* (NOTE: **sedating – sedated**)

sedation /sɪ'deɪʃ(ə)n/ noun the act of calming someone using a sedative □ **under sedation** having been given a sedative ○ *He was*

still under sedation, and could not be seen by the police.

sedative /'sedətɪv/ *noun* an anxiolytic or hypnotic drug such as benzodiazepine, which acts on the nervous system to help a person sleep or to relieve stress (*dated*) ◎ *She was prescribed sedatives by the doctor.* ■ *adjective* acting to help a person sleep or to relieve stress

sedentary /'sed(ə)nt(ə)ri/ *adjective* involving a lot of sitting and little exercise

'...changes in lifestyle factors have been related to the decline in mortality from ischaemic heart disease. In many studies a sedentary lifestyle has been reported as a risk factor for ischaemic heart disease' [*Journal of the American Medical Association*]

sedentary occupation /,sed(ə)nt(ə)ri,ɒk'ju'peɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a job where the workers sit down for most of the time

sediment /'sedimənt/ *noun* solid particles, usually insoluble, which fall to the bottom of a liquid

sedimentation /,sedimen'teɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the action of solid particles falling to the bottom of a liquid

sedimentation rate /,sedimen'teɪʃ(ə)n reɪt/ *noun* the rate at which solid particles are deposited from a solution, measured especially in a centrifuge

segment /'segmənt/ *noun* a part of an organ or piece of tissue which is clearly separate from other parts

segmental /seg'ment(ə)l/ *adjective* formed of segments

segmental ablation /seg'ment(ə)l æ'bлеɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a surgical operation to remove part of a nail, e.g. treatment for an ingrowing toenail

segmental bronchi /seg'ment(ə)l 'brɒŋki:/ *plural noun* air passages supplying a segment of a lung. Also called **tertiary bronchi**

segmentation /,segmən'teɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the movement of separate segments of the wall of the intestine to mix digestive juice with the food before it is passed along by the action of peristalsis

segmented /'segməntɪd/ *adjective* formed of segments

segregation /,segri'geɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* 1. the act of separating one person, group or thing from others, or of dividing people or things into separate groups which are kept apart from each other 2. the separation of the alleles of each gene and their distribution to separate sex cells during the formation of these cells in organisms with paired chromosomes

seizure /'si:ʒə/ *noun* a fit, convulsion or sudden contraction of the muscles, especially in a heart attack, stroke or epileptic fit

select /'selkt/ *verb* to choose one person, thing or group, but not others ◎ *She was selected to go on a midwifery course*

selection /sɪ'leksʃən/ *noun* an act of choosing one person, thing or group, but not others ◎ *The selection of a suitable donor for a bone marrow transplant* ◎ *The candidates for the post have to go through a selection process.*

selective /sɪ'lektɪv/ *adjective* choosing only one person, thing or group, and not others

selective oestrogen receptor modulator /sɪ,lektɪv 'oestrədʒ(ə)n rɪ,septə,moðjʊlɪtə/, **selective estrogen receptor modulator** *noun* a drug which acts on specific oestrogen receptors to prevent bone loss without affecting other oestrogen receptors, e.g. raloxifene hydrochloride. Abbr **SERM**

selective serotonin re-uptake inhibitor /sɪ,lektɪv sera,tæonin ri:'ʌpterɪk in,hɪbitə/ *noun* a drug which causes a selective accumulation of serotonin in the central nervous system, and is used in the treatment of depression, e.g. fluoxetine. Abbr **SSRI**

COMMENT: The drug should not be started immediately after stopping an MAOI and should be withdrawn slowly.

selenium /sə'lɪ:nɪəm/ *noun* a non-metallic trace element (NOTE: The chemical symbol is **Se**)

self- /self/ *prefix* yourself

self-abuse /,self ə'bju:s/ *noun* same as **self-harm**

self-actualisation /,self ,æk'tjuələr'zeɪʃ(ə)n/, **self-actualization** *noun* the successful development and use of personal talents and abilities

self-admitted /,self əd'mitɪd/ *adjective* referring to a patient who has admitted himself or herself to hospital without being sent by a doctor

self-care /self 'keə/ *noun* the act of looking after yourself properly, so that you remain healthy

self-catheterisation /,self ,kæθɪtərəz'zeɪʃ(ə)n/, **self-catheterization** *noun* a procedure in which a person puts a catheter through the urethra into his or her own bladder to empty out the urine

self-defence /,self dɪ'fens/ *noun* the act of defending yourself when someone is attacking you

self-examination /,self ɪg,zæmɪ'næɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the regular examination of parts of your own body for signs of disease

self-governing hospital /,self ,gavənɪŋ 'hɒspɪt(ə)l/ *noun* in the UK, a hospital which earns its revenue from services provided to the District Health Authorities and family doctors. Also called **hospital trust**

self-harm /,self 'ha:m/ *noun* a deliberate act by which someone injures part of their body as the result of a personal trauma. Cutting and burning are two of the most common forms of self-harm. Also called **self-abuse**, **self-injury**, **self-mutilation**, **self-wounding**

self-image /self 'imɪdʒ/ *noun* the opinion which a person has about how worthwhile, attractive, or intelligent he or she is

self-injury /,self 'ɪndʒəri/, **self-mutilation** /,self ,mju:tɪ'lɛf(ə)n/ *noun* same as **self-harm**

self-retaining catheter /self rɪ'teɪnɪŋ 'kæθətər/ *noun* a catheter which remains in place until it is deliberately removed

self-wounding noun same as **self-harm**

sell a turcica /,selə 'tɜ:sɪkə/ *noun* a hollow in the upper surface of the sphenoid bone in which the pituitary gland sits. Also called **pituitary fossa**

semeiology /,sɪ:maɪ'ɒlədʒɪ/ *noun* same as **symptomatology**

semen /'sɪ:mən/ *noun* a thick pale fluid containing spermatozoa, produced by the testes and seminal vesicles and ejaculated from the penis

semi- /semi/ *prefix* half

semicircular /,semi'sɜ:kjʊlər/ *adjective* shaped like half a circle

semicircular canal /,semisɜ:kjʊlər kə'næl/ *noun* any one of three tubes in the inner ear which are partly filled with fluid and help to maintain balance. See illustration at **EAR** in Supplement

COMMENT: The three semicircular canals are on different planes. When a person's head moves, as when he or she bends down, the fluid in the canals moves and this movement is communicated to the brain through the vestibular section of the auditory nerve.

semicircular duct /,semisɜ:kjʊlər 'dʌkt/ *noun* a duct in the semicircular canals in the ear

semicomatose /,semi'kəʊmətəʊs/ *adjective* almost unconscious or half asleep, but capable of being woken up

semi-conscious /,semi 'kɒnʃəs/ *adjective* half conscious, only partly aware of what is going on ○ *She was semi-conscious for most of the operation.*

semi-liquid /,semi 'lɪkwɪd/ *adjective* half liquid and half solid

semilunar /,semi'lu:nər/ *adjective* shaped like half a moon

semilunar cartilage /,semi,lu:nər 'kɑ:təlɪdʒ/ *noun* same as **meniscus**

semilunar valve /,semi,lu:nər 'vælv/ *noun* either of two valves in the heart, the pulmonary valve and the aortic valve, through which blood flows out of the ventricles

seminal /'semɪn(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to semen

seminal fluid /'semɪn(ə)l ,flu:ɪd/ *noun* the fluid part of semen, formed in the epididymis and seminal vesicles

seminal vesicle /,semɪn(ə)l 'vesɪk(ə)l/ *noun* one of two glands at the end of the vas deferens which secrete the fluid part of semen.

See illustration at **urogenital system (male)** in Supplement

seminiferous tubule /semi,nɪfərəs 'tju:bju:l/ *noun* a tubule in the testis which carries semen

seminoma /,semi'nəʊmə/ *noun* a malignant tumour in the testis (NOTE: The plural is **semomas** or **seminomata**)

semipermeable /,semi'pɜ:miəb(ə)l/ *adjective* allowing some types of particle to pass through but not others

semipermeable membrane /,semi ,pɜ:miəb(ə)l 'membreɪn/ *noun* a membrane which allows some substances in liquid solution to pass through but not others

semiprone /semi'prəʊn/ *adjective* referring to a position in which someone lies face downwards, with one knee and one arm bent forwards and the face turned to one side

semi-solid /,semi 'sɒlɪd/ *adjective* half solid and half liquid

SEN abbr State Enrolled Nurse

senescence /sɪ'nesəns/ *noun* the ageing process

senescent /sɪ'nesənt/ *adjective* approaching the last stages of the natural life span

Sengstaken tube /'seŋstekən tju:b/ *noun* a tube with a balloon, which is passed through the mouth into the oesophagus to stop oesophageal bleeding [After Robert William Sengstaken (b. 1923), US surgeon]

senile /'sɪ:nɪl/ *adjective* 1. referring to the last stages of the natural life span or to the medical conditions associated with it 2. referring to someone whose mental faculties have become weak because of age

senile cataract /,sɪ:nɪl 'kætərækt/ *noun* a cataract which occurs in an elderly person

senile dementia /,sɪ:nɪl dɪ'menʃəl/ *noun* mental degeneration affecting elderly people (dated)

senile plaque /'sɪ:nɪl plæk/ *noun* a spherical deposit of beta amyloid in brain areas in Alzheimer's disease

senilis /sə'nɪlɪs/ ♀ **arcus senilis**

senility /sə'nɪlɪti/ *noun* the deterioration of mental activity associated with the last stages of the natural life span

senior /'sɪ:nɪə/ *adjective* 1. older than another person or other people 2. holding a more important position than others ○ *He is the senior anaesthetist in the hospital.* ○ *Senior members of staff are allowed to consult the staff records.*

■ **senior** a senior person

senna /'sɛnə/ *noun* a laxative made from the dried fruit and leaves of a tropical tree

sensation /sen'seʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a feeling or information about something which has been sensed by a sensory nerve and is passed to the brain

sense /sens/ *noun* 1. one of the five faculties by which a person notices things in the outside world: sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch ○ *When she had a cold, she lost her sense of smell.* 2. the ability to discern or judge something ■ *verb* to notice something by means other than sight ○ *Teeth can sense changes in temperature.*

sense of balance /,sens əv 'bæləns/ *noun* a feeling that keeps a person upright, governed by the fluid in the inner ear balance mechanism

sense organ /sens 'ɔ:gən/ *noun* an organ in which there are various sensory nerves which can detect environmental stimuli such as scent, heat or pain, and transmit information about them to the central nervous system, e.g. the nose or the skin

sensibility /,sensɪ'bilitɪ/ *noun* the ability to detect and interpret sensations

sensible /'sensib(ə)l/ *adjective* 1. showing common sense or good judgment 2. able to be detected by the senses

sensible perspiration /,sensəb(ə)l ,pɜ:spə'reɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* drops of sweat which can be seen on the skin, secreted by the sweat glands

sensitisation /,sensɪta'zeɪʃ(ə)n/, **sensitization** *noun* 1. the process of making a person sensitive to something 2. an unexpected reaction to an allergen or to a drug, caused by the presence of antibodies which were created when the person was exposed to the drug or allergen in the past

sensitise /'sensɪtaɪz/, **sensitize** *verb* to make someone sensitive to a drug or allergen (NOTE: **sensitising – sensitised**)

sensitised person /,sensɪtaɪzd 'pɜ:s(ə)n/, **sensitized person** *noun* a person who is allergic to a drug

sensitising agent /'sensɪtaɪzɪŋ ,eɪdʒənt/, **sensitizing agent** *noun* a substance which, by acting as an antigen, makes the body form antibodies

sensitive /'sensɪtɪv/ *adjective* 1. able to detect and respond to an outside stimulus 2. having an unexpected reaction to an allergen or to a drug, caused by the presence of antibodies which were created when the person was exposed to the drug or allergen in the past

sensitivity /,sensi'trɪvɪtɪ/ *noun* 1. the fact of being able to detect and respond to an outside stimulus 2. the rate of positive responses in a test from persons with a specific disease. A high rate of sensitivity means a low rate of people being incorrectly classed as negative. Compare **specificity**

sensorineural deafness /,sensərɪ,njuərəl 'defnəs/, **sensorineural hearing loss** /,sensərɪ,njuərəl 'hɪərɪŋ lɒs/ *noun* deafness caused by a disorder in the auditory nerves or

the brain centres which receive impulses from the nerves. Also called **perceptive deafness**

sensory /'sensəri/ *adjective* referring to the detection of sensations by nerve cells

sensory cortex /,sensərɪ 'kɔ:tɛks/ *noun* the area of the cerebral cortex which receives information from nerves in all parts of the body (dated)

sensory deprivation /,sensərɪ ,deprɪ 'veɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a condition in which a person becomes confused because they lack sensations

sensory nerve /'sensərɪ nɜ:v/ *noun* a nerve which registers a sensation such as heat, taste or smell and carries impulses to the brain and spinal cord. Also called **afferent nerve**

sensory neurone /,sensərɪ 'njuərəʊn/ *noun* a nerve cell which transmits impulses relating to sensations from the receptor to the central nervous system

sensory receptor /,sensərɪ rɪ'septə/ *noun* a cell which senses a change in the surrounding environment, e.g. cold or pressure, and reacts to it by sending out an impulse through the nervous system. Also called **nerve ending**

separate *verb* /'sepəreɪt/ to move two or more people or things apart ○ *The surgeons believe it may be possible to separate the joined twins.* ○ *The retina has become separated from the back of the eye.* (NOTE: **separating – separated**) ■ *adjective* /'sep(ə)rətɪv/ 1. not touching, together or in the same place 2. distinct and not related or the same

separation /,sepə'reɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the act of separating or dividing two or more people or things, or the state of being separated

separation anxiety /,sepə'reɪʃ(ə)n æŋ'ziəti/ *noun* a state of anxiety caused in someone, especially a young child, by the thought or fact of being separated from his or her mother or primary caregiver

sepsis /'sepsɪs/ *noun* the presence of bacteria and their toxins in the body, which kill tissue and produce pus, usually following the infection of a wound

Sept- /sep/ *prefix* same as **septi-** (used before vowels)

septa /'septə/ plural of **septum**

septal /'sept(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to a septum

septal defect /,sept(ə)l 'di:fekt/ *noun* a congenital condition in which a hole exists in the wall between the left and right sides of the heart allowing an excessive amount of blood to flow through the lungs, leading in severe cases to pulmonary hypertension and sometimes heart failure

septate /'septeɪt/ *adjective* divided by a septum

septi- /sep/ *prefix* referring to sepsis

septic /'septɪk/ *adjective* referring to or produced by sepsis

septicaemia /,septɪ'si:mɪə/ *noun* a condition in which bacteria or their toxins are present in the blood, multiply rapidly and destroy tissue. □ **blood poisoning** (NOTE: The US spelling is **septicemia**.)

septicaemic /,septɪ'si:mɪk/ *adjective* caused by septicaemia, associated with septicaemia (NOTE: The US spelling is **septicemic**.)

septicaemic plague /,septɪ'si:mɪk 'pleɪg/ *noun* a form of bubonic plague in which the symptoms are generalised throughout the body

septic shock /,septɪk 'ʃɒk/ *noun* shock caused by bacterial toxins in the blood as a result of infection. There is a dramatic drop in blood pressure, preventing the delivery of blood to the organs. Toxic shock syndrome is one type of septic shock.

septo- /'septəʊ/ *prefix* referring to a septum

septoplasty /'septəplæstɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to straighten the cartilage in the septum (NOTE: The plural is **septoplasties**.)

Septrin /'septrɪn/ a trade name for co-trimoxazole

septum /'septəm/ *noun* a wall between two parts of an organ, e.g. between two parts of the heart or between the two nostrils in the nose. See illustration at **HEART** in Supplement (NOTE: The plural is **septa**.)

septum defect /'septəm ,di:fekt/ *noun* a condition in which a hole exists in a septum, usually the septum of the heart

sequela /sɪ'kwɪ:lə/ *noun* a disease or disorder that is caused by a disease or injury which the person had previously □ *a case of osteomyelitis as a sequela of multiple fractures of the mandible* □ *biochemical and hormonal sequelae of the eating disorders* □ *Kaposi's sarcoma can be a sequela of Aids.* (NOTE: The plural is **sequelae**.)

sequence /'si:kwəns/ *noun* a series of things, numbers etc., which follow each other in order ■ *verb* 1. to put things in order 2. to show how amino acids are linked together in chains to form protein (NOTE: **sequences – sequencing – sequenced**)

sequestra /'sɪ:kwestrə/ plural of **sequestrum**

sequestration /,sɪ:kwe'streɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* 1. the act of putting someone in an isolated place 2. the loss of blood into spaces in the body, reducing the circulating volume. It can occur naturally or can be produced artificially by applying tourniquets. □ *pulmonary sequestration* □ *A dry hacking cough can cause sequestration of the peritoneum in the upper abdomen.* 3. the formation of a sequestrum

sequestrectomy /,sɪ:kwi'strektəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to remove a sequestrum (NOTE: The plural is **sequestrectomies**.)

sequestrum /sɪ'kwestrəm/ *noun* a piece of dead bone which is separated from whole bone (NOTE: The plural is **sequestra**.)

ser- /sɪər/ *prefix* same as **sero-** (used before vowels)

sera /'sɪərəl/ plural *noun* plural of **serum**

serine /'serɪn/ *noun* an amino acid produced in the hydrolysis of protein

serious /'sɪəriəs/ *adjective* 1. having very bad consequences □ *He's had a serious illness.* □ *There was a serious accident on the motorway.* □ *There is a serious shortage of plasma.* 2. thoughtful and not superficial or humorous □ *a serious discussion on the appropriateness of the treatment* □ *serious about becoming a GP*

seriously /'sɪəriəslɪ/ *adverb* in a serious way □ *She is seriously ill.*

SERM abbr selective (o)estrogen receptor modulator

sero- /'sɪərəʊ/ *prefix* 1. referring to blood serum 2. referring to the serous membrane

seroconvert /,sɪərəʊkən've:t/ *verb* to produce specific antibodies in response to the presence of an antigen such as a bacterium or virus

serological /,sɪərə'lɒdʒɪk(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to serology

serological diagnosis /,sɪərəulɒdʒɪk(ə)l ,daɪəg'nəʊsɪs/ *noun* a diagnosis which comes from testing serum

serological type /,sɪərəlɒdʒɪk(ə)l 'taip/ *noun* same as **serotype**

serology /sɪərə'lɒdʒɪ/ *noun* the scientific study of serum and the antibodies contained in it

seronegative /,sɪərəʊ'negatɪv/ *adjective* referring to someone who gives a negative reaction to a serological test

seropositive /,sɪərəʊ'pozɪtɪv/ *adjective* referring to someone who gives a positive reaction to a serological test

seropus /'sɪərəʊ,pəs/ *noun* a mixture of serum and pus

serosa /sɪ'rəʊsə/ *noun* same as **serous membrane** (NOTE: The plural is **serosas** or **serosae**.)

serositis /,sɪərəʊ'saitɪs/ *noun* inflammation of a serous membrane

serotherapy /,sɪərəʊ'θerəpi/ *noun* treatment of a disease using serum from immune people or immunised animals

serotonin /,sɪərə'taʊnɪn/ *noun* a compound which is a neurotransmitter and exists mainly in blood platelets. It is released after tissue is injured and is important in sleep, mood and vasoconstriction.

serotype /'sɪərəʊtaip/ *noun* 1. a category of microorganisms or bacteria which have some antigens in common 2. a series of common antigens which exists in microorganisms and bacteria □ also called **serological type** ■ *verb* to group microorganisms and bacteria according

ing to their antigens (NOTE: **serotyping – sero-typed**)

serous /'sɪərəs/ **adjective** referring to, producing, or like serum

serous membrane /'sɪərəs 'membreɪn/ **noun** a membrane which both lines an internal cavity and covers the organs in the cavity, e.g. the peritoneum lining the abdominal cavity or pleura lining the chest cavity. Also called **serosa**

serous pericardium /,sɪərəs ,peri 'ka:diam/ **noun** the inner part of the pericardium, forming a double sac which contains fluid to prevent the two parts of the pericardium from rubbing together

serpens /'sɜ:pɛnz/ ♦ **erythema serpens**

serpiginous /sə'pɪdʒɪnəs/ **adjective** 1. referring to an ulcer or eruption which creeps across the skin 2. referring to a wound or ulcer with a wavy edge

serrated /sə'reɪtɪd/ **adjective** with a zigzag or saw-like edge

serration /sə'reɪʃ(ə)n/ **noun** one of the points in a zigzag or serrated edge

Sertoli cells /sə'tɔ:lɪ selz/ **plural noun** cells which support the seminiferous tubules in the testis [Described 1865. After Enrico Sertoli (1842–1910), Italian histologist, Professor of Experimental Physiology at Milan, Italy.]

sertraline /'sɜ:ttralɪn/ **noun** an antidepressant drug which extends the action of the neurotransmitter serotonin. It is also used in the treatment of obsessive-compulsive disorder and post-traumatic stress disorder.

serum /'sɪərəm/ **noun** 1. a fluid which separates from clotted blood and is similar to plasma except that it has no clotting agents. Also called **blood serum** 2. blood serum taken from an animal which has developed antibodies to bacteria, used to give humans temporary immunity to a disease. Also called **antisera** 3. any clear watery body fluid, especially a fluid that comes from a serous membrane (NOTE: The plural is **serums** or **sera**.)

COMMENT: Blood serum is plasma without the clotting agents. It contains salt and small quantities of albumin, globulin, amino acids, fats and sugars; its main component is water.

serum albumin /,sɪərəm 'ælbjʊmɪn/ **noun** a major protein in blood plasma

serum bilirubin /,sɪərəm bili'rū:bɪn/ **noun** bilirubin in serum, converted from haemoglobin as red blood cells are destroyed

serum globulin /,sɪərəm 'globjʊlɪn/ **noun** a major protein in blood serum that is an antibody

serum glutamic–oxalacetic transaminase /,sɪərəm glu:tæmɪk ,oksæləsi:tɪk træns'æmɪneɪz/ **noun** an enzyme excreted by damaged heart muscle, which appears in the blood of people who have had a heart attack. Abbr **SGOT**

serum glutamic–pyruvic transaminase /,sɪərəm glu:tæmɪk pa:rɪvɪk træns'æmɪneɪz/ **noun** an enzyme secreted by the parenchymal cells of the liver, occurring in increased amounts in the blood of people with infectious hepatitis. Abbr **SGPT**

serum hepatitis /,sɪərəm ,hepə'tartɪs/ **noun** a serious form of hepatitis transmitted by infected blood, unsterilised surgical instruments, shared needles or sexual intercourse. Also called **hepatitis B, viral hepatitis**

serum sickness /'sɪərəm ,sɪknəs/ **noun** an allergic reaction to serum therapy which was formerly used as a way of boosting passive immunity

serum therapy **noun** the administration of treated serum, often from horses, formerly used as a way of boosting passive immunity

serve **verb** 1. to give a person food or drink ○ *Lunch is served in the ward at 12:30.* 2. to be useful or helpful to a person or group ○ *The clinic serves the local community well.* 3. to have a particular effect or result ○ *The letter serves to remind you of your outpatients' appointment.* (NOTE: [all senses] **serves – serving – served**)

service /'sɜ:vɪs/ **noun** 1. the act or fact of serving a person or group 2. a group of people working together

sesamoid /'sesəmɔɪd/, **sesamoid bone** /'sesəmɔɪd bən/ **noun** any small bony nodule in a tendon, the largest being the kneecap

sessile /'sesaɪl/ **adjective** referring to something, especially a tumour, which has no stem. Opposite **pedunculate**

session /'seʃ(ə)n/ **noun** a visit to a therapist for treatment ○ *She has two sessions a week of physiotherapy.* ○ *The evening session had to be cancelled because the therapist was ill.*

set /set/ **verb** 1. to put the parts of a broken bone back into their proper places and keep the bone fixed until it has mended ○ *The doctor set the man's broken arm.* 2. (of a broken bone) to mend, to form a solid bone again ○ *His arm has set very quickly.* ○ *Her broken wrist is setting very well.* ♦ **reset** (NOTE: **setting – set**)

settle /'set(ə)l/ **verb** 1. to begin to feel comfortable or at ease, or to make a person feel comfortable or at ease (NOTE: **settles – settling – settled**) 2. (of a sediment) to fall to the bottom of a liquid 3. (of a parasite) to attach itself, to stay in a part of the body ○ *The fluke settles in the liver.* (NOTE: **settles – settling – settled**)

sever /'sevə/ **verb** to cut something off ○ *His hand was severed at the wrist.* ○ *Surgeons tried to sew the severed finger back onto the patient's hand.*

severe /'sɪ'veə/ **adjective** very bad or dangerous ○ *The patient experienced severe bleeding.* ○ *A severe outbreak of whooping cough occurred during the winter.*

severe acute respiratory disorder /sɪ'veər ə'kju:tɪ rɪ'spirət(ə)ri dɪs,ɔ:də/ noun full form of **SARS**

severely /sɪ'veɪli/ adverb very badly or dangerously ○ *Her breathing was severely affected.*

'...many severely confused patients, particularly those in advanced stages of Alzheimer's disease, do not respond to verbal communication' [Nursing Times]

severity /sɪ'veriti/ noun the degree to which something is bad or dangerous ○ *Treatment depends on the severity of the attack.*

sex /seks/ noun 1. one of two groups, male and female, into which animals and plants can be divided ○ *The sex of a baby can be identified before birth.* 2. same as **sexual intercourse**

sex act /'seks ækt/ noun an act of sexual intercourse

sexarche /'sɛksɑ:kɪ/ noun the age when a person first has sexual intercourse

sex change /'seks tʃeindʒ/ noun a surgical operation accompanied by hormone treatment to change someone's physical sex-linked characteristics from female to male or from male to female

sex chromosome /'seks ,krəʊməsəʊm/ noun a chromosome which determines if a person is male or female

COMMENT: Out of the twenty-three pairs of chromosomes in each human cell, two are sex chromosomes, which are known as X and Y. Females have a pair of X chromosomes and males have a pair consisting of one X and one Y chromosome. The sex of a baby is determined by the father's sperm. While the mother's ovum only carries X chromosomes, the father's sperm can carry either an X or a Y chromosome. If the ovum is fertilised by a sperm carrying an X chromosome, the embryo will contain the XX pair and so be female. Disordered chromosomes affect sexual development: a person with an XO chromosome pair (i.e. one X chromosome alone) has Turner's syndrome; a person with an extra X chromosome (making an XYY set) has Klinefelter's syndrome. Haemophilia is a disorder linked to the X chromosome.

sex determination /'seks dɪtɜ:mi'neɪʃ(ə)n/ noun the way in which the sex of an individual organism is fixed by the number of chromosomes which make up its cell structure

sex hormone /'seks 'hɔ:məʊn/ noun an oestrogen or androgen which promotes the growth of secondary sexual characteristics

sex-linkage /'seks ,lɪŋkɪdʒ/ noun the existence of characteristics which are transmitted through the X chromosomes

sex-linked /'seks ,lɪŋkt/ adjective 1. referring to genes which are linked to X chromosomes 2. referring to characteristics such as colour-blindness which are transmitted through the X chromosomes

sexology /'sek'sɒlədʒi/ noun the study of sex and sexual behaviour

sex organ /'seks ,ɔ:gən/ noun an organ which is associated with reproduction and sexual intercourse, e.g. the testes and penis in men, and the ovaries, Fallopian tubes, vagina and vulva in women

sex selection /'seks sɪ'leksʃ(ə)n/ noun the determination of a baby's sex before conception by separating the spermatozoa carrying Y chromosomes from those carrying X chromosomes

sexuplet /'sɛksstju:płət/ noun one of six babies born to a mother at the same time

sexual /'sekʃuəl/ adjective referring to sex

sexual act /'sekʃuəl ækt/ noun an act of sexual intercourse

sexual attraction /,sekʃuəl ə'trækʃ(ə)n/ noun a feeling of wanting to have sexual intercourse with someone

sexual deviation /,sekʃuəl di:vɪ'eɪʃ(ə)n/ noun any sexual behaviour which is not accepted as usual in the society in which you live. Examples in Western society are sadism and voyeurism.

sexual intercourse /,sekʃuəl 'ɪntəkɔ:s/ noun physical contact between people which involves stimulation of the genitals, especially the insertion of a man's erect penis into a woman's vagina with release of spermatozoa from the penis by ejaculation, which may fertilise ova from the woman's ovaries. Also called **sex, coitus, copulation**

sexually transmitted disease /,sekʃuəl træns,mitɪd ɪn'fekʃ(ə)n/, **sexually transmitted infection** /,sekʃuəl træns,mitɪd ɪn'fekʃ(ə)n/ noun a disease or infection transmitted from an infected person to another person during sexual intercourse. Abbr **STD, STI**

COMMENT: Among the commonest STDs are non-specific urethritis, genital herpes, hepatitis B and gonorrhoea; AIDS is also a sexually transmitted disease. The spread of sexually transmitted diseases can be limited by use of condoms. Other forms of contraceptive offer no protection against the spread of disease.

sexual reproduction /,sekʃuəl ,ri:p're'dʌʃən/ noun reproduction in which gametes from two individuals fuse together

SFD abbr small for dates

SGOT abbr serum glutamic-oxalacetic transaminase

SGPT abbr serum glutamic-pyruvic transaminase

shaft /ʃa:f/ noun 1. the long central section of a long bone 2. main central section of the erect penis

shake /seɪk/ verb to move, or make something move, with short quick movements
(NOTE: **shaking – shook – shaken**)

shaken baby syndrome /,ʃerkən 'beibi ,sɪndrəʊm/, **shaken infant syndrome** /

seikōn /sɪkən/ *noun* a series of internal head injuries in a very young child, caused by being shaken violently. It can result in brain damage leading to speech and learning disabilities, paralysis, seizures and hearing loss, and may be life-threatening.

shaky /'ʃeiki/ *adjective* feeling weak and unsteady

share /ʃeə/ *verb* 1. to use or do something together with others 2. to divide something and give parts of it to different people or groups (NOTE: [all verb senses] **shares** – **sharing** – **shared**) ■ *noun* a single part of something divided among different people or groups

shared care /ʃeəd 'keə/ *noun* antenatal care given jointly by an obstetrician in a hospital together with a general practitioner or a midwife working in the community

sharp /ʃɑ:p/ *adjective* 1. able to cut easily ○ *A surgeon's knife has to be kept sharp.* 2. hurting in a sudden and intense way ○ *She felt a sharp pain in her shoulder.*

sharply /'ʃɑ:pli/ *adverb* suddenly and to a significant extent ○ *His condition deteriorated sharply during the night.*

sharps /ʃɑ:p/ *plural noun* objects with points, e.g. syringes (*informal*)

shave /ʃeɪv/ *noun* the removal of hair by cutting it off at skin level with a razor ■ *verb* to remove hair with a razor (NOTE: **shaving** – **shaved**)

sheath /ʃi:θ/ *noun* 1. a layer of tissue which surrounds a muscle or a bundle of nerve fibres 2. same as **condom**

shed /ʃed/ *verb* to lose blood or tissue ○ *The lining of the uterus is shed at each menstrual period.* ○ *He was given a transfusion because he had shed a lot of blood.* (NOTE: **shedding** – **shed**)

sheet /ʃi:t/ *noun* a large piece of cloth which is put on a bed ○ *The sheets must be changed each day.* ○ *The soiled sheets were sent to the hospital laundry.* □ **draw-sheet**

sheltered operation /'self ,ɒp'reɪʃʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a surgical operation to treat congenital dislocation of the hip in children, in which bone tissue is grafted onto the acetabulum

sheltered accommodation /'selfədə'meɪʃʃ(ə)n/, **sheltered housing** /'selfədə'hauzɪŋ/ *noun* rooms or small flats provided for elderly people, with a resident supervisor or nurse

shiatsu /ʃi'a:tsu:/ *noun* a form of healing massage in which the hands are used to apply pressure at acupuncture points on the body in order to stimulate and redistribute energy

shift /ʃift/ *noun* 1. a way of working in which one group of workers work for a period and are then replaced by another group ○ *She is working on the night shift.* ○ *The day shift comes on duty at 6.30 in the morning.* 2. the period of

time worked by a group of workers 3. a movement

Shigella /ʃɪ'gelə/ *noun* a genus of bacteria which causes dysentery

shigellosis /ʃɪg'e'ləʊsɪs/ *noun* infestation of the digestive tract with *Shigella*, causing bacillary dysentery

shin /ʃɪn/ *noun* the front part of the lower leg

shinbone /'ʃɪnbəʊn/ *noun* same as **tibia**

shiner /'ʃaɪnə/ *noun* same as **black eye** (*informal*)

shingles /'ʃɪŋgəlz/ *noun* same as **herpes zoster**

shin splints /'ʃɪn splints/ *plural noun* extremely sharp pains in the front of the lower leg, felt by athletes

Shirodkar's operation /ʃɪ'rɒdkɑ:z ɒpə'reɪʃʃ(ə)n/, **Shirodkar pursestring** /ʃɪ'rɒdkɑ:z 'pɜ:sst्रɪŋ/ *noun* a surgical operation to narrow the cervix of the uterus in a woman who experiences habitual abortion in order to prevent another miscarriage, the suture being removed before labour starts. Also called **pursestring operation** [After N. V. Shirodkar (1900–71), Indian obstetrician.]

Shirodkar suture /ʃɪ'rɒdkɑ:z ,su:tʃə/ *noun* a type of suture which is placed around a cervix to tighten it during pregnancy and prevent miscarriage. Also called **pursestring stitch**

shiver /'ʃɪvə/ *verb* to tremble or shake all over the body because of cold or a fever, caused by the involuntary rapid contraction and relaxation of the muscles

shivering /'ʃɪvərɪŋ/ *noun* the condition of trembling or shaking all over the body because of cold or a fever, caused by the involuntary rapid contraction and relaxation of the muscles

shivery /'ʃɪvəri/ *adjective* trembling from cold, fear or a medical condition

shock /ʃɒk/ *noun* a state of weakness caused by illness or injury that suddenly reduces the blood pressure ○ *The patient went into shock.*

○ *Several of the passengers were treated for shock.* □ **traumatic shock** a state of shock caused by an injury which leads to loss of blood ■ *verb* to give someone an unpleasant surprise, and so put him or her in a state of shock ○ *She was still shocked several hours after the accident.* (NOTE: You say that someone is in **shock**, in a state of **shock** or that they went into **shock**.)

shock lung /ʃɒk 'lʌŋ/ *noun* a serious condition in which a person's lungs fail to work following a trauma

shock syndrome /'ʃɒk ,sɪnd्रəʊm/ *noun* a group of symptoms, a pale face, cold skin, low blood pressure and rapid and irregular pulse, which show that someone is in a state of shock.

□ **anaphylactic shock**

shock therapy /'ʃɒk ,θerəpi/, **shock treatment** /'ʃɒk ,tri:tment/ *noun* a method of treat-

ing some mental disorders by giving an anaesthetised patient an electric shock to induce an epileptic convulsion

shoot /ʃu:t/ *verb (of pain)* to seem to move suddenly through the body with a piercing feeling ○ *The pain shot down his arm.*

shooting /'ʃu:tɪŋ/ *adjective (of pain)* sudden and intense

short /ʃɔ:t/ *adjective* 1. not having enough of something 2. not very tall or long

short-acting /,ʃɔ:t 'ækting/ *adjective* effective only for a short period

shortness of breath /,ʃɔ:tətnəs əv 'breθ/ *noun* the inability to breathe quickly enough to supply the oxygen needed

short of breath /,ʃɔ:t əv 'breθ/ *adjective* unable to breathe quickly enough to supply the oxygen needed ○ *After running up the stairs he was short of breath.*

shortsighted /,ʃɔ:t'saɪtɪd/ *adjective* same as **myopic**

shortsightedness /,ʃɔ:t'saɪtɪdnəs/ *noun* same as **myopia**

shot /ʃɒ:t/ *noun* same as **injection (informal)** ○ *The doctor gave her a tetanus shot.* ○ *He needed a shot of morphine to relieve the pain.*

shoulder /'ʃəuldə/ *noun* a joint where the top of the arm joins the main part of the body ○ *He dislocated his shoulder.* ○ *She was complaining of pains in her shoulder or of shoulder pains.*

shoulder blade /'ʃəuldə bleɪd/ *noun* same as **scapula**

shoulder girdle /'ʃəuldə ,gɜ:d(ə)l/ *noun* same as **pectoral girdle**

shoulder joint /'ʃəuldə dʒɔ:nt/ *noun* a ball and socket joint which allows the arm to rotate and move in any direction

shoulder lift /'ʃəuldə lift/ *noun* a way of carrying a heavy person, in which the upper part of his or her body rests on the shoulders of two carriers

shoulder presentation /'ʃəuldə ,prez(ə)n ,teɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a position of a baby in the uterus, in which the shoulder will first appear

show /ʃəʊ/ *noun* the first discharge of blood at the beginning of childbirth ■ *verb* 1. to cause or allow something to be visible 2. to provide convincing evidence of something

shriveled /'ʃrɪv(ə)lɪd/ *verb* to become dry and wrinkled (NOTE: **shrivelling – shrivelled**. The US spellings are **shriveling – shriveled**.)

shuffling walk /,ʃʌf(ə)lɪŋ 'wɔ:k/, **shuffling gait** /,ʃʌf(ə)lɪŋ 'geɪt/ *noun* a way of walking in which the feet are not lifted off the ground, e.g. in Parkinson's disease

shunt /ʃʌnt/ *noun* 1. the passing of fluid through a channel which is not the usual one 2. a channel which links two different blood vessels and carries blood from one to the other ■ *verb (of blood)* to pass through a channel which

is not the usual one ○ *As much as 5% of venous blood can be shunted unoxygenated back to the arteries.*

shunting /'ʃʌntɪŋ/ *noun* a condition in which some of the deoxygenated blood in the lungs does not come into contact with air, and full gas exchange does not take place

SI *abbreviation* the international system of metric measurements. Full form **Système International**

sial- /'saɪəl/ *prefix* same as **sialo-** (*used before vowels*)

sialadenitis /,saɪələnɛdɪ'nætɪs/ *noun* inflammation of a salivary gland. Also called **sialoadenitis, sialitis**

sialagogue /saɪ'æləgɒg/ *noun* a substance which increases the production of saliva

sialitis /,saɪələ'taɪtɪs/ *noun* same as **sialadenitis**

sialo- /saɪələʊ/ *prefix* 1. referring to saliva 2. referring to a salivary gland

sialoadenitis /,saɪələʊnɛdɪ'nætɪs/ *noun* same as **sialadenitis**

sialogogue /saɪ'æləgɒg/ *noun* same as **sialagogue**

sialography /,saɪə'lɒgrəfi/ *noun* X-ray examination of a salivary gland. Also called **ptyalography**

sialolith /saɪ'æləʊlɪθ/ *noun* a stone in a salivary gland. Also called **ptyalith**

sialorrhoea /,saɪələʊ'rɪə/ *noun* the production of an excessive amount of saliva (NOTE: The US spelling is **sialorrhea**.)

Siamese twins /,saɪəmī:z 'twɪnz/ *plural noun* same as **conjoined twins**

sib /sɪb/ *noun* same as **sibling (informal)**

sibilant /'sɪbɪlənt/ *adjective* referring to a sound which whistles

sibling /'sɪbɪŋ/ *noun* a brother or sister

Sichuan flu /,sɪtʃwa:n 'flu:/ *noun* a virulent type of flu which has the same symptoms as those of ordinary flu (e.g. fever, sore throat and aching muscles) but they are more pronounced (informal) (NOTE: The virus was first discovered in 1987 in Sichuan, a southwestern province of China.)

sick /sɪk/ *adjective* 1. having an illness ○ *He was sick for two weeks.* □ **to report or call in** *sick* to say officially that you are unwell and cannot work 2. about to vomit ○ *The patient got up this morning and felt sick.* □ **to be sick** to vomit ○ *The child was sick all over the floor.* □ **to make someone sick** to cause someone to vomit ○ *He was given something to make him sick.*

sickbay /'sɪkbɛɪ/ *noun* a room in a factory or on a ship where people can visit a doctor for treatment

sickbed /'sɪkbed/ *noun* a bed where a person is lying sick ○ *She sat for hours beside her daughter's sickbed.*

sick building syndrome /'sɪk 'bɪldɪŋ ,sɪn drəʊm/ *noun* a condition in which many people working in a building feel ill or have headaches, caused by blocked air-conditioning ducts in which stale air is recycled round the building, often carrying allergenic substances or bacteria (*informal*)

sicken for /'sɪkən fɔ:/ *verb* to feel the first symptoms of an illness (*informal*) ○ *She's looking pale – she must be sickening for something.*

sickle cell /'sɪk(ə)l sel/ *noun* a red blood cell shaped like a sickle, formed as a result of the presence of an unusual form of haemoglobin. Also called **drepanocyte**

sickle-cell anaemia /'sɪk(ə)l sel ə,ni:miə/ *noun* an inherited condition in which someone develops sickle cells which block the circulation, causing anaemia and pains in the joints and abdomen. Also called **drepanocytosis**, **sickle cell disease**

‘...children with sickle-cell anaemia are susceptible to severe bacterial infection. Even children with the milder forms of sickle-cell disease have an increased frequency of pneumococcal infection’ [*Lancet*]

COMMENT: Sickle-cell anaemia is a hereditary condition which is mainly found in people from Africa and the West Indies.

sickle-cell chest syndrome /'sɪk(ə)l sel 'tʃest ,sɪndrəʊm/ *noun* a common complication of sickle-cell disease, with chest pain, fever and leucocytosis

sickle-cell disease /'sɪk(ə)l sel dɪ,zi:z/ *noun* same as **sickle-cell anaemia**. Abbr **SCD**.

sickle-cell trait /'sɪk(ə)l sel ,treɪt/ *noun* a hereditary condition of the blood in which some red cells become sickle-shaped, but there are not enough affected cells to cause anaemia

sicklist /'sɪklist/ *noun* a list of people who are sick, e.g. children in a school or workers in a factory ○ *We have five members of staff on the sicklist.*

sickly /'sɪkli/ *adjective* (*usually of children*) subject to frequent sickness ○ *He was a sickly child, but now is a strong and healthy man.*

sickness /'sɪknes/ *noun* 1. a state of having an illness ○ *There is a lot of sickness in the winter months.* ○ *Many children are staying away from school because of sickness.* ♀ **sea-sickness, motion sickness** 2. a feeling of wanting to vomit

sickroom /'sɪkru:m/ *noun* a room where someone is ill ○ *Visitors are not allowed into the sickroom.*

side /saɪd/ *noun* 1. the part of the body between the hips and the shoulder ○ *She was lying on her side.* 2. the part of an object which is not the front, back, top or bottom ○ *The nurse wheeled the trolley to the side of the bed.*

side-effect /'saɪd ɪ,fekt/ *noun* an effect produced by a drug or treatment which is not the main effect intended ○ *One of the side-effects of chemotherapy is that the patient's hair falls out.*

‘...the treatment is not without possible side-effects, some of which can be particularly serious. The side-effects may include middle ear discomfort, claustrophobia, increased risk of epilepsy’ [*New Zealand Medical Journal*]

side rail /'saɪd ,reɪl/ *noun* a rail at the side of a bed which can be lifted to prevent the person falling out

sidero- /saɪdərəʊ/ *prefix* referring to iron

sideropenia /,saɪdərəʊ'pi:nɪə/ *noun* a lack of iron in the blood usually caused by insufficient iron in the diet

siderophilin /saɪdə'rɒfəlɪn/ *noun* same as **transferrin**

siderosis /,saɪdə'rəʊsɪs/ *noun* 1. a condition in which iron deposits form in tissue 2. inflammation of the lungs caused by inhaling dust containing iron

SIDS abbr sudden infant death syndrome

sight /saɪt/ *noun* one of the five senses, the ability to see ○ *His sight is beginning to fail.* □ **to lose your sight** to become blind

sighted /'saɪtɪd/ *adjective* able to see, as opposed to visually impaired

sigmoid /'sɪgmɔɪd/ *adjective* 1. shaped like the letter S 2. referring to the sigmoid colon ■ *noun* same as **sigmoid colon**

sigmoid colon /,sɪgmɔɪd 'kɔ:lən/ *noun* the fourth section of the colon which continues as the rectum. See illustration at **DIGESTIVE SYSTEM** in Supplement. Also called **pelvic colon**, **sigmoid**, **sigmoid flexure**

sigmoidectomy /,sɪgmɔɪ'dektəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to remove the sigmoid colon (NOTE: The plural is **sigmoidectomies**)

sigmoid flexure *noun* same as **sigmoid colon**

sigmoidoscope /sig'mɔɪdəskəʊp/ *noun* a surgical instrument with a light at the end which can be passed into the rectum so that the sigmoid colon can be examined

sigmoidoscopy /,sɪgmɔɪ'dɒbskəpɪ/ *noun* a procedure in which the rectum and sigmoid colon are examined with a sigmoidoscope

sigmoidostomy /,sɪgmɔɪ'dɒstəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to bring the sigmoid colon out through a hole in the abdominal wall (NOTE: The plural is **sigmoidostomies**)

sign /saɪn/ *noun* a movement, mark, colouring or change which has a meaning and can be recognised by a doctor as indicating a condition (NOTE: A change in function which is also noticed by the patient is a **symptom**.) ■ *verb* to write your name on a document such as a form or cheque, or at the end of a letter ○ *The doctor signed the death certificate.*

significant /sig'nifikənt/ *adjective* important or worth noting ○ *No significant inflammatory responses were observed.*

significantly /sig'nifikəntli/ *adverb* in an important or noteworthy manner ○ *He was not significantly better on the following day.*

sign language /'saɪŋ ,læŋgwɪdʒ/ *noun* a set of agreed signs made with the fingers and hands, used to indicate words by or for people who cannot hear or speak

sildenafil citrate /,sɪldənæfil 'sɪtret/ *noun* an enzyme-inhibiting drug used in the treatment of male impotence

silent /'saɪlənt/ *adjective* 1. not making any noise or talking 2. not visible or showing no symptoms ◇ *Genital herpes may be silent in women.* ◇ *Graft occlusion is often silent with 80% of patients.*

silica /'sɪlɪkə/ *noun* a compound of silicon, the mineral which forms quartz and sand. Also called **silicon dioxide**

silicon /'sɪlkən/ *noun* a non-metallic chemical element (NOTE: The chemical symbol is **Si**.)

silicon dioxide /,sɪlkən daɪ'ɒksaɪd/ *noun* same as **silica**

silicosis /,sɪlɪk'əʊsɪs/ *noun* a disease of the lungs caused by inhaling silica dust from mining or stone-crushing operations

COMMENT: This is a serious disease which makes breathing difficult and can lead to emphysema and bronchitis.

silver /'sɪlvə/ *noun* a white-coloured metallic element (NOTE: The chemical symbol is **Ag**.)

silver nitrate /,sɪlva 'nætrɪtət/ *noun* a salt of silver that is mixed with a cream or solution and used, e.g., to disinfect burns or to kill warts

Silvester method /sɪl'vestə ,meθəd/ *noun* a method of giving artificial respiration. The person lies on his or her back, then the first aider brings the person's hands together on the chest and moves them above the person's head. ♦ **Holger-Nielsen method**

Simmonds' disease /'sɪməndz dɪ,zi:z/ *noun* a condition of women due to postpartum haemorrhage, in which there is lack of activity in the pituitary gland, resulting in wasting of tissue, brittle bones and premature senility [Described 1914. After Morris Simmonds (1855–1925), German physician and pathologist.]

simple /'sɪmpəl/ *adjective* 1. ordinary 2. not very complicated

simple epithelium /,sɪmpəl ,epɪ'thɪliəm/ *noun* an epithelium formed of a single layer of cells

simple fracture /,sɪmpəl 'frækʃə/ *noun* a fracture where the skin surface around the damaged bone has not been broken and the broken ends of the bone are close together. Also called **closed fracture**

simple tachycardia /,sɪmpəl tæki'ka:diə/ *noun* same as **sinus tachycardia**

simplex /'sɪmplɛks/ ♦ **herpes simplex**

Sims' position /'simz pə,zɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a position of the body in which the person lies on his or her left side with their left arm behind their back and their right knee and thigh flexed. It is used to allow the anal or vaginal area to be examined easily.

simvastatin /sɪm'væstɪn/ *noun* a drug which lowers lipid levels in the blood, used in the treatment of high cholesterol

sinciput /'sɪnsɪpət/ *noun* the part of the skull that includes the forehead and the area above it

sinew /'sɪnu:/ *noun* same as **tendon**

singer's nodule /,sɪngəz 'nɒdju:l/ *noun* a small white polyp which can develop in the larynx of people who use their voice too much or too loudly

single parent family /,sɪŋg(ə)l ,peərənt 'fæm(ə)li/ *noun* a family which consists of a child or children and only one parent, e.g. because of death, divorce or separation

single photon emission computed tomography /,sɪŋg(ə)l ,fætɒmɪ ɪ,mɪʃ(ə)n kam ,pjʊ:tɪdʒ tə'mɒgrəfi/ *noun* a scan to study brain blood flow in conditions such as Alzheimer's disease

singultus /sɪŋ'gʌltəs/ *noun* same as **hiccup**

sinistral /'sɪnɪstrəl/ *adjective* relating to or located on the left side, especially the left side of the body

sino- /sɪnəʊ/ *prefix* referring to a sinus

sinoatrial /,sɪnəʊ'eɪtriəl/ *adjective* relating to the sinus venosus and the right atrium of the heart

sinoatrial node /,sɪnəʊ'eɪtriəl nəʊd/ *noun* a node in the heart at the junction of the superior vena cava and the right atrium, which regulates the heartbeat. Also called **SA node**, **sinus node**

sinogram /'sɪnəʊgræm/ *noun* an X-ray photograph of a sinus

sinography /sɪ'nɒgrəfi/ *noun* examination of a sinus by taking an X-ray photograph

sinu- /sɪnəʊ/ *prefix* same as **sino-**

sinuatrial *adjective* same as **sinoatrial**

sinus /'sɪnəs/ *noun* 1. a cavity inside the body, including the cavities inside the head behind the cheekbone, forehead and nose ◇ *The doctor diagnosed a sinus infection.* 2. a tract or passage which develops between an infected place where pus has gathered and the surface of the skin 3. a wide venous blood space

sinusitis /,sɪnə'saɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the mucous membrane in the sinuses, especially the maxillary sinuses

sinus nerve /'sɪnəs nɜ:v/ *noun* a nerve which branches from the glossopharyngeal nerve

sinus node /'sɪnəs nəʊd/ *noun* same as **sinuatrial node**

sinusoid /'sɪnəsɔɪd/ *noun* a specially shaped small blood vessel in the liver, adrenal glands and other organs

sinus tachycardia /,sɪnəs tæki'ka:diə/ *noun* rapid beating of the heart caused by stimulation of the sinoatrial node. Also called **simple tachycardia**

sinus venosus /'sainəs və'nəʊsɪs/ *noun* a cavity in the heart of an embryo, part of which develops into the coronary sinus and part of which is absorbed into the right atrium

siphonage /'saɪfənædʒ/ *noun* the removal of liquid from one place to another with a tube, as used to empty the stomach of its contents

Sippy diet /'sipi ,daɪət/ *noun US* an alkaline diet of milk and dry biscuits as a treatment for peptic ulcers [After Bertram Welton Sippy (1866–1924), physician in Chicago, USA]

sister /'sistə/ *noun* 1. a female who has the same father and mother as someone ○ *He has three sisters.* ○ *Her sister works in a children's clinic.* 2. a senior nurse □ **sister in charge** a senior nurse in charge of a hospital ward

sit /sɪt/ *verb* 1. to rest with your weight largely supported by the buttocks 2. to cause a person to sit somewhere (NOTE: [all senses] **sitting – sat**)

site /saɪt/ *noun* 1. the position of something ○ *The X-ray showed the site of the infection.* 2. the place where something happened 3. the place where an incision is to be made in a surgical operation ■ *verb* to put something in a particular place, or be in a particular place ○ *The infection is sited in the right lung.* (NOTE: **siting – sited**)

...arterial thrombi have a characteristic structure; platelets adhere at sites of endothelial damage and attract other platelets to form a dense aggregate' [*British Journal of Hospital Medicine*]

...the sublingual site is probably the most acceptable and convenient for taking temperature' [*Nursing Times*]

...with the anaesthetist's permission, the scrub nurse and surgeon began the process of cleaning up the skin round the operation site' [*NATNews*]

situated /'sɪtʃueɪtɪd/ *adjective* in a particular place ○ *The tumour is situated in the bowel.* ○ *The atlas bone is situated above the axis.*

sit up /sɪt 'ʌp/ *verb* 1. to sit with your back straight ○ *The patient is sitting up in bed.* 2. to move from a lying to a sitting position (NOTE: **sitting up – sat up**)

situs /'sɪtəs/ *noun* the position of an organ or part of the body, especially the usual position (NOTE: The plural is **situs.**)

situs inversus /'saitəs ɪn'versəs/, **situs inversus viscerum** /'saitəs ɪn,vɪsərəm/ *noun* a congenital condition, in which the organs are not on the usual side of the body, i.e. where the heart is on the right side and not the left

sitz bath /'sɪts ba:θ/ *noun* a small low bath where someone can sit, but not lie down

SI units /'es 'aɪ ,ju:nɪts/ *plural noun* the units used in an international system of units for measuring physical properties such as weight, speed and light

Sjögren's syndrome /'sɜ:grenz ,sɪn drəʊm/ *noun* a chronic autoimmune disease in which the lacrimal and salivary glands become

infiltrated with lymphocytes and plasma cells, and the mouth and eyes become dry

skatole /'skætəʊl/ *noun* another spelling of scatole

skeletal /'skelɪt(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to the skeleton

skeletal muscle /'skelɪt(ə)l ,mʌs(ə)l/ *noun* a muscle attached to a bone, which makes a limb move

skeleton /'skelɪt(ə)n/ *noun* all the bones which make up a body

Skene's glands /'ski:nz glændz/ *noun* small mucous glands in the urethra in women [Described 1880. After Alexander Johnston Chalmers Skene (1838–1900), Scottish-born New York gynaecologist.]

skia- /'skaiə/ *prefix* referring to shadow

skiagram /'skaiəgræm/ *noun* an old term for X-ray photograph

skier's thumb /'ski:əz θʌm/ *noun* an injury to the thumb caused by falling directly onto it when it is outstretched, resulting in tearing or stretching of the ligaments of the main thumb joint

skill /skil/ *noun* an ability to do difficult work, which is acquired by training ○ *You need special skills to become a doctor.*

skilled /skild/ *adjective* having acquired a particular skill by training ○ *He's a skilled plastic surgeon.*

skill mix /'skil mɪks/ *noun* the range of different skills possessed by the members of a group or required for a particular job

skin /skɪn/ *noun* the tissue which forms the outside surface of the body ○ *His skin turned brown in the sun.* ○ *Skin problems in adolescents may be caused by diet.* (NOTE: For other terms referring to skin, see words beginning with **cut-, derm-, derma-, dermato-, dermo-.**)

COMMENT: The skin is the largest organ in the human body. It is formed of two layers: the epidermis is the outer layer, and includes the top layer of particles of dead skin which are continuously flaking off. Beneath the epidermis is the dermis, which is the main layer of living skin. Hairs and nails are produced by the skin, and pores in the skin secrete sweat from the sweat glands underneath the dermis. The skin is sensitive to touch and heat and cold, which are sensed by the nerve endings in the skin. The skin is a major source of vitamin D which it produces when exposed to sunlight.

skin graft /'skɪn gra:fɪt/ *noun* a layer of skin transplanted from one part of the body to cover an area where the skin has been destroyed ○ *After the operation she had to have a skin graft.*

skinny /'skɪni/ *adjective* very thin (*informal*)

skin test /'skɪn test/ *noun* a test for allergy, in which a substance is applied to the skin to see if a reaction occurs

skull /skul/ *noun* the eight bones which are fused or connected together to form the head,

along with the fourteen bones which form the face. Also called **cranium** □ **skull fracture** a condition in which one of the bones in the skull has been fractured

slash /slæʃ/ *noun* a long cut with a knife ○ *He had bruises on his face and slashes on his hands.* ○ *The slash on her leg needs three stitches.* ■ *verb* 1. to cut something with a knife or sharp edge □ to **slash your wrists** to try to kill yourself by cutting the blood vessels in the wrists 2. to cut costs or spending sharply (*informal*)

SLE *abbr* systemic lupus erythematosus

sleep /sli:p/ *noun* the state or a period of resting, usually at night, when the eyes are closed and you are not conscious of what is happening ○ *You need to get a good night's sleep if you have a lot of work to do tomorrow.* ○ *He had a short sleep in the middle of the afternoon.* □ **to get to sleep or go to sleep** to start sleeping ■ *verb* to be in a state of sleep (NOTE: **sleeping – slept**)

COMMENT: Sleep is a period when the body rests and rebuilds tissue, especially protein. Most adults need eight hours' sleep each night. Children require more (ten to twelve hours) but older people need less, possibly only four to six hours. Sleep forms a regular pattern of stages: during the first stage the person is still conscious of his or her surroundings, and will wake on hearing a noise; afterwards the sleeper goes into very deep sleep (slow-wave sleep), where the eyes are tightly closed, the pulse is regular and the sleeper breathes deeply. During this stage the pituitary gland produces the growth hormone somatotrophin. It is difficult to wake someone from deep sleep. This stage is followed by rapid eye movement sleep (REM sleep), in which the sleeper's eyes are half open and move about, he or she makes facial movements, the blood pressure rises and he or she has dreams. After this stage the sleeper re-lapses into the first sleep stage again.

sleep apnoea /'sli:p æp,ni:ə/ *noun* a condition related to heavy snoring, with prolonged respiratory pauses leading to cerebral hypoxia and subsequent daytime drowsiness

sleeping pill /'sli:pɪŋ pɪl/ *noun* a pill containing a drug, usually a barbiturate, which makes a person sleep ○ *She died of an overdose of sleeping pills.*

sleeping sickness /'sli:pɪŋ ,sɪknəs/ *noun* an African disease, spread by the tsetse fly, where trypanosomes infest the blood. Also called **African trypanosomiasis**

COMMENT: Symptoms are headaches, lethargy and long periods of sleep. The disease is fatal if not treated.

sleeping tablet *noun* a tablet containing a drug, usually a barbiturate, which makes a person sleep

sleeplessness /'sli:plesnəs/ *noun* ↗ **insomnia**

sleep off /'sli:p 'ɒf/ *verb* to recover from a mild illness or hangover by sleeping (NOTE: **sleeping off – slept off**)

sleep terror disorder /'sli:p 'terə dɪs,ɔ:də/ *noun* a condition in which a person regularly wakes from sleep in a state of terror and confusion but remembers nothing about it in the morning

sleepwalker /'sli:pwɔ:kə/ *noun* same as **somnambulist**

sleepwalking /'sli:pwɔ:kɪŋ/ *noun* same as **somnambulism**

sleepy /'sli:pɪ/ *adjective* feeling ready to go to sleep (NOTE: **sleepier – sleepiest**)

sleepy sickness /'sli:pɪ ,sɪknəs/ *noun* same as **lethargic encephalitis**

slice /sli:s/ *noun* a thin flat piece of tissue which has been cut off ○ *He examined the slice of brain tissue under the microscope.*

slide /slaɪd/ *noun* a piece of glass, on which a tissue sample is placed, to be examined under a microscope ■ *verb* to move along smoothly ○ *The plunger slides up and down the syringe.* (NOTE: **sliding – slid**)

sliding traction /,slaɪdɪŋ 'trækʃ(ə)n/ *noun* traction for a fracture of a femur, in which weights are attached to pull the leg

slight /slɪ:t/ *adjective* not very serious ○ *He has a slight fever.* ○ *She had a slight accident.*

slim /slɪm/ *adjective* pleasantly thin ○ *She has become slim again after being pregnant.* ■ *verb* to try to become thinner or weigh less ○ *She is trying to slim before she goes on holiday.* (NOTE: **slimming – slimmed**)

slimming /'slɪmɪŋ/ *noun* the use of a special diet or special food which is low in calories and which is supposed to stop a person getting fat

sling /sliŋ/ *noun* a triangular bandage attached round the neck, used to support an injured arm and prevent it from moving ○ *She had her left arm in a sling.*

slipped disc /,slipt 'dɪsk/ *noun* same as **displaced intervertebral disc, prolapsed intervertebral disc**

slit lamp /slɪt læmp/ *noun* a piece of equipment which provides a narrow beam of light and is connected to a special microscope, used to examine the eye

slough /sləʊ/ *noun* dead tissue, especially dead skin, which has separated from healthy tissue ■ *verb* to lose dead skin which falls off

slow-release vitamin tablet /'sleʊ ɹɪ,li:s 'vɪtəmɪn ,tæblət/ *noun* a vitamin tablet which will dissolve slowly in the body and give a longer and more constant effect

slow-wave sleep /,sleʊ ,weɪv 'sli:p/ *noun* a period of sleep during which the sleeper sleeps deeply and the eyes do not move

COMMENT: During slow-wave sleep, the pituitary gland secretes the hormone somatotrophin.

small /smɔ:l/ **adjective** 1. not large ○ *His chest was covered with small red spots.* ○ *She has a small cyst in the colon.* 2. young ○ *He had chickenpox when he was small.*

small children /'smɔ:l 'tʃɪldrən/ **noun** young children, between about 1 and 10 years of age

small for dates /,smɔ:l fə 'deɪts/ **adjective** referring to an unborn baby which is small in comparison to the average size for that number of weeks. Abbr **SFD**

small intestine /,smɔ:l ɪn'testɪn/ **noun** a section of the intestine from the stomach to the caecum, consisting of the duodenum, the jejunum and the ileum

small of the back /,smɔ:l əv ðə 'bæk/ **noun** the middle part of the back between and below the shoulder blades

smallpox /'smɔ:l'pɒpkəs/ **noun** a very serious, usually fatal, contagious disease caused by the pox virus, with a severe rash, leaving masses of small scars on the skin. Also called **variola**

COMMENT: It is more than 200 years since the first smallpox vaccine experiments and vaccination has proved effective in eradicating smallpox.

small stomach /,smɔ:l 'stʌmæk/ **noun** a stomach which is reduced in size after an operation, making the person unable to eat large meals

smear /smɪər/ **noun** a sample of soft tissue, e.g. blood or mucus, taken from a person and spread over a glass slide to be examined under a microscope

smear test /'smɪər test/ **noun** same as **Papanicolaou test**

smegma /'smegmə/ **noun** an oily secretion with an unpleasant smell which collects on and under the foreskin of the penis

smell /smel/ **noun** one of the five senses, the sense which is experienced through the nose ■ **verb** 1. to notice the smell of something through the nose ○ *I can smell smoke.* ○ *He can't smell anything because he's got a cold.* 2. to produce a smell ○ *The room smells of disinfectant.* (NOTE: **smelling – smelled or smelt**)

COMMENT: The senses of smell and taste are closely connected, and together give the real taste of food. Smells are sensed by receptors in the nasal cavity which transmit impulses to the brain. When food is eaten, the smell is sensed at the same time as the taste is sensed by the taste buds, and most of what we think of as taste is in fact smell, which explains why food loses its taste when someone has a cold and a blocked nose.

smelling salts /'smelɪŋ ,sɔ:lts/ **noun** crystals of an ammonia compound which give off a strong smell and can revive someone who has fainted

Smith-Petersen nail /,smiθ 'pi:təs(ə)n neɪl/ **noun** a metal nail used to attach the fractured neck of a femur [Described 1931. After

Marius Nygaard Smith-Petersen (1886–1953), Norwegian-born Boston orthopaedic surgeon.]

Smith's fracture /'smiθs ,fræktʃə/ **noun** a fracture of the radius just above the wrist

smog /smɒg/ **noun** pollution of the atmosphere in towns, caused by warm damp air combining with smoke and exhaust fumes from cars

smoke /sməʊk/ **noun** a white, grey or black product made of small particles, given off by something which is burning ■ **verb** to breathe in smoke from a cigarette, cigar or pipe which is held in the lips ○ *Doctors are trying to persuade people to stop smoking.* (NOTE: **smoking – smoked**)

COMMENT: The connection between smoking tobacco, especially cigarettes, and lung cancer has been proved to the satisfaction of the British government, which prints a health warning on all packets of cigarettes. Smoke from burning tobacco contains nicotine and other substances which stick in the lungs, and can in the long run cause cancer and heart disease.

smoke inhalation /'sməʊk ɪnhəleɪʃ(ə)n/ **noun** the breathing in of smoke, as in a fire

smoker /'sməʊkə/ **noun** a person who smokes cigarettes

smoker's cough /,sməʊkəz 'kɒf/ **noun** a dry asthmatic cough, often found in people who smoke large numbers of cigarettes

smoking /'sməʊkɪŋ/ **noun** the action of smoking a cigarette, pipe or cigar ○ *Smoking can injure your health.*

'...three quarters of patients aged 35–64 on GPs' lists have at least one major risk factor: high cholesterol, high blood pressure or addiction to tobacco. Of the three risk factors, smoking causes a quarter of heart disease deaths' [Health Services Journal]

smooth /smu:ð/ **adjective** flat, not rough ■ **verb** to make something smooth ○ *She smoothed down the sheets on the bed.*

smooth muscle /smu:ð 'mʌs(ə)l/ **noun** a type of muscle found in involuntary muscles. Also called **unstriated muscle**

SMR abbr submucous resection

snare /sneə/ **noun** a surgical instrument made of a loop of wire, used to remove growths without the need of an incision

sneeze /sni:z/ **noun** a reflex action to blow air suddenly out of the nose and mouth because of irritation in the nasal passages ○ *She gave a loud sneeze.* ■ **verb** to blow air suddenly out of the nose and mouth because of irritation in the nasal passages ○ *The smell of flowers makes her sneeze.* ○ *He was coughing and sneezing and decided to stay in bed.* (NOTE: **sneezing – sneezed**)

COMMENT: A sneeze sends out a spray of droplets of liquid, which, if infectious, can then infect anyone who happens to inhale them.

sneezing fit /'sni:zɪŋ fit/ **noun** a sudden attack when someone sneezes many times

Snellen chart /'snelən tʃa:t/ *noun* a chart commonly used by opticians to test eyesight [Described 1862. After Hermann Snellen (1834–1908), Dutch ophthalmologist.]

COMMENT: The Snellen chart has rows of letters, the top row being very large, and the bottom very small, with the result that the more rows a person can read, the better his or her eyesight.

Snellen type /'snelən taip/ *noun* different type sizes used on a Snellen chart

sniff /snif/ *noun* an act of breathing in air or smelling through the nose ○ *They gave her a sniff of smelling salts to revive her.* ■ *verb* to breathe in air or to smell through the nose ○ *He was sniffing because he had a cold.* ○ *She sniffed and said that she could smell smoke.*

sniffle /'snif(ə)l/ *verb* to keep on sniffing because you have a cold or are crying (NOTE: **sniffing – sniffled**)

sniffles /'snif(ə)lz/ *plural noun* a slight head cold, or an allergy that causes a running nose (informal; used to children) ○ *Don't go out into the cold when you have the sniffles.*

snore /snɔ:/ *noun* a loud noise produced in the nose and throat when a person is asleep ■ *verb* to make a loud noise in the nose and throat when asleep (NOTE: **snoring – snored**)

COMMENT: A snore is produced by the vibration of the soft palate at the back of the mouth, and occurs when a sleeping person breathes through both mouth and nose.

snoring /'snɔ:rɪŋ/ *noun* noisy breathing while asleep

snot /snɒt/ *noun* mucus in the nose (informal)

snow blindness /'snəʊ ,blaɪndnəs/ *noun* temporary painful blindness caused by bright sunlight shining on snow

snuffles /'snaf(ə)lz/ *plural noun* the condition of breathing noisily through a nose which is blocked with mucus, which is usually a symptom of the common cold, but can sometimes be a sign of congenital syphilis (informal; used to children)

soak /səʊk/ *verb* to put something in liquid so that it absorbs some of it ○ *Use a compress made of cloth soaked in warm water.*

social /'səʊʃ(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to society or to groups of people

social disease /,səʊʃ(ə)l dɪ'zi:z/ *noun* US sexually transmitted disease

socialisation /,səʊʃ(ə)lai'zeɪʃ(ə)n/, **socialization** *noun* the process involved when young children are becoming aware of society and learning how they are expected to behave

social medicine /,səʊʃ(ə)l 'med(ə)s(ə)n/ *noun* medicine as applied to treatment of diseases which occur in particular social groups

social services /,səʊʃ(ə)l 'sɜ:vɪsɪz/ *plural noun* the special facilities which the government or local authorities provide to people in the community who need help, such as the eld-

erly, children whose parents have died or the unemployed

social worker /'səʊʃ(ə)l ,wɜ:kə/ *noun* a government employee who works to provide social services to people in need and improve their living standards

society /sə'saɪəti/ *noun* 1. the community of people who live in a particular country and share its institutions and customs 2. an organisation of people who have a shared interest

sociopath /'səʊsiəpæθ/ *noun* same as **psychopath**

socket /'sɒkit/ *noun* a hollow part in a bone, into which another bone or organ fits ○ *The tip of the femur fits into a socket in the pelvis.*

sodium /'səʊdiəm/ *noun* a chemical element which is the basic substance in salt (NOTE: The chemical symbol is **Na**.)

COMMENT: Sodium is an essential mineral and exists in the extracellular fluid of the body. Sweat and tears also contain a high proportion of sodium chloride.

sodium balance /'səʊdiəm ,bæləns/ *noun* the balance maintained in the body between salt lost in sweat and urine and salt taken in from food. The balance is regulated by aldosterone.

sodium bicarbonate /,səʊdiəm baɪ'ka:bənət/ *noun* sodium salt used in cooking, and also as a relief for indigestion and acidity. Also called **bicarbonate of soda**

sodium chloride /,səʊdiəm 'klɔ:raɪd/ *noun* common salt

sodium fusidate /,səʊdiəm 'fju:sɪdət/ *noun* an antibiotic used mainly to treat penicillin-resistant staphylococcal infections

sodium pump /'səʊdiəm pʌmp/ *noun* a cellular process in which sodium is immediately excreted from any cell which it enters and potassium is brought in

sodium valproate /,səʊdiəm və'l'prəʊet/ *noun* an anticonvulsant drug used especially to treat migraines, seizures and epilepsy

sodokosis /,səʊdəʊ'kəʊsɪs/, **sodoku** /'səʊdəʊku:/ *noun* a form of rat-bite fever, in which swellings in the jaws do not occur

sodomy /'sɒdəmi/ *noun* anal sexual intercourse between men

soft /sɒft/ *adjective* not hard or not resistant to pressure

soft chance /sɒft 'ʃæŋkə/ *noun* same as **soft sore**

soften /'sɒf(ə)n/ *verb* to make something soft, or become soft

soft palate /sɒft 'pælət/ *noun* the back part of the palate leading to the uvula. ☞ **cleft palate**

soft sore /sɒft 'sɔ:/ *noun* a venereal sore with a soft base, situated in the groin or on the genitals and caused by the bacterium *Haemophilus ducreyi*. Also called **chancroid**, **soft chancre**

soft tissue /sɒft 'tɪʃu:/ *noun* skin, muscles, ligaments or tendons

soil /sɔɪl/ *noun* the earth in which plants grow
verb to make something dirty ○ *He soiled his sheets.* ○ *Soiled bedclothes are sent to the hospital laundry.*

solar plexus /'səʊlə 'pleksəs/ *noun* a nerve network situated at the back of the abdomen between the adrenal glands

solar retinopathy /,səʊlər etɪ'nɒpəθɪ/ *noun* irreparable damage to the most sensitive part of the retina, the macula, caused by looking at the sun with no protection or inadequate protection, as when looking at an eclipse of the sun

sole /səʊl/ *noun* the part under the foot ○ *The soles of the feet are very sensitive.*

soleus /'səʊliəs/ *noun* a flat muscle which goes down the calf of the leg (NOTE: The plural is *solei*.)

solid /'sɒlid/ *adjective* 1. not soft or yielding 2. hard and not liquid ○ *Water turns solid when it freezes.*

solid food /'sɒlid fu:d/ *noun* food which is chewed and eaten, not drunk ○ *She is allowed some solid food.* or *She is allowed to eat solids.*

COMMENT: Solid foods are introduced gradually to babies and to patients who have had intestinal operations.

solidify /sə'lɪdɪfaɪ/ *verb* to become solid, or cause something to become solid ○ *Carbon dioxide solidifies at low temperatures.*

solids *noun* solid food

soluble /'sɒljub(ə)l/ *adjective* able to dissolve ○ *a tablet of soluble aspirin*

soluble fibre /,sɒljüb(ə)l 'fɑ:bə/ *noun* a fibre in vegetables, fruit and pulses and porridge oats which is partly digested in the intestine and reduces the absorption of fats and sugar into the body, so lowering the level of cholesterol

solute /'sɒljū:t/ *noun* a solid substance which is dissolved in a solvent to make a solution

solution /sə'lu:ʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a mixture of a solid substance dissolved in a liquid

solvent /'sɒlv(ə)nt/ *noun* a liquid in which a solid substance can be dissolved

solvent abuse /'sɒlvənt ə,bju:s/, **solvent inhalation** /,sɒlvənt ,ɪnha'leɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a type of drug abuse in which someone inhales the toxic fumes given off by particular types of volatile chemical. Also called **glue-sniffing**

...deaths among teenagers caused by solvent abuse have reached record levels' [Health Visitor]

soma /'səʊmə/ *noun* the body, as opposed to the mind (NOTE: The plural is **somata** or **somas**.)

somat- /səʊmət/ *prefix* same as **somato-** (used before vowels)

somata /'səʊmətə/ plural of **soma**

somatic /sə'o'mætɪk/ *adjective* referring to the body, either as opposed to the mind, or as opposed to the intestines and inner organs. Compare **psychosomatic**

somatic nerve /sə'o'mætɪk nɜ:v/ *noun* any of the sensory and motor nerves which control skeletal muscles

somatic nervous system /səʊ,mætɪk 'nɜ:vəs ,sɪstəm/ *noun* the part of the nervous system that serves the sense organs and muscles of the body wall and limbs, and brings about activity in the voluntary muscles

somato- /səʊmətə/ *prefix* 1. referring to the body 2. **somatic**

somatology /,səʊmə'tɒlədʒɪ/ *noun* the study of both the physiology and anatomy of the body

somatostatin /,səʊmətə'u'stætɪn/ *noun* a hormone produced in the hypothalamus which helps to prevent the release of the growth hormone

somatotrophic hormone /,səʊmətə,trɒfɪk 'hɔ:mən/; **somatotrophin** /,səʊmətə'rɔ:fɪn/ *noun* a growth hormone, secreted by the pituitary gland, which stimulates the growth of long bones (NOTE: The US term for somatotrophin is **somatotropin**.)

somatotropin /,səʊmətə'u'trɔ:fɪn/ *noun* same as **growth hormone**

-some /səʊm/ *suffix* tiny cell bodies

somnambulism /sɒmn'naembjolɪz(ə)m/ *noun* a condition especially affecting children where the person gets up and walks about while still asleep. Also called **sleepwalking**

somnambulist /sɒmn'naembjolɪst/ *noun* a person who walks in his or her sleep. Also called **sleepwalker**

somnambulistic /sɒmnə,æmbjə'lɪstɪk/ *adjective* referring to somnambulism

somnolent /'sɒmnələnt/ *adjective* sleepy

somnolism /'sɒmnəlɪz(ə)m/ *noun* a trance which is induced by hypnotism

Somogyi effect /'sɒmɒdʒi ɪ,fekt/, **Somogyi phenomenon** /'sɒmɒdʒi fi,nɒmənən/ *noun* in diabetes mellitus, a swing to a high level of glucose in the blood from an extremely low level, usually occurring after an untreated insulin reaction during the night. It is caused by the release of stress hormones to counter low glucose levels.

-somy /səʊmɪ/ *suffix* the presence of chromosomes

son /sən/ *noun* a male child of a parent ○ *They have two sons and one daughter.*

Sonne dysentery /'sɒnə ,dɪsəntri/ *noun* a common form of mild dysentery in the UK, caused by *Shigella sonnei* [Described 1915. After Carl Olaf Sonne (1882–1948), Danish bacteriologist and physician.]

sonogram /'səʊnəgræm/ *noun* a chart produced using ultrasound waves to find where something is situated in the body

sonography /sə'nɒgrəfi/ *noun* same as **ul-trasonography**

sonoplacentography /,səʊnəplæsən'tɒgrəfi/ *noun* the use of ultrasound waves to find how the placenta is placed in a pregnant woman

sonotopography /,səʊnətə'pɒŋgrəfi/ *noun* the use of ultrasound waves to produce a sonogram

soothe /su:ð/ *verb* to relieve pain or irritation or make a person less tense ○ *The calamine lotion will soothe the rash.* (NOTE: **soothing – soothed**)

soothing /'su:ðɪŋ/ *adjective* relieving pain or irritation or making someone less tense ○ *They played soothing music in the dentist's waiting room.*

sopor /'səʊpə/ *noun* deep sleep or unconsciousness

soporific /,sɒpə'rɪfɪk/ *noun* a drug which makes a person go to sleep ■ *adjective* causing sleep

sorbitol /'sɔ:bɪtl/ *noun* a white crystalline sweet alcohol which is used as a sweetener and a moisturiser, and in the manufacture of Vitamin C

sordes /'sɔ:dɪ:z/ *plural noun* dry deposits round the lips of someone who has a fever

sore /sɔ:/ *noun* a small wound on any part of the skin, usually with a discharge of pus ■ *adjective* 1. rough and inflamed ○ *a sore patch on the skin* 2. painful ○ *My ankle still feels very sore.*

sore throat /sɔ:/ 'θrəut/ *noun* a condition in which the mucous membrane in the throat is inflamed, sometimes because the person has been talking too much, but usually because of an infection (*informal*)

S.O.S. *adverb* (*on prescriptions*) if necessary. Full form **si opus sit** (NOTE: It means that the dose should be taken once.)

sotalol /'sɒtəlɒl/ *noun* a drug used to treat an irregular heartbeat and high blood pressure

souffle /'su:f(ə)l/ *noun* a soft breathing sound, heard through a stethoscope

sound /saʊnd/ *noun* 1. something which can be heard ○ *The doctor listened to the sounds of the patient's lungs.* ○ *His breathing made a whistling sound.* 2. a long rod, used to examine or to dilate the inside of a cavity in the body ■ *adjective* strong and healthy ○ *He has a sound constitution.* ○ *Her heart is sound, but her lungs are congested.* ■ *verb* 1. to make a particular noise ○ *Her lungs sounded as if she had pneumonia.* 2. to examine the inside of a cavity using a rod

sour /'sauə/ *adjective* not bitter, salt or sweet (NOTE: It is one of the basic tastes.)

source /sɔ:s/ *noun* 1. the substance which produces something ○ *Sugar is a source of energy.* ○ *Vegetables are important sources of vitamins.* 2. the place where something comes from ○ *The source of the allergy has been identified.* ○ *The medical team has isolated the source of the infection.*

space /speɪs/ *noun* a place, empty area between things ○ *An abscess formed in the space between the bone and the cartilage.*

spansule /'spænsju:l/ *noun* a drug in the form of a capsule which is specially designed to release its contents slowly in the stomach

spare /speə/ *adjective* extra or only used in emergencies ○ *We have no spare beds in the hospital at the moment.* ○ *The doctor carries a spare set of instruments in her car.* ■ *verb* to be able to give or spend something ○ *Can you spare the time to see the next patient?* ○ *We have only one bed to spare at the moment.* (NOTE: **sparing – spared**)

spare part surgery /,speə 'pa:t ,sɜ:dʒəri/ *noun* surgery in which parts of the body such as bones or joints are replaced by artificial pieces

sparganosis /,spa:gə'nəʊsɪs/ *noun* a condition caused by the larvae of the worm Sparganum under the skin. It is widespread in East Asia.

spasm /'spæz(ə)m/ *noun* a sudden, usually painful, involuntary contraction of a muscle, as in cramp ○ *The muscles in his leg went into spasm.* ○ *She had painful spasms in her stomach.*

spasmo- /'spæzməʊ/ *prefix* referring to a spasm

spasmodic /spæz'mɒdɪk/ *adjective* 1. occurring in spasms 2. happening from time to time

spasmolytic /,spæzmə'lɪtɪk/ *noun* a drug which relieves muscle spasms

spasmus nutans /,spæzməs 'njʊntənz/ *noun* a condition in which someone nods his or her head and at the same time has spasms in the neck muscles and rapid movements of the eyes

spastic /'spæstɪk/ *adjective* with spasms or sudden contractions of muscles ■ *noun* a person affected with cerebral palsy (NOTE: The noun sense is now considered to be offensive.)

spastic colon /,spæstɪk 'kəʊlon/ *noun* same as **mucous colitis**

spastic diplegia /,spæstɪk dɪplɪdʒə/ *noun* a congenital form of cerebral palsy which affects mainly the legs. Also called **Little's disease**

spastic gait /,spæstɪk 'geɪt/ *noun* a way of walking where the legs are stiff and the feet not lifted off the ground

spasticity /'speɪ'stɪstɪ/ *noun* a condition in which a limb resists passive movement. ◊ **rigidity**

spastic paralysis /'speɪstɪk pə'ræləsɪs/ *noun* same as **cerebral palsy**

spastic paraplegia /'speɪstɪk pə'pælɪə 'plɪdʒə/ *noun* paralysis of one side of the body after a stroke

spatula /'spætjʊlə/ *noun* 1. a flat flexible tool with a handle, used to scoop, lift, spread or mix things 2. a flat wooden stick used to press the tongue down when the mouth or throat is being examined

speak /spi:k/ *verb* to say words or articulate sounds with the voice ◊ *He is learning to speak again after a laryngectomy.* (NOTE: speaking – spoke – spoken)

speak up /'spi:k 'ʌp/ *verb* to speak more loudly ◊ *Speak up, please – I can't hear you!*

special /'spef(ə)l/ *adjective* not ordinary, or for a specific purpose ◊ *He has been given a special diet to cure his allergy.* ◊ *She wore special shoes to correct a problem in her ankles.*

special care baby unit /'spef(ə)l keə 'bebɪ ,ju:nɪt/ *noun* a unit in a hospital which deals with premature babies or babies with serious disorders

special health authority /'spef(ə)l 'helθ ɔ:,θəriti/ *noun* a health authority which has unique national functions, or covers various regions. An example is UK Transplant, which manages the National Transplant Database and provides a 24-hour service for the matching and allocation of donor organs.

special hospital /'spef(ə)l 'hospɪt(ə)l/ *noun* a hospital for people whose mental condition makes them a potential danger to themselves and/or others

specialisation /'spefələr'zeɪʃ(ə)n/, **specialization** *noun* 1. the act of specialising in a particular branch of medicine 2. a particular branch of medicine which a doctor specialises in

specialise /'spefəlaɪz/, **specialize** *verb* 1. to concentrate on a specific subject or activity 2. to be an expert in a specific subject or area of knowledge (NOTE: **specialising** – **specialised**)

specialised /'spefəlaɪzd/, **specialized** *adjective* 1. designed for a particular purpose 2. concentrating on a particular activity or subject ◊ *specialised skills*

specialise in /'spefəlaɪz ɪn/, **specialize in** *verb* to study or to treat one particular disease or one particular type of patient ◊ *He specialises in children with breathing problems.* ◊ *She decided to specialise in haematology.*

specialism /'spefəlɪz(ə)m/ *noun* same as **speciality**

specialist /'spefəlist/ *noun* a doctor who specialises in a particular branch of medicine

◊ *He is a heart specialist.* ◊ *She was referred to an ENT specialist.*

specialist registrar /'spef(ə)list 'redʒɪstrə/ *noun* a junior doctor in a hospital who is doing further specialist training

speciality /'spefɪ'æləti/ *noun* a particular activity or type of work which someone is specially trained for or very interested in. Also called **specialism, specialty**

special school /'spef(ə)l sku:l/ *noun* a school for children with disabilities

specialty /'spef(ə)lti/ *noun* US same as **speciality**

species /'spi:ʃi:z/ *noun* a group of living things with the same characteristics and which can interbreed (NOTE: The plural is **species**.)

specific /'spefɪsɪk/ *adjective* referring to a disease caused by one type of microorganism only. Opposite **non-specific** ■ *noun* a drug which is only used to treat one disease

specific gravity /'spefɪsɪfɪk 'grævɪtɪ/ *noun* same as **relative density**

specificity /'spefɪ'fɪsɪtɪ/ *noun* the rate of negative responses in a test from persons free from a disease. A high specificity means a low rate of false positives. Compare **sensitivity**

specific urethritis /'spefɪsɪfɪk juərɪ'træθɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the urethra caused by gonorrhoea

specimen /'spesimɪn/ *noun* 1. a small quantity of something given for testing ◊ *He was asked to bring a urine specimen.* 2. one item out of a group ◊ *We keep specimens of diseased organs for students to examine.*

spectacles /'spektak(ə)lz/ *plural noun* glasses which are worn in front of the eyes to help correct problems in vision

COMMENT: Spectacles can correct problems in the focusing of the eye, such as shortsightedness, longsightedness and astigmatism. Where different lenses are required for reading, an optician may prescribe two pairs of spectacles, one for standard use and the other for reading. Otherwise, spectacles can be fitted with a divided lens (bifocals or varifocals).

spectra /'spektrə/ *plural of spectrum*

spectrography /spek'trəgrəfi/ *noun* the recording of a spectrum on photographic film

spectroscope /'spektrəsko:p/ *noun* an instrument used to analyse a spectrum

spectrum /'spektrəm/ *noun* 1. the range of colours, from red to violet, into which white light can be split when it is passed through something (NOTE: Different substances in solution have different spectra.) 2. the range of organisms that an antibiotic or chemical can kill (NOTE: The plural is **spectra** or **spectrums**.)

specula /'spekjʊlə/ *plural of speculum*

specular /'spekjʊlər/ *adjective* carried out using a speculum

speculum /'spekju:ləm/ *noun* a surgical instrument which is inserted into an opening in the body such as a nostril or the vagina to keep it open in order to allow a doctor to examine the inside (NOTE: The plural is **specula** or **speculums**.)

speech /'spi:tʃ/ *noun* 1. the ability to make intelligible sounds with the vocal cords 2. a talk given to an audience

speech block /'spi:tʃ blɒk/ *noun* a temporary inability to speak, caused by the effect of nervous stress on the mental processes

speech impediment /'spi:tʃ im'pedimənt/ *noun* an inability to speak easily or in the usual way because of the physical structure of the mouth or other disorders

speech therapist /'spi:tʃ ,θerəpɪst/ *noun* a qualified person who practises speech therapy

speech therapy /'spi:tʃ ,θerəpi/ *noun* treatment for a speech disorder such as stammering or one which results from a stroke or physical malformation

spell /spel/ *noun* a short period ○ *She has been having dizzy spells.* ○ *He had two spells in hospital during the winter.*

sperm /spɜ:m/ *noun* same as **spermatozoon** (NOTE: The plural is **sperm**.)

spermat- /spɜ:mət/ *prefix* same as **sperma-** (used before vowels)

spermatic /spɜ:'mætɪk/ *adjective* referring to sperm

spermatic artery /spɜ:,mætɪk 'a:təri/ *noun* an artery which leads into the testes. Also called **testicular artery**

spermatic cord /spɜ:,mætɪk 'kɔ:d/ *noun* a cord running from the testis to the abdomen carrying the vas deferens, the blood vessels, nerves and lymphatics of the testis

spermatid /'spɜ:mətɪd/ *noun* an immature male sex cell that develops into a spermatozoon

spermato- /spɜ:mətəʊ/ *prefix* 1. referring to sperm 2. referring to the male reproductive system

spermatocele /'spɜ:mətəsɪl/ *noun* a cyst which forms in the scrotum

spermatoocyte /'spɜ:mətəsɔɪt/ *noun* an early stage in the development of a spermatozoon

spermatogenesis /,spɜ:mətə'dʒenəsɪs/ *noun* the formation and development of spermatozoa in the testes

spermatogonium /,spɜ:mətə'gəniəm/ *noun* a cell which forms a spermatoocyte (NOTE: The plural is **spermatogonia**.)

spermatorrhoea /,spɜ:mətə'rɪə/ *noun* the discharge of a large amount of semen frequently and without an orgasm (NOTE: The US spelling is **spermatorrhea**.)

spermatozoon /,spɜ:mətə'zəʊn/ *noun* a mature male sex cell, which is ejaculated from the penis and is capable of fertilising an ovum.

Also called **sperm** (NOTE: The plural is **spermatozoa**.)

COMMENT: A human spermatozoon is very small and is formed of a head, neck and very long tail. A spermatozoon can swim by moving its tail from side to side. The sperm are formed in the testes and ejaculated through the penis. Each ejaculation may contain millions of sperm. Once a sperm has entered the female uterus, it remains viable for about three days.

spermaturia /,spɜ:ma'tjuəriə/ *noun* sperm in the urine

sperm bank /'spɜ:m bæŋk/ *noun* a place where sperm can be stored for use in artificial insemination

sperm count /'spɜ:m kaʊnt/ *noun* a calculation of the number of sperm in a quantity of semen

sperm donor /'spɜ:m ,dənər/ *noun* a male who gives sperm, for a fee, to allow a childless woman to bear a child

spermi- /spɜ:mi/ *prefix* referring to sperm and semen

spermicidal /,spɜ:mi'saɪd(ə)l/ *adjective* killing or able to kill sperm

spermicidal jelly /,spɜ:mi,saɪd(ə)l 'dʒeli/ *noun* a jelly-like product which acts as a contraceptive

spermicide /'spɜ:mɪsaɪd/ *noun* a substance which kills sperm

spermio- /spɜ:miəʊ/ *prefix* same as **sperm-** **spermiogenesis** /,spɜ:miəʊ'dʒenəsɪs/ *noun* the stage of spermatogenesis during which a spermatid changes into a spermatozoon

pheno- /fɪ:nəʊ/ *prefix* referring to the sphenoid bone

sphenoid /'sfɪ:nɔɪd/ *adjective* 1. relating to the sphenoid bone 2. shaped like a wedge ■ *noun* same as **sphenoid bone**

sphenoid bone /'sfɪ:nɔɪd bəʊn/ *noun* one of two bones in the skull which form the side of the socket of the eye. Also called **sphenoid**

sphenoid sinus /,sfɪ:nɔɪd 'saɪnəs/ *noun* one of the sinuses in the skull behind the nasal passage

sphenopalatine ganglion /,sfɪ:nəʊ,pælətɪn 'gæŋglɪən/ *noun* same as **pterygopalatine ganglion**

spherocyte /'sfɪ:rəʊsɪt/ *noun* a red blood cell that is round rather than the usual disc shape

spherocytosis /,sfɪ:rəʊsɪs/ *noun* a condition in which someone has spherocytes in the blood, causing anaemia, enlarged spleen and gallstones, as in acholuric jaundice

spincter /'spɪŋktə/, **spincter muscle** /'spɪŋktə ,məs(ə)l/ *noun* a circular band of muscle which surrounds an opening or passage in the body, especially the anus, and can

narrow or close the opening or passage by contracting

spincterectomy /'sfɪŋktə'rektəmɪ/ *noun*
1. a surgical operation to remove a sphincter 2. a surgical operation to remove part of the edge of the iris in the eye (NOTE: The plural is **spincterectomies**)

spincteroplasty /'sfɪŋktərə,plæstɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to relieve a tightened sphincter (NOTE: The plural is **spincteroplasties**)

spincterotomy /'sfɪŋktə'rɒtəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to make an incision into a sphincter (NOTE: The plural is **spincterotomies**)

sphincter pupillae muscle /,sfɪŋktə'pju:pɪlai, ,mæs(ə)l/ *noun* an annular muscle in the iris which constricts the pupil

sphyg /sfɪg/ *noun* same as **sphygmomanometer** (*informal*)

sphygmic /'sfɪgmi:k/ *adjective* referring to the pulse of an artery

sphygmo- /sfɪgməʊ/ *prefix* referring to the pulse

sphygmocardiograph /,sfɪgməʊ'ka:dɪəgrɑ:f/ *noun* a device which records heartbeats and pulse rate

sphygmograph /'sfɪgməgra:f/ *noun* a device which records the pulse

sphygmomanometer /,sfɪgməʊ'mə:nətə/ *noun* an instrument which measures blood pressure in the arteries

COMMENT: The sphygmomanometer is a rubber sleeve connected to a scale with a column of mercury, allowing the nurse to take a reading. The rubber sleeve is usually wrapped round the arm and inflated until the blood flow is stopped. The blood pressure is determined by listening to the pulse with a stethoscope placed over an artery as the pressure in the rubber sleeve is slowly reduced, and by the reading on the scale.

spica /'spaɪkə/ *noun* a way of bandaging a joint where the bandage crosses over itself like the figure 8 on the inside of the bend of the joint (NOTE: The plural is **spicae** or **spicas**)

spicule /'spɪkju:l/ *noun* a small splinter of bone

spigot /'spɪgət/ *noun* the end of a pipe which is joined by insertion into the enlarged end of another pipe

spina /'spaɪnə/ *noun* 1. a thin sharp piece of bone 2. the vertebral column

spina bifida /,spaɪnə 'bifɪdə/ *noun* a serious condition in which part of the spinal cord protrudes through the spinal column. Also called **rachischisis**

COMMENT: Spina bifida takes two forms: a mild form, spina bifida occulta, where only the bone is affected, and there are no visible signs of the condition; and the serious spina bifida cystica where part of the meninges or spinal cord passes through the gap; it may result in paralysis of the legs, and mental impairment

ment is often present where the condition is associated with hydrocephalus.

spinal /'spain(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to the spine ○ *She suffered spinal injuries in the crash.*

spinal accessory nerve /,spain(ə)l ək'sesɔri nɜ:v/ *noun* the eleventh cranial nerve which supplies the muscles in the neck and shoulders

spinal anaesthesia /,spain(ə)l ,ænæs'θi:zɪə/ *noun* local anaesthesia in which an anaesthetic is injected into the cerebrospinal fluid

spinal anaesthetic /,spain(ə)l ,ænæs'θe:tɪk/ *noun* an anaesthetic given by injection into the spine, which results in large parts of the body losing the sense of feeling

spinal block /,spain(ə)l 'blok/ *noun* analgesia produced by injecting the spinal cord with an anaesthetic

spinal canal /,spain(ə)l kə'næl/ *noun* the hollow channel running down the back of the vertebrae, containing the spinal cord. Also called **vertebral canal**

spinal column /'spain(ə)l ,kɒləm/ *noun* same as **spine**

spinal cord /'spain(ə)l kɔ:d/ *noun* part of the central nervous system, running from the medulla oblongata to the filum terminale, in the vertebral canal of the spine (NOTE: For other terms referring to the spinal cord, see words beginning with **myel-**, **myelo-**)

spinal curvature /,spain(ə)l 'kɜ:vətʃə/ *noun* unusual bending of the spinal column

spinal fusion /,spain(ə)l 'fju:z(ə)n/ *noun* a surgical operation to join two vertebrae together to make the spine more rigid. Also called **spondylosyndesis**

spinal ganglion /,spain(ə)l 'gæŋgliən/ *noun* a cone-shaped mass of cells on the posterior root, the main axons of which form the posterior root of the spinal nerve

spinal meningitis /,spain(ə)l ,menin'dʒaɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the membranes around the spinal cord, which particularly affects young children

spinal nerve /'spain(ə)l nɜ:v/ *noun* one of the 31 pairs of nerves which lead from the spinal cord and govern mainly the trunk and limbs

spinal puncture /,spain(ə)l 'pʌnktʃə/ *noun* same as **lumbar puncture** (NOTE: The US term is **spinal tap**)

spinal shock /'spain(ə)l 'ʃɒk/ *noun* a loss of feeling in the lower part of the body below a point at which the spine has been injured

spindle /'spɪndl/ *noun* 1. a long thin structure 2. a structure formed in cells during division to which the chromosomes are attached by their centromeres

spine /'spaɪn/ *noun* 1. the series of bones, the vertebrae, linked together to form a flexible

supporting column running from the pelvis to the skull ○ *She injured her spine in the crash.*
Also called **backbone**, **spinal column**, **vertebral column** 2. any sharp projecting part of a bone

COMMENT: The spine is made up of twenty-four ring-shaped vertebrae, with the sacrum and coccyx, separated by discs of cartilage. The hollow canal of the spine (the spinal canal) contains the spinal cord. See also note at vertebra.

Spinhaler /'spin'hɪlə/ a trade name for a device from which a person with breathing problems can inhale a preset dose of a drug

spinnbarkeit /'spinbə:kait/ noun a thread of mucus formed in the cervix which is used in determining the time of ovulation. At this time it can be drawn out on a glass slide to its maximum length.

spino- /'spainəʊ/ prefix 1. referring to the spine 2. referring to the spinal cord

spinocerebellar tract /,spainəʊ'serə,belə'trækt/ noun a nerve fibre in the spinal cord, taking impulses to the cerebellum

spinous process /,spainəʊs 'prəʊses/ noun a projection on a vertebra or a bone which looks like a spine

spiral /'spairel/ adjective running in a continuous circle upwards

spiral bandage /,spairal 'bændɪdʒ/ noun a bandage which is wrapped round a limb, each turn overlapping the one before

spiral ganglion /,spairal 'gæŋglɪən/ noun a ganglion in the eighth cranial nerve which supplies the organ of Corti

spiral organ /,spairal 'ɔ:gən/ noun same as **organ of Corti**

Spirillum /'spɪrɪləm/ noun one of the bacteria which cause rat-bite fever

spiro- /'spaireʊ/ prefix 1. referring to a spiral 2. referring to respiration

spirochaetaemia /,spairəʊkɪ:tɪ'miə/ noun the presence of spirochaetes in the blood (NOTE: The US spelling is **spirochtemia**.)

spirochaete /,spairəʊkɪ:t/ noun a bacterium with a spiral shape, e.g. the one which causes syphilis (NOTE: The US spelling is **spirochete**.)

spirogram /'spaireəʊgræm/ noun a record of someone's breathing made by a spirometer

spiograph /'spaireəʊgrɑ:f/ noun a device which records depth and rapidity of breathing

spirometry /'spai'rɒmətri/ noun the recording of a someone's breathing by use of a spirometer

spirometer /'spai'rɒmɪtə/ noun an instrument which measures the amount of air a person inhales or exhales

spirometry /'spai'rɒmətri/ noun a measurement of the vital capacity of the lungs by use of a spirometer

spironolactone /,spairə'nə'læktaʊn/ noun a steroid which helps the body produce urine,

used in the treatment of oedema and hypertension

spit /spit/ noun saliva which is sent out of the mouth ■ verb to send liquid out of the mouth ○ *Rinse your mouth out and spit into the cup provided.* ○ *He spat out the medicine.* (NOTE: **spitting – spat**)

Spitz-Holter valve /,spits 'holtə vælv/ noun a valve with a one-way system, surgically placed in the skull and used to drain excess fluid from the brain in hydrocephalus

splanchnic /'splæŋknɪk/ adjective referring to viscera

splanchnic nerve /'splæŋknɪk nɜ:v/ noun any sympathetic nerve which supplies organs in the abdomen

splanchnology /'splæŋk'nɒlədʒi/ noun the study of the organs in the abdominal cavity

spleen /spli:n/ noun an organ in the top part of the abdominal cavity behind the stomach and below the diaphragm, which helps to destroy old red blood cells, form lymphocytes and store blood. See illustration at **DIGESTIVE SYSTEM** in Supplement

COMMENT: The spleen, which is the largest endocrine (ductless) gland, appears to act to remove dead blood cells and fight infection, but its functions are not fully understood and an adult can live healthily after his or her spleen has been removed.

splen- /splen/ prefix same as **spleno-** (used before vowels)

splenectomy /sple'nekٹəmi/ noun a surgical operation to remove the spleen (NOTE: The plural is **splenectomies**.)

splenic /'splenɪk/ adjective referring to the spleen

splenic anaemia /,splenɪk ə'ni:mɪə/ noun a type of anaemia, caused by cirrhosis of the liver, in which the person has portal hypertension, an enlarged spleen and haemorrhages. Also called **Banti's syndrome**

splenic flexure /,splenɪk 'flekʃə/ noun a bend in the colon where the transverse colon joins the descending colon

splenii /'spli:ni:i/ plural noun plural of **splenic**

splenitis /splə'naitɪs/ noun inflammation of the spleen

splenius /'spli:nɪəs/ noun either of two muscles on each side of the neck that reach from the base of the skull to the upper back and rotate and extend the head and neck (NOTE: The plural is **splenii**.)

spleno- /spli:nəʊ/ prefix referring to the spleen

splenomegaly /,spli:nəʊ'megali/ noun a condition in which the spleen is unusually large, associated with several disorders including malaria and some cancers

splenorenal /,spli:nəʊ'rɪ:(n)əl/ adjective relating to both the spleen and the kidneys

splenorenal anastomosis /spli:nəʊrɪ:n(ə)l ə,næstə'maʊsɪs/ *noun* a surgical operation to join the splenic vein to a renal vein, as a treatment for portal hypertension

splenovenography /spli:nəʊvə'nɒgrəfɪ/ *noun* X-ray examination of the spleen and the veins which are connected to it

splint /splɪnt/ *noun* a stiff support attached to a limb to prevent a broken bone from moving
○ *He had to keep his arm in a splint for several weeks.* □ **skin splints**

splinter /'splɪntə/ *noun* a tiny thin piece of wood or metal which gets under the skin and can be irritating and cause infection

splinter haemorrhage /'splɪntə,hem(ə)rɪdʒ/ *noun* a tiny line of haemorrhaging under the nails or in the eyeball

split /splɪt/ *verb* to divide something, or become divided (NOTE: **splitting – split**)

split personality /splɪt,pɜ:sə'næləti/ *noun* same as **schizoid personality**

split-skin graft /,splɪt,skɪn'gra:fɪt/ *noun* a type of skin graft in which thin layers of skin are grafted over a wound. Also called **Thiersch graft**

spondyl /'spɒndɪl/ *noun* same as **vertebra**

spondyl- /spɒndɪl/ *prefix* same as **spondylo-** (*used before vowels*)

spondylitis /,spɒndɪ'laitɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the vertebrae

spondylo- /spɒndɪləʊ/ *prefix* referring to the vertebrae

spondylolisthesis /,spɒndɪləʊ'lɪsθəsɪs/ *noun* a condition in which one of the lumbar vertebrae moves forwards over the one beneath

spondylosis /,spɒndɪ'ləʊsɪs/ *noun* stiffness in the spine and degenerative changes in the intervertebral discs, with osteoarthritis. This condition is common in older people.

spondylosyndesis /,spɒndɪləʊsɪn'dɪsɪs/ *noun* same as **spinal fusion**

sponge /spɒndʒ/ *noun* a piece of light absorbent material, either natural or synthetic, used in bathing and cleaning

sponge bath /'spɒnʒ ba:θ/ *noun* the act of washing someone in bed, using a sponge or damp cloth
○ *The nurse gave the elderly lady a sponge bath.*

spongiform encephalopathy /,spɒnʒɪfɔ:m en,kefə'լɒpəθɪ/ *noun* a brain disease in humans and animals in which areas of the brain slowly develop holes in their cells and begin to look like a sponge

spongioblastoma /,spɒnʒiəʊblæ'təʊmə/ *noun* same as **glioblastoma** (NOTE: The plural is **spongioblastomas** or **spongioblastomata**.)

spongiosum /,spɒnʒi'əʊsəm/ □ **corpus spongiosum**

spongy /'spɒndʒɪ/ *adjective* soft and full of holes like a sponge

spongy bone /'spɒndʒi bəʊn/ *noun* cancellous bone, light bone tissue which forms the inner core of a bone and also the ends of long bones. See illustration at **BONE STRUCTURE** in Supplement

spontaneous /spɒn'teɪniəs/ *adjective* happening without any particular outside cause

spontaneous abortion /spɒn'teɪniəs ə'bɔ:ʃ(ə)n/ *noun* same as **miscarriage**

spontaneous delivery /spɒn'teɪniəs dɪ'liv(ə)ri/ *noun* a delivery of a baby which takes places naturally, without any medical or surgical help

spontaneous pneumothorax /spɒn'teɪniəs nju:məʊ'θə:ræks/ *noun* a condition occurring when an opening is created on the surface of the lung allowing air to leak into the pleural cavity

spontaneous version /spɒn'teɪniəs 'vɜ:ʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a movement of a fetus to take up another position in the uterus, caused by the contractions of the uterus during childbirth or by the movements of the baby itself before birth

spoon /spu:n/ *noun* an instrument with a long handle at one end and a small bowl at the other, used for taking liquid medicine
○ *a 5 ml spoon*

spoonful /'spu:nfʊl/ *noun* the quantity which a spoon can hold
○ *Take two 5 ml spoonfuls of the medicine twice a day.*

sporadic /spɔ:r'ædɪk/ *adjective* referring to outbreaks of disease that occur as separate cases, not in epidemics

spore /spɔ:/ *noun* a reproductive body of particular bacteria and fungi which can survive in extremely hot or cold conditions for a long time

sporcidal /,spɔ:ri'saɪd(ə)l/ *adjective* killing spores

sporicide /'spɔ:ri:saɪd/ *noun* a substance which kills bacterial spores

sporotrichosis /,spɔ:ri:tʃətrɪ'kəʊsɪs/ *noun* a fungus infection of the skin which causes abscesses

Sporozoa /spɔ:ra'zəʊə/ *noun* a type of parasitic Protozoa which includes Plasmodium, the cause of malaria

sport /spɔ:t/ *noun* 1. the playing of competitive physical games 2. a competitive physical game

sports injury /'spɔ:ts ,ɪndʒəri/ *noun* an injury caused by playing a sport, e.g. a sprained ankle or tennis elbow

sports medicine /'spɔ:ts ,med(ə)sm/ *noun* the study of the treatment of sports injuries

spot /spot/ *noun* a small round mark or pimple
○ *The disease is marked by red spots on the chest.* □ **to break out in spots or to come out in spots** to have a sudden rash

spotted fever /,spɒtɪd 'fi:və/ *noun* same as **meningococcal meningitis**

spotty /'spɒti/ **adjective** covered with pimples
sprain /'sprɛn/ **noun** a condition in which the ligaments in a joint are stretched or torn because of a sudden movement ■ **verb** to tear the ligaments in a joint with a sudden movement ○ *She sprained her wrist when she fell.*

spray /'spreɪ/ **noun** 1. a mass of tiny drops ○ *An aerosol sends out a liquid in a fine spray.* 2. a special liquid for applying to an infection in a mass of tiny drops ○ *throat spray* or *nasal spray* ■ **verb** 1. to send out a liquid in a mass of tiny drops ○ *They sprayed disinfectant everywhere.* 2. to spray an area with liquid ○ *They sprayed the room with disinfectant.*

spread /spred/ **verb** to go out over a large area, or to cause something to do this ○ *The infection spread right through the adult population.* ○ *Sneezing in a crowded bus can spread infection.* (NOTE: **spreading – spread**)

'...spreading infection may give rise to cellulitis of the abdominal wall and abscess formation' [Nursing Times]

Sprengel's deformity /'sprenɡəlz dɪfɔːmiti/, **Sprengel's shoulder** /'sprenɡəlz 'ʃəuldə/ **noun** a congenitally malformed shoulder, in which one scapula is smaller and higher than the other [Described 1891. After Otto Gerhard Karl Sprengel (1852–1915), German surgeon.]

sprue /spru:/ **noun** same as **psoriasis**

spud /spʌd/ **noun** a needle used to get a piece of dust or other foreign body out of the eye

spur /spɜː/ **noun** a sharp projecting part of a bone

sputum /'spjuːtəm/ **noun** mucus which is formed in the inflamed nose, throat or lungs and is coughed up ○ *She was coughing up bloodstained sputum.* Also called **phlegm**

squama /'skweɪmə/ **noun** a thin piece of hard tissue, e.g. a thin flake of bone or scale on the skin (NOTE: The plural is **squamæe**)

squamo- /'skweɪməʊ/ **prefix** 1. relating to the squamous part of the temporal bone 2. scaly

squamous /'skweɪməs/ **adjective** thin and hard like a scale

squamous bone /'skweɪməs bəʊn/ **noun** a part of the temporal bone which forms the side of the skull

squamous cell carcinoma /,skweɪməs sel kɔːsɪ'nəʊmə/ **noun** a common type of cancer which usually develops in the outer layer of the skin, on the lips, or inside the mouth or oesophagus. Abbr **SCC**

squamous epithelium /,skweɪməs epi'θiːliəm/ **noun** epithelium with flat cells like scales, which forms the lining of the pericardium, the peritoneum and the pleura. Also called **pavement epithelium**

squint /skwɪnt/ **noun** a condition in which the eyes focus on different points. Also called **strabismus** ■ **verb** to have one eye or both eyes looking towards the nose ○ *Babies often*

appear to squint, but it is corrected as they grow older.

SRN abbr State Registered Nurse

SSRI abbr selective serotonin re-uptake inhibitor

stab /stæb/ **noun** a sudden burst of pain ○ *She had a stab of pain above her right eye.* ■ **verb** to cut by pushing the point of a knife into the flesh ○ *He was stabbed in the chest.* (NOTE: **stabbing – stabbed**)

stabbing pain /'stæbɪŋ peɪn/ **noun** pain which comes in a series of short sharp bursts ○ *He had stabbing pains in his chest.*

stabilise /'stɪbəlaɪz/, **stabilize** **verb** to make a condition stable ○ *We have succeeded in stabilising his blood sugar level.* (NOTE: **stabilising – stabilised**)

stable /'steɪb(ə)l/ **adjective** not changing ○ *Her condition is stable.*

stable angina /,steɪb(ə)l æn'dʒaɪnə/ **noun** angina which has not changed for a long time

stab wound /'stæb wuːnd/ **noun** a deep wound made by the point of a knife

staccato speech /stɑːkə'teɪv 'speɪtʃ/ **noun** an unusual way of speaking with short pauses between each word

Stacke's operation /'stækɪz nɒpə'reɪʃ(ə)n/ **noun** a surgical operation to remove the posterior and superior wall of the auditory meatus [After Ludwig Stacke (1859–1918), German otologist]

stadium /'steɪdiəm/ **noun** a particular stage of a disease (NOTE: The plural is **stadia**)

stadium invasioni /,steɪdiəm ɪn'veɪzjəni/ **noun** same as **incubation period**

staff /stɑːf/ **noun** people who work in an organisation such as a hospital, clinic or doctor's surgery ○ *We have 25 full-time medical staff.* ○ *The hospital is trying to recruit more nursing staff.* ○ *The clinic has a staff of 100.*

staff midwife /stɑːf 'mɪdwaɪf/ **noun** a midwife who is on the permanent staff of a hospital

staff nurse /'stɑːf nɜːs/ **noun** a nurse who is on the permanent staff of a hospital

stage /steɪdʒ/ **noun** a point in the development of a disease at which a decision can be taken about the treatment which should be given or at which distinctive developments take place ○ *The disease has reached a critical stage.* ○ *This is a symptom of the second stage of syphilis.*

'...memory changes are associated with early stages of the disease; in later stages, the patient is frequently incontinent, immobile and unable to communicate' [Nursing Times]

stagger /'stæɡə/ **verb** to move unsteadily from side to side while walking

staging /'steɪdʒɪŋ/ **noun** the process of performing tests to learn the extent of a disease within the body, in order to decide the best treatment for someone

stagnant loop syndrome /'stægnənt 'lu:p ,sɪndrəʊm/ *noun* a condition which occurs in cases of diverticulosis or of Crohn's disease, with steatorrhoea, abdominal pain and megaloblastic anaemia

stain /steɪn/ *noun* a substance used to give colour to tissues which are going to be examined under the microscope ■ *verb* to treat a piece of tissue with a dye to increase contrast before it is examined under the microscope

COMMENT: Some stains are designed to have an affinity only with those chemical, cellular or bacterial elements in a specimen that are of interest to a microbiologist; thus the concentration or uptake of a stain, as well as the overall picture, can be diagnostic.

staining /'steɪnɪŋ/ *noun* the process of colouring tissue, bacterial samples or other materials to make it possible to examine them and to identify them under the microscope

stalk /stɔ:k/ *noun* a piece of tissue which attaches a growth to the main tissue

Stamey procedure /'steimi prə,sɪ:dʒə/ *noun* a surgical operation to cure stress incontinence in women. A minor abdominal incision is made as well as a vaginal incision, and the neck of the bladder is stitched to the abdominal wall.

stammer /'stæmə/ *noun* a speech difficulty in which someone repeats parts of a word or the whole word several times or stops to try to pronounce a word ○ *He has a bad stammer.* ■ *verb* to speak with a stammer

stammerer /'stæmərə/ *noun* a person who stammers

stammering /'stæmərɪŋ/ *noun* difficulty in speaking, in which the person repeats parts of a word or the whole word several times or stops to try to pronounce a word. Also called **dysphemia**

stamp out /'stæmp 'aut/ *verb* to remove something completely ○ *International organisations have succeeded in stamping out smallpox.* ○ *The government is trying to stamp out waste in the hospital service.*

stand /stænd/ *verb* 1. to be in an upright position with your bodyweight resting on your feet, or to put a person in this position 2. to get to your feet from a sitting position (NOTE: *stood*)

standard /'stændəd/ *adjective* usual, recommended or established ○ *It is standard practice to take the patient's temperature twice a day.* ■ *noun* 1. something which has been agreed upon and is used to measure other things by 2. a level of quality achieved by someone or something ○ *The standard of care in hospitals has increased over the last years.* ○ *The report criticised the standards of hygiene in the clinic.*

standardise /'stændədaɪz/, **standardize** *verb* to make all things of the same type follow the same standard

Standard Precautions /,stændəd pri 'kɔ:sʃ(ə)nz/ *plural noun* the most recent set of guidelines for health care workers on dealing with blood, all body fluids, secretions and excretions (except sweat), non-intact skin and mucous membranes. They are designed to reduce the risk of transmission of microorganisms. The Standard Precautions are implemented automatically for everyone, as all patients are presumed to be potentially infectious.

stand up /,staend 'ʌp/ *verb* 1. to get up from being on a seat ○ *He tried to stand up, but did not have the strength.* 2. to hold yourself upright ○ *She still stands up straight at the age of ninety-two.* (NOTE: **standing up – stood up**)

stapedectomy /,steɪpi'dektəmi/ *noun* a surgical operation to remove the stapes (NOTE: The plural is **stapedectomies**.)

stapedial mobilisation /stə,pɪ:diəl ,məʊbilɪ'seɪʃ(ə)n/, **stapediolyis** /stə,pɪ:dɪ 'bləsɪs/ *noun* a surgical operation to relieve deafness by detaching the stapes from the fenestra ovalis (NOTE: The plural of **stapediolyis** is **stapediolyses**.)

stapes /'steɪpi:z/ *noun* one of the three ossicles in the middle ear, shaped like a stirrup. See illustration at **EAR** in Supplement

COMMENT: The stapes fills the fenestra ovalis, and is articulated with the incus, which in turn articulates with the malleus.

staph /stæf/ *abbr* Staphylococcus

staphylectomy /,stæfi'lektəmi/ *noun* a surgical operation to remove the uvula (NOTE: The plural is **staphylectomies**.)

staphylococcal /,stæfilə'kɒk(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to Staphylococci

staphylococcal poisoning /,stæfilə'kɒkəl'pɔɪz(ə)nɪŋ/ *noun* poisoning by Staphylococci in food

Staphylococcus /,stæfilə'kɒkəs/ *noun* a bacterium which grows in a bunch like a bunch of grapes, and causes boils and food poisoning (NOTE: The plural is **Staphylococci**.)

staphyloma /,stæfɪ'ləʊmə/ *noun* a swelling of the cornea or the white of the eye (NOTE: The plural is **staphylomas** or **staphylomatata**.)

staphylorrhaphy /,stæfɪ'lɔ:rəfi/ *noun* same as **palorrhaphy** (NOTE: The plural is **staphylorrhaphies**.)

staple /'stepl(ə)l/ *noun* a small piece of bent metal, used to attach tissues together ■ *verb* to attach tissues with staples

stapler /'steplə/ *noun* a device used in surgery to attach tissues with staples, instead of suturing

starch /sta:tʃ/ *noun* the usual form in which carbohydrates exist in food, especially in bread, rice and potatoes. It is broken down by the digestive process into forms of sugar.

starchy /'stɑ:tʃi/ *adjective* referring to food which contains a lot of starch ○ *He eats too much starchy food.*

Starling's Law /'stɑ:lɪŋz lɔ:/ *noun* a law that the contraction of the ventricles is in proportion to the length of the ventricular muscle fibres at the end of diastole

startle reflex /'stɑ:t(t)əl ,rɪ:fleks/ *noun* the usual response of a young baby to a sudden loud noise or a sudden fall through the air, by contracting the limb and neck muscles

starvation /'stʌvərɪf(ə)n/ *noun* the fact of having had very little or no food

starvation diet /'stʌvərɪf(ə)n 'daɪət/ *noun* a diet which contains little nourishment, and is not enough to keep a person healthy

starve /'stʌ:v/ *verb* to have little or no food or nourishment ○ *The parents let the baby starve to death.*

stasis /'steɪsɪs/ *noun* a stoppage or slowing in the flow of a liquid, such as blood in veins, or food in the intestine

'A decreased blood flow in the extremities has been associated with venous stasis, which may precipitate vascular complications' [British Journal of Nursing]

-stasis /'steɪsɪs/ *suffix* referring to stoppage in the flow of a liquid

stat. /stæt/ *adverb* (*written on prescriptions*) immediately. Full form **statim**

state /steɪt/ *noun* the condition of something or of a person ○ *His state of health is getting worse.* ○ *The disease is in an advanced state.*

State Enrolled Nurse /'steɪt ɪn,rɔ:l'd 'nɜ:s/ *noun* Abbr **SEN**. Now called **second-level nurse**

state of mind /'steɪt əv 'maɪnd/ *noun* a general feeling ○ *He's in a very miserable state of mind.*

State Registered Nurse /'steɪt ,redʒɪstrɪstəd 'nɜ:s/ *noun* Abbr **SRN**. Now called **first-level nurse**

statin /'stætɪn/ *noun* a lipid-lowering drug which inhibits an enzyme in cholesterol synthesis, used to treat people with, or at high risk of developing, coronary heart disease

-statin /'stætɪn/ *suffix* used in generic names of lipid-lowering drugs ○ **pravastatin**

statistics /'stɑ:tɪstɪks/ *plural noun* official figures which show facts ○ *Population statistics show that the birth rate is slowing down.*

status /'steɪtəs/ *noun* a state or condition

'...the main indications being inadequate fluid and volume status and need for evaluation of patients with a history of severe heart disease' [Southern Medical Journal]

'...the standard pulmonary artery catheters have four lumens from which to obtain information about the patient's haemodynamic status' [RN Magazine]

status asthmaticus /'steɪtəs æs'mætɪkəs/ *noun* an attack of bronchial asthma which lasts for a long time and results in exhaustion and collapse

status epilepticus /,steɪtəs epi'leptɪkəs/ *noun* repeated and prolonged epileptic seizures without recovery of consciousness between them

status lymphaticus /,steɪtəs lim'fætɪkəs/ *noun* a condition in which the glands in the lymphatic system are enlarged

statutory bodies /,stæt(jʊtə)ri 'bɒdɪz/ *plural noun* organisations set up by Acts of Parliament to carry out specific functions, e.g. the Nursing and Midwifery Council, set up to regulate the nursing and midwifery professions

stay /steɪ/ *noun* the time which someone spends in a place ○ *The patient is only in hospital for a short stay.* ■ *verb* to stop in a place for some time ○ *She stayed in hospital for two weeks.* ○ *He's ill with flu and has to stay in bed.*

STD *abbr* sexually transmitted disease

steam inhalation /,stɪm ɪn'hælɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a treatment for respiratory disease in which someone breathes in steam with medicinal substances in it

steapsin /sti:'æpsɪn/ *noun* an enzyme produced by the pancreas, which breaks down fats in the intestine

stearic acid /sti,'ærɪk 'æsɪd/ *noun* one of the fatty acids

steat- /'sti:tət/, **steato-** /'sti:tətəʊ/ *prefix* referring to fat

steatoma /,sti:tə'toʊmə/ *noun* a cyst in a blocked sebaceous gland. ♀ **sebaceous cyst** (NOTE: The plural is **steatomata**.)

steatopygia /,sti:tə'pɪdʒiə/ *noun* excessive fat on the buttocks

steatorrhoea /,sti:tə'rɪə/ *noun* a condition in which fat is passed in the faeces

Stein-Leventhal syndrome /,sti:n 'levəntəl ,sɪndrəʊm/ *noun* ♀ **polycystic ovary syndrome** [Described 1935. After Irving F. Stein (b. 1887), US gynaecologist; Michael Leo Leventhal (1901–71), US obstetrician and gynaecologist.]

Steinmann's pin /,steɪnmæn'z ˈpɪn/ *noun* a pin for attaching traction wires to a fractured bone [Described 1907. After Fritz Steinmann (1872–1932), Swiss surgeon.]

stellate /'stelɪteɪt/ *adjective* shaped like a star

stellate fracture /,stelɪteɪt 'frækɪtʃə/ *noun* a fracture of the kneecap shaped like a star

stellate ganglion /,stelɪteɪt 'gængglɪən/ *noun* a group of nerve cells in the neck, shaped like a star

Stellwag's sign /'stelvæ:gz sain/ *noun* a symptom of exophthalmic goitre, where someone does not blink often, because the eyeball is protruding [After Carl Stellwag von Carion (1823–1904), ophthalmologist in Vienna, Austria]

stem /stɛm/ *noun* a thin piece of tissue which attaches an organ or growth to the main tissue

steno- /'stēnōʊ/ *prefix* narrow or constricted
stenose /'stē'nōʊs/ *verb* to make something narrow

stenosed valve /ste'nōʊst 'vælv/ *noun* a valve which has become narrow or constricted
stenosing condition /ste'nōʊs kən 'dīʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a condition which makes a passage narrow

stenosis /ste'nōʊsɪs/ *noun* a condition in which a passage becomes narrow

stenostomia /,stēnōʊ'stōmɪə/, **stenostomy** /stē'nōstōmɪ/ *noun* the narrowing of an opening

Stensen's duct /,stēnsən̄z dʌkt/ *noun* a duct which carries saliva from the parotid glands [Described 1661. After Niels Stensen (1638–86), Danish physician and priest, anatomist, physiologist and theologian.]

stent /stent/ *noun* a support of artificial material often inserted in a tube or vessel which has been sutured

step /stɛp/ *noun* a movement of the foot and the leg as in walking ○ *He took two steps forward.* ○ *The baby is taking her first steps.*

step up /,stɛp 'ʌp/ *verb* to increase something (*informal*) ○ *The doctor has stepped up the dosage.*

sterco- /stɛ:kəʊ/ *prefix* referring to faeces

stercobilin /,stɛ:kə'bɪlɪn/ *noun* a brown pigment which colours the faeces

stercobilinogen /,stɛ:kə'bərə'lɪmədʒen/ *noun* a substance which is broken down from bilirubin and produces stercobilin

stercolith /'stɛ:kəlɪθ/ *noun* a hard ball of dried faeces in the bowel

stercoraceous /,stɛ:kə'reɪʃəs/ *adjective* 1. made of or containing faeces 2. similar to faeces

stereognosis /,stērē'gnoʊsɪs/ *noun* the ability to tell the shape of an object in three dimensions by means of touch

stereoscopic vision /,stērē'ɔskɒpɪk 'vɪʒ(ə)n/ *noun* the ability to judge the distance and depth of an object by binocular vision

stereotactic /,stērē'ōtæk'tɪk/ *adjective* referring to procedures which use coordinates put into a computer or scanner in order to locate and operate upon tumours precisely. Examples are biopsies, surgery or radiation therapy.

stereotaxy /,stērē'ōtæksɪ/, **stereotaxic surgery** /,stērē'ōtæksɪk 'sɜː:dʒərɪ/ *noun* a surgical procedure to identify a point in the interior of the brain, before an operation can begin, to locate exactly the area to be operated on

stereotypy /,stērē'ōtaɪpi/ *noun* the repetition of the same action or word again and again

Sterets /'stērēts/ a trademark for a type of swab used for cleaning the skin before an injection

sterile /'stērēl/ *adjective* 1. with no harmful microorganisms present ○ *a sterile environment* 2. not able to produce children

sterile dressing /,stērēl 'dresɪŋ/ *noun* a dressing which is sold in a sterile pack, ready for use

sterilisation /,stērēlā'seɪʃ(ə)n/, **sterilization** *noun* 1. the action of making instruments or areas completely free from microorganisms which might cause infection 2. a procedure that makes someone unable to have children

COMMENT: Sterilisation of a woman can be done by removing the ovaries or cutting the Fallopian tubes. Sterilisation of a man is carried out by cutting the vas deferens (vasectomy).

sterilise /'stērēlaɪz/, **sterilize** *verb* 1. to make something completely free from microorganisms which might cause infection 2. to make someone unable to have children

steriliser /'stērēlaɪzə/, **sterilizer** *noun* a machine for sterilising surgical instruments by steam or boiling water

sterilising /'stērēlaɪzɪŋ/ *adjective* able to kill microorganisms ○ *Wipe the surface with sterilising fluid.*

sterility /stə'riliti/ *noun* 1. the state of being free from microorganisms 2. the state of being unable to have children

Steri-Strips /'stēri strips/ a trademark for thin paper strips which are placed over an incision in the skin. They help its edges to come together and form a scar.

sternal /'stɛ:n(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to the breastbone

sternal angle /,stɛ:n(ə)l 'æŋg(ə)l/ *noun* the ridge of bone where the manubrium articulates with the body of the sternum

sternal puncture /,stɛ:n(ə)l 'pʌŋktʃə/ *noun* a surgical operation to remove a sample of bone marrow from the breastbone for testing

sterno- /stɛ:nəʊ/ *prefix* relating to the breastbone

sternoclavicular /,stɛ:nəʊklə'veɪkjʊlər/ *adjective* referring to the sternum and the clavicle

sternoclavicular angle /,stɛ:nəʊklə 'vɪkjʊlər 'æŋgəl/ *noun* the angle between the sternum and the clavicle

sternocleidomastoid muscle /,stɛ:nəʊ 'klaidəʊ'meɪstɔɪd 'mʌs(ə)l/ *noun* a muscle in the neck, running from the breastbone to the mastoid process

sternocostal /,stɛ:nəʊ'kɒst(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to the sternum and ribs

sternocostal joint /,stɛ:nəʊ'kɒst(ə)l dʒɔɪnt/ *noun* a joint where the breastbone joins a rib

sternohyoid /,stɛ:nəʊ'haiəɪd/ *adjective* relating to the sternum and the hyoid bone

sterno^{hyoid} muscle /'stɜ:nəʊ'haɪəd, mæs(ə)l/ *noun* a muscle in the neck which runs from the breastbone into the hyoid bone

sternomastoid /'stɜ:nəʊ'mæstɔɪd/ *adjective* referring to the breastbone and the mastoid

sternomastoid tumour /,stɜ:nəʊ'mæstɔɪd' tju:mə/ *noun* a benign tumour which appears in the sternomastoid muscle in newborn babies

sternotomy /'stɜ:n'ntəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to cut through the breastbone, so as to be able to operate on the heart

sternum /'stɜ:nəm/ *noun* same as **breast-bone**

COMMENT: The sternum runs from the neck to the bottom of the diaphragm. It is formed of the manubrium (the top section), the body of the sternum and the xiphoid process. The upper seven pairs of ribs are attached to the sternum.

sternutatory /'stɜ:nju:tətɔri/ *noun* a substance which makes someone sneeze

steroid /'stɪərɔɪd/ *noun* any of several chemical compounds, including the sex hormones, which have characteristic ring systems and which affect the body and its functions

COMMENT: The word steroid is usually used to refer to corticosteroids. Synthetic steroids are used in steroid therapy, to treat arthritis, asthma and some blood disorders. They are also used by some athletes to improve their physical strength, but these are banned by athletic organisations and can have serious side-effects.

steroidal /'stɪərɔɪdəl/ *adjective* containing steroids. Opposite **non-steroidal**

sterol /'stɪərl/ *noun* an insoluble substance which belongs to the steroid alcohols, e.g. cholesterol

sterter /'stɜ:tə/ *noun* noisy breathing sounds in someone unconscious

sterterous /'stɜ:t(ə)rəs/ *adjective* characterised by heavy snoring

steth- /steθ/, **stetho-** /'steθə/ *prefix* referring to the chest

stethograph /'steθəgrɑ:f/ *noun* an instrument which records breathing movements of the chest

stethography /ste'θɒgrəfi/ *noun* the process of recording movements of the chest

stethometer /ste'θɒmɪtə/ *noun* an instrument which records how far the chest expands when a person breathes in

stethoscope /'steθəsko:p/ *noun* a surgical instrument with two earpieces connected to a tube and a metal disc, used by doctors to listen to sounds made inside the body, e.g. the sounds of the heart or lungs

Stevens-Johnson syndrome /,sti:vənz'dʒɒnsən, sɪnd्रəʊm/ *noun* a severe form of erythema multiforme affecting the face and genitals, caused by an allergic reaction to drugs [Described 1922. After Albert Mason Stevens (1884–1945); Frank Chambliss Johnson (1894–1934), physicians in New York, USA.]

vens (1884–1945); Frank Chambliss Johnson (1894–1934), physicians in New York, USA.]

sthenia /'sthi:nɪə/ *noun* a condition of great strength or vitality

STI *abbr* sexually transmitted infection

stick /stɪk/ *verb* to attach something, to fix things together, e.g. with glue ○ *In bad cases of conjunctivitis the eyelids can stick together.*

sticking plaster /'stɪkɪŋ ,pla:stə/ *noun* an adhesive plaster or tape used to cover a small wound or to attach a pad of dressing to the skin

sticky /'stɪki/ *adjective* able to become easily attached like glue

sticky eye /'stɪki aɪ/ *noun* a condition in babies in which the eyes remain closed because of conjunctivitis

stiff /stɪf/ *adjective* not able to be bent or moved easily ○ *My knee is stiff after playing football.*

stiffly /'stɪflɪ/ *adverb* in a stiff way ○ *He is walking stiffly because of the pain in his hip.*

stiff neck /stɪf 'nek/ *noun* a condition in which moving the neck is painful, usually caused by a strained muscle or by sitting in a cold wind

stiffness /'stɪfnəs/ *noun* the fact of being stiff ○ *arthritis accompanied by stiffness in the joints*

stigma /'stɪgma/ *noun* a visible symptom which shows that someone has a particular disease (NOTE: The plural is **stigmas** or **stigmata**)

stilet /'stɪlət/ *noun* 1. a fine wire used as a probe in surgery 2. a wire inserted in a catheter to give it rigidity

stillbirth /'stɪlbɜ:θ/ *noun* the birth of a dead fetus, more than 28 weeks after conception (informal)

stillborn /'stɪlbɔ:n/ *adjective* referring to a baby born dead ○ *Her first child was stillborn.*

Still's disease /'stɪlz dɪ,zɪz/ *noun* arthritis affecting children, similar to rheumatoid arthritis in adults [Described 1896. After Sir George Frederic Still (1868–1941), British paediatrician and physician to the king.]

stimulant /'stɪmju:lənt/ *noun* a substance which makes part of the body function faster ○ *Caffeine is a stimulant.* ■ *adjective* increasing body function

COMMENT: Natural stimulants include some hormones, and drugs such as digitalis which encourage a weak heart. Drinks such as tea and coffee contain stimulants.

stimulate /'stɪmju:lət/ *verb* to make a person or organ react, respond or function ○ *The therapy should stimulate the patient into attempting to walk unaided.* ○ *The drug stimulates the heart.*

stimulation /,stɪmju'leɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the action of stimulating something

stimulus /'stɪmju:la:s/ *noun* something which has an effect on a person or a part of the body

and makes them react (NOTE: The plural is **stimmers**.)

sting /stɪŋ/ *noun* the piercing of the skin by an insect which passes a toxic substance into the bloodstream ■ *verb (of an insect)* to make a hole in the skin and pass a toxic substance into the blood ○ *He was stung by a wasp.*

COMMENT: Stings by some insects such as tsetse flies can transmit a bacterial infection to a person. Other insects such as bees pass toxic substances into the bloodstream of the affected person, causing irritating swellings. Some people are strongly allergic to insect stings.

stinging /'stɪŋɪŋ/ *adjective* referring to a sharp unpleasant feeling of pricking or burning ○ *a sudden stinging sensation in the back of her leg*

stirrup /'stɪrəp/ *noun* same as **stapes**

stirrup bone /'stɪrəp bən/ *noun* same as **stapes**

stitch /stɪtʃ/ *noun* 1. same as **suture** 2 ○ *He had three stitches in his head.* ○ *The doctor told her to come back in ten days' time to have the stitches taken out.* 2. pain caused by cramp in the side of the body after running ○ *He had to stop running because he developed a stitch.* ■ *verb* same as **suture** ○ *They tried to stitch back the finger which had been cut off in an accident.*

stitch abscess /'stɪtʃ ,æbses/ *noun* an abscess which forms at the site of a stitch or suture

stock culture /stɒk 'kʌltʃə/ *noun* the basic culture of bacteria, from which other cultures can be taken

stocking /'stɒkɪŋ/ *noun* a close-fitting piece of clothing to cover the leg

Stokes–Adams syndrome /,stəʊks 'ædəmz ,sɪndrəʊm/ *noun* a loss of consciousness due to the stopping of the action of the heart because of asystole or fibrillation [After William Stokes (1804–78), Irish physician; Robert Adams (1791–1875), Irish surgeon]

stoma /'stəʊmə/ *noun* 1. any opening into a cavity in the body 2. the mouth 3. a colostomy (*informal*) (NOTE: [all senses] The plural is **stomata**.)

stomach /'stʌmæk/ *noun* 1. the part of the body shaped like a bag, into which food passes after being swallowed and where the process of digestion continues ○ *She complained of pains in the stomach or of stomach pains.* ○ *He has had stomach trouble for some time.* See illustration at **DIGESTIVE SYSTEM** in Supplement 2. the abdomen (*informal*) ○ *He had been kicked in the stomach.* (NOTE: For other terms referring to the stomach, see words beginning with **gastr-**, **gastro-**.)

COMMENT: The stomach is situated in the top of the abdomen, and on the left side of the body between the oesophagus and the duodenum. Food is partly broken down by hydro-

chloric acid and other gastric juices secreted by the walls of the stomach and is mixed and squeezed by the action of the muscles of the stomach, before being passed on into the duodenum. The stomach continues the digestive process started in the mouth, but few substances, except alcohol and honey, are actually absorbed into the bloodstream in the stomach.

stomach ache /'stʌmæk eɪk/ *noun* pain in the abdomen or stomach, caused by eating too much food or by an infection

stomach cramp /'stʌmæk kræmp/ *noun* a sharp spasm of the stomach muscles

stomach hernia *noun* same as **gastrocele**

stomach pump /'stʌmæk pʌmp/ *noun* an instrument for sucking out the contents of the stomach, e.g. to extract a poison that has been swallowed

stomach tube /'stʌmæk tju:b/ *noun* a tube passed into the stomach to wash it out or to take samples of the contents

stomach upset /'stʌmæk ,ʌpset/ *noun* a slight infection of the stomach ○ *She is in bed with a stomach upset.* Also called **upset stomach**

stomach washout /,stʌmæk 'wɒʃaʊt/ *noun* same as **gastric lavage**

stomal /'stəʊm(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to a stoma

stomal ulcer /,stəʊm(ə)l 'ʌlsə/ *noun* an ulcer in the region of the jejunum

stomat- /'stəʊmət/ *prefix* same as **stomato-** (*used before vowels*)

stomatitis /,stəʊmə'taɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the inside of the mouth

stomato- /'stəʊmətə/ *prefix* referring to the mouth

stomatology /,stəʊmə'tɒlədʒi/ *noun* a branch of medicine which studies diseases of the mouth

-stomy /'stəmɪ/ *suffix* meaning an operation to make an opening

stone /'stəʊn/ *noun* 1. same as **calculus (informal)** (NOTE: For other terms referring to stones, see words beginning with **lith-**, **litho-**, or ending with **-lith-**.) 2. a measure of weight equal to 14 pounds or 6.35 kilograms ○ *He tried to lose weight and lost three stone.* ○ *She weighs eight stone ten (i.e. 8 stone 10 pounds).*

stone-deaf /,stəʊn 'def/ *adjective* totally deaf

stool /stu:l/ *noun* 1. an act of emptying the bowels 2. a piece of solid waste matter which is passed out of the bowels ○ *an abnormal stool* ○ *loose stools* ○ *a stool test* (NOTE: Often used in the plural.) ■ *verb* to pass a piece of solid matter out of the bowels

stoop /stu:p/ *noun* a position where especially the top of your back is bent forward ○ *He walks with a stoop.* ■ *verb* to have a stoop ○ *He is seventy-five and stoops.*

stop needle /'stɒp ,ni:d(ə)l/ *noun* a needle with a ring round it, so that it can only be pushed a specific distance into the body

stoppage /'stɒpɪdʒ/ *noun* an act of stopping the function of an organ

storage disease /'stɔ:ri:dʒ ɒr,zi:z/ *noun* a disease in which unusual amounts of a substance accumulate in a part of the body

stove-in chest /,stəʊv ɪn 'tʃest/ *noun* an injury resulting from an accident, where several ribs are broken and pushed towards the inside

strabismal /stra'bɪzm(ə)l/ *adjective* with the eyes focusing on different points

strabismus /stra'bɪzməs/ *noun* a condition in which the eyes focus on different points. Also called **squint, heterotropia**

strabotomy /stra'bɒtəmi/ *noun* a surgical operation to divide the muscles of the eye in order to correct a squint

straight /streɪt/ *adjective* with no irregularities such as bends, curves or angles

straighten /streɪt(ə)n/ *verb* to make something straight, or become straight ○ *Her arthritis is so bad that she cannot straighten her knees.*

strain /streɪn/ *noun* 1. a condition in which a muscle has been stretched or torn by a strong or sudden movement 2. a group of microorganisms which are different from others of the same type ○ *a new strain of influenza virus* 3. nervous tension and stress ○ *Her work is causing her a lot of strain.* ○ *He is suffering from nervous strain and needs to relax.* ■ *verb* to stretch a muscle too far ○ *He strained his back lifting the table.* ○ *She had to leave the game with a strained calf muscle.* ○ *The effort of running upstairs strained his heart.*

strand /strænd/ *noun* a thread

strangle /'stræŋgəl/ *verb* to kill someone by squeezing the throat so that he or she cannot breathe or swallow

strangulated /'stræŋgjuleɪtɪd/ *adjective* referring to part of the body which is caught in an opening in such a way that the circulation of blood is stopped

strangulated hernia /,stræŋgjoleɪtɪd 'hɜ:nɪə/ *noun* a condition in which part of the intestine is squeezed in a hernia and the supply of blood to it is cut off

strangulation /,stræŋgju'lɛɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the act of squeezing a passage in the body

strangury /'stræŋgjʊrɪ/ *noun* a condition in which very little urine is passed, although the person wants to urinate, caused by a bladder disorder or by a stone in the urethra

strap /stræp/ *verb* □ **to strap (up)** to wrap a bandage round a limb tightly, to attach tightly ○ *The nurses strapped up his stomach wound.* ○ *The patient was strapped to the stretcher.*

strapping /'stræpɪŋ/ *noun* wide strong bandages or adhesive plaster used to bandage a large part of the body

Strategic Health Authority /strə,tɪ:dʒɪk 'helθ ɔ:,θɒriti/ *noun* in the UK, an organisation, accountable to government, that assesses the health needs of local people and ensures that local health services are commissioned and provided to meet those needs. Abbr **StHA**

stratified /'strætɪfaɪd/ *adjective* made of several layers

stratified epithelium /,strætɪfaɪd epi'θi:lɪəm/ *noun* epithelium formed of several layers of cells

stratum /'stræ:təm/ *noun* a layer of tissue forming the epidermis (NOTE: The plural is **strata**)

COMMENT: The main layers of the epidermis are: the **stratum germinativum** or **stratum basale**: this layer produces the cells that are pushed up to form the other layers; the **stratum granulosum**, a layer with granular cells under the **stratum lucidum**, a thin clear layer of dead and dying cells, and the surface layer, or **stratum corneum**, a layer of dead keratinised cells which progressively fall off.

strawberry mark /'strə:b(ə)ri mɑ:k/ *noun* a red birthmark in children, which will often disappear in later life

streak /stri:k/ *noun* a long thin line of a different colour

strength /streŋθ/ *noun* the fact of being strong ○ *After her illness she had no strength in her limbs.*

strengthen /'strenθ(ə)n/ *verb* to make something strong

strenuous /'strenjuəs/ *adjective* referring to exercise which involves using a lot of force ○ *Avoid doing any strenuous exercise for some time while the wound heals.*

strep throat /,strep 'θrəʊt/ *noun* an infection of the throat by a streptococcus (*informal*)

strepto- /streptə/ *prefix* referring to organisms which grow in chains

streptobacillus /,streptə'bæk'siləs/ *noun* a type of bacterium which forms a chain

streptococcal /,streptə'kɒk(ə)l/ *adjective* caused by a streptococcus

streptococcus /,streptə'kɒkəs/ *noun* a genus of bacteria which grows in long chains, and causes fevers such as scarlet fever, tonsillitis and rheumatic fever (NOTE: The plural is **streptococci**)

streptodornase /,streptə'dɔ:næs/ *noun* an enzyme formed by streptococci which can make pus liquid

streptokinase /,streptə'keɪnɛz/ *noun* an enzyme formed by streptococci which can break down blood clots and is therefore used in the treatment of myocardial infarction

streptolysin /strep'tɒləsɪn/ *noun* a toxin produced by streptococci in rheumatic fever, which acts to destroy red blood cells

Streptomyces /strep'tə'maɪsɪz/ *noun* a genus of bacteria used to produce antibiotics

streptomycin /strep'tə'maɪsɪn/ *noun* an antibacterial drug used mainly for the treatment of tuberculosis

stress /stres/ *noun* 1. physical pressure on an object or part of the body 2. a factor or combination of factors in a person's life which make him or her feel tired and anxious 3. a condition in which an outside influence such as overwork or a mental or emotional state such as anxiety changes the working of the body and can affect the hormone balance

stress disorder /'stres dɪsɔ:də/ *noun* a disorder caused by stress

stress fracture /'stres ,frækʃə/ *noun* a fracture of a bone caused by excessive force, as in some types of sport. Also called **fatigue fracture**

stress incontinence /'stres in,kɒntɪnəns/ *noun* a condition in women in which the muscles in the floor of the pelvis become incapable of retaining urine when the intra-abdominal pressure is raised by coughing or laughing

stress reaction /'stres ri,ækʃən/ *noun* a response to an outside stimulus which disturbs the usual physiological balance of the body

stress-related illness /'stres ri,leɪtɪd 'ɪlhəs/ *noun* an illness which is due in part or completely to stress

stretch /stretʃ/ *verb* to pull something out, or make something longer

stretcher /stretʃə/ *noun* a folding bed, with handles, on which an injured person can be carried by two people ◇ *She was carried out of the restaurant on a stretcher.* ◇ *Some of the accident victims could walk to the ambulances, but there were several stretcher cases.*

stretcher bearer /stretʃə ,beərə/ *noun* a person who helps to carry a stretcher

stretcher case /stretʃə keɪs/ *noun* a person who is so ill that he or she has to be carried on a stretcher

stretcher party /stretʃə ,pa:tɪ/ *noun* a group of people who carry a stretcher and look after the person on it

stretch mark /stretʃ mɑ:k/ *noun* a mark on the skin of the abdomen of a pregnant woman or of a woman who has recently given birth. ◇ **striae gravidarum**

stretch reflex /stretʃ ,ri:fleks/ *noun* a reflex reaction of a muscle which contracts after being stretched

stria /'straɪə/ *noun* a pale line on skin which is stretched, as in obese people (NOTE: The plural is **striae**.)

striae gravidarum /,strai: ,grævɪ'deərəm/ *plural noun* the lines on the skin of

the abdomen of a pregnant woman or of a woman who has recently given birth

striated /straɪ'teɪtɪd/ *adjective* marked with pale lines

striated muscle /straɪ'teɪtɪd ,mæs(ə)l/ *noun* a type of muscle found in skeletal muscles whose movements are controlled by the central nervous system. Also called **striped muscle**

strict /strɪkt/ *adjective* severe, which must not be changed ◇ *She has to follow a strict diet.* ◇ *The doctor was strict with the patients who wanted to drink alcohol in the hospital.*

stricture /'strɪktʃə/ *noun* the narrowing of a passage in the body

stricturoplasty /'strɪktʃərəʊ,plæstɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation in which a part of the intestine is widened

stridor /'straɪdɔ:/, **stridulus** /'straɪdjʊləs/ *noun* a sharp high sound made when air passes an obstruction in the larynx. ◇ **laryngismus**

strike-through /'straɪk θru:/ *noun* blood absorbed right through a dressing so as to be visible on the outside

'If strike-through occurs, the wound dressing should be repadded, not removed' [British Journal of Nursing]

string sign /'strɪŋ sain/ *noun* a thin line which appears on the ileum, a sign of regional ileitis or Crohn's disease

strip /stri:p/ *noun* a long thin piece of material or tissue ◇ *The nurse bandaged the wound with strips of gauze.* ◇ *He grafted a strip of skin over the burn.* ■ *verb* to take off something, especially clothes ◇ *The patients had to strip for the medical examination.* ◇ **to strip to the waist** to take off the clothes on the top part of the body

striped muscle /'strɪapt ,mæs(ə)l/ *noun* same as **striated muscle**

stripper /'stri:pə/ *noun* an instrument in the form of a flexible wire with an olive-shaped end used for stripping varicose veins

stripping /'stri:pɪŋ/ *noun* a surgical operation to remove varicose veins

stroke /straʊk/ *noun* same as **cerebrovascular accident** ◇ *He had a stroke and died.* ◇ *She was paralysed after a stroke.* ■ *verb* to touch something or someone softly with the fingers

'...stroke is the third most frequent cause of death in developed countries after ischaemic heart disease and cancer' [British Journal of Hospital Medicine]

'...raised blood pressure may account for as many as 70% of all strokes. The risk of stroke rises with both systolic and diastolic blood pressure' [British Journal of Hospital Medicine]

COMMENT: There are two causes of stroke: cerebral haemorrhage (haemorrhagic stroke), when an artery bursts and blood leaks into the brain, and cerebral thrombosis (occlusive stroke), where a blood clot blocks an artery.

stroke patient /'straʊk ,peɪʃ(ə)nt/ *noun* a person who has had a stroke

stroke volume /'strəʊk ,vɒlvju:m/ *noun* the amount of blood pumped out of the ventricle at each heartbeat

stroma /'strəʊmə/ *noun* tissue which supports an organ, as opposed to the parenchyma or functioning tissues in the organ

Strongyloides /,strɒndʒɪ'lɔɪdɪz/ *noun* a parasitic worm which infests the intestines

strongyloidiasis /,strɒndʒɪlɔɪ'daɪəsɪs/ *noun* the fact of being infested with *Strongyloides* which enters the skin and then travels to the lungs and the intestines

strontium /'strɒntiəm/ *noun* a metallic element (NOTE: The chemical symbol is **Sr.**)

strontium-90 /,strɒntiəm 'naɪntɪ/ *noun* an isotope of strontium which is formed in nuclear reactions and, because it is part of the fallout of nuclear explosions, can enter the food chain, attacking in particular the bones of humans and animals

structure /'strʌktʃə/ *noun* the way in which an organ or muscle is formed

struma /'stru:mə/ *noun* a goitre

strychnine /'striknɪ:n/ *noun* a poisonous alkaloid drug, made from the seeds of a tropical tree, and formerly used in small doses as a tonic

Stryker frame /'straɪkə freɪm/ *noun* a special piece of equipment on which a patient can easily be rotated by a nurse, used for patients with spinal injuries

ST segment /'es 'ti: ,segmənt/, **S-T segment** *noun* the part of an electrocardiogram, between the points labelled S and T, immediately before the last phase of the cardiac cycle.

◊ **PQRST complex**

student /'stju:d(ə)nt/ *noun* a person who is studying at a college or university ◊ *All the medical students have to spend some time in the hospital.*

student nurse /'stju:d(ə)nt nɜ:s/ *noun* a person who is studying to become a nurse

study /'stʌdi/ *noun* the act of examining something to learn about it ◊ *She's making a study of diseases of small children.* ◊ *They have finished their study of the effects of the drug on pregnant women.* ■ *verb* to examine something to learn about it ◊ *He's studying pharmacy.* ◊ *Doctors are studying the results of the screening programme.*

stuffy /'stʌfi/, **stuffed up** /,stʌft 'ʌp/ *adjective* referring to a nose which is blocked with inflamed mucous membrane and mucus (*informal*)

stump /stʌmp/ *noun* a short piece of a limb which is left after the rest has been amputated

stun /stʌn/ *verb* to knock someone out by a blow to the head

stunt /stʌnt/ *verb* to stop something growing ◊ *The children's development was stunted by disease.*

stupore /stju:pə/ *noun* a wet medicated dressing used as a compress

stupor /'stju:pə/ *noun* a state of being semi-conscious ◊ *After the party several people were found lying on the floor in a stupor.*

Sturge-Weber syndrome /,stɜːdʒə 'webə/ ,sɪnd्रɔːm/ *noun* a dark red mark on the skin above the eye, together with similar marks inside the brain, possibly causing epileptic fits

stutter /'stʌtə/ *noun* a speech problem where someone repeats the sound at the beginning of a word several times ◊ *He is taking therapy to try to cure his stutter.* ■ *verb* to speak with a stammer

stuttering /'stʌtərɪŋ/ *noun* same as **stammering**

style /stайл/ *noun* same as **hordeolum**

stylet /'stailət/ *noun* 1. a very thin piece of wire which is put into a catheter or hollow needle so that it will not become blocked when it is not being used 2. any long thin pointed instrument

stylo- /'stailəʊ/ *prefix* referring to the styloid process

styloglossus /,stailəʊ'glosəs/ *noun* a muscle which links the tongue to the styloid process

styloid /'stailəɪd/ *adjective* pointed

styloid process /'stailəɪd ,prəʊses/ *noun* a piece of bone which projects from the bottom of the temporal bone

stylus /'stailəs/ *noun* a long thin instrument used for applying antiseptics or ointments to the skin

styptic /'stɪptɪk/ *noun* a substance which stops bleeding ■ *adjective* used to stop bleeding

styptic pencil /,stɪptɪk 'pens(ə)l/ *noun* a stick of alum, used to stop bleeding from small cuts

sub- /sʌb/ *prefix* underneath or below

subabdominal /,sʌbəbə'dɒmɪn(ə)l/ *adjective* beneath the abdomen

subacute /,sʌbə'kjut:/ *adjective* referring to a condition which is not acute but may become chronic

subacute bacterial endocarditis /,sʌbəkjut: bæk,tɪəriəl ,endəʊkə:tɪ:daitɪs/,

subacute infective endocarditis /,sʌbəkjut:ɪnfektɪv ,endəʊkə:tɪ:daitɪs/ *noun* an infection of the membrane covering the inner surfaces of the heart caused by bacteria

subacute combined degeneration of the spinal cord /,sʌbəkjut:kəm'bɪnd di,dʒen'reɪʃ(ə)n əv ðə 'spærn(ə)l kɔ:ld/ *noun* a condition, caused by Vitamin B₁₂ deficiency, in which the sensory and motor nerves in the spinal cord become damaged and the person has difficulty in moving

subacute sclerosing panencephalitis /,sʌbə,kjut: sklə,rəʊsɪŋ ,pænenkefə'laitɪs/

noun a rare inflammatory disease of the brain, mostly affecting children. It is linked to having measles at a very young age, and is usually fatal.

subarachnoid /səbə'ræknoɪd/ *adjective* beneath the arachnoid membrane

subarachnoid haemorrhage /,səbə'ræknoɪd 'hem(ə)rɪdʒ/ *noun* bleeding into the cerebrospinal fluid of the subarachnoid space

subarachnoid space /,səbə'ræknoɪd 'speɪs/ *noun* a space between the arachnoid membrane and the pia mater in the brain, containing cerebrospinal fluid

subaxillary /,səbæk'sɪlərɪ/ *adjective* beneath the armpit

subcartilaginous /,səbkə:tɪ'lædʒɪnəs/ *adjective* 1. beneath cartilage or a body part composed of cartilage 2. made partly of cartilage

subclavian /səb'kleɪviən/ *adjective* underneath the clavicle

subclavian artery /səb,kleɪviən 'a:tərɪ/ *noun* one of two arteries branching from the aorta on the left and from the innominate artery on the right, continuing into the brachial arteries and supplying blood to each arm

subclavian vein /səb,kleɪviən 'veɪn/ *noun* one of the veins which continue the axillary veins into the brachiocephalic vein

subclinical /səb'klimɪk(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to a disease which is present in the body, but which has not yet developed any symptoms

subconscious /səb'kɒnʃəs/ *noun* the part of a person's mental processes which he or she is not aware of most of the time, but which can affect his or her actions ■ *adjective* present in the mind although a person is not aware of it

subcortex /səb'kɔ:tɛks/ *noun* the parts of the brain immediately beneath the cerebral cortex

subcortical /səb'kɔ:tɪk(ə)l/ *adjective* beneath a cortex

subcostal /səb'kɒst(ə)l/ *adjective* below the ribs

subcostal plane /səb,kɒst(ə)l 'pleɪn/ *noun* an imaginary horizontal line drawn across the front of the abdomen below the ribs

subcranial /səb'kreɪniəl/ *adjective* beneath the dome of the skull

subculture /'səbklʌltʃə/ *noun* a culture of bacteria which is taken from a stock culture

subculturing /səb'kʌltʃərɪŋ/ *noun* the act of taking a culture of bacteria from a stock culture

subcutaneous /,səbkju:təniəs/ *adjective* under the skin. Abbr. **s.c.**

subcutaneous injection /,səbkju:təniəs m'dʒekʃən/ *noun* same as **hypodermic injection**

subcutaneous oedema /,səbkju:təniəs ɪ'di:mə/ *noun* a fluid collecting under the skin, usually at the ankles

subcutaneous tissue /,səbkju:təniəs 'tɪʃu:/ *noun* fatty tissue under the skin

subdural /səb'djuərəl/ *adjective* between the dura mater and the arachnoid

subdural haematoma /səb,djuərəl hɪ:mə'təʊmə/ *noun* a haematoma between the dura mater and the arachnoid which displaces the brain, caused by a blow on the head

subglottis /səb'glɒtɪs/ *noun* the lowest part of the laryngeal cavity, below the vocal folds

subinvolution /,səbɪnvə'lju:s(ə)n/ *noun* a condition in which a part of the body does not go back to its former size and shape after having swollen or stretched, as in the case of the uterus after childbirth

subject /'səbdʒɪkt/ *noun* 1. a patient, a person who has a particular disease ○ *The hospital has developed a new treatment for arthritic subjects.* 2. something which is being studied or written about ○ *The subject of the article is 'Rh-negative babies'.*

subjective /səb'dʒektɪv/ *adjective* representing the views or feelings of the person concerned and not impartial ○ *The psychiatrist gave a subjective opinion on the patient's problem. Compare objective*

subject to /'səbdʒekt tu/ *adverb* likely to experience ○ *The patient is subject to fits.* ○ *After returning from the tropics she was subject to attacks of malaria.*

sublimate /'səblɪmeɪt/ *noun* a deposit left when a vapour condenses ■ *verb* to convert violent emotion into action which is not antisocial

sublimation /,səblɪ'meɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a psychological process in which violent emotions which would otherwise be expressed in antisocial behaviour are directed into actions which are socially acceptable

subliminal /səb'lɪmɪn(ə)l/ *adjective* too slight to be noticed by the senses

sublingual /səb'lɪŋgwəl/ *adjective* under the tongue

'...the sublingual region has a rich blood supply derived from the carotid artery and indicates changes in central body temperature more rapidly than the rectum' [Nursing Times]

sublingual gland /səb'lɪŋgwəl glænd/ *noun* a salivary gland under the tongue

subluxation /,səblʌk'seɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a condition in which a joint is partially dislocated

submandibular /,səbmæn'dibjʊlə/ *adjective* under the lower jaw

submandibular ganglion /səbmæn,dibjʊlə 'gænggliən/ *noun* a ganglion associated with the lingual nerve, relaying impulses to the submandibular and sublingual salivary glands

submandibular gland /,səbmæn'dibjʊlə,gla:nd/, **submaxillary gland** /səb'mæksɪləri,gla:nd/

glænd/ noun a salivary gland on each side of the lower jaw

submental /səb'ment(ə)l/ adjective under the chin

submucosa /,səbmju: 'kəʊsə/ noun tissue under a mucous membrane

submucous /səb'mju:kəs/ adjective under a mucous membrane

submucous resection /səb,mju:kəs rɪ'sekʃən/ noun the removal of a bent cartilage from the septum in the nose. Abbr **SMR**

subnormal /səb'nɔ:m(ə)l/ adjective with a mind which has not developed fully (NOTE: This term is regarded as offensive.)

subnormality /,səbnɔ:l'mælitɪ/ noun a condition in which someone's mind has not developed fully (NOTE: This term is regarded as offensive.)

suboccipital /,səb'ɒk'sɪpɪt(ə)l/ adjective beneath the back of the head

suborbital /səb'ɔ:bɪt(ə)l/ adjective beneath the eye socket

subperiosteal /,səbper'i'ostɪəl/ adjective immediately beneath the connective tissue around bones

subphrenic /səb'frenɪk/ adjective under the diaphragm

subphrenic abscess /səb,frenɪk 'æbses/ noun an abscess which forms between the diaphragm and the liver

subside /səb'saɪd/ verb to go down or become less violent ○ After being given the antibiotics, her fever subsided.

substance /'səbstəns/ noun a chemical material, e.g. a drug ○ toxic substances released into the bloodstream ○ He became addicted to certain substances.

substance abuse /'səbstəns ə,bju:s/, substance misuse /'səbstəns mis,ju:z/ noun the misuse or excessive use of drugs, alcohol or other substances for pleasure or to satisfy addiction, which often causes health, emotional or social problems for the user

substance P /,səbstəns 'pi:/ noun a neurotransmitter involved in pain pathways

substitution /,səbstrɪ'tju:f(ə)n/ noun the act of replacing one thing with another

substitution therapy /,səbstrɪ'tju:f(ə)n θerəpi/ noun a way of treating a condition by using a different drug from the one used before

substrate /'səbstreɪt/ noun a substance which is acted on by an enzyme

...insulin is a protein hormone and the body's major anabolic hormone, regulating the metabolism of all body fuels and substrates' [Nursing 87]

subsultus /səb'saltəs/ noun a twitching of the muscles and tendons, caused by fever

subtertian fever /səb,tɜ:ʃən 'fɪvər/ noun a type of malaria, where the fever is present most of the time

subthreshold /'səbθrəfθəuld/ adjective describing a stimulus that is not strong enough to have an effect

subtotal /səb'taʊt(ə)l/ adjective referring to an operation to remove most of an organ

subtotal gastrectomy /,səbtəʊt(ə)l ɡæ'strektəmi/ noun the surgical removal of all but the top part of the stomach in contact with the diaphragm

subtotal hysterectomy /,səbtəʊt(ə)l ,hɪstə'rektəmi/ noun the surgical removal of the uterus, but not the cervix

subtotal pancreatectomy /,səbtəʊt(ə)l ,pænkrɪə'tektəmi/ noun the surgical removal of most of the pancreas

subtotal thyroidectomy /,səbtəʊt(ə)l ,θaɪrət'ektəmi/ noun the surgical removal of most of the thyroid gland

subungual /səb'ʌŋgwəl/ adjective under a nail

succeed /sək'si:d/ verb to do well at what one was trying to do ○ Scientists have succeeded in identifying the new influenza virus. ○ They succeeded in stopping the flow of blood.

success /sək'ses/ noun 1. the fact of doing something well, doing what one was trying to do ○ They tried to isolate the virus but without success. 2. something which goes well ○ The operation was a complete success.

successful /sək'sesf(ə)l/ adjective working well ○ The operation was completely successful.

succession /sək'seʃ(ə)n/ noun a line of happenings, one after the other ○ She had a succession of miscarriages.

successive /sək'sesɪv/ adjective following one after the other ○ She had a miscarriage with each successive pregnancy.

succus /'səkəs/ noun juice secreted by an organ

succus entericus /,səkəs en'terikəs/ noun juice formed of enzymes, produced in the intestine to help the digestive process

succussion /sə'kʌʃ(ə)n/ noun a splashing sound made when there is a large amount of liquid inside a cavity in the body, e.g. the stomach

suck /sʌk/ verb to pull liquid or air into the mouth or into a tube

sucrase /'su:kreɪz/ noun an enzyme in the intestine which breaks down sucrose into glucose and fructose

sucrose /'su:k्रeʊs/ noun a sugar, formed of glucose and fructose, found in plants, especially in sugar cane, beet and maple syrup

suction /'sʌkʃən/ noun a force created by the action of sucking ○ The dentist hooked a suction tube into the patient's mouth.

sudamen /su'deimən/ *noun* a little blister caused by sweat (NOTE: The plural is **sudamina**.)

sudden /'sʌd(ə)n/ *adjective* happening quickly

sudden death /,sʌd(ə)n 'deθ/ *noun* death without any identifiable cause, not preceded by an illness

sudden infant death syndrome /,sʌd(ə)n ,ɪnfənt 'deθ ,sɪndrəʊm/ *noun* the sudden death of a baby under the age of about twelve months in bed, without any identifiable cause. Abbr **SIDS**. Also called **cot death**

Sudeck's atrophy /'su:deks ,ætrəfi/ *noun* osteoporosis in the hand or foot [Described 1900. After Paul Hermann Martin Sudeck (1866–1938), German surgeon.]

sudor /'su:dɔ:/ *noun* sweat

sudoriferous /su:də'riferəs/ *adjective* producing sweat

sudorific /su:də'rifik/ *noun* a drug which makes someone sweat

suffer /'safə/ *verb* 1. to have an illness for a long period of time ○ *I suffer from headaches.* 2. to feel pain ○ *I didn't suffer much.* 3. to receive an injury ○ *He suffered multiple injuries in the accident.*

sufferer /'safərə/ *noun* a person who has a particular disease ○ *A drug to help asthma sufferers or sufferers from asthma*

suffering /'saf(ə)rɪŋ/ *noun* the experiencing of pain over a long period of time

suffocate /'safəkeɪt/ *verb* to make someone stop breathing by cutting off the supply of air to his or her nose and mouth

suffocation /,safə'keɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the act of making someone become unconscious by cutting off his or her supply of air

suffuse /sə'fju:z/ *verb* to spread over or through something

suffusion /sə'fju:ʒ(ə)n/ *noun* the spreading of a red flush over the skin

sugar /'ʃʊgə/ *noun* any of several sweet carbohydrates (NOTE: For other terms referring to sugar, see words beginning with **glyc-**, **glyco-**.)

COMMENT: There are several natural forms of sugar: sucrose (in plants), lactose (in milk), fructose (in fruit), glucose and dextrose (in fruit and in body tissue). Edible sugar used in the home is a form of refined sucrose. All sugars are useful sources of energy, though excessive amounts of sugar can increase weight and cause tooth decay. Diabetes mellitus is a condition in which the body is incapable of absorbing sugar from food.

sugar intolerance /'ʃʊgər intələrəns/ *noun* diarrhoea caused by sugar which has not been absorbed

suggest /sə'dʒest/ *verb* to mention an idea ○ *The doctor suggested that she should stop smoking.*

suggested daily intake /sə,dʒestɪd ,deili 'ɪntæk/ *noun* the amount of a substance which

it is recommended a person should take in each day

suggestibility /sə,dʒəsti'biliti/ *noun* a mental state in which somebody just accepts other people's ideas, attitudes or instructions, without questioning them. It is usually increased under hypnosis.

suggestive /sə'dʒestɪb(ə)l/ *adjective* easily influenced by other people

suggestion /sə'dʒestʃən/ *noun* 1. an idea which has been mentioned ○ *The doctor didn't agree with the suggestion that the disease had been caught in the hospital.* 2. (in psychiatry) the process of making a person's ideas change, by suggesting different ideas which the person can accept, such as that he or she is in fact cured

suicidal /su:i'saɪd(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to someone who wants to kill himself ○ *He has suicidal tendencies.*

suicide /'su:zaid/ *noun* the act of killing oneself □ **to commit suicide** to kill yourself ○ *After his wife died he committed suicide.*

sulcus /'sʌlkəs/ *noun* a groove or fold, especially between the gyri in the brain □ **lateral sulcus and central sulcus** two grooves which divide a cerebral hemisphere into lobes

sulfa drug /'salfə dræg/, **sulfa compound** /'salfə ,kɒmpaund/ *noun* same as **sulfonamide**

sulfasalazine /,salfə'sæləzɪ:n/ *noun* a drug belonging to the sulfonamide group of antibacterial drugs. It is used in the treatment of ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease, and also of severe rheumatoid arthritis.

sulfate /'salfət/ *noun* same as **sulphate**

sulfonamide /sə'lfonəmaɪd/ *noun* a bacteriostatic drug, e.g. trimethoprim, used to treat bacterial infection, especially in the intestine and urinary system, but now less important due to increasing bacterial resistance

sulfonylurea /,salfənailjʊ'ri:a/ *noun* any of a group of drugs which lower blood sugar, used in the treatment of diabetes

sulfur /'salfə/ *noun* another spelling of **sulphur**

sulphate /'salfət/ *noun* a salt of sulphuric acid

sulphur /'salfə/ *noun* a yellow non-metallic chemical element which is contained in some amino acids and is used in creams to treat some skin disorders (NOTE: The chemical symbol is **S**. Note also that words beginning **sulph-** are spelt **sulf-** in US English.)

sulphuric acid /sə'l,fju:ərik 'æsɪd/ *noun* a strong colourless oily corrosive acid which has many uses

sumatriptan /su:mə'triptæn/ *noun* a drug which helps to narrow the blood vessels, used in the treatment of acute migraine

sun /sʌn/ *noun* the very hot and large star around which the earth travels and which gives light and heat

sunbathing /'sʌnbəθɪŋ/ *noun* the practice of lying in the sun to absorb sunlight

sun blindness /'sʌn_ blaɪndnəs/ *noun* same as **photoretinitis**

sunburn /'sʌnbɜ:n/ *noun* damage to the skin by excessive exposure to sunlight

sunburnt /'sʌnbɜ:nt/ *adjective* referring to skin made brown or red by exposure to sunlight

sunlight /'sʌnlɪft/ *noun* the light from the sun ○ *He is allergic to strong sunlight.*

COMMENT: Sunlight is essential to give the body Vitamin D, but excessive exposure to sunlight will not simply turn the skin brown, but also may burn the surface of the skin so badly that it dies and pus forms beneath. Constant exposure to the sun can cause cancer of the skin.

sunscreen /'sʌnskrɪ:n/ *noun* a cream for rubbing into the skin that acts as a block against the harmful rays of the sun, used to reduce the risk of sunburn

sunstroke /'sanstrəʊk/ *noun* a serious condition caused by excessive exposure to the sun or to hot conditions, in which the person becomes dizzy and has a high body temperature but does not perspire

super- /su:pə/ *prefix* 1. above 2. extremely

superciliary /,su:pə'siliərɪ/ *adjective* referring to the eyebrows

superego /,su:pə'rɔ:gəʊ/ *noun* (*in psychology*) the part of the mind which is a person's conscience, which is concerned with right and wrong

superfecundation /,su:pəfɪ:tənɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a condition in which two or more ova produced at the same time are fertilised by different males

superfetation /,su:pəfɪ:t'eɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a condition in which an ovum is fertilised in a woman who is already pregnant

superficial /,su:pə'fɪʃ(ə)l/ *adjective* on the surface, close to the surface or on the skin □

superficial burn burn on the skin surface

superficial fascia /,su:pəfɪʃ(ə)l 'feɪʃə/ *plural noun* membranous layers of connective tissue found just under the skin

superficial thickness burn /,su:pəfɪʃ(ə)l 'θɪknəs bɜ:n/ *noun* same as **partial thickness burn**

superficial vein /,su:pəfɪʃ(ə)l 'veɪn/ *noun* a vein which is near the surface of the skin

superinfection /'su:pərɪn,fekʃən/ *noun* a second infection which affects the treatment of the first infection, because it is resistant to the drug used to treat the first

superior /so'priərɪ/ *adjective* (*of part of the body*) higher up than another part

superior aspect /su,priərɪ 'æspekt/ *noun* a view of the body from above

superior ganglion /su,priərɪ 'gængliən/ *noun* a small collection of cells in the jugular foramen

superiority /su,priərɪ'brɪti/ *noun* the fact of being better than something or someone else

superiority complex /so,priərɪ'brɪti ,kɒmpleks/ *noun* a condition in which a person feels he or she is better and more important than others and pays little attention to them

superior mesenteric artery /su,priərɪ mes(e)n,terik 'a:tərɪ/ *noun* one of the arteries which supply the small intestine

superior vena cava /su,priərɪ ,vɪ:nə 'keɪvə/ *noun* a branch of the large vein into the heart, carrying blood from the head and the top part of the body. See illustration at **HEART** in Supplement

supernumerary /,su:pə'nju:mərərɪ/ *adjective* extra, more than the usual number

'...allocation of supernumerary students to clinical areas is for their educational needs and not for service requirements' [Nursing Times]

superovulation /,su:pərə,ɒvju'leɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* an increased frequency of ovulation, or production of a large number of ova at one time. It is often caused by giving a woman with infertility problems gonadotrophin hormones to stimulate ovulation.

supervise /'su:pəvaɪz/ *verb* to manage or organise something ○ *The administration of drugs has to be supervised by a qualified person.* ○ *She has been appointed to supervise the transfer of patients to the new ward.*

supervision /,su:pə'veɪʒ(ə)n/ *noun* management or organisation ○ *Elderly patients need constant supervision.* ○ *The sheltered housing is under the supervision of a full-time nurse.*

supervisor /'su:pəvaɪzə/ *noun* a person who supervises ○ *the supervisor of hospital catering services*

supinate /'su:pɪneɪt/ *verb* to turn the hand so that the palm faces upwards

supination /,su:pɪ'neɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the act of turning the hand so that the palm faces upwards. Opposite **pronation**. See illustration at **ANATOMICAL TERMS** in Supplement

supinator /'su:pɪneɪtə/ *noun* a muscle which turns the hand so that the palm faces upwards

supine /'su:pain/ *adjective* 1. lying on the back. Opposite **prone** 2. with the palm of the hand facing upwards

'...the patient was to remain in the supine position, therefore a pad was placed under the Achilles tendon to raise the legs' [NATNews]

supplement /'sæplɪmənt/ *noun* 1. any extra nutrients that are taken to help a specific condition when someone is not getting all they need from their food ○ *vitamin and folic acid supplements* 2. a pill or product regarded as helpful in improving health that can be bought

without a prescription. Supplements are not tested in the same way as prescription drugs. ○ *dietary or food supplements* ■ *verb* to add on or increase above what is taken usually ○ *She supplemented her diet with folic acid when she was planning a pregnancy.*

supply /sə'plai/ *noun* something which is provided ○ *The arteries provide a continuous supply of oxygenated blood to the tissues.* ○ *The hospital service needs a constant supply of blood for transfusion.* ○ *The government sent medical supplies to the disaster area.* ■ *verb* to provide or give something which is needed ○ *A balanced diet will supply the body with all the vitamins and trace elements it needs.* ○ *The brachial artery supplies the arm and hand.*

support /sə'pɔ:t/ *noun* 1. help to keep something in place ○ *The bandage provides some support for the knee.* ○ *He was so weak that he had to hold onto a chair for support.* 2. a handle, a metal rail which a person can hold ○ *There are supports at the side of the bed.* ○ *The bath is provided with metal supports.* ■ *verb* 1. to hold something ○ *He wore a truss to support a hernia.* 2. to keep something in place

support hose /sə'pɔ:t həʊz/ *plural noun* stockings that fit tightly to the legs, worn to help the flow of blood

supportive /sə'pɔ:tɪv/ *adjective* helping or comforting someone in trouble ○ *Her family was very supportive when she was in hospital.* ○ *The local health authority has been very supportive of the hospital management.*

support stocking /sə'pɔ:t ,stɒkɪŋ/ *noun* a stocking worn to prevent postural hypotension and peripheral oedema

support worker /sə'pɔ:t ,wɜ:kə/ *noun* someone who assists registered health service professionals as part of a team, e.g. as a nursing auxiliary or assistant, or in specialist areas such as mental health, speech therapy or physiotherapy

suppository /sə'pɒzɪt(ə)ri/ *noun* a piece of a soluble material such as glycerine jelly containing a drug, which is placed in the rectum to act as lubricant, or in the vagina, to treat disorders such as vaginitis, and is dissolved by the body's fluids

suppress /sə'pres/ *verb* to reduce the action of something completely, e.g. to remove a symptom or to stop the release of a hormone ○ *a course of treatment which suppresses the painful irritation* ○ *The drug suppresses the body's natural instinct to reject the transplanted tissue.* ○ *The release of adrenaline from the adrenal cortex is suppressed.*

suppression /sə'preʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the act of suppressing something ○ *the suppression of allergic responses* ○ *the suppression of a hormone*

suppressor T-cell /sə'presə t'i: sel/ *noun* a T-cell which stops or reduces the immune response to an antigen of B-cells and other T-cells

suppurate /'sæpjureɪt/ *verb* to form and discharge pus

suppurating /'sæpjureɪtɪŋ/ *adjective* purulent, containing or discharging pus

suppuration /,sæpjʊ'reɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the formation and discharge of pus

supra- /su:p्रə/ *prefix* above or over

supraglottis /,sʊprə'glɒtɪs/ *noun* the part of the larynx above the vocal folds, including the epiglottis

supraoptic **nucleus** /,su:prə'ɒptɪk 'nju:kliəs/ *noun* a nucleus in the hypothalamus from which nerve fibres run to the posterior pituitary gland

supraorbital /,su:prə'ɔ:bɪt(ə)l/ *adjective* above the orbit of the eye

supraorbital ridge /,su:prə'ɔ:bɪt(ə)l 'rɪdʒ/ *noun* the ridge of bone above the eye, covered by the eyebrow

suprapubic /,su:prə'pu:bɪk/ *adjective* above the pubic bone or pubic area

suprarenal /,su:prə'rɪ:n(ə)l/ *adjective* above the kidneys ■ *noun* same as **suprarenal gland**

suprarenal area /,su:prə'rɪ:n(ə)l 'eəriə/ *noun* the area of the body above the kidneys

suprarenal cortical hormone /,su:prə'rɪ:n(ə)l ,kɔ:tɪk(ə)l 'hɔ:məʊn/ *noun* a hormone secreted by the cortex of the adrenal glands, e.g. cortisone

suprarenal gland /,su:prə'rɪ:n(ə)l glænd/, **suprarenal** /,su:prə'rɪ:n(ə)l/ *noun* one of two endocrine glands at the top of the kidneys, which secrete adrenaline and other hormones

suprarenal medulla /,su:prə'rɪ:n(ə)l me'dʌlə/ *noun* same as **adrenal medulla**

suprasternal /,su:prə'stɜ:n(ə)l/ *adjective* above the sternum

supraventricular tachycardia /,sə'bven ,trɪkju:lə ,taeki'ka:diə/ *noun* tachycardia coming from the upper chambers of the heart

surface /'sɜ:fɪs/ *noun* the top layer of something ○ *The surfaces of the two membranes may rub together.*

surfactant /sɜ:'fæktaɪnt/ *noun* a substance in the alveoli of the lungs which keeps the surfaces of the lungs wet and prevents lung collapse

surgeon /'sɜ:dʒən/ *noun* a doctor who specialises in surgery (NOTE: Although surgeons are doctors, in the UK they are traditionally called 'Mr' and not 'Dr', so 'Dr Smith' may be a GP, but 'Mr Smith' is a surgeon.)

surgeon general /,sɜ:dʒən 'dʒen(ə)rəl/ *noun* US a government official responsible for all aspects of public health

surgery /'sɜ:dʒərɪ/ *noun* 1. the treatment of diseases or disorders by procedures which require an operation to cut into, to remove or to

manipulate tissue, organs or parts ○ *The patient will need plastic surgery to remove the scars he received in the accident.* ○ *The surgical ward is for patients waiting for surgery.* ○ *Two of our patients had to have surgery.* ○ *She will have to undergo surgery.* 2. a room where a doctor or dentist sees and examines patients ○ *There are ten patients waiting in the surgery.* ○ *Surgery hours are from 8.30 in the morning to 6.00 at night.*

surgical /'sɜːdʒɪk(ə)l/ **adjective** 1. referring to surgery ○ *All surgical instruments must be sterilised.* 2. referring to a disease which can be treated by surgery ○ *We manage to carry out six surgical operations in an hour.*

surgical belt /,sɜːdʒɪk(ə)l 'belɪt/ **noun** a fitted covering, worn to support part of the back, chest or abdomen

surgical boot /,sɜːdʒɪk(ə)l 'bu:tɪ/ **noun** a specially made boot for a person who has an unusually shaped foot, to support or correct it

surgical care /'sɜːdʒɪk(ə)l keəl/ **noun** looking after patients who have had surgery

surgical diathermy /,sɜːdʒɪk(ə)l daɪə'mi/ **noun** a procedure which uses a knife or electrode which is heated by a strong electric current until it coagulates tissue

surgical emphysema /,sɜːdʒɪk(ə)l ,emfɪ'meɪsə/ **noun** air bubbles in tissue, not in the lungs

surgical fixation /,sɜːdʒɪk(ə)l fɪk'seɪʃ(ə)n/ **noun** a method of immobilising something such as a bone either externally by the use of a splint or internally by a metal plate and screws

surgical gloves /'sɜːdʒɪk(ə)l glævz/ **plural noun** thin plastic gloves worn by surgeons

surgical hose **noun** a strong elastic stocking worn to support a weak joint in a knee or to relieve varicose veins. Also called **elastic hose**, **surgical stocking**

surgical intervention /,sɜːdʒɪk(ə)l ,ɪntə'venʃ(ə)n/ **noun** the treatment of disease or other condition by surgery

surgically /'sɜːdʒɪkli/ **adverb** using surgery ○ *The growth can be treated surgically.*

surgical neck /,sɜːdʒɪk(ə)l 'nek/ **noun** the narrow part at the top of the humerus, where the arm can easily be broken

surgical needle /,sɜːdʒɪk(ə)l 'ni:d(ə)l/ **noun** a needle for sewing up surgical incisions

surgical procedure /,sɜːdʒɪk(ə)l prə'sɪ:dʒə/ **noun** a surgical operation

surgical shoe /,sɜːdʒɪk(ə)l 'ʃu:/ **noun** a specially made boot for a person who has an unusually shaped foot, to support or correct it

surgical spirit /,sɜːdʒɪk(ə)l 'spɪ:tɪ/ **noun** ethyl alcohol with an additive giving it an unpleasant taste, used as a disinfectant or for cleansing the skin. Also called **rubbing alcohol**

surgical stocking /,sɜːdʒɪk(ə)l 'stɒkɪŋ/ **noun** same as **surgical hose**

surgical ward /'sɜːdʒɪk(ə)l wɔ:d/ **noun** a ward for patients who have undergone surgery

surgical wound /'sɜːdʒɪk(ə)l wu:nd/ **noun** an incision made during a surgical operation

surrogate /'sɜːrəgət/ **adjective** taking the place of ■ **noun** someone or something that takes the place of another person or thing ○

surrogate mother 1. a woman who has a child by artificial insemination for a woman who cannot become pregnant, with the intention of handing the child over to her when it is born 2. a person who takes the place of a natural mother for someone

surround /sə'raʊnd/ **verb** to be all around something ○ *The wound is several millimetres deep and the surrounding flesh is inflamed.*

survival /sə'vɪv(ə)l/ **noun** the act of continuing to live ○ *The survival rate of newborn babies has begun to fall.*

survive /sə'veɪv/ **verb** to continue to live ○ *He survived two attacks of pneumonia.* ○ *The baby only survived for two hours.*

survivor /sə'veɪvə/ **noun** a person who survives

susceptibility /sə'spektɪbɪlɪtɪ/ **noun** lack of resistance to a disease

'...low birthweight has been associated with increased susceptibility to infection' [East African Medical Journal]

'...even children with the milder forms of sickle-cell disease have an increased frequency of pneumococcal infection. The reason for this susceptibility is a profound abnormality of the immune system' [Lancet]

susceptible /sə'spektib(ə)l/ **adjective** likely to catch a disease ○ *She is susceptible to colds or to throat infections.*

suspect **noun** /'sʌspekt/ a person who doctors believe may have a disease ○ *They are screening all typhoid suspects.* ■ **verb** /sə'spekt/ to think that someone may have a disease ○ *He is a suspected diphtheria carrier.* ○ *Several cases of suspected meningitis have been reported.*

'...those affected are being nursed in five isolation wards and about forty suspected sufferers are being barrier nursed in other wards' [Nursing Times]

suspension /sə'spenʃ(ə)n/ **noun** a liquid with solid particles in it

suspensory /sə'spensəri/ **adjective** hanging down

suspensory bandage /sə,spensəri 'bændɪdʒ/ **noun** a bandage to hold a part of the body which hangs

suspensory ligament /sə,spensəri 'lɪgəmənt/ **noun** a ligament which holds a part of the body in position. See illustration at **EYE** in Supplement

sustain /sə'steɪn/ **verb** 1. to keep, to support, to maintain something ○ *These bones can sustain quite heavy weights.* ○ *He is not eating*

enough to sustain life. **2.** to experience an injury ○ *He sustained a severe head injury.*

sustentacular /səstən'tækjʊlər/ **adjective** referring to a sustentaculum

sustentaculum /səstən'tækjʊləm/ **noun** a part of the body which supports another part

suture /'sütʃər/ **noun** **1.** a fixed joint where two bones are fused together, especially the bones in the skull **2.** a procedure for attaching the sides of an incision or wound with thread, so that healing can take place. Also called **stitch** **3.** a thread used for attaching the sides of a wound so that they can heal ■ **verb** to attach the sides of a wound or incision together with thread so that healing can take place. Also called **stitch**

COMMENT: Wounds are usually stitched using thread or catgut which is removed after a week or so. Sutures are either absorbable, made of a substance which is eventually absorbed into the body, or non-absorbable, in which case they need to be removed after a certain time.

suxamethonium /sʌksəməni'θeəniəm/ **noun** a drug similar to acetylcholine in structure, used as a muscle relaxant during surgery

swab /swæb/ **noun** **1.** a cotton wool pad, often attached to a small stick, used, e.g., to clean a wound, to apply ointment or to take a specimen **2.** a specimen taken with a swab ○ *a cervical swab*

swallow /'swɔːləʊ/ **verb** to make liquid, food and sometimes air go down from the mouth to the stomach ○ *Patients suffering from nosebleeds should try not to swallow the blood.*

swallowing /'swɔːləʊɪŋ/ **noun** same as deglutition

Swan-Ganz catheter /'swɒn 'gæntz, kæθɪtər/ **noun** a special catheter which can be floated through the right chamber of the heart into the pulmonary artery. The balloon at its tip is then inflated to measure arterial pressure.

sweat /swet/ **noun** a salty liquid produced by the sweat glands to cool the body as the liquid evaporates from the skin ○ *Sweat was running off the end of his nose.* ○ *Her hands were covered with sweat.* Also called **perspiration** ■ **verb** to produce moisture through the sweat glands and onto the skin ○ *After working in the fields she was sweating.*

sweat duct /'swet dʌkt/ **noun** a thin tube connecting the sweat gland with the surface of the skin

sweat gland /'swet glænd/ **noun** a gland which produces sweat, situated beneath the dermis and connected to the skin surface by a sweat duct

sweat pore /'swet pɔːr/ **noun** a hole in the skin through which the sweat comes out

sweet /swiːt/ **adjective** one of the basic tastes, not bitter, sour or salt ○ *Sugar is sweet, lemons are sour.*

swell /swel/ **verb** to become larger, or cause something to become larger ○ *The disease affects the lymph glands, making them swell.* ○ *The doctor noticed that the patient had swollen glands in his neck.* ○ *She finds her swollen ankles painful.* (NOTE: **swelling** – **swelled** – **swollen**)

swelling /'swelɪŋ/ **noun** a condition in which fluid accumulates in tissue, making the tissue become large ○ *They applied a cold compress to try to reduce the swelling.*

swimmer's cramp /'swɪməz 'kræmp/ **noun** spasms in arteries and muscles caused by cold water, or by swimming soon after a meal

sycosis /sai'kəʊsɪs/ **noun** a bacterial infection of hair follicles

sycosis barbae /sai,kəʊsɪs 'ba:bɪ/ **noun** an infection of hair follicles on the sides of the face and chin. Also called **barber's itch**, **barber's rash**

Sydenham's chorea /'sɪdnəmz kə'ri:ə/ **noun** temporary chorea affecting children, frequently associated with endocarditis and rheumatism [Described 1686. After Thomas Sydenham (1624–89), English physician.]

symbiosis /sɪmbi'əʊsɪs/ **noun** a condition in which two organisms exist together and help each other to survive

symblepharon /sim'blefərən/ **noun** a condition in which the eyelid sticks to the eyeball

symbol /'sɪmbəl/ **noun** a sign or letter which means something

Syme's amputation /'saimz æmpju'teɪʃ(ə)n/ **noun** a surgical operation to amputate the foot above the ankle [Described 1842. After James Syme (1799–1870), Edinburgh surgeon and teacher; one of the first to adopt antisepsis (Joseph Lister was his son-in-law), and also among the early users of anaesthesia.]

symmetry /'simetri/ **noun** the regularity of structure and distribution of parts of the body, each side of the body being structurally similar to the other

sympathectomy /,sɪmpə'θektəmi/ **noun** a surgical operation to cut part of the sympathetic nervous system, as a treatment of high blood pressure

sympathetic /,sɪmpə'θetɪk/ **adjective** **1.** feeling or showing shared feelings, pity or compassion **2.** relating to or belonging to the sympathetic nervous system, or to one of its parts

sympathetic nervous system /,sɪmpə'θeɪtɪk 'nɜːvəs ,sistəm/, **sympathetic system** /,sɪmpə'θetɪk 'sistəm/ **noun** part of the autonomic nervous system, which leaves the spinal cord from the thoracic and lumbar regions to go to various important organs such as the heart, the lungs and the sweat glands, and which prepares the body for emergencies and vigorous muscular activity. ♦ **parasympathetic nervous system**

sympatholytic /,sɪm'pæθəʊ'lɪtɪk/ *noun* a drug which stops the sympathetic nervous system working

sympathomimetic /,sɪm'pæθəʊmɪ'metɪk/ *adjective* referring to a drug such as dopamine hydrochloride which stimulates the activity of the sympathetic nervous system and is used in cardiac shock following myocardial infarction and in cardiac surgery

sympathy /'sɪmpəθi/ *noun* 1. the feeling or expression of pity or sorrow for the pain or distress of somebody else 2. the relationship between people which causes one of them to provoke a similar condition to their own in the other one. For example, when the first person yawns, the second feels an urge to yawn too. 3. the influence produced on any part of the body by disease or change in another part

syphisectomy /,sɪmfizi'ektəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to remove part of the pubic symphysis to make childbirth easier

syphisiotomy /,sɪmfizi'ptəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to make an incision in the pubic symphysis to make the passage for a fetus wider

syphysis /'sɪmfəsɪs/ *noun* the point where two bones are joined by cartilage which makes the joint rigid

syphysis menti /,sɪmfəsɪs 'menti/ *noun* a point in the front of the lower jaw where the two halves of the jaw are fused to form the chin

syphysis pubis /,sɪmfəsɪs 'pjubɪs/ *noun* same as **pubic symphysis**

symptom /'sɪmptəm/ *noun* a change in the way the body works or a change in the body's appearance, which shows that a disease or disorder is present and which the person is aware of ◊ *The symptoms of hay fever are a running nose and eyes.* ◊ *A doctor must study the symptoms before making his diagnosis.* ◊ *The patient presented all the symptoms of rheumatic fever.* (NOTE: If a symptom is noticed only by the doctor, it is a **sign**.)

symptomatic /,sɪmptə'mætɪk/ *adjective* being a symptom of something ◊ *The rash is symptomatic of measles.*

symptomatology /,sɪmptəmə'tɒlədʒɪ/ *noun* a branch of medicine concerned with the study of symptoms. Also called **semeiology**

syn- /sɪn/ *prefix* joint, or fused

synalgia /sɪ'nældʒɪə/ *noun* a pain which is felt in one part of the body, but is caused by a condition in another part, e.g. pain in the groin which can be a symptom of a kidney stone or pain in the right shoulder which can indicate gall bladder infection. Also called **referred pain**

synapse /'sɪnæps/ *noun* a point in the nervous system where the axons of neurones are in contact with the dendrites of other neurones ■ *verb* to link something with a neurone

synaptic /sɪn'æptɪk/ *adjective* referring to a synapse

synaptic connection /sɪn'æptɪk kə'nekʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a link between the dendrites of one neurone with another neurone

synarthrosis /,sɪnə:'θrəʊsɪs/ *noun* a joint, e.g. in the skull, where the bones have fused together

synchondrosis /,sɪnkɒnd'rəʊsɪs/ *noun* a joint, as in children, where the bones are linked by cartilage, before the cartilage has changed to bone

synchysis /'sɪŋkɪsɪs/ *noun* a condition in which the vitreous humour in the eye becomes soft

syncope /'sɪŋkəpɪ/ *noun* a condition in which someone becomes unconscious for a short time because of reduced flow of blood to the brain. Also called **fainting fit**

syncytium /sɪn'sɪfiəm/ *noun* a continuous length of tissue in muscle fibres

syndactyl /sɪn'dæktɪl/ *adjective* having two or more fingers or toes joined together when born

syndactyly /sɪn'dæktɪli/, **syndactylism** /sɪn'dæktɪlɪz(ə)m/ *noun* a condition in which two toes or fingers are joined together with tissue

syndesm- /sɪndesm/, **syndesmo-** /sɪn'desməʊ/ *prefix* referring to ligaments

syndesmology /,sɪndes'mɒlədʒɪ/ *noun* a branch of medicine which studies joints

syndesmosis /,sɪndes'məʊsɪs/ *noun* a joint where the bones are tightly linked by ligaments

syndrome /'sɪndrəʊm/ *noun* a group of symptoms and other changes in the body's functions which, when taken together, show that a particular disease is present. ♦ **complex**

synechia /sɪ'nɛkiə/ *noun* a condition in which the iris sticks to another part of the eye

syneresis /sɪ'nɪərəsɪs/ *noun* the releasing of fluid as in a blood clot when it becomes harder

synergism /'sɪnədʒɪz(ə)m/ *noun* a situation where two or more things are acting together in such a way that both are more effective. Also called **synergy**

synergist /'sɪnədʒɪst/ *noun* a muscle or drug which acts with another and increases the effectiveness of both

synergy /'sɪnədʒɪ/ *noun* same as **synergism**

syngeneic /,sɪndʒə'nɪ:i:k/ *adjective* referring to individuals or tissues that have an identical or closely similar genetic make-up, especially one that will allow the transplanting of tissue without provoking an immune response

syngraft /'singra:fɪ/ *noun* same as **isograft**

synoptophore /sɪ'nɔptəfɔ:r/ *noun* an instrument used to correct a squint

synostosed /'sɪnəstəʊzd/ *adjective* (of bones) fused together with new bone tissue

synostosis /sɪn'ɒstəsɪs/ *noun* the fusing of two bones together by the formation of new bone tissue

synovectomy /sɪnəʊ'vektəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to remove the synovial membrane of a joint

synovia /sɪ'nəʊviə/ *noun* same as **synovial fluid**

synovial /sɪ'nəʊviəl/ *adjective* referring to the synovium

synovial cavity /sɪ'nəʊviəl 'kævɪtɪ/ *noun* a space inside a synovial joint. See illustration at **SYNOVIAL JOINT** in Supplement

synovial fluid /sɪ'nəʊviəl 'flu:ɪd/ *noun* a fluid secreted by a synovial membrane to lubricate a joint. See illustration at **SYNOVIAL JOINT** in Supplement

synovial joint /sɪ'nəʊviəl 'dʒɔɪnt/ *noun* a joint where the two bones are separated by a space filled with synovial fluid which nourishes and lubricates the surfaces of the bones. Also called **diarthrosis**

synovial membrane /sɪ'nəʊviəl 'membrən/, **synovium** *noun* a smooth membrane which forms the inner lining of the capsule covering a joint and secretes the fluid which lubricates the joint. See illustration at **SYNOVIAL JOINT** in Supplement

synovioma /sɪnəʊvi'əʊmə/ *noun* a tumour in a synovial membrane

synovitis /sɪnəʊ'vetɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the synovial membrane

synovium /sɪ'nəʊviəm/ same as **synovial membrane**

'70% of rheumatoid arthritis sufferers develop the condition in the metacarpophalangeal joints. The synovium produces an excess of synovial fluid which is abnormal and becomes thickened' [Nursing Times]

synthesis /sɪnθe'sɪs/ *noun* 1. the process of combining different ideas or objects into a new whole 2. a new unified whole resulting from the combination of different ideas or objects 3. the formation of compounds through chemical reactions involving simpler compounds or elements 4. in psychiatry, the fusing together of all the various elements of the personality
(NOTE: The plural is **syntheses**.)

synthesise /sɪnθe'saɪz/, **synthesize** *verb* to make a chemical compound from its separate components ○ *Essential amino acids cannot be synthesised.* ○ *The body cannot synthesise essential fatty acids and has to absorb them from food.*

synthetic /sɪn'θetɪk/ *adjective* made by humans, made artificially

synthetically /sɪn'θetɪkli/ *adverb* made artificially ○ *Synthetically produced hormones are used in hormone therapy.*

syphilide /sifɪlaɪd/ *noun* a rash or open sore which is a symptom of the second stage of syphilis

syphilis /sifɪlɪs/ *noun* a sexually transmitted disease caused by a spirochaete *Treponema pallidum*

COMMENT: Syphilis is a serious sexually transmitted disease, but it is curable with penicillin injections if the treatment is started early. Syphilis has three stages: in the first, or primary, stage, a hard sore (chancre) appears on the genitals or sometimes on the mouth; in the second, or secondary, stage about two or three months later, a rash appears, with sores round the mouth and genitals. It is at this stage that the disease is particularly infectious. After this stage, symptoms disappear for a long time, sometimes many years. The disease reappears in the third, or tertiary, stage in many different forms: blindness, brain disorders, ruptured aorta or general paralysis leading to mental disorder and death. The tests for syphilis are the Wassermann test and the less reliable Kahn test.

syring- /sɪrɪndʒ/ *prefix* same as **syringo-** (used before vowels)

syringe /sɪ'rɪndʒ/ *noun* a medical instrument made of a tube with a plunger which either slides down inside the tube, forcing the contents out through a needle as in an injection, or slides up the tube, allowing a liquid to be sucked into it ■ *verb* to wash out the ears using a syringe

syringo- /sɪrɪnggəʊ/ *prefix* referring to tubes, especially the central canal of the spinal cord

syringobulbia /sɪ,rɪnggə'bʊlbɪə/ *noun* syringomyelia in the brain stem

syringocystadenoma /sɪ,rɪnggəʊsɪstədɪ'neʊmə/, **syringoma** /sɪrɪng'gəʊmə/ *noun* a benign tumour in sweat glands and ducts

syringomyelia /sɪ,rɪnggə'mar'i:liə/ *noun* a disease which forms cavities in the neck section of the spinal cord, affecting the nerves so that the person loses the sense of touch and pain

syringomyelitis /sɪ,rɪnggə'marɪə'laitɪs/ *noun* a swelling of the spinal cord, which results in the formation of cavities in it

syringomyelocele /sɪ,rɪnggə'u'marɪə'ləsɪ:l/ *noun* a severe form of spina bifida where the spinal cord pushes through a hole in the spine

systaltic /sɪs'tæltɪk/ *adjective* describing an organ such as the heart that contracts and relaxes alternately

system /'sɪstəm/ *noun* 1. the body as a whole ○ *Amputation of a limb gives a serious shock to the system.* 2. the arrangement of particular parts of the body so that they work together ○ *the lymphatic system*

systematic desensitisation /sɪstə'mætɪk dɪ,sensɪtɪz'zeɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a therapy for phobias and other anxiety disorders in which patients are gradually given longer and longer exposures to the object of their fears

Système International d'Unités /sɪ,stem ,senteənæs,jənəl 'du:niteɪ/ *noun* the International System of units. ◊ **SI**

systemic /sɪ'stɪ:mɪk/ *adjective* referring to or affecting the whole body □ *Septicaemia is a systemic infection.*

systemic circulation /sɪ,stɪ:mɪk ,sɜ:kju'leɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the circulation of blood around the whole body, except the lungs, starting with the aorta and returning through the venae cavae

systemic lupus erythematosus /sɪ,stɪ:mɪk ,lu:pəs ,erɪθi:mə'təʊsəs/ *noun* one of several collagen diseases which are forms of lupus, where red patches form on the skin and spread throughout the body. Abbr **SLE**

systole /'sɪstəli/ *noun* a phase in the beating of the heart when it contracts as it pumps blood out. Opposite **diastole** □ **the heart is in systole** the heart is contracting and pumping

systolic /sɪ'stɒlik/ *adjective* referring to the systole

systolic murmur /sɪ,stɒlik 'mɜ:mə/ *noun* a sound produced during systole which indicates an unusual condition of a heart valve

systolic pressure /sɪ,stɒlik 'preʃə/ *noun* the high point of blood pressure which occurs during the systole. Systolic pressure is always higher than diastolic pressure.

T

T symbol tera-

TAB abbr typhoid-paratyphoid A and B ○ *He was given a TAB injection.* ○ *TAB injections give only temporary immunity against paratyphoid.* ◊ **TAB vaccine**

tabes /'teɪbi:z/ *noun* a condition in which someone is wasting away

tabes dorsalis /,teɪbi:z dɔ:rsɪlɪs/ *noun* a disease of the nervous system, caused by advanced syphilis, in which the person loses the sense of feeling, control of the bladder and the ability to coordinate movements of the legs, and has severe pains. Also called **locomotor ataxia**

tabes mesenterica /,teɪbi:z ,mesen'terɪkə/ *noun* the wasting of glands in the abdomen

tabetic /tə'betɪk/ *adjective* wasting away or affected by tabes dorsalis

tablet /'tæblət/ *noun* 1. a small flat round object containing medicine that is taken by swallowing ○ *a bottle of aspirin tablets* ○ *Take two tablets three times a day.* 2. any tablet, pill or capsule taken by swallowing (*informal*)

taboparesis /,teɪbəpə'reɪsɪs/ *noun* the final stage of syphilis in which the person has locomotor ataxia, general paralysis and mental deterioration

TAB vaccine /,ti: ei: bɪ: ,væksi:n/ *noun* a vaccine which immunises against typhoid fever and paratyphoid A and B

tachy- /tæki/ *prefix* fast

tachyarrhythmia /,tækiə'rɪðmɪə/ *noun* a fast irregular heartbeat

tachycardia /,tæki'kɑ:dɪə/ *noun* a rapid beating of the heart

tachyphrasia /,tæki'freɪziə/, **tachyphasia** /,tæki'feɪziə/ *noun* a particularly rapid way of speaking, as occurs with some people with mental disorders

tachyphyl(l)axis /,tækfɪl'læksɪs/ *noun* an effect of a drug or neurotransmitter which becomes less with repeated doses

tachypnoea /,tækip'nɪə/ *noun* very fast breathing

tacrolimus /,tækro'lɪ:məs/ *noun* a powerful immunosuppressant drug used to reduce the risk of organ transplant rejection

tactile /'tæktɪl/ *adjective* able to be sensed by touch

tactile anaesthesia /,tæktɪl ,ænæsə'θi:zɪə/ *noun* the loss of the sensation of touch

taenia /'ti:nɪə/ *noun* 1. a long ribbon-like part of the body 2. a large tapeworm of the genus *Taenia*

COMMENT: The various species of *Taenia* which affect humans are taken into the body from eating meat which has not been properly cooked. The most obvious symptom of tapeworm infestation is a sharply increased appetite, together with a loss of weight. The most common infestations are with *Taenia solium*, found in pork, where the larvae develop in the body and can form hydatid cysts, and *Taenia saginata*, the adult form of which grows to between four and eight metres long in the human intestine.

taeniacide /'ti:nɪəsəɪd/ *noun* a substance which kills tapeworms

taenia coli /,ti:nɪə 'kəʊləɪ/ *noun* the outer band of muscle running along the large intestine

taeniafuge /'ti:nɪəfju:dʒ/ *noun* a substance which makes tapeworms leave the body

taeniasis /ti:'naɪəsɪs/ *noun* infestation of the intestines with tapeworms

Tagamet /'tægəmət/ a trade name for a preparation of cimetidine

tai chi /tai 'tʃi:/, **t'ai chi** *noun* an ancient Chinese system of exercises designed for health, self-defence and spiritual development

take /teɪk/ *verb* 1. to swallow a medicine ○ *She has to take her tablets three times a day.* ○ *The medicine should be taken in a glass of water.* 2. to do particular actions ○ *The dentist took an X-ray of his teeth.* ○ *The patient has been allowed to take a bath.* 3. (of graft) to be accepted by the body ○ *The skin graft hasn't taken.* ○ *The kidney transplant took easily.* (NOTE: taking – took – taken)

take after /teɪk ,a:fɪtə/ *verb* to be like one or other parent ○ *He takes after his father.*

take care of /tæk 'keə əv/ *verb* to look after someone ○ *The nurses will take care of the accident victims.*

take off /,teɪk 'ɒf/ *verb* to remove something, especially clothes ○ *The doctor asked him to take his shirt off or to take off his shirt.*

talc /tælk/ *noun* a soft white powder used to dust on irritated skin

talcum powder /'tælkəm ,paʊdə/ *noun* scented talc

tali /'teili/ plural of **talus**

talipes /'tælɪpi:z/ *noun* a foot with a shape that does not allow usual walking, a congenital condition. Also called **cleft foot, club foot**

COMMENT: The most usual form of talipes (**talipes equinovarus**) is where the person walks on the toes because the foot is permanently bent forward. In other forms, the foot either turns towards the inside (**talipes varus**), towards the outside (**talipes valgus**) or upwards at the ankle (**talipes calcaneus**) so that the person cannot walk on the sole of the foot.

tall /tɔ:l/ *adjective* high, usually higher than other people ○ *He's the tallest in the family – he's taller than all his brothers.* ○ *How tall is he?* ○ *He's 5 foot 7 inches (5'7") tall or 1.25 metres tall.*

talo- /'teɪləʊ/ *prefix* referring to the ankle bone
talus /'teɪləs/ *noun* the top bone in the tarsus which articulates with the tibia and fibula in the leg, and with the calcaneus in the heel. Also called **anklebone**. See illustration at **FOOT** in Supplement (NOTE: The plural is **tali**.)

tamoxifen /tə'mɒksɪfən/ *noun* a drug which helps to prevent the actions of oestrogen, used especially in the treatment of breast cancer and some types of infertility

tampon /'tæmpən/ *noun* 1. a wad of absorbent material put into a wound to soak up blood during an operation 2. a cylindrical plug of soft material put into the vagina to absorb blood during menstruation

tamponade /,tæmpə'nεid/ *noun* 1. the action of putting a tampon into a wound 2. abnormal pressure on part of the body

tan /tæn/ *verb* (of skin) to become brown in sunlight ○ *He tans easily.* ○ *She is using a tanning lotion.*

tannin /'tænɪn/, **tannic acid** /'tænɪk 'æsɪd/ *noun* a substance found in the bark of trees and in tea and other liquids, which stains brown

tantalum /'tæntələm/ *noun* a rare metal, used to repair damaged bones (NOTE: The chemical symbol is **Ta**.)

tantalum mesh /'tæntələm mesʃ/ *noun* a type of net made of tantalum wire, used to repair cranial conditions

tantrum /'tæntrəm/ *noun* a sudden episode of bad behaviour, usually in a child, where the child throws things or lies on the floor and screams

tap /tæp/ *noun* 1. a surgical procedure to drain off body fluid with a hollow needle or a tube 2. a pipe with a closing valve and a handle which can be turned to make a liquid or gas come out of a container ■ *verb* 1. to remove or drain liquid from part of the body. ◇ **spinal** 2. to hit someone or something lightly ○ *The doctor tapped his chest with his finger.*

tape /teɪp/ *noun* a long thin flat piece of material

tapeworm /'teɪpwɜ:m/ *noun* a parasitic worm with a small head and long body like a ribbon. Tapeworms enter the intestine when a person eats raw meat or fish. The worms attach themselves with hooks to the side of the intestine and grow longer by adding sections to their bodies.

tapotement /tə'pəʊtmənt/ *noun* a type of massage where the therapist taps the person with his or her hands

tapping /'tæpɪŋ/ *noun* same as **paracentesis**

target /'tɑ:ɡɪt/ *noun* a place which is to be hit by something ◇ **target cell, target organ** 1. cell or organ which is affected by a drug, by a hormone or by a disease 2. large red blood cell which shows a red spot in the middle when stained

‘...the target cells for adult myeloid leukaemia are located in the bone marrow’ [British Medical Journal]

tarry stool /,tɑ:ri 'stu:l/ *noun* dark and sticky solid matter which is passed out of the bowels

tars- /tɑ:s/ *prefix* same as **tarso-** (used before vowels)

atarsal /'tɑ:s(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to the tarsus ■ *noun* same as **tarsal bone**

tarsal bone /'tɑ:s(ə)l bəʊn/ *noun* one of seven small bones in the ankle, including the talus and calcaneus. Also called **tarsal**

tarsalgia /tɑ: 'sældʒə/ *noun* a pain in the ankle

tarsal gland /'tɑ:s(ə)l glænd/ *noun* same as **meibomian gland**

tarsectomy /tɑ:'sɛktəmi/ *noun* 1. a surgical operation to remove one of the tarsal bones in the ankle 2. a surgical operation to remove the tarsus of the eyelid

tarsitis /tɑ: 'saɪtɪs/ *noun* an inflammation of the edge of the eyelid

tarso- /tɑ:səʊ/ *prefix* 1. relating to the ankle 2. relating to the edge of the eyelid

tarorrhaphy /tɑ:'sɒrəfi/ *noun* an operation to join the two eyelids together to protect the eye after an operation

tarsotomy /tɑ: 'sɒtəmi/ *noun* an incision of the tarsus of the eyelid

tarsus /'tɑ:səs/ *noun* 1. the seven small bones of the ankle. See illustration at **FOOT** in Supplement 2. a connective tissue which supports an eyelid (NOTE: The plural is **tarsi**.)

COMMENT: The seven bones of the tarsus are: calcaneus, cuboid, the three cuneiforms, navicular and talus.

tartar /'ta:tə/ *noun* a hard deposit of calcium which forms on teeth, and has to be removed by scaling. Also called **scale**

tartrazine /'ta:tراzi:n/ *noun* a yellow substance (E102) added to food to give it an attractive colour. Although widely used, tartrazine provokes reactions in hypersensitive people and is banned in some countries.

task allocation /'ta:sk ələ,kəɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a system in which patient care is divided into tasks which are given to different nurses with specific skills

taste /teɪst/ *noun* one of the five senses, where food or substances in the mouth are noticed through the tongue ○ *She doesn't like the taste of onions.* ○ *He has a cold, so food seems to have lost all taste or seems to have no taste.* ■ **verb** 1. to notice the taste of something with the tongue ○ *I have a cold so I can't taste anything* ○ *You can taste the salt in this butter.* 2. to have a taste ○ *The tablets taste of peppermint.*

taste bud /'teɪst bʌd/ *noun* a tiny sensory receptor in the vallate and fungiform papillae of the tongue and in part of the back of the mouth

COMMENT: The taste buds can tell the difference between salt, sour, bitter and sweet tastes. The buds on the tip of the tongue identify salt and sweet tastes, those on the sides of the tongue identify sour, and those at the back of the mouth the bitter tastes. Note that most of what we think of as taste is in fact smell, and this is why when someone has a cold and a blocked nose, food seems to lose its taste. The impulses from the taste buds are received by the taste cortex in the temporal lobe of the cerebral hemisphere.

taurine /'tɔ:ri:n/ *noun* an amino acid which forms bile salts

taxis /'tæksɪs/ *noun* the procedure of pushing or massaging dislocated bones or hernias to make them return to their usual position

-**taxis** /'tæksɪs/ *suffix* manipulation

taxonomy /tek'sɒnəmɪ/ *noun* 1. the practice or principles of classification generally ○ *Any diagnostic task can be aided by a taxonomy of symptoms and a taxonomy of causes together with connections between them.* 2. the science of classifying plants, animals and microorganisms into increasingly broader categories based on shared features. Traditionally, organisms were grouped by physical resemblances, but recently other criteria such as genetic matching have also been used.

Tay-Sachs disease /'tei 'sæks di,zɪ:z/ *noun* an inherited condition affecting the metabolism, characterised by progressive paralysis of the legs, blindness and learning disabilities [Described 1881. After Warren Tay (1843–1927), British ophthalmologist; Bernard Sachs (1858–1944), US neurologist.]

TB abbr tuberculosis ○ *He is suffering from TB.* ○ *She has been admitted to a TB sanatorium.*

T bandage /'ti: ,bændɪdʒ/ *noun* a bandage shaped like the letter T, used for bandaging the area between the legs

TBI *abbreviation* total body irradiation

T-cell /'ti: sel/ *noun* same as **T-lymphocyte**

TCP a trade name for various mild antiseptic liquids

t.d.s., TDS *adverb* (written on prescriptions) three times a day. Full form **ter in diem sumendum**

tea /ti:/ *noun* 1. the dried leaves of a plant used to make a hot drink 2. a hot drink made by pouring boiling water onto the dried leaves of a plant

teach /ti:tʃ/ *verb* 1. to give lessons in something ○ *Professor Smith teaches neurosurgery.* 2. to show someone how to do something ○ *She was taught first aid by her mother.* (NOTE: teaching – taught)

teaching hospital /'ti:tʃɪŋ ,hɒspɪt(ə)l/ *noun* a hospital attached to a medical school where student doctors work and study as part of their training

team /ti:m/ *noun* a group of people who work together ○ *The heart-lung transplant was carried out by a team of surgeons.*

team nursing /'ti:m ,nɜ:sɪŋ/ *noun* a system in which the care of a group of patients is assigned to a team of four or five health workers, led by a professional nurse who assigns them various tasks. They meet at the beginning and end of each shift to exchange information.

tear /tɪə/ *noun* 1. a drop of the salty fluid which forms in the lacrimal gland. The fluid keeps the eyeball moist and clean and is produced in large quantities when a person cries. ○ *Tears ran down her face.* (NOTE: For other terms referring to tears, see words beginning with **dacryo-** or **lacrimal**.) □ **she burst into tears** she suddenly started to cry 2. /tɪə/ a hole or a split in a tissue often due to over-stretching ○ *An episiotomy was needed to avoid a tear in the perineal tissue.* ■ **verb** to make a hole or a split in a tissue by pulling or stretching it too much ○ *He tore a ligament in his ankle.* ○ *They carried out an operation to repair a torn ligament.* (NOTE: **tearing** – **tore** – **torn**)

tear duct /'tɪə dʌkt/ *noun* same as **lacrimal duct**

tear gland /'tɪə glænd/ *noun* same as **lacrimal gland**

teat /ti:t/ *noun* a rubber nipple on the end of a baby's feeding bottle

technician /tek'nɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a qualified person who does practical work in a laboratory or scientific institution ○ *He is a laboratory technician in a laboratory attached to a teaching hospital.*

technique /tek'nɪ:k/ *noun* a way of doing scientific or medical work ◇ *a new technique for treating osteoarthritis* ◇ *She is trying out a new laboratory technique.*

'...few parts of the body are inaccessible to modern catheter techniques, which are all performed under local anaesthesia' [British Medical Journal]

'...the technique used to treat aortic stenosis is similar to that for any cardiac catheterization' [Journal of the American Medical Association]

'...cardiac resuscitation techniques used by over half the nurses in a recent study were described as 'completely ineffective' [Nursing Times]

tectorial membrane /tek'tɔ:rɪəl 'membren/ *noun* a membrane in the inner ear which contains the hair cells which transmit impulses to the auditory nerve

tectospinal tract /tɛktspən,spaɪn(ə)l 'trækt/ *noun* a tract which takes nerve impulses from the mesencephalon to the spinal cord

TED abbr thrombo-embolic deterrent stocking
teeth /ti:θ/ plural of **tooth**

teething /'ti:ðɪŋ/ *noun* the period when a baby's milk teeth are starting to erupt, and the baby is irritable ◇ *He is awake at night because he is teething.* ◇ *She has teething trouble and won't eat.*

Teflon /'teflɒn/ *trademark* a synthetic polymer injected into the joints of the larynx to increase movement and help hoarseness of voice

tegmen /'tɛgmən/ *noun* the covering for an organ (NOTE: The plural is **tegmina**.)

tegument /'tɛgjumənt/ *noun* a covering, especially the protective outer covering of an organism

tel- /tel/ *prefix* same as **tele-** (*used before vowels*)

tela /'tɪlə/ *noun* a delicate part or tissue in the body with a fine or intricate pattern like a web

telangiectasia /te,lændʒiɛk'teɪsiə/ *noun* a condition in which the small blood vessels, especially in the face and thighs, are permanently dilated producing dark red blotches

telangiectasis /te,lændʒi'ektəsɪs/, **telangiectasia** /te,lændʒiɛk'teɪsiə/ *noun* small dark red spots on the skin, formed by swollen capillaries

telangioma /te,lændʒi'əʊmə/ *noun* a tumour or haematoma of the blood capillaries

tele- /tel/ *prefix* referring to distance

teleceptor /'telɪseptə/ *noun* a sensory receptor which receives sensations from a distance. These occur in the eyes, ears and nose. Also called **telereceptor**

telemedicine /'telimed(ə)sɪn/ *noun* the provision of diagnosis and health care from a distance using media such as interactive computer programs or off-site advisers

telencephalon /'telen'kefəlɒn/ *noun* same as **cerebrum**

telepathy /'ta'lepəθi/ *noun* the apparent communication directly from one person's mind to

another person's, without the use of speech, writing or other signs or symbols

telerradiography /,telɪreɪdi'ɔgrəfi/ *noun* a type of radiography where the source of the X-rays is at a distance from the person being X-rayed

telerradiology /,telɪreɪdi'ɒlədʒi/ *noun* the process of transmitting scans and other images electronically so that they can be viewed by surgeons or other health care workers in different locations at the same time

telerradiotherapy /telɪreɪdi'θerəpi/ *noun* a type of radiotherapy, where the person being treated is some way away from the source of radiation

telereceptor /'telɪrɪseptə/ *noun* same as **teleceptor**

telo- /teləʊ/ *prefix* referring to an end

telophase /'teləfəz/ *noun* the final stage of mitosis, the stage in cell division after anaphase

temazepam /tə'mæzɪpæm/ *noun* a hypnotic drug used in the short-term treatment of insomnia

temperature /'temprɪtʃə/ *noun* 1. the heat of the body or of the surrounding air, measured in degrees ◇ *The doctor asked the nurse what the patient's temperature was.* ◇ *His temperature was slightly above normal.* ◇ *The thermometer showed a temperature of 99°F.* □ **to take a patient's temperature** to insert a thermometer in someone's body to see what his or her body temperature is ◇ *They took his temperature every four hours.* ◇ *When her temperature was taken this morning, it was normal.* 2. illness when your body is hotter than normal ◇ *He's in bed with a temperature.* ◇ *Her mother says she's got a temperature, and can't come to work.*

COMMENT: The average body temperature is about 37° Celsius or 98° Fahrenheit. This temperature may vary during the day, and can rise if a person has taken a hot bath or had a hot drink. If the environmental temperature is high, the body has to sweat to reduce the heat gained from the air around it. If the outside temperature is low, the body shivers, because rapid movement of the muscles generates heat. A fever will cause the body temperature to rise sharply, to 40°C (103°F) or more. Hypothermia exists when the body temperature falls below about 35°C (95°F).

temperature chart /'temprɪtʃə tʃɑ:t/ *noun* a chart showing changes in a person's temperature over a period of time

temperature graph /'temprɪtʃə gra:f/ *noun* a graph showing how a person's temperature rises and falls over a period of time

temper tantrum /'tempə ,tæntrəm/ *noun* ♦ **tantrum**

temple /'tempəl/ *noun* the flat part of the side of the head between the top of the ear and the eye

temporal /'temp(ə)rəl/ *adjective* referring to the temple

temporal arteritis /,temp(ə)rəl ə:tə'rātɪs/ *noun* a headache caused by inflammation of the region over the temporal artery, usually occurring in older people

temporal bone /'tempərəl bəʊn/ *noun* one of the bones which form the sides and base of the cranium. See illustration at **EAR** in Supplement

COMMENT: The temporal bone is in two parts: the petrous part forms the base of the skull and the inner and middle ears, while the squamous part forms the side of the skull. The lower back part of the temporal bone is the mastoid process, while the part between the ear and the cheek is the zygomatic arch.

temporal fossa /,temp(ə)rəl 'fɒsə/ *noun* a depression in the side of the head, in the temporal bone above the zygomatic arch

temporalis /,tempə'reɪlɪs/, **temporalis muscle** /,tempə'reɪlɪs ,mʌsl(ə)s/ *noun* a flat muscle running down the side of the head from the temporal bone to the coronoid process, which makes the jaw move up

temporal lobe /'temp(ə)rəl laʊb/ *noun* the lobe above the ear in each cerebral hemisphere

temporal lobe epilepsy /,temp(ə)rəl laʊb 'epilepsi/ *noun* epilepsy due to a disorder of the temporal lobe and causing impaired memory, hallucinations and automatism

temporary /'temp(ə)rəri/ *adjective* not permanent ○ *The dentist gave him a temporary filling.* ○ *The accident team put a temporary bandage on the wound.*

temporo- /tempərəʊ/ *prefix* 1. referring to the temple 2. referring to the temporal lobe

temporomandibular /,tempərəʊmæn'dibjʊlə/ *adjective* relating to the temporal bone and the mandible

temporomandibular joint /,tempərəʊ mæn'dibjʊlə ,dʒɔɪnt/ *noun* a joint between the jaw and the skull, in front of the ear

temporomandibular syndrome /,tempərəʊmæn'dibjʊlə ,sɪndrəʊm/ *noun* a painful condition affecting the temporomandibular joint and the muscles used for chewing, usually associated with a faulty meeting of the teeth in biting and sometimes causing clicking sounds

tenacious /tɪ'nɛʃəs/ *adjective* sticking or clinging to something else, especially a surface

tenaculum /tə'nækjʊləm/ *noun* a surgical instrument shaped like a hook, used to pick up small pieces of tissue during an operation

tend /tend/ *verb* 1. □ **to tend to do something** to be inclined to do something as a normal process ○ *The prostate tends to enlarge as a man grows older.* 2. to care for or attend to someone or something

tendency /'tendənsi/ *noun* the fact of being likely to do something □ **to have a tendency to something** to be likely to have something ○ *There is a tendency to obesity in her family.* ○ *The children of the area show a tendency to vitamin-deficiency diseases.*

'...premature babies have been shown to have a higher tendency to develop a squint during childhood' [Nursing Times]

tender /'tendə/ *adjective* referring to skin or a body part which is painful when touched ○ *The bruise is still tender.* ○ *Her shoulders are still tender where she got sunburnt.* ○ *A tender spot on the abdomen indicates that an organ is inflamed.*

tenderness /'tendənəs/ *noun* a feel of pain when touched ○ *Tenderness when pressure is applied is a sign of inflammation.*

tendinitis /,tendɪ'naitɪs/ *noun* an inflammation of a tendon, especially after playing sport, and often associated with tenosynovitis

tendinous /'tendɪnəs/ *adjective* referring to a tendon

tendo calcaneus /,tendəʊ kæl'keɪnəs/ *noun* the Achilles tendon, the tendon at the back of the ankle which connects the calf muscles to the heel and which acts to pull up the heel when the calf muscle is contracted

tendon /'tendən/ *noun* a strip of connective tissue which attaches a muscle to a bone. Also called **sinew** (NOTE: For other terms referring to a tendon, see words beginning with **tendo-**)

tendonitis /,tendə'naitɪs/ *noun* same as **tendinitis**

tendon sheath /'tendən ſi:θ/ *noun* a tube of membrane which covers and protects a tendon

tendovaginitis /,tendəvægɪnɪtɪs/ *noun* an inflammation of a tendon sheath, especially in the thumb

tenesmus /tə'nezməs/ *noun* a condition in which someone feels the need to pass faeces, or sometimes urine, but is unable to do so and experiences pain

tennis elbow /,tenɪs 'elbəʊ/ *noun* an inflammation of the tendons of the extensor muscles in the hand which are attached to the bone near the elbow. Also called **lateral epicondylitis**

tено- /tənəʊ/ *prefix* referring to a tendon

tenonitis /,tenəʊ'naitɪs/ *noun* the inflammation of a tendon

Tenon's capsule /tɪ:nəns ,kæpsjʊl/ *noun* a tissue which lines the orbit of the eye [After Jacques René Tenon (1724–1816), French surgeon]

tenoplasty /'tenəplæsti/ *noun* a surgical operation to repair a torn tendon

tenorrhaphy /te'nɔ:rəfi/ *noun* a surgical operation to stitch pieces of a torn tendon together

tenosynovitis /,tenəʊ,sainə'veɪtɪs/ *noun* a painful inflammation of the tendon sheath and the tendon inside. Also called **peritendinitis**

tenotomy /tə'nɒtəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to cut through a tendon

tenovaginitis /'tenəʊ,vædʒɪ'naitɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the tendon sheath, especially in the thumb

TENS /tɛns/ *abbreviation* a method of treating pain by applying electrodes to the skin. Small electric currents are passed through sensory nerves and the spinal cord. This suppresses the transmission of pain signals. ○ a *TENS unit or machine* Full form **transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation**

tense /tens/ *adjective* 1. (of a muscle) contracted 2. nervous and worried ○ *The patient was very tense while she waited for the report from the laboratory.*

tension /'tenʃən/ *noun* 1. the act of stretching or the state of being stretched 2. an emotional strain or stress

tension headache /'tenʃən ,heðeɪk/ *noun* a headache all over the head, caused by worry and stress

tension pneumothorax /'tenʃən nju:məʊθɔ:ræks/ *noun* a condition of the pneumothorax in which rupture of the pleura forms an opening like a valve, through which air is forced during coughing but cannot escape

tensor /'tensəl/ *noun* a muscle which makes a joint stretch out

tent /tent/ *noun* a small shelter put over and around someone's bed so that gas or vapour can be passed inside

tentorium cerebelli /ten,tɔ:rɪəm ,serə'bɛli/ *noun* a part of the dura mater which separates the cerebellum from the cerebral hemispheres

tera- /terə/ *prefix* 10¹². Symbol T

terat- /'terət/, **terato-** /'terətəʊ/ *prefix* congenitally unusual

teratocarcinoma /,terətəʊku:sɪ'nəʊmə/ *noun* a malignant teratoma, usually in the testes

teratogen /tə'rætədʒən/ *noun* a substance which causes the usual development of an embryo or fetus to be disrupted, e.g. the German measles virus

teratogenesis /,terətə'dʒenəsɪs/ *noun* an unusual pattern of development in an embryo and fetus

teratogenic /,terətə'dʒenɪk/ *adjective* 1. having the tendency to produce physical disorders in an embryo or fetus 2. relating to the production of physical disorders in an embryo or fetus

teratology /,terə'tɒlədʒɪ/ *noun* the study of the unhealthy development of embryos and fetuses

teratoma /,terə'təʊmə/ *noun* a tumour, especially in an ovary or testis, which is formed of tissue not usually found in that part of the body

terbutaline /tɜ:bju:təlɪ:n/ *noun* a drug which relaxes muscles, used in the treatment

of respiratory disorders and to control premature labour

teres /'trərɪz/ *noun* one of two shoulder muscles running from the shoulder blade to the top of the humerus. The larger of the two muscles, the teres major, makes the arm turn towards the inside, and the smaller, the teres minor, makes it turn towards the outside.

terfenadine /tɜ:fə'nædɪ:n/ *noun* an antihistamine used in the treatment of hay fever and urticaria

term /tɜ:m/ *noun* 1. a limited period of time, especially the period from conception to childbirth, or a point in time determined for an event □ *she was coming near to term* she was near the time when she would give birth 2. part of a college or school year ○ *The anatomy exams are at the beginning of the third term.* 3. a name or word for a particular thing

terminal /tɜ:min(ə)l/ *adjective* 1. referring to the last stage of a fatal illness ○ *The disease is in its terminal stages.* 2. referring to the end, being at the end of something ○ *He is suffering from terminal cancer.* ■ *noun* an ending, a part at the end of an electrode or nerve

terminal branch /tɜ:min(ə)l bra:ntʃ/ *noun* the end part of a neurone which is linked to a muscle. See illustration at **NEURONE** in Supplement

terminale /,tɜ:mi'neili/ ♀ *filum terminale*

terminal illness /tɜ:min(ə)l 'ɪlnəs/ *noun* an illness from which someone will soon die

terminally ill /,tɜ:minəlɪ 'ɪl/ *adjective* very ill and about to die ○ *She was admitted to a hospice for terminally ill patients or for the terminally ill.*

termination /,tɜ:mi'neɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the act of ending something □ **termination (of pregnancy)** abortion

-terol /terɒl/ *suffix* used in names of bronchodilators

tertian /'tɜ:ʃ(ə)n/ *adjective* referring to a fever with symptoms which appear every other day ■ *noun* a tertian fever or set of symptoms

tertian fever /'tɜ:ʃ(ə)n,fɪrvə/ *noun* a type of malaria where the fever returns every two days. ♀ **quartan fever**

tertiary /'tɜ:ʃəri/ *adjective* third, coming after secondary and primary

tertiary bronchi /,tɜ:ʃəri 'brɒŋki:/ *plural noun* ♀ **syphilis.** Same as **segmental bronchi**

tertiary care /,tɜ:ʃəri 'keə/, **tertiary health care** /,tɜ:ʃəri 'helθ keə/ *noun* highly specialised treatment given in a health care centre, often using very advanced technology. Compare **primary care, secondary care**

test /test/ *noun* a short examination to see if a sample is healthy or if part of the body is working well ○ *He had an eye test this morning.* ○ *Laboratory tests showed that she was a meningitis carrier.* ○ *Tests are being carried out on*

swabs taken from the operating theatre. □ **the urine test was positive** the examination of the urine sample showed the presence of an infection or a diagnostic substance ■ *verb* to examine a sample of tissue to see if it is healthy or an organ to see if it is working well ○ *They sent the urine sample away for testing.* ○ *I must have my eyes tested.*

testes /'testɪz/ plural of **testis**

testicle /'testɪk(ə)l/ *noun* same as **testis**

testicular /te'stɪkjʊlə/ *adjective* referring to the testes ○ *Testicular cancer comprises only 1% of all malignant neoplasms in the male.*

testicular artery /te'stɪkjʊlə 'a:tərɪ/ *noun* same as **spermatic artery**

testicular hormone /te'stɪkjʊlə 'hɔ:mən/ *noun* testosterone

testis /'testɪs/ *noun* one of two male sex glands in the scrotum. See illustration at **UROGENITAL SYSTEM (MALE)** in Supplement. Also called **testicle** (NOTE: The plural is **testes**. For other terms referring to the testes, see words beginning with **orchi-**.)

COMMENT: The testes produce both spermatozoa and the sex hormone, testosterone. Spermatozoa are formed in the testes, and passed into the epididymis to be stored. From the epididymis they pass along the vas deferens through the prostate gland which secretes the seminal fluid, and are ejaculated through the penis.

test meal /'test mi:l/ *noun* a test to check the secretion of gastric juices, no longer much used

testosterone /te'stɒstərəʊn/ *noun* a male sex hormone, secreted by the Leydig cells in the testes, which causes physical changes, e.g. the development of body hair and a deep voice, to take place in males as they become sexually mature

test tube /'test tju:b/ *noun* a small glass tube with a rounded bottom, used in laboratories to hold samples of liquids

test-tube baby /'test tju:b ,beibi/ *noun* a baby conceived through in vitro fertilisation in which the mother's ova are removed from the ovaries, fertilised with a man's spermatozoa in a laboratory, and returned to the mother's uterus to continue developing in the usual way

tetanic /te'tænɪk/ *adjective* referring to tetanus

tetano- /tetənəʊ/ *prefix* 1. relating to tetanus
2. relating to tetany

tetanus /'tet(ə)nəs/ *noun* 1. the continuous contraction of a muscle, under repeated stimuli from a motor nerve 2. an infection caused by *Clostridium tetani* in the soil, which affects the spinal cord and causes spasms in the muscles which occur first in the jaw. Also called **lock-jaw**

COMMENT: People who are liable to infection with tetanus, such as farm workers, should be

immunised against it, and booster injections are needed from time to time.

tetany /'tetənɪ/ *noun* spasms of the muscles in the feet and hands, caused by a reduction in the level of calcium in the blood or by lack of carbon dioxide

tetra- /'tetra/ *prefix* four

tetracycline /,tetrə'saɪklɪ:n/ *noun* an antibiotic of a group used to treat a wide range of bacterial diseases such as chlamydia. However, they are deposited in bones and teeth and cause a permanent yellow stain in teeth if given to children.

COMMENT: Because of its side-effects tetracycline should not be given to children. Many bacteria are now resistant to tetracycline.

tetradactyl /,tetrə'dæktɪlɪ/ *noun* a congenital condition in which a child has only four fingers or toes

tetralogy of Fallot /te'trælədʒɪ əv 'fæləʊ/ *noun* a disorder of the heart which makes a child's skin blue. Also called **Fallot's tetralogy**. ◊ **Blalock's operation**, **Waterston's operation**

COMMENT: The condition is formed of four conditions occurring together: the artery leading to the lungs is narrow, the right ventricle is enlarged, there is a disorder in the membrane between the ventricles and the aorta is not correctly placed.

tetraplegia /,tetrə'pli:dʒə/ same as **quadriplegia**

textbook /'tekstbʊk/ *noun* a book which is used by students ○ *a haematology textbook* or *a textbook on haematology*

textbook case /'tekstbuk keɪs/ *noun* a case which shows symptoms which are exactly like those described in a textbook, a very typical case

thalam- /θæləm/ *prefix* same as **thalamo-** (used before vowels)

thalamencephalon /,θæləmən'kefələn/ *noun* a group of structures in the brain linked to the brain stem, formed of the epithalamus, hypothalamus and thalamus

thalamic syndrome /θə'læmɪk ,sɪndrəʊm/ *noun* a condition in which someone is extremely sensitive to pain, caused by a disorder of the thalamus

thalamo- /θæləməʊ/ *prefix* referring to the thalamus

thalamocortical tract /,θæləməʊ,kɔ:tɪk(ə)l 'trækt/ *noun* a tract containing nerve fibres, running from the thalamus to the sensory cortex

thalamotomy /,θælə'mptəmi/ *noun* a surgical operation to make an incision into the thalamus to treat intractable pain

thalamus /'θæləməs/ *noun* one of two masses of grey matter situated beneath the cerebrum where impulses from the sensory neurones are transmitted to the cerebral cortex.

See illustration at **BRAIN** in Supplement (NOTE: The plural is **thalami**.)

thalassaemia /θælə'si:miə/ *noun* a hereditary disorder of which there are several forms caused by an anomalies in the protein component of the haemoglobin, leading to severe anaemia. It is found especially in people from Mediterranean countries, the Middle East and East Asia. Also called **Cooley's anaemia**

thalidomide /θæ'lɪdəmaɪd/ *noun* a synthetic drug given to pregnant women for morning sickness in the 1960s which caused babies to be born with stunted limbs. It is now used in the treatment of leprosy.

thallium scan /θæliəm skæn/ *noun* a method of finding out about the blood supply to the heart muscle by scanning to see how the radioactive element thallium moves when injected into the bloodstream and where it attaches itself to the heart wall

thanatology /θænə'tɒlədʒi/ *noun* the study of the medical, psychological and sociological aspects of death and the ways in which people deal with it

thaw /θə:/ *verb* to bring something which is frozen back to usual temperature

theatre /'θeɪətə/ *noun* ♦ **operating theatre**

'While waiting to go to theatre, parents should be encouraged to participate in play with their children' [British Journal of Nursing]

theatre gown /'θeɪətə gaʊn/ *noun* 1. a loose piece of clothing worn by a person having an operation 2. a long green robe worn over other clothes by a surgeon or nurse in an operating theatre

theatre nurse /'θeɪətə nɜ:s/ *noun* a nurse who is specially trained to assist a surgeon during an operation

theca /'θi:kə/ *noun* tissue shaped like a sheath

thelarche /'θela:rki/ *noun* the beginning of the process of breast development in young women

thenar /'θi:nə/ *adjective* referring to the palm of the hand ■ *noun* the palm of the hand. Compare **hypothear**

thenar eminence /'θi:nər 'eminəns/ *noun* the ball of the thumb, the lump of flesh in the palm of the hand below the thumb

theophylline /θi'fili:n/ *noun* a compound made synthetically or extracted from tea leaves which helps to widen blood vessels and airways, and to stimulate the central nervous system and heart. It is used in the treatment of breathing disorders.

theory /'θeəri/ *noun* an argument which explains a scientific fact

therapeutic /θerə'pju:tɪk/ *adjective* given in order to cure a disorder or disease

therapeutic abortion /θerəpju:tɪk ə'bɔ:ʃ(ə)n/ *noun* an abortion which is carried out because the health of the mother is in danger

therapeutic index /θerəpju:tɪk 'ɪndeks/ *noun* the ratio of the dose of a drug which causes cell damage to the dose of that drug which is typically needed to effect a cure, by which the safety of the drug is decided

therapeutic radiographer /θerə,pju:tɪk ,reɪdi'bræfə/ *noun* someone specially trained to use X-rays or radioactive isotopes in the treatment of patients

therapeutics /θerə'pju:tɪks/ *noun* the study of various types of treatment and their effect on patients

therapist /'θerəpɪst/ *noun* a person specially trained to give therapy ◇ *an occupational therapist* ♦ **psychotherapist**

therapy /'θerəpi/ *noun* the treatment of a person to help cure a disease or disorder

therm /θɜ:m/ *noun* a unit of heat equal to 100,000 British thermal units or 1.055×10^8 joules

thermal /θɜ:m(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to heat

thermal anaesthesia /,θɜ:m(ə)l ,ænəs'θi:ziə/ *noun* the loss of the feeling of heat

thermo- /θɜ:mə/ *prefix* referring to heat or temperature

thermoanaesthesia /,θɜ:mənæs'θi:ziə/ *noun* a condition in which someone cannot tell the difference between hot and cold

thermocautery /,θɜ:mə'kɔ:təri/ *noun* the procedure of removing dead tissue by heat

thermocoagulation /,θɜ:məukəʊ,ægjʊ'leɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the procedure of removing tissue and coagulating blood by heat

thermogram /'θɜ:məgræm/ *noun* an infrared photograph of part of the body

thermograph /'θɜ:məgrɑ:f/ *noun* a device that shows patterns of heat radiated from a body, used in diagnosis

thermography /'θɜ:'mpgrəfi/ *noun* a technique, used especially in screening for breast cancer, where part of the body is photographed using infrared rays which record the heat given off by the skin and show variations in the blood circulating beneath the skin

thermalysis /'θɜ:mələsɪs/ *noun* a loss of body temperature, e.g. by sweating

thermometer /'θɜ:məmɪtə/ *noun* an instrument for measuring temperature

thermophilic /'θɜ:məfilɪk/ *adjective* referring to an organism which needs a high temperature to grow

thermoreceptor /,θɜ:mə'pɔ:rtɪkəpɔ:tə/ *noun* a sensory nerve which registers heat

thermotaxis /,θɜ:mə'tæk'sɪs/ *noun* an automatic regulation of the body's temperature

thermotherapy /,θɜ:mə'θeərəpi/ *noun* treatment using heat, e.g. from hot water or infrared lamps, to treat conditions such as arthritis and bad circulation. Also called **heat therapy**

thiamine /'θaɪəmɪn/, **thiamin** /'θaɪəmɪn/ *noun* same as **Vitamin B₁**

thicken /θɪkən/ *verb* 1. to become wider or larger, or cause something to become wider or larger ○ *The walls of the arteries thicken under deposits of fat.* 2. (of liquid) to become more dense and viscous and flow less easily ○ *The liquid thickens as it cools.*

Thiersch graft /tɪəʃ grɑft/, **Thiersch's graft** /tɪəʃɪz grɑft/ same as **split-skin graft**
thigh /θaɪ/ *noun* the top part of the leg from the knee to the groin

thighbone /θaɪbəʊn/ *noun* the femur, the bone in the top part of the leg, which joins the acetabulum at the hip and the tibia at the knee (NOTE: For other terms referring to the thigh, see **femoral**.)

thin /θɪn/ *adjective* 1. not fat ○ *His arms are very thin.* ○ *She's getting too thin – she should eat more.* ○ *He became quite thin after his illness.* 2. not thick ○ *They cut a thin slice of tissue for examination under the microscope.* 3. referring to blood which is watery (NOTE: **thinner** – **thinnest**)

thiopental sodium /θaɪəpənt(ə)n'soʊdɪəm/ *noun* a barbiturate drug used as a rapid-acting intravenous general anaesthetic. Also called **thiopentone**

thiopentone /θaɪəpəntən/, **thiopentone sodium** /θaɪəpəntən'soʊdɪəm/ *noun* same as **thiopental sodium** (NOTE: Its chemical formula is C₁₁H₁₇N₂O₂SNa.)

thioridazine /θaɪərɪ'deɪzɪn/ *noun* a synthetic compound used as a tranquilliser for people who are suffering from a psychosis

third-degree burn /θɜ:d dɪ,gri: / 'bɜ:n/ *noun* a burn in which the skin and the tissues beneath it are severely damaged

third-degree haemorrhoids /θɜ:d dɪ,gri:/ *plural noun* haemorrhoids which protrude into the anus permanently

third molar /θɜ:d 'mɔ:lə/ *noun* one of the four molars at the back of the jaw, which only appears at about the age of 20 and sometimes does not appear at all. Same as **wisdom tooth**

thirst /θɜ:st/ *noun* a feeling of wanting to drink ○ *He had a fever and a violent thirst.*

thirsty /θɜ:sti/ *adjective* wanting to drink ○ *If the patient is thirsty, give her a glass of water.* (NOTE: **thirstier** – **thirstiest**)

Thomas's splint /'tɒməsɪz splint/, **Thomas splint** /'tɒməs splint/ *noun* a metal splint used to keep a fractured leg still. It has a padded ring at the hip attached to rods to which bandages are bound and a bar under the foot at the lower end. [Described 1875. After Hugh Owen Thomas (1834–91), British surgeon and bonesetter.]

thorac- /θɔ:rs/ *prefix* same as **thoraco-** (used before vowels)

thoracectomy /θɔ:rs'ektəmi/ *noun* a surgical operation to remove one or more ribs

thoracentesis /θɔ:rəsən'ti:sɪs/ *noun* same as **thoracocentesis**

thoraces /θɔ:rəsɪz/ plural of **thorax**

thoracic /θɔ:r'æsɪk/ *adjective* referring to the chest or thorax

thoracic aorta /θɔ:r'æsɪk eɪ'ɔ:tə/ *noun* part of the aorta which crosses the thorax

thoracic cavity /θɔ:r'æsɪk 'kævɪti/ *noun* the chest cavity, containing the diaphragm, heart and lungs

thoracic duct /θɔ:r'æsɪk dʌkt/ *noun* one of the main terminal ducts carrying lymph, on the left side of the neck

thoracic inlet /θɔ:r'æsɪk 'ɪnlɛt/ *noun* a small opening at the top of the thorax

thoracic outlet /θɔ:r'æsɪk 'aʊtlɛt/ *noun* a large opening at the bottom of the thorax

thoracic outlet syndrome /θɔ:r'æsɪk 'aʊtlɛt ,sɪndrəm/ *noun* same as **scalenus syndrome**

thoracic vertebrae /θɔ:r'æsɪk 'vɜ:tɪbrɪ:/ *plural noun* the twelve vertebrae in the spine behind the chest, to which the ribs are attached

thoraco- /θɔ:rəkəʊ/ *prefix* relating to the thorax

thoracocentesis /,θɔ:rəkəʊsən'ti:sɪs/ *noun* an operation in which a hollow needle is inserted into the pleura to drain fluid

thoracolumbar /,θɔ:rəkəʊ'lʌmbə/ *adjective* referring to the thoracic and lumbar areas of the body

thoracoplasty /'θɔ:rəkəʊplæsti/ *noun* a surgical operation to cut through the ribs to allow the lungs to collapse, formerly a treatment for pulmonary tuberculosis

thoracoscope /'θɔ:rəkəʊsko:p/ *noun* a surgical instrument, like a tube with a light at the end, used to examine the inside of the chest

thoracoscopy /,θɔ:rə'kɒskəpi/ *noun* an examination of the inside of the chest, using a thoracoscope

thoracotomy /,θɔ:rə'kɒtəmi/ *noun* a surgical operation to make a hole in the wall of the chest

thorax /'θɔ:ræks/ *noun* the cavity in the top part of the front of the body above the abdomen, containing the diaphragm, heart and lungs, and surrounded by the ribcage

thread /θred/ *noun* a thin piece of cotton, suture, etc. ○ *The surgeon used strong thread to make the suture.* ■ *verb* to insert a thin piece of cotton, suture, etc. through the eye of a needle

thread vein /'θred veɪn/ *noun* a fine vein that is visible through the skin

threadworm /'θredwɜ:zm/ *noun* a thin parasitic worm, *Enterobius vermicularis*, which infests the large intestine and causes itching round the anus. ♦ **Enterobius**. Also called **pincworm**

thready /'θredi/ *adjective* referring to a pulse which is very weak and can hardly be felt

thready pulse /θredi 'pals/ *noun* a very weak pulse which is hard to detect

threatened abortion /θret(ə)nd ə 'bɔ:ʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a possible abortion in the early stages of pregnancy, indicated by bleeding

threonine /'tri:ənī:n/ *noun* an essential amino acid

threshold /'θreshəuld/ *noun* 1. the point at which something starts, e.g. where something can be perceived by the body or where a drug starts to have an effect ◇ *She has a low hearing threshold.* 2. the point at which a sensation is strong enough to be sensed by the sensory nerves

'...if intracranial pressure rises above the treatment threshold, it is imperative first to validate the reading and then to eliminate any factors exacerbating the rise in pressure' [British Journal of Hospital Medicine]

thrill /'tril/ *noun* a vibration which can be felt with the hands

thrive /θraɪv/ *verb* to do well, to live and grow strongly

-thrix /θriks/ *suffix* relating to a hair

throat /θrəut/ *noun* 1. the top part of the tube which goes down from the mouth to the stomach 2. the front part of the neck below the chin

◇ **to clear the throat** to give a little cough

COMMENT: The throat carries both food from the mouth and air from the nose and mouth. It divides into the oesophagus, which takes food to the stomach, and the trachea, which takes air into the lungs.

throb /θrɒb/ *verb* 1. (of the heart) to beat harder and faster than usual, especially from exertion or fear 2. (of a painful part of the body) to experience pain which comes and goes regularly ◇ *Once the local anaesthetic wore off his thumb began to throb.*

throbbing /θrɒbɪŋ/ *adjective* referring to pain which comes again and again like a heart beat ◇ *She has a throbbing pain in her finger.* ◇ *He has a throbbing headache.*

throbbing pain /θrɒbɪŋ 'peɪn/ *noun* pain which continues in repeated short attacks

thrombectomy /θrɒm'bektəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to remove a blood clot

thrombin /θrɒmbɪn/ *noun* a substance which converts fibrinogen to fibrin and so coagulates blood

thrombo- /θrɒmbəʊ/ *prefix* 1. referring to a blood clot 2. referring to thrombosis

thromboangitis /θrɒmbəʊ,ændʒi'aɪtɪs/ *noun* a condition in which the blood vessels swell and develop blood clots along their walls

thromboangiitis obliterans /θrɒmbəʊændʒi'aɪtɪs əb'lɪtərənz/ *noun* a disease of the arteries in which the blood vessels in a limb, usually the leg, become narrow, causing gangrene. Also called **Buerger's disease**

thromboarteritis /θrɒmbəʊ,ɑ:tə'rætɪs/ *noun* inflammation of an artery caused by thrombosis

thrombocyte /θrɒmbəʊsait/ *noun* same as platelet

thrombocythaemia /θrɒmbəʊsai'θi:mɪə/ *noun* a disease in which someone has an unusually high number of platelets in the blood

thrombocytopenia /θrɒmbəʊ,saitənə'pi:nɪə/ *noun* a condition in which someone has an unusually low number of platelets in the blood

thrombocytopenic /θrɒmbəʊ,saitənə'penɪk/ *adjective* referring to thrombocytopenia

thrombocytosis /θrɒmbəʊsai'təʊsɪs/ *noun* an increase in the number of platelets in someone's blood

thrombo-embolic deterrent stocking /θrɒmbəʊ em,bɒlkɪ dɪ'terənt,stɒkɪŋ/ *noun* a support stocking to prevent thrombus formation following surgery. Abbr **TED**

thromboembolism /θrɒmbəʊ'embəlɪz(ə)m/ *noun* a condition in which a blood clot forms in one part of the body and moves through the blood vessels to block another, usually smaller, part

thromboendarterectomy /θrɒmbəʊ,əndə:tə'rektəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to open an artery to remove a blood clot which is blocking it

thromboendarteritis /θrɒmbəʊ,əndə:tə'rætɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the inside of an artery, caused by thrombosis

thrombokinase /θrɒmbəʊ'kaɪneɪz/ *noun* an enzyme which converts prothrombin into thrombin, so starting the sequence for coagulation of blood. Also called **thromboplastin**

thrombolysis /θrɒm'bɒlɪsɪs/ *noun* same as fibrinolysis

thrombolytic /θrɒmbəʊ'lɪtɪk/ *adjective* same as fibrinolytic

thrombophlebitis /θrɒmbəʊflɪ'baitɪs/ *noun* the blocking of a vein by a blood clot, sometimes causing inflammation

thromboplastic /θrɒmbəʊ'plæstɪk/ *adjective* causing or increasing the formation of blood clots

thromboplastin /θrɒmbəʊ'plæstɪn/ *noun* same as thrombokinase

thrombopoiesis /θrɒmbəʊpɔɪ'sɪs/ *noun* the process by which blood platelets are formed

thrombose /θrɒm'bəuz/ *verb* to cause thrombosis in a blood vessel, or be affected by thrombosis

thrombosis /θrɒm'bəʊsɪs/ *noun* the blocking of an artery or vein by a mass of coagulated blood

thrombus /θrɒmbəs/ *noun* same as blood clot

throw up /θrəʊ 'ʌp/ *verb* same as **vomit** (*informal*)

thrush /θrʌʃ/ *noun* an infection of the mouth or the vagina with the bacterium *Candida albicans*

thumb /θʌm/ *noun* the short thick finger, with only two bones, which is separated from the other four fingers on the hand

thumb-sucking /'θʌm ,səkɪŋ/ *noun* the action of sucking a thumb ○ *Thumb-sucking tends to push the teeth forward.*

thym- /θaɪm/ *prefix* referring to the thymus gland

thymectomy /θaɪ'mektəmi/ *noun* a surgical operation to remove the thymus gland

-thymia /θaɪmɪə/ *suffix* referring to a state of mind

thymic /θaɪmɪk/ *adjective* referring to the thymus gland

thymine /'θaɪmɪ:n/ *noun* one of the four basic chemicals in DNA

thymitis /θaɪ'maɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the thymus gland

thymocyte /θaɪməʊsət/ *noun* a lymphocyte formed in the thymus gland

thymol /θaɪmɒl/ *noun* a colourless compound which is made synthetically or extracted from thyme oil, used as an antiseptic

thymoma /θaɪ'moʊmə/ *noun* a tumour in the thymus gland

thymus /'θaɪməs/, **thymus gland** /'θaɪməs glænd/ *noun* an endocrine gland in the front part of the top of the thorax, behind the breastbone

COMMENT: The thymus gland produces lymphocytes and is responsible for developing the system of natural immunity in children. It grows less active as the person becomes an adult. Lymphocytes produced by the thymus are known as T-lymphocytes or T-cells.

thyro- /θaɪrəʊ/ *prefix* referring to the thyroid gland

thyrocalcitonin /,θaɪrəʊkælsɪn'təʊnɪn/ *noun* same as **calcitonin**

thyrocele /'θaɪrəsə:l/ *noun* swelling of the thyroid gland

thyroglobulin /,θaɪrəʊ'glɒbjʊlɪn/ *noun* protein stored in the thyroid gland which is broken down into thyroxine

thyroglossal /,θaɪrəʊ'glɒs(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to the thyroid gland and the throat

thyroglossal cyst /,θaɪrəʊglɒs(ə)l 'sɪst/ *noun* a cyst in the front of the neck

thyroid /θaɪrɔɪd/, **thyroid gland** *noun* /θaɪrɔɪd glænd/ an endocrine gland in the neck, which is activated by the pituitary gland and secretes a hormone which regulates the body's metabolism ■ *adjective* referring to the thyroid gland

COMMENT: The thyroid gland needs a supply of iodine in order to produce thyroxine. If the thyroid gland malfunctions, it can result in

hyperthyroidism (producing too much thyroxine) leading to goitre, or in hypothyroidism (producing too little thyroxine). Hyperthyroidism can be treated with carbimazole.

thyroid cartilage /,θaɪrɔɪd 'kɑ:təlɪdʒ/ *noun* a large cartilage in the larynx, part of which forms the Adam's apple. See illustration at **LUNGS** in Supplement

thyroid depressant /'θaɪrɔɪd dɪ,pres(ə)nt/ *noun* a drug which reduces the activity of the thyroid gland

thyroid dysfunction /'θaɪrɔɪd dɪs ,fʌŋkʃ(ə)n/ *noun* malfunction of the thyroid gland

thyroidectomy /,θaɪrɔɪ'dektəmi/ *noun* a surgical operation to remove all or part of the thyroid gland

thyroid extract /'θaɪrɔɪd ,ekstrækɪt/ *noun* a substance extracted from thyroid glands of animals and used to treat hypothyroidism

thyroid gland /'θaɪrɔɪd glænd/ *noun* same as **thyroid**

thyroid hormone /'θaɪrɔɪd ,hɔ:məʊn/ *noun* a hormone produced by the thyroid gland

thyroiditis /,θaɪrɔɪ'daɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the thyroid gland

thyroid-stimulating hormone /'θaɪrɔɪd ,stimjuleɪtɪŋ ,hɔ:məʊn/ *noun* a hormone secreted by the pituitary gland which stimulates the thyroid gland. Abbr **TSH**. Also called **thyrotrophin**

thyroparathyroidectomy /,θaɪrəʊ,pærə ,θaɪrɔɪ'dektəmi/ *noun* a surgical operation to remove the thyroid and parathyroid glands

thyroplasty /'θaɪrəoplæsti/ *noun* a surgical procedure performed on the cartilages of the larynx to improve the quality of the voice

thyrotomy /θaɪ'rɒtəmi/ *noun* a surgical opening made in the thyroid cartilage or the thyroid gland

thyrotoxic /,θaɪrə'otrɒsɪk/ *adjective* referring to severe hyperthyroidism

thyrotoxic crisis /,θaɪrəʊ,tɒksɪk 'kraɪsɪs/ *noun* a sudden illness caused by hyperthyroidism

thyrotoxic goitre /,θaɪrəʊ,tɒksɪk 'gɔɪtə/ *noun* overactivity of the thyroid gland, as in hyperthyroidism

thyrotoxicosis /,θaɪrəʊtɒksɪs'kəʊsɪs/ *noun* same as **hyperthyroidism**

thyrotrophin /,θaɪrəʊ't्रəʊfɪn/ *noun* same as **thyroid-stimulating hormone** (NOTE: The US term is **thyrotropin**.)

thyrotrophin-releasing hormone /,θaɪrəʊ,t्रəʊfɪn ri'lیsɪŋ ,hɔ:məʊn/ *noun* a hormone secreted by the hypothalamus, which makes the pituitary gland release thyrotrophin, which in turn stimulates the thyroid gland.

Abbr **TRH**

thyroxine /θaɪ'rɒksi:n/ *noun* a hormone produced by the thyroid gland which regulates the

body's metabolism and the conversion of food into heat, used in treatment of hypothyroidism

TIA abbr transient ischaemic attack

'...blood pressure control reduces the incidence of first stroke and aspirin appears to reduce the risk of stroke after TIAs by some 15%' [British Journal of Hospital Medicine]

tibia /'tibɪə/ noun the larger of the two long bones in the lower leg between the knee and the ankle. Also called **shinbone**. Compare **fibula**

tibial /'tɪbiəl/ adjective referring to the tibia

tibial artery /'tɪbiəl ,a:təri/ noun one of two arteries which run down the front and back of the lower leg

tibialis /'tɪbi:lɪəlɪs/ noun one of two muscles in the lower leg running from the tibia to the foot

tibial torsion /'tɪbiəl 'tɔ:sʃ(ə)n/ noun a persistent slight twist in the tibia, caused by a cramped position in the uterus. It makes the feet of young children point inwards for up to a year after they begin to walk on their own, but it corrects itself as the leg grows.

tibio- /'tibiəʊ/ prefix referring to the tibia

tibiofibular /'tibiəʊ'fibjʊlər/ adjective referring to both the tibia and the fibula

tic /tɪk/ noun an involuntary twitch of the muscles usually in the face (*informal*)

tic dououreux /tɪk du:lɔ:rʊ:/ noun same as trigeminal neuralgia

tick /tɪk/ noun a tiny parasite which sucks blood from the skin

tick fever /'tɪk ,fi:və/ noun an infectious disease transmitted by bites from ticks

t.i.d., TID adverb (used on prescriptions) three times a day. Full form **ter in die**

tidal air /'taɪd(ə)l ,eə/, **tidal volume** /'taɪd(ə)l 'vɒlvju:m/ noun the amount of air that passes in and out of the body in breathing

-idine /'ɪdɪ:n/ suffix used for antihistamine drugs

tie /taɪ/ verb to attach a thread with a knot ○ *The surgeon quickly tied up the stitches.* ○ *The nurse had tied the bandage too tight.* (NOTE: tying – tied)

timolol /'tɪməlɒl/ noun a beta-blocker used in the treatment of migraine, high blood pressure and glaucoma

tinct. abbr tincture

tincture /'tɪŋktʃə/ noun a medicinal substance dissolved in alcohol

tincture of iodine /,tɪŋktʃər əv 'aɪodɪ:n/ noun a weak solution of iodine in alcohol, used as an antiseptic

tinea /'tɪniə/ noun ♦ **ringworm**

tinea barbae /,tɪniə 'ba:bɪ:/ noun a fungal infection in the beard

tinea capitis /,tɪniə kə'pætɪs/ noun a fungal infection on the scalp

tinea cruris /,tɪniə 'kru:ris/ noun a fungal infection of the groin area, especially in hot climates

tinea pedis /,tɪniə 'pedɪs/ noun same as **athlete's foot**

tingle /'tinggl/ verb to have a pricking or stinging sensation in a body part

tingling /'tingglɪŋ/ noun a feeling of pricking or stinging in a body part ○ *an unpleasant tingling down her arm* ■ **adjective** pricking or stinging ○ *a tingling sensation*

tinnitus /'tɪnɪtəs/ noun a condition in which someone hears a ringing sound in the ears

COMMENT: Tinnitus can sound like bells, or buzzing, or a loud roaring sound. In some cases it is caused by wax blocking the auditory canal, but it is also associated with Ménière's disease, infections of the middle ear and acoustic nerve conditions.

tipped womb /,tɪpt 'wu:m/ noun US same as **retroverted uterus**

tired /'taɪəd/ adjective feeling a need to rest

tiredness /'taɪədnəs/ noun the condition of being tired

tired out /,taɪəd 'aut/ adjective feeling extremely tired ○ *She is tired out after the physiotherapy.*

tissue /'tɪʃu:/ noun a group of cells that carries out a specific function (NOTE: For other terms referring to tissue, see words beginning with **hist-**, **histo-**.)

COMMENT: Most of the body is made up of soft tissue, with the exception of the bones and cartilage. The main types of body tissue are connective, epithelial, muscular and nerve tissue.

tissue culture /'tɪʃu: ,kəltʃə/ noun tissue grown in a culture medium in a laboratory

tissue plasminogen activator /,tɪʃu: plæz'mɪnədʒən ,æktɪvɪteɪə/ noun an agent given to cause fibrinolysis in blood clots. Abbr **TPA**

tissue type /'tɪʃu: taɪp/ noun the immunological characteristics of a tissue that determine whether or not it can be successfully transplanted into another person

tissue typing /'tɪʃu: ,taɪpɪŋ/ noun the process of identifying various elements in tissue from a donor and comparing them to those of the recipient to see if a transplant is likely to be rejected

titanium /'taɪ'teɪniəm/ noun a light metallic element which does not corrode (NOTE: The chemical symbol is **Ti**.)

titration /'taɪ'treɪʃ(ə)n/ noun the process of measuring the strength of a solution

titre /'tɪ:tə/ noun a measurement of the quantity of antibodies in a serum

T-lymphocyte /'ti: ,lɪmfəsɔ:t/ noun a lymphocyte formed in the thymus gland. Also called **T-cell**

TNM classification /,ti: en 'em klæsifi ,keɪʃ(ə)n/ noun an internationally agreed

standard which is the most widely used means for classifying the extent of cancer. T refers to the size of the tumour, N to the lymph node involvement and M to the presence or absence of metastasis.

toco- /təʊkəʊ/ *prefix* referring to childbirth

tocography /tə'kɒgrəfi/ *noun* the process of recording the contractions of the uterus during childbirth

tocopherol /tə'kɒfərəl/ *noun* one of a group of fat-soluble compounds which make up vitamin E, found in vegetable oils and leafy green vegetables

toddler's diarrhoea /'tɒdləz dɑːrə'riːə/ *noun* a condition in which recurrent loose stools are produced, often containing partially digested food. It usually occurs in children between the ages of one and three years.

Todd's paralysis /'tɒdz pə,ræləsɪs/, **Todd's palsy** /'tɒdz,pɔːlzi/ *noun* a temporary paralysis of part of the body which has been the starting point of focal epilepsy

toe /təʊ/ *noun* one of the five separate parts at the end of the foot. Each toe is formed of three bones or phalanges, except the big toe, which only has two.

toenail /'təʊneɪl/ *noun* a thin hard growth covering the end of a toe

toileting /'tɔːlətɪŋ/ *noun* the act of helping someone to perform the actions of urinating or opening their bowels, including helping them to do so if they are unable to get out of bed or are incontinent

toilet training /'tɔːlət ,treɪnɪŋ/ *noun* the process of teaching a small child to pass urine or faeces in a toilet, so that he or she no longer requires nappies

tolbutamide /tɒl'bju:təmāɪd/ *noun* a drug which lowers blood-glucose levels by stimulating the pancreas to produce more insulin. It is used in the treatment of Type II diabetes.

tolerance /'tɒlərəns/ *noun* the ability of the body to tolerate a substance or an action ○ *He has been taking the drug for so long that he has developed a tolerance to it.*

'26 patients were selected from the outpatient department on grounds of disabling breathlessness, severely limiting exercise tolerance and the performance of activities of normal daily living' [Lancet]

tolerate /'tɒləreɪt/ *verb* 1. not to be affected by the unpleasant effects of something, especially not to experience bad effects from being exposed to something harmful 2. not to react to a drug through having developed a resistance to it

-tome /təʊm/ *suffix* 1. a cutting instrument 2. a segment ○ *a dermatome*

tom- /təʊməʊ/ *prefix* referring to cutting or a section

tomogram /'təʊməgræm/ *noun* a picture of part of the body taken by tomography

tomography /tə'mɒgrəfi/ *noun* the scanning of a particular part of the body using X-rays or ultrasound

-tomy /təmi/ *suffix* referring to a surgical operation

tone /təʊn/ *noun* the slightly tense state of a healthy muscle when it is not fully relaxed. Also called **tonicity, tonus**

tongue /tʌŋ/ *noun* the long muscular organ inside the mouth which can move and is used for tasting, swallowing and speaking. The top surface is covered with papillae, some of which contain taste buds. ○ *The doctor told him to stick out his tongue and say 'Ah'.* Also called **glossa** (NOTE: For other terms referring to the tongue, see **lingual** and words beginning with **gloss-, glosso-.**)

tongue depressor /'tʌŋ di,pre'sə/ *noun* an instrument, usually a thin piece of wood, used by a doctor to hold someone's tongue down while the throat is being examined

tongue-tie /'tʌŋ tai/ *noun* the condition of being unable to move your tongue with the usual amount of freedom, because the small membrane which attaches the tongue to the floor of the mouth is unusually short

tonic /'tɒnɪk/ *adjective* referring to a muscle which is contracted ■ *noun* a substance which improves the someone's general health or which makes a tired person more energetic ○ *He is taking a course of iron tonic tablets.* ○ *She asked the doctor to prescribe a tonic for her anaemia.*

tonicity /təʊ'nɪsɪtɪ/ *noun* same as tone

tono- /təʊnəʊ/ *prefix* referring to pressure

tonography /təʊ'nɒgrəfi/ *noun* a measurement of the pressure inside an eyeball

tonometer /təʊ'nɒmɪtə/ *noun* an instrument which measures the pressure inside an organ, especially the eye

tonometry /təʊ'nɒmətri/ *noun* a measurement of pressure inside an organ, especially the eye

tonsil /'tɒns(ə)l/ *noun* an area of lymphoid tissue at the back of the throat in which lymph circulates and protects the body against germs entering through the mouth. Also called **palatine tonsil**

COMMENT: The tonsils are larger in children than in adults, and are more liable to infection. When infected, the tonsils become enlarged and can interfere with breathing.

tonsillar /'tɒnsɪlər/ *adjective* referring to the tonsils

tonsillectomy /tɒnsɪ'lɛktəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to remove the tonsils

tonsillitis /,tɒnsɪ'laitɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the tonsils

tonsillotome /tɒn'silətəm/ *noun* a surgical instrument used in cutting into or removing the tonsils

tonsillotomy /tɔnsɪ'lɒtəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to make a cut into the tonsils

tonus /'təʊnəs/ *noun* same as tone

tooth /tu:θ/ *noun* one of a set of bones in the mouth which are used to chew food (NOTE: The plural is **teeth**. For other terms relating to the teeth, see words beginning with **dent-**.)

COMMENT: A tooth is formed of a soft core of pulp, covered with a layer of hard dentine. The top part of the tooth, the crown, which can be seen above the gum, is covered with hard shiny enamel which is very hard-wearing. The lower part of the tooth, the root, which attaches the tooth to the jaw, is covered with cement, also a hard substance, but which is slightly rough and holds the periodontal membrane which links the tooth to the jaw. The milk teeth in a child appear over the first two years of childhood and consist of incisors, canines and molars. The permanent teeth which replace them are formed of eight incisors, four canines, eight premolars and twelve molars. The last four molars (the third molars or wisdom teeth), are not always present, and do not appear much before the age of twenty. Permanent teeth start to appear about the age of five to six. The order of eruption of the permanent teeth is: first molars, incisors, premolars, canines, second molars, wisdom teeth.

toothache /'tu:θeɪk/ *noun* a pain in a tooth. Also called **odontalgia**

topagnosis /,təʊpəs'gnəʊsɪs/ *noun* an inability to tell which part of your body has been touched, caused by a disorder of the brain

tophus /'təʊfəs/ *noun* a deposit of solid crystals in the skin or in the joints, especially in someone with gout (NOTE: The plural is **tophi**.)

topical /'tɒpɪk(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to a specific area of the external surface of the body ○ *suitable for topical application*

'...one of the most common routes of neonatal poisoning is percutaneous absorption following topical administration' [Southern Medical Journal]

topical drug /'tɒpɪk(ə)l dræg/ *noun* a drug which is applied to a specific external part of the body only

topically /'tɒpɪkli/ *adverb* by putting on a specific external part of the body only ○ *The cream is applied topically.*

topo- /tɒpə/ *prefix* a place or region

topographical /,tɒpə'græfɪk(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to topography

topography /tə'pɒgrəfi/ *noun* the description of each particular part of the body

tormina /'tɔ:minə/ *noun* same as **colic**

torpid /'tɔ:pɪd/ *adjective* describing a part of the body that has lost the ability to move or feel

torpor /'tɔ:pə/ *noun* a condition in which someone seems sleepy or slow to react

torsion /'tɔ:ʃ(ə)n/ *noun* 1. the twisting of something, or a twisted state 2. the stress placed on an object which has been twisted

torso /'tɔ:səʊ/ *noun* the main part of the body, not including the arms, legs and head. Also called **trunk**

torticollis /,tɔ:tɪ'kɒlɪs/ *noun* a condition of the neck, where the head is twisted to one side by contraction of the sternocleidomastoid muscle. Also called **wry neck**

total /'təut(ə)l/ *adjective* 1. complete ○ *He has total paralysis of the lower part of the body.* 2. throughout the whole body

total body irradiation /,təut(ə)l 'bɒdi ɪ'reɪdɪ'eɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* treating the whole body with radiation

total deafness /,təut(ə)l 'defnəs/ *noun* being unable to hear any sound at all. ○ **hearing loss**

total hip arthroplasty /,təut(ə)l 'hɪp ,ɑ:troʊplæstɪ/, **total hip replacement** /,təut(ə)l 'hɪp ri'pleɪsmənt/ *noun* the replacement of both the head of the femur and the acetabulum with an artificial joint

total hysterectomy /,təut(ə)l ,hɪstə'rektəmɪ/ *noun* the surgical removal of the whole uterus

total pancreatectomy /,təut(ə)l ,pænkrɪə'tektəmɪ/ *noun* the surgical removal of the whole pancreas together with part of the duodenum. Also called **Whipple's operation**

total recall /,təut(ə)l rɪ'kɔ:l/ *noun* the fact of being able to remember something in complete detail

touch /tʌtʃ/ *noun* one of the five senses, where sensations are felt by part of the skin, especially by the fingers and lips

COMMENT: Touch is sensed by receptors in the skin which send impulses back to the brain. The touch receptors can tell the difference between hot and cold, hard and soft, wet and dry, and rough and smooth.

tough /tʌf/ *adjective* unable to break or tear easily ○ *The meninges are covered by a layer of tough tissue, the dura mater.*

Tourette's syndrome /tu:'rets ,sɪn drəʊm/, **Tourette syndrome** /tu:'ret ,sɪn drəʊm/ *noun* a condition which includes involuntary movements, tics, use of foul language and respiratory disorders. Also called **Gilles de la Tourette Syndrome**

tourniquet /'tɔ:nɪkeɪ/ *noun* an instrument or tight bandage wrapped round a limb to constrict an artery, so reducing the flow of blood and stopping bleeding from a wound

tox- /tɒks/ *prefix* same as **toxo-** (*used before vowels*)

toxaemia /tɒk'si:mɪə/ *noun* the presence of poisonous substances in the blood. ○ **blood poisoning** (NOTE: The US spelling is **toxemia**.)

toxaemia of pregnancy /tɒk,sɪ:mɪə əv 'pregnənsi/ *noun* a condition which can affect women towards the end of pregnancy, in which they develop high blood pressure and pass protein in the urine

toxic /'tɒksɪk/ *adjective* poisonous

toxic goitre /'tɒksɪk 'gɔɪtə/ *noun* a type of goitre due to hyperthyroidism in which the limbs tremble and the eyes protrude

toxicity /tɒk'sɪtɪ/ *noun* 1. the degree to which a substance is poisonous or harmful 2. the amount of poisonous or harmful material in a substance

toxico- /tɒksɪkəʊ/ *prefix* referring to poison

toxicogenic /,tɒksɪkəʊ'dʒenɪk/ *adjective* same as **toxigenic**

toxicologist /,tɒksi'kɒlədʒɪst/ *noun* a scientist who specialises in the study of poisons

toxicology /,tɒksi'kɒlədʒɪ/ *noun* the scientific study of poisons and their effects on the human body

toxicosis /,tɒksi'kəʊsɪs/ *noun* poisoning

toxic shock syndrome /,tɒksɪk 'ʃɒk ,sɪn̩drəm/ *noun* a serious condition caused by a staphylococcus infection of the skin or soft tissue. Its symptoms include vomiting, high fever, faintness, muscle aches, a rash and confusion. Abbr **TSS**

toxigenic /,tɒksi'dʒenɪk/ *adjective* caused or produced by a toxin. Also called **toxicogenic**

toxin /'tɒksɪn/ *noun* a poisonous substance produced in the body by microorganisms, and which, if injected into an animal, stimulates the production of antitoxins

toxo- /tɒksəʊ/ *prefix* referring to poison

toxocariasis /,tɒksəkə'ræsɪs/ *noun* the infestation of the intestine with worms from a dog or cat. Also called **visceral larva migrans**

toxoid /'tɒksɔɪd/ *noun* a toxin which has been treated and is no longer poisonous, but which can still provoke the formation of antibodies. Toxoids are used as vaccines, and are injected into a patient to give immunity against specific diseases.

toxoid-antitoxin /,tɒksɔɪd ,æntɪ'tɒksɪn/ *noun* a mixture of a toxoid and an antitoxin, used as a vaccine

toxoplasmosis /,tɒksəplæz'mæʊsɪs/ *noun* a disease caused by the parasite *Toxoplasma* which is carried by animals. Toxoplasmosis can cause encephalitis or hydrocephalus and can be fatal.

TPA abbr tissue plasminogen activator

trabecula /trə'bækjʊlə/ *noun* a thin strip of stiff tissue which divides an organ or bone tissue into sections (NOTE: The plural is **trabeculae**)

trabeculectomy /trə,bækju'lektəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to treat glaucoma by cutting a channel through trabeculae to link with Schlemm's canal

trace /treɪs/ *noun* a very small amount ○ There are traces of the drug in the blood sample. ○ The doctor found traces of alcohol in the patient's urine. ■ *verb* to find someone or something that you are looking for

trace element /'treɪs ,elɪmənt/ *noun* a substance which is essential to the human body, but only in very small quantities

COMMENT: The trace elements are cobalt, chromium, copper, magnesium, manganese, molybdenum, selenium and zinc.

tracer /'treɪsə/ *noun* a substance, often a radioactive one, injected into a substance in the body, so that doctors can follow its passage round the body

trache- /'treɪki/ *prefix* same as **tracheo-** (NOTE: used before vowels)

trachea /trə'ki:ə/ *noun* the main air passage which runs from the larynx to the lungs, where it divides into the two main bronchi. It is about 10 cm long, and is formed of rings of cartilage and connective tissue. See illustration at **LUNGS** in Supplement. Also called **windpipe**

tracheal /trə'ki:əl/ *adjective* referring to the trachea

tracheal tugging /trə'ki:əl 'tʌgɪŋ/ *noun* the feeling that something is pulling on the windpipe when the person breathes in, a symptom of aneurysm

tracheitis /,trə'ki:ətɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the trachea due to an infection

trachelorrhaphy /,trə'ki:lɒrəfɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to repair tears in the cervix of the uterus

tracheo- /'treɪkiəʊ/ *prefix* relating to the trachea

tracheobronchial /,trə'ki:ə'b्रɒŋkiəl/ *adjective* referring to both the trachea and the bronchi

tracheobronchitis /,trə'ki:ə'bɒŋk'aitɪs/ *noun* inflammation of both the trachea and the bronchi

tracheo-oesophageal /,trə'ki:ə'ɒsəfə'dʒi:əl/ *adjective* referring to both the trachea and the oesophagus

tracheostomy /,trə'ki:ɒstəmɪ/, **tracheotomy** /,trə'ki:ɒtəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to make a hole through the throat into the windpipe, so as to allow air to get to the lungs in cases where the trachea is blocked, as in pneumonia, poliomyelitis or diphtheria

COMMENT: After the operation, a tube is inserted into the hole to keep it open. The tube may be permanent if it is to bypass an obstruction, but can be removed if the condition improves.

trachoma /trə'kəʊmə/ *noun* a contagious viral inflammation of the eyelids, common in tropical countries, which can cause blindness if the conjunctiva becomes scarred

tract /trækɪ/ *noun* 1. a series of organs or tubes which allow something to pass from one part of the body to another 2. a series or bundle of nerve fibres connecting two areas of the nervous system and transmitting nervous impulses in one or in both directions

*GI fistulae are frequently associated with infection because the effluent contains bowel organisms

which initially contaminate the fistula tract' [Nursing Times]

traction /træk'sjən/ *noun* a procedure that consists of using a pulling force to straighten a broken or deformed limb ○ *The patient was in traction for two weeks.*

COMMENT: A system of weights and pulleys is fixed over the patient's bed so that the limb can be pulled hard enough to counteract the tendency of the muscles to contract and pull it back to its original position. Traction can also be used for slipped discs and other dislocations. Other forms of traction include frames attached to the body.

tractotomy /træk'tötəmi/ *noun* a surgical operation to cut the nerve pathway taking sensations of pain to the brain, as a treatment for severe pain that is hard to control

tragus /'treɪgəs/ *noun* a piece of cartilage in the outer ear which projects forward over the entrance to the auditory canal

training /'treɪnɪŋ/ *noun* the process of educating by giving instruction and the opportunity to practise

trait /treɪt/ *noun* 1. a typical characteristic of someone 2. a genetically controlled characteristic

trance /tra:ns/ *noun* a condition in which a person is in a dream, but not asleep, and seems not to be aware of what is happening round him or her ○ *a hypnotic trance*

tranexaminc acid /,trænek,sæmɪk 'æsɪd/ *noun* a drug used to control severe bleeding

tranquilliser /'træŋkwɪlaɪzə/, **tranquillizer**, **tranquillising drug** /'træŋkwɪlaɪzɪŋ dræg/ *noun* an antipsychotic, anxiolytic or hypnotic drug which relieves someone's anxiety and calms him or her down (*informal*) ○ *She's taking tranquillisers to calm her nerves. ○ He's been on tranquillisers ever since he started his new job.*

trans- /træns/ *prefix* through or across

transaminase /træn'sæmīneɪz/ *noun* an enzyme involved in the transamination of amino acids

transamination /træns,æm'i'neɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the process by which amino acids are metabolised in the liver

transcendental meditation /,trænsen,dent(ə)l ,medi'teɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a type of meditation in which the same words or sounds are repeated silently

transcription /træn'skrɪpjən/ *noun* 1. the act of copying something written, or of putting something spoken into written form 2. the first step in carrying out genetic instructions in living cells, in which the genetic code is transferred from DNA to molecules of messenger RNA, which then direct protein manufacture

transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation /,trænskjur,temiəs i,lektrik(ə)l 'nɜːvstimju,leɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* full form of **TENS**

transdermal /trænz'dɜːm(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to a drug which is released through the skin

transdermal patch /trænz,dɜːm(ə)l 'pætʃ/ *noun* a patch containing medication applied to the skin and releasing its contents into the body over a period of time

transdiaphragmatic approach /trænz,daiəfræg,maetɪk ə'prəutʃ/ *noun* an operation carried out through the diaphragm

transection /træn'sekʃ(ə)n/ *noun* 1. the act of cutting across part of the body 2. a sample of tissue which has been taken by cutting across a part of the body

transfer /træns'fɜː/ *verb* to pass from one place to another, or cause someone or something to pass from one place to another ○ *The hospital records have been transferred to the computer. ○ The patient was transferred to a special burns unit.*

transference /'trænsf(ə)rəns/ *noun* (in psychiatry) a condition in which someone transfers to the psychoanalyst the characteristics belonging to a strong character from his or her past such as a parent, and reacts as if the analyst were that person

transferrin /træns'fərɪn/ *noun* a substance found in the blood, which carries iron in the bloodstream. Also called **siderophilin**

transfer RNA /,trænsfɜː:ə,rn'æ/ *noun* RNA which attaches amino acids to protein chains being made at ribosomes

transfix /træns'fiks/ *verb* to cut through a part of the body completely, e.g. when amputating a limb

transfusion /træns'fju:ʒ(ə)n/ *noun* the procedure of transferring blood or saline fluids from a container into a someone's bloodstream

transient /'trænzɪənt/ *adjective* not lasting long

transient ischaemic attack /,trænzɪənt i'ski:mɪk ə,tæk/ *noun* a mild stroke caused by a brief stoppage of blood supply to the brain. Abb **TIA**

transillumination /,trænsɪ,lu:mi'nɛʃ(ə)n/ *noun* an examination of an organ by shining a bright light through it

transitional /træn'zɪʃ(ə)nəl/ *adjective* in the process of developing into something

transitional epithelium /træn,zɪʃ(ə)nəl epɪ'θɪlɪəm/ *noun* a type of epithelium found in the urethra

translation /træns'leɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* 1. the act of putting something written or spoken in one language into words of a different language 2. the process by which information in messenger RNA controls the sequence of amino acids assembled by a ribosome during protein synthesis

translocation /,trænsləʊ'keɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the movement of part of a chromosome to an-

other part of the same chromosome or to a different chromosome pair, leading to genetic disorders

translucent /træns'lu:s(ə)nt/ *adjective* allowing light to pass through, but not enough to allow objects on the other side to be clearly distinguished

translumbar /træns'lʌmber/ *adjective* through the lumbar region

transmigration /,trænzmaɪ'greɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the movement of a cell through a membrane

transmission-based precautions /træns'mɪʃ(ə)n bɛɪst prɪ'kɔ:f(ə)nz/ *plural noun* the most recent set of guidelines for health care workers on dealing with highly infectious diseases, to be used in addition to the Standard Precautions. There are three categories: Airborne Precautions, Droplet Precautions and Contact Precautions, sometimes used in combination for diseases which can be transmitted in various ways.

transmit /træn'zɪt/ *verb* to pass something such as a message or a disease ○ *Impulses are transmitted along the neural pathways.* ○ *The disease is transmitted by lice.*

transparent /træns'pærənt/ *adjective* able to be seen through ○ *The cornea is a transparent tissue on the front of the eye.*

transplacental /,trænspłə'sent(ə)l/ *adjective* through the placenta

transplant *noun* /'trænspłɑ:nt/ 1. a procedure which involves taking an organ such as the heart or kidney, or tissue such as skin, and grafting it into someone to replace an organ or tissue which is diseased or not functioning properly ○ *She had a heart-lung transplant.* 2. the organ or tissue which is grafted ○ *The kidney transplant was rejected.* ■ *verb* /træns'plɑ:nt/ to graft an organ or tissue onto or into someone to replace an organ or tissue which is diseased or not functioning correctly

transplantation /,trænspłɑ:n'teɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the act of transplanting something

...bone marrow transplantation has the added complication of graft-versus-host disease' [Hospital Update]

transport /træns'pɔ:t/ *verb* to carry someone or something to another place ○ *Arterial blood transports oxygen to the tissues.*

transposition /,trænspo'zɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a congenital condition where the aorta and pulmonary artery are placed on the opposite side of the body to their usual position

transpyloric plane /,trænspai,lɔrɪk'pleɪn/ *noun* a plane at right angles to the sagittal plane, passing midway between the suprasternal notch and the symphysis pubis. See illustration at ANATOMICAL TERMS in Supplement

transrectal /træns'rekt(ə)l/ *adjective* through the rectum

transsexual /trænz'sekʃuəl/ *adjective* feeling uncomfortable with the birth gender ■ *noun* a person, especially a man, who feels uncomfortable with their birth gender

transsexuality /trænz'sekʃuəlɪt̩(ə)m/ *noun* a condition in which a person, especially a man, feels uncomfortable with their birth gender

transtubercular plane /,trænstju:bɔ:kjʊlər'pleɪn/ *noun* an imaginary horizontal line drawn across the lower abdomen at the level of the projecting parts of the iliac bones. See illustration at ANATOMICAL TERMS in Supplement. Also called **intertubercular plane**

transudate /'trænsju:dæt/ *noun* a fluid which passes through the pores of a membrane. It contains less protein or solid material than an exudate.

transudation /,trænsju:'deɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the process of passing a fluid from the body's cells through the pores of a membrane

transuretero-ureterostomy /trænsju:juərɪtərəʊ,juərɪtə'rɒstəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation in which both ureters are brought to the same side in the abdomen, because one is damaged or obstructed

transurethral /,trænsju'ri:θrəl/ *adjective* through the urethra

transurethral prostatectomy /,trænsju:ri:θrəl prɒstə'tektəmɪ/, **transurethral resection** /,trænsju:ri:θrəl rɪ'se:kʃən/ *noun* a surgical operation to remove the prostate gland, where the operation is carried out through the urethra. Abbr TUR. Also called **resection of the prostate**

transvaginal /,trænsva'gɪnl/ *adjective* across or through the vagina

transverse /trænz've:s/ *adjective* across, at right angles to an organ

transverse arch /,trænz've:s ə:tʃ/ *noun* same as **metatarsal arch**

transverse colon /,trænzvɔ:s 'kəʊlən/ *noun* the second section of the colon which crosses the body below the stomach. See illustration at DIGESTIVE SYSTEM in Supplement

transverse fracture /,trænzvɔ:s 'frækʃə/ *noun* a fracture where the bone is broken straight across

transverse lie /,trænzvɔ:s 'laɪ/ *noun* the position of a fetus across the body of the mother

transverse plane /,trænzvɔ:s 'pleɪn/ *noun* a plane at right angles to the sagittal plane, running horizontally across the body. See illustration at ANATOMICAL TERMS in Supplement

transverse presentation /,trænzvɔ:s 'prez(ə)n'teɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a position of the baby in the uterus, where the baby's side will appear first, usually requiring urgent manipulation or caesarean section to prevent complications

transverse process /,trænzvə:s/ 'prəʊses/noun the part of a vertebra which protrudes at the side

transvesical prostatectomy /træns ,vesɪk(ə)l prɒstə'tektəmə/ noun an operation to remove the prostate gland, carried out through the bladder

transvestism /trænz'vestɪz(ə)m/ noun the condition of liking to dress and behave as a member of the opposite sex

transvestite /trænz'vestait/ noun a person who dresses and behaves as a member of the opposite sex

trapezium /trə'pi:ziəm/ noun one of the eight small carpal bones in the wrist, below the thumb. See illustration at **HAND** in Supplement
(NOTE: The plural is **trapezia** or **trapeziums**)

trapezius /trə'pi:ziəs/ noun a triangular muscle in the upper part of the back and the neck, which moves the shoulder blade and pulls the head back

trapezoid /'træpɪzɔɪd/, **trapezoid bone** /'træpɪzɔɪd bəʊn/ noun one of the eight small carpal bones in the wrist, below the first finger. See illustration at **HAND** in Supplement

trauma /'trɔ:ma/ noun 1. a wound or injury 2. a very frightening or distressing experience which gives a person a severe emotional shock
trauma centre /'trɔ:mə ,sentə/ noun a hospital or a department in a hospital that treats people who have complex, life-threatening injuries

traumatic /trɔ:mætɪk/ adjective 1. caused by an injury 2. extremely frightening, distressing or shocking

traumatic fever /trɔ:mætɪk 'fi:və/ noun a fever caused by an injury

traumatic pneumothorax /trɔ:mætɪk nju:mau'θɔ:ræks/ noun pneumothorax which results from damage to the lung surface or to the wall of the chest, allowing air to leak into the space between the pleurae

traumatology /,trɔ:ma'tɒlədʒi/ noun a branch of surgery which deals with injuries received in accidents

traveller's diarrhoea /,træv(ə)ləz daɪə 'ri:ə/ noun diarrhoea that affects people who travel to foreign countries and which is due to contact with a different type of *E. coli* from the one they are used to. (*informal*)

travel sickness /'træv(ə)l ,sɪknəs/ noun same as **motion sickness**

trazodone /'træzədəʊn/ noun an antidepressant drug which has a strong sedative effect, used in the treatment of depressive disorders accompanied by insomnia

Treacher Collins syndrome /,tri:tʃə 'klɪnz ,sɪndrəʊm/ noun a hereditary disorder in which the lower jaw, the cheek bones, and the ear are not fully developed

treat /tri:t/ verb to use medical methods to cure a disease or help a sick or injured person to recover ○ *She has been treated with a new antibiotic.* ○ *She's being treated by a specialist for heart disease.*

treatment /'trɪ:tment/ noun 1. actions taken to look after sick or injured people or to cure disease ○ *He is receiving treatment for a slipped disc.* 2. a particular way of looking after a sick or injured person or trying to cure a disease ○ *cortisone treatment* ○ *This is a new treatment for heart disease.*

trematode /'tremətəʊd/ noun a parasitic flatworm

tremble /'trembəl/ verb to shake or shiver slightly

trembling /'tremblɪŋ/ noun rapid small movements of a limb or muscles ○ *Trembling of the hands is a symptom of Parkinson's disease.*

tremens /'tri:menz/ ♀ **delirium tremens**

tremor /'tremə/ noun slight involuntary movements of a limb or muscle

trench fever /'trenf ,fɪvə/ noun a fever caused by Rickettsia bacteria, similar to typhus but recurring every five days

trench foot /,trentʃ 'fot/ noun a condition, caused by exposure to cold and damp, in which the skin of the foot becomes red and blistered and in severe cases turns black when gangrene sets in. Also called **immersion foot**
(NOTE: Trench foot was common among soldiers serving in the trenches during the First World War.)

trench mouth /,trentʃ 'maʊθ/ noun ♀ **gingivitis**

Trendelenburg's operation /tren 'delənbɜ:gz ɒpə,reɪʃ(ə)n/ noun an operation to tie a saphenous vein in the groin before removing varicose veins [After Friedrich Trendelenburg (1844–1924), German surgeon]

Trendelenburg's position /tren 'delənbɜ:gz pə,zɪʃ(ə)n/, **Trendelenburg position** /tren'delənbɜ:g pə,zɪʃ(ə)n/ noun a position in which someone lies on a sloping bed, with the head lower than the feet, and the knees bent. It is used in surgical operations to the pelvis and for people who have shock.

Trendelenburg's sign /tren'delənbɜ:g sain/ noun a symptom of congenital dislocation of the hip, where the person's pelvis is lower on the opposite side to the dislocation

trehpination /,trɪfɪ'næɪʃ(ə)n/ noun a surgical operation which consists of removing a small part of the skull with a trephine in order to perform surgery on the brain

trephine /trɪ'fi:n/ noun a surgical instrument for making a round hole in the skull or for removing a round piece of tissue

Treponema /'trepə'nɪ:mə/ *noun* a genus of bacteria which cause diseases such as syphilis or yaws

treponematoses /'trepəni:mə'təʊsɪs/ *noun* an infection by the bacterium *Treponema pertenue*. ◊ **yaws**

TRH *abbr* thyrotrophin-releasing hormone

triad /'traɪəd/ *noun* three organs or three symptoms which are linked together in a group

triage /'tri:dʒ/ *noun* the system in which a doctor or nurse sees patients briefly in order to decide who should be treated first

trial /'traɪəl/ *noun* a process of testing something such as a drug or treatment to see how effective it is, especially before allowing it to be used generally ◇ *clinical trials* ◇ *a six-month trial period* ◇ *We're supplying it on a trial basis.* ■ *verb* to test something as part of a trial

triamcinolone /'traiəm'snələʊn/ *noun* a synthetic corticosteroid drug used in the treatment of skin, mouth and joint inflammations

triangle /'triæŋgəl/ *noun* 1. a flat shape which has three sides 2. part of the body with three sides

triangular /'trai'ængjʊlə/ *adjective* with three sides

triangular bandage /'trai,ængjʊlə 'bændɪdʒ/ *noun* a bandage made of a triangle of cloth, used to make a sling for the arm

triceps /'traisep/s/ *noun* a muscle formed of three parts, which are joined to form one tendon

triceps brachii /'traisep/s 'breɪkii:/ *noun* a muscle in the back part of the upper arm which makes the forearm stretch out

trich- /trɪk/ *prefix* same as **tricho-** (*used before vowels*)

trichiasis /trɪ'kærɪsɪs/ *noun* a painful condition in which the eyelashes grow in towards the eye and scratch the eyeball

trichinosis /'trɪkɪn'nəʊsɪs/, **trichiniasis** /'trɪkɪ'nærɪsɪs/ *noun* a disease caused by infestation of the intestine by larvae of roundworms or nematodes, which pass round the body in the bloodstream and settle in muscles

COMMENT: The larvae enter the body in meat, especially pork, which has not been properly cooked.

tricho- /trɪkəu/ *prefix* 1. referring to hair 2. like hair

Trichocephalus /trɪkə'sefələs/ *noun* same as *Trichuris*

trichology /trɪ'kɒlədʒi/ *noun* the study of hair and the diseases which affect it

Trichomonas /'trɪkə'məʊnəs/ *noun* a species of long thin parasite which infests the intestines

Trichomonas vaginalis /trɪkə,məʊnəs vədʒi'nelɪs/ *noun* a parasite which infests the vagina and causes an irritating discharge

trichomoniasis /,trɪkəʊmə'nærɪsɪs/ *noun* infestation of the intestine or vagina with *Trichomonas*

trichomycosis /,trɪkəʊmət'kærɪsɪs/ *noun* a disease of the hair caused by a corynebacterium

Trichophyton /trɪkəfɪtən/ *noun* a fungus which affects the skin, hair and nails

trichophytosis /,trɪkəfətə'tærɪsɪs/ *noun* an infection caused by *Trichophyton*

trichosis /trɪk'kærɪsɪs/ *noun* any unusual condition of the hair

trichotillomania /,trɪkətɪləʊ'meɪniə/ *noun* a condition in which a person pulls his or her hair out compulsively

trichromatism /trɪk'krəʊmatɪz(ə)m/ *noun* vision which allows the difference between the three primary colours to be seen. Compare **di-chromatism, monochromatism**

trichrome stain /'traikrəʊm,steɪn/ *noun* a stain in three colours used in histology

trichuriasis /,trɪkju'rærɪsɪs/ *noun* an infestation of the intestine with whipworms

Trichurus /trɪ'kjʊərɪs/ *noun* a thin round parasitic worm which infests the caecum. Also called **whipworm**

tricuspid /trai'kʌspɪd/ *noun* something which has three cusps, e.g. a tooth or leaf ■ *adjective* 1. having three cusps or points 2. referring to a tricuspid valve or tooth

tricuspid valve /trai'kʌspɪd vəlv/ *noun* an inlet valve with three cusps between the right atrium and the right ventricle in the heart. See illustration at **HEART** in Supplement

tricyclic antidepressant /trai,sɑɪklɪk ,æntidi'pres(ə)nt/, **tricyclic antidepressant drug** /trai,sɑɪklɪk ,æntidi'pres(ə)nt drəg/ *noun* a drug used to treat depression and panic disorder, e.g. amitriptyline and nortriptyline

COMMENT: Antimuscarinic and cardiac side-effects can occur; rapid withdrawal should be avoided.

tridactyly /trai'dæktili/ *noun* the condition of having only three fingers or toes

trifocal lenses /trai,fəʊk(ə)l'lenzɪz/, **trifocal glasses** /trai,fəʊk(ə)l'glə:sɪz/, **trifocals** /trai,fəʊk(ə)l'plər/ *plural noun* spectacles which have three lenses combined in one piece of glass to give clear vision over different distances. ◊ **bifocal**

trigeminal /trai'dʒemɪnl(ə)l/ *adjective* in three parts

trigeminal ganglion /trai,dʒemɪnl(ə)l 'gænggliən/ *noun* a sensory ganglion containing the cells of origin of the sensory fibres in the fifth cranial nerve. Also called **Gasserian ganglion**

trigeminal nerve /trai'dʒemɪnl(ə)l nɜ:v/ *noun* the fifth cranial nerve, formed of the ophthalmic nerve, the maxillary nerve and the mandibular nerve, which controls the sensory

nerves in the forehead, face and chin, and the muscles in the jaw

trigeminal neuralgia /trai,dʒemɪn(ə)l nju'raeldʒə/ *noun* a disorder of the trigeminal nerve, which sends intense pains shooting across the face. Also called **tic dououreux**

trigeminy /trai'dʒemini/ *noun* an irregular heartbeat, where a regular beat is followed by two ectopic beats

trigger /'trɪgə/ *verb* to start something happening ○ *It is not known what triggers the development of shingles.*

trigger finger /'trɪgə,fiŋgə/ *noun* a condition in which a finger can bend but is difficult to straighten, probably because of a nodule on the flexor tendon

triglyceride /trai'glɪsəraɪd/ *noun* a substance such as fat which contains three fatty acids

trigone /'traɪgɔːn/ *noun* a triangular piece of the wall of the bladder, between the openings for the urethra and the two ureters

trigonitis /,trɪgə'naitɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the bottom part of the wall of the bladder

trigonocephalic /trai,gɒnəkə'fælɪk/ *adjective* referring to a skull which shows signs of trigonocephaly

trigonocephaly /trai,gɒnə'kef(ə)li/ *noun* a condition in which the skull is in the shape of a triangle, with points on either side of the face in front of the ears

triiodothyronine /trai,aɪədəʊ'θaɪrənɪ:n/ *noun* a hormone synthesised in the body from thyroxine secreted by the thyroid gland

trimeprazine /trai'meprazi:n/ *noun* an anti-histamine used to relieve the itching caused by eczema and various skin rashes, including allergic skin rashes caused by poison ivy

trimester /trai'mestə/ *noun* one of the three 3-month periods of a pregnancy

trimethoprim /trai'mi:θəprɪm/ *noun* a synthetic drug used in the treatment of malaria

triphasphate /trai'fɒsfet/ ♦ **adenosine tri-phosphate**

triple marker test /,trɪp(ə)l 'ma:kə test/ *noun* a blood test performed on pregnant women which can detect Down's syndrome in a fetus by analysing the relative levels of substances produced by the mother's placenta and the fetus itself

triplet /'triplət/ *noun* one of three babies born to a mother at the same time

triple vaccine /,trɪp(ə)l 'væksi:n/ *noun* a vaccine which induces protection against three diseases e.g. diphtheria, tetanus and whooping cough

triploid /'trɪplɔɪd/ *adjective* referring to a cell where each chromosome, except the sex chromosome, occurs three times, which is not viable in humans

triquetrum /trai'kwet्रəm/, **triquetal** /trai'kwetr(ə)l/, **triquetal bone** /trai'kwetr(ə)l bəʊn/ *noun* one of the eight small carpal bones in the wrist. See illustration at **HAND** in Supplement

trismus /'trɪzməs/ *noun* a spasm in the lower jaw, which makes it difficult to open the mouth, a symptom of tetanus

trisomic /trai'səʊmɪk/ *adjective* referring to Down's syndrome

trisomy /'trɪsəʊmi/ *noun* a condition in which someone has three chromosomes instead of a pair

trisomy 21 /,trɪsəʊmi ,twenti 'wʌn/ *noun* same as **Down's syndrome**

tritanopia /,trɪtaʊ'nəʊpiə/ *noun* a rare form of colour blindness, in which someone cannot see blue. Compare **Daltonism**, **deutanopia**

trocar /'trəʊkə:/ *noun* a surgical instrument or pointed rod which slides inside a cannula to make a hole in tissue to drain off fluid

trochanter /trə'kæntə/ *noun* two bony lumps on either side of the top end of the femur where muscles are attached

COMMENT: The lump on the outer side is the greater trochanter, and that on the inner side is the lesser trochanter.

trochlea /'trɒkliə/ *noun* any part of the body shaped like a pulley, especially part of the lower end of the humerus, which articulates with the ulna, or a curved bone in the frontal bone through which one of the eye muscles passes
(NOTE: The plural is **trochleae**.)

trochlear /'trɒkliə/ *adjective* referring to a ring in a bone

trochlear nerve /'trɒkliə nɜ:v/ *noun* the fourth cranial nerve which controls the muscles of the eyeball

trochoid joint /'trəʊkɔɪd dʒɔɪnt/ *noun* a joint where a bone can rotate freely about a central axis as in the neck, where the atlas articulates with the axis. Also called **pivot joint**

trolley /'trɒli/ *noun* a wheeled table for transporting patients ○ *The patient was placed on a trolley to be taken to the operating theatre.*

troph- /trɒf/ *prefix* same as **tropho-** (used before vowels)

trophic /'trɒfɪk/ *adjective* relating to food and nutrition

trophic ulcer /,trɒfɪk 'alsə/ *noun* an ulcer caused by lack of blood, e.g. a bedsore

tropho- /trɒfəu/ *prefix* referring to food or nutrition

trophoblast /'trɒfəblæst/ *noun* tissue which forms the wall of a blastocyst

-trophy /trəfi/ *suffix* 1. nourishment 2. referring to the development of an organ

troopia /'trəʊpiə/ *noun* same as **squint**

-tropic /trəpɪk/ *suffix* 1. turning towards 2. referring to something which influences

tropical /'trɒpɪk(ə)l/ *adjective* located in or coming from areas around the equator where the climate is generally very hot and humid
tropical disease /,trɒpɪk(ə)l dɪ'zɪ:z/ *noun* a disease which is found in tropical countries, e.g. malaria, dengue or Lassa fever

tropical medicine /,trɒpɪk(ə)l 'med(ə)sɪn/ *noun* a branch of medicine which deals with tropical diseases

tropical ulcer /,trɒpɪk(ə)l 'ʌlsə/ *noun* a large area of infection which forms around a wound, found especially in tropical countries. Also called **Naga sore**

trots /'trɒts/ □ **the trots** an attack of diarrhoea (*informal*)

trouble /'trʌb(ə)l/ *noun* a disorder or condition (*informal*) □ **stomach trouble** □ **treatment for back trouble**

Trousseau's sign /'tru:səʊz sain/ *noun* a spasm in the muscles in the forearm when a tourniquet is applied to the upper arm, which causes the index and middle fingers to extend. It is a sign of latent tetany, showing that the blood contains too little calcium. [After Armand Trousseau (1801–67), French physician]

true rib /,tru: 'rib/ *noun* one of the top seven pairs of ribs which are attached to the breastbone. Compare **false rib**

true vocal cords /,tru: 'vəʊk(ə)l ,kɔ:dz/ *plural noun* the cords in the larynx which can be brought together to make sounds as air passes between them

truncus /'trʌŋkəs/ *noun* the main blood vessel in a fetus, which develops into the aorta and pulmonary artery

trunk /trʌŋk/ *noun* same as **torso**

truss /trʌs/ *noun* a belt worn round the waist, with pads, to hold a hernia in place

trypanocide /'trɪpənəʊsaɪd/ *noun* a drug which kills trypanosomes

Trypanosoma /,trɪpənəʊ'səʊmə/, **trypanosome** /'trɪpənəʊsəʊm/ *noun* a microscopic organism which lives as a parasite in human blood. It is transmitted by the bite of insects such as the tsetse fly and causes sleeping sickness and other serious illnesses.

trypanosomiasis /,trɪpənəʊsəʊ'maɪəsɪs/ *noun* a disease, spread by insect bites, where trypanosomes infest the blood. Symptoms are pains in the head, general lethargy and long periods of sleep.

COMMENT: In Africa, sleeping sickness, and in South America, Chagas' disease, are both caused by trypanosomes.

trypsin /'trɪpsɪn/ *noun* an enzyme converted from trypsinogen by the duodenum and secreted into the digestive system where it absorbs protein

trypsinogen /trɪp'sɪnədʒən/ *noun* an enzyme secreted by the pancreas into the duodenum

tryptophan /'trɪptəfæn/ *noun* an essential amino acid

tsetse fly /'tetsi flai, 'setsi flai/ *noun* an African insect which passes trypanosomes into the human bloodstream, causing sleeping sickness

TSH *abbr* thyroid-stimulating hormone

TSS *abbr* toxic shock syndrome

tsutsugamushi disease /,tsu:tsgəs'ju:z/ 'mu:ʃi dɪ,ziz/ *noun* a form of typhus caused by the Rickettsia bacteria, passed to humans by mites found in South East Asia. Also called **scrub typhus**

tubal /'tju:b(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to a tube

tubal ligation /,tju:b(ə)l laɪ'geɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a surgical operation to tie up the Fallopian tubes as a sterilisation procedure

tubal occlusion /,tju:b(ə)l ə'klu:ʒ(ə)n/ *noun* a condition in which the Fallopian tubes are blocked, either as a result of disease or surgery

tubal pregnancy /,tju:b(ə)l 'pregnənsi/ *noun* the most common form of ectopic pregnancy, in which the fetus develops in a Fallopian tube instead of the uterus

tube /tju:b/ *noun* 1. a long hollow passage in the body 2. a soft flexible pipe for carrying liquid or gas 3. a soft plastic or metal pipe, sealed at one end and with a lid at the other, used to dispense a paste or gel

tube feeding /'tju:b fɪdɪŋ/ *noun* the process of giving someone nutrients through a tube directly into their stomach or small intestine

tuber /'tju:bə/ *noun* a swollen or raised area

tuber cinereum /,tju:bə ,sɪnə'rɪəm/ *noun* the part of the brain to which the stalk of the pituitary gland is connected

tubercle /'tju:bæk(ə)l/ *noun* 1. a small bony projection, e.g. on a rib 2. a small infected lump characteristic of tuberculosis, where tissue is destroyed and pus forms

tubercular /'tju'bɜ:kjʊlər/ *adjective* 1. causing or referring to tuberculosis 2. referring to someone who has tuberculosis 3. with small lumps, though not always due to tuberculosis

tuberculid /'tju'bɜ:kjʊlɪd/, **tuberculide** *noun* a skin wound caused by tuberculosis

tuberculin /'tju'bɜ:kjʊlɪn/ *noun* a substance which is derived from the culture of the tuberculosis bacillus and is used to test people for the presence of tuberculosis

tuberculin test /'tju'bɜ:kjʊlɪn test/ *noun* a test to see if someone has tuberculosis, in which someone is exposed to tuberculin and the reaction of the skin is noted

tuberculosis /'tju,bɜ:kjʊ'ləʊsɪs/ *noun* an infectious disease caused by the tuberculosis bacillus, where infected lumps form in the tissue. Abbr **TB**

COMMENT: Tuberculosis can take many forms: the commonest form is infection of the lungs (pulmonary tuberculosis), but it can also at-

tack the bones (Pott's disease), the skin (lupus), or the lymph nodes (scrofula). Tuberculosis is caught by breathing in bacillus or by eating contaminated food, especially unpasteurised milk. It can be passed from one person to another, and the carrier sometimes shows no signs of the disease. Tuberculosis can be cured by treatment with antibiotics, and can be prevented by inoculation with BCG vaccine. The tests for the presence of TB are the Mantoux test, the Heaf test and the patch test; it can also be detected by X-ray screening.

tuberculous /'tju:bɔ:kjʊləs/ *adjective* referring to tubercles

tuberose /'tju:bərəʊz/ *adjective* with lumps or nodules

tuberose sclerosis /,tju:bərəʊs sklə'reʊsɪs/ *noun* same as **epiloia**

tuberosity /,tju:bə'rɒsɪti/ *noun* a large lump on a bone

tuberous /'tju:bərəs/ *adjective* with lumps or nodules

tubo- /'tju:bəʊ/ *prefix* referring to a Fallopian tube or to the internal or external auditory meatus

tuboabdominal /,tju:bəʊəb'dɒmɪn(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to a Fallopian tube and the abdomen

tubocurarine /,tju:bəʊ'kjʊərəri:n/ *noun* a toxic alkaloid which is the active constituent of curare, used as a muscle relaxant

tubo-ovarian /,tju:bəʊ'əʊ'veəriən/ *adjective* referring to a Fallopian tube and an ovary

tubotympanal /,tju:bəʊ'tɪmpən(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to the Eustachian tube and the tympanum

tubular /'tju:bjʊlə/ *adjective* 1. shaped like a tube 2. referring to a tubule

tubular bandage /,tju:bjʊlə 'bændɪdʒ/ *noun* a bandage made of a tube of elastic cloth

tubular reabsorption /,tju:bjʊlə ri:ə'b'sɔ:pʃən/ *noun* the process by which some of the substances filtered into the kidney are absorbed back into the bloodstream by the tubules

tubular secretion /,tju:bjʊlə sɪ'kri:s(ə)n/ *noun* the secretion of some substances into the urine by the tubules of the kidney

tubule /'tju:bjʊ:l/ *noun* a small tube in the body. ♦ **renal tubule**

tuft /tʌft/ *noun* 1. a small group of hairs 2. a group of blood vessels. ♦ **glomerular tuft**

tugging /'tʌgɪŋ/ ♦ **tracheal tugging**

tularaemia /'tu:lə'rɪ:mɪə/ *noun* a disease of rabbits, caused by the bacterium *Pasteurella* or *Brucella tularensis*, which can be passed to humans. In humans, the symptoms are headaches, fever and swollen lymph nodes. Also called **rabbit fever** (NOTE: The US spelling is **tularemia**.)

tulle gras /'tju:l grɑ:/ *noun* a dressing made of open gauze covered with soft paraffin wax which prevents sticking

tumefaction /,tju:mɪ'fækʃən/ *noun* swelling within body tissue, usually caused a build-up of blood or water

tumescent /'tju:mɛsənt/ *adjective* swollen or showing signs of swelling, usually as a result of a build-up of blood or water within body tissues

tumid /'tju:mid/ *adjective* swollen

tummy /'tʌmi/ *noun* stomach or abdomen (*informal*)

tummy ache /'tʌmi eɪk/ *noun* stomach pain (*informal*)

tumoral /'tju:mərəl/, **tumorous** /'tju:mərəs/ *adjective* referring to a tumour

tumour /'tju:mər/ *noun* an unusual swelling or growth of new cells ○ *The X-ray showed a tumour in the breast.* ○ *A brain tumour.* (NOTE: For other terms referring to tumours, see words beginning with **onco-**. The US spelling is **tumor**.)

tunable dye laser /,tju:nəb(ə)l dæl'leɪzə/ *noun* a laser which coagulates fine blood vessels, used to blanch port wine stains

tunica /'tju:nɪkə/ *noun* a layer of tissue which covers an organ

tunica adventitia /,tju:nɪkə ,ædven'tɪʃə/ *noun* an outer layer of the wall of an artery or vein. Also called **adventitia**

tunica albuginea testis /,tju:nɪkə 'ælbju:dʒi:nɪə 'testɪs/ *noun* a white fibrous membrane covering the testes and the ovaries

tunica intima /,tju:nɪkə 'intɪmə/ *noun* the inner layer of the wall of an artery or vein. Also called **intima**

tunica media /,tju:nɪkə 'mi:dɪə/ *noun* the middle layer of the wall of an artery or vein. Also called **media**

tunica vaginalis /,tju:nɪkə vædʒɪ'nælɪs/ *noun* a membrane covering the testes and epididymis

tuning fork /'tju:nɪŋ fɔ:k/ *noun* a metal fork which, if hit, gives out a perfect note, used in hearing tests such as Rinne's test

tunnel vision /,tʌnəl(ə)l 'vɪz(ə)n/ *noun* vision which is restricted to the area directly in front of the eye

turbinate /'tɜ:bɪnət/ *adjective* 1. having a shape like a spiral or an inverted cone 2. referring to any of the three bones found on the walls of the nasal passages of mammals

turbinate bone /'tɜ:bɪnət bən/ *noun* ♦ **nasal conchae**

turbinectomy /,tɜ:bɪ'nek:təmi/ *noun* a surgical operation to remove a turbinate bone

turbulent flow /tɜ:bjʊlənt 'fləʊ/ *noun* rushing or uneven flow of blood in a vessel, usually caused by a partial obstruction

turcica /tɜ:sɪkə/ ♦ **sella turcica**

turgescence /tɜ:dʒes(ə)ns/ *noun* a swelling in body tissue caused by the accumulation of fluid

turgid /'tɜ:dʒɪd/ *adjective* swollen with blood

turgor /'tɜ:gə/ *noun* the condition of being swollen

turn /tɜ:n/ *noun* a slight illness or attack of dizziness (*informal*) ■ *verb* 1. to move the head or body to face in another direction 2. to change into something different ○ *The solution is turned blue by the reagent.*

Turner's syndrome /'tɜ:nəz ,sɪndrəʊm/ *noun* a congenital condition in females, caused by the absence of one of the pair of X chromosomes, in which sexual development is retarded and no ovaries develop [Described 1938. After Henry Hubert Turner (b. 1892), US endocrinologist, Clinical professor of Medicine, Oklahoma University, USA.]

turicephaly /,tɜ:ri'sefəli/ same as **oxycephaly**

tussis /'tæsɪs/ *noun* coughing

tutor /'tju:tə/ *noun* a teacher, a person who teaches small groups of students

tweezers /'twi:zəz/ *plural noun* an instrument shaped like small scissors, with ends which pinch and do not cut, used to pull out or pick up small objects

twenty-four hour flu /,twenti ,fɔ: əʊ 'flu:/ *noun* any minor illness similar to flu which lasts for a short period (*informal*)

twenty-twenty vision /,twenti ,twenti 'vɪz(ə)n/ *noun* perfect vision

twice /'twais/ *adverb* two times □ **twice daily** two times a day

twilight myopia /,twailait mai'əpiə/ *noun* a condition of the eyes, in which someone has difficulty in seeing in dim light

twilight sleep /'twailait ,sli:p/ *noun* a type of anaesthetic sleep, in which the patient is semi-conscious but cannot feel any pain

twilight state /'twailait stet/ *noun* a condition of epileptics and alcoholics in which the person can do some automatic actions, but is not conscious of what he or she is doing

COMMENT: Twilight state is induced at childbirth, by introducing anaesthetics into the rectum.

twin /'twɪn/ *noun* one of two babies born to a mother at the same time

COMMENT: Twins occur at a rate of about one birth in 38. They are often found in the same family, where the tendency to have twins is passed through females.

twinge /'twɪndʒ/ *noun* a sudden sharp pain ○ *He sometimes has a twinge in his right shoulder.*

twist /twɪst/ *verb* to hurt a joint by turning or bending it too much or the wrong way ○ *He twisted his ankle.*

twitch /'twɪtʃ/ *noun* a small movement of a muscle in the face or hands ■ *verb* to make small movements of the muscles

twitching /'twɪtʃɪŋ/ *noun* small movements of the muscles in the face or hands

tylosis /taɪ'ləʊsɪs/ *noun* the development of a callus

tympan- /tɪmpən/ *prefix* same as **tympano-** (NOTE: used before vowels)

tympanectomy /,tɪmpə'nektəmi/ *noun* a surgical operation to remove the tympanic membrane

tympanic /tɪm'pænɪk/ *adjective* referring to the eardrum

tympanic bone /tɪm'pænɪk bəʊn/ *noun* the part of the temporal bone that supports and partly surrounds the auditory canal

tympanic cavity /tɪm,pænɪk 'kævɪti/ *noun* the section of the ear between the eardrum and the inner ear, containing the three ossicles. Also called **middle ear**, **tympanum**

tympanic membrane /tɪm,pænɪk 'membræn/ *noun* the membrane at the inner end of the external auditory meatus leading from the outer ear, which vibrates with sound and passes the vibrations on to the ossicles in the middle ear. Also called **tympanum**, **eardrum**. See illustration at **EAR** in Supplement

tympanites /,tɪmpə'nartɪz/ *noun* the expansion of the stomach with gas. Also called **meteorsim**

tympanitis /,tɪmpə'nartɪs/ *noun* same as **otitis media**

tympano- /tɪmpənəʊ/ *prefix* referring to the eardrum

tympanoplasty /,tɪmpənəʊplæsti/ *noun* same as **myringoplasty**

tympanosclerosis /,tɪmpənəʊsklə'rəʊsɪs/ *noun* irreversible damage to the tympanic membrane and middle ear, starting with the replacement of tissues or fibrin by collagen and hyalin. Then calcification occurs, leading to deafness.

tympanotomy /,tɪmpə'nɒtəmi/ *noun* same as **myringotomy**

tympanum /'tɪmpənəm/ *noun* 1. same as **tympanic membrane** 2. same as **tympanic cavity**

type A behaviour /taɪp 'eɪ bɪ,hɛrvjə/ *noun* a behaviour pattern which may contribute to coronary heart disease, in which an individual is aggressive and over-competitive, and usually lives at a stressful pace. Compare **type B behaviour**

type B behaviour /taɪp 'bɪ:hɛrvjə/ *noun* a behaviour pattern which is unlikely to contribute to coronary heart disease, in which an individual is patient, tolerant, not very com-

petitive and lives at a more relaxed pace. Compare **type A behaviour**

Type I diabetes mellitus /taɪp ,wʌn daɪət̬i:z mə'lait̬əs/ *noun* the type of diabetes mellitus in which the beta cells of the pancreas produce little or no insulin, and the person is completely dependent on injections of insulin for survival. It is more likely to develop in people under 30. Symptoms are usually severe and occur suddenly. Also called **insulin-dependent diabetes**

Type II diabetes mellitus /taɪp ,tu: daɪət̬i:z mə'lait̬əs/ *noun* the type of diabetes mellitus in which cells throughout the body lose some or most of their ability to use insulin. It is more likely to develop in people who are over 40, who are overweight or obese, and who do not exercise regularly. It can be controlled in some cases with diet and exercise, but more severe cases may need oral medication which reduces glucose concentrations in the blood, or insulin injections, so that even cells with a poor uptake will capture enough insulin. Also called **non-insulin-dependent diabetes**

typhlitis /tɪ'flaɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the caecum (large intestine)

typho- /taɪfəʊ/ *prefix* 1. relating to typhoid fever 2. relating to typhus

typhoid /'taɪfɔɪd/, **typhoid fever** /,taɪfɔɪd 'fi:və/ *noun* an infection of the intestine caused by *Salmonella typhi* in food and water

COMMENT: Typhoid fever gives a fever and diarrhoea and the person may pass blood in the faeces. It can be fatal if not treated. People who have had the disease may become carriers, and the Widal test is used to detect the presence of typhoid fever in the blood.

typhus /'taɪfəs/ *noun* one of several fevers caused by the *Rickettsia* bacterium, transmitted by fleas and lice, producing a fever, extreme weakness and a dark rash on the skin. The test for typhus is the Weil-Felix reaction.

typical /'tɪpɪk(ə)l/ *adjective* showing the usual symptoms of a condition ◊ *His gait was typical of a patient suffering from Parkinson's disease.*

typically /'tɪpɪklɪ/ *adverb* in a typical way

tyramine /'taɪrəmi:n/ *noun* an enzyme found in cheese, beans, tinned fish, red wine and yeast extract, which can cause high blood pressure if found in excessive quantities in the brain. ◊ **monoamine oxidase**

tyrosine /'taɪrəsɪn/ *noun* an amino acid in protein which is a component of thyroxine, and is a precursor to the catecholamines dopamine, noradrenaline and adrenaline

tyrosinosis /,taɪrəʊsɪ'nəʊsɪs/ *noun* a condition in which there is irregular metabolism of tyrosine

U

UKCC *abbr* United Kingdom Central Council for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting

ulcer /'ʌlsə/ *noun* an open sore in the skin or in a mucous membrane, which is inflamed and difficult to heal ○ *stomach ulcer*

ulcerated /'ʌlsə'reɪtɪd/ *adjective* covered with ulcers

ulcerating /'ʌlsə'reɪtɪŋ/ *adjective* developing into an ulcer

ulceration /,ʌlsə'reɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the development of an ulcer

ulcerative /'ʌls(ə)rətɪv/ *adjective* referring to ulcers, or characterised by ulcers

ulcerative colitis /,ʌls(ə)rətɪv kə'laitɪs/ *noun* severe pain in the colon, with diarrhoea and ulcers in the rectum, often with a psychosomatic cause

ulceromembranous gingivitis /,ʌlsərəʊn'memb्रənəs ,dʒɪndʒɪ'tɪvɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the gums, which can also affect the mucous membrane in the mouth

ulcerous /'ʌlsərəs/ *adjective* 1. referring to an ulcer 2. like an ulcer

ulritis /ju'laitɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the gums

ulna /'ʌlnə/ *noun* the longer and inner of the two bones in the forearm between the elbow and the wrist. See illustration at **HAND** in Supplement. Compare **radius**

ulnar /'ʌlnə/ *adjective* referring to the ulna

...the whole joint becomes disorganised, causing ulnar deviation of the fingers resulting in the typical deformity of the rheumatoid arthritic hand' [Nursing Times]

ulnar artery /'ʌlnər ,a:təri/ *noun* an artery which branches from the brachial artery at the elbow and runs down the inside of the forearm to join the radial artery in the palm of the hand

ulnar nerve /'ʌlnə nɜ:v/ *noun* a nerve which runs from the neck to the elbow and controls the muscles in the forearm and some of the fingers

COMMENT: The ulnar nerve passes near the surface of the skin at the elbow, where it can easily be hit, giving the effect of the 'funny bone'.

ulnar pulse /'ʌlnə pa:ls/ *noun* a secondary pulse in the wrist, taken near the inner edge of the forearm

ultra- /'ʌltrə/ *prefix* 1. further than 2. extremely

ultrafiltration /,ʌltrəfɪl'treɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the process of filtering the blood to remove tiny particles, e.g. when the blood is filtered by the kidney

ultramicroscopic /'ʌltrəmaɪk्रɔ:s̩ɒpɪk/ *adjective* referring to something so small that it cannot be seen using a standard microscope

ultrasonic /,ʌltrə'sɔ:nɪk/ *adjective* referring to ultrasound

ultrasonic probe /,ʌltrəsɔ:nɪk 'prəʊb/ *noun* an instrument which locates organs or tissues inside the body using ultrasound

ultrasonics /,ʌltrə'sɔ:nɪks/ *noun* the study of ultrasound and its use in medical treatments

ultrasonic waves /,ʌltrəsɔ:nɪk 'weɪvz/ *plural noun* same as **ultrasound**

ultrasonogram /,ʌltrəsɔ:nəgræm/ *noun* a picture made with ultrasound for the purpose of medical examination or diagnosis

ultrasonograph /,ʌltrəsɔ:nəgrɑ:f/ *noun* a machine which takes pictures of internal organs, using ultrasound

ultrasonography /,ʌltrəsɔ:nəgrəfi/ *noun* the procedure of passing ultrasound waves through the body and recording echoes which show details of internal organs. Also called **echography**

ultrasonotomography /,ʌltrəsɔ:nətə'mɒd̩grəfi/ *noun* the procedure of making images using ultrasound of organs which are placed at different depths inside the body

ultrasound /'ʌltrəsaund/ *noun* very high frequency sound waves which can be reflected off internal body parts or off a fetus in the womb to create images for medical examination (NOTE: No plural for **ultrasound**.)

COMMENT: The very high frequency waves of ultrasound can be used to detect and record organs or growths inside the body, in a similar way to the use of X-rays, by recording the differences in echoes sent back from different tissues. Ultrasound is used routinely to monitor the development of a fetus in the womb, and to treat some conditions such as internal

bruising. It can also destroy bacteria and calcify.

ultrasound marker /'ʌltrəsaʊnd ,ma:kə/ *noun* an unusual physical characteristic seen in an ultrasound examination of a fetus which is an indication of the existence of a genetic or developmental disorder

ultrasound probe /'ʌltrəsaʊnd prəʊb/ *noun* same as **ultrasonic probe**

ultrasound scan /'ʌltrəsaʊnd skæn/ *noun* the examination of internal parts of the body, especially a fetus in the womb, using ultrasound technology

ultrasound scanning /'ʌltrəsaʊnd ,skænɪŋ/, **ultrasound screening** /'ʌltrəsaʊnd ,skri:nɪŋ/ *noun* a method of gathering information about the body by taking images using high-frequency sound waves

ultrasound treatment /'ʌltrəsaʊnd ,tri:tment/ *noun* the treatment of soft tissue inflammation using ultrasound waves

ultraviolet *adjective* referring to the short invisible rays beyond the violet end of the spectrum, which form the element in sunlight which tans the skin, helps the skin produce Vitamin D and kills bacteria. Abbr **UV**

ultraviolet lamp /'ʌltrə,vaiələt 'læmp/ *noun* a lamp which gives off ultraviolet rays

ultraviolet radiation /'ʌltrə,vaiələt reidi 'eɪʃ(ə)n/, **ultraviolet rays** /'ʌltrə,vaiələt reɪz/ *noun* short invisible rays of ultraviolet light. Abbr **UVR**

umbilical /ʌm'bili:k(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to the navel

umbilical circulation /ʌm,bili:k(ə)l ,sɜ:kju 'leɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the circulation of blood from the mother's bloodstream through the umbilical cord into the fetus

umbilical cord /ʌm'bili:k(ə)l kɔ:d/ *noun* a cord containing two arteries and one vein which links the fetus inside the uterus to the placenta

COMMENT: The arteries carry the blood and nutrients from the placenta to the fetus and the vein carries the waste from the fetus back to the placenta. When the baby is born, the umbilical cord is cut and the end tied in a knot. After a few days, this drops off, leaving the navel marking the place where the cord was originally attached.

umbilical hernia /ʌm,bili:k(ə)l 'hɜ:nɪə/ *noun* a hernia which bulges at the navel, usually in young children. Also called **exomphalos**

umbilical region /ʌm'bili:k(ə)l ,rɪ:dʒ(ə)n/ *noun* the central part of the abdomen, below the epigastrium

umbilicated /ʌm'bili:kɪteɪd/ *adjective* with a small depression, like a navel, in the centre

umbilicus /ʌm'bili:kəs/ *noun* same as **navel**

umbo /'ʌmbəʊ/ *noun* a projecting part in the middle of the outer side of the eardrum

un- /ʌn/ *prefix* not

unaided /ʌn'eɪdɪd/ *adjective* without any help ○ *Two days after the operation, he was able to walk unaided.*

unlock /ʌn'blɒk/ *verb* to remove something which is blocking ○ *An operation to unlock an artery.*

unciform bone /'ʌnsifɔ:m bəʊn/ *noun* one of the eight small carpal bones in the wrist, shaped like a hook. Also called **hamate bone**

uncinate /'ʌnsɪneɪt/ *adjective* shaped like a hook

uncinate epilepsy /,ʌnsɪneɪt 'epilepsi/ *noun* a type of temporal lobe epilepsy, in which the person has hallucinations of smell and taste

unconditioned response /,ʌnkən ,dɪʃ(ə)nd rɪ'spɒns/ *noun* a response to a stimulus which occurs automatically, by instinct, and has not been learned

unconscious /ʌn'kɒnʃəs/ *adjective* not aware of what is happening ○ *She was unconscious for two days after the accident.* ■ *noun* □ **the unconscious** (*in psychology*) the part of the mind which stores feelings, memories or desires that someone cannot consciously call up. ♦ **subconscious**

unconsciousness /ʌn'kɒnʃəsnəs/ *noun* the state of being unconscious, e.g. as a result of lack of oxygen or from some other external cause such as a blow on the head

uncontrollable /,ʌnkən'trəuləb(ə)l/ *adjective* not able to be controlled ○ *The uncontrollable spread of the disease through the population.*

uncoordinated /,ʌnkən'ɔ:dineɪteɪd/ *adjective* not working together ○ *His finger movements are completely uncoordinated.*

uncus /'ʌŋkəs/ *noun* a projecting part of the cerebral hemisphere, shaped like a hook

undecenoic acid /'ʌn,dɛsnəʊk 'æsɪd/, **undecylenic acid** /'ʌn,disilenik 'æsɪd/ *noun* a substance made from castor bean oil, used in the treatment of fungal infections such as thrush

under- /'ʌndə/ *prefix* less than usual, too little

undergo /'ʌndə'gəʊ/ *verb* to experience something such as a procedure or operation ○ *He underwent an appendicectomy.* ○ *There are six patients undergoing physiotherapy.*

underhydration /'ʌndəhaɪ'dreɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the condition of having too little water in the body

undernourished /'ʌndə'nɔ:rɪʃt/ *adjective* having too little food

underproduction /'ʌndəprə'dʌkʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the act of producing less than normal

undertake /'ʌndə'teɪk/ *verb* to carry out a procedure such as a surgical operation ○ *Replacement of the joint is mainly undertaken to relieve pain.*

underweight /ʌndə'weɪt/ *adjective* weighing less than is medically advisable ○ *He is several pounds underweight for his age.*

undescended testis /'ʌndɪ,sendɪd 'testɪs/ *noun* a condition in which a testis has not descended into the scrotum

undiagnosed /ʌn,dæg'nəʊzd/ *adjective* not identified as a specific disease or disorder

undigested /ʌndɪd'gestɪd/ *adjective* referring to food which is not digested in the body

undine /'ʌndi:n/ *noun* a glass container for a solution to bathe the eyes

undress /ʌn'dres/ *verb* to remove clothes

undulant fever /'ʌndjʊlənt ,fi:və/ same as brucellosis

unfit /ʌn'fɪt/ *adjective* not physically healthy

ungual /ʌŋgwəl/ *adjective* referring to the fingernails or toenails

unguent /'ʌŋgwənt/ *noun* a smooth oily medicinal substance which can be spread on the skin to soothe irritations

unguentum /ʌŋ'gwentəm/ *noun* (in pharmacy) an ointment

unguis /'ʌŋgwɪs/ same as nail

unhealthy /ʌn'helθi/ *adjective* 1. not in good physical condition 2. not helping someone to be healthy ○ *The children have a very unhealthy diet.*

unhygienic /ʌnhai'dʒi:nɪk/ *adjective* not clean or good for health ○ *The conditions in the hospital laundry have been criticised as unhygienic.*

uni- /ju:nɪ/ *prefix* one

unicellular /,ju:nɪ'seljʊlə/ *adjective* referring to an organism formed of one cell

uniform /'ju:nɪfɔ:m/ *noun* the set of official clothes worn by a group of people such as the nurses in a hospital to identify them ■ *adjective* the same or similar ○ *Healthy red blood cells are of a uniform shape and size.*

unigravida /,ju:nɪ'grævɪdə/ same as primigravida

unilateral /,ju:nɪ'læt(ə)rəl/ *adjective* affecting one side of the body only

unilateral oophorectomy /,ju:nɪ'læt(ə)rəl ,əʊfə'rektəmɪ/ *noun* the surgical removal of one ovary

union /'ju:njən/ *noun* the joining together of two parts of a fractured bone. Opposite **non-union**. ♦ **malunion**

uniovular /,ju:nɪ'bɪjʊlə/ *noun* consisting of, or coming from, one ovum

uniovular twins /,ju:nɪ'bɪjʊlə 'twɪnz/ *plural noun* same as **identical twins**

unipara /ju:'nɪpərə/ same as **primipara**

unipolar /,ju:nɪ'pɔ:lə/ *adjective* referring to a neurone with a single process. Compare **bipolar**. See illustration at **NEURONE** in Supplement

unipolar lead /,ju:nɪpɔ:lə 'li:d/ *noun* an electric lead to a single electrode

unipolar neurone /ju:nɪ,pɔ:lə 'nju:ərən/ *noun* a neurone with a single process. Compare **multipolar neurone**, **bipolar neurone**. See illustration at **NEURONE** in Supplement

unit /ju:nɪt/ *noun* 1. a single part of a larger whole 2. a part of a hospital that has a specialised function ○ *a burns unit* 3. a named and agreed standard amount used for measuring something ○ *A gram is an SI unit of weight.* 4. a quantity of a drug, enzyme, hormone or of blood, taken as a standard for measurement and producing a given effect ○ *three units of blood* ○ *a unit of insulin* 5. a machine or device ○ *a waste-disposal unit*

'...the blood loss caused his haemoglobin to drop dangerously low, necessitating two units of RBCs and one unit of fresh frozen plasma' [RN Magazine]

United Kingdom Central Council for Nursing, Midwifery, and Health Visiting /ju:,naɪtɪd ,kɪndəm ,sentrəl ,kaʊnsəl fə ,nɜ:sɪstɪŋ mid,wɪfəri ənd 'helθ ,vɪzɪtɪŋ/ *noun* in the UK from 1979 until April 2002, an organisation which regulated nurses, midwives, and health visitors. The UKCC and the four National Boards have now been replaced by the Nursing and Midwifery Council. Abbr **UKCC**

univalent /,ju:nɪ'velənt/ *adjective* same as monovalent

universal donor /,ju:nɪvɜ:s(ə)l 'dəʊnə/ *noun* a person with blood group O, whose blood may be given to anyone

Universal Precautions /,ju:nɪvɜ:s(ə)l prɪ 'kɔ:s(ə)nzl/ abbr UP. ♦ **Standard Precautions**

universal recipient /,ju:nɪvɜ:s(ə)l rɪ 'sɪpɪənt/ *noun* a person with blood group AB who can receive blood from all the other blood groups

unmedicated dressing /ʌn,medikeɪtɪd 'dresɪŋ/ *noun* a sterile dressing with no antibiotic or other medication on it

unprofessional conduct /ʌnprə,feʃən(ə)l 'kɒndɪkt/ *noun* action by a professional person such as a doctor or nurse which is considered wrong by the body which regulates the profession

'...refusing to care for someone with HIV-related disease may well result in disciplinary procedure for unprofessional conduct' [Nursing Times]

unqualified /ʌn'kwɒlfɪəd/ *adjective* referring to someone who has no qualifications or no licence to practise

unsaturated fat /ʌn'sætʃə'reitɪd 'fæt/ *noun* fat which does not have a large amount of hydrogen, and so can be broken down more easily

unstable /ʌn'steɪb(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to something which may change easily ○ *an unstable mental condition.*

unstable angina /ʌn,stɪb(ə)l æn'dʒaɪnə/ *noun* angina which has suddenly become worse

unsteady /ʌn'stedi/ *adjective* likely to fall down when walking ○ *She is still very unsteady on her legs.*

unstriated muscle /,ʌnstrɔɪə,tɪstɪd 'mæs(ə)l/ *noun* same as **smooth muscle**

unviable /ʌn'veɪəb(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to a fetus that cannot live if born

unwanted pregnancy /ʌn,wɒntɪd 'pregnənsi/ *noun* a condition in which a woman becomes pregnant without wanting to have a child

unwell /ʌn'wel/ *adjective* ill ○ *She felt unwell and had to go home.* (NOTE: Not used before a noun: **a sick woman** but **the woman was unwell**.)

upper /'ʌpə/ *adjective* at the top, higher

upper arm /,ʌpə 'ɑ:m/ *noun* the part of the arm from the shoulder to the elbow

upper limb /,ʌpə 'lim/ *noun* an arm ○ *There was damage to the upper limbs only.*

upper motor neurone /,ʌpər 'məʊtə ,njuərəʊn/ *noun* a neurone which takes impulses from the cerebral cortex

upper respiratory infection /,ʌpə rɪ 'spɪrət(ə)ri ɪn,fekʃən/ *noun* an infection in the upper part of the respiratory system

UPPP abbr uvulopalatopharyngoplasty

upset *noun* /'ʌpset/ a slight illness ■ *adjective* /'ap'set/ slightly ill

upside down /,ʌpsaɪd daʊn/ *adverb* with the top turned to the bottom

upside-down stomach /,ʌpsaɪd daʊn 'stʌmæk/ *adverb US* ♦ **diaphragmatic hernia**

uracil /'juərəsɪl/ *noun* a pyrimidine base, one of the four bases in RNA in which it pairs with thymine

uraemia /ju'rɪ:miə/ *noun* a disorder caused by kidney failure, where urea is retained in the blood, and the person develops nausea, convulsions and in severe cases goes into a coma (NOTE: The US spelling is **uremia**.)

uraemic /ju'rɪ:mi:k/ *adjective* referring to uraemia, or having uraemia (NOTE: The US spelling is **uremic**.)

uran- /ju:rən/ *prefix* referring to the palate

uraniscorrhaphy /,juərənɪ'skɔrəfɪ/ *noun* same as **palorrhaphy**

urataemia /,juərə'ti:miə/ *noun* a condition in which urates are present in the blood, e.g. in gout

urate /'juəreɪt/ *noun* a salt of uric acid found in urine

uraturia /,juərə'tjuəriə/ *noun* the presence of excessive amounts of urates in the urine, e.g. in gout

urea /ju'rɪə/ *noun* a substance produced in the liver from excess amino acids, and excreted by the kidneys into the urine

urease /'juərɪəz/ *noun* an enzyme which converts urea into ammonia and carbon dioxide

urecchysis /ju'rekɪsɪs/ *noun* a condition in which uric acid leaves the blood and enters connective tissue

uresis /ju'rɪ:sɪs/ *noun* the act of passing urine

ureter /ju'rɪ:tə, 'juərɪ:tə/ *noun* one of the two tubes which take urine from the kidneys to the urinary bladder. See illustration at **KIDNEY** in Supplement. Also called **urinary duct**

ureter- /jʊrɪ:tə/ *prefix* same as **uretero-** (*used before vowels*)

ureteral /ju'rɪ:tərəl/ *adjective* referring to the ureters

ureterectomy /,juərɪ:tə'rektəmɪ/ *noun* the surgical removal of a ureter

ureteric /,juərɪ:tərɪk/ *adjective* same as **ureteral**

ureteric calculus /,juərɪ:tərɪk 'kælkjʊləs/ *noun* a kidney stone in the ureter

ureteric catheter /,juərɪ:tərɪk 'kæθɪtə/ *noun* a catheter passed through the ureter to the kidney, to inject an opaque solution into the kidney before taking an X-ray

ureteritis /,juərɪ:tə'raɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of a ureter

uretero- /jʊrɪ:tərəʊ/ *prefix* referring to the ureter

ureterocele /ju'rɪ:tərəʊsɪ:l/ *noun* swelling in a ureter caused by narrowing of the opening where the ureter enters the bladder

ureterocolostomy /ju,rɪ:tərəʊkə'lɒstəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to implant the ureter into the sigmoid colon, so as to bypass the bladder

ureteroenterostomy /ju,rɪ:tərəʊ,entə'rɒstəmɪ/ *noun* an artificially formed passage between the ureter and the intestine

ureterolith /ju'rɪ:tərəʊlɪθ/ *noun* a stone in a ureter

ureterolithotomy /ju,rɪ:tərəʊlɪ'θɒtəmɪ/ *noun* the surgical removal of a stone from the ureter

ureterolysis /,juərɪ:tə'rɒləsɪs/ *noun* a surgical operation to free one or both ureters from adhesions or surrounding tissue

ureteroneocystostomy /ju,rɪ:tərə'nɔ:səstəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to transplant a ureter to a different location in the bladder

ureteronephrectomy /ju,rɪ:tərə'nɛfrek'təmɪ/ *noun* same as **nephroureterectomy**

ureteroplasty /ju'rɪ:tərəplæstɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to repair a ureter

ureteropyelonephritis /ju,rɪ:tərə'pɛlə'nɛfritɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the ureter and the pelvis of the kidney to which it is attached

ureteroscope /ju'rɪ:tərəskəp/ *noun* an instrument which is passed into the ureter and up into the kidneys, usually used to locate or remove a stone

ureteroscopy /ju'ærɪtə'rɒskəpi/ *noun* an examination of the ureter with a ureteroscope

uretersigmoidostomy /ju'ærɪ:tərəʊsɪg'mɔɪd'ɒstəmɪ/ same as **ureterocolostomy**

ureterostomy /ju'ærɪtə'rɒstəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to make an artificial opening for the ureter into the abdominal wall, so that urine can be passed directly out of the body

ureterotomy /ju'ærɪtə'rɒtəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to make an incision into the ureter, mainly to remove a stone

ureterovaginal /ju'ærɪ:tərəʊvə'dʒaɪn(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to the ureter and the vagina

urethr- /ju'ærɪ:θər/ *prefix* same as **urethro-** (*used before vowels*)

urethra /ju'ri:θrə/ *noun* a tube which takes urine from the bladder to be passed out of the body. See illustration at **UROGENITAL SYSTEM** in Supplement

COMMENT: In males, the urethra serves two purposes: the discharge of both urine and semen. The male urethra is about 20cm long; in women it is shorter, about 3cm and this relative shortness is one of the reasons for the predominance of bladder infection and inflammation (cystitis) in women. The urethra has sphincter muscles at either end which help control the flow of urine.

urethral /ju'ri:θrəl(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to the urethra

urethral catheter /ju'ri:θrəl(ə)l 'kæθətər/ *noun* a catheter passed up the urethra to allow urine to flow out of the bladder, used to empty the bladder before an abdominal operation. Also called **urinary catheter**

urethral stricture /ju'ri:θrəl 'strɪktʃə/ *noun* a condition in which the urethra is narrowed or blocked by a growth. Also called **urethrostenosis**

urethritis /ju'ærɪθ'raɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the urethra

urethro- /jʊrɪ:θrəʊ/ *prefix* referring to the urethra

urethrocele /ju'ri:θrəsɪ:l/ *noun* 1. a swelling formed in a weak part of the wall of the urethra 2. prolapse of the urethra in a woman

urethrogram /ju'ri:θrəgræm/ *noun* an X-ray photograph of the urethra

urethrography /ju'ærɪθrəgrəfi/ *noun* X-ray examination of the urethra

urethroplasty /ju'ri:θrəplæsti/ *noun* a surgical operation to repair a urethra

urethrorrhaphy /ju'ærɪθrərəfɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to repair a torn urethra

urethorrhoea /ju'ri:θrər'i:ə/ *noun* the discharge of fluid from the urethra, usually associated with urethritis

urethroscope /ju'ri:θrəskəʊp/ *noun* a surgical instrument, used to examine the interior of a man's urethra

urethroscopy /ju'ærɪθrəskəpi/ *noun* an examination of the inside of a man's urethra with a urethroscope

urethrostenosis /ju'ærɪθrəʊstə'nəʊsɪs/ *noun* same as **urethral stricture**

urethrostomy /ju'ærɪθrəstəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to make an opening for a man's urethra between the scrotum and the anus

urethrotomy /ju'ærɪθrɒtəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to open a blocked or narrowed urethra. Also called **Wheelhouse's operation**

uretic /ju'ri:tɪk/ *adjective* referring to the passing of urine

urge /ɜ:dʒ/ *noun* a strong need to do something

urge incontinence /'ɜ:dʒ ɪn,kɒntɪnəns/ *noun* a condition in which someone feels a very strong need to urinate and cannot retain their urine

urgent /'ɜ:dʒənt/ *adjective* needing to be done quickly ○ *She had an urgent operation for strangulated hernia.*

urgently /'ɜ:dʒəntli/ *adverb* immediately ○ *The relief team urgently requires more medical supplies.*

-uria /ju'ærɪə/ *suffix* 1. a condition of the urine 2. a disease characterised by a condition of the urine

uric acid /ju'ærɪk 'æsɪd/ *noun* a chemical compound which is formed from nitrogen in waste products from the body and which also forms crystals in the joints of people who have gout

uricacidaemia /ju'ærɪkæsɪd'ɪ:miə/ *noun* same as **lithaemia**

uricosuric /ju'ærɪkə'sjuærɪk/ *noun* a drug which increases the amount of uric acid excreted in the urine

uridrosis /ju'ærɪ'drəʊsɪs/ *noun* a condition in which excessive urea forms in the sweat

urin- /ju'ærɪn/ *prefix* same as **urino-** (*used before vowels*)

urinalysis /ju'ærɪ'næləsɪs/ *noun* the analysis of urine, to detect diseases such as diabetes mellitus

urinary /'juærɪn(ə)ri/ *adjective* referring to urine

urinary bladder /ju'ærɪn(ə)ri 'blædə/ *noun* a sac where the urine collects after passing from the kidneys through the ureters, before being passed out of the body through the urethra. See illustration at **KIDNEY, UROGENITAL SYSTEM (MALE)** in Supplement

urinary catheter /ju'ærɪn(ə)ri 'kæθətə/ *noun* same as **urethral catheter**

urinary duct /'juærɪn(ə)ri dʌkt/ *noun* same as ureter

urinary incontinence /ju'ærɪn(ə)ri in'kɒnɪtnəns/ *noun* the involuntary emission of urine

urinary obstruction /juərɪn(ə)ri əb'strækʃən/ *noun* a blockage of the urethra, which prevents urine being passed

urinary retention /juərɪn(ə)ri rɪ'tenʃən/ *noun* the inability to pass urine, usually because the urethra is blocked or because the prostate gland is enlarged. Also called **urine retention**

urinary system /juərɪn(ə)ri 'sistəm/ *noun* a system of organs and ducts which separate waste liquids from the blood and excrete them as urine, including the kidneys, bladder, ureters and urethra

urinary tract /'juərɪn(ə)ri trækt/ *noun* the set of tubes down which the urine passes from the kidneys to the bladder and from the bladder out of the body

urinary tract infection /'juərɪn(ə)ri trækt in'fekʃən/ *noun* a bacterial infection of any part of the urinary system. Symptoms are usually a need to urinate frequently and pain on urination. Abbr **UTI**

urinate /'juərɪneɪt/ *verb* to pass urine from the body

urination /juərɪ'nɛɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the passing of urine out of the body. Also called **micturition**

urine /'juərɪn/ *noun* a yellowish liquid, containing water and waste products, mainly salt and urea, which is excreted by the kidneys and passed out of the body through the ureters, bladder and urethra

urine retention /'juərɪn rɪ'tenʃ(ə)n/ *noun* same as **urinary retention**

uriniferous /juərɪ'nɪfərəs/ *adjective* carrying urine

uriniferous tubule /,juərɪ'nɪf(ə)rəs 'tju:bju:l/ *noun* same as **renal tubule**

urino- /juərɪnəʊ/ *prefix* referring to urine

urogenital /,juərɪnəʊ'dʒenɪt(ə)l/ *adjective* same as **urogenital**

urinometer /juərɪ'nɒmɪtə/ *noun* an instrument which measures the specific gravity of urine

urobilin /,juərəʊ'bailɪn/ *noun* a yellow pigment formed when urobilinogen comes into contact with air

urobilinogen /,juərəʊ'bɑ:b'lɪnədʒən/ *noun* a colourless pigment formed when bilirubin is reduced to stercobilinogen in the intestines

urocele /'juərəsɪ:l/ *noun* a swelling in the scrotum which contains urine

urochesia /,juərə'kɪ:zɪə/ *noun* the passing of urine through the rectum, due to injury of the urinary system (NOTE: The US spelling is **urochezia**.)

urochrome /'juərəkrəʊm/ *noun* the pigment which colours the urine yellow

urodynamics /,juərəʊdær'næmɪks/ *plural noun* the active changes which occur during

the function of the bladder, urethral sphincter and pelvic floor muscles

urogenital /,juərəʊ'dʒenɪt(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to the urinary and genital systems. Also called **urinogenital**

urogenital diaphragm /juərə,dʒenɪt(ə)l ,daɪə'fræm/ *noun* a fibrous layer beneath the prostate gland through which the urethra passes

urogenital system /,juərəʊ'dʒenɪt(ə)l ,sistəm/ *noun* the whole of the urinary tract and reproductive system

urogram /'juərəgræm/ *noun* an X-ray picture of the urinary tract, or of a part of it

urography /'ju:rdgræfi/ *noun* an X-ray examination of part of the urinary system after injection of radio-opaque dye

urokinase /,juərəʊ'keɪnaɪz/ *noun* an enzyme formed in the kidneys, which begins the process of breaking down blood clots

uroolith /'juərəlɪθ/ *noun* a stone in the urinary system

urological /,juərə'lɒdʒɪk(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to urology

urologist /ju'rɒlədʒɪst/ *noun* a doctor who specialises in urology

urology /ju'rɒlədʒi/ *noun* the scientific study of the urinary system and its diseases

urostomy /ju'rɒstəmɪ/ *noun* the surgical creation of an artificial urethra

urticaria /,ɜ:tɪ'keəriə/ *noun* an allergic reaction to injections, particular foods or plants where the skin forms irritating reddish patches. Also called **hives, nettle rash**

USP abbr United States Pharmacopeia. ♦ **pharmacopoeia**

usual /ju:zʊəl/ *adjective* expected or typical

uter- /ju:tə/ *prefix* same as **utero-** (*used before vowels*)

uteri /'ju:t(ə)ri/ plural of **uterus**

uterine /'ju:tərɪn/ *adjective* referring to the uterus

uterine cavity /,ju:tərɪn 'kævɪtɪ/ *noun* the inside of the uterus

uterine fibroid /,ju:tərɪn 'faɪbrɔɪd/, **uterine fibroma** /,ju:tərɪn faɪ'b्रəʊmə/ *noun* same as **fibroid tumour**

uterine procidentia /,ju:tərɪn prəsɪd'ensɪə/, **uterine prolapse** /,ju:tərɪn 'prəʊlæps/ *noun* a condition in which part of the uterus has passed through the vagina, usually after childbirth

COMMENT: Uterine procidentia has three stages of severity: in the first the cervix descends into the vagina, in the second the cervix is outside the vagina, but part of the uterus is still inside, and in the third stage, the whole uterus passes outside the vagina.

uterine retroflexion /,ju:tərɪn 'ret्रəʊ'fleksʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a condition in which the uterus bends backwards away from its usual position

uterine retroversion /ju:tərəvən̩ retrəv̩ 'vɜːʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a condition in which the uterus slopes backwards away from its usual position

uterine subinvolution /ju:tərəvən̩ ,sɪb̩ in'velʊ:sɪf(ə)n/ *noun* a condition in which the uterus does not go back to its previous size after childbirth

uterine tube /'ju:tərəvən̩ tju:b/ *noun* same as Fallopian tube

utero- /ju:tərəvə/ *prefix* referring to the uterus

uterocoele /'ju:tərəsəi:l/ *noun* a hernia of the uterus. Also called **hysterocele**

uterogestation /,ju:tərədʒe'steɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a standard pregnancy, where the fetus develops in the uterus

uterography /,ju:tə'rɒgrəfi/ *noun* an X-ray examination of the uterus

tero-ovarian /,ju:tərəvən̩ əʊ'veəriən̩/ *adjective* referring to the uterus and the ovaries

uterosalpingography /,ju:tərəvəsælpɪŋ 'grɒgrəfi/ same as **hysterosalpingography**

uterovesical /,ju:tərəvə'vesɪk(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to the uterus and the bladder

uterus /'ju:t(ə)rəs/ *noun* the hollow organ in a woman's pelvic cavity, behind the bladder and in front of the rectum in which the embryo develops before birth. Also called **womb**. See illustration at **UROGENITAL SYSTEM (FEMALE)** in Supplement (NOTE: For other terms referring to the uterus, see words beginning with **hyster-**, **hystero-**, **metr-**, **metro-**.)

COMMENT: The top of the uterus is joined to the Fallopian tubes which link it to the ovaries, and the lower end (cervix uteri) opens into the vagina. When an ovum is fertilised it becomes implanted in the wall of the uterus and develops into an embryo inside it. If fertilisation and pregnancy do not take place, the lining of the uterus (endometrium) is shed during menstruation. At childbirth, strong contractions of the wall of the uterus (myometrium) help push the baby out through the vagina.

uterus didelphys /,ju:t(ə)rəs dəd'delfɪs/ *noun* same as **double uterus**

UTI *abbr* urinary tract infection

utricle /'ju:trɪkl(ə)l/, **utriculus** /ju'otrɪkljʊləs/ *noun* a large sac inside the vestibule of the ear, which relates information about the upright position of the head to the brain

UV *abbreviation* ultraviolet

UV-absorbing lens /ju: ,vi: əb,zɔ:bɪŋ 'lenz/ *noun* a lens devised to absorb UVR in order to protect the eyes against the sun

uvea /'ju:vɪə/ *noun* a layer of organs in the eye beneath the sclera, formed of the iris, the ciliary body and the choroid. Also called **uveal tract**

uveal /'ju:vɪəl/ *adjective* referring to the uvea

uveal tract /'ju:vɪəl trækt/ *noun* same as **uvea**

uveitis /,ju:vɪ'i:tɪts/ *noun* inflammation of any part of the uvea

uveoparotid fever /,ju:vɪə'pærətɪd ,fi:və/, **uveoparotid syndrome** /,ju:vɪə'pærətɪd ,sɪndrəʊm/ *noun* inflammation of the uvea and of the parotid gland

UVR *abbr* ultraviolet radiation

uvula /'ju:vjʊlə/ *noun* a piece of soft tissue which hangs down from the back of the soft palate

uvular /'ju:vjʊlər/ *adjective* referring to the uvula

uvulectomy /,ju:vju'lektəmi/ *noun* the surgical removal of the uvula

uvulitis /,ju:vju'laitɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the uvula

uvulopalatopharyngoplasty /,ju:vjʊləpælətəufə'rɪŋgəplæstɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to remove the uvula and other soft tissue in the palate, in order to widen the airways and treat the problem of snoring. Abbr **UPPP**

V

vaccinate /'væksɪneɪt/ *verb* to introduce vaccine into a person's body in order to make the body create its own antibodies, so making the person immune to the disease (NOTE: You vaccinate someone **against** a disease.)

vaccination /,vækstɪ'nɛɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the action of vaccinating someone

COMMENT: Originally the words **vaccination** and **vaccine** applied only to smallpox immunisation, but they are now used for immunisation against any disease. Vaccination is mainly given against cholera, diphtheria, rabies, smallpox, tuberculosis, and typhoid.

vaccine /'væksɪn/ *noun* a substance which contains antigens to a disease or a weak form of a disease, used to protect people against it

vaccinotherapy /,vækstɪnəʊ'θerəpi/ *noun* the treatment of a disease with a vaccine

vacuole /'vækjuəl/ *noun* a space in a fold of a cell membrane

vacuum /'vækjuəm/ *noun* a space which is completely empty of all matter, including air

vacuum extraction /'vækjuəm ɪk'strækʃən/ *noun* the procedure of pulling on the head of the baby with a suction instrument to aid birth

vacuum extractor /'vækjuəm ɪk'stræktaɪər/ *noun* a surgical instrument formed of a rubber suction cup which is used in vacuum extraction during childbirth

vacuum suction /'vækjuəm ,sʌkʃən/ *noun* a method used to achieve an abortion, after dilatation of the cervix. Also called **aspiration**

vagal /'veɪg(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to the vagus nerve

vagal tone /,veɪg(ə)l 'taʊn/ *noun* the action of the vagus nerve to slow the beat of the sinoatrial node

vagin- /vædʒɪn/ *prefix* referring to the vagina

vagina /væ'dʒaɪnə/ *noun* a passage in a woman's reproductive tract between the entrance to the uterus, the cervix, and the vulva, able to stretch enough to allow a baby to pass through during childbirth. See illustration at **UROGENITAL SYSTEM (FEMALE)** in Supplement (NOTE: For other terms referring to the vagina, see words beginning with **colp-**, **colpo-**.)

vaginal /væ'dʒaɪn(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to the vagina

vaginal bleeding /væ,dʒaɪn(ə)l 'bli:dɪŋ/ *noun* bleeding from the vagina

vaginal delivery /væ,dʒaɪn(ə)l dɪ'lɪv(ə)ri/ *noun* the birth of a baby through the mother's vagina, without surgical intervention

vaginal diaphragm /væ,dʒaɪn(ə)l 'daɪəfræm/ *noun* a circular contraceptive device for women, which is inserted into the vagina and placed over the neck of the uterus before sexual intercourse

vaginal discharge /væ,dʒaɪn(ə)l 'dɪstʃa:dʒ/ *noun* the flow of liquid from the vagina

vaginal douche /væ,dʒaɪn(ə)l 'du:ʃ/ *noun* 1. the process of washing out the vagina 2. a device or liquid for washing out the vagina

vaginal examination /væ,dʒaɪn(ə)l ɪg,zæmɪ'neɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the act of checking the vagina for signs of disease or growth

vaginalis /,vædʒɪl'neɪlɪs/ *noun* 1. same as **Trichomonas vaginalis** 2. same as **tunica vaginalis**

vaginal orifice /væ,dʒaɪn(ə)l 'brifɪs/ *noun* an opening leading from the vulva to the uterus

vaginal proctocele /væ,dʒaɪn(ə)l 'prɒktəsə:l/ *noun* a condition associated with prolapse of the uterus, where the rectum protrudes into the vagina

vaginal suppository *noun* same as **pessary**

vaginectomy /,vædʒɪl'nekτəmi/ *noun* a surgical operation to remove the vagina or part of it

vaginismus /,vædʒɪl'nɪzməs/ *noun* a painful contraction of the vagina which prevents sexual intercourse

vaginitis /,vædʒɪl'naitɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the vagina which is mainly caused by the bacterium *Trichomonas vaginalis* or by a fungus *Candida albicans*

vaginography /,vædʒɪl'nɔgrəfi/ *noun* an X-ray examination of the vagina

vaginoplasty /væ'dʒaɪnəplæsti/ *noun* a surgical operation to graft tissue on to the vagina

vaginoscope /'vædʒɪnəʊskəʊp/ *noun* same as **colposcope**

vago- /'veɪgən/ *prefix* referring to the vagus nerve

vagotomy /veɪ'gɒtəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to cut through the vagus nerve which controls the nerves in the stomach, as a treatment for peptic ulcers

vagus /'veɪgəs/, **vagus nerve** /'veɪgəs nɜ:v/ *noun* either of the tenth pair of cranial nerves which carry sensory and motor neurons serving the heart, lungs, stomach, and various other organs and control swallowing. Also called **pneumogastric nerve**

valgus /'vælgəs/, **valgum** /'vælgəm/, **valga** /'vælgə/ *adjective* turning outwards. ♀ **hallux valgus**. Compare **varus**

validity /'vælɪdɪti/ *noun* (*of a study*) the fact of being based on sound research and methods which exclude alternative explanations of a result

valine /'veɪli:n/ *noun* an essential amino acid

Valium /'væliəm/ a trade name for diazepam

vallate papillae /,væleɪt pə'pɪli:/ *plural noun* large papillae which form a line towards the back of the tongue and contain taste buds

vallecula /və'lekjʊlə/ *noun* a natural depression or fissure in an organ as between the hemispheres of the brain (NOTE: The plural is **valleculae**)

Valsalva's manoeuvre /væ'l'sælvəz mə'nu:və/ *noun* the process of breathing out while holding the nostrils closed and keeping the mouth shut, used in order to test the functioning of the Eustachian tubes or to adjust the pressure in the middle ear

value /'væljʊ:/ *noun* 1. the degree to which something is useful or necessary ○ *food with low nutritional value* 2. a number or amount that is unknown and is shown as a symbol ■ *plural noun values* the views someone has about the appropriate way to behave ○ *respect for different cultural values*

valve /vælv/ *noun* a flap which opens and closes to allow liquid to pass in one direction only, e.g. in the heart, blood vessels or lymphatic vessels

valvotomy /væ'l'vetəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to cut into a valve to make it open wider

valvula /'vælvjʊlə/ *noun* a small valve (NOTE: The plural is **valvulae**)

valvular /'vælvjʊlə/ *adjective* referring to a valve

valvular disease of the heart /,vælvjʊlə dɪ,zi:z əv ði: 'ha:t/ *noun* an inflammation of the membrane which lines the valves of the heart. Abbr **VDH**

valvulitis /,vælvjʊ'laitɪs/ *noun* inflammation of a valve in the heart

valvuloplasty /'vælvjʊləplæsti/ *noun* surgery to repair valves in the heart without opening the heart

'...in percutaneous balloon valvuloplasty a catheter introduced through the femoral vein is placed across the aortic valve and into the left ventricle; the catheter is removed and a valve-dilating catheter bearing a 15mm balloon is placed across the valve' [Journal of the American Medical Association]

valvulotomy /,vælvjʊ'lɒtəmɪ/ *noun* same as **valvotomy**

vancomycin /,væŋkə'mai:sɪn/ *noun* an antibiotic which is effective against some bacteria which are resistant to other antibiotics. Strains of bacteria resistant to vancomycin have now developed.

van den Bergh test /,væn den 'bɜ:g/ *test/noun* a test of blood serum to see if a case of jaundice is caused by an obstruction in the liver or by haemolysis of red blood cells [After A.A. Hijmans van den Bergh (1869–1943), Dutch physician]

vaporise /'veɪpəraɪz/, **vaporize** *verb* to turn a liquid into a vapour

vaporiser /'veɪpəraɪzə/, **vaporizer** *noun* a device which warms a liquid to which medicinal oil has been added, so that it provides a vapour which someone can inhale

vapour /'veɪpə/ *noun* 1. a substance in the form of a gas 2. steam from a mixture of a liquid and a medicinal oil (NOTE: The US spelling is **vapor**)

Vaquez-Osler disease /væ,keɪz 'ɒslə di,zi:z/ *noun* same as **polycythaemia vera** [After Henri Vaquez (1860–1936), French physician, Sir William Osler (1849–1919), Professor of Medicine in Montreal, Philadelphia, Baltimore and then Oxford]

vara /'veərə/ *adjective* same as **varus**

variant CJD /,veəri'ænt ,sɪ:dʒeɪ 'di:/ *noun* a form of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease which was observed first in the 1980s, especially affecting younger people. Abbr **vCJD**

variation /,veəri'eɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a change from one level to another ○ *There is a noticeable variation in his pulse rate.* ○ *The chart shows the variations in the patient's temperature over a twenty-four hour period.*

varicectomy /,værɪ'sektəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to remove a vein or part of a vein

varicella /,værɪ'selə/ *noun* same as **chicken-pox**

varicella-zoster virus /,værɪselə 'zɒstə ,væɪrəs/ *noun* a herpes virus that causes chickenpox and shingles

varices /'værɪsɪz/ *plural of varix*

varicocele /'værɪkəsə:l/ *noun* swelling of a vein in the spermatic cord which can be corrected by surgery

varicose /'værɪkəs/ *adjective* 1. affected with or having varicose veins 2. designed for

the treatment of varicose veins **3.** relating to or producing swelling

varicose eczema /,værɪkəʊs 'eksɪmə/noun eczema which develops on the legs, caused by bad circulation. Also called **hypostatic eczema**

varicose ulcer /,værɪkəʊs 'ʌlsə/noun an ulcer in the leg as a result of bad circulation and varicose veins

varicose vein /,værɪkəʊs 'veɪn/noun a vein, usually in the legs, which becomes twisted and swollen

varicosity /,værɪ'kɒsɪtɪ/noun (of veins) the condition of being swollen and twisted

varicotomy /,værɪ'kɒtəmɪ/noun a surgical operation to make a cut into a varicose vein

varifocals /'veəri,fəʊk(ə)lz/plural noun spectacles with lenses which have varying focal lengths from top to bottom, for looking at things at different distances from the wearer

variola /və'rɪələ/ noun same as **smallpox**

varioloid /'veəriəlɔɪd/noun a type of mild smallpox which affects people who have already had smallpox or have been vaccinated against it

varix /'veərɪks/noun a swollen blood vessel, especially a swollen vein in the leg (NOTE: The plural is **varices**.)

Varolii /və'rəlɪi/:♦ pons Varolii

varus /'veərəs/, **varum** /'veərəm/, **vara** /'veərə/ adjective turning inwards. ♦ **coxa vara**. Compare **valgus**

vary /'veəri/ verb **1.** to change ○ *The dosage varies according to the age of the patient.* **2.** to try different actions ○ *The patient was recommended to vary her diet.*

vas /væs/noun a tube in the body (NOTE: The plural is **vasa**.)

vas- /væs/ prefix same as **vaso-**

vasa efferentia /,veɪsə efə'rentiə/plural noun the group of small tubes which sperm travel down from the testis to the epididymis

vasa vasorum /,veɪsə veɪ'sɔ:rəm/plural noun tiny blood vessels in the walls of larger blood vessels

vascular /'væskjʊlə/ adjective referring to blood vessels

vascular dementia /,væskjʊlə dɪ'menʃə/noun a form of mental degeneration due to disease of the blood vessels in the brain

vascularisation /,væskjʊlərəz'zeɪʃ(ə)n/, **vascularization** noun the development of new blood vessels

vascular lesion /,væskjʊlə 'li:ʒ(ə)n/noun damage to a blood vessel

vascular system /'væskjʊlə ,sistəm/noun the series of vessels such as veins, arteries and capillaries, carrying blood around the body

vasculitis /,væskjʊ'laitɪs/noun inflammation of a blood vessel

vas deferens /,væs 'defərenz/noun see illustration at **UROGENITAL SYSTEM (MALE)** in Supplement. also called **ductus deferens, sperm duct** (NOTE: The plural is **vasa deferentia**)

vasectomy /və'sektəmɪ/noun a surgical operation to cut a vas deferens, in order to prevent sperm travelling from the epididymis up the duct. ♦ **bilateral vasectomy**

vasa efferens /,væs 'efərenz/noun one of many tiny tubes which take the spermatozoa from the testis to the epididymis (NOTE: The plural is **vasa efferentia**)

vaso- /veɪzəʊ/ prefix **1.** referring to a blood vessel **2.** referring to the vas deferens

vasoactive /,veɪzəʊ'æktyv/adjective having an effect on the blood vessels, especially constricting the arteries

vasoconstriction /,veɪzəʊkən'strɪkʃən/noun a contraction of blood vessels which makes them narrower

vasoconstrictor /,veɪzəʊkən'strɪktər/noun a chemical substance which makes blood vessels become narrower, so that blood pressure rises, e.g. ephedrine hydrochloride

vasodilatation /,veɪzəʊ,dɪlə'teɪʃ(ə)n/, **vasodilation** /,veɪzəʊdəl'leɪʃ(ə)n/noun the relaxation of blood vessels, especially the arteries, making them wider and leading to increased blood flow or reduced blood pressure

vasodilator /,veɪzəʊdəl'leɪtər/noun a chemical substance which makes blood vessels become wider, so that blood flows more easily and blood pressure falls, e.g. hydralazine hydrochloride

'Volatile anaesthetic agents are potent vasodilators and facilitate blood flow to the skin.' [British Journal of Nursing]

vaso-epididymostomy /,veɪzəʊ ,ɪpɪdɪdɪ'mɒstəmɪ/noun a surgical operation to reverse a vasectomy in which the cut end of the vas deferens is joined to a tubule within the epididymis above a blockage in it

vasoinhibitor /,veɪzəoin'hɪbɪtər/noun a chemical substance that reduces or stops the activity of the nerves that control the widening or narrowing of the blood vessels

vasoligation /,veɪzələtɪ'geɪʃ(ə)n/noun a surgical operation to tie the vasa deferentia to prevent infection entering the epididymis from the urinary system

vasomotion /veɪzə'məʊʃ(ə)n/noun the control of the diameter of blood vessels and thus of blood flow. ♦ **vasoconstriction, vasodilatation**

vasomotor /,veɪzə'məʊtər/adjective referring to the control of the diameter of blood vessels

vasomotor centre /,veɪzə'məʊtər sentər/noun a nerve centre in the brain which changes the rate of heartbeat and the diameter of blood vessels and so regulates blood pressure

vasomotor nerve /'verzəʊ'məʊtə ˌnɜːv/ *noun* a nerve in the wall of a blood vessel which affects the diameter of the vessel

vasopressin /'verzəʊ'presɪn/ *noun* same as **antidiuretic hormone**

vasopressor /'verzəʊ'presər/ *noun* a substance which increases blood pressure by narrowing the blood vessels

vasospasm /'verzəʊspæzm/ *noun* a muscle spasm causing the fingers to become cold, white and numb. ♦ **Raynaud's disease**

vasovagal /'verzəʊ'veɪg(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to the vagus nerve and its effect on the heartbeat and blood circulation

vasovagal attack /'verzəʊ'veɪg(ə)l ə,tæk/ *noun* a fainting fit as a result of a slowing down of the heartbeats caused by excessive activity of the vagus nerve

vasovasostomy /'verzəʊvə'sɒstəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to reverse a vasectomy

vasovesiculitis /'verzəʊvesɪkju'lætɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the seminal vesicles and a vas deferens

vastus intermedius /'væstəs ,ɪnt̩ə'mɪdɪəs/, **vastus medialis** /'væstəs ,mɪdɪə'leɪəs/, **vastus lateralis** /'væstəs ,læt̩ə'reɪlɪs/ *noun* three of the four parts of the quadriceps femoris, the muscle of the thigh (NOTE: The fourth is the rectus femoris.)

vault /vɔːlt/ *noun* □ **vault of the skull** part of the skull which includes the frontal bone, the temporal bones and the occipital bone

VBAC *abbr* vaginal birth after Caesarean section

CJD *abbr* variant CJD

VD *abbr* venereal disease

VD clinic /'vi: 'di: ,klɪnɪk/ *noun* a clinic specialising in the diagnosis and treatment of venereal diseases

VDH *abbr* valvular disease of the heart

vectis /'vektɪs/ *noun* a curved surgical instrument used in childbirth

vector /'vektər/ *noun* an insect or animal which carries a disease and can pass it to humans ○ *The tsetse fly is a vector of sleeping sickness.*

vegan /'vi:gən/ *noun* someone who does not eat meat, dairy produce, eggs or fish and eats only vegetables and fruit ■ *adjective* involving a diet of only vegetables and fruit

vegetarian /'vedʒɪ'teəriən/ *noun* someone who does not eat meat, but eats mainly vegetables and fruit and sometimes dairy produce, eggs or fish ■ *adjective* involving a diet without meat

vegetation /'vedʒɪ'teɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a growth on a membrane, e.g. on the cusps of valves in the heart

vegetative /'vedʒɪtətɪv/ *adjective* 1. referring to growth of tissue or organs 2. referring

to a state after brain damage, where a person is alive and breathing but shows no responses

vehicle /'vi:rɪk(ə)l/ *noun* a liquid in which a dose of a drug is put

vein /veɪn/ *noun* a blood vessel which takes deoxygenated blood containing waste carbon dioxide from the tissues back to the heart (NOTE: For other terms referring to veins see words beginning **phleb-**, **phlebo-** or **veno-**.)

vena cava /'vi:nə 'keɪvə/ *noun* one of two large veins which take deoxygenated blood from all the other veins into the right atrium of the heart. See illustration at **HEART** in Supplement, **KIDNEY** in Supplement (NOTE: The plural is **venae cavae**.)

COMMENT: The superior vena cava brings blood from the head and the top part of the body, while the inferior vena cava brings blood from the abdomen and legs.

vene- /'veni/ *prefix* referring to veins

venene /və'nɪn/ *noun* a mixture of different venoms, used to produce antivenene

venepuncture /'venɪpʌŋktʃə/ *noun* the act of puncturing a vein either to inject a drug or to take a blood sample

venereal /və'nɪəriəl/ *adjective* 1. relating to sex acts or sexual desire 2. relating to the genitals 3. referring to an infection or disease which is transmitted through sexual intercourse ○ **venereal warts**

venereal disease /vɪ'nɪəriəl dɪ,zi:z/ *noun* a disease which is passed from one person to another during sexual intercourse. Abbr **VD** (NOTE: Now usually called a **sexually transmitted disease (STD)**.)

venereal wart /və,nɪəriəl 'wɔ:t/ *noun* a wart on the genitals or in the urogenital area

venereologist /və,nɪəriə'lɒdʒɪst/ *noun* a doctor who specialises in the study of venereal diseases

venereology /və,nɪəriə'lɒdʒɪ/ *noun* the scientific study of venereal diseases

venereum /və'nɪəriəm/ ♦ **lymphogranuloma venereum**

veneris /'venəris/ ♦ **mons**

venesection /'venɪ'sekʃən/ *noun* an operation where a vein is cut so that blood can be removed, e.g. when taking blood from a donor

venipuncture /'venɪpʌŋktʃə/ *noun* same as **venepuncture**

veno- /'vi:nəʊ/ *prefix* referring to veins

venoclysis /'və'nɒkλɪsɪs/ *noun* the procedure of slowly introducing a saline or other solution into a vein

venogram /'vi:nəgræm/ *noun* same as **phlebogram**

venography /vɪ'nɒgrəfi/ *noun* same as **phlebography**

venom /'venəm/ *noun* a poison in the bite of a snake or insect

COMMENT: Depending on the source of the bite, venom can have a wide range of effects, from a sore spot after a bee sting, to death from a scorpion. Antivenene will counteract the effects of venom, but is only effective if the animal which gave the bite can be correctly identified.

venomous /'venəməs/ *adjective* referring to an animal which has poison in its bite ○ *The cobra is a venomous snake.* ○ *He was bitten by a venomous spider.*

venosus /vɪ'nəsəs/ ♀ **ductus venosus**

venous /'vi:nəs/ *adjective* referring to the veins

'...venous air embolism is a potentially fatal complication of percutaneous venous catheterization' [Southern Medical Journal]

'...a pad was placed under the Achilles tendon to raise the legs, thus aiding venous return and preventing deep vein thrombosis' [NATNews]

venous bleeding /'vi:nəs 'bli:dɪŋ/ *noun* bleeding from a vein

venous blood /'vi:nəs bləd/ *noun* same as deoxygenated blood

venous haemorrhage /'vi:nəs 'hem(ə)rɪdʒ/ *noun* the escape of blood from a vein

venous system /'vi:nəs ,sɪstəm/ *noun* a system of veins which brings blood back to the heart from the tissues

venous thrombosis /'vi:nəs θrɒm'bəʊsɪs/ *noun* the blocking of a vein by a blood clot

venous ulcer /'vi:nəs 'ʌlsə/ *noun* an ulcer in the leg, caused by varicose veins or by a blood clot

ventilation /'ventɪ'lейʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the act of breathing air in or out of the lungs, so removing waste products from the blood in exchange for oxygen. ♀ **dead space**

ventilator /'ventileɪtə/ *noun* a machine which pumps air into and out of the lungs of someone who has difficulty in breathing ○ *The newborn baby was put on a ventilator.* Also called **respirator**

ventilatory failure /'ventileɪtri ,feɪlјə/ *noun* a failure of the lungs to oxygenate the blood correctly

Ventimask /'ventimu:sk/ a trademark for a type of oxygen mask

Ventolin /'ventəlɪn/ a trade name for salbutamol

ventouse /'ventu:s/ *noun* a cup-like vacuum device attached to the top of an unborn baby's head in the process of delivery, used to enable a distressed baby to be born quickly

ventral /'ventr(ə)l/ *adjective* 1. referring to the abdomen 2. referring to the front of the body. Opposite **dorsal**

ventricle /'ventrɪk(ə)l/ *noun* a cavity in an organ, especially in the heart or brain. See illustration at **HEART** in Supplement

COMMENT: There are two ventricles in the heart: the left ventricle takes oxygenated

blood from the pulmonary vein through the left atrium, and pumps it into the aorta to circulate round the body; the right ventricle takes blood from the veins through the right atrium, and pumps it into the pulmonary artery to be passed to the lungs to be oxygenated. There are four ventricles in the brain, each containing cerebrospinal fluid. The two lateral ventricles in the cerebral hemispheres contain the choroid processes which produce cerebrospinal fluid. The third ventricle lies in the midline between the two thalamus. The fourth ventricle is part of the central canal of the hindbrain.

ventricul- /'ventrikjʊl/ *prefix* referring to a ventricle in the brain or heart

ventricular /ven'trɪkjʊlə/ *adjective* referring to the ventricles

ventricular fibrillation /ven'trɪkjʊlə ,fibrɪ'leɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a serious heart condition where the ventricular muscles flutter and the heart no longer beats. Abbr **VF**

ventricular folds /ven'trɪkjʊlə fəuldz/ *plural noun* same as **vocal cords**

ventricular septal defect /ven'trɪkjʊlə 'sept(ə)l dɪ,fekt/ *noun* a condition in which blood can flow between the two ventricles of the heart, because the intraventricular septum has not developed properly. Abbr **VSD**. Compare **atrial septal defect**

ventriculitis /,ventrikjʊ'laitɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the brain ventricles

ventriculoatriostomy /ven'trɪkjʊlə,etri'ɒst̩mɪ/ *noun* an operation to relieve pressure caused by excessive quantities of cerebrospinal fluid in the brain ventricles

ventriculogram /ven'trɪkjʊləgræm/ *noun* an X-ray picture of the ventricles of the brain

ventriculography /,ventrikjʊ'lɒgrəfi/ *noun* a method of taking X-ray pictures of the ventricles of the brain after air has been introduced to replace the cerebrospinal fluid

ventriculo-peritoneal shunt /ven'trɪkjʊlə,pɛrɪtə,ni:əl 'ʃʌnt/ *noun* an artificial drain used in hydrocephalus to drain cerebrospinal fluid from the ventricles

ventriculoscopy /ven'trɪkjʊl'ɒskɔ:pɪ/ *noun* an examination of the brain using an endoscope

ventriculostomy /ven'trɪkjʊl'ɒst̩mɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to pass a hollow needle into a ventricle of the brain so as to reduce pressure, take a sample of fluid or enlarge the ventricular opening to prevent the need for a shunt

ventro- /'ventrəʊ/ *prefix* 1. ventral 2. referring to the abdomen

ventrofixation /'ventrəʊfɪk'seɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a surgical operation to treat retroversion of the uterus by attaching the uterus to the wall of the abdomen

ventrosuspension /,ventrəʊsə'spenʃən/ *noun* a surgical operation to treat retroversion of the uterus

Venturi mask /ven'tjuəri ma:sk/ *noun* a type of disposable mask which gives the person a controlled mixture of oxygen and air

Venturi nebuliser /ven'tjuəri ,nebjulaɪzə/ *noun* a type of nebuliser which is used in aerosol therapy

venule /'venju:l/ *noun* a small vein or vessel leading from tissue to a larger vein

verapamil /ve'ræpəmɪl/ *noun* a synthetic compound which helps to prevent the movement of calcium ions across membranes. It is used in the treatment of angina pectoris, hypertension and irregular heartbeat.

verbigeration /,vɜ:bɪdʒə'reɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* a condition seen in people with mental disorders, in which they keep saying the same words over and over again

vermicide /'vɜ:mɪsaɪd/ *noun* a substance which kills worms in the intestine

vermiform /'vɜ:mɪfɔ:m/ *adjective* shaped like a worm

vermiform appendix /,vɜ:mɪfɔ:m ə'pendɪks/ *noun* same as **appendix 1**

vermifuge /'vɜ:mɪfju:dʒ/ *noun* a substance which removes worms from the intestine

vermillion border /və,mɪliən 'bɔ:də/ *noun* the external red parts of the lips

vermis /'vɜ:mi:s/ *noun* the central part of the cerebellum, which forms the top of the fourth ventricle

vermix /'vɜ:mɪks/ *noun* a vermiform appendix

vernix caseosa /,vɜ:nɪks keɪsə'əʊsə/ *noun* an oily substance which covers a baby's skin at birth

verruca /və'rʊ:kə/ *noun* a small hard harmless growth on the sole of the foot, caused by a virus (NOTE: Verrucas are a type of wart. The plural is **verrucas** or **verrucae**.)

version /'vɜ:sʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the procedure of turning a fetus in a uterus so as to put it in a better position for birth

vertebra /'vɜ:tɪbrə/ *noun* one of twenty-four ring-shaped bones which link together to form the backbone. See illustration at **CARTILAGINOUS JOINT** in Supplement (NOTE: The plural is **vertebrae**.)

COMMENT: The top vertebra (the atlas) supports the skull; the first seven vertebrae in the neck are the cervical vertebrae; then follow the twelve thoracic or dorsal vertebrae which are behind the chest and five lumbar vertebrae in the lower part of the back. The sacrum and coccyx are formed of five sacral vertebrae and four coccygeal vertebrae which have fused together.

vertebral /'vɜ:tɪbrəl/ *adjective* referring to the vertebrae

vertebral artery /,vɜ:tɪbrəl 'a:təri/ *noun* one of two arteries which go up the back of the neck into the brain

vertebral canal /,vɜ:tɪbrəl kə'næl/ *noun* same as **spinal canal**

vertebral column /'vɜ:tɪbrəl ,kɒləm/ *noun* the series of bones and discs linked together to form a flexible column running from the base of the skull to the pelvis. Also called **back-bone**, **spinal column**. See illustration at **PELVIS** in Supplement

vertebral disc /,vɜ:tɪbrəl 'dɪsk/ *noun* same as **intervertebral disc**

vertebral foramen /,vɜ:tɪbrəl fə'reɪmən/ *noun* a hole in the centre of a vertebra which links with others to form the vertebral canal through which the spinal cord passes

vertebral ganglion /,vɜ:təbrəl 'gæŋglɪən/ *noun* a ganglion in front of the origin of the vertebral artery

vertebro-basilar insufficiency /,vɜ:tɪbrəbəsɪlər ɪnsɪf'ənsi/ *noun* a brainstem ischaemia due to temporary occlusion of the arteries

vertex /'vɜ:tɛks/ *noun* the top of the skull

vertex delivery /'vɜ:tɛks dɪ'lɪv(ə)rɪ/ *noun* a normal birth, where the baby's head appears first

vertigo /'vɜ:tɪgəʊ/ *noun* 1. feelings of dizziness or giddiness caused by a malfunction of the sense of balance 2. a fear of heights, as a result of a sensation of dizziness which is felt when high up, especially on a tall building ○ *She won't sit near the window – she suffers from vertigo.*

very low density lipoprotein /,verɪ ləʊ'densəti ,lipəʊ'prəʊti:n/ *noun* a fat produced by the liver after food has been absorbed and before it becomes low density lipoprotein. Abbr **VLDL**

vesical /'vesɪk(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to the bladder

vesicant /'vesɪkənt/ *noun* a substance which makes the skin blister. Also called **epispastic**

vesicle /'vesɪk(ə)l/ *noun* 1. a small blister on the skin, e.g. caused by eczema 2. a sac which contains liquid

vesico- /'vesɪkəʊ/ *prefix* referring to the urinary bladder

vesicofixation /,vesɪkə'fɪk'seɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* same as **cystopexy**

vesicostomy /,vesɪ'kɒstəmɪ/, /vesɪ'kɒtəmɪ/ *noun* same as **cystostomy**

vesicoureteric reflux /,vesɪk'ʊrətərɪ 'rɪ:fλəks/ *noun* the flowing of urine back from the bladder up the ureters during urination, which may carry infection from the bladder to the kidneys. Also called **vesicoureteric reflux**

vesicoureteric /,vesɪk'ʊrətə'ri'retɪk/ *adjective* relating to the urinary bladder and the ureters

vesicoureteric reflux /,vesɪk'ʊrətə'ri'retɪk 'rɪ:fλəks/ *noun* same as **vesicoureteric reflux**

vesicovaginal /,vesɪkə'venəl dʒæn(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to the bladder and the vagina

vesicovaginal fistula /,vesɪkʊvə,dfɜːm(ə)l 'fɪstjʊlə/ *noun* an unusual opening between the bladder and the vagina

vesicular /və'sɪk(j)ʊlə/ *adjective* referring to a vesicle

vesicular breathing /və,sɪk(j)ʊlə 'bri:ðɪŋ/, **vesicular breath sound** /və,sɪk(j)ʊlə 'breθ saʊnd/ *plural noun* the sound made during the normal breathing process

vesiculation /və,sɪk(j)ʊ'lɛɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the formation of blisters on the skin

vesiculectomy /,vesɪk(j)ʊ'lektəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to remove a seminal vesicle

vesiculitis /və,sɪk(j)ʊ'laitɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the seminal vesicles

vesiculography /və,sɪk(j)ʊ'lɒgrəfi/ *noun* an X-ray examination of the seminal vesicles

vesiculopapular /və,sɪk(j)ʊlə'pæpjʊlə/ *adjective* referring to a skin disorder which has both blisters and papules

vesiculopustular /və,sɪk(j)ʊlə'u'pastjʊlə/ *adjective* referring to a skin disorder which has both blisters and pustules

vessel /'ves(ə)l/ *noun* 1. a tube in the body along which liquid flows, especially a blood vessel 2. a container for fluids

vestibular /ve'stɪbjʊlə/ *adjective* referring to a vestibule, especially the vestibule of the inner ear

vestibular folds /ve'stɪbjʊlə fəuldz/ *plural noun* folds in the larynx above the vocal folds, which are not used for speech. Also called **false vocal cords**

vestibular glands /ve'stɪbjʊlə glændz/ *plural noun* the glands at the point where the vagina and vulva join, which secrete a lubricating substance

vestibular nerve /ve'stɪbjʊlə nɜːv/ *noun* the part of the auditory nerve which carries information about balance to the brain

vestibule /'vestɪbju:l/ *noun* a cavity in the body at the entrance to an organ, especially the first cavity in the inner ear or the space in the larynx above the vocal cords or a nostril. See illustration at **EAR** in Supplement

vestibulocochlear nerve /ves,tɪbjʊlə'u'kɒklɪə,nɜːv/ *noun* the eighth cranial nerve which governs hearing and balance. Also called **acoustic nerve, auditory nerve**

vestigial /ves'tɪdʒiəl/ *adjective* existing in a rudimentary form ○ *The coccyx is a vestigial tail.*

VF abbr ventricular fibrillation □ **in VF** referring to someone whose heart is no longer able to beat

viability /,vaiə'biliti/ *noun* the fact of being viable ○ *The viability of the fetus before the 22nd week is doubtful.*

viable /'vaiəb(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to a fetus which can survive if born ○ *A fetus is viable by about the 28th week of pregnancy.*

Viagra /vai'ægrə/ a trade name for sildenafil citrate

vial /'vaiəl/ *noun* same as **phial**

Vibramycin /,vai'bri'maɪsɪn/ a trade name for doxycycline

vibrate /vai'breɪt/ *verb* to move rapidly and continuously

vibration /var'breɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* rapid and continuous movement ○ *Speech is formed by the vibrations of the vocal cords.*

vibration white finger /vai,breɪʃ(ə)n 'waɪt,fɪŋgə/ *noun* a condition caused by long-term use of a chain saw or pneumatic drill, which affects the circulation in the fingers

vibrator /vai'bretəl/ *noun* a device to produce vibrations, which may be used for massages

Vibrio /'vibrɪə/ *noun* a genus of Gram-negative bacteria which are found in water and cause cholera

vibrissae /vai'brɪsə:/ *plural noun* hairs in the nostrils or ears

vicarious /vɪ'keəriəs/ *adjective* done by one organ or agent in place of another

vicarious menstruation /vɪ,keəriəs ,men stru'eɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the discharge of blood other than by the vagina during menstrual periods

victim /'viktɪm/ *noun* person who is injured in an accident or who has caught a disease ○ *The victims of the rail crash were taken to the local hospital.* □ **to fall victim to something** to become a victim of or to experience bad effects from something ○ *Half the people eating at the restaurant fell victim to salmonella poisoning.*

vigour /'vɪgə/ *noun* a combination of positive attributes expressed in rapid growth, large size, high fertility and long life in an organism (NOTE: The US spelling is **vigor**.)

villous /'vɪləs/ *adjective* shaped like a villus, or formed of villi

villus /'vɪləs/ *noun* a tiny projection like a finger on the surface of a mucous membrane (NOTE: The plural is **villi**.)

vinblastine /vɪn'blæsti:n/ *noun* an alkaloid drug used in the treatment of cancer

vincristine /vɪn'krɪsti:n/ *noun* an alkaloid drug similar to vinblastine, also used in the treatment of cancer. It works by blocking cell division and is highly toxic.

vinculum /'vɪŋkjʊləm/ *noun* a thin connecting band of tissue (NOTE: The plural is **vincula**.)

violent /'vaiələnt/ *adjective* very strong, very severe ○ *He had a violent headache.* ○ *Her reaction to the injection was violent.*

violently /'vaiələntli/ *adverb* in a strong way ○ *He reacted violently to the antihistamine.*

violet /'vaiələt/ *noun* a dark, purplish blue colour at the end of the visible spectrum

viraemia /vai'rɪmɪə/ *noun* a virus in the blood (NOTE: The US spelling is **viremia**.)

viral /'vaɪrəl/ *adjective* caused by a virus, or referring to a virus

viral hepatitis *noun* same as **serum hepatitis**

viral infection /'vaɪrəl ɪn,fekʃən/ *noun* an infection caused by a virus

viral pneumonia /'vaɪrəl nju:məniə/ *noun* a type of inflammation of the lungs caused by a virus. Also called **virus pneumonia**

virgin /'vɜ:dʒɪn/ *noun* a female who has not experienced sexual intercourse

virginity /və'dʒɪnɪti/ *noun* the condition of a female who has not experienced sexual intercourse

virile /'vɪrɪl/ *adjective* like a man, with strong male characteristics

virilisation /'vɪrlɪzɪ'seɪʃ(ə)n/, **virilization** *noun* the development of male characteristics in a woman, caused by a hormone imbalance or therapy

virilism /'vɪrlɪz(ə)m/ *noun* male characteristics such as body hair and a deep voice in a woman

virology /'vai'rɒlədʒi/ *noun* the scientific study of viruses

virulence /'vɪrələns/ *noun* 1. the ability of a microorganism to cause a disease 2. the degree of effect of a disease

virulent /'vɪrələnt/ *adjective* 1. referring to the ability of a microorganism to cause a disease ○ *An unusually virulent strain of the virus* 2. referring to a disease which develops rapidly and has strong effects

virus /'vaɪrəs/ *noun* a parasite consisting of a nucleic acid surrounded by a protein coat that can only develop in other cells. Viruses cause many diseases including the common cold, AIDS, herpes and polio. (NOTE: Antibiotics have no effect on viruses, but effective vaccines have been developed for some viral diseases.)

virus pneumonia *noun* same as **viral pneumonia**

viscera /'vɪsərə/ *plural noun* the internal organs, e.g. the heart, lungs, stomach and intestines

visceral /'vɪsərəl/ *adjective* referring to the internal organs

visceral larva migrans /,vɪsərəl ,la:və'maɪgrænz/ *noun* same as **toxocariasis**

visceral muscle /'vɪsərəl ,mʌs(ə)l/ *noun* a smooth muscle in the wall of the intestine which makes the intestine contract

visceral pericardium /,vɪsərəl ,peri'kɔ:diəm/ *noun* the inner layer of serous pericardium, attached to the wall of the heart

visceral peritoneum /,vɪsərəl ,perɪtə'nju:əm/ *noun* part of the peritoneum which covers the organs in the abdominal cavity

visceral pleura /,vɪsərəl 'plʊərə/ *noun* a membrane attached to the surface of a lung. See illustration at **LUNGS** in Supplement

visceral pouch /'vɪsərəl paʊəf/ *noun* same as **pharyngeal pouch**

viscero- /'vɪsərəʊ/ *prefix* relating to the viscera

visceromotor /,vɪsərə'məʊtər/ *adjective* controlling the movement of viscera

visceroptosis /,vɪsərə'təʊsɪs/ *noun* a movement of an internal organ downwards from its usual position

visceroreceptor /,vɪsərəʊrɪ'septər/ *noun* a receptor cell which reacts to stimuli from organs such as the stomach, heart and lungs

viscid /'vɪsɪd/ *adjective* referring to a liquid which is sticky and slow-moving

viscosity /'vɪskəsɪtɪ/ *noun* the state of a liquid which moves slowly

viscous /'vɪskəs/ *adjective* referring to a liquid which is thick and slow-moving

viscus /'vɪskəs/ ♦ **viscera**

visible /'vɪzɪb(ə)l/ *adjective* able to be seen ○ *There were no visible symptoms of the disease.*

vision /'vɪʒ(ə)n/ *noun* the ability to see, eyesight ○ *After the age of 50, many people's vision begins to fail.*

vision centre /'vɪʒ(ə)n ,sentə/ *noun* the point in the brain where the nerves relating to the eye come together

visit /'vɪzɪt/ *noun* 1. a short stay with someone, especially to comfort a patient ○ *The patient is too weak to have any visits.* ○ *He is allowed visits of ten minutes only.* 2. a short stay with a professional person ○ *They had a visit from the district nurse.* ○ *She paid a visit to the chiropodist.* ○ *On the patient's last visit to the physiotherapy unit, nurses noticed a great improvement in her walking.* ■ *verb* to stay a short time with someone ○ *I am going to visit my brother in hospital.* ○ *She was visited by the health visitor.*

visiting times /'vɪzɪtɪŋ tæɪmz/ *plural noun* the times of day when friends are allowed into a hospital to visit patients

visitor /'vɪzɪtə/ *noun* a person who visits ○ *Visitors are allowed into the hospital on Sunday afternoons.* ○ *How many visitors did you have this week?*

visual /'vɪʒʊəl/ *adjective* referring to sight or vision

visual acuity /,vɪʒʊəl ə'kjy:utɪ/ *noun* the ability to see objects clearly

visual area /,vɪʒʊəl 'eəriə/ *noun* the part of the cerebral cortex which is concerned with sight

visual axis /,vɪʒʊəl 'æk्सɪs/ *noun* the line between the object on which the eye focuses, and the fovea

visual cortex /,vɪʒʊəl 'kɔ:tɛks/ *noun* the part of the cerebral cortex which receives information about sight

visual field /'vɪʒʊəl fɪ:l:d/ *noun* the area which can be seen without moving the eye. Also called **field of vision**

visualisation /'vɪʒʊələz'εɪʃ(ə)n/, **visualization** *noun* 1. a technique in which an image of an internal organ or other part of the body is produced by using X-rays or other means such as magnetic resonance imaging 2. a technique in which someone creates a strongly positive mental picture of something such as the way in which they would like to solve a problem, in order to help them cope with it

visually impaired /'vɪʒʊəli im'peəd/ *adjective* having difficulty in seeing because of an eye condition

visually impaired person /'vɪʒʊəli im'peəd 'pɜ:s(ə)n/ *noun* a person whose eyesight is not clear

visual purple /'vɪʒʊəl 'pɜ:p(ə)l/ *noun* same as **rhodopsin**

vitae /'væti:/ ♦ **arbor vitae**

vital /'væt(ə)l/ *adjective* very important or necessary for life ○ *If circulation is stopped, vital nerve cells begin to die in a few minutes.* ○ *Oxygen is vital to the human system.*

vital capacity /'væt(ə)l kə'pæsɪtɪ/ *noun* the largest amount of air which a person can exhale at one time

vital centre /'væt(ə)l 'sentə/ *noun* a group of nerve cells in the brain which govern a particular function of the body such as the five senses

vital organs /'væt(ə)l 'ɔ:gənz/ *plural noun* the most important organs in the body, without which a human being cannot live, e.g. the heart, lungs and brain

vital signs /'væt(ə)l 'sainz/ *plural noun* measurements of pulse, breathing and temperature

vital statistics /'væt(ə)l sta'tɪstɪks/ *plural noun* a set of official statistics relating to the population of a place, such as the percentage of live births per thousand, the incidence of particular diseases and the numbers of births and deaths

vitamin /'vɪtəmɪn/ *noun* an essential substance not synthesised in the body, but found in most foods, and needed for good health

Vitamin A /'vɪtəmɪn 'eɪ/ *noun* a vitamin which is soluble in fat and can be formed in the body from precursors but is mainly found in food such as liver, vegetables, eggs and cod liver oil. Also called **retinol**

COMMENT: Lack of Vitamin A affects the body's growth and resistance to disease and can cause night blindness or xerophthalmia. Carotene (the yellow substance in carrots) is a precursor of Vitamin A, which accounts for the saying that eating carrots helps you to see in the dark.

Vitamin B₁ /'vɪtəmɪn bi: 'wʌn/ *noun* a vitamin found in yeast, liver, cereals and pork. Also called **thiamine**

Vitamin B₂ /'vɪtəmɪn bi: 'tu:/ *noun* a vitamin found in eggs, liver, green vegetables, milk and yeast. Also called **riboflavine**

Vitamin B₆ /'vɪtəmɪn bi: 'siks/ *noun* a vitamin found in meat, cereals and molasses. Also called **pyridoxine**

Vitamin B₁₂ /'vɪtəmɪn bi: 'twelv/ *noun* a vitamin found in liver and kidney, but not present in vegetables. Also called **cyanocobalamin**

Vitamin B complex /'vɪtəmɪn bi: 'kɒmpleks/ *noun* a group of vitamins such as folic acid, riboflavin and thiamine

Vitamin C /'vɪtəmɪn si:/ *noun* a vitamin which is soluble in water and is found in fresh fruit, especially oranges and lemons, raw vegetables and liver. Also called **ascorbic acid**

Vitamin D /'vɪtəmɪn 'di:/ *noun* a vitamin which is soluble in fat and is found in butter, eggs and fish. It is also produced by the skin when exposed to sunlight. It helps in the formation of bones, and lack of it causes rickets in children.

vitamin deficiency /'vɪtəmɪn di,fɪʃ(ə)nsi/ *noun* a lack of necessary vitamins ○ *He is suffering from Vitamin A deficiency.* ○ *Vitamin C deficiency causes scurvy.*

Vitamin E /'vɪtəmɪn 'eɪ/ *noun* a vitamin found in vegetables, vegetable oils, eggs and wholemeal bread

Vitamin K /'vɪtəmɪn 'keɪ/ *noun* a vitamin found in green vegetables such as spinach and cabbage, and which helps the clotting of blood and is needed to activate prothrombin

vitelline sac /'vɪ'telɪnə sæk/ *noun* a sac attached to an embryo, where the blood cells first form

vitellus /'vɪ'teləs/ *noun* the yolk of an egg (ovum)

vitiligo /'vɪtɪ'lɪgəʊ/ *noun* a condition in which white patches appear on the skin. Also called **leucoderma**

vitrectomy /'vɪ:trek'təmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to remove some or all of the vitreous humour of the eye

vitreous /'vɪtriəs/ *adjective* 1. having the characteristics of glass 2. relating to the vitreous humour of the eye

vitreous body /'vɪtriəs 'bɒdi/ *noun* same as **vitreous humour**

vitreous detachment /'vɪtriəs di'tætʃmənt/ *noun* the separation of the vitreous humour from the retina, often due to natural ageing when the vitreous humour thins, but also occurring in other conditions such as diabetes

vitreous humour /'vɪtriəs 'hju:mə/ *noun* a transparent jelly which fills the main cavity

behind the lens in the eye. See illustration at **EYE** in Supplement

vitritis /'vɪ:t्रɪtɪs/ *noun* same as **hyalitis**

vitro /'vɪ:triəʊ/ ♦ **in vitro**

Vitus /'vaitəs/ ♦ **St Vitus's dance**

viviparous /'vɪ:vɪpərəs/ *adjective* referring to animals which bear live young, such as humans, as opposed to birds and reptiles which lay eggs

vivisection /'vɪ:vɪ'sekʃən/ *noun* the act of dissecting a living animal as an experiment

vocal /'vəʊk(ə)l/ *adjective* referring to the voice

vocal cords /'vəʊk(ə)l kɔ:dz/ *plural noun* a pair of fibrous sheets of tissue which span the cavity of the voice box (**larynx**) and produce sounds by vibrating. Also called **ventricular folds**

vocal folds /'vəʊk(ə)l fəuldz/ *plural noun* same as **vocal cords**

vocal folds abducted /'vəʊk(ə)l fəuldz əb'dʌktɪd/ *noun* the usual condition of the vocal cords in quiet breathing

vocal folds adducted /'vəʊk(ə)l fəuldz ə'dʌktɪd/ *noun* the position of the vocal cords for speaking

vocal fremitus /'vəʊk(ə)l 'fremɪtəs/ *noun* a vibration of the chest when a person speaks or coughs

vocal ligament /'vəʊk(ə)l ,lɪgəmənt/ *noun* a ligament in the centre of the vocal cords

vocal resonance /'vəʊk(ə)l 'rezənəns/ *noun* a sound heard by a doctor when he or she listens through a stethoscope to the chest while a person is speaking

voice /vɔɪs/ *noun* the sound made when a person speaks or sings □ **to lose one's voice** not to be able to speak because of a throat infection □ **his voice has broken** his voice has become deeper and adult, with the onset of puberty

voice box /'vɔɪs bɒks/ *noun* the larynx, a hollow organ containing the vocal cords at the back of the throat, which produces sounds

volar /'vəʊlə/ *adjective* referring to the palm of the hand or sole of the foot

volatile /'vɒlətɪəl/ *adjective* referring to a liquid which turns into gas at room temperature

volatile oils /'vɒlətɪəl 'ɔɪlz/ *plural noun* concentrated oils from plants used in cosmetics and as antiseptics

volitantes /'vɒlɪ'tænti:z/ ♦ **muscae volitantes**

volition /və'lɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the ability to use the will

Volkmann's canal /'fɒlkma:nz kə,næl/ *noun* a canal running horizontally through compact bone, carrying blood to the Haversian systems [After Richard von Volkmann (1830–89), German surgeon]

Volkmann's contracture /'fɒlkma:nz kən,trækٹʃə/ *noun* a fibrosis and tightening of the

muscles of the forearm because blood supply has been restricted, leading to contraction of the fingers

volsella /'vɒl'selə/ *noun* a type of surgical forceps with claw-like hooks at the end of each arm. Also called **vulsella**

volume /'vɒplju:m/ *noun* an amount of a substance

voluntary /'vɒlənt(ə)ri/ *adjective* done because one wishes to do it

voluntary admission /'vɒlənt(ə)ri əd'mɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the process of taking someone into a psychiatric hospital with the person's consent

voluntary movement /'vɒlənt(ə)ri 'mu:vment/ *noun* a movement directed by the person's willpower, using voluntary muscles, e.g. walking or speaking

voluntary muscle /'vɒlənt(ə)ri ,mʌs(ə)l/ *noun* a muscle which is consciously controlled. It is usually made up of striated fibres.

COMMENT: Voluntary muscles work in pairs, where one contracts and pulls, while the other relaxes to allow the bone to move.

volunteer /'vɒlən'tɪə/ *noun* a person who offers to do something for free, without being paid □ *The hospital relies on volunteers to help with sports for disabled children.* □ *They are asking for volunteers to test the new cold cure.* ■ **verb** to offer to do something for free □ *The research team volunteered to test the new drug on themselves.*

volvulus /'vɒlvjʊləs/ *noun* a condition in which a loop of intestine is twisted and blocked, so cutting off its blood supply

vomer /'vəʊmə/ *noun* a thin flat vertical bone in the septum of the nose

vomica /'vɒmɪkə/ *noun* 1. a cavity in the lungs containing pus 2. the act of vomiting pus from the throat or lungs

vomit /'vɒmɪt/ *noun* partly digested food which has been brought up from the stomach into the mouth □ *His bed was covered with vomit.* □ *She died after choking on her own vomit.* Also called **vomitus** ■ **verb** to bring up partly digested food from the stomach into the mouth □ *He had a fever, and then started to vomit.* □ *She vomited her breakfast.*

vomiting /'vɒmɪtiŋ/ *noun* the act of bringing up vomit into the mouth. Also called **emesis**

vomitus /'vɒmɪtəs/ *noun* same as **vomit**

von Hippel-Lindau syndrome /'vɒn ,hip(ə)l 'lɪndəʊ ,sɪndrəʊm/ *noun* a disease in which angiomas of the brain are related to angiomas and cysts in other parts of the body

von Recklinghausen's disease /'vɒn 'reklɪŋhaʊz(ə)nz di,zɪ:z/ *noun* 1. same as **neurofibromatosis** 2. same as **osteitis fibrosis cystica** [Described 1882. After Friedrich Daniel von Recklinghausen (1833–1910), Professor of Pathology at Strasbourg, France.]

von Willebrand's disease /'vɒn 'vɪlə
brændz dɪ.zi:z/ *noun* a hereditary blood disease, occurring in both sexes, in which the mucous membrane starts to bleed without any apparent reason. It is caused by a deficiency of a clotting factor in the blood, called von Willebrand's factor. [Described 1926. After E. A. von Willebrand (1870–1949), Finnish physician.]

von Willebrand's factor /'vɒn 'vɪlə
brændz ,fæktə/ *noun* a protein substance in plasma involved in platelet aggregation

voyeurism /'vwaɪəz̬rɪz̬(ə)m/ *noun* a condition in which a person experiences sexual pleasure by watching others having intercourse

VSD *abbr* ventricular septal defect

vu /vu:/ ♀ **déjà vu**

vulgaris /'vʌl'geərɪs/ ♀ **lupus vulgaris**

vulnerable /'vʌln(ə)rəb(ə)l/ *adjective* likely to catch a disease because of being in a weak-

ened state ○ *Premature babies are especially vulnerable to infection.*

vulsellæ /'vʌl'selə/, **vulsellum** /'vʌl'seləm/ *noun* same as **volsella**

vulv- /'vʌlv/ *prefix* referring to the vulva (*used before vowels*)

vulva /'vʌlvə/ *noun* a woman's external sexual organs, at the opening leading to the vagina.

◊ **kraurosis vulvae** (NOTE: For other terms referring to the vulva, see words beginning with **epi-** **si-**.)

COMMENT: The vulva is formed of folds (the labia), surrounding the clitoris and the entrance to the vagina.

vulvectomy /'vʌl'vektəmɪ/ *noun* a surgical operation to remove the vulva

vulvitis /'vʌl'veɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the vulva, causing intense irritation

vulvovaginitis /'vʌlvəvəgɪnɪtɪs/ *noun* inflammation of the vulva and vagina

W

wad /wɒd/ *noun* a pad of material used to put on a wound ○ *The nurse put a wad of absorbent cotton over the sore.*

wadding /'wɒdɪŋ/ *noun* material used to make a wad ○ *Put a layer of cotton wadding over the eye.*

waist /weɪst/ *noun* the narrow part of the body below the chest and above the buttocks

wait /weɪt/ *verb* to stay somewhere until something happens or someone arrives ○ *He has been waiting for his operation for six months.* ○ *There are ten patients waiting to see Dr Smith.*

waiting list /'weɪtɪŋ lɪst/ *noun* a list of people waiting for admission to hospital usually for treatment of non-urgent disorders ○ *The length of waiting lists for non-emergency surgery varies enormously from one region to another.* ○ *It is hoped that hospital waiting lists will get shorter.*

waiting room /'weɪtɪŋ ru:m/ *noun* a room at a doctor's or dentist's surgery where people wait ○ *Please sit in the waiting room – the doctor will see you in ten minutes.*

waiting time /'weɪtɪŋ taɪm/ *noun* the period between the time when someone's name has been put on the waiting list and his or her admission into hospital

wake /weɪk/ *verb* 1. to interrupt someone's sleep ○ *The nurse woke the patient.* or *The patient was woken by the nurse.* 2. to stop sleeping ○ *The patient had to be woken to have his injection.* (NOTE: **waking – woke – woken**)

wakeful /'weɪkf(ə)l/ *adjective* wide awake, not wanting to sleep

wakefulness /'weɪkfʊlnəs/ *noun* the condition of being wide awake

wake up /,weɪk 'ʌp/ *verb* to stop sleeping, or stop someone sleeping ○ *The old man woke up in the middle of the night and started calling for the nurse.*

Waldeyer's ring /,va:ldeɪəz 'rɪŋ/ *noun* a ring of lymphoid tissue made by the tonsils and adenoid [Described 1884. After Heinrich Wilhelm Gottfried Waldeyer-Hartz (1836–1921), German anatomist.]

walk /wɔ:k/ *verb* to go on foot ○ *The baby is learning to walk.* ○ *He walked when he was only eleven months old.* ○ *She can walk a few steps with a Zimmer frame.*

walking distance /'wɔ:kɪŋ ,dɪstəns/ *noun* the distance which someone can walk before they experience pain in their muscles, which shows the effectiveness of the blood supply to their legs

walking frame /'wɔ:kɪŋ freɪm/ *noun* a metal frame used by people who have difficulty in walking. ◊ **Zimmer frame**

wall /wɔ:l/ *noun* the side part of an organ or a passage in the body ○ *An ulcer formed in the wall of the duodenum.* ○ *The doctor made an incision in the abdominal wall.* ○ *They removed a fibroma from the wall of the uterus or from the uterine wall.*

wall eye /'wɔ:l aɪ/, **walleye** *noun* an eye which is very pale or which is squinting so strongly that only the white sclera is visible

Wangensteen tube /'wæŋgənsti:n tju:b/ *noun* a tube which is passed into the stomach to remove the stomach's contents by suction [Described 1832. After Owen Harding Wangensteen (1898–1980), US surgeon.]

ward /wɔ:d/ *noun* a room or set of rooms in a hospital, with beds for the patients ○ *He is in Ward 8B.* ○ *The children's ward is at the end of the corridor.*

ward manager /'wɔ:d ,mænɪdʒə/ *noun* a nurse in charge of a ward

ward nurse /'wɔ:d nɜ:s/ *noun* a nurse who works in a hospital ward

ward sister /'wɔ:d ,sistə/ *noun* a senior nurse in charge of a ward

warfarin /'wɔ:f(ə)rɪn/ *noun* a colourless crystalline compound used to help prevent the blood clotting

warm /wɔ:m/ *adjective* quite hot, pleasantly hot ○ *The patients need to be kept warm in cold weather.*

warn /wɔ:n/ *verb* to tell someone that a danger is possible ○ *The children were warned about the dangers of solvent abuse.* ○ *The doctors warned her that her husband would not live more than a few weeks.*

warning /'wɔ:nɪŋ/ *noun* written or spoken information about a danger ○ *There's a warning on the bottle of medicine, saying that it should be kept away from children.* ○ *Each packet of cigarettes has a government health warning printed on it.* ○ *The health department has given out warnings about the danger of hypothermia.*

wart /'wɔ:t/ *noun* a small hard harmless growth on the skin, usually on the hands, feet or face, caused by a virus (NOTE: Warts on the feet are called **verrucas**.)

washbasin /'wɔ:sbeɪs(ə)n/ *noun* a bowl in a kitchen or bathroom where you can wash your hands

washout /'wɔ:ʃaʊt/ *noun* a thorough cleaning with a liquid, especially water

Wassermann reaction /'wɔ:səmæn rɪ'ækʃn/, **Wassermann test** /'wɔ:səmæn test/ *noun* a blood serum test to see if someone has syphilis. Abbr **WR** [Described 1906. After August Paul von Wassermann (1866–1925), German bacteriologist.]

waste /'weɪst/ *adjective* referring to material or matter which is useless ○ *The veins take blood containing waste carbon dioxide back into the lungs.* ○ *Waste matter is excreted in the faeces or urine.* ■ *verb* to use more of something than is needed ○ *The hospital kitchens try not to waste a lot of food.*

waste away /,weɪst ə'wei/ *verb* to become thinner ○ *When he caught the disease he simply wasted away.*

waste product /,weɪst 'prɒdʌkt/ *noun* a substance which is not needed in the body and is excreted in urine or faeces

wasting /'weɪstɪŋ/ *noun* a condition in which a person or a limb loses weight and becomes thin

wasting disease /'weɪstɪŋ dɪ,zɪ:z/ *noun* a disease which causes severe loss of weight or reduction in size of an organ

water /'wɔ:tə/ *noun* 1. the liquid essential to life which makes up a large part of the body ○ *Can I have a glass of water please?* ○ *They suffered dehydration from lack of water.* □ **water on the knee** fluid in the knee joint under the kneecap, caused by a blow on the knee 2. urine (*informal*) ○ *He passed a lot of water during the night.* ○ *She noticed blood streaks in her water.* ○ *The nurse asked him to give a sample of his water.* ■ *plural noun waters* the fluid in the amniotic in which a fetus floats (*informal*) Also called **amniotic fluid** ■ *verb (of the eyes)* to fill with tears or saliva (NOTE: For other terms referring to water, see words beginning with **hydr-**, **hydro-**.)

COMMENT: Since the body is formed of about 50% water, the average adult needs to drink about 2.5 litres (5 pints) of fluid each day. Water taken into the body is passed out again as urine or sweat.

water balance /'wɔ:tə ,bæləns/ *noun* a state where the water lost by the body, e.g. in urine or sweat, is made up by water absorbed from food and drink

water bed /'wɔ:tə bed/ *noun* a mattress made of a large heavy plastic bag filled with water, used to prevent bedsores

waterbrush /'wɔ:təbræʃ/ *noun* a condition caused by dyspepsia, in which there is a burning feeling in the stomach and the mouth suddenly fills with acid saliva

water-hammer pulse /'wɔ:tə ,hæmər pəls/ *noun* same as **Corrigan's pulse**

Waterhouse-Friderichsen syndrome /,wɔ:tshaʊs 'fri:dərɪksən ,sɪndrom/ *noun* a condition caused by blood poisoning with meningococci, in which the tissues of the adrenal glands die and haemorrhage [Described 1911 by Rupert Waterhouse (1873–1958), physician at Bath, UK; described 1918 by Carl Friderichsen (b. 1886), Danish physician]

watering eye /,wɔ:tərɪŋ 'aɪ/ *noun* an eye which fills with tears because of an irritation

waterproof /'wɔ:təpru:f/ *adjective* not allowing water through ○ *Put a waterproof sheet on the baby's bed.*

water sac /'wɔ:tə sæk/ *noun* ♀ **amnion**

Waterston's operation /'wɔ:təstənз ,opreɪʃn/ *noun* a surgical operation to treat Fallot's tetralogy, in which the right pulmonary artery is joined to the ascending aorta [After David James Waterston (1910–85), paediatric surgeon in London, UK]

waterworks /'wɔ:təwɜ:ks/ *plural noun* same as **urinary system (informal)**

watery /'wɔ:t(ə)rɪ/ *adjective* liquid, like water ○ *He passed some watery stools.*

Watson-Crick helix /,wɔ:tson(ə)n 'krik ,hɪ:lɪks/ *noun* a molecular model for DNA in which the organic base pairs are linked by hydrogen bonds which form the rungs of a ladder spiralling in the form of a helix

Watson knife /,wɔ:tson 'naɪf/ *noun* a type of very sharp surgical knife for skin transplants

wax /wæks/ *noun* a soft yellow substance produced by bees or made from petroleum

WBC abbr white blood cell

weak /wi:k/ *adjective* not strong ○ *After his illness he was very weak.* ○ *She is too weak to dress herself.* ○ *He is allowed to drink weak tea or coffee.*

weaken /'wi:kən/ *verb* to make something or someone weak, or become weak ○ *He was weakened by the disease and could not resist further infection.* ○ *The swelling is caused by a weakening of the wall of the artery.*

weakness /'wi:knəs/ *noun* the fact of lacking strength ○ *The doctor noticed the weakness of the patient's pulse.*

weak pulse /'wi:k 'pəls/ *noun* a pulse which is not strong, which is not easy to feel

weal /wi:l/ *noun* a small area of skin which swells because of a sharp blow or an insect bite
wean /wi:n/ *verb* to make a baby stop breast-feeding and take other liquid or solid food, or to make a baby start to eat solid food after having only had liquids to drink ○ *The baby was breastfed for two months and then was gradually weaned onto the bottle.*

wear /weə/ *verb* to become damaged through being used ○ *The cartilage of the knee was worn from too much exercise.* (NOTE: **wearing – wore – worn**)

wear and tear /'weər ən 'teə/ *noun* the normal use which affects an organ ○ *A heart has to stand a lot of wear and tear.* ○ *The wear and tear of a strenuous job has begun to affect his heart.*

wear off /'weər 'ɒf/ *verb* to disappear gradually ○ *The effect of the painkiller will wear off after a few hours.* ○ *He started to open his eyes, as the anaesthetic wore off.*

webbing /'webɪŋ/ *noun* the condition of having an extra membrane of skin joining two structures in the body together

Weber-Christian disease /'veɪbə 'krɪstjən dɪ,zi:z/ *noun* a type of panniculitis where the liver and spleen become enlarged [After Frederick Parkes Weber (1863–1962), British physician; Henry Asbury Christian (1876–1951), US physician]

Weber's test /'veɪbəz test/ *noun* a test to see if both ears hear correctly, where a tuning fork is struck and the end placed on the head [After Friedrich Eugen Weber-Liel (1832–91), German otologist]

web space /'web speɪs/ *noun* the soft tissue between the bases of the fingers and toes

Wechsler scales /'vekslə skeɪlz/ *plural noun* a set of standardised scales for measuring someone's IQ. There are three separate versions developed for different age groups.

wee /wi:/ *verb* same as *urinate* (*informal*)

weep /wi:p/ *verb* 1. to cry 2. (*of a wound*) to ooze fluid

Wegener's granulomatosis /,vegənəz ,grænju'ləmə'təʊsɪs/ *noun* a disease of connective tissue, where the nasal passages, lungs and kidneys are inflamed and ulcerated, with formation of granulomas. It is usually fatal.

weigh /wei/ *verb* 1. to measure how heavy something is ○ *The nurse weighed the baby on the scales.* 2. to have a particular weight ○ *She weighed seven pounds (3.5 kilos) at birth.* ○ *A woman weighs less than a man of similar height.* ○ *The doctor asked him how much he weighed.* ○ *I weigh 120 pounds or I weigh 54 kilos.*

weight /'weɪt/ *noun* 1. how heavy someone or something is ○ *What's the patient's weight?* □ **her weight is only 105 pounds** she weighs only 105 pounds □ **to lose weight** to get thinner ○ *She's trying to lose weight before she*

goes on holiday. □ **to put on weight** to become fatter ○ *He's put on a lot of weight in the last few months.* □ **to gain in weight** to become fatter or heavier 2. something which is heavy ○ *Don't lift heavy weights, you may hurt your back.*

weight gain /'weɪt ,geɪn/ *noun* the fact of becoming fatter or heavier

weight loss /'weɪt ,lɒs/ *noun* the fact of losing weight or of becoming thinner ○ *Weight loss can be a symptom of certain types of cancer.*

Weil-Felix reaction /,vail 'feɪlɪks rɪ ,ækʃən/, **Weil-Felix test** /,vail 'feɪlɪks test/ *noun* a test to see if someone has typhus, in which the person's serum is tested for antibodies against *Proteus vulgaris* [Described 1916. After Edmund Weil (1880–1922) Austrian physician and bacteriologist; Arthur Felix (1887–1956), British bacteriologist.]

Weil's disease /'vailz dɪ'zi:z/ *noun* same as *leptospirosis* [Described 1886. After Adolf Weil (1848–1916), physician in Estonia who also practised in Wiesbaden, Germany.]

welder's flash /,weldəz 'flæʃ/ *noun* a condition in which the eye is badly damaged by very bright light

welfare /'welfəə/ *noun* 1. good health, good living conditions ○ *They look after the welfare of the old people in the town.* 2. money paid by the government to people who need it ○ *He exists on welfare payments.*

well /wel/ *adjective* healthy ○ *He's not a well man.* ○ *You're looking very well after your holiday.* ○ *He's quite well again after his flu.* ○ *She's not very well, and has had to stay in bed.*

well-baby clinic /,wel 'beɪbɪ ,klinik/ *noun* a clinic where parents can ask a doctor or nurse any questions they have about their child's growth and development. Their babies can be weighed and measured and their development monitored.

wellbeing /'wel ,bi:ɪŋ/ *noun* the state of being in good health and having good living conditions ○ *She is responsible for the wellbeing of the patients under her care.*

well-man clinic /,wel 'mæn ,klinik/ *noun* a clinic just for men where they can get check-ups, advice and health information

well-woman clinic /,wel 'womən ,klinik/ *noun* a clinic which specialises in preventive medicine for women, e.g. breast screening and cervical smear tests, and gives advice on pregnancy, contraception and the menopause

wen /wen/ *noun* a cyst which forms in a sebaceous gland

Werdnig-Hoffmann disease /,vɜ:dniŋ 'hofmən dɪ,zi:z/ *noun* a disease in which the spinal muscles atrophy, making the muscles of the shoulders, arms and legs weak. In its most severe form, infants are born floppy, have

feeding and breathing problems and rarely live more than two or three years.

Werner's syndrome /'wɜ:nəz/,sɪndrəʊm noun an inherited disorder involving premature ageing, persistent hardening of the skin, underdevelopment of the sex organs and cataracts

Wernicke-Korsakoff syndrome /,vɜ:nɪkə'kɔ:səkɒf/,sɪndrəʊm noun a form of brain damage caused by severe nutritional deficiencies in people with long-term alcoholism

Wernicke's encephalopathy /,vɜ:nɪkəz'en,kɛfə'lɛpəθi/ noun a condition caused by lack of Vitamin B, which often affects alcoholics and in which the person is delirious, moves the eyes about rapidly, walks unsteadily and is subject to constant vomiting [Described 1875. After Karl Wernicke (1848–1905), Breslau psychiatrist and neurologist.]

Wertheim's operation /'vɜ:θaimz əpə'reɪʃ(ə)n/ noun a surgical operation to remove the uterus, the lymph nodes which are next to it and most of the vagina, the ovaries and the Fallopian tubes, as treatment for cancer of the uterus [Described 1900. After Ernst Wertheim (1864–1920), Austrian gynaecologist.]

West Nile fever /,west 'nail,fɪ:və/ noun a mosquito-borne viral infection which causes fever, pains, enlarged lymph nodes and sometimes inflammation of the brain

wet /wet/ adjective not dry, covered in liquid ○ He got wet waiting for the bus in the rain and caught a cold. ○ The baby has nappy rash from wearing a wet nappy. ■ verb to make the bed wet by urinating while asleep ○ He is eight years old and he still wets his bed every night.

wet beriberi /,wet ,beri'beri/ noun beriberi in which the body swells with oedema

wet burn /wet 'bɜ:n/ noun same as scald

wet dream /wet dri:m/ noun same as nocturnal emission

wet dressing /,wet 'dresɪŋ/ noun ▶ compress

Wharton's duct /,wɔ:t(ə)nз 'dʌkt/ noun a duct which takes saliva into the mouth from the salivary glands under the lower jaw [After Thomas Wharton (1614–73), English physician and anatomist at St Thomas's Hospital, London, UK]

Wharton's jelly /,wɔ:t(ə)nз 'dʒeli/ noun a jelly-like tissue in the umbilical cord

wheal /wi:l/ same as weal

Wheelhouse's operation /'wi:lhaʊsɪz'əpəreɪʃ(ə)n/ noun same as urethrotomy [After Claudius Galen Wheelhouse (1826–1909), British surgeon]

wheeze /wi:z/ noun a whistling noise in the bronchi ○ The doctor listened to his wheezes. ■ verb to make a whistling sound when breathing ○ When she has an attack of asthma, she wheezes and has difficulty in breathing.

wheezing /'wi:zɪŋ/ noun whistling noises in the bronchi when breathing. Wheezing is often found in people with asthma and is also associated with bronchitis and heart disease.

wheezy /'wi:zi/ adjective making a whistling sound when breathing ○ She was quite wheezy when she stopped running.

whiplash injury /'wiplæʃ ,ɪndʒəri/ noun an injury to the vertebrae in the neck, caused when the head jerks backwards, often occurring in a car that is struck from behind

whiplash shake syndrome /'wiplæʃ 'seɪk ,sɪndrəʊm/ noun in young babies, a series of internal head injuries caused by being shaken violently. They can result in brain damage leading to speech and learning disabilities, paralysis, seizures, blindness and hearing loss. They are often life-threatening.

Whipple's disease /'wɪp(ə)lz dɪ,zi:z/ noun a disease in which someone has difficulty in absorbing nutrients and passes fat in the faeces, the joints are inflamed and the lymph glands enlarged [Described 1907. After George Hoyt Whipple (1878–1976), US pathologist. Nobel prize for Pathology and Medicine 1934.]

Whipple's operation /'wɪp(ə)lz əpə,reɪʃ(ə)n/ noun same as **pancreatectomy**

whipworm /'wɪpwɜ:m/ noun same as **Trichuris**

white /waɪt/ adjective of a colour like snow or milk ○ White patches developed on his skin. ○ Her hair has turned quite white. (NOTE: **whiter** – **whitest**) ■ noun the main part of the eye which is white ○ The whites of his eyes turned yellow when he developed jaundice.

white blood cell /,waɪt 'blʌd ,sel/ noun a colourless blood cell which contains a nucleus but has no haemoglobin, is formed in bone marrow and creates antibodies. Abbr **WBC**. Also called **leucocyte**

white commissure /,waɪt 'kɒmɪsʃuə/ noun part of the white matter in the spinal cord near the central canal

white corpuscle /,waɪt 'kɔ:pʊs(ə)l/ noun same as **white blood cell**

white finger /,waɪt 'fɪngə/ noun a condition in which a finger has a mottled discoloured appearance because its blood vessels are damaged. The thumb is usually not affected. Very severe cases can result in finger loss. It occurs most commonly in Raynaud's disease.

whitehead /'waɪθeð/ noun a small white swelling formed when a sebaceous gland becomes blocked

white leg /,waɪt 'leg/ noun a condition which affects women after childbirth, in which a leg becomes pale and inflamed as a result of lymphatic obstruction. Also called **milk leg, phlegmasia alba dolens**

white matter /'waɪt ,mætə/ noun nerve tissue in the central nervous system which contains more myelin than grey matter

white noise instrument /'waɪt nɔɪz ,ɪn strʊmənt/ *noun* a small electronic device worn in the ear. It combines sounds of many different frequencies. It is used to mask internal noise in the ear due to tinnitus.

whites /'waɪts/ *plural noun* same as **leucorrhœa** (*informal*)

whitlow /'wɪtləʊ/ *noun* an inflammation caused by infection near the nail in the fleshy part of the tip of a finger. Also called **felon**

WHO *abbr* World Health Organization

whoop /'hu:p, hu:p/ *noun* a loud noise made when inhaling by a person who has whooping cough

whooping cough /'hu:pɪŋ kɒf/ *noun* an infectious disease caused by *Bordetella pertussis* affecting the bronchial tubes, common in children, and sometimes very serious. Also called **pertussis**

COMMENT: A person with whooping cough coughs very badly and makes a characteristic 'whoop' when he or she breathes in after a coughing fit. Whooping cough can lead to pneumonia, and is treated with antibiotics. Vaccination against whooping cough is given to infants.

Widal reaction /vi:'da:l rɪ,ækʃən/, **Widal test** /vi:'da:l test/ *noun* a test to detect typhoid fever. A sample of the person's blood is put into a solution containing typhoid bacilli, or anti-typhoid serum is added to a sample of bacilli from the person's faeces. If the bacilli agglutinate, i.e. form into groups, this indicates that the person has typhoid fever. [Described 1896. After Georges Fernand Isidore Widal (1862–1929), French physician and teacher.]

Willis /'wɪlɪs/ ♀ **circle of Willis**

willpower /'wil,pauə/ *noun* the fact of having a strong will ○ *The patient showed the will-power to start walking again unaided.*

Wilms' tumour /'vilmz ,tju:mə/ *noun* same as **nephroblastoma** [Described 1899. After Max Wilms (1867–1918), Professor of Surgery at Leipzig, Basle and Heidelberg.]

Wilson's disease /'wilsonz dɪ,zi:z/ *noun* a hereditary disease where copper deposits accumulate in the liver and the brain, causing cirrhosis. Also called **hepatolenticular degeneration** [Described 1912. After Samuel Alexander Kinnier Wilson (1878–1937), British neurologist.]

wind /wind/ *noun* 1. gas which forms in the digestive system and escapes through the anus ○ *The baby is suffering from wind.* Also called **flatus** 2. an uncomfortable feeling caused by the accumulation of gas in the upper digestive system ○ *He has pains in the stomach caused by wind.* Also called **flatulence** □ **to break wind** to bring up gas from the stomach, or to let gas escape from the anus

windburn /'windbɜ:n/ *noun* redness and inflammation of the skin caused by exposure to harsh wind

window /'wɪndəʊ/ *noun* a small opening in the ear

windpipe /'wɪndpaɪp/ *noun* same as **trachea**

wiring /'waɪrɪŋ/ *noun* 1. a network of wires 2. a neurological or physiological structure or process which controls a function in the body 3. the act of fixing a piece of bone in place using wires

wisdom tooth /'wɪzdəm tu:θ/ *noun* one of the four teeth in the back of the jaw which only appear at about the age of 20 and sometimes do not appear at all. Also called **third molar**

witch hazel /'wɪtʃ ,heɪz(ə)l/ *noun* a lotion made from the bark of a tree, used to check bleeding and harden inflamed tissue and bruises. Also called **hamamelis**

withdrawal /wið'drɔ:əl/ *noun* 1. a loss of interest in having contact with other people, which leads to a person becoming isolated 2. a period during which a person who has been addicted to a drug stops taking it and experiences unpleasant symptoms

'...she was in the early stages of physical withdrawal from heroin and showed classic symptoms: sweating, fever, sleeplessness and anxiety' [Nursing Times]

withdrawal symptom /wið'drɔ:əl ,sɪmpt̩əm/ *noun* an unpleasant physical condition, e.g. vomiting, headaches or fever, which occurs when someone stops taking an addictive drug

Wolff-Parkinson-White syndrome /wɔlf ,pa:kɪns(ə)n 'wait ,sɪndrəʊm/ *noun* a condition within the heart's conducting tissue which makes the heart beat dangerously fast. It can be fatal.

womb /wu:m/ *noun* same as **uterus** (NOTE: For other terms referring to the womb, see words beginning with **hyster-**, **hystero-**, **metr-**, **metro-**, **uter-**, **tero-**.)

women's ward /'wɪmɪnz wɔ:d/, **women's hospital** /'wɪmɪnz ,hɒspɪt(ə)l/ *noun* a ward or hospital for female patients. ♀ **well-woman clinic**

Wood's lamp /'wʊdз læmp/ *noun* an ultraviolet lamp which allows a doctor to see fluorescence, e.g. in the hair of someone who has a fungal infection [After Robert Williams Wood (1868–1955), US physicist]

woolsorter's disease /'wʊlsɔ:təz dɪ,zi:z/ *noun* a form of anthrax which affects the lungs

word blindness /'wɜ:d ,blaɪndnəs/ *noun* same as **alexia**

work-related upper limb disorder /,wɜ:k ri,leɪtid , Apə 'lim dɪs,ɔ:də/ same as **repetitive strain injury**. Abbr **WRULD**.

World Health Organization /,wɜ:ld 'helθ ɔ:rgənaɪz,eɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* an organisation, part of the United Nations, which aims to improve health in the world. Abbr **WHO**

worm /wɔ:m/ *noun* a long thin animal with no legs or backbone, which can infest the human body, especially the intestines

wound /wu:nd/ *noun* damage to external tissue which allows blood to escape ◇ *He had a knife wound in his leg.* ◇ *The doctors sutured the wound in his chest.* □ **gunshot wound** wound caused by a pellet or bullet from a gun ■ **verb** to harm someone by making a hole in the tissue of the body ◇ *She was wounded three times in the head.*

wound dehiscence /wu:nd di:'his(ə)ns/ *noun* the splitting open of a surgical incision

wound healing /'wu:nd ,hi:lɪŋ/ *noun* the replacement of dead tissue with new tissue

WR abbr Wassermann reaction

wrench /rentʃ/ *verb* to injure part of the body by twisting it suddenly and forcibly

wrinkle /'rɪŋkəl/ *noun* a fold in the skin

wrinkled /'rɪŋkəld/ *adjective* covered with wrinkles

wrist /rist/ *noun* a joint between the hand and forearm ◇ *He sprained his wrist and can't play tennis tomorrow.* See illustration at **HAND** in Supplement (NOTE: For other terms referring to

the wrist, see words beginning with **carp-**, **carpo-**.)

COMMENT: The wrist is formed of eight small bones in the hand which articulate with the bones in the forearm. The joint allows the hand to rotate and move downwards and sideways. The joint is easily fractured or sprained.

wrist drop /'rist drɒp/ *noun* paralysis of the wrist muscles, caused by damage to the radial nerve in the upper arm, which causes the hand to hang limp

wrist joint /'rist dʒɔɪnt/ *noun* a place where the wrist joins the arm

writer's cramp /,raɪtəz 'kræmp/ *noun* a painful spasm of the muscles in the forearm and hand which comes from writing too much

writhe /raɪð/ *verb* □ **to writhe in pain** to twist and turn because the pain is very severe

WRULD abbr work-related upper limb disorder

wry neck /'rai nek/, **wryneck** *noun* same as **torticollis**

Wuchereria /,vʊkə'rɪəriə/ *noun* a type of tiny nematode worm which infests the lymph system, causing elephantiasis

X

xanth- /zænθ/ *prefix* same as **xantho-** (*used before vowels*)

xanthaemia /zæn'θi:miə/ *noun* same as **carotenaemia** (*NOTE: The US spelling is xanthemia.*)

xanthelasma /,zænθə'læzmə/ *noun* the formation of little yellow fatty tumours on the eyelids

xanthine /'zænθi:n/ *noun* 1. an intermediate product in the breakdown of nucleic acids to uric acid, found in blood, body tissue and urine 2. a derivative of xanthine, e.g. caffeine or theophylline

xantho- /zænθəu/ *prefix* yellow

xanthochromia /,zænθə'krəʊmɪə/ *noun* yellow colour of the skin as in jaundice

xanthoma /zæn'θəʊmə/ *noun* a yellow fatty mass, often on the eyelids and hands, found in people with a high level of cholesterol in the blood (*NOTE: The plural is xanthomata.*)

xanthomatosis /,zænθəmə'təʊsɪs/ *noun* a condition in which several small masses of yellow fatty substance appear in the skin or some internal organs, caused by an excess of fat in the body

xanthopsia /zæn'θɔpsɪə/ *noun* a disorder of the eyes, making everything appear yellow

xanthosis /zæn'θəʊsɪs/ *noun* yellow colouring of the skin, caused by eating too much food containing carotene

X chromosome /'eks ,krəʊməsəʊm/ *noun* a chromosome that determines sex. Compare **Y chromosome**. ♀ **sex chromosome**

xeno- /zenəu/ *prefix* different

xenograft /'zenəgrɑ:f/ *noun* tissue taken from an individual of one species and grafted on an individual of another species. Also called **heterograft**. Opposite **homograft**

xenotransplantation /,zenətrænspla:n 'teɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the process of transplanting organs from one species to another, especially from animals to humans

xero- /zɪərəu/ *prefix* dry

xeroderma /zɪərə'dz:mə/ *noun* a skin disorder where dry scales form on the skin

xerophthalmia /,zɪərɒf'θælmɪə/ *noun* a condition of the eye, in which the cornea and conjunctiva become dry because of a lack of Vitamin A

xeroradiography /,zɪərəʊ,reɪdɪ'ɒgrəfi/ *noun* an X-ray technique used in producing mammograms on selenium plates

xerosis /zɪ'rəʊsɪs/ *noun* extreme dryness of skin or mucous membrane

xerostomia /,zɪərə'stəʊmɪə/ *noun* dryness of the mouth, caused by lack of a saliva

xiphi- /zɪfɪ/ *prefix* relating to the xiphoid process

xiphisternal plane /,zɪfɪ,stɜ:n(ə)l/ 'plain/ *noun* an imaginary horizontal line across the middle of the chest at the point where the xiphoid process starts

xiphisternum /,zɪfɪ'stɜ:nəm/ *noun* same as **xiphoid process**

xiphoid process /'zɪfɪd ,prəʊses/, **xiphoid cartilage** /'zɪfɪd ,kɑ:tɪlɪdʒ/ *noun* the bottom part of the breastbone which is cartilage in young people but becomes bone by middle age. Also called **ensiform cartilage**, **xiphisternum**

X-linked /'eks ,lɪŋkt/ *adjective* relating to the genes situated on the X chromosome

X-linked disease /'eks ,lɪŋkt dɪ,zɪ:z/ *noun* a genetic disorder caused by a mutation on the X chromosome which only appears in males, e.g. one form of haemophilia

X-ray /'eks reɪ/; **x-ray** *noun* 1. a ray with a very short wavelength, which is invisible, but can go through soft tissue and register as a photograph on a film. X-rays are used in diagnosis in radiography, and in treating disease by radiotherapy. ○ *The X-ray examination showed the presence of a tumour in the colon.*

2. a photograph taken using X-rays ○ *The dentist took some X-rays of the patient's teeth.* ○ *He pinned the X-rays to the light screen.* 3. an examination in which X-ray photographs are taken ○ *All the staff had to have chest X-rays.*

■ **verb** to take an X-ray photograph of a patient ○ *There are six patients waiting to be X-rayed.*
COMMENT: Because X-rays go through soft tissue, it is sometimes necessary to make inter-

nal organs opaque so that they will show up on the film. In the case of stomach X-rays, people take a barium meal before being photographed (contrast radiography); in other cases, such as kidney X-rays, radioactive substances are injected into the bloodstream or into the organ itself. X-rays are used not only in radiography for diagnosis but as a treatment in radiotherapy as rapidly dividing cells such as cancer cells are most affected. Excessive exposure to X-rays, either as a person being treated, or as a radiographer, can cause radiation sickness.

X-ray imaging /'eks reɪ ,ɪmɪdʒɪŋ/ *noun* the process of showing X-ray pictures of the inside of part of the body on a screen

X-ray photograph /,eks reɪ 'fəʊtəgrɑ:f/ *noun* a picture produced by exposing sensitive film to X-rays ◎ *He was examining the X-ray photographs of the patient's chest.*

X-ray screening /'eks reɪ ,skrɪ:nɪŋ/ *noun* a method of gathering information about the

body by taking images using X-rays. It is carried out by a radiographer or radiologist.

Xylocaine /'zailəkeɪn/ a trade name for a preparation of lignocaine

xylometazoline hydrochloride /,zailəʊ mə,tæzəli:n̩ ,haɪdrə'klɔ:rɪd/, **xylometazoline** /,zailəʊmə'tæzəli:n̩/ *noun* a drug which helps to narrow blood vessels, used in the treatment of colds and sinusitis

xylose /'zailəʊz/ *noun* pentose which has not been metabolised

XYY syndrome /,eks waɪ 'sɪndrəʊm/ *noun* an extremely rare condition in males in which they have two Y chromosomes instead of one. They grow faster than normal, and their final height is approximately 7cm above average. Many experience severe acne during adolescence.

Y

yawn /jɔ:n/ *noun* a reflex action when tired or sleepy, in which the mouth is opened wide and after a deep intake of air, the breath exhaled slowly ○ *His yawns made everyone feel sleepy.* ■ *verb* to open the mouth wide and breathe in deeply and then breathe out slowly
yawning /'jɔ:nɪŋ/ *noun* the act of opening the mouth wide without conscious control and slowly releasing a deep breath, usually a sign of tiredness or boredom

yaws /jɔ:z/ *noun* a tropical disease caused by the spirochaete *Treponema pertenue*. Symptoms include fever with raspberry-like swellings on the skin, followed in later stages by bone malformation. Also called **framboesia, pian**. ♦ **treponematosis**

Y chromosome /'waɪ ,kraʊməsəʊm/ *noun* a chromosome that determines sex, it is carried by males and is shorter than an X chromosome. Compare **X chromosome**. ♦ **sex chromosome**

yeast /ji:st/ *noun* a fungus which is used in the fermentation of alcohol and in making bread. It is a good source of Vitamin B.

yellow /'jeləʊ/ *adjective* of a colour like that of the sun or of gold ○ *His skin turned yellow when he had hepatitis.* ○ *The whites of the eyes become yellow as a symptom of jaundice.* ■ *noun* a colour like that of the sun or of gold

yellow atrophy /,jeləʊ 'ætrəfɪ/ *noun* an old name for severe damage to the liver

yellow elastic fibrocartilage /,jeləʊ ɪ'læstɪk ,faɪbrəʊ'kɔ:tɪlɪdʒ/ *noun* flexible cartilage, e.g. in the ear and epiglottis

yellow fever /'jeləʊ ,fɪvə/ *noun* an infectious disease, occurring especially in Africa and South America, caused by an arbovirus carried by the mosquito *Aedes aegypti*. It affects the liver and causes jaundice. There is no known cure and it can be fatal, but vaccination can prevent it.

yellow fibre /,jeləʊ 'faɪbə/ *noun* same as **elastic fibre**

yellow marrow *noun* ♦ **marrow**

yellow spot /'jeləʊ spɒt/ *noun* same as **macula lutea**

Yersinia pestis /jɜ:sɪnɪə 'pestɪs/ *noun* a bacterium which causes plague

yin and yang /,jɪn ənd 'jæŋ/ *noun* the two opposite and complementary principles of Chinese philosophy which are thought to exist in varying proportions in all things. They are sometimes thought of as femininity and masculinity.

yoga /'jøʊgə/ *noun* 1. a Hindu discipline which promotes spiritual unity with a Supreme Being through a system of postures and rituals 2. any one of dozens of systems and methods derived from or based on Hindu yoga. Many include breathing exercises and postures which are thought to aid health.

yolk sac /'jɔ:k sæk/ *noun* same as **vitelline sac**

yuppie flu /,jʌpi 'flu:/ *noun* ♦ **myalgic encephalomyelitis** (*informal*)

Z

Zadik's operation /'zeɪdɪks əpə,reɪʃ(ə)n/ noun a surgical operation to remove the whole of an ingrowing toenail

Zantac /'zæntæk/ a trade name for ranitidine
zidovudine /zɪ'dəʊvjudi:n/ noun azidothymidine or AZT, a drug used in the treatment of AIDS, which helps to slow the progress of the disease

Zimmer frame /'zɪmə freɪm/ a trademark for a metal frame used by people who have difficulty in walking ◎ *She managed to walk some steps with a Zimmer frame.* ♦ **walking frame**

zinc /zɪŋk/ noun a white metallic trace element (NOTE: The chemical symbol is Zn.)

zinc ointment /zɪŋk 'ɔɪntmənt/ noun a soothing ointment made of zinc oxide and oil
zinc oxide /zɪŋk 'ɒksaɪd/ noun a compound of zinc and oxygen, which forms a soft white soothing powder used in creams and lotions (NOTE: Its chemical formula is ZnO.)

Zollinger-Ellison syndrome /,zɒlɪndʒər 'elɪs(ə)n ,sɪndrəʊm/ noun a condition in which tumours are formed in the islet cells of the pancreas together with peptic ulcers [Described 1955. After Robert Milton Zollinger (b. 1903), Professor of Surgery at Ohio State University, USA; Edwin H. Ellison (1918–70), Associate Professor of Surgery at Ohio State University, USA.]

zona /'zəʊnə/ noun 1. same as **herpes zoster**
2. a zone or area

zona pellucida /,zəʊnə pɪ'lju:sɪdə/ noun a membrane which forms around an ovum

zone /zəʊn/ noun an area of the body

zonula /'zənju:lə/, **zonule** /'zənju:l/ noun a small area of the body

zonule of Zinn /,zənju:l əv 'zɪn/ noun a suspensory ligament of the lens of the eye

zonulolysis /,zənju'lɒləsɪs/ noun the removal of a zonule by dissolving it

zoo- /zəʊ/ prefix relating to animals

zoonosis /,zəʊn'naʊsɪs/ noun a disease which a human can catch from an animal (NOTE: The plural is **zoonoses**.)

zoster /'zəstə/ ♦ **herpes zoster**

Z-plasty /'zed ,plæsti/ noun a technique used in plastic surgery. A deep Z-shaped incision is made to relieve tension in the area of a scar, or to change the direction of a scar.

zygoma /zai'gəʊmə/ noun same as **zygomatic arch** (NOTE: The plural is **zygomata**.)

zygomatic /,zaɪgə'mætɪk/ adjective referring to the zygomatic arch

zygomatic arch /,zaɪgəmætɪk 'ɑ:tʃ/ noun the ridge of bone across the temporal bone, running between the ear and the bottom of the eye socket. Also called **zygoma**

zygomatic bone /,zaɪgəmætɪk 'bəʊn/ noun a bone which forms the prominent part of the cheek and the lower part of the eye socket. Also called **cheekbone, malar bone**

zygomatic process /,zaɪgəmætɪk 'prəʊsɛs/ noun one of the bony projections which form the zygomatic arch

zygomycosis /,zaɪgəmətɪk'kəʊsɪs/ noun a disease caused by a fungus which infests the blood vessels in the lungs

zygote /'zaɪgət/ noun a fertilised ovum, the first stage of development of an embryo

zym- /zaim/ prefix (used before vowels) 1. enzymes 2. fermentation

zymogen /'zaimədʒen/ noun same as **proenzyme**

zymosis /zai'məʊsɪs/ noun same as **fermentation**

zyotic /zai'mɒtɪk/ adjective referring to zymosis

SUPPLEMENT

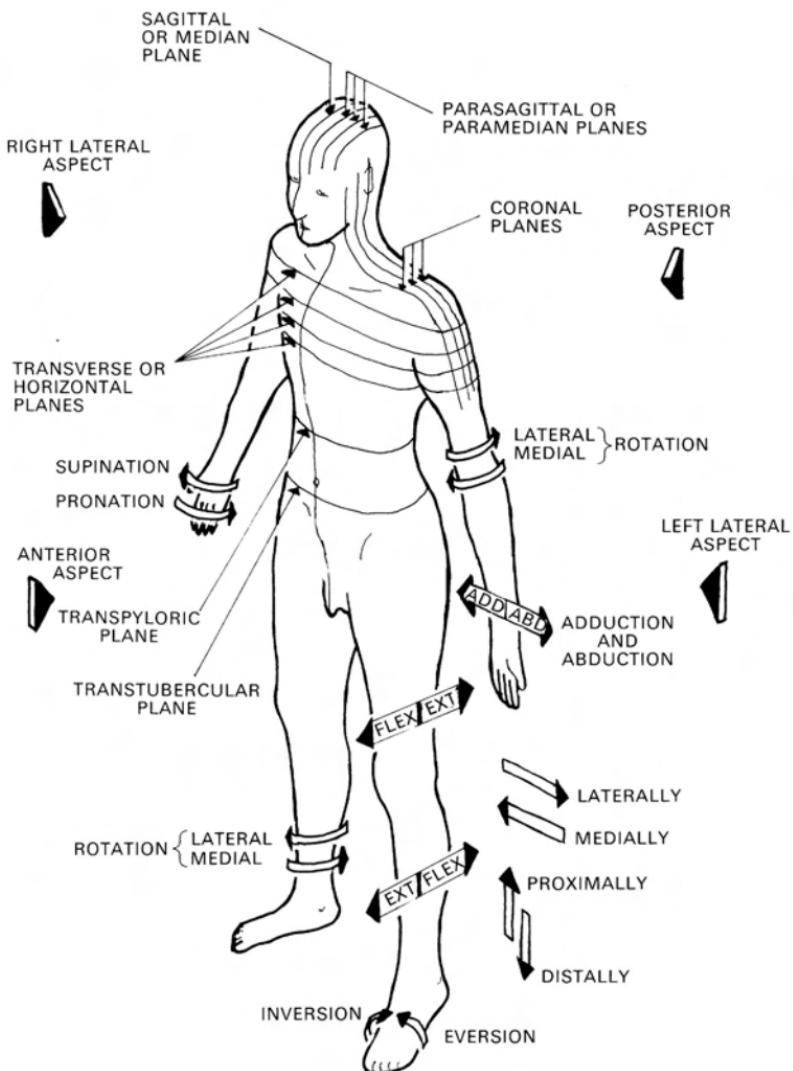
Anatomical Terms

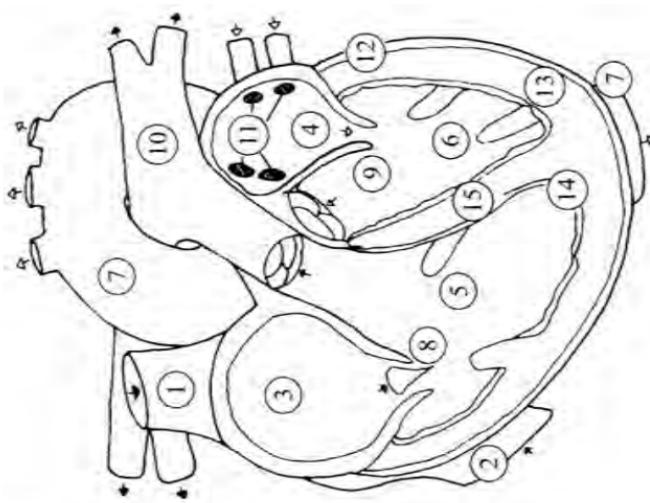
The body is always described as if standing upright with the palms of the hands facing forward. There is only one central vertical plane, termed the *median* or *sagittal* plane, and this passes through the body from front to back. Planes parallel to this on either side are *parasagittal* or *paramedian* planes. Vertical planes at right angles to the median are called *coronal* planes. The term *horizontal* (or *transverse*) plane speaks for itself. Two specific horizontal planes are (a) the *transpyloric*, midway between the suprasternal notch and the symphysis pubis, and (b) the *transtubercular* or *intertubercular* plane, which passes through the tubercles of the iliac crests. Many other planes are named from the structures they pass through.

Views of the body from some different points are shown on the diagram; a view of the body from above is called the *superior aspect*, and that from below is the *inferior aspect*.

Cephalic means toward the head; *caudal* refers to positions (or in a direction) towards the tail. *Proximal* and *distal* refer to positions respectively closer to and further from the centre of the body in any direction, while *lateral* and *medial* relate more specifically to relative sideways positions, and also refer to movements. *Ventral* refers to the abdomen, front or anterior, while *dorsal* relates to the back of a part or organ. The hand has a *dorsal* and a *palmar* surface, and the foot a *dorsal* and a *plantar* surface.

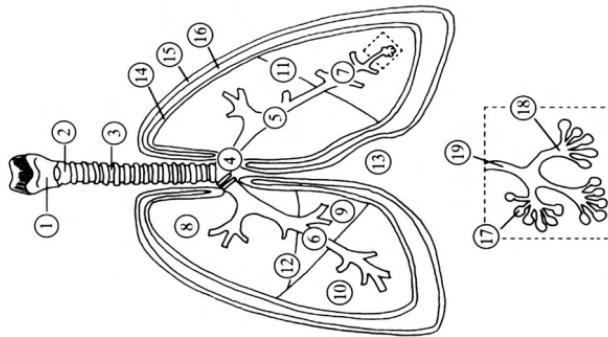
Note that *flexion of the thigh* moves it forward while *flexion of the leg* moves it backwards; the movements of *extension* are similarly reversed. Movement and rotation of limbs can be *medial*, which is with the front moving towards the centre line, or *lateral*, which is in the opposite direction. Specific terms for limb movements are *adduction*, towards the centre line, and *abduction*, which is away from the centre line. Other specific terms are *supination* and *pronation* for the hand, and *inversion* and *eversion* for the foot.





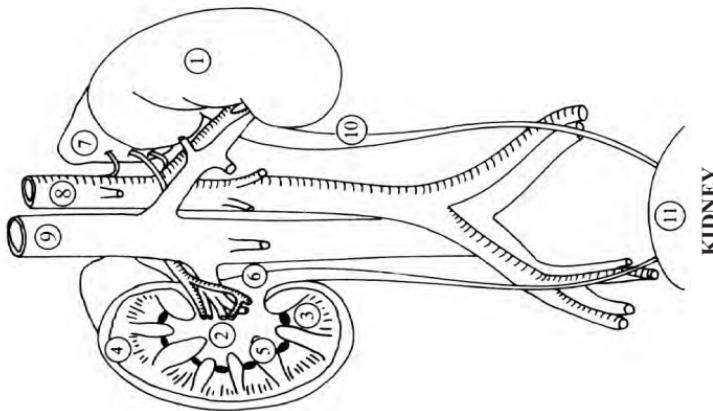
HEART

- 1. superior vena cava
- 2. inferior vena cava
- 3. right atrium
- 4. left atrium
- 5. right ventricle
- 6. left ventricle
- 7. aorta
- 8. tricuspid valve
- 9. bicuspid valve
- 10. pulmonary artery
- 11. pulmonary veins
- 12. epicardium
- 13. myocardium
- 14. endocardium
- 15. septum



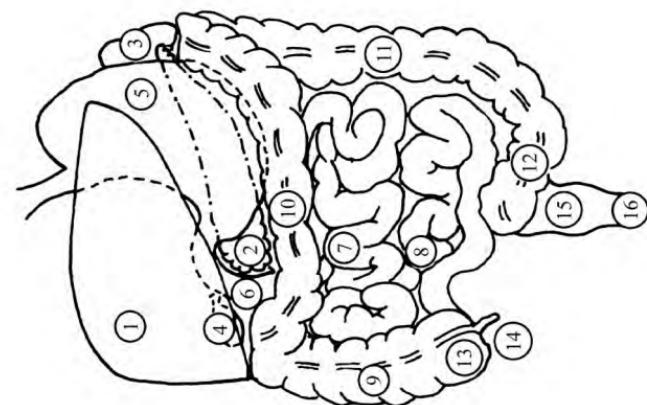
LUNGS

- 1. thyroid cartilage
- 2. cricoid cartilage
- 3. trachea
- 4. main bronchus
- 5. superior lobe bronchus
- 6. middle lobe bronchus
- 7. inferior lobe bronchus
- 8. superior lobe
- 9. middle lobe
- 10. inferior lobe
- 11. oblique fissure
- 12. horizontal fissure
- 13. cardiac notch
- 14. visceral pleura
- 15. parietal pleura
- 16. pleural cavity
- 17. alveoli
- 18. alveolar duct
- 19. bronchiole
- 19'. A detailed view of the bronchial tree.



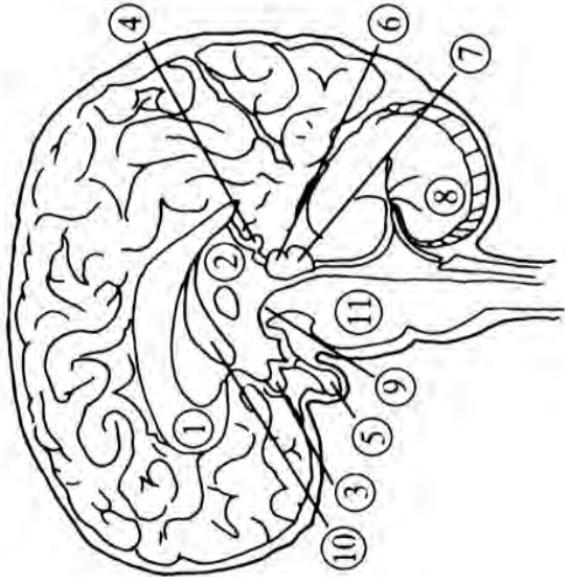
KIDNEY

- 1. kidney
- 2. calyx
- 3. pyramid
- 4. renal cortex
- 5. renal medulla
- 6. renal pelvis
- 7. adrenal gland
- 8. abdominal aorta
- 9. inferior vena cava
- 10. ureter
- 11. urinary bladder



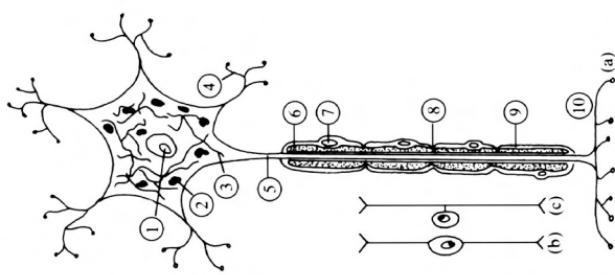
DIGESTIVE SYSTEM

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| 1. liver | 12. sigmoid colon |
| 2. pancreas | 13. caecum |
| 3. spleen | 14. appendix |
| 4. gall bladder | 15. rectum |
| 5. stomach | 16. anus |
| 6. duodenum | |
| 7. jejunum | |
| 8. ileum | |
| 9. ascending colon | |
| 10. transverse colon | |
| 11. descending colon | |



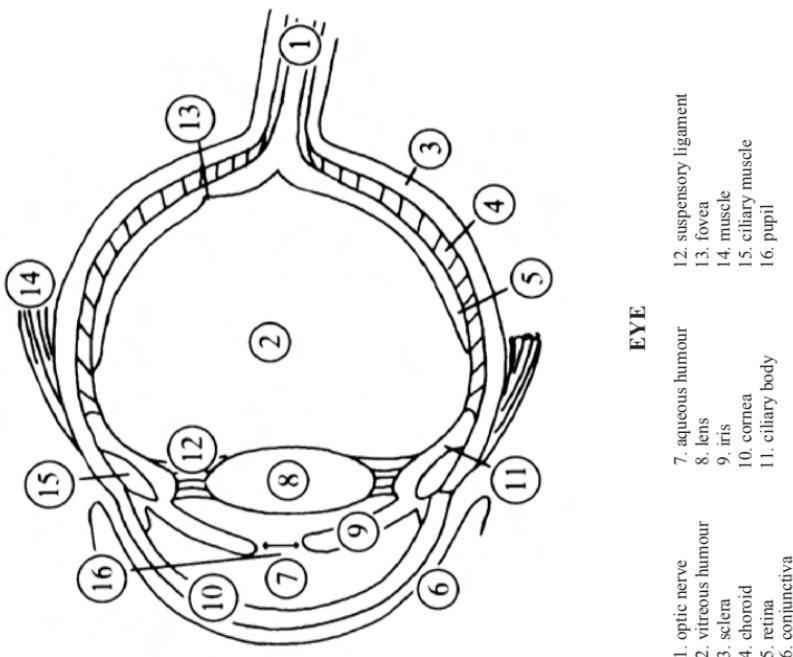
BRAIN

- 1. corpus callosum
- 2. thalamus
- 3. hypothalamus
- 4. pineal body
- 5. pituitary gland
- 6. superior colliculi
- 7. inferior colliculi
- 8. cerebellum
- 9. cerebral peduncle
- 10. fornix cerebri
- 11. pons



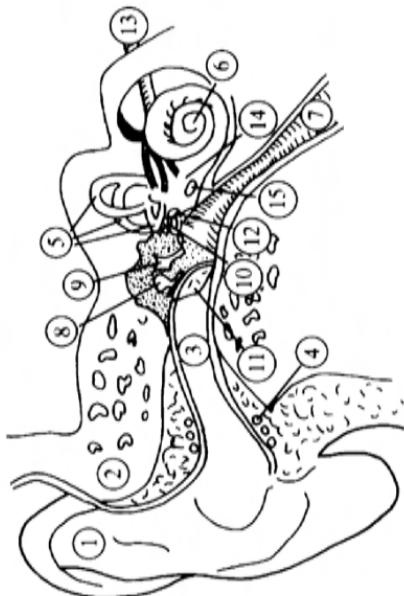
NEURON

- 1. nucleus
- 2. Nissl granules
- 3. neurofibrilla
- 4. dendrite
- 5. axon
- 6. myelin sheath
- 7. Schwann cell nucleus
- 8. node of Ranvier
- 9. neurilemma
- 10. terminal branch
- (a) multipolar
- (b) bipolar
- (c) unipolar
- (d) nucleus
- (e) axon
- (f) myelin sheath
- (g) node of Ranvier
- (h) neurilemma
- (i) terminal branch
- (j) Schwann cell nucleus



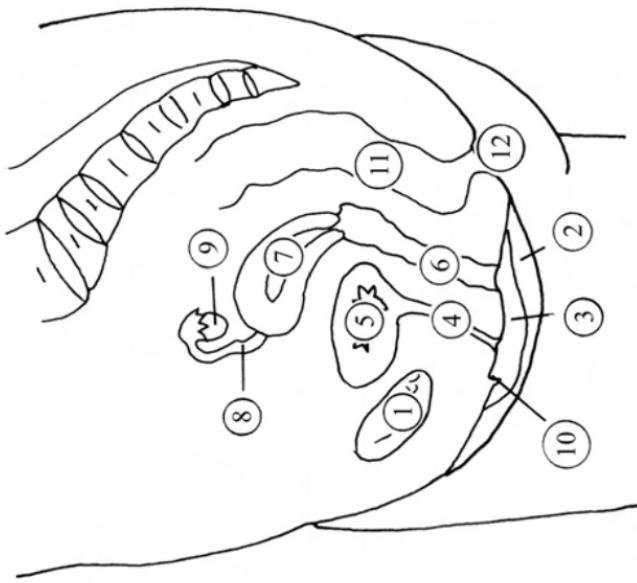
EYE

- | | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. optic nerve | 7. aqueous humour | 12. suspensory ligament |
| 2. vitreous humour | 8. lens | 13. fovea |
| 3. sclera | 9. iris | 14. muscle |
| 4. choroid | 10. cornea | 15. ciliary muscle |
| 5. retina | 11. ciliary body | 16. pupil |
| 6. conjunctiva | | |



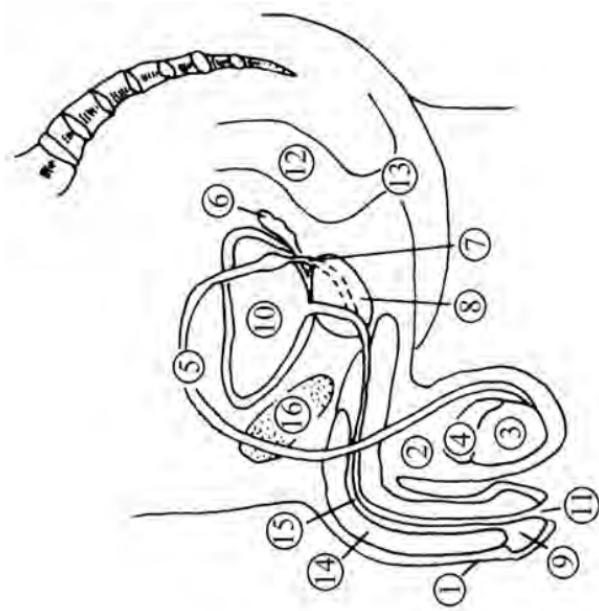
EAR

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. pinna | 6. cochlea | 11. tympanic membrane (eardrum) |
| 2. temporal bone | 7. Eustachian tube | 12. round window |
| 3. external auditory meatus | 8. malleus | 13. auditory nerve |
| 4. ceruminous glands | 9. incus | 14. vestibule |
| 5. semicircular canals | 10. stapes | 15. oval window |



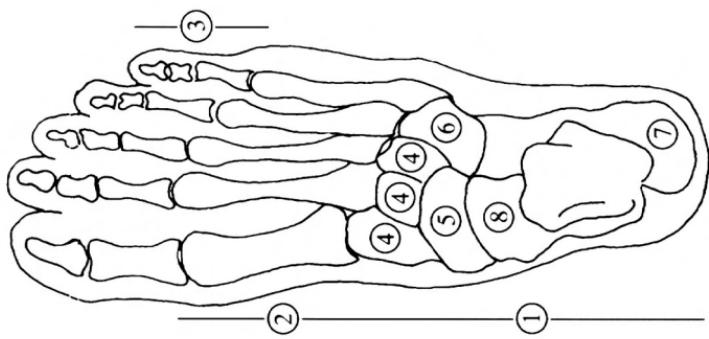
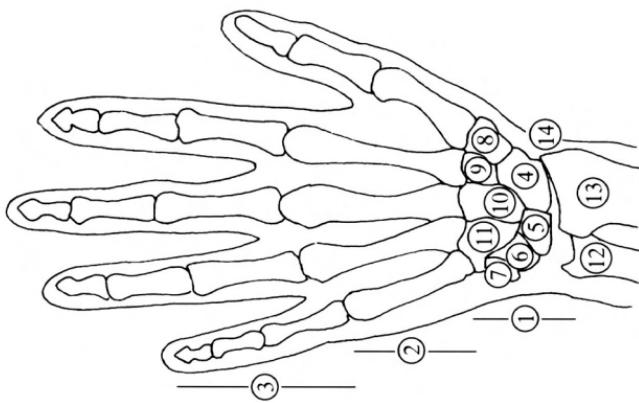
UROGENITAL SYSTEM (female)

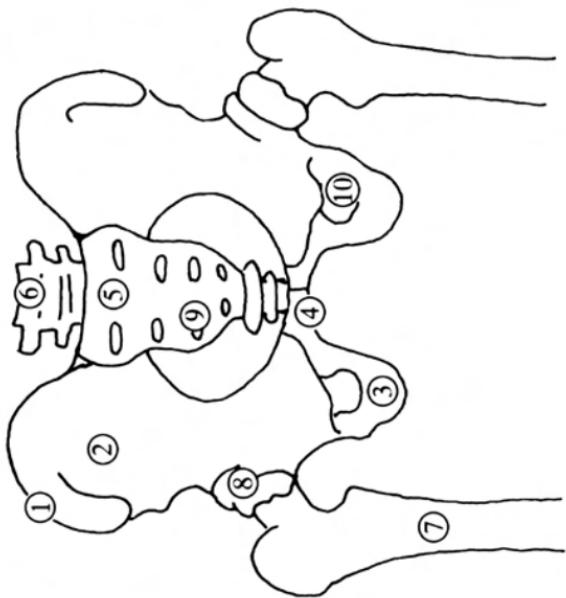
- | | |
|-----------------|--------------------|
| 1. public bone | 5. urinary bladder |
| 2. labia majora | 6. vagina |
| 3. labia minora | 7. uterus |
| 4. urethra | 8. Fallopian tube |
| 9. ovary | 10. clitoris |
| 11. rectum | 12. anus |



UROGENITAL SYSTEM (male)

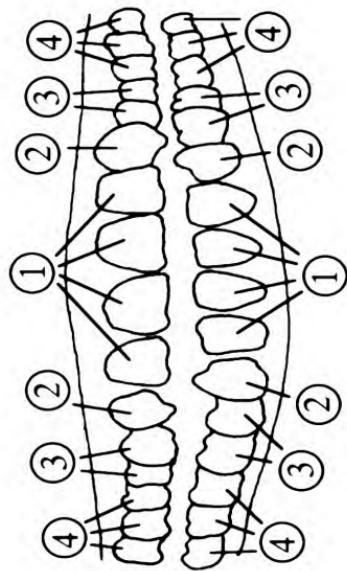
- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. penis | 7. ejaculatory duct |
| 2. scrotum | 8. prostate gland |
| 3. testis | 9. glans |
| 4. epididymis | 10. urinary bladder |
| 5. ductus deferens | 11. urethra |
| 6. seminal vesicle | 12. rectum |
| | 13. anus |
| | 14. corpus cavernosum |
| | 15. corpus spongiosum |
| | 16. pubic bone |





PELVIS

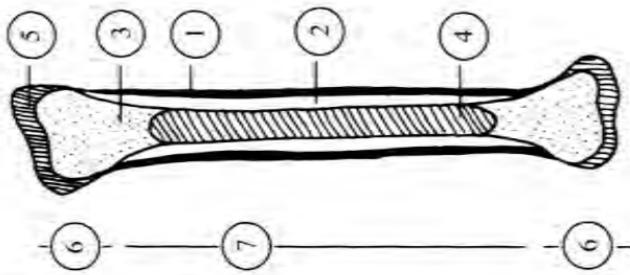
- | | | |
|----------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. iliac crest | 5. sacrum | 8. hip joint |
| 2. ilium | 6. vertebral column | 9. sacral foramen |
| 3. ischium | 7. femur | 10. obturator foramen |
| 4. pubis | | |



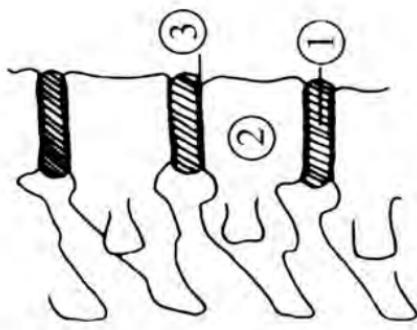
TEETH

- | | |
|-------------|-----------------------|
| 1. incisors | 5. sacrum |
| 2. canines | 6. vertebral column |
| | 7. femur |
| | 8. hip joint |
| | 9. sacral foramen |
| | 10. obturator foramen |

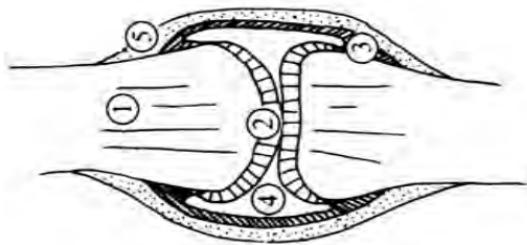
BONE STRUCTURE



CARTILAGINOUS JOINT



SYNOVIAL JOINT



1. bone
2. articular cartilage
3. synovial membrane
4. synovial cavity and fluid
5. joint capsule (ligament)

1. periosteum
2. compact bone
3. cancellous (spongy) bone (red marrow)
4. medullary cavity (yellow marrow)
5. articular cartilage
6. epiphysis
7. diaphysis

1. periosteum
2. compact bone
3. cancellous (spongy) bone (red marrow)
4. medullary cavity (yellow marrow)
5. articular cartilage
6. epiphysis
7. diaphysis

WEBSTER'S NEW WORLDTM



MEDICAL DICTIONARY

THIRD EDITION

FULLY REVISED AND UPDATED

*Your guide to symptoms, diseases,
treatments, pharmaceuticals, and more*

NOW WITH MORE THAN 8,500 FULLY CROSS-REFERENCED ENTRIES

Free
healthcare guide
and podcasts
online!

BY THE DOCTORS AND EXPERTS AT
WebMD

WE DEFINE YOUR WORLD®

WEBSTER'S NEW WORLDTM

Medical Dictionary

Third Edition

From the Doctors and Experts at WebMD



Wiley Publishing, Inc.

<http://www.rashidiislamiccenter.com>

WEBSTER'S NEW WORLDTM

Medical Dictionary

Third Edition

From the Doctors and Experts at WebMD



Wiley Publishing, Inc.

Webster's New World™ Medical Dictionary, Third Edition

Copyright © 2008 MedicineNet.com. All rights reserved.

Published by Wiley Publishing, Inc., Hoboken, New Jersey

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning or otherwise, except as permitted under Sections 107 or 108 of the 1976 United States Copyright Act, without either the prior written permission of the Publisher, or authorization through payment of the appropriate per-copy fee to the Copyright Clearance Center, 222 Rosewood Drive, Danvers, MA 01923, (978) 750-8400, fax (978) 646-8600, or on the web at www.copyright.com. Requests to the Publisher for permission should be addressed to the Legal Department, Wiley Publishing, Inc., 10475 Crosspoint Blvd., Indianapolis, IN 46256, (317) 572-3447, fax (317) 572-4355, or online at <http://www.wiley.com/go/permissions>.

The publisher and the author make no representations or warranties with respect to the accuracy or completeness of the contents of this work and specifically disclaim all warranties, including without limitation warranties of fitness for a particular purpose. No warranty may be created or extended by sales or promotional materials. The advice and strategies contained herein may not be suitable for every situation. This work is sold with the understanding that the publisher is not engaged in rendering legal, accounting, or other professional services. If professional assistance is required, the services of a competent professional person should be sought. Neither the publisher nor the author shall be liable for damages arising here from. The fact that an organization or Website is referred to in this work as a citation and/or a potential source of further information does not mean that the author or the publisher endorses the information the organization or Website may provide or recommendations it may make. Further, readers should be aware that Internet Websites listed in this work may have changed or disappeared between when this work was written and when it is read.

Trademarks: Wiley, the Wiley Publishing logo, Webster's New World, and all related trademarks, logos and trade dress are trademarks or registered trademarks of John Wiley & Sons, Inc. and/or its affiliates. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners. Wiley Publishing, Inc. is not associated with any product or vendor mentioned in this book.

For general information on our other products and services or to obtain technical support, please contact our Customer Care Department within the U.S. at 800-762-2974, outside the U.S. at 317-572-3993, or fax 317-572-4002.

Wiley also publishes its books in a variety of electronic formats. Some content that appears in print may not be available in electronic books. For more information about Wiley products, please visit our web site at www.wiley.com.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data is available from the publisher upon request.

ISBN: 978-0-470-18928-3

Printed in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Book production by Wiley Publishing, Inc. Composition Services

Acknowledgments

At MedicineNet.com, a part of the WebMD network, we continue to foster the concept that you, the readers, are truly interested in understanding health issues and medical concepts. Accordingly, we have addressed the medical terms in this dictionary with sensitivity to potential concerns of those who are acutely or chronically confronting disease or health concerns. We are grateful for your interest in health topics as it is a driving force for the development of the *Webster's New World Medical Dictionary, Third Edition*.

On behalf of the MedicineNet.com division of WebMD, we wish to thank the staff at Wiley Publishing, Inc., especially Roxane Cerdá and Suzanne Snyder, for bringing this dictionary to those who need it. We also thank the officers of MedicineNet.com, particularly Gene Lu and David Sorenson, who have supported the development of this dictionary.

The excellence of the technical and editorial staffs at MedicineNet.com greatly facilitated this entire project. Dan Griffith and Michael Cupp provided the unique publishing software that made it all possible. Cynde Lee, Kelly McKiernan, and Tanya Buchanan have performed magnificently in managing the vast amount of content and communication between authors and editors. David Sorenson has been an inspirational catalyst for motivation and consistent superior quality.

William C. Shiel, Jr., MD, FACP, FACR, thanks his children, Cara Shiel Krenn, Daniel, and Timothy for their support. He also acknowledges the support and encouragement of his parents, William and Virginia Shiel, as well as his dear mother-in-law, Helen Stark. With infinite gratitude and love he thanks his wife, Catherine, for her support, love, and editing. With gratitude he acknowledges the Herculean efforts of Frederick Hecht, MD, FAAP, FACMG in developing previous editions of this dictionary. And, with admiration beyond words, he thanks his dear friend, colleague, and co-founder of MedicineNet.com, Dennis Lee, MD.

Melissa Conrad Stöppler, MD wishes to thank her husband, Hubert Stöppler, and her children, Johannes, Anna, and Tilman, for their enduring support, love, and patience. She also gratefully acknowledges the support and encouragement of her parents, Kathryn B. Conrad and the late Henry E. Conrad, Jr.

Thank you all.

—William C. Shiel, Jr., MD, FACP, FACR

—Melissa Conrad Stöppler, MD

Get Additional Free Content Online

As an added bonus to this fully revised third edition of the *Webster's New World™ Medical Dictionary*, you can visit the companion website at www.medterms.com/wnw.

You'll find a free PDF Healthcare Guide to help you get the most out of your personal medical care. You can also listen to podcasts from Dr. William Shiel and Dr. Melissa Stöppler, the co-editors of the *Webster's New World Medical Dictionary*, in which they discuss strategies to help you better communicate with your doctors and caregivers.

Editorial Staff

Co-Editors-in-Chief

William C. Shiel, Jr., MD, FACP, FACR
www.MedicineNet.com

Ruchi Mathur, MD, FRCP(C)

www.MedicineNet.com

Melissa Conrad Stöppler, MD

www.MedicineNet.com

Content Managers

Cynde Lee

Kelly McKiernan

www.MedicineNet.com

Assistant Editors

Dennis Lee, MD
www.MedicineNet.com

Concept Development

David Sorenson

Gene Lu

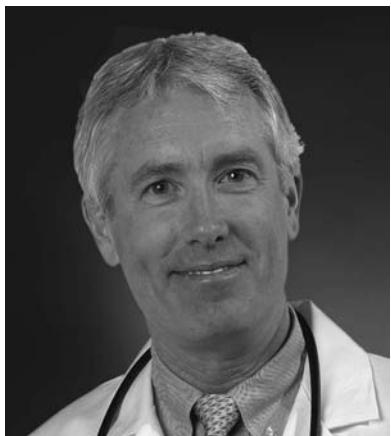
www.MedicineNet.com

Jay W. Marks, MD

www.MedicineNet.com

About the Authors

William C. Shiel, Jr., MD, FACP, FACR, Co-Editor-in-Chief



William C. Shiel, Jr., MD, FACP, FACR, received a bachelor of science degree with honors from the University of Notre Dame. There he was involved in research in radiation biology and received the Huisking Scholarship. After graduating from St. Louis University School of Medicine, he completed his internal medicine residency and rheumatology fellowship at University of California, Irvine. He is board certified in internal medicine and rheumatology and is a fellow of the American Colleges of Physicians and Rheumatology. Dr. Shiel is in active practice in the field of rheumatology at the Arthritis Center of Southern Orange County, California. He is currently an active associate clinical professor of medicine at University of California, Irvine. He has

served as chair of the Department of Internal Medicine at Mission Hospital Regional Medical Center in Mission Viejo, California. Dr. Shiel has authored numerous articles on subjects related to arthritis for prestigious peer-reviewed medical journals, as well as many expert medical-legal reviews. He has lectured in person and on television both for physicians and the community. He is a contributor for questions for the American Board of Internal Medicine and has reviewed board questions on behalf of the American Board of Rheumatology Subspecialty. He served on the Medical and Scientific Committee of the Arthritis Foundation, and he is currently on the Medical Advisory Board of Lupus International. Dr. Shiel is proud to have served as chief editor for MedicineNet.com since its founding in 1996. He was co-editor-in-chief of the first and second editions of *Webster's New World Medical Dictionary*.

Melissa Conrad Stöppler, MD, Co-Editor-in-Chief



Melissa Conrad Stöppler, MD, is a US board-certified anatomic pathologist with subspecialty training in the fields of experimental and molecular pathology. Dr. Stöppler's educational background includes a BA with Highest Distinction from the University of Virginia and an MD from the University of North Carolina. She completed residency training in anatomic pathology at Georgetown University followed by subspecialty fellowship training in molecular diagnostics and experimental pathology. Dr. Stöppler served as a faculty member of the Georgetown University School of Medicine and has also served on the medical faculty at the University of Marburg, Germany. Her research in the area of virus-induced cancers has been funded by the National

Institutes of Health as well as by private foundations. She has a broad list of medical publications, abstracts, and conference presentations and has taught medical students and residents both in the United States and Germany. Dr. Stöppler was named a fellow of the Alexander von Humboldt Society in Germany and was a recipient of a Physician Scientist Award from the US National Cancer Institute. Dr. Stöppler currently serves on the Medical Editorial Board of MedicineNet.com, and is the Chief Medical Editor of eMedicineHealth.com, both WebMD Inc. companies. Her experience also includes translation and editing of medical texts in German and English. Dr. Stöppler's special interests in medicine include family health and fitness, patient education/empowerment, and molecular diagnostic pathology. She currently resides in the San Francisco Bay area with her husband and their three children.

Dennis Lee, MD, Assistant Editor

Dennis Lee, MD, was born in Shanghai, China, and received his college and medical training in the United States. He is fluent in English and three Chinese dialects. He graduated with chemistry departmental honors from Harvey Mudd College. He was appointed president of AOA society at UCLA School of Medicine. He underwent internal medicine residency and gastroenterology fellowship training at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center. Board certified in internal medicine and gastroenterology, Dr. Lee is currently a member of Mission Internal Medical Group, a multispecialty medical group serving southern Orange County, California. Dr. Lee has maintained an interest in technology and medical education. He is a regular guest lecturer at Saddleback College in Orange County, California. Dr. Lee serves as chair of MedicineNet.com.

Jay W. Marks, MD, Assistant Editor

Jay W. Marks, MD, is a board-certified internist and gastroenterologist. He graduated from Yale University School of Medicine and trained in internal medicine and gastroenterology at UCLA/Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles. For 20 years he was associate director of the Division of Gastroenterology at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center and an associate professor of medicine, in residence, at UCLA. At Cedars-Sinai he co-directed the Gastrointestinal Endoscopy Unit, taught physicians during their graduate and postgraduate training, and performed specialized, nonendoscopic gastrointestinal testing. He carried out Public Health Service–sponsored (National Institutes of Health) clinical and basic research into mechanisms of the formation of gallstones and methods for the nonsurgical treatment of gallstones. He is the author of 36 original research manuscripts and 24 book chapters. Dr. Marks presently directs an independent gastrointestinal diagnostic unit where he continues to perform specialized tests for the diagnosis of gastrointestinal diseases. Dr. Marks serves as medical and pharmacy editor of MedicineNet.com.

Ruchi Mathur, MD, FRCP(C), Assistant Editor

Dr. Mathur received her medical degree in Canada and did her medical residency at the University of Manitoba in Internal Medicine. Dr. Mathur is a certified fellow of the Royal College of Physicians of Canada and is US board certified in internal medicine and endocrinology, diabetes and metabolism. She has been the recipient of numerous research grants which have included the American Diabetes Association grant for research in the field of diabetes and gastric dysmotility and the Endocrine Fellows Foundation Grant for Clinical Research. She has an extensive list of medical publications, abstracts, and posters and has given numerous lectures on diabetes. Most recently she has co-authored the textbook *Davidson's Diabetes Mellitus: Diagnosis and Treatment*, published by Elsevier. Dr. Mathur has also served as Research Fellow at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center and a clinical instructor at UCLA in endocrinology and metabolism. Currently Dr. Mathur is Co-Director of the Diabetes Management Clinic at the Roybal Comprehensive Health Center and Assistant Professor of Medicine at the Keck School of Medicine, University of Southern California.

Contributing Authors

Ronald Adamany, MD, Gastroenterology • Kent Adamson, MD, Orthopedic Surgery • Leon Baginski, MD, Obstetrics & Gynecology • Jerry Balentine, DO, FACOEP, FACEP, Emergency Medicine • Edward Block, MD, Gastroenterology • James Bredencamp, MD, Otolaryngology • Yuri Bronstein, MD, Neurology • Rudolph Brutico, MD, Pediatrics • Carolyn Janet Crandall, MD, Internal Medicine & Women's Health • Howard Crystal, MD, Neurology • John Cunha, DO, Emergency Medicine • Eric Daar, MD, Internal Medicine & Infectious Diseases • Andrew A. Dahl, MD, FACS, Ophthalmology •

Fernando Dangond, MD, Neurology • Charles C.P. Davis, MD, PhD, Emergency Medicine • Roxanne Dryden-Edwards, MD, Psychiatry and Mental Health • Jason C. Eck, DO, MS, Orthopaedic Surgery • Steve Ehrlich, MD, Cardiology • Manuel Fernandez, MD, Endocrinology • Robert Ferry, MD, Pediatric Endocrinologist • Michael C. Fishbein, MD, Cardiovascular & Autopsy Pathology • Tse-Ling Fong, MD, Hepatology • Catherine G. Fuller, MD, Allergy & Immunology • Ronald Gehling, MD, Allergy & Immunolgy • Gus Gialamas, MD, Orthopedic Surgery • Gary W. Gibbon, MD, Pulmonary Disease & Allergy • Mitchell J. Gitkind, MD, Gastroenterology • Vay Liang W. Go, MD, Nutrition • Sandra Gonzalez Gompf, MD, FACP, FIDSA, Infectious Disease • Jayson Goo, ATC, MA, CKTI, Human Performance/Corrective Therapy • Daniel L. Gomel, MD, Internal Medicine & Geriatrics • Mark Gruber, MD, Family Practice • Harold H. Harsch, MD, Psychiatry • Roza Hayduk, MD, Sleep Medicine • Barbara K. Hecht, PhD • Frederick Hecht, MD, FAAP • Standiford Helm III, MD, Anesthesiologist/Pain Management • Kendall Ho, MD, Emergency Medicine • Debra E. Houry, MD, MPH, Emergency Medicine/Women's Health • Camille Marie Teres Hylton, MD, Ophthalmology • David Kaminstine, MD, Gastroenterology • Kenneth Kaye, MD, Pathology • Jillyen E. Kibby, M.A., CCC-A, Audiology • Harley J. Kornblum, MD, Pediatrics & Neurology • Betty Kovacs, MS, RD, Nutrition • Daniel Lee Kulick, MD, FACC, FSCAI., Internal Medicine & Cardiology • Eric Lee, MD, Gastroenterology • Margaret Lee, DDS, Dentistry • Stacy E. Lee, MD, Allergy & Immunology • Michael Lill, MD, Hematology/Oncology • Arthur H. Loussararian, MD, Inetral Medicine & Cardiology • Ralph Maeda, MD, Surgery • Dwight Makoff, MD, Nephrology & Hypertension • Murray Margolis, MD, Internal Medicine • Randy Martin, MD, Pulmonary/Infectious Diseases • James Meaglia, MD, Urology • John Mersch, MD, Pediatrics • Michael Miyamoto, MD, Cardiology • Zab Mohsenifar, MD, Internal Medicine & Pulmonary Diseases • John R. Morris, MD, Orthopedic Surgery • Mim Mulford, MD, Endocrinology • Marty Nettleman, MD, MS, Infectious Disease • Mark Scott Noah, MD, Internal Medicine • Omudhome Ogbru, PharmD, Pharmacy • Peter J. Panzarino, Jr. MD, Psychiatry & Behavioral Medicine • David Adam Perlstein, MD, FAAP, Pediatratics • Dennis Philips, MD, Pediatrics • Donald Pratt, MD, Internal Medicine • Stefan M. Pulst, MD, Neurology • J. Bradley Randleman, MD, Opthamology • Donald Rediker, MD, Cardiology • Alan Rockoff, MD, Dermatology • Emmanuel Saltiel, PharmD FASHP, FCCP, Pharmacy • Stephen J. Sanders, M.A., CCC-A, Audiology • Michael Santoro, MD, Gastroenterology • George Schiffman, MD, Pulmonary • Leslie J. Schoenfield, MD, PhD • Melvin Shiffman, MD, Cosmetic Surgery • Lawrence J. Schwartz, MD, Ophthalmology • Joseph Sciammarella, MD, FACP, FA.CEP, Emergency Medicine • John Sheppard, MD, Ophthalmology and Pharmacology • David Simon, MD, Internal Medicine • Robert Simon, MD, Neurology • Thomas P. Sokol, MD, FACS, FASCRS, Gastroenterology • Mark Sullivan, MD, Urology • Alan Szeftel, MD, Allergy and Immunology/Pulmonary Disease • Bruce Tammelin, MD, Pulmonary Disease • Suzanne Trupin MD, FACOG, Obstetrics and Gynecology • Michael Truong, MD, Endocrinology • Theodore Van Dam, MD, Internal Medicine • John Vierling, MD, Hepatology • Benjamin C. Wedro, MD, FAAEM, Emergency Medicine • Richard Weil, M.Ed., CDE, Exercise Physiology, Diabetes Educator • Maureen Welker, MSN, NPc, CCRN • Edward J. White, MD, General Surgery • Leslie Williams, EdD, Psychology • Joseph Y. Wu, MD, Internal Medicine & Geriatrics • Marilyn A.D. Yee, PharmD, Pharmacy • David Zachary, MD, Family Medicine

Introduction

lexicographer A writer of dictionaries, a harmless drudge.

—Samuel Johnson, 1755

Like the previous editions, this edition has been conceived and developed by the staff of the health information Web site MedicineNet.com, part of the WebMD Health Network. One of the earliest health information sites on the Internet, MedicineNet.com has devoted a number of years to creating an online medical dictionary that now contains a wealth of contemporary medical terms and provides the broad foundation for this book.

To create this new edition of *Webster's New World Medical Dictionary*, we have reviewed every entry in the previous edition and have rewritten and strengthened many of those entries. In addition, we have selected new entries from our online medical dictionary for incorporation into this third edition. A unique feature of an online medical dictionary is that it can (and does) evolve rapidly to keep pace with the changes in medicine. We have taken advantage of this to update *Webster's New World Medical Dictionary*.

Like all of the medical content from MedicineNet.com, this dictionary was written and edited by physicians, to be used by anyone and everyone concerned about their own health or the health of those who matter to them. All the medical information found on MedicineNet.com has been developed by a network of physicians. The physicians select the topics and review and edit all written content. These physicians also make use of medical specialists and health writers throughout the US. The "About the Authors" pages provide abbreviated biographies of the editors and specialists who contributed content to the MedicineNet.com online dictionary and this book.

Medicine is now advancing with remarkable rapidity on many fronts, and the language of medicine is also continually evolving with remarkable rapidity, commensurate with the changes. Today, there is constant need for communication between and among consumers and providers of health care. There is consequently a need for a high-quality, contemporary medical dictionary.

In the current health care environment, patients and their physicians, nurses, and allied health professionals must be able to discuss the ever-changing aspects of health, disease, and biotechnology. An accurate understanding of medical terminology can assist communication and improve care for patients, and it can help to alleviate the concerns of family members and friends.

The fact that the content of this dictionary is physician-produced by MedicineNet.com ensures an unusual degree of professional expertise, reliability, and perspective.

As a bonus, this edition includes a companion Web site at www.medterms.com/wnw. There you will find content not found in the book such as PDF healthcare guides and audio podcasts.

We hope that you will find *Webster's New World Medical Dictionary, Third Edition* a valuable addition to your family or office library and a source of both information and illumination in any medical situation.

Aa

A In genetics, adenine, a member of the adenine-thymine (A-T) base pair in DNA.

a- Prefix indicating the absence or depletion of something; for example, aphagia (not eating) or aphonya (voiceless). The related prefix *an-* is usually used before a vowel, as in *anemia* (without blood) and *anoxia* (without oxygen).

AA **1** Alcoholics Anonymous. **2** Amino acid.

AAAS American Association for the Advancement of Science, a professional organization that publishes the weekly journal *Science*.

AAFP **1** American Association of Family Physicians, a professional organization for physicians who treat both children and adults. **2** American Academy of Family Physicians, a professional organization for physicians who treat both children and adults.

AOO **1** American Association of Ophthalmology, a professional organization. **2** American Association of Orthodontists, a professional organization. **3** American Academy of Otolaryngology, a professional organization.

AAOS American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons, a professional organization. See also *orthopaedics*.

AAP **1** American Academy of Pediatrics, a professional organization for physicians who treat infants, children, adolescents, and young adults. **2** American Academy of Pedodontics, a professional organization. **3** American Academy of Periodontology, a professional organization. **4** American Association of Pathologists, a professional organization.

ab- Prefix indicating from, away from, or off, as in *abduction* (movement of a limb away from the midline of the body) and *abnormal* (away from normal).

abdomen The part of the body that contains all the structures between the chest and the pelvis. The abdomen, or belly, is anatomically separated from the chest by the diaphragm, the powerful muscle

that spans the body cavity, just below the lungs. See also *abdominal cavity*.

abdomen, acute See *acute abdomen*.

abdominal aorta The final section of the aorta, the largest artery in the body, which begins at the diaphragm as a continuation of the thoracic aorta and ends by splitting in two, to form the common iliac arteries. The abdominal aorta supplies oxygenated blood to all the abdominal and pelvic organs, as well as to the legs. See also *aorta*.

abdominal aortic aneurysm See *aneurysm*, *abdominal aortic*.

abdominal cavity The cavity within the abdomen. This space between the abdominal wall and the spine contains a number of crucial organs, including the lower part of the esophagus, the stomach, small intestine, colon, rectum, liver, gallbladder, pancreas, spleen, kidneys, adrenal glands, ureters, and bladder. See also *abdomen*.

abdominal guarding Tensing of the abdominal wall muscles to guard inflamed organs within the abdomen from the pain of pressure upon them. Abdominal guarding is detected when the abdomen is pressed and is an indication that inflammation of the inner abdominal (peritoneal) surface may be present due, for example, to appendicitis or diverticulitis. The tensed muscles of the abdominal wall automatically go into spasm to keep the tender underlying tissues from being irritated.

abdominal hysterectomy See *hysterectomy*, *abdominal*.

abdominal muscle One of a large group of muscles in the front of the abdomen that assists in maintaining regular breathing movements, supports the muscles of the spine while lifting, and keeps abdominal organs in place. Abdominal muscles are the target of many exercises, such as sit-ups. Abdominal muscles are informally known as the abs.

abdominal pain Pain in the belly. Abdominal pain can be acute or chronic. It may reflect a major problem with one of the organs in the abdomen, such as appendicitis or a perforated intestine, or it may result from a fairly minor problem, such as excess buildup of intestinal gas.

abducens nerve See *abducent nerve*.

abducent nerve The sixth cranial nerve, which emerges from the skull to operate the lateral rectus muscle. This muscle draws the eye toward the side of the head. Paralysis of the abducent nerve causes inward turning of the eye.

abduction The movement of a limb away from the midline of the body. The opposite of abduction is adduction.

abductor muscle See *muscle, abductor*.

ABG Arterial blood gas, a sampling of the blood levels of oxygen and carbon dioxide within the arteries, as opposed to the levels of oxygen and carbon dioxide in veins. Typically, the acidity (pH) is also simultaneously measured.

abiotrophy Loss of function, or degeneration for reasons unknown.

ablate To remove, from a Latin word meaning “to carry away.” See *ablation*.

ablation Removal or excision. Ablation is usually carried out surgically. For example, surgical removal of the thyroid gland (a total thyroidectomy) is ablation of the thyroid.

abnormal Outside the expected norm, or uncharacteristic of a particular patient.

ABO blood group The major human blood group system. The ABO type of a person depends on the presence or absence of two genes, A and B. These genes determine the configuration of the red blood cell surface. A person who has two A genes has red blood cells of type A. A person who has two B genes has red cells of type B. If the person has one A and one B gene, the red cells are type AB. If the person has neither the A nor the B gene, the red cells are type O. It is essential to match the ABO status of both donor and recipient in blood transfusions and organ transplants.

abortifacient A medication or substance that causes pregnancy to end prematurely.

abortion Premature exit of the products of the fetus, fetal membranes, and placenta from the uterus. Abortion can be a natural process, as in a miscarriage; an induced procedure, using medication or other substances that cause the body to expel the fetus; or a surgical procedure that removes the contents of the uterus. See also *dilation and curettage*.

abortion, habitual The miscarriage of three or more consecutive pregnancies with no intervening pregnancies. Habitual abortion is a form of infertility. Also known as recurrent abortion and multiple abortion.

abortion, multiple See *abortion, habitual*.

abortion, recurrent See *abortion, habitual*.

abortion, spontaneous Miscarriage.

abortive Tending to cut short the course of a disease, as in abortive polio (polio cut short).

abortive polio A minor, abbreviated form of infection with the polio virus. Full recovery occurs in 24 to 72 hours, and the condition does not involve the nervous system or permanent disabilities. See also *polio*.

ABP American Board of Pediatrics, a professional organization for physicians who treat infants, children, adolescents, and young adults.

abrasion 1 A wearing away of the upper layer of skin as a result of applied friction force. See also *scrape*. 2 In dentistry, the wearing away of a tooth surface.

abruptio placentae Premature separation (abruption) of the placenta from the wall of the uterus, often in association with high blood pressure or preeclampsia. Abruptio is a potentially serious problem both for mother and fetus because the area where it occurs bleeds and the uterus begins to contract. Shock may result. See also *placenta; preeclampsia*.

abs Slang term for the abdominal muscles.

abscess A local accumulation of pus anywhere in the body. See also *boil; pus*.

abscess, perianal An abscess next to the anus that causes tenderness, swelling, and pain on defecation.

abscess, peritonsillar An abscess behind the tonsils that pushes one of the tonsils toward the uvula (the prominent soft tissue dangling from the back of the palate in the back of the mouth). A peritonsillar abscess is generally very painful and associated with difficulty opening the mouth. If a peritonsillar abscess is untreated, the infection can spread deep into the neck, causing airway obstruction and other life-threatening complications.

abscess, skin A confined collection of pus in the skin. The common boil is a type of skin abscess. See also *boil*.

abscission To remove tissue by cutting it away, as in surgery. See also *resection*.

absence of the breast See *amastia*.

absence of the nipple See *athelia*.

absinthe An emerald-green liqueur flavored with extracts of the wormwood plant, licorice, and aromatic flavorings in an alcohol base. Absinthe was manufactured, commercialized, and popularized in France in the late 1700s. It was an extremely addictive drink. Prolonged drinking of absinthe causes convulsions, blindness, hallucinations, and mental deterioration. Absinthe has been banned, but something of its taste is still available in such drinks as Greek ouzo and French pastis. Homemade absinthe may still be illicitly consumed in some areas.

absolute CD4 count The number of “helper” T-lymphocytes in a cubic millimeter of blood. The absolute CD4 count is frequently used to monitor the extent of immune suppression in persons with HIV because with HIV, this number declines as the infection progresses. Also known as T4 count.

absorption Uptake. For example, intestinal absorption is the uptake of food (or other substances) from the digestive tract.

abstinence The voluntary self-denial of food, drink, or sex. Today, abstinence most commonly refers to denial of one's sexual activity.

abuse, child See *child abuse*.

abuse, elder See *elder abuse*.

a.c. Abbreviation of the Latin phrase *ante cibum*, meaning “before meals.” See also Appendix A, “Prescription Abbreviations.”

AC joint See *acromioclavicular joint*.

acanthosis nigricans A skin condition characterized by dark, thickened, velvety patches, especially in the folds of skin in the armpit, groin, and back of the neck. It can occur with endocrine diseases such as Cushing disease and diabetes mellitus, from tumors of the pituitary gland, underlying malignancies, certain drugs, and as a genetic disorder. It is most common in people who have insulin resistance—those whose body is not responding correctly to the insulin that they make in their pancreas.

acapnia Lower than normal level of carbon dioxide in the blood. The opposite of acapnia is hypercapnia.

accelerated phase of leukemia Chronic myelogenous leukemia that is progressing. In this phase, the number of immature, abnormal white blood cells in the bone marrow and blood is higher than in the chronic phase, but not as high as in the blast phase.

accessory nerve The eleventh cranial nerve, which emerges from the skull and receives an additional (accessory) root from the upper part of the spinal cord. It supplies the sternocleidomastoid and trapezius muscles.

accessory neuropathy A disease of the accessory nerve, paralysis of which prevents rotation of the head away from one or both sides and causes the shoulder to droop. Damage can be confined to the accessory nerve, or it may also involve the ninth and tenth cranial nerves, which exit the skull through the same opening.

accessory placenta See *placenta, accessory*.

acclimatization to altitude The process of adapting to the decrease in oxygen concentration at a specific altitude. A number of changes must take place for the body to operate with decreased oxygen. These changes include increasing the depth of respiration; increasing the pressure in the pulmonary arteries, forcing blood into portions of the lung that are normally not used at sea level; manufacturing additional oxygen-carrying red blood cells; and manufacturing extra 2, 4-DPG, a substance that facilitates the release of oxygen from hemoglobin to the body tissues. Acclimatization generally takes 1 to 3 days and occurs after any significant altitude change above 1,220 meters (approximately 4,000 feet). Acclimatization is the body's natural means of correcting altitude sickness and the rate of acclimatization depends on the altitude, rate of ascent, and individual susceptibility.

accoucheur A male obstetrician. An accoucheuse is a woman obstetrician, or sometimes a midwife.

ACE Angiotensin converting enzyme. ACE converts an angiotensin to its activated form, angiotensin II, enabling it to function. Angiotensin II constricts blood vessels and elevates blood pressure.

ACE inhibitor A drug that inhibits ACE. Using an ACE inhibitor relaxes the arteries, not only lowering blood pressure but also improving the pumping efficiency of a failing heart and improving cardiac output in patients with heart failure. ACE inhibitors are therefore used for blood pressure control and congestive heart failure. ACE inhibitors include benazepril (brand name: Lotensin), captopril (brand name: Capoten), lisinopril (brand names: Zestril, Prinivil), quinapril (brand name: Accupril), and ramipril (brand name: Altace). Interestingly, ACE inhibitors were originally developed from the venom of a Brazilian viper snake.

acentric chromosome A chromosome that is lacking a centromere (a specialized region of the chromosome to which spindle fibers attach during cell division). As a result, an acentric chromosome is lost when the cell divides. See also *centromere*.

aceruloplasminemia See *ceruloplasmin deficiency*.

acetabulum The cup-shaped socket of the hip joint. The acetabulum is a feature of the pelvis. The head (upper end) of the femur (thighbone) fits into the acetabulum and articulates with it, forming a ball-and-socket joint.

acetaminophen A nonaspirin pain reliever or analgesic. Acetaminophen may be given alone to relieve pain and inflammation or it may be combined with other drugs, as in some migraine medications, which contain acetaminophen, a barbiturate, and caffeine.

acetone A volatile liquid used as an industrial solvent. Acetone is also one of the ketone bodies that is formed when the body uses fat instead of glucose (sugar) for energy. The formation of acetone is usually a sign that cells lack insulin or cannot effectively use the insulin that is available, as occurs in diabetes. Acetone is excreted from the body in the urine.

acetone breath The breath of a person with excessive acetone in their body. Acetone breath smells fruity and is a telltale sign of significant diabetes. See also *diabetes mellitus*.

acetylcholine A neurotransmitter released by nerves that is essential for communication between the nerves and muscles.

acetylsalicylic acid See *aspirin*.

achalasia A disease of the esophagus that mainly affects young adults. Abnormal function of nerves and muscles of the esophagus causes difficulty swallowing and sometimes chest pain. Regurgitation of undigested food can occur, as can coughing or breathing problems related to entry of food material into the lungs. The underlying problems are weakness of the lower portion of the esophagus and failure of the lower esophageal sphincter to open and allow passage of food. Diagnosis is made by an X-ray, endoscopy, or esophageal manometry. Treatment includes medication, dilation (stretching) to widen the lower part of the esophagus, and surgery to open the lower esophagus. A fairly recent approach involves injecting medicines into the lower esophagus to relax the sphincter.

Achilles tendon One of the longest tendons in the body, a tough sinew that attaches the calf muscle to the back of the heel bone (calcaneus). The name comes from Greek mythology: The hero Achilles was invulnerable to injury except for his heel, which proved his downfall when it was pierced by Paris's arrow. It has also proved, literally, to be the downfall of many athletes who have experienced the sudden pain of its rupture.

Achilles tendonitis Inflammation in the tendon of the calf muscle, where it attaches to the heel bone. Achilles tendonitis causes pain and stiffness at the back of the leg, near the heel. Achilles tendonitis can be caused by overuse of the Achilles tendon, overly tight calf muscles or Achilles tendons, excess uphill running, a sudden increase in the intensity of training or the type of shoes worn to run, or wearing high heels at work and then switching to a lower-heeled workout shoe. Achilles tendonitis causes pain, tenderness, and often swelling over the Achilles tendon. There is pain on rising up on the toes and pain with stretching of the tendon. The range of motion of the ankle may be limited. Treatment includes applying ice packs to the Achilles tendon, raising the lower leg, and taking an anti-inflammatory medication. In some severe cases of Achilles tendonitis, a cast may be needed for several weeks. A heel lift insert may also be used in shoes to prevent future overstretching of the Achilles tendon. Exerting rapid stress on the Achilles tendon when it is inflamed can result in rupture of the tendon.

achlorhydria A lack of hydrochloric acid in the digestive juices in the stomach.

achondroplasia A genetic disorder of bone growth and the most common cause of short stature with disproportionately short arms and legs (known as dwarfism). The individual has a large head with a prominent forehead (frontal bossing); underdevelopment (hypoplasia) of the midface, with cheekbones that lack prominence; and a low nasal bridge with narrow nasal passages. The fingers are short, and the ring and middle fingers diverge to give the hand a trident (three-pronged) appearance. The brain is entirely normal in people with achondroplasia, but complications can damage the brain and spinal cord. Achondroplasia is an autosomal dominant trait, affecting boys and girls equally. Most cases are due to new gene mutations that appear for the first time in the affected child. Achondroplasia is caused by mutation in the fibroblast growth factor receptor-3 gene (FGFR3), and prenatal diagnosis is possible. See also *dwarfism*; *dwarfism*, *hydrochondroplastic*.

acid, pantothenic Vitamin B5. See also Appendix C, "Vitamins."

acid indigestion Excessive secretion of hydrochloric acid by the stomach cells. Medically known as hyperchlorhydria. Sometimes used interchangeably with heartburn. See also *heartburn*.

acid phosphatase An enzyme that acts to liberate phosphate under acidic conditions and is made in the liver, spleen, bone marrow, and prostate gland. Abnormally high serum levels of acid phosphatase may indicate infection, injury, or cancer of the prostate.

acidophilus Bacteria found in yogurt with "live cultures" that can help restore supportive bacteria to an intestinal tract whose normal bacterial population (flora) has been disturbed by disease or antibiotics. Eating yogurt with acidophilus may also be useful in preventing overgrowth of yeast (*Candida*) in the intestinal tract, mouth (thrush), and vagina. See also *probiotic*.

acidosis Too much acid in the blood and body. Acidosis is an abnormal condition resulting from the accumulation of acid or the depletion of alkaline reserves. The pH of a body with acidosis is below normal. For a person with diabetes, this can lead to diabetic ketoacidosis. The opposite of acidosis is alkalosis. See also *pH*.

ACL Anterior cruciate ligament.

acne Localized skin inflammation resulting from overactivity of the oil glands at the base of hair follicles or as a response to contact with irritating substances. See also *acne vulgaris*.

acne rosacea See *rosacea*.

acne vulgaris The common form of acne, in teens and young adults, that is due to overactivity of the oil (sebaceous) glands in the skin that become plugged and inflamed. Acne typically develops when the oil glands come to life around puberty and are stimulated by male hormones that are produced in the adrenal glands of both boys and girls. Treatments include keeping the skin clean and avoiding irritating soaps, foods, drinks, and cosmetics. Severe acne and acne in those who are prone to scarring can be treated with topical creams and oral medications. Skin damaged by acne can be improved with treatment by a dermatologist or facial technologist using dermabrasion (sanding), removal of scar tissue via laser, and chemical peels. Also known as pimples.

ACOG American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, a professional organization for women's health care providers that also does advocacy work to improve the care of female patients.

acoustic nerve The eighth cranial nerve which is concerned with hearing, balance, and head position. It branches into two parts—a cochlear part that transmits sound reception for hearing and a vestibular part that senses balance and head position. Also known as the vestibulocochlear nerve.

acquired Not inherited, or present at birth (congenital), but developing after birth. For example, AIDS is an acquired, not an inherited, form of immune deficiency.

acquired immunodeficiency disease See *AIDS*.

acquired mutation A genetic change that occurs in a single cell after the conception of an individual. That change is then passed along to all cells descended from that cell. Acquired mutations are involved in the development of cancer.

acral-lentiginous melanoma See *melanoma, acral-lentiginous*.

acrocentric chromosome A chromosome in which the centromere is located quite near one end of the chromosome. Humans normally have five pairs of acrocentric chromosomes. Down syndrome is caused by an extra acrocentric chromosome (chromosome 21).

acrocephalosyndactyly An inherited disorder characterized by abnormalities of the skull, face, hands, and feet. It begins with premature closure of some sutures of the skull (craniostenosis) and results in a tall peaked head, shallow eye sockets, and underdeveloped cheekbones. With acrocephalosyndactyly, fingers and toes are fused (syndactyly), and the thumbs and big toes have broad ends. Acrocephalosyndactyly is an autosomal dominant trait that affects boys and girls. A parent can transmit the gene for the disorder, or it can occur due to a new mutation. Surgery is often useful to correct the abnormalities of the skull, face, hands, and feet. See also *Apert syndrome; Crouzon syndrome*.

acrochordon See *skin tag*.

acrocyanosis Blueness of the hands and feet, usually due to inadequate circulation.

acrodermatitis enteropathica A progressive, hereditary disease of children, characterized by the simultaneous occurrence of skin inflammation (dermatitis) and diarrhea. The skin on the cheeks, elbows, and knees is inflamed, as is tissue about the mouth and anus. There is also balding of the scalp, eyebrows, and lashes; delayed wound healing; and recurrent bacterial and fungal infections due to immune deficiency. The key laboratory finding is an abnormally low blood zinc level, reflecting impaired zinc uptake. Treatment with zinc by mouth is curative. Acrodermatitis enteropathica is an autosomal recessive disorder. See also *deficiency, zinc, zinc*.

acromegaly See *gigantism, pituitary*.

acromioclavicular joint A gliding joint located between the acromion (a projection of the scapula that forms the point of the shoulder) and the clavicle (the collar bone). It is served and supported by the capsular, superior, and inferior acromioclavicular ligaments; the articular disk; and the coracoclavicular (trapezoid and conoid) ligaments. Abbreviated AC joint.

acrosyndactyly A condition in which a person has fused or webbed fingers or toes. Acrosyndactyly can be partial or complete, and it can usually be corrected via surgery. It is associated with several birth defect syndromes. See also *Apert syndrome*.

ACS American College of Surgeons, a professional organization that administers standards of practice for surgeons. Those who meet the group's standards can call themselves Fellows of the ACS.

actinic Referring to the ultraviolet (UV) rays from sunlight and UV lamps. Sunburn is an actinic burn. An actinic keratosis is a skin lesion that is the consequence of chronic sun exposure.

actinic keratosis Rough, scaly patches of skin that are considered precancerous and are due to sun exposure. Prevention is to cut sun exposure and wear sunscreen. Treatments include performing cryosurgery (freezing with liquid nitrogen), cutting the keratoses away, burning them, putting 5-fluorouracil on them, and using photodynamic therapy (injecting into the bloodstream a chemical that collects in actinic keratoses and makes them more sensitive to destruction by a specialized form of light). Also known as solar keratosis and senile keratosis.

activated charcoal Charcoal that has been heated to increase its ability to absorb molecules. Activated charcoal is used to help relieve intestinal gas. It is also used to filter and purify liquids, to absorb poisons (as in gas mask filters), and in emergency situations to neutralize swallowed poisons.

active euthanasia The active acceleration of a terminally ill patient's death by use of drugs or other means. Currently, active euthanasia is openly practiced in the Netherlands and in the US state of Oregon. The patient's request to the physician must be voluntary, explicit, and carefully considered, and it must be made repeatedly. Moreover, the patient's suffering must be unbearable and without any prospect of improvement. Suicide for other reasons, whether irrational or rational, is not active euthanasia. The forced killing of an ill or disabled person, as has occurred in eugenics programs, is also not active euthanasia. And although medications administered for pain relief may hasten death, aggressive pain relief is a normal medical decision in terminal care, not in active euthanasia. See also *assisted suicide; eugenics; euthanasia*.

active immunity Immunity produced by the body in response to stimulation by a disease-causing organism or other agent.

activities of daily living Things that a person normally does during a day, including self-care (eating, bathing, dressing, grooming), work, home-making, and leisure. The ability or inability to perform these activities can be used as a practical measure of ability or disability, and it may be used by insurers and HMOs as a rationale for approving or denying physical therapy or other treatments. Abbreviated ADL.

acuity, auditory The clearness of hearing, a measure of how well a person hears.

acuity, visual The clearness of vision, a measure of how well one sees.

acuity test, visual The familiar eye chart test, which measures how well a person can see at various distances.

acupressure The application of pressure on specific points on the body to control symptoms such as pain or nausea. Similar in concept to acupuncture, but without needles. See also *acupuncture*.

acupuncture The practice of inserting needles into specific points on the body with a therapeutic aim, such as to reduce pain or to induce anesthesia without the use of drugs. Traditional Chinese acupuncturists say the practice unblocks the flow of a life force called ch'i; Western researchers believe acupuncture may affect production of endorphins, the body's natural painkillers. In 1997, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) issued a consensus statement stating that "There is sufficient evidence of acupuncture's value to expand its use into conventional medicine." See also *acupressure*.

acupuncturist A person skilled in the practice of acupuncture, who may or may not be credentialed by an accrediting body.

acute Of short duration, rapid, and abbreviated in onset. A condition is termed acute in comparison to a subacute condition, which lasts longer or changes less rapidly; or a chronic condition, which may last almost indefinitely, with virtually no change. Each disease has a unique time scale: An acute myocardial infarction (heart attack) may last a week, whereas an acute sore throat may last only a day or two. See also *chronic*.

acute abdomen Medical shorthand for the acute onset of abdominal pain. A potential medical emergency, an acute abdomen may reflect a major problem with one of the organs in the abdomen, such as appendicitis (inflamed appendix), cholecystitis (inflamed gallbladder), a perforated ulcer in the intestine, or a ruptured spleen.

acute esophageal stricture See *esophageal stricture, acute*.

acute fatty liver of pregnancy Abbreviated AFLP, liver failure in late pregnancy, usually of unknown cause. Symptoms include nausea and vomiting, abdominal pain, yellowing of the skin and eyes (jaundice), frequent thirst (polydipsia), increased urination (polyuria), headache, and altered mental state. Laboratory features of AFLP include low blood sugar (hypoglycemia), elevated liver enzymes, and low levels of blood platelets. Untreated AFLP can cause complete liver failure, bleeding due to impaired blood clotting, and death of the mother and fetus. AFLP is treated by delivering the baby as soon as possible, often by inducing early labor. It usually subsides after delivery and does not occur in subsequent pregnancies. In some cases AFLP is associated with an abnormality of fatty-acid metabolism: a deficiency of the enzyme long-chain-3-hydroxyacyl-CoA dehydrogenase (LCHAD). The mother and father have half the normal LCHAD activity, and the fetus has no LCHAD activity. This metabolic disease in the baby's liver causes the fatty liver disease in the mother.

acute HIV infection See *HIV infection, acute*.

acute idiopathic polyneuritis See *Guillain-Barre syndrome*.

acute illness A disease with an abrupt onset and, usually, a short course.

acute leukemia Cancer of the blood cells that characteristically comes on suddenly and, if not

treated, progresses quickly. In acute leukemia, the leukemic cells are not able to mature properly.

acute membranous gingivitis A progressive and painful infection of the mouth and throat due to the spread of infection from the gums. Symptoms include ulceration, swelling, and sloughing off of dead tissue from the mouth and throat. Certain germs (including fusiform bacteria and spirochetes) have been thought to be involved, but the actual cause is not yet known. Like most other poorly understood diseases, acute membranous gingivitis goes by many other names, including acute necrotizing ulcerative gingivitis, fusospirillary gingivitis, fusospirillosis, fusospirochetal gingivitis, necrotizing gingivitis, phagedenic gingivitis, trench mouth, ulcerative gingivitis, ulcerative stomatitis, Vincent angina, Vincent gingivitis, Vincent infection, and Vincent stomatitis.

acute mountain sickness The physical effect of being in a high-altitude environment. Abbreviated AMS, it is common at altitudes above 2,440 meters (approximately 8,000 feet). Three-fourths of people have mild symptoms of AMS at altitudes over 3,048 meters (approximately 10,000 feet). Occurrence depends on the altitude, rate of ascent, and individual susceptibility. Symptoms begin 12 to 24 hours after arrival at a new altitude and include headache, dizziness, fatigue, shortness of breath, loss of appetite, nausea, disturbed sleep, and general malaise. These symptoms tend to worsen at night, when the respiratory drive is decreased. Symptoms should subside within 2 to 4 days, and can be treated by using pain medications such as aspirin. Acetazolamide (brand name: Diamox) can also be used to minimize symptoms and may be taken as a preventive measure. Moderate AMS has the same symptoms as AMS, but the headaches cannot be relieved with medication, and both breathing and coordinated movements become difficult. The only remedies are advanced medications and descent to lower altitudes. Severe AMS causes great shortness of breath at rest, inability to walk, decreased mental status, and fluid buildup in the lungs. Severe AMS requires immediate descent to lower altitudes: 610 to 1,220 meters (approximately 2,000 to 4,000 feet). See also *acclimatization to altitude*.

acute myelogenous leukemia See *leukemia, acute myeloid*.

acute myeloid leukemia See *leukemia, acute myeloid*.

acute myocardial infarction A heart attack that occurs when the heart muscle is suddenly deprived

of circulating blood. Abbreviated AMI. See also *heart attack*.

acute nonlymphocytic leukemia See *leukemia, acute myeloid*.

acute otitis media Painful inflammation of the middle ear, typically with fluid in the middle ear, behind a bulging eardrum or a perforated eardrum, often with drainage of pus. The customary treatment is antibiotics for 7 to 10 days. After antibiotic treatment, some children are left with fluid in the middle ear, which can cause temporary hearing loss. In most children, the fluid eventually disappears spontaneously. If a child has a bulging eardrum and is experiencing severe pain, a myringotomy (surgical incision of the eardrum) to release the pus may be done. Tubes may be placed in the ear to drain fluid. See also *ear infection*.

acute peritonitis See *peritonitis, acute*.

acute respiratory distress syndrome Respiratory failure of sudden onset due to fluid in the lungs (pulmonary edema), following an abrupt increase in the permeability of the normal barrier between the capillaries in the lungs and the air sacs. The muscles used in breathing are forced to work harder, causing labored and inefficient breathing. An abnormally low level of oxygen in the blood (hypoxemia) occurs. The types of acute lung injury that may lead to ARDS include, but are not limited to, aspiration of food or other items into the lungs, inhalation of a toxic substance, widespread infection of the lungs, blood infection (sepsis), and near-drowning. Treatment frequently involves temporary use of a mechanical ventilator to help the patient breathe.

acute thrombocytopenic purpura Sudden onset of low blood platelet levels, with bleeding into the skin and elsewhere. Abbreviated ATP. ATP can have many causes; for example, it can be a potentially serious complication during the acute phase of measles infection.

acute-phase protein A protein whose plasma concentrations increase during certain inflammatory disorders. Perhaps the best-known acute-phase protein is C-reactive protein (CRP).

acyclovir A potent antiviral drug or medication (brand name: Zovirax) that works against several human herpes viruses, Epstein-Barr virus, herpes zoster, varicella (chickenpox), cytomegalovirus, and other viruses. It is part of the AIDS drug AZT. See also *AZT*.

ad- Prefix indicating toward or in the direction of. For example, adduction is the movement of a limb toward the midline of the body, and adrenal literally means “toward the kidney.”

ad lib Abbreviation of the Latin phrase *ad libitum*, meaning “as much as one desires” or “at your discretion.” See also Appendix A, “Prescription Abbreviations.”

ADA **1** American Dental Association, a professional organization for dentists. Its Council on Dental Education and Commission on Dental Accreditation are responsible for accrediting schools of dentistry and allied professions. **2** American Diabetes Association, a nonprofit health organization that sponsors diabetes research, provides information about diabetes and diabetes prevention to patients and others, and advocates for improved treatment of people with diabetes. **3** Adenosine deaminase.

Adam's apple The familiar feature on the front of the neck that is the forward protrusion of the thyroid cartilage, the largest cartilage of the larynx. It tends to enlarge at adolescence, particularly in males. It is usually said to take its name from the extrabiblical story that a piece of the forbidden fruit stuck in Adam's throat.

ADD **1** Attention deficit disorder. **2** Adenosine deaminase deficiency.

addiction An uncontrollable craving, seeking, and use of a substance such as alcohol or another drug. Dependence is such an issue with addiction that stopping is very difficult and causes severe physical and mental reactions.

Addison's anemia See *anemia, pernicious*.

Addison's disease Chronic underfunction of the outer portion of the adrenal gland, most commonly due to autoimmune destruction. Other causes include physical trauma to the adrenal gland, hemorrhage, tuberculosis, and destruction of the pituitary gland cells that secrete adrenocorticotrophic hormone (ACTH), which normally controls the adrenal gland. Addison's disease is characterized by bronzing of the skin, anemia, weakness, and low blood pressure.

adducted thumbs Clasped thumbs, caused by absence of the extensor pollicis longus and/or brevis muscles to the thumb. When associated with mental retardation, it is part of an X-linked syndrome that affects mainly boys. See *MASA syndrome*.

adduction Movement of a limb toward the midline of the body. The opposite of adduction is abduction.

adductor muscle See *muscle, adductor*.

adenine A nucleotide member of the base pair adenine-thymine (A-T) in DNA.

adenitis Inflammation of a gland.

adenocarcinoma A cancer that develops in the lining or inner surface of an organ and usually has glandular (secretory) properties. More than 95 percent of prostate cancers are adenocarcinomas.

adenoid A mass of lymphoid tissue in the upper part of the throat, behind the nose. When the adenoids are enlarged due to frequent infections, breathing through the nose may become difficult. Surgical removal may be done, often accompanied by removal of the tonsils. Also known as pharyngeal tonsil.

adenoidectomy The surgical removal of the adenoids.

adenoiditis Infection of the adenoids.

adenoma A benign tumor that arises in or resembles glandular tissue. If an adenoma becomes cancerous, it is called an adenocarcinoma.

adenomyoma A nodule that forms around endometrial tissue in cases of adenomyosis. See *adenomyosis*.

adenomyosis A common, benign condition of the uterus in which the endometrium (the inner uterus) grows into the adjacent myometrium (the uterine musculature located just outside the endometrium). The myometrium may respond to this intrusion with muscular overgrowth. If an island of endometrial tissue is contained within the myometrium, it forms an adenomyoma. Also known as endometriosis interna, endometriosis uterina, adenomyosis uteri, and adenomyometritis.

adenopathy Large or swollen lymph nodes. Lymph nodes can become enlarged as a result of inflammatory diseases, infection, or cancer. Synonymous with lymphadenopathy.

adenosine deaminase An enzyme that plays a key role in salvaging purine molecules. Abbreviated ADA.

adenosine deaminase deficiency An autosomal recessive genetic condition that results in severe combined immunodeficiency disease. The

first successful gene therapy for this condition in humans was done in 1990, by infusing patients with genetically engineered blood cells.

adenosine triphosphate A nucleotide compound that is of critical importance for the storage of energy within cells and the synthesis of RNA. Abbreviated ATP.

adenovirus One of a group of viruses that can cause infections of the lung, stomach, intestine, and eyes. Symptoms resemble those of the common cold. There are no effective medications for treating adenovirus infection. Adenovirus infection typically does not cause death or permanent problems. More than 40 types of adenoviruses have been recognized, all of which are extremely tiny. Adenoviruses are being used in research as a vehicle for gene therapy and as a vector for vaccines.

ADH Antidiuretic hormone.

ADH secretion, inappropriate A condition that results in the inability to produce dilute urine and imbalance of fluids and electrolytes in the body, particularly lowering blood sodium. Symptoms include nausea, vomiting, muscle cramps, confusion, and convulsions. This syndrome may occur with oat-cell lung cancer, pancreatic cancer, prostate cancer, and Hodgkin's disease, among other disorders. Also known as syndrome of inappropriate ADH secretion or SIADH.

ADHD Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

adhesion The union of two opposing tissue surfaces. This term is often used to refer to the sides of a wound, as well as to scar tissue strands that can form at the site of a previous operation, such as within the abdomen after a laparotomy.

adhesive capsulitis A condition in which a person has constant severe limitation of the range of motion of the shoulder due to scarring around the shoulder joint. Adhesive capsulitis is an unwanted consequence of rotator cuff disease that involves damage to the rotator cuff. The affected joint is characteristically painful and tender to palpation. Physical therapy and cortisone injections are often helpful. Surgery is used in advanced cases. Also known as frozen shoulder.

adipose Fatty. Adipose refers to tissue made up of mainly fat cells such as the yellow layer of fat beneath the skin.

adiposis dolorosa See *Dercum disease*.

adjuvant A substance that helps and enhances the effect of a drug, treatment, or biologic system.

adjuvant chemotherapy

adjuvant chemotherapy Chemotherapy given after removal of a cancerous tumor to further help in treatment. Many chemotherapy drugs are most effective after the majority of the tumor has been removed.

ADLs Activities of daily living.

admitting physician The doctor responsible for admitting a patient to a hospital or other inpatient health facility.

adnexa In gynecology, the appendages of the uterus, namely the ovaries, the Fallopian tubes, and the ligaments that hold the uterus in place.

adrenal gland A small gland located on top of the kidney. The adrenal glands produce hormones that help control heart rate, blood pressure, the way the body uses food, the levels of minerals such as sodium and potassium in the blood, and other functions particularly involved in stress reactions.

adrenal medulla See *medulla, adrenal*.

adrenaline A stress hormone produced within the adrenal gland that quickens the heart beat, strengthens the force of the heart's contraction, and opens up the bronchioles in the lungs, among other effects. The secretion of adrenaline is part of the human "fight or flight" response to fear, panic, or perceived threat. Also known as epinephrine.

adult hemoglobin See *hemoglobin A*.

adult-onset diabetes Non-insulin-dependent, or type 2, diabetes, the most common form of diabetes mellitus. Unlike patients with insulin-dependent, or type 1, diabetes, in whom the pancreas makes no insulin, patients with adult-onset diabetes produce some insulin, sometimes even large amounts. However, their bodies do not produce enough insulin or their body cells are resistant to the action of insulin. People with this form of diabetes are frequently overweight and can sometimes control their disease by losing weight through diet and exercise. Otherwise, they may need to combine insulin or another diabetes medication with diet and exercise. See also *diabetes, type 1*.

adult-onset Still's disease Still's disease that begins in adulthood rather than in childhood. See also *Still's disease*.

advance directive A document drawn up by a patient or, in some cases, the patient's representative to set treatment preferences and to designate a surrogate decision maker should the patient become unable to make medical decisions. Advance

directives include the living will, power of attorney, and health care proxy. See also *DNR*.

adverse event In pharmacology, any unexpected or dangerous reaction to a drug or vaccine.

AED See *automated external defibrillator*.

aer-, aero- Prefix indicating air or gas, such as aerogastria (excess stomach gas).

aerobic Oxygen-requiring. Aerobic bacteria need oxygen to grow. Aerobic exercise requires the heart and lungs to work harder to meet the body's increased oxygen demand.

aerobic exercise Brisk exercise that promotes the circulation of oxygen through the blood and is associated with an increased rate of breathing. Examples include running, swimming, and bicycling.

aerophagia Literally, eating air, from the Greek words *aer*, meaning "air," and *phagein*, meaning "to eat." Aerophagia is a common cause of stomach gas. Everyone swallows small amounts of air when eating or drinking. However, activities such as rapid eating or drinking, gum chewing, smoking, and wearing ill-fitting dentures may cause a significant increase in swallowed air.

aerosinusitis Painful sinus troubles due to changing atmospheric pressures. Aerosinusitis is the cause of sinus pain when going up or down in a plane. Also known as barosinusitis and sinus barotrauma.

aerosol A fine spray or mist. Medications in aerosol form can be administered via a nebulizer and inhaled.

aerotitis Middle ear problems due to changing atmospheric pressures, as when a plane descends to land. Symptoms include ear pain, ringing ears, diminished hearing and, sometimes, dizziness. Also known as aerotitis media, barotitis, barotitis media, and otic barotrauma.

Aesculapius The ancient Roman god of medicine, whose staff with a snake curled around it is commonly used as a symbol of medicine. According to mythology, Aesculapius's children included Hygeia, the goddess of health, and Panaceia, the goddess of healing.

affective disorder A psychiatric disorder that affects the control of mood. See *bipolar disorder; cyclothymia; depression; seasonal affective disorder*.

afferent Carrying toward. A vein is an afferent vessel because it carries blood from the body toward the heart. The opposite of afferent is efferent.

afferent nerve A nerve that carries impulses toward the central nervous system.

afferent vessel A vessel that carries blood toward the heart. A vein or venule.

AFLP Acute fatty liver of pregnancy.

AFO Ankle-foot orthosis.

AFP Alpha-fetoprotein.

African tapeworm See *Taenia saginata*.

African tick typhus See *typhus, African tick*.

afterbirth The placenta and the fetal membranes that are normally expelled from the uterus after the birth of a baby. See also *placenta*.

aftercare Medical care and instructions for patients after leaving a medical facility.

agammaglobulinemia Total or near-total absence of infection-fighting antibodies belonging to the class called gamma globulins. Agammaglobulinemia can be due to certain genetic diseases or caused by acquired diseases, including AIDS.

agenesis Lack of development. For example, agenesis of a toe means the toe failed to form.

agenesis, sacral See *caudal regression syndrome*.

agenesis of the gallbladder A condition in which the gallbladder fails to develop. It occurs in 1 in about every 1,000 people, usually without additional birth defects.

agent, antihypertensive See *antihypertensive*.

agent, anti-infective See *anti-infective*.

Agent Orange An herbicide and defoliant containing 2,4-D and 2,4,5-T, as well as trace amounts of dioxin. Agent Orange was used as a defoliant in the Vietnam War. There has been concern about Agent Orange potentially causing cancer and birth defects.

age-related macular degeneration See *macular degeneration*.

ageusia An inability to taste sweet, sour, bitter, or salty substances. People who can taste sweet, sour, bitter, or salty substances but have a reduced ability to do so are said to have hypogeusia.

aggressive 1 In cancer medicine, quickly growing or tending to spread rapidly. For example, an aggressive tumor. 2 In psychiatry, having a tendency to aggression or belligerent behavior.

aggressive fibromatosis See *desmoid tumor*.

agnosia An inability to recognize sensory inputs such as light, sound, and touch). Agnosia is typically a result of brain injury. For example, damaging the back part of the brain can cause visual agnosia (inability to properly recognize objects by sight).

agonist A substance that acts like another substance and therefore stimulates an action. Agonist is the opposite of antagonist. Antagonists and agonists are key players in the chemistry of the human body and in pharmacology.

agoraphobia An abnormal and persistent fear of public places or open areas, especially those from which escape could be difficult or in which help might not be immediately accessible. Persons with agoraphobia frequently also have panic disorder. People with mild agoraphobia often live normal lives by avoiding anxiety-provoking situations. In the most severe agoraphobia, the victims may be incapacitated and homebound. Agoraphobia tends to start in the mid to late 20s, and the onset may appear to be triggered by a traumatic event.

agranulocytosis A marked decrease in the number of granulocytes (neutrophils). Agranulocytosis results in frequent chronic bacterial infections of the skin, lungs, throat, and other areas. It can be an inherited genetic condition or acquired as, for example, in leukemia. See also *agranulocytosis, infantile genetic; granulocytopenia; severe congenital neutropenia*.

agranulocytosis, infantile genetic An inherited condition characterized by a lack of granulocytes (neutrophils), a type of white blood cell that is important in fighting infection, and a predisposition to frequent bacterial infections. Also known as Kostmann disease or syndrome and genetic infantile agranulocytosis. See also *agranulocytosis; granulocytopenia; severe congenital neutropenia*.

agreement, arbitration See *arbitration agreement*.

Aicardis syndrome A rare genetic disorder that occurs only in females and is caused by congenital

absence of the corpus callosum, a large bundle of nerves that connects the left and right sides of the brain. Features include epilepsy that emerges in infancy and is difficult to control, vision problems due to maldeveloped retinas, developmental delay, and sometimes physical deformities of the spine, face, and/or heart. See also *epilepsy; seizure disorders*.

AID Artificial insemination by donor.

AIDS Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome, a syndrome caused by infection with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), with ensuing compromise of the body's immune system. Features include deficiency of certain types of leukocytes, especially T cells; infection with opportunistic infections that take advantage of the impaired immune response, such as tuberculosis, bacterial pneumonia, human herpes virus, or toxoplasmosis; certain types of cancer, particularly Kaposi sarcoma; inability to maintain body weight (wasting); and in advanced cases, AIDS dementia complex. Treatment for AIDS has advanced rapidly. Antiviral, antibacterial, and immune-boosting medications, among other treatments, are part of current treatment protocols.

AIDS dementia complex A brain disorder in people with severe AIDS, causing loss of thinking capacity and affecting the ability to function. AIDS dementia complex is considered an AIDS-defining illness—that is, one of the serious illnesses that occurs in HIV-positive individuals warranting an AIDS diagnosis, according to the definition of AIDS by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

AIDS-related complex A term used in the early years of the AIDS epidemic to describe people with HIV infection who had only mild symptoms of illness, such as swollen lymph glands. It is rarely used today. Abbreviated ARC.

airway The path that air follows to get into and out of the lungs. The mouth and nose are the normal entry and exit ports for the airway. Entering air then passes through the back of the throat (pharynx) and continues through the voice box (larynx), down the trachea, to finally pass through the bronchi.

airway obstruction Partial or complete blockage of the breathing passages to the lungs. Causes include the presence of foreign matter, allergic reactions, infections, anatomical abnormalities, and trauma. Associated respiratory distress may be sudden, with only a cough for a warning. There is often agitation in the early stages. Other signs include labored, ineffective breathing, until the person is no

longer breathing (apneic). Loss of consciousness occurs if the obstruction is not relieved. Treatment of airway obstruction due to a foreign body includes the Heimlich maneuver for adults, a series of five abdominal thrusts for children over 1 year of age, and a combination of five back blows with the flat of the hand and five abdominal thrusts with two fingers on the upper abdomen for infants.

AKA Above-the-knee amputation, generally performed when the leg is not medically viable or to prevent the spread of disease to the tissues above the knee from below.

akathisia A movement disorder characterized by a feeling of inner restlessness and a compelling need to be in constant motion, as well as by actions such as rocking while standing or sitting, lifting the feet as if marching on the spot, and crossing and uncrossing the legs while sitting. People with akathisia are unable to sit or keep still, complain of restlessness, fidget, rock from foot to foot, and pace.

akinesia The state of being without movement.

akinetic Related to the loss of the normal ability to move the muscles.

akinetic epilepsy See *epilepsy, akinetic*.

akinetic mutism See *mutism, akinetic*.

alanine aminotransferase An enzyme normally present in liver, skeletal muscle, and heart cells. Abbreviated ALT. ALT is released into blood when the liver, skeletal muscle, or heart is inflamed or injured by diseases, conditions, or medications. Also known as serum glutamic pyruvic transaminase (SGPT).

albinism A pigmentation disorder characterized by partial or total lack of the pigment melanin in the skin, hair, and iris. Albinism is caused by an autosomal recessive gene and can occur in people of any ethnic background. People with albinism have delicate skin that sunburns and develops skin cancer easily, and they may suffer from eye disorders. See also *Hermansky-Pudlak syndrome; vitiligo*.

albino A person with albinism. The term was first applied by the Portuguese to people in West Africa, who may have had partial or complete albinism.

albuginea Tough white fibrous tissue. The tunica albuginea of the testis, for example, is the layer of dense whitish inelastic tissue that surrounds the testis.

albumin The main protein in human blood and the key to regulating the osmotic pressure of blood. Chemically, albumin is soluble in water, precipitated by acid, and coagulated by heat.

albuminuria More than the normal amount of albumin in the urine. Albuminuria can be a sign that protein is leaking through the kidney, most often through the glomeruli, or a sign of significant kidney disease. It may also be the harmless result of vigorous exercise. Also known as proteinuria.

alcohol An organic substance formed when a hydroxyl group is substituted for a hydrogen atom in a hydrocarbon. The type of alcohol used in alcoholic beverages, ethanol, derives from fermenting sugar with yeast. After alcohol is ingested, the body converts it to sugar-based fuel. Alcohol acts as a central nervous system depressant, and it may be part of solutions used as preservatives, antiseptics, or medications.

alcohol abuse Use of alcoholic beverages to excess, either on individual occasions (binge drinking) or as a regular practice. For some individuals—children or pregnant women, for example—almost any amount of alcohol use may be legally considered “alcohol abuse.” Heavy alcohol abuse can cause physical damage and death.

alcohol poisoning A condition in which a toxic amount of alcohol has been consumed, usually in a short period of time. The affected individual may become extremely disoriented, unresponsive, or unconscious, with shallow breathing. Because alcohol poisoning can be deadly, emergency treatment is necessary.

alcohol use in pregnancy The consumption of alcohol during pregnancy, which can damage the fetus. See also *fetal alcohol effect; fetal alcohol syndrome*.

Alcoholics Anonymous A free self-help organization founded to assist people addicted to alcohol in breaking old behavior patterns and gaining support for consistently living a sober lifestyle.

alcoholism Physical dependence on alcohol to the extent that stopping alcohol use would bring on withdrawal symptoms. In popular and therapeutic parlance, the term may also be used to refer to ingrained drinking habits that cause health or social problems. Treatment requires first ending the physical dependence and then making lifestyle changes that help the individual avoid relapse. In some cases, medication and hospitalization are necessary. Alcohol dependence can have many serious effects

on the brain, liver, and other organs of the body, some of which can lead to death.

aldosterone A hormone produced by the outer portion (cortex) of the adrenal gland. Aldosterone regulates the balance of water and electrolytes in the body, encouraging the kidney to excrete potassium into the urine and retain sodium, thereby retaining water. It is classified as a mineralocorticoid hormone.

aldosteronism See *Conn syndrome*.

alexia Loss of the ability to read or understand the written word, due either to brain damage that disconnects these functions or to temporary dysfunction caused by abnormal electrical or chemical activity in the brain.

alienist French term for a psychologist, a psychiatrist, or another practitioner who cares for the mentally ill.

alimentary Concerning food, nourishment, and the organs of digestion. From the Latin *alimentum*, meaning nourishment.

alkaline phosphatase An enzyme that liberates phosphate under alkaline conditions and is made in liver, bone, and other tissues. Alkaline phosphatase can be measured in a routine blood test. Abnormally high serum levels of alkaline phosphatase may indicate bone disease, liver disease, or bile duct obstruction.

alkalosis Relatively too much base in the blood and body, an abnormal condition resulting from the accumulation of base or the depletion of acid. The pH of an alkalotic body measures above normal. The opposite of alkalosis is acidosis.

alkaptonuria A genetic metabolic disorder due to deficiency of the enzyme homogentisic acid (HGA) dioxygenase. Deficiency of this enzyme leads to the three cardinal features of alkaptonuria (the presence of homogentisic acid in the urine), ochronosis (bluish-black pigmentation in connective tissue), and arthritis. Urine that turns dark is a characteristic feature.

allele An alternative form of a gene.

allergen A substance that can cause an allergic reaction. Common allergens include ragweed pollen, animal dander, and mold.

allergic conjunctivitis Inflammation of the whites of the eyes (conjunctivae), with itching, redness, and tearing, due to allergy.

allergic granulomatosis See *Churg-Strauss syndrome*.

allergic reaction A hypersensitive immune response to a substance. An allergic reaction can occur when the immune system attacks a normally harmless substance. The allergic immune system calls upon a protective antibody called immunoglobulin E (IgE) to fight these invading substances. In the melee, cells called mast cells release a variety of strong chemicals, including histamine, into the tissues and blood. This chemical release is irritating and causes itching and swelling and can also lead to lung airway narrowing and throat tightening, as is found in asthma, as well as to loss of voice. For example, this is how hay fever and allergic pink eye (conjunctivitis) occur. See also *allergic conjunctivitis; allergic rhinitis; anaphylactic shock; asthma*.

allergic rhinitis Medical term for hay fever, an allergic reaction that mimics a chronic cold. Symptoms include nasal congestion, a clear runny nose, sneezing, nose and eye itching, and tearing of the eyes. Postnasal dripping of clear mucus frequently causes a cough, loss of smell is common, and occasionally loss of taste. Nosebleeds may occur. Also known as June cold and summer cold.

allergic rhinitis, perennial Allergic rhinitis that occurs throughout the year.

allergic rhinitis, seasonal Allergic rhinitis that occurs during a specific season.

allergic salute The characteristic gesture of a person with allergic rhinitis: rubbing his or her nose with the index finger.

allergic vasculitis See *Churg-Strauss syndrome*.

allergy Hypersensitivity of the body's immune system in response to exposure to specific substances (antigens), such as pollen, bee stings, poison ivy, drugs, or foods. See also *allergic reaction; anaphylactic shock*.

allergy desensitization Stimulation of the immune system with gradually increasing doses of the substances to which a person is allergic in order to modify or stop the allergic response. This form of treatment is very effective for allergies to pollen, mites, animal dander, and stinging insects, including bees, hornets, yellow jackets, wasps, velvet ants, fire ants, and certain necessary medications.

allergy scratch test See *allergy skin test*.

allergy skin test A test in which a small drop of the suspected allergy-provoking substance (allergen) is placed on the skin and the skin is then gently scratched through the drop with a sterile needle. If the skin redden's and, more importantly, if it swells, the test is read as positive, and allergy to that substance is considered probable.

allergy to cockroaches An allergic reaction to tiny protein particles shed or excreted by cockroaches. Asthma can be due to exposure to cockroach allergens. Removing cockroach allergens from the home is not an easy job, but it can go far in reducing the frequency and severity of asthma and other allergic reactions.

allograft The transplant of an organ or tissue from one individual to another of the same species with a different genotype. For example, a transplant from one person to another, but not an identical twin, is an allograft. Allografts account for many human transplants, including those from cadaveric, living related, and living unrelated donors. Also known as an allogeneic graft or a homograft.

allopath A term sometimes applied to a physician who practices allopathy, or conventional medicine. See also *allopathy*.

allopathic medicine See *allopathy*.

allopathy The system of medical practice that treats disease by the use of remedies to produce effects different from those produced by the disease under treatment. Doctors of medicine (MDs) practice allopathic medicine. The term "allopathy" was coined to designate conventional medicine as opposed to homeopathy, the system of therapy based on the concept that disease can be treated with drugs (in minute doses) thought capable of producing the same symptoms in healthy people as the disease itself. Allopathy is also known as conventional medicine. See also *allopath*.

alopecia Baldness. Temporary alopecia may occur as a result of chemotherapy. Permanent alopecia may result from any of several conditions, including common male-pattern baldness. Radiation therapy administered to the head can also cause permanent alopecia due to irreversible damage to the hair follicles. See also *alopecia areata; alopecia capitis totalis; alopecia universalis; alopecia traumatic*.

alopecia, traumatic Hair loss caused by injury to the scalp. Common causes include the use of caustic hair straighteners, especially those that include lye as an ingredient; stress traction injury

from tight rollers and braiding; overheating of the hair shafts; and compulsive pulling out of hair (trichotillomania).

alopecia areata Patchy baldness that typically begins with rapid hair loss on discrete areas of the scalp and sometimes progresses to complete baldness and even loss of body hair. The characteristic diagnostic finding is short, broken hairs called "exclamation point" hairs. Alopecia areata affects both males and females and, most often, children and young adults. It seems to be caused by an autoimmune mechanism, wherein the body's own immune system attacks the hair follicles and disrupts normal hair formation. Alopecia areata is sometimes associated with allergic disorders, thyroid disease, vitiligo, lupus, rheumatoid arthritis, ulcerative colitis, and other conditions, and some forms may be inherited. Hair can sometimes regrow within a year without treatment. The longer the period of time of hair loss, the less chance that the hair will regrow.

alopecia capitis totalis Loss of all scalp hair, with normal hair elsewhere on the body remaining.

alopecia universalis Loss of all hair on the entire body.

alpha cell, pancreatic A type of cell found in areas within the pancreas called the islets of Langerhans. Alpha cells make and release glucagon, which raises the level of glucose (sugar) in the blood.

alpha error The statistical error made in testing a hypothesis when it is concluded that a result is positive, but it really is not. Also known as false positive.

alpha interferon One of the three main classes of interferons, which are specialized proteins (lymophokines) produced by the body in response to microbial infection that interfere with the multiplication of viruses in cells. The other two main classes are called beta interferon and gamma interferon. See also *interferon; interferon therapy*.

Alpha Omega Alpha An honor society, the medical school equivalent of Phi Beta Kappa of undergraduate school.

alpha thalassemia See *thalassemia, alpha*.

alpha-1 antitrypsin deficiency An inherited disorder characterized by a lack of the alpha-1 antitrypsin protease inhibitor. Alpha-1 antitrypsin deficiency leads to damage of various organs, especially the lung and liver. Symptoms may become

apparent at a very early age or anytime later, manifesting as shortness of breath due to emphysema or as liver symptoms such as jaundice, fatigue, fluid in the abdomen, mental changes, or gastrointestinal bleeding. Treatment options include, for lung disease, replacement of the missing alpha-1 antitrypsin. Avoidance of smoking and of other lung irritants is an important part of management. Treatment of the liver disease is liver transplant. Also known as protease inhibitor 1 deficiency.

alpha-fetoprotein A plasma protein normally produced by a fetus, principally in the fetus's liver, the fetal gastrointestinal tract, and the yolk sac, a structure temporarily present during embryonic development. Abbreviated AFP. The level of AFP is typically high in the fetus's blood. It goes down after birth. By 1 year of age, it is virtually undetectable. During pregnancy, AFP crosses the placenta from the fetal circulation and appears in the mother's blood. The level of AFP in the mother's blood provides an opportunity to screen for a number of disorders, including open neural tube defects (such as anencephaly and spina bifida), Down syndrome, and other chromosome abnormalities.

Alport syndrome A hereditary condition characterized by kidney disease, deafness, and sometimes eye defects. Alport syndrome involves inflammation of the kidney (nephritis), often progressing to kidney failure, and sensory nerve hearing loss. Progression to kidney failure is gradual and usually occurs in males before 50 years of age.

ALS Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, Lou Gehrig's disease.

ALT Alanine aminotransferase.

alternative medicine Healing arts not taught in traditional Western medical schools that promote options to conventional medicine that is taught in these schools. An example of an alternative therapy is using a special diet to treat cancer instead of undergoing surgery, radiation, or chemotherapy that has been recommended by a Western physician. Complementary medicine is different from alternative medicine. Whereas complementary medicine is used together with conventional medicine, alternative medicine is used in place of conventional medicine. See also *complementary medicine; conventional medicine*.

altitude, acclimatization to See *acclimatization to altitude*.

altitude illness See *altitude sickness*.

altitude sickness Sickness caused by being at a high altitude, usually above 2,400 meters (approximately 8,000 feet). The cause of altitude sickness is a matter of oxygen physiology. At sea level the concentration of oxygen is about 21 percent, and the barometric pressure averages 760 mm Hg. As altitude increases, the concentration remains the same, but the number of oxygen molecules per breath is reduced. At 5,400 meters (approximately 12,000 feet) above sea level, the barometric pressure is only 483 mm Hg, so there are roughly 40 percent fewer oxygen molecules per breath. In order to oxygenate the body effectively, the breathing rate must increase. This extra ventilation increases the oxygen content in the blood—but not to sea level concentrations. Because the amount of oxygen required for activity is the same at high altitude as at sea level, the body must adjust to having less oxygen. In addition, high altitude and lower air pressure cause fluid to leak from the capillaries, which can cause fluid buildup in the lungs and the brain. Prevention measures for altitude sickness include avoiding or retreating from high-altitude areas, gradual acclimatization, and medication. The acclimatization process is inhibited by dehydration, overexertion, and intake of alcohol and depressant drugs. Preventive medications include acetazolamide (brand name: Diamox) and dexamethasone (a steroid). See also *acclimatization to altitude; acute mountain sickness*.

alveolitis Inflammation of the alveoli, the air sacs in the lungs.

alveolus A tiny air sac in the lungs. Plural alveoli.

Alzheimer's disease A progressive degenerative disease of the brain that leads to dementia. On a cellular level, Alzheimer's disease is characterized by the finding of unusual helical protein filaments in nerve cells of the brain. These twisted filaments are called neurofibrillary tangles. In the brain, Alzheimer's disease involves degeneration of the cortical regions, especially the frontal and temporal lobes. There is currently no cure for Alzheimer's disease, but new medications and therapies appear to slow its progress and improve the patient's ability to function.

AMA American Medical Association, a professional organization for physicians that sets widely accepted standards of practice and ethics and that publishes the weekly journal *JAMA (Journal of the American Medical Association)*.

amastia A rare condition wherein the normal growth of the breast or nipple does not occur. Unilateral amastia (absence of one breast) is often associated with absence of the pectoral muscles.

Bilateral amastia (absence of both breasts) is associated with multiple birth defects involving other parts of the body. See also *amazia*.

amaurosis fugax A symptom that is often described as a shade coming down over the eye. Amaurosis fugax is a partial or complete loss of sight that is temporary. Amaurosis fugax is usually caused by arteriosclerosis in the blood vessels that supply the brain. It can also occur with excessive acceleration, as in flight, and with ophthalmic migraine. See also *arteriosclerosis*.

amaurotic familial idiocy An outdated term for Tay-Sachs disease (TSD). See *Tay-Sachs disease*.

amazia A condition wherein the breast tissue is absent, but the nipple is present. Amazia is typically a result of radiation or surgery.

ambidextrous Able to use both the right and left hands with equal dexterity. Neither right- nor left-handed.

amblyopia, nocturnal Night blindness, also known as day sight. See *nyctanopia*.

ambulance A vehicle equipped with medications and devices intended to stabilize patients while speeding them to a hospital. In its original sense, an ambulance was a mobile field hospital.

ambulatory Able to walk about, not bedridden or immobile.

ambulatory care Medical care provided on an outpatient basis, including diagnosis, observation, treatment, and rehabilitation services.

ameba A single-celled, protozoan organism that constantly changes shape. Amebae can infect the bowels, causing diarrhea. They can also infect the liver, causing abscesses to form.

amebiasis The state of being infected with amebae, especially with the ameba *Entamoeba histolytica*.

amebic colitis Amebic dysentery with ulcers in the colon from infection with the ameba *Entamoeba histolytica*. This single-celled parasite is transmitted to humans via contaminated water and food.

amebic dysentery Inflammation of the intestine due to infection with the ameba *Entamoeba histolytica*. Amebic dysentery can be accompanied by amebic infection of the liver and other organs.

amelanotic Without melanin. A skin lesion that is amelanotic lacks the pigment melanin and, therefore, is essentially colorless.

amelanotic melanoma See *melanoma, amelanotic*.

amelioration Improvement in a patient's condition, or the activity of making an effort to correct, or at least make more acceptable, conditions that are difficult to endure related to patient's conditions.

amenorrhea See *menstruation, cessation of*.

amenorrhea, physiologic The cessation of menstruation for completely normal reasons. The lack of menstruation during pregnancy and lactation are forms of physiologic amenorrhea.

amenorrhea, primary The failure of menstruation to occur at puberty.

amenorrhea, secondary The cessation of menstruation for abnormal reasons. Causes include anorexia nervosa, disease of the female reproductive tract, and overexercise. Secondary amenorrhea can also be caused by certain medications, notably the birth control medication medroxyprogesterone (brand name: Depo-Provera); in this case, amenorrhea is an expected effect.

American Type Culture Collection The world's premier biological culture repository, and a key resource for medical research.

AMI Acute myocardial infarction.

amine A chemical compound containing nitrogen. Amines are derived from ammonia.

amino acid One of the 20 building blocks from which proteins are assembled. Isoleucine, leucine, lysine, phenylalanine, threonine, tryptophan, and valine are deemed "essential" amino acids because the human body cannot make them and they must be obtained in the diet. Amino acids are sometimes taken orally in supplement form.

amino acid screen A screening blood or urine test that returns information about the levels of amino acids. An amino acid screen is useful in diagnosing certain conditions, including the inborn errors of amino acid metabolism such as phenylketonuria (PKU).

aminotransferase An enzyme that catalyzes the transfer of an amino group from a donor molecule to a recipient molecule. The donor molecule is usually an amino acid and the recipient molecule is usually an alpha-2 keto acid. Two of the best-known enzymes in this class are serum glutamic oxaloacetic transaminase (SGOT) and serum glutamic pyruvic transaminase (SGPT), both of which

are normally found primarily in cells in the liver and heart.

amitriptyline A tricyclic antidepressant drug (brand name: Elavil) prescribed to treat depression, chronic pain, migraines, eating disorders, and a wide variety of other conditions. See also *tricyclic antidepressant*.

AML See *leukemia, acute myeloid*.

amnesia An impairment to or lack of memory. Anterograde amnesia refers to a lack of memory of events occurring after a traumatic event, whereas retrograde amnesia refers to lack of memory of events that occurred before the event.

amniocentesis A before-birth diagnostic procedure during which a long needle is used to obtain amniotic fluid from within the uterus. This fluid can be used for genetic and other diagnostic tests. Informally known as amnio.

amnion A thin membrane that surrounds the fetus during pregnancy. The amnion is the inner of the two fetal membranes (the chorion is the outer one), and it contains the amniotic fluid.

amniotic fluid The fluid bathing a fetus within the uterus, which serves as a shock absorber.

amphetamine A drug that has a stimulant effect on the central nervous system that can be both physically and psychologically addictive when overused. Amphetamine has been much abused recreationally. The street term "speed" refers to stimulant drugs such as amphetamine.

amplification An event that produces multiple copies of a gene or of any sequence of DNA. Gene amplification plays a role in cancer. Amplification can occur *in vivo* (in the living individual) or *in vitro* (in the laboratory).

ampulla of Vater A small projection into the duodenum through which bile and pancreatic secretions flow to mix with food for digestion.

amputation Removal of part or all of a body part that is enclosed by skin. Amputation can occur at an accident site, the scene of an animal attack, or a battlefield. Amputation is also performed as a surgical procedure. It is typically performed to prevent the spread of gangrene as a complication of frostbite, injury, diabetes, arteriosclerosis, or any other illness that impairs blood circulation. It is also performed to prevent the spread of bone cancer and to curtail loss of blood and infection in a person who has suffered severe, irreparable damage to a limb.

When performing an amputation, surgeons generally cut above the diseased or injured area so that a portion of healthy tissue remains to cushion bone. Sometimes the location of a cut may depend in part on its suitability to be fitted with an artificial limb, or prosthesis.

AMS 1 Atypical measles syndrome. 2 Acute mountain sickness.

amygdala 1 The amygdaloid nucleus in the brain. 2 The tonsils. These structures were so named because they appeared to be shaped like an almond.

amyloidosis A group of diseases that result from the abnormal deposition of a protein, called amyloid, in various tissues of the body. Amyloid protein can be deposited in a localized area, and it may not be harmful or it may affect only a single tissue of the body. This form of amyloidosis is called localized amyloidosis. Amyloidosis that affects tissues throughout the body is referred to as systemic amyloidosis. Systemic amyloidosis can cause serious changes in organs throughout the body. Amyloidosis can occur as its own entity or secondarily, as a result of another illness, including multiple myeloma, chronic infections (such as tuberculosis or osteomyelitis), or chronic inflammatory diseases (such as rheumatoid arthritis and ankylosing spondylitis).

amyotrophic lateral sclerosis A progressive chronic disease of nerves from the spinal cord that are responsible for supplying electrical stimulation to the muscles. Abbreviated ALS. ALS is progressive and usually fatal in less than eight years, from illnesses that strike as the body becomes weaker. ALS occurs most often in adults over 50. The cause of ALS is unknown. It is sometimes called Lou Gehrig's disease, after a great baseball player who was its best-known victim.

ANA Antinuclear antibody, detected when a blood sample is microscopically evaluated using special cellular stain methods. ANAs indicate autoimmunity, or, an overactive misdirected immune system that can be associated with inflammation of various tissues of the body. The ANA test reveals different patterns, depending on how the cell nucleus is stained in the laboratory: homogeneous, or diffuse; speckled; nucleolar; and peripheral, or rim. Although these patterns are not specific for any one illness, certain illnesses can more frequently be associated with some patterns. For example, the nucleolar pattern is commonly found in the disease scleroderma. The speckled pattern is seen in many conditions and in persons who have no autoimmune disorder. ANAs are found in approximately 5

percent of the normal population, usually in low titers (low levels).

anaerobic Not requiring oxygen. Anaerobic bacteria, for example, do not require oxygen to grow.

anal fissure A tear in the anal canal, one of the most common causes of red blood in the stool.

anal itching Irritation of the skin at the exit of the rectum, accompanied by the desire to scratch. The intensity of anal itching is increased by moisture, pressure, and abrasion caused by clothing and sitting. It may be caused by irritating chemicals in food (as in spices, hot sauces, and peppers); irritation due to frequent liquid stools, as in diarrhea; diseases, such as diabetes mellitus or HIV infection, that increase the possibility of yeast infections; and psoriasis. Other causes of anal itching include hemorrhoids, anal fissures, abnormal local growth of anal skin (anal papillae), and skin tags. Treatment is directed first toward relieving the burning and soreness, including cleaning and drying the anus thoroughly, avoiding leaving soap in the anal area, showering gently without directly rubbing or irritating the skin, and using moist pads rather than toilet paper to clean the anus after bowel movements. Local application of cortisone cream may help. Also known as pruritus ani.

analgesia The inability to feel pain.

analgesic A drug that relieves pain.

analysis In psychology, a term for conversation-based therapeutic processes used to gain understanding of complex emotional or behavioral issues.

anaphylactic shock A widespread and extremely serious allergic reaction that can result in death. Symptoms include dizziness, loss of consciousness, labored breathing, swelling of the tongue and breathing tubes, blueness of the skin, low blood pressure, and heart failure. Immediate emergency treatment is required, for example, administration of epinephrine in the case of bee or wasp stings. See also *allergic reaction*.

anaphylactoid purpura A form of blood vessel inflammation that affects small capillaries in the skin and the kidneys. It results in skin rash associated with joint inflammation (arthritis) and cramping pain in the abdomen. Anaphylactoid purpura frequently follows a bacterial or viral infection of the throat or breathing passages, and it is an unusual reaction of the body's immune system to this infection. It occurs most commonly in children. Generally a mild illness that resolves spontaneously, anaphylactoid purpura can sometimes cause serious

problems in the kidneys and bowels. Treatment is directed toward the most significant area of involvement. Also known as Henoch-Schonlein purpura (HSP).

anaphylaxis An allergic reaction. In severe cases, anaphylaxis can include potentially deadly anaphylactic shock. See also *allergic reaction; anaphylactic shock*.

anastomosis The connection of normally separate parts. An anastomosis may be naturally occurring or it may be created during embryonic development, surgery, or trauma, or by pathological means. An anastomosis may, for example, connect two blood vessels, or it may connect the healthy sections of the colon or rectum after a cancerous or otherwise diseased portion has been surgically removed.

anat. Abbreviation for anatomy.

anatomy The study of human or animal form, by observation or examination of the living being, examination or dissection of dead specimens, microscopic examination, and/or textbooks.

anatomy, gross In medicine, the study of human structures that can be seen with the naked eye. Known among medical students studying human anatomy simply as "gross."

anatomy, microscopic The study of normal structure of an organism under the microscope. Known among medical students simply as "micro." Also known as histology.

anatripsis The use of friction as a treatment modality for a medical condition. Anatripsis may or may not also involve the application of a medicament.

Anderson-Fabry disease See *Fabry disease*.

androgen A group of hormones, including androsterone, that promotes the development and maintenance of male sex characteristics. Androgen production is stimulated by the hormone testosterone. See also *testosterone*.

android pelvis See *male pelvis*.

androstenedione A steroid produced in the adrenal gland that is a precursor to testosterone and other male hormones (androgens). Known popularly as andro, it has been used as a supplement to increase muscle strength. Taking andro raises testosterone levels above normal. Side effects include acne, male baldness, and a decrease in "good" cholesterol (which may predispose to heart disease and stroke).

androsterone A male sex hormone that is found in the blood and urine of men and women. It is seven times weaker than testosterone.

anemia The condition of having a lower-than-normal number of red blood cells or quantity of hemoglobin. Anemia diminishes the capacity of the blood to carry oxygen. Patients with anemia may feel tired, fatigue easily, appear pale, develop palpitations, and become short of breath. Children with chronic anemia are prone to infections and learning problems. The main causes of anemia are bleeding, hemolysis (excessive destruction of red blood cells), underproduction of red blood cells (as in bone marrow diseases), and underproduction of normal hemoglobin (as in sickle cell anemia and in iron deficiency anemia). Women are more likely than men to have anemia because of menstrual blood loss. In children, anemia is most commonly due to insufficient iron in the diet. Anemia is also often due to gastrointestinal bleeding caused by medications, including such common drugs as aspirin and ibuprofen.

anemia, Addisonian See *anemia, pernicious*.

anemia, aplastic Anemia due to failure of the bone marrow to produce red and white blood cells as well as platelets. Aplastic anemia frequently occurs without a known cause. Known causes include exposure to chemicals (for example, benzene, toluene in glues, insecticides, solvents), drugs (for example, chemotherapy drugs, gold, seizure medications, antibiotics), viruses (for instance, HIV, Epstein-Barr), radiation, immune conditions (for example, systemic lupus erythematosus, rheumatoid arthritis), pregnancy, paroxysmal nocturnal hemoglobinuria, and inherited disorders (for example, Fanconi anemia).

anemia, Cooley See *thalassemia*.

anemia, Fanconi See *Fanconi anemia*.

anemia, iron deficiency Anemia due to inadequate iron. Iron is necessary to make hemoglobin, the molecule in red blood cells that is responsible for the transport of oxygen. In iron deficiency anemia, the red cells are small and pale. Characteristic features of iron deficiency anemia in children include failure to thrive and increased infections. Iron deficiency anemia can be treated with iron supplements and iron-containing foods. Food sources of iron include meat, poultry, eggs, vegetables, and certain cereals. Iron supplements may also be taken, although they should never be given to children without a physician's recommendation.

anemia, Mediterranean See *thalassemia*.

anemia, pernicious Low red blood cell count caused by inadequate vitamin B12. Abbreviated PA. Patients with PA do not produce intrinsic factor (IF), a substance that allows the body to absorb vitamin B12 from foods. The resulting inadequacy of vitamin B12 hampers the production of red blood cells. PA can be treated by injection of vitamin B12; oral administration will not work because people with PA cannot absorb orally administered vitamin B12. Also known as Addison's anemia.

anemia, refractory Anemia that is unresponsive to treatment.

anemia, sickle cell A genetic blood disorder caused by the presence of an abnormal, sickle-shaped form of hemoglobin. These hemoglobin molecules tend to aggregate after unloading oxygen, forming long, rod-like structures that force the red cells to assume a sickle shape. Unlike normal red cells, which are usually smooth and malleable, the sickle red cells cannot squeeze through small blood vessels. When the sickle cells block small blood vessels, the organs are deprived of blood and oxygen. This leads to periodic episodes of pain and damages the vital organs. Sickled red cells die after only about 10 to 20 days, instead of the usual 120 days or so. Because they cannot be replaced fast enough, the blood is chronically short of red cells, causing anemia. The gene for sickle cell anemia must be inherited from both parents for the illness to occur in children. A child with only one copy of the gene may have sickle-cell traits but no symptoms of illness. See also *sickle cell trait*.

anencephaly Absence of the cranial vault and of most or all of the cerebral hemispheres of the brain, a lethal malformation. Anencephaly is due to imperfect development of the neural tube, the structure that gives rise to the central nervous system, during very early pregnancy. The upper end of the neural tube fails to close. The risk of all neural tube defects, including anencephaly, is decreased if the mother's diet during pregnancy contains ample folic acid. See also *neural tube defect*.

anesthesia Loss of feeling or awareness, as when anesthetic is administered before surgery.

anesthesiologist A physician or, less often, a dentist who is specialized in the practice of anesthesiology.

anesthesiology The branch of medicine specializing in the use of drugs or other agents that cause insensibility to pain.

anesthetic A substance that causes lack of feeling or awareness, dulling pain to permit surgery and other painful procedures.

anesthetic, epidural An anesthetic injected into the epidural space surrounding the fluid-filled sac (the dura) around the spinal cord. It partially numbs the abdomen and legs and is most commonly used during childbirth.

anesthetic, general An anesthetic that puts a person to sleep rendering them unconscious.

anesthetic, local An anesthetic that causes loss of feeling in a limited part of the body.

anesthetist A nurse or technician trained to administer anesthetics.

aneuploidy A condition in which a person has one or a few chromosomes above or below the normal chromosome number. For example, three copies of chromosome 21, which is characteristic of Down syndrome, is a form of aneuploidy.

aneurysm A localized widening (dilatation) of an artery, a vein, or the heart. At the point of an aneurysm, there is typically a bulge. The wall of the blood vessel or organ is weakened and may rupture.

aneurysm, abdominal aortic A balloon-like swelling in the wall of the aorta within the abdomen. This swelling weakens the aorta's wall and, because of the great volume of blood flowing under high pressure in the aorta, it can rupture. An abdominal aortic aneurysm is monitored by ultrasound. Surgery is often recommended if the aneurysm is more than 5.5 centimeters (2.2 inches) in diameter or if a smaller aneurysm is enlarging with unusual rapidity.

aneurysm, aortic An aneurysm of the largest artery in the body, the aorta, involving that vessel in its course above the diaphragm (thoracic aortic aneurysm) or, more commonly, below the diaphragm (abdominal aortic aneurysm). Because of the volume of blood flowing under relatively high pressure within the aorta, a ruptured aneurysm of the aorta is a catastrophe. See also *aneurysm, abdominal aortic; aneurysm, thoracic*.

aneurysm, arterial An aneurysm involving an artery.

aneurysm, arteriosclerotic An aneurysm that occurs because a vessel wall is weakened by arteriosclerosis. Also known as atherosclerotic aneurysm. See also *arteriosclerosis*.

aneurysm, berry A small aneurysm that looks like a berry and classically occurs at the point at which a cerebral artery departs from the circular artery (the circle of Willis) at the base of the brain. Berry aneurysms frequently rupture and bleed.

aneurysm, brain An aneurysm of a blood vessel in the brain, usually due to a defect in the vessel at birth or from high blood pressure. Rupture of the aneurysm causes a sudden severe headache, often with nausea, vomiting, decreased consciousness, and can be life threatening.

aneurysm, cardiac An outpouching of an abnormally thin portion of the heart wall. Cardiac aneurysms tend to involve the left ventricle because the blood there is under the greatest pressure.

aneurysm, dissecting An aneurysm in which the wall of an artery rips (dissects) longitudinally. This occurs because bleeding into the weakened wall splits the wall. Dissecting aneurysms tend to affect the thoracic aorta. They are a particular danger in Marfan syndrome.

aneurysm, fusiform An aneurysm that is shaped like a spindle and widens an artery or a vein.

aneurysm, milinary A tiny, millet-seed-sized aneurysm that tends to affect minute arteries in the brain and, in the eye, the retina.

aneurysm, saccular An aneurysm that resembles a small sack. A berry aneurysm is typically saccular.

aneurysm, thoracic An aneurysm of the largest artery in the body, the aorta, involving that vessel in its course within the thorax (chest). Because of the volume of blood flowing under relatively high pressure within the aorta, a ruptured aneurysm of the aorta is a catastrophe. See also *aneurysm, abdominal aortic; aneurysm, aortic*.

aneurysm, venous A localized widening of a vein.

aneurysmal bone cyst See *bone cyst, aneurysmal*.

anger An emotional state that may range in intensity from mild irritation to intense fury and rage. Anger has physical effects, including raising the heart rate and blood pressure, as well as the levels of adrenaline.

angiitis Inflammation of the walls of small blood vessels. Also known as vasculitis.

angiitis, allergic granulomatous See *Churg-Strauss syndrome*.

angina Chest pain due to an inadequate supply of oxygen to the heart muscle. The pain is typically severe and crushing, and it is characterized by a feeling of pressure and suffocation just behind the breastbone. Angina can accompany or be a precursor of a heart attack.

angina, Prinzmetal Chest pain due to a coronary artery spasm, a sudden constriction of one of the vessels that supply the heart muscle with blood that is rich in oxygen. This spasm deprives the heart muscle of blood and oxygen. Treatments include beta-blocker medications and nitroglycerin to open up the coronary arteries. Also known as variant angina. See also *coronary artery spasm*.

angina, variant See *angina, Prinzmetal*.

angina, Vincent See *acute membranous gingivitis*.

angina pectoris See *angina*.

angioedema A skin condition that resembles hives but affects a deeper skin layer causing localized swellings of soft tissues, such as the tongue or lips. Angioedema can be a sign of an allergic reaction. See also *angioedema, hereditary*.

angioedema, hereditary A genetic form of angioedema. Persons with it are born lacking the enzyme C1 esterase inhibitor, a protein that normally inhibits the activation of a cascade of proteins. Without this inhibitor protein, angioedema occurs, resulting in recurrent attacks of swollen tissues, pain in the abdomen, and swelling of the voice box (larynx), which can compromise breathing. The diagnosis of hereditary angioedema is confirmed by finding subnormal blood levels of C1 esterase inhibitor. Treatment and prevention options include antihistamines and male steroids (androgens). Also known as hereditary angioneurotic edema. See also *angioedema*.

angiogenesis The process of developing new blood vessels. Angiogenesis is critically important during the normal development of the embryo and fetus. It also appears to be important during tumor formation.

angiogram An X-ray image of blood vessels. The vessels can be seen because a contrast dye within them blocks the X-rays from developing an imaging film.

angiod streaks Tiny breaks in the elastin-filled tissue in the retina in the back of the eye. Angiod streaks are seen in patients with pseudoxanthoma elasticum, a rare disorder of degeneration of the elastic fibers with tiny areas of calcification in the

skin, retinae, and blood vessels, and they are visible during an examination using an ophthalmoscope. Angiod streaks can cause blindness.

angiookeratoma corporis diffusum universale
See *Fabry disease*.

angioneurotic edema, hereditary See *angioedema, hereditary*.

angiopathy Disease of the arteries, veins, and capillaries. There are two types of angiopathy: microangiopathy and macroangiopathy. In microangiopathy, the walls of small blood vessels become so thick and weak that they bleed, leak protein, and slow the flow of blood. For example, diabetics may develop microangiopathy with thickening of capillaries in many areas, including the eye. In macroangiopathy, fat and blood clots build up in the large blood vessels, stick to the vessel walls, and block the flow of blood. Macroangiopathy in the heart is coronary artery disease; in the brain, it is cerebrovascular disease. Peripheral vascular disease is macroangiopathy that affects, for example, vessels in the legs.

angioplasty A procedure in which a balloon-tipped catheter is used to enlarge a narrowing in a coronary artery caused by arteriosclerosis. Also known as percutaneous transluminal coronary angioplasty (PTCA). See also *arteriosclerosis*.

angiosarcoma A form of tissue cancer (sarcoma) that arises in the lining of blood vessels. Angiosarcomas tend to be aggressive, recur locally, and spread widely. Predisposing factors include lymphedema (as from a radical mastectomy), radiotherapy, foreign materials (such as steel and plastic) in the body, and environmental agents (such as arsenic solutions used to spray grapevines and vinyl chloride in the plastic industry).

angiostatin A fragment of a protein, plasminogen, that is involved in blood clotting. Angiostatin is normally secreted by tumors, and it appears to halt the process of developing new blood vessels, which is necessary to tumor development.

angiotensin A family of peptides that constrict blood vessels. Narrowing the diameter of the blood vessels causes blood pressure to rise.

angiotensin converting enzyme See *ACE*.

angle-closure glaucoma Increased pressure in the front chamber of the eye due to blockage of its normal circulation of fluid. When the iris retracts and thickens (when the pupil of the eye is wide open), it blocks the drainage pathway for fluid in

the eye. This causes the pressure in the eye to soar, which can damage the optic nerve and lead to blindness. The elevated pressure is ideally to be detected before the appearance of other symptoms of angle-closure glaucoma, so the pressure is routinely checked during eye exams. Symptoms of acute angle-closure glaucoma include severe eye and facial pain, nausea and vomiting, blurred vision, and a halo effect around lights. Acute angle-closure glaucoma is an emergency because optic nerve damage and vision loss can occur within hours of its onset. Angle-closure glaucoma tends to affect people born with a narrow angle between the cornea and iris. See also *glaucoma*.

anhidrosis Lack of sweating. Anhidrosis creates a dangerous inability to tolerate heat.

anisocoria A condition in which the left and right pupils of the eyes are not of equal size. The size of the pupil determines how much light is let into the eye. With anisocoria, the larger pupil lets more light enter the eye. There are many causes of anisocoria, including eye injury or infection and swelling within the brain.

anisocytosis Excessive inequality in the size of the red blood cells. Anisocytosis is apparent on a blood smear examined under a microscope.

ankle A complex structure made up of two joints: the true ankle joint and the subtalar joint. The ankle's movement is constrained and controlled by ligaments, including the anterior tibiofibular ligament, which connects the tibia to the fibula; the lateral collateral ligaments, which attach the fibula to the calcaneus to give the outside of the ankle stability; and the deltoid ligaments on the inside of the ankle, which connect the tibia to the talus and calcaneus to provide medial stability to the ankle. See also *ankle joint*.

ankle joint A joint that is composed of three bones: the tibia, the fibula, and the talus. The ankle joint is responsible for the up-and-down motion of the foot. The subtalar joint is under the ankle joint, and it consists of the talus on top and calcaneus on the bottom. The subtalar joint is responsible for the side-to-side motion of the foot.

ankle-foot orthosis A brace, usually made of plastic, that is worn on the lower leg and foot to support the ankle, hold the foot and ankle in the correct position and correct foot drop. Abbreviated AFO. Also known as foot drop brace.

ankyloglossia A minor birth defect in which the flap of membrane attached to the underside of the tongue (frenulum) is too short. This shortened

frenulum limits the mobility of the tongue. Ankyloglossia is also called tongue tie, from the folk belief that the anomaly causes feeding and speech problems. A child cannot feed or speak properly because the tongue is “tied.” This antiquated belief is untrue.

ankylosing Having a tendency to stiffen and fuse together.

ankylosing spondylitis A form of chronic inflammation of the spine and the sacroiliac joints. Chronic inflammation in these areas causes pain and stiffness in and around the spine. Over time, chronic spinal inflammation (spondylitis) can lead to a complete cementing together (fusion) of the vertebrae, a process called ankylosis. Ankylosing spondylitis can sometimes be seen in patients with psoriasis and inflammatory bowel disease (ulcerative and Crohn's colitis).

ankyrin deficiency A genetic disorder of the red blood cell membrane. Ankyrin deficiency is the cause of hereditary spherocytosis. See also *spherocytosis, hereditary*.

anlage 1 In biology, whatever precedes something else. 2 In embryology, a precursor or fore-runner, of a more mature structure or organ. 3 In psychoanalysis, a predisposition to a given trait or personality characteristic.

ANLL Acute nonlymphocytic leukemia.

annexin One of a family of proteins that bind calcium and phospholipids.

annexin V A substance that normally forms a shield around certain phospholipid molecules in the blood, blocking their entry into coagulation (clotting) reactions. Annexin V is thought to be a cause of antiphospholipid syndrome.

anomaly Any deviation from normal, out of the ordinary. In medicine, an anomaly is usually something that is abnormal at birth.

anomaly, congenital A birth defect. A minor congenital anomaly is an unusual anatomic feature such as a short second toe that is of no serious medical or cosmetic consequence. By contrast, a major congenital anomaly is a defect such as a cleft palate that is of serious medical or cosmetic consequence.

anorexia A decreased appetite or an aversion to food, resulting in disturbed eating habits and weight loss. Anorexia may be caused by some medications and medical conditions, particularly in elderly or hospitalized patients. See also *anorexia nervosa*.

anorexia nervosa An eating disorder characterized by extreme attempts to control the diet and/or an aversion to food. It affects young women most often, but it may also be seen in men, children, and older adults. Symptoms can include extreme weight loss, weakness, and dulling of hair and skin. In some cases, anorexia nervosa may be a form of obsessive-compulsive disorder. Treatment includes medication, therapy, dietary counseling and, in extreme cases, hospitalization. Untreated anorexia can cause organ failure and death. See also *body dysmorphic disorder, bulimia nervosa, obsessive-compulsive disorder*.

anorexic 1 Pertaining to, or having the appearance of, anorexia. 2 Lack of appetite. 3 A drug or other agent that causes anorexia and so diminishes the appetite. See also *anorexia*.

anorexigenic Causing anorexia (loss of appetite) as, for example, an anorexigenic drug. See also *anorexia*.

anorgasmia Failure to achieve orgasm (climax) during sexual intercourse. Anorgasmia has many causes, including stress, anxiety, depression, fatigue, worry, guilt, fear of painful intercourse, fear of pregnancy, the undesirability of a partner, the undesirability of a setting, and the use of alcohol or prescription or illicit drugs.

anosmia The failure of the development of or the loss of the sense of smell.

anotia The absence from birth of the external, visible part of the ear (the auricle).

anoxia The absence, or near absence, of oxygen. Anoxia can injure tissues of the body.

ant, fire See *fire ant*.

ant, velvet See *velvet ant*.

ant sting See *fire ant*.

antagonist A substance that acts against and blocks an action. Antagonist is the opposite of agonist. Agonists and antagonists are key players in the chemistry of the human body and in pharmacology.

antenatal diagnosis See *prenatal diagnosis*.

anterior The front. For example, the breastbone is part of the anterior surface of the chest. Opposite of posterior. See also Appendix B, “Anatomic Orientation Terms.”

anterior cruciate ligament A ligament in the knee that crosses from the underside of the femur to

the top of the tibia. Abbreviated ACL. Injuries to the ACL can occur in a number of situations, including sports, and can be quite serious, sometimes requiring surgery. See also *knee*.

anterior pituitary See *pituitary, anterior*.

anteroposterior From front to back. Abbreviated AP. When a chest X-ray is taken with the patient's back against the film plate and the X-ray machine in front of the patient, it is referred to as an AP view. The opposite of AP is posteroanterior (PA). See also Appendix B, "Anatomic Orientation Terms."

anthracosis See *black lung disease*.

anthrax A highly infectious disease that normally affects animals, especially ruminants (such as cattle, sheep, and horses), but that can be transmitted to humans by contact with infected animals or their products or by biologic warfare. The agent of anthrax is the bacterium *Bacillus anthracis*. Its spores can resist destruction and remain viable for years. Anthrax is treated with antibiotics such as penicillin, tetracycline, erythromycin, and ciprofloxacin (brand name: Cipro). Three forms of disease are caused by anthrax: cutaneous anthrax, inhalation anthrax, and gastrointestinal anthrax. See also *anthrax, cutaneous; anthrax, gastrointestinal; anthrax, inhalation*.

anthrax, cutaneous Anthrax infection of the skin. The most common form of anthrax, cutaneous anthrax starts as a red-brown raised spot that enlarges and has redness, blistering, and hardening in the area of the spot. The center of the spot then shows an ulcer crater with blood-tinged drainage and the formation of a black crust (an eschar). The glands in the area become swollen (enlarged lymph nodes), and the patient may have muscle aching and pain, headache, fever, nausea, and vomiting.

anthrax, gastrointestinal Anthrax infection of the gastrointestinal tract, now very rare but deadly. Gastrointestinal anthrax is caused by eating meat that is contaminated with the bacterium *Bacillus anthracis*.

anthrax, inhalation Anthrax infection of the lungs, also known as pulmonary anthrax, that is due to the inhalation of anthrax spores. The inhaled spores multiply rapidly in the lymph nodes in the chest. A person infected with inhalation anthrax experiences local bleeding and tissue death (necrosis) in these lymph nodes, and the disease spreads to the adjacent lung tissue. The first symptoms are subtle, gradual, and somewhat flu-like, including rising

fever. In a few days, severe respiratory distress occurs, followed by shock and coma. Prompt recognition and treatment are critical. Even with treatment, the patient may die. Once called woolsorters' disease.

anthrax immunization A series of six injections over a 6-month period, followed by annual booster shots, given to military personnel and others (including veterinarians who work with large animals) who are at high risk of anthrax exposure.

anthrax toxin The toxic substance secreted by the bacterium *Bacillus anthracis*, the cause of the disease anthrax.

anti-angiogenesis drug A drug, such as angiostatin or endostatin, that halts the development of new blood vessels (angiogenesis).

antibiotic A substance produced by one microorganism that selectively inhibits the growth of another. Synthetic antibiotics, usually chemically related to naturally occurring antibiotics, are made to accomplish comparable tasks. Antibiotics are used to treat bacterial infections. See also *cephalosporin antibiotics; penicillin*.

antibiotic resistance The ability of bacteria and other microorganisms to resist the effects of an antibiotic to which they were once sensitive. Antibiotic resistance is a major concern of overuse of antibiotics. Also known as drug resistance.

antibody A specialized immune protein (an immunoglobulin) produced because of the introduction of an antigen into the body. An antibody possesses the remarkable ability to combine with the antigen that triggered its production. The production of antibodies is a major function of the immune system and is carried out by a type of white blood cell called a B cell, or a B lymphocyte. Antibodies can be triggered by, and directed toward, foreign proteins, microorganisms, or toxins. Antibodies that are directed against one's own tissues are referred to as autoantibodies. See also *immune system*.

antibody, antinuclear See *antinuclear antibody*.

anticholinergic Opposing the actions of the neurotransmitter acetylcholine. Anticholinergic drugs inhibit the transmission of parasympathetic nerve impulses, thereby reducing spasms of smooth muscles (for example, muscles in the bladder). Side effects of anticholinergic medications include dry mouth and related dental problems, blurred vision, tendency toward overheating (hyperpyrexia), and in some cases, dementia-like symptoms.

anticipation The progressively earlier appearance and increased severity of a disease from generation to generation. The phenomenon of anticipation was once thought to be an artifact, but a biological basis for it has been discovered in a number of genetic disorders, such as myotonic dystrophy and Huntington disease.

anti-citrulline antibody See *citrulline antibody*.

anticoagulant An agent that is used to prevent the formation of blood clots. Anticoagulants have various uses. Some are used for the prevention or treatment of disorders characterized by abnormal blood clots and emboli. Anticoagulant drugs include intravenous heparin, which acts by inactivating thrombin and several other clotting factors that are required for a clot to form, and oral anticoagulants such as warfarin and dicumarol, which act by inhibiting the liver's production of vitamin K-dependent factors that are crucial to clotting. Anticoagulant solutions are also used for the preservation of stored whole blood and blood fractions and to keep laboratory blood specimens from clotting.

antidepressant A medication that prevents or reduces the symptoms of clinical depression. Some antidepressants may also be prescribed for their other medical effects, including increasing blood flow within the brain and treating chronic pain. See also *MAO inhibitor; SSRI; tricyclic antidepressant*.

antidiuretic hormone A peptide hormone made in the hypothalamus and released at the base of the brain by the nearby pituitary gland. Abbreviated ADH. ADH prevents the production of dilute urine and is therefore antidiuretic. It can also stimulate contraction of arteries and capillaries, and it may have effects on mental function. Also known as vasopressin. See also *ADH secretion, inappropriate; pituitary, posterior*.

antiDNAse B A blood test for antibodies to the streptococcus B bacteria.

antidote A drug that counteracts a poison.

antifungal A medication that limits or prevents the growth of yeasts and other fungal organisms.

antigen A substance that the immune system perceives as being foreign or dangerous. The body combats an antigen with the production of an antibody.

antigen, prostate specific See *prostate specific antigen test*.

antigen-antibody complex The complex formed by the binding of an antibody to an antigen. Antigen-antibody complexes initiate immune responses. Also known as an immune complex.

antihistamine A drug that opposes the action of histamine released during an allergic reaction by blocking the action of the histamine on the tissue. Antihistamines frequently cause dry mouth and sleepiness. Some antihistamines are nonsedating. Antihistamine side effects that may occur include urine retention in males and increased heart rate.

antihypertensive A medication or another substance that reduces high blood pressure (hypertension). See also *high blood pressure*.

anti-infective An agent that is capable of acting against infection, either by inhibiting the spread of an infectious agent or by killing the infectious agent outright.

antineoplastic 1 Acting to prevent, inhibit, or halt the development of a neoplasm (a malignant tumor, or cancer). 2 An agent with antineoplastic properties. Cancer chemotherapy is antineoplastic.

antinuclear antibody An antibody that is directed against the structures within the nucleus of a cell and that is characteristic of autoimmunity. Abbreviated ANA. ANAs are found in the blood of patients whose immune systems attack their own body tissues (autoimmunity), such as patients with systemic lupus erythematosus, rheumatoid arthritis, juvenile diabetes mellitus, and Hashimoto disease. ANAs can also be found in patients with chronic infections and cancer, and many medications—including procainamide (brand name: Procan SR), hydralazine, and phenytoin (brand name: Dilantin)—can stimulate their production. See also *ANA; autoimmune disorder*.

antioxidant A substance that reduces damage due to oxygen, such as that caused by free radicals. Well-known antioxidants include enzymes and other substances, such as vitamin C, vitamin E, and beta carotene, which are capable of counteracting the damaging effects of oxidation. Antioxidants are also commonly added to food products such as vegetable oils and prepared foods to prevent or delay their deterioration from the action of air. Antioxidants may possibly reduce the risks of cancer. Antioxidants clearly slow the progression of age-related macular degeneration.

antiphospholipid syndrome An immune disorder characterized by the presence of abnormal antibodies in the blood that are directed against the chemical structure of fats that contain phosphorus

(phospholipids). Abbreviated APS. APS is associated with abnormal blood clotting, migraine headaches, recurrent pregnancy loss, and low blood platelet counts (thrombocytopenia). APS can occur by itself (primary APS) or be caused by an underlying condition (secondary APS), such as systemic lupus erythematosus. Examples of antiphospholipid antibodies are cardiolipin antibody and lupus anti-coagulant. See also *annexin V*.

antiplatelet agent A medication that interferes with the tendency of platelets in the blood to clump and clot. Aspirin is an antiplatelet agent.

antiseptic Discouraging the growth of microorganisms. Commonly refers to antiseptic preparations used during medical procedures or used to maintain sanitary conditions in nursing homes, barbershops, tattoo parlors, and other facilities where unchecked microorganism growth could result in disease. See also *aseptic*.

antispasmodic A medication that relieves, prevents, or lowers the incidence of muscle spasms, especially those of smooth muscle such as in the bowel wall.

antitoxin 1 An antibody that is naturally produced to counteract a toxin, such as a toxin from a bacterial infection or snake bite. 2 An antibody from the serum of an animal stimulated with specific antibodies that is administered to humans or other animals to provide passive immunity to a disease. Such antitoxins are of short-term value only and are used for treatment rather than prevention.

antiviral agent A medication or another agent that kills viruses or inhibits their capability to reproduce.

antral-duodenal motility study A study used to detect and record the contractions of the muscles of the stomach and duodenum in order to diagnose motility disorders of the stomach and small intestine. A tube is passed through the nose, throat, esophagus, and stomach, until the tip lies in the small intestine. The tube senses when the muscles of the stomach and small intestine contract and squeeze it. The contractions are recorded by a computer and analyzed.

antrum A general term for a nearly closed cavity or chamber. For example, the antrum of the stomach (gastric antrum) is a portion before the outlet, which is lined by mucosa and does not produce acid. The paranasal sinuses can be referred to as the frontal antrum, ethmoid antrum, and maxillary antrum.

anus The opening of the rectum to the outside of the body.

anus, imperforate A birth defect in which the rectum is a blind alley and there is no anus. Imperforate anus occurs in about 1 in 5,000 births, and it can be corrected by surgery.

anxiety A feeling of apprehension and fear, characterized by physical symptoms such as palpitations, sweating, and feelings of stress.

anxiety disorder A chronic condition characterized by an excessive and persistent sense of apprehension, with physical symptoms such as sweating, palpitations, and feelings of stress. Treatments include the comfort offered by understanding the condition, avoiding or desensitizing exacerbating situations, and medications.

aorta The largest artery in the body, the major conduit from the heart to the body. The aorta arises from the left ventricle of the heart, ascends a little, arches, and then descends through the chest and the abdomen, ending by dividing into two arteries, the common iliac arteries, that supply blood to the lower extremities. Anatomically, the aorta is traditionally divided into the ascending aorta, the aortic arch, and the descending aorta. The descending aorta is, in turn, subdivided into the thoracic aorta, which goes from the heart to above the diaphragm, and the abdominal aorta, which is below the diaphragm. The aorta has branches to the head and neck, the arms, the major organs in the chest and abdomen, and the legs. It supplies them all with oxygenated blood. See also *abdominal aorta; ascending aorta; descending aorta; thoracic aorta*.

aorta, coarctation of the A constriction of the aorta. At the point of coarctation, the sides of the aorta appear to be pressed together. Blood pressure is increased above the constriction, and the flow of blood is impeded below the level of the constriction. Symptoms may not be evident at birth but can develop as soon as the first week after birth, with congestive heart failure or high blood pressure that call for early surgery. The outlook after surgery is usually favorable. Some cases of coarctation of the aorta have been treated with balloon angioplasty.

aortic aneurysm See *aneurysm, aortic*.

aortic arch The second section of the aorta following the ascending aorta. As it continues from the heart, it gives off the brachiocephalic trunk, and the left common carotid and subclavian arteries. The brachiocephalic trunk splits to form the right subclavian and the right common carotid arteries,

which supply blood to the right arm and the right side of the neck and head. The left common carotid artery and left subclavian artery, the second and third branches off the aortic arch, perform parallel functions on the left side.

aortic insufficiency Backflow of blood from the aorta into the left ventricle across a weakened aortic valve. Also known as aortic regurgitation.

aortic regurgitation See *aortic insufficiency*.

aortic stenosis Narrowing (stenosis) of the aortic valve, the valve between the left ventricle of the heart and the aorta. This narrowing impedes the delivery of blood to the body through the aorta and makes the heart work harder. The need for surgery depends on the degree of stenosis. A procedure called balloon valvuloplasty has been used in some cases of aortic stenosis.

aortic valve One of the four valves of the heart. The aortic valve is positioned at the beginning of the aorta. It normally permits blood from the left ventricle to flow into the aorta, and prevents blood in the aorta from returning to the heart. See also *heart valve*.

aortic valve, bicuspid An abnormal aortic valve with only two cusps. See also *aortic stenosis*.

aortitis Inflammation of the aorta. The causes of aortitis include syphilis and rheumatic fever.

AP 1 Angina pectoris. 2 Arterial pressure. 3 In endocrinology, anterior pituitary gland. 4 In anatomy, anteroposterior.

aperient Laxative.

Apert syndrome The best-known type of acrocephalosyndactyly, a group of disorders characterized by malformations of the skull, face, hands, and feet. Apert syndrome is inherited as an autosomal dominant trait. See also *acrocephalosyndactyly*; *fibroblast growth factor receptor*.

apex The Latin word for summit, the apex is the tip of a pyramidal or rounded structure, such as the lung or the heart. The apex of the lung is indeed its tip—its rounded most superior portion. The apex of the heart is likewise its tip, but it is formed by the left ventricle, so it is essentially the most inferior portion of the heart.

Apgar score An objective score of the condition of a baby after birth. This score is determined by scoring the heart rate, respiratory effort, muscle tone, skin color, and response to a catheter in the

nostril. Each of these objective signs receives 0, 1, or 2 points. An Apgar score of 10 means an infant is in the best possible condition. The Apgar score is done routinely 60 seconds after the birth of the infant. A child with a score of 0 to 3 needs immediate resuscitation. The Apgar score is often repeated 5 minutes after birth, and in the event of a difficult resuscitation, the Apgar score may be done again at 10, 15, and 20 minutes.

aphagia Inability to eat.

aphasia Literally, no speech. Aphasia may also be used to describe defects in spoken expression or comprehension of speech.

apheresis The process of removing a specific component from blood temporarily. Also known as hemapheresis and pheresis. Forms of apheresis include plasmapheresis, harvesting plasma or liquid part of the blood; leukapheresis, harvesting leukocytes or white blood cells; granulocytapheresis, harvesting granulocytes; lymphocytapheresis, harvesting lymphocytes; lymphoplasmapheresis, harvesting lymphocytes and plasma; and plateletapheresis, harvesting platelets.

aphonia Inability to speak.

apical The adjective for apex, the tip of a pyramidal or rounded structure, such as the lung or the heart. For example, an apical lung tumor is a tumor located at the top of the lung.

aplasia Failure to develop. See also *atrophy*.

aplasia of the breast See *amastia*.

aplastic anemia See *anemia, aplastic*.

apnea The absence of breathing (respiration).

apnea, sleep See *sleep apnea*.

apophysitis calcaneus Inflammation of the growth plate of the calcaneus, the bone at the back of the heel, where the Achilles tendon attaches. Apophysitis calcaneus occurs mainly in older children and adolescents, especially active boys. It can be very painful, although it may be dismissed as "growing pains." Treatment includes activity limitation, medication, shoe inserts, heel lifts, and sometimes casting if it becomes especially severe. Fortunately, it usually disappears as the child gets older. Also known as Sever condition. See also *Achilles tendon*.

apoptosis A form of cell death in which a programmed sequence of events leads to the elimination

appendectomy

of cells without releasing harmful substances into the surrounding area. Apoptosis plays a crucial role in developing and maintaining the health of the body by eliminating old cells, unnecessary cells, and unhealthy cells. The human body replaces perhaps one million cells per second. Too little or too much apoptosis can play a role in many diseases. When apoptosis does not work correctly, cells that should be eliminated may persist and become immortal, for example, in cancer and leukemia. When apoptosis works overly well, it kills too many cells and inflicts grave tissue damage. This is the case in strokes and neurodegenerative disorders such as Alzheimer's, Huntington's, and Parkinson's diseases. Also known as programmed cell death and cell suicide.

appendectomy Surgical removal of the appendix. An appendectomy is performed because of probable appendicitis. See also *appendicitis*.

appendicitis Inflammation of the appendix, usually associated with infection of the appendix. Appendicitis often causes fever, loss of appetite, and pain. Appendicitis may be suspected because of the medical history and physical examination. The pain of appendicitis can be located in various areas of the belly. If the appendix ruptures and infection spreads throughout the abdomen, the pain becomes widespread as the entire lining of the abdomen becomes inflamed. Ultrasonography and computerized tomography may be helpful in diagnosis.

appendix A small outpouching from the beginning of the large intestine.

appendix epididymis A small cystic projection from the surface of the epididymis (a structure within the scrotum that is attached to the backside of the testis), which represents a remnant of the embryologic mesonephros.

appendix epiploica A finger-like projection of fat attached to the colon.

appendix testis A small solid projection of tissue on the outer surface of the testis, which is a remnant of the embryologic mullerian duct.

apposition **1** The act of adding or accretion. Growth by apposition is characteristic of many tissues in the body by which nutritive matter from the blood is transformed on the surface of an organ into a solid unorganized substance. **2** The act of putting things in juxtaposition or side by side. To lose a pair of apposed teeth is to lose teeth that are next to each other. Also known as juxtaposition.

apraxia The inability to execute a voluntary motor movement despite being able to demonstrate normal muscle function. Apraxia is not related to a lack of understanding or to any kind of physical paralysis; rather, it is caused by a problem in the cortex of the brain.

apraxia of speech A severe speech disorder characterized by an inability to speak or a severe struggle to speak clearly. Apraxia of speech occurs when the oral-motor muscles do not or cannot obey commands from the brain or when the brain cannot reliably send those commands. Apraxia of speech is caused by damage to the Broca area in the brain. See also *dyspraxia of speech*.

APS Antiphospholipid syndrome.

aphthous ulcer See *canker sore*.

aqueduct A channel for the passage of fluid.

aqueduct of Sylvius A canal between the third and fourth ventricles in the brain within the system of four communicating cavities that are continuous with the central canal of the spinal cord. The ventricles are filled with cerebrospinal fluid, which is carried by the aqueduct of Sylvius.

aqueduct of the midbrain See *aqueduct of Sylvius*.

arachnodactyly A condition in which a person has long, spider-like fingers and toes. Arachnodactyly is a frequent finding in those with Marfan syndrome. See also *Marfan syndrome*.

arachnophobia An abnormal and persistent fear of spiders. Sufferers from arachnophobia experience undue anxiety, even though they realize that the risk of encountering a spider and being harmed by it is small or nonexistent. They may avoid going barefoot and may be especially alert when taking showers or getting into and out of bed.

arbitration agreement An arrangement in which the patient waives the right to sue the physician and, instead, agrees to submit any dispute to arbitration. Arbitration agreements are legal and binding. The arguments in their favor are that, for patients, the case can be settled faster, and more money can go to the patient (rather than to a lawyer). Physicians can often get a discount on their malpractice insurance if the majority of their patients sign such agreements.

arbovirus A type of virus transmitted to humans by mosquitoes and ticks. Arbovirus can cause inflammation of the brain (encephalitis). The types

of arboviral encephalitis that occur in the US include LaCrosse, eastern equine, western equine, and St. Louis encephalitis, all of which are transmitted by mosquitoes. Another arbovirus, Powassan, transmitted by ticks, is a cause of encephalitis in the northern US. Many other types of arboviral encephalitis occur throughout the world. Most are problems only for travelers to countries where the viruses are endemic. One, the West Nile virus, has made a major entry into the US. It causes West Nile encephalitis, also known as West Nile fever. See also *hemorrhagic fever, viral*.

ARC AIDS-related complex.

arch, aortic See *aortic arch*.

archaea A unique group of microorganisms that are called bacteria (Archaeobacteria) but are genetically and metabolically different from all other known bacteria. They appear to be living fossils, the survivors of an ancient group of organisms that bridged the gap in evolution between bacteria and multicellular organisms (eukaryotes).

arcus senilis A cloudy opaque arc or circle around the edge of the eye, often seen in the eyes of the elderly.

ARDS Acute respiratory distress syndrome.

areola 1 The small, darkened area around the nipple of the breast. 2 The colored part of the iris around the pupil of the eye. 3 Any small space in a tissue.

arginine An essential amino acid and a key component of protein. Lack of arginine in the diet impairs growth, and in adult males it decreases the sperm count. Arginine is available in turkey, chicken, and other meats, and as L-arginine in supplements. Babies born without the enzyme phosphatase synthetase have arginine deficiency syndrome; adding arginine to their diets permits normal growth and development.

argyria Silver poisoning, resulting in ashen, gray, discolored skin, and damage to other tissues of the body. Caused by long-term use of silver salts or other preparations containing silver.

arm In popular usage, the appendage that extends from the shoulder to the hand. However, the medical definition refers to the upper extremity extending from the shoulder only to the portion of the elbow, excluding the forearm, which extends from the elbow to the wrist. The arm contains one bone: the humerus.

arm, wrist, and hand bones See *bones of the arm, wrist, and hand*.

armed tapeworm See *Taenia solium*.

Arnold Chiari malformation See *Chiari malformation*.

aromatherapy A form of alternative medicine in which essential oils or other scents are inhaled to achieve therapeutic benefit. The mechanism of action in aromatherapy is unknown, but recent studies have shown that aromatherapy may be beneficial for some health problems.

arrector pili A microscopic band of muscle tissue that connects a hair follicle to the dermis. When stimulated, the arrector pili contracts and causes the hair to become more perpendicular to the skin surface, thereby erecting the hair (causing the hair to stand on end). The arrector pili muscle plays a key role in forming goose bumps. See also *goose bumps*.

arrhythmia An abnormal heart rhythm. With an arrhythmia, the heartbeats may be irregular or too slow (bradycardia), too rapid (tachycardia), or too early. When a single heartbeat occurs earlier than normal, it is called a premature contraction. See also *bradycardia; tachycardia*.

arrhythmia, atrial An abnormal heart rhythm due to electrical disturbances in the upper chambers of the heart (atria) or the atrioventricular (AV) node "relay station," leading to fast heart beats. Examples of atrial arrhythmias include atrial fibrillation, atrial flutter, and paroxysmal atrial tachycardia.

arrhythmia, ventricular An abnormally rapid heart rhythm that originates in the lower chambers of the heart (ventricles). Ventricular arrhythmias include ventricular tachycardia and ventricular fibrillation. Both are life-threatening arrhythmias, and they are most commonly associated with heart attacks or scarring of the heart muscle from previous heart attacks.

arterial anastomosis A joining of two arteries. See also *anastomosis*.

arterial aneurysm See *aneurysm, arterial*.

arterial blood gas See *ABG*.

arterial pressure The pressure of the blood within an artery. Also known as arterial tension and intra-arterial pressure.

arterial tension See *arterial pressure*.

arteriogram An X-ray in which an injection of dye shows blood vessels.

arteriole A small branch of an artery that leads to a capillary. The oxygenated hemoglobin (oxyhemoglobin) makes the blood in arterioles (and arteries) look bright red.

arteriosclerosis Hardening and thickening of the walls of the arteries. Arteriosclerosis leads to heart attacks and strokes, as well as to peripheral vascular disease. Arteriosclerosis can be categorized as atherosclerosis, medial calcification, hypertensive, or arteriolar sclerosis. See also *atherosclerosis; heart attack; stroke; peripheral vascular disease*.

arteriosclerotic aneurysm See *aneurysm, arteriosclerotic*.

arteriovenous malformation See *malformation, arteriovenous*.

arteritis, cranial A serious disease characterized by inflammation of the walls of arteries, particularly those that supply blood to the head. Symptoms include headache, pain in the jaw when repetitively chewing, and tenderness of the scalp, usually over the inflamed arteries of the sides of the head (temporal area). Less specific symptoms include fatigue, low-grade fever, and weight loss. The muscle aching of polymyalgia rheumatica is seen in one-fourth of patients with cranial arteritis. When the arteries affected by cranial arteritis become inflamed, they can narrow to the degree that the blood flow through them is limited. This can cause serious deficiency of oxygen supply to the tissues that are normally supplied by these arteries. Deficient oxygenation of the eyes or brain can lead to impaired or double vision, blindness, or stroke. Patients with cranial arteritis are usually over 50 years of age. The disease is detected by a biopsy of an artery and treated with high dose cortisone-related medications. Also known as temporal arteritis and giant cell arteritis. See also *polymyalgia rheumatica*.

arteritis, giant cell See *arteritis, cranial*.

arteritis, temporal See *arteritis, cranial*.

artery A blood vessel that carries blood, rich in oxygen, away from the heart to the body. The oxygenated hemoglobin (oxyhemoglobin) in arterial blood makes it look bright red. See also *aorta; carotid artery; ophthalmic artery; radial artery; splenic artery; vertebral artery*.

artery, coronary See *coronary artery*.

artery spasm, coronary See *coronary artery spasm*.

arthralgia Pain in a joint.

arthritis Inflammation of a joint. When joints are inflamed, they can develop stiffness, warmth, swelling, redness, and pain. There are more than 100 types of arthritis. See also *ankylosing spondylitis; arthritis, degenerative; arthritis, gouty; arthritis, Lyme; psoriatic arthritis; arthritis, Reiter; arthritis, rheumatoid; arthritis, spondylitis; gout; lupus; pseudogout*.

arthritis, degenerative A type of arthritis caused by inflammation, breakdown, and eventual loss of the cartilage of the joints. Degenerative arthritis is the most common form of arthritis, usually affecting the hands, feet, spine, and large weight-bearing joints, such as the hips and knees. Also known as osteoarthritis and degenerative joint disease.

arthritis, gouty See *gouty arthritis*.

arthritis, Lyme Joint inflammation associated with Lyme disease, a bacterial disease spread by ticks. See also *Lyme disease*.

arthritis, psoriatic See *psoriatic arthritis*.

arthritis, Reiter The joint component of a syndrome of inflammation of the joints (arthritis), eyes (conjunctivitis), and the genitourinary and/or gastrointestinal systems. See also *Reiter syndrome*.

arthritis, rheumatoid An autoimmune disease characterized by chronic inflammation of joints. Rheumatoid disease can also involve inflammation of tissues in other areas of the body, such as the lungs, heart, and eyes. Because it can affect multiple organs of the body, rheumatoid arthritis is referred to as a systemic illness. Although rheumatoid arthritis is a chronic illness, patients may experience long periods without symptoms. Also known as rheumatoid disease.

arthritis, septic Joint inflammation caused by infection from blood poisoning (sepsis) or from infection within the affected joint itself, or as a side effect of infection in other body tissues. Treatment includes antibiotic medications and surgical drainage. Also known as pyarthrosis and suppurative arthritis.

arthritis, spondylitis A form of arthritis that causes chronic inflammation of the spine.

arthritis, systemic-onset chronic rheumatoid
See *arthritis, systemic-onset juvenile rheumatoid*.

arthritis, systemic-onset juvenile rheumatoid
A form of joint disease in children whose systemic signs and symptoms include high intermittent fever, a salmon-colored skin rash, swollen lymph glands, enlargement of the liver and spleen, inflammation of the lungs (pleuritis), and inflammation around the heart (pericarditis). The arthritis itself may not be immediately apparent, but in time it surfaces and may persist after the systemic symptoms are long gone. Also known as systemic-onset chronic arthritis or Still's disease.

arthritis in children Arthritis in children, usually in the form of juvenile/pediatric arthritis or rheumatoid arthritis. See also *arthritis, systemic-onset juvenile rheumatoid*.

arthritis mutilans An extremely severe form of chronic rheumatoid or psoriatic arthritis characterized by resorption of bones and the consequent collapse of soft tissue. When this affects the hands, it can cause a phenomenon sometimes referred to as "telescoping fingers."

arthrocentesis A procedure in which a sterile needle and syringe are used to drain fluid from the joint. This is usually done as an office procedure or at the bedside in the hospital. For certain conditions, medication is put into the joint after fluid removal. The needle is then removed, and a bandage or dressing is applied over the entry point. Joint fluid can be examined to determine the cause of the joint swelling, such as infection, gout, or rheumatoid disease. Arthrocentesis can be helpful in relieving joint swelling and pain. Also known as joint aspiration.

arthrogryposis Joint contractures that develop before birth and are evident at birth. With arthrogryposis there is a lack of the normal range of motion in one or more joints. In normal embryonic development, joints can be seen moving by 8 weeks of gestation. This motion of joints is essential to the proper development of the joints and structures around them. Limitation of joint motion before birth leads to joint contractures and arthrogryposis. Prenatal limitation of joint mobility can result from neurologic deficits, muscle defects, connective tissue defects, and fetal crowding (in which there is not enough room for the fetus to move around freely in the womb).

arthropathy Joint disease.

arthroscope A thin, flexible fiberoptic scope that is introduced into a joint space through a small incision in order to carry out diagnostic and treatment procedures within the joint. An arthroscope is fitted with a miniature camera, a light source, and precision tools at the end of flexible tubes. See also *arthroscopy*.

arthroscopic Related to arthroscopy.

arthroscopy A surgical technique in which a tube-like instrument is inserted into a joint to inspect, diagnose, and repair tissues. It is most commonly performed in patients with diseases of the knees or shoulders.

arthrosis See *joint*.

articulation 1 In medicine, the joint where bones come together. See also *joint*. 2 In dentistry, the occlusal surfaces of the teeth, where the teeth come together. 3 In speech, the production of intelligible words and sentences by joining together the lips, tongue, palate, and other structures.

articulation disorder A speech disorder involving difficulties in articulating specific types of sounds. Articulation disorders often involve substitution of one sound for another, slurring of speech, or indistinct speech. Treatment is speech therapy.

artificial heart A human-made heart. An artificial heart is a mechanical pump that is used to replace a damaged heart temporarily or permanently.

artificial insemination A procedure in which a fine catheter (tube) is inserted through the cervix into the uterus to directly deposit a sperm sample. The purpose of this relatively simple procedure is to achieve fertilization and pregnancy. Also known as intrauterine insemination (IUI).

artificial insemination by donor A procedure in which a fine catheter (tube) is inserted through the cervix into the uterus to directly deposit a sperm sample from a donor other than the woman's mate. The purpose of this procedure is to achieve fertilization and pregnancy. Abbreviated AID. Also known as heterologous insemination.

artificial insemination by partner A procedure in which a fine catheter (tube) is inserted through the cervix into the uterus to deposit a sperm sample from the woman's mate directly into the uterus. The purpose of this procedure is to achieve fertilization and pregnancy. Abbreviated AIH. Also known as homologous insemination.

artificial pacemaker A device that uses electrical impulses to regulate the heart rhythm or reproduce it. An internal pacemaker is one in which the electrodes to the heart, the electronic circuitry, and the power supply are all implanted internally, within the body. Although there are different types of pacemakers, all are designed to treat a heart rate that is too slow (bradycardia). Pacemakers may function continuously and stimulate the heart at a fixed rate, or they may function at an increased rate during exercise. A pacemaker can also be programmed to detect an overly long pause between heartbeats and then stimulate the heart.

artificial pancreas A machine that constantly measures glucose (sugar) in the blood and, in response to an elevated level of glucose, releases an appropriate amount of insulin. In this respect, an artificial pancreas functions like a natural pancreas.

asbestos A natural material made up of tiny fibers that is used as thermal insulation. Inhalation of asbestos fibers can lead to asbestosis and mesothelioma.

asbestosis Scarring of the lungs caused by inhalation of asbestos fibers. When asbestos fibers lodge in the lungs, they promote the development of cancer, such as mesothelioma of the pleura (the lining of the lung) and bronchogenic carcinoma (cancer of the lung). See also *mesothelioma*.

ascaris Intestinal roundworms. Infection with ascaris is referred to as ascariasis.

ascending aorta The first section of the aorta, which starts from the left ventricle of the heart and extends to the aortic arch. The right and left coronary arteries that supply blood to the heart muscle arise from the ascending aorta.

ascites An abnormal accumulation of fluid within the abdomen. There are many causes of ascites, including cirrhosis of the liver, cancer within the abdomen, congestive heart failure, and tuberculosis.

ascorbic acid Vitamin C, an essential nutrient found mainly in fruits and vegetables. The body requires ascorbic acid in order to form and maintain bones, blood vessels, and skin. Ascorbic acid also promotes the healing of cuts, abrasions and wounds; helps fight infections; inhibits conversion of irritants in smog, tobacco smoke, and certain foods into cancer-causing substances; appears to lessen the risk of developing high blood pressure and heart disease; helps regulate cholesterol levels; prevents the development of scurvy; appears to lower the risk of developing cataracts; and aids in

iron absorption. Ascorbic acid can cause adverse reactions when taken with some drugs.

ASCUS An acronym for Atypical Squamous Cells of Undetermined Significance. This term is used in the Bethesda System for reporting Pap smear findings, and indicates that some flat (squamous) cells look unusual and may or may not be pre-malignant or malignant.

ASD Atrial septal defect.

aseptic Free from infection, sterile. See also *antiseptic*.

aseptic necrosis See *avascular necrosis*.

ASO Antistreptolysin-O, a blood test that looks for antibodies to the streptococcus A bacteria. Also abbreviated ASLO.

aspartate aminotransferase An enzyme that is normally present in liver and heart cells that is released into the blood when the liver or heart is damaged. Abbreviated AST. Some medications can also raise blood AST levels. Also known as serum glutamic oxaloacetic transaminase (SGOT).

Asperger syndrome A disorder related to autism characterized by obsessive interests and behavior, but without speech delay or mental retardation. Other features of Asperger syndrome include physical clumsiness, and/or moderate to severe social deficits. Asperger syndrome is the mildest of and at the highest functioning end of the spectrum of pervasive developmental disorders (the autism spectrum). Persons with Asperger syndrome have deviations or abnormalities in three broad aspects of development: social relatedness and social skills, the use of language for communicative purposes, and certain behavioral and stylistic characteristics that involve repetitive or perseverative features and a limited but intense range of interests. See also *autism*.

aspergillosis Infection with the fungus Aspergillus, seen especially in people with compromised immune systems in whom there may be invasive lung infection and sometimes spread to other tissues, including the brain, the skin, and bones. Aspergillosis also causes allergic sinusitis and allergic bronchopulmonary disease.

Aspergillus A family of fungal organisms and molds, some of which can cause disease.

asphyxia Impaired breathing.

aspirate To suck in. For example, a person may aspirate by accidentally drawing material from the stomach into the lungs, and a physician can aspirate fluid from a joint. See also *arthrocentesis; aspiration*.

aspiration 1 Removal of a sample of fluid and cells through a needle. 2 The accidental sucking of food, fluid, vomit, or other foreign material into the lungs.

aspiration, joint See *arthrocentesis*.

aspiration pneumonia Inflammation of the lungs due to aspiration.

aspirin Once the Bayer trademark for acetysalicylic acid, now the common name for this anti-inflammatory pain reliever.

assay 1 An analysis done to determine the presence and amount of a substance. An assay may be done, for example, to determine the level of thyroid hormones in the blood. 2 An analysis done to determine the biologic or pharmacologic potency of a drug. For example, an assay may be done of a vaccine to determine its potency. 3 As a verb, to try or attempt. For example, "She assayed this operation for the first time and was understandably nervous." 4 The act of analyzing a mixture for one or more of its components. 5 The act of judging the value or worth of something.

assistant, physician See *physician assistant*.

assisted living A type of long-term care facility for elderly or disabled people who are able to get around on their own but who may need help with some activities of daily living or simply prefer the convenience of having their meals in a central cafeteria and having nursing staff on call.

assisted suicide Deliberate hastening of death performed by a terminally ill patient, with assistance from a physician, a family member, or another individual. See also *active euthanasia*.

assistive device A device that is designed, made, or adapted to help a person perform a particular task. For example, canes, crutches, walkers, wheelchairs, and shower chairs are all assistive devices. See also *assistive technology*.

assistive technology An assistive device or, more commonly, some kind of electronic or computerized device that helps a disabled person to function more easily in the world. Examples of assistive technology include devices that allow people to control a computer with the mouth, keyboards that can "speak"

for mute individuals, and closed-captioning systems that help the hearing impaired enjoy television shows and videos. See also *augmentative communication device*.

association 1 In the study of birth defects (dysmorphology), the nonrandom occurrence in two or more individuals of a pattern of multiple anomalies not known to be a malformation syndrome (such as Down syndrome), a malformation sequence of events, or a field defect, in which all the defects are concentrated in one particular area of the body. An example of an association in dysmorphology is the VATER association. 2 In genetics, the occurrence together of two or more characteristics more often than would be expected by chance alone. Association is to be distinguished from linkage. An example of association involves a feature on the surface of white blood cells, the human leukocyte antigen (HLA) type. HLA type B-27 is associated with an increased risk for a number of diseases, including ankylosing spondylitis.

association, VACTERL See *VACTERL association*.

Association of American Medical Colleges A nonprofit association of accredited medical schools in the US and Canada that is responsible for the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT), an entrance examination for medical schools.

AST Aspartate aminotransferase.

asthenia Weakness. Lack of strength.

asthenic 1 Having a slender, light body. Ectomorphic. 2 Weak. Lacking in strength.

asthma A common lung disorder in which inflammation causes the bronchi to swell and narrow the airways, creating breathing difficulties that may range from mild to life-threatening. Symptoms include shortness of breath, cough, wheezing, and chest tightness. The diagnosis of asthma is based on evidence of wheezing and is confirmed with breathing tests. Many allergens and irritants can precipitate attacks of asthma. Avoidance of precipitating factors can be helpful. Treatment may include lifestyle changes, activity reduction, allergy shots, and medications to prevent or reverse the bronchospasm.

asthma, exercise-induced Asthma triggered by vigorous physical activity. It primarily affects children and young adults because of their high levels of physical activity, but it can occur at any age. Exercise-induced asthma is initiated by the fall in airway temperature during rapid breathing followed

by rapid reheating with lowered ventilation. The more heat that is transferred, the cooler the airways become, and the more rapidly the airways rewarm, the more the bronchi are narrowed. Acute attacks can be minimized by warming up before strenuous activity. An inhalator may also be used before exertion. Also known as exercise-induced bronchospasm and thermally induced asthma.

asthma, thermally induced See *asthma, exercise-induced*.

astigmatism A common form of visual impairment in which part of an image is blurred due to an irregularity in the dome-shaped curvature of the front surface of the eye, the cornea. With astigmatism, light rays entering the eye are not uniformly focused on the retina. The result is blurred vision at all distances. Significant astigmatism can cause headaches, eye strain, and seriously blurred vision. Astigmatism is often not detected during routine eye screening in schools. It may coexist with other refractive errors such as nearsightedness and farsightedness. Astigmatism is corrected with slightly cylindrical lenses that have greater light-bending power in one direction than the other. Use of these lenses elongates objects in one direction and shortens them in the other, much like looking into a distorting wavy mirror.

astrocytoma A tumor that begins in the brain or spinal cord in small, star-shaped cells called astrocytes. The location of the tumor depends on the age of the person. In adults, astrocytomas most often arise in the cerebrum, whereas in children, they may arise in the brain stem, cerebrum, and cerebellum.

asymptomatic Without symptoms. For example, an asymptomatic infection is an infection with no symptoms.

asystole A dire form of cardiac arrest in which the heart stops beating and there is no electrical activity in the heart. As a result, the heart is at a total standstill.

ataxia Poor coordination and unsteadiness due to the brain's failure to regulate the body's posture and regulate the strength and direction of limb movements. Ataxia is usually due to disease in the cerebellum of the brain, which lies beneath the back part of the cerebrum.

ataxia-telangiectasia A progressive disease characterized by degeneration of the nervous system manifest by poor coordination and balance (cerebellar ataxia), red eyes due to widening of small blood vessels in the conjunctiva (ocular telangiectasia), and

recurrent sinus and lung infections. Abbreviated AT. Patients with AT have a striking predisposition to leukemia and lymphoma and are extremely sensitive to radiation. Other features include difficulty swallowing and slowed growth. AT is inherited as an autosomal recessive trait.

ATCC American Type Culture Collection.

atelectasis Failure of full expansion of the lung at birth, or lung collapse thereafter. Also known as collapsed lung.

atelectasis, primary Failure of full expansion of the lung at birth.

atelectasis, secondary Partial or complete collapse of a previously expanded lung. Secondary atelectasis may occur when full chest expansion is difficult, such as after chest surgery.

athelia Absence of the nipple. Athelia tends to occur on one side (unilaterally) in children with the Poland syndrome and on both sides (bilaterally) with certain types of ectodermal dysplasia. Athelia also occurs in association with progeria (premature aging). See also *amastia; amazia; Poland syndrome; progeria*.

atherectomy A procedure to remove plaque (atheroma) from the inside of a blood vessel. Atherectomy is done most often in major arteries, such as the coronary, carotid, and vertebral arteries, that have experienced the occlusive effects of atherosclerosis. Atherectomy may be accomplished by various means, including angioplasty, laser surgery, conventional surgical incision, or use of a small drill-tipped catheter. In the US, atherectomy is nicknamed the "Rotortooter" procedure, after a company that cleans out drainage pipes.

atheroma A fatty deposit in the inner lining (intima) of an artery, resulting from atherosclerosis. Also called an atherosclerotic plaque, an arterial plaque, or a plaque.

atherosclerosis The presence of fatty lipid deposits in the lining (intima) of an artery. Atherosclerosis is a form of arteriosclerosis. See also *arteriosclerosis*.

atherosclerotic Pertaining to atherosclerosis. Atherosclerotic heart disease is the leading cause of death in the US. See *atherosclerosis*.

athetosis Involuntary writhing movements, particularly of the arms and hands. Athetosis is associated with several neurological disorders, such as cerebral palsy and Rett syndrome.

athlete's foot A skin infection caused by a fungus called Trichophyton that thrives within the upper layer of the skin when it is moist, warm, and irritated. The fungus can be found on floors and in socks and clothing, and it can be spread from person to person through contact with these objects. However, without proper growing conditions, athlete's foot fungus will not infect the skin. It can be treated with topical antifungal preparations. Also known as tinea pedis, athlete's foot is a form of ringworm.

atlantoaxial joint The joint between the first (atlas) and second (axis) vertebrae of the neck beneath the skull. The axis features a bony prominence called the odontoid process, about which the atlas rotates. The atlantoaxial joint is a pivot type of joint. It allows the head to turn from side to side. The atlantoaxial joint is supported and strengthened by the capsular, anterior, and posterior atlantoaxial and by the transverse ligaments. Also known as atloaxoid joint.

atlas The first vertebra in the neck. It supports the head at the base of the skull. Also known as first cervical vertebra.

atonic Without normal muscle tone or strength. An atonic seizure is one in which the person suddenly loses muscle tone and strength; the person cannot sit or stand upright and, unless supported, falls down.

atopic dermatitis A skin disease characterized by areas of severe itching, redness, scaling, and loss of the surface of the skin. Atopic dermatitis is the most common of the many types of eczema. Atopic dermatitis is frequently associated with other allergic disorders, especially asthma and hay fever. A defect of the immune system within the skin has been detected in patients who have atopic dermatitis, but the reason for the defect is unknown.

ATP 1 Acute thrombocytopenic purpura. 2 Adenosine triphosphate.

atresia Absence of a normal opening, or failure of a structure to be tubular. Atresia can affect many structures in the body. For example, esophageal atresia is a birth defect in which part of the esophagus is not hollow, and with anal atresia, there is no hole at the bottom end of the intestine.

atria The plural of atrium.

atrial arrhythmia See *arrhythmia, atrial*.

atrial fibrillation See *fibrillation, atrial*.

atrial septal defect A hole in the wall (septum) between the upper chambers of the heart (atria). Abbreviated ASD. ASD is a major class of heart malformation. Usually, when clots in veins break off (embolize), they travel first to the right side of the heart and then to the lungs, where they lodge. When there is an ASD, however, a clot can cross from the right to the left side of the heart, and then pass into the arteries as a paradoxical embolism. Once a clot is in the arterial circulation, it can travel to the brain, block a vessel there, and cause a stroke. ASDs are surgically closed.

atrial septum The wall between the right and left atria of the heart.

atrioventricular Pertaining to the upper chambers of the heart (atria) and the lower chambers of the heart (ventricles).

atrioventricular node The electrical relay station between the upper and lower chambers of the heart. Abbreviated AV node. Electrical signals from the atria must pass through the AV node to reach the ventricles. The AV node, which controls the heart rate, is one of the major elements in the cardiac conduction system. The AV node serves as an electrical relay station, slowing the electrical current sent by the sinoatrial (SA) node before the signal is permitted to pass down through to the ventricles. This delay ensures that the atria have an opportunity to fully contract before the ventricles are stimulated. After passing the AV node, the electrical current travels to the ventricles, along special fibers embedded in the walls of the lower part of the heart.

atrium An entry chamber. On both sides of the heart, the atrium is the chamber that leads to the ventricle.

atrophic vaginitis Thinning of the lining (endothelium) of the vagina due to decreased production of estrogen. Atrophic vaginitis may occur with menopause.

atrophy A wasting away or diminution. Muscle atrophy is a decrease in muscle mass, often due to extended immobility.

atropine A drug, made from the belladonna plant, that is administered via injection, eye drops, or in oral form to relax muscles by inhibiting nerve responses.

atropine psychosis A syndrome characterized by dry mouth, blurred vision, forgetfulness, and difficulty with urination that can be caused by the anticholinergic effects of some drugs, particularly antipsychotic medications. Treatment requires

reducing or stopping the medication. See also *anticholinergic*.

attack, vasovagal See *vasovagal reaction*.

attention The act of attending to discrete stimuli in the environment. Learning is most efficient when a person is paying attention. Poor attention can be a key sign of behavior disorders in children, stress, or depression. See also attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

attention deficit disorder See *attention deficit hyperactivity disorder*.

attention deficit hyperactivity disorder A disorder in which a person is unable to control behavior due to difficulty in processing neural stimuli, accompanied by an extremely high level of motor activity. Abbreviated ADHD. ADHD can affect children and adults, but it is easiest to perceive during schooling. A child with ADHD may be extremely distractible, unable to remain still, and very talkative. ADHD is diagnosed by using a combination of parent and/or patient interview, observation of the patient, and sometimes use of standardized screening instruments. Treatments include making adjustments to the environment to accommodate the disorder, behavior modification, and the use of medications. Stimulants are the most common drugs used, although certain other medications can be effective.

attenuate To weaken, or to make or become thin.

attenuated virus A weakened, less vigorous virus. An attenuated virus may be used to make a vaccine that is capable of stimulating an immune response and creating immunity, but not of causing illness.

atypical Unusual, or not fitting a single diagnostic category.

atypical measles syndrome The modified expression of measles, as may occur in persons who were incompletely immunized against measles or who have compromised immune systems. Abbreviated AMS. AMS begins suddenly with high fever, headache, cough, and abdominal pain. A rash may appear 1 to 2 days later, often beginning on the limbs. Swelling (edema) of the hands and feet may occur. Pneumonia is common. See also *measles*.

audiogram A test of hearing at a range of sound frequencies.

audiology The study of hearing.

audiometry The measurement of hearing.

auditory acuity The clarity or clearness of hearing, a measure of how well a person hears. Auditory acuity is measured in order to determine a person's need for a hearing aid.

auditory tube See *Eustachian tube*.

augmentative communication device A physical, mechanical, or electronic device that helps a person with a speech impairment to communicate. Augmentative communication devices range from books of pictures or words that the patient can show to express thoughts, to computers that are capable of synthesizing complex speech.

aura A sensation perceived by a patient that precedes a condition affecting the brain. An aura often occurs before a migraine or seizure. It may consist of flashing lights, a gleam of light, blurred vision, an odor, the feeling of a breeze, numbness, weakness, or difficulty in speaking..

aural vertigo, recurrent See *Ménière's disease*.

auricle 1 The principal projecting part of the ear, also known as pinna. 2 A structure that is ear-shaped, like the atrium of the heart, which is also referred to as the auricle of the heart.

auricular Of or pertaining to the outer ear, or to something else that is ear-shaped, such as the atrium of the heart.

auricular fibrillation See *fibrillation, atrial*.

auscultate To listen, for diagnostic purposes, to the sounds made by the internal organs of the body. For example, nurses and physicians auscultate the lungs and heart of a patient by using a stethoscope placed on the patient's chest or back.

autism A spectrum of neuropsychiatric disorders characterized by deficits in social interaction and communication and by unusual and repetitive behavior. Some, but not all, people with autism are nonverbal. Autism is normally diagnosed before age 6, and it may be diagnosed in infancy in some cases. The cause of autism is currently unknown, although it is believed to involve an inherited or acquired genetic defect involving multiple chromosomes, possibly including chromosomes 6, 15, 17, and/or the X chromosome. Autism is not caused by emotional trauma, as was once theorized. Autistic or autistic-like behavior may be caused by other

neurological conditions—particularly the seizure disorder Landau-Kleffner syndrome—certain forms of encephalitis, and several genetic disorders, including Angelman syndrome and Rett syndrome. Also known as Kanner syndrome or infantile autism. See also *Asperger syndrome; elective mutism; fragile X syndrome; Landau-Kleffner syndrome; Prader-Willi syndrome; Rett syndrome*.

autistic disorder Autism, particularly the most serious form of autism.

autoantibody An antibody that is directed against the patient's own body. Autoantibodies play a causative role in a number of diseases, such as rheumatoid arthritis, systemic lupus erythematosus, and Hashimoto disease. See also *autoimmune disorder*.

autoclave A chamber for sterilizing with steam under pressure. The original autoclave was essentially a pressure cooker in which steam tightened the lid.

autogenous Self-produced.

autograft Tissue transplanted from one part of the body to another in the same individual. Also known as an autotransplant.

autoimmune disorder A condition characterized by autoimmunity in which a misdirected immune system acts against the tissues of one's own body. Autoimmune disorders typically feature inflammation of various tissues of the body and are associated with antinuclear antibodies (ANAs) in the blood. Examples of autoimmune disorders include systemic lupus erythematosus, Sjogren's syndrome, rheumatoid arthritis, polymyositis, scleroderma, Hashimoto disease, juvenile (type 1) diabetes mellitus, Addison disease, vitiligo, pernicious anemia, glomerulonephritis, and pulmonary fibrosis. Autoimmune disorders are more frequent in women than in men. It is thought that the estrogen of females may influence the immune system to predispose some women to autoimmune disorders. Furthermore, the presence of one autoimmune disorder increases the chance for developing another simultaneous autoimmune disorder. See also *anti-nuclear antibody*.

autoimmune hemolytic anemia A condition in which the immune system destroys red blood cells, resulting in fewer of these oxygen-transporting cells. See also *hemolytic anemia*.

autoimmune thyroiditis See *Hashimoto disease*.

autoimmunity The state of being attacked by one's own immune system. Patients whose misdirected immune systems attack their own body tissues are said to have autoimmunity. See also *antinuclear antibody; autoimmune disorder*.

autologous In blood transfusion and transplantation, a situation in which the donor and recipient are the same person. Patients scheduled for non-emergency surgery may be autologous donors by donating blood for themselves that will be stored until the surgery. An autologous graft is a graft (such as a graft of skin) that is provided for oneself.

automated external defibrillator A device that automatically analyzes the heart rhythm and that—if it detects a problem that may respond to an electrical shock—delivers a shock to restore a normal heart rhythm. Thanks to their small size and ease of use, AEDs have been installed in many settings (such as schools and airports), and serve a role in expanding the number of opportunities for life-saving defibrillation. Abbreviated AED.

automatism A behavior that is performed without conscious knowledge and that does not appear to be under conscious control. This curious type of behavior occurs in a number of neurological and psychiatric disorders. The neurologic disorders associated with automatism include narcolepsy and some forms of epilepsy. The psychiatric conditions associated with automatism include schizophrenia and fugue states. Automatism involves doing something “automatically” and not remembering afterward how one did it or even that one did it. Also known as automatic behavior. See also *epilepsy; seizure disorders*.

autonomic nervous system A part of the nervous system that regulates key involuntary functions of the body, including the activity of the heart muscle; the smooth muscles, including the muscles of the intestinal tract; and the glands. The autonomic nervous system has two divisions: the sympathetic nervous system, which accelerates the heart rate, constricts blood vessels, and raises blood pressure, and the parasympathetic nervous system, which slows the heart rate, increases intestinal and gland activity, and relaxes sphincter muscles.

autopsy A postmortem examination. Also known as necropsy.

autosomal Pertaining to a chromosome that is not a sex chromosome. People normally have 22 pairs of autosomes (44 autosomes) in each cell, together with 2 sex chromosomes, X and Y in a male and X and X in a female.

autosomal dominant trait A genetic trait that appears in patients who have received one copy of a specific autosomal (nonsex) gene for that particular trait. For example, achondroplasia, Marfan syndrome, and Huntington disease are autosomal dominant traits.

autosomal recessive trait A genetic trait that appears only in patients who have received two copies of a specific autosomal (nonsex) gene for that particular trait, one from each parent. For example, sickle cell anemia and cystic fibrosis are autosomal recessive traits.

autosome Any chromosome other than the X and Y sex chromosomes. People normally have 22 pairs of autosomes (44 autosomes) in each cell.

aux Prefix indicating growth or increase.

AV **1** Atrioventricular. Relating to the atrium(atria) and ventricle(s) of the heart. **2** Arteriovenous. Relating to an artery(ies) and a vein(s).

AV node Atrioventricular node.

avascular necrosis A condition in which poor blood supply to an area of bone leads to bone death. Abbreviated AVN. Also known as aseptic necrosis and osteonecrosis.

avian influenza A highly contagious viral disease with up to 100 percent mortality in domestic fowl. Caused by influenza A virus subtypes H5 and H7. All types of birds are susceptible to the virus, but outbreaks occur most often in chickens and turkeys. The infection may be brought by migratory wild birds which can carry the virus, but show no signs of disease. Humans are only rarely affected. Also known as fowl plague, avian flu, and bird flu.

AVM Arteriovenous malformation. See *malf ormation, arteriovenous*.

avulsion Tearing away. A nerve can be avulsed by an injury, as can part of a bone.

axilla Armpit.

axillary Pertaining to the armpit, the cavity beneath the junction of the arm and the body.

axillary dissection Removal of a portion of the lymph nodes under the arm.

axis The second cervical vertebra. The first cervical vertebra (atlas) rotates around the odontoid process of the axis. See also *atlas; atlantoaxial joint*.

axon A long fiber of a nerve cell (neuron) that acts somewhat like a fiber-optic cable to carry outgoing messages. The neuron sends electrical impulses from its cell body through the axon to target cells. Each nerve cell has one axon. An axon can be over a foot in length. See also *dendrite; neuron*.

Ayurveda India's traditional, natural system of medicine that has been practiced for more than 5,000 years. Ayurveda provides an integrated approach to preventing and treating illness through lifestyle interventions and natural therapies. Ayurvedic theory states that all disease begins with an imbalance or stress in the individual's consciousness. Lifestyle intervention is a major ayurvedic preventive and therapeutic approach.

azotemia A higher-than-normal blood level of urea or other nitrogen-containing compounds. The hallmark test for azotemia is the serum blood urea nitrogen (BUN) level. Azotemia is usually caused by the inability of the kidneys to excrete these compounds.

AZT Azidothymidine, now renamed zidovudine, but still best known by the abbreviation AZT. This antiviral drug is prescribed, usually in combination with protease inhibitors and other drugs, to treat HIV infection in patients with AIDS.

Bb

B cell A type of white blood cell that has an important role in producing antibodies for the immune system. B cells are lymphocytes that mature in the bone marrow (as opposed to T cells, lymphocytes that mature in the thymus). Many B cells go on to become plasma cells and produce antibodies (immunoglobulins); some B cells mature into memory B cells. See also *memory B cell; plasma cell*.

B variant GM2-gangliosidosis See *Tay-Sachs disease*.

B. quintana See *Bartonella quintana*.

Babinski reflex A reflex used to determine adequacy of the higher (central) nervous system. The Babinski reflex is obtained by stimulating the outside of the sole of the foot, causing extension of the big toe while fanning the other toes. The examiner begins the stimulation at the heel and goes forward to the base of the toes. Most newborn babies and young infants are not neurologically mature, and they therefore show a Babinski reflex. A Babinski reflex in an older child or an adult is abnormal and is a sign of a problem in the brain or spinal cord. A Babinski reflex that is present on one side but not the other is also abnormal, and it can indicate which side of the brain is involved. Also known as plantar response, big toe sign, and Babinski phenomenon, response, or sign.

baby teeth See *primary teeth*.

bacillus A large family of bacteria that are rod-like in shape. They include the bacteria that cause food to spoil, as well as those that are responsible for some diseases. Helpful members of the bacillus family are used to make antibiotics or colonize the human intestinal tract and aid with digestion.

back pain Pain felt in the low or upper back. Causes of pain in the low and upper back include conditions affecting the bony spine; discs between the vertebrae; ligaments around the spine and discs; spinal inflammation; spinal cord and nerves; muscles; internal organs of the pelvis, chest, and abdomen; tumors; and the skin.

back pain, low Pain in the lower back area that can be caused by problems with the lumbar spine, the discs between the vertebrae, the ligaments around the spine and discs, the spinal cord and nerves, muscles of the low back, internal organs of the pelvis and abdomen, or the skin covering the lumbar area. See also *sciatica*.

backbone The spine, a flexible row of bones stretching from the base of the skull to the tailbone. See also *vertebral column*.

bacteremia The presence of live bacteria in the bloodstream. Also known as bacillemia. See also *blood culture; septicemia*.

bacteria Single-celled microorganisms that can exist either as independent (free-living) organisms or as parasites (dependent on another organism for life). The plural of bacterium. Examples of bacteria include Acidophilus, a normal inhabitant of yogurt; Gonococcus which causes gonorrhea; Clostridium welchii, the most common cause of gangrene; E. coli, which lives in the colon and can cause disease elsewhere; and Streptococcus, the bacterium that causes the common throat infection called strep throat.

bacteria, flesh-eating See *necrotizing fasciitis*.

bacterial Of or pertaining to bacteria, as in a bacterial lung infection.

bacterial vaginosis A vaginal condition characterized by an abnormal vaginal discharge due to an overgrowth of normal bacteria in the vagina. Women with bacterial vaginosis also have fewer than the usual population of vaginal bacteria, called lactobacilli. Symptoms of bacterial vaginosis are vaginal discharge and sometimes a fishy odor. A microscopic sign of bacterial vaginosis is an unusual vaginal cell called a clue cell. Treatment options include oral antibiotics and vaginal gels. Bacterial vaginosis can cause premature labor and delivery, as well as infection of the amniotic fluid and of the uterus after delivery. Therefore, screening and treatment for bacterial vaginosis during pregnancy may be done.

bacteriocidal Capable of killing bacteria. Antibiotics, antiseptics, and disinfectants can all be bacteriocidal.

bacteriophage A virus that lives within a bacterium, replicating itself and eventually destroying the bacterial cell. Bacteriophages have been very helpful in the study of bacterial and molecular genetics. They are sometimes simply called phages.

bacteriostatic Capable of inhibiting the growth or reproduction of bacteria. See also *bacteriocidal*.

bacterium Singular of bacteria. See also *bacteria*.

bag of waters The amniotic sac and amniotic fluid.

Baker cyst A swelling in the space behind the knee (the popliteal space) that is composed of a membrane-lined sac filled with synovial fluid that has escaped from the joint. Also known as synovial cyst of the popliteal space.

balanitis Inflammation of the rounded head (the glans) of the penis. Inflammation of the foreskin is called posthitis. In the uncircumcised male, balanitis and posthitis generally occur together as balanoposthitis: inflammation of both the glans and foreskin.

balanitis, circinate A skin inflammation around the penis in males with Reiter syndrome. With circinate balanitis, the skin around the shaft and tip of the penis can become inflamed and scaly. Cortisone creams can be used as treatment. See also *balanitis; keratoderma blennorrhagicum; Reiter syndrome*.

balanoposthitis Inflammation of both the glans penis and foreskin. An uncircumcised boy should be taught to clean his penis with care to prevent infection and inflammation of the foreskin and the glans. Cleaning of the penis is done by gently retracting the foreskin, only to the point where resistance is met. Full retraction of the foreskin may not be possible until after age 3. See also *balanitis; posthitis*.

baldness Lack or loss of hair on the scalp. Also known as alopecia. There are many types of baldness, each with a different cause. Baldness may be localized to the front and top of the head, as in the very common type of male-pattern baldness; baldness may be patchy, a condition called alopecia areata; or it may involve the entire head, as in alopecia capitis totalis. See *alopecia; alopecia areata; alopecia capitis totalis; alopecia, traumatic; alopecia universalis*.

ball-and-socket joint A joint in which the round end of a bone fits into the cavity of another bone. The hip joint is a ball-and-socket joint.

balloon angioplasty Coronary angioplasty that is accomplished by using a balloon-tipped catheter inserted through an artery in the groin or arm, to enlarge a narrowing in a coronary artery. Angioplasty is commonly successful in opening coronary arter-

ies. Recurrent narrowing at the site of balloon inflation can still develop following successful coronary angioplasty. See also *coronary artery disease*.

balloon tamponade A procedure in which a balloon is inflated within the esophagus or stomach, to apply pressure on bleeding blood vessels, compress the vessels, and stop the bleeding. It is used in the treatment of bleeding veins in the esophagus (esophageal varices) and stomach. Also known as esophagogastric tamponade.

banding of chromosomes Treatment staining of chromosomes to reveal characteristic patterns of horizontal bands. Thanks to these banding patterns, which resemble bar codes, each human chromosome is distinctive and can be identified without ambiguity. Banding also permits the detection of chromosome deletions (lost segments), duplications (extra segments), and other structural abnormalities.

barbiturate A class of drugs that depresses activity in the brain and spinal cord (central nervous system), including many sleeping pills, sedatives, antispasmodics, and anesthetics. Barbiturates are addictive, carry a high risk of overdose, and should never be used with alcohol or with other nervous system depressants.

bariatric surgery Surgery on the stomach and/or intestines to help a person with extreme obesity lose weight. Bariatric surgery is an option for people who have a body mass index (BMI) above 40. It is also an option for people with a BMI between 35 and 40 who have health problems like type 2 diabetes or heart disease. Types of bariatric surgery include gastric banding and gastric bypass. See also *bariatrics*.

bariatrician A physician who specializes in bariatrics. See *bariatrics*.

bariatrics The field of medicine that focuses on persons who are overweight using a comprehensive program including diet and nutrition, exercise, behavior modification, lifestyle changes, and, when indicated, the prescription of appetite suppressants and other appropriate medications. Bariatrics also includes research into overweight, as well as its causes, prevention, and treatment. See also *bariatric surgery*.

barium enema An enema using a white, chalky solution containing barium, in preparation for series of X-ray images of the lower intestine (colon). The barium outlines the colon on the X-ray film.

barium solution A liquid that contains barium sulfate, which produces a visible image on X-ray film. Barium solution outlines organs of the body so they can be seen as images on X-ray film.

barium sulfate An odorless, flavorless barium salt. Barium is a metallic chemical element. See also *barium enema; barium solution; barium swallow*.

barium swallow A test that involves filling the esophagus, stomach, and small intestines with a barium solution in preparation for an X-ray, to define the anatomy of the upper digestive tract. Also known as upper gastrointestinal series.

barosinusitis See *aerosinusitis*.

barotitis See *aerotitis*.

Barr body A microscopic feature of female cells that is due to the presence of two X chromosomes, one of which is inactive and crumples up.

Barrett esophagus A complication of chronic severe gastrointestinal reflux disease (GERD) that involves a change in the type of cells that line the inner wall of the lower esophagus. There is a small but definite increased risk of cancer of the esophagus (adenocarcinoma) in people with Barrett esophagus. The diagnosis of Barrett esophagus is made on seeing (through endoscopy) a pink esophageal lining (mucosa) that extends a short distance (usually less than 2.5 inches) up the esophagus from the gastroesophageal junction and finding cell changes on biopsy of the lining. Treatment involves acid-suppression drugs and followup monitoring of the esophagus is advised.

barrier method A birth control method that employs a barrier which prevents sperm from entering the cervix, thereby preventing conception. Condoms and diaphragms are examples of a barrier method. See also *cervical cap; condom; condom, female; diaphragm*.

Bartholin gland One of a pair of glands between the vulva and the vagina that produce lubrication in response to stimulation. Along with a second pair of nearby glands, called the lesser vestibular glands, the Bartholin glands act to aid in sexual intercourse. Also known as greater vestibular gland.

Bartonella henselae See *cat scratch disease*.

Bartonella quintana A parasitic microorganism in the rickettsiae family that can multiply within the gut of a louse and can then be transmitted to humans and cause trench fever. Transmission occurs when infected louse feces are rubbed into

abraded skin or into the whites of the eyes. Trench fever was first recognized in the trenches of World War I, and it now occurs among homeless people, injection drug users, street alcoholics, and others who live in cramped, unhygienic quarters. *B. quintana* is also responsible for a disease called bacillary angiomatosis in people infected with HIV, and for infection of the heart and great vessels (endocarditis) in people with bloodstream infection (bacteremia). Also known as Rochalimaea quintana. See also *trench fever*.

basal cell A small, round cell found in the lower part, or base, of the epidermis.

basal cell carcinoma The most common type of skin cancer, which commonly presents as a sore that seems to get better and then recurs and may start to bleed. Basal cell carcinoma often occurs on the face and neck, where the skin is exposed to sunlight. These tumors are locally invasive and tend to burrow in but not metastasize (spread) to distant locations.

basal ganglia A region of the base of the brain that consists of three clusters of neurons (caudate nucleus, putamen, and globus pallidus) that are responsible for involuntary movements such as tremors, athetosis, and chorea. The basal ganglia are abnormal in a number of important neurologic conditions, including Parkinson's disease and Huntington's disease.

basal metabolic rate The rate of metabolism, as measured by the amount of heat given off when a person is at rest; it is expressed as calories of energy per hour per square meter of skin. The basal metabolic rate can offer clues about underlying health problems. For example, a person with an overly active thyroid has an elevated basal metabolic rate.

basal temperature 1 Usually, a person's temperature on awakening in the morning. Because changes in basal temperature accompany ovulation, basal temperature is often tracked by women who want to ensure or avoid pregnancy. 2 A crude measure of thyroid function that is achieved by taking and comparing basal temperatures. This measure is now superceded by modern thyroid function blood tests. Also known as Broda test.

base A unit of DNA. There are four bases in DNA: adenine (A), guanine (G), thymine (T), and cytosine (C). The sequence of bases (for example, CAG) constitutes the genetic code.

base pair Two DNA bases that are complementary to one another (A and T, or G and C) and join

base sequence

in strands to form the double-helix that is characteristic of DNA.

base sequence The particular order of nucleotide bases in a DNA molecule.

baseline Information or data gathered at the beginning of a period from which variations that subsequently develop are compared.

basement membrane A thin membrane that is composed of a single layer of cells.

basophil A type of white blood cell (leukocyte) with coarse, bluish-black granules of uniform size within the cytoplasm. Basophils are so named because their cytoplasmic granules stain with basic dyes. Basophils normally constitute 0.5 to 3 percent of the peripheral blood leukocytes, and contain histamine and serotonin. Also known as a basophilic leukocyte.

basophilic leukocyte See *basophil*.

battered child syndrome A condition in which a person has skeletal fractures, especially multiple injuries of various ages, that result from child abuse. All states in the US have adopted laws mandating the reporting of suspected instances of child abuse. See also *child abuse*.

battle fatigue The World War II name for what is known today as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). See also *post-traumatic stress disorder*.

BCG Bacille Calmette Guérin, a weakened (attenuated) version of a bacterium called *Mycobacterium bovis* that is closely related to *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, the agent responsible for tuberculosis. See *tuberculosis vaccination*.

Beau's lines Transverse lines or grooves across the fingernails, or transverse depressions in the nail plate, from temporary disturbance of cell division where the nail develops. The condition may be caused by local disease or injury of the nail fold, or from a generalized condition such as an illness or a drug, for example, chemotherapy.

bedbug A blood-sucking bug in the *Cimex* family that lives hidden in bedding or furniture and comes out at night to bite its victims.

bedsore A painful, often reddened area of degenerating, ulcerated skin that is caused by pressure and lack of movement and is worsened by exposure to urine or other irritating substances. Untreated bedsores can become seriously infected or gangrenous. Bedsores are a major problem for patients

who are confined to a bed or wheelchair, and they can be prevented by moving the patient frequently, changing bedding, and keeping the skin clean and dry. Also known as pressure sore, decubitus sore, and decubitus ulcer.

bedwetting Involuntary urination in bed after the usual age of toilet training. Also known as nighttime enuresis and nocturnal enuresis. It may be caused by incomplete development of bladder control, a sleep or arousal disorder, bladder or kidney disease, neurological problems, or psychological causes (such as fear of the dark that prevents the child from leaving the bed). About 20 percent of 5-year-olds wet the bed at least once a month; surprisingly, bedwetting can persist into teenage. Treatment depends on the cause and may include education, behavior modification techniques, the use of alarms, bladder-retention training, and medication. See also *enuresis*.

bee sting An area of skin affected by piercing from the stinger of a bee. A bee sting can trigger an allergic reaction, including life-threatening anaphylactic shock. Avoidance and prompt treatment are essential for those who are allergic to bee stings. Self-injectible adrenaline can be carried by persons known to be allergic when in risk areas. Hikers should wear long pants and shirts in risk areas. If a person is attacked, he or she should run for shelter, covering the face to prevent airway stings. Treatment depends on the severity of symptoms. Stingers should be removed promptly, and the area should be cleansed with soap and water. Ice packs, pain medications, and anti-itching medications can be helpful in treating local reactions. Victims with more serious symptoms can require intravenous fluids, oxygen, cortisone medicine, or epinephrine, as well as medications to open the breathing passages. In selected cases, allergy injection therapy is highly effective for prevention. For those who are not allergic, stings are a minor nuisance unless they occur in multiples.

bee sting, Africanized A sting from an Africanized ("killer") bee, a species of large honey bees found in South and Central America, as well as in some parts of the US. This species of bees has an unusual and dangerous natural defense mechanism when disturbed. A loud noise or vibration, such as a barking dog or lawn mower, near a hive may cause the bees to display aggressive behavior. They attack in large numbers and for a longer period of time than is typical of the common European honey bee. As a result, Africanized bees inflict more stings, injecting a higher dosage of bee venom into their victims. See also *bee sting*.

beef tapeworm The most common of the large tapeworms that parasitize people. Beef tapeworm can be contracted from infected beef that is raw or rare. Also known as *Taenia saginata*.

behavior modification The use of rewards and/or punishments to encourage desirable behavior.

behavioral disorder A condition characterized by undesirable behavior that is within the patient's control (for example, substance abuse and antisocial behavior).

behavioral medicine An interdisciplinary field of research and practice that focuses on how people's thoughts and behavior affect their health. Behavioral medicine is concerned, for example, with undesirable behaviors such as drug abuse, and utilizes behavior therapy techniques such as biofeedback, relaxation training, and hypnosis.

behaviorism The science of studying and modifying animal or human behavior, often through behavior modification techniques.

Behcet's syndrome A chronic disease featuring inflammation of small blood vessels and characterized by a triad of features: ulcers in the mouth, ulcers of the genitalia, and inflammation of the eye (uveitis). The mouth ulcers typically present as recurring crops of aphthous ulcers. Arthritis is also commonplace. The cause of Behcet's syndrome is not known. It is more frequent and severe in patients from the Eastern Mediterranean and Asia than in those of European descent.

belching A normal process of releasing through the mouth air that accumulates in the stomach, thereby relieving distention. Upper abdominal discomfort associated with excessive swallowed air may extend into the lower chest, producing symptoms that suggest heart or lung disease.

Bell's palsy Paralysis of the nerve that supplies the facial muscles on one side of the face (the seventh cranial nerve, or facial nerve). Bell's palsy often starts suddenly. The cause may be a viral infection. Treatment includes protecting the eye on the affected side from dryness during sleep. Massage of affected muscles can reduce soreness. Sometimes cortisone medication, such as prednisone, is given to reduce inflammation during the first weeks of illness. The outlook is generally good; the vast majority of patients recover within weeks or months.

belly See *abdomen*.

belly button The navel or umbilicus; the former site of attachment of the umbilical cord.

benign Not malignant. A benign tumor is one that does not invade surrounding tissue or spread to other parts of the body; it is not a cancer.

benign intracranial hypertension See *pseudotumor cerebri*.

benign partial epilepsy with centro-temporal spikes See *epilepsy, benign rolandic*.

benign prostatic hyperplasia A common, non-cancerous enlargement of the prostate gland. The enlarged prostate may compress the urinary tube (urethra), which courses through the center of the prostate, impeding the flow of urine from the bladder through the urethra to the outside. Abbreviated BPH. If BPH is severe enough, complete blockage can occur. BPH generally begins after age 30, evolves slowly, and causes symptoms only after age 50. Half of men over age 50 develop symptoms of BPH, but only a minority need medical or surgical intervention. Medical therapy includes drugs such as finasteride and terazosin. Prostate surgery has traditionally been seen as offering the most benefits—and the most risks—for BPH. BPH is not a sign of prostate cancer. Also known as benign prostatic hypertrophy and nodular hyperplasia of the prostate.

benign rolandic epilepsy of childhood See *epilepsy, benign rolandic*.

bereavement The period after a loss during which grief is experienced and mourning occurs. The duration of bereavement depends on both how attached the person was to the person (or pet) who died, and the amount of preparation time anticipating the loss.

beriberi Inflammation of multiple nerves (polyneuritis), heart disease (cardiopathy), and edema (swelling) due to a deficiency of thiamine (vitamin B1) in the diet.

Bernard-Soulier syndrome A disorder in which the platelets crucial to normal blood clotting lack the ability to adequately stick to injured blood vessel walls, leading to abnormal bleeding. Bernard-Soulier syndrome usually appears in the newborn period, infancy, or early childhood, with bruises, nosebleeds, and gum bleeding. Bernard-Soulier syndrome is an inherited disease, transmitted as an autosomal recessive trait. There is no specific treatment. Bleeding episodes may require platelet transfusions. Specific platelet function tests, as well as tests for the glycoproteins common to Bernard-Soulier syndrome, can confirm the diagnosis. Also known as giant platelet syndrome.

Bernstein test

Bernstein test A test to find out if heartburn is caused by acid in the esophagus, and so to diagnose GERD (gastroesophageal reflux disease). The test involves dripping a mild acid, similar to stomach acid, through a tube placed in the esophagus. Also known as esophageal acid infusion test.

berry aneurysm See *aneurysm, berry*.

beta blocker A class of drugs that block the effect of beta-adrenergic substances such as adrenaline (epinephrine), that play a key role in the sympathetic portion of the involuntary nervous system. By blocking the action of the sympathetic nervous system on the heart, they slow the heartbeat and relieve stress on the heart. Beta blockers are used to treat abnormal heart rhythms, specifically to prevent abnormally fast heart rates (tachycardias) or irregular heart rhythms, such as premature ventricular beats. Because beta blockers reduce the demand of the heart muscle for oxygen, they can be useful in treating angina. They have also become important drugs in improving survival after a heart attack. Due to their effect on blood vessels, beta blockers can lower the blood pressure and are of value in the treatment of hypertension. Other uses include the prevention of migraine headaches and the treatment of familial or hereditary essential tremors. Beta blockers reduce pressure within the eye and they are therefore used to lessen the risk of damage to the optic nerve and loss of vision in patients with glaucoma. Beta blockers include acebutolol (brand name: Sectral), atenolol (brand name: Tenormin), bisoprolol (brand name: Zebeta), metoprolol (brand names: Lopressor, Lopressor LA, Toprol XL), nadolol (brand name: Corgard), and timolol (brand name: Blocadren). Topical beta blockers for the eye include timolol ophthalmic solution (brand name: Timoptic) and betaxolol hydrochloride (brand name: Betoptic).

beta carotene A protective antioxidant vitamin that is a natural component of carrots. See also Appendix C, "Vitamins."

beta cell, pancreatic A cell that makes insulin and is found in the areas of the pancreas called the islets of Langerhans. Destruction of beta cells causes type 1 (insulin-dependent) diabetes mellitus. See also *diabetes mellitus*.

beta error The statistical error (said to be "of the second kind," or type II) that is made in testing when it is concluded that something is negative when it really is positive. Also known as false negative.

beta-2 microglobulin A nonspecific test that measures the amount of cell destruction present. It is considered to be one of the best ways to measure

the progression of HIV-related disease, although it may also indicate cell destruction due to cytomegalovirus or other causes.

beta-adrenergic blocking drug See *beta blocker*.

bezoar A clump or wad of swallowed food or hair. Bezoars can block the digestive system, especially the exit of the stomach. A bezoar composed of hair is called a trichobezoar. A bezoar composed of vegetable materials is called a phytobezoar. A bezoar composed of hair and food is called a trichophytobezoar.

BF Physician's shorthand for black female.

bi- Prefix indicating two, as in biceps (a muscle with two heads) or bicuspid (having two flaps or cusps).

bias In a clinical research trial, the effects that may cause an incorrect conclusion. Common examples of bias include advanced knowledge of the treatment being given, strong desire of the researcher for a specific outcome, or improper study design. To avoid bias, a blinded study may be done. See also *blinded study; double-blinded study*.

bicarbonate In medicine, bicarbonate usually refers to bicarbonate of soda (sodium bicarbonate, baking soda), a white powder that is a common ingredient in antacids. Also, the bicarbonate level is an indirect measure of the acidity of the blood that is determined when electrolytes are tested. The normal serum range for bicarbonate is 22–30 mmol/liter.

biceps A muscle that has two heads, or origins. There is more than one biceps muscle. The biceps brachii is the well-known flexor muscle in the upper arm; it bulges when the arm is bent in a C-shape with the fist toward the forehead. The biceps femoris is in the back of the thigh.

bicornuate Having two horns or horn-shaped branches. The uterus is normally unicornuate, but it can sometimes be bicornuate.

bicuspid Having two flaps or cusps.

bicuspid aortic valve An aortic valve in the heart that has two flaps (cusps) that open and close. A normal aortic valve in the heart has three flaps. There may be no symptoms of bicuspid aortic valve in childhood, but in time the valve may become narrowed, making it harder for blood to pass through it, or blood may start to leak backward through the

valve (regurgitate). Treatment depends on how the valve is working. For a severely deteriorated valve, replacement surgery may be necessary.

bicuspid valve See *mitral valve*.

b.i.d. An abbreviation commonly used on prescriptions that means twice a day. See also Appendix A, "Prescription Abbreviations."

bifid Split in two.

bifid uvula See *uvula*.

big toe sign See *Babinski reflex*.

bilateral Affecting both sides. For example, bilateral arthritis affects joints on both the left and right sides of the body.

bile A yellow-green fluid that is made by the liver and stored in the gallbladder. Bile passes through the common bile duct into the duodenum, where it helps digest fat. The principal components of bile are cholesterol, bile salts, and the pigment bilirubin. Cholesterol is normally kept in liquid form by the dissolving action of the bile salts. An increased amount of cholesterol in the bile overwhelms the dissolving capacity of the bile salts and leads to the formation of cholesterol gallstones. Similarly, a deficiency of bile salts promotes cholesterol gallstone formation. See also *gallstone*.

bile acid resin A substance that binds in the intestine with bile acids that contain cholesterol and is then eliminated in the stool. The major effect of bile acid resin is to lower LDL-cholesterol. Bile acid resin may be prescribed, together with a statin medication, for patients with heart disease, to reduce cholesterol. Cholestyramine (brand name: Questran) and colestipol (Colestid) are examples of bile acid resins. Side effects may include constipation, bloating, nausea, and gas. Although bile acid resin is not absorbed, it may interfere with the absorption of other medicines if taken at the same time as the other medicines. See also *statin*.

bile sludge See *biliary sludge*.

bilharzia A schistosome, a trematode worm parasite. Three main species of these worms—*Schistosoma haematobium*, *S. japonicum*, and *S. mansoni*—cause disease in humans. Larval forms of the parasite live in freshwater snails. When the parasite is liberated from the snail, it burrows into the skin, transforms to the schistosomulum stage, and migrates to the urinary tract (*S. haematobium*), or liver or intestine (*S. japonicum* or *S. mansoni*), where the adult worms develop. Eggs are shed into

the urinary tract or the intestine, where they hatch to form another form of the parasite, called miracidia, that can then infect snails again, completing the parasite's life cycle. Also known as schistosomiasis.

biliary Having to do with the gallbladder, bile ducts, or bile. The biliary system consists of the gallbladder, bile ducts, and bile. See also *bile*.

biliary cirrhosis, primary See *cirrhosis, primary biliary*.

biliary sand A term used by surgeons to describe small particles in bile that are visible to the naked eye and are large enough to be counted easily in a gallbladder that has been removed. Biliary sand may be looked upon as a stage of growth between biliary sludge, which is made up of microscopic particles, and gallstones. The composition of biliary sand varies but is similar to that of gallstones, the most common components being cholesterol crystals and calcium salts. Biliary sand may cause no symptoms, or it may cause intermittent symptoms, including pain in the abdomen, nausea, and vomiting, particularly after a fatty meal. Biliary sand can cause complications, including inflammation of the pancreas (pancreatitis) and inflammation of the gallbladder (cholecystitis). Biliary sand can often be detected by an ultrasound of the abdomen. If patients with biliary sand develop symptoms or complications, gallbladder removal (cholecystectomy) is performed. See also *gallstone*.

biliary sludge Microscopic particulate matter in bile. The composition of biliary sludge varies. The most common particulate components are cholesterol crystals and calcium salts. Biliary sludge has been associated with certain conditions, including rapid weight loss, fasting, pregnancy, the use of certain medications (for example, ceftriaxone, octreotide), and bone marrow or solid organ transplantation. However, it most commonly occurs in individuals with no identifiable conditions. Biliary sludge can be considered microscopic gallstones. Biliary sludge usually causes no symptoms, and it may appear and disappear over time. It may, however, cause intermittent pain in the abdomen, often with nausea and vomiting. Biliary sludge may also cause more serious complications, including inflammation of the pancreas (pancreatitis) and inflammation of the gallbladder (cholecystitis). Biliary sludge can be detected with ultrasound of the abdomen, or by directly examining bile content under a microscope. If patients with biliary sludge develop symptoms or complications, the gallbladder may be removed. See also *gallstone*.

bilirubin A yellow-orange compound that is produced by the breakdown of hemoglobin from red blood cells.

binaural Relating to both ears. While hearing aids may be binaural (in both ears) or monaural (in just one ear), binaural aids are generally considered to be superior. Synonymous with stereophonic.

binge drinking The dangerous practice of consuming large quantities of alcoholic beverages in a single session. Binge drinking carries a serious risk of harm, including alcohol poisoning. See also *alcohol poisoning*.

binge eating disorder An eating disorder characterized by periods of extreme overeating, but not followed by purging behaviors, as in bulimia. Binge eating disorder can occur alone or in association with abnormality of the brain's hypothalamus gland, Prader-Willi disorder, or other medical conditions. It can contribute to high blood pressure, weight gain, diabetes, and heart disease. Treatment may include therapy, dietary education and advice, and medication.

binocular vision The ability to maintain visual focus on an object with both eyes, creating a single visual image. Lack of binocular vision is normal in infants. Adults without binocular vision experience distortions in depth perception and visual measurement of distance.

bio- Prefix indicating living plants or creatures, as in biology (the study of living organisms).

biofeedback A method of treatment that uses a monitor to measure patients' physiologic information of which they are normally unaware. By watching a monitor, patients can learn by trial and error to adjust their thinking and other mental processes in order to control "involuntary" bodily processes such as blood pressure, temperature, gastrointestinal functioning, and brain wave activity. Biofeedback is now used to treat a wide variety of conditions and diseases, including stress, alcohol and other addictions, sleep disorders, epilepsy, respiratory problems, fecal and urinary incontinence, muscle spasms, partial paralysis, muscle dysfunction caused by injury, migraine headaches, hypertension, and a variety of blood vessel conditions, including Raynaud's phenomenon.

bioflavonoid An antioxidant compound that is found in various plants and is available in supplement form. Once known as vitamin P.

biologic evolution A process mediated by genes that shows a slow rate of change and uses mutations

and selection as agents of change. New variants in biologic evolution are often harmful, and when these new variants are transmitted from parents to offspring, this occurs according to classical genetics. Humans require cultural as well as biological evolution. See also *cultural evolution*.

biological response modifier A substance that stimulates the body's response to infection and disease. Abbreviated BRM. The body naturally produces small amounts of certain BRMs. Some BRMs are made in the laboratory in large amounts for use in treating cancer, rheumatoid arthritis, Crohn's disease, hepatitis, and other diseases. BRMs used in biological therapy include monoclonal antibodies, interferon, interleukin-2 (IL-2), and colony-stimulating factor. Also known as biologics.

biological therapy Treatment to stimulate or restore the ability of the immune system to fight infection and disease. Biological therapy is thus any form of treatment that uses the body's natural abilities to cause the immune system to fight infection, treat disease, or to protect the body from side effects of treatment. For example, biological therapy to block the action of a messenger of inflammation, called tumor necrosis factor (TNF), is being used to treat conditions such as Crohn's disease and rheumatoid arthritis. Also known as biotherapy or immunotherapy. See also *biological response modifier*.

biomarker A biologic feature that can be used to measure the presence or progress of disease or the effects of treatment. For example, prostate specific antigen (PSA) is a biomarker for cancer of the prostate.

biopsy The removal of a sample of tissue for examination under a microscope to check for cancer cells or other abnormalities.

biopsy, endometrial A procedure for sampling the lining of the uterus (the endometrium). Endometrial biopsy is usually done to detect the cause of abnormal uterine bleeding, but it may be used to determine the cause of infertility, test for uterine infections, and even monitor responses to certain medications. The procedure can be done in a physician's office. There are few risks, the most common being cramping and pain. Oral pain medications taken beforehand may help reduce cramping and pain. See also *biopsy*.

biopsy, excisional A surgical procedure in which an entire abnormal area is removed for diagnostic examination under a microscope.

biopsy, incisional A surgical procedure in which only a portion of an abnormal area is

removed for diagnostic examination under a microscope. An incisional biopsy is used when the abnormal area is too large for excisional biopsy or when excision would destroy important tissue or pose a cosmetic problem. See also *biopsy, excisional*.

biopsy, needle A procedure in which a small amount of tissue is taken for examination by using a hollow needle. See also *biopsy; biopsy, stereotactic needle*.

biopsy, punch See *punch biopsy*.

biopsy, sentinel-lymph-node Examination of the first lymph node that receives lymphatic drainage from a tumor to learn whether that node has tumor cells in it. The sentinel node's identity is determined by injecting around the tumor a tracer substance that travels through the lymphatic system to the first draining node, thereby identifying it. If the sentinel node contains tumor cells, removal of more nodes in the area may be warranted. If the sentinel node is normal, extensive dissection of the regional lymphnode basin is generally not required. See also *biopsy*.

biopsy, stereotactic needle A procedure in which the spot to be biopsied is located three-dimensionally, the information is entered into a computer, and then the computer calculates the information and positions a needle to remove the biopsy sample. Stereotactic needle biopsy can be done in a properly equipped physician's office, and it carries a minimal amount of pain and risk compared to other types of biopsy. See also *biopsy*.

biotechnology The fusion of biology and technology, the application of biological techniques to product research and development. In particular, biotechnology involves the use by industry of recombinant DNA, cell fusion, and new bioprocessing techniques to produce large molecules useful in treating and preventing disease. Slang biotech.

bioterrorism Terrorism using biologic agents that are harmful to humans. Biological diseases and the agents that might be used for terrorism have been listed by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). These agents include viruses, bacteria, rickettsiae (microorganisms that have traits common to both bacterial and viruses), fungi, and biological toxins. The biological disease agents are classified into three categories, according to the degree of danger each agent is felt to pose. Category A poses high risk to national security because they can be easily disseminated or transmitted from person to person; cause high mortality, with the potential for major public health impact; might cause public panic and social disruption; and

require special action for public health preparedness. Examples of Category A diseases include anthrax, botulism, the plague, smallpox, tularemia, and hemorrhagic fever due to the Ebola and Marburg viruses. Category B agents are moderately easy to disseminate; cause moderate morbidity and low mortality; and require specific enhancements of the CDC's diagnostic capacity and enhanced disease surveillance. Examples of Category B diseases include Q fever, Brucellosis, Glanders, Ricin toxin, epsilon toxin of the gas gangrene bacillus, and *Staphylococcus enterotoxin B*. Category C agents are emerging pathogens that could be engineered for mass dissemination in the future because of their availability; ease of production and dissemination; and potential for high morbidity and mortality and major health impact. Examples of Category C diseases include Nipah virus, Hantavirus, tickborne hemorrhagic fever and encephalitis viruses, Yellow fever, and Tuberculosis (multi-drug-resistant TB).

bipolar disorder A disorder, formerly called manic-depressive illness, in which the patient cycles through uncontrollable mood states. Less prevalent than simple clinical depression, bipolar disorders involve cycles of depression, hypomania (elevated mood), mania (extremely elevated mood), and in some cases psychosis. Sometimes the mood switches are dramatic and rapid, but most often they are gradual. Both depression and mania affect thinking, judgment, and social behavior in ways that cause serious problems. For example, unwise business, financial, and personal decisions may be made when an individual is in a manic phase. Bipolar disorder is usually a chronic recurring condition, with serious impairment and suicide common in untreated cases. The cause is as yet unknown, although bipolar disorders appear to have a strong genetic basis and may be influenced by seasonal patterns, hormones, or viral infection. A strategy that combines medication and psychosocial treatment is optimal for managing bipolar disease. Also known as manic-depressive disease and manic depression. See also *cyclothymia; seasonal affective disorder; depression; mania; mixed mania*.

birth The process of delivering a fetus from the uterus. Normally, the fetus is expelled through the cervix and birth canal with the assistance of rhythmic muscle contractions. Birth may instead be a surgical procedure: a Caesarean section. See also *caesarean section*.

birth control The practice of exercising some level of control over contraception. Birth control methods are many, and they vary in effectiveness. The most effective method is abstinence from sex, followed by oral, injectible, or implanted contraceptives; barrier methods used consistently and

with spermicidal gel; and the basal temperature method, if used carefully and consistently. See also *barrier method; cervical cap; coitus interruptus; condom; condom, female; contraceptive; contraceptive, emergency; contraceptive, implanted; Depo-Provera; diaphragm; intrauterine device; natural family planning; oral contraceptive.*

birth control pill See *oral contraceptive*.

birth defect Any defect present in a baby at birth. Birth defects involve many different tissues, including the brain, heart, lungs, liver, bones, and intestinal tract. These defects can occur for many reasons, including genetic conditions and toxic exposures of the fetus (for example, to alcohol). All parents are at risk of having a baby with a birth defect. Birth defects are now the leading cause of infant mortality (death) in the US and many other developed nations. Infrequent, but significant, birth defects include heart defects, cleft lip and palate, Down syndrome, and spina bifida. Also known as congenital malformation or congenital anomaly. See also *dysmorphology*.

birthmark A discoloration of the skin that may or may not be raised and is present at birth. Most birthmarks are harmless. Occasionally a specific type of birthmark can be a visible marker for a more serious health problem. See also *café au lait; port-wine stain*.

birthrate The number of live births divided by the average population, or by the population at midyear. Also known as crude birthrate.

bisexual **1** An individual who engages in both heterosexual and homosexual sexual relations. Bisexual can also refer to the corresponding lifestyle. **2** In physical biology, bisexual refers to an individual who was born with gonadal tissue of both sexes (that is, both testicular and ovarian tissue). Also known as true hermaphrodite.

bisphosphonate A class of drugs used to strengthen bone. Bisphosphonates are used to treat osteoporosis and the bone pain from diseases such as metastatic breast cancer, multiple myeloma, and Paget's disease. Bone is in a constant state of remodeling, whereby new bone is laid down by cells called osteoblasts, while old bone is removed by cells called osteoclasts. Bisphosphonates inhibit bone removal (resorption) by the osteoclasts. The bisphosphonates include Fosamax (alendronate), Actonel (risedronate), Boniva (ibandronate), and Reclast (zoledronate).

bite In dental terms, how well the teeth fit together (occlude) in the mouth.

bitewing X-ray A dental X-ray that depicts how the teeth fit together on one side of the mouth.

BKA Below-the-knee amputation. See *amputation*.

Black Death See *bubonic plague*.

black eye Bruising of the eyelid and/or the area around the eye as a result of trauma to the eye. Colloquially known as a shiner.

black lung disease A disease of the lungs that is caused by inhaling coal dust, which in some patients can lead to progressive massive fibrosis of the lungs and severely impaired lung function. Also known as anthracosis and coal miner's pneumoconiosis.

Black Plague See *bubonic plague*.

blackhead A familiar term for what is medically called an open comedo. A comedo, the primary sign of acne, consists of a widened hair follicle filled with skin debris, bacteria, and oil called sebum. A blackhead has a wide opening to the skin and is capped with a blackened mass of skin debris. In contrast, a closed comedo, commonly called a whitehead, has an obstructed opening to the skin and may rupture to cause a low-grade skin inflammatory reaction in the area.

bladder A hollow organ in the lower abdomen that stores urine. The kidneys filter waste from the blood and produce urine, which enters the bladder through two tubes, called ureters. Urine leaves the bladder through another tube, the urethra. In women, the urethra is a short tube that opens just in front of the vagina. In men, it is longer, passing through the prostate gland and then the penis. Also known as urinary bladder and vesical.

bladder, overactive A condition in which sudden involuntary contractions of the muscular wall of the bladder cause urinary urgency, immediate and unstoppable needs to urinate. Overactive bladder is a form of urinary incontinence (the unintentional loss of urine) and is relatively common, particularly in older adults. Treatment may include pelvic muscle strengthening, behavioral therapy, and medications. Also called urge incontinence.

bladder cancer A common form of cancer that begins in the lining of the bladder. The most common warning sign is blood in the urine. Symptoms include pain during urination, frequent urination, and feeling the need to urinate without results. A diagnosis of bladder cancer is supported by findings in the medical history, physical examination, examination of the urine, and intravenous pyelogram

(IVP). Confirmation of the diagnosis requires a biopsy, usually using a cystoscope. The bladder is lined with cells called transitional cells and squamous cells. A tumor may grow through the lining into the muscular wall of the bladder and extend into nearby organs such as the uterus or vagina (in women) or the prostate gland (in men). When bladder cancer spreads beyond the bladder, the malignant cells are frequently found in nearby lymph nodes and may have spread to other lymph nodes or other places, including the lungs, liver, or bones. Risk factors for bladder cancer include age over 40 years, race (Caucasians are at twice the risk of African-Americans and Hispanic-Americans, with Asian-Americans at least risk), gender (men are two to three times more likely to get bladder cancer), family history of bladder cancer, use of tobacco (which is a major risk factor), occupational exposures (for example, workers in the rubber, chemical, and leather industries, hairdressers, machinists, metal workers, printers, painters, textile workers, and truck drivers), and prior treatment with cyclophosphamide or arsenic exposure. Treatment depends on the growth, size, and location of the tumor. Surgical operations are commonly needed. Chemotherapy, biological therapy, or radiotherapy may also be used.

bladder infection Infection of the urinary bladder. Some people are at greater risk for bladder infections and other urinary tract infections (UTIs) than others. Women are at greater risk than men; one woman in five develops a UTI during her lifetime. Not everyone with a UTI has symptoms. Common symptoms include a frequent urge to urinate and a painful burning when urinating. Underlying conditions that impair the normal urinary flow can lead to more complicated UTIs. Also known as bacterial cystitis. See also *bladder pain*.

bladder inflammation Inflammation of the urinary bladder. Also called cystitis. Can be due to infection from bacteria that ascend the urethra to the bladder or for unknown reasons, such as with interstitial cystitis. Symptoms include a frequent need to urinate, often accompanied by a burning sensation. As bladder inflammation progresses, blood may be observed in the urine and the patient may suffer cramps after urination. In young children, attempts to avoid the pain of cystitis can be a cause for daytime wetting (enuresis). Treatment includes avoiding irritants, such as perfumed soaps, near the urethral opening; increased fluid intake; and, for infectious cystitis, antibiotics. Untreated bladder inflammation can lead to scarring and the formation of stones when urine is retained for long periods of time to avoid painful urination.

bladder pain Pain from the urinary bladder. Among the symptoms of bladder infection are feelings of pain, pressure, and tenderness around the bladder, pelvis, and perineum (the area between the anus and vagina or anus and scrotum), which may increase as the bladder fills and decrease as it empties; decreased bladder capacity; an urgent need to urinate; painful sexual intercourse; and, in men, discomfort or pain in the penis and scrotum.

Blalock-Taussig operation A pioneering operation to treat children born with the heart malformation tetralogy of Fallot named for the US surgeon Alfred Blalock and the US pediatric cardiologist Helen B. Taussig.

blast An immature blood cell.

blast crisis A phase of advanced leukemia, usually chronic myelogenous leukemia (CML), in which the number of immature, abnormal white blood cells (blasts) in the bone marrow and blood is extremely high. Also known as the blast phase. See also *leukemia*.

blastoma A tumor thought to arise in embryonic tissue. This term is commonly used as part of the name for a tumor, as in glioblastoma and medulloblastoma (types of brain tumors), hepatoblastoma (a liver tumor), nephroblastoma (a Wilms tumor of the kidney), neuroblastoma (a childhood tumor of neural origin), osteoblastoma (a bone tumor), and retinoblastoma (a tumor of the retina in the eye).

bleb See *blister*.

bleeding Hemorrhaging. Losing blood, typically because of injury to blood vessels. With simple bleeding, cleaning the site of injury and applying mild pressure or a bandage is sufficient treatment. If bleeding is caused by injury to a major blood vessel, emergency care is necessary. Spontaneous bleeding in the skin can represent a serious underlying illness and requires medical evaluation. Menstrual bleeding involves the normal expulsion of uterine tissue. See also *hemorrhage; menstruation*.

blepharitis Inflammation of the eyelids. Blepharitis occurs in two forms, anterior and posterior. Anterior blepharitis affects the outside front of the eyelid, where the eyelashes are attached. The two most common causes of anterior blepharitis are bacteria (*Staphylococcus*) and scalp dandruff. Posterior blepharitis affects the inner eyelid (the moist part that makes contact with the eye) and is caused by problems with the oil (meibomian) glands in this part of the eyelid. Two skin disorders can cause this form of blepharitis: rosacea and seborrheic dermatitis.

blepharospasm The involuntary, forcible closure of the eyelids. The first symptoms may be uncontrollable blinking. Only one eye may be affected initially, but eventually both eyes are usually involved. The spasms may leave the eyelids completely closed, causing functional blindness even though the eyes and vision are normal. Blepharospasm is a form of focal dystonia.

blighted ovum A fertilized ovum (egg) that did not develop or whose development ceased at an early stage, before 6 or 7 weeks of gestation. On the ultrasound examination of a blighted ovum, only the gestational sac that normally surrounds the embryo can be seen. There is usually no embryo inside the gestational sac. A blighted ovum is a form of early spontaneous abortion (miscarriage).

blind Unable to see. See also *blindness*.

blinded study A clinical trial of drugs in which the test participants do not know whether they are receiving the product being tested or a placebo (dummy). This blinding is intended to ensure that the study results are not affected by the power of suggestion (the placebo effect). See also *double-blinded study*.

blindness Loss of useful sight. Blindness can be temporary or permanent, and there are many causes of blindness. Damage to any portion of the eye, the optic nerve, or the area of the brain that is responsible for vision can lead to blindness. Also known as visually handicapped, visually impaired, and visually challenged. See also *blindness, legal*.

blindness, legal A degree of blindness that entitles a person to certain benefits according to the law. The definition of legal blindness varies from country to country. In the US, the definition of legal blindness that is used to determine eligibility for government disability benefits is as follows: 1 visual acuity of 20/200 or worse in the better eye with corrective lenses (20/200 means that a person must be at 20 feet from an eye chart to see what a person with normal vision can see at 200 feet); or 2 visual field restriction to 20 degrees diameter or less (tunnel vision) in the better eye. Note that these criteria do not necessarily indicate a person's ability to function.

blindness, night See *nyctanopia*.

blindness, river See *river blindness*.

blister A collection of fluid underneath the top layer of skin (epidermis). There are many causes of blisters, including burns, friction forces, and diseases of the skin. Also known as bleb and bulla.

Bloch-Sulzberger syndrome See *incontinentia pigmenti*.

blocker, beta See *beta blocker*.

blood The red fluid in the body that contains white and red blood cells, platelets, proteins, and other elements. Blood is transported throughout the body by the circulatory system. Blood flows in two directions: away from the heart (arterial blood) and toward the heart (venous blood). Arterial blood has a high concentration of oxygen and nutrients for body tissues, and venous blood is the means by which carbon dioxide is transported to the lungs for removal from the body. See also *blood cell*.

blood cell One of several different types of cells that make up the blood. The red blood cells (erythrocytes) contain hemoglobin, which carries oxygen in the blood. The white blood cells (leukocytes) are a blood-borne part of the immune system. The platelets help blood to clot. Together, these three types of cells make up about half of the volume of blood. The remainder is made up of plasma. See also *erythrocyte; leukocyte; plasma; platelet*.

blood clot A mass of coagulated blood. A blood clot can block a major blood vessel, causing stroke or other problems.

blood clot, estrogen-associated A blood clot associated with estrogen therapy. Blood clots are occasional but serious side effects of estrogen therapy. They occur most frequently with high doses of estrogen. Cigarette smokers on estrogen therapy are at a higher risk for blood clots than nonsmokers are. Therefore, patients requiring estrogen therapy are strongly encouraged to quit smoking. See also *estrogen; estrogen replacement therapy*.

blood coagulation The aggregation of blood platelets and other blood elements to form a semi-solid clot. Coagulation occurs under the influence of the clotting factors fibrinogen, prothrombin, and thrombin, which are normally activated in response to injury. Working together, these substances thicken the blood and produce fibrin, a substance that closes off the wound. When blood coagulates abnormally, dangerous blood clots can enter the bloodstream.

blood conservation Actions taken during medical treatment and surgery to limit the amount of donor blood needed.

blood count, complete See *CBC*.

blood culture A test that is designed to detect microorganisms, such as bacteria and fungi, in

blood. A sample of blood obtained using a sterile technique is placed in a culture medium and incubated in a controlled environment. If microorganisms grow, their type can be identified, and they can be tested against different antibiotics for proper treatment of the infection. Because microorganisms may be only intermittently present in blood, a series of blood cultures is often done before the result is considered negative. See also *bacteremia; sepsis; septicemia*.

blood group An inherited feature on the surface of the red blood cells. A series of related blood types constitutes a blood group system, such as the Rh or ABO system. The frequencies of the ABO and Rh blood types vary from population to population. In the US, the most common type is O+ (meaning O in the ABO system and positive in the Rh system), which is present in 37.4 percent of the population. The frequencies in the US (in descending order) are O+ (37.4 percent), A+ (35.7 percent), B+ (8.5 percent), O- (6.6 percent), A- (6.3 percent), AB+ (3.4 percent), B- (1.5 percent), and AB- (0.6 percent).

blood group, ABO See *ABO blood group*.

blood in the urine Blood that appears in the urine. Also known as hematuria. Gross hematuria refers to blood that is so plentiful in the urine that the blood is visible with just the naked eye. Microhematuria refers to blood in urine that is visible only under a microscope; there is so little blood that it cannot be seen without magnification. Hematuria, whether gross or microscopic, is abnormal and should be further investigated. It may or may not be accompanied by pain. Painful hematuria can be caused by a number of disorders, including infections and stones in the urinary tract. Painless hematuria can also be due to a large number of causes, including cancer.

blood marker A sign of a disease or condition that can be isolated from a blood sample. For example, the monoclonal antibody D8/17 is a diagnostic sign of pediatric autoimmune disorders associated with streptococcus.

blood poisoning A bacterial infection of the blood. See also *bacteremia; sepsis; septicemia*.

blood pressure The pressure of the blood within the arteries. Blood pressure is produced primarily by the contraction of the heart muscle. The traditional measurement of blood pressure is recorded by two numbers. The first number (the systolic pressure) is measured after the heart contracts, and it is the higher number. The second number (the diastolic pressure) is measured before the heart contracts, and it is the lower number. A

blood pressure cuff is used to measure pressure. See also *hypertension; hypotension; sphygmomanometer*.

blood pressure, high See *hypertension*.

blood pressure, low See *hypotension*.

blood sugar, high See *hyperglycemia*.

blood sugar, low See *hypoglycemia*.

blood test A test that requires a sample of blood. Some blood tests require only a finger stick, and others require a venipuncture (blood taken from a vein) or blood withdrawn from an artery.

blood thinner An anticoagulant agent; a medication that works against coagulating process of blood.

blood titer A blood test that tests for the level, or amount (titer), of something in the blood. For example, a strep titer looks for the level of streptococcus antibodies in the blood.

blood transfusion The transfer of blood or blood components from one person (the donor) into the bloodstream of another person (the recipient). Blood transfusion may be done as a lifesaving maneuver to replace blood cells or blood products lost through bleeding or due to depression of the bone marrow. Transfusion of one's own blood (autologous) is the safest method but requires advanced planning, and not all patients are eligible for it. Directed donor blood allows the patient to receive blood from known donors. Volunteer donor blood is usually most readily available and, when properly tested, has a low risk of side effects.

blood urea nitrogen A measure of the urea level in blood. Abbreviated BUN. Diseases that compromise the function of the kidney frequently lead to increased BUN levels.

blood, urinary See *blood in the urine*.

blood-brain barrier A protective network of blood vessels and cells that filters blood flowing to the brain. The blood-brain barrier normally prevents infectious agents and foreign substances from getting into the brain. Medications designed to work within the brain and spinal fluid must cross the blood-brain barrier to be effective.

bloody nose See *nosebleed*.

bloody show Literally, the appearance of blood, a classic sign of impending labor. The bloody show

consists of blood-tinged mucus created by extrusion and passage of the mucous plug that filled the cervical canal during pregnancy.

bloody sputum Coughed up blood or bloody mucus. Bloody sputum can be caused by infection in the lungs and airways, such as acute bronchitis or pneumonia, or cancer. Whenever bloody sputum is present and cannot be attributed to a curable infectious condition, a complete lung evaluation is warranted, including bronchoscopy, to be certain cancer is not present. Also known as hemoptysis.

blot, Western A technique in molecular biology that is used to separate and identify proteins. It is called a Western blot merely because it is similar to a Southern blot, which was named after its inventor, the British biologist M.E. Southern. For example, the Western blot assay method is commonly used to diagnose Lyme disease.

Blount disease See *tibia vara*.

blue baby See *cyanosis*.

blush Redness of the skin as a result of dilated capillaries, typically over the cheeks or neck. Blushing is an involuntary response of the nervous system that leads to widening of the capillaries in the involved skin. A blush is temporary, and it may be brought on by excitement, exercise, fever, or embarrassment. Also known as flush.

BM Physician's shorthand for black male.

BMD See *bone mineral density*.

BMI Body mass index.

BMJ *British Medical Journal*, one of the major general medical journals in the world. *BMJ* states that it "aims to help doctors everywhere practice better medicine and to influence the debate on health."

BNP See *B-type natriuretic peptide*.

board certified In medicine, a description for a physician who has taken and passed a medical specialty examination by one of several recognized boards of specialists. Before obtaining board certification, the physician must become board eligible.

board eligible In medicine, a description for a physician who has completed the requirements for admission to a medical specialty board examination but has not passed that examination. For example, a physician must have 3 years of training in an approved pediatric residency to be eligible for certification by the American Board of Pediatrics.

body dysmorphic disorder A psychiatric disorder characterized by excessive preoccupation with imagined defects in physical appearance. It is classified as an anxiety disorder, and it is believed to be a variant of obsessive-compulsive disorder. Also known as somatoform disorder and dysmorphophobia.

body mass index A key index for relating weight to height. Abbreviated BMI. BMI is a person's weight in kilograms (kg) divided by his or her height in meters squared. The National Institutes of Health (NIH) now defines normal weight, overweight, and obesity according to BMI rather than the traditional height/weight charts. Overweight is a BMI of 27.3 or more for women and 27.8 or more for men. Obesity is a BMI of 30 or more for either sex (about 30 pounds overweight). A very muscular person might have a high BMI without health risks.

body surface area The total surface area of the human body. The BSA is used in many measurements in medicine, including the calculation of drug dosages and the amount of fluids to be administered intravenously. Abbreviated BSA.

body type A somewhat old-fashioned term used to classify the human shape into three primary types: ectomorphic, mesomorphic, or endomorphic.

bodywork Any of a number of therapeutic or simply relaxing practices that involve the manipulation, massage, or regimented movement of body parts. Examples include massage, craniosacral therapy, and Pilates. Bodywork may be used as an adjunct to medical treatment, or it may be prescribed as a form of physical therapy for certain conditions.

boil A skin abscess that forms at a hair follicle infected with pus-forming bacteria. The main treatments include hot packs and draining (lancing) the boil when it is soft. Antibiotics are usually not very helpful in treating boils. A person who has a fever or long-term illness, such as cancer or diabetes, or is taking medications that suppress the immune system should contact a health care practitioner on developing a boil. Also known as furuncle.

bone The hard connective tissue that forms the skeleton of the body. It is composed chiefly of collagen fibers that contain calcium phosphate and calcium carbonate. Bones also serve as a storage area for calcium, playing a large role in calcium balance in the blood. The 206 bones in the human body serve a wide variety of purposes. They support and protect internal organs; for example, the ribs protect the lungs. Muscles pull against bones to make the body move. See also *bone marrow*.

bone, breast See *sternum*.

bone, cuboid The outer bone in the instep of the foot. It is called the cuboid bone because it is shaped like a cube. The cuboid bone is jointed in back with the heel bone (calcaneus) and in front with the bones just behind the fourth and fifth toes (metatarsals).

bone, heel See *calcaneus*.

bone, sesamoid A little bone that is embedded in a joint capsule or tendon; for example, the kneecap (patella).

bone, shin The larger of the two bones in the lower leg. The shin bone is anatomically known as the tibia. Its smaller companion is the fibula.

bone cancer A malignancy of bone. Primary bone cancer (cancer that begins in bone) is rare, but it is not unusual for cancers to metastasize (spread) to bone from other parts of the body, such as the breast, lung, and prostate. The most common type of primary bone cancer is osteosarcoma, which develops in new tissue in growing bones. Another type of cancer, chondrosarcoma, arises in cartilage. Ewing's sarcoma begins in immature nerve tissue in bone marrow. Osteosarcoma and Ewing's sarcoma tend to occur in children and adolescents, and chondrosarcoma occurs most often in adults. Pain is the most frequent symptom of primary and metastatic cancer in bone. Bone cancer can also interfere with normal movements and can weaken the bones, leading to fractures. Diagnosis of bone cancer is supported by findings of the medical history and examination, blood tests (including measuring the level of the enzyme for the enzyme alkaline phosphatase), and X-ray studies, and it is confirmed by a biopsy. Treatment depends on the type, location, size, and extent of the tumor. Surgery is often the primary treatment. Although amputation of a limb is sometimes necessary for primary bone cancer, chemotherapy has made limb-sparing surgery possible in many cases. Radiation may also be used.

bone cyst, aneurysmal A benign lesion in a bone that contains connective tissue and blood inside a thin bony shell. Aneurysmal bone cysts act like tumors and expand the bone, and they typically occur in the second decade of life. They can affect any bone in the arms, legs, trunk, or skull.

bone cyst, simple A solitary fluid-filled cavity (cyst) in a bone, usually in the shaft of a long bone, especially the humerus, in a child. A simple bone cyst can cause pain in or near the bone. Also known as unicameral bone cyst and solitary bone cyst.

bone density See *bone mineral density*.

bone marrow The soft blood-forming tissue that fills the cavities of bones and contains fat and immature and mature blood cells, including white blood cells, red blood cells, and platelets. Diseases or drugs that affect the bone marrow can affect the total counts of these cells.

bone marrow aspiration The removal of a small amount of liquid bone marrow through a needle. The needle is placed through the top layer of bone, and a liquid sample containing bone marrow cells is obtained through the needle by sucking (aspirating) it into a syringe. The suction causes pain for a few moments. Bone marrow aspiration is done to diagnose and follow the progress of various conditions, including anemia and cancer, and to obtain marrow for transplantation.

bone marrow biopsy The removal of a sample of bone marrow and a small amount of bone through a large needle. Two samples are taken. The first is bone marrow by aspiration (suction with a syringe). The second is a core biopsy to obtain bone marrow along with bone fibers. After the needle is removed, this solid sample is pushed out of the needle with a wire. Both samples are examined under a microscope to examine the cells and the architecture of the bone marrow.

bone marrow transplant A procedure in which diseased or damaged bone marrow is replaced with healthy bone marrow. The bone marrow to be replaced may be deliberately destroyed by high doses of chemotherapy and/or radiation therapy. Replacement marrow may come from another person, or the patient's own marrow may be removed and stored before treatment for later use. When marrow from an unrelated donor is used, the procedure is referred to as allogeneic. If the marrow is from an identical twin, it is termed syngeneic. Autologous bone marrow transplantation uses the patient's own marrow. Abbreviated BMT. See also *transplant*.

bone mineral density Also known as BMD and bone density. A measure of bone density, reflecting the strength of bones as represented by calcium content. The BMD test detects osteopenia (mild bone loss, usually without symptoms) and osteoporosis (more severe bone loss, which may cause symptoms). See also *osteopenia; osteoporosis*.

bone scan A nuclear medicine technique for creating images of bones on a computer screen or on film. A small amount of radioactive material is injected into a vein and travels through the bloodstream. It collects in the bones, especially in

abnormal areas of the bones, and is detected by an instrument called a scanner. Bone scans are used for the detection and monitoring of disorders that affect the bones, including Paget disease, cancer, infections, and fractures. Bone scanning is also helpful in evaluating and measuring the activity of certain joint diseases.

bones, appendicular See *bones of the arm, wrist, and hand*.

bones, axial See *bones of the head*.

bones, lower extremity See *bones of the leg, ankle, and foot*.

bones of the arm, wrist, and hand There are 64 bones in the upper extremities. They consist of 10 shoulder and arm, 16 wrist, and 38 hand bones. The 10 shoulder and arm bones are the clavicle, scapula, humerus, radius, and ulna on each side. The 16 wrist bones are the scaphoid, lunate, triquetrum, pisiform, trapezium, trapezoid, capitate, and hamate on each side. The 38 hand bones are the 10 metacarpal bones and 28 finger bones (phalanges). Also known as appendicular bones.

bones of the head There are 29 bones in the human head. They include 8 cranial bones, 14 facial bones, the hyoid bone, and 6 ear (auditory) bones. The 8 cranial bones are the frontal, 2 parietal, occipital, 2 temporal, sphenoid, and ethmoid bones. The 14 facial bones are the 2 maxilla, the mandible, 2 zygoma, 2 lacrimal, 2 nasal, 2 turbinate, vomer, and 2 palate bones. The hyoid bone is the horseshoe-shaped bone at the base of the tongue. The 6 small auditory bones (ossicles) are the malleus, incus, and stapes in each ear. Along with the bones of the trunk, also known as axial bones. See also *bones of the trunk*.

bones of the leg, ankle, and foot There are 62 lower extremity bones. They consist of 10 hip and leg, 14 ankle, and 38 foot bones. The 10 hip and leg bones are the innominate, or hip, bone (which is a fusion of the ilium, ischium, and pubis), and the femur, tibia, fibula, and patella (kneecap) on each side. The 14 ankle bones are the talus, calcaneus (heel bone), navicular, cuboid, internal cuneiform, middle cuneiform, and external cuneiform on each side. The 38 foot bones are the 10 metatarsals and 28 toe bones (phalanges).

bones of the skeleton The human body has 206 bones. These consist of 80 axial (head and trunk) bones and 126 appendicular (upper and lower extremity) bones. See also *bones of the arm, wrist, and hand; bones of the head; bones of the leg, ankle, and foot; bones of the trunk*.

bones of the trunk The 51 trunk bones consist of 26 vertebrae, 24 ribs, and the sternum. The 26 vertebrae comprise 7 cervical, 12 thoracic, and 5 lumbar vertebrae, plus the sacrum and the coccyx. The 24 ribs comprise 14 true ribs, 6 false ribs, and 4 floating ribs. The sternum is the breastbone. Along with the bones of the head, also known as axial bones.

bony syndactyly A condition in which the bones of the fingers or toes are joined together. Bony syndactyly is not the same as cutaneous syndactyly, which only involves webbing of the skin between the digits.

bony tarsus A structure that is made up of seven bones situated between the bones of the lower leg and the metatarsus bones of the feet. The seven bones of the bony tarsus are the calcaneus, talus (astragalus), cuboid, and navicular (scaphoid), plus the first, second, and third cuneiform bones. The bony tarsus contributes to the broad, flat framework of the foot.

booster shot An additional dose of a vaccine needed periodically to "boost" the immune system. For example, a booster shot of the tetanus and diphtheria (Td) vaccine is recommended for adults every 10 years.

borborygmus A gurgling, rumbling, or squeaking noise from the abdomen that is caused by the movement of gas through the bowels. Also known as stomach rumbling. The plural is borborygmi.

borderline personality disorder A personality type characterized by difficulty forming and keeping stable relationships, highly emotional or aggressive behavior, impulsivity, and rapid shifts in values, self-image, mood, and behavior.

Bornholm disease A viral infection that is most commonly caused by an enterovirus called Coxsackie B. Symptoms include fever, intense abdominal and chest pain, and headache. The chest pain is caused by inflammation of the tissue lining the lungs, and it is typically worsened by breathing or coughing. The illness usually lasts from 3 to 14 days. Also known as epidemic myalgia and pleurodynia.

botox A highly purified preparation of botulinum toxin A, a toxin produced by the bacterium Clostridium botulinum. Botox is injected, in very small amounts, into specific muscles, as a treatment. It acts by blocking the transmission of nerve impulses to muscles and so paralyzes (relaxes) the muscles. Botox treatment has found a growing number of uses from easing muscle spasms (as, for

example, in spastic cerebral palsy) to its increasingly widespread cosmetic use in flattening wrinkles.

bottlefeeding The practice of feeding an infant a substitute for breast milk. Pediatricians generally advise exclusively breastfeeding (that is, breastfeeding with no supplementary formula) for all full-term, healthy infants for the first 6 months of life. However, many infants are bottlefed today, at least in part. For infants to achieve normal growth and maintain normal health, infant formulas must include proper amounts of water, carbohydrate, protein, fat, vitamins, and minerals.

botulinum toxin A toxin produced by the bacterium *Clostridium botulinum*, which is the most poisonous biological substance known. Botulinum toxin is toxic to nerves. It binds to the nerve ending at the point where the nerve joins a muscle, blocking the release by the nerve of the chemical acetylcholine (the principal neurotransmitter at the neuromuscular junction), preventing the muscle from contracting. The result is weakness and paralysis of the muscle. Purified botulinum toxin A was the first bacterial toxin to be used as a medicine. It is marketed under the trade name Botox. See also *botox; botulism*.

botulism An uncommon but potentially very serious type of food poisoning that produces paralysis of muscles, from a nerve toxin called botulinum toxin that is produced by the bacteria *Clostridium botulinum*. There are various types of botulism, including food-borne, wound, infant intestinal, and adult intestinal botulism. The symptoms of botulism can range from mild, including transient nausea and vomiting, to severe that progress to heart and lung failure and death. Food-borne botulism occurs typically in unrefrigerated or poorly refrigerated foods and foods without preservatives, especially uncooked or half-cooked meats. It can be prevented by careful use of refrigeration and preservative techniques, and the toxin can be destroyed with heat. *Clostridium botulin* and *botulinum toxin* might, it is feared, be misused as agents of bioterrorism. See also *bioterrorism; food poisoning; botox*.

boutonneuse See *typhus, African tick*.

bowel The small and large intestine.

bowel disease, inflammatory A group of chronic intestinal diseases characterized by inflammation of the bowel (the small and large intestine). Abbreviated IBD. The most common types of IBD are ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease. The portion of the intestine that is affected becomes irritated and swollen, and ulcers may form. IBD can be lim-

ited to the intestine or associated with disease involving the skin, joints, spine, liver, eyes, and other organs. The cause is not always known, although it can be caused or made worse by infection. Symptoms include abdominal pain and diarrhea. Symptoms tend to wax and wane, and long remissions and even spontaneous resolution of symptoms are well known. Although people of any age can be affected, IBD is most common in young adults. Treatment involves dietary changes, the use of medicines, and sometimes surgery, depending on the type and course of the disease under care. Effective therapy exists for the majority of cases. Narcotics, codeine, and antidiarrheal medications should be avoided during severe episodes of IBD because they may cause dangerous colon swelling (toxic megacolon). See also *Crohn's disease; colitis, ulcerative*.

bowel disorders and fiber High-fiber diets help delay the progression of and number of bouts with diverticulosis. In many cases, high-fiber diets help reduce the symptoms of irritable bowel syndrome (IBS). It is generally accepted that a diet high in fiber is protective or at least reduces the incidence of colon polyps and colon cancer.

Bowen's disease See *cancer, skin*.

bowlegs A condition in which the legs curve out, leaving a gap between the knees, after infancy. Bowlegs can be corrected with surgery or casting. Also known as genu varum and tibia vara.

BP In general medicine, blood pressure. On a medical chart, you might see "BP90/60 T98.6 Ht60/reg R15," which signifies that the blood pressure (BP) is 90/60 mm Hg, the temperature (T) is 98.6° Fahrenheit, the heart rate (Ht) is 60 beats per minute and regular, and respirations are occurring at 15 per minute.

BPH Benign prostatic hyperplasia, benign prostatic hypertrophy.

brace, foot drop See *ankle-foot orthosis*.

braces, dental Devices used by orthodontists to move the position teeth or adjust underlying bone. Temporomandibular joint (TMJ) problems can also sometimes be corrected with dental braces. Teeth can be moved by removable appliances or by fixed braces. If there is crowding of teeth, some teeth may need to be extracted before braces are applied. Retainers may be necessary long after dental braces are placed, especially in orthodontic treatment of adults.

brachial artery The artery that runs from the shoulder down to the elbow. See also *brachial vein*.

brachial plexus A bundle of nerves that begins in the back of the base of the neck and extends through the armpit. It is formed by the union of portions of the fifth through eighth cervical spinal nerves and the first thoracic spinal nerve. Damage to the brachial plexus can affect nerves responsible for muscle function and sensation of the arm and chest.

brachial vein A vein that accompanies the brachial artery between the shoulder and the elbow. The route of the brachial vein is from the elbow up to the shoulder. See also *brachial artery*.

brachy- Prefix indicating short, as in brachycephaly (short head) and brachydactyly (short fingers and toes).

brachycephaly A condition in which the head is unusually short in diameter from front to back. Brachycephaly is frequently a feature in congenital malformation syndromes, including Down syndrome (trisomy 21).

brachydactyly A condition in which the fingers and toes are short and stubby. Brachydactyly is a common finding in malformation syndromes, such as Down syndrome (trisomy 21).

brachytherapy Radiation treatment given by placing radioactive material directly in or near the target, which is often a tumor. Brachytherapy for prostate cancer, for example, is also called interstitial radiation therapy or seed implantation. In brachytherapy for prostate cancer, radioactive seeds are implanted in the prostate. The seeds might be titanium-encased pellets that contain the radioisotope iodine-125.

brady- Prefix indicating slow, as in bradycardia (slow heart rate), bradykinesia (slow movement), and bradyphrenia (slow thought processes).

bradycardia A slow heart rate, usually defined as less than 60 beats per minute.

bradykinesia Slow movement. Bradykinesia is often associated with an impaired ability to adjust the body's position. Bradykinesia can be a symptom of nervous system disorders, particularly Parkinson's disease, or a side effect of medications.

bradyphrenia A slow thought process. Bradyphrenia can be a side effect of certain psychiatric medications.

bradypnea Abnormally slow breathing. A respiratory rate that is too slow. The normal rate of respirations (breaths per minute) depends on a number of

factors, including the age of the individual and the degree of exertion.

Braille A system of raised-dot writing for the blind in which each letter is represented as a raised pattern that can be read by touching it with the fingers. In Braille, dot patterns are assigned to letters of the alphabet, punctuation marks, and other symbols. Braille was devised by Louis Braille.

brain The portion of the central nervous system that is located within the skull. It functions as a primary receiver, organizer, and distributor of information for the body. It has a right half and a left half, each of which is called a hemisphere.

brain, fornix of the One of a pair of arching fibrous bands in the brain that connects the two lobes of the cerebrum.

brain, water on the See *hydrocephalus*.

brain aneurysm See *aneurysm, brain*.

brain cancer A malignant growth of the brain. See also *brain tumor*.

brain death The permanent, irreversible cessation of all brain functions. Brain death is not the same thing as a coma or vegetative state. The presence of brain death is legally synonymous with death itself in most US states.

brain freeze A headache that occurs when one puts ice, a cold food, or a chilled beverage in the mouth, chilling the roof of the mouth. Ice cream is by far the most frequent offender. Brain freeze is characterized by a stabbing, aching pain that begins a few seconds after ingestion of something cold. The pain peaks in 30 to 60 seconds. No treatment is required. Also known as an ice cream headache.

brain malleability See *brain plasticity*.

brain plasticity The phenomenon of change and learning in the adult brain. Also known as brain malleability.

brain stem The stem-like part of the base of the brain that is connected to the spinal cord. The brain stem controls the flow of messages between the brain and the rest of the body, and it also controls basic body functions such as breathing, swallowing, heart rate, blood pressure, consciousness, and whether one is awake or sleepy. The brain stem consists of the midbrain, pons, and medulla oblongata.

brain stem glioma A type of brain tumor that involves the glial cells.

brain tumor A benign or malignant growth in the brain. Primary brain tumors initially form in brain tissue. Secondary brain tumors are cancers that have spread (metastasized) to the brain tissue from tissue elsewhere in the body. Brain tumors can occur in people of any age.

brain ventricle One of the communicating cavities within the brain. There are four ventricles: two lateral ventricles, the third ventricle, and the fourth ventricle. The lateral ventricles are in the cerebral hemispheres. Each lateral ventricle consists of a triangular central body and four horns. The lateral ventricles communicate with the third ventricle through the interventricular foramen (opening). The third ventricle is a median (midline) cavity in the brain, bounded by the thalamus and hypothalamus on either side. In front, the third ventricle communicates with the lateral ventricles, and in back it communicates with the aqueduct of the midbrain (the aqueduct of Sylvius). The fourth ventricle is the most inferior of the four ventricles of the brain. It extends from the aqueduct of the midbrain to the central canal of the upper end of the spinal cord, with which it communicates by the two foramina (openings) of Luschka and the foramen of Magendie. The ventricles are filled with cerebrospinal fluid, which is formed by structures, called choroid plexuses, that are located in the walls and roofs of the ventricles.

branchial cleft cyst A cavity that is a remnant from embryologic development and is still present at birth in one side of the neck, just in front of the large angulated muscle on either side (the sternocleidomastoid muscle). The cyst may not be recognized until adolescence, when it enlarges its oval shape. Sometimes a branchial cleft cyst develops a sinus or drainage pathway to the surface of the skin, from which mucus can be expressed. Total surgical excision is the treatment of choice. Also known as branchial cyst.

branchial cyst See *branchial cleft cyst*.

Braxton Hicks contraction An irregular contraction of the womb (uterus) that occurs toward the middle of a woman's first pregnancy and earlier, and more intensely, in her subsequent pregnancies. Braxton Hicks contractions tend to occur during physical activity. The uterus tightens for 30 to 60 seconds, beginning at the top of the uterus, and the contraction gradually spreads downward before the uterus relaxes. Braxton Hicks contractions may be quite uncomfortable and sometimes difficult to distinguish from the contractions of true labor.

BRCA1 A tumor suppressor gene that normally acts to restrain the growth of cells. Mutated forms of

BRCA1 and BRCA2 are responsible for about half the cases of inherited breast cancer, especially those that occur in relatively young women. From the words breast and cancer. See also *breast cancer susceptibility gene*.

BRCA2 A tumor suppressor gene that normally acts to restrain the growth of cells. Mutations of BRCA2, like those of BRCA1, are responsible mainly for hereditary breast cancer. They seldom appear to be involved in sporadic, noninherited breast cancer—the 95 percent of breast cancer that does not run in families. Both BRCA1 and BRCA2 are large, complex genes. From the words breast and cancer. See also *breast cancer susceptibility gene*.

breadbasket A popular term for the stomach.

breakbone fever See *dengue fever*.

breast The front of the chest or the mammary gland. The mammary gland is a milk-producing gland that is largely composed of fat. Within the mammary gland are sac-like structures called lobules, which produce the milk, as well as a complex network of branching ducts. These ducts exit from the lobules at the nipple. The lobules and ducts are supported in the breast by surrounding fatty tissue and ligaments. The breast contains blood vessels and lymphatics, but no muscles. The lymphatics are thin channels similar to blood vessels; they do not carry blood, but they collect and carry tissue fluid, which ultimately reenters the bloodstream. Breast tissue fluid drains through the lymphatics into the lymph nodes located in the armpit and behind the breastbone (sternum). The appearance of the normal female breast differs greatly among individuals and at different times during a woman's life: before, during, and after adolescence; during pregnancy; during the menstrual cycle; and after menopause. The nipple of the breast becomes erect because of cold, breastfeeding, and sexual activity. The pigmented area around the nipple is called the areola. See also *gland, mammary*.

breast, infiltrating ductal carcinoma of the One of several recognized specific patterns of breast cancer that begins in the cells that form the ducts of the breast. The most common form of breast cancer, it may appear as a smooth-edged lump in the breast. On physical examination, this lump usually feels much harder or firmer than benign lumps in the breast.

breast, infiltrating lobular carcinoma of the The second most common invasive breast cancer. Infiltrating lobular carcinoma starts in the lobules, the glands that secrete milk, and then infiltrates surrounding tissue. Lobular carcinoma can occur in

more than one site in the breast or in both breasts at the same time (a bilateral lobular carcinoma).

breast, Paget's disease of The combination of scaly skin on the nipple that resembles eczema and an underlying cancer of the breast. The nipple is inflamed because of the presence of Paget's cells, large, irregular cells that are almost always associated with cancer in the breast. In Paget's disease, the nipple and areola (the area surrounding the nipple) are typically red, inflamed, and itchy. There may be crusting, bleeding, or ulceration. The nipple may be inverted (turned inward), and there may be a discharge from the nipple. Paget's disease of the breast accounts for a small but significant minority of all breast tumors. It usually occurs in women in their 50s, but it can occur at a later age. It is very rare in men. Also called Paget's disease of the nipple.

breast absence See *amastia*.

breast augmentation Artificial enlargement of the breasts. Breast augmentation may be done by insertion of a silicone bag (prosthesis) under the breast (submammary) or under the breast and chest muscle (subpectoral), after which the bag is filled with saline solution. This prosthesis expands the breast area to give the appearance of a fuller breast (increased cup size).

breast cancer A common form of cancer that begins in the breast. There are many types of breast cancer, and they differ in their capability of spreading to other body tissues (metastasis). Breast cancer can occur in both men and women, although it is more common in women. Some forms of breast cancer are genetic (inherited), and others are linked to exposure to cancer-causing substances, but most cases of breast cancer occur for unknown reasons. Risk factors for breast cancer may include genetic predisposition, as indicated by a history of breast cancer in close relatives; overexposure of the chest to radiation, smoking, childlessness, induced abortion, obesity and diet, and exposure to carcinogenic substances. Breast cancer is diagnosed with self-examination and physician examination of the breasts, mammography, ultrasound testing, and biopsy. Treatment depends on the type and location of the breast cancer, as well as the age and health of the patient. Options may include lumpectomy (removal of the small, cancerous area only), chemotherapy, radiation, and partial or total mastectomy. The American Cancer Society recommends that all women should perform regular breast self-exams and that women should have a baseline mammogram done between the ages of 35 and 40 years. After age 40, yearly mammograms are recommended. Breast cancer prevention includes diet changes, avoiding carcinogens when possible, and

screening. Most breast cancers are treatable when caught early, and survival rates are high. See also *breast cancer susceptibility gene*; *breast cancer, familial*; *breast, infiltrating ductal carcinoma of the*; *breast, infiltrating lobular carcinoma of the*; *mastectomy*.

breast cancer, familial A form of breast cancer that tends to occur in members of the same family. A number of factors have been identified as increasing the risk of breast cancer. One of the strongest is a family history of breast cancer in a relative. About 15 to 20 percent of women with breast cancer have such a family history of the disease, clearly reflecting the participation of inherited (genetic) components in the development of some breast cancers. Dominant breast cancer susceptibility genes, including BRCA1 and BRCA2, appear to be responsible for about 5 percent of all breast cancer. See also *BRCA1*; *BRCA2*; *breast cancer susceptibility gene*.

breast cancer, male Breast cancer in men. Male breast cancer is much less common than breast cancer in women. Fewer than 1 percent of persons with breast cancer are male. However, breast cancer is no less dangerous in males than in females. After the diagnosis of breast cancer is made, the mortality rates are virtually the same for men and for women.

breast cancer susceptibility gene An inherited factor that predisposes an individual to breast cancer. Two of these genes, BRCA1 and BRCA2, have been identified. Several other genes (those for Li-Fraumeni syndrome, Cowden disease, Muir-Torre syndrome, and ataxia-telangiectasia) are also known to predispose women to breast cancer. However, because all these known breast cancer susceptibility genes together do not account for more than a minor fraction of breast cancer that clusters in families, it is clear that more breast cancer genes remain to be discovered. See also *BRCA1*; *BRCA2*.

breast implant See *breast augmentation*.

breast milk Milk from the breast. Human milk contains a balance of nutrients that closely matches infant requirements for brain development, growth, and a healthy immune system. Human milk also contains immunologic agents and other compounds that act against viruses, bacteria, and parasites.

breast reduction Surgical reduction of breast size in order to reduce the weight of the breasts and relieve symptoms from unusually large, pendulous breasts. Breast reduction can relieve skin irritation of the chest, and pain in the back and shoulders. Also known as reduction mammoplasty.

breastbone See *sternum*.

breastfeeding The highly recommended practice of feeding an infant with the mother's natural milk. Breast milk contains vitamins, minerals, and enzymes that aid the baby's digestion, and immunity factors in breast milk can help infants fight off infections. Breast milk can be expressed, manually or with the assistance of a breast pump, for use while the mother is away, or breastfeeding and formula-feeding can be used together. The activity of breastfeeding has strong benefits for mothers as well as infants: It encourages the release of hormones that improve uterine muscle tone, and it may help to prevent breast cancer. The ability of the breast to produce milk diminishes soon after childbirth without the stimulation of breastfeeding. Also known as nursing. See also *lactation*.

breathing The process of respiration, during which air is inhaled into the lungs through the mouth or nose due to muscle contraction and then exhaled due to muscle relaxation.

breech The buttocks.

breech birth Birth of a baby with the buttocks, rather than the head, emerging first. Breech birth is more likely to cause injury to the mother or the infant than head-first birth. In many cases a baby in the breech position can be turned before delivery by using repeated, gentle massage.

Brenner tumor A tumor of the surface of the ovary. Brenner tumors are usually benign, but in rare cases, they are cancerous.

bridge 1 A set of one or more false teeth that is supported by a metal framework and used to replace one or more missing teeth. 2 A form of treatment that serves as a transition from a previous form of treatment and is followed with another form, such as in "bridge therapy." 3 Tissue that forms an arc over adjacent tissue(s). For example, heart tissue that has formed over a coronary artery, sometimes physically pinching the artery, is referred to as a myocardial bridge.

Brill-Zinsser disease Reactivation of epidemic typhus years after an earlier attack of the disease. *Rickettsia prowazekii*, the agent that causes epidemic typhus, remains viable for many years. When the host's defenses are down, it can be reactivated. See also *rickettsial diseases; typhus, epidemic*.

brittle bone disease See *osteogenesis imperfecta*.

BRM See *biological response modifier*.

Broca area An area of the cerebral motor cortex in the frontal lobe of the brain that is responsible for speech development. Damage to the Broca area can cause speech disorders, including aphasia, apraxia, and dyspraxia. See also *aphasia; apraxia of speech; dyspraxia of speech*.

Broda test See *basal temperature*.

bronchi The plural of bronchus.

bronchiectasis Permanent abnormal widening of the bronchi (air tubes that branch deep into the lungs). Bronchiectasis can cause recurrent lung infections, a disabling cough, shortness of breath, and coughing up blood.

bronchiole The tiny branch of air tubes within the lungs that is a continuation of the bronchus. The bronchioles connect to the alveoli (air sacs).

bronchiolitis Inflammation of the bronchioles, usually due to viral infections.

bronchitis Inflammation and swelling of the bronchi. Bronchitis can be acute or chronic.

bronchitis, acute An infection of the bronchi of recent origin, typically characterized by cough, chest discomfort, and production of mucus (sputum). Acute bronchitis is treated with antibiotics.

bronchitis, chronic Inflammation and swelling of the lining of the airways, leading to narrowing and obstruction generally resulting in daily cough. The inflammation stimulates production of mucus, which can cause further blockage of the airways. Obstruction of the airways, especially with mucus, increases the likelihood of bacterial lung infection. Chronic bronchitis is common in persons who have smoked for extended periods.

bronchopulmonary dysplasia A chronic lung disease in infants who received mechanical respiratory support with high oxygenation in the neonatal period.

bronchopulmonary segment A subdivision of one lobe of a lung, based on the connection to the segmental bronchus. For example, the right upper lobe of the lung has apical, anterior, and posterior segments.

bronchoscope A thin, flexible instrument with a lighted viewing tube that is used to visualize the air passages to the lungs.

bronchoscopy A procedure using a bronchoscope to diagnose and treat lung conditions and disease. See also *bronchoscope*.

bronchospasm A temporary narrowing of the airways in the lung. Bronchospasm causes the breathing difficulties seen in asthma. See also *asthma*.

bronchospasm, exercise-induced See *asthma, exercise-induced*.

bronchus A large air tube that begins at the end of the trachea and branches into the lungs. The supporting walls of the bronchus are made up in part of cartilage.

Brown's syndrome An eye abnormality that can present at birth characterized by an inability to elevate the eyeball when trying to move the eyeball to the outside. Brown's syndrome can also be caused by other conditions that affect the normal function of the eye muscles, such as nodules from rheumatoid arthritis or rare tumors in the eye muscle.

Brucellosis An infectious disease characterized by rising and lowering (undulant) fever, sweating, muscle and joint pains, and weakness. Brucellosis is caused by the bacterium *Brucella*, which can be transmitted in unpasteurized milk from cattle, sheep, and goats; cheese made from this unpasteurized milk; and contact with diseased animals. Antibiotics are used to treat Brucellosis. Also known as undulant fever.

bruise Injury of the soft tissues that results in breakage of the local capillaries and leakage of red blood cells. In the skin it can be seen as a reddish-purple discoloration that does not blanch when pressed. When a bruise fades, it becomes green and brown, as the body metabolizes the blood cells in the skin. It is best treated with local application of a cold pack immediately after injury. Also known as contusion.

bruit A sound heard over an artery or vascular channel, reflecting turbulence of flow. Most commonly, a bruit is caused by abnormal narrowing of an artery. Listening for a bruit in the neck with a stethoscope is a simple way to screen for narrowing (stenosis) of the carotid artery, which can be a result of cholesterol plaque accumulation.

Brushfield spot A little white spot on the surface of the iris. Brushfield spots are arranged in a ring, concentric with the pupil. These spots occur in normal children but are far more frequent in those with Down syndrome. Also called speckled iris.

bruxism Grinding and gnashing of the teeth. Bruxism is due to clenching of the teeth other than in chewing and is associated with forceful lateral or protrusive jaw movements. This results in the grind-

ing or rubbing together of the teeth. Bruxism can injure teeth and cause local pain in the mouth or jaw and may contribute to temporomandibular joint (TMJ) syndrome.

BSA See *body surface area*.

B-type natriuretic peptide A 32-amino-acid polypeptide secreted by the ventricles of the heart in response to excessive stretching of heart muscle cells. The levels of B-type natriuretic peptide are elevated in patients with congestive heart failure, and correlate with both the severity of symptoms and the prognosis. Also known as BNP.

bubo An enlarged lymph node that is tender and painful. Buboes particularly occur in the groin and armpit (the axillae). These swollen glands are seen in a number of infectious diseases, including gonorrhea, syphilis, tuberculosis, and the eponymous bubonic plague.

bubonic plague An infectious disease that is caused by the bacterium *Yersinia pestis* and is transmitted to humans from infected rats by the oriental rat flea. It is named for the characteristic feature of buboes (painfully enlarged lymph nodes) in the groin, armpits, neck, and elsewhere. Other symptoms of bubonic plague include headache, fever, chills, and weakness. Bubonic plague can lead to gangrene (tissue death) of the fingers, toes, and nose. Also called Black Death and Black Plague.

buccal mucosa The inner lining of the cheeks and lips.

bulbourethral gland A pea-sized gland in the male located behind and to the side of the urethra that discharges a component of seminal fluid into the urethra. There are two bulbourethral glands, one on each side. Also known as the Cowper's gland.

bulimia An eating disorder characterized by periods of extreme overeating, often interrupted by periods of anorexia. Bulimia is usually accompanied by self-induced vomiting or other forms of purging, including the use of laxatives, obsessive exercise, or fasting. Bulimia can be life-threatening due to dehydration, and it can cause permanent damage to the bowels, liver, kidney, teeth, and heart. It also raises a person's risk of seizures. It is believed to be closely related to obsessive-compulsive disorder. Treatment may include cognitive behavior therapy, dietary and health education, and antidepressant medication. Also known as bulimia nervosa. See also *anorexia nervosa; body dysmorphic disorder; obsessive-compulsive disorder*.

bulla See *blister*.

bullous Characterized by blistering, such as a second-degree burn.

bullous pemphigoid A disease characterized by tense, blistering eruptions of the skin caused by inflammation associated with antibodies in the basement membrane layer of skin. It is diagnosed by skin biopsy showing the abnormal antibodies deposited in the skin layer. Treatment is with topical cortisone creams but sometimes requires high doses of cortisone (steroids) or other medicines taken internally.

bump A raised area resulting from blood and serum leaking from injured blood vessels into the tissues, as well as from the body's inflammatory response to the injury. A purplish, flat bruise that occurs when blood leaks out into the top layers of skin is referred to as an ecchymosis.

BUN Blood urea nitrogen.

bunion A localized, painful swelling at the base of the big toe due to new bone formation. The affected toe is often curved outward. Bunions are frequently associated with inflammation of the nearby bursa (bursitis) and degenerative joint disease (osteoarthritis). Bunions most commonly affect women, particularly those who wear tight-fitting shoes and high heels. Treatment includes rest, a change in shoes, foot supports, medications, or surgery.

Burkitt lymphoma A type of non-Hodgkin lymphoma that most often occurs in young people between the ages of 12 and 30. Burkitt lymphoma usually causes a rapidly growing tumor in the abdomen and, less often, tumors in the testis, sinuses, bone, lymph nodes, skin, bone marrow, or central nervous system. Burkitt lymphoma is a tumor of B cell origin. See also *lymphoma, non-Hodgkin's*.

burn Damage to the skin or other body parts caused by extreme heat, flame, contact with heated objects, or chemicals. Burn depth is generally categorized as first, second, or third degree. The treatment of burns depends on the depth, area, and location of the burn, as well as additional factors, such as material that may be burned onto or into the skin. Treatment options range from simply applying a cold pack to emergency treatment to skin grafts.

burn, first degree A superficial burn with similar characteristics to a typical sunburn. The skin is red in color, without blistering, sensation is intact, and the burn is usually somewhat painful.

burn, second degree A burn severe enough to cause blistering of the skin. The pain of a second-degree burn is usually somewhat more intense than the pain of a first-degree burn.

burn, third degree A burn in which the damage has progressed to the point of skin death. The skin is white and without sensation. In extreme cases damage may extend beyond the skin and into underlying tissue. In these cases the skin may be blackened or burned away. Unless skin grafts are feasible, loss of the affected limb, permanent disfigurement, and even death are likely in such severe cases.

burning mouth syndrome An intense burning sensation on the tongue, often at the tip of the tongue. Burning mouth syndrome tends to develop in "supertasters"—people with an unusually large density of taste buds, each surrounded by pain fibers—and in postmenopausal women, who may lose their ability to sense bitter tastes as a result of burning mouth syndrome.

burp 1 Gas brought up from the stomach through the mouth, producing a guttural noise. 2 As a verb, to bring up gas from the stomach through the mouth. Also, to help a baby bring up gas after feeding, by rubbing or patting its back. Also known as eructation.

bursa A closed, fluid-filled sac that functions as a gliding surface to reduce friction between tissues of the body. When a bursa becomes inflamed, the condition is known as bursitis.

bursitis Inflammation of a bursa, causing pain and tenderness. See also *bursa; bursitis, aseptic; bursitis, calcific; bursitis, elbow; bursitis, hip; bursitis, knee; bursitis, septic; bursitis, shoulder*.

bursitis, aseptic Bursitis that is not due to an infectious condition. Treatment of noninfectious bursitis includes rest, ice, and medications for inflammation and pain. Sometimes local cortisone injections are given to quiet inflammation.

bursitis, calcific Chronic bursitis with calcification of the bursa. The calcium deposition can occur as long as the inflammation is present.

bursitis, elbow Inflammation of the bursa at the tip of the elbow, called the olecranon bursa. The olecranon bursa is a common site of bursitis.

bursitis, hip Inflammation of a bursa of the hip. There are two major bursae of the hip, which is a common location for bursitis.

bursitis, knee Inflammation of a bursa of the knee. There are three major bursae of the knee, which is a common site for bursitis.

bursitis, septic Inflammation of a bursa due to infection, usually with bacteria. Septic bursitis is treated with antibiotics, aspiration, and surgery. Also known as infectious bursitis.

bursitis, shoulder Inflammation of a bursa of the shoulder. There are two major bursae of the shoulder, which is a common location for bursitis.

butterfly rash A red, flat, butterfly-shaped facial rash over the bridge of the nose. More than half of patients with systemic lupus erythematosus develop this characteristic rash. The butterfly rash of lupus is typically painless and does not itch. Along with inflammation in other organs, the rash can be precipitated or worsened by exposure to sunlight. This photosensitivity can be accompanied by a worsening of inflammation throughout the body, causing a flare-up of the disease. A somewhat similar rash can also occur in other conditions, such as rosacea. Also known as a malar rash. See also *lupus; lupus, discoid; lupus erythematosis, systemic*.

bypass An operation in which a new pathway is created for the transport of substances in the body.

bypass, cardiopulmonary A bypass of the heart and lungs as, for example, in open heart surgery. In this procedure, blood returning to the heart is diverted through a heart-lung machine (a pump-oxygenator) before being returned to the arterial circulation.

bypass, coronary A form of bypass surgery that can create new routes around narrowed and blocked arteries, permitting increased blood flow to deliver oxygen and nutrients to the heart muscles. Also known as coronary artery bypass graft (CABG) surgery, it is an option for selected patients with significant narrowings and blockages of the heart arteries. The bypass graft for a CABG can be a vein from the leg or an inner chest-wall artery. CABG surgery is one of the most commonly performed major operations. Coronary artery disease develops because of hardening of the arteries (atherosclerosis) that supply blood to the heart muscle. Diagnostic tests include electrocardiograms (EKGs), stress tests, echocardiograms, and coronary angiographies.

Cc

C **1** In genetics, cytosine, a member of the G-C (guanine-cytosine) base pair in DNA. **2** In bio-science, carbon, an essential element in the basic structure of living things.

C1 through C7 The seven cervical vertebrae of the neck. C1 supports the head and is named atlas, for the Greek god who supported the world. C2 is called the axis because the atlas rotates about the odontoid process, a bony projection of the axis. C7 is sometimes called the prominent vertebra because of its long spine that projects from the back of the vertebral body at the base of the neck.

CA 19–9 A tumor marker found in patients with colorectal, pancreatic, stomach, and bile duct cancer.

CA 125 Cancer antigen 125, a protein normally made by certain cells in the body, including those of the ovaries, Fallopian tubes, uterus, cervix, and lining of the chest and abdominal cavities (the pleura and peritoneum). When CA 125 is found in higher than normal amounts (more than 35 kU/ml), it is considered a marker for cancer. Benign conditions that can raise CA 125 include infections of the lining of the abdomen and chest, menstruation, pregnancy, endometriosis, and liver disease. Benign tumors of the ovaries can also cause abnormal test results.

CABG Coronary artery bypass graft. See *bypass, coronary*.

cachetic Having cachexia. Patients with cancer, AIDS, and other serious chronic diseases may appear cachetic. See also *cachexia*.

cachexia General physical wasting with loss of weight and muscle mass due to a disease. Also known as marasmus.

CAD Coronary artery disease.

caduceus A staff with two snakes entwined about it, topped by a pair of wings. The caduceus was carried by the Greek messenger god Hermes, whose Roman counterpart was Mercury, and is therefore the sign of a herald. By a curious misconception, the caduceus also became the insignia of the US

Army Medical Corps and a well-known symbol of physicians and medicine. The Corps should have chosen the symbol of medicine: the rod of Aesculapius, which has only one snake and no wings. No wings were necessary because the essence of medicine was not speed. The single serpent that could shed its skin and emerge in full vigor represented the renewal of youth and health.

caesarean section A procedure in which an infant is surgically removed from the uterus rather than being born vaginally. Caesarean sections were performed in ancient civilizations to salvage babies upon the death of nearly full-term pregnant women. Julius Caesar is said to have been born by this procedure, hence the name. The term section in surgery refers to the division of tissue. In the case of a caesarean section, the abdominal wall of the mother and the wall of the uterus are divided in order to extract the baby. Also known as C-section.

caesarean section, lower segment A caesarean section in which the surgical incision is made in the lower segment of the uterus. Abbreviated LSCS.

caesarean section, vaginal birth after A vaginal delivery for a woman who previously had a caesarean section. It was once the rule that after a caesarean section, the next delivery also had to be by caesarean section. Now vaginal delivery after caesarean section is sometimes feasible. Age is one of the factors that need to be considered because women over 30 who try a vaginal delivery after a caesarean section are more likely than younger women to have a uterine rupture. Abbreviated VBAC.

café au lait spot A flat spot on the skin that has a color similar to that of coffee with milk (café au lait) in persons with light skin or that has a darker appearance than the surrounding skin in persons with dark skin. About 10 percent of the general population has café au lait spots, which can be removed with a Yag laser technique. Café au lait spots are normally harmless, but in some cases they are a sign of neurofibromatosis. The presence of six or more café au lait spots, each of which is 1.5 cm or more in diameter, is diagnostic of neurofibromatosis. See also *neurofibromatosis; Yag laser surgery*.

caffeine A stimulant compound found naturally in coffee, tea, cocoa (chocolate), and kola nuts (cola) and added to soft drinks, foods, and medicines. Caffeine can cause anxiety, insomnia, nervousness, and hypertension. Caffeine is a diuretic and increases urination. It can decrease a person's ability to lose weight because it stimulates insulin secretion, which reduces blood sugar, which increases hunger. Caffeine can help to relieve headaches, so a number of over-the-counter and

prescription pain relievers include it as an ingredient, usually with aspirin or another analgesic.

Caffey disease An inflammatory bone disorder seen only in newborn and very young babies, characterized by swelling of soft tissues, irritability, fever, and paleness. Also known as infantile cortical hyperostosis.

calamine An astringent made from zinc carbonate or zinc oxide, customarily used in lotion form to treat skin problems or insect bites that cause itching or discomfort.

calcaneal spur A bony spur, also known as a heel spur, that projects from the back or underside of the heel bone (the calcaneus) and that may make walking painful. Calcaneal spurs are associated with inflammation of the Achilles tendon (Achilles tendinitis), and cause tenderness and pain at the back of the heel, which is made worse by pushing off the ball of the foot. Spurs under the sole (the plantar area) are associated with inflammation of the plantar fascia, which is the bowstring-like tissue that stretches from the heel underneath the sole. These spurs can cause localized tenderness and pain that is made worse by stepping down on the heel. Calcaneal spurs and plantar fasciitis can occur alone, or they can be related to underlying diseases that cause arthritis, such as reactive arthritis and ankylosing spondylitis. Treatment is designed to decrease the inflammation and avoid reinjury. Heel lifts reduce stress on the Achilles tendon and relieve painful spurs at the back of the heel. Donut-shaped shoe inserts take pressure off plantar spurs. Infrequently, surgery is done on chronically inflamed spurs.

calcaneocuboid joint The joint located in the foot between the calcaneus bone and the cuboid bone. It is a gliding type of joint. The ligaments that serve to support and strengthen this joint are called the capsular, dorsal calcaneocuboid, bifurcated, long plantar, and plantar calcaneocuboid ligaments.

calcaneus The heel bone, a more or less rectangular bone at the back of the foot. Also known as os calcis.

calcific bursitis Chronic inflammation of a bursa (bursitis) that leads to calcium deposits in the bursa. The calcification can occur as long as the inflammation is present. See also *bursa; bursitis*.

calcification The process of suffusing tissues with calcium salts.

calcified granuloma A node-like type of tissue inflammation that has a specific appearance under

a microscope (granuloma) and contains calcium deposits. Because it usually takes some time for calcium to be deposited in a granuloma, it is generally assumed that a calcified granuloma is an old granuloma, or an old area of inflammation. For example, a calcified granuloma in the lung may be due to tuberculosis contracted years earlier that is now inactive and dormant.

calcinoses An abnormal deposit of calcium salts in body tissues. Examples include the calcifications in the skin from scleroderma and in the muscle from polymyositis.

calcitonin A hormone produced by the thyroid gland that lowers the levels of calcium and phosphate in the blood and promotes the formation of bone. Bone is in a constant state of remodeling. Old bone is removed by cells called osteoclasts, and new bone is added by cells called osteoblasts. Calcitonin inhibits bone removal by the osteoclasts and at the same time promotes bone formation by the osteoblasts. Calcitonin is given in hypercalcemia (high blood calcium) to lower the calcium level; in osteoporosis to increase bone density and decrease the risk of a fracture; and in Paget disease to decrease bone turnover and bone pain. Also known as thyrocalcitonin.

calcium A mineral found mainly in the hard part of bones, where it is stored. Calcium is added to bone by cells called osteoblasts and removed from bone by cells called osteoclasts. Calcium is essential for healthy bones and is also important for muscle contraction, heart action, and normal blood clotting. Food sources of calcium include dairy foods; some leafy green vegetables, such as broccoli and collards; canned salmon; clams; oysters; calcium-fortified foods; and soy foods, such as tofu. According to the National Academy of Sciences, adequate intake of calcium is 1 gram daily for both men and women. The upper limit for calcium intake is 2.5 grams daily.

calcium deficiency A low blood level of calcium (hypocalcemia), which can make the nervous system highly irritable, causing spasms of the hands and feet (tetany), muscle cramps, abdominal cramps, overly active reflexes, and so on. Chronic calcium deficiency contributes to poor mineralization of bones, soft bones (osteomalacia) and osteoporosis, and, in children, rickets and impaired growth.

calcium excess An elevated blood calcium level (hypercalcemia), which can cause muscle weakness and constipation, affect the conduction of electrical impulses in the heart (heart block), lead to calcium stones in the urinary tract, impair kidney

function through nephrocalcinosis, and interfere with the absorption of iron, predisposing the person to iron deficiency.

calculus A stone, as in the urinary tract, or calcium salt deposits on the teeth. In Latin, the word calculus means “a pebble.” Pebbles were once used for counting, from which came the mathematical field of calculus.

calculus, renal See *kidney stones*.

calf The belly or fleshy hind part of the back of the leg below the knee. The calf is made up mainly of the gastrocnemius muscle. Pain in the calf is commonly caused by muscle strain, but can be caused by blood clots in veins of the legs.

caliper 1 A metal or plastic instrument used to measure the diameter of an object. The skin-fold thickness in several parts of the body can be measured with calipers, as can fat deposits. This measurement is done in medicine, especially in the diagnosis and treatment of obesity, and in physical anthropology. Calipers are also used to measure the diameter of the pelvis in pregnant women to ensure that it is large enough to permit birth. 2 A type of leg splint.

callus 1 A localized, firm thickening of the superficial layer of skin as a result of repetitive friction. A callus on the skin of the foot may have become thick and hard from rubbing against an ill-fitting shoe. Calluses of the feet may lead to other problems, such as serious infections. Shoes that fit well can keep calluses from forming on the feet. Also known as keratoma. 2 Hard new bone substance that forms in an area of a bone fracture. It is part of the natural process of bone repair.

calor Heat, one of the four classic signs of inflammation together with dolor, rubor, and tumor (pain, redness, and swelling, respectively).

calorie A unit of food energy. The word calorie is ordinarily used instead of the more precise, scientific term kilocalorie. A kilocalorie represents the amount of energy required to raise the temperature of a liter of water 1° centigrade at sea level. Technically, a kilocalorie represents 1,000 true calories of energy.

Campylobacter jejuni A bacterium that typically infects the bowels. Now the leading cause of bacterial food poisoning, *Campylobacter jejuni* is most often spread by contact with raw or undercooked poultry. A single drop of juice from a contaminated chicken is enough to make someone sick. Symptoms tend to start 2 to 5 days after exposure

and typically last a week. They resemble the symptoms of viral gastroenteritis—diarrhea, fever, abdominal pain, cramping, nausea, and vomiting—but with *Campylobacter*, fever is typical and the diarrhea is often bloody. Antibiotics can be helpful treatment. Most people recover completely. However, some suffer long-term consequences, such as arthritis or Guillain-Barré syndrome. Both are thought to occur when a person’s immune system is activated by the *Campylobacter jejuni* and misdirected to attack the person’s own body.

Canavan disease A progressive, inherited disorder of the central nervous system that is caused by a deficiency of the enzyme aspartoacylase. Signs appearing in children between 3 and 6 months of age include developmental delay, significant motor slowness, enlargement of the head (macrocephaly), loss of muscle tone (hypotonia), poor head control, and severe feeding problems. As the disease progresses, seizures, shrinkage of the nerve to the eye (optic atrophy), and often blindness develop, as do heartburn (gastrointestinal reflux) and deterioration of the ability to swallow. Canavan disease is inherited as an autosomal recessive condition, with both parents silently carrying a single Canavan gene and each of their children running a 25 percent risk of receiving both genes and having the disease. Canavan disease is more prevalent among individuals of Eastern European Jewish (Ashkenazi) background than in others. There is currently no effective treatment and affected children die in the first decade of life. Also known as spongy degeneration of the central nervous system and Canavan-Van Bogaert-Bertrand disease.

cancer An abnormal growth of cells that tend to proliferate in an uncontrolled way and, in some cases, to metastasize (spread) to other areas of the body. Cancer is not one disease; rather, it is a host of more than 100 different and distinctive diseases. A tumor can involve any tissue of the body. Most types of cancer are named for the type of cell or organ in which they start. If a cancer metastasizes, the new tumor bears the same name as the original primary tumor. Skin cancer is the most common type of cancer in both men and women. The second most common types of cancer are prostate cancer in men and breast cancer in women. Lung cancer is the leading cause of death from cancer for both men and women in the US. Cancer is not contagious. Also known as malignancy, malignant tumor, and malignant neoplasm. See also *cancer, causes*.

cancer, bladder See *bladder cancer*.

cancer, bone See *bone cancer*.

cancer, brain See *brain cancer*.

cancer, breast See *breast cancer*.

cancer, breast, familial See *breast cancer, familial*.

cancer, breast, susceptibility gene See *breast cancer susceptibility gene*.

cancer, causes Causes of cancer. In most individual cases, the exact cause of cancer is unknown. It's likely that each case represents an interplay of several factors, which may include increased genetic susceptibility; environmental insults, such as chemical exposure or smoking cigarettes; lifestyle factors, including diet; and damage caused by infectious disease. Although they are not causes per se, a number of factors—including gender, race, age, and the health of the patient's immune system—can influence the development of cancer. When common causes for a type of cancer are discovered, this information can be very helpful in prevention and sometimes in treatment. For example, the link between overexposure to the sun and skin cancer is well known, and individuals can easily reduce their risk of skin cancer by avoiding sun tanning and sunburns. Alcohol is associated with an increased risk of cancer of the esophagus, mouth, pharynx, larynx, liver, breast, rectum, and pancreas.

cancer, cervical A malignant tumor of the cervix, the lowest part of the uterus, which forms a canal that opens into the vagina. Regular pelvic exams and Pap tests are of great importance and can detect precancerous changes in the cervix. The most common symptom is abnormal bleeding. Cancer of the cervix can be diagnosed by using a Pap test or other procedures that sample the cervix tissue. Precancerous changes in the cervix may be treated with cryosurgery, cauterization, or laser surgery. Women who begin having sexual intercourse before age 18 and have many sexual partners are at increased risk. Furthermore, women whose partners begin having sexual intercourse at a young age and have many sexual partners, especially one who had cervical cancer, are at increased risk. The human papillomavirus (HPV) is a sexually transmitted virus that is a known cause of cervical cancer. Other risk factors include exposure before birth to the drug diethylstilbestrol (DES), smoking, and immunodeficiency. See also *Pap test*.

cancer, colon A malignant tumor arising from the inner wall of the large intestine (the colon). In the US, colon cancer is the third leading type of cancer in males and the fourth in females. Risk factors for cancer of the colon and rectum (colorectal cancer) include colon polyps, long-standing ulcerative colitis, and genetic family history. Most colorectal cancers develop from polyps. Removal of colon polyps

can prevent colorectal cancer. Colon polyps and early colon cancer can have no symptoms. Therefore, regular screening is important, starting at age 50 (or earlier, if added risk factors are present). Diagnosis can be made by barium enema or by colonoscopy, with biopsy confirmation of cancer tissue. Surgery is the most common treatment for colorectal cancer.

cancer, colorectal See *cancer, colon*.

cancer, esophagus See *esophageal cancer*.

cancer, gastric A malignant tumor of the stomach. Gastric cancer can develop in any part of the stomach and can spread from the stomach to other organs. Symptoms of stomach cancer are often vague, such as loss of appetite and weight. Gastric cancer is diagnosed via a biopsy of stomach tissue during an endoscopy. Also called stomach cancer.

cancer, Hodgkin's lymphoma A type of lymphoma (cancer of the lymphatic system). Also known as Hodgkin's disease. The most common symptom is painless swelling of the lymph nodes in the neck, underarm, or groin. Most patients are in their teens or 20s. It is diagnosed with a biopsy of an enlarged lymph node. Treatment usually includes radiation therapy or chemotherapy. Patients treated for Hodgkin's disease have an increased risk of developing other types of cancer, especially leukemia, later in life. See also *Hodgkin's disease*.

cancer, kidney A malignant tumor of the kidney. Childhood kidney cancer is different from adult kidney cancer. The most common type of childhood kidney cancer is Wilms tumor. The most common type of adult kidney cancer is renal cell cancer (also known as renal adenocarcinoma). A frequent sign of kidney cancer is blood in the urine. The diagnosis of kidney cancer is supported by findings of the medical history and examination, blood, urine, and X-ray tests, and is confirmed with biopsy. Kidney cancer is treated with surgery, embolization, radiation therapy, hormone therapy, biological therapy, or chemotherapy. See also *cancer, renal cell; Wilms tumor*.

cancer, laryngeal A malignant tumor of the voice box (larynx), which is located at the top of the windpipe (trachea). Cancer of the larynx occurs most often in people over the age of 55, especially those who have been heavy smokers. People who stop smoking can greatly reduce their risk. Hoarseness without pain can be a symptom of cancer of the larynx. The larynx can be examined with a viewing tube called a laryngoscope. Cancer of the larynx is usually treated with radiation therapy or surgery. Chemotherapy can also be used for laryngeal cancers that have spread.

cancer, lung A malignant tumor of the lung, the major organ of respiration. Lung cancer kills more men and women than any other form of cancer. Eight out of 10 lung cancers are due to damage caused by tobacco smoke. Persistent cough and bloody sputum can be symptoms of lung cancer. Diagnosis of lung cancer can be based on examination of sputum or on tissue examination with biopsy, using bronchoscopy, a needle through the chest wall, or surgical excision.

cancer, male breast See *breast cancer, male*.

cancer, melanoma A skin cancer that begins in cells called melanocytes, which normally grow together to form benign (noncancerous) moles. A change in size, shape, or color of a mole can be a sign of melanoma. Melanoma can be cured if it is detected early. If it is not detected early, however, it may spread to other areas of the body, and that can cause death. Diagnosis is confirmed with a biopsy of the abnormal skin. Sun exposure can cause skin damage, which can in turn lead to melanoma. See also *melanoma*.

cancer, multiple myeloma See *multiple myeloma*.

cancer, myeloma See *multiple myeloma*.

cancer, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma See *lymphoma, non-Hodgkin's*.

cancer, oral A malignant tumor of the mouth area. A sore in the mouth that does not heal can be a warning sign of oral cancer. A biopsy is the only way to determine whether an abnormal area in the oral cavity is cancerous. Oral cancer is almost always caused by tobacco (smoking and chewing) or alcohol use. Surgery to remove the tumor in the mouth is the usual treatment.

cancer, ovarian A malignant tumor of the ovary, the egg sac in a female. Women who have a family history of ovarian cancer are at an increased risk of developing ovarian cancer. Hereditary ovarian cancer makes up a small percentage of all cases of ovarian cancer. Three hereditary patterns have been identified: ovarian cancer alone, ovarian and breast cancers, and ovarian and colon cancers. Ovarian cancer is difficult to detect early because there usually are no symptoms and the symptoms that do occur tend to be vague. Detection involves physical examination (including pelvic exam), ultrasound, X-ray tests, CA 125 test, and biopsy of the ovary. Most ovarian growths in women under age 30 are benign (noncancerous), fluid-filled cysts.

cancer, pancreatic A malignant tumor of the pancreas. Pancreatic cancer has been called a "silent" disease because early pancreatic cancer usually does not cause symptoms. If the tumor blocks the common bile duct, and bile cannot pass into the digestive system, the skin and whites of the eyes may become yellow (jaundiced), and the urine may become darker as a result of accumulated bile pigment (bilirubin).

cancer, penis A malignant tumor in which cancer cells develop in the tissues of the penis. It is rare in the US. A physician should be consulted for growths or sores on the penis, any unusual discharge from the penis, or bleeding. If warranted, a biopsy is performed. If cancer is found, more tests are done to find out whether the cancer has spread to other parts of the body (staging). Treatment options include surgery, radiation therapy, chemotherapy, and biological therapy. The chance of recovery and choice of treatment depend on the stage of the cancer and the patient's general state of health. Men who are not circumcised at birth may have a higher risk of getting cancer of the penis.

cancer, prostate A malignant tumor of the prostate, the gland that produces some of the components of semen. Prostate cancer is the second leading cause of death of males in the US. It is often first detected as a hard nodule found during a routine rectal examination. The PSA blood test is a screening test for prostate cancer. Diagnosis of prostate cancer is established when cancer cells are identified in prostate tissue obtained via biopsy. In some patients, prostate cancer is life threatening. In many others, prostate cancer can exist for years without causing any health problems. Treatment options for prostate cancer include observation, radiation therapy, surgery, hormone therapy, and chemotherapy.

cancer, rectal A malignant tumor arising from the inner wall of the end of the large intestine (rectum). In the US, it is the third leading cause of cancer in males and the fourth in females. Risk factors include heredity, colon polyps, and long-standing ulcerative colitis. Most rectal cancers develop from polyps in the colon. Removal of these polyps can prevent cancer. Colon polyps and early rectal cancer can have no symptoms, so regular screening is important. Diagnosis can be made by barium enema or by colonoscopy, with biopsy confirmation of cancer tissue. Surgery is the most common treatment.

cancer, renal cell A malignant tumor that develops in the lining of the kidney tubules that filter the blood and produce urine. Also known as renal cell carcinoma and renal adenocarcinoma. See also *cancer, kidney*.

cancer, skin A malignant tumor of the outer surface of the body. Skin cancer is the most common cancer in the US. There are many types of skin cancer; the three most common types are basal cell carcinoma, squamous cell carcinoma, and the most deadly, melanoma. The main cause of skin cancer is ultraviolet light from sunlight. Tanning lamps are a hazard in this regard. Unexplained changes in the appearance of the skin that last longer than 2 weeks should be evaluated by a physician. The cure rate for skin cancer could be 100 percent if all skin cancers were brought to a physician's attention before they had a chance to spread. See also *basal cell carcinoma; squamous cell carcinoma; melanoma*.

cancer, stomach See *cancer, gastric*.

cancer, testicular A malignant tumor of the male sex organ (testicle) that normally produces the hormone testosterone. It is one of the most common cancers in young men. Most testicular cancers are found by men themselves, as lumps in the testicles. The risk of testicular cancer is increased in males whose testicles did not move down normally into the scrotum during childhood (undescended testicles). When a growth in a testicle is detected, cancer is confirmed after surgical removal of the affected testicle (orchiectomy) and examination of the tissue under a microscope. Testicular cancer is almost always curable if it is found early.

cancer, thyroid A malignant tumor of the gland in front of the neck that normally produces thyroid hormone, which is important to the normal regulation of the metabolism in the body. There are four major types of cancer of the thyroid gland: papillary, follicular, medullary, and anaplastic. Persons who received radiation to the head or neck in childhood should be examined by a physician for thyroid cancer every 1 to 2 years. The most common symptom of thyroid cancer is a lump, or nodule, that can be felt in the neck. The only certain way to tell whether a thyroid lump is cancer is by examining thyroid tissue obtained via biopsy.

cancer, uterine A malignant tumor of the uterus (womb), which occurs most often in women between the ages of 55 and 70. Abnormal bleeding after menopause is the most common symptom. Cancer of the uterus is diagnosed based on the results of a pelvic examination, Pap test, biopsy of the uterus, and/or dilation and curettage (D & C).

cancer antigen 125 See *CA 125*.

cancer survivor Someone who has received the diagnosis of a potentially fatal form of cancer and is thereby forced to face his or her own mortality.

cancer symptoms Symptoms that may be associated with cancer, including changes in bowel or bladder habits, a sore that does not heal, unusual bleeding or discharge, thickening or a lump in the breast or any other part of the body, indigestion or difficulty swallowing, obvious change in a wart or mole, and a nagging cough or hoarseness. These symptoms are not always signs of cancer; they can result from less serious conditions. Some forms of cancer cause little or no discomfort until the disease is far advanced, so it is important to see a physician for regular checkups rather than wait for problems to occur.

Candida albicans A yeast-like fungal organism found in small amounts in the normal human intestinal tract. Normally kept in check by the body's own helpful bacteria, *C. albicans* can increase in numbers when this balance is disturbed causing candidiasis of the intestinal tract or yeast infections of other parts of the body. See also *candidiasis*.

candidiasis Disease caused by the yeast *Candida albicans*. *Candida albicans* can cause vaginal yeast infections, diaper rash, skin rashes that emerge in moist, warm folds of skin, and thrush (white patches inside the mouth and throat). Candidiasis tends to develop when the normal balance of bacteria is upset, as sometimes occurs with the use of antibiotics. Prevention measures include the use of probiotics, and in some cases, dietary changes. Candidiasis can be treated with antifungal medications. Candidiasis is usually a minor and easily addressed problem, but it can be an important problem for those with immune-system disorders, such as AIDS.

canker sore A common small, frequently painful and sensitive crater in the lining of the mouth. Also known as aphthous ulcer. Sores typically last for 10 to 14 days and generally heal without scarring.

cannabis Marijuana (*Cannabis sativa*), a drug derived from the family of plants that includes hemp. Cannabis can be smoked or eaten. Use of cannabis produces a mild sense of euphoria, as well as impairments in judgment and lengthened response time. Although cannabis use is illegal in most parts of the world, the plant appears to have some potential for medical use, particularly as a palliative for glaucoma and disease-related loss of appetite and wasting, as is often seen in cancer, AIDS, and other illnesses. In some areas of the US, individuals whose physicians recommend the medical use of cannabis can obtain special permission.

cannula A hollow tube with a sharp, retractable inner core that can be inserted into a vein, an artery, or another body cavity.

capillary A tiny blood vessel that connects an arteriole (the smallest division of an artery) with a venule (the smallest division of a vein). Although tiny, the capillary plays an important role in the circulatory system. The walls of capillaries act as semi-permeable membranes that permit the exchange of various substances, including fluids and the gases oxygen and carbon dioxide, between the blood stream and the tissues of the body.

capillary hemangioma See *hemangioma, capillary*.

capitation In US health services, a fixed “per capita” amount that is paid to a hospital, clinic, or physician for each person served. If that person uses few services, the excess amount paid is potential profit for the payee. If the person uses many services, the payee may lose money.

caps Abbreviation for capsules.

carbohydrate One of the three nutrient compounds, along with fat and protein, used as energy sources (calories) by the body. Carbohydrates take the form of simple sugars or of more complex forms, such as starches and fiber. Complex carbohydrates come naturally from plants. Intake of complex carbohydrates, when they are substituted for saturated fat, can lower blood cholesterol. Carbohydrates produce 4 calories of energy per gram. When eaten, all carbohydrates are broken down into the sugar glucose.

carbon monoxide poisoning A potentially deadly condition caused by breathing carbon monoxide gas, which prevents oxygenation of the blood. Common causes of carbon monoxide poisoning include malfunctioning furnaces and the use of kerosene heaters or similar devices in unventilated indoor spaces. Carbon monoxide is also emitted by automobile and other engines, so these should not be run in unventilated spaces, such as closed garages. Inexpensive alarms are available that can detect dangerous buildups of carbon monoxide. The treatment for carbon monoxide poisoning is immediate reoxygenation of the blood in a hospital.

carboxyhemoglobin Hemoglobin that has carbon monoxide instead of the normal oxygen bound to it. Carbon monoxide has a much stronger binding to hemoglobin than oxygen. Carboxyhemoglobin is formed in carbon monoxide poisoning and leads to oxygen deficiency in the body. The source of the carbon monoxide may be exhaust (such as from a car, truck, boat, or generator), smoke from a fire, or tobacco smoke. The level of carboxyhemoglobin is a measure of the degree of carbon monoxide exposure.

carbuncle A skin abscess (boil) that extends into subcutaneous layers of skin, usually caused by local infection with the bacteria *Staphylococcus aureus*. Treatment includes antibiotics (typically in the form of topical creams) and, in severe cases, surgical drainage. See also *abscess*.

carcinoembryonic antigen A protein found in many types of cells that is associated with a developing fetus and tumors and measurable by blood testing. Abbreviated CEA. Conditions that increase CEA include smoking, infection, inflammatory bowel disease, pancreatitis, cirrhosis of the liver, and some benign tumors (in the same organs that have cancers with increased CEA). The normal level is less than 2.5 ng/ml (nanograms per milliliter) in an adult nonsmoker and less than 5.0 ng/ml in a smoker. Benign disease rarely elevates the CEA over 10 ng/ml. The main use of CEA test is as a tumor marker, especially with intestinal cancer. The most common cancers that elevate CEA are in the colon and rectum. Others include cancer of the pancreas, stomach, breast, and lung, as well as certain types of thyroid and ovarian cancer. Levels over 20 ng/ml before therapy are associated with cancer that has already metastasized (spread). CEA tests are useful in monitoring the treatment of CEA-rich tumors.

carcinogen A substance or an agent that causes cancer. The International Agency for Research on Cancer has classified many substances and processes as probably or definitely causing cancer in humans. The agency has divided these substances and processes into three categories: agents (such as arsenic, asbestos, and benzene); mixtures (such as in coal tars, tobacco products, and smoke); and exposures (such as in aluminum production, shoe manufacturing and repair, and the rubber industry). One of the best-known carcinogens is ultraviolet radiation from sunlight causing skin cancers.

carcinogenic Having a cancer-causing potential.

carcinoma Cancer that begins in the skin or in tissues that line or cover body organs. Examples are carcinoma of the breast, colon, liver, lung, pancreas, prostate, or stomach.

carcinoma, large cell See *large cell carcinoma*.

carcinoma, squamous cell Cancer that begins in squamous cells, which are thin, flat cells that resemble fish scales. Squamous cells are found in the tissue that forms the surface of the skin and the lining of some organs of the body. See also *carcinoma in situ, squamous cell*.

carcinoma, transitional cell Cancer that develops in the lining of the renal pelvis, ureter, or bladder.

carcinoma in situ Cancer that has stayed in the place where it began and has not spread to neighboring tissues (for example, squamous cell carcinoma *in situ*).

carcinoma in situ, squamous cell An early stage of skin cancer that develops from squamous cells (the flat, scale-like cells in the outer layer of the skin). The hallmark is a persistent, progressive, slightly raised, red, scaly, or crusted plaque that may occur anywhere on the skin surface or on mucosal surfaces, such as in the mouth. Under a microscope, atypical squamous cells are seen to have proliferated through the whole thickness of the epidermis (the outer layer of the skin) but not beyond. Squamous cell carcinoma *in situ* is commonly caused by sun exposure, but can be from prolonged exposure to arsenic. Also known as Bowen disease.

carcinoma of the breast, infiltrating ductal One of several recognized specific patterns of cancer of the breast, so named because it begins in the cells that form the ducts of the breast. It is the most common form of breast cancer. On a mammogram, invasive ductal carcinoma is usually visualized as a mass with fine spikes radiating from the edges (spiculation). It can sometimes be felt as a firm lump in the breast. Treatment may include radiation, chemotherapy, and surgery.

carcinoma of the breast, infiltrating lobular The second most common type of invasive breast cancer. Infiltrating lobular carcinoma starts in the glands that secrete milk (lobules). On a mammogram, a lobular carcinoma can look similar to a ductal carcinoma, appearing as a mass with fine spikes radiating from the edges (spiculation). Infiltrating lobular carcinoma can cause a thickening of the breast tissue. Lobular carcinoma can occur in more than one site in the breast or in both breasts at the same time. Treatment may include radiation, chemotherapy, and surgery.

cardiac Having to do with the heart.

cardiac aneurysm See *aneurysm, cardiac*.

cardiac arrest A heart attack in which the heart suddenly stops pumping sufficient blood. A cardiac arrest that results in the death of heart muscle is referred to as a myocardial infarction. See also myocardial infarction, acute.

cardiac atrium See *atrium*.

cardiac conduction system The electrical conduction system that stimulates the heart to contract and pump blood. This system generates electrical impulses and conducts them throughout the muscle of the heart. Among the major elements in the cardiac conduction system are the sinoatrial node, the atrioventricular (AV) node, and the autonomic nervous system. See also *atrioventricular node; autonomic nervous system; sinoatrial node*.

cardiac defibrillator, implantable A device that is designed to be put in the body to recognize certain types of abnormal heart rhythms (arrhythmias) and correct them by delivering precisely calibrated and timed electrical shocks to restore a normal heartbeat. Defibrillators continuously monitor the heart rhythm in order to detect overly rapid life-threatening arrhythmias, such as ventricular tachycardia (rapid regular beating of the ventricles, the bottom chambers of the heart) or ventricular fibrillation (rapid irregular beating of the ventricles). Today's implantable defibrillators can be implanted with less invasive surgical techniques than in the past.

cardiac index A cardiodynamic measure based on the cardiac output, which is the amount of blood the left ventricle ejects into the systemic circulation in one minute, measured in liters per minute (l/min). Cardiac output is indexed to a patient's body size by dividing by the body surface area to yield the cardiac index.

cardiac muscle A type of muscle tissue that is found only in the heart and is distinguishable from the two other forms of muscle, smooth muscle (that moves internal organs, such as the bowels, and vessels, such as the artery walls) and skeletal muscle (that powers joints). Cardiac muscle is responsible for pumping blood throughout the body.

cardiac output The amount of blood the heart pumps through the circulatory system in a minute. The amount of blood put out by the left ventricle of the heart in one contraction is called the stroke volume. The stroke volume and the heart rate determine the cardiac output. A normal adult has a cardiac output of 4.7 liters (5 quarts) of blood per minute.

cardiac septum The dividing wall between the right and left sides of the heart. That portion of the septum that separates the two upper chambers (the right and left atria) of the heart is termed the atrial (or interatrial) septum; the portion that lies between the two lower chambers (the right and left ventricles) of the heart is called the ventricular (or interventricular) septum.

cardiac tamponade See *tamponade, cardiac*.

cardiac ventricle See *ventricle, heart*.

cardiologist A physician who specializes in treating heart disorders.

cardiology The study and treatment of heart disorders.

cardiomyopathy Disease of the heart muscle (myocardium).

cardiomyopathy, hypertrophic A heart defect characterized by increased thickness (hypertrophy) of the wall of the left ventricle, the largest of the four chambers of the heart.

cardioplegia Paralysis of the heart, as may be done electively in stopping the heart during cardiac surgery. Cardioplegia may be done using chemicals, cold (cryoangioplegia), or electrical stimulation.

cardiopulmonary Having to do with both the heart and lungs.

cardiopulmonary bypass Bypass of the heart and lungs (for example, during open-heart surgery). Blood returning to the heart is diverted through a heart-lung machine (a pump-oxygenator) before it is returned to the arterial circulation. The machine does the work of both the heart and the lungs, by pumping blood as well as supplying oxygen to red blood cells.

cardiopulmonary resuscitation A life-saving emergency procedure that involves breathing for the victim and applying external chest compression to make the heart pump. Abbreviated CPR. In the early stages of a heart attack, death can often be avoided if a bystander starts CPR within 5 minutes of the onset of ventricular fibrillation. When paramedics arrive, medications and/or electrical shock (cardioversion) to the heart can be administered to convert ventricular fibrillation to a normal heart rhythm. Prompt CPR and rapid paramedic response can improve the chances of survival from a heart attack.

cardiovascular Relating to the circulatory system, which comprises the heart and blood vessels and carries nutrients and oxygen to the tissues of the body and removes carbon dioxide and other wastes from them. Cardiovascular diseases are conditions that affect the heart and blood vessels and include arteriosclerosis, coronary artery disease, heart valve disease, arrhythmia, heart failure, hypertension, orthostatic hypotension, shock, endocarditis, diseases of the aorta and its branches, disorders

of the peripheral vascular system, and congenital heart disease.

cardiovascular system The heart and blood vessels. Also known as circulatory system.

cardioversion The conversion of a cardiac rhythm or electrical pattern to another, generally from an abnormal one to a normal one. Cardioversion can be accomplished by using medications or by electrical shock with a special defibrillator.

cardioverter A defibrillator that is used in cardioversion (the conversion of one cardiac rhythm to another). See also *cardiac defibrillator, implantable*.

carditis Inflammation of the heart.

care, ambulatory See *ambulatory care*.

care, managed See *managed care*.

care, nail See *nail care*.

care proxy, health See *health care proxy*.

caries Dental cavities in the two outer layers of a tooth (the enamel and the dentin). Small caries may not cause pain, and may not be noticed by the patient. Larger caries can collect food, and the inner pulp of the affected tooth can become irritated by bacterial toxins or by foods that are cold, hot, sour, or sweet causing a toothache. Caries are caused by the Streptococcus bacteria, which produces an enamel-dissolving acid as it devours carbohydrate deposits (plaque) on the teeth. To prevent caries, one should brush and floss the teeth daily, use a bactericidal mouthwash, and have regular dental cleanings by a professional. If caries do occur, the eroded area can be cleaned and filled by a dentist to prevent further damage.

carotene, beta See *beta carotene*.

carotenemia An excessive blood level of carotene, which causes a temporary yellowing of the skin (pseudojaundice). Carotenemia is most commonly seen in infants fed too much mashed carrots and adults consuming high quantities of carrots, carrot juice, or beta carotene in supplement form.

carotid Pertaining to the carotid artery and the area near that key artery, which is located in the front of the neck.

carotid artery Either of the two key arteries located in the front of the neck, through which blood from the heart goes to the brain. The right

carotid endarterectomy

and left common carotid arteries are located on each side of the neck. Together, these arteries provide the principal blood supply to the head and neck. The left common carotid artery arises directly from the aorta. The right common carotid artery arises from the brachiocephalic artery, which, in turn, comes off the aorta. Each of the two divides to form external and internal carotid arteries. Cholesterol plaque on the inner wall of the carotid artery can lead to a stroke.

carotid endarterectomy An operation to clear the carotid artery of buildup of cholesterol-containing matter along its inner wall. See also *endarterectomy*.

carpal tunnel A tunnel in the wrist formed by bone and tissues in the palm side of the wrist that provides passage for the median nerve to the hand.

carpal tunnel release A surgical procedure to relieve pressure exerted on the median nerve within the carpal tunnel causing carpal tunnel syndrome. Surgical release is performed via a small incision, using conventional surgery techniques or a fiber-optic scope (endoscopic carpal tunnel repair).

carpal tunnel syndrome Compression and irritation of the median nerve as it passes under the transverse carpal ligament in the wrist. Abbreviated CTS. CTS can be due to trauma from repetitive work, such as that of retail checkers and cashiers, assembly line workers, meat packers, typists, writers, and accountants. Other factors that can cause CTS include obesity, pregnancy, hypothyroidism, arthritis, and diabetes. The symptoms of CTS include numbness, tingling, a "pins and needles" feeling especially at night in the hand, particularly in the thumb, index, and middle fingers. CTS can also cause wrist pain, weakness in the grip, and a feeling of hand incoordination. In some cases the pain seems to migrate up from the wrist and into the arm, shoulder, and neck. The diagnosis is suspected based on symptoms, supported by signs on physical examination, and confirmed by nerve conduction testing. Treatment depends on the severity of symptoms and the underlying cause. Early CTS is usually treated by modification of activities, a removable wrist brace, exercises and/or manipulation (massage), and anti-inflammatory medicines. If detected early, CTS is reversible. If numbness and pain continue in the wrist and hand, cortisone injection into the carpal tunnel can help. Surgery is used only when other treatments have failed. In advanced CTS, particularly if there is profound weakness and muscle atrophy (wasting), surgery is done to avoid permanent nerve damage.

carrier test A test designed to detect carriers of a gene for a recessive genetic disorder. For example, carrier testing is done for the sickle cell trait, thalassemia trait, and Tay-Sachs gene.

cartilage Firm, rubbery tissue that cushions bones at joints. A flexible kind of cartilage makes up other parts of the body, such as the larynx and the outside parts of the ears.

casein The main protein found in milk and other dairy products.

cast 1 A protective shell of plaster and bandage that is molded to protect a broken or fractured limb as it heals. 2 An abnormal mass of dead cells that forms in a body cavity. For example, casts of cells that form in the tubules of the kidneys are sometimes detected in urine samples.

casting The application of a molded orthopedic appliance, usually composed of plaster or fiberglass, to immobilize part or all of a limb for the purpose of healing injured tissues.

casting, serial The use of successive casts to reshape deformed or spastic limbs or contracted joints.

castration Removal or destruction of the sex glands. The term is usually used in reference to the testicles, but it also can apply to the ovaries.

CAT scan Computerized axial tomography scan. CAT scanning is a painless X-ray test in which a computer generates cross-section views of a patient's anatomy. It can identify normal and abnormal structures, and it can be used to guide procedures. Iodine-containing contrast material is sometimes used in CAT scanning. A patient who is allergic to iodine or contrast materials and is scheduled to have a CAT scan should notify the physician and the radiology staff about the allergy. Also known as CT scan.

cat scratch disease See *cat scratch fever*.

cat scratch fever An infection caused by the *Bartonella henslae* bacteria. Almost half of all domestic cats carry these bacteria and can transmit it to humans through a scratch or bite. Cat scratch fever causes swelling of the lymph nodes, sore throat, fatigue, fever, chills, sweats, vomiting, loss of appetite, and weight loss. There is usually a little bump (a papule), which may be pus-filled (a pustule), at the site of the scratch. In people with immunodeficiency, cat scratch fever can progress to bacillary angiomatosis, a bacterial skin infection that can be treated with the antibiotics rifampin, ciprofloxacin, trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole, and gentamicin.

catabolism See *metabolism*.

catalepsy A body's persistence in unusual postures, with waxy rigidity of the limbs, mutism, and complete inactivity, regardless of outside stimuli, as is sometimes seen in catatonic schizophrenia.

catalyst A substance that speeds up a chemical reaction but is not consumed or altered in the process. Catalysts are of immense importance in chemistry and biology. All enzymes are catalysts that expedite the biochemical reactions necessary for life. The enzymes in saliva, for example, accelerate the conversion of starch to glucose, doing in minutes what would otherwise take weeks.

cataplexy A debilitating condition in which a person suddenly feels weak and collapses at times of strong emotion such as during laughter, anger, fear, or surprise. In so collapsing, people with cataplexy may injure themselves. For example, laughter and other emotions may trigger a reflex that can bring many of the muscles of the body to the point of collapse. Cataplexy often affects people who have narcolepsy.

cataract A clouding or loss of transparency of the lens in the eye as a result of increased water content. There are many causes of cataracts, including aging, cortisone medication, trauma, diabetes, and other diseases. Cataracts affect most people who live into old age. Symptoms include double or blurred vision and sensitivity to light and glare. A physician can diagnose cataracts by examining the eyes with a viewing instrument. Sunglasses can help to prevent cataracts. See also *cataract surgery*.

cataract surgery Removal of the clouded (cataractous) lens in its entirety via surgery and replacement of the lens with an intraocular lens (IOL) made of plastic. A typical cataract operation takes about an hour, requires local anesthesia only, and usually does not require hospitalization.

catatonic In a state of catalepsy. See *catalepsy*.

cath Medical shorthand for catheter or a procedure using a catheter.

cathartic A laxative.

catheter A thin, flexible tube.

catheter, bladder A flexible plastic tube inserted into the bladder. See also *catheter, Foley; catheter, indwelling bladder*.

catheter, Foley A flexible plastic tube inserted into the bladder to provide continuous urinary

drainage. After the catheter is inserted in the bladder, a balloon on the bladder end is inflated with air or fluid so that the catheter cannot be removed. Removal is accomplished by deflating the balloon and slipping the catheter out. See also *catheter, indwelling bladder*.

catheter, indwelling bladder A catheter inserted into the bladder that remains there to provide continuous urinary drainage. The principal type is the Foley catheter. See also *catheter, Foley*.

catheter, IV A catheter placed in a vein to provide a pathway for drugs, nutrients, fluids, or blood products. Blood samples can also be withdrawn through an IV catheter.

catheter, oximetry A catheter used with monitoring equipment that can measure the amount of oxygenated hemoglobin in the bloodstream. See also *catheter, Swan-Ganz*.

catheter, PA A catheter that is inserted into the pulmonary artery.

catheter, Swan-Ganz A style of oximetry catheter that is inserted into a major vein under the collarbone or in the neck, threaded through the right side of the heart, and then threaded into the pulmonary artery. Physicians can use monitoring equipment with a Swan-Ganz catheter to measure blood pressure inside the heart and to find out how much blood the heart is pumping.

cathexis In psychiatry, the concentration of psychic energy on an idea.

cauda equina A bundle of spinal nerve roots that arise from the end of the spinal cord. The cauda equina comprises the roots of all the spinal nerves below the first lumbar (L1) vertebra in the lower back.

cauda equina syndrome Impairment of the nerves in the cauda equina, characterized by dull pain in the lower back and upper buttocks and lack of feeling (analgesia) in the buttocks, genitalia, and thigh, together with disturbances of bowel and bladder function.

caudad Toward or of the feet or tail. The opposite of cranial. See also Appendix B, "Anatomic Orientation Terms."

caudal 1 An anatomic term pertaining to, situated in, or directed toward the tail or the hind part.

2 Inferior to another structure, in the sense of being below it.

caudal anesthesia Anesthesia produced by injection of a local anesthetic into the caudal canal, the sacral portion of the spinal canal. Caudal anesthesia is used to provide anesthesia and analgesia (pain relief) below the umbilicus. It may be the sole anesthetic or combined with general anesthesia. Also known as caudal epidural anesthesia or a caudal block.

caudal regression syndrome A disorder characterized by absence of all or part of the sacrum and dysfunction of the bowels, bladder, and legs. About 20 percent of children with caudal regression are born to mothers with diabetes. Treatment involves surgery to correct these defects, when possible.

caul Folk term for the membranes that surround the fetus in the womb, particularly for the presence of these membranes over the newborn infant's face or head at birth, a relatively common and usually harmless occurrence. In some cultures, the presence of a caul at birth is considered spiritually significant.

cauliflower ear An acquired deformity of the external ear to which wrestlers and boxers are particularly vulnerable, due to trauma. When a blood clot (hematoma) forms under the skin of the ear, the clot disrupts the connection of the skin to the ear cartilage. The cartilage has no other blood supply except from the overlying skin, so if the skin is separated from the cartilage, it is deprived of nutrients and dies. The ear cartilage then shrivels up to form the classic cauliflower ear, so named because the tissue resembles that lumpy vegetable's surface. Treatment involves draining the blood clot through an incision in the ear and then applying a compressive dressing, to sandwich the two sides of the skin against the cartilage.

causalgia Intense burning pain and sensitivity to the slightest vibration or touch, usually in the hand or foot, at a site some distance removed from a wound that has healed.

causes of cancer See *cancer, causes*.

cauterization The use of heat to destroy abnormal cells. Also known as diathermy and electrodiathermy.

cavernous hemangioma See *hemangioma, cavernous*.

cavernous sinus A large channel of venous blood that creates a cavity (sinus) bordered by the sphenoid bone and the temporal bone of the skull. The cavernous sinus is an important structure

because of its location and its contents, which include the third cranial (oculomotor) nerve, the fourth cranial (trochlear) nerve, parts 1 (the ophthalmic nerve) and 2 (the maxillary nerve) of the fifth cranial (trigeminal) nerve, and the sixth cranial (abducens) nerve.

cavernous sinus syndrome A condition characterized by swelling of the eyelids and the conjunctivae of the eyes, as well as paralysis of the cranial nerves that course through the cavernous sinus. It is caused by a cavernous sinus thrombosis.

cavernous sinus thrombosis A blood clot within the cavernous sinus. A thrombosis in this key crossroads causes cavernous sinus syndrome.

cavity See *caries*.

cavity, abdominal See *abdominal cavity*.

CBC Complete blood count, a set of values of the cellular (formed) elements of blood. CBC measurements are usually determined by specially designed machines that analyze the different components of blood in less than a minute. The values generally included in a CBC are the following:

- The number of white blood cells in a volume of blood. The normal range varies slightly among laboratories but is generally between 4,300 and 10,800 cells per cubic millimeter (cmm).
- The automated white cell differential, which is a machine-generated percentage of the different types of white blood cells, usually split into granulocytes, lymphocytes, monocytes, eosinophils, and basophils.
- Red cell count, which is the number of red blood cells in a volume of blood. The normal range varies slightly among laboratories but is generally between 4.2 and 5.9 million cells/cmm.
- The amount of hemoglobin in a volume of blood. The normal range for hemoglobin is different between the sexes; it is approximately 13–18 g/deciliter for men and 12–16 g/deciliter for women (international units 8.1–11.2 millimoles/liter for men and 7.4–9.9 millimoles/liter for women).
- Hematocrit, the ratio of the volume of red cells to the volume of whole blood. The normal range for hematocrit is different between the sexes and is approximately 45 to 52 percent for men and 37 to 48 percent for women.

- Mean cell volume, which is the average volume of a red cell. This is a calculated value derived from the hematocrit and red cell count, and the normal range is 86–98 femtoliters.
- Mean cell hemoglobin, which is the average amount of hemoglobin in the average red cell. This is a calculated value that is derived from the measurement of hemoglobin and the red cell count. The normal range is 27–32 picograms.
- Mean cell hemoglobin concentration, which is the average concentration of hemoglobin in a given volume of red cells. This is a calculated volume that is derived from the hemoglobin measurement and the hematocrit. The normal range is 32 to 36 percent.
- Red cell distribution width, which is a measurement of the variability of red cell size. Higher numbers indicate greater variation in size. The normal range is 11–15.
- Platelet count, which is the number of platelets in a volume of blood. Platelets are not complete cells; they are actually fragments of cytoplasm from a cell called a megakaryocyte that is found in the bone marrow. Platelets play a vital role in blood clotting. The normal range varies slightly among laboratories but is in the range of 150,000–400,000/cmm (150×10³/liter to 400×10³/liter).

CBT Cognitive behavior therapy.

CCP antibody See *citrulline antibody*.

CD4 Transmembrane glycoprotein, which is expressed by T-4 cells (also known simply as T cells). See also *T cell; T-4 cell*.

CD4 count, absolute See *T-4 count*.

CD8 Transmembrane glycoprotein expressed by T-8 cells. See also *T lymphocyte, cytotoxic; T-suppressor cell*.

CDC The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the US agency charged with tracking and investigating public health trends. A part of the US Public Health Services (PHS) under the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the CDC is based in Atlanta, Georgia. It publishes key health information, including weekly data on all deaths and diseases reported in the US and travelers' health advisories. The CDC also fields special rapid-response teams to halt epidemic diseases.

cDNA Complementary DNA.

CEA Carcinoembryonic antigen.

CEA assay CEA test.

cecal Pertaining to the cecum.

cecum The first portion of the large bowel, which is situated in the lower-right quadrant of the abdomen. The cecum receives fecal material from the small bowel (ileum), which opens into it. The appendix is attached to the cecum.

celiac disease, adult See *celiac sprue*.

celiac sprue An immune disorder whereby the small intestine is injured when exposed to gluten, a protein found in wheat and related grains. Celiac sprue causes impaired absorption and digestion of nutrients through the small intestine. Symptoms include frequent diarrhea and weight loss. A skin condition called dermatitis herpetiformis is sometimes associated. The most accurate test for celiac sprue is a biopsy of the small bowel. Treatment involves avoidance of gluten in the diet. Medications are used for refractory (stubborn) sprue. Also known as gluten enteropathy.

cell The basic structural and functional unit of any living thing. Each cell is a small container of chemicals and water wrapped in a membrane. There are 100 trillion cells in a human, and each contains all of the genetic information necessary to manufacture a human being. This information is encoded within the cell nucleus in 6 billion subunits of DNA called base pairs. These base pairs are packaged in 23 pairs of chromosomes, with 1 chromosome in each pair coming from each parent. Each of the 46 human chromosomes contains the DNA for thousands of individual genes.

cell, alpha See *alpha cell, pancreatic*.

cell, beta See *beta cell, pancreatic*.

cell, delta See *delta cell, pancreatic*.

cell, germ The egg or sperm. Each mature germ cell is haploid, meaning that it has a single set of 23 chromosomes that contains half the usual amount of DNA and half the usual number of genes. This makes germ cells notable exceptions to the usual rules governing chromosomes, genes, and DNA.

cell, reproductive See *cell, germ*.

cell cloning The process of producing a group of cells that are genetically identical (clones) to a single ancestral cell.

cell cycle The sequence of events within the cell between mitotic (cell) divisions. The cell cycle is conventionally divided into five phases: G₀ (the gap); G₁, (the first gap); S (the synthesis phase, during which the DNA is synthesized and replicated); G₂ (the second gap); and M (mitosis). Cells that are not destined to divide again are considered to be in the G₀ phase. The transition from G₀ to G₁ is thought to commit the cell to completing the cell cycle by dividing.

cellulite In popular language, deposits of fat that have a cottage cheese-like texture. Medically, cellulite is not considered abnormal.

cellulitis A spreading bacterial infection underneath the skin surface characterized by redness, warmth, swelling, and pain. Cellulitis commonly appears in areas where there is a break in the skin.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
See *CDC*.

Centigrade A thermometer scale in which the freezing point of water at sea level is 0°C and the boiling point of water at sea level is 100°C. The Centigrade scale is used in most of the world to indicate the temperature on a thermometer, but the Fahrenheit scale is still popular in the US. This anachronism requires conversion from Centigrade (°C) to Fahrenheit (°F), and vice versa. $1^{\circ}\text{C} = (5/9) ({}^{\circ}\text{F} - 32)$. $1^{\circ}\text{F} = (9/5) ({}^{\circ}\text{C}) + 32$.

centimorgan A unit of measure of genetic recombination frequency. Abbreviated cM. One cM is equal to a 1 percent chance that a marker at one genetic locus will be separated from a marker at another locus due to crossing over in a single generation. In humans, 1 cM is equivalent, on average, to 1 million base pairs.

central auditory processing disorder A neurological disorder in which a person has difficulty properly interpreting sounds received by the ears, particularly the phonemes of speech. Abbreviated CAPD. CAPD can result in difficulties with attention, speech production, and reading.

central core disease of muscle One of the conditions that produces “floppy baby” syndrome. Central core disease of muscle causes hypotonia (low muscle tone) in a newborn baby, slowly progressive muscle weakness, and muscle cramps after exercise. Muscle biopsy shows a key diagnostic finding of absent mitochondria in the center of many muscle fibers. It is caused by an abnormal gene on chromosome 19 involving ryanodine receptor 1, and is inherited as a dominant trait.

central line An infusion tube located in or near the heart, which is at the center of the circulatory system. For example, a Swan-Ganz catheter with its tip in the right atrium and ventricle of the heart is a central line.

central nervous system That part of the nervous system that consists of the brain and spinal cord. Abbreviated CNS. The CNS is one of the two major divisions of the nervous system. The other is the peripheral nervous system (PNS), which is outside the brain and spinal cord. The PNS connects the CNS to sensory organs, such as the eye and ear, and to other organs of the body, muscles, blood vessels, and glands.

central nervous system, spongy degeneration of the See *Canavan disease*.

central vision A process in which millions of cells change light into nerve signals that tell the brain what the person is seeing. As a person reads, drives, and performs other activities that require fine, sharp, straight-ahead vision, light is focused onto the macula in the center of the retina, the light-sensitive layer of tissue at the back of the eye.

centromere The “waist” of the chromosome that is essential for the division and retention of the chromosome in the cell. The centromere is a uniquely specialized region of the chromosome to which spindle fibers attach during cell division.

cephal- Prefix indicating the head.

cephalgia Headache.

cephalgia, histamine See *cluster headache*.

cephalosporin antibiotics A group of more than 20 antibiotic drugs that are based on compounds originally isolated from the fungus *Cephalosporium acremonium*. See also *antibiotic*.

cephalothoracic lipodystrophy A disorder characterized by painless symmetrical diffuse deposits of fat beneath the skin of the neck, upper trunk, arms, and legs. The condition is genetic and is inherited as an autosomal dominant trait. Also known as multiple symmetrical lipomatosis, Launois-Bensaude syndrome, Madelung disease, and familial benign cervical lipomatosis.

cerclage Encirclement with a ring, loop, wire, or ligature. Cerclage can be done around bone fragments to hold them together, but it usually refers to an operation performed on the cervix to prevent a miscarriage.

cerebellar Pertaining to the cerebellum, the part of the brain in the back of the head between the cerebrum and the brain stem.

cerebellum The portion of the brain that is in the back of the head, between the cerebrum and the brain stem. It is involved in the control of voluntary and involuntary movement as well as balance.

cerebral Of or pertaining to the cerebrum or the brain.

cerebral aneurysm See *aneurysm, brain*.

cerebral fornix An arching fibrous band in the brain that connects the two lobes of the cerebrum. There are two such bands, each of which is an arched tract of nerves.

cerebral hemisphere One of the two halves of the cerebrum, which is the largest part of the brain.

cerebral palsy An abnormality of motor function (the ability to move and control movements) that is acquired at an early age, usually less than 1 year, and is due to a brain lesion that is nonprogressive. Abbreviated CP. CP is frequently the result of abnormalities that occur while a fetus is developing inside the womb. Such abnormalities may include accidents of brain development, genetic disorders, stroke due to abnormal blood vessels or blood clots, or infection of the brain. In rare instances, obstetrical accidents during particularly difficult deliveries can cause brain damage and result in CP. CP can take three forms: spastic, choreoathetoid, and hypotonic (flaccid). In spastic CP, there is an abnormality of muscle tone in which one or more extremities (arms or legs) are held in a rigid posture. Choroathetoid CP is associated with abnormal, uncontrollable writhing movements of the arms and/or legs. A child with hypotonic CP appears floppy—like a rag doll. Treatment may include the use of casting and braces to prevent further loss of limb function, speech therapy, physical therapy, occupational therapy, the use of augmentative communication devices, and the use of medications or botulinum toxin (botox) injections to treat spasticity.

cerebral ventricle One of a system of four communicating cavities within the brain that are continuous with the central canal of the spinal cord. They include two lateral ventricles in the cerebral hemispheres, each consisting of a triangular central body and four horns. The lateral ventricles communicate with the third ventricle through an opening called the interventricular foramen. The third ventricle, a median (midline) cavity in the brain, is bounded by

the thalamus and hypothalamus on either side. In front, the third ventricle communicates with the lateral ventricles, and in back it communicates with the aqueduct of the midbrain (also known as the aqueduct of Sylvius). The fourth ventricle, which is the lowest of the four ventricles of the brain, extends from the aqueduct of the midbrain to the central canal of the upper end of the spinal cord, with which it communicates, through the two foramina of Luschka and the foramen of Magendie. The ventricles are filled with cerebrospinal fluid.

cerebritis Inflammation of the brain. Cerebritis can be caused by infection or inflammation from disease.

cerebrospinal fluid A watery fluid that is continuously produced and absorbed and that flows in the ventricles within the brain and around the surface of the brain and spinal cord. Abbreviated CSF. CSF is produced by the choroid plexus, a series of infolded blood vessels that project into the cerebral ventricles, and it is absorbed into the venous system. If production exceeds absorption, CSF pressure rises, and the result is hydrocephalus. This can also occur if the CSF pathways are obstructed, causing the fluid to accumulate. The CSF obtained during a lumbar puncture is analyzed to detect disease.

cerebrovascular accident See *stroke*.

cerebrovascular disease Disease of the arteries that supply blood to the brain. Cerebrovascular disease is usually caused by atherosclerosis and can lead to a stroke. See also *atherosclerosis; stroke*.

cerebrum The largest part of the brain, which is divided into two hemispheres (halves). The left and right hemispheres are connected by two arching bands of nerves (cerebral fornices). See also *cerebral fornix*.

ceruloplasmin deficiency A genetic disorder that is due to a lack of ceruloplasmin, a protein that is involved in iron transport. The absence of ceruloplasmin leads to the abnormal deposition of iron in the pancreas (causing diabetes), liver (causing cirrhosis), retina (damaging vision), and brain (causing dementia and Parkinson's disease). Aggressive treatment with deferoxamine, a chelating agent that takes up iron, halts the progression of these complications. Also known as aceruloplasminemia.

cervical Having to do with any kind of neck, including the neck on which the head is perched and the neck of the uterus.

cervical cancer See *cancer, cervical*.

cervical cap A specially fitted contraceptive device that bars the entry of sperm into the cervix. The cervical cap is a thimble-shaped dome made of latex rubber and is much smaller than a diaphragm. For best results, a cervical cap is customarily used with spermicidal gel or cream. See also *birth control, contraceptive*.

cervical cerclage The process of encircling a cervix that is abnormally liable to dilate (an incompetent cervix) with a ring or loop to prevent a miscarriage.

cervical intraepithelial neoplasia The growth of abnormal precancerous cells on the surface of the cervix. Grades from one to three (least to most) may be used to describe the degree of involvement.

cervical rib See *rib, cervical*.

cervical vertebrae The upper seven vertebrae in the spinal column, which make up the neck. They are designated C1 through C7, from the top down. See *C1 through C7*.

cervicitis Inflammation of the uterine cervix.

cervix The low, narrow part of the uterus, which forms a canal that opens from the uterus into the vagina. The inner surface of the cervix is covered with mucus. During ovulation, this mucus is specially adapted to speed sperm to the egg. The tiny opening of the cervix dilates during birth to permit the newborn's head to emerge.

cervix, incompetent A cervix that has an abnormal tendency to dilate and so may not be able to keep a fetus from being spontaneously aborted (miscarried).

cesarean section See *caesarean section*.

CFS Chronic fatigue syndrome.

Chagas disease An infectious disease found in Central and South America caused by the parasite *Trypanosoma cruzi*. The parasite can be transmitted through bites from bugs that carry it (known as kissing bugs) or via blood transfusion. Soon after infection, there may be symptoms such as swelling of the eye on one side of the face, usually at the bite wound, but many people do not become ill until many years after being infected. Infants and persons with immunodeficiency are at risk of severe infections and complications such as meningitis and heart failure. Also known as American trypanosomiasis. See also *kissing bugs*.

chalazion See *cyst, Meibomian*.

CHAMPUS Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Uniformed Services. CHAMPUS is a US federally funded health program that provides beneficiaries with medical care, supplemental to that available in US military and Public Health Service facilities. All CHAMPUS beneficiaries switch to using Medicare at age 65. CHAMPUS is like Medicare in that the government contracts with private parties to administer the program. CHAMPUS was revamped as a managed care system and renamed TRICARE.

chancre The classic nonpainful ulcer of syphilis that teems with spirochetes. A chancre forms in the first (primary) stage of syphilis, is highly contagious, and can last from 1 to 5 weeks. Syphilis can be transmitted from any contact with a chancre. If a chancre is outside the vagina or on the scrotum of the male, the use of condoms may not help in preventing transmission of syphilis. Likewise, if a chancre is in the mouth, merely kissing an infected individual can spread syphilis. See also *syphilis*.

change of life See *menopause*.

Charcot-Marie-Tooth disease A genetic disease of nerves that is characterized by progressively debilitating weakness, particularly of the limbs. The foremost feature is marked wasting of the extremities, particularly in the calves, resulting in "stork legs." The disease usually weakens the legs before it weakens the arms. Pes cavus (deformity of the foot) is often the first sign of the disease. The disease is one of the most common genetic diseases, and it is the most common genetic disorder of peripheral nerves. The disease can be inherited as an autosomal dominant trait, an autosomal recessive trait, or an X-linked trait. There are also sporadic cases in which there is no family history due to a new dominant mutation. Abbreviated CMT. Also known as peroneal muscular atrophy and hereditary motor and sensory neuropathy.

charley horse Slang for a cramp in a muscle in the leg, usually caused by a strain or injury. A charley horse can last anywhere from a few seconds to over a quarter of an hour. It is not uncommon for one to recur before it finally resolves.

chart, Snellen The familiar eye chart used to measure how well a person sees at various distances. A Snellen chart is imprinted with block letters that decrease in size line by line, corresponding to the distance at which that line of letters is normally visible.

chase the dragon A practice of heroin use that involves heating heroin and then inhaling it. This

practice carries a risk of irreversible brain damage and death.

cheek The side of the face, which forms the side wall of the mouth. The cheekbone is part of the temporal bone of the skull, and it provides the prominence of the cheek. The term cheek also refers to something that has the form of the human cheek, particularly with two laterally paired parts, such as a buttock.

chemical menopause See *menopause, chemical*.

chemical reaction A process in which one substance is transformed into another.

chemokine One of a large group of proteins that act as chemical messengers and were first found attracting white blood cells to areas of inflammation. Chemokines are involved in several forms of acute and chronic inflammation, infectious diseases, and cancer.

chemokine receptor A molecule that receives a chemokine and associated proteins (chemokine docks). Several chemokine receptors are essential co-receptors for the HIV virus.

chemoprevention The use of natural or laboratory-made substances to prevent cancer.

chemotherapy Of or pertaining to treatment with drugs to kill cancer cells. Most anticancer drugs are injected into a vein, but some are given by mouth. Chemotherapy is usually systemic treatment, meaning that the drugs flow through the bloodstream to nearly every part of the body. Chemotherapy is generally given in cycles: A treatment period is followed by a recovery period, another treatment period, and so on. The side effects of chemotherapy depend mainly on the drugs and doses the patient receives. Generally, anticancer drugs affect cells that divide rapidly, including blood cells, which fight infection, help the blood to clot, and carry oxygen to all parts of the body. When white blood cells are affected by anticancer drugs, patients are more likely to develop infections. When red blood cells are affected, they may have decreased energy. Cells that line the digestive tract also divide rapidly, so chemotherapy can cause loss of appetite, nausea and vomiting, hair loss or thinning, and mouth sores. For some patients, medicines can be prescribed to help with side effects, especially with nausea and vomiting. Usually these side effects gradually go away during the recovery period or after treatment stops. In some men and women, chemotherapy drugs may result in temporary or permanent loss of the ability to have children. For

men, sperm banking before treatment may be considered; women may choose to have eggs extracted and stored. Women's menstrual periods may stop, and women may have hot flashes and vaginal dryness due to induced menopause. In some cases, bone marrow transplantation and peripheral stem-cell support are used to replace bone marrow tissue that has been destroyed by the effects of chemotherapy. See also *adjuvant chemotherapy; cancer*.

chemotherapy, adjuvant See *adjuvant chemotherapy*.

cherubism A genetic disorder of childhood that leads to prominence of the lower face and an appearance reminiscent of the cherubs portrayed in Renaissance art. Cherubism is inherited as an autosomal dominant condition. The gene responsible for cherubism is called SH3BP2 (for SH3-domain binding protein 2). Exactly how a mutation in SH3BP2 leads to cherubism is not known.

chest The area of the body located between the neck and the abdomen. The chest contains the lungs, the heart, and part of the aorta. The walls of the chest are supported by the dorsal vertebrae, the ribs, and the sternum. Also known as thorax.

chest film See *chest X-ray*.

chest pain Pain in the chest that can be a result of many things, including angina, heart attack (coronary occlusion), and other important diseases. Chest pain is a warning to seek medical attention, so one should try not to ignore chest pain and "work through it."

chest X-ray A type of X-ray commonly used to detect abnormalities in the lungs. A chest X-ray can also detect some abnormalities in the heart, aorta, and the bones of the thoracic area.

CHF Congestive heart failure.

Chiari malformation A condition in which brain tissue protrudes into the spinal canal as a result of a small or misshapen skull. Chiari malformation is usually present at birth (congenital), but occasionally develops after birth. Also known as Arnold Chiari malformation.

chickenpox A highly infectious viral disease characterized by an itchy rash. Also known as varicella. It is caused by herpes zoster, a member of the herpes family of viruses. Chickenpox has nothing to do with chicken; the name originated to distinguish this mild pox from smallpox (chicken being used, as in chickenhearted, to mean weak or timid). Chickenpox is not a major matter unless it occurs in

an immunodeficient person or the pox become infected with bacteria through scratching. Treatment, other than the use of calamine lotion or other topical solutions to diminish itching, is not normally necessary. However, adults (and sometimes children) can have major problems from chickenpox, including pneumonia and encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) that can lead to difficulty with balance and coordination (cerebellar ataxia). Other serious complications can include ear infections, damaged nerves (palsies), and Reye's syndrome. In such cases, antiviral medications may be tried. Reinfection with chickenpox can occur. Reactivation of the chickenpox virus is responsible for shingles. The current aim in the US is to achieve universal immunization of children with the chickenpox vaccine. See also *chickenpox immunization; herpes zoster; neuralgia; postherpetic; shingles*.

chickenpox immunization A vaccination that prevents chickenpox. If an older person has not had chickenpox, the shot may be given at any time. All children, except those with compromised immune systems or known neurological conditions, are recommended to have the vaccination. See also *chickenpox*.

chilblain An injury due to cold temperatures that, although painful, causes little or no permanent impairment. It appears as red, swollen skin that is tender and hot to the touch and may itch. This can worsen to an aching, prickly ("pins and needles") sensation, and then numbness. It can develop in only a few hours in skin exposed to extreme cold. The treatment for chilblain is to stop exposure to cold, remove any wet or constrictive clothing, gently wash and dry the injured area, elevate the injured area, cover the injured area with layers of loose warm clothes, and allow the injured area to rewarm.

child abuse A complex set of behaviors that include child neglect and the physical, emotional, and sexual abuse of children. Although most people think first of physical abuse when they hear the term child abuse, physical abuse makes up only a small percentage of reported cases. Physical abuse is defined as physical injury inflicted upon the child with cruel and/or malicious intent, although the law recognizes that in some cases the parent or caretaker may not have intended to hurt the child; rather, the injury may have resulted from excessive discipline or physical punishment. Physical abuse includes punching, beating, kicking, biting, burning, shaking, or otherwise physically harming a child. Injuries that can be fatal include severe head trauma, shaken baby syndrome, trauma to the abdomen or chest, scalding, burns, drowning, suf-

focation, and poisoning. Child abuse should always be reported, investigated, and stopped.

child health The care and treatment of children. Child health is the purview of pediatrics, which became a medical specialty in the mid-nineteenth century. Before that time the care and treatment of childhood diseases were included within such areas as general medicine, obstetrics, and midwifery.

childbed fever Fever due to an infection after childbirth, usually of the placental site within the uterus. If the infection involves the bloodstream, it constitutes puerperal sepsis. Childbed fever was once a common cause of death for women of childbearing age, but it is now comparatively rare in the developed world due to improved sanitary practices in midwifery and obstetrics. Also known as child-birth fever and puerperal fever.

childbirth See *labor*.

childbirth fever See *childbed fever*.

childhood 1 The time between birth until adulthood. 2 The time from infancy to the onset of puberty. During childhood, the potential of a unique human person must be nurtured by parents or parent figures.

childhood disintegrative disorder One of the pervasive developmental disorders (PDDs) characterized by apparently normal development for at least the first 2 years after birth, as manifested by the presence of age-appropriate verbal and nonverbal communication, social relationships, play, and adaptive behavior. Children with this disorder display significant loss of previously acquired skills (before age 10 years). This loss may affect expressive or receptive language, social skills or adaptive behavior, bowel or bladder control, play, or motor skills. Childhood disintegrative disorder also involves impairment in social interaction and communication, often with the development of repetitive stereotyped patterns of behavior, interests, and activities, including motor stereotypes and mannerisms. The loss of previously acquired skills distinguishes childhood disintegrative disorder from autism, another PDD. See also *autism; developmental disorder*.

childhood schizophrenia See *schizophrenia, childhood*.

children's immunizations Vaccinations given to children. In the US, it is currently recommended that all children receive vaccination against the following unless the child has special circumstances,

such as a compromised immune system or a neurological disorder:

- Diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis (whooping cough), as separate vaccinations or in combination as DPT
- Haemophilus influenzae type B (HIB)
- Hepatitis B
- Measles, mumps, and rubella (German measles), as separate vaccinations or in combination as MMR
- Pneumococcal infections
- Poliovirus
- Tetanus (lockjaw)
- Varicella zoster virus (chickenpox)

chimera 1 An imaginary monster made up of incongruous parts. 2 In medicine, a person composed of two genetically distinct types of cells. This may be due to the fusion of two embryos at a very early (blastula) stage. More commonly today, the formation of a chimera is due to transplantation, such as when bone marrow from one person is used to reconstitute the bone marrow of an irradiated recipient. 3 A viral, bacterial, or other cell that seems to be composed of two genetically distinct strains, as might be seen when genetic engineering techniques are used to enclose therapeutic properties from one cell in another type of cell for delivery.

chiropractic A system of diagnosis and treatment based on the concept that the nervous system coordinates all of the body's functions and that disease results from a lack of normal nerve function. Chiropractic employs manipulation and adjustment of body structures, such as the spinal column, so that pressure on nerves coming from the spinal cord due to displacement (subluxation) of a vertebral body may be relieved. Practitioners believe that misalignment and nerve pressure can cause problems not only in the local area, but also at some distance from it. Chiropractic treatment appears to be effective for muscle spasms of the back and neck, tension headaches, and certain leg pain. It may or may not be useful for other ailments. Some chiropractors also recommend other forms of treatment, such as massage, diet changes, vitamins and minerals, and herbal supplements. See also *chiropractor*.

chiropractor A chiropractic practitioner. Becoming a doctor of chiropractic (DC) requires a minimum of 2 years of college and 4 years in a school of chiropractic medicine. Some chiropractors also earn a traditional medical degree (MD) or other additional qualifications. Not all chiropractors are alike in their practice. The International

Chiropractors Association believes that patients should be treated by spinal manipulation alone, whereas the American Chiropractic Association advocates a multidisciplinary approach that combines spinal adjustment with other modalities, such as physical therapy, psychological counseling, and dietary measures.

chlamydia The agent of a sexually transmitted disease, a type of bacteria found in the cervix, urethra, throat, or rectum that acts very much like gonorrhea in the way it is spread, the symptoms it produces, and its long-term consequences. Chlamydia is destructive to the Fallopian tubes, causing infertility, tubal pregnancy, and severe pelvic infection. It is common for infected women to have no symptoms. Chlamydia is associated with an increased incidence of preterm births. Also, an infant can acquire the disease during passage through the birth canal, leading to eye problems or pneumonia. Chlamydia is one of the reasons newborns are routinely treated with antibiotic eyedrops. Chlamydia can also cause inflammation of the urethra, epididymis, and rectum in men. A chronic form of arthritis, called reactive arthritis, can develop after chlamydia infection.

chloroform A clear, volatile liquid with a strong smell similar to that of ether. Chloroform was once administered by inhalation to produce anesthesia, given to relieve pain, and used as a remedy for cough. It is quite toxic to the kidneys and the liver.

choana The passageway from the back of one side of the nose to the throat. There are two choanae, one on either side of the nose. The choanae must be open to permit breathing through the nose.

chocolate A food or flavoring made from the seeds of the cacao or chocolate tree (*Theobroma cacao*). Chocolate is rich in flavinoids, compounds that act as antioxidants. Flavinoids may also lower blood pressure and improve blood flow by opening blood vessels. Thus, chocolate may have health benefits, provided it is consumed in moderation.

choked disk See *papilledema*.

choking Partial or complete obstruction of the airway, usually due to the presence of food, a toy, or another foreign body in the upper throat or trachea. See also *airway obstruction*.

cholangiogram A radiology procedure used to look at the gallbladder and bile ducts.

cholangitis, primary sclerosing See *primary sclerosing cholangitis*.

cholecystectomy Surgical removal of the gallbladder. This procedure may be done by laparoscopy or by open surgery.

cholecystitis Inflammation of the gallbladder. Cholecystitis is a complication of gallstones, and it is frequently associated with infection in the gallbladder. Risk factors for cholecystitis include age, obesity, female gender, multiple pregnancies, use of birth control pills, and heredity. The most common symptom is pain in the upper abdomen, although some patients have no symptoms. Diagnosis can be made with ultrasound of the abdomen. Surgery (standard or laparoscopic) is considered for patients with severe cholecystitis. In some mild cases, medication may be used instead to treat the infection and inflammation and to dissolve the gallstones.

cholera An infectious disease characterized by intense vomiting and profuse watery diarrhea and that rapidly leads to dehydration and often death. Cholera is caused by infection with the bacteria *Vibrio cholerae*, which may be transmitted via infected fecal matter, food, or water. With modern sanitation, cholera is no longer as common as it once was, but epidemics still occur whenever people must live in crowded and unsanitary conditions, such as in refugee camps. The disease is treated with intravenous fluids and with antibiotics. Cholera has also been known as Asian cholera, due to its one-time prevalence in that area of the world.

cholescintigraphy A diagnostic test in which a two-dimensional picture of a radiation source in the biliary system is obtained through the use of radioisotopes. The test is used to examine the biliary system and diagnose obstruction of the bile ducts (for example, by a gallstone or a tumor), disease of the gallbladder, and bile leaks.

cholesterol The most common type of steroid in the body. Cholesterol has a reputation for being associated with an increased risk for heart and blood vessel disease. However, cholesterol is essential to the formation of bile acids, vitamin D, progesterone, estrogens (estradiol, estrone, estriol), androgens (androsterone, testosterone), mineralocorticoid hormones (aldosterone, corticosterone), and glucocorticoid hormones (cortisol). Cholesterol is also necessary to the normal permeability and function of the membranes that surround cells. A diet high in saturated fats tends to increase blood cholesterol levels, whereas a diet high in unsaturated fats tends to lower blood cholesterol levels. Although some cholesterol is obtained from the diet, most cholesterol is made in the liver and other tissues. The treatment of elevated cholesterol involves not only diet but also weight loss, regular

exercise, and medications. After the age of 20, cholesterol testing is recommended every 5 years.

cholesterol, "bad" See *LDL cholesterol*.

cholesterol, "good" See *HDL cholesterol*.

cholesterol, HDL See *HDL cholesterol*.

cholesterol, high-density lipoprotein See *HDL cholesterol*.

cholesterol, LDL See *LDL cholesterol*.

cholesterol, low-density lipoprotein See *LDL cholesterol*.

cholesterol, lowering with fibrates Lowering cholesterol levels through the use of cholesterol-lowering drugs that are primarily effective in lowering triglycerides and, to a lesser extent, in increasing HDL levels. Gastrointestinal complaints are the most common side effect, and fibrates appear to increase the likelihood of a patient's developing cholesterol gallstones.

cholesterol, lowering with niacin Niacin, also known as nicotinic acid, is a water-soluble B vitamin that improves levels of all lipoproteins when given in doses well above the vitamin requirement. Niacin lowers the total cholesterol, LDL cholesterol, and triglyceride levels, while raising the HDL cholesterol level. A common and troublesome side effect of niacin is flushing, or hot flashes, which is a result of the widening of blood vessels. Most patients develop a tolerance for flushing, and in some patients it can be decreased by taking the drug during or after meals or by the use of aspirin or other similar medications prescribed by a physician. "No-flush" niacin formulations are also available. A variety of gastrointestinal symptoms, including nausea, indigestion, gas, vomiting, diarrhea, and the activation of peptic ulcers have been seen in some patients who use niacin. Other major adverse effects include liver problems, gout, and high blood sugar; risk of these complications increases as the dose of niacin increases. The nicotinamide form of niacin does not lower cholesterol levels.

cholesterol gallstone Stone within the gallbladder that is a result of chronically elevated blood levels of cholesterol (hypercholesterolemia). This can lead to inflammation of the gallbladder (cholecystitis). See also *cholecystitis*.

chondrocalcinosis Calcium deposition in cartilage. Chondrocalcinosis can be associated with degenerative arthritis, pseudogout, hemochromatosis, hyperparathyroidism, diabetes, hypomagnesemia, and Wilson's disease.

chondromalacia Abnormal softening or degeneration of cartilage. See also *patellofemoral syndrome*.

chondromalacia patella See *patellofemoral syndrome*.

chondroplasia The formation of cartilage by specialized cells called chondrocytes.

chondrosarcoma A malignant tumor that arises in cartilage cells (chondroblasts). Chondrosarcoma can be primary or secondary. Primary chondrosarcoma forms in bone and is a disease in children. Secondary chondrosarcoma arises from a preexisting benign defect of cartilage (such as an osteochondroma or enchondroma), usually after age 40. The main treatment is surgery. See also *cartilage; sarcoma*.

chorda tendinea A thread-like band of fibrous tissue that attaches on one end to the edge of the tricuspid and mitral valves of the heart and on the other end to the papillary muscle within the heart. The chorda tendinea serves to anchor the valves.

chorda tympani A branch of the facial nerve (the seventh cranial nerve) that serves the taste buds in the front of the tongue, runs through the middle ear, and carries taste messages to the brain. The chorda tympani is part of one of three cranial nerves involved in taste.

chordoma A benign tumor, usually in the lower back, that originates from cells destined to form cartilage. These cells are remnants of the primitive notochord, the flexible rod of cells in the embryo that forms the supporting axis of the body. Chordomas induce bone destruction.

chorea Ceaseless, restless, rapid, complex body movements that look well coordinated and purposeful but are, in fact, involuntary. The term chorea is derived from the Greek word *choreia*, which means “dancing” (as is choreography) because chorea was thought to be suggestive of a grotesque dance. See also *Huntington’s disease; Sydenham’s chorea*.

chorea, Huntington’s See *Huntington’s disease*.

chorea, Sydenham’s See *Sydenham’s chorea*.

chorioamnionitis Inflammation of the chorion and the amnion, the membranes that surround the fetus. Chorioamnionitis usually is associated with a bacterial infection. This may be due to bacteria ascending from the mother’s genital tract into the

uterus to infect the membranes and the amniotic fluid. Chorioamnionitis is dangerous to the mother and child.

chorioangioma, placental A benign tumor of a blood vessel in the placenta. Large chorioangiomas can cause complications, including excess amniotic fluid (polyhydramnios), maternal and fetal clotting problems (coagulopathies), premature delivery, toxemia, fetal heart failure, and hydrops (excess fluid) affecting the fetus. Chorioangiomas probably act as shunts between arteries and veins (arteriovenous shunts), leading to progressive heart failure of the fetus.

choriocarcinoma A highly malignant tumor that arises from trophoblastic cells within the uterus. Choriocarcinoma may follow any type of pregnancy but is especially likely to occur with a hydatidiform mole. The prognosis for women with metastatic choriocarcinoma has improved with the advent of multidrug chemotherapy. See also *hydatidiform mole*.

chorion The outermost of the two fetal membranes (the amnion is the innermost) that surround the embryo. The chorion develops villi (vascular finger-like projections) and develops into the placenta.

chorionic gonadotropin, human See *human chorionic gonadotropin*.

chorionic villus sampling A procedure for first-trimester prenatal diagnosis. Abbreviated CVS. CVS may be done between the eighth and tenth weeks of pregnancy. The aim is to diagnose severe abnormalities that are present in the fetus. Tissue is withdrawn from the villi of the chorion, a part of the placenta, and then prepared for diagnostic analysis.

choroiditis An inflammation of the layer of the eye behind the retina, either in its entirety (multifocal choroiditis) or in patches (focal choroiditis). The only symptom is usually blurred vision. Choroiditis is treated with medications that reduce inflammation. See also *uveitis*.

Christmas disease See *hemophilia B*.

chromatid One of the two daughter strands created by the lengthwise division of the chromosome. The two chromatids are at first joined together by a centromere, and then they separate, with each chromatid becoming a chromosome.

chromatography, gas An automated technique for separating mixtures of substances in which the mixture to be analyzed is vaporized and carried by

an inert gas through a special column and thence to a detection device.

chromatopsia Colored vision. A condition in which objects appear abnormally colored to the viewer.

chromosome A carrier of genetic information that is visible under an ordinary light microscope. Each human chromosome has two arms, the p (short) arm and the q (long) arm. These arms are separated from each other only by the centromere, which is the point at which the chromosome is attached to the spindle during cell division. The 3 billion base pairs in the human genome are organized into 24 chromosomes. All genes are arranged linearly along the chromosomes. Generally the nucleus of a human cell contains two sets of chromosomes—one set given by each parent. Each set has 23 single chromosomes: 22 autosomes and an X or a Y sex chromosome. (A normal female has a pair of X chromosomes; a male has an X and Y pair.) A chromosome contains roughly equal parts of protein and DNA. The chromosomal DNA contains an average of 150 million nucleotide building blocks, called bases. DNA molecules are among the largest molecules now known.

chromosome, acentric A fragment of a chromosome that lacks a centromere, so that the chromosome is lost when the cell divides.

chromosome, acrocentric A chromosome that has its centromere located near one end of the chromosome. Humans have five pairs of acrocentric chromosomes. Down syndrome is due to an extra acrocentric chromosome (chromosome 21).

chromosome, autosomal Any chromosome other than a sex chromosome (X or Y chromosome). Also known as an autosome.

chromosome, dicentric A chromosome that is abnormal in that it has two centromeres rather than one. Because the centromere is essential for chromosome division, a dicentric chromosome is pulled in opposite directions when the cell divides. This causes the chromosome to form a bridge and then break and be unstable.

chromosome, marker An abnormal chromosome that is distinctive in appearance but not fully identified. A marker chromosome is not necessarily a marker for a specific disease or abnormality, but it can be distinguished under the microscope from all the normal human chromosomes. For example, the fragile X (FRAXA) chromosome was once called the marker X.

chromosome, metaphase A chromosome at the stage in the cell cycle at which it is most condensed, easiest to see by itself, and therefore easiest to study. Metaphase chromosomes are often chosen for karyotyping and chromosome analysis.

chromosome, prophase A chromosome at a stage before metaphase in the cell cycle, when the chromosomes are long and often tangled like a ball of twine. Prophase chromosomes may be selected for analysis via resolution chromosome banding when it is important to detect minute details.

chromosome, sex The X or Y chromosome in humans. (Some other species have other sex chromosomes.)

chromosome, X The sex chromosome found twice in normal females and once, along with a Y chromosome, in normal males. The complete chromosome complement (consisting of 46 chromosomes, including the 2 sex chromosomes) is thus conventionally written as 46,XX for chromosomally normal females and 46,XY for chromosomally normal males. The X chromosome not only determines gender but also carries the genetic code for many essential functions in both males and females.

chromosome, Y The sex chromosome found in normal males, together with an X chromosome. Once thought to be a genetic wasteland, the Y chromosome is now known to contain at least 20 genes. Some of these genes are unique to the Y chromosome, including the male-determining gene and male fitness genes that are active only in the testis and that are thought to be responsible for the formation of sperm. Other genes on the Y chromosome have counterparts on the X chromosome, are active in many body tissues, and play crucial “housekeeping” roles within cells.

chromosome complement The whole set of chromosomes for a species. In humans, the normal chromosome complement consists of 46 chromosomes, including the 2 sex chromosomes. Also known as the karyotype.

chromosome disorder An abnormal condition due to something unusual in an individual's chromosomes. For example, Down syndrome is a chromosome disorder caused by the presence of an extra copy of chromosome 21, and Turner syndrome is most often due to the presence of only a single sex chromosome: one X chromosome.

chromosome inversion A condition in which a chromosome segment is clipped out, turned upside down, and reinserted back into the chromosome. A

chromosome inversion can be inherited from one or both parents, or it may be a mutation that appears in a child whose family has no history of chromosome inversion. An inversion can be “balanced,” meaning that it has all the genes that are present in a normal chromosome; or it can be “unbalanced,” meaning that genes have been deleted (lost) or duplicated. A balanced inversion causes no problems. An unbalanced inversion is often associated with problems such as developmental delay, mental retardation, and birth defects.

chromosome inversion, paracentric A type of chromosome rearrangement in which a chromosomal segment that does not include the centromere (and is therefore paracentric) is snipped out of a chromosome, inverted, and inserted back into the chromosome. The feature that makes it paracentric is that both breaks are on the same side of the centromere, so that the centromere is not involved in the rearrangement.

chromosome inversion, pericentric A basic type of chromosome rearrangement in which a segment that includes the centromere (and is therefore pericentric) is snipped out of a chromosome, inverted, and inserted back into the chromosome. The feature that makes it pericentric is that the breaks are on both sides of the centromere.

chromosome map The chart of the linear array of genes on a chromosome. The Human Genome Project contributes to the mapping of the human chromosomes. See also *Human Genome Project*.

chromosomes in multiple miscarriages Chromosome abnormalities (such as deletions, additions, or translocations) that are responsible for causing miscarriages. A couple that has had more than one miscarriage has about a 5 percent chance that one member of the couple is carrying an irregular chromosome that is responsible for the miscarriages.

chronic In medicine, lasting a long time. A chronic condition is one that lasts 3 months or more. Chronic diseases are in contrast to those that are acute (abrupt, sharp, and brief) or subacute (within the interval between acute and chronic).

chronic arthritis, systemic-onset juvenile See *Still's disease*.

chronic bronchitis See *bronchitis, chronic*.

chronic disease A disease that persists for a long time, typically 3 months or more. Examples of chronic diseases include arthritis, diabetes, and

emphysema. In comparison, an acute illness is of short duration. See also *acute*.

chronic fatigue syndrome A debilitating and complex disorder characterized by profound fatigue that lasts 6 months or longer, is not improved by bed rest, and may be worsened by physical or mental activity. Abbreviated CFS. Persons with CFS most often function at a substantially lower level of activity than they were capable of before the onset of the illness. In addition to these key defining characteristics, patients report various nonspecific symptoms, including weakness, muscle pain, impaired memory and/or mental concentration, insomnia, and postexertional fatigue lasting more than 24 hours. In some cases, CFS can persist for years. The cause or causes of CFS have not been identified, and no specific diagnostic tests are available. Moreover, because many illnesses have incapacitating fatigue as a symptom, care must be taken to exclude other known and often treatable conditions before a diagnosis of CFS is made. Also known as chronic fatigue and immune dysfunction syndrome (CFIDS) and myalgic encephalomyelitis (ME).

chronic illness An illness that lasts 3 months or more.

chronic leukemia Cancer of the blood cells that progresses slowly, as opposed to acute leukemia, which progresses rapidly. The two major types of chronic leukemia are chronic lymphocytic leukemia (CLL) and chronic myeloid leukemia (CML). See also *leukemia, chronic phase of*.

chronic lymphocytic leukemia See *leukemia, chronic lymphocytic*.

chronic myeloid leukemia See *leukemia, chronic myeloid*.

chronic obstructive lung disease Any disorder that persistently obstructs bronchial airflow. Abbreviated COLD. COLD mainly involves two related diseases: chronic bronchitis and emphysema. The obstruction is generally permanent and worsens over time. In asthma, there is also obstruction of airflow out of the lungs, but the obstruction is usually reversible, and between asthma attacks, the flow of air through the airways is generally good. Also known as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).

chronic obstructive pulmonary disease See *chronic obstructive lung disease*.

chronic peritonitis See *peritonitis, chronic*.

chronic phase See *leukemia, chronic phase of*.

chronic tamponade See *tamponade, chronic*.

chronicity The state of being chronic, having a long duration.

Churg-Strauss syndrome A disease characterized by inflammation of the blood vessels in persons with history of asthma or allergy. The symptoms include fatigue, weight loss, inflammation of the nasal passages, numbness, and weakness. The diagnosis is confirmed with a biopsy of involved tissue. Treatment involves stopping inflammation and suppressing the immune system. Also known as allergic granulomatosis and allergic granulomatous angiitis.

chyme A predigested, acidified mass of food that passes from the stomach into the small intestine.

Ci The abbreviation for a Curie, a unit of radioactivity. See also *Curie*.

-cide Suffix indicating killing or killer, as in bactericide (a solution capable of killing bacteria).

ciliary neuralgia See *cluster headache*.

circadian Refers to events occurring within the span of a full 24-hour day, as in a circadian clock.

circadian clock An internal time-keeping system in all organisms. Changes in the external environment, particularly in the light-dark cycle, train this biologic clock. When environmental conditions are constant, rhythms driven by the circadian clock follow a nearly perfect 24-hour pattern. The human circadian clock regulates many daily activities, such as sleep and waking. When a person doesn't follow these natural rhythms, or when the external environment strays from its usual rhythm (as occurs in the long nights and short days of deep winter), the circadian clock must readjust. Rapid environmental changes and problems with circadian clock adjustment are among the causes of jet lag, problems that affect shift workers, some types of sleep disorders, and bipolar disorders, particularly seasonal affective disorder. Certain genes serve to set and control the circadian clock. See also *bipolar disorder; jet lag; seasonal affective disorder; sleep disorder*.

circinate balanitis See *balanitis, circinate*.

circle of Willis A critical arterial circle at the base of the brain. The circle of Willis receives all the blood that is pumped up the two internal carotid arteries that come up the front of the neck. All the principal arteries that supply the two halves of the brain (hemispheres) branch off from the circle of Willis.

circulation In medicine, the movement of fluid through the body in a regular or circuitous course. The circulatory system, composed of the heart and blood vessels, functions to produce circulation. Heart failure is an example of a problem with circulation.

circulation, fetal The blood circulation in the fetus (an unborn baby). Before birth, blood from the fetal heart that is destined for the lungs is shunted away from the lungs through a short vessel called the ductus arteriosus and returned to the aorta. When this shunt is open, it is said to be a patent ductus arteriosus (PDA). The PDA usually closes at or shortly after birth, allowing blood to course freely to the lungs.

circulatory Having to do with circulation, the movement of fluid in a regular or circuitous course.

circulatory system The system that moves blood through the body. The circulatory system is composed of the heart, arteries, capillaries, and veins. This remarkable system transports oxygenated blood from the lungs to the heart and throughout the body via the arteries. The blood goes from the arteries to the veins by passing through the capillaries. Then the blood that has been depleted of oxygen by the body is returned to the lungs and heart via the veins. See also *artery; blood; heart; lung; respiratory system; vein*.

circumcision, female The excision (removal) of part or all of the external female genitalia, including the clitoris, and sometimes extending to the labia. Female circumcision is practiced in some parts of the Middle East and Africa, particularly Sudan, and it is viewed with disfavor in other parts of the world. Also known as female genital mutilation. See also *clitoridectomy*.

circumcision, male Surgery that removes the protective ring of loose skin (foreskin) that normally covers the glans of the penis. Circumcision dates back to prehistoric times, and it may be performed for religious or cultural reasons, or to promote cleanliness. Newborn circumcision decreases the risk of urinary tract infections and lowers the risk of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV. It also diminishes the risk for cancer of the penis and lessens the risk for cancer of the cervix in sexual partners.

cirrhosis Liver disease characterized by irreversible scarring. Alcohol and viral hepatitis, including both hepatitis B and hepatitis C, are among the many causes of cirrhosis. Cirrhosis can cause yellowing of the skin (jaundice), itching, and fatigue. Diagnosis is suggested by physical examination and

blood tests, and it can be confirmed by liver biopsy. Complications of cirrhosis include mental confusion, coma, fluid accumulation (ascites), internal bleeding, and kidney failure. Treatment is designed to limit any further damage to the liver and to prevent complications. Liver transplantation is becoming an important option for patients with advanced cirrhosis.

cirrhosis, primary biliary A scarring liver disease caused by an abnormality of the immune system. Small bile ducts within the liver become inflamed and obliterated from scarring. Backup of bile causes intense skin itching and yellowing of the skin (jaundice). Lack of bile decreases absorption of calcium and vitamin D, leading to osteoporosis. See also *cirrhosis*.

citrulline antibody An immune protein (antibody) that binds to a non-standard amino acid, citrulline, which is formed by removing amino groups from the natural amino acid, arginine. Citrulline antibody is present in the blood of many patients with rheumatoid arthritis. It is used in the diagnosis of rheumatoid arthritis when evaluating patients with unexplained joint inflammation. Also known as anti-citrulline antibody, anti-cyclic citrullinated peptide antibody, CCP antibody, and anti-CCP antibody.

Cl The chemical symbol for the element chlorine.

clap Slang term for gonorrhea. See *gonorrhea*.

clasped thumbs and mental retardation See *adducted thumbs*.

claudication Limping. From the Latin claudicare, which means "to limp." The Roman emperor Claudius was so named because he limped, probably because of a birth defect.

claudication, intermittent Pain in the calf that comes and goes, typically felt while walking, and usually subsiding with rest. Intermittent claudication can be due to temporary artery narrowing due to vasospasm, permanent artery narrowing due to atherosclerosis, or complete occlusion of an artery to the leg. The prognosis is generally favorable because the condition often stabilizes or improves with time. Walking regularly can sometimes increase the distance that the patient can walk without symptoms. Drugs may be prescribed for management. If conservative therapy is inadequate and claudication is severe and persistent, correction of the narrowing in the affected artery with surgery, such as bypass grafting, or interventional radiology, such as balloon angioplasty might be suggested.

claudication, venous Limping and/or pain resulting from inadequate venous drainage.

clavicle See *collarbone*.

clavus See *corn*.

clay-shoveler's fracture See *fracture, clay-shoveler's*.

cleft lip A fissure in the upper lip that is due to failure of the left and right sides of the fetal lip tissue to fuse, an event that should take place by 35 days of fetal age. Cleft lip can be on one side only or on both sides. Because failure of lip fusion can impair the subsequent closure of the palatal shelves, cleft lip often occurs in association with cleft palate. It is one of the most common physical birth defects, and it can be corrected with surgery.

cleft palate An opening in the roof of the mouth due to a failure of the palatal shelves to come fully together from either side of the mouth and fuse during the first months of development as an embryo. The opening in the palate permits communication between the nasal passages and the mouth. Surgery is needed to close the palate. Cleft palate can occur alone or in association with cleft lip.

cleft uvula A common minor anomaly in which the uvula (the tissue that hangs down at the back of the palate) is cleft, or parted by a fissure. Persons with a cleft uvula should not have their adenoids removed because without the adenoids they cannot achieve proper closure between the soft palate and pharynx while speaking, and they will develop hypernasal speech. Also known as bifid uvula.

cleidocranial dysostosis A genetic disorder of bone development that is characterized by absent or incompletely formed collarbones and cranial and facial abnormalities that may include square skull, late closure of the sutures of the skull, late closure of the fontanelles, low nasal bridge, delayed eruption of the teeth, and abnormal permanent teeth. A child with this disorder can bring his or her shoulders together, or nearly so. The gene for cleidocranial dysostosis has been found on chromosome 6 in band p21. Also known as cleidocranial dysplasia and craniocleidodysostosis.

click-murmur syndrome See *mitral valve prolapse*.

climacteric 1 Menopause in women. 2 The time corresponding to menopause in the life of men.

clinical 1 Having to do with the examination and treatment of patients. 2 Applicable to patients. The term comes from the French "clinique" (at the bedside).

clinical cytogenetics The application of chromosome analysis to clinical medicine. For example, clinical cytogenetic testing is done to look for an extra chromosome 21 in a child who is suspected of having Down syndrome.

clinical depression Depressed mood that meets the DSM-IV criteria for a depressive disorder. The term clinical depression is commonly used to describe depression that is a type of mental illness—not a normal, temporary mood caused by life events or grieving.

clinical disease A disease that has recognizable clinical signs and symptoms, as distinct from a sub-clinical illness, which lacks detectable signs and symptoms. Diabetes, for example, can be a subclinical disease for some years before becoming a clinical disease.

clinical research trial A study that is intended to evaluate the safety and effectiveness of medications or medical devices by monitoring their effects on large groups of people. Studies may be conducted by government health agencies (such as the National Institutes of Health [NIH]), researchers affiliated with hospital or university medical programs, independent researchers, or individuals from private industry. Usually volunteers are recruited, although in some cases research participants may be paid. For some patients, clinical research trials represent an avenue for receiving promising new therapies that would not otherwise be available. Patients with difficult-to-treat or “incurable” diseases may pursue participation in clinical research trials if standard therapies are not effective.

clinical trial See *clinical research trial*.

clip A device used to hold something or things together. For example, a surgical clip may be used to prevent a blood vessel from bleeding into the brain, or in a vasectomy to pinch together the sides of the vas deferens.

clitoridectomy The surgical excision (removal) of the clitoris to reduce a woman’s ability to be sexually stimulated during intercourse. Also known as female circumcision and female genital mutilation. See also *circumcision, female*.

clitoris A small mass of erectile tissue in the female that is situated at the anterior apex of the vulva, near the meeting of the labia majora (vulvar lips). Like the penis, the clitoris is highly sensitive to stimulation during sex. The clitoris corresponds to the penis in the male.

CLL Chronic lymphocytic leukemia. See *leukemia, chronic lymphocytic*.

clone 1 A replica. For example, a clone can be made of a group of bacteria or a macromolecule such as DNA. 2 A group of cells derived from a single ancestral cell. 3 An individual developed from a single somatic (nongerm) cell from a parent, representing an exact replica of that parent.

clone, recombinant A clone that contains recombinant DNA molecules.

clone bank See *genomic library*.

cloning The process of creating a genetically identical copy.

cloning, cell The process of producing a group of cells (clones), all genetically identical, from a single ancestral cell.

cloning, DNA The use of DNA manipulation procedures to produce multiple copies of a single gene or segment of DNA.

cloning, therapeutic See *therapeutic cloning*.

Clostridium difficile A bacterium that is one of the most common causes of infection of the colon in the US. Patients taking antibiotics are at risk of becoming infected with *C. difficile* as antibiotics can disrupt the normal bacteria of the bowel, allowing *C. difficile* to become established in the colon. In some people, a toxin produced by *C. difficile* causes diarrhea, abdominal pain, severe inflammation of the colon (colitis), fever, an elevated white blood cell count, vomiting, and dehydration. In severely affected patients, the inner lining of the colon becomes severely inflamed (pseudomembranous colitis) with the potential to perforate.

Clostridium perfringens A bacterium that is the most common cause of gas gangrene, a lethal infection of soft tissue, especially muscle. *C. perfringens* bacteria are toxin- and gas-producing bacteria. Before the introduction of antibiotics, a significant percentage of battlefield injuries were complicated by gas gangrene. *C. perfringens* also causes food poisoning and a fulminant form of bowel disease called necrotizing colitis. Formerly known as *C. welchii*.

Clostridium welchii See *Clostridium perfringens*.

clot-dissolving medication An agent such as plasminogen-activator (t-PA) or streptokinase that is effective in dissolving clots and reopening arteries.

For example, clot-dissolving medications may be used in the treatment of heart attacks, to reestablish blood flow to the heart muscle (myocardium). Also known as thrombolytic agents.

clubfoot A common malformation of the foot that is evident at birth. The foot is turned in sharply so that the person seems to be walking on his or her ankle. Clubfoot can sometimes be corrected with a combination of surgery, bracing, and physical therapy. Also known as talipes equinovarus.

cluster An aggregation of cases of a disease or another health-related condition, such as a cancer, birth defect, or headaches, closely grouped in time and place. See also *cluster headache*.

cluster headache A distinctive episodic syndrome of headaches. The most common cluster headache pattern, acute cluster headache, is characterized by one to three short attacks of pain each day around the eyes, clustered over a stretch of 1 to 2 months, and followed by a pain-free period that averages 1 year. The other main pattern of cluster headache, chronic or episodic cluster headache, is characterized by the absence of sustained periods of remission, with pain occurring out of the blue or emerging several years after an episodic pattern. Cluster headache is different and distinct from migraine, although the underlying mechanisms are similar. For example, propranolol is effective in treating migraine but not in treating cluster headache, whereas lithium is beneficial for cluster headache but not migraine. Also known as ciliary neuralgia, erythromegacephalgesia, histamine cephalgia, migrainous neuralgia, Raeder syndrome, sphenopalatine neuralgia, and vidian neuralgia.

cluttering A speech disorder characterized by the unwanted repetition of entire words. It resembles stuttering, in which only sounds or parts of words are repeated. See also *speech disorder*.

CM Centimorgan.

CME Continuing medical education, education that physicians are required to obtain in order to earn CME credits to retain their medical licenses. They may do so by taking courses, attending medical conferences where they learn about new developments, or by reading and taking tests.

CML Chronic myeloid leukemia. See *leukemia, chronic myeloid*.

CNA Certified nurse aide. See *nurse assistant*.

CNS Central nervous system.

CNS prophylaxis Chemotherapy or radiation therapy to the central nervous system (CNS) as a preventive treatment. CNS prophylaxis is given to kill cancer cells that may be in the brain and spinal cord, even though no cancer has been detected there.

coagulation, blood See *blood coagulation*.

coal miner's pneumoconiosis See *black lung disease*.

coarctation A narrowing, stricture, or constriction of an artery. The sides of the vessel at the point of a coarctation appear to be pressed together.

coarctation of the aorta Congenital constriction of the aorta that impedes the flow of blood below the level of the constriction and increases blood pressure above the constriction. Symptoms may not be evident at birth but may develop as soon as the first week after birth, with congestive heart failure or high blood pressure that can require early surgery. The outlook after surgery is favorable. Some cases have been treated with balloon angioplasty.

coated stent A tiny cage to prop open an artery and prevent it from closing again, that is coated with a drug. The stent is inserted into a coronary artery, usually just after an angioplasty has been done, to keep open the vessel. The stent slowly releases the drug with which it is coated. Coated stents reduce the risk of artery re-narrowing (restenosis) after angioplasty. Also known as a medicated stent, drug-coated stent, drug-eluting stent, eluting stent.

cocaine A substance derived from the leaves of the coca plant that is a bitter, addictive substance formerly used as an anesthetic. Safer anesthetics than cocaine were developed in the 20th century, although it is still used as an injectable anesthetic by some dentists. Synthetic alternatives, such as procaine, are used far more widely. Tragically, cocaine is a highly addictive and destructive street drug.

cocci The plural of coccus.

coccus A bacterial cell that has the shape of a sphere. Coccus is part of the name of a number of bacteria, such as enterococcus, meningococcus, pneumococcus, staphylococcus, and streptococcus.

coccygeal vertebrae The three to five (the average number is four) rudimentary vertebrae that make up the coccyx.

coccyx The small tail-like bone at the bottom of the spine, very near the anus. It is the lowest part of the spinal column. Also known as tailbone.

cochlear implant A device that is surgically placed (implanted) within the inner ear to help a person with a certain form of deafness to hear. Cochlear implants rarely cure severe or profound deafness, but they can help some hearing-impaired people to distinguish the sounds of language clearly enough to participate in a verbal environment. For children who are congenitally deaf (born deaf), a cochlear implant can markedly increase a preschool child's chances of being able to function effectively in mainstream school classes.

cockroach allergy A condition that manifests as an allergic reaction when one is exposed to cockroach allergens, tiny protein particles shed or excreted by cockroaches. Asthma can be triggered by exposure to these cockroach allergens. See also *allergy*.

code, genetic The instructions in a gene that tell the cell how to make a specific protein. A, T, G, and C are the "letters" of the DNA code and represent the chemicals adenine, thymine, guanine, and cytosine, respectively. These make up the nucleotide bases of DNA. Each gene's code combines these four chemicals in various ways to spell out three-letter "words" that specify which amino acid is needed at every step in making a protein. The discovery of the genetic code ranks as one of the premiere events of biology and medicine.

code blue An emergency situation announced in a hospital or institution in which a patient is in cardiopulmonary arrest, requiring a team of providers (sometimes called a "code team") to rush to the specific location and begin immediate resuscitative efforts.

code pink A hospital or institution alert to security that a baby is missing from the hospital nursery.

codon A set of any three adjacent bases in DNA or RNA. There are 64 different codons, of which 61 specify the incorporation of an amino acid into a polypeptide chain; the remaining 3 are stop codons, which signal the ends of polypeptides.

coenzyme A substance that enhances the action of an enzyme to mediate and speed a chemical reaction. A number of the water-soluble vitamins, such as vitamins B1, B2, and B6, serve as coenzymes. See also *enzyme*.

Cogan corneal dystrophy A disorder in which the cornea shows grayish fingerprint lines, geographic map-like lines, and dots (or microcysts). These lines and dots can be seen on examination with a slit-lamp, which focuses a high-intensity light beam through a slit while the examiner uses a mag-

nifying scope to look at the front of the eye where the epithelial basement membrane is seen as abnormal. The disorder is usually without symptoms. However, about 1 patient in 10 has recurrent erosion of the cornea that generally begins after age 30. Also known as epithelial basement corneal dystrophy and map-dot-fingerprint type corneal dystrophy and microcystic corneal dystrophy.

Cogan syndrome A rare form of artery inflammation (arteritis) of unknown cause that affects the ear. Cogan syndrome causes problems of hearing and balance and also inflammation of the cornea and often fever, fatigue, and weight loss. Joint and muscle pains can also be present. Less frequently, the arteritis can involve blood vessels elsewhere in the body, as in the skin, kidneys, nerves, and other tissues and organs. Cogan syndrome can lead to deafness or blindness. Treatment is directed toward stopping the inflammation of the blood vessels. Cortisone-related medications, such as prednisone, are often used. Severe disease can require immunosuppression medications, such as cyclophosphamide.

cognition The process of knowing. Cognition includes both awareness and judgment.

cognitive Having to do with thought, judgment, or knowledge.

cognitive behavior therapy A therapeutic practice that helps patients recognize and remedy dysfunctional thought patterns. One characteristic technique is exposure and response prevention, in which a patient with a phobia deliberately exposes himself or herself to the feared situation, gradually decreasing the panic response. Cognitive behavior therapy is used to treat obsessive-compulsive disorder, panic disorder, and other biologically based psychiatric illnesses, often in combination with medication. Evidence gathered from brain scans indicates that over time this therapy can sometimes create actual changes in brain and neurotransmitter function. Abbreviated CBT.

cognitive disability A broad term used to describe such diverse conditions as mental retardation, thought disturbances, and neurological conditions that chronically affect a certain type of perception or mental ability.

cognitive disturbance Disruption of one's ability to think logically.

cognitive dulling Loss of mental faculties; difficulty in thinking logically or quickly. Cognitive dulling can occur due to a medical condition or as a side effect of medication.

cognitive science The study of the mind. Cognitive science is an interdisciplinary science that draws on many fields, including neuroscience, psychology, philosophy, computer science, artificial intelligence, and linguistics. The purpose of cognitive science is to develop models that help explain human perception, thinking, and learning with the premise that the mind is an information processor. This processor receives, stores, retrieves, transforms, and transmits information. The information and the corresponding information processes can be studied as patterns.

cohort In a clinical research trial, a group of study participants or patients.

coinsurance See *copayment*.

coitus Sexual intercourse.

coitus interruptus Sexual intercourse in which, as a birth-control measure, the male attempts to withdraw the penis before ejaculation. It is not usually an effective means of birth control because sperm are present in preejaculate fluid produced during intercourse. See also *birth control*.

colchicine A plant substance that is used in clinical medicine for the treatment of the inflammation, such as from gouty arthritis, and in the laboratory to arrest cells during cell division by disrupting the spindles so that their chromosomes can be visualized.

COLD Chronic obstructive lung disease.

cold, common A contagious viral upper respiratory tract infection. The common cold can be caused by many different types of viruses, and the body can never build up resistance to all of them. For this reason, colds are a frequent and recurring problem. Going out into cold weather has no effect on causing a cold. Antibiotics do not cure or shorten the duration of the illness.

cold, June See *hay fever*.

cold, summer See *allergic rhinitis*.

cold injury An injury caused by exposure to extreme cold that can lead to loss of body parts and even to death. Examples of cold injury are chilblain, trench foot, and frostbite. Cold injury occurs with and without freezing of body tissues. The young and the elderly are especially prone to cold injury, and alcohol consumption increases the risk of cold injury. It is important not to thaw an extremity if there is a risk of it refreezing. The extremity should be protected from trauma and gradually rewarmed.

cold sore A small sore located on the face or in the mouth that causes pain, burning, or itching before bursting and crusting over. Common locations for cold sores are the lips, chin, cheeks, and nostrils. Cold sores more rarely appear on the gums and the roof of the mouth. Cold sores are caused by herpes simplex type 1 virus, which lies dormant in the body and is reawakened by factors such as stress, sunburn, or fever from a wide range of infectious diseases, including colds. Sunscreen (SPF 15 or higher) on the lips prevents recurrences of herpes due to sunburn. The virus is highly contagious when fever blisters are present. It is spread by physical contact, such as kissing. Also known as labial herpes, febrile herpes, and fever blister.

colectomy An operation to remove all or part of the colon (large intestine). In a partial colectomy, the surgeon removes only part of the colon. The bowel is then reconnected or an opening of the bowel (ostomy) is created on the abdominal wall to allow the contents of the bowel to exit from the body. Colectomy may be needed for treatment of diverticulitis, benign polyps of the colon, and cancer of the colon.

colic A cause of crampy abdominal pain in early infancy. Colic is a common condition, occurring in about 1 in 10 babies. An infant with colic is irritable, cries, and often has a rigid abdomen and draws up its legs. Overfeeding, undiluted juices, food allergies, and stress can aggravate colic. Colic usually lasts from early infancy to the third or fourth month of age. Treatment can include dietary changes, carefully measured feedings, and extra burping. Parents should not assume that new abdominal pain and loud crying in their baby are colic. It is important for the baby to be seen by a physician to rule out more serious conditions.

colitis Inflammation of the colon (large intestine). There are many forms of colitis, including amebic, Crohn's, infectious, pseudomembranous, spastic, and ulcerative.

colitis, amebic Inflammation of the intestine, with ulcers in the colon, due to infection with an ameba called *Entamoeba histolytica*. This parasite can be transmitted to humans via contaminated water and food. Symptoms, which include diarrhea, indigestion, nausea, and weight loss, can begin shortly after infection, or the ameba may live in the gastrointestinal tract for months or years before symptoms erupt. Amebic colitis can be treated with medication, including emetine and antibiotics. See also *amebic dysentery; amebiasis*.

colitis, Crohn's Crohn's disease affecting the colon. Also known as granulomatous colitis. See also *Crohn's disease*.

colitis, granulomatous

colitis, granulomatous See *colitis, Crohn's*.

colitis, pseudomembranous Severe inflammation of the inner lining of the colon, usually due to the *Clostridium difficile* bacterium. Patients taking antibiotics are at particular risk of becoming infected with *C. difficile* because the natural bacteria of the bowel can usually prevent proliferation of *C. difficile*, but they are disrupted by antibiotics. A toxin produced by *C. difficile* causes colitis symptoms, including diarrhea, abdominal pain, and severe inflammation. Rarely, the walls of the colon wear away and holes develop (colon perforation), which can lead to a life-threatening infection of the abdomen. See also *Clostridium difficile*.

colitis, spastic See *irritable bowel syndrome*.

colitis, ulcerative A bowel disease that is characterized by inflammation with ulcer formation in the lining of colon (large intestine). Its cause is unknown. The end of the colon (the rectum) is generally involved. When limited to the rectum, the disease is called ulcerative proctitis. The inflammation may extend to varying degrees into the upper parts of the colon. When the entire colon is involved, it is referred to as pancolitis or universal colitis. Symptoms include intermittent rectal bleeding, crampy abdominal pain, and diarrhea. Many patients experience long remissions, even without medication. Ulcerative colitis may mysteriously resolve after a long history of symptoms. Direct visualization (via sigmoidoscopy or colonoscopy) and biopsy of the lining of the bowel is the most accurate diagnostic test. Treatment of ulcerative colitis involves medications and/or surgery; changes in diet can sometimes help.

colitis, universal Ulcerative colitis that involves the entire colon (large intestine).

collagen The principal protein of the skin, tendons, cartilage, bone, and connective tissue. Collagen is an essential part of the framework of the design of our various body tissues.

collagen disease A disease that damages collagen or other components of connective tissue. For example, dermatomyositis and systemic lupus erythematosus are collagen diseases.

collagen injection The practice of injecting collagen into a part of the face or body (often the lips) to make it larger. The effects are long-lasting but not permanent. Collagen injections are usually done by plastic surgeons.

collapsed lung See *atelectasis*.

collarbone A horizontal bone above the first rib that makes up the front part of the shoulder. Also known as the clavicle, the collarbone links the breastbone (sternum) with the scapula, a triangular bone in the back of the shoulder. One end of the collarbone connects to the sternum, forming one side of the sternoclavicular joint. The other end of the collarbone connects to the scapula, there forming one side of the acromioclavicular joint.

collateral 1 In anatomy, a subordinate or accessory part. 2 A side branch, as of a blood vessel or nerve. After a coronary artery occlusion, collateral vessels often develop to shunt blood around the blockage.

collateral knee ligament, lateral A ligament that straps the outside of the knee joint and provides stability and strength to the knee joint. Abbreviated LCL.

collateral knee ligament, medial A ligament on the inner side of the knee joint. The medial collateral knee ligament adds stability and strength to the knee joint. Abbreviated MCL.

colon The long, coiled, tubelike organ that removes water from digested food. The remaining material, solid waste called stool, moves through the colon to the rectum and leaves the body through the anus. Also known as large bowel and large intestine.

colon cancer See *cancer, colon*.

colon cancer prevention Measures taken to prevent the formation of colon cancer. Colorectal cancer can run in families. The risk of colon cancer is increased for a person whose immediate family member (parent, sibling, or child) had colorectal cancer. It is increased further for a person who has had more than one such relative with colorectal cancer or a family member who has developed colon cancer earlier than 55 years of age. Individuals to whom any of these circumstances apply should undergo colonoscopy every 3 years, starting at an age that is 7 to 10 years younger than when the youngest family member with colon cancer was diagnosed.

colon polyp A benign tumor of the large intestine. Benign polyps do not invade nearby tissue or spread to other parts of the body. Benign polyps can easily be removed during colonoscopy and are not life threatening. If benign polyps are not removed from the large intestine, they can become malignant (cancerous) over time. Most cancers of the large intestine are believed to have developed from polyps.

colonic irrigation See *irrigation of the colon*.

colonoscope A flexible, lighted instrument used to view the inside of the colon.

colonoscopy A procedure whereby a physician inserts a viewing tube (colonoscope) into the rectum for the purpose of inspecting the colon. During colonoscopy, polyps can be removed, bleeding can be cauterized, and a biopsy can be performed if abnormal areas of the colon are seen.

colony-stimulating factor A laboratory-made agent that is similar to substances in the body that stimulate the production of blood cells. Abbreviated CSF. Treatment with CSF can help blood-forming tissue recover from the effects of chemotherapy and radiation therapy.

colorblindness The inability to perceive colors in a normal fashion. The most common forms of colorblindness are inherited as sex-linked (X-linked) recessive traits. Females are carriers and males are affected. As a result, approximately 1 in 8 males is colorblind, compared to fewer than 1 in 100 females. The most common form of colorblindness is red-green. The second most common form is blue-yellow. The most severe form of colorblindness is achromatopsia, the inability to see any color. Testing for colorblindness is commonly performed along with other types of vision screening. See also *monochromatism*.

colorectal Related to the colon and/or rectum.

colorectal cancer See *cancer, colon*.

colostomy An artificial exit from the colon created to divert waste through a hole in the colon and through the wall of the abdomen. A colostomy is commonly performed by severing the colon and then attaching the end leading to the stomach to the skin, through the wall of the abdomen. At the exterior opening (stoma), a bag can be attached for waste removal. The end of the colon that leads to the rectum is closed off and becomes dormant (known as a Hartmann colostomy). There are other types of colostomy procedures. Usually a colostomy is performed because of infection, blockage, cancer, or in rare instances, severe trauma of the colon.

colostomy, iliac A colostomy in which the exterior opening (stoma) is located on the lower-left side of the abdomen.

colostomy, transverse A colostomy in which the exterior opening (stoma) is located on the upper abdomen.

colostomy bag A removable, disposable bag that attaches to the exterior opening of a colostomy

(stoma) to permit sanitary collection and disposal of bodily wastes.

colostrum A sticky white or yellow fluid secreted by the breasts during the second half of pregnancy and for a few days after birth, before breast milk comes in. It is high in protective antibodies that boost the newborn's immune system.

colpo- Prefix referring to the vagina.

colpopexy The use of stitches to bring a displaced vagina back into position against the abdominal wall.

colpoptosis A condition in which the vagina has dropped from its normal position against the abdominal wall.

colporrhaphy Surgical repair of the vagina.

colposcopy A procedure in which a lighted magnifying instrument called a colposcope (or vaginoscope) is used to examine the vagina and cervix.

colpotomy A surgical incision in the vagina.

coma A state of deep, unarousable unconsciousness. A coma may occur as a result of head trauma, disease, poisoning, or numerous other causes. Coma states are sometimes graded based on the absence or presence of reflexive responses to stimuli.

comedo The primary sign of acne, consisting of a widened hair follicle filled with keratin skin debris, bacteria, and sebum (oil). A comedo may be closed or open. A closed comedo (called a whitehead) has an obstructed opening to the skin and may rupture to cause a low-grade inflammatory skin reaction in the area. An open comedo (called a blackhead) has a wide opening to the skin and is capped with a blackened mass of skin debris.

comedones The plural of comedo. See also *comedo*.

communited fracture See *fracture, comminuted*.

common bile duct The duct that carries bile from the gallbladder and liver into the duodenum (upper part of the small intestine). The common bile duct is formed by the junction of the cystic duct, from the gallbladder, and the common hepatic duct, from the liver.

common cold See *cold, common*.

communicable disease A disease caused by an infectious organism.

communication disorder A disorder of the speech apparatus and/or of the mental faculties used to speak or communicate by other means. Treatment includes speech therapy and other interventions, as appropriate, for the underlying condition. See also *aphasia; apraxia of speech; articulation disorder; autism; cluttering; speech disorder; stuttering*.

comorbid Occurring together. For example, if a person has both Crohn's disease and stomach ulcers, these are comorbid conditions.

compassionate use A term used in the US for a method of providing experimental treatments, generally for very ill individuals who have no other treatment options, prior to final FDA approval for use in humans.

complementary medicine A group of diagnostic and therapeutic disciplines that are used together with conventional medicine. An example of a complementary therapy is using aromatherapy to help lessen a patient's discomfort following surgery. Complementary medicine is traditionally not taught or used in Western medical schools or hospitals. Complementary medicine includes a large number of practices and systems of health care that, for a variety of cultural, social, economic, or scientific reasons, have not been adopted by mainstream Western medicine. See also *alternative medicine; conventional medicine*.

complete androgen insensitivity syndrome An older term for the complete androgen insensitivity syndrome, a genetic disorder that makes XY fetuses insensitive (unresponsive) to androgens (male hormones). Instead, they are born looking externally like normal girls. Internally, there is a short blind-pouch vagina and no uterus, fallopian tubes, or ovaries. There are testes in the abdomen or the inguinal canal. The complete androgen insensitivity syndrome is usually detected at puberty when a girl should but does not begin to menstruate. The gene for the syndrome is on the X chromosome and codes for the androgen receptor (also called the dihydrotestosterone receptor). There are also partial androgen insensitivity syndromes.

complete blood count See *CBC*.

complete hysterectomy See *hysterectomy, total*.

complete syndactyly See *syndactyly, complete*.

complication In medicine, an unanticipated problem that arises following, and is a result of, a procedure, treatment, or illness. A complication is so named because it complicates the situation.

compound fracture See *fracture, compound*.

compound microscope A microscope that consists of two microscopes in series, the first serving as the ocular lens (close to the eye) and the second serving as the objective lens (close to the object to be viewed).

compress Cloth or another material applied under pressure to an area of the skin and held in place for a period of time. A compress can be any temperature, and it can be dry or wet. It may also be impregnated with medication or an herbal remedy. Most compresses are used to relieve inflammation.

compression fracture See *fracture, compression*.

computed tomography scan See *CAT scan*.

computerized axial tomography scan See *CAT scan*.

conception 1 The union of a sperm and an egg to create the first cell of a new organism. The term conception has also been used to imply the implantation of the blastocyst, the formation of a viable zygote, and the onset of pregnancy. 2 Related to the formulation or understanding of an idea. See also *pregnancy*.

concussion A traumatic injury to soft tissue, usually the brain, as a result of a violent blow, shaking, or spinning. A brain concussion can cause immediate but temporary impairment of brain functions, such as thinking, vision, equilibrium, and consciousness. After a person has had a concussion, he or she is at increased risk for recurrence. Moreover, after a person has several concussions, less of a blow can cause injury, and the person can require more time to recover.

conditioning 1 Exercise and practice to build up the body for either improved performance, as in physical therapy, or in preparation for sports performance. 2 The development of certain predictable behavior as a result of repetitive activity or exposure.

conditioning, Pavlovian Use of a system of rewards and punishments to influence behavior. Named after the Russian physiologist Ivan Petrovich Pavlov, who conditioned dogs to respond in what proved to be a predictable manner by giving them rewards.

condom A barrier method of contraception consisting of a sheath made of latex, lambskin, or other material that collects semen and thereby prevents conception. There are both male and female condoms. When not specified, the term condom usually refers to a male condom. See also *barrier method; birth control; condom, female; condom, male*.

condom, female A sheath made of plastic or latex that is anchored outside the vagina and lines the interior of the vagina. It collects semen, preventing the semen from reaching the cervix, and thereby preventing conception. It also provides some protection against sexually transmitted diseases, including the HIV virus. See also *barrier method; birth control*.

condom, male A sheath made of latex, lambskin, or other material that is placed over the erect penis before penetration to collect semen, preventing the semen from reaching the cervix, and thereby preventing conception. When used consistently, a condom is a reasonably reliable method of contraception, especially if it is combined with the use of a spermicide or a female barrier method (but not a female condom). Latex condoms also provide some protection against sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV, but lambskin condoms do not protect against HIV. A condom can be used only once. See also *barrier method; birth control*.

conduction system, cardiac See *cardiac conduction system*.

condyloma Wartlike growths around the anus, vulva, or glans penis. There are three major types of condyloma, each of which is sexually transmitted: condyloma acuminatum (warts around the vulva), condyloma latum (a form of secondary syphilis), and condyloma subcutaneum (also known as molluscum contagiosum).

condyloma acuminatum A sexually transmitted disorder characterized by wartlike growths around the vulva. See also *genital warts*.

condyloma latum A form of the secondary stage of syphilis, characterized by wartlike growths around the anus.

condyloma subcutaneum A sexually transmitted disorder characterized by wartlike growths around the anus and genitals that is caused by the virus poxvirus. Also known as molluscum contagiosum.

cone biopsy See *conization*.

cone cell A light-sensitive cell in the retina of the eye. Cone cells absorb light and are essential for distinguishing colors.

congenital A condition that is present at birth, whether or not it is inherited.

congenital aganglionic megacolon See *Hirschsprung's disease*.

congenital clasped thumbs with mental retardation See *adducted thumbs*.

congenital defect A birth defect.

congenital dislocation of the hip See *congenital hip dislocation*.

congenital heart disease A malformation of the heart, aorta, or other large blood vessels that is the most frequent form of major birth defect in newborns. Abbreviated CHD. There are many types of CHD, including atrial septal defect (ASD), ventricular septal defect (VSD), pulmonary (valvular) stenosis, aortic stenosis, coarctation of the aorta, Tetralogy of Fallot, and transposition of the great arteries. Much of the practice of pediatric cardiology consists of the diagnosis and treatment of CHD. Also known as congenital heart defect, congenital heart malformation, congenital cardiovascular disease, congenital cardiovascular defect, and congenital cardiovascular malformation.

congenital hemolytic jaundice See *spherocytosis, hereditary*.

congenital hip dislocation One of the most common birth defects, characterized by an abnormal formation of the hip joint in which the ball at the top of the thighbone (the head of the femur) is not stable within the socket (acetabulum). The ligaments of the hip joint may also be loose and stretched. The degree of instability at the hip varies. The usual treatment is the use of a device called the Pavlik harness. If the harness is not effective, the hip may be positioned into place under anesthesia (closed reduction) and maintained with a body cast (spica). Also known as infantile hip dislocation, congenital dislocation of the hip (CDH), and developmental dysplasia of the hip (DDH).

congenital hypothyroidism See *cretinism*.

congenital malformation A physical defect present in a baby at birth that can involve many different parts of the body, including the brain, heart, lungs, liver, bones, and intestinal tract. Congenital malformation can be genetic, it can result from exposure of the fetus to a malforming agent (such

as alcohol), or it can be of unknown origin. Congenital malformations are now the leading cause of infant mortality (death) in the US and many other developed nations. Examples include heart defects, cleft lip and palate, spina bifida, limb defects, and Down syndrome.

congenital neutropenia, severe See *severe congenital neutropenia*.

congenital ptosis of the eyelids Drooping of the upper eyelids at birth. The lids may droop only slightly, or they may cover the pupils and restrict or even block vision. Moderate or severe ptosis calls for treatment to permit normal vision development. If congenital ptosis of the eyelids is not corrected, amblyopia (lazy eye) may develop, which can lead to permanently poor vision.

congenital torticollis See *torticollis, congenital*.

congestive heart failure Inability of the heart to keep up with the demands on it, with failure of the heart to pump blood with normal efficiency. When this occurs, the heart is unable to provide adequate blood flow to other organs, such as the brain, liver, and kidneys. Abbreviated CHF. CHF may be due to failure of the right or left ventricle, or both. The symptoms can include shortness of breath (dyspnea), asthma due to the heart (cardiac asthma), pooling of blood (stasis) in the general body (systemic) circulation or in the liver's (portal) circulation, swelling (edema), blueness or duskiness (cyanosis), and enlargement (hypertrophy) of the heart. The many causes of CHF include coronary artery disease leading to heart attacks and heart muscle (myocardium) weakness; primary heart muscle weakness from viral infections or toxins, such as prolonged alcohol exposure; heart valve disease causing heart muscle weakness due to too much leaking of blood or causing heart muscle stiffness from a blocked valve; hyperthyroidism; and high blood pressure.

conization Surgery to remove a cone-shaped piece of tissue from the cervix and cervical canal. Conization may be used to diagnose or treat a cervical condition. Also known as cone biopsy.

conjunctiva A thin, clear, moist membrane that coats the inner surfaces of the eyelids (palpebral conjunctiva) and the outer surface of the eye (ocular, or bulbar, conjunctiva). Inflammation of the conjunctiva is called conjunctivitis (pinkeye).

conjunctivitis Inflammation of the membrane covering the surface of the eyeball. It can be a result of infection or irritation of the eye, or it can be

related to systemic diseases, such as Reiter syndrome. Also known as pinkeye.

conjunctivitis, allergic Inflammation of the whites of the eyes (the conjunctivae), with itching, redness, and tearing, that is caused by an allergic reaction and frequently accompanied by hay fever.

conjunctivitis arida See *xerophthalmia*.

Conn syndrome Overproduction of the hormone aldosterone by a tumor in the outer portion (cortex) of the adrenal gland. The excessive aldosterone results in low potassium levels (hypokalemia), underacidity of the body (alkalosis), muscle weakness, excessive thirst, excessive urination, and high blood pressure. Also known as aldosteronism and hyperaldosteronism.

connectionism A theory of information processing that is based on the neurophysiology of the brain. The basic tenets of connectionism are that signals are processed by elementary units (in this case, neurons), processing units are connected in parallel to other processing units, and connections between processing units are weighted. The weights may be hard-wired, learned, or both, and they represent the strengths of connection (either excitatory or inhibitory) between two units.

connective tissue A material consisting of protein fibers that form a framework that provides a support structure for body tissues. See also *collagen*.

connective tissue disease A disease (autoimmune or otherwise) that attacks the collagen or other core components of connective tissue. Lupus is a connective tissue disease.

connective tissue disease, mixed See *mixed connective tissue disease*.

Conor and Bruch disease See *typhus, African tick*.

consanguinity Close blood relationship, sometimes used to denote human inbreeding. Mating of closely related persons can cause significant genetic disease in offspring. Everyone carries rare recessive genes that, in the company of other genes of the same type, are capable of causing autosomal recessive diseases. First cousins share a set of grandparents, so for any particular gene in one of them, the chance that the other inherited the same allele from the same source is one in eight. For this reason, marriage between first cousins (not to mention closer relatives) is generally discouraged, and in many areas of the world is illegal. Mating between

more distant relatives carries lesser risks. In families where a recessive genetic disorder is known or suspected to be present, genetic testing and counseling are advised, even if the level of consanguinity is very low (as, for example, in marriages between third or fourth cousins).

constipation Infrequent and frequently incomplete bowel movements. Constipation is the opposite of diarrhea and is commonly caused by irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), diverticulosis, and medications. Paradoxically, constipation can also be caused by overuse of laxatives. Colon cancer can also narrow the colon and thereby cause constipation. A high-fiber diet can frequently relieve constipation. If the diet is not helpful, medical evaluation is warranted.

continuing medical education See *CME*.

continuous positive airway pressure A treatment for sleep apnea that involves wearing over the face a breathing mask that forces air through the nasal passages at a steady rate, preventing the airway from collapsing during sleep. Abbreviated CPAP. See also *sleep apnea*.

contraceptive Something capable of preventing conception from taking place. See also *barrier method; birth control; cervical cap; condom; condom, female; condom, male; contraceptive; emergency; contraceptive, implanted; Depo-Provera; diaphragm; intrauterine device; oral contraceptive*.

contraceptive, emergency An oral contraceptive that can be taken after unprotected intercourse. For example, emergency contraceptives may be given to victims of rape as part of aftercare procedures. Also known as the morning-after pill.

contraceptive, implanted A time-release contraceptive that is surgically implanted under the skin.

contraceptive device, intrauterine See *intrauterine device*.

contraction The tightening and shortening of a muscle.

contraction, uterine The tightening and shortening of the uterine muscles. During labor, contractions cause the cervix to thin and dilate, and they aid the baby in its entry into the birth canal and then its progress through the birth canal.

contraindicate To make a treatment or procedure inadvisable because of a particular condition

or circumstance. For example, certain medications are contraindicated during pregnancy because of the danger they pose to the fetus, and the use of aspirin is contraindicated in small children because of the danger of Reye's syndrome.

contraindication A condition which makes a particular treatment or procedure inadvisable.

contralateral Of or pertaining to the other side. The opposite of ipsilateral (the same side). For example, a stroke involving the right side of the brain may cause contralateral paralysis of the left leg.

control In research, the group of participants that does not receive the treatment under investigation. The control group may be given a placebo treatment or receive a treatment with known results to permit comparison with the results of the experiment. In lab research that does not use live participants (*in vitro* research rather than *in vivo* research), control procedures serve the same purpose as a control group.

controlled substance A drug or chemical that is regulated by the government. This regulation applies to manufacture, possession, and usage.

contusion See *bruise*.

conventional medicine Medicine as practiced by holders of MD or DO degrees and by their allied health professionals, such as physical therapists, psychologists, and registered nurses. Also known as *allopathy*. See also *allopathy*.

copayment A payment made by an individual who has health insurance, usually at the time a service is received, to offset some of the cost of care. Copayments are a common feature of HMO (health maintenance organization) and PPO (preferred provider organization) health plans in the US. Copayment size may vary depending on the service; generally, low copayments are required for visits to a regular medical provider and higher copayments are required for services received in an emergency room, the latter intended to discourage insured persons from using the emergency room unless it is absolutely necessary. Also known as coinsurance.

COPD Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. See *chronic obstructive lung disease*.

coprolalia The involuntary uttering of obscene, derogatory, or embarrassing words or phrases. Coprolalia is a symptom of Tourette's syndrome, a tic disorder. Like other tics, coprolalia tends to appear and disappear, and it responds to medication. See also *tic; tic disorder; Tourette's syndrome*.

cord, vocal See *vocal cord*.

corn A small callused area of skin caused by local pressure that irritates tissue over a bony prominence. Although the surface area of a corn may be small, the area of hardening actually extends into the deeper layers of skin and flesh. The inside projection of the corn is what causes discomfort. Corns most commonly occur over a toe, where they form what is referred to as hard corns. Between the toes, pressure can form a soft corn of macerated skin, which often yellows. Corns can be softened by soaking them in hot water, with or without softening agents that are available over the counter or by prescription. In some cases, minor outpatient surgery may be used to remove excess corn tissue. A corn on the toe is also called a clavus.

cornea The clear front window of the eye, which transmits and focuses light into the eye. The cornea is more than a protective film; it is a fairly complex structure that has five layers.

cornea, conical See *keratoconus*.

corneal abrasion A scratch or scrape on the cornea, the clear front window of the eye that transmits and focuses light into the eye. Corneal abrasion can also be caused by excessive dryness to the eye. The cornea can become infected and painful as a result of the abrasion. See also *cornea*.

corneal dystrophy A condition in which one or more parts of the cornea lose their normal clarity due to a buildup of cloudy material. There are over 20 corneal dystrophies that affect all parts of the cornea.

corneal dystrophy, Cogan See *Cogan corneal dystrophy*.

corneal ring, intrastromal A plastic ring designed to be implanted in the cornea in order to flatten the cornea and thereby correct, or reduce the degree of, nearsightedness (myopia). The ring is placed in the corneal stroma, the middle of the five layers of the cornea.

coronal plane A vertical two-dimensional imaginary slice through the body from head to foot and parallel to the shoulders.

coronary artery A vessel that supplies the heart muscle (myocardium) with blood that is rich in oxygen. The coronary arteries encircle the heart in the manner of a crown (in Latin, corona means "crown"). Like other arteries, the coronary arteries may be subject to arteriosclerosis (hardening of the arteries). See also *artery*.

coronary artery bypass graft See *bypass, coronary*.

coronary artery disease Impediment or blockage of one or more arteries that supply blood to the heart, usually due to atherosclerosis (hardening of the arteries). Abbreviated CAD. A major cause of illness and death, CAD begins when hard cholesterol substances (plaques) are deposited within a coronary artery. The plaques in the coronary arteries can lead to the formation of tiny clots that can obstruct the flow of blood to the heart muscle, producing symptoms and signs of CAD, including chest pain (angina pectoris), heart attack (myocardial infarction), and sudden death. Treatment for CAD includes bypass surgery, balloon angioplasty, and the use of stents.

coronary artery spasm A sudden constriction of a coronary artery that deprives the heart muscle of blood and oxygen. This can cause a type of sudden chest pain referred to as variant angina or Prinzmetal angina. Coronary artery spasm can be triggered by emotional stress, medicines, street drugs (particularly cocaine), and exposure to extreme cold. Treatments include the use of beta-blocker medications and, classically, nitroglycerin to allow the coronary arteries to open.

coronary occlusion Blockage of a coronary artery, which can cause a heart attack. See also *acute myocardial infarction*.

coronavirus One of a group of viruses, so named because they look like a corona or halo when viewed under the electron microscope. Coronaviruses are the second leading cause of the common cold (after the rhinoviruses). A new coronavirus was discovered to be responsible for severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS). See also *severe acute respiratory syndrome*.

corpora cavernosa Two chambers that run the length of the penis and are filled with spongy tissue. Blood flows in and fills the open spaces in this spongy tissue to create an erection.

corporeal Pertaining to the body of an organ or the entire body.

corpse A dead body. The term corpse is more often used in mystery stories than in medicine, which prefers the term *cadaver*.

corpus The body of the uterus.

Corrigan pulse A pulse that is forceful and then suddenly collapses. It is usually found in patients with aortic regurgitation, a condition caused by a

leaky aortic valve. The left ventricle of the heart ejects blood under high pressure into the aorta. Then the aortic valve normally shuts tight so that blood cannot return to the ventricle. If, however, the aortic valve cannot close completely, the blood in the aorta comes sloshing back into the ventricle, and the pressure and the pulse collapse. Also known as water-hammer pulse.

cortex The outer layer of any organ.

cortex, cerebral The gray outer portion of the largest part of the brain, the cerebrum. Because it has thousands of complex folds, the cerebral cortex has a much larger surface area than one might think. Specific areas of the cerebral cortex govern sensory perception, voluntary response to stimuli, thought, memory, and the unique human capability of consciousness. The white matter of the brain lies within the cerebral cortex, and it carries instructions arising within the cortex to all other parts of the brain and body through an intricate network of nerve fibers.

cortical Having to do with the cortex, the outer layer of an organ.

cortical desmoid tumor See *desmoids tumor, cortical*.

corticosteroid Any of the steroid hormones made by the outer portion (cortex) of the adrenal gland. There are two sets of these hormones: the glucocorticoids, which are produced in reaction to stress and also help in the metabolism of fats, carbohydrates, and proteins; and the mineralocorticoids, which regulate the balance of salt and water within the body.

cortisol A metabolite of the primary stress hormone cortisone. Cortisol is an essential factor in the proper metabolism of starches, and it is the major natural glucocorticoid (GC) in humans.

cortisone A naturally occurring adrenocorticoid hormone that is produced in minute amounts by the adrenal gland. Synthetic cortisone is also available; it is metabolized by the body into cortisol. Uses for synthetic oral, intramuscular, and intravenous cortisone medications include treatment of adrenocortical deficiency and treatment of conditions associated with inflammation. A popular topical form is known as hydrocortisone cream.

coryza A head cold that includes a runny nose.

cosmetic surgeon See *plastic surgeon*.

costal margin The lower edge of the chest (thorax), formed by the bottom edge of the rib cage.

costochondritis Inflammation and swelling of the cartilage of the chest wall, usually involving the cartilage that surrounds the breastbone (sternum) but sometimes including the adjacent tip of a rib. Costochondritis causes local pain and tenderness of the chest around the sternum. Treatment options include anti-inflammatory medications and, in severe cases, corticosteroid injections. Also known as Tietze syndrome.

cough A rapid expulsion of air from the lungs, typically in order to clear the lung airways of fluids, mucus, or other material. Also known as tussis.

cough suppressant A drug used to control coughing, particularly with a dry, nagging, unproductive cough.

coughing syncope See *syncope, coughing*.

Coumadin See *warfarin*.

counseling The therapeutic practice of using discussion to help patients understand and better cope with life's problems or health issues. Areas in which counseling may be used in medicine include nutrition, genetic counseling, and family counseling (particularly to help the family cope with a member's illness or death). Counselors may also see individuals or married couples, or they may work with students in a school setting.

counseling, genetic See *genetic counseling*.

counselor A person who practices counseling. Depending on state laws, counselors may or may not be required to hold particular licenses. Credentials used by counselors include MFC (marriage and family counselor) and LMFC (licensed marriage and family counselor). Genetic counselors are certified by the American Board of Medical Genetics and the American Board of Genetic Counseling.

cousin marriage See *consanguinity*.

Cowper's gland See *bulbourethral gland*.

cowpox A mild skin disease of milk cows, principally confined to the udder and teats, that can be contracted by people from milking an infected cow. Affected people develop vesicles (blebs), which break and form ulcers on the fingers (sometimes called "milkers' nodules"). These usually heal without scarring.

cox-1 Cyclooxygenase-1, an enzyme that acts to speed up the production of certain chemical messengers, called prostaglandins, in a variety of areas of the body such as the stomach, kidneys, and sites

of inflammation. In the stomach, prostaglandins promote the production of a protective natural mucus lining. They also interact within certain cells that are responsible for inflammation and other functions.

cox-2 Cyclooxygenase-2, an enzyme that acts to speed up the production of certain chemical messengers, called prostaglandins that play a key role in promoting inflammation. When cox-2 activity is blocked, inflammation is reduced. Unlike cox-1, cox-2 is active only at the site of inflammation, not in the stomach.

cox-2 inhibitor An antiinflammatory drug that selectively blocks the cox-2 enzyme. Blocking this enzyme impedes the production of the chemical messengers that cause the pain and swelling of arthritis inflammation. Cox-2 inhibitors do not pose as great a risk of injuring the stomach or intestines as drugs that block cox-1. An example of a cox-2 inhibitor is celecoxib (brand name: Celebrex).

Coxsackievirus A family of enteroviruses first found in the town Coxsackie, south of Albany, New York. The Coxsackieviruses are separable into two groups: A and B. Type A viruses cause herpangina (sores in the throat) and hand, foot, and mouth disease. Type B viruses cause epidemic pleurodynia. Both types A and B viruses can cause meningitis, myocarditis, and pericarditis, as well as diabetes in children.

CPAP Continuous positive airway pressure. See also *sleep apnea*.

CPR Cardiopulmonary resuscitation.

crabs Slang for pubic lice, parasitic insects that can infest in the genital area of humans. Pubic lice are usually spread through sexual contact. Rarely, infestation can be spread through contact with an infested person's bed linens, towels, or clothes. The key symptom of pubic lice is itching in the genital area. Lice eggs (nits) or crawling lice can be seen with the naked eye.

cracked-tooth syndrome A toothache caused by a broken tooth (tooth fracture), without associated caries (cavities) or advanced gum disease. Biting on the area of tooth fracture can cause severe, sharp pains. Tooth fractures are usually caused by chewing or biting hard objects, such as hard candies, pencils, nuts, or ice. Treatment usually involves protecting the tooth with a crown. However, if placing a crown does not relieve pain symptoms, root canal surgery may be necessary.

cradle cap A form of seborrheic dermatitis of the scalp that is usually seen in infants but sometimes found in older children. It is characterized by flaking or scaling of the skin, which may also be reddened.

cramp, writer's A dystonia that affects the muscles of the hand and sometimes the forearm and that only occurs during handwriting. Similar focal dystonias have been called typist's cramp, pianist's cramp, musician's cramp, and golfer's cramp.

cranial Toward (the opposite of caudad) or of the head. See also Appendix B, "Anatomic Orientation Terms."

cranial arteritis See *arteritis, cranial*.

cranial dystonia See *dystonia, cranial*.

cranial nerves The nerves of the brain, which emerge from or enter the skull (the cranium), as opposed to the spinal nerves, which emerge from the vertebral column. There are 12 cranial nerves, each of which is accorded a Roman numeral and a name:

- Cranial nerve I: the olfactory nerve
- Cranial nerve II: the optic nerve
- Cranial nerve III: the oculomotor nerve
- Cranial nerve IV: the trochlear nerve
- Cranial nerve V: the trigeminal nerve
- Cranial nerve VI: the abducent nerve
- Cranial nerve VII: the facial nerve
- Cranial nerve VIII: the vestibulocochlear nerve
- Cranial nerve IX: the glossopharyngeal nerve
- Cranial nerve X: the vagus nerve
- Cranial nerve XI: the accessory nerve
- Cranial nerve XII: the hypoglossal nerve

craniocleidodysostosis See *cleidocranial dysostosis*.

craniofacial disorder A disorder that affects the structure of the skull and face.

craniopharyngioma A benign brain tumor that develops from embryonic tissue that forms part of the pituitary gland. Pressure on the pituitary gland by the tumor reduces the availability of the hormone vasopressin, raising the pressure within the cranium. A craniopharyngioma usually includes hard, calcified components within the tumor itself and affects the development of the adjacent skull. Treatment is usually surgery.

craniosacral therapy An alternative therapy in which practitioners attempt to create positive effects by manipulating the bones of the skull and spine, as well as the fascia that underlies muscle tissue. There is little scientific evidence at this time for the value of craniosacral therapy.

craniosynostosis Premature fusion of the sutures between the growth plates in an infant's skull that prevents normal skull expansion. Craniosynostosis can cause an abnormally shaped skull. Premature closure of all the sutures can cause microcephaly (an abnormally small head), which prevents the normal growth of the brain and results in mental retardation. Treatment usually involves surgery.

craniotomy A surgical operation in which an opening is made in the skull.

cranium The top portion of the skull, which protects the brain. The cranium includes the frontal, parietal, occipital, temporal, sphenoid, and ethmoid bones.

C-reactive protein An acute-phase plasma protein whose blood concentration reflects the presence and intensity of inflammation. Abbreviated CRP. Conditions that commonly lead to marked increases in CRP include infection, trauma, surgery, burns, inflammatory conditions, and advanced cancer. Moderate changes occur after strenuous exercise, heatstroke, and childbirth. Small changes occur after psychological stress and in several psychiatric illnesses. Elevated levels of CRP are associated with atherosclerosis and heart disease.

cream A water-soluble medicinal preparation applied to the skin. An ointment differs from a cream in that it has an oil base, as opposed to being water-soluble.

crepitus A clinical sign in medicine that is characterized by a peculiar crackling, crinkly, or grating feeling or sound under the skin, around the lungs, or in the joints. Crepitus in soft tissues is often due to gas, most often air, that has penetrated and infiltrated an area where it should not normally be (for example, in the soft tissues beneath the skin). Crepitus in a joint can indicate cartilage wear in the joint space.

CREST syndrome A limited form of scleroderma, a disease of connective tissue that involves the formation of scar tissue (fibrosis) in the skin and sometimes also in other organs of the body. "CREST" is an acronym for Calcinosis (the formation of tiny deposits of calcium in the skin), Raynaud's phenomenon (spasm of the tiny artery

vessels that supply blood to the fingers, toes, nose, tongue, or ears), Esophageal dysmotility (esophageal involvement by the scleroderma), Sclerodactyly (localized thickening and tightness of the skin of the fingers or toes), and Telangiectasias (dilated capillaries that form tiny red areas, frequently on the face and hands and in the mouth, behind the lips).

cretinism Congenital hypothyroidism (underactivity of the thyroid gland at birth), which results in growth retardation, developmental delay, and other abnormal features. Cretinism can be due to deficiency of iodine in the mother's diet during pregnancy.

Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease A degenerative disease of the brain that causes dementia and, eventually, death. It is believed to be caused by an unconventional microbe called a prion, rather than by bacteria or a virus. Abbreviated CJD. Symptoms of CJD include forgetfulness, nervousness, trembling hand movements, unsteady gait, muscle spasms, chronic dementia, balance disorder, and loss of facial expression. CJD is classified as a spongiform encephalopathy, and it has some relationship to animal diseases in that category, most notably bovine spongiform encephalopathy (mad cow disease). There is neither treatment nor cure for CJD. Also known as Creutzfeldt-Jakob syndrome, Jakob-Creutzfeldt disease, and spastic pseudoparalysis.

crib death See SIDS.

crippled A medically outmoded and politically incorrect term that implies a serious loss of normal function through damage or loss of an essential body part or element. The term has been replaced by handicapped.

critical care The specialized care of patients whose conditions are life-threatening and who require comprehensive care and constant monitoring, usually in intensive care units. Also known as intensive care.

Crohn's colitis Crohn's disease involving only the large intestine (colon). See also *Crohn's disease*.

Crohn's disease A chronic inflammatory bowel disease that primarily involves the small and/or large intestine. Crohn's disease can be a chronic, recurrent condition, or it can cause minimal symptoms. In mild forms, Crohn's disease causes scattered, shallow, ulcers in the inner surface of the bowel. In more serious cases, deeper and larger ulcers can develop, causing scarring, stiffness, and

possibly narrowing of the bowel, sometimes leading to obstruction. Deep ulcers can puncture holes in the bowel wall, leading to infection in the abdominal cavity (peritonitis) and in adjacent organs. Abdominal pain, diarrhea, vomiting, fever, and weight loss can be symptoms. Diagnosis is commonly made by X-ray or colonoscopy. Treatments include medications that reduce inflammation, suppress the immune system, and antibiotics. Dietary changes can reduce symptoms. When severe, surgery can be necessary. Also known as regional enteritis. See also *Crohn's enteritis*; *Crohn's enterocolitis*; *Crohn's ileitis*; *Crohn's ileocolitis*.

Crohn's enteritis Crohn's disease involving only the small intestine. See also *Crohn's disease*.

Crohn's enterocolitis Crohn's disease involving both the small and large intestines. See also *Crohn's disease*.

Crohn's ileitis Inflammation of the ileum (the lowest part of the small intestine) due to Crohn's disease. See also *Crohn's disease*.

Crohn's ileocolitis Crohn's disease involving the ileum (the lowest portion of the small intestine) and the colon (the large intestine). See also *Crohn's disease*.

cross-section In anatomy, a transverse cut through a structure or tissue. The opposite is longitudinal section.

cross-sectional study A research study done at one time, not over the course of time. A cross-sectional study might be a study of a disease such as AIDS at one point in time, to learn its prevalence and distribution within the population. Also known as a synchronic study.

cross-training Doing two or more aerobic activities, such as jogging, bicycling, and swimming, on a regular basis.

crossed embolism See embolism, paradoxical.

crossing over Exchanging genetic material between two paired chromosomes. Crossing over is a way to recombine the genetic material so that each person (except for identical twins) is genetically unique.

crossover study A type of clinical trial in which the study participants receive each treatment in a random order. With this type of study, every patient serves as his or her own control. Crossover studies are often used when researchers feel it would be difficult to recruit participants willing to risk going without a promising new treatment.

croup An infection of the larynx, trachea, and bronchial tubes that occurs mainly in children. It is usually caused by viruses but sometimes by bacteria. Symptoms include a cough that sounds like a seal's bark and a harsh crowing sound during inhalation. A low-grade fever is common. A major concern with croup is difficulty breathing as the air passages narrow. Treatment may include administration of moist air (as from a humidifier), saltwater nose drops, decongestants and cough suppressants, pain medication, fluids, and, if the infection is bacterial, antibiotics. The breathing of a child with croup should be closely monitored, especially at night, when croup usually gets worse due to prone body position while sleeping. Although most children recover from croup without hospitalization, some may develop life-threatening breathing difficulties. Therefore, close contact with a physician during croup is especially important.

Crouzon syndrome A hereditary craniofacial disorder characterized by craniostenosis, small eye sockets that cause the eyes to protrude, a large jaw, and a beaked nose with narrowed breathing passages. Some people with Crouzon syndrome also have sleep apnea, hearing loss, and other difficulties. Treatment involves surgery to correct the craniofacial malformations. Also known as craniofacial dysostosis. See also *craniostenosis*.

CRP C-reactive protein.

cruciate Cross-shaped.

cruciate ligament A ligament, such as the ligaments in the knee, that crosses other ligaments. See also *anterior cruciate ligament*; *posterior cruciate ligament*.

cruciate ligament, anterior See *anterior cruciate ligament*.

cruciate ligament, posterior See *posterior cruciate ligament*.

cryocardioplegia Cold-induced cardioplegia. See also *cardioplegia*.

cryoglobulinemia The presence in blood of abnormal proteins called cryoglobulins that have the unusual property of precipitating from the blood serum when it is chilled and redissolving upon rewarming. Cryoglobulins can increase the risk of blood clots forming in the brain (stroke), eyes, and heart. Cryoglobulins can also cause inflammation of blood vessels (vasculitis), which increases the risk of artery blockage. Cryoglobulinemia can also accompany another disease, such as multiple myeloma, dermatomyositis, or lymphoma.

Sometimes, small amounts of cryoglobulins are detected in blood samples from people who have no apparent symptoms.

cryopreservation The process of cooling and storing cells, tissues, or organs at very low temperatures to maintain their viability. For example, the technology of cooling and storing cells at a temperature below the freezing point (-196°C) permits high rates of survivability of the cells upon thawing.

cryoprotectant A chemical component of a freezing solution used in cryopreservation to help protect what is being frozen from freeze damage. The chemical glycerol, for example, is commonly used as a cryoprotectant to protect frozen red blood cells.

cryosurgery Treatment performed with an instrument that freezes and destroys abnormal tissue.

crypt In anatomy, variously a blind alley, a tube with no exit, a depression, or a pit in an otherwise fairly flat surface. For example, the tonsillar crypts are little pitlike depressions in the tonsils.

cryptorchidism A condition in which one or both testicles fail to move from the abdomen, where they develop before birth, down into the scrotum. Boys who have had cryptorchidism that was not corrected in early childhood are at increased risk for developing cancer of the testicles. Also known as undescended testicles.

C-section See *caesarean section*.

CSF 1 Cerebrospinal fluid. 2 Colony-stimulating factor.

CT scan See *CAT scan*.

CTL Cytotoxic T lymphocytes. See *T lymphocyte, cytotoxic*.

CTS Carpal tunnel syndrome.

cuboid bone The cube-shaped outer bone in the instep of the foot. The cuboid bone has a joint in back that allows it to articulate posteriorly with the calcaneus (the heel bone). It also has a joint in the front that permits it to articulate anteriorly with the fourth and fifth metatarsals (the bones just behind the fourth and fifth toes).

cul-de-sac In anatomy, a blind pouch or cavity that is closed at one end. The term cul-de-sac is used specifically to refer to the rectouterine pouch (the pouch of Douglas), an extension of the peritoneal cavity between the rectum and back wall of the uterus.

culdocentesis The puncture and aspiration (withdrawal) of fluid from the rectouterine pouch (the pouch of Douglas), an extension of the peritoneal cavity between the rectum and back wall of the uterus.

culdoscope The viewing tube (endoscope) introduced through the end of the vagina into the rectouterine pouch (the pouch of Douglas), an extension of the peritoneal cavity between the rectum and back wall of the uterus, in a culdoscopy.

culdoscopy The introduction of a viewing tube (called an endoscope or culdoscope) through the end of the vagina into the rectouterine pouch (the pouch of Douglas), an extension of the peritoneal cavity between the rectum and back wall of the uterus.

cultural evolution Social change mediated by ideas. Cultural evolution shows a rapid rate of change, is usually purposeful and often beneficial, is widely disseminated by diverse means, is frequently transmitted in complex ways, and is enriched by the frequent formation of new ideas and new technologies. Cultural evolution is unique to humans among all forms of life. See also *biologic evolution*.

culture In microbiology, the propagation of microorganisms in a growth medium. Any body tissue or fluid can be evaluated in the laboratory by using culture techniques to detect and identify infectious processes. Culture techniques can be used to determine sensitivity to antibiotics. Cells may also be grown in culture.

curettage Removal of tissue with a curette from the wall of a cavity or another surface. For example, curettage may be done to remove skin cancer. After a local anesthetic numbs the area, the skin cancer is scooped out with a curette. Curettage may also be done in the uterus; dilation and curettage (D&C) refers to the dilation (widening) of the cervical canal to permit curettage of the endometrium, the inner lining of the uterus.

curette spoon-shaped instrument that has a sharp edge. The word curette comes from French and means "scraper." Also spelled curet.

Curie A unit of radioactivity. Specifically, a Curie is the quantity of any radioactive nuclide in which the number of disintegrations per second is 3.7×10 to the 10th power.

Cushingoid Having the constellation of symptoms and signs seen in Cushing's syndrome, caused by an excess of cortisol hormone, particularly facial puffiness and unexplained weight gain. For example, a

Cushingoid appearance can result from the extended use of cortisone medications, such as prednisone and prednisolone. See also *Cushing's syndrome*.

Cushing's syndrome A constellation of symptoms and signs caused by an excess of cortisol hormone. Cushing's syndrome is a hormonal condition that affects many areas of the body. Common symptoms are thinning of the skin; weakness; weight gain; bruising; hypertension; diabetes; thin, weak bones (osteoporosis); facial puffiness; and, in women, cessation of menstrual periods. One of the most common causes of Cushing's syndrome is the administration of cortisol-like medications for the treatment of diverse diseases. All other cases of Cushing's syndrome are due to the excess production of cortisol by the adrenal gland.

cusp 1 In reference to a heart valve, a triangular segment of the valve, which opens and closes with the flow of blood. 2 In reference to teeth, a raised area of the biting surface.

cut An area of severed skin. It is important to wash a cut with soap and water, and keep it clean and dry, but avoid putting alcohol, hydrogen peroxide, or iodine into a cut, which can delay healing. Delay in getting medical care can increase the rate of wound infection. If a cut results from a puncture wound through a shoe, there is a high risk of infection. Redness, swelling, increased pain, and pus draining from the wound also indicate an infection that requires professional care.

cutaneous Related to the skin.

cutaneous papilloma See *skin tag*.

cutaneous syndactyly See *syndactyly, cutaneous*.

cutis anserina See *goose bumps*.

CVS Chorionic villus sampling.

cyanosis A bluish color of the skin and the mucous membranes due to insufficient oxygen in the blood. For example, the lips can develop cyanosis when exposed to extreme cold. Cyanosis can be present at birth, as in a "blue baby," an infant with a malformation of the heart that permits into the arterial system blood that is not fully oxygenated.

cyanotic Characterized by cyanosis. See also *cyanosis*.

cycle, cell See *cell cycle*.

cycle, menstrual The monthly progression of changes in the endometrium (the lining of the

uterus), which includes the shedding of part of the endometrium and menstruation (monthly vaginal bleeding). This cycle is governed by a complex sequence of hormones that influence fertility and may affect mood and a variety of physical functions. By convention, the menstrual cycle is considered to begin on the first day of menstrual bleeding. See also *menstruation*.

cyclooxygenase-1 See *cox-1*.

cyclooxygenase-2 See *cox-2*.

cyclooxygenase-2 inhibitor See *cox-2 inhibitor*.

cyclophosphamide A medication (brand name: Cytoxan) that is prescribed primarily to suppress the immune system and kill growing cells in people with autoimmune disorders and certain types of cancer respectively.

cyclosporine An immunosuppressing medication (brand names: Neoral, Sandimmune) that is prescribed chiefly for organ transplant recipients and people with autoimmune disorders.

cyclothymia A form of bipolar disorder in which the mood swings are less severe than manic depression. See also *bipolar disorder*.

cyst A closed sac or capsule, usually filled with fluid or semisolid material.

cyst, Baker See *Baker cyst*.

cyst, Meibomian An inflammation of the oil gland of the eyelid. Also known as chalazion or tarsal cyst.

cyst, ovarian A fluid-filled sac in the ovary. The most common type of ovarian cyst is a follicular cyst. Other cysts can contain blood; they are called hemorrhagic or endometrioid cysts. Still other types of ovarian cysts are called dermoid cysts, or ovarian teratomas. These bizarre but usually benign tumors can contain many different body tissues, such as hair, teeth, bone, or cartilage. Most ovarian cysts are never noticed. When a cyst causes symptoms, pain is by far the most common feature. Pain from an ovarian cyst can be caused by rupture of the cyst, rapid growth of the cyst, and spontaneous bleeding into the cyst, or the cyst twisting around its blood supply. Diagnosis is usually made with ultrasound imaging. Treatment of ovarian cysts depends on the woman's age, the size and type of the cyst, and the cyst's appearance on ultrasound. If a cyst is causing severe pain, is not resolving, or is suspicious in any way, it can be removed through laparoscopy or, if necessary, through an open laparotomy (bikini

incision). See also *cyst of the ovary, follicular; ovarian teratoma*.

cyst, pilonidal An abscess that occurs in the cleft between the buttocks. Pilonidal cysts form frequently in adolescence after long trips that involve sitting, and they may be painful. Treatment frequently involves surgery if not responsive to heat applications and antibiotics.

cyst, sebaceous A rounded, swollen area of the skin formed by an abnormal sac of retained oily excretion (sebum) from the sebaceous glands. See also *gland, sebaceous*.

cyst, synovial, of the popliteal space See *Baker cyst*.

cyst, tarsal See *cyst, Meibomian*.

cyst, thyroglossal A fluid-filled sac that is present at birth and located in the midline of the neck. A thyroglossal cyst is a congenital malformation (a birth defect). It results from incomplete closure of a segment of the thyroglossal duct, a tube-like structure that normally closes as the embryo develops. Also called a thyroglossal duct cyst or a thyrolingual cyst.

cyst, thyrolingual See *cyst, thyroglossal*.

cyst of the ovary, follicular A fluid-filled sac in the ovary. A follicular cyst is the most common type of ovarian cyst. It results from the overgrowth of a follicle, the fluid-filled cyst that contains an egg, that does not rupture to release the egg. Normally ovarian cysts resolve with no intervention over the course of days to months. See also *cyst, ovarian*.

cystectomy Surgery to remove the bladder.

cystic acne A localized infection (abscess) that is formed when oil ducts become clogged and infected. Cystic acne is most common in the teenage years. Treatment includes avoiding irritants on the face, including many cleansers and cosmetics, and in some severe cases, use of steroid or antibiotic medication. Cystic acne can cause permanent scarring in severe cases and in those who are prone to forming keloids. See also *acne vulgaris*.

cystic fibrosis A common grave genetic disease that affects the exocrine glands and is characterized by the production of abnormal secretions, leading to mucus buildup that impairs the pancreas and, secondarily, the intestine. Mucus buildup in lungs can impair respiration. Abbreviated CF. Without treatment, CF results in death for 95 percent of affected children before age 5; however, a few long-lived CF patients have survived past age 60. Early

diagnosis is of great importance. Treatment includes physical therapy to loosen the mucus in the lungs and use of pancreatic enzymes and medications to fight dangerous infections of the lungs. One in 400 couples is at risk for having children with CF. CF is a recessive trait, so the chance of an at-risk couple having a child with CF is 25 percent with each pregnancy. CF is caused by mutations in the CFTR (cystic fibrosis conductance regulator) gene, which is located on chromosome 7.

cysticercosis An infection caused by the pork tapeworm, *Taenia solium*. Infection occurs when the tapeworm larvae enter the body and form cysts called cysticerci. When cysticerci are found in the brain, the condition is called neurocysticercosis. Cysticercosis is contracted by accidentally swallowing pork tapeworm eggs. Tapeworm eggs are passed in the bowel movement of a person who is infected. When the tapeworm eggs are inside the stomach, they hatch, penetrate the intestine, travel through the bloodstream, and may develop into cysticerci in the muscles, brain, or eyes. Infection is found most often in rural, developing countries where hygiene is poor and pigs are allowed to roam freely and eat human feces. Cysticercosis is not spread from person to person. However, a person who is infected with the intestinal tapeworm stage of the infection (*T. solium*) sheds tapeworm eggs in bowel movements. Tapeworm eggs that are accidentally swallowed by another person can cause infection.

cystine An amino acid that is particularly notable because it is the least soluble of all naturally occurring amino acids and because it precipitates out of solution in the heritable disease cystinuria. Cystine tends to precipitate out of urine and form stones (calculi) in the urinary tract, which can obstruct the flow of urine. See also *cystinuria*.

cystine kidney stones Kidney stones formed due to an excess of cystine in the urine. Small stones are passed in the urine, but big stones remain in the kidney, impairing the outflow of urine. Medium-size stones can make their way from the kidney into the ureter and lodge there, further blocking the flow of urine. See also *cystinuria*.

cystine transport disease See *cystinuria*.

cystinuria A genetic disorder that affects the transport of an amino acid called cystine and results in an excess of cystine in the urine and the formation of cystine kidney stones. Cystinuria is the most common defect in the transport of amino acids. Signs and symptoms of cystinuria include blood in the urine (hematuria); pain in the side due to kidney pain; intense, cramping pain due to stones in the urinary tract (renal colic); urinary tract disease

due to obstruction (obstructive uropathy); and urinary tract infections. There are several genetic types of cystinuria. See also *cystine kidney stones*.

cystitis Inflammation of the bladder. See also *bladder inflammation*.

cystitis, interstitial Chronic inflammation or irritation of the bladder wall of unknown cause. This inflammation can lead to scarring and stiffening of the bladder, and even to ulcerations and bleeding. Diagnosis is based on symptoms, findings from cystoscopy and biopsy, and elimination of other treatable causes, such as infection, as suspects. Treatment is aimed at relieving symptoms. Abbreviated IC.

cystocele Bulging of the bladder into the vagina.

cystoscope A lighted optical instrument that is inserted through the urethra into the bladder. A cystoscope has two ports: an optical port that permits one to see inside the bladder and a port for insertion of various instruments designed for biopsy, treatment of small bladder tumors, removal of stones from the bladder, and removal of the prostate.

cystoscopy A procedure in which a lighted optical instrument called a cystoscope is inserted through the urethra to look at the bladder.

cytogenetics The study of chromosomes, which are the visible carriers of the hereditary material. Cytogenetics is a fusion science, joining cytology (the study of cells) with genetics (the study of inherited variation).

cytogenetics, clinical See *clinical cytogenetics*.

cytomegalovirus A DNA-containing virus from the herpes virus family. Infection with human cytomegalovirus can also cause viral hepatitis and viral pneumonia. Also known as human herpes virus 5 (HHV-5). Abbreviated CMV. See also *mononucleosis*.

cytometry, flow See *flow cytometry*.

cytoplasm The substance of a cell that lies outside the nucleus.

cytosine A fundamental gene particle of the G-C (guanine-cytosine) pair of bases in DNA.

cytotoxic T lymphocyte See *T lymphocyte, cytotoxic*.

Cytoxan See *cyclophosphamide*.

Dd

D & C Dilatation and curettage. See also *abortion*.

da Vinci, Leonardo The father of anatomic art, as well as an accomplished architect, scientist, engineer, inventor, poet, sculptor, and painter. In striking contrast to the pronouncements of Galen and other anatomists, da Vinci recognized that optimal scientific knowledge of human anatomy could be gained only by dissecting the human body. He injected the blood vessels and cerebral ventricles with wax for preservation, a technique that is still used today. His drawings of the human anatomy have long been considered to be unrivaled.

dacryocyst The lacrimal sac; tear sac. The dilated (widened) upper end of the nasolacrimal duct, the passageway that allows tears to drain into the nasal cavity.

dactyl-, -dactyl Prefix or suffix denoting the digits (fingers or toes), as in dactylitis (inflammation of a finger or toe).

dactyledema Swelling of a finger or toe.

dactylitis Inflammation of a finger or toe.

dactylomegaly Enlargement of a finger or toe.

dactylospasm A cramp of a finger or toe.

Daily Prayer of a Physician A prayer that is said to have been written by the twelfth-century physician-philosopher Moses Maimonides, but possibly penned by German physician Marcus Herz. This prayer is often recited by new medical graduates.

Daltonism See *red-green colorblindness*.

dander Tiny scales shed from human or animal skin or hair. Dander floats in the air, settles on surfaces, and makes up a good portion of household dust. Cat dander is a common cause of allergic reactions.

dandruff A scalp condition that produces white flakes that may be shed and fall from the hair. One cause of dandruff is overworking of the sebaceous

glands. Another cause of dandruff is fungus, especially an abundance of the fungus *Pitrosporum ovale*. If several weeks of using a good-quality shampoo does not stop the dandruff, treatment options include an antifungal shampoo such as Denorex, DHS Targel, ionil-T plus, MG217, Neutrogena T/Gel, Scalpicin, Sebulex, Selsun Blue, Tegrin, or Zircon. The active ingredients approved for dandruff treatment by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) include tar, pyrithione zinc, salicylic acid, selenium sulfide, sulfur, and ketoconazole.

dandy fever See *dengue fever*.

Danlos syndrome See *Ehlers-Danlos syndrome*.

Darier disease See *keratosis follicularis*.

DASH diet An eating plan designed to lower the blood pressure. DASH is an acronym for Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension. The DASH "combination diet" has been shown to decrease the blood pressure, and so helps to prevent and control high blood pressure. The DASH "combination diet" is rich in fruits, vegetables, and low fat dairy foods. It is low in saturated and total fat and cholesterol, while high in dietary fiber, potassium, calcium, and magnesium, and somewhat high in protein.

daw Abbreviation meaning "dispense as written."

day sight See *nyctanopia*.

DDH Developmental dysplasia of the hip. See *congenital hip dislocation*.

DDX See *differential diagnosis*.

De Quervain's tenosynovitis Inflammation of tendons on the side of the wrist at the base of the thumb. These tendons include the extensor pollicis brevis and the abductor pollicis longus tendons. De Quervain's tenosynovitis is typically associated with pain when the thumb is folded across the palm and the fingers are flexed over the thumb as the hand is pulled away from the involved wrist area (the Finklestein sign). Treatment includes a combination of rest, splinting, ice, anti-inflammation medication, and/or cortisone injection. Surgery is rarely necessary.

DEA The Drug Enforcement Administration of the US Department of Justice, which regulates interstate commerce in prescription drugs to prevent them from being used as drugs of abuse. Every prescription written in the US bears the DEA number of the prescribing physician.

deafness Partial or complete hearing loss. Levels of hearing impairment vary from a mild to a total loss of hearing. Elderly adults suffer most often from hearing loss. The most common cause of hearing

loss in children is otitis media. A substantial number of hearing impairments are caused by environmental factors such as noise, drugs, and toxins. Deafness can also result from inherited disorders.

deafness, ichthyosis-keratitis See *keratitis-ichthyosis-deafness syndrome*.

deafness with goiter See *Pendred syndrome*.

death The end, or cessation, of life. In the US, the Uniform Determination of Death Act states that: "An individual who has sustained either 1 irreversible cessation of circulatory and respiratory functions, or 2 irreversible cessation of all functions of the entire brain, including the brain stem, is dead. A determination of death must be made in accordance with accepted medical standards."

death, black See *bubonic plague*.

death rate, crude The number of deaths in the population divided by the average population (or the population at midyear).

debilitate To impair the strength of or to enfeeble. A chronic progressive disease may debilitate a patient.

debride To remove dead, contaminated, or adherent tissue and/or foreign material. To debride a wound is to remove all materials that may promote infection and impede healing. This may be done by enzymes (as with proteolytic enzymes), mechanical methods (as in a whirlpool), or sharp debridement (using instruments).

deciduous teeth See *primary teeth*.

decongestant A drug that shrinks the swollen membranes in the nose, making it easier for a person to breathe. Decongestants can be taken orally or as nasal spray. Decongestant nasal spray should not be used for more than 5 days without a physician's recommendation. Many decongestant nasal sprays cause a worsening of symptoms (a rebound effect) when they are taken for too long and then discontinued. Decongestants should not be used by people who have high blood pressure unless they are under a physician's supervision.

decubitus ulcer See *bedsore*.

deep Away from the exterior surface, or farther into the body, as opposed to superficial. For example, the bones are deep to the skin. See also Appendix B, "Anatomic Orientation Terms."

deep vein thrombosis A blood clot within a deep vein, typically in the thigh or leg. The blood clot (thrombus) can break off as an embolus and make its way to the lung, where it can cause lung problems. Abbreviated DVT. Also known as economy-class syndrome.

defecation syncope See *vasovagal syncope*.

defect, atrial septal See *atrial septal defect*.

defect, enzyme See *enzyme defect*.

defect, ventricular septal See *ventricular septal defect*.

defibrillation The use of a carefully controlled electric shock, administered either through a device on the exterior of the chest wall or directly to the exposed heart muscle, to normalize the rhythm of the heart or restart it.

defibrillator A device that corrects an abnormal heart rhythm by delivering electrical shocks to restore a normal heartbeat.

defibrillator, implantable cardiac See *cardiac defibrillator, implantable*.

deficiency, adenosine deaminase See *adenosine deaminase deficiency*.

deficiency, alpha-1 antitrypsin See *alpha-1 antitrypsin deficiency*.

deficiency, ankyrin See *spherocytosis, hereditary*.

deficiency, calcium See *calcium deficiency*.

deficiency, ceruloplasmin See *ceruloplasmin deficiency*.

deficiency, G6PD Deficiency of the enzyme glucose-6-phosphate dehydrogenase (G6PD), the most common enzyme defect of medical importance. The frequency of G6PD deficiency is increased in blacks and people of Mediterranean origin (including Italians, Greeks, Arabs, and Jews). Persons with this enzyme deficiency can develop anemia due to the breakup of their red blood cells when they are first born and when they are exposed to certain drugs, naphthalene moth balls, fava beans, fever, viral and bacterial infections, and diabetic acidosis. Drugs that can stimulate the anemia include the antimalarials hydroxychloroquine and primaquine, salicylates, dapsone, sulfonamide antibiotics, nitrofurans, phenacetin, and some vitamin K derivatives.

deficiency, glucocerebrosidase See *Gaucher disease*.

deficiency, glucose-6-phosphate dehydrogenase See *deficiency, G6PD*.

deficiency, hex-A See *Tay-Sachs disease*.

deficiency, iron An inadequate amount of iron, the most common known form of nutritional disorder in the world. Iron is necessary to make hemoglobin, the molecule in red blood cells that transports oxygen. Iron deficiency results in anemia. The prevalence of iron deficiency is highest among young children and women of childbearing age (particularly pregnant women). In pregnant women, iron deficiency increases the risk for preterm delivery and delivery of babies with low birth weight. In children, iron deficiency causes developmental delays, behavioral disturbances, failure to thrive, and increased infections. The treatment of iron deficiency anemia includes using iron supplements and iron-containing foods in the diet. Food sources of iron include meat, poultry, eggs, vegetables, and cereals (especially those fortified with iron). However, iron supplements should not be given to children unless a physician recommends them.

deficiency, lactase Lack of the enzyme lactase in the small intestine. Lactase is needed to digest lactose, a sugar found in milk and most other dairy products and also used as an ingredient in other foods. Although most people are born with the ability to make adequate amounts of lactase, the production of lactase normally decreases with age, and there are significant differences in lactase production among ethnic groups. People of African or Asian descent commonly have difficulty digesting products that contain lactose. The most common symptoms of lactase deficiency are diarrhea, bloating, and gas. Treatment usually involves avoiding lactose in the diet or taking over-the-counter lactase supplements before eating foods that contain lactose.

deficiency, LCHAD Deficiency of the enzyme long-chain-3-hydroxyacyl-CoA dehydrogenase (LCHAD), an abnormality of fatty acid metabolism. Acute fatty liver of pregnancy (AFLP) has been found to be associated in some cases with LCHAD deficiency. In such cases, both parents have LCHAD activity at half of normal levels, but the fetus has none. The metabolic disease in the baby's liver apparently causes the fatty liver disease in the mother. In women who have had AFLP, the risk of AFLP increases with each pregnancy. See also *acute fatty liver of pregnancy*.

deficiency, long-chain-3-hydroxyacyl-CoA dehydrogenase See *deficiency, LCHAD*.

deficiency, magnesium Lack of magnesium, which can occur because of inadequate intake or impaired intestinal absorption of magnesium. Low magnesium levels are often associated with low calcium and potassium levels because these nutrients interact with each other. Magnesium deficiency causes increased irritability of the nervous system, as evidenced by spasms of the hands and feet, muscular twitching and cramps, spasms of the larynx, and other symptoms. Treatment involves ensuring intake and absorption of the recommended dietary allowances of magnesium, currently 420 mg per day for men and 320 mg per day for women. One should not take more than 350 mg per day in supplement form, however.

deficiency, niacin See *pellagra*.

deficiency, protein C See *protein C deficiency*.

deficiency, selenium Lack of the essential mineral selenium, which can cause Keshan disease, a fatal form of disease of the heart muscle (cardiomyopathy) that was first observed in Keshan province in China and has since been found elsewhere. Treatment involves ensuring intake of the recommended dietary allowance of selenium, currently 70 mg per day for men and 55 mg per day for women. Food sources of selenium include seafood; some meats, such as kidney and liver; and some grains and seeds.

deficiency, UDP-glucuronosyltransferase See *Gilbert syndrome*.

deficiency, zinc A lack of zinc that is associated with short stature, anemia, increased pigmentation of skin, enlarged liver and spleen, impaired gonadal function, impaired wound healing, and immune deficiency. The diagnosis is with an abnormally low blood zinc level. One form of zinc deficiency is the hereditary skin disease acrodermatitis enteropathica. Treatment involves ensuring intake of the recommended dietary allowance of zinc, currently recommended 12 mg per day for women and 10 mg per day for men. Food sources of zinc include meat, eggs, seafood, nuts, and cereals. Longstanding zinc deficiency can lead to chronic diarrhea and inflammation of the skin (dermatitis). See also *acrodermatitis enteropathica*.

deformation A change from the normal size or shape of a structure produced by mechanical forces that distort an otherwise normal structure. Deformations occur most often late in pregnancy and during delivery. For example, a twin pregnancy can cause deformations due to crowding of the twins late in pregnancy. A well-known example of a deformation is molding of the head of a baby born by

vaginal delivery. A deformation is different from a malformation in both timing and impact. See also *malformation*.

degeneration, macular See *macular degeneration*.

degenerative arthritis See *arthritis, degenerative*.

degenerative joint disease See *arthritis, degenerative*.

deglutition The act of swallowing, particularly of swallowing food. The muscles of deglutition are the muscles employed in the act of swallowing.

dehisce To burst open or gape. A surgical wound may partially or completely dehisce after surgery, depending upon whether some or all of the layers of tissue come open.

dehydration Excessive loss of body water. Diseases of the gastrointestinal tract that cause vomiting or diarrhea may lead to dehydration. There are a number of other causes of dehydration, including overheating (hyperthermia), prolonged vigorous exercise (as in a marathon), kidney disease, and medications (diuretics). One clue to dehydration is a rapid drop in weight. Symptoms include increasing thirst, dry mouth, weakness or lightheadedness (particularly when it worsens on standing), and a darkening of or decrease in urination. Severe dehydration can lead to changes in the body's chemistry, kidney failure, and death. Intravenous or oral fluid replacement may be needed in some cases. See also *diarrhea; hyperthermia*.

dehydroepiandrosterone Also DHEA; a steroid hormone made by the adrenal glands, that acts on the body much like testosterone and is converted into testosterone and estrogen. The blood levels of DHEA decline with age. DHEA is sold in the US without a prescription as a "nutritional supplement." It has been claimed to improve mood, boost the immune system, sharpen memory, and combat aging.

déjà vu A disquieting feeling of having been somewhere or done something in the past, even though one has not. Although most people have experienced this feeling at one time or another, in some people sensations of *déjà vu* are part of a seizure or migraine aura; in others, the sensations are a seizure phenomenon. See also *jamaïs vu; seizure disorder*.

delay, developmental See *developmental delay*.

deletion Loss of a segment of DNA from a chromosome. A chromosome deletion can cause disease. An example is the cri du chat (cat cry) syndrome, which is due to loss of part of chromosome 5. The opposite of duplication.

delirium A sudden state of severe confusion and rapid changes in brain function, sometimes associated with hallucinations and hyperactivity, during which the patient is inaccessible to normal contact. Delirium can be due to a number of conditions, including infection, drug toxicity or withdrawal, seizures, brain tumor, poisoning, head injury, and metabolic disturbances.

delirium tremens A central nervous system symptom of alcohol withdrawal that is seen in chronic alcoholism. Symptoms include uncontrollable trembling, hallucinations, severe anxiety, sweating, and sudden feelings of terror. Abbreviated DTs. DTs can be both frightening and, in severe cases, deadly. Treatment includes observation, comfort care, and in some cases medication.

delivery, breech See *breech birth*.

delivery, footling See *footling birth*.

delivery, vertex See *vertex birth*.

delta cell, pancreatic A type of cell located in tissue that is called the islets of Langerhans in the pancreas. Delta cells make somatostatin, a hormone that inhibits the release of numerous hormones in the body.

delta-storage pool disease See *Hermansky-Pudlak syndrome*.

deltoid The muscle, roughly triangular in shape, that stretches from the collarbone (clavicle) over the shoulder to the upper bone of the arm (humerus). It contracts to move the arm up from the side.

dementia Significant loss of intellectual abilities, such as memory capacity, that is severe enough to interfere with social or occupational functioning. Criteria for the diagnosis of dementia include impairment of attention, orientation, memory, judgment, language, motor and spatial skills, and function. By definition, dementia is not due to major depression or schizophrenia. Alzheimer's disease is the most common cause of dementia. Other causes include AIDS, alcoholism, brain injury, vascular dementia (damage to the blood vessels leading to the brain), dementia with Lewy bodies, brain tumors, drug toxicity, infection of brain, Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, meningitis, Pick disease, syphilis, and hypothyroidism.

dementia, MELAS See *MELAS syndrome*.

dementia complex, AIDS See *AIDS dementia complex*.

demulcent An agent that forms a soothing, protective film when administered onto a mucous membrane surface. For example, mucilage and oils are demulcents that can relieve irritation of the bowel lining.

demyelination A degenerative process that erodes the myelin sheath that normally protects nerve fibers. Demyelination exposes these fibers and appears to cause problems in nerve impulse conduction. Demyelination is seen in a number of diseases, particularly multiple sclerosis.

dendrite A short, arm-like protuberance from a nerve cell (neuron). The tips of dendrites transmit and receive chemical messages. See also *axon; neuron*.

denervation Loss of nerve supply. Causes of denervation include disease, chemical toxicity, physical injury, or intentional surgical interruption of a nerve.

dengue fever An acute mosquito-borne viral illness of sudden onset with headache, fever, prostration, severe joint and muscle pain, swollen glands (lymphadenopathy), and rash. The presence of fever, rash, and headache (the "dengue triad") is characteristic. Dengue fever is endemic throughout the tropics and subtropics. Also called breakbone fever, dandy fever, and dengue. Victims of dengue fever often suffer temporary contortions due to the intense joint and muscle pain.

dengue hemorrhagic fever A syndrome caused by the dengue virus that tends to affect children under age 10 and causes fever, headache, sore throat, cough, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, bleeding, and circulatory collapse (shock). Other symptoms are bleeding with easy bruising, blood spots in the skin, vomiting of blood, blood in the stool, bleeding gums, and nosebleeds. Pneumonia and heart inflammation may also be present. Most deaths occur in children and infants are at particular risk.

dental braces See *braces, dental*.

dental impaction The pressing together of teeth. For example, molar teeth (the large teeth in the back of the jaw) can be impacted, cause pain, and require pain medication, antibiotics, and surgical removal.

dental pain Pain in or near the mouth that comes from irritation of a nerve to a tooth. The most common cause of toothache is a dental cavity. The second most common is gum disease. Toothache can be caused by a problem that does not originate from a tooth or the jaw.

dentin The hard tissue of the tooth that surrounds the central core of nerves and blood vessels (pulp).

deoxyribonucleic acid See *DNA*.

depilation See *epilation*.

Depo-Provera A contraceptive that is injected and lasts 3 months between doses. Depo-Provera is also used to regulate menstrual cycle in women with uneven or painful menses. It contains the hormonal compound medroxyprogesterone acetate.

depression An illness that involves the body, mood, and thoughts and that affects the way a person eats, sleeps, feels about himself or herself, and thinks about things. Depression is not the same as a passing blue mood. It is not a sign of personal weakness or a condition that can be wished away. People with depression cannot merely "pull themselves together" and get better. Without treatment, symptoms can last for weeks, months, or years. Appropriate treatment, however, can help most people with depression. The signs and symptoms of depression include loss of interest in activities that were once interesting or enjoyable, including sex; loss of appetite, with weight loss, or overeating, with weight gain; loss of emotional expression (flat affect); a persistently sad, anxious, or empty mood; feelings of hopelessness, pessimism, guilt, worthlessness, or helplessness; social withdrawal; unusual fatigue, low energy level, a feeling of being slowed down; sleep disturbance and insomnia, early-morning awakening or oversleeping; trouble concentrating, remembering, or making decisions; unusual restlessness or irritability; persistent physical problems such as headaches, digestive disorders, or chronic pain that do not respond to treatment, and thoughts of death or suicide or suicide attempts. The principal types of depression are called major depression, dysthymia, and bipolar disease (manic-depressive disease).

depression, bipolar See *bipolar disorder*.

depression, dysthymia See *dysthymia*.

depression, major Depression with a combination of symptoms that interfere with the ability to work, sleep, eat, and enjoy once-pleasurable activities. These disabling episodes of depression can occur once, twice, or several times in a lifetime. See also *depression*.

depression, manic

depression, manic See *bipolar disorder*.

depression, postpartum Severe depression presenting after childbirth. See also *depression*.

depression, unipolar Depressive disease without a manic phase. See *depression*.

depression, winter See *seasonal affective disorder*.

Dercum disease A condition characterized by painful fatty tumors (lipomas) beneath the skin. The disease tends to be associated with obesity and is about five times more frequent in females than in males. Onset of symptoms generally occurs in middle age. The fatty tumors are most often located on the trunk and limbs. Also called *adiposis dolorosa*.

dermabrasion A surgical procedure that involves the controlled scraping away of the upper layers of the skin by using sandpaper or some other mechanical means. The purpose of dermabrasion is to smooth the skin and, in the process, remove small scars (as from acne), moles (nevi), tattoos, or fine wrinkles. Dermabrasion is performed by a dermatologist. Chemical skin peels are an alternative to dermabrasion.

dermatitis Inflammation of the skin. Dermatitis has many causes, including direct contact with an irritating substance; allergic reaction to an inhaled, ingested, or injected allergen; eczema; or underlying immune disease. Symptoms of dermatitis include redness, itching, and in some cases, blistering. Noneczematous dermatitis is usually caused by direct contact with an irritant. Frequent offenders include detergents, especially those with perfumes; chemicals used in photo development; ammonia from decomposing urine in an infant's diapers (*diaper dermatitis*); and some types of solvents. Treatment involves identifying and avoiding substances that cause attacks and, during attacks, using topical treatments, such as steroid creams. See also *eczema*.

dermatitis herpetiformis An intensely itchy skin inflammation caused by an immune reaction to dietary gluten, a protein found in wheat, barley, rye, and related grains. Dermatitis herpetiformis is associated with a disorder of the small intestine called celiac sprue. See also *celiac sprue*.

dermatographism A common form of hives that appears due to stroking, rubbing, or scratching of the skin, or when tight-fitting clothes rub the skin. Dermatographism occurs in about 5 percent of the population. Dermatographism is not a disease and requires no specific treatment.

dermatologic Having to do with skin.

dermatologist A physician who specializes in the diagnosis and treatment of skin problems.

dermatology The branch of medicine concerned with the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of diseases of the skin, hair, nails, oral cavity, and genitals. Some practitioners of dermatology also do cosmetic care and enhancement. See also *dermatologist*.

dermatome 1 A localized area of skin that receives its sensations via a single nerve from a single nerve root of the spinal cord. Shingles (herpes zoster) typically affects one or several isolated dermatomes. 2 A cutting instrument used for skin grafting or for slicing thin pieces of skin.

dermatomyositis A chronic inflammatory disease of muscle causing weakness that is associated with patches of slightly raised reddish or scaly rash. The rash can be on the bridge of the nose, around the eyes, or on sun-exposed areas of the neck and chest. Classically, however, it is over the knuckles. When inflammation of the muscle (myositis) occurs without skin disease, the condition is referred to as polymyositis. It affects both children and adults. The most common symptom is muscle weakness, usually affecting the muscles that are closest to the trunk of the body (proximal). Trouble with swallowing may occur. Occasionally, the muscles ache and are tender to touch. Some patients develop hardened bumps of calcium deposits under the skin. Treatment involves steroid drugs, such as prednisolone or prednisone. Other treatments including immunosuppressing drugs, such as azathioprine and methotrexate, may be prescribed. Intravenous immunoglobulin can be effective for severe dermatomyositis. Physical therapy is usually recommended to preserve muscle function and avoid muscle atrophy. Both dermatomyositis and polymyositis can sometimes be associated with cancers, including lymphoma, breast, lung, ovarian, and colon cancer. See also *polymyositis*.

dermatopathy Any disease of the skin. Also known as dermopathy.

dermatophytic onychomycosis See *onychomycosis*.

dermis The lower or inner layer of the two main layers of cells that make up the skin (the other being the epidermis). See also *epidermis*; *skin*.

dermoid See *ovarian teratoma*.

dermoid cyst of the ovary See *ovarian teratoma*.

dermopathy See *dermatopathy*.

descending aorta The part of the aorta that runs down through the chest and the abdomen. The descending aorta starts after the arch of the aorta and ends by splitting into the common iliac arteries that go down toward the thighs. The descending aorta is subdivided into the thoracic aorta and the abdominal aorta. See also *aorta*.

desensitization, allergy See *allergy desensitization*.

designer drug A drug, typically a psychoactive drug, whose structure is a modification of a preexisting drug in order to bypass existing drug laws and regulations for the purpose of marketing. Designer drugs are dangerous, as their toxic effects and pharmacology have not been properly evaluated. They are outlawed by the US Controlled Substances Act. An example of a designer drug is the street drug "ecstasy," which is an analogue of methamphetamine.

designer estrogen An engineered drug that possesses some, but not all, of the actions of estrogen. Also known as selective estrogen-receptor modulator (SERM). For example, raloxifene (brand name: Evista) is classified as a designer estrogen because, like estrogen, it prevents bone loss and lowers serum cholesterol; however, it does not stimulate the endometrial lining of the uterus.

desmoid tumor A benign soft-tissue tumor that does not spread to other parts of the body. Desmoid tumors occur most often in young adults, and they usually involve the limbs or trunk, but they can also arise in the abdomen or thorax. Desmoid tumors are very difficult to remove because they adhere tenaciously to surrounding structures and organs. Surgery is the treatment, but recurrence after surgery is common. Radiation therapy and limited chemotherapy have also been used. A desmoid tumor is also called aggressive fibromatosis because it is locally aggressive and fibrous, like scar tissue.

desmoid tumor, cortical A tumor that arises in embryonic tissue.

desmoplasia The growth of fibrous or connective tissue anywhere in the body.

desmoplastic reaction A reaction that is associated with some tumors and is characterized by the pervasive growth of dense fibrous tissue around the tumor. The formation of scar tissue (adhesion)

within the abdomen after abdominal surgery is another type of desmoplastic reaction.

desquamate To shed the outer layers of the skin.

desquamation The shedding of the outer layers of the skin. For example, when the rash of measles fades, desquamation occurs.

deuteranomaly See *colorblindness*.

deuteranopia See *colorblindness*.

development The process of growth and differentiation. The most important stage of human development occurs before birth, as tissues and organs arise from differentiation of cells in the embryo. This process continues until birth, and interruptions in development result in the most serious types of birth defects, such as anencephaly and spina bifida. The developmental process continues after birth, as an infant or child grows physically, develops basic brain-based abilities such as speech and hand-eye coordination, and learns. Interruptions in any of these processes can result in developmental delay.

development, embryonic See *prenatal development*.

development, fetal See *prenatal development*.

developmental delay A condition in which a child is behind schedule in reaching milestones of early childhood development. This term is often used as a euphemism for mental retardation, which can be less a delay than a permanent limitation of a child's ability to progress.

developmental disorder One of several disorders that interrupt normal development in childhood. A developmental disorder may affect a single area of development (specific developmental disorder) or several areas (pervasive developmental disorder). With early intervention, most specific developmental disorders can be accommodated and overcome. Early intervention is absolutely essential for pervasive developmental disorders, many of which respond to an aggressive approach that may combine speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, behavior modification techniques, play therapy, and in some cases medication. See also *autism*; *cerebral palsy*; *developmental disorder, pervasive*; *developmental disorder, specific*; *developmental dyspraxia*; *dysarthria*; *dyscalculia*; *dyslexia*.

developmental disorder, pervasive A class of disorders in which the patient shows impairment in social interaction, imaginative activity, and verbal

and nonverbal communication skills, and has a limited number of interests and activities that tend to be repetitive (stereotyped). Abbreviated PDD. All types of PDDs are disorders of the nervous system that are usually evident by age 3. In general, children who have PDDs have difficulty talking, playing with other children, and relating to others, including their family members. The types of PDD include autistic disorder, Rett syndrome, childhood disintegrative disorder, Asperger syndrome, and “pervasive developmental disorder not otherwise specified.” See also *Asperger syndrome; autism; childhood disintegrative disorder; Rett syndrome*.

developmental disorder, specific A disorder that affects only one area of development. For example, dysgraphia is a specific developmental disorder; it is a specific impairment of the ability to write legibly. See also *developmental disorder; developmental disorder, pervasive; dysarthria; dyscalculia; dyslexia*.

developmental dysplasia of the hip See *congenital hip dislocation*.

developmental dyspraxia A pattern of delayed, uneven, or aberrant development of gross or fine motor skills during childhood development. Developmental dyspraxia may be seen alone or in combination with other developmental problems, particularly apraxia or dyspraxia of speech. Treatment is via early intervention, using physical therapy to improve gross motor skills and occupational therapy to assist in fine motor development and sensory integration. See also *apraxia of speech; dyspraxia of speech*.

deviated septum See *nasal septum, deviated*.

device, assistive Any device that is designed, made, and/or adapted to assist a person to perform a particular task that might otherwise be difficult. For example, canes, crutches, walkers, wheelchairs, and shower chairs are all assistive devices. See also *assistive technology; augmentative communication device; device, medical*.

device, intrauterine See *intrauterine device*.

device, medical Broadly defined, any physical item used in medical treatment, from a heart pacemaker to a wheelchair. In insurance parlance, medical device is usually synonymous with assistive device, although it may include items more frequently thought of as medical supplies, such as dressings needed for wound care at home or syringes for self-administration of insulin. Medical devices are not covered by most insurance policies, although they may be available through supplemen-

tal insurance or, in some cases, on an inexpensive rental basis through hospitals, clinics, or pharmacies. See also *assistive device*.

dextro- Prefix from the Latin word dexter, meaning “on the right side.” For example, a molecule that shows dextrorotation is turning or twisting to the right. The opposite of levo-.

dextrocardia Reversal of the anatomic location of the heart, placing it in the right side of the chest rather than in its normal location on the left. This is a true anatomic reversal, in which the apex (tip) of the heart points to the right instead of the left. Dextrocardia occurs in Kartagener syndrome, an abnormal condition that is present at birth. See also *dextroposition of the heart; Kartagener syndrome*.

dextroposition Moving to the right.

dextroposition of the heart A condition in which the heart is displaced to the right side of the chest, but without any anatomic alteration in the heart itself. Dextroposition occurs when the contents of the left side of the chest shove the heart to the right, or when the contents of the right side of the chest are reduced (for example, by collapse of the right lung) and the heart moves toward the sparsely occupied space on the right. See also *dextrocardia*.

dextrose Glucose, a simple sugar.

DHEA See *dehydroepiandrosterone*.

DHF Dengue hemorrhagic fever.

Di Ferrante syndrome A rare form of mucopolysaccharidosis. Di Ferrante syndrome is an autosomal recessive genetic disorder. Also known as mucopolysaccharidosis Type IX. See also *mucopolysaccharidosis*.

dia- Prefix meaning through, throughout, or completely, as in diachronic (over a period of time), diagnosis (to completely define the nature of a disease), and dialysis (cleansing the blood by passing it through a special machine).

diabetes See *diabetes mellitus*.

diabetes, adult-onset Type 2 diabetes. See also *diabetes, type 2*.

diabetes, brittle See *diabetes, labile*.

diabetes, bronze Diabetes mellitus that occurs as a result of damage to the pancreas from iron deposition of hemochromatosis. See also *diabetes mellitus; hemochromatosis*.

diabetes, childhood Type 1 diabetes. See also *diabetes, type 1*.

diabetes, gestational A diabetic condition that appears during pregnancy and usually goes away after the birth of the baby. Gestational diabetes is best controlled by dietary adjustment. Gestational diabetes can cause birth complications. One complication is macrosomia, in which the baby is considerably larger than normal due to large deposits of fat; such a baby can grow too large to be delivered through the vagina. Gestational diabetes also increases the risk of low blood sugar, low serum calcium and low serum magnesium in the baby immediately after delivery. The key to prevention is careful control of the mother's blood sugar levels. If the mother maintains normal blood sugar levels, it is less likely that the fetus will develop macrosomia, hypoglycemia, or other chemical abnormalities.

diabetes, insulin-dependent Type 1 diabetes. See also *diabetes, type 1*.

diabetes, insulin-resistant Type 2 diabetes. See also *diabetes, type 2*.

diabetes, labile Type 1 diabetes that is untreated, poorly controlled, or resistant to treatment so that the blood glucose level tends to swing quickly and widely up and down. Also known as brittle diabetes and unstable diabetes. See also *diabetes, type 1*.

diabetes, non-insulin-dependent Type 2 diabetes. See also *diabetes, type 2*.

diabetes, type 1 A chronic condition in which the pancreas makes too little insulin (or no insulin) because the beta cells in the pancreas have been destroyed by the immune system. The body is then not able to effectively use blood glucose (sugar) for energy. The disease tends to occur in childhood, adolescence, or early adulthood, but it may appear at any age. The symptoms and signs of type 1 diabetes are great thirst, hunger, a need to urinate often, and loss of weight. Fluctuations in blood glucose levels can lead to blurred vision. Extremely elevated glucose levels can lead to lethargy and coma. To treat the disease, the person must inject insulin, follow an appropriate diet, exercise daily, and test blood glucose several times daily. This type of diabetes used to be known as juvenile diabetes, juvenile-onset diabetes, and insulin-dependent diabetes. See also *diabetes, type 2; diabetic neuropathy; diabetic retinopathy; diabetic coma; diabetic shock*.

diabetes, type 2 A form of diabetes mellitus in which patients can still produce insulin, but do so relatively inadequately. Type 2 diabetes mellitus occurs mostly in individuals over 30 years old and the

incidence increases with age. While there is a strong genetic component to developing this form of diabetes, there are other risk factors, particularly obesity. Symptoms include increased urine output, increased appetite and thirst, unexplained weight loss or fluctuation, and fatigue. Type 2 diabetes mellitus is first treated with weight reduction, a diabetic diet, and exercise. When these measures fail to control the elevated blood sugars, oral medications are used. If oral medications are still insufficient, insulin medications are considered. Also known as non-insulin-dependent diabetes, adult-onset diabetes, or insulin-resistant diabetes. See also *diabetes, type 1; diabetic neuropathy; diabetic retinopathy*.

diabetes, unstable See *diabetes, labile*.

Diabetes Association, American See *ADA*.

diabetes diet Dietary control that is the primary method for treating all forms of diabetes. The goal is to minimize the chance of overloading the body with the sugar glucose. Patients with diabetes benefit from eating carefully controlled amounts and types of food at regular intervals throughout the day, rather than at two or three large meals. Soluble fibers, such as oat bran, apples, citrus, pears, peas and beans, and psyllium, slow down the digestion of carbohydrates (sugars), which results in better glucose metabolism. Patients avoid consumption of sugary foods and moderate their intake of starches that convert quickly to glucose. Some patients with type 2 diabetes may be successfully treated with diet alone, and patients on insulin can often reduce their insulin requirements by adhering to the appropriate diet. Learning proper eating habits is especially important for children with diabetes (type 1 diabetics), who run the highest long-term risk of severe symptoms.

diabetes insipidus A metabolic disorder that mimics symptoms of diabetes mellitus, including increased output of urine and increased thirst. It is caused by a malfunction in the pituitary gland, and can be treated by administering vasopressin, a pituitary hormone. There are two types of diabetes insipidus, central and nephrogenic. Central diabetes insipidus is a lack of ADH production and is due to damage to the pituitary gland or hypothalamus where ADH is produced. Nephrogenic diabetes insipidus is a lack of response of the kidney to the fluid-conserving action of ADH. It can be due to diseases of the kidney (such as polycystic kidney disease), certain drugs (such as lithium), and can also occur as an inherited disorder. The main danger is when fluid intake does not keep pace with urine output, resulting in dehydration and high blood sodium. The treatment of central diabetes insipidus is with vasopressin. Nephrogenic diabetes insipidus does not respond to

vasopressin treatment. In cases of nephrogenic diabetes insipidus caused by a drug (such as lithium), stopping the drug usually leads to recovery. In cases of hereditary nephrogenic diabetes insipidus, treatment is with fluid intake to match urine output and drugs that lower urine output. See also *antidiuretic hormone; pituitary, posterior*.

diabetes mellitus A chronic condition associated with abnormally high levels of sugar (glucose) in the blood and urine. Absence of, insufficient production of, or autoimmune resistance to the pancreatic hormone insulin causes diabetes. Insulin provides the body with a natural method for oxidizing glucose to provide energy; without enough insulin, glucose builds up in the bloodstream to dangerous levels. The tendency to develop diabetes runs in families, but not all patients have such a family history. Symptoms of diabetes include increased urine output, increased appetite and thirst, unexplained weight loss or fluctuation, and fatigue. Diabetes mellitus is diagnosed through blood sugar testing. Major complications include dangerously elevated blood sugar levels, abnormally low blood sugar levels due to incorrect dosing of diabetes medications, and disease of the blood vessels, which can damage the eyes, kidneys, nerves, and heart. Circulation problems due to blood vessel damage may also endanger the patient's feet and legs. When the body cannot use glucose for energy because of inadequate insulin in diabetes, it turns to burning fat as energy. This process creates compounds called ketones. If the blood level of ketones gets too high, the result is a dangerous condition called ketosis that, if unchecked, can cause lethargy, convulsions, coma, and death. Treatment depends on the type of diabetes. Diet is always the primary treatment. Many patients take medications that help to regulate their production and use of insulin. Others may need insulin injections, either self-administered via syringe or, more recently, via an almost-painless "gun" device, an external insulin pump, or an internally implanted insulin pump. There are two forms of diabetes mellitus, type 1 (insulin requiring) and type 2 (non-insulin requiring). Approximately 10 percent of the patients with diabetes mellitus have type 1 diabetes; the remaining 90 percent have type 2 diabetes mellitus. Diabetes mellitus is commonly referred to as diabetes, though technically there are two forms of diabetes, diabetes mellitus and diabetes insipidus, which are distinctly different conditions, both of which are characterized by the excessive production of dilute urine. See also *diabetes, type 1; diabetes, type 2*.

diabetic coma Deep unconsciousness that results from uncontrolled diabetes associated with ketones

in the bloodstream. The best treatment is prevention. Careful diet, medication, and insulin dosing, as needed, should prevent ketone buildup. Patients with diabetes and their family members should be aware of the early signs of ketone buildup, including weight loss, nausea, confusion, gasping for breath, a characteristically sweet, chemical odor, similar to that of acetone or alcohol (acetone breath), to the patient's breath, and sometimes sweat. Lethargy, confusion, and convulsions may precede diabetic coma. To prevent death, immediate emergency medical treatment is needed in a hospital setting for patients who show the early signs of diabetic coma.

diabetic dermopathy A skin condition characteristic of diabetes featuring light brown, reddish oval, or round scaly patches, most often on the shins or front of the thighs and less often on the scalp, forearm, and trunk. The cause of diabetic dermopathy is thought to be a type of inflammation affecting tiny blood vessels in the skin. There is no known effective treatment, but the patches can resolve after a few years.

diabetic nephropathy Kidney disease from long-standing diabetes. Diabetes affects the tiny blood vessels in the glomerulus, a key structure in the kidney composed of capillary blood vessels. This structure is critical for blood filtration. Features of diabetic nephropathy include nephrotic syndrome, which is characterized by excessive protein in the urine, high blood pressure, and progressively impaired kidney function. With severe diabetic nephropathy, kidney failure, end-stage renal disease requiring kidney dialysis or a kidney transplant may result. Also known as intercapillary glomerulonephritis, Kimmelstiel-Wilson disease, and Kimmelstiel-Wilson syndrome.

diabetic neuropathy Nerve damage caused by diabetes that leads to numbness and sometimes pain and weakness in the hands, arms, feet, and legs. Diabetic neuropathy can affect the digestive tract, heart, and genitalia. The longer a person has diabetes, the greater the risk of neuropathy. There are four types of diabetic neuropathy: peripheral, autonomic, proximal, and focal. Peripheral neuropathy, the most common, causes pain or loss of feeling in the hands, arms, feet, and legs. Autonomic neuropathy can cause changes in digestion, bowel and bladder control problems, and erectile dysfunction, and it can affect the nerves that serve the heart and control blood pressure. Proximal neuropathy produces pain in the thighs and hips and weakness in the legs. Focal neuropathy can strike any nerve in the body, causing pain or weakness. Treatment of diabetic neuropathy principally involves bringing the blood glucose and glycohemoglobin levels into the normal range. Good foot care is mandatory. Analgesics, low doses of antidepressants, and some anticonvulsant

medications may be prescribed for relief of pain, burning, or tingling. Some patients may find that walking regularly, taking warm baths, and using elastic stockings help relieve leg pain due to diabetic neuropathy.

diabetic retinopathy Disease of the retina caused by diabetes that involves damage to the tiny blood vessels in the back of the eye. Early disease may not cause symptoms. As the disease progresses, it enters its advanced, or proliferative, stage. Fragile, new blood vessels grow along the retina and in the clear, gel-like vitreous that fills the inside of the eye. Without timely treatment, these new blood vessels can bleed, cloud vision, and destroy the retina. Everyone with type 1 or type 2 diabetes is at risk for diabetic retinopathy. Swelling in the portion of the retina that is most sensitive to light (macular edema) makes it hard for a patient to do things like read and drive. As new blood vessels form at the back of the eye, they can bleed and further blur vision. Large hemorrhages tend to happen more than once, often during sleep. There are no early warning signs. Diagnosis of diabetic retinopathy is made during an eye examination that includes a visual acuity test, pupil dilation, ophthalmoscopy (to look in the back of the eye), and tonometry (to check the pressures). The two treatments for diabetic retinopathy are laser surgery, to stop the edema and hemorrhage, and vitrectomy, to remove blood from the back of the eye. It is strongly recommended that all diabetics have eye examinations at least once (ideally twice) a year.

diabetic shock Hypoglycemia (low blood sugar) due to excessive use of insulin or other glucose-lowering medications to lower the blood sugar level in diabetic patients. Symptoms include a sweet, chemical odor on the patient's breath that is similar to that of acetone or alcohol (acetone breath); fatigue, lightheadedness, or fainting; and reddening of the skin in Caucasian patients or darkening of the skin in patients with darker skin. Immediate treatment involves administration of glucose in a prescription sublingual form or in the form of hard candy or cake frosting if nothing else is available. Patients with diabetes and their families should learn the early warning signs of diabetic shock and carry glucose tablets for emergency use. The treatment includes glucagon given by intramuscular injection. Glucagon causes the release of glucose from the liver, and should be part of the emergency kit of a diabetic, especially if the patient uses insulin. Families and friends of those with diabetes should be taught how to administer glucagon, because obviously the patients will not be able to do it themselves in an emergency situation. Changes in diet, medication, or insulin administration can then be made to prevent future episodes.

Also known as an insulin reaction or insulin shock. See also *insulin reaction*.

diabulimia The practice of minimizing one's insulin dosages by patients with type 1 diabetes mellitus in an attempt to control body weight. Since insulin encourages fat storage, sometimes patients attempt to manipulate their insulin, often skipping doses, in an attempt to reduce weight gain. The term does not refer to a recognized medical condition but to a practice recognized by diabetes experts. Diabulimia is most common in young girls and women with type 1 diabetes.

diachronic Over a period of time. The opposite of synchronic.

diachronic study See *longitudinal study*.

diagnosis Knowledge of the nature of a disease. A patient who speaks of "getting a diagnosis" means learning the medical name for the ailment and gaining an understanding of the condition. Abbreviated dx and Dx. See also *differential diagnosis*.

diagnosis, differential See *differential diagnosis*.

dialysis The process of cleansing the blood by passing it through a special machine. Dialysis is necessary when the kidneys are not able to filter the blood. It gives patients with kidney failure a chance to live productive lives. There are two types of dialysis: hemodialysis and peritoneal dialysis. A hemodialysis session generally takes about 4 hours, and patients typically visit a dialysis clinic one to three times per week. Peritoneal dialysis allows the patient to do dialysis at home. Each type of dialysis has advantages and disadvantages. Patients can often choose the type of long-term dialysis that best matches their needs. See also *dialysis, peritoneal*.

dialysis, peritoneal A dialysis technique that uses the patient's own body tissues inside the belly (abdominal cavity) as a filter. The intestines lie in the abdominal cavity, the space between the abdominal wall and the spine. A plastic tube called a dialysis catheter is placed through the abdominal wall and into the abdominal cavity. A saline fluid called dialysate is then flushed into the abdominal cavity so that it washes around the intestines. The intestinal walls act as a filter between this fluid and the bloodstream. By using different types of solutions, waste products and excess water can be removed from the body through this process.

dialysis machine A machine used in dialysis that filters a patient's blood to remove excess water and waste products when the kidneys are damaged,

dysfunctional, or missing. The dialysis machine itself can be thought of as an artificial kidney. Inside, it consists of more plastic tubing that carries the removed blood to the dialyser, a bundle of hollow fibers that forms a semipermeable membrane for filtering out impurities. In the dialyser, blood is diffused with a saline solution called dialysate, and the dialysate is in turn diffused with blood. When the filtration process is complete, the cleansed blood is returned to the patient. Most patients who undergo dialysis because of kidney impairment or failure use a dialysis machine at a dialysis clinic. Also, a machine called a peritoneal dialysis machine can be used chronically at home for dialysis, which eliminates the need for regular hemodialysis clinic treatments. Using this machine during the day and frequently during sleep, the patient can control his/her own dialysis.

diaper rash An inflammatory reaction localized to the area of skin usually covered by the diaper. It can have many causes, including infections (yeast, bacterial, or viral), friction irritation, chemical allergies (perfumes, soaps), sweat, decomposed urine, and plugged sweat glands. Most diaper rash problems can be solved by cleansing the skin with nonperfumed, gentle products; changing diapers frequently; and exposing the affected skin area to air. Commercially available diaper rash ointments may be helpful for prevention but may actually cause further irritation if used on the inflamed areas. Also called diaper dermatitis.

diaphragm 1 The muscle that separates the chest (thoracic) cavity from the abdomen. Contraction of the diaphragm helps to expand the lungs when one breathes in air. 2 A specially fitted contraceptive device that covers the cervix to prevent the entry of sperm. For greatest effectiveness, a diaphragm is used with spermicidal gel or cream. See also *birth control; contraceptive*.

diaphragm pacing A procedure to help patients with spinal cord injuries to breathe. Their breathing is helped by setting the respiratory rate by electrical stimulation (pacing) of the phrenic nerve using electrodes surgically implanted into the diaphragm muscle that is innervated by the nerve.

diaphragmatic hernia Passage of a loop of bowel through the diaphragm muscle. This type of hernia occurs as the bowel from the abdomen protrudes (herniates) upward through the diaphragm into the chest (thoracic) cavity.

diarrhea A common condition that involves unusually frequent and liquid bowel movements. The opposite of constipation. There are many infectious and noninfectious causes of diarrhea.

Persistent diarrhea is both uncomfortable and dangerous to the health because it can indicate an underlying infection and may mean that the body is not able to absorb some nutrients due to a problem in the bowels. Treatment includes drinking plenty of fluids to prevent dehydration and taking over-the-counter remedies. People with diarrhea that persists for more than a couple days, particularly small children or elderly people, should seek medical attention.

diarrhea, antibiotic-induced Diarrhea caused by the bacterium *Clostridium difficile* (*C. difficile*), one of the most common causes of infection of the large bowel (colon). Patients taking antibiotics are at particular risk of becoming infected with *C. difficile*. Antibiotics disrupt the normal bacteria of the bowel, allowing *C. difficile* and other bacteria to become established and overgrow inside the colon. In some people, a toxin produced by *C. difficile* causes diarrhea, abdominal pain, severe inflammation of the colon (colitis), fever, an elevated white blood cell count, vomiting, and dehydration. In severely affected patients, the inner lining of the colon becomes severely inflamed (pseudomembranous colitis). Rarely, the walls of the colon wear away and holes develop (colon perforation), which can lead to a life-threatening infection of the abdomen.

diarrhea, rotavirus A leading cause of severe diarrhea in infants and young children, often accompanied by fever and dehydration. Treatment includes frequent administration of fluids to prevent dehydration, rest, good nutrition, and in some cases medication. A preventive vaccine has been developed but is not in use at this time. See also *rotavirus*.

diarrhea, travelers' Illness, including diarrhea, that is associated with travel to a foreign country. Causes include viruses and the bacterium *Escherichia coli*, which may be transmitted via food or water. Prevention involves drinking bottled water; filtering tap water or, if camping, water from natural sources; washing fruits and vegetables purchased in local markets with a solution of water and a few drops of bleach; and when possible, choosing restaurants with high standards of sanitation. Treatment includes replacement of fluids and electrolytes (sodium and other ions) lost via diarrhea. In serious cases of persistent travelers' diarrhea, medical care should be sought.

diarrhea and dermatitis, zinc deficiency See *deficiency, zinc*.

diastolic Referring to the time when the heart is in a period of relaxation and dilation (expansion),

which is called diastole. Diastolic pressure is the minimum arterial pressure during relaxation and dilation of the ventricles of the heart when the ventricles fill with blood. In a blood pressure reading, the diastolic pressure is typically the second number recorded. For example, in a blood pressure reading of 120/80 ("120 over 80"), the diastolic pressure is 80 (that is, 80 mm Hg [millimeters of mercury]). A diastolic murmur is a heart murmur heard during diastole. See also *systolic*.

diathermy See *cauterization*.

diathesis An elegant term for a predisposition or tendency. For example, hemorrhagic diathesis means a tendency to bleed.

dicentric chromosome See *chromosome, dicentric*.

diet Food and drink. A specific diet can be prescribed for medical reasons according to a certain type, volume, and timing. For examples, specific diets are commonly prescribed for persons affected by hypoglycemia, gout, celiac disease, dermatitis herpetiformis, lactose intolerance, diabetes, hypercholesterolemia, heart disease, kidney disease, and difficulty in swallowing.

diet, DASH See *DASH diet*.

dietary supplement A substance that can be added to the diet, usually in pill, liquid, or powder form, ostensibly to promote health. Dietary supplements range from natural weight-gain concoctions used by body-builders, to joint pain relievers, vitamins, herbs, minerals, and salts that claim health benefits. Many dietary supplements are harmless when taken as directed, and the health benefits of some have been substantiated. Dietary supplements can interact with prescription medications, and some are not suitable for people with certain medical conditions.

diethylstilbestrol The earliest synthetic form of the female hormone estrogen. Abbreviated DES. DES was widely prescribed between 1940 and 1971 to prevent miscarriages. The use of DES during pregnancy declined and was halted when it was found that, when given during the first 5 months of pregnancy, DES can interfere with the development of the fetal reproductive system. Women whose mothers were given DES during pregnancy are at increased risk for an uncommon form of cancer called clear cell adenocarcinoma of the vagina and cervix. Daughters of women who took DES also have an increased risk of having the most common forms of cancer of the cervix. They are also at increased risk of having anatomic abnormalities of the vagina,

cervix, and uterus and of having tubal (ectopic) pregnancies, infertility, miscarriages, or premature births. Sons of women who took DES are predisposed to abnormalities of the testicles, such as abnormally small testes and failure of the testes to descend into the scrotum; these abnormalities increase the risk of testicular cancer. People who believe they may have been exposed to DES before birth should inform their physicians of their exposure so that they can be appropriately examined and monitored. DES is still available for prescription in the US for the palliative treatment of breast and prostate cancer.

dietitian A person trained in the design and management of the diet in health and disease as, for example, in diabetes.

differential diagnosis Knowledge gained through weighing the probability of one disease against the probability of other diseases that might account for a patient's illness. For example, the differential diagnosis of a runny nose includes allergic rhinitis (hay fever), the abuse of nasal decongestants, and the common cold. Abbreviated DDX. See also *diagnosis*.

differentiation 1 The process by which cells become progressively more specialized; a normal process by which cells mature. Cells early in development have the potential to develop into many different types of tissues of the body. Differentiation occurs so the specific body tissues can form. Once developed into a specific cell type, the cell has lost its ability to differentiate into a cell for a different tissue. 2 In cancer, the difference in the maturity (development) of the cancer cells in a tumor. Differentiated tumor cells resemble normal cells and tend to grow and spread at a slower rate than undifferentiated or poorly differentiated tumor cells, which lack the structure and function of normal cells and grow uncontrollably. 3 The evolution from an incomplete form of disease to a complete form of disease.

diffuse idiopathic skeletal hyperostosis A form of degenerative arthritis characteristically associated with flowing calcification along the sides of the vertebrae of the spine. Abbreviated DISH. DISH commonly includes inflammation (tendonitis) and calcification of the tendons at their points of attachment to bone. Anti-inflammatory medications (NSAIDs), such as ibuprofen, can be helpful in relieving both pain and inflammation. Also called Forestier disease.

DiGeorge syndrome A congenital disorder characterized by low blood calcium because of underdevelopment of the parathyroid glands

needed to control calcium; immunodeficiency due to hypoplasia of the thymus (an organ behind the breastbone in which lymphocytes mature and multiply); and defects involving the outflow tracts from the heart. DiGeorge syndrome is caused by a very small deletion in chromosome band 22q11.2. The key gene that is lost is Tbx-1. Tbx-1 is a master control gene that regulates other genes required for the connection of the heart with the blood circulation. Tbx-1 also controls genes involved in the development of the parathyroid and thymus glands and the shape of the face. Also known as hypoplasia of the thymus and parathyroids and as third and fourth pharyngeal pouch syndrome.

digestive system The system of organs responsible for getting food into and out of the body and for making use of food to keep the body healthy. The digestive system includes the salivary glands, mouth, esophagus, stomach, liver, gallbladder, pancreas, small intestine, colon, and rectum. The digestive system's organs are joined in a long, twisting tube from the mouth to the anus. Inside this tube is a lining called the mucosa. In the mouth, stomach, and small intestine, the mucosa contains tiny glands that produce juices to help digest food. Two solid organs, the liver and the pancreas (both of which are embryologically derived from the digestive tract), produce digestive juices that reach the intestine through small tubes known as ducts. In addition, parts of other organ systems (for instance, nerves and blood) play a major role in the digestive system.

digit A finger or toe.

digit, supernumerary An extra finger or toe.

digital rectal exam A routine exam in which a physician inserts a lubricated, gloved finger into the rectum and feels for abnormal areas to detect rectal cancer and, in a man, inflammation, enlargement, or cancer of the prostate as well as nerve problems indicated by reduction of the normal tone of the muscles of the rectal sphincter.

digitalis A chemical from the dried leaf of the common foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*) plant that is used to strengthen the force of the heartbeat. The Scottish physician William Withering discovered this use for digitalis in the late 1700s. Digitalis, its components, and their derivatives have long been used to treat congestive heart failure and slow the speeding heart so it is more efficient.

dilatate In medicine, to enlarge or expand. Also known as dilate.

dilatation The process of enlargement or expansion. Also known as dilation.

dilate To stretch or enlarge. Also known as dilatate.

dilating The widening and opening of an opening, such as the cervix or esophagus. For example, the amount of widening can be described in terms of the number of fingers that could fit in the cervical opening, or it is described in centimeters.

dilation See *dilatation*.

dilation, pupil **1** A type of eye examination that enables an eye-care professional to see more of the retina, the light-sensitive layer of tissue at the back of the eye. Dilating the pupil permits the retina to be examined for signs of disease. To dilate the pupil, drops are placed into the eye. **2** A normal response of the iris to a decrease in light exposure. **3** An abnormal widening of the pupil in response to brain injury.

dilation and curettage A minor operation in which the cervix is expanded (dilatated) enough to permit the cervical canal and uterine lining to be scraped with a spoon-shaped instrument called a curette (curettage). Abbreviated D & C. D & C is normally used to remove abnormal material from the uterus, such as unexpelled placental material after birth.

dilator A device used to stretch or enlarge an opening. Patients with scarring of the esophagus can require a dilator procedure to open the esophagus for adequate passage of food and fluids.

diphtheria An acute infectious upper respiratory tract disease that affects the throat. It is caused by the bacteria *Corynebacterium diphtheriae*. Symptoms include sore throat and mild fever at first. As the disease progresses, a membranous substance forms in the throat that makes it difficult to breathe and swallow. Diphtheria can be deadly. It is one of the diseases that the DT (diphtheria-tetanus), DTP (diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis), and DTaP (diphtheria-tetanus-acellular-pertussis) vaccines are designed to prevent.

diploid The number of chromosomes in most cells of the body. The diploid in humans is 46, which is twice the haploid number of 23 chromosomes contained in human eggs (ova) and sperm.

diplopia A condition in which a single object appears as two objects. Also known as double vision.

directive, advance medical See *advance directive*.

disaster supplies Items stored in case of emergency, such as a prolonged power outage, earthquake, or flood. Recommended disaster supplies include the following:

- Water. Store at least 3 gallons of water per person (2 quarts for drinking, 2 quarts for food preparation/sanitation × three days). Store it in plastic containers, such as soft drink bottles.
- Food. Store at least a 3-day supply of foods that require no refrigeration, preparation, or cooking (and little or no water). If you must heat food, go to a camping goods store for options that do not require electricity or natural gas. Good choices include ready-to-eat canned meats, fruits, and vegetables; canned juices, milk, and soup (if powdered, store extra water); staples, particularly sugar, salt, and pepper; high-energy foods such as peanut butter, granola bars, and trail mix; vitamin pills; special foods for infants, elderly persons, or persons on special diets; and “comfort foods” such as cookies, hard candy, sweetened cereals, lollipops, instant coffee, and tea.
- First aid kit. Assemble a first aid kit for your home and one for each car. A first aid kit should include sterile adhesive bandages in assorted sizes, four to six 2-inch sterile gauze pads, four to six 4-inch sterile gauze pads, hypoallergenic adhesive tape, three triangular bandages, three rolls of 2-inch sterile roller bandages, three rolls of 3-inch sterile roller bandages, scissors, tweezers, a needle, moist towelettes, antiseptic (cream and/or liquid), thermometer, two tongue depressors, a tube of petroleum jelly or other lubricant, assorted sizes of safety pins, cleansing agent and/or soap, a medicine dropper, two pairs of latex gloves, and sunscreen. Contact your local American Red Cross chapter to obtain a basic first aid manual.
- Nonprescription drugs. Over-the-counter drugs that you might need in an emergency include aspirin or nonaspirin pain relievers, antidiarrhea medication, antacid for stomach upset, syrup of ipecac and activated charcoal (to use if advised by the Poison Control Center), and laxatives.
- Tools and supplies. Keep the items you would most likely need during an evacuation in an easy-to-carry container, such as a large, covered trash container, camping backpack, or duffle bag. These emergency items include mess kits (or paper cups, plates, and plastic utensils), an emergency-preparedness manual, a battery-operated radio with extra batteries, a flashlight with extra batteries, cash or traveler's checks, change, a nonelectric can opener, a utility knife, a small canister fire extinguisher of the ABC type, a tube tent, pliers, tape, a compass, matches in a waterproof container, aluminum foil, plastic storage containers, a signal flare, paper and pencil, needles and thread, a shut-off wrench for turning off household gas and water, a whistle, plastic sheeting, and a map of the area for locating shelters. A map showing the precise location of local shelters may be available in advance from your local emergency-preparedness office.
- Sanitation. Have on hand an adequate supply of toilet paper and/or towelettes, soap, liquid detergent, feminine supplies, personal hygiene items, plastic garbage bags with ties for personal sanitation uses, a plastic bucket with a tight lid, disinfectant, and chlorine bleach.
- Clothing and bedding. Have available at least one complete change of clothing and footwear per person, preferably items that are easy to clean. Depending on your location, you may also need to include sturdy shoes or work boots, hats and gloves, coats and/or rain gear, thermal underwear, blankets or sleeping bags, and sunglasses.
- Special items. Remember family members with special needs, such as infants and elderly or disabled persons. For babies, store an adequate supply of formula, diapers, bottles, powdered milk, and medications. For older children and adults, remember essentials such as heart and high blood pressure medication, insulin and syringes, prescription drugs, denture needs, contact lenses and supplies, extra eyeglasses, and games and books for entertainment. Ask a physician or pharmacist about how to store prescription medications.
- Important documents. Keep these records in a waterproof, portable container: wills, insurance policies, contracts, deeds, stocks and bonds, passports, Social Security cards, immunization records, bank account numbers, credit card account numbers and

companies, an inventory of valuable household goods, important telephone numbers, and family records (such as birth, marriage, and death certificates).

This kit should be stored in a convenient place known to all family members, and a smaller version should be stowed in each car trunk. All items should be stored in air-tight plastic bags, and the stored water supply should be changed every 6 months so it stays fresh. Stored food should be rotated every 6 months, and the kit and family needs should be rethought at least once a year. Batteries should be replaced as needed, clothes should be updated as family members' sizes change, and so on.

discharge **1** The flow of fluid from part of the body, such as the nose or vagina. **2** To officially permit a patient to leave the hospital.

discoid lupus See *lupus, discoid*.

discordant **1** Showing discordance, lack of synchrony. For example, a couple may be discordant for a sexually transmitted infection, with one partner having it and the other not. **2** In transplantation genetics, between different species. For example, a discordant graft is a transplant between members of very different species.

disease Illness or sickness, often characterized by abnormal sensations (symptoms) and physical findings (signs). For a specific disease, see the specific disease (such as Addison disease) under its alphabetical listing.

disease, metabolic See *metabolic disease*.

disease, obesity-related One of the diseases to which obesity predisposes, including type 2 diabetes; high blood pressure; stroke; heart attack; congestive heart failure; certain forms of cancer, such as prostate and colon cancer; gallstones and gall bladder disease; gout and gouty arthritis; osteoarthritis of the knees, hips, and lower back; sleep apnea; and Pickwickian syndrome.

disease, polygenic A genetic disorder caused by the combined action of more than one gene. Examples of polygenic conditions include some forms of coronary disease, hypertension, asthma, and diabetes. Because such disorders depend on the simultaneous presence of several genes, they are not inherited as simply as single-gene diseases. See also *disease, single gene*.

disease, single gene A hereditary disorder caused by a change (mutation) in a single gene. There are thousands of single-gene diseases, including achondroplasia, Huntington's disease, cystic

fibrosis, sickle cell anemia, Duchenne muscular dystrophy, and hemophilia. Single-gene diseases typically describe classic simple Mendelian patterns of inheritance (as autosomal dominant, autosomal recessive, and X-linked traits), compared to polygenic diseases, which follow more complex patterns of inheritance. See also *disease, polygenic*.

diseases, rickettsial See *rickettsial diseases*.

DISH Diffuse idiopathic skeletal hyperostosis.

disk, choked See *papilledema*.

diskitis Inflammation of the disks between the vertebrae in the spinal column.

diskitis, tuberculous See *tuberculous diskitis*.

disorder, attention deficit See *attention deficit disorder*.

disorder, lymphoproliferative A malignant disease of the lymphoid cells and of cells from the reticuloendothelial system (lymph nodes and drainage tissues that clear inert particles within the body). A patient with lymphoproliferative disorder has proliferation and accumulation of lymphoid cells in the blood and marrow.

disorder, myeloproliferative A malignant disease of certain bone marrow cells, including those that give rise to the red blood cells, the granulocyte (types of white blood cells), and the platelets (which are crucial to blood clotting). The four major myeloproliferative disorders are polycythemia vera, myelofibrosis, thrombocythemia, and chronic myeloid leukemia (CML).

disorder, seasonal affective See *seasonal affective disorder*.

dissect To cut apart or separate tissue, as for anatomical study or in surgery. Also, an artery is said to dissect when its wall is torn, as in a dissecting aneurysm.

dissecting aneurysm See *aneurysm, dissecting*.

dissociation In psychology and psychiatry, a perceived detachment of the mind from the emotional state or even from the body. Dissociation is characterized by a sense of the world as a dreamlike or unreal place and may be accompanied by poor memory of specific events.

dissociative disorder A psychiatric disorder characterized by the ability to temporarily disconnect from reality. Multiple personality disorder is a

type of dissociative disorder in which, while dissociating, the person believes himself or herself to be another person.

distal The more (or most) distant of two (or more) things. For example, the distal end of the thigh bone is the end of that bone that is by the knee, most distant from the end that is near the hip. The opposite of distal is proximal. See also Appendix B, "Anatomic Orientation Terms."

distal hereditary myopathy See *muscular dystrophy, distal*.

diuresis Excretion of urine, typically in large volumes. See also *diuretic*.

diuretic Something that promotes the formation of urine by the kidney. All diuretics cause a person to "lose water," but they do so by diverse means, including inhibiting the kidney's ability to reabsorb sodium, thus enhancing the loss of sodium and consequently water in the urine (loop diuretic); enhancing the excretion of both sodium and chloride in the urine so that water is excreted with them (thiazide diuretic); or blocking the exchange of sodium for potassium, resulting in excretion of sodium and potassium but relatively little loss of potassium (potassium-sparing diuretic). Some diuretics work by yet other mechanisms, and some have other effects and uses, such as in treating hypertension. Also known as water pill. Substances in food and drinks, such as coffee, tea, and alcoholic beverages, may act as diuretics.

diuretic, loop A diuretic that works by encouraging the loss of sodium (salt) and water by affecting sodium transport at the loop area of the kidneys. As the sodium is removed, it takes water with it. Loop diuretics are very strong, and they should be used only under constant medical supervision. They can deplete the electrolyte balance, cause dehydration, reduce blood volume, and worsen certain medical conditions. See also *diuretic*.

diuretic, potassium-sparing A diuretic that blocks the exchange of sodium (salt) and potassium, encouraging the excretion of sodium and therefore of water, but generally allowing potassium to be retained. See also *diuretic*.

diuretic, thiazide A diuretic that works by encouraging excretion of both sodium (salt) and chloride. See also *diuretic*.

diurnal Occurring in the daytime. A patient may have a diurnal fever rather than a nocturnal one. Diurnal also refers to something that recurs every day.

diverticula The plural of diverticulum.

diverticulitis Inflammation of diverticula along the wall of the large intestine (colon). For diverticulitis to occur, there must be outpouchings of the large intestine (diverticulosis). Diverticulitis can be diagnosed with barium X-rays of the colon or with sigmoidoscopy or colonoscopy. Antibiotics are usually needed to treat acute diverticulitis. Liquid or low-fiber foods are advised during acute diverticulitis attacks. In severe diverticulitis, with high fever and pain, patients are hospitalized and given intravenous antibiotics. Surgery is necessary for persistent bowel obstruction and for abscesses that do not respond to antibiotics. A high-fiber diet may help delay the progression of diverticulosis and may prevent or reduce bouts of diverticulitis. See also *diverticulosis*.

diverticulosis The condition of having diverticula, small outpouchings from the large intestine (colon). Diverticulosis can occur anywhere in the colon but is most typical in the sigmoid colon, the S-shaped segment of the colon located in the lower-left part of the abdomen. The incidence of diverticulosis increases with age. As a person ages, the walls of the colon weaken, and this weakening permits the formation of diverticula. By age 80, most people have diverticulosis. Diverticulosis sets the stage for inflammation and infection of the diverticula (diverticulitis). A diet that is high in fiber keeps the bowels moving, keeps the pressure in the colon within normal limits, and slows or stops the formation of diverticula. See also *diverticulitis*.

diverticulum A small bulging sac that pushes outward from the bowels. The plural is diverticula. As a person ages, pressure within the large intestine (colon) causes diverticula. Diverticula can occur throughout the colon but are most common near the end of the S-shaped segment of the colon located in the lower-left part of the abdomen (the sigmoid colon). See also *diverticulitis; diverticulosis*.

diverticulum, Meckel An outpouching of the small bowel. About 1 in every 50 people has a Meckel diverticulum. Meckel diverticula are usually located about 2 feet before the junction of the small bowel and the colon (the large intestine) in the lower-right abdomen. Meckel diverticula can become inflamed, ulcerate, and perforate (break open or rupture), which can cause obstruction of the small bowel. Generally Meckel diverticula that are inflamed or perforated are removed via surgery.

dizziness Painless head discomfort with many possible causes, including disturbances of vision, the brain, the balance (vestibular) system of the inner ear, or the gastrointestinal system. Dizziness is

a medically indistinct term. Laypersons use it to describe a variety of conditions, ranging from lightheadedness or unsteadiness to vertigo. See also *lightheadedness; unsteadiness; vertigo*.

dizziness, anxiety as a cause of One cause of dizziness is overbreathing (hyperventilation) due to anxiety. Relief can be had by breathing in and out of a paper bag to increase the level of carbon dioxide in the blood. In persistent cases, as in repeated panic attacks, antianxiety medication can be helpful.

dizziness, presyncopal Dizziness before fainting. Some symptoms of dizziness, such as “wooziness,” feeling as though one is about to black out, and tunnel vision may be presyncopal and are due to insufficient blood flow to the brain. These symptoms are typically worse when standing, improve with lying down, and may be experienced by healthy individuals who rise quickly from a seated or prone position and have a few seconds of disorientation. See also *syncope*.

DMD Duchenne muscular dystrophy. See *muscular dystrophy, Duchenne*.

DNA 1 Deoxyribonucleic acid, one of the two molecules (along with RNA) that encode genetic information. DNA is double-stranded. The two strands are held together by weak hydrogen bonds between base pairs of nucleotides to form a double helix. The double helix looks something like an immensely long ladder twisted into a helix, or coil. The sides of the ladder are formed by a backbone of sugar and phosphate molecules, and the rungs consist of nucleotide bases joined in the middle by the hydrogen bonds. The four nucleotides in DNA contain the bases adenine (A), guanine (G), cytosine (C), and thymine (T). **2** In the UK, an abbreviation for “did not attend,” comparable to the US term “no-show” for a patient who missed an appointment.

DNA, mitochondrial The DNA of the mitochondrion, a structure situated in the cytoplasm of the cell rather than in the nucleus, where all the other chromosomes are located. Abbreviated mtDNA. mtDNA is inherited from the mother. There are 2 to 10 copies of the mtDNA genome in each mitochondrion. mtDNA is a double-stranded, circular molecule. It is very small compared to the chromosomes in the nucleus, and it contains only a limited number of genes. It is specialized in the information it carries, and it encodes a number of the subunits in the mitochondrial respiratory-chain complex that the cell needs in order to respire. Mutations (changes) in mtDNA can cause disease, and they often impair the function of oxidative-phosphorylation enzymes in the respiratory chain, especially in tissues with high

energy expenditure, such as brain and muscle tissues. See also *mitochondrial disease*.

DNA, recombinant DNA made up of DNA molecules of different origins, joined together by using recombinant DNA technology. A recombinant DNA molecule is constructed (recombined) from segments from two or more different DNA molecules. Under certain conditions, a recombinant DNA molecule can enter a cell and replicate there.

DNA cloning The use of DNA-manipulation procedures to produce multiple copies of a single gene or segment of DNA. See also *DNA, recombinant*.

DNA polymerase An enzyme that catalyzes (speeds) the polymerization of DNA. DNA polymerase uses preexisting nucleic acid templates and assembles the DNA from deoxyribonucleotides.

DNA repair The process by which a cell uses a series of special enzymes to repair mutations (changes) in DNA and restore the DNA to its original state. The DNA is constantly mutating and being repaired. This repair process is controlled by special genes. A mutation in a DNA repair gene can cripple the repair process and cause a cascade of unrepaired mutations in the genome.

DNA repair gene A gene that is engaged in DNA repair. When a DNA repair gene is altered, mutations pile up throughout the DNA.

DNA repair pathway The sequence of steps in the repair of DNA. Each step is governed by an enzyme.

DNA replication A complex process whereby the “parent” strands of DNA in the double helix are separated, and each one is copied to produce a new (daughter) strand. This process is said to be “semi-conservative” because one strand from each parent is conserved and remains intact after replication has taken place.

DNA sequence The precise ordering of the bases (A, T, G, C) from which DNA is composed. Base pairs form naturally only between A and T and between G and C, so the base sequence of each single strand of DNA can be simply deduced from that of its partner strand. The DNA nucleotide code is in triplets, such as ATG; the base sequence of ATG’s partner strand would be TAC.

DNR Do not resuscitate.

D.O. Doctor of Osteopathy, an osteopathic physician. See also *osteopath; osteopathy*.

do not resuscitate A directive to not attempt mechanical or manual resuscitation if the patient stops breathing. Abbreviated DNR. See also *advance directive*.

DOB Date of birth, an abbreviation that is frequently used in medical charting.

doctor In a medical context, any medical professional with an MD, a PhD, or any other doctoral degree. The term doctor is quite unspecific. A doctor may, for example, be a physician, psychologist, biomedical scientist, dentist, or veterinarian. In a nonmedical context, a professor of history might be addressed as doctor, an eminent theologian might be named a doctor of a church, and a person awarded an honorary doctorate by a college or university might also be called a doctor.

doctors' symbol See *Aesculapius*.

DOE Department of Energy, a US agency.

dolor Pain, one of the four classic signs of inflammation together with calor, rubor, and tumor (heat, redness, and swelling, respectively).

domain In biomedicine, a discrete portion of a protein that has its own function. The combination of domains in a single protein determines the overall function of the protein.

dominant A genetic trait that is evident when only one copy of that gene for that trait is present. (As opposed to a recessive trait, which is usually expressed only when two copies of the gene for that trait are present.) Most dominant traits are due to genes located on the autosomes (the nonsex chromosomes). Diseases inherited in an autosomal dominant manner typically affect both males and females and each of their children run a 50 percent chance to receive their disease gene. Autosomal dominant diseases include achondroplasia (dwarfism with short arms and legs), Huntington disease (a form of progressive dementia), and neurofibromatosis (a neurologic disorder with an increased risk of malignant tumors). X-linked dominance is due to genes on the X chromosome. A single copy of the mutant gene on the X chromosome causes the disease in a female. An example is a type of hereditary rickets called hypophosphatemic rickets. See also *autosomal dominant trait; X-linked dominant*.

dominant, autosomal See *autosomal dominant*.

dominant, X-linked See *X-linked dominant*.

donor The giver of a tissue or an organ, such as a blood donor or kidney donor.

donor insemination See *artificial insemination by donor*.

dopa-responsive dystonia A disease characterized by progressive difficulty in walking and in some cases by spasticity. Abbreviated DRD. DRD begins in childhood or adolescence. It can be successfully treated with drugs. Segawa dystonia is an important variant of DRD. Some scientists feel that DRD is not only rare but also rarely diagnosed because it mimics many of the symptoms of cerebral palsy. Medications that affect the chemical nerve transmitter dopa can improve symptoms.

dorsal Pertaining to the back, or posterior, side of a structure, as opposed to the ventral, or front, side. Some of the dorsal surfaces of the body are the back, buttocks, and calves, and the knuckle side of the hand. See also Appendix B, "Anatomic Orientation Terms."

dorsum The back or posterior side of a structure. Something that pertains to the dorsum is dorsal.

DOT Directly observed therapy.

double helix The structure of DNA, in which two strands of DNA spiral about each other.

double pneumonia See *pneumonia, double*.

double-blinded study A medical study in which both the subjects participating and the researchers are aware of when the experimental medication or procedure has been given. Double-blinded studies are often used when initial studies show particular promise.

double-jointed Popular term to describe a joint that is unusually flexible. Medically, the joint is said to be hyperflexible, hyperextensible, or hypermobile. People whose fingers are hypermobile have higher rates of arthritis in the hands. Marked joint hypermobility is a feature of Ehlers-Danlos syndrome. See also *Ehlers-Danlos syndrome*.

douche Usually, a stream of water applied into the vagina for cleansing purposes. A douche can use a solution, such as vinegar and water, rather than simple water, and it can be directed at any body cavity or part.

douching Using water or a medicated solution to clean the vagina and cervix or any other body cavity or part.

Douglas, pouch of See *pouch of Douglas*.

Dowager's hump An abnormal outward curvature of the thoracic vertebrae of the upper back. Compression of the front portion of the involved vertebrae due to osteoporosis leads to forward bending of the spine (kyphosis) and creates a hump at the upper back. Like most osteoporotic changes, it is often preventable.

Down syndrome A common birth defect that is usually due to an extra chromosome 21 (trisomy 21). Down syndrome causes mental retardation, a characteristic facial appearance, and multiple malformations. It occurs most frequently in children born to mothers over age 35. It is associated with a major risk for heart problems, a lesser risk of duodenal atresia (partially undeveloped intestines), and a minor but significant risk of acute leukemia. Treatment for Down syndrome includes early intervention to develop the mental and physical capacities to their utmost, speech therapy, and surgery, as needed, to repair malformations. About one-half of children with Down syndrome have heart defects, most often holes between the two sides of the heart (septal defects). With appropriate intervention, most children with Down syndrome live active, productive lives into at least middle age. Most are mildly to moderately retarded, although some have IQs in the low-normal range. Unfortunately, most adults with Down syndrome eventually develop Alzheimer's disease as they grow older. Down syndrome was also once called mongolism, a term now considered out of date, as the disorder has no relationship to Mongolian or Asian heritage. It can occur in any racial or ethnic group.

downregulation Reduction in the number of receptors on the surface of target cells, making the cells less sensitive to a hormone or another agent.

DPT Diphtheria-pertussis-tetanus vaccine. Today the more frequent abbreviation is DTP, for diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis vaccine. See also *DTP immunization*.

drain 1 A device for removing fluid from a cavity or wound, typically a tube or wick. 2 As a verb, to allow fluid to be released from a confined area.

DRD See *dopa-responsive dystonia*.

dream A series of thoughts, visions, and other sensations that occupy the mind during sleep. Dreams occur during that part of sleep when there are rapid eye movements (REM sleep). People have three to five periods of REM sleep per night, which usually come at intervals of 1 to 2 hours and are quite variable in length. An episode of REM sleep might be brief and last just 5 minutes, or it might be

much longer. Experiments have shown that a person can communicate with a person who is dreaming. Dreaming is not uniquely human; cats and dogs dream, judging from the physiologic features, and so, apparently, do many other animals. The content of dreams is sometimes the topic of psychoanalysis. Although this method of therapy is less common today than it once was, some physicians still look at dreams as a diagnostic clue to medical disorders. For example, children with bipolar disorder have been found to frequently have a particular type of nightmare, and especially lucid dreams are a side effect of certain medications. These clues indicate that chemicals in the brain, as well as life events and individuals' preoccupations, influence dreams. See also *REM sleep*.

drip Short for intravenous drip, a device for administering a fluid drop-by-drop into a vein via an intravenous (IV) route.

drug, ACE-inhibitor See *ACE inhibitor*.

drug, anti-angiogenesis See *anti-angiogenesis drug*.

drug, antihypertensive See *antihypertensive*.

drug, anti-infective See *agent, anti-infective*.

drug, antiviral See *antiviral agent*.

drug, over-the-counter A drug for which a prescription is not needed.

drug, prescription See *prescription drug*.

drug, teratogenic See *teratogen*.

drug activity A measure of the physiological response that a drug produces. A less active drug produces less response, and a more active drug produces more response.

Drug Enforcement Administration See *DEA*.

drug resistance The ability of bacteria and other microorganisms to withstand a drug that once stalled them or killed them.

drug screen An examination of biologic material to detect the presence of certain drugs and determine prior drug use. Also known as a drug test.

drug-coated stent See *coated stent*.

drug-induced Incited or caused by a drug.

drugs during pregnancy, dangerous See *teratogen*.

dry eyes See *xerophthalmia*.

dry mouth See *xerostomia*.

dry skin See *xeroderma*.

DSM-IV Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, fourth edition, the official source on definitions related to mental illness.

DT immunization A vaccination against diphtheria and tetanus. DT immunization does not protect from pertussis as the DTP and DTaP immunizations do. It is usually reserved for individuals who have had a significant adverse reaction to a DTP shot or who have a personal or family history of seizure disorder or brain disease. See also *diphtheria; tetanus*.

DTaP immunization Diphtheria-tetanus-acellular-pertussis immunization, a vaccine that, like DTP, protects against diphtheria, pertussis (whooping cough), and tetanus. DTaP is the same as DTP, except that it contains only acellular pertussis vaccine, which is thought to cause fewer of the minor reactions associated with immunization. Acellular pertussis vaccine is also probably less likely than regular pertussis vaccine to cause the more severe reactions occasionally seen following pertussis vaccination. It is currently recommended that DTaP be given at 18 months and at 4 to 6 years of age. See also *diphtheria; pertussis; tetanus*.

DTP immunization Diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis (whooping cough) immunization, a vaccine that is given in a series of five shots at 2, 4, 6, and 18 months of age and again at 4 to 6 years of age. Due to vaccination programs, diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis have become less common than they were in the past. However, there are still unvaccinated individuals who are capable of carrying and passing diphtheria and pertussis to others who are not vaccinated. Tetanus bacteria are prevalent in natural surroundings, such as contaminated soil. Children with compromised immune systems or known neurological disorders generally should not receive the DTP immunization, particularly during infancy. See also *DTaP immunization*.

DTs See *delirium tremens*.

dual diagnosis A diagnosis of both a mental illness and a substance abuse disorder.

Duchenne muscular dystrophy See *DMD*.

duct A walled passageway, such as a lymph duct, that carries fluid from one place to another. Also known as a ductus.

duct, thoracic See *thoracic duct*.

ductal carcinoma of the breast, infiltrating
See *carcinoma of the breast, infiltrating ductal*.

ductus See *duct*.

ductus arteriosus A short vessel through which blood headed from the heart via the pulmonary artery to the lungs is shunted before birth. This blood is shunted away from the lungs and returned to the aorta. When the shunt is open, it is said to be patent. A patent ductus arteriosus (PDA) usually closes at or shortly after birth, and blood is permitted from that moment on to course freely to the lungs. If the ductus stays open, flow reverses, and blood from the aorta is shunted into the pulmonary artery and recirculated through the lungs. The PDA may close later on its own, or it may need to be ligated (tied off) surgically.

due date The estimated calendar date when a baby is due to be born. Also called the estimated date of confinement (EDC).

dumping syndrome A group of symptoms, including cramps, nausea, diarrhea, and dizziness, that occur when food or liquid enters the small intestine too rapidly.

duodenal ulcer A crater (ulcer) in the lining of the beginning of the small intestine (duodenum). Ulcer formation is caused by infection with *Helicobacter pylori*. Other factors predisposing a person to ulcers include anti-inflammatory medications and cigarette smoking. Ulcer pain may not correlate with the presence or severity of ulceration. Diagnosis is made with barium X-ray or endoscopy. Complications of ulcers include bleeding, perforation, and blockage. Treatment involves using antibiotics to eradicate *H. pylori*, eliminating risk factors, and preventing complications.

duodenitis Inflammation of the duodenum, the first part of the small intestine.

duodenum The first part of the small intestine. The duodenum is a common site for peptic ulcer formation.

duplication, chromosome The addition of part of another chromosome to a chromosome. This is a common cause of genetic disease. The opposite of deletion.

Dupuytren's contracture A localized formation of scar tissue in the palm of the hand within a tissue (fascia) beneath the skin of the palm that normally covers the tendons that pull the fingers into a grip.

As Dupuytren's contracture progresses, more of the fascia becomes thickened and shortened. Dimpling and puckering of the skin over the area eventually occur. The precise cause of Dupuytren's contracture is not known. Causes include diabetes mellitus, seizure disorders (epilepsy), and alcoholism. It also can be inherited. Most patients with Dupuytren's contracture require only stretching exercises with heat application. When the palm is persistently sore with grasping, ultrasound treatments can be helpful. Sometimes local inflammation can be relieved with cortisone injection. For patients with significant fixed flexed posture (contracture) of the fingers from Dupuytren's contracture, surgical procedures can remove the scarred tissue to free the fingers.

dura mater The outermost and most fibrous of the three membranes (dura mater, arachnoid membrane, and pia mater) covering the brain and the spinal cord.

durable power of attorney A type of advance medical directive in which legal documents provide the power of attorney to another person in the case of an incapacitating medical condition. A durable power of attorney allows another person to make bank transactions, sign Social Security checks, apply for disability, or write checks to pay utility bills while an individual is medically incapacitated. Such documents are recommended for any patient who may be unable to make his or her wishes known during a long medical confinement.

DVT Deep vein thrombosis.

dwarfism Abnormally short stature, which may be due to a variety of causes. Some forms of dwarfism are hereditary. The Little People of America (LPA) defines dwarfism as a medical or genetic condition that usually results in an adult height of 148 cm (4 feet 10 inches) or shorter, among both men and women. Also known as nanism. Dwarfism is now more correctly called short stature. See also *achondroplasia; dwarfism; pituitary; hypochondroplasia; Seckel syndrome*.

dwarfism, achondroplastic See *achondroplasia*.

dwarfism, hypochondroplastic See *hypochondroplasia*.

dwarfism, pituitary Dwarfism caused by a lack of growth hormone, usually due to malfunction of the anterior pituitary gland. Children with growth hormone deficiency may grow normally for the first 2 to 3 years of life, but they then fall behind their peers in height. Unlike those with other forms of dwarfism, those with pituitary dwarfism are normally proportioned. Pituitary dwarfism can be treated with injections of human growth hormone

during childhood. Also known as hypopituitary dwarfism. See also *pituitary, anterior*.

dwarfism, rhizomelic Dwarfism with shortening especially of the ends of the limbs. See also *achondroplasia; dwarfism*.

dwarfism, Seckel-type See *Seckel syndrome*.

dwarfism, thanatophoric A form of short-limbed (micromelic) dwarfism that usually causes death within the first few hours after birth. The bones of the arms and legs are very short. The ribs are also extremely short, and the rib cage is small, leading to respiratory insufficiency and death. See also *achondroplasia; dwarfism; hypochondroplasia*.

Dx Abbreviation for diagnosis, the determination of the nature of a disease.

dys- Prefix denoting bad or difficult, as in *dyspepsia* (difficult digestion).

dysarthria Speech that is characteristically slurred, slow, and difficult to understand. A person with dysarthria may also have problems controlling the pitch, loudness, rhythm, and voice qualities of his or her speech. Dysarthria is caused by paralysis, weakness, or inability to coordinate the muscles of the mouth. Dysarthria can occur as a developmental disability. It may be a sign of a neuromuscular disorder such as cerebral palsy or Parkinson's disease. It may also be caused by a stroke, brain injury, or brain tumor. Treatment of dysarthria includes intensive speech therapy with a focus on oral-motor skill development.

dyscalculia A specific developmental disability that affects a person's ability to conceptualize and perform mathematics. Mild cases can often be compensated for with use of a calculator, but those with severe dyscalculia need special education services.

dysentery Inflammation of the intestine, with pain, diarrhea, bloody stools, and often a fever above 38.3°C (101°F). The causes of dysentery include bacteria (such as *Shigella*), protozoa (such as *amebae*), parasitic worms (such as *schistosomes*), and viruses. Dysentery can be fatal because it can cause severe dehydration. Treatment includes rapid rehydration, sometimes via IV, and medication.

dysentery, amebic See *amebic dysentery*.

dysfunction, erectile See *erectile dysfunction*.

dysgraphia A specific developmental disability that affects a person's handwriting ability. Problems may include fine-motor-muscle control of the hands and/or processing difficulties. Sometimes occupational

therapy is helpful for those with dysgraphia. Most successful students with dysgraphia that does not respond to occupational therapy or extra writing help use a typewriter, computer, or verbal communication.

dyskinesia The presence of involuntary movements, such as the choreiform movements seen in some cases of rheumatic fever or the characteristic movements of tardive dyskinesia. Some forms of dyskinesia are side effects of certain medications, particularly L-dopa and, in the case of tardive dyskinesia, antipsychotic drugs.

dyslexia A specific developmental disability that alters the way the brain processes written material. Because dyslexia is due to a defect in the brain's processing of graphic symbols, it is thought of primarily as a learning disability. The effects of dyslexia vary from person to person. The only common trait among people with dyslexia is that they read at levels significantly lower than are typical for people of their age and intelligence. Dyslexia is different from reading retardation which may, for example, reflect mental retardation or cultural deprivation. Treatment of dyslexia should be directed to the specific learning problems of the affected individual. The usual course is to modify teaching methods and the educational environment to meet the specific needs of the individual with dyslexia. The outlook varies. The prognosis is generally good, however, for individuals whose dyslexia is identified early, who have supportive families and friends and a strong self-image, and who are involved in appropriate remediation programs.

dyslipidemia A disorder of lipoprotein metabolism, including lipoprotein overproduction or deficiency. Dyslipidemias may be manifested by elevation of the total cholesterol, the "bad" low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol or the triglyceride concentrations, and by a decrease in the "good" high-density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol concentration in the blood. Dyslipidemias lead to atherosclerosis. See also *atherosclerosis*.

dysmenorrhea See *menstrual cramps*.

dysmorphic feature A body characteristic that is abnormally formed. A malformed ear, for example, is a dysmorphic feature.

dysmorphology The study of human congenital malformations (birth defects), particularly those affecting the anatomy (morphology) of the individual.

dysostosis, cleidocranial See *cleidocranial dysostosis*.

dyspareunia Pain during sexual intercourse. There are many causes of dyspareunia, including vaginal infection or dryness. Treatment is directed

toward the underlying cause and vaginal lubricant jelly can be of help.

dyspepsia Indigestion. A condition characterized by upper abdominal symptoms that may include pain or discomfort, bloating, feeling of fullness with very little intake of food, feeling of unusual fullness following meals, nausea, loss of appetite, heartburn, regurgitation of food or acid, and belching. The term dyspepsia is often used for these symptoms when they are not typical of a well-described disease (for example, gastrointestinal reflux) and the cause is not clear. After a cause for the symptoms has been determined, the term dyspepsia is usually dropped in favor of a more specific diagnosis.

dysphagia Difficulty swallowing. Dysphagia is due to abnormal nerve or muscle control. It is common, for example, after a stroke. Dysphagia can compromise nutrition and hydration and may lead to aspiration pneumonia and dehydration.

dysphonia An impairment of the voice. Difficulty in speaking. Hoarseness caused by a virus is a common form of dysphonia.

dysphonia, spasmodic A disorder that involves the muscles of the throat that control speech. Spasmodic dysphonia causes strained and difficult speaking or breathy and effortful speech. Also known as spastic dysphonia and laryngeal dystonia.

dysphoria Anxiety.

dysplasia Abnormality in form or development. For example, retinal dysplasia is abnormal formation of the retina during embryonic development.

dysplasia, bronchopulmonary Chronic lung disease in infants who have received mechanical respiratory support with high oxygenation in the neonatal period.

dysplasia, cleidocranial See *cleidocranial dysostosis*.

dysplastic nevus A mole whose appearance is different from that of common moles. Dysplastic nevi are generally larger than ordinary moles, and they have irregular borders. Their color is often not uniform. They are usually flat, but parts may be raised above the skin surface. Dysplastic nevi can be precancerous. See *cancer; skin*.

dyspnea Difficult or labored breathing; shortness of breath. Dyspnea is a sign of serious disease of the airway, lungs, or heart. The onset of dyspnea should not be ignored; it is reason to seek medical attention.

dyspnoea See *dyspnea*.

dyspraxia

dyspraxia Impaired or painful function of an organ of the body. See also *developmental dyspraxia*.

dyspraxia, developmental See *developmental dyspraxia*.

dyspraxia of speech A developmental disability characterized by difficulty with muscle control, specifically with the muscles involved in producing speech. The cause is unclear. Treatment involves intensive speech therapy that concentrates on oral-motor skills. See also *apraxia of speech*.

dysthymia A type of depressive disorder that involves long-term, chronic symptoms that are not disabling but that nonetheless keep a person from full function or from feeling good. Dysthymia is a less severe type of depression than major depression. However, people with dysthymia may also sometimes experience major depressive episodes, suggesting that there is a continuum between dysthymia and major depression. See also *depression; depression, major*.

dystocia Difficult or abnormal labor or delivery.

dystocia, cervical Dystocia caused by mechanical obstruction at the cervix.

dystocia, fetal Dystocia caused by the fetus, due to its size (too big), shape, or position in the uterus.

dystocia, placental Dystocia characterized by trouble delivering the placenta (afterbirth).

dystonia Involuntary movements and prolonged muscle contraction that result in twisting body motions, tremors, and abnormal posture. These movements may involve the entire body or only an isolated area. Dystonia can be inherited, may occur sporadically without any genetic pattern, may be associated with medications (particularly antipsychotic drugs), or may be a symptom of certain diseases (for example, a specific form of lung cancer). Some types of dystonia respond to dopamine. Dystonia can sometimes also be controlled with sedative-type medications or surgery.

dystonia, cranial A form of dystonia that affects the muscles of the head, face, and neck. Spasmodic torticollis can be classified as a type of cranial dystonia.

dystonia, dopa-responsive See *dopa-responsive dystonia*.

dystonia, focal A form of dystonia that affects only one muscle group. Common focal dystonias that affect the muscles of the hand and sometimes the forearm have been called typist's cramp, pianist's cramp, musician's cramp, golfer's cramp, and writer's cramp.

dystonia, focal, due to blepharospasm The involuntary, forcible closure of the eyelids. Focal dystonia due to blepharospasm is the second most common focal dystonia. The first symptom may be uncontrollable blinking. Only one eye may be affected initially, but eventually both eyes are usually involved. The spasms may leave the eyelids completely closed, causing functional blindness even though the eyes and vision are normal. Uncontrollable blinking may also be caused by tic disorders, including Tourette syndrome.

dystonia, focal, due to torticollis See *torticollis*.

dystonia, generalized torsion See *dystonia, idiopathic torsion*.

dystonia, idiopathic torsion A form of torsion dystonia that begins in childhood, around age 12. Symptoms typically start in one part of the body, usually in an arm or a leg, and eventually spread to the rest of the body within about 5 years. Early-onset torsion dystonia is not fatal, but it can be severely debilitating. Also known as generalized torsion dystonia. See also *dystonia, torsion*.

dystonia, laryngeal See *dysphonia, spasmodic*.

dystonia, oromandibular Dystonia that affects the muscles of the jaw, lips, and tongue. The jaw may be pulled either open or shut, and speech and swallowing can be difficult.

dystonia, Segawa See *dopa-responsive dystonia*.

dystonia, torsion A type of dystonia in which symptoms typically start in one part of the body, usually in an arm or a leg, and eventually spread to the rest of the body. A form that strikes in childhood is known as idiopathic torsion dystonia, early-onset torsion dystonia, and generalized torsion dystonia. See also *dystonia, idiopathic torsion*.

dystonia musculorum deformans See *dystonia, torsion*.

dystrophy, muscular See *muscular dystrophy*.

dystrophy, myotonic A relatively common inherited disease in which the muscles contract but have decreasing ability to relax (myotonia). Myotonic dystrophy is also characterized by the development of a mask-like, expressionless face, premature balding, cataracts, and abnormalities in heart rhythm. See *amplification; anticipation*.

dysuria Pain during urination, or difficulty urinating. Dysuria is usually caused by inflammation of the urethra, frequently as a result of infection.



E. coli *Escherichia coli*, a bacterium that normally resides in the colon. Although *E. coli* is normally present in the colon with no harmful consequences, it can cause disease when transmitted from human to human via water, food, or feces. Infants, young children, the elderly, and people with compromised immune systems are especially at risk for *E. coli* infection.

Eagle syndrome Inflammation of the styloid process, a spike-like growth that projects out of the base of the skull. If the styloid process is oversized or projects too far, the tissues in the throat can rub on it causing pain during the act of swallowing and pain on rotation of the neck. Diagnosis of Eagle syndrome is made by an X-ray demonstrating an abnormally elongated styloid process.

ear The hearing organ. There are three sections of the ear: outer, middle, and inner. The outer, or external, ear helps concentrate the vibrations of air created by sound onto the eardrum, causing the eardrum to vibrate. These vibrations are transmitted by a chain of little bones in the middle ear to the inner ear, where they stimulate the fibers of the auditory nerve to transmit impulses to the brain. The auditory cortex of the brain interprets speech and other sounds that the ear receives as information we can use to interpret our environment. See also *ear, inner; ear, middle; ear, outer*.

ear, cauliflower See *cauliflower ear*.

ear, external See *ear, outer*.

ear, inner A highly complex structure whose essential component for hearing is the membranous labyrinth, where the fibers of the auditory nerve connect the ear to the brain. The membranous labyrinth is a system of communicating sacs and ducts (tubes) filled with fluid (endolymph), and it is lodged within a cavity called the bony labyrinth. At some points the membranous labyrinth is attached to the bony labyrinth, and at other points the membranous labyrinth is suspended within the bony labyrinth in a fluid called perilymph. The bony labyrinth has three parts: a central cavity called the vestibule; semicircular canals, which open into the vestibule; and a spiraling tube called the cochlea. The membranous labyrinth also has a vestibule,

which consists of two sacs (the utricle and saccule) that are connected by a narrow tube. The larger of the two sacs, the utricle, is the principal organ of the vestibular system, which is the system of balance. This system informs a person about the position and movement of the head. The smaller of the two sacs, the saccule, is also connected by a membranous tube to the cochlea that contains the organ of Corti. The hair cells, which are the special sensory receptors for hearing, are in the organ of Corti.

ear, internal See *ear, inner*.

ear, low-set A minor anomaly in which the ear is situated below the normal location. Technically, the ear is low-set when the helix of the ear meets the cranium at a level below that of a horizontal plane through both inner canthi (the inside corners of the eyes). The presence of two or more minor anomalies such as this one in a child increases the probability that the child has a major malformation.

ear, malrotated See *ear, slanted*.

ear, middle A part of the ear that consists of the eardrum (tympanic membrane) and, beyond it, a cavity (tympanum). This cavity is connected to the pharynx (nasopharynx) via a canal known as the Eustachian tube. The middle ear cavity also contains a chain of three little bones, the ossicles (the malleus, incus, and stapes), which connect the eardrum to the internal ear. The middle ear communicates with the pharynx, equilibrates with external pressure, and transmits the eardrum vibrations to the inner ear.

ear, outer The part of the ear that is visible along the side of the head. The outer ear consists of the pinna, or auricle (the visible projecting portion of the ear), the external acoustic meatus (the outside opening to the ear canal), and the external ear canal, which leads to the eardrum. The outer ear concentrates air vibrations on the eardrum to make the eardrum vibrate.

ear, slanted A minor anomaly in which the ear is slanted more than usual—more than 15 degrees from the perpendicular. The presence of two or more minor anomalies such as this one in a child increases the probability that the child has a major malformation. Slanted ears are a common sign of fetal alcohol spectrum disorders. Both of these conditions also feature a very high rate of sensorineural hearing loss and ear infections. Also known as mal-rotated ear. See also *fetal alcohol effect; fetal alcohol syndrome*.

ear, swimmer's See *ear infection, external*.

ear piercing The practice of using a needle or needle gun to make holes through the ear lobe or other parts of the ear so that jewelry can be worn. Ear piercing can result in inflammation and/or

infection. Infected ear piercings should be washed and then treated with antibiotic cream. Further treatment involves either allowing the piercing to close or using only nonirritating jewelry (usually gold or hypoallergenic plastic). The likelihood of inflammation and infection is greater for piercings that go through hard cartilage, as found on the side and top of the outer ear, than for the soft bottom lobe of the ear.

ear pit A tiny pit in front of the ear, also called a preauricular pit. This minor anomaly is of no consequence in and of itself. It is more common in blacks than in whites, and in females than males. It can recur in families. However, the presence of two or more minor anomalies such as this one in a child increases the probability that the child also has a major malformation, such as a congenital heart defect.

ear puncture Puncture of the eardrum. Ear puncture may be due to an accident, as when something is stuck into the ear, or due to fluid pressure in the middle ear. The eardrum is occasionally punctured intentionally via surgery. A tiny incision (myringotomy) is made in the eardrum to allow fluid trapped behind the eardrum, usually thickened secretions, to be removed. An ear tube may be inserted after the fluid drains. See also *ear tube*.

ear ringing See *tinnitus*.

ear infection Infection of the ear by bacteria or viruses. Ear infections are the most frequent diagnosis in sick children. Ear infections occur less commonly in adults. Almost every child has one or more bouts of middle ear infection (otitis media) before age 6. The Eustachian tube is shorter in children than in adults, allowing easy entry of bacteria and viruses. Outer ear infection in adults is sometimes associated with excessive cotton swab irritation of the ear canal. Bottle-feeding is a risk factor for ear infections. Breast-feeding passes to the baby immunity that helps prevent ear infections. The position of the breast-feeding child is better than that of the bottle-feeding child for Eustachian tube function. If a child needs to be bottle-fed, holding the infant rather than allowing the child to lie down with the bottle is best. A child should not take the bottle to bed. Ear infections are not contagious, but the bacteria or viruses that cause them may be. A child with an ear infection can travel by airplane, but if the Eustachian tube is not functioning well, changes in pressure can cause discomfort. A child with a draining ear should not fly or swim. See also *ear infection, external*.

ear infection, external Infection of the skin covering the outer ear canal that leads in to the ear

drum, usually due to bacteria such as streptococcus, staphylococcus, or pseudomonas. External ear infection is usually caused by excessive water exposure. When water pools in the ear canal (frequently trapped by wax), the skin will become soggy and serve as an inviting culture media for bacteria. The first sign of an external ear infection is a feeling of fullness and itching in the ear. Next the ear canal swells, and drainage and pain follow. With severe infection, the ear canal can swell completely shut and the side of the face can become swollen. Moisture and irritation will prolong the course of swimmer's ear. For this reason, the ear should be kept dry. Scratching the inside of the ear or using Q-tips should be avoided. A hearing aid should be left out. Also known as otitis externa and swimmer's ear.

ear tag A rudimentary tag of ear tissue, often containing a core of cartilage, usually located just in front of the ear (auricle). This minor anomaly is common and harmless. However, the presence of two or more minor anomalies such as this one in a child increases the probability that the child has a major malformation. Also known as preauricular tag.

ear tube A small plastic tube that is inserted into the eardrum (tympanum) to keep the middle ear aerated for a prolonged period of time. To put an ear tube in place, a tiny surgical incision is made in the eardrum. Any fluid is removed. Water should not be allowed to enter the ear canal while the tubes are in place. Ear tubes may remain in place for several years. A physician may remove a tube during a routine office visit, or it may simply fall out of the ear naturally without the patient realizing it. Formerly known as a tympanostomy tube.

ear tumor A formation of benign (noncancerous) bumps on the external ear or within the external ear canal. Most of these lumps and bumps are harmless sebaceous cysts. However, some are bony overgrowths known as exostoses or osteomas. If they are large and interfere with hearing, they can be surgically removed with relative ease.

eardrum The tympanic membrane of the ear, or tympanum. The eardrum separates the middle ear from the external ear.

earthquake supplies kit See *disaster supplies*.

earwax A natural wax-like substance secreted by glands in the skin on the outer part of the ear canal. Earwax repels water and traps dust and sand particles. Usually small amounts of wax accumulate and then dry up and fall out of the ear canal, carrying unwanted particles. Earwax is helpful in normal amounts. The absence of earwax may result in dry, itchy ears, and in infection. There are two types of

earwax: wet and dry. Most whites and blacks have the wet type, and most Asians and Native Americans have the dry type.

Ebola virus A virus that causes a deadly form of hemorrhagic fever that is characterized by a rise in temperature and bleeding problems. Ebola virus epidemics have occurred mainly in Sudan and Zaire. The initial symptoms are fever and headache, followed by vomiting and diarrhea, muscle pain, rash, and bloody nose, spitting up of blood from the lungs and stomach, and bloody eyes. Ebola virus is highly contagious and is transmitted by contact with blood, feces, or body fluids from an infected person. The incubation period ranges from 2 to 21 days. There is no specific treatment for the disease. Death can occur within 10 days.

EBV Epstein-Barr virus.

ecchymosis Nonraised skin discoloration caused by the escape of blood into the tissues from ruptured blood vessels. Ecchymoses can occur in mucous membranes (for example, in the mouth).

ecchymotic Characterized by ecchymosis.

ECG Electrocardiogram.

echocardiography A diagnostic test of the heart that uses ultrasound waves to form images of the heart chambers, valves, and surrounding structures. Echocardiography can measure cardiac output, and it is a sensitive test for detecting inflammation around the heart (pericarditis). It can also be used to detect abnormal anatomy and infections of the heart valves.

echolalia The involuntary, parrot-like repetition (echoing) of a word or phrase just spoken by another person. Echolalia is a feature of schizophrenia (especially the catatonic form), Tourette syndrome, and other disorders. See also *echopraxia; schizophrenia; Tourette syndrome*.

echopraxia The involuntary imitation of the movements of another person. Echopraxia is a feature of schizophrenia (especially the catatonic form), Tourette syndrome, and some other neurologic diseases. See also *echolalia*.

echovirus A group of viruses found in the intestinal tract. The “echo” part of the name is an acronym for enteric cytopathic human orphan viruses. “Orphan” implied that these viruses were not associated with any disease. However, it is now known that echoviruses can cause a number of different diseases, including rashes, diarrhea, respiratory infections (such as the common cold, sore throat, bronchitis, and bronchiolitis), muscle

inflammation, meningitis, encephalitis, and inflammation around the heart.

eclampsia The presence of one or more convulsions in a pregnant woman who has preeclampsia. Eclampsia is a frequent cause of maternal death in underdeveloped countries, and it is a serious problem even in developed countries. Treatment is with antispasmodic medication, notably magnesium sulfate. See also *HELLP syndrome; preeclampsia*.

ecogenetics The interaction of genetics with the environment. For example, persons with the genetic disease phenylketonuria (PKU) lack an enzyme that is needed to process the amino acid phenylalanine, and they require a special environment: a diet low in phenylalanine.

economy-class syndrome See *deep vein thrombosis*.

ecstasy 1 A state of rapture and trancelike elation. 2 A street name for 3, 4-methylenedioxymethamphetamine (MDMA), a synthetic, mind-altering drug with hallucinogenic and amphetamine-like properties—other street names include “Adam” and “XTC.” Its chemical structure is similar to two other synthetic drugs, MDA and methamphetamine. See also *designer drug*.

ECT Electroconvulsive therapy.

ectoderm The outermost of the three primary germ cell layers (the other two being the mesoderm and endoderm) that make up a very young embryo. The ectoderm differentiates (specializes) to give rise to many important tissues and structures, including the outer layer of the skin and its appendages (such as the sweat glands, hair, and nails), the teeth, the lens of the eye, parts of the inner ear, the nerves, the brain, and the spinal cord. Stem cell research has shown that some cells within ectodermal structures retain their ability to differentiate into other tissues. For example, some cells in the brain (ectoderm) can become bone marrow (mesoderm). See also *differentiation; embryo; endoderm; mesoderm*.

ectodermal dysplasia A genetic disorder in which the skin and associated structures (the hair, nails, teeth, and sweat glands) develop abnormally. X-linked anhidrotic (nonsweating) ectodermal dysplasia is most common; because it is an X-linked trait, it mainly affects males. There is also an autosomal dominant form that affects both males and females. The term ectodermal dysplasia refers to the abnormal development (dysplasia) of structures derived from one of the germ cell layers in the embryo (ectoderm).

-ectomy The surgical removal of something. For example, a lumpectomy is the surgical removal of a lump, a tonsillectomy is the removal of the tonsils, and an appendectomy is removal of the appendix.

ectopia cordis A birth defect that results in an abnormal location of the heart, usually outside the chest.

ectopic In the wrong place, out of place. For example, an ectopic kidney is a kidney that is not in the usual location.

ectopic pregnancy A pregnancy that occurs outside of the uterus. Usually, ectopic pregnancies occur because a fertilized egg settles and grows in a Fallopian tube. However, ectopic pregnancies can occur in other locations, such as the ovary, cervix, and abdominal cavity. An ectopic pregnancy is usually due to the inability of a fertilized egg to make its way through a Fallopian tube into the uterus. Risk factors include pelvic inflammatory disease (PID); adhesions from surgery on or near a Fallopian tube; endometriosis, a condition in which tissue like that normally lining the uterus is found outside the uterus; a prior ectopic pregnancy; a history of repeated induced abortions; and a history of infertility problems or use of medications to stimulate ovulation. A major concern with ectopic pregnancy is internal bleeding. Pain is usually the first symptom. The pain, which is usually sharp and stabbing, is often one-sided and may occur in the pelvis, abdomen, or even the shoulder or neck (due to blood from a ruptured ectopic pregnancy building up under the diaphragm and the pain being “referred” up to the shoulder or neck). Diagnosis is made through a pelvic exam to test for pain, tenderness, and a mass in the abdomen. The most useful laboratory test is the measurement of the hormone human chorionic gonadotropin (hCG). In a normal pregnancy, the level of hCG doubles about every 2 days during the first 10 weeks, whereas in an ectopic pregnancy, the hCG rise is usually slower and lower than normal. Ultrasound can also help determine whether a pregnancy is ectopic, as can culdocentesis, the insertion of a needle through the vagina into the space behind the uterus to see whether there is blood there from a ruptured Fallopian tube. Treatment includes surgery, often by laparoscopy, to remove the ill-fated pregnancy. A ruptured Fallopian tube usually has to be removed. If the tube has not yet burst, a physician may be able to repair it. The outlook for future pregnancies depends on the extent of the surgery.

eczema An inflammatory reaction of the skin in which there are tiny blister-like raised areas in the early stage followed by reddening, swelling, bumps, crusting, and thickening and scaling. Eczema char-

acteristically causes itching and burning. Also known as atopic dermatitis. Eczema is a very common skin problem that may start in infancy, later in childhood, or in adulthood. It can be caused by allergies, diabetes, sunburn, or unknown reasons. It can be treated with medications, commonly topical cortisone creams that reduce inflammation. There are numerous types of eczema, including atopic dermatitis, contact eczema, seborrheic eczema, nummular eczema, neurodermatitis, stasis dermatitis, and dyshidrotic eczema.

eczema, allergic contact A red, itchy, weepy reaction that occurs where the skin has come into contact with a substance that the immune system recognizes as foreign, such as poison ivy or certain preservatives in creams and lotions. Also known as allergic contact dermatitis.

eczema, contact A localized reaction that involves redness, itching, and burning that occurs where the skin has come into contact with an allergen (an allergy-causing substance) or an irritant such as an acid, a cleaning agent, or another chemical.

eczema, dyshidrotic Irritation of the skin on the palms of the hands and the soles of the feet that is characterized by clear, deep blisters that itch and burn.

eczema, nummular Coin-shaped patches of irritated skin that may be crusted, scaling, and extremely itchy. Nummular eczema appears most commonly on the arms, back, buttocks, and lower legs.

eczema, seborrheic See *seborrhea*.

ED Erectile dysfunction.

EDC Estimated date of confinement. See *due date*.

edema The swelling of soft tissues as a result of excess fluid accumulation. Edema is often most prominent in the lower legs and feet toward the end of the day because fluid pools while people maintain an upright position.

edema, hereditary angioneurotic Localized skin swelling that results from an inherited deficiency of the C1 esterase inhibitor protein, which normally prevents activation of a cascade of proteins that leads to the occurrence of angioedema. Patients can develop recurrent attacks of swollen tissues, pain in the abdomen, and swelling of the voice box (larynx) that can compromise breathing. The diagnosis is confirmed when abnormally low levels of C1

esterase inhibitor are detected in the blood. Treatment options include antihistamines and male steroids (androgens). Also known as hereditary angioedema.

edema, periorbital Swelling around the eyes due to excess water accumulation.

edentulous Being without teeth. Complete loss of all natural teeth can substantially reduce quality of life, self-image, and daily functioning.

Edwards syndrome See *trisomy 18 syndrome*.

EEG Electroencephalogram.

EFA Essential fatty acid.

effacement Thinning of the cervix, which occurs before and while the cervix dilates.

effect, founder See *founder effect*.

efferent Carrying away. For example, an artery is an efferent vessel that carries blood away from the heart, and an efferent nerve carries impulses away from the central nervous system. The opposite of efferent is afferent.

efferent nerve A nerve that carries impulses away from the central nervous system.

efferent vessel A vessel that carries blood away from the heart. Hence, an efferent vessel is an artery or an arteriole (a little artery).

effusion Too much fluid, an outpouring of fluid. For example, a pleural effusion is an abnormal accumulation of fluid in the pleural space between the lungs and the chest wall, while a knee effusion is an abnormal amount of fluid in the knee joint. A hemorrhagic effusion contains blood in the fluid.

effusion, pericardial Too much fluid within the fibrous sac (pericardium) that surrounds the heart. The inner surface of the pericardium is lined by a layer of flat cells (mesothelial cells) that normally secrete a small amount of fluid, which acts as a lubricant to allow normal heart movement within the chest. A pericardial effusion involves the presence of an excessive amount of pericardial fluid, a pale yellow serous fluid, within the pericardium.

effusion, pleural Excess fluid between the two membranes that cover the lungs (the visceral and parietal pleurae) separating the lungs from the chest wall. A small quantity of fluid is normally spread thinly over the visceral and parietal pleurae and acts as a lubricant between the two membranes. Any significant increase in the quantity of pleural

fluid is a pleural effusion. The most common symptoms of pleural effusion are chest pain and painful breathing (pleurisy). Many pleural effusions cause no symptoms but are discovered during physical examination or detected on chest X-rays; X-ray is the most convenient way to confirm the diagnosis. Pleural effusion can be caused by heart and kidney failure, hypoalbuminemia (low levels of albumin in the blood), infections, pulmonary embolism, and malignancies.

EGD Esophagogastroduodenoscopy. See *endoscopy, upper*.

egg See *ovum*.

EGG See *electrogastrogram*.

egg sac See *ovary*.

Ehlers-Danlos syndrome A heritable disorder of connective tissue that is characterized by easy bruising, joint hypermobility (loose joints), skin laxity, and weakness of tissues. Abbreviated EDS. There are a number of different types of EDS, each of which has these characteristic features. The variations of EDS are treated according to their particular manifestations. Skin protection (against injury of trauma, sun, and so on) is critical. Wounds must be tended to with great care, and infections must be treated and prevented. Suturing can be difficult because the skin can be extremely fragile. Joint injury must be avoided, and bracing may sometimes be necessary to maintain joint stability. Exercises that strengthen the muscles that support the joints can help to minimize joint injury. Contact sports and activities involving joint impact should be avoided.

ehrlichiosis An acute tick-borne disease first reported in humans in 1986. Ehrlichiosis is due to infection by the rickettsia microbe, *Ehrlichia canis*, which is usually carried by the brown dog tick. Ehrlichiosis is similar to Rocky Mountain spotted fever, characterized by high fever, headache, malaise, and muscle pain, but without the rash. See also *rickettsial diseases*.

eight-day measles Rubeola (measles). See also *measles*.

ejaculation Ejection of sperm and seminal fluid during an orgasm in a male.

ejection fraction The percentage of blood that is pumped out of a filled ventricle as a result of a heartbeat. The heart does not eject all the blood in the ventricle. Only about two-thirds of the blood is normally pumped out with each beat, and that fraction is referred to as the ejection fraction. The ejection fraction is an indicator of the heart's health. If

the heart is diseased from a heart attack or another heart condition, the ejection fraction may decrease.

EKG Electrocardiogram.

elbow The juncture of the long bones in the middle portion of the upper extremity. The bone of the arm (humerus) meets both the ulna (the inner bone of the forearm) and radius (the outer bone of the forearm) to form a hinge joint at the elbow. The radius and ulna also meet one another in the elbow to permit a small amount of rotation of the forearm. The elbow therefore functions to move the arm like a hinge (forward and backward) and in rotation (outward and inward). The biceps muscle is the major muscle that flexes the elbow hinge, and the triceps muscle is the major muscle that extends it. The primary stability of the elbow is provided by the ulnar collateral ligament, located on the medial (inner) side of the elbow. The outer bony prominence of the elbow is the lateral epicondyle, a part of the humerus bone. Tendons attached to this area can be injured, causing inflammation or tendonitis (lateral epicondylitis, or tennis elbow). The inner portion of the elbow is a bony prominence called the medial epicondyle of the humerus. Additional tendons from muscles attach here and can be injured, likewise causing inflammation or tendonitis (medial epicondylitis, or golfer's elbow).

elbow, arthritis of the Inflammation of the elbow joint. Arthritis of the elbow can be due to many systemic forms of arthritis, including rheumatoid arthritis, gouty arthritis, and psoriatic arthritis. Elbow arthritis is associated with signs of warmth, swelling, pain, tenderness, and decreased range of motion.

elbow, golfer's Medial epicondylitis caused by injured tendons from the muscles that attach to the bony prominence in the inner portion of the elbow called the medial epicondyle.

elbow, tennis Lateral epicondylitis caused by injured tendons from the muscles that attach to the outer bone of the elbow (called the lateral epicondyle), which is a part of the humerus bone.

elbow, tip of the The bony tip of the elbow, which is formed by the near end of the ulna, one of the two long bones in the forearm (the other is the radius). See also *olecranon*.

elbow bursitis A common form of bursitis that is also known as olecranon bursitis. At the tip of the elbow (olecranon area) is the olecranon bursa, a fluid-filled sac that functions as a gliding surface to reduce friction during motion. Because of its location, the olecranon bursa is subject to trauma, rang-

ing from simple repetitive weight-bearing while leaning to banging in a fall. Such trauma can cause elbow bursitis in the area overlying the point of the elbow. If elbow bursitis is not caused by infection, treatment includes rest and the use of ice and medications for inflammation and pain. Infectious bursitis is treated with antibiotics, aspiration, and surgery.

elbow joint See *elbow*.

elder abuse The physical, sexual, or emotional abuse of an elderly person, usually one who is disabled or frail. Like child abuse, elder abuse is a crime that all health and social services professionals are mandated to report.

elective mutism Complete lack of speech, believed to be chosen on the part of the patient. True elective mutism may be a reaction to a traumatic event, the aftermath of damage to or pain in the mouth or throat, or a symptom of extreme shyness. In other cases, the lack of speech is eventually found not to be chosen, but rather a symptom of damage or deformity of the speech apparatus or of autism. See also *selective mutism*.

electric shock An extreme stimulation of the nerves, muscles, and other parts of the body that is caused by contact with electrical current. Electric shock can cause burning at the site of entry of the electricity, unconsciousness, and death. If a person may be in contact with high voltage, no one else should touch the person directly or go near the area. Using a dry, nonconductive object such as a wooden stick, the switch should be switched off, to break the contact between the electrical source and the patient. Immediate emergency medical help is required. While waiting for emergency treatment, the victim must be kept warm and CPR may be necessary.

electric shock therapy See *electroconvulsive therapy*.

electrocardiogram A recording of the electrical activity of the heart. Abbreviated ECG and EKG. An ECG is a simple, noninvasive procedure. Electrodes are placed on the skin of the chest and connected in a specific order to a machine that, when turned on, measures electrical activity all over the heart. Output usually appears on a long scroll of paper that displays a printed graph of activity on a computer screen. The initial diagnosis of heart attack is usually made through observation of a combination of clinical symptoms and characteristic ECG changes. An ECG can detect areas of muscle deprived of oxygen and/or dead tissue in the heart. If a medication is known to sometimes adversely

affect heart function, a baseline ECG may be ordered before the patient starts taking the medicine, and follow-up testing may occur at regular intervals to look for any changes.

electroconvulsive therapy The use of controlled, measured doses of electric shock to induce convulsions. Convulsions so induced can sometimes treat clinical depression that is unresponsive to medication. Abbreviated ECT.

electrodesiccation Use of an electric current to destroy cancerous tissue and control bleeding.

electrodiathermy See *cauterization*.

electroencephalogram A technique for studying the electrical currents within the brain. Electrodes are attached to the scalp. Wires attach these electrodes to a machine, which records the electrical impulses. The results are either printed out or displayed on a computer screen. Different patterns of electrical impulses can denote various forms of epilepsy. Abbreviated EEG.

electrogastrogram A test in which the electrical current generated by the muscle of the stomach is sensed and recorded in a manner very similar to that of an electrocardiogram of the heart. Abbreviated EGG. An EGG is performed by taping electrodes to the skin on the upper abdomen over the stomach. Recordings from the muscle are stored and analyzed by a computer. An EGG is performed to diagnose motility disorders of the stomach, conditions that prevent the muscles of the stomach from working normally.

electrolarynx A battery-operated instrument that makes a humming sound to help people who have lost their larynx talk.

electrolysis Permanent removal of body hair, including the hair root, with an electronic device. Although electrolysis is promoted as a permanent process, many people find that hair does grow back (albeit slowly) after electrolysis. Electrolysis may be done by a dermatologist, by an electrolysis technician, or by a facial technologist or esthetician.

electrolyte A substance that dissociates into ions in solution and acquires the capacity to conduct electricity. Sodium, potassium, chloride, calcium, and phosphate are examples of electrolytes, informally known as lytes. Electrolyte replacement is needed when a patient has prolonged vomiting or diarrhea, and as a response to strenuous athletic activity. Commercial electrolyte solutions are available, particularly for sick children (solutions such as Pedialyte) and athletes (sports drinks, such as

Gatorade). Electrolyte monitoring is important in treatment of anorexia and bulimia.

electromyogram A test that records the electrical activity of muscles. Normal muscles produce a typical pattern of electrical current that is usually proportional to the level of muscle activity. Diseases of muscle and/or nerves can produce abnormal electromyogram patterns. Abbreviated EMG. Also known as a myogram.

electron microscope A microscope in which an electron beam replaces light to form the image. An electron microscope permits greater magnification and resolution than an optical microscope, but the electron densities of objects are shown rather than their actual images. Abbreviated EM.

electron microscopy See *electron microscope*.

electrophoresis A method used in clinical and research laboratories for separating molecules according to their size and electrical charge. An electric current is passed through a medium that contains the mixture of molecules. Each kind of molecule travels through the medium at a different rate, depending on its electrical charge and molecular size. Separation of the molecules occurs based on these differences.

electroretinography A test in which the electrical potentials generated by the retina of the eye are measured when the retina is stimulated by light. Abbreviated ERG. In an ERG, an electrode is placed on the cornea at the front of the eye that measures the electrical response of the rods and cones, the visual cells in the retina at the back of the eye. An ERG may be useful in the evaluation of hereditary and acquired disorders of the retina. The instrument used to conduct ERG is an electroretinograph, and the resultant recording is called an electroretinogram.

electroshock therapy See *electroconvulsive therapy*.

elephant nails See *pachyonychia congenita*.

ELISA Enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay, a rapid immunochemical test that involves an enzyme used for measuring a wide variety of tests of body fluids. ELISA tests detect substances that have antigenic properties, primarily proteins rather than small molecules and ions, such as glucose and potassium. Some of these substances include hormones, bacterial antigens, and antibodies. ELISA tests are generally highly sensitive and specific, and they compare favorably with radioimmuno assay (RIA) tests. They have the added advantage of not

requiring the use of radioisotopes or radiation-counting apparatus.

elliptocytosis A blood disorder characterized by elliptically shaped red blood cells with variable breakup of red cells (hemolysis) and varying degrees of anemia. Inherited as a dominant trait, elliptocytosis is due to the mutation of one of the genes that encodes proteins of the red cell membrane skeleton. There are several forms of elliptocytosis caused by specific gene abnormalities.

EM 1 Electron microscope. **2** Electron microscopy.

embolism The obstruction of a blood vessel by a foreign substance or a blood clot that travels through the bloodstream, lodging in a blood vessel, plugging the vessel. Foreign substances that can cause embolisms include air bubbles, amniotic fluid, globules of fat, clumps of bacteria, chemicals (such as talc), and drugs (mainly illegal ones). Blood clots are the most common causes of embolisms. A pulmonary embolus is a blood clot that has been carried through the blood into the pulmonary artery (the main blood vessel from the heart to the lung) or one of its branches, plugging that vessel within the lung.

embolism, crossed See *embolism, paradoxical*.

embolism, paradoxical Passage of a clot (thrombus) from a vein to an artery. When clots in veins break off (embolize), they travel first to the right side of the heart and, normally, then to the lungs, where they lodge. The lungs act as a filter to prevent the clots from entering arterial circulation. However, when there is a hole in the wall between the two upper chambers of the heart (atrial septal defect), a clot can cross from the right to the left side of the heart, and then pass into the arteries as a paradoxical embolism. When a clot enters arterial circulation, it can travel to the brain, block a vessel there, and cause a stroke (cerebrovascular accident). Because of the risk of stroke from paradoxical embolism, it is usually recommended that even small atrial septal defects be repaired. Also known as crossed embolism.

embolization The clogging of small blood vessels with a substance that blocks the flow of blood. Embolization can occur as an abnormal natural event, such as when a blood clot travels from the leg to lodge in the blood vessels of the lungs, or it can be used as a treatment method, such as when material is purposely placed in blood vessels that supply a tumor in the hopes of destroying that tumor. See also *embolism*.

embolus A blockage or plug that obstructs a blood vessel. Examples of emboli are detached blood clots, clumps of bacteria, and clumps of other foreign material, such as air.

embryo An organism in the early stages of growth and differentiation, from fertilization to the beginning of the third month of pregnancy (in humans). After that point in time, an embryo is called a fetus.

embryonal rhabdomyosarcoma See *sarcoma botryoides*.

embryonic development See *prenatal development*.

embryonic hemoglobin See *hemoglobin E*.

emergency contraceptive See *contraceptive, emergency*.

emergency medical technician A person trained in the performance of the procedures required in emergency medical care. Abbreviated EMT. EMTs generally work with mobile emergency response teams, such as ambulance or fire and rescue teams. Some EMTs are employed in emergency rooms, and some are hired to be present at sporting events, camps, or other locations where emergency response might be needed.

emergency supplies kit See *disaster supplies*.

emesis Vomiting.

emetic Something that causes vomiting. A common emetic is syrup of ipecac.

EMG See *electromyogram*.

emotional child abuse See *child abuse*.

emphysema **1** A lung condition characterized by an abnormal accumulation of air in the lung's many tiny air sacs (alveoli). As air continues to collect in these sacs, they become enlarged and may break or be damaged and form scar tissue. Emphysema is strongly associated with cigarette smoking, a practice that causes lung irritation. It can also be associated with or worsened by repeated infection of the lungs, such as that seen in chronic bronchitis. The best response to the early warning signs of emphysema is prevention: smoking cessation and immediate treatment for incipient lung infections. **2** Air accumulated abnormally into body tissues, such as between layers of skin (subcutaneous emphysema).

empiric risk The chance that a disease will occur in a family, based on experience with the

diagnosis, past history, and medical records rather than theory.

empirical Based on experience and observation rather than on systematic logic. Experienced physicians often use empirical reasoning to make diagnoses, based on having seen many cases over the years. Less-experienced physicians are more likely to use diagnostic guides and manuals. In practice, both approaches (if properly applied) can lead to the same diagnosis.

empyema Pus in the pleural space between the outer surface of the lung and the chest wall. Empyema is typically a result of a serious bacterial infection. Empyema is a type of pleural effusion, one that is grossly infected. See also *effusion, pleural; pneumonia*.

EMT Emergency medical technician.

enanthem A rash inside the body. Koplik spots within the mouth in measles constitute enanthem. By contrast, a rash on the outside of the body is called exanthem. A patient with measles can have both exanthem and enanthem. See also *exanthem; measles; rash*.

encapsulated Confined to a specific area. For example, an encapsulated tumor remains in a compact form.

encephalitis Inflammation of the brain, which may be caused by a bacterium, a virus, or an allergic reaction. Some forms of viral encephalitis are contagious. Encephalitis usually runs a short course, with full recovery within a week, but can cause brain damage and death. Treatment of encephalitis must begin as early as possible to avoid potentially serious and lifelong effects. Depending on the cause of the inflammation, treatment may include use of antibiotics, antiviral medications, and anti-inflammatory drugs. If brain damage results from encephalitis, therapy (such as physical therapy or cognitive restoration therapy) may help patients regain lost functions.

encephalitis, West Nile See *West Nile virus*.

encephalomyelitis Inflammation of both the brain and the spinal cord. Encephalomyelitis can be caused by a variety of conditions, including viruses that infect the nervous system. One type of encephalomyelitis, acute disseminated encephalomyelitis, occurs most commonly after an acute viral infection, such as measles (rubeola). It is due to an autoimmune attack on the nervous system, meaning that the immune system mistakenly

attacks body tissue that it believes to be the measles virus. Also known as myeloencephalitis.

encephalopathic syndrome A dangerous condition that is associated with lithium toxicity.

encephalopathy, mitochondrial See *MELAS syndrome*.

enchondroma A common benign tumor of cartilage within bone. Enchondroma most often appears as a bony nodule in the hand or foot of a patient aged 10 to 30 years. Pain may be a sign of a fracture or malignant transformation. If fracture occurs, the enchondroma may be treated with removal and bone grafting. No treatment is needed if there are no symptoms. Enchondromas rarely become malignant as chondrosarcomas.

enchondromatosis See *Ollier's disease*.

encopresis The inability to control the elimination of stool. Encopresis can have a variety of causes, including inability to control the anal sphincter muscle or gastrointestinal problems, particularly chronic diarrhea and Crohn's disease. Several neurological disorders, including Tourette syndrome and obsessive-compulsive disorder, are also occasionally associated with the symptom of encopresis, particularly in children. Preventive care for encopresis includes frequent scheduled toileting and the wearing of pads or diapers to prevent embarrassing soiling. Careful cleaning is important to prevent skin breakdown. Treatment of encopresis usually involves treatment of the underlying disorder; cognitive behavioral therapy or behavior modification is also sometimes helpful. Also known as fecal incontinence.

endarterectomy An operation to clear an artery of accumulated cholesterol-containing matter along its inner wall to restore normal blood flow. An endarterectomy removes diseased material from the inside of an artery, and also removes any occluding atheromatous deposits, the aim being to leave a smooth lining within the vessel, so the blood can flow freely. See also *atherosclerosis*.

endemic Present in a community at all times, but occurring in low frequency. For example, malaria is endemic in some areas of the world. In comparison to endemic, epidemic denotes a sudden outbreak, and pandemic denotes an epidemic that spreads across a region. See also *epidemic; pandemic*.

endemic typhus See *typhus, murine*.

endocardium The lining of the interior surface of the heart chambers. The endocardium consists of a layer of endothelial cells and an underlying layer of connective tissue.

endocervical curettage The removal of tissue from the inside of the cervix, using a spoon-shaped instrument called a curette.

endocrine Pertaining to hormones and the glands that make and secrete them into the bloodstream through which they travel to affect distant organs. See also *endocrinology; endocrinopathy*.

endocrinology The study of the medical aspects of hormones, including diseases and conditions associated with hormonal imbalance, damage to the glands that make hormones, or the use of synthetic or natural hormonal drugs. An endocrinologist is a physician who specializes in the management of hormone conditions.

endocrinopathy A disease of an endocrine gland. The term endocrinopathy is commonly used as a medical term for a hormone problem. Common endocrinopathies include hyperthyroidism and hypothyroidism.

endoderm The innermost of the three primary germ cell layers (the other two being the mesoderm and ectoderm) that make up the very early embryo. It differentiates to give rise first to the embryonic gut and then to the linings of the respiratory and digestive tracts and the liver and pancreas. Also referred to as entoderm. See also *differentiation; ectoderm; embryo; mesoderm*.

endogenous Originating from inside an organism. For example, endogenous cholesterol is cholesterol that is made inside the body, not derived from the diet. See also *exogenous*.

endometrial biopsy A common procedure for sampling the inner lining of the uterus (the endometrium). Endometrial biopsy is usually done to learn the cause of abnormal uterine bleeding, although it may be used to determine the cause of infertility, test for uterine infections, and monitor the response to certain medications. The main problems resulting from endometrial biopsy are cramping and pain. Vaginal bleeding, infection, and, very rarely, perforation of the uterus can also occur.

endometrial hyperplasia A condition characterized by overgrowth of the lining of the uterus.

endometriosis A noncancerous condition in which tissue that looks like endometrial tissue grows in abnormal places, most often in the

abdomen. Although most women with endometriosis have no symptoms, pelvic pain during menstruation or ovulation can be a symptom of endometriosis. Endometriosis can also be suspected by a physician during a physical examination and confirmed by surgery, usually laparoscopy. Treatment options include medication for pain, hormone therapy, and laparoscopic surgery to remove the growths (hysterectomy was once done but is usually ineffective). Most women with endometriosis are completely unaware of these growths, and are not harmed by their presence. However, endometriosis can increase the risk of ectopic pregnancy, a potentially life-threatening condition that can cause infertility. See also *adenomyosis*.

endometritis Inflammation of the endometrium, the inner layer of the uterus.

endometrium The inner layer of the uterus.

endonuclease An enzyme that cleaves a nucleic acid (DNA or RNA) at specific sites in the nucleotide base sequence.

endorphin A hormonal compound that is made by the body in response to pain or extreme physical exertion. Endorphins are similar in structure and effect to opiate drugs. They are responsible for the so-called runner's high, and release of these essential compounds permits humans to endure childbirth, accidents, and strenuous everyday activities.

endoscope A lighted optical instrument that is used to get a deep look inside the body. An endoscope, which may be rigid or flexible, can be used to examine organs, such as the throat or esophagus. Specialized endoscopes are named for where they are intended to look. Examples include the cystoscope (bladder), nephroscope (kidney), bronchoscope (bronchi), laryngoscope (larynx), otoscope (ear), arthroscope (joint), laparoscope (abdomen), and gastrointestinal endoscopes.

endoscopic gastrostomy, percutaneous See *gastrostomy, percutaneous endoscopic*.

Endoscopic Retrograde Cholangio-Pancreatography See ERCP.

endoscopy Examination of the inside of the body by using a lighted, flexible instrument called an endoscope. In general, an endoscope is introduced into the body through a natural opening such as the mouth or anus. Although endoscopy can include examination of other organs, the most common endoscopic procedures evaluate the esophagus, stomach, and portions of the intestine.

endoscopy, upper A procedure that enables the examiner (usually a gastroenterologist) to examine the esophagus, the stomach, and the first portion of small bowel (duodenum) by using a thin, flexible tube that can be looked through or seen through on a TV monitor. Also known as esophagogastroduodenoscopy (EGD).

endostatin A fragment of a protein, collagen 18, that is found in all blood vessels. Endostatin is normally secreted by blood vessels in response to tumors. Endostatin appears to halt the process of developing new blood vessels (angiogenesis), which is necessary to tumor development.

endothelial Relating to the endothelium.

endothelium The single layer of cells that lines the inner surfaces of the blood vessels and the heart. The endothelium is where cholesterol can accumulate as plaque in arteries affected by arteriosclerosis. The endothelium is a specific form of epithelium. See also *epithelium*.

endotracheal tube A flexible plastic tube that is put in the mouth and then down into the trachea (airway). A physician inserts an endotracheal tube under direct vision, with the help of a laryngoscope, in a procedure called endotracheal intubation. The purpose of using an endotracheal tube is to ventilate the lungs.

endourologist A urologist with special expertise in navigating inside the kidneys, ureter, and bladder, using endoscopic optical instruments and other tools. Endourologists are specialists in diagnosing and treating diseases of these organs.

engagement The sensation that a pregnant woman feels when the lowermost part of the fetus descends and is engaged in the mother's pelvis, an event that typically occurs 2 to 3 weeks before labor begins. Women who have had two or more prior viable pregnancies (multiparas) may not experience engagement until labor actually begins. When engagement occurs, there is a visible change in the shape of the woman's stomach because the baby drops lower in the abdomen. Also known as lightening because the pregnant woman feels lighter after this event. Most women feel more comfortable after engagement, but some may experience lower back pain as the fetus presses close to the tailbone and the sciatic nerve. Others may find movement more difficult due to the lower center of gravity caused by engagement.

ENGERIX-B A vaccine against the hepatitis B virus. ENGERIX-B stimulates the body's immune system to produce antibodies against the virus.

engram An enduring change in the brain that is postulated to account for the persistence of memory.

enophthalmos Sunken eyeball. Enophthalmos can be a sign of severe dehydration.

exoxaparin A low-molecular-weight version of heparin that acts like heparin as an anticoagulant medication. Exoxaparin is used to prevent thromboembolic complications (blood clots that travel from their site of origin through the bloodstream to clog another vessel) and in the early treatment of blood clots in the lungs (pulmonary embolisms).

ENT Ears, nose, and throat. An ENT physician is a specialist in the diagnosis and treatment of disorders of the head and neck, particularly those of the ears, nose, and throat. ENT physicians are also known as otolaryngologists.

Entamoeba histolytica The agent that causes amebic dysentery. Entamoeba histolytica is a single-celled parasite that is transmitted to humans via contaminated water and food. It can also infect the liver and other organs. See also *amebiasis; amebic colitis; amebic dysentery*.

enteric Of or relating to the small intestine.

enteric-coated medication A medication that is coated with a material that allows transit through the stomach to the small intestine before the medication is released. Aspirin, which commonly causes stomach irritation and upset, is among the medications that may have enteric coating.

enteritis, Crohn's See *Crohn's enteritis*.

enteritis, regional See *Crohn's disease*.

entero- Prefix referring to the intestine, as in enteropathy (a disease of the intestine) and enterospasm (a painful, intense contraction of the intestine).

enterobiasis See *pinworm infestation*.

enterocele A vaginal hernia. Protrusion of the small intestine into the upper wall of the vagina.

enterocentesis The use of a hollow needle inserted through the wall of the stomach or intestine to relieve pressure from gas or fluid buildup.

enterococcus Bacteria normally found in the feces. Two types, *Enterococcus faecalis* and *Enterococcus faecium*, cause human disease, most commonly in the form of urinary tract and wound infections. Other infections, including those of the

blood stream (bacteremia), heart valves (endocarditis), and the brain (meningitis) can occur in severely ill patients in hospitals. Enterococci also often colonize open wounds and skin ulcers, and are among the most common antibiotic-resistant bacteria.

enterocolitis, Crohn's See *Crohn's enterocolitis*.

enterogenous Carried within the intestine. For example, an enterogenous bacterial infection is a bacterial infection within the intestine.

enteropathy A disease of the intestine.

enteropathy, gluten See *celiac sprue*.

enteropathy, protein-losing A condition in which an excessive amount of plasma protein is lost into the intestine. Protein-losing enteropathy can be due to diverse causes, including celiac sprue, extensive ulceration of the intestine, intestinal lymphatic blockage, and infiltration of leukemic cells into the intestinal wall.

enterospasm A painful, intense contraction of the intestine.

enterostomal therapist A health care specialist who is trained to help patients care for and adjust to their colostomies.

enterostomy An operation that opens the small intestine and brings it through the abdominal wall to create a new opening (stoma) to permit intestinal draining. See also *colostomy; ostomy*.

enterovirus A virus that comes into the body through the gastrointestinal tract and thrives there, often moving on to attack the nervous system. Enteroviruses include the polioviruses, rhinoviruses, and echoviruses. See also *polio*.

Entoderm See *endoderm*.

enucleation The surgical removal of an eye. Enucleation is done under drastic circumstances such as to remove a malignant tumor in the eye or to relieve intolerable pain in a blind eye. Following enucleation, an artificial eye (ocular prosthesis) is implanted as a cosmetic substitute for the real eye.

enuresis Involuntary urination, which may be caused by a variety of factors, including disorders of the kidneys, bladder, or ureter, and poor control of the muscles that control release of urine. Enuresis is also occasionally associated with neurological disorders, such as Tourette syndrome, particularly in children. Nighttime (nocturnal) enuresis may be related to any of the above, or it may be a symptom

of a sleep disorder. Palliative treatment options include ensuring regularly scheduled toileting, increasing awareness of the need to urinate, performing exercises intended to strengthen the muscles that control release of urine, using pads or diapers to prevent embarrassing and uncomfortable wetness, and in some cases using special devices that alert the patient to the initial signs of wetness. Treatment of enuresis usually involves treatment of the underlying disorder. Cognitive behavioral therapy or behavior modification techniques sometimes also proves helpful. Also known as urinary incontinence. See also *bedwetting; Kegel exercises*.

environmental tobacco smoke See *second-hand smoke*.

enzootic Endemic in animals. An enzootic disease is constantly present in an animal population, but usually only affects a small number of animals at any one time.

enzyme A protein or protein-based molecule that speeds up a chemical reaction in a living organism. An enzyme acts as a catalyst for specific chemical reactions, converting a specific set of reactants (substrates) into specific products. Without enzymes, life as we know it would not exist. Errors in the design of enzymes are responsible for numerous diseases. See also *enzyme defect*.

enzyme defect A disorder resulting from a deficiency (or functional abnormality) of an enzyme. For example, newborns are routinely screened for certain enzyme defects, such as phenylketonuria (PKU) and galactosemia.

enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay See *ELISA*.

eosinophil A normal type of white blood cell that has coarse granules within its cytoplasm. Eosinophils are produced in the bone marrow and migrate to tissues throughout the body. When a foreign substance enters the body, other types of white blood cells (lymphocytes and neutrophils) release substances to attract eosinophils and then release toxic substances to kill the invader. The numbers of eosinophils in blood often rise when an allergic reaction occurs. Elevated eosinophil counts are also common in some diseases, such as parasite diseases and asthma.

eosinophilia An abnormally high number of eosinophils in the blood. Normally, eosinophils constitute 1 percent to 3 percent of the peripheral blood leukocytes, at a count of 350 to 650 per cubic millimeter. In areas of the world where parasite diseases are common, they are the usual cause of eosinophilia. In developed nations, eosinophilia is

most often due to allergy or, less often, a drug reaction. Other causes of eosinophilia are numerous, but less common. See also *eosinophil*.

eosinophilic fasciitis A disease that leads to inflammation and thickening of the skin and of the lining tissue under the skin that covers the surface of underlying tissues (fascia). In eosinophilic fasciitis, the involved fascia is inflamed with the eosinophil white blood cells. Progressive thickening occurs, and often redness, warmth, and hardness of the skin surface occur as well. Also known as Shulman syndrome.

eosinophilic granuloma A disease in which histiocytes multiply and attack the tissues, forming solitary or multiple eosinophilic granulomas. Eosinophilic granuloma predominantly affects children and young adults. It is the most common type of Langerhans cell histiocytosis. In patients with eosinophilic granuloma, granulomas may develop in bone, with overlying tender and sometimes warm areas of swelling with an inability to bear weight.

ependymoma A type of brain tumor that derives from the glial cells that line the cavities within the brain's ventricles. Because cerebrospinal fluid normally flows through these ventricles, blockage due to an ependymoma can cause buildup of fluid, pressure on the brain, and hydrocephalus.

ephedrine A vasoconstricting, bronchodilating drug that is used to treat asthma and also found in over-the-counter remedies for cold and flu symptoms and in some herbal remedies (in the form of the ephedrine-containing herbs ephedra or Ma Huang). Side effects of ephedrine can include jitteriness, racing heartbeat, nausea, sleeplessness, and headache. Ephedrine misuse or abuse can be dangerous and even life-threatening, especially for people with heart conditions.

epicanthal fold A fold of skin that comes down across the inner angle of the eye. Epicanthal folds appear most frequently in persons with Down syndrome and some other constellations of birth defects. To the untrained eye, an epicanthal fold may look similar to the eye fold found in peoples of Asian origin, but the normal Asian eye fold is actually quite distinct, whereas an epicanthal fold is continuous with the lower edge of the upper eyelid.

epicardium See *pericardium, visceral*.

epidemic The occurrence of more cases of a disease than would be expected to occur in a community or region during a given time period. A sudden outbreak (as, for example, of cholera). See also *endemic; pandemic*.

epidemic hemorrhagic fever See *hemorrhagic fever, viral*.

epidemic myalgia See *Bornholm disease*.

epidemic typhus See *typhus, epidemic*.

epidemiologist A person engaged in epidemiology. Epidemiologists can be people with MD, PhD, DPH (Doctor of Public Health), MPH (Master of Public Health), RN, or other degrees.

epidemiology, classical The study of populations in order to determine the frequency and distribution of diseases, and then to measure the risks of those diseases.

epidemiology, clinical Epidemiology focused specifically on patients with diseases of clinical importance.

epidermis The upper, or outer, layer of the two main layers of cells in the skin (the other being the dermis). The epidermis is mostly made up of flat, scale-like cells called squamous cells. Under the squamous cells are round cells called basal cells. The deepest part of the epidermis also contains melanocytes, cells that produce the substance melanin, which gives skin its color. See also *dermis; skin*.

epidermoid carcinoma See *carcinoma, squamous cell*.

epidermolysis bullosa One in a group of blistering skin conditions. The skin is so fragile in people with epidermolysis bullosa that even minor rubbing may cause blistering.

epididymis A structure within the scrotum that is attached to the back side of the testis. The epididymis is a coiled segment of the spermatic ducts that stores spermatozoa while they mature and then transports the spermatozoa between the testis and the tube connecting the testes with the urethra (vas deferens).

epididymitis Inflammation of the epididymis. Epididymitis can be caused by sexually acquired bacteria, such as gonorrhea and chlamydia; or by bacteria that come from somewhere else, such as *E. coli* from the bowel. Sometimes no bacteria are found to be associated. Bacterial epididymitis is treated with antibiotics. If no bacterial cause is detected, medications to reduce inflammation are sometimes helpful.

epidural Outside of the dura mater, the outermost and most fibrous of the three membranes (dura mater, arachnoid membrane, and pia mater) covering the brain and the spinal cord. See also *epidural anesthetic*.

epidural anesthetic An anesthetic that is injected into the epidural space surrounding the fluid-filled sac (the dura) around the spine to partially numb the abdomen and legs. An epidural is used fairly commonly in childbirth, if anesthesia is requested, and during birth by caesarean section.

epidural hematoma See *hematoma, epidural*.

epigastrium The part of the abdominal wall that is above the umbilicus (belly button).

epiglottis The flap that covers the trachea during swallowing, so that food does not enter the lungs.

epilation Removal of body hair, including the hair root, by means of electrical device, tweezers, or wax. Epilation may be performed by a dermatologist, but is more commonly done for cosmetic purposes by a facial technologist or esthetician. After epilation, the skin may be particularly sensitive. Also known as depilation.

epilepsy Seizure disorder. When nerve cells in the brain fire electrical impulses at a rate up to four times higher than normal, a sort of electrical storm, called a seizure, occurs in the brain. Epilepsy is characterized by a pattern of repeated seizures. Known causes of epilepsy include head injuries, brain tumors, lead poisoning, maldevelopment of the brain, and genetic and infectious illnesses. However, in half of cases, no cause can be found. Medication can control seizures for the majority of patients. In cases of epilepsy that cannot be managed with drugs, a ketogenic diet or brain surgery may be considered. See also *Aicardis syndrome; Landau-Kleffner syndrome; Lennox-Gastaut syndrome; Otabara syndrome; Ramsey Hunt syndrome; Rasmussen syndrome; Rett syndrome; seizure; seizure disorder; seizure, tonic-clonic; Sturge-Weber syndrome; Tassinari syndrome*.

epilepsy, akinetic A seizure disorder that is characterized by drop seizures, in which the patient experiences a temporary loss of consciousness and lack of movement (akinesia).

epilepsy, benign rolandic The most common type of partial seizure disorder, which is usually characterized by partial seizures during sleep. The only outward sign of benign rolandic epilepsy may be movements of the face and mouth or staring spells. Benign rolandic epilepsy begins between the ages of 2 and 13 years, and it is called benign because it remits on its own by adulthood. Diagnosis is made through observation and via sleep-deprived or 24-hour EEG. On an EEG, benign rolandic epilepsy shows blunted, high-voltage central temporal ("rolandic") spiking, followed by

slow waves. Treatment with antiseizure medications may or may not be necessary. Also known as benign rolandic epilepsy of childhood (BREC) and benign partial epilepsy with centrottemporal spikes. See also *seizure, partial*.

epilepsy, grand mal Epilepsy that includes tonic-clonic (grand mal) seizures, which are the most obvious type of seizure. There are two parts to a tonic-clonic seizure. In the tonic phase, the body becomes rigid, and in the clonic phase, there is uncontrolled jerking. A tonic-clonic seizure may or may not be preceded by an aura, and these seizures are often followed by headache, confusion, and sleep. They may last for mere seconds or continue for several minutes. If a tonic-clonic seizure does not resolve or if such seizures follow each other in rapid succession, emergency help is needed because the patient could be in a life-threatening state known as status epilepticus. Treatment is with antiseizure medications.

epilepsy, Jacksonian A seizure disorder that is characterized by progressive spreading of abnormal sensations or movements from one local area of the body to more widespread areas. Jacksonian epilepsy is caused by the progressive spread of abnormal electrical activity in the motor cortex of the brain. Seizures of this type typically cause no change in awareness or alertness. They are transient, fleeting, and ephemeral. Jacksonian seizures are extremely varied and may involve, for example, apparently purposeful movements such as turning of the head, eye movements, smacking of the lips, mouth movements, drooling, rhythmic muscle contractions in a part of the body, abnormal numbness, tingling, and a crawling sensation over the skin. Diagnosis is made through observation and EEG. Treatment, if necessary, is with antiseizure medications. Also called Jacksonian seizure disorder. See also *seizure, partial*.

epilepsy, juvenile myoclonic A form of epilepsy that occurs in young people, most commonly in the teenage years. It is characterized by jerking (myoclonic) movements of the arms and upper torso, without loss of consciousness. Seizures are most likely to occur when a person is awakening from sleep. Many children with this disorder are sensitive to light (photosensitive) and may have myoclonic jerks or seizures when exposed to bright light. Diagnosis is made through observation and EEG. During a myoclonic seizure, polyspike-wave discharges occur over a normal EEG background. Juvenile myoclonic epilepsy appears to be an inheritable genetic disorder, with the gene located on chromosome 6. Treatment is with antiseizure medications.

epilepsy, Landau-Kleffner See *Landau-Kleffner syndrome*.

epilepsy, partial Epilepsy characterized by seizures that affects only one part of the brain. Symptoms depend on which part of the brain is affected. One part of the body, or multiple parts on one side of the body, may start to twitch uncontrollably. Partial seizures may involve head turning, eye movements, lip smacking, mouth movements, drooling, rhythmic muscle contractions in a part of the body, apparently purposeful movements, abnormal numbness, tingling, and a crawling sensation over the skin. Partial seizures can also include sensory disturbances, such as smelling or hearing things that are not there, or having a sudden flood of emotions. Although the patient may feel confused, consciousness is not lost. Also known as focal seizures and local seizures. See also *seizure; seizure disorder; seizure, partial*.

epilepsy, petit mal A form of epilepsy in which only absence (petit mal) seizures occur, with very brief, unannounced lapses in consciousness. See also *seizure, absence*.

epilepsy, temporal lobe Epilepsy characterized by abnormal electrical activity in the temporal lobe of the brain. This activity does not cause grand mal seizures; rather, it causes unusual behaviors and patterns of cognition. Temporal lobe epilepsy may, for example, cause sudden outbursts of unexpected aggression or agitation, or it may be characterized by aura-like phenomena. Temporal lobe epilepsy is difficult to diagnose because temporal lobe seizures may not show up on an EEG. Diagnosis may instead be made through observation of symptoms or the use of brain imaging technology. Temporal lobe epilepsy can often be treated with the same antiseizure medications that are used for other forms of epilepsy. See also *seizure; seizure disorders; temporal lobe*.

epileptic aura See *aura*.

epilepticus, status See *status epilepticus*.

epinephrine The official name for adrenaline in the British Pharmacopoeia. See also *adrenaline*.

epiphyseal plate fracture See *fracture, Salter-Harris*.

epiphysis The growth area near the end of a bone.

episcleritis Inflammation of the episclera, a thin membrane that covers the white of the eye (sclera). Episcleritis is typically benign, easily treated with topical anti-inflammatory drops, and usually quickly resolved. Episcleritis can sometimes accompany other diseases, such as rheumatoid arthritis and lupus.

episiotomy A surgical procedure for widening the outlet of the birth canal to facilitate delivery of the baby and to avoid a jagged rip of the area between the anus and the vulva (perineum). During an episiotomy, an incision is made between the vagina and the rectum. The usual cut goes straight down and does not involve the muscles around the rectum or the rectum itself. An episiotomy can decrease the amount of maternal pushing, and it may also decrease trauma to the vaginal tissues and expedite delivery of the baby when quick delivery is necessary. However, episiotomies are associated with increased incidence of extensions or tears into the muscle of the rectum or even the rectum itself. Episiotomies and natural tearing can often be avoided with the use of perineal massage during delivery. Repair of the episiotomy is by simple stitching.

epispadias A congenital malformation in which the opening of the urethra is on the top side of the penis. Hypospadias is a corresponding malformation in which the opening of the urethra is on the underside of the penis. Surgical repair is usually recommended for epispadias. See also *hypospadias*.

epistaxis See *nosebleed*.

epistaxis, treatment of See *nosebleed, treatment of*.

epithelial Relating to the epithelium.

epithelial basement corneal dystrophy See *Cogan corneal dystrophy*.

epithelium The cellular layer that covers internal and external organs of the body, including the skin, blood vessels, body cavities, and glands. Epithelium varies in the number of cellular layers and types of cells, depending upon the anatomic location. The endothelium is a type of epithelium that lines the inner surfaces of the blood vessels and heart. See also *endothelium*.

EPO 1 Erythropoietin. 2 Evening primrose oil.

EPO test A test of the amount of hormone erythropoietin (EPO) in blood. The EPO level can indicate bone marrow disorders, kidney disease, or EPO abuse. Testing EPO blood levels is of value because too little EPO might be responsible for too few red blood cells (such as in evaluating anemia); too much EPO can cause too many red blood cells (polycythemia), might be evidence of a kidney tumor, and in an athlete might suggest EPO abuse. Normal levels of EPO are 0 to 19 (some say up to 24) milliunits per milliliter (mU/ml). See also *erythropoietin*.

eponym Something named after someone. For example, a condition called Shiel syndrome might be named after (an eponym for) someone named Shiel who discovered it or who was the first to describe and clearly delineate it.

Epstein-Barr virus A virus in the herpes family that is best known as the cause of infectious mononucleosis (also called mono and glandular fever). Abbreviated EBV. EBV infection is characterized by fatigue and general malaise. Infection with EBV is common and is normally temporary and minor. However, in some individuals EBV can trigger chronic illness, including immune and lymphoproliferative syndromes. It is a particular danger to people with compromised immune systems, including those with AIDS. Treatment is with antiviral medication and rest. Also known as human herpesvirus 4 (HHV-4).

ERCP Endoscopic retrograde cholangio-pancreatography, a diagnostic procedure used to examine diseases of the liver, bile ducts, and pancreas. ERCP is usually performed under intravenous sedation rather than general anesthesia. ERCP provides important information that cannot be obtained by other means. Therapeutic measures can often be taken at the time of ERCP to remove stones in the bile ducts or to relieve obstructions of the bile ducts.

erectile dysfunction A consistent inability to sustain an erection sufficient for sexual intercourse. Commonly known as impotence. Medically, the term erectile dysfunction is used to properly differentiate this form of impotence from other problems that interfere with sexual intercourse, such as disease, injury, drug side effects, or a disorder that impairs the nerve supply or the blood flow to the penis. Other forms of impotence include lack of sexual desire and problems with ejaculation and orgasm. Erectile dysfunction is treatable in all age groups, and treatment includes using medication (notably Viagra) and penile implants. Abbreviated ED.

erection, penile The state of the penis when it is filled with blood and becomes rigid. The penis contains two chambers called the corpora cavernosa, which run the length of the organ, are filled with spongy tissue, and are surrounded by a membrane called the tunica albuginea. The spongy tissue contains smooth muscles, fibrous tissues, spaces, veins, and arteries. The urethra, which is the channel for urine and ejaculate, runs along the underside of the corpora cavernosa. Erection begins with sensory and mental stimulation. Impulses from the brain and local nerves cause the muscles of the corpora cavernosa to relax, allowing blood to flow in and fill the open spaces. The blood creates pressure in the

corpora cavernosa, making the penis expand. The tunica albuginea helps to trap the blood in the corpora cavernosa, thereby sustaining erection. Erection is reversed when muscles in the penis contract, stopping the inflow of blood and opening outflow channels.

ERG 1 Electroretinography. 2 Electroretinograph, the instrument used to perform electroretinography. 3 An electroretinogram, the recording produced by an electroretinograph.

ergonomics The science of making things fit people. Ergonomics uses knowledge from the fields of anatomy, mechanics, physiology, and psychology to utilize human energy most effectively. Something that is ergonomic is designed for safe, comfortable, and efficient use. For example, a computer keyboard with an ergonomic design is intended to help the user avoid carpal tunnel syndrome and wrist pain.

ergot A fungus (*Claviceps purpurea*) that contaminates rye and wheat and that produces substances (alkaloids) called ergotamines. Ergotamines constrict blood vessels and cause the muscle of the uterus to contract. They have been much used for the treatment of migraines. They have also been used and misused to induce abortion. In excess, ergotamines can cause symptoms such as hallucinations, severe gastrointestinal upset, a type of dry gangrene, and a painful burning sensation in the limbs and extremities. Chronic ergot poisoning (ergotism) was rife during the Middle Ages due to the consumption of contaminated rye. Because of the burning pain, it was known as ignis sacer (holy fire) and ignis infernalis (hell's fire), and was one of the causes of St. Anthony's fire. A form of ergot was also the original basis for the illicit drug lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD).

erotomania The false yet persistent belief that one is loved by a person (often a famous or prominent person), or the pathologically obsessive pursuit of a disinterested object of love. Erotomania can be a symptom of schizophrenia or other psychiatric disorders that are characterized by delusional symptoms.

error, alpha See *alpha error*.

error, beta See *beta error*.

error, type I See *alpha error*.

error, type II See *beta error*.

errors of metabolism, inborn See *metabolic disease*.

ERT Estrogen replacement therapy.

erythema Redness of the skin that results from capillary congestion. Erythema can occur with inflammation, as in sunburn and allergic reactions to drugs.

erythema chronicum migrans The classic initial rash of Lyme disease. In the early phase of erythema chronicum migrans, within hours to weeks of the tick bite, the local skin develops an expanding ring of unraised redness. There may be an outer ring of brighter redness and a central area of clearing. See also *Lyme disease*.

erythema infectiosum See *fifth disease*.

erythema nodosum An inflammatory reaction that occurs deep in the skin and is characterized by the presence of tender, red, raised lumps or nodules that range in size from 1 to 5 centimeters and are most commonly located over the shins but occasionally on the arms or other areas. The causes of erythema nodosum include medications (such as sulfa-related drugs, birth control pills, estrogens, iodides, and bromides), strep throat, cat scratch fever, fungal diseases, infectious mononucleosis, sarcoidosis, Behcet's syndrome, inflammatory bowel disease (Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis), and normal pregnancy. In many cases, no cause can be determined. Erythema nodosum may be self-limited. If treatment is needed, the underlying condition is treated, and treatment is simultaneously directed toward the erythema nodosum itself. Treatment can include anti-inflammatory drugs and cortisone given by mouth or injection. Colchicine is sometimes used effectively to reduce inflammation.

erythroblastosis See *hemolytic disease of the newborn*.

erythrocyanosis Discoloration on the legs that has a bluish or purple hue.

erythrocyte See *red blood cell*.

erythrocyte membrane protein band 4.1 See *elliptocytosis*.

erythroleukemia A form of acute myeloid leukemia (AML) that involves the cells that give rise to the erythrocytes (red blood cells). In erythroleukemia, the body produces large numbers of abnormal, immature red blood cells.

erythromycin An antibiotic that is commonly prescribed to treat bacterial infection. Erythromycin prevents bacteria from producing proteins and interferes with bacterial growth and multiplication. See also *macrolide antibiotic*.

erythroplakia An abnormal reddened patch with a velvety surface that is found in the mouth. Erythroplakia carries an increased risk for becoming a cancer in the oral cavity. Treatment methods include observation, topical ointments, and surgical techniques including laser surgery.

erythropoietin A hormone that is produced by the kidney and promotes the formation of red blood cells in the bone marrow. Abbreviated EPO. Human EPO is a glycoprotein (a protein with an attached sugar) that has a molecular weight of 34,000. The kidney cells that make EPO are specialized and are sensitive to low oxygen levels in the blood that comes into the kidney. These cells release EPO when the blood oxygen level is low. EPO stimulates the bone marrow to produce more red blood cells, which in turn increases the oxygen-carrying capacity of the blood. EPO is produced not only in the kidney but also, to a lesser extent, in the liver. The amount of EPO in the blood can indicate bone marrow disorders or kidney disease. Normal levels of EPO are 0 to 19 milliunits per milliliter (mU/ml). Elevated levels can be seen in polycythemia rubra vera, a disorder characterized by an excess of red blood cells. Lower-than-normal values of EPO are seen in chronic renal failure. Using recombinant DNA technology, EPO has been synthetically produced for use in persons with anemia due to kidney failure and other conditions. It has been misused as a performance-enhancing drug in endurance athletes, reportedly including cyclists, long-distance runners, speed skaters, and cross-country skiers. As such, EPO is thought to be especially dangerous, perhaps because dehydration can further increase the thickness of the blood, increasing the risk for heart attacks and strokes. See also *EPO test*.

eschar 1 The scab that is formed when a wound or skin is sealed by the heat of cauterization or burning. 2 The dark crusted ulcer (tache noire) at the site of the chigger (mite larva) bite in scrub typhus.

Escherichia coli See *E. coli*.

esophageal Related to the esophagus.

esophageal cancer A malignant tumor of the esophagus. The risk of cancer of the esophagus is increased by long-term irritation of the esophagus, such as from smoking, heavy alcohol intake, and Barrett esophagitis. Very small tumors in the esophagus usually do not cause symptoms. As a tumor grows, the most common symptom is difficulty in swallowing. There may be a feeling of fullness, pressure, or burning as food passes down the esophagus. Cancer of the esophagus can also cause indigestion, heartburn, vomiting, and frequent choking on food.

Because of these problems, weight loss is common. Esophageal cancer can be diagnosed through a barium X-ray study of the esophagus and endoscopy and biopsy of the tumor. Treatment includes chemotherapy and sometimes surgery.

esophageal reflux See *gastroesophageal reflux disease*.

esophageal speech Speech produced with air that is trapped in the esophagus and forced out again.

esophageal stricture, acute A narrowing or closure of the normal opening of the swallowing tube that leads to the stomach, usually caused by scarring from acid irritation. Acute, complete obstruction of the esophagus occurs when food (usually meat) is lodged in the esophageal stricture. This causes chest pain and inability to swallow saliva. Attempts to relieve the obstruction by inducing vomiting at home are usually unsuccessful. Patients with complete esophageal obstruction can breathe and are not at risk of suffocation. Endoscopy is usually used to retrieve the obstruction and relieve the condition.

esophageal stricture, chronic A long-standing narrowing or closure of the normal opening of the swallowing tube that leads to the stomach, usually caused by scarring from acid irritation. Chronic esophageal stricture is a common complication of chronic gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD). Several procedures are available for stretching (dilating) the strictures without having to resort to surgery. One procedure involves placing a deflated balloon across the stricture at the time of endoscopy. The balloon is then inflated, thereby opening the narrowing caused by the stricture. Another method involves inserting tapered dilators of different sizes through the mouth and into the esophagus to dilate the stricture.

esophageal ulcer A crater in the lining of the esophagus that is created by the corrosive acidic digestive juices secreted by the stomach cells. Ulcer formation is related to the presence of Helicobacter pylori (*H. pylori*) bacteria in the stomach, use of anti-inflammatory medications, and cigarette smoking. Ulcer pain may not correlate with the presence or severity of ulceration. Diagnosis is made through barium X-ray or endoscopy. Complications of ulcers include bleeding and perforation. Treatment includes using antibiotics to eradicate *H. pylori*, eliminating risk factors, and preventing complications.

esophagectomy An operation to remove a portion of the esophagus.

esophagitis Inflammation of the esophagus.

esophagogastric tamponade See *balloon tamponade*.

esophagogastroduodenoscopy See *endoscopy, upper*.

esophagoscopy Examination of the esophagus by using a thin, lighted instrument.

esophagram A series of X-rays of the esophagus. The X-ray pictures are taken after the patient drinks a barium solution that coats and outlines the walls of the esophagus. See also *barium swallow*.

esophagus The tube that connects the throat with the stomach. The esophagus lies between the trachea (windpipe) and the spine. In an adult, the esophagus is about 25 centimeters (10 inches) long. When a person swallows, the muscular walls of the esophagus contract to push food down into the stomach. Glands in the lining of the esophagus produce mucus, which keeps the passageway moist and facilitates swallowing. Also known as gullet.

esotropia A condition in which a person is cross-eyed or, in medical terms, has convergent or internal strabismus.

essential In medicine, of unknown cause, as in essential hypertension (high blood pressure of unknown cause). Also known as idiopathic.

essential fatty acid An unsaturated fatty acid that is essential to human health, but cannot be manufactured in the body. Abbreviated EFA. There are three types of EFAs: arachnoidic acid, linoleic acid, and linolenic acid. When linoleic acid is obtained in the diet, it can be converted to both arachnoidic and linolenic acid. Linoleic acid is commonly found in cold-pressed oils, especially oils extracted from cold-water fish and certain seeds. Supplementation with EFAs appears to be useful as a treatment for certain neurological disorders. However, arachnoidic acid may lower the seizure threshold. For that reason, it is important to consult a physician before starting a program of EFA supplementation.

essential oil An oil derived from a natural substance, usually either for its healing properties or as a perfume. Some pharmaceuticals, and many over-the-counter or "holistic" remedies, are based on or contain essential oils. For example, products containing camphor or eucalyptus essential oils can help relieve congestive coughs, and many essential oils are used in the practice of aromatherapy.

estimated date of confinement See *due date*.

estrogen A female steroid hormone that is produced by the ovaries and, in lesser amounts, by the adrenal cortex, placenta, and male testes. Estrogen helps control and guide sexual development, including the physical changes associated with puberty. It also influences the course of ovulation in the monthly menstrual cycle, lactation after pregnancy, aspects of mood, and the aging process. Production of estrogen changes naturally over the female lifespan, reaching adult levels with the onset of puberty (menarche) and decreasing in middle age until the onset of menopause. Estrogen deficiency can lead to lack of menstruation (amenorrhea), persistent difficulties associated with menopause (such as mood swings and vaginal dryness), and osteoporosis in older age. In cases of estrogen deficiency, natural and synthetic estrogen preparations may be prescribed. Estrogen is also a component of many oral contraceptives. An overabundance of estrogen in men causes development of female secondary sexual characteristics (feminization), such as enlargement of breast tissue.

estrogen, designer See *designer estrogen*.

estrogen replacement therapy The use of natural or synthetic estrogen to treat changes associated with menopause, such as hot flashes, disturbed sleep, and vaginal dryness, that are associated with decreased estrogen levels. Abbreviated ERT. ERT can also prevent osteoporosis, which can be a consequence of decreased estrogen levels. Vaginal ERT products help with vaginal dryness, more severe vaginal changes, and bladder effects. The use of unopposed ERT (that is, ERT alone) is associated with an increase in the risk of endometrial cancer (cancer of the lining of the uterus). However, taking the hormone progestogen along with estrogen reduces the risk of endometrial cancer substantially. See also *hormone replacement therapy*.

estrogen-associated blood clots See *estrogen-associated hypercoagulability*.

estrogen-associated hypercoagulability Hyper-coagulable blood (a supranormal tendency for blood to clot) occurs as an occasional but serious side effect of estrogen therapy. The blood clots in this situation are dose-related; that is, they occur more frequently with higher doses of estrogen. All estrogen therapy preparations carry this risk. Cigarette smokers on estrogen therapy are at a higher risk for blood clots than nonsmokers. Therefore, patients requiring estrogen therapy are strongly encouraged not to smoke.

ESWL Extracorporeal shock wave lithotripsy.

etiology The study of causes, as in the causes of a disease. The term *aetiology* is generally used in the UK.

eugenics A pseudoscience with the stated aim of improving the genetic constitution of the human species by selective breeding. Eugenics is from a Greek word meaning “normal genes.” The use of Albert Einstein’s sperm to conceive a child by artificial insemination would represent an attempt at positive eugenics. The Nazis notoriously engaged in negative eugenics by genocide in World War II. It is important to note that no experiment in eugenics has ever been shown to result in measurable improvements in human health.

eukaryote An organism that consists of one or more cells with a nucleus and other well-developed compartments. Eukaryotes include all organisms except bacteria, viruses, and blue-green algae, which are prokaryotes, so people are eukaryotes. See also *prokaryote*.

eugenics A discipline that aims to improve the outcome of a genetic disease by altering the environment. The term eugenics is from a Greek word meaning “normal appearing.” For example, people with phenylketonuria (PKU) can avoid the expression of their disease by staying on a low-phenylalanine diet and avoiding major sources of phenylalanine such as diet soft drinks sweetened with aspartame.

euphoria Elevated mood. Euphoria is a desirable and natural occurrence when it results from happy or exciting events. An excessive degree of euphoria that is not linked to events is characteristic of hypomania and mania, which are abnormal mood states associated with bipolar disorders. See also *bipolar disorder*.

euploid The normal number of chromosomes for a species. In humans, the euploid number of chromosomes is 46; with the notable exception of the unfertilized egg and sperm, in which it is 23.

Eustachian tube The tube that runs from the middle ear to the pharynx. The function of the Eustachian tube is to protect, aerate, and drain the middle ear and mastoid. The Eustachian tube permits the gas pressure in the middle ear cavity to adjust to external air pressure. When you are descending in an airplane, the Eustachian tube opens when your ears “pop.” It is harder to get air into the middle ear than get it out, which is why we have more trouble with our ears when a plane is descending than when it takes off. Occlusion of the Eustachian tube can lead to the development of middle ear infection (otitis media). The Eustachian tube opens into the nasopharynx. The Eustachian tube measures only 17 to 18 mm, and it is horizontal at birth. As it grows to double that length, it grows to be positioned at an incline of 45 degrees in

adulthood. For this reason the nasopharyngeal opening in an adult is significantly below the tympanic opening, found in the middle ear near the eardrum. The shorter length and the horizontal orientation of the Eustachian tube in infancy protects the middle ear poorly, makes for poor drainage of fluid from the middle ear, and predisposes infants and young children to middle ear infection. The greater length and particularly the slope of the tube as it grows serve more effectively to protect, aerate, and drain the middle ear. The Eustachian tube in the adult is opened by two muscles, the tensor palati and the levator palati, but the anatomy of children permits only the tensor palati to work. Also known as otopharyngeal tube because it connects the ear to the pharynx and auditory tube.

euthanasia The hastening of death for a terminally ill patient. Euthanasia is from the Greek for “dying well.” See also *active euthanasia; assisted suicide; eugenics*.

euthyroid The state of having normal thyroid gland function. See also *hyperthyroid; hypothyroid*.

evacuation supplies kit See *disaster supplies*.

evening primrose oil A natural source of essential fatty acids (EFAs).

event, adverse In pharmacology, an unexpected or dangerous reaction to a drug.

evidence-based medicine The judicious use of the best current available scientific research in making decisions about the care of patients. Evidence-based medicine (EBM) is intended to integrate clinical expertise with the research evidence and patient values.

evolution The continuing process of change.

evolution, biologic See *biologic evolution*.

evolution, cultural See *cultural evolution*.

evolutionarily conserved gene A gene that has remained essentially unchanged throughout evolution. Conservation of a gene indicates that it is unique and essential: There is not an extra copy of that gene with which evolution can tinker, and changes in the gene are likely to be lethal.

evolutionarily conserved sequence A base sequence in a DNA molecule (or an amino acid sequence in a protein) that has remained essentially unchanged throughout evolution.

Ewing sarcoma See *sarcoma, Ewing*.

exacerbation A worsening. In medicine, exacerbation may refer to an increase in the severity of a disease or its signs and symptoms. For example, an exacerbation of asthma might occur as a serious effect of air pollution, leading to shortness of breath.

exaggerated startle disease See *hyperlexia*.

exam, pelvic See *pelvic exam*.

exam, rectal See *digital rectal exam*.

exanthem A rash on the outside of the body. By contrast, a rash on the inside of the body (for example, inside the mouth) is called enanthem. A patient with measles can have both exanthem and enanthem. See also *enanthem; measles; rash*.

exanthem subitum A sudden rash. See also *measles*.

excess iron An overload of iron that can damage the heart, liver, gonads, and other organs. See also *iron excess*.

excise To cut out entirely. For example, a scalpel or laser beam may be used to excise a tumor. The terms excise and resect are not synonymous. Excise implies total removal, whereas resect does not.

excisional biopsy See *biopsy, excisional*.

exclamation point hair A short, broken-off hair that is found in an area of hair loss and is narrower closer to the scalp than at the other end (and therefore looks like an exclamation point). Exclamation point hair is a key diagnostic finding in a disorder called alopecia areata. See also *alopecia areata*.

excrecence An abnormal outgrowth as, for example, a wart.

exercise, aerobic See *aerobic exercise*.

exercise treadmill A machine used to obtain a continuous electrocardiogram recording of the heart as a patient performs increasing levels of exercise. An exercise treadmill permits the detection of abnormal heart rhythms (arrhythmias) and provides a screening test for the presence of narrowed arteries to the heart (coronary arteries). Narrowing of these arteries can limit the supply of oxygenated blood to the heart muscle during exercise.

exercise-induced asthma See *asthma, exercise-induced*.

exercise-induced bronchospasm See *asthma, exercise-induced*.

exfoliate 1 To peel off scaly skin spontaneously. For example, the skin exfoliates from the palms and soles in psoriasis, Kawasaki disease, and Reiter syndrome. 2 To deliberately wear away the top layer of skin, as may be done gently by a facial technologist who is applying a topical skin treatment for cosmetic purposes or more severely by a dermatologist treating acne. In the latter case, the most common exfoliating methods are sanding and chemical peels.

exocrine Pertaining to the secretion of a substance out of the body through a duct. The exocrine glands include the salivary glands, sweat glands, and glands within the gastrointestinal tract. Exocrine is as opposed to endocrine, which refers to the secretion of a substance (a hormone) within the body through the bloodstream. See also *endocrine*.

exogenous Originating from outside an organism. For example, insulin taken by a diabetic is exogenous insulin. See also *endogenous*.

exon A region of DNA in a gene that is transcribed (read) into mature messenger RNA. An exon is the protein-coding part of a gene. See also *intron*.

exonuclease An enzyme that cleaves nucleotide bases sequentially from the free ends of a nucleic acid (DNA or RNA).

exophthalmos A condition in which the patient has protruding eyeballs, as in Graves disease.

exotropia Divergent gaze. Also known as external strabismus and, pejoratively, walleye.

expectorant A medication that helps bring up mucus and other material from the lungs, bronchi, and trachea. An example of an expectorant is guaiacol-fenesin, which promotes drainage of mucus from the lungs by thinning the mucus, and also lubricates the irritated respiratory tract.

exposure In cognitive behavioral therapy, the process of exposing oneself to an event or a place that causes anxiety or panic. The intention of controlled exposure is to gradually lower the level of stress and anxiety associated with the stimulus, to eventually prevent panic attacks, obsessive-compulsive behaviors, and other unwanted reactions. See also *cognitive behavior therapy*.

exposure and response prevention A cognitive behavior therapy technique that uses planned exposures and exercises to reduce unwanted responses. Abbreviated E&RP. See also *cognitive behavior therapy; exposure*.

expression, gene See *gene expression*.

expressivity The consistency of a genetic disease. For example, Marfan syndrome shows variable expressivity. Some persons with Marfan syndrome merely have long fingers and toes, and others have the full-blown disease, with dislocation of the lens and dissecting aneurysm of the aorta.

expulsion, stage of The second stage of labor, lasting from the full dilation of the cervix until the baby is completely out of the birth canal.

extension The process of straightening or the state of being straight. The opposite of flexion or the state of being bent.

external ear See *ear, outer*.

external jugular vein The more superficial of the two jugular veins in the neck that drain blood from the head, brain, face, and neck and convey blood toward the heart. The external jugular vein collects most of the blood from the outside of the skull and the deep parts of the face. It lies outside the sternocleidomastoid muscle, passes down the neck, and joins the subclavian vein. See also *internal jugular vein*.

external radiation therapy See *radiation therapy, external*.

extracorporeal shock wave lithotripsy See *lithotripsy, extracorporeal shock wave*.

extrapyramidal side effects Physical symptoms, including tremor, slurred speech, akathesia, dystonia, anxiety, distress, paranoia, and bradyphrenia, that are primarily associated with improper dosing of or unusual reactions to neuroleptic (antipsychotic) medications.

extrapyramidal system The part of the nervous system that regulates muscle reflexes.

extrasystole A premature contraction of the heart that is independent of the normal rhythm of the heart. An extrasystole begins in a part of the heart other than the normal heartbeat origin, the sinoatrial (SA) node. Extrasystoles are followed by a pause, as the heart electrical system “resets” itself, and the contraction following the pause is usually more forceful than normal. These more forceful contractions can be perceived as palpitations. See also *palpitations*.

extrauterine pregnancy See *ectopic pregnancy*.

extremity An uttermost part of the body, such as a hand or a foot.

eye The organ of sight. The eye has a number of components, including the cornea, iris, pupil, lens, retina, macula, optic nerve, and vitreous humor. The cornea is the clear front window of the eye that transmits and focuses light into the eye. The iris is the colored part of the eye, and regulates the amount of light that enters the eye. The size of the pupil, the dark aperture in the iris, determines how much light is let into the eye. The lens is the transparent structure inside the eye that focuses light rays onto the retina. The retina is the nerve layer that lines the back of the eye, senses light, and creates impulses that travel through the optic nerve to the brain. The macula is a small area in the retina that contains special light-sensitive cells and allows people to see fine details clearly. The optic nerve is the nerve that connects the eye to the brain. It carries the impulses formed by the retina to the visual cortex of the brain to interpret vision. The vitreous humor is a clear, jelly-like substance that fills the middle of the eye.

eye chart test A test that measures vision ability at various distances. An eye chart is imprinted with block letters that line-by-line decrease in size, corresponding to the distance at which each line of letters is normally visible. See also *chart, Snellen*.

eyedrop test A test that involves putting certain liquids into the eye to produce a particular response. There are many types of eyedrops and many types of eyedrop tests. One of the most common eyedrop tests is pupil dilation. See also *dilation, pupil*.

eyelid The lid or cover of the eye, a movable fold of skin and muscle that can be closed over the eyeball or opened at will. Each eye has an upper and a lower lid. Also known as a palpebra.

eyelids, adult ptosis of the Drooping of the upper eyelids in adults, most commonly due to separation of the tendon of the lid-lifting (levator) muscle from the eyelid. This may occur with age, after cataract or other eye surgery, or due to an injury, an eye tumor, or a complication of another disease that involves the levator muscle or its nerve supply, such as diabetes. If treatment is necessary, it is usually surgical. Sometimes a small tuck in the lifting muscle and eyelid can raise the lid sufficiently. More severe ptosis requires reattachment and strengthening of the levator muscle.

eyelids, congenital ptosis of the Drooping of the upper eyelids at birth. Moderate or severe ptosis calls for surgical treatment to permit normal vision development. If moderate or severe ptosis is not corrected, amblyopia ("lazy eye") may develop, which can lead to permanently poor vision. Congenital ptosis is often caused by poor development of the levator muscle that lifts the eyelid. Children with ptosis may tip their heads back into a chin-up position to see underneath the eyelids or raise their eyebrows in an attempt to lift up the lids. Congenital ptosis rarely improves with time. Mild ptosis usually does not require surgery early in life. Treatment is usually surgery to tighten the levators. If the levator is very weak, the lid can be attached or suspended from under the eyebrow so that the forehead muscles can do the lifting. Even after surgery, focusing problems can develop as the eyes grow and change shape. All children with ptosis, whether they have had surgery or not, should therefore regularly visit ophthalmologists.

eyes, flashing lights in the Spontaneous flashing-light sensations in the eyes that can be caused by a number of factors. A sensation of flashing lights can be caused when the vitreous humor (the clear, jelly-like substance that fills the middle of the eye) shrinks and tugs on the retina. These flashes of light can appear off and on for several weeks or months. With age, flashes become increasingly common. Flashes usually do not reflect a serious problem. However, if one notices the sudden appearance of light flashes or a sudden increase in flashing lights, one should see an ophthalmologist immediately to see whether the retina has been torn or whether there is another cause. Flashes of light that appear as jagged lines or "heat waves" in both eyes, often lasting 10 to 20 minutes, are different from these benign flashes. They are usually caused by migraine, a spasm of blood vessels in the brain. These jagged lines can also occur without a headache, in which case they are termed ophthalmic migraine or migraine without headache. Treatment may or may not be necessary depending on the cause.

eyes, spots in front of the The spontaneous appearance of spots in the eyes. Also known as "floaters," spots are usually images formed by deposits of protein drifting about in the vitreous humor (the clear, jelly-like substance that fills the middle of the eye). The appearance of permanent or recurring white or black spots in the same area of the field of vision may be an early warning sign of cataracts or other serious problems.



F **1** Chemical symbol for the element fluorine. **2** Abbreviation for Fahrenheit. **3** The symbol for the coefficient of inbreeding. See also *coefficient of inbreeding*.

Fabry disease A genetic disease caused by a mutation in the GLA gene, resulting in a deficiency of the enzyme alpha-galactosidase A, also known as ceramide trihexosidase. This enzyme is essential to the metabolism of a fat compound known as globotriaosylceramide. Without alpha-galactosidase A, this fatty substance accumulates in the walls of blood vessels, leading to narrowing and decreased blood flow to the tissues normally supplied by these vessels. Small vessels in the skin, kidneys, heart, and nervous system are preferentially affected, impairing function of these organs. Males with Fabry disease are more severely affected than females with it because the gene for Fabry disease is on the X chromosome. Males have only one X, whereas females have a second X and therefore some enzyme activity. Females with partial enzyme activity may not show any symptoms, or may have symptoms as severe as affected males. Diagnosis is made by determining the level of alpha-galactosidase A in blood plasma or through genetic testing. Symptoms may include blood vessel-filled skin lesions known as angiokeratomas over the hips, buttocks, thighs, and lower belly with fever accompanying attacks of pain in the fingers and toes. Potentially life-threatening complications such as stroke, heart failure, and kidney failure may also occur. Treatment includes intravenously-administered enzyme replacement therapy with agalsidase beta (brand name: Fabrazyme), which reduces the fat accumulation in many types of cells and tissues. Episodes of pain in the hands and feet may benefit from medications such as diphenylhydantoin (brand name: Dilantin) or carbamazepine (brand name: Tegretol). Also known as Anderson-Fabry disease and angiokeratoma corporis diffusum universale.

face, masklike An expressionless face with little or no sense of animation; a face that is more like a mask than a normal face. Masklike face is seen in a number of disorders, including Parkinson's disease and myotonic dystrophy. Also known as masklike facies.

facelift A surgical procedure that is designed to make the face appear younger by pulling loose facial skin taut and tightening and repositioning the underlying facial musculature. Excessive skin and/or fat may be removed during the procedure. Supplemental procedures—including necklift, blepharoplasty (eyelid surgery), autologous fat injection, forehead lift, and browlift; chemical or laser peel; and malar (cheek), submalar, or chin implants—may be necessary to achieve the desired results. Although they are infrequent, risks and complications of facelift surgery include bleeding; hematoma; bruising; infection; neurological dysfunction (loss of muscle function or sensation), which is usually temporary; widened or thickened scars; loss of hair around the incision site; asymmetry (unevenness between two sides); and skin necrosis (loss of skin due to tissue death). Also known as rhytidectomy.

facial canal introitus The entrance to the facial canal, a passage in the temporal bone of the skull through which the facial nerve (the seventh cranial nerve) travels. In anatomy, an introitus is an entrance that goes into a canal or hollow organ.

facial nerve The seventh cranial nerve, a nerve that has fibers both going out and coming in (both efferent and afferent fibers). The facial nerve supplies the muscles of facial expression. See also *facial nerve paralysis*.

facial nerve paralysis Loss of voluntary movement of the muscles of one side of the face due to abnormal function of the facial nerve. Paralysis of the facial nerve causes a characteristic drooping of one side of the face, inability to wrinkle the forehead, inability to whistle, inability to close an eye, and deviation of the mouth toward the other side of the face. Numerous conditions can cause facial nerve paralysis including infections, inherited diseases, tumors, toxins, and trauma. Bell's palsy is the development of facial nerve paralysis without an identifiable cause. The disease causes paralysis of the muscles of the side of the face on which the facial nerve is affected. One goal of treatment is to protect the eye on the affected side from dryness. Sometimes corticosteroid medication is given to reduce inflammation during the first weeks of illness. Surgical decompression to reduce swelling and pressure on the affected nerve may also be performed.

facies Face.

facio-genito-popliteal syndrome See *popliteal pterygium syndrome*.

factitious disorder See *Munchausen syndrome*.

factor VIII A coagulation (clotting) factor. Classic hemophilia (hemophilia A) is due to a deficiency in factor VIII activity. Also known as antihemophilic factor (AHF) or antihemophilic globulin (AHG). Human factor VIII concentrates as well as recombinant (laboratory-produced) factor VIII are administered in the treatment of hemophilia A. See also *hemophilia A*.

factor, rheumatoid An antibody that is measurable in the blood. Rheumatoid factor is commonly used as a blood test for the diagnosis of rheumatoid arthritis. Rheumatoid factor is present in about 80 percent of adults (and a much lower proportion of children) with rheumatoid arthritis. It is also present in patients with other connective tissue diseases, such as systemic lupus erythematosus and Sjögren's syndrome, and in some with infectious diseases, including infectious hepatitis.

FAE Fetal alcohol effect.

Fahr syndrome A rare, inherited, progressive brain disorder that is characterized clinically by involuntary movements, prolonged muscle contractions, and dementia. It is characterized by abnormal deposits of calcium in the basal ganglia and cerebral cortex of the brain. The gene that is responsible for Fahr syndrome has been mapped to chromosome 14. There is no cure for Fahr syndrome. Also called idiopathic basal ganglia calcification. Treatment is directed toward relieving symptoms.

failure, heart See *congestive heart failure*.

failure to thrive The inability of a child to physically grow as quickly and as much as his or her peers. Abbreviated FTT. There is no official consensus as to what constitutes FTT. It usually refers to a child whose growth is below the 3rd or 5th percentiles for his or her age or whose growth has fallen off precipitously and crossed two major growth quartiles (for example, from above the 75th percentile to below the 25th percentile). FTT in early infancy sometimes results in death, and in older infancy or childhood it is an important disease marker. FTT has many causes, including exposure to toxins in utero, chronic diseases, infection, chronic kidney disease, gastrointestinal disorders, undiagnosed metabolic disorders, emotional deprivation and other psychosocial conditions, and other diseases. Treatment of FTT requires discovery and treatment of the underlying causes. In the interim, IV feeding is necessary in some cases, and in others, supplemental high-calorie feedings can help.

fainting See *syncope*.

falciparum malaria See *malaria, falciparum*.

FALDH deficiency See *Sjögren's syndrome*.

fallopian tube One of the two tubes that transport eggs from the ovary to the uterus. The Fallopian tubes have small hair-like projections called cilia on the cells of the lining. These tubal cilia are essential to the movement of the egg through the tube and into the uterus. If the tubal cilia are damaged by infection, an egg may not be pushed along normally but may stay in the tube. Infection can also cause partial or complete blockage of the tube with scar tissue, physically preventing eggs from getting to the uterus. Infection, endometriosis, tumors, scar tissue in the pelvis (pelvic adhesions), and any other process that damages a Fallopian tube or narrows its diameter increase the chance of an ectopic pregnancy. See also *ectopic pregnancy*.

false negative A result that appears negative when it should not. An example of a false negative would be if a particular test designed to detect cancer returns a negative result but the person actually does have cancer.

false positive A result that indicates that a given condition is present when it is not. An example of a false positive would be if a particular test designed to detect cancer returns a positive result but the person does not have cancer.

false rib One of the last five pairs of ribs. A rib is said to be false if it does not attach to the sternum (the breastbone). The upper three false ribs connect to the costal cartilages of the ribs just above them. The last two false ribs usually have no ventral attachment to anchor them in front and so are called floating, fluctuating, or vertebral ribs.

familial A condition that tends to occur more often in family members than is expected by chance alone. A familial disease may be genetic (such as cystic fibrosis) or environmental (such as chicken pox).

familial adenomatous polyposis A genetic disease characterized by the presence of numerous precancerous polyps in the colon and rectum. The polyps usually begin to form at puberty, and colon cancer almost always develops later in life. Abbreviated FAP. FAP is inherited as an autosomal dominant trait. Most people who receive the gene manifest the disease, although the expression of FAP can vary markedly from person to person. The gene that is mutated in FAP is the APC (adenomatous polyposis coli) gene on chromosome 5. Surgery is often necessary to remove the colon in order to prevent the development of cancer. A milder type of

familial adenomatous polyposis has been identified that is inherited in an autosomal recessive manner. This is referred to as autosomal recessive familial adenomatous polyposis and is caused by mutations in a different gene known as MUTYH. Also known as familial polyposis, familial polyposis coli.

familial breast cancer See *breast cancer, familial*.

familial cancer Cancer or a predisposition (tendency) to it that runs in families.

familial hypercholesterolemia The most common inherited type of hyperlipidemia (high lipid levels in the blood). Familial hypercholesterolemia is recognizable in childhood and is due to genetic defects in the receptor (target) for low-density lipoprotein (LDL). The most common autosomal dominant form of hypercholesterolemia is caused by mutation in the LDL receptor gene (LDLR) on chromosome 19. There are also a number of other less frequent forms of this disorder. Familial hypercholesterolemia predisposes a person to premature arteriosclerosis, including coronary artery disease, and can lead to heart attacks at an unusually young age. Treatment involves dietary modifications and the use of cholesterol-lowering medications.

familial Mediterranean fever A rare genetic disorder that is characterized by recurrent attacks of inflammation, with fever and pain in the abdomen, chest, and/or joints. Abbreviated FMF. FMF attacks typically last for 12 to 72 hours. The symptoms may differ from patient to patient, even in the same family. In some cases, protein deposits, called amyloid, can accumulate in tissues (amyloidosis). When this injures the kidneys it can lead to kidney failure. Colchicine prevents the attacks of pain and the deposition of amyloid. FMF is inherited as an autosomal recessive trait. Molecular testing for mutations in the MEFV gene (on chromosome 16) confirms the diagnosis. Molecular genetic testing can also detect carriers and the prenatal presence of FMF. Also known as recurrent polyserositis.

familial mental retardation 1 See *FMR1*.

familial neurovisceral lipidoses See *GM1-gangliosidosis*.

familial polyposis See *familial adenomatous polyposis*.

family planning See *birth control*.

family tree See *pedigree*.

Fanconi anemia A rare, inherited disease that adversely affects all the elements of bone marrow and is associated with malformations of the heart, kidney, and limbs, as well as pigmentary changes of the skin. Fanconi anemia predisposes a person to cancer, particularly to a disturbance of bone marrow growth called myelodysplasia and to acute myeloid leukemia. Patients also tend to develop cancers in areas of the body where cells normally reproduce rapidly, such as the mouth, the esophagus, the intestinal and urinary tracts, and the reproductive organs. Fanconi anemia is most common in Ashkenazi Jews. Mutations in multiple different genes can cause the disease, which is inherited as an autosomal recessive trait.

FAO deficiency See *Sjogren's syndrome*.

FAP Familial adenomatous polyposis.

Farber lipogranulomatosis A very rare, deadly genetic disease that is characterized by the onset, in the first few weeks of life, of swollen, painful joints; nodules under the skin; profound motor and developmental delay; cherry-red spots in the retina; and cardiorespiratory problems. The disease is inherited as an autosomal recessive trait and is due to a deficiency of the enzyme acid ceramidase. Farber lipogranulomatosis is one of the sphingolipidoses, a group of genetic diseases that involve overproduction or accumulation of fatty substances called sphingolipids in the brain and nervous system. See also *sphingolipidosis*.

farsightedness An error of refraction in the human eye that causes light rays to focus behind the retina instead of on it. A person who is farsighted has normal vision at a distance but has trouble focusing on nearby objects. Farsightedness can be corrected with refractive lenses—either glasses or contact lenses—and in some cases by surgery. Also known as hyperopia.

fart See *flatulence*.

FAS Fetal alcohol syndrome.

fascia A flat band of tissue below the skin that covers underlying tissues and separates different layers of tissue. Fascia also encloses muscles.

fasciculation Involuntary contractions or twitchings of groups of muscle fibers. Fasciculations can occur in normal individuals without an associated disease or condition, or as a result of illness, such as muscle cramps, nerve diseases, and metabolic imbalances.

fasciitis Inflammation of the fascia.

fasciitis, eosinophilic See *eosinophilic fasciitis*.

fasciitis, plantar Inflammation of the plantar fascia, the bowstring-like tissue that stretches from the heel bone to the base of the toes. Plantar fasciitis can be due to calcaneal spurs, which typically cause localized tenderness and pain that is made worse by stepping down on the heel. Plantar fasciitis may be related to physical activity overload, abnormal foot mechanics, or may be due to underlying diseases that cause arthritis, such as Reiter disease, ankylosing spondylitis, and diffuse idiopathic skeletal hyperostosis. Treatment is designed to decrease inflammation and avoid reinjury. Icing reduces pain and inflammation. Anti-inflammatory agents, such as ibuprofen and injections of cortisone, can help. Infrequently, surgery is done on chronically inflamed spurs. A donut-shaped shoe insert can take pressure off a calcaneal spur and lessen plantar fasciitis.

fasting blood glucose A test to determine how much glucose (sugar) is in a blood sample after an overnight fast. The fasting blood glucose test is commonly used to detect diabetes mellitus. A blood sample is taken in a lab, physician's office, or hospital. The test is done in the morning, before the person has eaten. The normal range for blood glucose is 70 to 100 mg/dl. Levels between 100 and 126 mg/dl are referred to as impaired fasting glucose or pre-diabetes. Diabetes is typically diagnosed when fasting blood glucose levels are 126 mg/dl or higher.

fasting blood sugar See *fasting blood glucose*.

fat 1 Along with proteins and carbohydrates, one of the three nutrients used as energy sources by the body. The energy produced by fats is 9 calories per gram. Proteins and carbohydrates each provide 4 calories per gram. 2 Total fat; the sum of saturated, monounsaturated, and polyunsaturated fats. 3 A slang term for obese or adipose. 4 In chemistry, a compound formed from chemicals called fatty acids. These fats are greasy, solid materials found in animal tissues and in some plants. 5 A kind of body tissue that contains fats stored as energy that also insulates and cushions internal organs, also known as adipose tissue.

fat, trans See *trans fatty acid*.

fatty acid, trans See *trans fatty acid*.

fatty liver of pregnancy, acute See *acute fatty liver of pregnancy*.

fauces Throat.

fava bean A broad bean to which many people react adversely. Fava beans look like large, tan lima beans. They are popular in Mediterranean and Middle Eastern cuisines, are eaten raw when very young, can be cooked in soups and many other dishes, or may be made into fava brittle candy. Fava beans are the main commercial source of the drug L-dopa. Also known as broad beans. See also *favism*.

favism A condition characterized by hemolytic anemia (breakup of red blood cells) that occurs after a person eats fava beans or is exposed to the pollen of the fava plant. This dangerous reaction occurs exclusively in people with a deficiency of the enzyme glucose-6-phosphate dehydrogenase (G6PD), an X-linked genetic trait. However, not all G6PD-deficient families appear to be at risk for favism; this indicates that an additional genetic factor is needed in order to create susceptibility to favism. See also *deficiency, G6PD*.

FDA Food and Drug Administration.

febrile Feverish.

febrile headache See *headache, febrile*.

febrile seizure See *seizure, febrile*.

fecal incontinence See *encopresis*.

fecal occult blood test A test to check for hidden blood in the stool.

fecolith A hard stony mass of feces in the intestinal tract. A fecolith can obstruct the appendix, leading to appendicitis. Fecaliths can also obstruct diverticuli. Also known as coprolith and stercolith.

feces The excrement discharged from the intestines.

fecund See *fertile*.

fecundity See *fertility*.

feedback A process in which the factors that produce a result are themselves modified, corrected, and strengthened by that result. Many biologic processes are controlled by feedback, just as the temperature in a home (from a furnace or air conditioner) can be regulated by a thermostat. This principle is the basis for the practice of biofeedback. See also *biofeedback*.

feeding, breast See *breastfeeding*.

feet As a measure of length, the plural of foot.

Felty syndrome An uncommon complication of long-standing rheumatoid arthritis defined by the presence of an enlarged spleen (splenomegaly) and an abnormally low white blood cell count. Patients may have an increased susceptibility to infection. The cause of Felty syndrome is not known. Treatment of Felty syndrome is not always required beyond treatment for the underlying rheumatoid arthritis, but splenectomy can benefit some patients with very low white blood cell counts and recurring infections. See also *rheumatoid arthritis*.

female An individual of the sex that bears young or that produces ova or eggs, or a person who has a particular physical appearance, chromosome constitution, or gender identification. See also *female chromosome complement*.

female chromosome complement The whole set of chromosomes for a female. The large majority of females have a 46, XX chromosome complement (46 chromosomes, including 2 X chromosomes). A minority of females have other chromosome complements, such as 45, X (45 chromosomes, including 1 X chromosome) or 47, XXX (47 chromosomes, including 3 X chromosomes).

female external genitalia The external genital structures of the female, including the labia minora, labia majora, and the clitoris.

female genital mutilation See *circumcision, female*.

female gonad See *ovary*.

female internal genitalia The internal genital structures of the female, which include the ovaries, the Fallopian tubes, the uterus, the uterine cervix, and the vagina. These are, collectively, the female organs of reproduction.

female organs of reproduction The ovaries, which produce eggs (ova) and female hormones; the Fallopian tubes, which transport the egg from the ovaries to the uterus; the uterus, which receives the egg for fertilization and provides a growth environment for the developing embryo and fetus; the cervix, the lower, narrow part of the uterus that opens into the vagina; and the vagina, the muscular canal that extends from the cervix to the outside of the body and enables sperm to enter the female reproductive tract.

female pelvis The lower part of the abdomen that is located between the hip bones in a female. The female pelvis is usually more delicate than,

wider than, and not as high as the male pelvis. The angle of the female pubic arch is wide and round. The female sacrum is wider than the male's, and the iliac bone is flatter. The pelvic basin of the female is more spacious and less funnel-shaped than the male's. From a purely anatomic viewpoint, the female pelvis is better suited than the male pelvis to accommodate a fetus during pregnancy and permit the baby to be born.

female urethral meatus See *female urethral opening*.

female urethral opening The external opening of the transport tube that leads from the bladder to discharge urine outside the body in a female. The urethra in a female is shorter than the urethra in the male. The meatus (opening) of the female urethra is below the clitoris and just above the opening of the vagina.

femoral Having to do with the femur.

femoral artery The continuation of the external iliac artery after it passes under the inguinal ligament. The femoral arteries supply oxygenated blood from the heart to the lower extremities.

femoral vein The large vein in the groin that passes with the femoral artery under the inguinal ligament to enter the abdomen, at which point it becomes the external iliac vein. The femoral vein is a continuation of the popliteal vein, and it carries blood back to the heart from the lower extremities.

femur The single bone in the thigh, which is the largest bone in the human body. Also known as the thighbone.

fenestration The creation of a new opening. From the Latin for "the making of a window."

ferritin The major protein concerned with iron storage. The blood ferritin level serves as an indicator of the amount of iron stored in the body, and it can become elevated due to the presence of conditions featuring significant inflammation.

fertile Able to conceive and bear offspring. Also known as fecund.

fertility The ability to conceive and bear children, the ability to become pregnant through normal sexual activity.

fertilization The process of combining the male gamete, or sperm, with the female gamete, or ovum. The product of fertilization is a cell called a zygote.

fetal alcohol effect A condition in which a child has some signs of fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS) but does not meet all of the necessary criteria for FAS and there is a history of alcohol exposure before birth. Abbreviated FAE. The Institute of Medicine (IOM) has replaced the term FAE with the terms alcohol-related birth defects (ARBD) and alcohol-related neurodevelopmental disabilities (ARND), which together with FAS make up the fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASDs). ARNDs and ARBDs can still have severe and lifelong consequences for the child, including mental retardation and facial malformation. See also *fetal alcohol spectrum disorders; fetal alcohol syndrome*.

fetal alcohol spectrum disorders Conditions reflecting the possible effects of prenatal exposure to alcohol. Abbreviated FASDs. The FASDs include fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS), alcohol-related birth defects (ARBDs), and alcohol-related neurodevelopmental disabilities (ARNDs). See also *fetal alcohol syndrome*.

fetal alcohol syndrome A syndrome of damage that occurs to a child before birth as a result of the mother drinking alcohol during pregnancy. Abbreviated FAS. FAS always involves brain damage, impaired growth, and head and face abnormalities. FAS is one of the leading causes of mental retardation in the US. FAS is the extreme end of the fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASDs), the terms used to describe the range of effects that prenatal exposure to alcohol may have. In addition to FAS, the FASDs also include conditions in which the individuals have some, but not all, of the characteristics of FAS. These conditions include alcohol-related birth defects (ARBD) and alcohol-related neurodevelopmental disabilities (ARND). Besides education of women and surgery on children with FAS to correct major physical defects, there is no treatment for FAS. No amount of alcohol has been proven safe during pregnancy. To establish the diagnosis of FAS, the following signs must be present: small size and weight before and after birth (pre- and postnatal growth retardation); evidence of brain delay in development, intellectual impairment, or neurologic abnormalities; and specific appearance of the head and face. At least two of the following groups of signs must be present: small head size (microcephaly); small eyes (microphthalmia) and/or short eye openings (palpebral fissures); and underdevelopment of the upper lip, indistinct groove between the lip and nose (the philtrum), and flattened cheekbones. See also *fetal alcohol spectrum disorders*.

fetal circulation See *circulation, fetal*.

fetal development See *prenatal development*.

fetal distress Compromise of a fetus during the antepartum period (before labor) or intrapartum period (during the birth process). The term fetal distress is commonly used to describe fetal hypoxia (low oxygen levels in the fetus), which can result in fetal damage or death if it is not reversed or if the fetus is not promptly delivered. Fetal distress can be detected via abnormal slowing of labor, changes in fetal heart rate, the presence of meconium (dark green fecal material from the fetus) or other abnormal substances in the amniotic fluid, or fetal monitoring with an electronic device that shows a fetal scalp pH of less than 7.2.

fetal dystocia See *dystocia, fetal*.

fetal hemoglobin See *hemoglobin F*.

fetal mortality rate The number of fetal deaths divided by the sum of all births plus late fetal deaths in a given year. In the US, the fetal mortality rate plummeted from 19.2 per 1,000 births plus late fetal deaths in 1950 to 6.6 per 1,000 in 2000. However, the fetal mortality rate is higher than this in certain ethnic groups and among mothers with health problems during pregnancy, especially if the mother does not receive adequate personal and prenatal health care. The fetal mortality rate is considered a good measure of the quality of health care in a country or a medical facility.

fetal movement Movement of the fetus in the womb. The first fetal movements felt by the mother usually occur between 18 and 22 weeks of pregnancy but may occur earlier. Also known as quickening.

fetoprotein, alpha- See *alpha-fetoprotein*.

fetoscope A device used to obtain information about a fetus within the uterus. There are two types of fetoscopes: A fiberoptic scope for looking directly at the fetus within the uterus and a stethoscope designed for listening to the fetal heart beat.

fetoscopy Examination of a fetus within the uterus by using a fetoscope.

fetus An unborn offspring, from the embryo stage (the end of the eighth week after conception, when the major structures have formed) until birth.

fever Technically, any body temperature above the normal oral measurement of 37°C (98.6°F) or the normal rectal temperature of 99°F. However, fever is not considered medically significant until the temperature is above 38°C (100.4°F). Fever is part of the body's own disease-fighting arsenal: Rising body temperatures are apparently capable of

killing many disease-producing organisms. For that reason, low fevers should normally go untreated, unless they are accompanied by troubling symptoms. As fevers range to 40°C (104°F) and above, however, there can be unwanted consequences, such as delirium and convulsions, particularly for children. A fever of this sort demands immediate home treatment and then medical attention. Home treatment possibilities include the use of aspirin or, in children, nonaspirin pain killers such as acetaminophen, cool baths, or sponging to reduce the fever. Fever may occur with almost any type of infection or illness. Also called pyrexia.

fever, breakbone See *dengue fever*.

fever, cat scratch See *cat scratch fever*.

fever, dengue See *dengue fever*.

fever, Ebola virus See *Ebola virus*.

fever, epidemic hemorrhagic See *hemorrhagic fever, viral*.

fever, five-day See *trench fever*.

fever, intermittent A type of fever that rises and falls, often becoming worse at night and being accompanied by drenching sweats.

fever, Lassa An acute viral infection found in the tropics, especially in West Africa. Lassa fever is caused by a single-stranded RNA virus that is animal borne (zoonotic). Lassa fever can cause a potentially fatal illness, is highly contagious, and can rapidly spread. The reservoir, or host, of the Lassa virus is a rodent known as the “multimammate rat.” People can become infected by eating this infected rat or by eating food contaminated by the rat’s excretions. Person-to-person transmission also occurs via direct contact, contamination of skin breaks with infected blood, and aerosol spreads (virus particles moving through the air). The first symptoms typically occur 1 to 3 weeks after the patient comes into contact with the virus and may include high fever, sore throat, cough, eye inflammation (conjunctivitis), facial swelling, pain behind the breastbone, back pain, abdominal pain, vomiting, diarrhea, and general weakness that lasts for several days. The antiviral drug ribavirin is used for treatment along with supportive care.

fever, Mediterranean See *familial Mediterranean fever*.

fever, Q See *Q fever*.

fever, remittent A type of fever that gradually decreases in intensity over time.

fever, Rocky Mountain spotted See *Rocky Mountain spotted fever*.

fever, scarlet See *scarlet fever*.

fever, spotted See *Rocky Mountain spotted fever*.

fever, tick See *Rocky Mountain spotted fever*.

fever, trench See *trench fever*.

fever, undulant See *Brucellosis*.

fever blister See *canker sore*.

fever of unknown origin The presence of fever greater than 38.3°C (101°F) “off and on” for more than three weeks without a specific cause identified for the fever. Abbreviated FUO. Extensive diagnostic testing can determine the cause in the majority of cases of FUO. FUO may be related to infections such as HIV or other viral infections, cancers, or chronic inflammatory diseases such as sarcoidosis.

fever therapy A treatment in which abnormal elevations in body temperature are used to treat disease. Fever therapy was done in the past but is rarely, if ever, used today.

fever with renal syndrome, hemorrhagic See *hemorrhagic fever, viral*.

FGF Fibroblast growth factor.

fiber The parts of fruits and vegetables that cannot be digested. Fiber is of vital importance to digestion; it helps the body move food through the digestive tract, reduces serum cholesterol, and contributes to disease protection. Also known as bulk and roughage.

fiber, bowel disorders and High-fiber diets help delay the progression of diverticulosis and, at least, reduce the number of bouts of diverticulitis. In many cases, fiber helps reduce the symptoms of irritable bowel syndrome and constipation.

fiber, cholesterol and Cholesterol blood levels can be influenced by intake of fiber. Soluble fiber substances are effective in helping reduce the level of blood cholesterol.

fiber, constipation and Constipation can be influenced by intake of fiber. Insoluble fiber retains water in the colon, resulting in softer and larger

stools. Fiber is used effectively in treating constipation that results from poor dietary habits. Bran is particularly rich in insoluble fiber.

fiber, diabetes and Diabetes can be influenced by intake of fiber. Soluble fibers found in oat bran, apples, citrus fruits, pears, peas and beans, psyllium, and other foods slow down the digestion of carbohydrates (sugars), which results in improved glucose metabolism. A diet high in cereal fiber has been linked to a decreased risk for developing type II diabetes.

fiber, insoluble Fiber that cannot dissolve in water. Insoluble fiber is found in wheat bran, cabbage, peas and beans, and other foods. Both are important diet components for optimal health. See also *fiber, soluble*.

fiber, soluble Fiber that can at least partially be dissolved in water. Soluble fiber is found in oat bran, apples, citrus, pears, peas and beans, psyllium, and other foods. Both soluble and insoluble fiber are important diet components for optimal health. See also *fiber, insoluble*.

fibrates Cholesterol-lowering drugs that are effective in lowering triglycerides and, to a lesser extent, in increasing HDL cholesterol levels. Gemfibrozil (brand name: Lopid), the fibrate most widely used in the US, can be effective for patients with high triglyceride levels, but it is not very effective for lowering LDL cholesterol. As a result, it is used less often than other drugs for patients with heart disease for whom LDL cholesterol lowering is the main goal of treatment. Fibrates are generally well tolerated by most patients. Fibrates appear to increase a patient's likelihood of developing cholesterol gallstones and can increase the effects of medications that thin the blood.

fibril A small fiber, a fine thread.

fibrillation In cardiology, an abnormal and erratic twitching of the heart muscle.

fibrillation, atrial An abnormal and irregular heart rhythm in which electrical signals are generated chaotically throughout the upper chambers (atria) of the heart. Many people with atrial fibrillation have no symptoms. Among those who do, the most common symptom is an uncomfortable awareness of the rapid and irregular heartbeat (palpitations). Atrial fibrillation can promote the formation of blood clots that travel from the heart to the brain, resulting in stroke. Treatment of atrial fibrillation involves risk-factor control, use of medications to slow the heart rate and/or convert the heart to

normal rhythm, and prevention of blood clots. Also known as auricular fibrillation.

fibrillation, auricular See *fibrillation, atrial*.

fibrillation, ventricular An abnormal and irregular heart rhythm in which there are rapid uncoordinated fluttering contractions of the lower chambers (ventricles) of the heart. Ventricular fibrillation disrupts the synchrony between the heartbeat and the pulse beat. Ventricular fibrillation is commonly associated with heart attacks and scarring of the heart muscle from previous heart attacks. Ventricular fibrillation is life threatening.

fibrin The protein that is formed during normal blood clotting and that is the essence of the clot.

fibrinogen The protein from which fibrin is formed in normal blood clotting.

fibroadenoma The most common benign tumor of the breast and the most common breast tumor in women under 30 years of age. Fibroadenomas are usually solitary and may increase in size during pregnancy. The most common signs of fibroadenoma are a painless, rubbery or firm, moveable mass of the breast. The diagnosis of fibroadenoma is made by biopsy. Treatment may involve surgical removal. Fibroadenomas are rare in postmenopausal women. Juvenile fibroadenomas are rapidly growing, benign breast tumors that occur in adolescent females.

fibroblast A type of cell found in connective tissue throughout the body that produces collagen and other proteins found in the extracellular (between cells) spaces.

fibroblast growth factors A family of signaling molecules that bind to surface receptors and exert actions on cells known as fibroblasts. Abbreviated FGFs. There are multiple types of FGFs, and FGF molecules bind to a family of fibroblast growth factor receptor molecules (FGFR1, FGFR2, FGFR3, and FGFR4). This interaction plays a role in wound healing and embryonic development. Disruption of FGFs or FGFRs can result in disease. Mutations in FGFR2 cause the best-known type of acrocephalosyndactyly, Apert syndrome. Different mutations in FGFR2 are responsible for other genetic diseases, including Pfeiffer syndrome (a type of acrocephalosyndactyly) and Crouzon syndrome (a craniofacial disorder). All these disorders are inherited as autosomal dominant traits. See also *acrocephalosyndactyly; Apert syndrome; Crouzon syndrome; Pfeiffer syndrome*.

fibrocystic breast condition The presence of lumpiness and/or discomfort in one or both breasts. The condition is very common and benign. Fibrocystic breast condition was formerly referred to as fibrocystic breast disease and primarily affects women between the ages of 30 and 50; it tends to become less of a problem after menopause. The diagnosis of fibrocystic breasts is complicated by the fact that the condition can vary widely in its severity. The symptoms can also be limited in duration, usually occurring only premenstrually. Normal hormonal variation during the menstrual cycle is the primary contributing factor to fibrocystic breast condition. The foremost concern is not fibrocystic breast condition itself but the impaired detection of breast cancer, as the lumps in fibrocystic breast condition can mimic and mask breast cancer.

fibroid A common benign tumor of the uterus. Fibroids can be present without symptoms. However, in about 25 percent of women, fibroids cause symptoms such as prolonged or heavy menstrual bleeding, pelvic pressure or pain, and, in rare cases, reproductive dysfunction. Drugs that manipulate the levels of steroid hormones can be effective in treating fibroids, but side effects limit their long-term use. Fibroids may be removed if they cause discomfort or if they are associated with uterine bleeding. In addition to hysterectomy and abdominal myomectomy, various minimally invasive procedures have been developed to remove or diminish the size of fibroids. Also known as leiomyoma and myoma of the uterus.

fibroma A benign tumor consisting of a mass of connective tissue cells that have a spindle shape.

fibroma, cemento-ossifying A reactive lesion of the gingiva that may grow to very large size, unless treated. Abbreviated COF. A COF has a hard, fibrous consistency. Treatment is surgery. Also known as ossifying fibroma.

fibroma, collagenous See *fibroma, desmoplastic*.

fibroma, desmoplastic A rare type of primary bone tumor that is characteristically composed of well-differentiated cells that produce collagen. Desmoplastic fibromas are discovered most often in the first three decades of life, in the mandible (the femur and pelvis are also favored sites). Although benign, these tumors infiltrate locally and may cause pain and swelling or fluid accumulation. Treatment is surgical removal, but desmoplastic fibromas may recur. Also known as collagenous fibroma.

fibroma, ossifying See *fibroma, cemento-ossifying*.

fibromatosis A condition characterized by multiple fibromas. See also *fibroma*.

fibromyalgia A disease characterized by chronic pain, stiffness, and tenderness of muscles, tendons, and joints, without detectable inflammation. Fibromyalgia does not cause body damage or deformity. However, undue fatigue plagues 90 percent of patients with fibromyalgia. Sleep disorder is also common in patients with fibromyalgia. Fibromyalgia can be associated with other rheumatic conditions, and irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) can occur with fibromyalgia. There is no definitive medical test for the diagnosis of fibromyalgia, so diagnosis is made by eliminating other possible causes of the symptoms. The most effective treatment is a combination of education, stress reduction, exercise, and medication. Formerly known as fibrositis.

fibrosarcoma A malignant tumor consisting of fibroblasts (connective tissue cells that produce the collagen found in scar tissue) Fibrosarcoma may occur as a mass in the soft tissues or may be found in bone. An infantile form of fibrosarcoma which occurs in children less than one year of age has an excellent prognosis when appropriately treated. Symptoms may include a lump or mass with or without associated pain and soreness.

fibrosis, radiation Scarring of the lungs from radiation. Radiation fibrosis is a consequence of the repair process that follows radiation pneumonitis (inflammation of the lungs due to radiation), as from radiation therapy. Radiation fibrosis typically occurs within months to a few years after the completion of radiation treatments. Whereas the inflammation of radiation pneumonitis is often reversible with medications, radiation fibrosis is usually irreversible and permanent.

fibrositis See *fibromyalgia*.

fibrous dysplasia, monostotic See *monostotic fibrous dysplasia*.

fibrous dysplasia, polyostotic See *polyostotic fibrous dysplasia*.

fibula The smaller of the two bones in the lower leg. The end of the fibula forms the bony prominence of the outer ankle.

fièvre boutonneuse See *typhus, African tick*.

fifth disease A mild disease occurring typically in children that is caused by parvovirus B-19. The characteristic symptoms of fifth disease include low-grade fever, fatigue, a “slapped cheeks” rash, and a rash over the whole body. Transmission is by droplets in the air (respiratory secretions) or through blood. Some children with immunodeficiency (such as those with AIDS or leukemia) or with certain blood disorders (such as sickle cell anemia or hemolytic anemia) may become seriously ill with fifth disease including the development of anemia. About 80 percent of adults with fifth disease have joint aches and pains (arthritis), which may persist for months. Pregnant women who have not previously had fifth disease should avoid contact with patients who have it because parvovirus B-19 can infect a fetus prior to birth. Although no birth defects have been reported as a result of fifth disease, it can cause the death of an unborn fetus. This occurs in less than 5 percent of pregnant women who become infected with the virus. The odd name, fifth disease, comes from the prevaccination era, when this disease was often the fifth disease that a child contracted. Also known as erythema infectiosum.

filariasis A parasitic disease caused by the African eye worm, a microscopic thread-like worm. The adult worms can only live in the human lymph system. Lymphatic filariasis affects people in the tropics and sub-tropics of Asia, Africa, the Western Pacific, and parts of Central and South America. The disease spreads from person to person by mosquito bites. The microscopic worms travel to the lymph vessels and grow into adults. The adult worms mate and release millions of microscopic worms into the blood. The disease usually is not life threatening, but it can cause permanent damage to the lymphatic system and kidneys. Because of the damage to the lymphatic system, fluid collects and causes swelling (known as lymphedema) in the arms, breasts, legs, and, for men, the genital area. Also known as lymphatic filariasis. See also *lymphedema*.

film Slang shortening of X-ray film.

film, AP An X-ray picture in which the beams pass from front to back (anteroposterior). See also *film, PA*.

film, lateral An X-ray picture taken from the side.

film, PA An X-ray picture in which the beams pass from back to front (posteroanterior). See also *film, AP*.

filovirus A virus in the family filoviridae that causes hemorrhagic fever. Filoviruses have single-stranded RNA as their genetic material. Ebola virus and the Marburg virus are both filoviruses.

fine needle aspiration The use of a thin needle to withdraw material from the body for analysis. For example, when a nodule is felt in the thyroid, fine needle aspiration may be done to remove a tissue sample that can be examined to determine whether the nodule is benign or malignant. The aspirated material is examined under the microscope by a pathologist.

fingernail A covering for the tip of the finger that is produced by living skin cells in the finger. A fingernail consists of several parts, including the nail plate (the visible part of the nail), the nail bed (the skin beneath the nail plate), the cuticle (the tissue that overlaps the plate and rims the base of the nail), the nail folds (the skin folds that frame and support the nail on three sides), the lunula (the whitish half-moon at the base of the nail), and the matrix (the hidden part of the nail unit under the cuticle). A fingernail grows from the matrix and is composed largely of keratin, a hardened protein that is also found in skin and hair. See also *nail; nail care*.

fingers, six See *hexadactyly*.

fire, St. Anthony's An intensely painful burning sensation in the limbs and extremities that is caused by ergot, which is the consequence of a fungus (*Claviceps purpurea*) that contaminates rye and wheat. See also *ergot*.

fire ant Originally from South America, a red or yellowish ant of small to medium size that has a severe sting that burns like fire. The sting of a fire ant causes a pustule to form within 24 hours that takes several days to resolve. Fire ant toxin can trigger an allergic reaction, particularly in people allergic to bee, wasp, and yellow jacket stings. Avoidance and prompt treatment are essential.

fire supplies kit See *disaster supplies*.

first do no harm A classic slogan that is used in medicine, often in the Latin wording *primum non nocere* that is attributed to Hippocrates.

first stage of labor The part of labor when the cervix dilates fully, to approximately 10 centimeters in diameter. Also known as the stage of dilatation.

FISH Fluorescence in situ hybridization, a molecular cytogenetic technique that tags genetic material

with fluorescent molecules. FISH is useful for identifying chromosomes and parts of chromosomes, deciphering chromosome rearrangements, detecting chromosome abnormalities, and detecting and mapping genes. For example, a FISH probe to chromosome 21 allows the detection of cells with trisomy 21 (an extra chromosome 21, which is the cause of Down syndrome).

fishbowl granuloma See *granuloma, fishbowl*.

Fisher's exact test A statistical test used to determine whether there is a nonrandom association between two variables that is much used in medical research. It tests the independence of rows and columns in a 2×2 contingency table (a table with two horizontal rows crossing two vertical columns, creating four places for data) based on the exact sampling distribution of the observed frequencies. Hence it is an "exact" test.

fish-odor syndrome An inborn error of metabolism that is associated with an offensive body odor whose scent is similar to the smell of rotting fish. Fish-odor syndrome is due to the excessive excretion of trimethylamine (TMA) in urine, sweat, and breath. This syndrome is caused by a mutation in the gene for the enzyme flavin-containing monooxygenase-3 (FMO3). Dietary modifications to reduce the consumption of triethylamine precursors may provide some relief of symptoms. Also known as trimethylaminuria.

fistula An abnormal passageway between organs, vessels, or other structures that are not normally connected. For example, an anal fistula is an opening in the skin near the anus: This opening may lead to a tunnel into the rectal canal or to a passage that ends in a blind pouch.

five-day fever See *trench fever*.

flail chest A condition that occurs when enough ribs are broken (usually from a crush injury) to compromise the rigidity of the chest wall. On inspiration, the chest wall moves inward instead of outward, and it does the opposite on expiration.

flat feet Absence of an arch in the sole of the foot that causes the foot to lie flat when the person is standing. All babies have flat feet because their arches are not yet built up (and their feet tend to be plump). This condition may persist into adulthood, or an arch may form as the child grows. Flat feet can also be acquired, as in jobs that require a great deal of walking and carrying of heavy objects. Also called pes planus.

flatulence The passing of gas from the intestinal tract. Also commonly known as farting. See also *flatus*.

flatus Gas in the intestinal tract or gas passed through the anus. Intestinal gas contains numerous gases including oxygen, nitrogen, hydrogen, carbon dioxide, hydrogen sulfide, ammonia, and methane. The foul smell usually is caused by small traces of gases such as hydrogen sulfide, ammonia, and methane.

flavin-containing monooxygenase-3 FMO3.

flavivirus One of a family of viruses transmitted by mosquitos and ticks that cause some important diseases, including dengue, yellow fever, tick-borne encephalitis, and West Nile fever. Flaviviruses have single-stranded RNA as their genetic material.

flexion The process of bending, or the state of being bent. For example, flexion of the fingers results in a clenched fist.

Flexner Report A report, the full name of which is "Medical Education in the United States and Canada." The 1910 report is named for its author, professional educator Abraham Flexner, who researched and wrote this report for the Carnegie Foundation. At the time that the report was written, many medical schools were proprietary schools operated more for profit than for education. In their stead, Flexner proposed medical schools in the German tradition of strong biomedical sciences, together with hands-on clinical training. The Flexner Report caused many medical schools to close, and most of the remaining schools were reformed to conform to the Flexnerian model.

floaters Spots in the field of vision due to deposits of protein drifting about in the vitreous humor (the clear jelly-like substance that fills the middle of the eye). Also known as spots in front of the eyes.

floating rib The last two false ribs, which usually have no ventral attachment to anchor them in front. Also known as fluctuating or vertebral rib. See also *false rib*.

flood supplies kit See *disaster supplies*.

floppy baby syndrome An abnormal condition of newborns and infants manifested by inadequate tone of the muscles. Floppy baby syndrome can be due to a multitude of neurologic and muscle problems. See also *hypotonia*.

flow cytometry Analysis of biological material via detection of the light-absorbing or fluorescing properties of cells, or of subcellular fractions such as chromosomes, as they pass in a narrow stream through a laser beam. Flow cytometry can be used with automated sorting devices to sort successive droplets of a stream into different fractions, depending on the fluorescence emitted by each droplet.

flow karyotyping Use of flow cytometry to analyze and/or separate chromosomes on the basis of their DNA content.

flu See *influenza*.

flu, stomach A gastrointestinal illness caused by a microorganism. Stomach flu is not related to the influenza (flu) virus.

flu shot See *influenza vaccine*.

flu vaccine See *influenza vaccine*.

fluctuating rib See *floating rib*.

fluid, cerebrospinal See *cerebrospinal fluid*.

fluorescence in situ hybridization FISH.

fluorescence microscope A microscope that is equipped to examine material that fluoresces under ultraviolet (UV) light.

fluoroscopy An X-ray procedure that makes it possible to see internal organs in motion. Fluoroscopy uses X-rays to produce real-time video images. Instead of using film, fluoroscopy captures X-rays with a device called an image intensifier and converts the X-rays into light. The light is then captured by a camera and displayed on a video monitor.

fluorouracil An anticancer drug whose chemical name is 5-fluorouracil (5-FU).

flush 1 A redness of the skin, typically over the cheeks or neck. A flush is usually temporary and brought on by excitement, exercise, fever, or embarrassment. Flushing is an involuntary (uncontrollable) response of the nervous system that leads to widening of the capillaries of the involved skin. Also referred to as a blush (or, may be used as a verb). Flushing may also be caused by medications or other substances that cause widening of the capillaries. 2 To wash out a wound, body area, or medical device.

fluvastatin A cholesterol-lowering drug (brand name: Lescol) that is prescribed to prevent medical problems associated with high cholesterol levels, such as atherosclerosis and heart disease. Fluvastatin is also used to treat inherited lipid disorders and similar disorders caused by liver or kidney disease.

FMF Familial Mediterranean fever.

FMO3 Flavin-containing monooxygenase-3, an enzyme that is encoded on chromosome 1 and normally metabolizes trimethylamine. See also *fish-odor syndrome*.

FMR1 Familial mental retardation 1, the gene that is responsible for the production of the protein familial mental retardation protein (FMRP). See also *fragile X syndrome*.

FMRP Familial mental retardation protein, the lack of which results in fragile X syndrome, the most common inherited cause of mental retardation. See also *FMR1; fragile X syndrome*.

focused H and P A medical history (H) and physical examination (P) that focuses on the patient's present problem. For example, if a patient is complaining of an earache, the physician concentrates on the ear rather than doing a complete clinical exam.

folate See *folic acid*.

Foley catheter See *catheter, Foley*.

folic acid A B vitamin that is an important factor in nucleic acid synthesis. A deficiency of folic acid causes megaloblastic anemia. Lack of folic acid during pregnancy can lead to neural tube birth defects, including spina bifida and anencephaly. An adequate intake of folic acid reduces the risks for a remarkably broad range of birth defects and appears to be important to the health of arteries, reducing the risk of second heart attacks and strokes. See Appendix C, "Vitamins."

follicle A shaft in the skin through which hair grows. Inflammation of the follicle is referred to as folliculitis.

follicle-stimulating hormone A hormone produced by the pituitary gland that controls estrogen production by the ovaries. Abbreviated FSH. See also *gonadotropin*.

follicular cyst of the ovary See *cyst of the ovary, follicular*.

Fondation Jean Dausset The Centre d'Etudes du Polymorphisme Humain (CEPH), an internationally renowned research laboratory created in Paris in 1984 by Professor Jean Dausset to provide the scientific community with resources for human genome mapping.

Fong disease See *nail-patella syndrome*.

fontanel A soft spot of the skull of a newborn infant where the cartilage has not yet hardened into bone between the skull bones. There are normally two fontanels, both in the midline of the skull. The anterior fontanel is well in front of the posterior fontanel. The posterior fontanel closes first, at latest by the age of 8 weeks in a full-term baby. The anterior fontanel closes at around 18 months of age, but it can close normally as early as 9 months. Also known as fontanelle.

food Any substance that is eaten to provide nutritional support for the body.

food, functional A modified food that claims to improve health or well-being by providing benefit beyond that of the traditional nutrients it contains. Functional foods may include such items as cereals, breads, beverages that are fortified with vitamins, some herbs, and nutraceuticals.

food, “super” Food with alleged healing or health-promoting capabilities. Not all items advertised as “super” foods or healing foods have been proven to promote health, however, and some may be contraindicated for people with certain health conditions.

Food and Drug Administration An agency within the US Public Health Service that provides a number of health-related services. Abbreviated FDA. The FDA's services include inspecting food and food-processing facilities to ensure wholesomeness and safety; scrutinizing food and drugs for pets and farm animals; ensuring that cosmetics will not cause harm; monitoring the health of the nation's blood supply; ensuring that medicines, medical devices, and biologicals (such as insulin and vaccines) are safe and effective; and testing radiation-emitting products such as microwave ovens to protect the public. The FDA also oversees health and safety labeling of these products. All new prescription and over-the-counter drugs are subject to FDA approval. The FDA must determine that a new drug produces the benefits it's supposed to produce, without causing side effects that would outweigh the benefits. It does so by looking at the results of clinical trials done outside the FDA. When serious adverse effects from a medication are reported, the FDA has the power to force the manufacturer to make

changes in the drug, change its safety labeling or marketing practices, or remove the medication from the market.

food poisoning Disease caused by food-borne infectious organisms, such as the Clostridium botulinum bacteria that produces deadly botulism toxin. Symptoms may include stomach upset, nausea, vomiting, and weakness, depending on the organism involved. The most prominent causes of food poisoning are noroviruses (often from shellfish and salads), *Campylobacter jejuni* (the leading cause of bacterial food poisoning, often from undercooked poultry), *Salmonella* (often from raw or undercooked eggs), *Listeria monocytogenes* (often from unpasteurized milk and cheese), *Vibrio vulnificus* (through raw or inadequately cooked seafood), and *E. coli* 0157:H7 (often from undercooked hamburger). See also *botulism*; *E. coli*; *listeriosis*; *salmonellosis*.

foodborne disease See *food poisoning*.

foot 1 The extremity at the end of the leg, with which a person stands and walks. The foot is a complex structure, made up of dozens of bones that work together with muscles and tendons to execute precise movements. The bones of the foot include the 10 metatarsals and the 28 phalanges (toe bones). 2 As a measurement, 12 inches, or one-third of a yard. The foot was originally the length of a man's foot, and it served as a measurement of land. Abbreviated ft.

foot, athlete's See *athlete's foot*.

foot drop brace See *ankle-foot orthosis*.

foot fungus See *athlete's foot*.

footling birth A foot- or feet-first birth. A footling birth is called single-footling or double-footling, depending on whether the presenting part of the baby at delivery is just one foot or both feet. Also known as footling presentation.

footling presentation See *footling birth*.

foramen A natural opening. Although a foramen is usually through bone, it can be an opening through other types of tissue, as with the foramen ovale in the heart. The plural of foramen is foramina.

foramen, interventricular An opening between the lateral and third ventricles in the brain.

foramen magnum The large hole at the base of the skull that allows passage of the spinal cord.

foramen of Magendie An opening from the fourth ventricle in the brain to the central canal of the upper end of the spinal cord.

foramen ovale An oval opening between the two upper chambers of the heart (the atria) that is a normal feature of fetal and newborn circulation. The foramen ovale normally closes by 3 months of age.

foramina of Luschka A pair of openings from the fourth ventricle of the brain to the central canal of the upper end of the spinal cord.

forceps An instrument that has two blades and a handle and is used for handling, grasping, or compressing.

forceps, obstetrical A forceps designed as an aid in the vaginal delivery of a baby. Forceps may be used to ease delivery or to cope with problems of fetal distress or fetal position. The decision to use forceps must be made by an obstetrician.

forearm The portion of the upper limb from the elbow to the wrist. The forearm has two bones: the radius and ulna.

foreign body airway obstruction Partial or complete blockage of the breathing tubes to the lungs due to the presence of a foreign body, such as food or another object. See also *airway obstruction*.

forensic medicine The branch of medicine dealing with the application of medical knowledge to establish facts in civil or criminal legal cases, such as an investigation into the cause and time of a suspicious death. Also known as forensic pathology.

foreskin The fold of skin that covers the head (glans) of the penis. The inside of the foreskin has preputial glands, a special type of sebaceous (oil) glands that secrete an oily lubricant known as smegma. The foreskin is often surgically removed via circumcision. Also known as prepuce. See also *circumcision, male*.

foreskin, inflammation of the See *posthitis*.

foreskin, tight See *phimosis*.

foreskin and glans, inflammation of the See *balanoposthitis*.

Forestier disease See *diffuse idiopathic skeletal hyperostosis*.

formula A prepared substitute for breast milk. Formula does not contain the special immunity factors found in breast milk that help the baby to fight off infections, and it may not include all the vitamins, minerals, and enzymes found in human breast milk. For that reason, experts in infant nutrition agree that breast milk is the best source of nutrition for infants.

formula feeding Feeding an infant or toddler prepared formula instead of or in addition to breastfeeding. Formula feeding is indicated when the mother has an illness that could be passed on to the baby through breast milk or through the close physical proximity required for breastfeeding. Otherwise, experts in infant nutrition agree that breastfeeding is best.

fornices Plural of fornix.

fornix In anatomy, any vaultlike or arched structure, such as the fornix cerebri (an arching fibrous band in the brain).

fornix cerebri One of two arching fibrous bands in the brain that connect the two lobes of the cerebrum. Each of the two fornices in the brain is an arched tract of nerves.

fornix conjunctivae The loose arching folds that connect the conjunctival membrane lining the inside of the eyelid with the conjunctival membrane covering the eyeball.

fornix uteri The anterior (front) and posterior (back) recesses into which the upper vagina is divided. These vaultlike recesses are formed by protrusion of the cervix into the vagina. The fornix uteri is also known as the fornix vaginae (or the vaginal fornices) and the uterine fornices.

fornix vaginae See *fornix uteri*.

founder effect The positive effect on gene frequency when a population (colony) has only a small number of original settlers, one or more of whom had that gene. For example, the gene for Huntington's disease was introduced into the Lake Maracaibo region in Venezuela early in the nineteenth century. This is now the largest known aggregation of the Huntington's gene in the world.

fourth stage of labor The hour or two after delivery when the tone of the uterus is reestablished as the uterus contracts again, expelling any remaining contents. These contractions are hastened by breastfeeding, which stimulates production of the hormone oxytocin.

fourth ventricle One cavity in a system of four communicating cavities within the brain, which are continuous with the central canal of the spinal cord. The fourth ventricle is the most inferior (lowest) of these. It extends from the aqueduct of the midbrain to the central canal of the upper end of the spinal cord, with which it communicates via the foramina of Luschka and the foramen of Magendie. It is filled with cerebrospinal fluid that is formed by structures called choroid plexuses located in the walls and roofs of the ventricle.

fraction, ejection See *ejection fraction*.

fracture A break in bone or cartilage. Although usually a result of trauma, a fracture can be the result of an acquired disease of bone, such as osteoporosis, or of abnormal formation of bone in a congenital disease of bone, such as osteogenesis imperfecta ("brittle bone disease"). Fractures are classified according to their character and location (for example, greenstick fracture of the radius).

fracture, buckle See *fracture, torus*.

fracture, clay-shoveler's An uncommon breakage of the spine, of the vertebrae from the lower neck or upper back, that results from stress. Clay-shoveler's fracture usually occurs in laborers who rapidly lift heavy weights with their arms extended, such as in shoveling. Symptoms of clay-shoveler's fracture include burning, knife-like pain at the level of the fractured spine, between the upper shoulder blades. Clay-shoveler's fracture is diagnosed via X-ray examination of the spine. Most patients require no treatment other than rest and avoidance of activities that stress the area of the fracture. Occasionally surgical removal of the tip of the broken spine is performed for those with long-standing pain.

fracture, comminuted A fracture in which a bone is broken, splintered, or crushed into a number of pieces.

fracture, compound A fracture in which a bone is sticking through the skin. Also known as an open fracture.

fracture, compression A fracture caused by compression, the act of pressing together. Compression fractures of the vertebrae are especially common in elderly people.

fracture, greenstick A fracture in which one side of a bone is broken and the other is bent (like a green stick).

fracture, open See *fracture, compound*.

fracture, Salter-Harris A traumatic fracture of the phyeal and/or epiphyseal growth plate. Salter-Harris fractures occur in the extremities of children at the point where new bone is being formed as the bones grow.

fracture, spiral See *fracture, torsion*.

fracture, stress A fracture caused by repetitive stress, as may occur in sports, strenuous exercise, or heavy physical labor. Stress fractures are especially common in the metatarsal bones of the foot, particularly in runners. Osteoporosis increases the possibility of stress fractures. Treatment includes rest, disuse, and sometimes splinting or casting to prevent reinjury during healing.

fracture, toddler's A torsion fracture of the tibia that occurs without bone displacement. This fracture is called toddler's fracture because it occurs in infants who are early on in their walking, causing a stress breakage of bone in the large bone of the leg below the knee.

fracture, torsion A fracture in which a bone has been twisted apart. Also called a spiral fracture. See also *fracture, toddler's*.

fracture, torus A fracture in which one side of a bone bends but does not actually break. Torus fractures normally heal on their own within a month, with rest and disuse. Also known as incomplete fracture or buckle fracture.

fracture, transverse A fracture in which the break is across a bone, at a right angle to the long axis of the bone.

fracture, Y A fracture with a Y-like shape that occurs at the end of a bone.

fragile site A point on a chromosome where gaps and breaks tend to occur, which can be passed on from one generation to another.

fragile X chromosome An X chromosome that has a fragile site and is associated with a common form of mental retardation. Fragile X chromosome is due to a mutation (a trinucleotide repeat) in the DNA at that spot. Not all people who inherit the fragile site have the fragile X syndrome, and it is not yet known what genetic or environmental factors cause the breaks or deletions at this fragile site. Also known as FRAXA (as is fragile X syndrome). See also *fragile X syndrome*.

fragile X syndrome The most common heritable form of mental retardation. Fragile X syndrome is due to a dynamic mutation (a trinucleotide

repeat) at an inherited fragile site on the X chromosome; therefore, it is an X-linked disorder. Characteristics of fragile X syndrome in boys may include, in addition to mental impairment, prominent or long ears, a long face, delayed speech, hyperextensible joints, hyperactivity, tactile defensiveness, gross motor delays, and autistic-like behaviors. Boys are typically more severely affected than girls with fragile X syndrome. Only about half of all females who carry the genetic mutation for fragile X syndrome have symptoms themselves. Because the mutation is dynamic, it can vary in length and hence in severity of its effects from generation to generation, from person to person, and even within a given individual. The diagnosis of the syndrome is confirmed by molecular genetic testing. Also known as FRAXA (as is the fragile X chromosome itself) and Martin-Bell syndrome.

frambesia See *yaws*.

FRAXA See *fragile X chromosome*.

free radical An unstable compound containing unpaired electrons whose behavior is characterized by rapid reactions. Free radicals have been implicated in the aging process, cancer, and other kinds of physical damage to body tissues.

frenulum A physical structure that has a restraining function. For example, the lingual frenulum attaches the tongue to the floor of the mouth and appears to restrain it.

Freudian Pertaining to Sigmund Freud, the neurologist, psychiatrist, and founder of psychoanalysis, or to the theory and practice of psychoanalysis and psychotherapy developed by Freud. Freudian psychoanalysis concentrates on finding the roots of adult behavior in childhood conflicts. The term Freudian also refers to interpretations of behavior based on Freud's precepts.

Frey syndrome Sweating on one side of the forehead, face, scalp, and neck that occurs soon after ingestion of food, as a result of damage to a nerve that goes to the large saliva gland in the cheek (the parotid gland). The symptoms are usually mild, but more severe cases may require medical treatment.

frontal lobe The part of each hemisphere of the brain located behind the forehead that serves to regulate and mediate the higher intellectual functions. The frontal lobes are important for controlling thoughts, reasoning, and behaviors.

frostbite Damage to tissues that results from exposure to extreme cold. The tissues become injured from blood clotting and ice-crystal forma-

tion. Severe frostbite can result in death of the tissues (gangrene). The best way to warm a frozen part is to put it into a tub of hot water at 40°C to 42°C (104°F to 108°F). The extremity should not be thawed if there is a risk of it refreezing, which could further damage tissue. Warming over a fire or next to a heater should be avoided due to the risk of burns or dehydration of the injured tissue. The extremity should not be rubbed with snow because any rubbing may aggravate the injury. There may be considerable pain when the frostbitten area is rewarmed. See also *cold injury*.

frozen shoulder Permanent severe limitation of the range of motion of the shoulder due to inflammation and subsequent scarring around the shoulder joint (adhesive capsulitis). Frozen shoulder may occur following an injury or immobilization of the shoulder joint, and it occurs more commonly in people with diabetes and certain other health conditions than in the general population.

FSH Follicle-stimulating hormone.

ft. Abbreviation for foot, a measure of length.

FTT Failure to thrive.

fucosidosis An inherited lysosomal storage disease characterized by lack of the enzyme fucosidase. Without fucosidase, there is accumulation of fucose in the tissues. Fucosidosis is an autosomal recessive disorder. The gene that is responsible for fucosidosis, *FUCA1*, is on chromosome 1. Fucosidosis in its most severe form can cause neurologic deterioration, growth retardation, visceromegaly (enlargement of the internal organs), and seizures.

fugue state An altered state of consciousness in which a person may move about purposely and even speak but is not fully aware. A fugue state is usually a type of complex partial seizure. See also *seizure, complex partial*.

functional food See *food, functional*.

functional gene test A test for a specific protein which indicates not only that the corresponding gene is present but also that it is active.

fundoplication A surgical treatment for GERD. Usually a specific type of this procedure, called Nissen fundoplication, is performed, in which the upper part of the stomach is wrapped around the lower esophageal sphincter to strengthen this structure, prevent acid reflux, and repair a hiatal hernia. The procedure may be performed by laparoscopy. See also *gastroesophageal reflux disease*.

fundus In medicine, the bottom or base of an organ. For example, the fundus of the eye is the retina. However, the fundus of the stomach is inexplicably the upper portion. From the Latin for “the bottom.”

fungal nail infection See *onychomycosis*.

fungiform Mushroom-shaped.

fungiform papillae Broad, flat structures that house taste buds in the central portion of the dorsum (back) of the tongue. Fungiform papillae were once thought to resemble little mushrooms.

fungus A plantlike organism that does not contain chlorophyll and feeds on organic matter. An example of a common fungus is the yeast organism that causes thrush and diaper rash (diaper dermatitis).

fungus, foot See *athlete's foot*.

funnel chest “Caved-in” chest. Usually an unimportant isolated finding first evident at birth, funnel chest can occasionally be part of a connective-tissue disorder such as Marfan syndrome. Also known as pectus excavatum.

funny bone A sensation, rather than an actual bone, that one gets when the elbow is bumped and the ulnar nerve that runs past the elbow is stimulated and produces a strange, almost painful, sensation.

FUO See *fever of unknown origin*.

furosemide A common diuretic medication (brand name: Lasix) that is prescribed to rid the body of excess fluid. Furosemide may be recommended to treat fluid accumulation as a result of kidney disease, fluid in the lungs, congestive heart failure, high blood pressure, and other conditions. See also *diuretic, loop*.

furuncle See *boil*.

fusiform Formed like a spindle: wider in the middle and tapering toward the ends. For example, a fusiform aneurysm is a vascular outpouching that is shaped like a spindle.

fusiform aneurysm An outpouching or widening of an artery or a vein that is shaped like a spindle.

<http://www.rashidiislamiccenter.com>

G g

G In genetics, guanine, one member of the G-C base pair (guanine-cytosine) in DNA. See also *DNA; guanine; RNA*.

G protein A guanine nucleotide binding protein in cells that interacts with cell surface receptors and affects biochemical actions within cells.

G6PD Glucose-6-phosphate dehydrogenase, an enzyme that red blood cells rely heavily on because it protects the cells against oxidative stresses. See also *deficiency, G6PD*.

GAG Glycosaminoglycan.

gait A manner of walking. Observation of gait can provide early diagnostic clues for a number of disorders, including cerebral palsy, Parkinson's disease, and Rett syndrome.

galactose A sugar found in milk. Galactose is a disaccharide that is made up of two sugars, galactose and glucose, that are bound together.

galactosemia An inherited disorder of galactose metabolism that occurs in newborns and can result in damage to the liver, brain, kidneys, and other organs in infants due to the accumulation of galactose derivatives in the body. Individuals with galactosemia cannot tolerate any amount of human or animal milk intake. The symptoms of galactosemia resolve if a diet that restricts the intake of galactose and lactose is started during the first 10 days of life. Galactosemia is inherited as an autosomal recessive trait. Galactosemia is due to deficient activity of the enzyme galactose-phosphate uridylyltransferase (GALT). Molecular testing for the gene that produces GALT permits carrier detection, genetic counseling, and prenatal diagnosis.

galactosylceramidosis See *Krabbe disease*.

gallbladder A pear-shaped organ located below the liver that stores the bile secreted by the liver. During and after a fatty meal, the gallbladder contracts, delivering the bile through the bile ducts into the intestines to help with digestion.

gallbladder absence See *agenesis of the gallbladder*.

gallium A rare metal with the atomic weight 69. There are several isotopic forms of gallium that differ from it in atomic weight. One is gallium-68, which is produced by cyclotrons and emits gamma rays. The citrate form of gallium-68 is used as a radiotracer to locate sites of inflammation and tumor tissue within the body.

gallium scan A test to detect sites in the body where cells are multiplying rapidly, such as tumors or areas of inflammation. A small amount of radioactive gallium is injected into a vein, and the element is taken up by cells that are rapidly dividing. A scanner is used to detect the areas of gallium uptake. See also *gallium*.

gallop rhythm An abnormal heart rhythm that pounds in the chest resembling the gallop of a horse when heard during examination with a stethoscope.

gallstone A stone of varying size that forms when substances in bile harden. There can be just one large stone, hundreds of tiny stones, or any combination and number. Gallstones can block the normal flow of bile if they lodge in any of the ducts that carry bile from the liver to the small intestine. Bile trapped in these ducts can cause inflammation in the gallbladder, the ducts, or, rarely, the liver. If a gallstone blocks the opening to the pancreatic duct, which opens into the common bile duct, digestive enzymes can become trapped in the pancreas and cause extremely painful inflammation called gallstone pancreatitis. Gallstones may not cause symptoms or may lead to pain for up to several hours in the upper back or under the right shoulder, together with nausea, vomiting, abdominal bloating, or indigestion. There are two types of gallstones: cholesterol stones and pigment stones. Gallstones are most common among women, Native Americans, Mexican Americans, and people who are overweight. Laparoscopic surgery to remove the gallbladder is the most common treatment. Also known as cholelithiasis.

gallstone, microscopic See *biliary sand*.

gamete Germ cell.

gamete intrafallopian transfer An assisted reproductive procedure for the treatment of infertility in which a woman's eggs are removed, mixed with sperm, and placed into the fallopian tube via a laparoscopic procedure. Abbreviated GIFT. GIFT allows the fertilization process to take place inside the fallopian tubes rather than inside the laboratory. GIFT involves stimulation of the ovaries to produce multiple eggs, aspiration of the eggs, mixing with mobile sperm, and injection of the egg-sperm mixture into the fallopian tube.

gamma knife A tool that uses highly focused beams of gamma radiation to perform neurosurgery without making an incision. A gamma knife is used

to treat many types of brain tumors as well as arteriovenous malformations and other conditions of the brain. See also *radiation therapy, stereotactic*.

ganglion 1 An aggregation of nerve cell bodies. 2 A tendon cyst, commonly near the wrist.

gangliosidosis, GM1 See *GM1-gangliosidosis*.

gangliosidosis, GM2 See *Sandhoff disease*.

gangrene Tissue death due to loss of adequate blood supply. Sometimes bacteria invade such tissue and accelerate its decay. Dry gangrene is the death of tissue due to vascular insufficiency without bacterial invasion in which the tissue dies, loses sensation and simply dries up, blackens, and shrivels. Dry gangrene eventually requires amputation. Gas gangrene occurs when body tissue is invaded by bacteria that thrive in areas of low oxygen content. These bacteria are called anaerobic bacteria and include the Clostridium family of bacteria. The bacteria generate gas and pus; the tissues swell and can become painful. Wet gangrene requires urgent antibiotic treatment and sometimes surgical drainage.

Gardner syndrome A variant of familial adenomatous polyposis characterized by the combination of polyps of the colon, tumors in extra-bowel sites (especially osteomas), and a characteristic abnormality of the retina of the eye. See also *familial adenomatous polyposis*.

Gareis-Mason syndrome See *MASA syndrome*.

gargoylism See *Hurler syndrome*.

gas, intestinal See *flatulence; flatus*.

gas, laughing See *nitrous oxide*.

gas chromatography See *chromatography, gas*.

gastrectomy Surgery to remove part or all of the stomach.

gastric Having to do with the stomach.

gastric atrophy A condition in which the stomach muscles shrink and become weak. Gastric atrophy may result in a lack of digestive juices due to accompanying shrinkage of the digestive glands.

gastric banding A surgical procedure that converts the upper part of the stomach into a very small pouch, forcing the patient to eat only tiny portions yet still feel full. Gastric banding is a type of bariatric surgery that is normally done only in severe cases of obesity. The operation is sometimes called gastric

stapling, and inflatable bands and/or staples may be used to create the stomach pouch. See also *bariatric surgery*.

gastric bypass A type of bariatric surgery that involves stapling or banding techniques to reduce the stomach to a small pouch and connecting the new, smaller stomach directly to the middle portion of the small intestine, thereby bypassing the remainder of the stomach and a portion of the small intestine. The procedure is performed to treat severe cases of obesity. See also *bariatric surgery*.

gastric cancer See *cancer, gastric*.

gastric emptying study A test that evaluates the process of emptying food from the stomach. For a gastric emptying study, a patient eats a meal in which the food or beverage is mixed with a small amount of radioactive material. A scanner that acts like a Geiger counter is placed over the stomach to monitor the amount of radioactivity in the stomach for several hours after the test meal. In patients with abnormal emptying of the stomach, the food and radioactive material stay in the stomach longer than normal (usually for hours) before emptying into the small intestine.

gastric ulcer A hole in the lining of the stomach that is caused by the acidic digestive juices secreted by the stomach cells. Ulcer formation is related to infection with *H. pylori* bacteria in the stomach, the use of anti-inflammatory medications, and cigarette smoking. Ulcer pain may not correlate with the presence or severity of ulceration. Diagnosis is made via barium X-ray endoscopy. See also *Helicobacter pylori*.

gastritis Inflammation of the stomach.

gastroenteritis Inflammation of the stomach and the intestines. Gastroenteritis can cause nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea. Gastroenteritis has numerous causes, including infections (viruses, bacteria, and parasites), food poisoning, and stress.

gastroenterologist A physician who specializes in the diagnosis and treatment of diseases of the digestive system.

gastroesophageal reflux disease A condition in which the stomach contents return back up into the esophagus. Abbreviated GERD. GERD frequently causes heartburn because of irritation of the esophagus by stomach acid. GERD can lead to scarring and stricture of the esophagus, which requires stretching (dilating) of the esophagus. Ten percent of patients with GERD develop Barrett esophagus, which increases the risk of cancer of the esophagus. Eighty

percent of patients with GERD also have hiatal hernias. Treatment may involve the use of antacids or medications to decrease acid production or accelerate stomach emptying. See also *Barrett esophagus*, *hiatal hernia*.

gastrointestinal stromal tumor A type of tumor that usually begins in cells in the wall of the gastrointestinal tract. It can be benign or malignant. Abbreviated GIST. Malignant GISTS can occur from the esophagus to the rectum, but occur most commonly in the stomach and small intestine. Treatment for GIST includes ST1571 (Gleevec), the first approved drug to directly turn off the signal of a protein known to cause a cancer.

gastrointestinal tract The stomach and intestines. Abbreviated GI tract.

gastroparesis A disease of the muscles of the stomach or the nerves controlling the muscles that causes the muscles to stop working. Gastroparesis results in inadequate grinding of food by the stomach and poor emptying of food from the stomach into the intestine. Gastroparesis may be associated with paralysis of the small intestine and colon. The most common underlying cause is diabetes mellitus. Gastroparesis is diagnosed via gastric emptying study. It is usually treated with medications that stimulate the stomach muscle to contract.

gastroscope A flexible, lighted instrument that is put through the mouth and esophagus to view the stomach. Tissue from the stomach can be removed through a gastroscope.

gastrostomy A surgical opening into the stomach. A gastrostomy may be used for feeding, usually via a feeding tube called a gastrostomy tube. Feeding can also be done through a percutaneous endoscopic gastrostomy (PEG) tube.

gastrostomy, percutaneous endoscopic A surgical procedure for placing a feeding tube that does not necessitate performing an open laparotomy operation on the abdomen. Abbreviated PEG. An endoscope is passed through the mouth, throat, and esophagus to the stomach. The surgeon then makes a small incision in the skin of the abdomen, pushes an IV tube through the skin into the stomach, and then sutures (ties) the tube in place. PEG is used for feeding as well as administering medications.

Gaucher disease A series of disorders that are due to deficient activity of the enzyme glucocerebrosidase, which leads to accumulation of glucocerebroside in tissues of the body. The five types of Gaucher disease encompass a continuum of clinical

findings from a lethal form that occurs before or just after birth to a form so mild that it may not be diagnosed until old age. All types of Gaucher disease are inherited in an autosomal recessive manner.

gender identity disorder See *transsexualism*.

gene **1** In classical genetics, a unit of inheritance. **2** In molecular genetics, a sequence of chromosomal DNA that is required to make a functional product.

gene, breast cancer susceptibility See *breast cancer susceptibility gene*.

gene, evolutionarily conserved A gene that has remained essentially unchanged throughout evolution. Conservation of a gene indicates that it is unique and essential. Changes in the gene are likely to be lethal.

gene, target The primary gene of concern. See also *gene, marker*.

gene, zygotic lethal A gene that is fatal for the zygote, the cell formed by the union of a sperm and an egg. The zygote would normally develop into an embryo, as instructed by the genetic material within the unified cell. However, a zygotic lethal gene kills prenatal development at its earliest point. A zygotic lethal gene is a mutated version of a normal gene that is essential to the survival of the zygote.

gene deletion The total loss or absence of a gene. Gene deletion plays a role in birth defects and in the development of cancer.

gene duplication An extra copy of a gene. Gene duplication is a key mechanism in evolution. After a gene is duplicated, the once-identical genes can undergo changes and diverge to create two different genes.

gene expression The translation of information encoded in a gene into protein or RNA structures that are present and operating in the cell. Expressed genes include genes that are transcribed into messenger RNA (mRNA) and then translated into protein, as well as genes that are transcribed into RNA, such as transfer and ribosomal RNAs, but not translated into protein.

gene family A group of genes that are related in structure and often in function. The genes in a gene family are descended from an ancestral gene. For example, the hemoglobin genes belong to one gene family that was created by gene duplication and divergence.

gene mapping The charting of the positions of genes on a DNA molecule or chromosome and the distance, in linkage units or physical units, between genes.

gene marker A detectable genetic trait or distinctive segment of DNA that serves as a landmark for a target gene. Markers are on the same chromosome as the target gene. They must be near enough to the target gene to be genetically linked to it and to be inherited, usually together with that gene, and thereby serve as signposts to it.

gene product The RNA or protein that results from the expression of a gene. The amount of gene product is a measure of the degree of gene activity.

gene testing The testing of a sample of blood (or another fluid or tissue) for evidence of a gene. The aim of gene testing is usually to learn whether a gene for a disease is present or absent.

gene therapy The treatment of disease by replacing, altering, or supplementing a gene that is absent or abnormal and that is responsible for the disease.

general paresis Progressive dementia and generalized paralysis due to chronic inflammation of the covering and substance of the brain (meningoencephalitis). General paresis is a part of late (tertiary) syphilis and is very rare today. It occurs a decade or more after the initial infection.

genetic Having to do with genes and genetic information.

genetic code See *code, genetic*.

genetic counseling An educational counseling process for individuals and families who have a genetic disease or may be at risk for a disease to facilitate informed decision-making.

genetic counselor A health professional who has a graduate degree or specialized training in the areas of genetics and genetic counseling.

genetic infantile agranulocytosis See *severe congenital neutropenia*.

genetic screening Testing of a population to identify individuals who are at risk for a genetic disease or for transmitting a gene for a genetic disease.

genetic transport disease An inherited disease resulting from a malfunction in the receptors and/or carrier proteins responsible for the transport of molecules across cell membranes. Several dozen diseases are known to be due to transport

defects. An example of a transport disease is cystinuria, the most common defect known in the transport of an amino acid (namely, cystine) and a significant cause of kidney stones.

genital Pertaining to the external and/or internal organs of reproduction.

genital herpes An infection by human herpes virus that is transmitted through intimate contact with the moist mucous linings of the genitals. This contact can involve the mouth, the vagina, or the genital skin. Following infection, the virus travels to nerve roots near the spinal cord and settles there permanently. When an infected person has a herpes outbreak, the virus travels down the nerve fibers to the site of the original infection; when it reaches the skin, redness and blisters occur. Commonly called herpes.

genital warts Warts confined primarily to the moist skin of the genitals or around the anus. Genital warts are caused by the human papillomaviruses (HPVs), which are transmitted through sexual contact. The virus can also be transmitted from mother to baby during childbirth. Also known as condyloma acuminatum, condylomata, and venereal warts. See also *HPV*.

genitalia The male or female reproductive organs. The genitalia include internal and external structures. The female internal genitalia are the ovaries, Fallopian tubes, uterus, cervix, and vagina. The female external genitalia are the labia minora and majora (the vulva) and the clitoris. The male internal genitalia are the testes, epididymis, and vas deferens. The male external genitalia are the penis and scrotum.

genitourinary Pertaining to the genital and urinary systems.

genome All the genetic information possessed by any organism (for example, the human genome, the elephant genome, the mouse genome, the yeast genome, and the genome of a bacterium). Humans and many other higher animals actually have two genomes—a chromosomal genome and a mitochondrial genome—that together make up their genome.

genome, chromosomal All the genetic information in the chromosomes of an organism. For humans, the chromosomal genome is all the DNA contained in the normal complement of 46 chromosomes in virtually every cell in the body. Together with the mitochondrial genome, the chromosomal genome constitutes the genome of the human being. Also known as nuclear genome.

genome, human All the genetic information in a person. The human genome is made up of the DNA in chromosomes as well as the DNA in mitochondria.

genome, mitochondrial The sum of the genetic information contained in the chromosome of the mitochondrion, a structure located in the cytoplasm outside the nucleus of the cell. The mitochondrial genome is composed of mitochondrial DNA (mDNA), a double-stranded circular molecule that contains a limited number of genes. During fertilization, mDNA is transmitted only by the mother. Together, the mitochondrial genome and the chromosomal genome constitute the entire human genome.

genome, nuclear See *genome, chromosomal*.

genomic library A collection of clones that is made from a set of randomly generated overlapping DNA fragments and that represents the entire genome of an organism. Also known as clone bank.

genomics The scientific study of the genome, the complete genetic information contained within an organism. See also *genome*.

genotype The genetic constitution (genome) of a cell, an individual, or an organism. The genotype is distinct from the expressed features, or phenotype, of the cell, individual, or organism. The genotype of a person is that person's genetic makeup. It can pertain to all genes or to a specific gene.

genu The Latin word for knee, as in genu recurvatum (hyperextension of the knee), genu valgum (knock knee), and genu varum (bowleg). See *knee*.

GERD Gastroesophageal reflux disease.

germ cell Either the egg or the sperm cell; a reproductive cell. Each mature germ cell is haploid, meaning that it has a single set of 23 chromosomes containing half the usual amount of DNA and half the usual number of genes. Except for the egg and the sperm, most cells in the human body contain the entire human genome. Also known as a gamete.

germ cell tumor A tumor that arises from a germ cell. A germ cell tumor may arise within the gonads (in the ovary or testis). Most testicular tumors, in fact, are germ cell tumors. Germ cell tumors also may arise in extragonadal sites, reflecting the fact that germ cells travel to diverse areas of the body, such as the chest, abdomen, and brain.

German measles See *rubella*.

German measles immunization See *MMR*.

germinoma A rare cancer of the germ cells (the tissue that normally differentiates to become the eggs or sperm cells).

gestalt therapy An older psychotherapeutic concept that stresses understanding mental processes as holistic entities (gestalts) rather than as discrete steps. Gestalt therapy often uses group therapy techniques to help patients gain this type of insight. See also *group therapy*.

gestation The period of time from conception to birth.

gestational diabetes See *diabetes, gestational*.

GI tract See *gastrointestinal tract*.

giant cell arteritis See *arteritis, cranial*.

giant cell pneumonia See *pneumonia, giant cell*.

giant cell tumor of bone A tumor of bone characterized by massive destruction of the end (epiphysis) of a long bone. The site most commonly involved by this tumor is the knee, both the far end of the femur and the near end of the tibia. The term "giant cell" reflects the fact that microscopic analysis of the tumor reveals large multinucleate cells (cells with more than one nucleus). The tumor is often coated by new bony growth. It causes pain, restricts movement, and is usually malignant. Treatment is by surgery, usually followed by chemotherapy.

giant platelet syndrome See *Bernard-Soulier syndrome*.

Giardia lamblia A parasite responsible for a common form of infectious diarrhea. The parasite lives in two stages: trophozoites and cysts. Trophozoites are the active form of the parasite inside the body. Cysts represent the resting stage that enables the parasite to survive outside the body. Infection begins from swallowing the Giardia cysts. The acid in the stomach activates the cysts, which in turn release the disease-causing trophozoites. The parasites attach to the lining of the small intestine, reproduce, and are swept down the intestine in the fecal stream. Cysts form in the lower intestines and are then passed in the feces. See also *giardiasis*.

giardiasis A contagious form of diarrhea caused by the parasite *Giardia lamblia*. Transmission is most common by direct contact with infected feces or by eating food or drinking water contaminated by feces. *Giardia* is one of the most common intestinal parasites in the world, and the disease is most prevalent in developing countries. *Giardia* is also a major

cause of waterborne outbreaks of diarrhea in the US. It particularly affects diapered children and toddlers being toilet-trained. Symptoms include a sudden explosive, watery, foul-smelling diarrhea; excessive gas; abdominal pain; bloating; nausea; tiredness; and loss of appetite. Fever is unusual. If not treated, giardiasis can last for months or even years. The diagnosis is made by microscopic identification of the parasite in stool. Tests that detect antigens (proteins) to Giardia in the feces are especially useful for screening children in day-care settings, and for testing adults after treatment. Treatment may be with metronidazole (Flagyl). See also *Giardia lamblia*.

GIFT Gamete intrafallopian transfer.

gigantism **1** Extreme growth in height. Gigantism is usually associated with disorders of the pituitary gland, which secretes human growth hormone (somatotrophin) during childhood, before the bones fuse. **2** Extreme growth of specific body parts. See also *gigantism, focal*.

gigantism, eunuchoid Extremely tall stature due to the delayed onset of puberty that permits the continued growth of the long bones before their growing ends (epiphyses) fuse and growth stops.

gigantism, focal Extreme growth of specific body parts, such as one arm, the tongue, or a combination of parts, as seen in Beckwith-Wiedemann syndrome or acromegaly. Focal gigantism may occur before or after the bones fuse. If it occurs afterward, it causes disfigurement. Surgery for mass reduction can help improve function, and other treatments may be available for specific conditions.

gigantism, pituitary Extreme growth in height caused by oversecretion of growth hormone (somatotrophin) by the anterior pituitary gland. Other features of pituitary gigantism include thickening of the skin, enlargement of the bones, and elongation of the jaw and other areas. Pituitary gigantism may be caused by an adenoma of the pituitary gland, a benign tumor of the pituitary gland, or other causes. Treatment is usually possible with hormones, surgery, or both. See also *acromegaly*.

Gilbert syndrome A common but harmless genetic condition in which UDP-glucuronosyltransferase, a liver enzyme that is essential to the disposal of bilirubin, is abnormal. Mutations in the same gene cause the Crigler-Najjar syndrome, which is a more severe and dangerous form of hyperbilirubinemia (high bilirubin in the blood). Also known as hyperbilirubinemia type 1.

gingiva The gums.

gingivitis Gum disease with inflammation of the gums. The gums appear red and puffy and usually bleed during tooth-brushing or dental examination. Treatment involves improved cleaning. Antiseptic mouthwashes may also be recommended. See also *acute membranous gingivitis; gum disease*.

GIST Gastrointestinal stromal tumor.

gland A group of cells that secrete a substance for use in the body. For example, the thyroid gland.

gland, mammary One of the glands within the breast that secretes milk when prompted to do so by special hormones. The mammary glands become enlarged when they are engorged with milk. See also *mastitis*.

gland, Meibomian One of the small glands in the eyelids that make a lubricant called sebum that is discharged through tiny openings in the edges of the lids. The Meibomian glands can become inflamed, a condition termed meibomianitis or meibomitis. Chronic inflammation leads to cysts of the Meibomian glands, called chalazions. Also known as the palpebral gland, tarsal gland, and tarsoconjunctival gland. See also *cyst, Meibomian; sebum*.

gland, palpebral See *gland, Meibomian*.

gland, parotid See *parotid gland*.

gland, prostate A gland in the male reproductive system that is located just below the bladder. The prostate gland surrounds part of the urethra, the canal that empties the bladder. The prostate is composed of glandular tissue and bundles of smooth muscle. The prostate gland secretes a milky fluid that is discharged into the urethra at the time of ejaculation of semen and is part of semen. See also *prostate enlargement; prostatitis*.

gland, sebaceous One of the skin glands that empty an oily secretion called sebum into the hair follicles near the surface of the skin. Sebum helps to keep skin moist and protected. See also *cyst, sebaceous*.

gland, sudoriferous See *gland, sweat*.

gland, sweat A small tubular gland that is situated in the subcutaneous tissue within and under the skin. Sweat glands discharge sweat through tiny openings in the surface of the skin. The sweat itself is a transparent, colorless, acidic fluid that contains some fatty acids and mineral matter. Also known as sudoriferous gland.

gland, tarsal See *gland, Meibomian*.

gland, thyroid A gland that makes and stores hormones that help regulate heart rate, blood pressure, body temperature, and the conversion of food to energy (metabolism). Thyroid hormones are also essential for proper growth and development. The thyroid gland is located in the lower part of the neck, below the Adam's apple, wrapped around the windpipe (the trachea). It has the shape of a butterfly: two wings (lobes) attached to one another by a middle part. The thyroid uses iodine, a mineral found in some foods and in iodized salt, to make its hormones. The two most important thyroid hormones are thyroxine (T4) and triiodothyronine (T3). Thyroid stimulating hormone (TSH), which is produced by the pituitary gland, acts to stimulate hormone production by the thyroid gland. The thyroid gland also makes the hormone calcitonin, which is involved in calcium metabolism and stimulating bone cells to add calcium to bone. See also *calcitonin; hyperthyroid; hypothyroidism; thyroxine; triiodothyronine*.

glandular fever Infectious mononucleosis. See also *mononucleosis*.

glans 1 The glans penis, the rounded head of the penis. 2 The rounded head of the clitoris.

glans and foreskin, inflammation of the See *balanoposthitis*.

glans penis, inflammation of the See *balanitis*.

glaucoma A common eye condition in which the fluid pressure inside the eye rises because of slowed fluid drainage from the eye. If untreated, glaucoma may damage the optic nerve and other parts of the eye, causing the loss of vision or even blindness. There are no symptoms in the early stages of glaucoma. As the disease progresses the field of vision narrows, and blindness may eventually result. There are several types of glaucoma, including open-angle glaucoma and acute angle-closure glaucoma. Open-angle glaucoma is the common adult-onset type of glaucoma. Acute angle-closure glaucoma is a less common form of glaucoma, but one that can rapidly impair vision. Glaucoma treatment may include medication, surgery, or laser surgery.

glaucoma, angle-closure See *angle-closure glaucoma*.

gliadin A protein found in wheat and some other grains that is part of wheat gluten. People with celiac sprue, Crohn's disease, and related conditions may be sensitive to gliadin in the diet. See also *celiac sprue; Crohn's disease; dermatitis herpetiformis*.

glial cell A supportive cell in the central nervous system. Unlike neurons, glial cells do not conduct electrical impulses. The glial cells surround neurons and provide support for and insulation between them. Glial cells are the most abundant cell types in the central nervous system. Types of glial cells include oligodendrocytes, astrocytes, ependymal cells, Schwann cells, microglia, and satellite cells.

glioblastoma multiforme A highly malignant, rapidly growing type of brain tumor that arises from glial cells in the brain. Early symptoms may include sleepiness, headache, and vomiting. Also called a grade IV astrocytoma. Treatment can involve surgery and radiation treatment.

glioma A brain tumor that begins in a glial cell in the brain or spinal cord. Malignant gliomas are the most common primary tumors of the central nervous system. They are often resistant to treatment and carry a poor prognosis. Astrocytomas are the most common glial tumors. See also *glioma, optic*.

glioma, optic A rare, most commonly benign tumor on the optic nerve or the optic chiasm (the crossing of the two optic nerves). Optic gliomas cause pressure and destruction of normal optic nerve tissue. They are most common in children and teens. Optic gliomas are strongly associated with neurofibromatosis (NF1).

gliosis A process leading to scars in the central nervous system that involves the production of a dense fibrous network of glial cells (supporting cells) in areas of damage. Gliosis is a prominent feature of many diseases of the central nervous system, including multiple sclerosis and stroke. After a stroke, nerve cells die and are replaced by areas of gliosis. See also *glial cell*.

globus 1 A globe or sphere, used in various contexts in medicine. 2 The sensation of having a lump in the throat when nothing is really there. Also known as *globus hystericus*.

globus hystericus See *globus*.

globus major The head of the epididymis, the structure just behind the testis.

globus minor The tail of the epididymis, a cord-like structure just behind the testis.

globus pallidus A comparatively pale-looking, spherical area in the brain. The globus pallidus is specifically part of the lentiform nucleus, which in turn is part of the striate body, a component of the basal ganglia. Also called pale globe, palladum, and paleostriatum.

glossitis Inflammation of the tongue. There are many possible causes of glossitis, including vitamin B12 deficiency, Sjogren's syndrome, and side effects of medications or chemotherapy.

glossolalia 1 A condition in which a person makes nonsensical sounds that mimic the rhythms and inflections of actual speech. Glossolalia may be seen in deep sleep or in trance states. 2 The scientific term for the religious phenomenon known as "speaking in tongues."

glossopharyngeal nerve The ninth cranial nerve, which supplies the tongue, throat, and one of the salivary glands (the parotid gland). Problems with the glossopharyngeal nerve result in difficulties with tasting and swallowing.

glottis The middle part of the larynx, where the vocal cords are located.

glucocerebrosidase deficiency An enzyme deficiency that causes Gaucher disease. See also *Gaucher disease*.

glucocorticoid See *corticosteroid*.

glucometer A portable device used to check blood glucose concentrations. After pricking the skin with a lancet, a drop of blood is placed on a test strip in the glucometer. The meter analyzes the blood glucose concentration and displays the result on the meter's digital display. See also *glucose*.

glucosamine A molecule derived from the sugar glucose by the addition of an amino group. Glucosamine is a component of a number of structures, including the blood group substances and cartilage. Glucosamine is currently in use as a nutritional supplement (often in combination with chondroitin) and is touted as a remedy for arthritic symptoms.

glucose The simple sugar that is the chief source of energy. Glucose is found in the blood and is the main sugar that the body manufactures. The body makes glucose from all three elements of food—protein, fats, and carbohydrates—but the largest amount of glucose derives from carbohydrates. Glucose serves as the major source of energy for living cells. However, cells cannot use glucose without the help of insulin. Also known as dextrose.

glucose, fasting blood See *fasting blood glucose*.

glucose tolerance test A test of carbohydrate metabolism that is used primarily in the diagnosis of type II diabetes and gestational diabetes. Abbreviated

GTT. After the patient has fasted overnight, but before breakfast, a specific amount of glucose is given by mouth, and the blood levels of this sugar are measured every 30–60 minutes. The GTT result depends on a number of factors, including the ability of the intestines to absorb glucose, the power of the liver to take up and store glucose, the capacity of the pancreas to produce insulin, and the amount of "active" insulin.

glucose-6-phosphate dehydrogenase See *G6PD*.

glucosylceramidosis See *Gaucher disease*.

glucuronosyltransferase, UDP- A liver enzyme that is essential to the disposal of bilirubin. An abnormality of UDP-glucuronosyltransferase results in a condition called Gilbert syndrome. See also *Gilbert syndrome*.

gluteal Pertaining to the buttocks region, which is formed by the gluteus maximus, gluteus medius, and gluteus minimus muscles.

gluten A protein that is found in wheat and related grains. Gluten can be found in a large variety of processed foods, including soups, salad dressings, and natural flavorings. Unidentified starches, hydrolyzed proteins, and binders and fillers used in medications or vitamins can be unsuspected sources of gluten. People with celiac sprue, Crohn's disease, or related disorders may need to avoid gluten products. See also *gladin*.

gluten enteropathy See *celiac sprue*.

glycemic index An indicator of the rapidity and extent to which carbohydrate-containing foods raise the blood glucose levels in the two hours after consumption. Foods containing carbohydrates that break down most quickly during digestion have the highest glycemic index. Also called the dietary glycemic index. See also *glucose*.

glycogen storage disease One of the multiple inherited disorders of metabolism that interfere with glycogen synthesis or breakdown, leading to the storage of carbohydrates as glycogen in the body. The conditions may affect the liver or the skeletal (striated) muscle, both primary glycogen storage sites. Symptoms and signs depend upon the exact type but can include enlargement of the liver (hepatomegaly), hypoglycemia, and muscle weakness or cramps eventually accompanied by muscle wasting. McArdle disease (glycogen storage disease type V) is the most common type of glycogen storage disease. McArdle disease is an autosomal recessive disorder caused by mutations in the gene that

encodes myophosphorylase, an enzyme that is essential for glycogenolysis. Other types of glycogen storage disease include von Gierke disease and Pompe disease.

glycosaminoglycan A negatively charged chain of polysaccharides (modified sugars) that is composed of repeating disaccharide units. Abbreviated GAG. Important GAGs in the human body include chondroitin sulfate, dermatan sulfate, heparan sulfate, heparin, hyaluronate, and keratan sulfate. GAGs are involved as lubricants and components of bone, cartilage, blood vessels, and certain types of cells. Also known as mucopolysaccharides.

GM1-gangliosidosis A rare genetic lipid storage disorder that is similar to Hurler syndrome and Tay-Sachs disease but that affects both the brain and the viscera. Symptoms include skeletal deformities and severe effects on the brain and organs. The mutation that is responsible for the disease is located on chromosome 3. There is no treatment for GM1-gangliosidosis. Also known as familial neurovisceral lipidoses and Landing disease. See also *Hurler syndrome; sphingolipidosis; Tay-Sachs disease*.

GM2-gangliosidosis One of a group of genetic lipid storage disorders that affect the brain. The main types of GM2 gangliosidoses are Tay-Sachs disease and its variants (due to hexosaminidase A deficiency) and Sandhoff disease and its variants (due to hexosaminidase B deficiency). See also *Sandhoff disease; Tay-Sachs disease*.

goiter A noncancerous enlargement of the thyroid gland. With a goiter, the levels of thyroid hormones may be normal (euthyroid), elevated (hyperthyroidism), or decreased (hypothyroidism).

goiter, diffuse toxic See *Graves disease*.

goiter, exophthalmic See *Graves disease*.

goiter, iodide A goiter caused by prolonged intake of too much iodine that results in abnormally low thyroid activity (hypothyroidism). Certain foods and medications contain large amounts of iodine. Examples include seaweed; iodine-rich expectorants (Brand names: SSKI and Lugol solution) used in the treatment of cough, asthma, and chronic pulmonary disease; and amiodarone (brand name: Cardorone), an iodine-rich medication used in the control of abnormal heart rhythms.

goiter, toxic multinodular A condition in which the thyroid gland contains multiple lumps (nodules) that are overactive and that produce excess thyroid hormones. Also known as Parry disease and Plummer disease.

goiter-deafness syndrome See *Pendred syndrome*.

golfer's cramp A dystonia that affects the muscles of the hand and sometimes the forearm and that occurs only when a person is playing golf. Similar focal dystonias have also been called typist's cramp, pianist's cramp, musician's cramp, and writer's cramp. See also *dystonia; dystonia, focal*.

golfer's elbow See *elbow, golfer's*.

gonad A reproductive gland that produces germ cells (gametes): an ovary or testis.

gonad, female See *ovary*.

gonad, indifferent A gonad in an embryo that has not differentiated into a definitive testis or ovary. An indifferent gonad becomes a testis if the embryo has a Y chromosome, but if the embryo has no Y chromosome, the indifferent gonad becomes an ovary. The absence of a Y chromosome permits the indifferent gonad to become an ovary, but both X chromosomes are needed for the ovary to function normally.

gonad, male See *testis*.

gonadotropin One of the hormones that are secreted by the pituitary gland and that affect the function of the male or female gonads. See also *follicle-stimulating hormone; human chorionic gonadotropin; luteinizing hormone*.

gonadotropin, human chorionic See *human chorionic gonadotropin*.

gonorrhea A bacterial infection that is transmitted by sexual contact. Gonorrhea is one of the oldest known sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), and it is caused by the Neisseria gonorrhoeae bacteria. Men with gonorrhea may have a yellowish discharge from the penis accompanied by itching and burning. More than half of women with gonorrhea do not have any symptoms. If symptoms occur, they may include burning or frequent urination, yellowish vaginal discharge, redness and swelling of the genitals, and a burning or itching of the vaginal area. If untreated, gonorrhea can lead to severe pelvic infections and even sterility. Complications in later life can include inflammation of the heart valves, arthritis, and eye infections. Gonorrhea can also cause eye infections in babies born of infected mothers. Gonorrhea is treated with antibiotics.

Goodpasture syndrome An autoimmune disease characterized by a combination of lung and kidney disease. Hallmarks of the disease are pulmonary hemorrhage (bleeding in the lungs) and

glomerulonephritis (inflammation of the glomerulus) due to severe inflammation in the basement membranes of the alveoli of the lung and the glomerulus in the kidney, with the formation of antibodies to components of the basement membrane at both sites. Symptoms include cough with bloody sputum, bloody urine, decreased urine output, fatigue (weakness), and weight loss. Hypertension and swelling (edema) are also common findings on physical examination. The syndrome is also referred to as anti-glomerular basement membrane antibody disease.

goose bumps A temporary local change in the skin that starts with a stimulus, such as cold or fear. That stimulus causes a nerve discharge from the sympathetic nervous system, which is part of the autonomic nervous system. The nerve discharge causes contraction of the hair erector muscle (*arrectores pilorum*), elevating the hair follicles above the rest of the skin. Also called cutis anserina, goose flesh, and horripilation.

goose flesh See *goose bumps*.

Gottron sign A scaly, patchy redness over the knuckles that is seen in patients with dermatomyositis, an inflammatory muscle disorder. See also *polymyositis*.

gout A condition that is characterized by abnormally elevated levels of uric acid in the blood, recurring attacks of joint inflammation (arthritis), deposits of hard lumps of uric acid in and around the joints. It is sometimes associated with decreased kidney function and kidney stones. Uric acid is a breakdown product of purines, which are part of many foods we eat. The tendency to develop gout and elevated blood levels of uric acid (*hyperuricemia*) is often inherited, and it can be promoted by obesity, weight gain, alcohol intake, high blood pressure, abnormal kidney function, and certain drugs. The most reliable diagnostic test for gout is the identification of crystals in joints, body fluids, and tissues. The treatment of an attack of gouty arthritis includes taking measures to reduce inflammation such as ice applications, resting the inflamed joint, and anti-inflammatory medications. See also *gout, tophaceous; gouty arthritis; hyperuricemia*.

gout, tophaceous A form of chronic gout that is characterized by the deposit of nodular masses of uric acid crystals (*tophi*) in different soft tissue areas of the body. Even though tophi are most commonly found as hard nodules around the fingers, at the tips of the elbows, and around the big toe, tophi nodules can appear anywhere in the body. See also *gout*.

gouty arthritis An attack of joint inflammation that is due to deposits of uric acid crystals in the joint fluid (synovial fluid) and joint lining (synovial lining). Gouty arthritis attacks can be precipitated by dehydration, injury, fever, heavy eating, heavy drinking of alcohol, and recent surgery. Intense joint inflammation occurs when white blood cells engulf the uric acid crystals, causing pain, heat, and redness of the joint tissues. The term gout is commonly used to refer to these painful arthritis attacks, but gouty arthritis is only one manifestation of gout. See also *gout*.

Gower syndrome See *syncope, situational*.

graft Healthy skin, bone, kidney, liver, or other tissue that is taken from one part of the body to replace diseased or injured tissue removed from another part of the body. For example, skin grafts can be used to cover areas of skin that have been burned.

graft-versus-host disease A complication of bone marrow transplants in which the donor bone marrow attacks the host's organs and tissues. Abbreviated GVHD. GVHD is seen in cases where the blood marrow donor is unrelated to the patient or when the donor is related to the patient, but is not a perfect match. There are two forms of GVHD: acute GVHD and chronic GVHD. Both types can vary in the severity of the symptoms. Acute GVHD typically occurs within the first 3 months after a transplant and can affect the skin, liver, stomach, and/or intestines. Chronic GVHD typically occurs 2 to 3 months after the transplant and causes symptoms similar to those of autoimmune disorders such as lupus and scleroderma. Patients may develop a skin rash, hair loss, dry eyes and mouth, liver damage, and almost any organ can be affected by chronic GVHD. Preventive measures include immunosuppressive drugs such as cyclosporine and methotrexate as well as techniques to deplete the donor marrow of the T cells that cause GVHD. Severe GVHD is usually treated with steroids and sometimes a drug called antithymocyte globulin.

grand mal seizure See *seizure, tonic-clonic*.

granular cell tumor A typically benign, uncommon tumor characterized by the presence of cells with a striking granularity of the cytoplasm when viewed under the microscope. The tumors are derived from neural cells, and the granularity of the cytoplasm is due to the accumulation of secondary lysosomes. Granular cell tumors are generally slow-growing, solitary, painless nodules that can occur anywhere in the body. Malignant granular cell tumors occur rarely.

granulation That part of the healing process in which lumpy, pink tissue containing new connective tissue and capillaries forms around the edges of a wound. Granulation of a wound is normal and desirable.

granulocyte A type of white blood cell that is filled with microscopic granules, little sacs containing enzymes that digest microorganisms. Granulocytes are part of the innate immune system, and they have somewhat nonspecific, broad-based activity. They do not respond exclusively to specific antigens, as do B-cells and T-cells. Neutrophils, eosinophils, and basophils are all types of granulocytes, and their names are derived from the staining features of their granules in the laboratory, a naming scheme that dates back to a time when certain structures could be identified in cells by histochemistry, but the functions of these intracellular structures were still not known.

granulocytopenia A marked decrease in the number of granulocytes that results in frequent chronic bacterial infections of the skin, lungs, throat, and other tissues. Granulocytopenia can be inherited, or it can be acquired. For example, it may be acquired as an aspect of leukemia. Granulocytopenia can more specifically be neutropenia (shortage of neutrophils), eosinopenia (shortage of eosinophils), and/or basopenia (shortage of basophils). The term neutropenia is sometimes used interchangeably with granulocytopenia. See also *agranulocytosis; agranulocytosis, infantile genetic; neutropenia; severe congenital neutropenia*.

granulocytosis An elevated number of granulocytes in the peripheral blood. The term is often used to refer to an increase in the number of neutrophils, the predominant type of granulocyte. Granulocytosis may be a sign of numerous abnormal conditions, including infection or cancer. See also *granulocyte*.

granuloma One of several forms of localized, nodular inflammation found in tissues. Granulomas have a typical pattern when examined under a microscope. They can be caused by a variety of biologic, chemical, and physical irritants of tissue. See also *granuloma, calcified; granuloma, fishbowl*.

granuloma, calcified A granuloma that contains calcium deposits. Because it usually takes time for calcium to be deposited in a granuloma, a calcified granuloma is generally assumed to be an old granuloma.

granuloma, fishbowl Localized nodular skin inflammation (small, reddish, raised areas of skin) that is caused by the bacterium Mycobacterium

marinum (*M. marinum*). Fishbowl granuloma is typically acquired by occupational or recreational exposure to salt or fresh water; often it is the result of scratches or scrapes of the skin during the care of aquariums. The diagnosis is confirmed through a culture of tissue specimens that yield *M. marinum*. The infection can be treated with a variety of antibiotics. Also known as swimming pool granuloma.

granuloma, swimming pool See *granuloma, fishbowl*.

granuloma annulare A benign, chronic skin condition characterized by raised, reddish bumps arranged in a circular or ring pattern. Usually, there are no other symptoms. Granuloma annulare is most common in children, predominantly girls. Its cause is unknown. Granuloma annulare typically disappears on its own within several years. Treatment is generally unnecessary except for cosmetic reasons.

granuloma tropicum See *yaws*.

granulomatosis, allergic See *Churg-Strauss syndrome*.

granulomatosis, Wegener An inflammatory disease of small arteries and veins (vasculitis) that can involve any organ but classically involves vessels supplying the tissues of the lungs, nasal passages (sinuses), and kidneys. Symptoms include fatigue, weight loss, fever, shortness of breath, bloody sputum, joint pains, and sinus inflammation, sometimes with nasal ulcerations and bloody nasal discharge. Wegener granulomatosis most commonly affects young or middle-aged adults. The diagnosis of Wegener granulomatosis is confirmed by finding evidence of vasculitis and granulomas on biopsy of tissue that is inflamed. Treatment is directed toward stopping the inflammation process by suppressing the immune system.

granulomatous colitis See *colitis, Crohn's*.

granulosa cell tumor A tumor belonging to the sex cord-stroma group of tumors of the ovary, sometimes referred to as granulosa-theca cell tumors. Abbreviated GCT. GCTs commonly produce estrogen, and the accompanying symptoms of excess estrogen are often the reason for early diagnosis. Adult GCTs make up the majority of GCTs and usually occur in postmenopausal women. Most juvenile GCTs develop in individuals younger than 30 years and tend to recur within the first 3 years. Treatment of GCTs involves surgical removal, and the prognosis is generally good.

Graves disease An autoimmune disease that produces general overactivity (toxicity) of the thyroid gland, which becomes enlarged into a goiter. Graves disease is the most common disease that causes an excess of thyroid hormone (hyperthyroidism). Grave's disease is frequently associated with protrusion of the eyes (ophthalmopathy). Dermopathy is a rare, painless, reddish lumpy skin rash that occurs on the front of the leg in some patients. Graves disease can be diagnosed via a typical thyroid scan (which shows diffuse, increased uptake), or by testing the blood for thyroid-stimulating immunoglobulin (TSI) and finding abnormally high levels. Treatment includes antithyroid medications, removal of thyroid tissue via surgery (subtotal thyroidectomy), and radioiodine (RAI). Also known as diffuse toxic goiter.

gravid Pregnant.

gray matter The cortex of the brain, which contains nerve cell bodies. The gray matter is so named because it is darker than the white matter, the part of the brain that contains myelinated nerve fibers.

Gray's Anatomy A book that was originally titled *Anatomy Descriptive and Surgical*, by Henry Gray, that appeared in 1858. Known as *Gray's Anatomy*.

Great Plague The typhus outbreak that swept London in 1665. See also *bubonic plague*; *typhus, epidemic*.

great saphenous vein The larger of the two saphenous veins, the principal veins that run up the leg near the surface. The great saphenous vein goes from the foot all the way up to the saphenous opening, an oval aperture in the broad fascia of the thigh. The vein then passes through this fibrous membrane. Also known as large saphenous vein.

green tea A tea brewed from fresh leaves from the *Camellia sinensis* plant used in traditional Chinese and Indian medicine. Green tea contains a high concentration of powerful antioxidants called polyphenols. Laboratory studies suggest that green tea may help protect against or slow the growth of certain cancers, but studies in humans have shown mixed results. Some studies have also shown that green tea may help lower blood cholesterol levels and have a protective effect against other diseases ranging from diabetes to liver disease. Extracts of green tea leaves are also available as capsules and liquid preparations. The scientific or medical benefits of green tea have not been firmly established, and green tea may have harmful interactions with certain prescription medications.

greenstick fracture See *fracture, greenstick*.

groin The area where the thigh meets the hip.

gross anatomy See *anatomy, gross*.

gross hematuria See *hematuria, gross*.

Group A strep See *streptococcus pyogenes*.

Group B strep See *streptococcus, group B*.

group therapy 1 A type of psychiatric care in which several patients meet with one or more therapists at the same time. Patients form a support group for each other, and they receive expert care and advice. The group therapy model is particularly appropriate for psychiatric illnesses that are support intensive, such as anxiety disorders, but is not well suited for treatment of some other psychiatric disorders, such as schizophrenia. 2 A type of psychoanalysis in which patients analyze each other, with the assistance of one or more psychotherapists, as in an "encounter group." See also *gestalt therapy*.

growing pains Mysterious pains in growing children, usually in the legs, likely occurring as a result of overuse. Growing pains are typically somewhat diffuse, and they are not associated with physical changes of the area, such as swelling or redness. The pains are usually easily relieved by massage, acetaminophen, or rest. If pain persists for over a week or there are physical changes, the child should be seen by a physician.

growth chart A chart used to evaluate the progress of a child's growth and development using parameters of physical development, typically height and weight. Growth charts are developed from information obtained by measuring and weighing thousands of children and determining the averages for weight and height for each age and sex within a given population.

growth factor Any one of a number of naturally-occurring chemicals in the body that stimulate cells to divide and multiply. Growth factors are necessary for the control of processes such as embryonic development, wound healing, and tissue growth. Growth factors may also influence the growth rate of some tumors. Growth factors stimulate cell division by attaching to specific receptor molecules on the surface of cells.

gtt. Abbreviation for drops, as of a liquid medication. See also Appendix A, "Prescription Abbreviations."

guanine One of the five nitrogenous bases found in nucleic acids; guanine is one of the purine bases and is a member of the G-C (guanine-cytosine) pair of bases in DNA.

guarding, abdominal See *abdominal guarding*.

guided imagery An alternative medicine technique in which patients use their imagination to visualize improved health, or to “attack” a disease, such as a tumor. Guided imagery may be utilized as complementary medicine in some oncology centers and other medical facilities.

Guillain-Barre syndrome A rare disorder characterized by a misdirected immune response against the peripheral nervous system associated with progressive symmetrical paralysis and loss of reflexes, usually beginning in the legs. In most cases of Guillain-Barre syndrome, the patient has a complete or nearly complete recovery. Guillain-Barre syndrome is not associated with fever. It usually occurs after a respiratory infection or may follow other triggering infections or events, including vaccinations. Treatment includes plasmapheresis, intravenous gamma globulin (IVIG) and supportive care. See also *demyelination*; *Landry ascending paralysis*.

gum disease Inflammation of the soft tissue (gingiva) and abnormal loss of the bone surrounding the teeth. Gum disease is caused by toxins secreted by bacteria in the plaque that accumulates over time along the gum line. Plaque is a mixture of food, saliva, and bacteria. Early symptoms of gum disease include gum bleeding, and pain is a symptom of more advanced gum disease, as the loss of bone around the teeth leads to the formation of gum pockets. Bacteria in these pockets cause gum infection, swelling, pain, and further bone destruction. See also *acute membranous gingivitis*; *gingivitis*.

gustatory sweating See *sweating, gustatory*.

Guthrie test A blood test to screen for phenylketonuria (PKU) and the original impetus for the screening of newborns for metabolic diseases. See *phenylalanine*; *phenylalanine hydroxylase deficiency*; *PKU*; *PKU, maternal*.

gutta percha A natural material derived from tree sap that can be formed to various shapes under heat. Because gutta percha does not cause allergic reactions, it is often used to pack the empty spaces left when a root canal is performed.

GVHD Graft-versus-host disease.

gyn Short for gynecology and gynecologist.

gynecoid Like a woman; womanly, female.

gynecoid obesity Overweight with a fat distribution generally characteristic of a woman, with the largest accumulation around the hips.

gynecoid pelvis A pelvis that is characteristic of a woman; see *female pelvis*.

gynecologic oncologist A physician who specializes in treating cancers of the female reproductive organs.

gynecologist A physician who specializes in treating diseases of the female reproductive organs and providing well-woman health care that focuses primarily on the reproductive organs.

gynecology The branch of medicine that is particularly concerned with the health of the female organs of reproduction.

gynecomastia Excessive development of the male breasts. Temporary enlargement of the breasts is not unusual or abnormal in boys during adolescence or during recovery from malnutrition. Gynecomastia may also be a sign of an abnormal condition, as, for example, in Klinefelter syndrome.

<http://www.rashidiislamiccenter.com>

H h

H and H Common shorthand for hemoglobin and hematocrit, two very common and important blood tests. Sometimes written as H & H.

H and P Medical shorthand for history and physical, the initial clinical evaluation and examination of the patient.

H. flu *Haemophilus influenzae* type B.

H. flu immunization *Haemophilus influenzae* type B immunization.

H. heilmannii *Helicobacter heilmannii*.

H. pylori *Helicobacter pylori*.

Haemophilus influenzae type B A bacterium that is capable of causing a range of diseases, including ear infections, soft tissue infection (cellulitis), arthritis, upper respiratory infections, and pneumonia; as well as such serious, invasive infections as meningitis with potential brain damage and epiglottitis with airway obstruction. Abbreviated HIB. HIB spreads by droplet through coughs and sneezing. About half the cases of HIB present as meningitis with fever, headache, and stiff neck. The remainder present as cellulitis, arthritis, or sepsis (bloodstream infection). About 5 percent of cases are fatal. Up to 20 percent of survivors of HIB have permanent hearing loss. More than 90 percent of all HIB infections occur in children 5 years or younger—the peak attack rate is at 6 to 12 months of age. See also *Haemophilus influenzae type B immunization*.

Haemophilus influenzae type B immunization An immunization designed to prevent diseases caused by *Haemophilus influenzae* type B (HIB). In the US, the HIB vaccine is usually given at 2, 4, and 6 months of age, with a final booster at 12 to 15 months of age. The HIB vaccine rarely causes severe reactions, and it has almost eradicated HIB-related diseases in children.

hair, exclamation point See *exclamation point hair*.

hair, lanugal See *lanugo*.

hair follicle See *follicle*.

hairball A wad of swallowed hair. Hairballs sometimes cause blockage of the digestive system, especially at the exit of the stomach. Also called trichobezoar.

hairy cell leukemia See *leukemia, hairy cell*.

halitosis An unpleasant odor from the mouth, commonly referred to as bad breath. Halitosis can be caused by the consumption of certain foods, poor oral hygiene, alcohol or tobacco use, dry mouth, or by certain chronic medical conditions.

hallucinogen A drug or other chemical substance that causes hallucinations (profound distortions in a person's perceptions of reality). Under the influence of hallucinogens, people see images, hear sounds, and feel sensations that seem real but do not exist. Some hallucinogens also produce rapid, intense emotional swings. An example of a hallucinogen is lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD).

hallux The big toe.

hallux valgus A condition in which the big toe (hallux) is bent outward (toward the midline of the foot; valgus) so that it overlaps the second toe. Hallux valgus may be accompanied by a bunion (localized painful swelling) and is frequently associated with inflammation. It can be related to inflammation of the nearby bursa (bursitis) or degenerative joint disease (osteoarthritis).

hallux varus A condition in which the joint of the big toe is bent inward (away from the midline of the foot; varus).

Halstead mastectomy See *mastectomy, radical*.

hamartoma A benign (noncancerous) tumor-like growth consisting of a disorganized mixture of cells and tissues normally found in the area of the body where the growth occurs.

hammer toe A condition in which the toe is flexed (curly), but with no abnormal rotation of the toe. Hammer toe may require surgical correction.

hamstring One of the prominent tendons at the back of the knee. The hamstrings are the side walls of the hollow behind the knee (popliteal space). Both hamstrings connect to muscles that flex the knee. The term is sometimes used to refer to the muscles in the back of the thigh. A pulled hamstring is a common athletic injury.

hand-foot-and-mouth disease A common viral illness usually seen in infants and children characterized by a rash on the hands and feet and in

the mouth. The internal rash (exanthem) consists of blisters and little ulcers. These may involve not only the lining of the mouth but also the gums, palate, and tongue. The external rash on the body (exanthem) typically affects the hands, the feet, and sometimes the buttocks. There may also be sore throat, irritability, decreased appetite, and fever. Hand-foot-and-mouth disease is caused by various viruses, including several types of coxsackievirus: most often Coxsackievirus A16, but also other coxsackieviruses and enterovirus 71. The incubation period is short, usually 4 to 6 days. The disease occurs most frequently in summer and fall. The illness is characteristically mild and self-limited. Also known as hand-foot-and-mouth syndrome and hand, foot, and mouth disease or syndrome.

Hand-Schuller-Christian disease A form of Langerhans cell histiocytosis usually affecting children aged 2 to 5. The condition is characterized by the accumulation of histiocytes (specialized cells of the immune system) in various organs, causing damage to the tissues. Involvement of bones is characteristic, and the most frequent sites of bony involvement are the flat bones of the skull, ribs, pelvis, and scapula (wing bone). Chronic otitis media due to involvement of the mastoid and the temporal bone is common. Diabetes insipidus affects some patients. See also *Langerhans cell histiocytosis*.

Hangman's fracture A broken neck involving a fracture of an upper cervical vertebra similar to the injury suffered in death by hanging. The fracture affects the vertebra called the axis, the second cervical vertebra (C2), with or without subluxation (slippage) of C2 on the third cervical vertebra (C3).

Hansen's disease See *leprosy*.

hantavirus A group of viruses that cause hemorrhagic fever and pneumonia. The hantaviruses include the hantaan virus that causes Korean (and Manchurian) hemorrhagic fever. Hantaviruses are transmitted to humans by direct or indirect contact with the saliva and excreta of rodents, such as deer mice, field mice, and ground voles.

hantavirus pulmonary syndrome A severe lung condition caused by hantavirus infection. Abbreviated HPS. In 1993, HPS struck the Four Corners area (where the states of Arizona, New Mexico, Nevada, and Utah meet) with devastating, frequently fatal consequences. As the name indicates, HPS is due to a hantavirus. The HPS outbreak in Four Corners followed 2 years of more rain, more foliage, and more deer mice than usual.

haploid A set of chromosomes that contains only one member of each chromosome pair. The sperm and egg are haploid and, in humans, each has 23 chromosomes.

haplotype 1 A set of closely linked genetic markers present on one chromosome that tend to be inherited as a unit, such as those genes of the major histocompatibility complex (MHC). 2 A phenotype (set of characteristics) determined by closely linked genes inherited as a unit from one parent.

hard measles See *measles*.

hard palate The first section of the bony part of the roof of the mouth, located in front of the soft palate.

Hardy-Weinberg law A basic concept in population genetics that relates the gene frequency to the genotype frequency. The Hardy-Weinberg law can be used, for example, to determine allele frequency and heterozygote frequency when the incidence of a genetic disorder is known.

Hashimoto disease A progressive disease of the thyroid gland characterized by the presence of antibodies directed against the thyroid and by infiltration of the thyroid gland by lymphocytes (white blood cells activated by the immune system). Hashimoto disease is the most common cause of hypothyroidism in North America and Europe. In Hashimoto disease, the thyroid gland is usually enlarged (goiter) and has a decreased ability to make thyroid hormones. Hashimoto disease predominantly affects women, and it can be inherited. Also known as autoimmune thyroiditis and Hashimoto thyroiditis.

Hashimoto's thyroiditis See *Hashimoto disease*.

HAV Hepatitis A virus. See *hepatitis A*.

Havrix A vaccine that is made from killed hepatitis A virus (HAV) and is intended to stimulate the body's immune system to produce antibodies against HAV.

hay fever See *allergic rhinitis*.

Hb Hemoglobin.

HBIG Hepatitis B immune globulin, which contains antibodies to hepatitis B virus (HBV). HBIG offers prompt but short-lived protection against infection with HBV. HBIG may be given in cases of accidents that carry a transmission risk when the exposed person has not received the HBV vaccine.

HBO Hyperbaric oxygen therapy. See *hyperbaric oxygen therapy*.

HBV Hepatitis B virus. See *hepatitis B*.

hCG Human chorionic gonadotropin.

HCM Hypertrophic cardiomyopathy. See *cardiomyopathy, hypertrophic*.

Hct Hematocrit.

HCV Hepatitis C virus. See *hepatitis C*.

HDL High density lipoprotein. See *HDL cholesterol*.

HDL cholesterol High density lipoprotein cholesterol. Lipoproteins, which are combinations of fats (lipids) and proteins, are the form in which lipids are transported in the blood. HDLs transport cholesterol from the tissues of the body to the liver, so the cholesterol can be eliminated in the bile. HDL cholesterol is therefore considered the “good” cholesterol. The higher the HDL cholesterol level, the lower the risk of coronary artery disease. The average man has an HDL cholesterol level of 40 to 50 mg/dL. In the average woman, HDL levels range from 50 to 60 mg/dL. An HDL cholesterol of 60 mg/dL or higher gives some protection against heart disease. Regular aerobic exercise, loss of excess weight (fat), and cessation of cigarette smoking increase HDL cholesterol levels. When lifestyle modifications are insufficient, medications can be used.

HDV Hepatitis D virus. See *hepatitis D*.

head bones See *bones of the head*.

head lice Pediculus humanus capitis, parasitic insects found on the human scalp. They lay eggs on the hair shaft close to the root, and hatched lice stay mostly on the scalp. Head lice infection is very common and easily acquired by coming in close contact with someone who has head lice, infested clothing, or infested belongings. Preschool and elementary school children and their families are infested most often. Symptoms of head lice infestation include a tickling feeling of something moving in the hair, itching caused by an allergic reaction to the bites, irritability, and sores on the head caused by scratching. Although lice are very small, they can be seen on the scalp when they move. The eggs (nits) are easily seen on hair shafts. Treatment involves a combination of topical insecticidal medication and manual removal of all nits with a lice comb or the fingers.

headache A pain in the head, with the pain being above the eyes or the ears, behind the head (occipital), or in the back of the upper neck. Headache has many causes. All headaches are classified as primary or secondary headaches. Primary headaches are not associated with other diseases. Examples of primary headaches are migraine headaches, tension headaches, and cluster headaches. Secondary headaches are caused by other diseases, and the associated diseases can be minor or major. Tension headaches are the most common type of primary headache, and migraine headaches are the second most common type of primary headache. Cluster headaches are a rare but important type of primary headache, affecting mainly men. Secondary headaches may result from innumerable conditions, ranging from life-threatening ones such as brain tumors, strokes, meningitis, lupus, and subarachnoid hemorrhages to less serious but common conditions such as withdrawal from caffeine and discontinuation of analgesics (pain-killing medications). Many people suffer from “mixed” headache disorders, in which tension headaches or secondary headaches may trigger migraines. The treatment of the headache depends on the type and severity of the headache and on other factors, such as the age of the patient. Treatment options include short-term and long-term medications. Also known as cephalgia. See also *cluster headache; headache, tension; hematoma, epidural; hematoma, subdural; hemorrhage, subarachnoid; migraine headache; subarachnoid hemorrhage*.

headache, cervicogenic A headache that has its origins in the muscles, tendons, and nerves of the neck. It may be a simple tension headache, or it may result from damage to neck joints, ligaments, muscles, tendons, or the trigeminal nerve. Treatment for chronic cervicogenic headaches includes massage, physical therapy, analgesic medication, and in some extreme cases injected nerve-block medication or surgery. See also *headache, tension*.

headache, cluster See *cluster headache*.

headache, febrile A headache associated with fever. Because febrile headache can sometimes indicate serious conditions such as inflammation of the brain (encephalitis), a person who is suffering from a febrile headache should immediately seek medical attention.

headache, migraine See *migraine headache*.

headache, muscle tension See *headache, tension*.

headache, rebound A headache experienced by someone who has taken pain relievers for migraines or other health conditions and has built up a tolerance for these medications. Often a rebound headache occurs right after the medication wears off. Treatment involves using the medication less frequently or switching to a different pain reliever.

headache, sinus A headache caused by pressure within the sinus cavities of the head, usually in connection with sinus infection. The sufferer has pain and tenderness in the sinus area, discharge from the nose, and sometimes a swollen face. Treatment involves treating the underlying condition, which is often an allergy, and using nasal vasoconstrictors and analgesic medications.

headache, stress See *headache, tension*.

headache, tension A headache previously thought to be caused by contraction of the muscles in the back of the neck, on the scalp, and sometimes in the jaw. The term tension-type headache is now preferred, reflecting the fact that research has shown that these headaches may not be related to muscle tension. Although the cause is unknown, they are believed to be related to the levels of neurotransmitters in the brain and are possibly complicated by tightness in muscles. Stress, lifestyle changes, and changes in sleep patterns are among many possible triggers.

headache, thunderclap A sudden and excruciatingly painful headache. Some physicians feel that in the absence of a known headache disorder, such as migraines, a thunderclap headache may sometimes signal a ruptured aneurysm in the brain. A person who experiences this type of headache should immediately seek medical attention.

headache, vascular One of a group of headaches felt to involve abnormal sensitivity of the blood vessels (arteries) in the brain to various triggers, resulting in rapid changes in the artery size due to spasm (constriction). Other arteries in the brain and scalp then open (dilate), and throbbing pain is perceived in the head. Migraine headache is the most common type of vascular headache. See also *migraine headache*.

health As officially defined by the World Health Organization, a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

health, child See *child health*.

Health and Human Services, Department of
See *HHS*.

health care proxy An advance medical directive in the form of a legal document that designates another person (a proxy) to make health care decisions in case a person is rendered incapable of making his or her wishes known. The health care proxy has, in essence, the same rights to request or refuse treatment that the person would have if he or she were capable of making and communicating decisions.

health outcomes research Research that measures the value of a particular course of therapy.

hearing aids Small electronic devices worn inside or behind the ear that improve the hearing and speech comprehension of people with hearing loss due to damage to the small sensory cells in the inner ear. Hearing aids contain a microphone, amplifier, and speaker.

heart The muscle that pumps blood received from veins into arteries throughout the body. The heart is positioned in the chest behind the sternum (breastbone); in front of the trachea, esophagus, and aorta; and above the diaphragm. A normal heart is about the size of a closed fist and weighs about 298 grams or 10.5 ounces. It is cone-shaped, with the point of the cone pointing down to the left. Two-thirds of the heart lies in the left side of the chest, with the balance in the right side of the chest. The heart is composed of specialized cardiac muscle, and it is four-chambered, with a right atrium and ventricle, and an anatomically separate left atrium and ventricle. The blood flows from the systemic veins into the right atrium, thence to the right ventricle, from which it is pumped to the lungs and then returned into the left atrium, thence to the left ventricle, from which it is driven into the systemic arteries. The heart is thus functionally composed of two hearts: the right heart and the left heart. The right heart consists of the right atrium, which receives deoxygenated blood from the body, and the right ventricle, which pumps the deoxygenated blood to the lungs under low pressure; and the left heart, which consists of the left atrium, which receives oxygenated blood from the lung, and the left ventricle, which pumps the oxygenated blood out to the body under high pressure.

heart, artificial A human-made heart that is used to replace a diseased or malfunctioning heart when a donor organ is not available.

heart, left The left atrium and left ventricle.

heart, right The right atrium and right ventricle.

heart attack A sudden blockage of a coronary artery. Not infrequently, this leads to the death of part of the heart muscle due to its loss of blood supply. Typically, the loss of blood supply is caused by a complete blockage of a coronary artery by a blood clot. The interruption of blood flow is usually caused by arteriosclerosis, with narrowing of the coronary arteries, the culminating event being a thrombosis (clot). Death of the heart muscle often causes chest pain and electrical instability of the heart muscle tissue. Electrical instability of the heart may cause ventricular fibrillation (chaotic electrical disturbance), resulting in the inability of the heart to deliver oxygenated blood to the body. Permanent brain damage and death can result from heart attack unless oxygenated blood flow is restored within 5 minutes. Heart attack deaths can be avoided if a bystander starts CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) within 5 minutes of the onset of ventricular fibrillation. When paramedics arrive, medications and/or electrical shock (cardioversion) to the heart can be administered to convert ventricular fibrillation to a normal heart rhythm. Therefore, prompt CPR and rapid paramedic response can improve the survival chances after a heart attack. Also known as a myocardial infarction (MI). See also *cardiac arrest*.

heart block A blockage in the conduction of the normal electrical impulses in the heart. Heart block is not uncommon and is detected with an electrocardiogram. Heart block occurs from degeneration or scarring of the electrical pathways in the heart muscle, either naturally or as a result of disease. Heart block typically requires no treatment, but can be a factor in the decision of whether or not to put a pacemaker in a heart that is failing or irregularly beating.

heart conduction system See *cardiac conduction system*.

heart failure See *congestive heart failure*.

heart murmur An unusual, "whooshing" heart sound that may be innocent or may reflect disease or malformation. A heart murmur is created by blood flow through a heart valve, by blood flow through a narrowed chamber, or by an unusual connection between the chambers, as seen with congenital heart disease. Sometimes a heart murmur does not represent any disease or condition and is, therefore, referred to as a functional heart murmur. There are many forms of heart murmurs representing a variety of heart conditions. Each type of murmur is characterized by its location, timing, duration, as well as the intensity and quality of the

sound it makes. A heart murmur is usually heard by a physician while he or she listens to the chest with a stethoscope. While the heart murmur itself is never treated, sometime the condition it represents may require treatment.

heart rate The number of heartbeats per unit of time, usually per minute. The heart rate is based on the number of contractions of the ventricles (the lower chambers of the heart). The heart rate may be too fast (tachycardia) or too slow (bradycardia). The pulse is a bulge of an artery from waves of blood that course through the blood vessels each time the heart beats. The pulse is often taken at the wrist to estimate the heart rate.

heart septum The dividing wall between the right and left sides of the heart. That portion of the septum that separates the right and left atria of the heart is termed the atrial, or interatrial, septum, whereas the portion of the septum that lies between the right and left ventricles of the heart is called the ventricular, or interventricular, septum.

heart transplant An operation in which a diseased or malfunctioning heart is replaced with a healthy donor heart taken from a deceased person. See also *transplant*.

heart valve One of the four heart valves. All four heart valves are one-way valves, permitting forward and avoiding backward flow of blood. Blood entering the heart first passes through the tricuspid valve, and then the pulmonary valve. After returning from the lungs, the blood passes through the mitral (bicuspid) valve and leaves the heart via the aortic valve to pass through the aorta.

heart ventricle One of the two lower chambers of the heart. The right ventricle receives blood from the right atrium and pumps it into the lungs via the pulmonary artery, and the left ventricle receives blood from the left atrium and pumps it into the circulation system via the aorta.

heartburn An uncomfortable feeling of burning and warmth that occurs in waves, rising up behind the breastbone (sternum) and moving toward the neck. Heartburn has nothing to do with the heart. It is usually due to gastroesophageal reflux, the return of stomach acid into the esophagus. See also *gastroesophageal reflux disease*.

heart-lung machine A machine that does the work both of the heart and of the lungs: pumping and oxygenating blood. Blood returning to the heart is diverted through a heart-lung machine before being returned to arterial circulation. Such

machines may be used during open-heart surgery. Also known as pump-oxygenator or cardiopulmonary bypass machine.

heat prostration See *hyperthermia*.

heat rash A red or pink rash usually found on body areas covered by clothing. It can develop when sweat ducts become blocked and swell. Symptoms may include discomfort and itching. Heat rash is most common in babies, but may affect adults in hot, humid climates. Most cases of heat rash heal by themselves, and treatment is directed toward the relief of symptoms. Also known as prickly heat.

heatstroke See *hyperthermia*.

Heberden's disease 1 Angina. 2 Osteoarthritis of the small joints with bony enlargement (Heberden's nodes) of the joint at the end of the finger. See also *angina pectoris*.

Heberden's node A small fixed bony enlargement of the joint at the end of the finger. A Heberden's node is a calcified spur of the bone of that joint (distal interphalangeal joint) and is associated with osteoarthritis.

Hecht syndrome An inherited disorder that is transmitted as an autosomal dominant trait, in which short, tight muscles make it impossible to open the mouth fully or keep the fingers straight when the hand is flexed back. The small mouth creates feeding problems. The hands may be so tightly fisted that infants with Hecht syndrome crawl on their knuckles. Also known as trismus pseudocamptodactyly syndrome.

Hecht's pneumonia See *pneumonia, giant cell*.

heel bone See *bone, heel*.

heel spur See *calcaneal spur*.

Heimlich maneuver An emergency treatment for obstruction of the airway in adults. The Heimlich maneuver may be needed when someone chokes on a piece of food that has "gone down the wrong way." To perform the Heimlich maneuver, a rescuer stands behind the victim, wraps his or her arms around the victim's waist, makes a fist with one hand, and holds the fist with the thumb side just below the breast bone at the top of the abdomen. The rescuer places his or her other hand over the fist and uses it to pull sharply into the top of the victim's abdomen and forcefully press up into the victim's diaphragm to expel the obstruction (most commonly food). The Heimlich maneuver should be repeated as necessary. If the Heimlich maneuver

is unsuccessful, an emergency tracheostomy may be necessary to prevent suffocation. Named for the US surgeon Henry Heimlich, who noted that food and other objects that caused choking by blocking the airway from the mouth to the lungs were not expelled by giving sharp blows to the back. See also *airway obstruction; tracheostomy*.

helical CAT scan See *spiral CAT scan*.

Helicobacter heilmannii A bacterium that infects most cats, dogs, and pigs and causes them stomach inflammation (gastritis). *H. heilmannii* is not usually transmitted from animals to people, but people who have been infected by *H. heilmannii* are known to have developed gastric and duodenal ulcers. Antibiotics can cure *H. heilmannii* infections. *H. heilmannii* is closely related to *H. pylori*.

Helicobacter pylori A bacterium that causes stomach inflammation (gastritis) and ulcers in the stomach and duodenum. This bacterium is the most common cause of ulcers worldwide. *H. pylori* infection may be acquired from contaminated food and water or through person-to-person contact. It is common in people who live in crowded conditions with poor sanitation. This bacterium is also believed to be associated with stomach cancer (gastric adenocarcinoma) and a rare type of lymphoid tumor called gastric MALT lymphoma. Infected persons usually carry *H. pylori* indefinitely, often without symptoms, unless treated with antibiotics to eradicate the bacterium. Also known as ulcer bug.

HELLP syndrome A combination of the breakdown of red blood cells (hemolysis; the H in the acronym), elevated liver enzymes (EL), and low platelet count (LP) occurring in pregnancy. HELLP syndrome has been considered to be a complication of preeclampsia and eclampsia (toxemia) of pregnancy, but the syndrome can also occur on its own. Common symptoms include headache, nausea and/or vomiting, and pain in the upper abdomen. Increased fluid in the tissues (edema) is also common. Protein is often found in the urine. Blood pressure may be elevated. Occasionally, coma can result from seriously low blood sugar (hypoglycemia). Treatment depends upon the stage of pregnancy, the severity of the condition, and the overall health status of the patient and may include corticosteroid medications, blood transfusions, antihypertensive medications, and antiseizure medications. Urgent delivery is required if the health of the fetus is compromised or if the mother's health is at serious risk. HELLP syndrome can be complicated by liver rupture, anemia, bleeding, and death. HELLP syndrome can also develop during the early period after delivery of a baby. Women with a history of HELLP

syndrome are considered at increased risk for complications in future pregnancies.

helper T cell See *T-4 cell*.

helper/suppressor ratio The ratio of T-helper (T-4; cells expressing the CD4 antigen) cells to suppressor (T-8; cells expressing the CD8 antigen) cells in the bloodstream. This value is used in the diagnosis and management of conditions that affect immune functioning, including HIV infection.

hemangioma A benign tumor formed by a collection of excess blood vessels. A hemangioma may be visible through the skin as a birthmark, known colloquially as a "strawberry mark." Most hemangiomas that occur at birth disappear after a few months or years.

hemangioma, capillary A type of hemangioma that is composed almost entirely of tiny capillary vessels. Capillary hemangiomas may appear anywhere on the body but are most common on the face, scalp, back, and chest. They may be evident at birth or become noticeable several weeks later. They usually grow quickly and then remain fixed in size and, with time, spontaneously subside. The vast majority are gone by the time the patient is age 10. No treatment is needed. Capillary hemangiomas include strawberry hemangiomas, strawberry marks, and salmon patches. See also *salmon patch*.

hemangioma, cavernous A type of hemangioma composed of blood-filled "lakes" and channels. A cavernous hemangioma is raised and red or purplish. Small cavernous hemangiomas on the surface of the body may be removed or treated by electrocoagulation. Surgery is sometimes needed.

hemangiosarcoma See *angiosarcoma*.

hemarthrosis Blood in a joint.

hematemesis Bloody vomit.

hematocrit The proportion of the blood that consists of red blood cells. Abbreviated Hct. Hct is expressed as a percentage. For example, an Hct of 25 percent means that there are 25 milliliters of red blood cells in 100 milliliters of blood. The normal ranges for Hct depend on the age and, after adolescence, the sex of the patient. The normal ranges are 40.7 to 50.3 percent in adult males, and 36.1 to 44.3 percent in adult females. The values returned on Hct tests may vary slightly between laboratories. An abnormally low level of Hct is referred to as anemia and can come from bleeding, iron deficiency, breakage of red blood cells (hemolysis), and many other causes. An abnormally high level of Hct is

referred to as polycythemia and can be a result of chronic lung disease, polycythemia rubra vera, and other causes. See also *CBC*.

hematologist A physician who specializes in diagnosing and treating diseases of the blood.

hematology The branch of medicine concerned with the blood and blood-forming tissues, encompassing the diagnosis and treatment of disorders of the coagulation process, blood-cell formation, hemoglobin synthesis, and immune system, as well as cancers of blood and blood-forming organs such as leukemias and lymphomas.

hematoma A localized swelling that is filled with blood caused by a break in the wall of a blood vessel. The breakage may be spontaneous, as in the case of an aneurysm, or caused by trauma. The blood is usually clotted or partially clotted, and it exists within an organ or in a soft tissue space, such as muscle. Treatment depends on the location and size of the hematoma but usually involves draining the accumulated blood. A hematoma in or near the brain is particularly dangerous.

hematoma, epidural A hematoma between the skull and the brain's tissue-like covering, which is known as the dura. Epidural hematoma is usually caused by a full-on blow to the head and is often associated with skull fracture. Diagnosis is usually made via MRI or CT scan. Treatment is trepanation: drilling through the skull to drain the excess blood.

hematoma, intracerebral A hematoma within the brain itself. Diagnosis is usually made by CT or MRI scan. Treatment involves surgery.

hematoma, intracranial A hematoma within the brain cavity (cranium). The hematoma may or may not be within the brain itself. Treatment can require surgical drainage and depends on the location, size, and duration of the hematoma. See also *hematoma, epidural; hematoma, intracerebral; hematoma, subdural*.

hematoma, subcutaneous A hematoma beneath the skin.

hematoma, subdural A hematoma between the brain and its covering, the dura. If the hematoma causes increased pressure on the brain, neurological abnormalities including slurred speech, impaired gait, and dizziness may result and progress to coma and even death. Subdural hematomas can be caused by minor accidents to the head, major trauma, or the spontaneous bursting of a blood vessel in the brain (aneurysm). Acute subdural hematomas are usually due to severe head

trauma. Chronic subdural hematomas may be very insidious. They usually go unnoticed, sometimes for 2 to 4 weeks: When they do cause problems, the incident that caused the bleeding is often long past. Symptoms include increasing daily headache, fluctuating drowsiness or confusion, and mild weakness on one side of the body. In infants, subdural hematomas can cause the fontanel to bulge and the head circumference to enlarge. Diagnosis is usually made by MRI or CT scan. Treatment is trepanation: drilling through the skull to drain the excess blood.

hematopoiesis The production of all types of blood cells including formation, development, and differentiation of blood cells. Prenatally, hematopoiesis occurs in the yolk sac, then in the liver, and lastly in the bone marrow. In the normal situation, hematopoiesis in adults occurs in the bone marrow and lymphatic tissues. All types of blood cells are derived from primitive cells (stem cells) that are pluripotent (they have the potential to develop into all types of blood cells).

hematuria See *blood in the urine*.

hematuria, gross Blood in the urine that can be seen with the naked eye. Hematuria may or may not be accompanied by pain, but it is always abnormal and should be further investigated.

hemidiaphragm Half of the diaphragm, the muscle that separates the chest cavity from the abdomen and that serves as the main muscle of respiration. The right hemidiaphragm is protected by the liver and is stronger than the left. The left hemidiaphragm is more often subject to rupture and hernia than the right. See also *diaphragm; diaphragmatic hernia*.

hemiparesis Weakness on one side of the body.

hemiplegia Paralysis on one side of the body.

hemithorax Half of the thorax or, more simply, one side of the chest.

hemizygous Having only a single copy of a gene instead of the customary two copies. All the genes on the single X chromosome in the male are hemizygous.

hemochromatosis An inherited disorder characterized by abnormally high absorption of iron by the intestinal tract, resulting in excessive storage of iron, particularly in the liver, skin, pancreas, heart, joints, and testes. Common early symptoms include abdominal pain, weakness, lethargy, and weight loss. The onset of symptoms is usually between 30

to 50 years of age in males and after menopause in females. The excess iron gives the skin a bronze color and damages the liver, causing liver scarring (fibrosis) or cirrhosis, usually after age 40. Diabetes also occurs due to damage to the pancreas. Other findings include congestive heart failure or arrhythmias, arthritis, and hypogonadism. Treatment is removal of excess iron by periodic phlebotomy (removal of blood) to deplete the body iron. Early diagnosis and treatment before symptoms develop prevents all the complications of the disease. Hemochromatosis is inherited in an autosomal recessive manner. Also known as bronze diabetes and hereditary hemochromatosis.

hemodialysis See *dialysis*.

hemoglobin The oxygen-carrying protein pigment in the blood, specifically in the red blood cells. Abbreviated Hb. Hb is usually measured as total Hb expressed as the amount of Hb in grams (gm) per deciliter (dl) of whole blood. The normal ranges are approximately 14 to 17 gm/dl for adult men and 12 to 15 gm/dl for adult women. Values returned on Hb tests may vary slightly between laboratories. See also *CBC*.

hemoglobin A Normal adult hemoglobin, the main type of hemoglobin found after infancy. The A stands for adult.

hemoglobin A1c A minor component of hemoglobin to which glucose is bound. Abbreviated HbA1c. HbA1c levels depend on the blood glucose concentration: The higher the glucose concentration in blood, the higher the level of HbA1c. Levels of HbA1c are not influenced by daily fluctuations in the blood glucose concentration but reflect the average glucose levels over the prior 6 to 8 weeks. Measurement of HbA1c is a useful indicator of how well the blood glucose level has been controlled in the recent past and may be used to monitor the effects of diet, exercise, and drug therapy on blood glucose in patients with diabetes. In healthy people without diabetes, the HbA1c level is less than 7 percent of total hemoglobin. Also known as glycosylated or glucosylated hemoglobin.

hemoglobin E Normal embryonic hemoglobin, the main type of hemoglobin found in the human embryo. The E stands for embryonic and also for epsilon, a chain that is unique to embryonic hemoglobin. Originally known as Gower-2.

hemoglobin F Normal fetal hemoglobin, the main type of hemoglobin found in the fetus and newborn baby. The F stands for fetal.

hemoglobin S The most common type of abnormal hemoglobin, which is found in people with sickle cell trait and sickle cell anemia. It differs from hemoglobin A only by a single amino acid substitution. The S stands for sickle. See also *anemia, sickle cell; sickle cell trait*.

hemoglobinuria The presence of free hemoglobin in the urine, which may make the urine look dark. Normally, there is no hemoglobin in the urine. Hemoglobinuria is a sign of a number of abnormal conditions, such as bleeding and paroxysmal nocturnal hemoglobinuria.

hemolysis Breakage of red blood cells. This occurs to a minor degree normally as red blood cells age. However, excessive hemolysis is very abnormal and leads to hemolytic anemia. See also *hemolytic anemia*.

hemolytic anemia Anemia due to the destruction, rather than underproduction, of red blood cells. Hemolytic anemia can result from a medication reaction, from the immune system attacking the red blood cells (autoimmune hemolytic anemia), from destruction of blood cells passing through diseased heart valves, and other causes.

hemolytic disease of the newborn Abnormal breakup of red blood cells in a fetus or newborn. Hemolytic disease of the newborn is usually due to antibodies made by the mother that are directed against the baby's red blood cells. It is typically caused by Rh incompatibility (a difference between the Rh blood groups of mother and baby). Symptoms can be mild or severe and may include generalized swelling (hydrops fetalis), enlargement of the liver and spleen, jaundice, and anemia. Severe cases may lead to brain damage and/or death. Also known as erythroblastosis fetalis.

hemolytic jaundice, congenital See *spherocytosis, hereditary*.

hemolytic-uremic syndrome A condition involving the breakup of red blood cells (hemolysis) and kidney failure. Abbreviated HUS. HUS is the most common cause of acute kidney failure in infants and young children, but the condition can also occur in adults. The disease results in damage to the lining of blood vessels in the kidney, leading to destruction of red blood cells as they pass through damaged vessels. The damaged cells facilitate clot formation in the blood vessels of the kidneys, which can lead to kidney failure. Platelet levels are also decreased, which can cause bleeding problems. HUS most often occurs after a gastrointestinal (enteric) infection, caused by a type of *E. coli* bacteria (*Escherichia coli*

O157:H7). HUS may also occur following other types of gastrointestinal infections including Shigella and Salmonella, or it may be related to other conditions and infections.

hemophagocytic lymphohistiocytosis A rare, cancer-like disorder resulting from an impaired immune system in which macrophages and lymphocytes grow abnormally and accumulate in the body's organs, including the liver, spleen, bone marrow, central nervous system, and skin. Hemophagocytic lymphohistiocytosis can be an inherited condition, or it can occur as a result of immunosuppression (as in organ transplants) or infection. Most patients are infants or young children. Treatment involves chemotherapy and in some cases bone-marrow transplantation. See also *histiocytosis*.

hemophilia An inherited disorder in which the ability of blood to clot normally is impaired. There are two types of hemophilia: hemophilia A and hemophilia B.

hemophilia A Classic hemophilia, which is due to a profound deficiency in the activity of clotting factor VIII. Affected individuals suffer hemorrhage into joints and muscles, easy bruising, and prolonged bleeding from wounds. The disease is inherited as an X-linked trait, so males are affected and females carry the gene. Treatment involves administration of blood products that introduce clotting factor VIII and replace lost blood. Use of contaminated blood products exposed many people with hemophilia to HIV infection in the 1980s and 1990s. Hemophilia A has affected the Russian royal house and the descendants of Queen Victoria.

hemophilia B Hemophilia due to deficiency of coagulation factor IX in the blood, which results in prolonged oozing after minor and major injuries, tooth extractions, or surgery. There is renewed bleeding after the initial bleeding has stopped. The gene for hemophilia B is on the X chromosome, so males are affected and females carry the gene. About 10 percent of carrier females are at risk for bleeding. Treatment involves administration of blood products that introduce clotting factor IX and replace lost blood. Also called Christmas disease (named for the first patient with the disease to be studied in detail).

hemoptysis Spitting up blood or blood-tinged sputum from the respiratory tract. Hemoptysis occurs when tiny blood vessels that line the lung airways are broken. Hemoptysis can be harmless such as from irritated bronchial tubes with bronchitis, or be serious such as from cancer of the lung.

hemorrhage

hemorrhage Abnormal bleeding. A hemorrhage can be internal, and therefore invisible, or external, and therefore visible on the body. For example, bleeding into the spleen or liver is internal hemorrhage, and bleeding from a cut on the face is an external hemorrhage. See also *bleeding*.

hemorrhagic fever, epidemic See *hemorrhagic fever, viral*.

hemorrhagic fever, viral A set of diseases caused by viruses and characterized by the abrupt onset of high fever and chills, headache, cold and cough, and pain in the muscles, joints, and abdomen, with nausea and vomiting. Abbreviated VHF. One type of hemorrhagic fever is associated with bleeding into the kidney (hemorrhagic fever with renal syndrome) and is caused by hantaviruses from the family *Bunyaviridae*. Examples of viruses known to cause hemorrhagic fever include the arboviruses, the Marburg virus, and the Ebola virus. Viruses associated with most VHFs naturally reside in an animal host or arthropod vector and are transmitted by the animal or insect host to humans. See also *arbovirus; Ebola virus; hantavirus*.

hemorrhoids Dilated (enlarged) veins in the walls of the anus and sometimes around the rectum, usually caused by untreated constipation but occasionally associated with chronic diarrhea. Symptoms start with bleeding after defecation. If untreated, hemorrhoids can worsen, protruding from the anus. Treatment involves changing the diet to prevent constipation and avoid further irritation, the use of topical medication, and sometimes surgery. Also known as piles.

Henoch-Schonlein purpura See *anaphylactoid purpura*.

heparin One of several glycosaminoglycans (GAGs), an anticoagulant produced naturally by the liver and some other cells in the body. Heparin may also be purified or synthesized for use as a medication. As a drug, heparin is useful in preventing blood clots that travel from their site of origin through the bloodstream to clog another vessel (thromboembolic complications); it is used also in the early treatment of blood clots in the lungs (pulmonary embolisms) and clotting-related heart conditions. See also *glycosaminoglycan; heparin, low-weight*.

heparin, low-weight A relatively new form of the drug heparin (brand names: Lovenox and Fragmin) that has a lower molecular weight than normal heparin. Fewer blood tests are needed for monitoring when low-weight heparin is given, as

opposed to traditional unfractionated heparin. Low-weight heparin may be superior to regular (unfractionated) heparin in cases of unstable angina and other cardiac diseases. See also *heparin*.

hepatic Having to do with the liver.

hepatic duct A duct that carries bile from the liver into the common bile duct which conveys it to the duodenum (the upper part of the small intestine). There are three hepatic ducts: the right hepatic duct (which drains bile from the right half of the liver); the left hepatic duct (which drains bile from the left half of the liver); and the common hepatic duct (which is formed by the junction of the right and left hepatic ducts).

hepatitis Inflammation of the liver, irrespective of the cause. Hepatitis is caused by a number of conditions, including drug toxicity, immune diseases, and viruses.

hepatitis, infectious An infectious form of hepatitis, such as hepatitis A.

hepatitis, non-A, non-B The old name for hepatitis C, before the causative virus was identified.

hepatitis, viral Liver inflammation caused by a virus. Specific hepatitis viruses have been labeled A, B, C, D, and E. Some other viruses, such as the Epstein-Barr virus and cytomegalovirus, can also cause hepatitis, but the liver is not their primary target.

hepatitis A Inflammation of the liver caused by the hepatitis A virus (HAV), which is usually transmitted by food or drink that has been handled by an infected person whose hygiene is poor. Symptoms include nausea, fever, and jaundice (yellowing of the skin and/or eyes), although some patients have no symptoms at all. Hepatitis A does not lead to chronic disease. Diagnosis is made by blood test. When immediate protection against hepatitis A infection is needed, immunoglobulin (gamma globulin) is used. Immunoglobulin is effective only if given within 2 weeks of exposure, and it lasts only 2 to 4 months. Immunoglobulin can be used to protect people who have contact with someone with acute viral hepatitis and by travelers who must depart for regions with poor sanitation and high hepatitis A rates before vaccines can take effect. Patients can receive immunoglobulin and hepatitis A vaccine simultaneously. Also called infectious hepatitis and epidemic jaundice. See also *hepatitis A immunization*.

hepatitis A immunization A vaccine that may be considered for individuals in high-risk settings for contracting the hepatitis A virus. Two hepatitis A

vaccines (brand names: Havrix and Vaqta) are commercially available in the US. Both are highly effective and provide protection even after one dose. Two doses are recommended for adults, and three doses are recommended for children under 18 years of age to provide prolonged protection.

hepatitis B Inflammation of the liver due to the hepatitis B virus (HBV), which can be transmitted through blood products, needle sticks, body piercing and tattooing with unsterilized instruments, the dialysis process, sexual and even less intimate close contact, and childbirth. Symptoms include fatigue, jaundice, nausea, vomiting, dark urine, and light stools. Diagnosis is made by blood test. Treatment includes administration of antiviral drugs and/or hepatitis B immune globulin (HBIG). Chronic hepatitis B may be treated with interferon. HBV infection can be prevented with the hepatitis B vaccine and through avoidance of activities that could lead to getting the virus. Also known as serum hepatitis. See also *hepatitis B immunization*.

hepatitis B immune globulin HBIG.

hepatitis B immunization A vaccine that protects against both hepatitis B and hepatitis D. It gives prolonged protection, but three shots over 6 months are usually required. Hepatitis B immunization is one of the recommended childhood vaccinations. Adults in high-risk situations, including health care workers, dentists, intimate and household contacts of patients with chronic hepatitis B infection, male homosexuals, individuals with multiple sexual partners, dialysis patients, IV drug users, those who travel to countries where hepatitis B infection is common, and recipients of repeated transfusions are also advised to get this vaccine. See also *hepatitis D*.

hepatitis C Inflammation of the liver due to the hepatitis C virus (HCV), which is usually spread via blood transfusion, hemodialysis, and needle sticks. HCV causes most transfusion-associated hepatitis, and the damage it does to the liver can lead to cirrhosis and cancer. Transmission of the virus by sexual contact is rare. At least half of HCV patients develop chronic hepatitis C infection. Diagnosis is made by blood test. Treatment is via antiviral drugs. Chronic hepatitis C may be treated with interferon, sometimes in combination with antivirals. There is no vaccine for hepatitis C. Previously known as non-A, non-B hepatitis.

hepatitis D Liver inflammation due to the hepatitis D virus (HDV), which causes disease only in patients who additionally have the hepatitis B virus. Transmission occurs via infected blood, needles, or

sexual contact with an infected person. Symptoms are identical to those of hepatitis B. HDV infection can be prevented with the hepatitis B vaccine and through avoidance of activities that could lead to getting the virus.

hepatitis E A rare form of liver inflammation caused by infection with the hepatitis E virus (HEV). It is transmitted via food or drink handled by an infected person or through infected water supplies in areas where fecal matter may get into the water. Hepatitis E does not cause chronic liver disease. There is no vaccine or treatment for hepatitis E, although antiviral drugs may be tried.

hepatitis G A virus isolated from the blood of some patients with posttransfusion hepatitis that is hypothesized to be a cause of hepatitis by some investigators, but the virus has not yet been confirmed as a cause of acute or chronic hepatitis.

hepatocellular carcinoma A cancer arising from the liver cells (hepatocytes). Liver damage, manifested by cirrhosis (scarring), is a primary risk factor for liver cancer. Cirrhosis may be caused by viral hepatitis, primarily hepatitis B and C, alcohol abuse, hemochromatosis, certain autoimmune diseases of the liver, and other diseases that result in chronic inflammation of the liver. Symptoms include abdominal pain or tenderness, jaundice, enlarged abdomen, and easy bruising or bleeding.

hepatomegaly An abnormally enlarged liver. Hepatomegaly can be caused by heart failure, blockage of blood vessels from the liver, or be a sign of chronic liver disease.

hepatosplenomegaly Abnormal enlargement of the liver and spleen. Hepatosplenomegaly is typically associated with chronic liver diseases.

hepatotoxic Being injurious to the liver. For example, alcoholic beverages and acetaminophen (brand name: Tylenol) can be hepatotoxic.

HER2 **1** Human epidermal growth factor receptor. **2** A protein involved in normal cell growth that is found in abnormally high levels on, and promotes the growth of, some cancer cells, notably breast cancer cells. HER2-positive breast cancers tend to be more aggressive than other types of breast cancer and are less responsive to treatment with hormones. Treatments that target HER2, such as trastuzumab (Herceptin), can be effective in breast cancers that overexpress HER2. Breast cancer tissue is routinely tested for HER2 because the results may affect treatment recommendations and decisions. Also known as HER2/neu, c-erb-B-2. See also *Herceptin*.

herbal remedy A medication prepared from plants, including most of the world's traditional remedies for disease. Most people think of herbal remedies as products sold over the counter as "supplements," such as saw palmetto extract and goldenseal ointment. However, many over-the-counter and prescription drugs, including aspirin and digoxin, are based on ingredients originally derived from plants. Lab tests have shown that some herbal remedies are indeed effective against illness. One should use these drugs carefully, taking care to avoid overdose, interactions with other medications, and misuse. See also *dietary supplement*; *herbalism*.

herbalism The practice of making or prescribing herbal remedies for medical conditions. Practitioners of herbalism may be licensed or unlicensed. See also *herbalist*.

herbalist One versed in herbal lore and, in regard to therapy, an herb physician. Herbalists may be licensed MDs, naturopaths, or osteopaths. They may also be unlicensed. People who are interested in herbalism should seek out knowledgeable, and preferably licensed, herbalists. See also *herbalism*.

Herceptin Brand name of the drug trastuzumab, a type of targeted cancer therapy known as a monoclonal antibody, for women with breast cancer whose tumors produce too much HER2 protein. This type of cancer is known as "HER2-positive." See also *HER2*.

hereditary angioneurotic edema See *angioedema, hereditary*.

hereditary hemorrhagic telangiectasia A genetic disease characterized by the presence of multiple direct connections between arteries and veins called arteriovenous malformations (AVMs). Small AVMs, or telangiectases, close to the surface of skin and mucous membranes often rupture and bleed after slight trauma. Abbreviated HHT. The most common manifestations of HHT are recurrent nosebleeds beginning at about 12 years of age. About one-fourth of individuals with HHT will develop gastrointestinal bleeding. Large AVMs may also bleed in the brain, lung, or other sites. HHT is inherited as an autosomal dominant trait. Most patients have a parent with HHT. HHT is unusual in that it can be caused by a mutation in at least three different genes. Also known as Osler-Rendu-Weber syndrome and Rendu-Osler-Weber syndrome.

hereditary multiple exostoses See *osteochondromatosis*.

hereditary mutation A gene change that occurs in a germ cell (an egg or a sperm) and is then incorporated into every cell in the developing body of the new organism. Hereditary mutations play a role in cancer, as, for example, in the eye tumor retinoblastoma and Wilms' tumor of the kidney. Also known as germline mutation.

hereditary spherocytosis See *spherocytosis, hereditary*.

heredity The genetic transmission of characteristics from parent to child.

heritability The degree to which something is inherited.

heritable Capable of being transmitted from parent to child.

Hermansky-Pudlak syndrome A group of genetic diseases characterized by a deficiency of pigment in the skin and eye, a bleeding tendency resulting from a platelet storage pool deficiency, and systemic disorders related to deficient function of lysosomes. Abbreviated HPS. Albinism that occurs in the eyes results in significant reduction in visual acuity. Pulmonary fibrosis and granulomatous colitis are known complications. The diseases are inherited as an autosomal recessive trait and are due to multiple different gene mutations. Diagnosis is made by examining blood platelets under an electron microscope or by genetic testing. There is currently no treatment for HPS. Also known as albinism with hemorrhagic diathesis, pigmented reticuloendothelial cells, and delta-storage pool disease.

hernia A general term referring to a protrusion of a tissue through the wall of the cavity in which it is normally contained. Also known as rupture.

hernia, hiatal Protrusion of the stomach up into the opening that is normally occupied by the esophagus in the diaphragm, the muscle that separates the chest cavity from the abdomen. A hiatal hernia can be congenital, or it can be acquired through strenuous physical activity. Hiatal hernias may contribute to gastroesophageal reflux disease with associated symptoms. Treatment involves lifestyle modifications, medications, and in some cases, surgery. Also known as hiatus hernia. See also *gastroesophageal reflux disease*.

hernia, Velpau A protrusion of tissue in front of the femoral blood vessels in the groin. Treatment is via surgery.

herniated disk A disk, situated between two vertebrae, that protrudes and tends to press on a nerve root, causing radiating pain. A herniated disk may cause sciatica (pain in the lower back, leg, and behind the knee). Treatment options include use of anti-inflammatory medications, local injection of steroids, and surgical procedures. Also known as herniated disc, slipped disk or disc, prolapsed disk or disc, and ruptured disc or disk.

herniation Abnormal protrusion of tissue through an opening.

heroin A semisynthetic drug derived from, but more potent than, morphine. Heroin is now better known as a drug of abuse than for its medical uses. Heroin may be injected into a vein, injected under the skin, snorted, or smoked. It is highly addictive, and overdose is an ever-present possibility due to the varying purity of street drugs. Treatment of heroin addiction may involve the use of medications such as methadone, a synthetic opioid, and buprenorphine.

herpes **1** Infection with one of the human herpes viruses, particularly herpes simplex 1 or 2. **2** The family of herpesviruses.

herpes, genital See *genital herpes*.

herpes simplex virus type 1 A herpesvirus that causes cold sores and fever blisters in and around the mouth and less commonly, genital herpes. Abbreviated HSV-1. In rare cases, as when a patient's immune system is severely compromised, this virus can cause infection of the brain (encephalitis). Also known as human herpesvirus 1 (HHV-1). Treatments include topical or oral antiviral medications. See also *fever blister*.

herpes simplex virus type 2 A herpes virus that causes genital herpes, which is characterized by sores in the genital area. Abbreviated HSV-2. HSV-2 may also be a cause of fever blisters around the mouth. In rare cases, as when a patient's immune system is severely compromised, this virus can cause widespread infection of the body. Treatment involves use of topical or oral antiviral medication. Also known as human herpesvirus 2 (HHV-2). See also *genital herpes*.

herpes zoster The herpes virus that causes chickenpox (varicella). Herpes zoster and chickenpox are usually contracted in childhood, at which time the virus infects nerves (namely, the dorsal root ganglia). It remains latent for years but can later be reactivated to cause shingles (blisters over

the distribution of the affected nerve). Shingles is often accompanied by intense pain and itching. Also known as shingles, zona, zoster, and human herpesvirus 3 (HHV-3). See also *chickenpox; chickenpox immunization; shingles*.

herpesvirus One of a family of viruses that contain DNA and that cause infections in humans (human herpesviruses) or animals. Herpesviruses are common and often live in the host's tissue for years or even decades without causing symptoms.

herpetiform virus A virus with the characteristic shape and behavior of a virus in the herpes family. Not all members of the herpes virus family have been identified. Some herpetiform viruses may eventually be called herpesviruses, and others are merely similar to herpesviruses. See also *herpesvirus*.

hetero- Prefix meaning different, as in heteromorphism (something that is different in form) and heterozygous (possessing two different forms of a particular gene). The opposite of hetero- is homo-.

heterochromatin A genetically inactive part of the genome. Heterochromatin was so named because its chromosomal material (chromatin) stains more darkly throughout the cell cycle than most chromosomal material (euchromatin). There are two types of heterochromatin: constitutive heterochromatin and facultative heterochromatin.

heterochromia iridis A difference in color between the iris of one eye and the iris of the other eye. A person with one brown eye and one blue eye has heterochromia iridis.

heterochromia iridis, sectoral A difference in color within an iris. A person with both brown and blue in the same eye has sectoral heterochromia iridis.

heterokaryon A cell with two separate nuclei formed by the experimental fusion of two genetically different cells. For example, heterokaryons composed of nuclei from Hurler syndrome and Hunter syndrome, both diseases of mucopolysaccharide metabolism, have normal mucopolysaccharide metabolism. This proves that the two syndromes affect different proteins and so can correct each other in the heterokaryon.

heteromorphism Something that is different in form. Chromosome heteromorphisms are normal variations in the appearance of chromosomes.

heteroploid A different chromosome number than the normal number of chromosomes. Abnormal numbers of chromosomes are associated with a number of disorders. For example, Down syndrome is the result of having three instead of two chromosome 21s.

heterosexual 1 A person who is sexually attracted to persons of the opposite sex. Colloquially known as straight. 2 The act or habit of opposite-sex attraction.

heterosexuality Sexuality directed toward someone of the opposite sex.

heterozygote An individual who has two different forms of a particular gene, one inherited from each parent. A heterozygote for cystic fibrosis (CF) has the CF gene on one chromosome 7 and the normal paired gene on the other chromosome 7. Also known as carrier.

heterozygous Possessing two different forms of a particular gene, one inherited from each parent.

HEV Hepatitis E virus. See *hepatitis E*.

hex-A deficiency Hexosaminidase A deficiency. See *Tay-Sachs disease*.

hexadactyly The presence of an extra digit: a sixth finger or toe. Hexadactyly is a very common birth defect. The sixth digit can be located in three different locations: on either side of the extremity or somewhere in between. With the hand, for example, the extra finger can be out beyond the little finger (ulnar hexadactyly), out beyond the thumb (radial hexadactyly), or between two of the normally expected fingers (intercalary hexadactyly). See also *polydactyly*.

hexoseaminidase A An enzyme whose deficiency causes Tay-Sachs disease. See also *Tay-Sachs disease*.

HGV Hepatitis G virus. See *hepatitis G*.

HHS The Department of Health and Human Services of the US government, which has jurisdiction over public health, welfare, and civil rights issues and is the highest-level US government body with such jurisdiction. Agencies under HHS include the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

HHV Human herpesvirus. HHV-1 is herpes simplex type 1. HHV-2 is herpes simplex type 2. HHV-3 is herpes zoster, the cause of shingles. HHV-4 is the

Epstein-Barr virus, the cause of infectious mononucleosis. HHV-5 is cytomegalovirus. See also *human herpesvirus 6; human herpesvirus 7; human herpesvirus 8*.

hiatal hernia See *hernia, hiatal*.

HIB Haemophilus influenzae type B.

HIB immunization See *Haemophilus influenzae type B immunization*.

hibernation reaction See *seasonal affective disorder*.

hiccup See *hiccup*.

hiccup An extraordinary type of breathing movement that involves a sudden intake of air (inspiration) due to a sudden involuntary contraction of the diaphragm, accompanied by closure of the glottis in the larynx. Closure of the glottis then halts the incoming air. The column of air strikes the closed glottis to produce the characteristic sound of a hiccup. Prolonged hiccups can become a major medical problem and be a sign of underlying disease (such as lung cancer or tumors in or around the diaphragm). Intractable hiccups can be painful and require medication to cause them to stop. In some patients with tic disorders, hiccups can be a tic. Also known as a singultus and hiccup.

hidradenitis suppurativa An illness characterized by multiple abscesses of the skin that form in and around oil and sweat glands and hair follicles, most commonly under the armpits and in the groin area. Hydradenitis suppurativa is treated by antibiotics and anti-inflammatory medications often along with surgical resection of the involved skin.

high blood pressure A repeatedly elevated blood pressure exceeding 140 over 90 mmHg. Chronic high blood pressure can stealthily cause blood vessel changes in the back of the eye (retina), abnormal thickening of the heart muscle, kidney failure, and brain damage. No specific cause for high blood pressure is found in 95 percent of patients. Treatment for high blood pressure involves dietary changes, regular aerobic exercise, and medication. There are many types of medications used to treat high blood pressure including diuretics, beta-blockers, blood vessel dilators, and others. Also known as hypertension.

high colonic See *irrigation of the colon*.

hip bursitis See *bursitis, hip*.

hip pointer A bruise of the upper edge of the ilium, one of the hip bones. This injury is typically caused by a direct blow or fall and is most common in those playing contact sports. Also known as iliac crest contusion.

hippocampus An area deep in the forebrain that helps regulate emotion, learning, and memory.

Hippocratic Oath An oath taken by new physicians authored by Hippocrates. The oath represents a promise to act ethically: to treat the ill to the best of one's ability, to preserve a patient's privacy, to teach the secrets of medicine to the next generation, and so on. See also *Daily Prayer of a Physician*.

Hirschsprung's disease An abnormal condition that is present at birth and is due to absence of the normal nerves (ganglia) in the bowel wall. Nerves can be missing starting at the anus and extending up a variable distance of the bowel. This results in enlargement of the bowel above the point of the missing nerve, as the nerves normally assist in the natural movement of the muscles in the lining of the bowels to move bowel contents through. Hirschsprung's disease is the most common cause of lower intestinal blockage in newborns. The symptoms are vomiting, constipation, distention of the abdomen, and intestinal obstruction. Hirschsprung's disease is a feature of a number of syndromes but can also occur in isolation. Treatment is surgery. Also known as congenital aganglionic megacolon or congenital megacolon.

hirsute Having an overabundance of hair.

hirsutism Having excessive facial and bodily hair. Hirsutism can be a side effect of certain medications (such as prednisone) or reflect an underlying hormonal imbalance.

hirudin An anticoagulant agent that prevents blood clots from traveling through the bloodstream to clog up a vessel (thromboembolic complications). Hirudin is the main chemical in the secretion of leeches that allows them to suck out blood freely from the body after they attach to the skin. Desirudin and lepirudin (brand name: Refludan) are genetically engineered recombinant forms of hirudin.

His disease See *trench fever*.

histamine A substance that plays a major role in many allergic reactions, dilating blood vessels and making the vessel walls abnormally permeable. Histamine is part of the body's natural allergic response to substances such as pollens. Antihistamines work by preventing the release of

histamine from certain cells (mast cells) thereby blocking the allergic reaction.

histamine cephalgия See *cluster headache*.

histiocyte A type of white blood cell, also called a macrophage, that is created by bone marrow. Histiocytes usually stay in place, but when they are stimulated by infection or inflammation, they become active, attacking bacteria and other foreign matter in the body. See also *histiocytosis*.

histiocytosis One of several disorders in which histiocytes start to multiply and proliferate abnormally. The result can be tissue damage, pain, the development of tumor-like lumps, fatigue, and other symptoms. If histiocytosis affects the pituitary gland, diabetes insipidus may also develop. Treatment includes radiation and chemotherapy, although for reasons unknown, some cases of histiocytosis go into remission without treatment.

histiocytosis, Langerhans cell See *Langerhans cell histiocytosis*.

histiocytosis, lipid See *Niemann-Pick disease*.

histiocytosis, sinus A type of histiocytosis in which the lymph nodes are the main site of histiocyte proliferation. The sinuses of the lymph nodes become filled with and distended by masses of histiocytes.

histiocytosis X See *Langerhans cell histiocytosis*.

histocompatible Literally, tissue compatible, meaning that the tissue can exist together with tissue of another organism without the immune system rejecting it. If a tissue donor and tissue recipient are histocompatible, a transplant is expected to be easily accepted.

histology The study of tissues as seen under a microscope. Also known as microscopic anatomy, as opposed to gross anatomy.

histone A protein around which DNA coils to form chromatin. Without histones, DNA could not organize into chromosomes.

Histoplasma capsulatum A fungus that is found worldwide that is particularly common in the central and eastern parts of the US. It is carried in bird and bat droppings, and it is deposited in the soil. Although people can contract histoplasmosis from their environment, it cannot be passed from person to person. While most persons exposed to *H. capsulatum* do not become ill, some people develop a disease that predominantly affects the lungs called histoplasmosis. See also *histoplasmosis*.

histoplasmosis A disease caused by the fungus *Histoplasma capsulatum*. Most people with histoplasmosis have no symptoms. However, it can cause acute or chronic lung disease and progressive disseminated histoplasmosis, which affects a number of organs. Infants, young children, and older persons—particularly those with chronic lung disease—are at increased risk for severe disease. Disseminated histoplasmosis is most frequently seen in people with cancer or AIDS. The acute respiratory disease of histoplasmosis is characterized by respiratory symptoms, a general ill feeling, fever, chest pains, and a dry or nonproductive cough. Distinct patterns may be seen on a chest x-ray. Chronic lung disease related to histoplasmosis resembles tuberculosis and can worsen over months or years. The disseminated form is fatal unless treated. Mild cases resolve without treatment. Severe cases of acute histoplasmosis and all cases of chronic and disseminated histoplasmosis are treated with antifungal medications, usually for life in those with compromised immune systems.

history See *history, medical*.

history, developmental An account of how and when a child passed developmental milestones, such as walking and talking. For adults, information on social-emotional development may be included. A developmental history is used primarily in the diagnosis of developmental disorders.

history, family An account of past and current family structure and relationships within the family, including medical information about family members.

history, medical A complete account of all past and present medical events and problems a person has experienced, including psychiatric illness.

history, social An account of a patient that puts his or her illness or behavior in context. A social history may include aspects of the patient's developmental, family, and medical history, as well as relevant information about life events, social class, race, religion, and occupation.

His-Werner disease See *trench fever*.

HIV Human immunodeficiency virus, the cause of AIDS. HIV is a retrovirus: It has an RNA genome and a reverse transcriptase enzyme. Using the reverse transcriptase, the virus uses its RNA as a template for making complementary DNA. This DNA can then integrate itself into the DNA of the host organism. Also known as the AIDS virus, human lymphotropic virus type III, lymphadenopathy-associated virus, and lymphadenopathy virus. See also *AIDS*.

HIV infection, acute The body's initial reaction to infection by human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), a flu-like syndrome that occurs 2 to 4 weeks after a person contracts HIV. Symptoms include fever, sore throat, headache, skin rash, and swollen glands (lymphadenopathy). This syndrome precedes the development of detectable antibodies to HIV in the blood (seroconversion), which normally takes weeks or months. When antibodies to HIV appear in the blood, a person tests positive in the standard ELISA test for HIV. See also *AIDS; HIV infection, primary*.

HIV infection, primary The stage of infection by human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), in which detectable antibodies to HIV appear in the blood (seroconversion). It normally takes from several weeks to several months for antibodies to the virus to develop after HIV transmission. When antibodies to HIV appear in the blood, a person tests positive in the standard ELISA test for HIV. Primary HIV infection may or may not include the symptoms of acute HIV. See also *AIDS; HIV infection, acute*.

hive A raised, itchy area of skin that is often a sign of an allergic reaction. A hive can be rounded or flat topped but is always elevated above the surrounding skin. It reflects circumscribed edema (local swelling) of the skin. Hives are usually well circumscribed but may be coalescent, and they blanch with pressure. They may last for several minutes, hours, or may persist for days. Approximately 20–25 percent of the population has experienced hives. Treatment is administration of antihistamines. Also known as urticaria and welt.

HLA Human leukocyte antigen, the major human histocompatibility system. HLA typing is done before transplantation to determine the degree of tissue compatibility between donor and recipient.

Hodgkin's disease A type of lymphoma, a cancer that develops in the lymph system, part of the body's immune system. Because there is lymph tissue in many parts of the body, Hodgkin's disease can start in almost any part of the body. The cancer can spread to almost any organ or tissue in the body, including the liver, bone marrow, and spleen. Hodgkin's disease most commonly affects young adults in their 20s and 30s, as well as people older than 55 years. Symptoms include painless swelling of the lymph nodes in the neck, underarm, or groin; fever; night sweats; tiredness; weight loss; and itchy skin. Diagnosis is made by biopsy of the lymph node. The chance of recovery (prognosis) and choice of treatment depend on a number of factors, including the stage of the cancer and whether it is in just one area or has spread throughout the body. Treatment includes radiation and/or chemotherapy.

Hodgkin's disease is life-threatening if untreated, but it has a very high cure rate. Also called Hodgkin's lymphoma.

Hodgkin's lymphoma See *Hodgkin's disease*.

holandric inheritance Inheritance of genes on the Y chromosome. Because only males normally have Y chromosomes, Y-linked genes can only be transmitted from father to son.

hole, macular See *macular hole*.

Holter monitor A type of portable heart monitor that is a small electrocardiogram (EKG) device worn in a pouch around the neck or waist. A Holter monitor keeps a record of the heart rhythm, typically over a 24-hour period, and the patient keeps a diary of activities and symptoms. The EKG recording is then correlated with the person's activities and symptoms. This type of test is useful for identifying heart disturbances that are sporadic and not readily identified with a resting EKG.

homeobox gene A gene containing a short DNA sequence of about 180 base pairs referred to as a homeobox. Homeobox genes encode proteins that bind and regulate the expression of DNA in multicellular organisms. Homeoboxes are present in the genomes of many organisms from fruit flies to humans, and they appear to determine when particular groups of genes are expressed during embryonic development.

homeopath A person who practices homeopathy.

homeopathy Founded in the 19th century, a practice that is based on the concept that disease can be treated with minute doses of drugs thought capable of producing in healthy people the same symptoms as those of the disease being treated. This principle is similar to the concept behind exposure therapy for allergies, but the amounts of active medication used in homeopathy are so small as to be almost undetectable. Scientific studies of homeopathy have returned mixed results. It is considered alternative medicine in the US.

homo- Prefix meaning same, as in homology (similarity in DNA or protein sequences between individuals or between species) and homosexual (a person who is sexually attracted to persons of the same sex). The opposite of homo- is hetero-.

homocysteine An amino acid that is produced by the human body, usually as a byproduct of consuming meat. Homocysteine is normally converted into other amino acids. An abnormal accumulation of homocysteine, which can be measured in the blood,

can be a marker for the development of heart disease. Elevated levels of homocysteine in the blood appear to increase the risk of heart attack, stroke, peripheral vascular disease, and venous thromboembolism (blood clots in the veins). Homocysteine is believed to damage blood vessels in several ways. It injures the cells that line arteries and stimulates the growth of smooth muscle cells. Homocysteine can also disrupt normal blood clotting mechanisms. Elevated levels of homocysteine also appear to increase the risk of Alzheimer's disease. The ways to lower homocysteine are to eat less meat and take supplements of the B vitamins folic acid (folate), B6, and B12 that are needed by the enzymes that process homocysteine.

homocystinuria A genetic disease that is due to an enzyme deficiency that permits a buildup of the amino acid homocysteine. Progressive mental retardation is common, but does not always occur, in untreated cases of homocystinuria. The finding of vascular disease and premature arteriosclerosis in persons with homocystinuria led to the theory that homocysteine may be a factor in heart disease. Homocystinuria is inherited in an autosomal recessive manner and is one of the diseases commonly included among the diseases for which newborns are screened. Treatments include special diets and vitamin B6.

homolog 1 One chromosome of a pair. 2 A gene from one species that has a common origin and functions the same as a gene from another species. Also spelled homologue.

homologous 1 Similar in appearance, form, or function. 2 Paired or matched; usually referring to the relationship between two chromosomes that are paired and so are homologs of each other.

homologous chromosomes A pair of chromosomes that contain the same gene sequences, each derived from one parent.

homology Similarity in DNA or protein sequences between individuals or between species.

homosexual 1 A person who is sexually attracted to persons of the same sex. Colloquially known as gay. 2 The act or habit of same-sex attraction.

homosexuality Sexuality directed toward someone of the same sex.

hookworm An intestinal parasite that infests a billion people, mainly in tropical and subtropical areas. Infection is from contact with soil contaminated by hookworm larvae. First signs are itching

and rash at the site where the larvae penetrate the skin. This is followed by diarrhea, intestinal cramps, pain, anorexia, weight loss, and anemia. Loss of iron and protein due to hookworm can retard the growth and mental development of children, sometimes irreversibly. The infection can be fatal, particularly for infants, pregnant women, and persons who are malnourished. See also *Necator americanus*.

horizontal Parallel to the floor. A person lying on a bed is considered to be in a horizontal position. See also Appendix B, "Anatomic Orientation Terms."

hormone A chemical substance produced in the body that controls and regulates the activity of certain cells or organs. Many hormones are secreted by special glands, such as thyroid hormone produced by the thyroid gland. Hormones are essential for every activity of life, including the processes of digestion, metabolism, growth, reproduction, and mood control. Many hormones, such as neurotransmitters, are active in more than one physical process.

hormone, androgenic Any hormone that promotes the development and maintenance of male sex characteristics. Testosterone is an androgenic hormone.

hormone, follicle-stimulating See *follicle-stimulating hormone*.

hormone, mineralocorticoid A group of hormones, the most important of which is aldosterone, that regulates the balance of water and electrolytes (ions such as sodium and potassium) in the body. The mineralocorticoid hormones act specifically on the tubules of the kidney. See also *corticosteroid*.

hormone, thyroid A chemical substance that is made by the thyroid gland, which is located in the front of the neck. The two most important thyroid hormones are thyroxine (T4) and triiodothyronine (T3). Thyroid hormones are critical for regulation of the body's metabolism. See also *thyroxine; triiodothyronine*.

hormone, thyroid-stimulating See *thyroid-stimulating hormone*.

hormone, thyrotropin See *thyroid-stimulating hormone*.

hormone replacement therapy The use of medications containing both estrogen and progestogen to reduce or stop short-term changes associated with the perimenopause, such as hot flashes,

disturbed sleep, and vaginal dryness. Abbreviated HRT. Many physicians now use the term hormone therapy, abbreviated HT, rather than HRT. HRT can ease the symptoms of menopause and protect against osteoporosis and hip fractures.

hormone therapy Treatment of disease or symptoms with synthetic or naturally derived hormones. The term is most commonly used to describe use of medications containing both estrogen and progestogen to reduce or stop short-term changes associated with the perimenopause. In the more general sense, hormone therapy may be used to treat some forms of cancer, taking advantage of the fact that certain cancers depend on hormones to grow. It may also be used for thyroid disorders, and illnesses associated with hormone production or use. Hormone therapy may include giving hormones to the patient or using medications that decrease the level of hormones in the body.

Horner ptosis See *Horner syndrome*.

Horner syndrome A condition resulting from interruption of the sympathetic nerve pathways to the eye, resulting in the drooping of the upper eyelid on one same side (ptosis), the constriction of the pupil of that eye (miosis), and with the lack of sweating (anhidrosis) and flushing of the affected side of the face. Also known as Horner-Bernard syndrome, Bernard syndrome, Bernard-Horner syndrome, and Horner ptosis.

hornet sting A sting from a hornet, which can trigger an allergic reaction of varying severity. Avoidance and prompt treatment are essential. For those with severe reactions, injectable epinephrine should always be kept on hand. In selected cases, allergy injection therapy is highly effective.

horripilation See *goose bumps*.

hospice A program or facility that provides special care for people who are near the end of life and for their families. Hospice care can be provided at home, in a hospice or other freestanding facility, or within a hospital.

hospital A place for receiving medical or surgical care, usually as an inpatient (resident). An ill person in the US may be "in the hospital," and his ailing UK counterpart would say he is "in hospital."

hospitalist A hospital-based general physician. Hospitalists assume the care of hospitalized patients in the place of patients' primary care physicians. In the most prevalent US model of hospitalist care, several physicians practice together as a group and work full time to care for inpatients.

hot flash A sudden wave of mild or intense body heat caused by a rush of hormones. Hot flashes result from blood vessels opening and constricting, an action that is triggered by hormonal changes caused by decreased levels of estrogen. They can occur at any time and may last from a few seconds to a half hour. Hot flashes are a symptom of the perimenopause.

housemaid's knee See *bursitis, knee*.

HPS 1 Hantavirus pulmonary syndrome. **2** Hermansky-Pudlak syndrome.

HPV Human papillomavirus.

HPV vaccine Human papillomavirus vaccine. An immunization against commonly found types of human papillomaviruses that cause benign genital warts, premalignant conditions of the cervix (dysplasias), and less commonly, cancers of the cervix. The immunization may not protect everyone and is not effective against all types of cervical cancer.

HRT Hormone replacement therapy.

HS Hereditary spherocytosis. See *spherocytosis, hereditary*.

HT Hormone therapy.

ht **1** Abbreviation for height. **2** Abbreviation for heart.

HUGO Human Genome Organization, the international organization concerned with researching and mapping the human genes.

human chorionic gonadotropin A hormone that is made by chorionic cells in the fetal part of the placenta. Abbreviated hCG. hCG is directed at and stimulates the gonads. hCG becomes detectable within days of fertilization, and it forms the foundation of most common pregnancy tests. The level of hCG in maternal serum is also one component in the double and triple screens used during pregnancy to assign risks of Down syndrome and other fetal disorders. See also *gonadotropin*.

human gene therapy See *gene therapy*.

human genome See *genome, human*.

Human Genome Organization See *HUGO*.

Human Genome Project Begun formally in 1990, the US Human Genome Project was an international effort coordinated by the US. Its goals included the identification and sequencing (order-

ing) of all the bases in the human genome. US participation in this monumental undertaking was supported by funds from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Department of Energy (DOE). The project was successful.

human herpesvirus 1 through 5 See *HHV*.

human herpesvirus 6 A herpes virus that apparently lies dormant in many people, and is most likely to cause problems when the immune system is compromised by disease, as in AIDS patients, or by deliberate immune suppression, as in organ transplant patients. Abbreviated HHV-6. There are two forms of HHV-6: A and B. A is rare and is acquired in adulthood. B is relatively common, is usually acquired in childhood, and is associated with roseola. Both HHV-6 A and B can reactivate at a later date and are believed to contribute to diseases of the bone marrow and/or central nervous system in some patients, including fatal encephalitis, chronic fatigue syndrome, and possibly multiple sclerosis. Diagnosis is made via rapid blood culture or other blood test. Treatment is experimental, but antiviral drugs or beta interferon may be tried.

human herpesvirus 7 A herpes virus that causes seizures and other central nervous system symptoms in children. Abbreviated HHV-7. Closely related to HHV-6, HHV-7 has also been linked to roseola. Diagnosis is made via rapid blood culture or other blood test. Treatment is experimental at this time, but antiviral drugs or beta interferon may be tried.

human herpesvirus 8 A herpesvirus that may contribute to Kaposi sarcoma, a rare form of cancer that is sometimes seen in AIDS patients, and to some B-cell lymphomas. Abbreviated HHV-8. Diagnosis is made via rapid blood culture or other blood test. Treatment is experimental at this time, but antiviral drugs or beta interferon may be tried. Also known as Kaposi sarcoma-associated herpesvirus (KSHV).

human immunodeficiency virus See *HIV*.

human leukocyte antigen See *HLA*.

human papillomavirus One of the family of more than 100 viruses that are responsible for causing warts. Abbreviated HPV. The majority of HPVs produce warts on the hands, fingers, or face. Most of these warts are innocuous, causing nothing more than cosmetic concerns. Several types of HPV are confined primarily to the moist skin of the genitals, producing genital warts, and have been identified as a cause of cancer of the cervix and other cancers of the ano-genital region. The HPVs that cause wartlike growths on the genitals are sexually transmitted. A

vaccine is available that protects against infection by the most common types of HPVs that are associated with cancer and genital warts.

humerus The long bone in the upper arm that extends from the shoulder to the elbow.

humidifier A machine that puts moisture into the air. Humidified air makes it easier to breathe for persons with certain conditions, such as cystic fibrosis, Sjogren's syndrome, and others.

humor In medicine, a fluid or semifluid substance. For example, the aqueous humor is the fluid normally present in the anterior chamber of the eye, between the cornea and the iris.

humor, aqueous The fluid, continually produced by the ciliary body, that is normally present in the anterior chamber of the eye, between the cornea and the iris.

humoral Pertaining to elements in the blood or other body fluids.

humoralism An ancient theory holding that health came from balance between the bodily liquids termed humors. Disease was thought to arise when imbalance occurred between the humors. The humors were phlegm (water), blood, gall (black bile, thought to be secreted by the kidneys and spleen), and choler (yellow bile secreted by the liver). The humoral theory was devised well before Hippocrates, and it was not definitively demolished until 1858. The word humor lives on as a medical term for liquid or semiliquid substances in the body and as a euphemism for mood (such as being "in good humor"). Also known as humorism.

humorism See *humoralism*.

Hunter syndrome A genetic metabolic disorder that arises from deficiency of the enzyme iduronate sulfatase, resulting in tissue deposits of molecules called mucopolysaccharides. Hunter syndrome is inherited as an X-linked recessive trait. The characteristic features of Hunter syndrome include dwarfism, bone deformities, a thickened, coarse face, hepatosplenomegaly (enlargement of the liver and spleen) from mucopolysaccharide deposits, cardiovascular disorders from mucopolysaccharide deposits, and deafness. There are two forms of Hunter syndrome: a severe form that causes progressive mental retardation, physical disability, and death before age 20 in most cases; and a mild form in which patients survive to adulthood, are able to reproduce, and have intellect that is impaired minimally, if at all. The gene for the enzyme iduronate

sulfatase (deficient in Hunter's syndrome) is on the X chromosome. Also known as mucopolysaccharidosis II.

Huntington's chorea See *Huntington's disease*.

Huntington's disease A genetic degenerative disorder of the brain cells characterized by progressive mental and physical deterioration that leads to death. Abbreviated HD. Although HD is usually an adult-onset disorder, it can affect children as well. The average survival time is 15 to 18 years after the onset of symptoms. Mood disturbance is usually the first symptom seen, with bipolar disorder-like mood swings that may include mania, depression, extreme irritability or angry outbursts, and psychosis. Other symptoms include chorea (restless, wiggling, turning movements), muscle stiffness and slowness of movement, and difficulties with memory and other cognitive processes. HD is inherited in an autosomal dominant manner. The HD gene is on chromosome 4. Diagnosis is made via molecular genetic testing. At this time there is no cure for HD, although medication may be used to control symptoms of the illness, such as mood swings and chorea. See also *chorea*.

Hurler syndrome An inherited error of metabolism characterized by deficiency of the enzyme alpha-L-iduronidase, which normally breaks down molecules called mucopolysaccharides. Without the activity of this enzyme, mucopolysaccharides accumulate abnormally in the tissues of the body. There are two clinical subtypes of disease due to deficiency of alpha-L-iduronidase: Hurler syndrome and Scheie syndrome. Hurler syndrome patients have progressive mental degeneration, a broad forehead with heavy eyebrows, enlarged and deformed skull, small stature, corneal opacities, hepatosplenomegaly (enlargement of the liver and spleen), valvular heart defects, thick skin, joint contractures, and hernias. Hurler syndrome is inherited in an autosomal recessive manner. The gene that codes for alpha-L-iduronidase is on chromosome 4. Enzyme replacement therapy helps the body make alpha-L-iduronidase and can alleviate many of the symptoms, but enzyme replacement therapy has not been shown to affect the mental damage. Bone marrow transplantation may slow the progression of Hurler syndrome and may prevent mental retardation if done at an early age. Also known as mucopolysaccharidosis type I.

hurricane supplies See *disaster supplies*.

Hutchinson-Gilford progeria syndrome See *progeria*.

hyaline membrane disease Synonym for acute respiratory distress syndrome and respiratory distress syndrome. See *acute respiratory distress syndrome; respiratory distress syndrome*.

hybrid The result of a cross between genetically unlike parents. A hybrid is therefore the offspring of parents who differ in regard to the particular gene in question.

hybridoma A hybrid cell used as the basis for the production of antibodies in large amounts for diagnostic or therapeutic use. Hybridomas are produced by injecting a specific antigen into a mouse, collecting an antibody-producing cell from the mouse's spleen, and fusing it with a tumor cell called a myeloma cell. The hybridoma cells multiply indefinitely in the laboratory and can be used to produce a specific antibody indefinitely.

hydatid mole See *hydatidiform mole*.

hydatidiform mole A tumor that forms in the uterus as a mass of cysts resembling a bunch of grapes. Hydatidiform moles occur during the child-bearing years, and they do not spread outside the uterus. However, a malignancy called choriocarcinoma may start from a hydatidiform mole. In its early stages, a hydatidiform mole may look like a normal pregnancy. Diagnosis is based on a history of lack of fetal movement, a pelvic examination, an ultrasound, and a blood test to look for high levels of the hormone beta human chorionic gonadotropin (hCG). hCG in the blood of a woman who is not pregnant can be a sign of a hydatidiform mole. Treatment includes removal of the mole by dilation and curettage (D & C) and suction evacuation and surgery to remove the uterus (hysterectomy). Also known as a molar pregnancy.

hydro- Prefix meaning related to water.

hydrocele Accumulation of fluid in the coat around the testis. Small hydroceles tend to disappear by 1 year of age. Larger hydroceles may persist and warrant surgery.

hydrocephalus An abnormal buildup of cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) in the ventricles and/or subarachnoid space of the brain. The fluid often increases intracranial pressure, which can compress and damage the brain. Hydrocephalus can arise before birth or at any time afterward. Causes can include birth defects (particularly spina bifida), hemorrhage into the brain, infection, meningitis, tumor, and head injury. Symptoms depend on the person's age. In infants, the most obvious sign is usually an abnormally large head; other symptoms may include vomiting, sleepiness, irritability, an

inability to look upward, and seizures. In older children and adults, there is no head enlargement from hydrocephalus, but symptoms may include headache, nausea, vomiting, and sometimes blurred vision. Patients may have problems with balance, delayed development in walking or talking, and poor coordination. Irritability, fatigue, seizures, and personality changes (such as an inability to concentrate or remember things) may also develop. Drowsiness and double vision are common symptoms as hydrocephalus progresses. Treatment involves insertion of a shunt to let the excess fluid exit and be reabsorbed into the bloodstream, thereby relieving the pressure on the brain. The outlook with hydrocephalus depends on the cause and on the timing of the diagnosis and treatment. Also known as water on the brain and hydrocephaly. See also *hydrocephalus, acquired; hydrocephalus, congenital*.

hydrocephalus, acquired Hydrocephalus that is due to a postnatal cause, something that happened sometime after birth. See also *hydrocephalus*.

hydrocephalus, communicating Hydrocephalus in which there is no obstruction to the flow of the cerebrospinal fluid (CSF). Specifically, there is no obstruction within the ventricular system of the brain or where the CSF passes into the spinal canal. Communicating hydrocephalus is due to overproduction of CSF or failure of the brain to reabsorb CSF normally.

hydrocephalus, congenital Hydrocephalus that is present at birth. See also *hydrocephalus*.

hydrocephalus, normal pressure Hydrocephalus that occurs because of a gradual blockage of CSF drainage pathways in the brain. Although the ventricles enlarge, intracranial pressure remains within normal range. Abbreviated NPH. NPH can occur as a complication of brain infection or bleeding (hemorrhage). In some patients, no predisposing cause can be identified. NPH is characterized by memory loss (dementia), gait disorder (ataxia), urinary incontinence, and a general slowing of activity. See also *hydrocephalus; hydrocephalus ex-vacuo*.

hydrocephalus ex-vacuo Hydrocephalus that occurs when there is damage to the brain caused by stroke or injury, in which there may be an actual shrinkage of brain substance. The CSF pressure itself is normal. See also *hydrocephalus; hydrocephalus, normal pressure*.

hydrocephaly See *hydrocephalus*.

hydrogen breath test A test that uses the measurement of hydrogen in the breath to diagnose several conditions that cause gastrointestinal symptoms. Large amounts of hydrogen may be produced by anaerobic bacteria in the colon when there is a problem with the digestion or absorption of food in the small intestine that allows more unabsorbed food to reach the colon, or when the colonic bacteria move back into the small intestine. Hydrogen produced by the bacteria is absorbed into the blood and travels to the lungs where it is exhaled in the breath and measured. The diagnosis of lactose intolerance is one of the most common indications for use of a hydrogen breath test.

hydronephrosis Distention of the kidney with urine. Hydronephrosis is caused by obstruction of urine outflow (for example, by a stone blocking the ureter).

hydrops fetalis A serious and potentially fatal condition of a fetus characterized by gross edema (swelling) from abnormal accumulation of fluids in the body. Hydrops fetalis has both immune-related and non-immune-related causes. Immune-related hydrops fetalis can be due to hemolytic disease such as Rh blood group incompatibility, in which antibodies crossing the placenta from the mother destroy the red blood cells of the fetus. Non-immune-related hydrops fetalis can have many causes but is most commonly a result of cardiac abnormalities in the fetus. See also *Rh incompatibility*.

hydroxyapatite An essential ingredient of normal bone and teeth that makes up bone mineral and the matrix of teeth and gives them their rigidity. See also *hydroxyapatite crystal disease*.

hydroxyapatite crystal disease Inflammation caused by hydroxyapatite crystals. Hydroxyapatite molecules can group together (crystallize) to form microscopic clumps. If the tiny crystals of hydroxyapatite are deposited by mistake in or around joints, they may cause inflammation of the joints and nearby tissues, such as tendons and ligaments. Hydroxyapatite crystal disease is sometimes the cause of rotator cuff problems in the shoulder.

hygiene The science of preventive medicine and the preservation of health. Also commonly used as a euphemism for cleanliness and proper sanitation.

hymen A thin membrane that may completely or partially cover the vaginal opening before first sexual intercourse but that usually disappears before puberty.

hyoglossus The muscle that permits the tongue to be held on the floor of the mouth.

hyper- Prefix meaning high, beyond, excessive, or above normal, as in hyperglycemia (high sugar in the blood) and hypercalcemia (high calcium in the blood). The opposite of hyper- is hypo-.

hyperactivity A higher-than-normal level of activity. An organ can be described as hyperactive if it is more active than is usual. Behavior can also be described as hyperactive. See also *attention deficit hyperactivity disorder*.

hyperadrenocorticism See *Cushing's syndrome*.

hyperaldosteronism See *aldosteronism*.

hyperbaric oxygen chamber A pressurized chamber in which a patient receives pure oxygen, either directly or through a mask, tent, or tube. The oxygen is delivered at high pressure, more than 1.4 times normal atmospheric pressure. See also *hyperbaric oxygen therapy*.

hyperbaric oxygen therapy The use of a hyperbaric oxygen (HBO) chamber to treat any of a number of conditions, notably carbon monoxide poisoning, decompression sickness ("the bends"), smoke inhalation, and gas gangrene. HBO therapy also helps to heal skin grafts, major burn injuries, and it is sometimes used in cases of antibiotic-resistant or severe infection. The patient is enclosed in the chamber and receives appropriately pressurized pure oxygen for a specified length of time.

hyperbilirubinemia An elevated level of the pigment bilirubin in the blood. A sufficient elevation of bilirubin produces jaundice. Some degree of hyperbilirubinemia is very common right after birth, especially in premature babies. Treatment of hyperbilirubinemia in the newborn involves exposure of the skin to special lights and removal of serum from the blood and replacing with solutions free of bilirubin (exchange transfusion).

hyperbilirubinemia type 1 See *Gilbert syndrome*.

hypercalcemia A higher-than-normal level of calcium in the blood. Hypercalcemia can be a result of malignancy, elevated parathyroid gland activity (hyperparathyroidism), or other conditions. It can cause a number of nonspecific symptoms, including loss of appetite, nausea, thirst, fatigue, muscle weakness, restlessness, and confusion. An elevated level of calcium may cause muscle weakness and constipation, affect the conduction of electrical impulses in the heart (heart block), lead to calcium stones (nephrocalcinosis) in the urinary tract, impair kidney function, and interfere with the absorption of iron, predisposing the person to iron deficiency.

hypercalciuria Excessive excretion of calcium in the urine, which may cause calcium kidney stones. Overactivity of the parathyroid gland (hyperparathyroidism) may cause excess calcium in the bloodstream (hypercalcemia) with increased excretion of calcium in the urine. See also *hypercalcemia*.

hypercapnia A greater than normal level of carbon dioxide in the blood.

hypercholesterolemia High blood cholesterol. See also *familial hypercholesterolemia*.

hypercoagulable state A condition in which there is an abnormally increased tendency toward blood clotting (coagulation). There are numerous hypercoagulable states. Each has different causes, and each increases a person's chances of developing blood clots, such as those associated with thrombophlebitis (inflammation due to a clot in the veins). The causes include medications (particularly female hormones and birth control pills), surgery (especially hip, knee, and urinary system procedures), pregnancy, phospholipid antibodies in blood (anticardiolipin antibodies, lupus anticoagulant), cancer (although most patients with hypercoagulable states do not have cancer), elevated blood homocysteine levels, and inherited protein deficiencies, such as deficiencies of antithrombin III, factor V Leiden, protein S, and protein C. Treatment involves avoidance of the triggering mechanism and sometimes use of blood-thinning medication. See also *antiphospholipid syndrome; estrogen-associated hypercoagulability*.

hyperemesis gravidarum Extreme, excessive, and persistent vomiting in early pregnancy that may lead to dehydration and malnutrition. It is usually associated with weight loss of more than 5 percent of the woman's prepregnancy weight. Hyperemesis gravidarum affects about 1 in every 300 pregnant women and is most common in young women, in first pregnancies, and in women carrying multiple fetuses. Hyperemesis gravidarum usually stops on its own by the 20th week of pregnancy. Treatment of mild hyperemesis gravidarum usually involves dietary measures, rest, and use of antacids. Very severe hyperemesis gravidarum may call for the use of intravenous fluids and nutrition.

hyperexplexia A rare genetic disorder inherited in an autosomal dominant manner in which babies have an exaggerated startle reflex. Symptoms at birth may include muscle stiffness (hypertonia), an exaggerated response to being startled, and strong brain stem reflexes (especially head-retraction reflex). The startle reflex is sometimes accompanied by sudden stiffness (acute generalized hypertonia),

which can cause the affected person to fall to the ground like a log. Treatment is via medications. Also known as exaggerated startle disease, hyperekplexia, Kok disease, startle disease, and stiff baby syndrome.

hyperglycemia Elevated blood glucose (sugar). Hyperglycemia is often found in diabetes mellitus. See also *diabetes mellitus*.

hyperhidrosis A condition characterized by extreme and excessive sweating. Primary hyperhidrosis affects the hands, feet, and armpits and often has no identifiable cause. If the sweating occurs as a result of another medical condition, it is called secondary hyperhidrosis. In secondary hyperhidrosis, the sweating may be all over the body or may be localized to one area. A number of medical conditions can cause secondary hyperhidrosis.

hyperkalemia Elevated potassium in the blood. Hyperkalemia can be caused by taking excessive amounts of potassium, by medications, tissue trauma, and by diseases such as kidney failure. Hyperkalemia may not produce any symptoms, but severe hyperkalemia can lead to potentially fatal arrhythmias of the heart.

hyperkeratosis Thickening of the outer layer of skin, which is composed of the protein keratin. Causes include normal wear and tear, inflammation of the skin, or genetic conditions.

hyperlipidemia Elevated lipid (fat) levels in the blood. Hyperlipidemia can be inherited and increases the risk of disease of the blood vessels leading to stroke and heart disease.

hypermagnesemia Excess magnesium in the blood. Kidney disease is one of the main causes of hypermagnesemia. Persons with impaired kidney function should be especially careful about their magnesium intake because they can accumulate magnesium, which is dangerous and sometimes fatal.

hypermobility syndrome A condition in which joints can move beyond the normal range of motion predisposing them to injury and pain. Symptoms of hypermobility syndrome can include pains in knees, fingers, hips, and elbows, and the affected joints may sprain or dislocate. Joint hypermobility can disappear with aging from childhood to adulthood. Some persons have genetic conditions that are associated with hypermobility syndrome, such as Ehlers-Danlos syndrome. Also known as joint hypermobility syndrome. See also *Ehlers-Danlos syndrome*.

hypernatremia Elevated sodium in the blood. Hypernatremia can be caused by medications or conditions such as dehydration or kidney disease. See also *sodium*.

hyperopia See farsightedness.

hyperostosis Overgrowth of bone.

hyperphenylalaninemia Elevated levels of the amino acid phenylalanine in the blood. See also *phenylalanine; phenylalanine hydroxylase deficiency; PKU; PKU, maternal*.

hyperphosphatemia An elevated level of phosphate in the blood. Higher-than-normal levels can be caused by ingestion of phosphate-rich foods, such as dairy products, or by kidney failure.

hyperpigmentation Dark spots on the skin. Hyperpigmentation is primarily a cosmetic concern that can be covered with makeup, although in some cases (such as the *cafe au lait* spots associated with neurofibromatosis) it can be a sign of an underlying medical problem.

hyperplasia An increase in the number of normal cells in a tissue or an organ. Hyperplasia can represent a precancerous condition.

hyperplasia, benign prostatic See *benign prostatic hyperplasia*.

hyperplasia, endometrial A condition characterized by overgrowth of the lining of the uterus. This is considered a precancerous condition.

hypersomnia Excessive sleepiness in which a person has trouble staying awake during the day or exhibits prolonged nighttime sleep. People who have hypersomnia can fall asleep at any time—for example, at work or while they are driving—and they may have other sleep-related problems. Causes include narcolepsy, sleep deprivation, neurological or other medical conditions, obesity, genetic factors, medications, and drug or alcohol abuse.

hypertension See *high blood pressure*.

hypertension, benign intracranial See *pseudotumor cerebri*.

hypertension, pulmonary High blood pressure in the pulmonary arteries. This elevated blood pressure can lead to severe shortness of breath and death. Lung transplantation is considered in severe cases that are unresponsive to treatments.

hyperthermia Overheating of the body, possibly due to extreme weather conditions. Unrelieved

hyperthermia can lead to collapse and death, particularly in the elderly. Hyperthermia can be prevented in many cases through use of air conditioning and ventilation, as well as by ensuring that vulnerable persons drink extra water. In emergency cases of hyperthermia, injections of saline solution and rapid cooling of the body may be necessary. Also known as heatstroke and heat prostration.

hyperthermia, malignant A rare inherited disease that causes a rapid rise in body temperature and muscle rigidity when a person undergoes general anesthesia. Succinyl choline and halothane are the two drugs most associated with the condition. The result can be destruction of muscle tissue, kidney failure, and death may occur. The propensity to malignant hyperthermia is inherited in an autosomal dominant manner. One form of malignant hyperthermia is produced by mutation of the ryanodine receptor gene (RYR1). Treatment involves administration of dantrolene sodium (brand name: Dantrium) and rapid cooling of the patient.

hyperthyroid Having an excessive amount of thyroid hormone resulting from an overactive thyroid gland or from taking too much thyroid hormone. Symptoms of hyperthyroidism can include increased heart rate, weight loss, depression, and cognitive slowing. Treatment can include medications, the use of radioactive iodine, thyroid surgery, or a reduction in the dose of thyroid hormone.

hypertonia Increased tightness of muscle tone and reduced capacity of the muscle to stretch caused by damage to the motor nerve pathways in the central nervous system. Untreated hypertonia can lead to loss of function and deformity. Treatment can include physical and/or occupational therapy or medications. Injections of botulinum toxin (botox) are sometimes used in the treatment for chronic hypertonia in cerebral palsy and other disorders. Also known as spasticity.

hypertonic solution A solution that contains more dissolved particles (such as salt and other electrolytes) than is found in normal cells and blood. For example, hypertonic solutions are used for soaking wounds.

hypertrophic cardiomyopathy See *cardiomyopathy, hypertrophic*.

hypertrophy Enlargement or overgrowth of an organ or part of the body due to the increased size of the constituent cells.

hypertrophy, benign prostatic See *benign prostatic hyperplasia*.

hyperuricemia Abnormally elevated uric acid in the blood. Uric acid is a breakdown product of purines, which are part of many foods. Hyperuricemia may indicate an increased risk of gout, but many patients with hyperuricemia do not develop gout, and some patients with repeated gout attacks have normal or low blood uric acid levels. Hyperuricemia can also lead to kidney stones and hard deposits of uric acid (tophi) in the skin. People with hyperuricemia should avoid taking aspirin. Treatments may include dietary changes and the use of medications that lower uric acid level.

hyperventilation Overbreathing. Hyperventilation causes dizziness, lightheadedness, a sense of unsteadiness, and tingling around the mouth and fingertips. Hyperventilation can be severe enough to mimic the early warning symptoms of a heart attack, and is therefore a common cause of emergency room visits in the US. Hyperventilation is common and normal after aerobic exercise. Hyperventilation can be caused by serious diseases of metabolism and anxiety. Relief for hyperventilation caused by anxiety can be achieved by breathing in and out of a paper bag to increase the level of carbon dioxide in the blood.

hypo- Prefix meaning low, under, beneath, down, or below normal, as in hypoglycemia (low blood sugar) and hyposensitivity (undersensitivity). The opposite of hypo- is hyper-.

hypocalcemia Lower-than-normal level of calcium in the blood, which makes the nervous system highly irritable, as evidenced by tetany (spasms of the hands and feet, muscle cramps, abdominal cramps, and overly active reflexes). Chronic hypocalcemia contributes to poor mineralization of bones, soft bones (osteomalacia), and osteoporosis. In children, hypocalcemia leads to rickets and impaired growth. Treatment involves increased dietary intake of calcium or calcium supplementation.

hypochondria The condition of being obsessed with imaginary medical complaints. A person with hypochondria tends to misinterpret minor physical changes as symptoms of major illness. It is closely related to, and may be a subtype of, obsessive-compulsive disorder. Treatment with antidepressant medication and/or cognitive behavioral therapy is often successful. See also *obsessive-compulsive disorder*.

hypochondroplasia A type of short-limb dwarfism, with shortening especially of the ends of the limbs. A child with hypochondroplasia usually has a prominent forehead, mildly shortened extremities and digits, limited range of motion at the

elbows, and inward curvature of the lower back. Diagnosis is made through physical examination and X-rays. Hypochondroplasia is inherited in an autosomal dominant manner. Hypochondroplasia can also occur spontaneously. The gene for hypochondroplasia is the same gene that causes achondroplastic dwarfism: the fibroblast growth factor receptor 3 (FGFR3). However, the two forms of dwarfism are caused by different mutations in FGFR3.

hypoglossal nerve The twelfth cranial nerve, which supplies the muscles of the tongue.

hypoglossal neuropathy Disease of the hypoglossal nerve. Paralysis of the hypoglossal nerve affects the tongue, making speech sound thick and causing the tongue to deviate toward the paralyzed side. In time, the tongue diminishes in size (atrophies).

hypoglycemia Low blood sugar (glucose). Hypoglycemia may be associated with symptoms such as anxiety, sweating, tremor, palpitations, nausea, and pallor. Hypoglycemia also starves the brain of glucose energy, which is essential for proper brain function. Lack of glucose energy to the brain can cause symptoms ranging from headache, mild confusion, abnormal behavior, loss of consciousness, seizure, and coma. Severe hypoglycemia can cause death. The causes of hypoglycemia include use of drugs (such as insulin), liver disease, surgical absence of the stomach, tumors that release excess amounts of insulin, and pre-diabetes. In some patients, symptoms of hypoglycemia occur during fasting (fasting hypoglycemia). In others, symptoms of hypoglycemia occur after meals (reactive hypoglycemia). Immediate treatment of severe hypoglycemia consists of administering large amounts of glucose and repeating this treatment at intervals if the symptoms persist. Treatment must also be directed at the underlying cause. Treatment of reactive hypoglycemia involves changing the diet, including eating fewer concentrated sweets and ingesting multiple small meals throughout the day.

hypokalemia Low potassium in the blood. Hypokalemia is commonly caused by conditions that lead to loss of potassium through the gastrointestinal tract such as vomiting, diarrhea, impaired kidney function, and use of diuretic medications. Symptoms may include fatigue, weakness, muscle cramping, and arrhythmias of the heart.

hypomagnesemia Low magnesium in the blood, which can occur due to inadequate intake or impaired intestinal absorption of magnesium. Hypomagnesemia is often associated with low

calcium (hypocalcemia) and low potassium (hypokalemia). It causes increased irritability of the nervous system with tetany (spasms of the hands and feet, muscular twitching and cramps, spasm of the larynx, and overly active reflexes).

hypomania A condition similar to mania but less severe. The symptoms include elevated mood, increased activity, decreased need for sleep, grandiosity, racing thoughts, and the like. However, hypomanic episodes differ in that they do not cause significant distress or impair one's work, family, or social life to the extent that manic episodes do. Hypomania is one component of cyclothymic disorder, a condition similar to but less severe than bipolar disorder, in which episodes of hypomania alternate with episodes of depression known as dysthymia. See also *cyclothymia; mania*.

hyponatremia Low sodium in the blood. Hyponatremia can be caused by many conditions and when severe can lead to confusion and seizures.

hypophosphatemia A lower-than-normal level of phosphate in the blood. Hypophosphatemia can be associated with a number of conditions including bone diseases and hormone conditions. Symptoms occur only when hypophosphatemia is very severe and include muscle weakness that may progress to coma and death.

hypopigmentation Lack of color in the skin or eyes. Hypopigmentation is characteristic of the various forms of albinism and of several genetic diseases. See *albinism; Hermansky-Pudlak syndrome*.

hypoplasia Underdevelopment or incomplete development of a tissue or an organ. For example, hypoplasia of the enamel of the teeth indicates that the enamel coating is thinner than normal or missing in some but not all areas. Hypoplasia is less drastic than aplasia, where there is no development of a tissue or an organ at all.

hypoplasia of the thymus and parathyroids
See *DiGeorge syndrome*.

hypoplastic left heart syndrome A form of congenital heart disease in which the whole left half of the heart, including the aorta is underdeveloped (hypoplastic). Blood returning from the lungs has to flow through an opening in the wall between the upper chambers of the heart (an atrial septal defect). The right ventricle pumps blood into the pulmonary artery, and blood reaches the aorta through a shunt (the ductus arteriosus). A child with hypoplastic left heart syndrome may appear normal at birth, but symptoms appear within the

first few days of life when the ductus arteriosus closes. The infant becomes ashen, has difficulty breathing, and has problems with feeding. This heart defect is usually fatal unless treated by a series of surgeries or a heart transplant. See also *atrial septal defect; ductus arteriosus*.

hypospadias A birth defect in which the urethra opens on the underside of the penis or below the penis. Treatment involves surgery to repair and reconstruct the urethra.

hypotension Blood pressure that is below the normal expected for an individual in a given environment. Blood pressure normally varies greatly with activity, age, medications, and underlying medical conditions. Hypotension can result from conditions of the nervous system, conditions that do not begin in the nervous system, and drugs. Neurological conditions that can lead to low blood pressure include changing position from lying to a more vertical position (postural hypotension), stroke, shock, Parkinson's disease, neuropathy, and fright. Nonneurological conditions that can cause low blood pressure include bleeding, sepsis, dehydration, heart disease, adrenal insufficiency, pregnancy, prolonged bed rest, poisoning, and blood transfusion reactions. Severe hypotension is referred to as shock or hypovolemic shock. Treatment of mild hypotension may not be necessary, although the severe lowering of blood pressure known as shock is life-threatening and requires immediate medical treatment. Hypotension is the opposite of hypertension (abnormally high blood pressure). See also *hypotension, orthostatic*.

hypotension, orthostatic A temporary lowering of blood pressure, usually related to suddenly standing up. Healthy people may experience orthostatic hypotension if they rise quickly from a seated position, especially after a meal. Orthostatic hypotension occurs most commonly in older people. The change in position causes a temporary reduction in blood flow and therefore a shortage of oxygen to the brain. This leads to lightheadedness, dizziness, and, sometimes, a temporary loss of consciousness. Tilt-table testing can be used to confirm a diagnosis of orthostatic hypotension. Tilt-table testing involves placing the patient on a table with a foot support. The table is tilted upward, and blood pressure and pulse are measured while symptoms are recorded in various positions. Also known as postural hypotension.

hypotension, postural See *hypotension, orthostatic*.

hypothalamus The area of the brain that secretes substances that influence pituitary and

other gland function and is involved in the control of body temperature, hunger, thirst, and other processes that regulate body equilibrium.

hypothermia Abnormally low body temperature. Someone who falls asleep in a cold temperature may become hypothermic, and the condition can be fatal. Hypothermia is intentionally produced to slow the metabolism during some types of surgery. Severe hypothermia can be fatal. Those with mild or moderate hypothermia (are alert and conscious, and have not lost the shivering reflex) will usually simply require removing them from the cold environment and providing them with additional insulation. Treatment of severe hypothermia involves slow heating of the body using blankets or other ways of increasing body warmth. Body temperature should increase by no more than a couple of degrees per hour.

hypothyroid Deficiency of thyroid hormone. The hypothyroid state (hypothyroidism) is characterized by fatigue, weight gain, and constipation. Severe, longstanding hypothyroidism can lead to swelling of the extremities, coma, and death.

hypothyroidism, congenital See *cretinism*.

hypothyroidism, infantile Underactivity of the thyroid gland that starts after birth in infancy or early childhood, as manifested by delays in growth and development, and by myxedema (a dry, waxy type of swelling, often including swollen lips and nose). Treatment involves use of thyroid hormone medication. Also known as Brissaud infantilism and infantile myxedema.

hypotonia Decreased muscle tone and strength that results in floppiness. Hypotonia is a common finding with cerebral palsy and other neuromuscular disorders. Untreated hypotonia can lead to hip dislocation and other problems. Treatment is via physical therapy. In some cases, braces may be needed to permit a full range of movement in patients with hypotonia.

hypotonic solution A solution that contains fewer dissolved particles (such as salt and other electrolytes) than is found in normal cells and blood. Hypotonic solutions are commonly used to give fluids intravenously to hospitalized patients in order to treat or avoid dehydration.

hypoventilation The state in which a reduced amount of air enters the alveoli in the lungs, resulting in decreased levels of oxygen and increased levels of carbon dioxide in the blood. Hypoventilation can be due to breathing that is too shallow (hypopnea) or too slow (bradypnea), or to diminished lung

function. The opposite of hypoventilation is hyper-ventilation (overbreathing).

hypovolemia Abnormal decrease in the volume of blood plasma. Hypovolemia occurs with dehydration or bleeding.

hypovolemic shock See *shock, hypovolemic*.

hypoxia A lower-than-normal concentration of oxygen in arterial blood, as opposed to anoxia, a complete lack of blood oxygen. Hypoxia will occur with any interruption of normal respiration.

hypoxia-ischemia Blood flow to cells and organs that is not sufficient to maintain their normal function, combined with a lower-than-normal concentration of oxygen in arterial blood.

hysterectomy An operation to remove the uterus. Hysterectomies are most commonly performed as a treatment for fibroids, cancer or severe dysplasia of the uterus, and for dysfunctional uterine bleeding.

hysterectomy, abdominal Surgical removal of the uterus through an incision made in the abdominal wall, as opposed to a vaginal hysterectomy. See also *hysterectomy, vaginal*.

hysterectomy, complete See *hysterectomy, total*.

hysterectomy, laparoscopic supracervical Surgical removal of the uterus but not the cervix, using laparoscopic techniques.

hysterectomy, partial Surgical removal of the uterus but not the cervix. Also known as subtotal hysterectomy.

hysterectomy, subtotal See *hysterectomy, partial*.

hysterectomy, total Complete surgical removal of the uterus including the cervix. Also known as complete hysterectomy.

hysterectomy, vaginal Removal of the uterus through a surgical incision within the vagina, as opposed to abdominal hysterectomy. With a vaginal hysterectomy, the scar is not outwardly visible. See also *hysterectomy, abdominal*.

hysteroscopy Examination of the inside of the uterus by insertion of a lighted scope (hysteroscope) through the cervix into the uterus.

<http://www.rashidiislamiccenter.com>



iatr- Prefix indicating something related to a physician or medicine, as in iatromisia (an intense dislike of doctors).

iatrapistic Having a lack of faith in doctors.

iatrogenic Due to the activity of a physician or therapy. For example, an iatrogenic illness is an illness that is caused by a medication or physician.

iatromelia An ineffective or negligent medical treatment.

iatromisia An intense dislike of doctors or the medical profession.

IBD Inflammatory bowel disease. See *bowel disease, inflammatory*.

IBS Irritable bowel syndrome.

ibuprofen A nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID) that is commonly used to treat pain, swelling, and fever. Common brand names of ibuprofen include Advil, Motrin, and Nuprin.

I-cell disease A rare, severe genetic disorder of the lysosomes (organelles within a cell that contain enzymes that can lyse, or digest, substances). Multiple enzyme deficiencies associated with I-cell disease lead to the accumulation of certain fatty substances (mucolipids) and certain complex carbohydrates (mucopolysaccharides) within the cells of many tissues of the body. The name comes from the deposits of accumulated material, known as inclusion bodies. I-cell disease affects the kidneys, heart, and nervous system. I-cell disease is inherited in an autosomal recessive manner. There is no known treatment for I-cell disease. Also known as mucolipidosis II.

ichthyosis, spasticity, oligophrenia syndrome See *Sjögren's syndrome*.

ichthyosis simplex See *ichthyosis vulgaris*.

ichthyosis vulgaris A genetic skin disease characterized by scaly areas of skin that usually appear in childhood. The palms and soles are often affected. Areas that tend to be spared include the

armpits, the insides of the elbows, and the skin behind the knee. Many people with ichthyosis vulgaris also have asthma, eczema, or hay fever. The gene responsible for this disease is located on chromosome 1. Also known as ichthyosis simplex.

ichthyosis-keratitis-deafness syndrome See *keratitis-ichthyosis-deafness syndrome*.

ICSH interstitial-cell-stimulating hormone (ICSH). See *luteinizing hormone*.

ICSI Intracytoplasmic sperm injection.

icterus See *jaundice*.

ICU Intensive care unit. The intensive care unit is a designated area of a hospital facility that is dedicated to the care of patients who are seriously ill.

ICU psychosis A disorder in which patients in an intensive care unit (ICU) or a similar hospital setting experience anxiety, become paranoid, hear voices, see things that are not there, become severely disoriented in time and place, become very agitated, or even become violent. ICU psychosis is a form of acute brain failure (delirium). Organic factors, including dehydration, low blood oxygen (hypoxia), heart failure, infection, and drugs can cause or contribute to delirium. Other factors that are believed to play into ICU psychosis are sensory deprivation, sensory overload, pain (particularly if poorly controlled), sleep deprivation, disruption of the normal day-night rhythm, and the loss of control over their lives that patients often feel in an ICU. Treatment of ICU psychosis depends on the cause. ICU psychosis usually goes away when the patient leaves the ICU.

ID Intradermal.

IDDM Insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus. See *diabetes, type 1*.

idiocy, amaurotic familial See *Tay-Sachs disease*.

idiopathic See *essential*.

idiopathic Of unknown cause. For example, idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis is scarring of the lung tissue without a known cause.

idiopathic hypertrophic subaortic stenosis Narrowing of the left ventricle of the heart just below the aortic valve through which blood must pass on its way up into the aorta. The narrowing cuts the flow of blood and is due to hypertrophic cardiomyopathy (HCM), a genetic disorder of the heart. HCM is the leading cause of sudden cardiac death in preadolescent and adolescent children. The hallmark of the HCM is abnormal enlargement

of the left ventricle of the heart, but it frequently involves the interventricular septum, which results in an obstruction of flow through the left ventricular outflow tract. Treatment options include drugs and surgery. Abbreviated IHSS. See also *subaortic stenosis*.

idiopathic sclerosing cholangitis See *primary sclerosing cholangitis*.

idiopathic torsion dystonia See *dystonia, idiopathic torsion*.

IgA Immunoglobulin A, an antibody.

IgA nephropathy A chronic disorder caused by the accumulation of immunoglobulin A deposits within the filtering units of the kidney, resulting in the presence of blood and protein in the urine and swelling in the extremities. The disease progresses with time and may ultimately lead to renal failure. High blood pressure is one complication of the disease. The cause is not fully understood, but genetic (inherited) factors may be related to the development of the condition. Treatment involves medications and focuses on slowing the progression of the disease and preventing complications. Also known as Berger disease.

IgD Immunoglobulin D, an antibody.

IgE Immunoglobulin E, an antibody.

IgG Immunoglobulin G, an antibody.

IgM Immunoglobulin M, an antibody.

IHSS Idiopathic hypertrophic subaortic stenosis.

IL Interleukin.

ileitis, Crohn's See *Crohn's ileitis*.

ileitis, terminal Inflammation of the end of the small intestine (terminal ileum) due to Crohn's disease. See also *Crohn's disease*.

ileocolitis, Crohn's See *Crohn's ileocolitis*.

ileum Part of the small intestine beyond the jejunum and before the large intestine (colon).

ileus Obstruction of the intestine due to its being paralyzed. The paralysis does not need to be complete to cause ileus, but the intestine must be so inactive that food cannot pass through it, which leads to blockage of the intestine. Ileus commonly follows some types of surgery. It can also result from certain drugs, injuries, and illnesses. Regardless of the cause, ileus causes constipation and bloating.

When one listens to the abdomen with a stethoscope, no bowel sounds are heard because the bowel is inactive. Also known as paralytic ileus.

ileus, meconium Obstruction of the intestine due to overly thick meconium, a dark, sticky substance that is normally present in the intestine at birth. Meconium is passed in the feces after birth, after trypsin and other enzymes from the pancreas have acted on it. Meconium ileus occurs when the infant has a deficiency of trypsin and other digestive enzymes from the pancreas, as in cystic fibrosis. Treatment is with enemas and can require surgical procedures.

ileus, paralytic See *ileus*.

iliac Pertaining to the ilium.

iliac horns A horn-like malformation on the crest of each of the iliac bones of the pelvis, a characteristic finding in nail-patella syndrome. See also *nail-patella syndrome*.

ilium The upper part of the pelvic bone, which forms the receptacle of the hip.

illness, acute An illness with an abrupt onset and usually a short course.

illness, altitude See *altitude sickness*.

illness, chronic An illness that has persisted for a long period of time. Chronic illness is a continuing disease process.

IM Intramuscular.

imagery **1** A mental process that involves thoughts representing sensory qualities. **2** A wide variety of procedures used in therapy to encourage changes in attitudes, behavior, or physiological reactions. Imagery includes all the senses, including visual, aural, tactile, olfactory, proprioceptive, and kinesthetic. Imagery has been used as a strategy for facilitating weight gain and alleviating the nausea and vomiting associated with chemotherapy in cancer patients, for relieving stress, for pain control, as adjunctive therapy for several diseases, and to enhance immunity in geriatric patients.

immune Protected against infection, usually by the presence of antibodies.

immune response Any reaction by the immune system. For example, poison ivy can cause an immune response in the skin characterized by inflammation with tiny blisters, and itching. Also, a flu shot is designed to produce an immune response

by stimulating the production of antibodies against the flu virus.

immune system A complex system that is responsible for distinguishing a person from everything foreign to him or her and for protecting his or her body against infections and foreign substances.

immunity The condition of being immune. Immunity can be innate—for example, humans are innately immune to canine distemper—or conferred by a previous infection or immunization.

immunization A vaccination that works by stimulating the immune system of the body to fight disease. A healthy immune system is able to recognize invading bacteria and viruses, and it produces antibodies to destroy or disable them. Immunizations prepare the immune system to ward off a disease. To immunize against viral diseases, the virus used in the vaccine has been weakened or killed. To immunize against bacterial diseases, it is generally possible to use only a small portion of the dead bacteria to stimulate antibodies against the whole bacteria. The effectiveness of immunizations can be improved by periodic repeat injections, called boosters. For information about specific immunizations, see the name of the disease (for examples, DTP immunization, hepatitis B immunization, polio immunization).

immunization, children's See *children's immunizations*.

immunization, flu See *influenza vaccine*.

immunization, German measles See *MMR*.

immunization, H. flu See *Haemophilus influenzae type B immunization*.

immunization, Hib See *Haemophilus influenzae type B immunization*.

immunization, infectious hepatitis See *hepatitis A immunization*.

immunization, measles See *MMR*.

immunization, mumps See *MMR*.

immunization, serum hepatitis See *hepatitis B immunization*.

immunization, varicella See *chickenpox immunization*.

immunocompetent Able to develop an immune response. An immunocompetent body is able to

recognize antigens and act against them. Immunocompetent is the opposite of immunodeficient.

immunocompromised Having an immune system that has been impaired by disease or medical treatment.

immunodeficiency The inability to form a normal immune response. Immunodeficiency can be due to a genetic disease or it can be acquired, as in AIDS.

immunodeficient Lacking immunity, and so being susceptible to infection. Immunodeficient is the opposite of immunocompetent.

immunodepression See *immunosuppression*.

immunogenetics The genetics (pattern of inheritance) of the immune response. For example, immunogenetics includes the study of Rh, ABO, and other blood groups.

immunoglobulin A A major class of immunoglobulins (antibodies) found in serum and external body secretions such as saliva, tears, and sweat, as well as in the gastrointestinal, respiratory, and genitourinary tracts. Abbreviated IgA. About 10 percent to 15 percent of the antibodies present in the body are IgA antibodies.

immunoglobulin D A class of immunoglobulins found in small amounts in the body, whose exact function is not clear.

immunoglobulin E A class of immunoglobulins that includes the antibodies that are important in an allergic response. Abbreviated IgE. A person who has an allergy often has elevated blood levels of IgE. IgE antibodies attack and engage the invading army of allergens.

immunoglobulin G A class of immunoglobulins found in all body fluids. They are the smallest but most common antibodies (75 percent to 80 percent) in the body. Abbreviated IgG. IgG antibodies are very important in fighting bacterial and viral infections. IgG antibodies are the only type of antibody that can cross the placenta in a pregnant woman to help the fetus.

immunoglobulin M A class of immunoglobulins found in blood and lymph fluid that are the first type of antibody made in response to an infection. Abbreviated IgM. IgM antibodies make up about 5 percent to 10 percent of all the antibodies in the body.

immunohistochemistry A laboratory test to identify, under the microscope, particular chemicals or proteins in tissues or cells by attaching them to specific antibodies which, in turn, are linked to fluorescent dye or enzyme markers for visualization. For example, immunohistochemistry is used by pathologists in the diagnosis of cancers and other conditions.

immunologist A physician or another degreed professional who is knowledgeable about immunology.

immunology The study of all aspects of the immune system, including its structure and function, disorders of the immune system, blood banking, immunization, and organ transplantation.

immunosuppression Suppression of the immune system and its ability to fight infection. Immunosuppression may result from certain diseases, such as AIDS or lymphoma, or from certain drugs, such as some of those used to treat cancer. Immunosuppression may also be deliberately induced with drugs, as in preparation for bone marrow or other organ transplantation, to prevent the rejection of a transplant. Also known as immunodepression.

immunosuppressive agent A medication that depresses or halts immune system activity. For example, immunosuppressive agents may be given to prevent the body from forming an immune response to an organ transplant or to treat a disease that is caused by an overactive immune system, such as rheumatoid arthritis.

immunotherapy See *biological therapy*.

immunotherapy, allergy Stimulation of the immune system with gradually increasing doses of the substances to which a person is allergic. The aim of allergy immunotherapy is to modify or stop the allergy by reducing the strength of the IgE response. This form of treatment is very effective for allergies to pollen, mites, animal dander, and especially, stinging insects.

impact To lodge firmly or wedge in. For example, a molar tooth that is growing up and against an adjacent tooth is impacting the tooth next to it.

impaction, dental See *dental impaction*.

imperforate anus See *anus, imperforate*.

impetigo A skin infection caused by the *staphylococcus* or, less often, by the *streptococcus* bacterium. The first sign of impetigo is a patch of red,

itchy skin. Pustules develop on this area, soon forming crusty, yellow-brown sores that can spread to cover entire areas of the face, arms, and other body parts. Most patients are children. Because impetigo is caused by a bacterium that is transmitted onto the skin, it is contagious and easily contracted by persons who might touch the affected person. Treatment involves the use of antibiotics.

implant, cochlear See *cochlear implant*.

implantable cardiac defibrillator See *cardiac defibrillator, implantable*.

implantable pacemaker See *pacemaker, internal*.

impotence See *erectile dysfunction*.

imprinting, psychological A remarkable phenomenon that occurs in animals, and theoretically in humans, in the first hours of life. The newborn creature bonds to the type of animals it meets at birth and begins to pattern its behavior after them. In humans, this is often called bonding, and it usually refers to the relationship between the newborn and its parents.

in. Abbreviation for inch.

in situ In the normal location. An in situ tumor is one that is confined to its site of origin and has not invaded neighboring tissue or gone elsewhere in the body. For example, squamous cell carcinoma in situ is an early stage of skin cancer.

in situ, carcinoma See *carcinoma in situ*.

in situ hybridization The use of a DNA or RNA probe to detect complementary genetic material in cells or tissue. In situ hybridization involves hybridizing a labeled nucleic acid to suitably prepared cells or tissues on microscope slides to allow visualization in situ (in the normal location).

in vitro In glass, as in a test tube. An in vitro test is one that is done in glass or plastic vessels in the laboratory. In vitro is the opposite of in vivo.

in vitro fertilization A laboratory procedure in which sperm are put in a special dish with unfertilized eggs to achieve fertilization. The embryos that result can be transferred into the uterus or frozen (cryopreserved) for future use. Abbreviated IVF.

in vivo In the living organism. For example, an experiment that is done in vivo is done in the body of a living organism as opposed to in a laboratory method that does not use the living organism as the host of the test. In vivo is the opposite of in vitro.

inactivated polio vaccine See *polio immunization; polio vaccine, inactivated*.

inappropriate ADH secretion See *ADH secretion, inappropriate*.

inborn error of metabolism A heritable disorder of the biochemistry of the body. Examples of inborn error of metabolism include albinism and phenylketonuria (PKU). There are hundreds of known inborn errors of metabolism. See also *albinism; cystinuria; phenylketonuria*.

inbreeding See *consanguinity*.

incest Sexual activity between individuals so closely related that marriage is legally prohibited. Incest involving a child is a form of child abuse.

inch A length equivalent to one-twelfth of a foot, one-thirtieth of a yard, or 2.54 cm. Abbreviated in.

incidence The frequency with which something, such as a disease or trait, appears in a particular population or area.

incision A cut that is purposely made. When making an incision, a surgeon is making a cut.

incisional biopsy See *biopsy, incisional*.

incompetent cervix See *cervix, incompetent*.

incontinence The inability to control excretions, to hold urine in the bladder, or to keep feces in the rectum.

incontinence, fecal See *encopresis*.

incontinence, urinary See *enuresis*.

incontinent Unable to control excretions, to hold urine in the bladder, or to keep feces in the rectum.

incontinentia pigmenti One of the genetic diseases known as neurocutaneous disorders, which cause characteristic patterns of discolored skin and also involve the brain, eyes, nails, and hair. The disease is caused by the genomic rearrangement of the gene for NEMO, or nuclear factor kappa B essential modulator (IKBKG-IKK gamma). Symptoms include discolored skin that appears within two weeks of birth. Neurological abnormalities can include slow motor development, seizures, mental retardation, visual problems, and muscle weakness. Other key features of IP include dental and nail abnormalities. IP is inherited as an X-linked dominant trait, and most affected male fetuses do not survive. In females

with IP and certain other X-linked conditions, the X chromosome with the mutant allele is preferentially inactivated; this phenomenon is termed nonrandom (or skewed) X-chromosome inactivation. Also known as Bloch-Sulzberger syndrome.

index case A person who first draws attention to his or her family because of having a medical condition. For example, if an eye doctor discovers a person has glaucoma, and subsequently other cases of glaucoma are found in the person's family, that person is the index case. Also known as propositus (if male) or proposita (if female).

indifferent gonad See *gonad, indifferent*.

indigestion See *dyspepsia*.

induced menopause See *menopause, induced*.

induction therapy The first in a series of therapeutic measures taken to treat a disease, typically a cancer. The induction therapy, for example, in acute leukemia is the initial chemotherapy designed to bring about a remission.

infant A young baby, from birth to 12 months of age.

infant mortality rate The number of children dying at less than 1 year of age, divided by the number of live births that year.

infantile genetic agranulocytosis See *agranulocytosis, infantile genetic*.

infantile hip dislocation See *congenital hip dislocation*.

infantile hypothyroidism See *hypothyroidism, infantile*.

infantile myxedema See *hypothyroidism, infantile*.

infantile paralysis See *polio*.

infarct An area of tissue death that is due to a local lack of oxygen.

infarction The formation of an infarct, an area of tissue death, due to a local lack of oxygen.

infarction, acute myocardial See *heart attack*.

infection The invasion and multiplication of microorganisms such as bacteria, viruses, and parasites that are not normally present within the body. An infection may cause no symptoms and be subclinical, or it may cause symptoms and be clinically

apparent. An infection may remain localized, or it may spread through the blood or lymphatic vessels to become systemic (bodywide). Microorganisms that live naturally in the body are not considered infections. For example, bacteria that normally live within the mouth and intestine are not infections.

infection, ear See also *ear infection*.

infection, group B strep See *streptococcus, group B*.

infection, middle ear See *acute otitis media*.

infection, opportunistic An infection that grasps the opportunity to cause disease, which is presented when a person's immune system is weak. These opportunistic microorganisms may be dormant in the body and may cause few problems for healthy individuals. Opportunistic infections are a particular problem for organ transplant patients and those with diseases that affect the immune system, particularly AIDS. Toxoplasmosis and cytomegalovirus are examples of opportunistic infections.

infection, pinworm See *pinworm infestation*.

infection, primary HIV See *HIV infection, primary*.

infection, rotavirus See *rotavirus*.

infection, urinary tract See *urinary tract infection*.

infection, Vincent See *acute membranous gingivitis*.

infectious hepatitis See *hepatitis A*.

infectious hepatitis immunization See *hepatitis A immunization*.

infectious mononucleosis See *mononucleosis*.

inferior In medicine, below, downward, or toward the feet, as opposed to superior. For example, the liver is inferior to the lungs. See also Appendix B, "Anatomic Orientation Terms."

infertile Unable to conceive despite regular intercourse without contraception. Infertility can be due to many causes related to problems with the male, female, or both. Many types of infertility are treatable. Using medications or assisted reproductive technologies. See also *conception; infertility*.

infertility Diminished or absent ability to conceive and bear offspring. A couple is considered to

be experiencing infertility if conception has not occurred after 12 months of sexual activity without the use of contraception. Infertility can have many causes and may be related to factors in the male, female, or both. Treatments can include medications and assisted reproductive technologies.

infiltrate To penetrate. For example, a cancer may grow into, or infiltrate, surrounding tissues.

infiltrating ductal carcinoma of the breast See *breast, infiltrating ductal carcinoma of the*.

infiltrating lobular carcinoma of the breast See *breast, infiltrating lobular carcinoma of the*.

inflammation A localized reaction that produces redness, warmth, swelling, and pain as a result of infection, irritation, or injury. Inflammation can be external or internal.

inflammatory bowel disease See *bowel disease, inflammatory*.

influenza An illness caused by viruses that infect the respiratory tract. These viruses are divided into three types, designated A, B, and C. Symptoms of influenza include fever, appetite loss, an achy feeling throughout the body, and weakness. Most people who get influenza recover completely in 1 to 2 weeks, but some people develop serious and potentially life-threatening medical complications, such as pneumonia. Much of the illness and death caused by influenza can be prevented by annual influenza vaccinations. Commonly known as flu. See also *influenza vaccine*.

influenza vaccine An immunization against certain types of the influenza virus. The "flu shot" is an inactivated vaccine (containing killed virus) given with a needle. The nasal-spray flu vaccine is a vaccine made with live, weakened flu viruses (sometimes called LAIV for "Live Attenuated Influenza Vaccine"). The viruses in the vaccine change each year based on international surveillance and scientists' estimations about which types and strains of viruses will circulate in a given year. Antibodies to the flu virus develop about 2 weeks after vaccination. See also *influenza*.

informatics The application of computers and statistics to the management of information.

informed consent The process by which a patient learns about and understands the purpose, benefits, and potential risks of a medical or surgical intervention, including clinical trials, and then agrees to receive the treatment or participate in the

trial. Informed consent generally requires the patient or responsible party to sign a statement confirming that they understand the risks and benefits of the procedure or treatment.

infraspinatus muscle A muscle that assists the lifting of the arm while turning the arm outward (external rotation). The tendon of the infraspinatus muscle is one of four tendons that stabilize the shoulder joint and constitute the rotator cuff.

inguinal Having to do with the groin.

inguinal canal A passage in the lower anterior abdominal wall that in the male allows passage of the spermatic cord and in the female contains the round ligament. Because of the weakness the inguinal canal creates in the abdominal wall, it is the most frequent site for a hernia.

inguinal orchectomy Surgery to remove a testicle, with the incision made through the groin.

inheritance The transmission of a gene from parent to child. The pattern of inheritance is the manner in which a gene is transmitted. For example, the pattern of inheritance may be as an autosomal dominant trait that is transmitted from father or mother to son or daughter.

inheritance, holandric See *inheritance, Y-linked*.

inheritance, mitochondrial The inheritance of a trait encoded in the mitochondrial genome. Mitochondrial inheritance does not obey the classic rules of genetics. Mitochondrial DNA is always inherited from the mother only, meaning that persons with a mitochondrial disease may be male or female but are always related in the maternal line, and no male with the disease can transmit it to his children. The mitochondria are structures in the cell's cytoplasm, located outside the nucleus, and are responsible for energy production (metabolism). See also *mitochondria; mitochondrial diseases*.

inheritance, multifactorial A type of hereditary pattern seen when there is more than one genetic factor and, sometimes, environmental influence. Many common traits and many common diseases are multifactorial. Skin color, for example, is multifactorially determined, as is intelligence. Type 2 diabetes is multifactorial because it is due to inherited (genetic) factors but may also require environmental factors, such as obesity, to develop.

inheritance, Y-linked Inheritance of genes on the Y chromosome. Because normally only males

have Y chromosomes, Y-linked genes can be transmitted only from father to son. Also known as holandric inheritance.

inhibin One of two hormones (designated inhibin-A and inhibin-B) secreted by the gonads (by Sertoli cells in the male and the granulosa cells in the female) and that inhibit the production of follicle-stimulating hormone (FSH) by the pituitary gland. The inhibins are also involved in the control of the production of gametes and embryonic and fetal development. Because inhibin-A is elevated in the blood serum of women carrying a fetus with Down syndrome, inhibin-A is included in the maternal serum screening tests for Down syndrome in the second trimester of pregnancy.

inhibitor, protease See *protease inhibitor*.

injury, cold See *cold injury*.

inner ear See *ear, inner*.

INR International normalized ratio.

insect sting A sting from a stinging insect, such as a bee, hornet, yellow jacket, or wasp, that can trigger allergic reactions. These reactions vary greatly in severity. Avoidance and prompt treatment are essential. In selected cases, allergy injection therapy is highly effective.

insemination The deposition of semen in the female reproductive tract. With sexual intercourse, the deposit is made within the vagina or the cervix. By artificial means, such as intrauterine insemination, the deposit can be made directly into the uterus.

insemination, artificial See *artificial insemination*.

insemination, heterologous See *artificial insemination by donor*.

insemination, homologous See *artificial insemination by partner*.

insemination, intrauterine See *artificial insemination*.

insertion A chromosome abnormality that is due to insertion of a segment from one chromosome into another chromosome.

insomnia The perception or complaint of inadequate or poor-quality sleep due to a number of factors, such as difficulty falling asleep, waking up frequently during the night with difficulty returning to

sleep, waking up too early in the morning, or unrefreshing sleep. Insomnia is not defined by the number of hours of sleep a person gets or how long it takes to fall asleep; it is a measure of satisfaction with sleep. Individuals vary normally in their need for and their satisfaction with sleep. Insomnia may cause problems during the day, such as tiredness, a lack of energy, difficulty concentrating, and irritability.

Institute of Medicine A nonprofit organization established in 1970 as a component of the US National Academy of Sciences that works outside the framework of government to provide evidence-based research and recommendations for public health and science policy. Abbreviated IOM. The IOM is also an honorific membership organization.

insufficiency, pancreatic See *pancreatic insufficiency*.

insulin A hormone that is made by the beta cells in the islets of Langerhans of the pancreas and that controls the amount of sugar (glucose) in the blood. Insulin helps the body use glucose for energy. Cells cannot utilize glucose without insulin. If the beta cells that make insulin degenerate, preventing the body from making enough insulin on its own, type 1 (insulin-dependent) diabetes mellitus results. A person with this type of diabetes must inject insulin from other sources, such as synthetic insulin. See also *diabetes mellitus; diabetic shock*.

insulin pump A mechanical device used in the treatment of diabetes mellitus that delivers insulin 24 hours per day via a catheter placed under the skin. Insulin pumps deliver basal insulin doses, and user controls allow for the administration of bolus doses of insulin for carbohydrate-containing meals as well as corrective or supplemental doses when needed. See also *insulin*.

insulin reaction See *diabetic shock*.

insulin shock See *diabetic shock*.

insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus See *diabetes, type 1*.

intelligence, nonverbal The innate or learned ability to understand and carry out motor tasks, such as solving physical puzzles. Also known as performance IQ.

intelligence, verbal The innate or learned ability to understand and answer questions given in writing or verbally.

intelligence quotient See *IQ*.

intelligence test A questionnaire or series of exercises designed to measure intelligence. There are many types of intelligence tests, and they may measure learning and/or ability in a wide variety of areas and skills. Scores may be presented as an IQ (intelligence quotient), as a mental age, or on a scale.

intensive care See *critical care*.

intensive care unit psychosis See *ICU psychosis*.

intention tremor An abnormal, repetitive shaking movement of the body that appears during voluntary movement of a part of the body toward a target. An intention tremor suggests a problem with the cerebellum of the brain, the region important for coordination and balance. See also *tremor*.

inter- Prefix indicating between.

interatrial septum The partition that separates the upper chambers (atria) of the heart.

intercostal muscle The muscle tissue between any two ribs.

interferon A naturally occurring substance that interferes with the ability of viruses to reproduce. Interferon also boosts the immune system. There are a number of different interferons, and they fall into three main classes: alpha, beta, and gamma. All interferons are proteins (lymphotoxins) normally produced by the body in response to infection. Interferons can be synthesized using recombinant DNA technology. See also *interferon therapy*.

interferon therapy The administration of interferon to help the body fight disease such as viral infection or cancer. In therapeutic doses, interferon can be hard to tolerate. Side effects include flu-like symptoms (fatigue, headache, and aches) and, less regularly, low thyroid activity, arthritis, low platelet count, and severe depression. Some of these side effects, particularly depression, can be successfully treated with additional medications. See also *interferon*.

interleukin One of several similar protein substances that serve as signaling molecules within the body. Interleukins can be produced by a variety of different cells within the body and can be thought of as chemical messengers that help regulate the actions of the immune system. Abbreviated IL. They may be used in biological therapy to stimulate the growth and activities of certain kinds of white blood cells that are involved in immune response. Numerous different ILs have been identified.

intermittent claudication See *claudication, intermittent*.

intern In medicine, a physician who has completed medical school and is engaged in the first year of postgraduate medical training (residency).

internal cardiac defibrillator See *cardiac defibrillator, implantable*.

internal ear See *ear, inner*.

internal genitalia, female See *genitalia*.

internal jugular vein The deeper of the two jugular veins in the neck that drain blood from the head, brain, face, and neck, and then convey it toward the heart. The internal jugular vein runs down the inside of the neck, outside the internal and common carotid arteries, and unites with the subclavian vein to form the innominate vein. See also *jugular vein, internal*.

internal medicine The medical specialty dedicated to the diagnosis and medical treatment of adults. A physician who specializes in internal medicine is referred to as an internist. Subspecialties of internal medicine include allergy and immunology, cardiology (heart diseases), endocrinology (hormone disorders), hematology (blood disorders), infectious diseases, gastroenterology (diseases of the gut), nephrology (kidney diseases), oncology (cancer), pulmonology (lung disorders), and rheumatology (arthritis and musculoskeletal disorders).

internal pacemaker See *pacemaker, internal*.

internal radiation therapy See *radiation therapy, internal*.

international normalized ratio A system established by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Committee on Thrombosis and Hemostasis for reporting the results of blood coagulation (clotting) tests. Abbreviated INR. Under the INR system, all results are standardized. For example, a person taking the anticoagulant warfarin (brand name: Coumadin) would regularly have blood tested to measure the INR. The INR permits patients on anticoagulants to travel and obtain comparable test results wherever they are.

internist A physician who practices internal medicine and specializes in the diagnosis and medical treatment of adults. See also *internal medicine*.

interobserver variation The amount of variation between the results obtained by two or more observers examining the same material.

interphase The interval in the cell cycle between two cell divisions, during which the individual chromosomes cannot be distinguished. Interphase was once thought to be a resting phase, but it is actually the time when DNA is replicated in the cell nucleus.

intersex A group of conditions sometimes referred to as disorders of sexual development (DSDs) in which there is a discrepancy between the appearance of the external genitalia and the type of internal (testes and ovaries) genitalia. The condition was formerly termed hermaphroditism or pseudohermaphroditism. One example of intersex is androgen insensitivity syndrome, in which the body's receptors to male hormones do not function properly. In this case, individuals have a male genetic makeup (XY) and testicular tissue but have incompletely formed or female external genitalia. In some cases, known as true gonadal intersex, a person has both ovarian and testicular tissue.

interstitial Pertaining to being between things, especially between things that are normally closely spaced. The word interstitial is much used in medicine and has specific meaning, depending on the context. For instance, interstitial cystitis is a specific type of inflammation of the bladder wall. Interstitial radiation involves placing radioactive material directly into a tumor. Interstitial pneumonia is inflammation of the lung that involves the mesh of lung tissue (alveolar septa) rather than the air spaces (alveoli).

interstitial cystitis See *cystitis, interstitial*.

interstitial radiation See *radiation therapy, interstitial*.

interstitial-cell-stimulating hormone (ICSH) See *luteinizing hormone*.

intervening sequence See *intron*.

interventional radiology See *radiology, interventional*.

interventricular foramen An opening between the lateral and third ventricles in the system of four communicating cavities within the brain that are continuous with the central canal of the spinal cord.

interventricular septum The stout wall that separates the lower chambers (the ventricles) of the heart from one another. A hole in the interventricular septum is termed a ventricular septal defect (VSD).

intervertebral disc A disk-shaped piece of specialized tissue that separates the bones of the spinal column. Intervertebral discs form the intervertebral joints and provide protection and shock absorbing functions for the spine. The center of a disc, called the nucleus, is soft, springy, and receives the shock of standing, walking, running, etc. The outer ring of the disc, called the *annulus* (Latin for ring), provides structure and strength to the disc. The intervertebral discs are susceptible to degenerative changes associated with wear and tear or aging, and a disc can herniate or rupture. A herniated disc is often referred to as a slipped disc. This term comes from the action of the nuclear tissue when it is forced from the center of the disc. The nuclear tissue located in the center of the disc can be placed under so much pressure that it can cause the annulus to rupture. When the disc has herniated or ruptured, it may create pressure against one or more of the spinal nerves, which can cause pain, weakness, or numbness. Also known as intervertebral disk.

intestinal gas See *flatulence*.

intestinal malrotation See *malrotation of the intestine*.

intestinal obstruction Blockage of the intestine by infolding (intussusception), malformation, tumor, digestive problems, a foreign body, or inflammation. Symptoms of intestinal obstruction can include crampy abdominal pain, lack of ability to normally eliminate feces, and eventually shock. On examining the abdomen, the physician may feel a mass. Abdominal X-rays may suggest intestinal obstruction, but a barium enema may be needed to show the actual cause. Treatment depends on the cause of the obstruction. See also *intussusception*.

intestinal pseudo-obstruction A condition in which the patient has symptoms of intestinal obstruction with no sign of actual physical obstruction. This condition may be due to problems with the nerves that control intestinal muscles or to other causes. Treatment depends on the cause.

intestine The long, tubelike organ in the abdomen that completes the process of digestion. It consists of the small and large intestines and extends from the stomach to the anus. See also *intestine, large; intestine, small*.

intestine, large The tubelike organ that completes the process of digestion, receiving material from the small intestine. It has four parts: the caecum, the appendix (vermiform appendix), the colon, and the rectum. After the products of digestion enter the caecum through the ileocecal valve,

they move rapidly past the appendix, which juts out from the intestine near the caecum. The colon absorbs any remaining water and forms the stool, which is sent to the rectum for elimination. The walls of the large intestine are muscular and contract to move material along its length. See also *intestine; intestine, small*.

intestine, small The tubelike organ that receives the products of digestion from the stomach. It has three parts: the duodenum, the jejunum, and the ileum. The duodenum is rich in glands that produce digestive enzymes, and it also receives bile from the liver. Digested material moves from the duodenum to the ileum through the jejunum. The ileum ends with the ileocecal valve, which prevents food passed into the large intestine from traveling back into the small intestine. The walls of the small intestine are muscular and contract to move digested food along its length. The intestinal tube is lined with a mucus-like tissue that contains tiny, finger-like projections called villi. The villi increase the surface available for absorbing nutrients from digested food. See also *intestine; intestine, large*.

intolerance, food Difficulty in digesting a food. Common offenders include milk products, wheat and other grains that contain gluten, and foods that tend to cause intestinal gas, such as cabbage and beans. Food intolerance is often mistaken for food allergy, but it does not involve a histamine response against the food. Treatments include avoiding the offending food and taking supplemental products that allow that food to be adequately digested.

intolerance, lactose See *lactose intolerance*.

intra- Prefix indicating within.

intra-arterial pressure See *arterial tension*.

intracranial hemorrhage Bleeding inside the head. Intracranial hemorrhage can be caused by many conditions including head injury, ruptured aneurysm, and stroke.

intractable Unstoppable. For example, intractable diarrhea is diarrhea that can't be stopped, even with medication, and intractable pain is pain that can't be stopped, even with medication.

intracytoplasmic sperm injection An assisted reproduction procedure in which a single sperm is injected directly into a single egg cell in the laboratory to achieve fertilization. Abbreviated ICSI.

intradermal In the skin. For example, an intradermal injection is given into the skin. Abbreviated ID.

intradermal test A type of skin test in which an agent (often a protein) is injected into the skin to test the reaction to the agent. Intradermal tests are often used to diagnose allergies and to test cellular immunity.

intraductal carcinoma A condition characterized by the proliferation of malignant cells in the lining of a breast duct without evidence of spreading outside the duct to other tissues in the breast or outside the breast. Also known as ductal carcinoma in situ, abbreviated DCIS. DCIS is clearly a precursor (forerunner) of invasive breast cancer. DCIS originates in a single glandular structure but may spread within the breast through the ductal system. The goal in treating DCIS is to prevent local recurrence and, in particular, invasive breast cancer.

intraductal papilloma A benign, wart-like growth that occurs in breast ducts.

intraepithelial Within the layer of cells that forms the surface or lining of an organ. For example, a blister forms fluid in the intraepithelial layer of the skin.

intrahepatic Within the liver. For example, a liver tumor is an intrahepatic growth.

intramuscular Into the muscle. For example, an intramuscular medication is given by needle into the muscle. Abbreviated IM.

intraobserver variation The amount of variation one observer experiences when observing the same material more than once.

intraocular In the eye. For example, intraocular pressure is the pressure within the eye.

intraocular lens An artificial lens made of plastic, silicone, acrylic or other material that is implanted in the eye during cataract surgery. Abbreviated IOL.

intraocular pressure The pressure created by the continual renewal of fluids within the eye. Intraocular pressure is increased in glaucoma. In acute angle-closure glaucoma, intraocular pressure rises because the canal into which the fluid in the front part of the eye normally drains is suddenly blocked. In chronic glaucoma, there is a gradual imbalance between the production and removal (resorption) of the fluid in the back part of the eye, causing the supply of fluid to exceed demand. See also *glaucoma*.

intraoperative During surgery.

intraoperative blood salvage The recovery of blood lost into a body cavity during surgery or because of trauma. The blood is recovered in a sterile fashion and stored in a collection bag. This blood can then be reintroduced into the patient's circulation by an intravenous infusion, reducing the need for donor blood transfusion.

intraoperative radiation therapy Radiation treatment given during surgery. Abbreviated IORT. See also *radiation therapy*.

intraperitoneal Within the peritoneal cavity, the area that contains the abdominal organs.

intraperitoneal chemotherapy Treatment in which anticancer drugs are put directly into the abdomen through a thin tube. See also *chemotherapy*.

intrastromal corneal ring A plastic ring that is designed to be implanted in the cornea, the transparent structure at the front of the eye, to flatten the cornea and thereby reduce the degree of nearsightedness (myopia). The ring is placed in the corneal stroma, the middle of the five layers of the cornea.

intrathecal chemotherapy Treatment with drugs that are injected into the cerebrospinal fluid, which surrounds the brain and spinal cord, to kill cancer cells. For example, intrathecal chemotherapy is used to treat cancer that has spread to the spinal cord. See also *chemotherapy*.

intruterine In the uterus.

intruterine device A prescription contraceptive device that is inserted into the uterus by a physician to prevent conception or pregnancy. Abbreviated IUD. Some IUDs contain and release hormones. IUDs remain in place until they are removed by a physician and have one of the lowest failure rates of any contraceptive method.

intruterine growth retardation Abnormally slow growth of a fetus. When the baby is born, it appears small for its actual age. Intruterine growth retardation is associated with an increased risk of illness and death in the newborn period.

intravenous 1 Into a vein. For example, intravenous antibiotics are antibiotics in a solution that is administered directly into the venous circulation via a syringe or an intravenous catheter (tube). Abbreviated IV. 2 A solution that is administered intravenously. 3 The device that is used to administer an IV solution.

intravenous gamma globulin See *intravenous immunoglobulin*.

intravenous immunoglobulin A sterile solution of concentrated antibodies extracted from healthy people that is administered directly into a vein. Abbreviated IVIG. IVIG is used to treat disorders of the immune system or to boost the immune response to serious illness. Also known as intravenous gamma globulin (IGG).

intravenous pyelogram An X-ray of the kidneys and urinary tract. Abbreviated IVP. Structures are made visible on an IVP by the injection of a contrast material.

intravenous tension The pressure of the blood within a vein. Also known as venous pressure.

intraventricular In the ventricle of the heart or the brain.

introitus An entrance that goes into a canal or hollow organ.

introitus, facial canal The entrance to the facial canal, a passage in the temporal bone of the skull through which the facial nerve travels.

introitus, vaginal The vaginal opening.

intron Part of a gene that is initially transcribed into the primary RNA transcript but is later removed from it when the exon sequences on either side of it are spliced together. Also known as intervening sequence.

intubate To put a tube in, commonly used to refer to the insertion of a breathing tube into the trachea for mechanical ventilation. For example, as a life-saving measure, an emergency room physician might intubate a patient who is not breathing adequately so that the lungs can be ventilated.

intussusception Infolding (prolapse) of a portion of the intestine within another immediately adjacent portion of intestine, which predominantly affects children. Intussusception decreases the supply of blood to the affected part of the intestine and frequently leads to intestinal obstruction. The pressure created by the two walls of the intestine pressing together causes inflammation and swelling, and it reduces the blood flow. Death of bowel tissue can occur, with significant bleeding, perforation, abdominal infection, and shock occurring very rapidly. Most cases of intussusception occur in children between 5 months and 1 year of age. Symptoms begin with sudden, loud crying in an infant, with the baby drawing the knees up to the chest due to

abdominal cramping. The pain and crying are intermittent but recur frequently and increase in intensity and duration. Fever is common. As the condition progresses, the infant becomes weak and then shows signs of shock, including pale color, lethargy, and sweating. About half of afflicted infants pass a bloody, mucousy ("currant jelly") stool. The cause of intussusception is not known, although viral infections of the intestine may contribute to intussusception in infancy. In older children or adults, the presence of polyps or a tumor may trigger intussusception. Early diagnosis is very important. On examining the abdomen, a physician may feel a mass. Abdominal X-rays may suggest intestinal obstruction, but a barium enema is needed to show the characteristic telescoping of the bowel. In some cases, the intestinal obstruction can be relieved with a barium or air enema. If the obstruction cannot be reduced by a barium enema, surgery is required for treatment.

invasive cancer Cancer that has spread from the site of origin to deeper tissues or to other parts of the body.

inversion, chromosome See *chromosome inversion*.

invest In medicine, to envelop, cover, or embed. For example, a dentist might invest a patient's teeth with a wax material in order to form a mold of it.

involution A retrograde change. After treatment, a tumor may involute; with advancing age, there may be physical and emotional involution.

iodide The form to which iodine in the diet is reduced before being absorbed through the intestinal wall into the bloodstream and carried to the thyroid gland. See also *iodine*.

iodide goiter See *iodine excess*.

iodine An element in the diet that is essential for the manufacture of hormones by the thyroid gland. The thyroid gland uses iodine to make thyroxine (T4), which has four iodine molecules attached to its structure, and triiodothyronine (T3), which has three iodine molecules attached. Iodine is found in seafood, bread, iodized salt, and seaweed.

iodine deficiency A lack of sufficient iodine in the diet, which can lead to inadequate production of thyroid hormone (hypothyroidism) and enlargement of the thyroid gland (goiter). Since the addition of iodine to table salt became common, iodine deficiency has rarely been seen in the US.

iodine excess Prolonged intake of too much iodine that leads to swelling of the thyroid gland (goiter) and abnormally low thyroid activity (hypothyroidism). Certain foods and medications contain large amounts of iodine, including seaweed; iodine-rich expectorants such as SSKI and Lugol's solution that are used to treat cough, asthma, and chronic pulmonary disease; and amiodarone (brand name: Cardorone), an iodine-rich medication used to control abnormal heart rhythms.

IOL Intraocular lens.

IOM Institute of Medicine.

iontophoresis A transdermal delivery system in which a substance bearing a charge is propelled through the skin by a low electrical current. This method can be used to drive a drug across the skin barrier.

IORT Intraoperative radiation therapy.

IP Incontinentia pigmenti.

ipecac, syrup of A solution that contains a naturally occurring substance that can cause vomiting (emesis). Ipecac is derived from dried roots of a Brazilian bush, Uragoga ipecacuanha. Syrup of ipecac is used to treat a few types of poisoning. It is important to consult with the local poison control center before administering syrup of ipecac because many poisons cause additional harm if vomited.

ipsilateral On the same side, as opposed to contralateral. For example, a tumor involving the right side of the brain may affect vision ipsilaterally—that is, in the right eye.

IPV Inactivated polio vaccine. See *polio immunization*.

IQ Intelligence quotient, an attempt to measure the intelligence of an individual. There are many different forms of IQ tests. For original calculations of IQ, the person's mental age as determined by a test was divided by chronological age. See also *intelligence test; intelligence, nonverbal; intelligence, verbal*.

iridectomy The process of making a hole in the iris. Iridectomy is a treatment for glaucoma.

iridology The practice of diagnosing disease by examining the iris of the eye. Although some diseases affect the eye, iridology is not considered scientific medicine.

iris The circular, colored curtain of the eye. The opening of the iris forms the pupil. The iris helps regulate the amount of light that enters the eye.

iris, speckled See *Brushfield spot*.

iritis Inflammation of the iris. Iritis can be associated with an autoimmune disease such as rheumatoid arthritis or lupus. It can also occur as a result of infection, other inflammatory conditions, or injury.

iron A mineral that is necessary for the transport of oxygen via hemoglobin in red blood cells and for the oxidation process in cells by cytochromes. Food sources of iron include meat, poultry, eggs, vegetables, and cereals, especially those fortified with iron. See also *deficiency, iron; excess iron; iron poisoning*.

iron deficiency See *deficiency, iron*.

iron excess See *excess iron*.

iron poisoning An abnormally excessive ingestion of iron resulting in injury to body tissues. Iron supplements meant for adults, such as pregnant women, are a major cause of poisoning in children. Children should never be given supplements or multivitamins containing iron unless they have been prescribed by a physician, and iron preparations for adults should be kept away from children. See also *hemochromatosis*.

irrigate To wash out. For example, one can irrigate a wound to clean it.

irrigation of the colon The use of liquid solutions given by enema to remove material from the rectum or colon, ostensibly to eliminate toxins from the bowel. Unless ordered by a physician, irrigation of the colon is rarely advisable. Irrigation of the colon carries a number of risks, including interference with the normal digestive process and perforation. Also known as colonic irrigation and high colonic.

irritable bowel syndrome A functional intestinal disorder of the bowels and their nerves. Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) may be caused by either abnormal motility (abnormal contractions) of the intestinal muscles or abnormally sensitive nerves in the intestines (visceral hyper-sensitivity). IBS is characterized by abdominal pain, bloating, mucus in stools, and irregular bowel habits, with alternating diarrhea and constipation. These symptoms tend to be chronic, and they wax and wane over the years. Although IBS can cause chronic and recurrent discomfort, it does not normally lead to

any serious organ problems. Diagnosis usually involves excluding other illnesses. Treatment is directed toward relief of symptoms. Also known as spastic colitis, mucus colitis, and nervous colon syndrome.

ischemia Inadequate blood supply to a local area due to blockage of blood vessels leading to that area. Treatment is directed toward increasing the circulation to the affected body area.

ischial bursitis See *weaver's bottom*.

ischiopubic bar See *ischium*.

ischiopubic synchondrosis The central point of the ischium, which does not close until after the toddler years. See also *ischium*.

ischium The bone that makes up the lower-rear part of the pelvis. Also known as ischiopubic bar and ischiopubic bone.

islet cell transplantation A treatment for diabetes in which insulin-producing islet cells are taken from a donor's pancreas and transferred into a person with diabetes. Once transplanted, the donor islets begin to make and release insulin, actively regulating the level of glucose in the blood. As with other transplant procedures, immune suppressant drugs must be taken continuously to help prevent rejection of the donor cells by the host.

islet cell tumor A tumor that arises from the islet cells of the pancreas. The islet cells normally produce insulin and other hormones, and so the tumors frequently, but not always, produce one of these hormones. Islet cell tumors can be benign or malignant and generally cause symptoms related to the hormone produced by the tumor. Specific types of islet cell tumors include insulinomas, glucagonomas, and gastrinomas. People with a family history of multiple endocrine neoplasia type I (MEN I) are at an increased risk for the development of islet cell tumors. Treatments depend upon the type of tumor and may include surgery, chemotherapy, and medications to treat the symptoms of hormone excess.

islet of Langerhans A group of specialized cells in the pancreas that make and secrete hormones, including insulin. These cells sit in groups (islets), with several different types of cells in an islet, including alpha cells that make glucagon, which raises the level of glucose (sugar) in the blood; beta cells that make insulin; and delta cells that make somatostatin, which inhibits the release of numerous other hormones in the body. Degeneration of the insulin-producing beta cells is the main cause of type 1 (insulin-dependent) diabetes mellitus.

isochromosome An abnormal chromosome that has two identical arms due to duplication of one arm and loss of the other. Isochromosomes are found in tumors and in some girls with Turner syndrome.

isodisomy A remarkable situation in which both chromosomes in a pair are from one parent only. Isodisomy causes some birth defects and is suspected to play a role in cancer. Also known as uniparental disomy.

isolate 1 In genetics, a group (for example, the Amish) in which mating is always between members of the group. 2 A single microbe or cell that has been separated from the whole, or a pure culture produced from an isolate. 3 A particular strain of virus, bacteria, or organism taken from a patient.

isotonic solution A solution that has the same salt concentration as cells and blood. Isotonic solutions are commonly used as intravenously infused fluids in hospitalized patients.

isotope A form of a chemical element that has a different-from-normal atomic mass. Isotopes are used in a number of medical tests because they can produce images of tissues that can be used to detect diseases or conditions.

itching An uncomfortable sensation in the skin that feels as if something is crawling on the skin and makes the person want to scratch the affected area. Itching is medically known as pruritis; something that is itchy is pruritic.

itching, anal See *anal itching*.

-itis Suffix meaning inflammation. For example, colitis is inflammation of the colon.

ITP Idiopathic thrombocytopenic purpura. A condition characterized by the sudden, abnormal lowering of the platelet count. The cause is unknown, but the immune system seems to play a major role in the process by eliminating the platelets. ITP can lead to dangerously low platelet counts that can be associated with spontaneous bleeding. Purpura are purplish bruises under the skin that are often seen in this condition. ITP requires treatments directed at suppressing the immune system.

IUD Intrauterine device.

IUGR Intrauterine growth retardation.

IV Intravenous.

IVF In vitro fertilization.

Jj

Jacksonian seizure See *seizure, partial*.

Jadassohn-Lewandowski syndrome See *pachyonychia congenita*.

jail fever See *typhus, epidemic*.

Jakob-Creutzfeldt disease See *Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease*.

JAMA The *Journal of the American Medical Association*, one of the two leading general medical journals published in the US. JAMA is published by the American Medical Association (AMA). It carries original, generally well-documented, peer-reviewed medical articles on many clinical and research topics in medicine.

jamais vu The illusion that the familiar does not seem familiar. See also *déjà vu; seizure disorders*.

jaundice A yellowish staining of the skin and whites of the eyes (sclerae) with bilirubin, the pigment found in bile. Jaundice can be an indicator of liver or gallbladder disease, or it may result from the rupture of red blood cells (hemolysis). In newborn babies it is usually, but not always, a normal condition. Also known as icterus. See also *jaundice, hemolytic; jaundice, hepatocellular; jaundice, neonatal; jaundice, obstructive; kernicterus; spherocytosis, hereditary*.

jaundice, congenital hemolytic See *spherocytosis, hereditary*.

jaundice, hemolytic Jaundice caused by destruction of red blood cells. Hemolytic jaundice can be an inborn condition (as in hereditary spherocytosis) or it can be caused by a blood transfusion from a different blood group, infection in the blood-stream (sepsis), or some type of poisoning. Also known as pre-hepatic jaundice. See also *spherocytosis, hereditary*.

jaundice, hepatocellular Jaundice caused by liver disease, as by hepatitis. See also *hepatitis*.

jaundice, neonatal Jaundice in newborn babies. Neonatal jaundice is usually due to the breakdown of red blood cells, which release bilirubin that the immature liver cannot metabolize and prepare for excretion into the urine. This type of neonatal jaundice typically appears between the second and fifth days of life and clears with time, as the liver matures. Diagnosis is made through observation and measurement of the blood bilirubin level. Treatment usually involves timed exposure of the skin to special lights. Severe jaundice is treated by removing serum from the body and replacing with solutions without bilirubin (exchange transfusion). Also known as newborn jaundice. See also *jaundice; kernicterus; spherocytosis, hereditary*.

jaundice, obstructive Jaundice caused by obstruction of the drainage through the bile ducts, as may occur with gallstones. Symptoms of obstructive jaundice include the typical yellowing of jaundice as well as dark urine, pale feces, and itching. Also known as post-hepatic jaundice. Sometimes the cause of obstructive jaundice is cancer, a condition referred to as malignant obstructive jaundice.

jaundice, physiologic See *physiologic jaundice*.

jaw The movable junction of the bones below the mouth (the mandible) and the bone just above the mouth (the maxilla).

JC virus A virus that commonly causes infections of no consequence in children with a normal immune system, but which is responsible for an infection of the brain and spinal cord called progressive multifocal leukoencephalopathy (PML) in people with AIDS and other forms of immune system impairment. Abbreviated JVC. The JC virus is a human polyomavirus. It is a small virus with a closed circular genome consisting of double-stranded DNA. The letters JC are the initials of a patient with PML from whose brain the virus was first isolated.

jejunal Having to do with the jejunum.

jejunostomy A surgical operation to create an opening of the jejunum (a part of the small intestine) to a hole (stoma) in the abdomen.

jejunum The middle portion of the small intestine. The jejunum is about 2.4 meters (8 feet) in length and located halfway between the duodenum and the ileum. The jejunum is responsible for much of the absorption of the fluids and calcium that we ingest. See also *intestine; intestine, small*.

jellyfish sting The injection into the skin of venom from the stinging unit (nematocyst) of the

jellyfish. The jellyfish tentacles can extend for several feet and are lined with venom-filled cells (nematocysts). One tentacle may fire thousands of nematocysts into the skin on contact. The pain can be severe, particularly in the first hours after an attack, and itching is common. The victim may have weakness, nausea, headache, muscle pain and spasms, tearing and nasal discharge, increased perspiration, changes in pulse rate, and chest pain. Welting may persist for weeks at the site, and scarring may remain. Even dead jellyfish are capable of leaving a painful mark. Those who get serious stings may require oxygen or cardiorespiratory assistance. There is no antivenom for the stings of North American jellyfish, but there is antivenom for the stings of some Australian species.

jet lag A temporary disorder that features fatigue and insomnia and that is caused when the body's natural rhythms are interrupted by rapid travel across time zones. Other symptoms of jet lag include anxiety, constipation, diarrhea, confusion, dehydration, headache, irritability, nausea, sweating, coordination problems, and even memory loss. See also *circadian clock*.

jock itch A common fungal infection sometimes referred to as ringworm, involving the skin of the inner thighs, buttocks, and genitals. Also known as tinea cruris. It occurs most frequently in people who are overweight and/or who sweat profusely, such as athletes. Symptoms include an itchy, red, sometimes ring-shaped rash. Treatment involves topical or oral antifungal medications.

jogger's nails Very common, small, semicircular white spots on the toenails. These spots result from injury to the base (matrix) of the nail, a structure under the visible nail where the cells that make up the visible nail are produced. The injury responsible for these white spots on the nails can be due to athletic activity or poorly fitting shoes; jogging in poorly fitting shoes causes the condition so often as to coin the term jogger's nails. These spots are not a cause for concern. They eventually grow out with the nail.

joint The area where two bones are attached for the purpose of permitting body parts to move. A joint is usually formed of fibrous connective tissue and cartilage. Joints are grouped according to their type of motion: ball-and-socket joint; hinge joint; condyloid joint, which permits all forms of angular movement except axial rotation; pivot joint; gliding joint; or saddle joint. Joints can move in only four ways: gliding, in which one bony surface glides on another, without angular or rotatory movement; angular, a movement that occurs only between long bones, increasing or decreasing the angle between the bones; circumduction, which occurs in joints

composed of the head of a bone and an articular cavity, with the long bone describing a series of circles and the whole forming a cone; and rotation, in which a bone moves about a central axis without moving from this axis. Also known as articulation and arthrosis.

joint, AC Acromioclavicular joint.

joint, acetabular The hip joint. The acetabulum is the cup-shaped socket of the hip joint, and it is a key feature of the pelvic anatomy. The upper end of the femur (thighbone) fits right into the acetabulum, articulates with it, and thereby forms the largest ball-and-socket joint in the human body.

joint, acromioclavicular See *acromioclavicular joint*.

joint, ankle See *ankle joint*.

joint, atlas and axis See *atlantoaxial joint*.

joint, ball-and-socket See *ball-and-socket joint*.

joint, calcaneocuboid See *calcaneocuboid joint*.

joint, elbow See *elbow*.

joint, knee See *knee*.

joint, patellofemoral See *patellofemoral joint*.

joint, shoulder See *shoulder joint*.

joint, temporomandibular See *temporomandibular joint*.

joint, TM See *temporomandibular joint*.

joint aspiration See *arthrocentesis*.

joint hypermobility syndrome See *hypermobility syndrome*.

junctions of the body, principal The principal joints of the human body include the following:

acromioclavicular

ankle (tibia-fibula and talus)

atlantoaxial

atlantooccipital

calcaneocuboid

carpometacarpal

elbow (humerus, radius, and ulna)

femur and tibia

hip bone and femur

intercarpal (proximal carpal, distal carpal, and the two rows of carpal bones with each other)
intermetacarpals
intermetatarsals
interphalangeal
intervertebral joints
knee (femur, tibia, and patella)
manubriosternal
metacarpophalangeal
metatarsophalangeal
radioulnar
ribs, heads of
ribs, tubercles and necks of
sacrococcygeal
sacroiliac
shoulder (humerus and scapula)
sternoclavicular
sternocostal
subtalar
symphysis pubis
talus and calcaneus
talus and navicular
tarsometatarsal
temporomandibular
tibiofibular
ulnohumeral
wrist (radius, ulna, and carpal)

Journal of the American Medical Association
See *JAMA*.

jugular See *jugular vein*.

jugular vein One of the veins in the neck that drain blood from the head, brain, face, and neck, and then convey it toward the heart. There are an external jugular vein and an internal jugular vein on each side of the neck. The jugular veins are particularly prominent during congestive heart failure. When the patient is sitting or in a semirecumbent position, the height of the jugular veins and their pulsations provide an estimate of the central venous pressure, as well as important information about whether the heart is keeping up with the demands on it. See also *jugular vein, external; jugular vein, internal*.

jugular vein, external The more superficial of the two jugular veins on each side of the neck. The external jugular vein collects most of the blood from

the outside of the skull and the deep parts of the face. It lies outside the sternocleidomastoid muscle, passes down the neck, and joins the subclavian vein. See also *jugular vein*.

jugular vein, internal The deeper of the two jugular veins on each side of the neck. The internal jugular vein collects blood from the brain, the outside of the face, and the neck. It runs down the inside of the neck, outside the internal and common carotid arteries, and unites with the subclavian vein to form the innominate vein. See also *jugular vein*.

June cold See *allergic rhinitis*.

juvenile Between infantile and adult. Used in medicine to indicate onset in childhood, as in juvenile rheumatoid arthritis.

juvenile chronic arthritis, systemic-onset See *arthritis, systemic-onset juvenile rheumatoid*.

juvenile laryngeal papillomatosis A condition characterized by the emergence of numerous warty growths on the vocal cords in children and young adults. A baby can contract juvenile laryngeal papillomatosis by being infected with the human papillomavirus (HPV) during birth through the vaginal canal of a mother who has genital warts. Treatment usually involves surgical excision. Recurrences of laryngeal papillomatosis are frequent. Remission may occur after several years.

juvenile polyposis syndrome An autosomal dominant disorder in which polyps develop throughout the gastrointestinal tract in the first decade or two of life. People with the disease are at increased risk for developing gastrointestinal cancers. Abbreviated JPS. There can also be diarrhea, GI bleeding, and protein-losing from the intestinal wall. JPS is clearly heterogeneous (more than one entity) as regards causation. Some cases of JPS appear sporadic with no family history of juvenile polyposis, while other cases are due to mutations in the MADH4 gene on chromosome 18 or the BMPR1A gene on chromosome 10. Also known as juvenile intestinal polyposis (JIP), juvenile polyposis coli (JPC).

juvenile rheumatoid arthritis See *arthritis, systemic-onset juvenile rheumatoid*.

juxta- Prefix meaning near, nearby, or close, as in juxtaspinous (near the spinal column) and juxtavesicular (near the bladder).

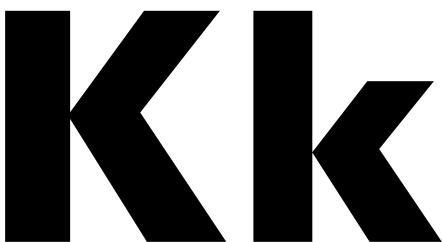
juxtaarticular Near a joint. For example, a juxtaarticular fracture is a break near a joint.

juxtaposition See *apposition*.

juxtapyloric Near the pylorus, the muscular area at the junction of the stomach and the first part of the small intestine. For example, a juxtapyloric ulcer is located near the pylorus.

juxtapinal Near the spinal column. For example, juxtapinal abscess lies adjacent to the spinal column.

juxtavesicular Near the bladder.



K The symbol for potassium, the major positive ion (cation) found inside cells. A proper level of potassium is essential for normal cell function. An abnormal increase in potassium (hyperkalemia) or an abnormal decrease in potassium (hypokalemia) can profoundly affect the nervous system and the heart and, if extreme, can be fatal.

kala-azar A chronic and potentially fatal parasitic disease of the viscera (the internal organs, particularly the liver, spleen, bone marrow, and lymph nodes) due to infection by the parasite *Leishmania donovani*. *Leishmania donovani* is transmitted by sandfly bites in parts of Asia (primarily India), Africa (primarily Sudan), and South America (primarily Brazil). Kala-azar can cause no or few symptoms but typically it is associated with fever, loss of appetite, fatigue, enlargement of the liver, spleen, and nodes; and suppression of the bone marrow. Kala-azar also increases the risk of other secondary infections. The term "kala-azar" comes from India where it is the Hindi for black fever. The disease is also known as Indian leishmaniasis, visceral leishmaniasis, leishmania infection, dum dum fever, black sickness, and black fever. See also *Leishmania; leishmaniasis*.

Kaposi sarcoma A relatively rare type of skin malignancy that tends to affect elderly people and those with an abnormal immune system, as in AIDS. Kaposi sarcoma is caused by human herpesvirus 8 (HHV-8), which may be transmitted via kissing. Kaposi sarcoma is a highly vascular (angioblastic) tumor of the skin, characterized by soft purplish plaques and papules that form nodules, which typically start on the feet and ankles and then slowly spread across the skin of the legs, hands, and arms. In AIDS patients, these tumors can also develop internally and cause severe internal bleeding. The treatment depends on the severity of the tumor. Low dosages of radiation therapy can be effective in treating mild cases of Kaposi sarcoma. However, in more severe cases, anticancer drugs may be used to slow the spread of the tumor. The Kaposi sarcoma tumor was first described in 1872 by the dermatologist Moritz Kaposi Kohn. See also *AIDS; HIV; sarcoma*.

Kartagener syndrome A genetic syndrome that is characterized by sinusitis, bronchiectasis (widening and inflammation of the bronchi), dextrocardia (heart on the right side of the chest), and infertility. Kartagener syndrome is inherited in an autosomal recessive manner. Kartagener syndrome is usually due to mutation in the gene called DNAI1 on chromosome 9. However, linkage studies have mapped the disease gene to 5p and 19q in some families, indicating that Kartagener syndrome is more than one genetic entity. Also known as ciliary dyskinesia syndrome.

karyotype A standard arrangement of the chromosome complement prepared for chromosome analysis. A normal female karyotype would include each of the 22 pairs of autosomes (nonsex chromosomes), arranged in numeric order, together with the two X chromosomes.

karyotyping The preparation, analysis, and interpretation of a karyotype.

karyotyping, flow See *flow karyotyping*.

Kawasaki disease A syndrome that mainly affects young children, causing fever; reddening of the eyes (conjunctivitis), lips, and mucous membranes of the mouth; ulcerative gum disease (gingivitis); swollen glands in the neck (cervical lymphadenopathy); and a rash that is raised and bright red (maculoerythematous). The rash appears in a "glove-and-sock" fashion over the skin of the hands and feet. The skin then becomes hard and swollen (edematous), and it peels off. Kawasaki disease affects the blood vessels and is now the main cause of acquired heart disease in children. It is most common in people of Asian descent, and it is more common in males than in females. Its cause is unknown; current theories include a virus or other infectious agent. Treatment usually involves intravenous immunoglobulin (IVIG). Also known as mucocutaneous lymph node syndrome, infantile polyarteritis.

Kb Kilobase.

KB **1** Keratoderma blennorrhagicum. **2** Ketone bodies.

Kegel exercises Exercises designed to increase muscle strength and elasticity in the female pelvis. Kegel exercises may be recommended for treatment of incompetent cervix, vaginal looseness after pregnancy and delivery, or urinary incontinence.

keloid A scar that rises quite abruptly above the rest of the skin. It is irregularly shaped, usually pink to red in color, tends to enlarge progressively, and may be harder than the surrounding skin. Keloids

are a response to trauma, such as a cut to the skin. In creating a normal scar, connective tissue in the skin is repaired by the formation of collagen. Keloids arise when extra collagen forms. Susceptibility to keloids is genetic, and keloids are particularly common in people of African descent.

keratectomy Removal of part of the cornea by surgical excision or by laser. See also *keratectomy, photorefractive*.

keratectomy, photorefractive Laser eye surgery designed to change the shape of the cornea, reducing or eliminating the need for glasses and contact lenses. The laser removes the outer layer of the cornea and then flattens it. This is intended to correct nearsightedness (myopia) and uneven curvature of the cornea that distorts vision (astigmatism). Photorefractive keratectomy is an outpatient procedure that is done in an office with numbing eye drops. Abbreviated PRK. The same type of laser is used for PRK and LASIK. The major difference between the two surgeries is the way that the stroma, the middle layer of the cornea, is exposed before it is vaporized with the laser. In PRK, the top layer of the cornea, called the epithelium, is scraped away to expose the stromal layer underneath. In LASIK, a flap is cut in the stromal layer and the flap is folded back. See also *LASIK*.

keratin A protein found in the upper layer of the skin, hair, and nails, and in animal horns.

keratitis Inflammation of the cornea. Keratitis can occur due to abrasion trauma, infection, or underlying diseases such as Sjogren's syndrome and lupus. Keratitis can lead to blindness.

keratitis, rosacea Inflammation of the cornea of the eye that affects about half of all people with rosacea. Symptoms include burning and grittiness of the eyes (conjunctivitis). If rosacea keratitis is not treated with medication to stop the inflammation, the damage to the cornea may impair vision. See also *rosacea*.

keratitis-ichthyosis-deafness syndrome An inherited disorder that is characterized by keratitis (gradual destruction of the cornea of the eye, sometimes leading to blindness), ichthyosis (localized areas of disfiguring reddish thickened skin), and deafness from birth. Abbreviated KID syndrome. Another characteristic feature of KID syndrome is thin or absent scalp hair. Some patients develop cancer of the tongue, and some have subtle abnormalities of the nervous system. KID syndrome is inherited in an autosomal dominant manner and is usually due to mutation in the connexin-26 gene (located on chromosome 13).

kerato- 1 Prefix referring to the cornea, as in keratitis (inflammation of the cornea) and kerato-plasty (corneal transplant). 2 Prefix referring to the nails, hair, or skin tissue, as in keratin (a protein found in the upper layer of the skin, hair, and nails, and in animal horns) and keratosis (a localized horny overgrowth of the skin).

keratoconjunctivitis Inflammation of the eye that involves both the cornea and conjunctiva. Keratoconjunctivitis can occur due to abrasion trauma, infection, and underlying diseases such as Sjogren's syndrome and lupus.

keratoconus A cone-shaped cornea, with the apex of the cone being forward. Keratoconus causes distorted vision. Also known as conical cornea. Treatment of keratoconus depends on the severity of the condition. Treatment options include eyeglasses, rigid contact lenses, and corneal transplantation, and combinations of these.

keratoderma blennorrhagicum A skin disease that occurs in patients with reactive arthritis (formerly Reiter's syndrome). Abbreviated KB. Classically, the areas of the skin that are involved are the palms of the hands and the soles of the feet, although other body surfaces may also be affected. The inflammation of the skin can come and go. When the inflammation is present, it appears as patches of reddish, raised pustules that can be painful and tender. These patchy areas may group together and peel periodically. KB can be treated with topical medications, including skin softeners (emollients) and medications that clear off the peeling, dry skin (keratolytic medications). Sometimes these treatments are used along with vitamin D creams, such as calcipotriene. Emotional stress and certain medications may aggravate the condition.

keratoplasty Corneal transplant.

keratosis A localized horny overgrowth of the skin, such as a wart or callus. Among the common types of keratosis are actinic keratosis and seborrheic keratosis.

keratosis, actinic A small rough spot on the skin that can give rise to a skin cancer called squamous cell carcinoma. Actinic keratosis is due to excessive sun exposure and most frequently occurs in fair-skinned people after 40 years of age. Common locations for actinic keratosis are the face, scalp, nape of the neck, upper chest, forearms, and backs of the hands. Prevention involves minimizing sun exposure and using sunscreen. Treatments include cryosurgery (freezing), surgical removal, topical medications, laser therapy, and photodynamic therapy (injection into the bloodstream of a

chemical that collects in the actinic keratoses to make them more sensitive to exposure to a specialized form of light). Also known as senile keratosis and solar keratosis.

keratosis, seborrheic A common skin disorder that is characterized by benign, painless, often wart-like skin lesions that appear to be “stuck on.” The raised spots are usually yellow or brown. Treatment, if warranted, involves surgical or cryosurgical removal. Also known as seborrheic warts and verruca.

keratosis, senile See *keratosis, actinic*.

keratosis, solar See *keratosis, actinic*.

keratosis follicularis A genetic skin disease that is characterized by slowly progressive hardening of the skin (keratosis) around the hair follicles. This disorder is inherited in an autosomal dominant manner and is due to mutation in a gene called ATP2A2 on chromosome 12. Also known as Darier disease.

keratotic scabies See *scabies, keratotic*.

keratotomy A surgical cut of the cornea.

keratotomy, radial A surgical procedure designed to flatten the cornea and thereby correct nearsightedness (myopia). It is called a radial keratotomy because the radial incisions in the cornea resemble the spokes in a bicycle wheel.

kernicterus A disorder that is due to severe jaundice in the newborn, with deposition of the pigment bilirubin in the brain that causes damage to the brain, potentially leading to athetoid cerebral palsy, hearing loss, vision problems, or mental retardation. Also known as bilirubin encephalopathy.

Kernig sign A sign indicating the presence of meningitis (inflammation of the meninges covering the brain and spinal cord). The test for Kernig sign is done by having the person lie flat on the back, flex the thigh so that it is at a right angle to the trunk, and completely extend the leg at the knee joint. If the leg cannot be completely extended due to pain, this is Kernig sign.

Keshan disease A condition caused by deficiency of the essential mineral selenium. Keshan disease is a potentially fatal form of cardiomyopathy (disease of the heart muscle). It was first observed in Keshan province in China, and it has since been found in other areas where the selenium level in the soil is low. Treatment involves selenium supplementation.

ketoacidosis A life-threatening feature of uncontrolled diabetes that is characterized by a combination of ketosis and acidosis. Ketosis is the accumulation of substances called ketone bodies in the blood. Acidosis is increased acidity of the blood. Symptoms of ketoacidosis include slow, deep breathing with a fruity odor to the breath, confusion, frequent urination (polyuria), poor appetite, and eventually loss of consciousness. Ketoacidosis should be treated immediately and is usually done in a hospital. It may require the administration of intravenous fluids, insulin, and glucose. See also *diabetes mellitus; ketone bodies*.

ketogenic diet A diet devised as a treatment for severe seizure disorders that do not respond to conventional medication. The traditional ketogenic diet contains four parts fat to one part protein and carbohydrate. All portions must be precisely weighed and timed. Because this diet can cause the buildup of ketone bodies in the blood, it is highly risky and should be tried only under close medical supervision. See also *ketone bodies; ketoacidosis; seizure disorders*.

ketone bodies Acetone, acetoacetate, and B-hydroxybutyrate—three toxic, acidic chemicals that build up in the bloodstream when the body is forced to burn fat for energy instead of burning glucose. See also *ketoacidosis*.

ketonuria A condition in which abnormally high amounts of ketone metabolites are present in the urine. Ketonuria is usually a sign of diabetes that is out of control. Ketonuria can also develop as a result of fasting, dieting, starvation, and eating disorders. See *ketoacidosis*.

KID syndrome See *keratitis-ichthyosis-deafness syndrome*.

kidney One of a pair of organs located in the right and left side of the abdomen. The kidneys remove waste products from the blood and produce urine. As blood flows through the kidneys, the kidneys filter waste products, chemicals, and unneeded water from the blood. Urine collects in the middle of each kidney, in an area called the renal pelvis. It then drains from the kidney through a long tube, the ureter, to the bladder, where it is stored until elimination. The kidneys also make substances that help control blood pressure and regulate the formation of red blood cells.

kidney cancer See *cancer, kidney*.

kidney scoping See *retrograde intrarenal surgery*.

kidney stone A stone in the kidney or a stone that originates in the kidney but has passed lower down in the urinary tract. Kidney stones are a common cause of blood in the urine and pain in the abdomen, flank, or groin. The development of kidney stones is related to decreased urine volume or to increased excretion of stone-forming components, such as calcium, oxalate, urate, cystine, xanthine, and phosphate. The stones form in the urine-collecting area (pelvis) of the kidney and may range in size from tiny to "staghorn" stones the size of the renal pelvis itself. Factors that predispose people to kidney stones include reduction in fluid intake, increased exercise with dehydration, medications that cause high uric acid (hyperuricemia), and a history of gout. Pain from kidney stones is usually of sudden onset, very severe and intermittent, and not improved by changes in position, and it radiates from the back, down the flank, and into the groin. Nausea and vomiting are common. The majority of stones pass spontaneously within 48 hours. However, some stones do not. Several factors influence the ability to pass a stone, including the size of the person, prior stone passage, prostate enlargement, pregnancy, and the size of the stone. If a stone does not pass, the help of a urology specialist may be needed. Routine treatment includes relief of pain, hydration, and, if there is concurrent urinary infection, administration of antibiotics. Also known as nephrolithiasis.

kidney stones, cystine See *cystine kidney stones*.

kidney transplant Replacement of a diseased, damaged, or missing kidney with a donor kidney. Patients with end-stage kidney failure are candidates for transplantation. A successful transplant frees the patient from needing dialysis and provides the kidney's other metabolic functions. The principal problems in kidney transplantation are immunologic—avoiding rejection of the transplanted kidney by the recipient's immune system. The first kidney transplant was done by the US surgeon Joseph E. Murray in 1954. It was the first successful human organ transplant. See also *transplant*.

killed polio vaccine See *polio vaccine, inactivated*.

kilobase A unit of length of DNA that is equal to 1,000 nucleotide bases. Abbreviated Kb.

kilocalorie The amount of energy required to raise the temperature of 1 liter of water 1° Celsius at sea level. In nutrition terms, the word calorie is commonly used instead of the more precise scientific term kilocalorie. See also *calorie*.

Kimmelstiel-Wilson disease See *diabetic nephropathy*.

kindred The extended family.

kinetic With movement, as opposed to akinetic.

kinetics 1 The rate of change in a biochemical or other reaction. 2 The study of reaction rates.

kinky hair syndrome See *Menkes syndrome*.

kinship Relationship by marriage or, specifically, a blood tie.

kissing bugs Insect carriers of the parasite Trypanosoma cruzi, which causes Chagas disease. The bugs "kiss" people, especially babies, on the lips while they are asleep, infecting them with their parasite. See also *Chagas disease*.

kissing disease Nickname for infectious mononucleosis. See also *mononucleosis*.

kit, disaster supplies See *disaster supplies*.

Klebsiella A group of bacteria that normally lives in the intestinal tract, but can cause infections when the microorganism infects tissues of the body. Klebsiella are frequently the cause of infections acquired in hospitals.

Kleine-Levin syndrome A rare condition that is characterized by periods of excessive drowsiness and sleep, lasting up to 20 hours per day. Affected individuals usually have excessive food intake and may be confused, irritable, and lethargic. Some patients have hallucinations or sexual disinhibition. Most patients with Kleine-Levin syndrome are adolescent males. The cause is unknown. Most cases resolve over time without treatment. Also known as Kleine-Levin hibernation syndrome.

Klinefelter syndrome A condition in males who have XXY sex chromosomes, rather than the usual XY. Some also have additional X chromosomes, or more than one Y chromosome. XXY is one of the most common chromosomal abnormalities. It occurs in 1 in 500 male births. The signs of Klinefelter syndrome include small testes, insufficient production of testosterone, and infertility. XXY males are more likely than other males to show breast enlargement, lack of facial and body hair, and a rounded body type, and they are more likely than other males to be overweight and be taller than their fathers and brothers. Klinefelter boys tend to have learning and/or behavioral problems.

Klippel-Feil syndrome A congenital disorder involving the fusion of any two of the 7 neck (cervical) vertebrae. Affected individuals have a short neck, low hairline at the nape of the neck, and limited movement of the head. Klippel-Feil syndrome is due to a defect in the early development of the spinal column in the neck and may be associated with other birth defects. Also known as Klippel-Feil sequence.

Klippel-Trenaunay-Weber syndrome A rare congenital malformation syndrome of the vascular system characterized by enlargement of a single limb (asymmetric limb hypertrophy), varicose veins, abnormal connections in the vascular system (arteriovenous malformations), and abnormal nests of blood vessels that proliferate inappropriately and excessively (hemangioma, or port-wine stains), and pigmented moles on the skin (nevi). Abbreviated KTW syndrome. Some sources subclassify those patients with arteriovenous malformations as having Parkes-Weber syndrome and those with the original findings of port-wine stain, varicose veins, and bony and soft tissue hypertrophy involving an extremity as having Klippel-Trenaunay syndrome. The cause of KTW syndrome is unknown.

knee A joint that permits flexibility in the middle of the lower extremity. The thigh bone (femur) meets the large shin bone (tibia) to form the main knee joint. This joint has an inner (medial) and an outer (lateral) compartment. The kneecap (patella) joins the femur to form a third joint, called the patellofemoral joint. The patella protects the front of the knee joint. The knee joint is surrounded by a joint capsule, with ligaments strapping the inside and outside of the joint (collateral ligaments) as well as crossing within the joint (cruciate ligaments). The collateral ligaments run along the sides of the knee and limit its sideways motion. The anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) connects the tibia to the femur at the center of the knee and functions to limit the tibia's rotation and forward motion. The posterior cruciate ligament (PCL), located just behind the ACL, limits the backward motion of the tibia. All these ligaments provide stability and strength to the knee joint. A thickened cartilage pad between the two joints (meniscus) is formed by the femur and tibia. The meniscus acts as a smooth surface for the joint to move on. It serves to evenly load the surface during weight bearing, and it also aids in disbursing joint fluid for joint lubrication. The knee joint is surrounded by fluid-filled sacs called bursae, which serve as gliding surfaces to reduce friction of the tendons. Below the kneecap is a large tendon (patellar tendon) that attaches to the front of the tibia bone. Large blood vessels pass through the area behind the knee, which is called the popliteal

space. The large muscles of the thigh move the knee. In the front of the thigh, the quadricep muscles extend the knee joint. In the back of the thigh, the hamstring muscles flex the knee. The knee also rotates slightly under the guidance of specific muscles of the thigh. The knee is critical to normal walking and is a weight-bearing joint. Knee pain can be caused by a number of factors, including injury, inflammation of the bursa (bursitis), strain, and problems with the sciatic nerve, which runs from the lower back to the knee. See also *bursitis; patellofemoral syndrome; sciatica*.

knee bursitis Inflammation of a fluid-filled sac (bursa) around the knee. See *bursitis*.

knee jerk The reflex that is tested by tapping just below the bent knee on the patellar tendon. Normally this causes the quadriceps muscle to contract and bring the lower leg forward. It has given rise to the saying "a knee-jerk reaction." Also known as patellar reflex.

knee replacement A surgical procedure to relieve pain and increase function in people with severe damage to the knee joint. Knee replacement surgery may involve replacing the entire joint (total knee replacement) or only a portion of the joint (partial knee replacement). Damaged cartilage and bone from the surface of the knee joint are removed and replaced with an artificial substance. Knee replacement surgery is considered for patients whose knee joints have been damaged by progressive arthritis, trauma, or other rare destructive diseases of the joint. The most common reason for knee replacement in the US is severe osteoarthritis of the knees. Also known as knee arthroplasty.

kneecap The patella, the small bone in the front of the knee. The patella is a little (sesamoid) bone, embedded in the tendon of insertion of the quadriceps muscle. If the patella is shattered beyond repair, it can be removed in an operation called a patellectomy and sometimes replaced with prosthetic material.

knock-knees An abnormal curve of the legs that causes the knees to touch or nearly touch while the feet are apart. The problem may arise in the bone structure, or it may develop gradually as a result of muscle abnormalities. Knock-knees can cause movement difficulties, muscle and bone strain, and pain due to overstress on the ankles. The condition can be treated via physical therapy, and in some cases it can be corrected with surgery. Also known as genu valgum.

knuckle The top of the flexed finger joint.

Koch postulates A set of criteria for judging whether a given microorganism is the cause of a given disease.

Kok disease See *hyperexplexia*.

Koplik spots Little spots inside the mouth that are highly characteristic of the early phase of measles (rubeola). The spots look like tiny grains of white sand, each surrounded by a red ring. They are often found on the inside of the cheek, opposite the first and second upper molars. See also *measles*.

Kostmann disease See *severe congenital neutropenia*.

Krabbe disease A progressive degenerative disorder of the nervous system that involves the destruction of myelin, a fatty material that surrounds and insulates nerves. Most patients have the infantile form of Krabbe disease. During the first few months of life, they seem normal, but before 6 months of age, the signs of extreme irritability, spasticity, and developmental delay become evident. Neurological deterioration leads to death generally before age 2. Other forms of Krabbe disease have late infantile, juvenile, or adult age of onset. Krabbe disease is inherited in an autosomal recessive manner and is due to a mutation in the gene for galactosylceramidase (GALC), leading to the accumulation of galactocerebroside in tissues. Diagnosis is made by finding 5 percent or less of normal GALC activity. Prenatal diagnosis is feasible. Also known as galactocerebrosidase deficiency, GALC deficiency, and globoid cell leukodystrophy.

Krukenberg tumor A tumor of the ovary that is caused by the spread of metastatic cancer of the gastrointestinal tract, characteristically from the stomach.

KUB Abbreviation for kidney, ureter, and bladder.

KUB film An abdominal X-ray that shows the kidney, ureter, and bladder.

kuru A slowly progressive fatal disease of the brain that is due to an infectious agent transmitted among people in Papua New Guinea by ritual cannibalism. Kuru is an infectious form of subacute spongiform encephalopathy and is caused by a tiny infectious particle called a prion. It appears to be similar to bovine spongiform encephalopathy ("mad cow disease") and Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease. Also called trembling disease.

Kussmaul breathing Air hunger, or the rapid, deep, and labored breathing characteristic of patients with acidosis (excess acidity of tissues). For example, Kussmaul breathing is seen with the acidosis of diabetes mellitus that is seriously out of

control. Treatment is directed toward controlling the underlying disease.

kwashiorkor A childhood disease that is caused by protein deprivation. Early signs include apathy, drowsiness, and irritability. More advanced signs are poor growth, lack of stamina, loss of muscle mass, swelling, abnormal hair (sparse, thin, often streaky red or gray hair in dark-skinned children), and abnormal skin that darkens in irritated but not sun-exposed areas. An enlarged and protuberant belly is common. Kwashiorkor disables the immune system, rendering the affected individual susceptible to a host of infectious diseases. It is responsible for much illness and death among children worldwide. Also known as protein malnutrition and protein-calorie malnutrition (PCM).

kyphoplasty A somewhat incorrect name for the vertebroplasty procedure. Kyphoplasty literally means "to repair the bending of the spine to curve outward from the body." Kyphosis can result when a vertebra (or several vertebrae) suffers a compression fracture from osteoporosis. Vertebroplasty is the procedure that can re-establish the height of a compressed vertebra. Sometimes, but not always, vertebroplasty can correct some of the kyphosis. See also *vertebroplasty*.

kyphoscoliosis A combination of outward curvature (kyphosis) and lateral curvature (scoliosis) of the spine. Kyphoscoliosis can be due to musculoskeletal disease or to unknown causes. Treatment includes physical therapy and wearing a back brace, and in some cases surgery. Surgery for kyphoscoliosis may involve inserting a metal rod in the spine and restructuring some bones, and it is usually followed by wearing a back cast and then a back brace for some time.

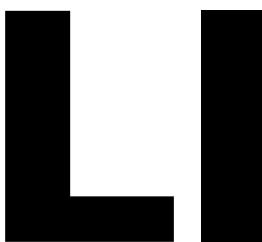
kyphoscoliosis, idiopathic Kyphoscoliosis that occurs during development, without a known cause.

kyphosis Outward curvature of the spine, causing a humped back. Treatment includes physical therapy and wearing a back brace, and in some cases surgery. Surgery for kyphosis may involve inserting a metal rod in the spine and restructuring some bones, and it is usually followed by wearing a back cast and then a back brace for some time.

kyphosis, fixed Kyphosis caused by collapse of the vertebrae, usually due to musculoskeletal disease. See also *kyphosis*.

kyphosis, juvenile See *Scheuermann's disease*.

kyphosis, mobile Kyphosis caused by compensating for muscle weakness or structural abnormality in another area of the body. See also *kyphosis*.



L1 through L5 The five lumbar vertebrae, which are situated between the thoracic vertebrae and the sacral vertebrae in the spinal column.

La Leche League An organization that helps and supports breastfeeding mothers with advice, ideas, and both legal and medical advocacy. Abbreviated LLL.

lab result The result of a test done in a laboratory.

lab test A test that is done in the laboratory where the appropriate equipment, supplies, and certified expertise are available.

labia Lips, the fleshy folds that surround the opening of the mouth (oral labia) or the vagina (the labia majora and labia minora).

labia, oral The lips around the mouth. See also *lip*.

labia, vaginal The two pairs of labia (lips)—the labia majora and labia minor—at the entrance to the vagina. Together the vaginal labia form part of the vulva, the female external genitalia.

labia majora The larger (major) outside pair of labia (lips) of the vulva (the female external genitalia). See also *labia, vaginal*.

labia minora The smaller (minor) inside pair of labia (lips) of the vulva (the female external genitalia). See also *labia, vaginal*.

labial Pertaining to a lip.

labial sound A sound requiring the participation of one or both lips. Also known simply as labial. All labials are consonants. Bilabial sounds, such as "p," involve both lips, whereas labiodental sounds, such as "v," involve the upper teeth and lower lip.

labile Unstable. For example, labile blood pressure is blood pressure that abnormally increases and decreases frequently.

labile diabetes See *diabetes, labile*.

labium The singular form of labia.

labor Childbirth, the process of delivering a baby and the placenta, membranes, and umbilical cord from the uterus to the vagina to the outside world. During the first stage of labor (which is called dilation), the cervix dilates fully to a diameter of about 10 cm (2 inches). The first stage of labor is divided into two phases: the latent phase and the active phase. In the latent phase, contractions become progressively more coordinated and the cervix dilates to 4 cm (approximately 1.5 inches). The latent phase averages about 8 hours for a nullipara (a woman having her first baby) and 5 hours for a multipara (a woman having a subsequent baby). In the active phase, the cervix becomes fully dilated and the presenting part of the baby descends into the midpelvis. The active phase averages about 5 hours for a nullipara and 2 hours for a multipara. In the second stage (which is called expulsion), the baby moves out through the cervix and vagina to be born. Expulsion generally lasts 2 hours for a nullipara and 1 hour for a multipara. The third stage of labor begins with the delivery of the baby and ends when the placenta and membranes are expelled. Also known as parturition and childbirth.

laboratory A place for doing tests and research procedures, and for preparing chemicals and some medications. Also known as lab.

labyrinth The maze of canals in the inner ear. The delicate membranous canals of the labyrinth are enclosed and protected by a bony chamber that is referred to as the bony labyrinth. The labyrinth is the portion of the ear that is responsible for sensing balance.

labyrinthitis Inflammation of the labyrinth of the ear, which can be accompanied by vertigo. Labyrinthitis has many potential causes including virus infection, Ménière's disease, and autoimmune disease.

laceration See *cut*.

lacrimal Pertaining to tears. For example, the lacrimal gland is a gland that secretes tears.

lacrimal gland A small almond-shaped structure that produces tears and is located just above the upper, outer corner of the eye.

lacrimation Shedding tears, or shedding more tears than is normal (for example, as a result of eye injury or irritation).

lactase The enzyme that breaks down the milk sugar lactose. Lactase is essential to digest lactose. Without enough lactase, a person is lactose intolerant. See also *lactose intolerance*.

lactase deficiency See *deficiency, lactase*.

lactation The process of milk production. Human milk is secreted by the mammary glands, which are located within the fatty tissue of the breast. The hormone oxytocin is produced in response to the birth of a new baby, and it both stimulates uterine contractions and begins the lactation process. For the first few hours of nursing, a special fluid called colostrum is delivered; colostrum is especially high in nutrients, fats, and antibodies, to protect the newborn from infection. Thereafter, the amount of milk produced is controlled primarily by the hormone prolactin, which is produced in response to the length of time the infant nurses at the breast. See also *breastfeeding*.

lactic acid A simple sugar that is the byproduct of glucose metabolism. Most lactic acid is produced by the red blood cells and by muscle cells when oxygen levels are low. When lactic acid accumulates rapidly in the muscle cells during or just after exercise, cramping can result. When lactic acid builds up faster than it can be removed by the body, lactic acidosis is the result. Lactic acidosis can occur with intensive exercise or may be related to medical conditions.

Lactobacillus A bacterium normally found in the mouth, intestinal tract, and vagina. Lactobacillus can also live in fermenting products, such as yogurt. Humans appear to have a symbiotic relationship with this bacteria: some types have become an important part of food digestion, although Lactobacillus can also contribute to cavities in the teeth if allowed to remain too long within the mouth.

Lactobacillus acidophilus See *acidophilus*.

lactose intolerance The inability to digest lactose, a component of milk and some other dairy products. The basis for lactose intolerance is the lack of an enzyme called lactase in the small intestine. The most common symptoms of lactose intolerance are diarrhea, bloating, and gas. The diagnosis may be made via a trial of a lactose-free diet or by special testing. Treatment involves avoidance of products that contain lactose or use of lactase enzyme supplements before eating. See also *deficiency, lactase*.

lacuna A small pit, cavity, defect, or gap. For example, a lacunar infarct in the brain is an area where a stroke has left a tiny pit in the brain.

lamella A thin leaf, plate, disk, or wafer, such as in bone tissue.

lamina Plates or layers. For example, the lamina arcus vertebrae are plates of bone within each vertebral body.

laminaria A thin piece of sterile seaweed that can be used to gradually dilate the cervix.

laminectomy A surgical procedure in which the posterior arch of a vertebra is removed. Laminectomy is done to relieve pressure on the spinal cord or on the nerve roots that emerge from the spinal canal. The procedure may be used to treat a slipped or herniated disc or to treat spinal stenosis.

lancet A small, pointed knife that is used to prick a finger for a blood test.

Lancet, The A well-known medical journal published in England. Founded in 1823, *The Lancet* is the longest-running medical journal in the world.

Landau-Kleffner syndrome A disorder with onset in childhood characterized by the loss of speech and recognition of spoken language. Patients may also have behavioral disorders and seizures and may develop behaviors similar to autism. See also *autism; epilepsy; seizure; seizure disorder*.

Landing disease See *GMI-gangliosidosis*.

Langerhans cell histiocytosis The preferred name for what was once called histiocytosis X. Langerhans cell histiocytosis refers to several disorders in which histiocytes start to multiply and proliferate abnormally. The result can be tissue damage, pain, the development of tumor-like lumps, fatigue, and other symptoms. If histiocytosis affects the pituitary gland, diabetes insipidus may also develop. Treatment includes radiation and chemotherapy; although for reasons unknown, some cases of histiocytosis go into remission without treatment. This disease includes the conditions known as eosinophilic granuloma, Letterer Siwe disease, and Hand-Schuller-Christian disease.

Langerhans, islet of See *islet of Langerhans*.

lanugo Downy hair on the body of a fetus or newborn baby. Lanugo is the first hair to be produced by the fetal hair follicles, and it usually appears on the fetus at about 5 months of gestation. Lanugo is very fine, soft, and usually unpigmented. Although lanugo is normally shed before birth, around 7 or 8 months of gestation, it is sometimes present at birth. This is not a cause for concern: Lanugo disappears of its own accord within a few days or weeks.

laparoscopy A type of surgery in which small incisions are made in the abdominal wall through which a laparoscope and other instruments can be placed to permit structures within the abdomen and

pelvis to be seen. A variety of probes or other instruments can also be pushed through these small incisions in the skin. In this way, a number of surgical procedures can be performed without the need for a large surgical incision.

laparotomy An operation to open the abdomen. For example, laparotomy is used to remove cancer of the intestines or repair bowel blockage.

large cell carcinoma A term used to describe a microscopically identified variant of certain cancers, for example lung cancers, in which the abnormal cells are particularly large.

large cell lymphoma See *lymphoma, large cell*.

large intestine See *intestine, large*.

laryngeal Having to do with the larynx (voice box).

laryngeal nerve, recurrent One of the branches of the vagus nerve, a long and important nerve that originates in the brain stem. After the recurrent laryngeal nerve leaves the vagus nerve, it goes down into the chest and then loops back up, to supply nerves to the larynx (the voice box). It is said to be recurrent because it returns in its course to the larynx. See also *laryngeal palsy*.

laryngeal nerve palsy See *laryngeal palsy*.

laryngeal palsy Paralysis of the larynx (voice box) that is caused by damage to the recurrent laryngeal nerve, which supplies the larynx (voice box), or its parent nerve, the vagus nerve, which originates in the brain stem and runs down to the colon. In laryngeal palsy, the larynx is paralyzed on the side where the recurrent laryngeal nerve has been damaged, unless the problem originated with damage to the vagus nerve itself. Damage to the recurrent laryngeal nerve can be the result of diseases inside the chest, such as a tumor, an aneurysm of the arch of the aorta, or an aneurysm of the left atrium of the heart.

laryngeal papilloma A warty growth in the larynx, usually on the vocal cords. Persistent hoarseness is a common symptom.

laryngeal papillomatosis The presence of numerous warty growths on the vocal cords caused by human papillomavirus (HPV), which is contracted at birth via the vaginal canal of a mother with genital warts. Laryngeal papillomatosis is most common in young children under age 3 but may occur at any age. Recurrences of laryngeal papillomatosis are, unfortunately, frequent. Remission may occur after several years.

laryngectomee A person who has had his or her larynx (voice box) removed. See also *laryngectomy*.

laryngectomy Surgery to remove part or all of the larynx. The surgeon performs a tracheostomy, creating an opening in the front of the neck (stoma). Air enters and leaves the trachea and lungs through the stoma. A tracheostomy tube keeps the new airway open.

laryngectomy, partial A laryngectomy that preserves the voice. The surgeon removes only part of the larynx (voice box)—just one vocal cord, just part of a vocal cord, or just the epiglottis—and the opening in the front of the neck (stoma) is temporary. After a brief recovery period, the tracheostomy tube is removed, and the stoma closes up. The patient can then breathe and talk in the usual way. In some cases, however, the voice may be hoarse or weak.

laryngectomy, total A laryngectomy in which the whole larynx (voice box) is removed, and the opening in the front of the neck (stoma) is permanent. The patient breathes through the stoma and must learn to talk in a new way.

laryngitis An inflammation of the larynx. Inflammation of the larynx is most often caused by viral infections. In these cases, other symptoms, such as sore throat, cough, difficulty swallowing, and fever, generally occur. The voice changes may persist after the fever and other symptoms of acute infection have resolved. Laryngitis can also occur as a result of irritation to the vocal cords. People such as singers, cheerleaders, or even small children after bouts of screaming may find that they become hoarse or speak with a “gravely” voice after prolonged overuse. Environmental causes of irritation of the airway that can result in inflammation of the larynx include exposure to tobacco smoke or other chemicals.

laryngitis, reflux Inflammation of the larynx (voice box) caused by stomach acid backing up into the esophagus. Reflux laryngitis is associated with chronic hoarseness and symptoms of esophageal irritation such as heartburn, chest pain, asthma, or the feeling of a foreign body in the throat (the globus phenomenon). This can lead to chronic throat clearing, difficulty swallowing, cough, spasms of the vocal cords, and growths on the vocal cords (granulomas). Reflux also increases the risk of cancer of the esophagus and larynx. See also *reflux*.

laryngomalacia An abnormally soft, floppy larynx (voice box).

laryngoscope A flexible, lighted tube that is used to examine the inside of the larynx (voice box).

laryngoscopy

laryngoscopy Examination of the larynx (voice box), either with a mirror (indirect laryngoscopy) or with a laryngoscope (direct laryngoscopy).

larynx A tube-shaped organ in the neck that contains the vocal cords. The larynx is about 5 cm (2 in.) long. It is part of the respiratory system and is located between the pharynx and the trachea. Humans use the larynx to breathe, talk, and swallow. Its outer wall of cartilage forms the area of the front of the neck referred to as the Adam's apple. The vocal cords, two bands of muscle, form a V inside the larynx. Each time a person inhales, air goes into the nose or mouth, then through the larynx, down the trachea, and into the lungs. When a person exhales, the air goes the other way. The vocal cords are relaxed during breathing, and air moves through the space between them without making any sound. The vocal cords tighten up and move closer together for speech. Air from the lungs is forced between them and makes them vibrate, producing the sound of a voice. The openings of the esophagus and the larynx are very close together in the throat. When a person swallows, a flap called the epiglottis moves down over the larynx to keep food out of the windpipe. Also known as voice box.

laser A powerful beam of light that is used in some types of surgery to cut or destroy tissue.

laser surgery, Yag The use of a laser to punch a hole in the iris, in order to relieve increased pressure within the eye. Yag laser surgery is an outpatient procedure that may be used, for example, to treat acute angle-closure glaucoma.

laser-assisted in situ keratomileusis See LASIK.

LASIK Laser-assisted in situ keratomileusis, a kind of laser eye surgery that is designed to change the shape of the cornea to correct vision defects including nearsightedness (myopia), farsightedness (hyperopia), and astigmatism. LASIK is an outpatient procedure that is done with numbing eye drops and takes only minutes to perform. LASIK is similar to photorefractive keratectomy, the major difference being the way that the middle layer of the cornea is exposed before it is vaporized with the laser. In PRK, the top layer of the cornea, called the epithelium, is scraped away to expose the middle layer underneath. In LASIK, a flap is cut in the middle layer and the flap is folded back.

Lasix See *furosemide*.

Lassa fever See *fever, Lassa*.

lateral 1 The side of the body or body part that is farthest from the middle or center (median) of the

body. Typically, lateral refers to the outer side of the body part, but it is also used to refer to the side of a body part. For example, in references to the knee, lateral means the side of the knee farthest from the opposite knee. The opposite of lateral is medial. See also Appendix B, "Anatomic Orientation Terms." 2 In radiology, a slang term for a lateral X-ray film.

lateral collateral ligament of the knee The ligament that straps the outside of the knee joint. It helps provide stability and strength to the knee. See also *knee*.

lateral meniscus of the knee A thickened crescent-shaped cartilage pad in the outer portion of the joint formed by the femur (thigh bone) and the tibia (shin bone). The lateral meniscus acts as a smooth surface for the joint to move on. The lateral meniscus is toward the outer side of the knee joint. It serves to evenly load the surface during weight-bearing, and also aids in disbursing joint fluid for joint lubrication. See also *knee*.

lateral ventricle A communicating cavity in the brain that is part of a system of four communicating cavities that are continuous with the central canal of the spinal cord. The two lateral ventricles are located in the cerebral hemispheres, one in each hemisphere. Each consists of a triangular central body and four horns. The third and fourth ventricles are located in the center of the brain. The lateral ventricles communicate with the third ventricle through an opening called the interventricular foramen. Both lateral ventricles are filled with cerebrospinal fluid.

lateral X-ray An X-ray taken from the side of the patient.

latex allergy An allergic reaction to the protein found in rubber latex. Latex is made from a natural product of tropical rubber trees and is found in surgical gloves, balloons, condoms, rubber bands, pacifiers, and many other products. The allergic reaction can be mild, consisting of bumps or a rash on the skin in areas of contact with latex, or severe enough to cause life-threatening complications.

laughing gas See *nitrous oxide*.

lavage Washing out. Gastric lavage, for example, is the washing out of the stomach to remove drugs or poisons.

law, Hardy-Weinberg See *Hardy-Weinberg law*.

laxative Something that promotes emptying of the bowels. Laxatives are used to combat constipation. They are sometimes overused, producing diarrhea. Laxatives include milk of magnesia and many others.

Ib. Abbreviation for pound (for the Latin *libra*), a measure of weight.

LCHAD deficiency See *deficiency, LCHAD*.

LDL Low-density lipoprotein.

LDL cholesterol Low-density lipoprotein cholesterol, commonly referred to as “bad” cholesterol. Elevated LDL levels are associated with an increased risk of heart disease. Lipoproteins, which are combinations of fats (lipids) and proteins, are the form in which lipids are transported in the blood. Low-density lipoproteins transport cholesterol from the liver to the tissues of the body.

L-dopa See *levodopa*.

lead poisoning An acute or chronic poisoning caused by the absorption of lead or any of its salts into the body. Lead poisoning is an environmental hazard that is capable of causing mental retardation, behavioral disturbance, and brain damage. Lead poisoning is formally defined in the US as at least 10 micrograms of lead per deciliter of blood. Lead poisoning is more common in children than in adults because young children often put their hands and other objects in their mouths, and these objects can have lead dust on them. Furthermore, lead poisoning is more dangerous in children than in adults because children absorb more lead and the developing brain and nervous system are more sensitive to the damaging effects of lead. Lead was used in household paint until 1978, and it was also found in leaded gasoline, some types of batteries, water pipes, and pottery glazes. Lead paint and pipes are still found in many older homes, and lead is sometimes also found in water, food, household dust, and soil. Lead can be a workplace hazard for people in some occupations. A diet that is high in iron and calcium can help protect people against absorbing lead. Treatment involves chelation therapy, whereby blood is removed and metals are filtered out through a machine, then reinfused into the patient. Treatment cannot repair damage to the brain done by lead poisoning, but it may prevent further damage. Also known as plumbism.

learning disability One of several childhood disorders characterized by difficulty with certain skills such as reading or writing in individuals with normal intelligence. Learning disorders affect the ability to interpret what one sees and hears or the ability to link information from different parts of the brain. These limitations can show up in many ways—as specific difficulties with spoken and written language, coordination, self-control, or attention. Such difficulties extend to schoolwork and can impede learning to read or write, or to do math. In

some people, many overlapping learning disabilities may be apparent. Other people may have a single, isolated learning problem that has little impact on other areas of their lives. A learning disability is often called a learning problem.

left heart See *heart, left*.

left heart hypoplasia syndrome See *hypoplastic left heart syndrome*.

left ventricle See *ventricle, left*.

leg In popular usage, the part of the body from the top of the thigh down to the foot, and in medical terminology, the portion of the lower extremity that runs from the knee to the ankle. The leg (in the medical sense) has two bones—the tibia (shinbone) and the fibula—both of which are known as long bones. The larger of the two is the tibia. The fibula runs alongside the tibia.

leg, ankle, and foot bones See *bones of the leg, ankle, and foot*.

leg, restless See *restless leg syndrome*.

leg, upper More properly called the thigh, the upper leg is the area between the knee and the hip. It has only one bone, the femur, which spans the distance from the hip to the knee.

Legg-Calvé-Perthes disease A hip disorder in children that is due to interruption of the blood supply to the head of the femur (the ball in the ball-and-socket hip joint), causing it to deteriorate. This disease is most common between ages 6 and 9, and it tends to affect boys most commonly but is more severe when it occurs in girls. Legg-Calvé-Perthes disease sometimes runs in families. The symptoms include hip and thigh pain, stiff hip, a limp, and diminution in size of the thigh. Over a period of 18 to 24 months, the blood supply usually reestablishes itself. During this period, the bone is soft and liable to fracture under pressure, causing collapse of the head of the femur. Treatment may include casting, bracing, surgery, and physical therapy. Also known as Legg disease, Legg-Perthes disease, Perthes disease, and avascular necrosis of the femoral head.

Legg-Perthes disease See *Legg-Calvé-Perthes disease*.

Legionella The bacterium that causes Legionnaires' disease.

Legionnaires' disease A disease that is caused by bacteria found in plumbing, shower heads, and water-storage tanks. The disease was first identified

at the 1976 American Legion convention, and subsequent outbreaks have occurred. The bacterium that causes it, now known as Legionella, thrives in the mist of condensers, air conditioners, and evaporative cooling towers, and it can infest an entire building or airplane. The symptoms of Legionnaires' disease are much like those of pneumonia and can be overwhelming and sometimes fatal. Also known as Legionella pneumonia.

Leigh's disease A rare, inherited disorder characterized by degeneration of the central nervous system. Leigh's disease can be caused by mutations in mitochondrial DNA or by deficiencies of an enzyme called pyruvate dehydrogenase. Symptoms usually begin between the ages of 3 months and 2 years and progress rapidly. Early symptoms may include poor sucking ability and loss of head control and motor skills, loss of appetite, vomiting, irritability, continuous crying, and seizures. As the symptoms progress, weakness, lack of muscle tone, and episodes of lactic acidosis, which can lead to impairment of respiratory and kidney function, may occur. The prognosis is poor.

leiomyoma See *fibroid*.

leiomyosarcoma A malignant tumor that originates in smooth muscle, the major structural component of most hollow internal organs and the walls of blood vessels. Leiomyosarcoma can occur almost anywhere in the body but is most frequently found in the uterus and gastrointestinal tract. Complete surgical excision, if possible, is the treatment of choice.

Leishmania A group of parasites that cause several human diseases. See also *leishmaniasis*.

leishmaniasis A parasitic disease that is spread by the bite of sand flies infected with the protozoa Leishmania. There are several forms of leishmaniasis, the most common being cutaneous and visceral leishmaniasis (known as kala-azar). The cutaneous form of the disease causes skin sores and is usually named for a geographic place (for example, Jericho boil, Baghdad button, Delhi sore). Visceral leishmaniasis affects the internal organs of the body and can be fatal. See also *kala-azar*.

Lemierre's disease A rare, potentially lethal complication of tonsillitis caused by anaerobic (not requiring oxygen) bacteria including Fusobacteria. The disease usually develops after a bacterial infection has created an abscess near the tonsils. Deep in the abscess, the anaerobic bacteria can flourish. The bacteria penetrate from the abscess into the neighboring jugular vein in the neck to cause an infected blood clot to form and are seeded by the

bloodstream throughout the body. The keys to survival are prompt recognition of the disease, immediate use of appropriate antibiotics and drainage of abscesses. Also known as postanginal sepsis.

Lennox syndrome See *Lennox-Gastaut syndrome*.

Lennox-Gastaut syndrome A severe form of epilepsy that usually begins in early childhood. It is characterized by frequent seizures of multiple types, mental impairment, and a slow spike-and-wave pattern seen on an EEG. The seizures are notoriously hard to treat and may lead to falls and injuries. Treatment involves anti-epileptic medications.

lens The transparent structure inside the eye that focuses light rays onto the retina.

lens, intraocular See *intraocular lens*.

lens, objective In a microscope, the lens nearest to the object being examined. Most light microscopes now have a turret that bears a selection of objective lenses.

lens, ocular In a microscope, the lens closest to the eye. Also known as eyepiece. Most light microscopes are binocular, with one ocular lens for each eye.

lentigo maligna melanoma See *melanoma, lentigo maligna*.

leprosy An infectious disease of the skin, nervous system, and mucous membranes that is caused by the bacteria *Mycobacterium leprae*. Leprosy is transmitted via person-to-person contact. For thousands of years leprosy was one of the world's most feared communicable diseases because the nerve and skin damage often led to terrible disfigurement and disability. Today leprosy can be cured, particularly if treatment is begun early. Antibiotic therapy is the mainstay of treatment. Surgery can be performed to reconstruct damaged faces and limbs. Also known as Hansen's disease.

leptin A hormone produced mainly by adipocytes (fat cells) that is involved in the regulation of body fat. Leptin interacts with areas of the brain that control hunger and behavior and signals that the body has had enough to eat. A small number of people have genetic mutations in the leptin gene, leading to a greater demand for food, resulting in obesity.

leptomeninges The two innermost layers of tissue that cover the brain and spinal cord. The two layers are called the arachnoid mater and pia mater.

lesbian A female homosexual.

lesbianism Female homosexuality. Also known as Sapphism.

Lesch-Nyhan syndrome A rare, inherited disorder caused by a deficiency of the enzyme hypoxanthine-guanine phosphoribosyltransferase (HPRT). The lack of HPRT causes a buildup of uric acid in all body fluids, and leads to symptoms such as severe gout, poor muscle control, and moderate retardation, which appear in the first year of life. Affected individuals also display self-mutilating behaviors such as lip and finger biting, beginning in the second year of life. Elevated uric acid levels can damage many organs, including the joints, kidneys, central nervous system, and other tissues of the body, leading to swelling in the joints and severe kidney disease. Neurological symptoms include facial grimacing, involuntary writhing, and repetitive movements of the arms and legs. The prognosis is poor, with death usually occurring in the first or second decade of life.

lesion An area of abnormal tissue change. Lesions vary in severity from harmless to serious.

let-down reflex An involuntary reflex during breastfeeding that causes the milk to flow freely.

lethal Deadly.

lethal gene, zygotic See *gene, zygotic lethal*.

lethargy Abnormal drowsiness, stupor.

Letterer-Siwe disease A form of Langerhans cell histiocytosis starting in infancy that involves proliferation of histiocytes in multiple organs such as the skin, bones, and other organs. Symptoms include rash, swollen glands, enlargement of the liver and spleen, liver disease, anemia, and lytic lesions of the bones. Letterer-Siwe disease is the most severe form of Langerhans cell histiocytosis and has a high mortality rate.

leucemia See *leukemia*.

leukemia Cancer of the blood cells. Strictly speaking, leukemia should refer only to cancer of the white blood cells (leukocytes), but in practice it can apply to malignancy of any cellular element in the blood or bone marrow, as in red cell leukemia (erythroleukemia). Treatment may involve chemotherapy, radiation therapy, biological therapy, and/or bone marrow transplantation. Also spelled leucemia. See also *accelerated phase of leukemia; leukemia, blastic phase of; leukemia, chronic phase of; leukemia, hairy cell; leukemia, lymphocytic; leukemia, myeloid; leukemia, refractory; myelodysplastic syndrome*.

leukemia, accelerated phase of See *accelerated phase of leukemia*.

leukemia, acute lymphoblastic A form of leukemia that has a sudden onset and is characterized by the presence in the blood and bone marrow of large numbers of unusually immature white blood cells that are precursors of lymphocytes (lymphoblasts). Lymphoblasts are rarely seen in the blood under normal circumstances. Abbreviated ALL. Treatment for ALL may include chemotherapy, radiation, biological therapy, and bone marrow transplantation. There is a high cure rate for ALL today, especially among children. Also known as acute lymphocytic leukemia.

leukemia, acute myeloid A quickly progressive malignancy in which there are too many immature blood-forming cells that are precursors to the granulocytes or monocytes in the blood and bone marrow. Abbreviated AML. AML can occur in children and adults. In AML, the red blood cell levels may be low, causing anemia; platelet levels may be low, causing bleeding and bruising; and the white blood cell levels may be low, leading to infections. Treatments for AML include chemotherapy and bone marrow transplantation. The treatment of the subtype of AML called acute promyelocytic leukemia (APL) differs from that for other forms of AML; it uses all-trans-retinoic acid (ATRA), which induces a complete response in 70 percent of cases and extends survival. Also known as acute myelogenous leukemia and acute nonlymphocytic leukemia (ANLL).

leukemia, blastic phase of A stage in chronic myeloid leukemia in which 30 percent or more of the cells in the bone marrow or blood are the malignant blast cells. See also *leukemia, chronic myeloid*.

leukemia, chronic lymphocytic The most common form of leukemia in adults, in which lymphocytes look fairly normal but are not fully mature and do not function correctly against infection. The malignant cells are found in blood and bone marrow, collect in and enlarge the lymph nodes, and may crowd out other blood cells in the bone marrow, resulting in a shortage of red cells (producing anemia) and platelets (producing bleeding and bruising). Abbreviated CLL. CLL is most common in people 60 years of age or older, and it progresses slowly. In the first stages of CLL, there are often no symptoms. As time goes on, more and more lymphocytes are made and symptoms begin to appear. Treatments may include chemotherapy, monoclonal antibody therapy, and bone marrow transplantation.

leukemia, chronic myelogenous See *leukemia, chronic myeloid*.

leukemia, chronic myeloid A malignant disease involving the white blood cells belonging to the myeloid line that is due to a chromosome rearrangement called the Philadelphia (or Ph) chromosome translocation. Abbreviated CML. CML has several phases that succeed one another. In the first phase, the chronic phase, there are few blast cells in blood and bone marrow and there may be no symptoms. This phase may last from several months to several years. In the next phase, the accelerated phase, there are more blast cells in blood and bone marrow and fewer normal cells. In the final phase, the blastic phase (or blast crisis), more than 30 percent of the cells in the blood or bone marrow are blast cells. Treatments may involve chemotherapy and bone marrow transplantation. Also called chronic myelocytic leukemia and chronic granulocytic leukemia.

leukemia, chronic phase of A stage in chronic myeloid leukemia in which there are few blast cells in the blood or bone marrow and few, if any, symptoms. See also *leukemia, chronic myeloid*.

leukemia, granulocytic See *leukemia, myeloid*.

leukemia, hairy cell A rare type of chronic leukemia in which the abnormal white blood cells appear to be covered with tiny hairs when examined microscopically. The hairy cells are malignant B lymphocytes. There may be too few normal blood cells of all types because of an excess of leukemic cells in the bone marrow. The deficit of different types of normal blood cells can lead to anemia, easy bleeding, and a tendency to infection. Treatment may include chemotherapy, biological therapy, and surgery (to remove the enlarged spleen). In some cases, bone marrow transplantation is done.

leukemia, lymphocytic Cancer of blood cells that are precursors of lymphocytes. The two major types of lymphocytic leukemia are acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL) and chronic lymphocytic leukemia (CML). Also known as lymphoid leukemia.

leukemia, myelogenous See *leukemia, myeloid*.

leukemia, myeloid Cancer of the blood cells of the myeloid line. The two major types of myeloid leukemia are acute myeloid leukemia (AML) and chronic myeloid leukemia (CML). Also known as myelogenous leukemia and nonlymphocytic leukemia.

leukemia, nonlymphocytic See *leukemia, myeloid*.

leukemia, refractory Leukemia in which the high level of white blood cells does not decrease in response to treatment.

leukemia, smoldering See *myelodysplastic syndrome*.

leukemoid reaction A benign condition in which the high number of white blood cells found on a blood test resembles the numbers seen in leukemia. For example, infectious mononucleosis can produce a leukemoid reaction.

leuko- Prefix meaning white, as in leukocyte (white blood cell).

leukocyte A blood cell that helps the body fight infections and other diseases. Also known as white blood cell (WBC). See also *blood cell*.

leukocyte, granular See *granulocyte*.

leukocyte, polymorphonuclear A type of granulocyte that has a nucleus that is so deeply lobated (divided) that the cell appears to have multiple nuclei. Informally called a poly. Also known as neutrophil. See also *blood cell; leukocyte; granulocyte*.

leukocyte count A laboratory test performed to measure the white blood cell (WBC) count. See also *leukocyte*.

leukocytosis A condition in which the number of white blood cells is higher than normal.

leukodystrophy A disorder of the white matter of the brain. The white matter mainly consists of nerve fibers rather than nerve cells themselves, and it is concerned with conduction of nerve impulses.

leukodystrophy, globoid-cell See *Krabbe disease*.

leukopenia A shortage of white blood cells.

leukoplakia A white spot or patch on the mucous membranes in the mouth (for instance, inside the cheeks, on the gums, on the tongue) that may become cancerous.

leukotriene One of a group of chemicals produced by the body that accompanies inflammation. Leukotrienes are believed to play a major role in causing the symptoms of hay fever and asthma.

levo- Prefix meaning on the left side, as in levorotation (turning or twisting to the left). The opposition of levo- is dextro-.

levocardia Reversal of all the abdominal and thoracic organs (*situs inversus*) except the heart, which is still in its usual location on the left. Levocardia virtually always is associated with a congenital heart disease.

levodopa A drug (brand names include: Dopar, Larodopa) that is used to treat Parkinson's disease, Parkinsonian symptoms in other disorders, restless legs syndrome, and herpes zoster. Levodopa converts to the neurotransmitter dopamine in the brain.

levothyroxine sodium A synthetic thyroid hormone (brand names include: Eltroxin, Levothroid, Levoxine, Levoxyl, Synthroid) that is used as a thyroid hormone replacement drug to treat an underactive thyroid gland (hypothyroidism). Because not all brands of levothyroxine sodium are equivalent, it is important not to switch between brand names or generic formulations.

LH Luteinizing hormone.

LHRH Luteinizing hormone-releasing hormone.

LHRH agonist A compound that is similar to luteinizing hormone-releasing hormone (LHRH) in structure and can act like LHRH.

libido 1 Sexual drive. 2 In psychoanalysis, the psychic energy from all instinctive biological drives.

library In genetics, an unordered collection of cloned DNA from a particular organism (for example, an *E. coli* library, a human DNA library). The relationships between these clones can be established with physical mapping. See also *genomic library*.

library, genomic See *genomic library*.

lice, head See *head lice*.

licensed practical nurse See *nurse, licensed practical*.

lichen planus A common skin disease that features small, itchy pink or purple spots on the arms or legs. The abnormal areas on the skin in lichen planus are typically flat-topped (hence the term planus), itchy, and frequently have a polygonal or angular shape. Lichen planus can occur anywhere on the body but is characteristically found on the wrists, shins, lower back, and neck. Lichen planus on the scalp may lead to hair loss. The causes of lichen planus are unknown. However, it can be triggered by the use of certain drugs, such as thiazide diuretics, phenothiazines, and antimalarials. Treatment involves use of topical corticosteroids. In

most cases, the disease spontaneously regresses 6 months to 2 years after onset.

ligament A tough band of connective tissue that connects various structures, such as two bones.

ligament, anterior cruciate See *anterior cruciate ligament*.

ligament, lateral collateral knee See *lateral collateral ligament of the knee*.

ligament, medial collateral knee See *medial collateral ligament of the knee*.

ligament, posterior cruciate See *posterior cruciate ligament*.

ligaments, knee The four strong, elastic bands of tissue that connect bone to bone in the knee. They provide strength and stability to the joint. These four ligaments connect the femur (the bone in the thigh) with the tibia (the larger bone in the lower leg); the medial collateral ligament (MCL), which provides stability to the inner (medial) aspect of the knee; the lateral collateral ligament (LCL), which provides stability to the outer (lateral) aspect of the knee; the anterior cruciate ligament (ACL), in the center of the knee, which limits rotation and the forward movement of the tibia; the posterior cruciate ligament (PCL), in the center of the knee, which limits backward movement of the tibia. Other ligaments are part of the knee capsule, which is a protective, fiber-like structure that wraps around the knee joint.

ligand A molecule that binds to another. Often, a soluble molecule such as a hormone or neurotransmitter that binds to a receptor.

ligate To tie, as in to ligate (tie off) an artery.

ligature Material used to tie something in surgery. Ligatures are used to tie off blood vessels, and they may be made of silk, gut, wire, or other materials.

lightening See *engagement*.

lightheadedness A feeling that one is about to faint. Lightheadedness is medically distinct from dizziness, unsteadiness, and vertigo. See also *dizziness; unsteadiness; vertigo*.

lights, flashing A sensation that is created when the clear, jelly-like substance that fills the middle of the eye (vitreous humor) shrinks and tugs on the retina. These flashes of light can appear off and on for several weeks or months. As a person ages, flashes are likely to occur increasingly often.

limb

Flashes usually do not reflect a serious problem. However, if flashing lights suddenly appear or increase, an ophthalmologist should be consulted immediately, to see whether the retina has been torn. Flashes of light that appear as jagged lines or “heat waves” in both eyes, often lasting 10 to 20 minutes, are frequently caused by migraine, a spasm of blood vessels in the brain.

limb An arm or a leg.

lingual Having to do with the tongue.

linkage The tendency for genes to be inherited together as a package because of their location near one another on the same chromosome.

lip One of the two fleshy folds that surround the opening of the mouth. The upper lip is separated from the nose by the philtrum, the area that lies between the base of the nose and the pigmented edge (called the vermillion border or the carmine margin) of the upper lip. The upper and lower lips meet at the corners (angles) of the mouth, which are called the oral commissures. Small blind pits are sometimes seen at the corners of the mouth; they are known as angular lip pits, and are considered normal minor variants. The lips may be abnormally thin or thick. For example, children with fetal alcohol syndrome typically have a thin upper lip and flat philtrum.

lip, cleft See *cleft lip*.

lipectomy, suction-assisted See *liposuction*.

lipid A fat. Lipids are vital parts of cells and, with carbohydrates and proteins, are the main constituents of cells. Lipids are easily stored in the body and serve as fuel. Among the well-known lipids are cholesterol, triglycerides, fatty acids, and steroids (such as cortisone). Lipoproteins, glycolipids, and phospholipids are all compound lipids (lipids in combination with other types of chemicals).

lipid profile A pattern of lipids in the blood. A lipid profile usually includes the levels of total cholesterol, high-density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol, triglycerides, and the calculated low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol.

lipid storage disease One of a number of disorders that are due to inborn errors in lipid metabolism. Lipid storage diseases result in the abnormal accumulation of lipids in various organs. Examples include Gaucher disease, Fabry disease, Niemann-Pick disease, and metachromatic leukodystrophy.

lipodystrophy, cephalothoracic See *cephalothoracic lipodystrophy*.

lipodystrophy syndrome A disturbance of lipid (fat) metabolism that involves the partial or total absence of fat, and often abnormal deposition and distribution of fat in the body. There are a number of different lipodystrophy syndromes. Some of them are present at birth (congenital), and others are acquired later. Some are genetic (inherited), and others are not. One lipodystrophy syndrome is associated with HIV infection and antiretroviral drug therapy but the exact cause of this syndrome is unknown. In lipodystrophy syndrome, the face, arms, and legs become thin due to loss of subcutaneous fat, and the skin becomes dry, the lips crack, and weight drops. See also *cephalothoracic lipodystrophy; protease inhibitor*.

lipoma A benign tumor of adipocytes (fat cells). Lipomas are common in the skin and are found anywhere on the body. They may be surgically removed for cosmetic reasons.

lipomatosis, familial benign cervical See *cephalothoracic lipodystrophy*.

lipoprotein A molecule that is a combination of lipid and protein. Lipids do not travel in the blood by themselves, but they are carried through the bloodstream as lipoproteins.

liposarcoma A type of malignant tumor that arises from fat cells in deep soft tissue, such as inside the thigh. Most frequently seen in older adults (age 40 and above), liposarcomas are the most common of all soft-tissue sarcomas. See also *sarcoma*.

liposuction The surgical suctioning of fat deposits from specific parts of the body, the most common being the abdomen, buttocks, hips, thighs and knees, chin, upper arms, back, and calves. A hollow instrument called a cannula is inserted under the skin to break up the fat. A high-pressure vacuum is then applied to the cannula to suck out the fat. Liposuction is one of the most common cosmetic operations in the US. See also *liposuction, tumescent; liposuction, ultrasonic-assisted*.

liposuction, tumescent A form of liposuction in which several quarts of a solution are pumped below the skin in the area from which fat is to be suctioned. The saline (salt water) solution used includes the local anesthetic lidocaine to numb the area and the vessel-constrictor epinephrine (adrenaline) to help minimize bleeding. The fat is suctioned out through small suction tubes called microcannulas. See also *liposuction*.

liposuction, ultrasonic-assisted A form of liposuction in which the cannula is energized with ultrasonic energy to assist in the breakdown of fat tissue. This technique has an advantage in areas of scar tissue, such as the male breast, the back, and areas where liposuction has been performed before. Its disadvantages include the need for longer incisions in the skin, a potential for skin or internal burns, greater cost, and a longer time needed to complete the procedure. See also *liposuction*.

Listeria A group of bacteria that can infect both animals and humans. See also *Listeriosis*.

Listeriosis A disease that is caused by eating food contaminated with the bacterium *Listeria monocytogenes*. Listeriosis is an important public health problem in North America. The disease affects primarily pregnant women, newborns, and anyone who is immunocompromised. Symptoms include fever, muscle aches, nausea, and diarrhea. If infection spreads to the nervous system, symptoms such as headache, stiff neck, confusion, loss of balance, or convulsions can occur. Infection during pregnancy may appear mild but can lead to stillbirth, premature delivery, and infection of the newborn. Persons who are at risk of contracting Listeriosis can prevent the infection by avoiding certain high-risk foods and by handling food properly. Raw food from animal sources (such as beef, pork, or poultry) should be thoroughly cooked and uncooked meats should be kept separate from vegetables, cooked foods, and ready-to-eat foods. Raw vegetables should be washed thoroughly before being eaten, and raw (unpasteurized) milk or foods made from raw milk should be avoided.

liter A metric measure of capacity that is equal to the volume of 1 kilogram of water at 4° Celsius and at standard atmospheric pressure of 760 millimeters of mercury. There are 1,000 cubic centimeters, or 1 cubic decimeter, in 1 liter. A liter is a little more than 1 quart (1.057 US liquid quarts). Abbreviated L or l.

lithium A naturally occurring salt that, in purified form, is used to treat certain psychiatric disorders, especially bipolar disease. The therapeutic level of lithium—the amount needed to treat bipolar disorders—is perilously close to the level that can cause toxicity, so monitoring of blood levels is required. Symptoms of lithium toxicity include diarrhea, vomiting, blurred vision, loss of coordination, and loss of motor control. Treatment of lithium toxicity involves immediately reducing or discontinuing lithium use under medical supervision.

litho- Prefix meaning stone, as in lithotomy (an operation to remove a stone), or lithotripsy (a procedure to crush a stone).

lithotomy Surgical removal of a stone.

lithotripsy A procedure that uses shock waves to break a stone in the kidney, urinary tract, or gallbladder. See *lithotripsy, extracorporeal shock wave; lithotripsy, percutaneous nephro-*.

lithotripsy, extracorporeal shock wave A technique for shattering a kidney stone or gallstone with a shock wave that is produced outside the body. Anesthesia may be necessary to control the pain, depending on the size and density of the stone and on the energy of the shock wave needed to break it up. The urologist may opt to place a catheter (stent) in the ureter from below to facilitate passage of the shattered fragments. Abbreviated ESWL.

lithotripsy, percutaneous nephro- A technique for removing large and/or dense kidney stones and staghorn stones. Abbreviated PNL. In PNL, there is no incision; rather, an access port is created by puncturing the kidney through the skin, and the port is then enlarged to allow insertion of instruments to break up and remove stones. The procedure is done under anesthesia, using real-time live X-ray control (fluoroscopy).

lithotriptor A machine that is used to shatter kidney stones and gallstones by physical or other means, such as with shock waves.

live polio vaccine See *polio vaccine, oral*.

livedo reticularis A mottled purplish discoloration of the skin. Livedo reticularis can be a normal condition that is simply more obvious when a person is exposed to the cold. It can also be an indicator of impaired circulation. Livedo reticularis has been reported in association with autoimmune diseases, such as systemic lupus erythematosus; abnormal antibodies referred to as phospholipid antibodies; and a syndrome featuring phospholipid antibodies with multiple brain strokes.

liver The largest solid organ in the body, situated in the upper part of the abdomen on the right side. The liver has a multitude of important and complex functions, including to manufacture proteins, including albumin (to help maintain the volume of blood) and blood clotting factors; to synthesize, store, and process fats, including fatty acids (used for energy) and cholesterol; to metabolize and store carbohydrates (used as the source for the sugar in blood); to form and secrete bile that contains bile acids to aid in the intestinal absorption of fats and

liver biopsy

the fat-soluble vitamins A, D, E, and K; to eliminate, by metabolizing or secreting, the potentially harmful biochemical products produced by the body, such as bilirubin, from the breakdown of old red blood cells and ammonia from the breakdown of proteins; and to detoxify, by metabolizing and/or secreting, drugs, alcohol, and environmental toxins.

liver biopsy A procedure in which a small sample of the liver is removed for the diagnosis of abnormal liver conditions. The most common method for obtaining a liver biopsy is percutaneous ("through the skin"). A percutaneous biopsy involves insertion of a biopsy needle through the skin and chest wall over the lower right side of the chest (directly over the liver) using a local anesthetic.

liver of pregnancy, acute fatty See *acute fatty liver of pregnancy*.

liver transplantation Surgery to remove a diseased liver and replace it with a healthy liver (or part of one) from a donor. The most common reason for liver transplantation in children is biliary atresia (a disease in which the ducts that carry bile out of the liver are missing or damaged). The most common reason for liver transplantation in adults is cirrhosis (a disease in which healthy liver cells are killed and replaced with scar tissue). There is no effective treatment for end-stage liver disease other than transplantation. The life of someone with kidney failure can be extended via dialysis, and someone with a failing heart can sometimes be sustained with an implantable pump, but there are no machines that can take over the liver's functions. Transplanted livers may come from cadavers or living donors.

livid Black-and-blue, as from bruising.

living will An advance medical directive that specifies what types of medical treatment are desired. A living will can be very specific or very general. The most common statement in a living will requests that if the patient suffers an incurable, irreversible illness, disease, or condition, and the attending physician determines that the condition is terminal, life-sustaining measures that would serve only to prolong dying be withheld or discontinued. More specific living wills may include information regarding an individual's desire for services such as pain relief, antibiotics, hydration, feeding, and the use of ventilators, blood products, or cardiopulmonary resuscitation.

LLETZ Large loop excision of the transformation zone, a procedure for treating high grade cervical dysplasia discovered on colposcopic examination. The surgeon uses a wire loop through which an

electrical current is passed to remove the precancerous areas of the cervix. The procedure can be done in the physician's office and requires only a local anesthetic. Also known as loop electrosurgical excision procedure (LEEP).

LLL 1 Left lower lobe, the bottom-left lobe of the lung. 2 La Leche League. 3 The Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, a federal research facility that focuses on health and biomedicine, science and math education, the environment, energy, and national security.

LLQ Left lower quadrant (quarter). For example, the LLQ of the abdomen contains the descending portion of the colon.

lobar Having to do with a lobe. For example, lobar pneumonia is pneumonia in a single lobe of a lung.

lobe 1 A subdivision of an organ that is divided by fissures, connective tissue, or other natural boundaries. 2 A rounded projecting portion, such as the lobe of the ear.

lobectomy An operation to remove an entire lobe of the lung.

lobular carcinoma of the breast, infiltrating See *breast, infiltrating lobular carcinoma of the*.

lobule A little lobe.

local therapy In the context of cancer, treatment that affects cells in the tumor and the area close to it. Also known as local treatment.

local treatment See *local therapy*.

lochia The fluid that is discharged from the vagina for a week or so after childbirth. At first the lochia is primarily blood, followed by a more mucousy fluid that contains dried blood, and finally a clear-to-yellow discharge.

loci Plural of locus.

lockjaw See *tetanus*.

locomotion 1 Movement from one place to another. 2 The ability to get from one place to the next. See also *locomotive system*.

locomotive system The bones, the joints, and the muscles that contract and relax to move the joints and bones.

locus In genetics, the place a gene occupies on a chromosome. The plural is loci.

Loeys-Dietz syndrome An inherited syndrome characterized by aortic aneurysms and other blood vessel abnormalities in children. The condition is often associated with other birth defects. The aortic aneurysms of Loeys-Dietz syndrome are prone to rupture at a smaller size than other aneurysms, with early identification of the condition and surgical intervention critical for survival.

loin The portion of the lower back from just below the ribs to the pelvis.

long arm of a chromosome See *chromosome*.

long QT syndrome A disorder of the heart's electrical system that predisposes individuals to irregular heartbeats, fainting spells, and sudden death. The irregular heartbeats are typically brought on by stress or vigorous activity. Abbreviated LQTS. LQTS is often symptomless and undiagnosed, but it is well known as a cause of sudden cardiac death in young, apparently healthy people, most notably competitive athletes. QT refers to an interval seen in an electrocardiogram (EKG) test of heart function. There are multiple genetic forms of LQTS. Romano-Ward syndrome is an autosomal dominant form of LQTS. The Jervell and Lange-Nielsen syndrome is an autosomal recessive form of LQTS and is characterized by congenital profound bilateral sensorineural hearing loss and long QT interval.

long-chain-3-hydroxyacyl-CoA dehydrogenase deficiency See *deficiency*, *LCHAD*.

longevity Lifespan. Increased longevity means a longer life.

longitudinal Along the length of something; running lengthwise or, by extension, over the course of time.

longitudinal section A section that is cut along the long axis of a structure. Longitudinal section is the opposite of cross-section.

longitudinal study A study done over the passage of time. For example, a longitudinal study of children with Down syndrome might involve the study of 100 children with this condition from birth to 10 years of age. Longitudinal study is the opposite of cross-sectional (synchronous) study. Also known as diachronic study.

lordosis Inward curvature of the spine. The spine is not supposed to be absolutely straight, so some degree of curvature is normal. When the curve exceeds the usual range, it may be due to musculoskeletal disease or simply to poor posture. Treatment usually involves physical therapy,

although in severe cases surgery, casting, and/or bracing may be required. The neck and low back normally have some lordosis.

Lou Gehrig's disease See *amyotrophic lateral sclerosis*.

louse-borne typhus See *typhus, epidemic*.

low blood pressure See *hypotension*.

low placenta See *placenta previa*.

lower GI series A series of diagnostic X-rays of the colon and rectum, taken after the patient is given a barium enema. See also *barium enema*.

lower segment cesarean section See *cesarean section, lower segment*.

low-set ear See *ear, low-set*.

LP Lumbar puncture.

LQTS Long QT syndrome.

LSCS Lower segment cesarean section.

lubricant An oily or slippery substance. A vaginal lubricant may be helpful for women who feel pain during intercourse because of vaginal dryness.

lues See *syphilis*.

LUL Left upper lobe, the top-left lobe of the lung.

lumbago An older, medically imprecise term referring to pain in the lower back.

lumbar Referring to the five lumbar vertebrae, the disks below them, and the corresponding area of the lower back. The lumbar vertebrae and their disks are situated below the thoracic vertebrae and above the sacral vertebrae in the spinal column and are surrounded by soft tissues, including ligaments and large muscles.

lumbar puncture A procedure in which cerebrospinal fluid is removed from the spinal canal for diagnostic testing or treatment. Abbreviated LP. The patient usually lies sideways for the procedure, although LPs in infants are often done upright. After local anesthesia is injected into the small of the back (the lumbar area), a needle is inserted between two vertebrae and into the spinal canal. Spinal fluid pressure can then be measured, and cerebrospinal fluid can be removed for testing. LP is particularly helpful in the diagnosis of inflammatory diseases of the central nervous system (CNS), especially meningitis and other infections. It can also

provide clues to the diagnosis of stroke, spinal cord tumor, and cancer in the CNS. An LP can also be done for therapeutic purposes, as a way of administering antibiotics, cancer drugs, or anesthetic agents into the spinal canal. Spinal fluid is sometimes removed via LP to decrease spinal fluid pressure in patients with conditions such as normal-pressure hydrocephalus or benign intracranial hypertension. Risks related to LP include headache, brain herniation, bleeding, and infection. These complications are uncommon, with the exception of headache, which can appear up to a day after LP. Headaches are less likely to occur if the patient remains lying flat for 1 to 3 hours after the procedure. Also known as spinal tap, spinal puncture, thecal puncture, and rachiocentesis.

lumbar vertebrae The five vertebrae situated between the thoracic vertebrae and the sacral vertebrae in the spinal column. The lumbar vertebrae are represented by the symbols L1 through L5.

lumpectomy The surgical removal of a small tumor, which may be benign or cancerous. In common use, lumpectomy refers especially to removal of a lump from the breast. Lumpectomy, often with chemotherapy or radiation therapy, can be an alternative to mastectomy in cases of nonmetastatic breast cancer.

lung One of a pair of three-lobed breathing organs located within the right and left sides of the chest. The lungs remove carbon dioxide from the blood and bring oxygen into the blood. Air comes into the lungs via the trachea, traveling evenly into the left and right lungs by means of the left and right bronchi. Each bronchus branches off into several smaller bronchioles, which end in many alveolar sacs. In the tiny alveoli within these sacs, oxygen is exchanged for carbon dioxide in blood delivered back to the heart by the pulmonary veins. Lung function is controlled by several muscles, including the diaphragm muscle beneath the lungs and the intercostal muscles that surround the lungs.

lung, collapsed See *atelectasis*.

lung transplant Surgery to replace a diseased or damaged lung with a healthy lung from an organ donor. Lung transplant is sometimes done in tandem with heart transplant. See also *transplant*.

lupus A chronic inflammatory disease that is caused by autoimmunity. Patients with lupus have in their blood unusual antibodies that are targeted against their own body tissues. Lupus can cause disease of the skin, heart, lungs, kidneys, joints, and nervous system. The first symptom is a red (or dark), scaly rash on the nose and cheeks, often

called a butterfly rash because of its distinctive shape. As inflammation continues, scar tissue may form, including keloid scarring in patients prone to keloid formation. The cause of lupus is unknown, although heredity, viruses, ultraviolet light, and drugs may all play a role. Lupus is more common in women than in men, and although it occurs in all ethnic groups, it is most common in people of African descent. Diagnosis is made through observation of symptoms, and through testing of the blood for signs of autoimmune activity. Early treatment is essential to prevent progression of the disease. A rheumatologist can provide treatment for lupus, and this treatment has two objectives: treating the difficult symptoms of the disease and treating the underlying autoimmune activity. It may include use of steroids and other anti-inflammatory agents, antidepressants and/or mood stabilizers, intravenous immunoglobulin, and, in cases in which lupus involves the internal organs, chemotherapy. See also *lupus, discoid; lupus erythematosis, systemic*.

lupus, discoid A chronic inflammatory condition that is limited to the skin and is caused by an autoimmune disease. Up to 10 percent of persons with discoid lupus eventually develop systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE). Heredity, viruses, ultraviolet light, and drugs may also be involved. Skin symptoms associated with discoid lupus include patchy redness with areas of hyper- and hypopigmentation that can cause scarring; and photosensitivity, or skin rash in reaction to exposure to sunlight. Diagnosis of discoid lupus may be made via medical history and antinuclear antibody (ANA) testing. Treatment is directed toward decreasing inflammation and/or the level of autoimmune activity. Treatment methods include avoidance of sun exposure and use of anti-malarial medications (hydroxychloroquine and others), local cortisone injections, Dapsone, and immune-suppression medications. See also *lupus; lupus erythematosis, systemic*.

lupus erythematosis, systemic A form of lupus that has a tendency to involve the internal organs. Abbreviated SLE. Eleven criteria have been established for the diagnosis of SLE, including the presence of a malar ("butterfly") rash and/or other discoid skin rash; skin rash in reaction to sunlight exposure; ulceration of the mucus lining of the mouth, nose, or throat; two or more swollen, tender joints of the extremities (arthritis); inflammation of the lining tissue around the heart or lungs (pericarditis/pleuritis), usually associated with chest pain with breathing; abnormal amounts of protein or cellular elements in the urine, caused by kidney abnormalities; brain irritation manifested by seizures, severe mood swings, and/or psychosis; low counts of white or red blood cells, or platelets; abnormal

results on immune-system tests, including anti-DNA or anti-Sm (Smith) antibodies, falsely positive blood test for syphilis, anticardiolipin antibodies, lupus anticoagulant, or a positive lupus erythematosus prep test; and positive results for antinuclear antibodies (ANAs) on a blood test. SLE is also often characterized by fatigue. Psychiatric symptoms closely resemble those of a bipolar disorder, which sometimes leads to misdiagnosis. SLE is eight times more common in women than in men. The causes of SLE are unknown, but heredity, infectious disease, ultraviolet light, and drugs may all play a role. Treatment is directed toward decreasing inflammation and moderating the level of autoimmune activity, and it can range from administration of anti-inflammatory medication to use of chemotherapy. Persons with SLE can help prevent flare-ups of their disease by avoiding sun exposure and by not abruptly discontinuing medications. Medication can help treat specific symptoms as well, including reducing skin rash, irritation, and scarring; reducing joint inflammation; and treating psychiatric symptoms. See also *lupus*.

LUQ Left upper quadrant (quarter). For example, the LUQ of the abdomen contains the spleen.

Luschka, foramina of See *foramina of Luschka*.

luteinizing hormone A gonadotropin (a hormone that affects the function of the sex organs) that is released by the pituitary gland in response to luteinizing hormone-releasing hormone. Abbreviated LH. In females, LH controls the length and sequence of the female menstrual cycle, including ovulation, preparation of the uterus for implantation of a fertilized egg, and ovarian production of both estrogen and progesterone. In males, LH stimulates the testes to produce androgen. Also known as interstitial-cell-stimulating hormone (ICSH). See also *gonadotropin*.

luteinizing hormone-releasing hormone A hormone that controls the production of luteinizing hormone in men and women. Abbreviated LHRH. See also *luteinizing hormone*.

luxation Complete dislocation of a joint. A partial dislocation is a subluxation.

Lyme disease An inflammatory disease that is caused by the bacterium *Borrelia burgdorferi*, which is transmitted to humans by the deer tick. The first sign of Lyme disease is a red, circular, expanding rash, usually radiating from the tick bite, followed by flu-like symptoms and joint pains. After the *B. burgdorferi* has entered the bloodstream, it can infect and inflame many different types of tissues, eventually causing many diverse symptoms. Lyme

disease is medically divided into three phases: early localized disease with skin inflammation; early disseminated disease with heart and nervous system involvement, including palsies and meningitis; and late disease, featuring motor and sensory nerve damage and brain inflammation and arthritis. Within hours to weeks of the tick bite, an expanding ring of unraised redness develops, with an outer ring of brighter redness and a central area of clearing, giving it the appearance of a bull's-eye. The redness of the skin is often accompanied by generalized fatigue, muscle and joint stiffness, swollen glands, and headache. Early treatment with antibiotics is the best strategy for preventing major problems due to Lyme disease. Further prevention of Lyme disease involves avoiding areas where ticks are common, wearing protective clothing and lotion, and immediately removing any ticks from the body. Interestingly, Lyme disease only became apparent in 1975, when mothers of a group of children who lived near each other in Lyme, Connecticut, made researchers aware that their children were all diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis. This unusual grouping of illness that appeared to be rheumatoid eventually led researchers to the identification of the bacterial cause of Lyme disease in 1982.

lymph The almost colorless fluid that travels through the lymphatic system, carrying cells that help fight infection and disease.

lymph gland See *lymph node*.

lymph node One of many small, bean-shaped organs located throughout the lymphatic system. The lymph nodes are important in the function of the immune response and also store special cells that can trap cancer cells or bacteria that are traveling through the body through the lymph. Also known as lymph gland.

lymph node, sentinel The first lymph node to receive lymphatic drainage from a tumor. The sentinel node for a given tumor is found by injecting a tracer substance around the tumor. This substance then travels through the lymphatic system to the sentinel node. The tracer substance may be a blue dye that can be tracked visually or a radioactive colloid that can be followed radiologically. Biopsy of the sentinel lymph node can reveal whether cancer has spread through the lymphatic system. If the sentinel node contains tumor cells, removal of more nodes in the area may be warranted.

lymphadenitis The enlargement and/or inflammation of a lymph node. Lymphadenitis may have multiple causes and may involve a single lymph node or a group of lymph nodes. See also *lymph node*.

lymphadenitis, regional See *cat scratch fever*.

lymphadenopathy Abnormally enlarged lymph nodes. Commonly called swollen glands.

lymphadenopathy virus See *HIV*.

lymphadenopathy-associated virus See *HIV*.

lymphangiogram An X-ray of the lymphatic system for which a dye is injected to outline the lymphatic vessels and organs.

lymphangioma An abnormal structure that consists of a collection of blood vessels and lymph vessels that are overgrown and clumped together. Depending on its nature, a lymphangioma may grow slowly or quickly. Lymphangiomas can cause problems because of their location. For example, a lymphangioma around the larynx might cause a breathing problem.

lymphatic Pertaining to a small, thin channel that is similar to a blood vessel and that collects and carries tissue fluid (lymph) from the body. This fluid ultimately drains back into the bloodstream.

lymphatic system The tissues and organs, including the bone marrow, spleen, thymus, and lymph nodes, that produce and store cells that fight infection and disease. The channels that carry lymph are also part of this system.

lymphedema A condition in which excess fluid collects in tissue and causes swelling. Lymphedema may occur in the arm or leg after lymph vessels or lymph nodes in the underarm or groin are removed. It usually causes painless swelling.

lymphocyte A small white blood cell that plays a large role in defending the body against disease. Lymphocytes are integrally involved in many immune responses. There are two main types of lymphocytes: B cells and T cells. Lymphocytes are often present at sites of chronic inflammation.

lymphocytic Referring to lymphocytes, a type of white blood cell. For example, lymphocytic inflammation in the skin is skin that is infiltrated with lymphocytes.

lymphocytopenia Having an abnormally low number of lymphocytes. There are many causes of lymphocytopenia, ranging from medication toxicity to a variety of diseases.

lymphocytosis Having too many lymphocytes. Lymphocytosis may be a marker that infection or disease is present.

lymphogranuloma venereum An uncommon genital or anorectal (affecting the anus and/or rectum) infection that is caused by a specific type of Chlamydia trachomatis. Abbreviated LGV. Patients with LGV typically have tender lymph nodes in the groin and may recently have had a genital ulcer that resolved on its own. Other patients, in particular those with HIV infection, may have rectal or anal inflammation, scarring, and narrowing (stricture), which cause frequent small bowel movements (diarrhea) and a sense of incomplete evacuation of the bowels. In addition, these patients can have pain around the anal area (perianal), and occasionally drainage from the perianal area or the glands in the groin. Treatment is with antibiotics.

lymphoid Referring to lymphocytes, a type of white blood cell, or to tissue in which lymphocytes develop. Lymphoid tissue is full of lymphocytes, such as a lymph node.

lymphoid tissue The part of the body's immune system that is important for the immune response and helps protect it from infection and foreign bodies. Lymphoid tissue is present throughout the body and includes the lymph nodes, spleen, tonsils, adenoids, and other structures.

lymphoma A tumor of the lymphoid tissue. The major types of lymphoma are Hodgkin's disease and non-Hodgkin's lymphoma (NHL). NHL can in turn be divided into low-grade, intermediate-grade, high-grade, and miscellaneous lymphomas. The course of NHL varies greatly, from indolent to rapidly fatal. Treatment options include chemo and radiation therapy.

lymphoma, AIDS-related A condition that occurs in people with AIDS, in which lymphoid tumors are present, presumably due to immune-system impairment. Treatment is like that of other lymphomas but must take into account the fact that the natural immunity is impaired.

lymphoma, Hodgkin's See *Hodgkin's disease*.

lymphoma, large cell Cancer of the lymphatic tissue that is characterized by unusually large cells when viewed microscopically.

lymphoma, lymphoblastic A rapidly moving, aggressive form of lymphoma that is most often seen in children or young adults. Since it is a tumor consisting of early lymphocyte precursors (lymphoblasts) it is believed to represent the same disease entity as acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL). Lymphoblastic lymphoma is a term that has been used in the past to refer to the presence of the abnormal lymphoblasts primarily in the lymph

nodes. The World Health Organization (WHO) classification has unified lymphoblastic lymphoma and lymphoblastic leukemia into one entity known as precursor B- or T-cell lymphoblastic leukemia/lymphoma. Treatment may include chemotherapy, radiation, surgery, medications, and bone marrow transplant.

lymphoma, non-Hodgkin's A form of lymphoma in which malignant tumors arise in the lymphatic system. Abbreviated NHL. Several subtypes of cancer are classified as NHL, all of which originate in and spread via the lymphatic system. Symptoms of NHL depend on the location of the tumor, but can include swollen, but not painful, lymph nodes; gastric distress; skin problems; night sweats; unexplained weight loss; itching; and fever. Diagnosis is made via biopsy of a swollen lymph node, although an X-ray, a sonogram, a CAT scan, or an MRI may also be helpful. Treatment may include chemotherapy, radiation, bone marrow transplantation, stem-cell transplantation, use of medication, and the use

of monoclonal antibodies, depending on the age of the patient and the type of tumor.

lymphoproliferative disorders Malignant diseases of the lymphoid cells and of cells from the reticuloendothelial system that usually occur in people with compromised immune systems, such as patients with AIDS and recent transplant patients. Lymphoproliferative disorders can be associated with Epstein-Barr virus infection. See also *Epstein-Barr virus*.

lymphoreticulosis, benign See *cat scratch fever*.

-lysis Suffix indicating destruction, as in hemolysis (the destruction of red blood cells with the release of hemoglobin).

-lytic Suffix having to do with lysis, as in hemolytic anemia (anemia due to the destruction of red blood cells).

<http://www.rashidiislamiccenter.com>

Mm

M protein An antibody or part of an antibody that is found in unusually large amounts in the blood or urine of patients with multiple myeloma, a form of cancer that arises in plasma cells.

MAC 1 Mycobacterium avium complex. 2 Membrane attack complex.

Macewen operation A surgical operation to repair inguinal hernia that was designed by Scottish surgeon Sir William Macewen.

machine, heart-lung See *heart-lung machine*.

macro- Prefix meaning large or long, as macrocephaly (an abnormally large head) and macrosomia (an overly large body). The opposite of macro- is micro-.

macroangiopathy A disease of the large blood vessels in which fat and blood clots build up and stick to the vessel walls, blocking the flow of blood. Types of macroangiopathy include coronary artery disease (macroangiopathy in the heart), cerebrovascular disease (macroangiopathy in the brain), and peripheral vascular disease (macroangiopathy that affects, for example, vessels in the legs).

macrobiota The living organisms of a region that are large enough to be seen with the naked eye.

macrobiotic Referring to the macrobiota, a region's living organisms that are large enough to be seen with the naked eye.

macrobiotic diet A diet that incorporates Ayurvedic principles of food combining, is based mainly on brown rice and vegetables, and claims to lengthen life. The macrobiotic diet is strictly not recommended for pregnant women or children and may not provide sufficient protein and nutrients for others.

macrocephaly An abnormally large head. The opposite of macrocephaly is microcephaly. Macrocephaly can be a normal variant or be a sign of pressure within the growing head during childhood, such as from hydrocephalus.

macrocytic Literally, referring to any abnormally large cell; in practice, referring to an abnormally large red blood cell. For example, macrocytic anemia is characterized by abnormally large red blood cells. The opposite of macrocytic is microcytic.

macrogenitosomia A condition in which the external sex organs are prematurely or abnormally enlarged. Macrogenitosomia is associated with hormonal disorders that may also create changes in the internal sex organs.

macroglobulinemia A condition in which the blood contains high levels of large proteins and is too thick to flow through small blood vessels. The large protein is an antibody called macroglobulin or IgM. One type of macroglobulinemia is Waldenström macroglobulinemia, a type of cancer.

macroglossia An abnormally large tongue. Macroglossia is sometimes said to be associated with Down syndrome, but in that disorder the tongue is actually large only in relationship to a smaller-than-normal mouth cavity.

macrognathia An abnormally large jaw. Macrognathia can be associated with pituitary gigantism, tumors, and other disorders. Macrognathia can often be corrected with surgery. Also known as prognathic mandible.

macrolide antibiotic One of a family of antibiotics produced by Streptomyces bacteria. Examples of the macrolide antibiotics include erythromycin and azithromycin. See also *erythromycin*.

macroorchidism Abnormally large testes. To determine if the testes are too large, a device called an orchidometer is used that permits a testis to be compared to a series of plastic ovals (like miniature American footballs) of differing sizes. Macroorchidism is a diagnostic feature, for example, of the fragile X syndrome, the most common inherited form of mental retardation. The opposite of macroorchidism is microorchidism.

macrophage A type of white blood cell that ingests foreign material. Macrophages are key players in the immune response to foreign invaders of the body, such as infectious microorganisms. They are normally found in the liver, spleen, and connective tissues of the body.

macroscopic Large enough to be seen with the naked eye, as opposed to microscopic. For example, a macroscopic tumor is big enough to see without a microscope.

macrosomia An overly large body. A child with macrosomia has significant overgrowth, which can represent a hormone imbalance.

macula A small spot. For example, a macula on the skin is a small flat spot. See also *macula lutea*.

macula lutea A small area in the retina that provides the keenest vision. It is the light-sensitive layer of tissue at the back of the eye. Also known as simply macula.

macular 1 Referring to a macule, a circumscribed change in the color of the skin that is neither elevated nor depressed. 2 Referring to the macula lutea of the retina.

macular degeneration Deterioration of the macula lutea, a common progressive disorder that causes partial or total loss of macular vision, causing difficulty in doing tasks that require fine frontal vision (such as reading and driving a car). Although some forms of macular degeneration affect young people, most macular degeneration occurs in people over 60 years of age and is termed age-related macular degeneration (AMD). There are two types of AMD: the dry type and the less frequent wet type. In dry AMD, loss of central vision occurs slowly due to the gradual breakdown of cells in the macula. Dry AMD may progress to wet AMD, which is sometimes referred to as advanced AMD. Neither type causes pain. An early symptom of wet AMD is that straight lines appear wavy. This happens because the newly formed blood vessels leak fluid under the macula. The fluid raises the macula from its normal place at the back of the eye and distorts vision. Another sign that a person may have wet AMD is rapid loss of central vision. In both dry and wet AMD, the person may also notice blind spots. A person who has any of these changes in vision should consult an ophthalmologist without delay. See also *macular vision*.

macular hole A hole in the macula, the area of the retina that is responsible for fine central vision. Macular holes occur mainly in women. In time, central vision tends to worsen. A surgical procedure called vitrectomy (removal of the vitreous humor) may be considered as a treatment option. See also *macular vision*.

macular vision The type of fine, sharp, straight-ahead vision that enables people to read, drive, and perform other activities. As light is focused onto the macula, millions of cells change the light into nerve signals that tell the brain what is being seen. This is called macular or central vision. See also *macula lutea*.

macule A circumscribed change in the color of skin that is neither raised nor depressed. Macules are completely flat and can only be appreciated by visual inspection and not by touch. Physicians refer

to flat skin spots on the skin as macules, as opposed to papules.

mad cow disease A nickname for bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), a progressive neurological disorder of cattle that results from infection by a transmissible agent. The most widely accepted theory is that the agent is a modified form of a normal cell surface component known as a prion. Evidence indicates that BSE has been transmitted to humans, primarily in the UK, causing a variant form of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (vCJD) and resulting in degenerative spongiform (soft and full of cavities, sponge-like) changes in the brain similar to those seen in affected cattle. Also known as bovine spongiform encephalopathy.

Magendie, foramen of See *foramen of Magendie*.

magnesium A mineral that is involved in many processes in the body, including nerve signaling, the building of healthy bones, and normal muscle contraction. All unprocessed foods contain magnesium. High concentrations of magnesium are found in nuts, unmilled grains, and legumes, such as peas and beans. See also *deficiency, magnesium; magnesium excess*.

magnesium deficiency See *deficiency, magnesium*.

magnesium excess Too much magnesium in the body. Persons with impaired kidney function should be especially careful about their magnesium intake because they can accumulate dangerous levels of magnesium. Also known as hypermagnesemia. See also *magnesium*.

magnetic resonance imaging A procedure that uses magnetism, radio waves, and a computer to create pictures of areas inside the body. Abbreviated MRI. An MRI is painless and has the advantage of avoiding x-ray radiation exposure. There are no known risks of an MRI. The benefits of an MRI relate to its precise accuracy in detecting structural abnormalities of the body. Patients with heart pacemakers, metal implants, or metal chips or clips in or around the eyes cannot be scanned with MRI because of the effect of the magnet.

Maimonides' Daily Prayer of a Physician See *Daily Prayer of a Physician*.

maintenance therapy Treatment designed to help the original primary treatment to succeed. Maintenance therapy may be given to patients who

have cancer that is in remission to prevent a relapse.

major In general, something that is more than something else. For example, the teres major muscle is larger than the teres minor muscle.

major depression See *depression, major*.

major histocompatibility complex A cluster of genes on chromosome 6 that encode a class of cell surface molecules that are important for antigen production and are critical in organ transplantation. Abbreviated MHC. The MHC includes the human leukocyte antigen (HLA) genes.

malabsorption Poor intestinal absorption of nutrients. Malabsorption can occur from diseases that injure the bowels, such as Crohn's disease, Whipple's disease, celiac disease, and many others.

malacia Softening. For example, osteomalacia is softening of bone, usually due to deficiency of calcium and vitamin D.

malady A disease or an illness, from the French *maladie*, meaning "illness."

malaise A vague feeling of discomfort, one that cannot be pinned down but is often sensed as "just not right."

malar Referring to the cheek. For example, a malar rash is a rash that appears over the cheeks.

malar bone The zygoma. See also *zygoma*.

malar rash Rash over the cheeks. See also *butterfly rash*.

malaria An infectious disease that affects many millions of people and is caused by protozoan parasites from the Plasmodium family. These parasites can be transmitted by the sting of the Anopheles mosquito or by a contaminated needle or transfusion. The symptoms of malaria include cycles of chills, fever, sweats, muscle aches, and headache that recur every few days. Other symptoms include vomiting, diarrhea, coughing, and yellowing of the skin and eyes (jaundice). Treatment includes use of oral or intravenous medication, particularly chloroquine, mefloquine (brand name: Larium), or atovaquone/proguanil (brand name: Malarone). Anti-malarial drugs can be taken by those traveling to endemic areas for prevention of malaria. Persons carrying the sickle cell gene have some protection against malaria. Among the many names for malaria

are ague, jungle fever, marsh or swamp fever, and paludism. See also *malaria, falciparum*.

malaria, falciparum The most dangerous type of malaria, which is caused by the parasite Plasmodium falciparum. Falciparum malaria is associated with high levels of parasites in the blood and has the highest death rate and rate of complications of all types of malaria. Red blood cells that are infected with the parasite tend to sludge and lead to microinfarctions (tiny areas of dead tissue due to lack of oxygen) in capillaries in the brain, liver, adrenal gland, intestinal tract, kidneys, lungs, and other organs. Patients should be treated in a hospital setting, using intravenous medications.

male 1 Of the sex that produces sperm cells rather than eggs. 2 Having the physical appearance, by chromosome constitution or by gender identification, of the sex that produces sperm cells rather than eggs.

male breast cancer See *breast cancer, male*.

male chromosome complement The whole set of chromosomes for a human male. The large majority of males have a 46,XY chromosome complement: 46 chromosomes, including 1 X and 1 Y chromosome. A minority of males have other chromosome constitutions, such as 47,XXY (47 chromosomes, including 2 X chromosomes and 1 Y chromosome) or 47,XYY (47 chromosomes, including 1 X and 2 Y chromosomes).

male external genitalia The external genital structures of the male, comprising the penis, the male urethra, and the scrotum.

male gonad A testis, one of a pair of organs located behind the penis in a pouch of skin called the scrotum. The testes produce and store sperm and are also the body's main source of male hormones. These hormones control the development of the reproductive organs and other male characteristics, such as body and facial hair, low voice, and wide shoulders.

male internal genitalia The internal genital structures of the male that are concerned with reproduction, including the testis, epididymis, ductus deferens, seminal vesicle, ejaculatory duct, bulbourethral gland, and prostate.

male organs of reproduction The sum total of all the genital organs—internal and external—of the male that are concerned with reproduction. See also *male external genitalia; male internal genitalia*.

male pelvis The lower part of the abdomen that is located between the hip bones in a male. The male pelvis is more robust, narrower, and taller than the female pelvis. The angle of the male pubic arch and the sacrum are narrower as well.

malformation An abnormality in which the development of a structure is arrested, delayed, or misdirected early in embryonic life, and the effect is permanent. See also *congenital malformation*.

malformation, arteriovenous A malformation of blood vessels in the brain, brainstem, or spinal cord that is characterized by a complex tangled web of abnormal arteries and veins connected by one or more fistulas (abnormal communications). Abbreviated AVM. An AVM has no capillary bed. The fistulas in the AVM permit high-speed, high-flow shunting of blood from the arterial to the venous side of the circulation. This creates low pressure in the arterial vessels feeding the AVM and neighboring areas of the brain that they normally supply with blood. If an AVM causes problems, it is usually before the person who has it reaches age 40. The most common symptoms include hemorrhaging (bleeding), seizures, headaches, and neurological problems such as paralysis or loss of speech, memory, or vision. Treatment for AVM may involve surgery or closing off the vessels of the AVM by nonsurgical means, using a catheter to deliver agents that block the blood vessels. Most people with AVMs never experience problems, but AVMs that hemorrhage can lead to serious neurological problems and sometimes death.

malignancy A tumor that is malignant (cancerous), that can invade and destroy nearby tissue, and that may spread (metastasize) to other parts of the body.

malignant 1 Tending to be severe and become progressively worse, as in malignant hypertension. 2 In regard to a tumor, having the properties of a malignancy. See also *malignancy*.

malignant giant cell tumor A type of bone tumor that is characterized by massive destruction of bone near the end (epiphysis) of a long bone and causes pain and restricts movement. The most common site of malignant giant cell tumor is the knee. Diagnosis is made by examining a sample of the affected area. Treatment involves excising the affected area, usually followed by chemotherapy or radiation.

malignant melanoma See *melanoma*.

malleability, brain See *brain plasticity*.

malleolus The rounded bony prominence on either side of the ankle joint.

malleus A tiny bone in the middle ear that is shaped like a minute mallet.

malrotated ear See *ear, slanted*.

malrotation of the intestine Failure of the intestine to rotate normally during the development of the embryo. One of the dangers of malrotation of the intestine is that the intestine may be obstructed by abnormal bands or twist on its own blood supply, a condition called volvulus. Malrotation of the intestine is usually not apparent until the intestine becomes obstructed or twisted, generally in infants or in early childhood. Symptoms at that time may include vomiting up bile (greenish-yellow digestive fluid), abdominal pain, drawing up the legs, distention (swelling) of the abdomen, and bloody stools. This situation is considered an emergency and calls for immediate surgery to salvage the intestine and save the child.

MALT lymphoma A low grade type of malignancy that arises in cells in mucosal tissue which are involved in antibody production. These lymphomas occur most often in the stomach but can also arise in the lung, thyroid, salivary glands, eye, skin, or soft tissues. MALT stands for mucosa-associated lymphoid tissue. MALT lymphomas are typically slow growing and are usually diagnosed at an early stage. They may be treated with low doses of radiotherapy or removed by surgery. If they have spread, they are treated with chemotherapy. The outlook is good, even when the disease is quite widespread.

mammary gland One of the two half-moon-shaped glands on either side of the adult female chest, which with fatty tissue and the nipple make up the breast. Within each mammary gland is a network of sacs that produce milk during lactation and send the milk to the nipple via a system of ducts. Undeveloped mammary glands are present in female children and in males. See also *breast; lactation*.

mammogram An X-ray of the breast that is taken with a device that compresses and flattens the breast. A mammogram can help a health professional decide whether a lump in the breast is a gland, a harmless cyst, or a tumor. A mammogram can cause pressure, discomfort, and some soreness that lasts for a little while after the procedure. If the mammogram result raises suspicions about cancer, a biopsy is usually the next step. The American Cancer Society and the American College of Surgeons currently recommend that a woman

obtain her first, baseline, mammogram between the ages of 35 and 40. After the age of 40, a mammogram should be done yearly. Women who are at high risk for developing breast cancer may need to obtain mammograms earlier than these recommendations and at more frequent intervals.

managed care Any system that manages health care delivery to control costs. Typically, managed care systems rely on a primary care physician who acts as a gatekeeper for other services, such as specialized medical care, surgery, and physical therapy.

mandible The bone of the lower jaw. The joint where the mandible meets the upper jaw at the temporal bone is called the temporomandibular joint.

maneuver, Heimlich See *Heimlich maneuver*.

maneuver, Valsalva See *Valsalva maneuver*.

mania An abnormally elevated mood state that is characterized by such symptoms as inappropriate elation, increased irritability, severe insomnia, grandiose notions, increased speed and/or volume of speech, disconnected and racing thoughts, increased sexual desire, markedly increased energy and activity level, poor judgment, and inappropriate social behavior. A mild form of mania that does not require hospitalization is called hypomania. Mania that also features symptoms of depression ("agitated depression") is called mixed mania. See also *bipolar disorder*.

manic In a state of mania.

manic depression See *bipolar disorder*.

manic-depressive disease See *bipolar disorder*.

Mantle cell lymphoma A type of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma that originates from a specific type of B lymphocytes. Abbreviated MCL. Most cases of MCL are associated with a specific chromosome translocation, t(11;14). MCL has a poor prognosis.

MAO Monoamine oxidase, an enzyme that is active in the nervous system. All the effects of MAO are not known, but it is known that MAO acts against the neurotransmitter epinephrine.

MAO inhibitor One of a family of medications (brand names: Aurorex, Nardil, Parnate) that act to limit the activity of monoamine oxidase (MAO) in the nervous system. MAOIs are prescribed to treat depression, anxiety, migraine, and selected other conditions in patients who are not responsive to

other medications. They interact with many over-the-counter medications and some foods, so patients taking MAOIs must be educated about what to avoid and must follow a restricted diet.

MAOI Monoamine oxidase (MAO) inhibitor.

map-dot-fingerprint type corneal dystrophy See *Cogan corneal dystrophy*.

maple syrup urine disease A hereditary disease that is due to deficiency of an enzyme involved in amino acid metabolism, characterized by urine that smells like maple syrup. In maple syrup urine disease, the three branched-chain amino acids (leucine, isoleucine, and valine) cannot be metabolized (processed), and they build up in the blood, causing problems with brain function and leading to mental retardation, physical disability, and death, if not treated. Treatment involves use of a special diet and monitoring of protein intake.

mapping See *gene mapping*.

mapping, gene See *gene mapping*.

marasmus See *cachexia*.

Marfan syndrome An inherited disorder of connective tissue that is characterized by abnormalities of the eyes, skeleton, and cardiovascular system. Nearsightedness (myopia) is the most common eye feature in Marfan syndrome. Displacement of the lens from the center of the pupil occurs in more than half of patients. Patients with Marfan syndrome have an increased risk for retinal detachment, glaucoma, and early cataracts. The skeleton shows bone overgrowth and loose joints. The arms and legs are unusually long, as are the fingers and toes. Due to overgrowth of the ribs, the sternum may be pushed in (pectus excavatum) or out (pectus carinatum). Scoliosis is common. Cardiovascular manifestations in Marfan syndrome include enlargement of the aorta at the level of the aortic valve, aortic aneurysm, prolapse of the mitral and tricuspid valves, and enlargement of the pulmonary artery. The major causes of disease and death in the syndrome are related to the heart and blood vessels. Marfan syndrome is inherited in an autosomal dominant manner and is caused by mutation in the FBN1 gene that encodes fibrillin 1. About 75 percent of people with Marfan syndrome have an affected parent, and 25 percent have a new gene mutation. Pregnancy can be dangerous for women with Marfan syndrome because the aorta can widen. Prevention of complications is key and includes exercise, blood pressure control, monitoring of the eyes, heart, and lungs, and physical therapy. Given

good medical management, the life expectancy in Marfan syndrome now approximates that for the general population.

marijuana A common street and recreational drug that comes from the marijuana plant: the hemp plant *cannabis sativa*. The pharmacologically active ingredient in marijuana is tetra-hydro-cannabinol (THC). Marijuana is used to heighten perception, affect mood, and relax. Many people think marijuana is harmless, but it is not. Signs of marijuana use include red eyes, lethargy, and uncoordinated body movements. The long-term effects may include decrease in motivation and harmful effects on the brain, heart, lungs, and reproductive system. People who smoke marijuana are also at increased risk of developing cancer of the head and neck. A pharmaceutical product, Marinol, that contains synthetic THC, is available as a prescription medication. It comes in the form of a pill (eliminating the harmful and cancer-causing chemicals present when marijuana is smoked) and is used to relieve the nausea and vomiting associated with chemotherapy for cancer patients and to treat loss of appetite in AIDS patients.

mark, strawberry See *hemangioma, capillary*.

marker 1 See *gene marker*. 2 A blood marker or a tumor marker. See also *blood marker; tumor marker*.

marker, blood See *blood marker*.

marker, gene See *gene marker*.

marker, tumor See *tumor marker*.

marker chromosome See *chromosome, marker*.

Maroteaux-Lamy syndrome A form of mucopolysaccharidosis with onset before age 3 that is characterized by an inability to metabolize dermatan sulfate. This leads to abnormal accumulation of dermatan sulfate, mostly in the peripheral tissues. The result is mild to severe changes in muscle, bone, skin, and other tissues, particularly the heart. Diagnosis is made through examination of leukocytes and cultured skin fibroblasts, or 24-hour urine collection to search for high levels of dermatan sulfate. There is no current treatment for Maroteaux-Lamy syndrome, but individual symptoms and problems may respond to physical therapy, medication, or surgery. Due to the heart damage caused by the syndrome, death usually occurs before the patient reaches age 40. Also known as mucopolysaccharidosis type VI. See also *mucopolysaccharidosis*.

marriage, cousin See *consanguinity*.

marrow See *bone marrow*.

marsh fever See *malaria*.

Martin-Bell syndrome See *fragile X syndrome*.

MASA syndrome A syndrome named for its characteristics: mental retardation, aphasia, shuffling gait, and adducted thumbs. Features of the syndrome include mental retardation and aphasia (lack of speech); adducted (clasped) thumbs, absent extensor pollicis longus and/or brevis muscles to the thumb, shuffling gait, and leg spasticity; small body size; and lumbar lordosis (swayback). MASA is inherited as an X-linked trait, and so it affects mainly boys. Also known as clasped thumbs and mental retardation, congenital clasped thumbs with mental retardation, adducted thumbs with mental retardation, and Gareis-Mason syndrome. See also *adducted thumbs*.

mask of pregnancy See *melasma*.

masklike face See *face, masklike*.

masochism The derivation of pleasure from one's own pain. Masochism is considered a sexual disorder (paraphilia). Named after the 19th-century Austrian writer Leopold von Sacher-Masoch.

MASS syndrome Mitral valve/myopia, aorta, skeleton, and skin syndrome, a heritable disorder of connective tissue that is characterized by involvement of all those structures. MASS syndrome is due to a mutation in the fibrillin 1 gene FBN1, the same gene that is mutated in Marfan syndrome and is considered by some to be a form of Marfan syndrome.

massage The therapeutic practice of manipulating the muscles and limbs to ease tension and reduce pain. Massage can be a part of physical therapy or practiced on its own. It can be effective for reducing the symptoms of disorders of or pain in the muscles and nervous system, and it is often used to reduce stress.

massage therapist A person who practices therapeutic massage. In many US states, massage therapists can be licensed after completing a specified training program. Licensed therapists may practice independently or in medical settings.

masseter The muscle that raises the lower jaw.

mast cell A granulocyte found in connective tissue whose normal function is unknown but that is frequently injured during allergic reactions. When a mast cell is injured, it releases strong chemicals, including histamine, into the tissues and blood. These chemicals are very irritating and cause itching, swelling, and fluid leaking from cells. They can also cause muscle spasm, leading to lung and throat tightening (as is found in asthma) and loss of voice.

mastalgia Pain in the breast or mammary gland, whether serious or not. Mastalgia has many causes including injury, infection, and plugged milk ducts.

mastectomy A general term for removal of the breast, usually to remove cancerous tissue. The operation can be done in a hospital or in an outpatient clinic, depending on how extensive it needs to be. After a mastectomy, reconstructive surgery may be performed to restore a more normal appearance. In cases of nonmetastatic breast cancer, a lumpectomy—with radiation, chemotherapy, or a combination of these treatments—is sometimes performed as an alternative to mastectomy.

mastectomy, double Removal of both breasts.

mastectomy, Halsted A radical mastectomy. See *mastectomy, radical*.

mastectomy, modified radical Removal of the breast tissue and the axillary lymph nodes, which are under the arms.

mastectomy, partial Surgical removal of only enough breast tissue to be sure that the margins of the tissue removed are free of cancer. Also known as segmental mastectomy.

mastectomy, preventive Removal of one or both breasts without the current presence of cancer. This surgery is sometimes chosen as a preventive measure by women who have a strong family history of breast cancer.

mastectomy, prophylactic See *mastectomy, preventive*.

mastectomy, radical Removal of all breast tissue, from just under the collarbone to the abdomen, including the chest wall muscles and the axillary lymph nodes in the armpit. In a trial begun in 1971, the efficacy of radical mastectomy was compared with that of total mastectomy. This historic trial spelled the end of radical mastectomy and started the trend toward less extensive surgery, which has culminated in the lumpectomy, leading to a vast

improvement in the quality of life for women with breast cancer. Also known as Halstead mastectomy.

mastectomy, segmental A partial mastectomy. See *mastectomy, partial*.

mastectomy, simple Removal of one or both breasts, but not the lymph nodes. Also known as a total mastectomy.

mastectomy, subcutaneous Removal of breast tissue, using a minimal incision. This type of mastectomy may be used to remove small areas of suspicious or cancerous tissue, but it can also be a cosmetic surgery procedure. For example, subcutaneous mastectomy can reduce the volume of enlarged male breasts or be part of a female-to-male sex-change procedure.

mastectomy, total A simple mastectomy. See *mastectomy, simple*.

masticate To chew.

mastitis Inflammation of one or more mammary glands within the breast, usually in a lactating woman. Mastitis can be felt as a hard, sore spot within the breast. Mastitis can be caused by an infection in the breast or by a plugged milk duct. Treatment includes resting and applying warm compresses to the affected area, and for those who are lactating, nursing or expressing milk frequently.

mastocytoma A benign nodular tumor on the skin, rich in mast cells, that is usually present at birth or in early childhood and resolves spontaneously. Also called a mast cell tumor. See also *mast cell*.

mastocytosis A condition characterized by infiltration of mast cells into the tissues of the body. Mast cells are connective tissue cells which release chemicals, including histamine, that cause itching, swelling, and fluid leakage from cells. There are several different clinical forms of mastocytosis. See also *mast cell; mastocytoma*.

mastoid The rounded protrusion of bone just behind the ear. The mastoid was once thought to look like a breast (hence its name).

mastoiditis Inflammation of the mastoid, which often occurs secondarily to ear infection.

maternal mortality rate The number of registered maternal deaths due to birth- or pregnancy-related complications per 100,000 registered live births.

maternal serum alpha-fetoprotein The presence of alpha-fetoprotein (AFP), a plasma protein that is normally produced by the fetus, in the mother's blood. Abbreviated MSAFP. MSAFP serves as the basis for some valuable tests. AFP is manufactured principally in the fetus's liver but is also found in the fetal gastrointestinal tract and in the yolk sac, a structure that is temporarily present during embryonic development. The level of AFP is typically high in the fetus's blood, goes down in the baby's blood after birth, and by 1 year of age is virtually undetectable. During pregnancy, AFP crosses the placenta from the fetal circulation and appears in the mother's blood. The MSAFP can be screened to detect a number of disorders, including open neural tube defects, such as anencephaly and spina bifida, in which case MSAFP tends to be high; Down syndrome, in which case MSAFP tends to be low; and other chromosome abnormalities.

matter, gray See *gray matter*.

matter, white See *white matter*.

maxilla The major bone of the upper jaw.

MCAT Medical College Admissions Test.

McBurney point The most tender area of the abdomen of patients in the early stage of appendicitis.

McCune-Albright syndrome See *polyostotic fibrous dysplasia*.

MD Abbreviation for the Latin *Medicinae Doctor*, "doctor of medicine."

mean cell hemoglobin See *CBC*.

mean cell hemoglobin concentration See *CBC*.

mean cell volume See *CBC*.

measles An acute and highly contagious viral disease characterized by fever, runny nose, cough, red eyes, and a spreading skin rash. Measles can be complicated by ear infections, pneumonia, encephalitis (which can cause convulsions, mental retardation, and even death), the sudden onset of low blood platelet levels with severe bleeding (acute thrombocytopenic purpura), or a chronic brain disease that occurs months to years after an attack of measles (subacute sclerosing panencephalitis). During pregnancy, exposure to the measles virus may trigger miscarriage or premature delivery. Treatment includes rest and use of anti-itching

preparations to soothe the skin, and nonaspirin pain relievers for fever. Measles is a leading cause of vaccine-preventable death worldwide. Also known as rubeola, hard measles, seven-day measles, eight-day measles, nine-day measles, ten-day measles, and morbilli. See also *measles, atypical; measles encephalitis; measles immunization*.

measles, atypical An altered type of measles that may begin with a mild prodrome of fever, headache, cough, and abdominal pain. In other cases, a sudden onset of high fever, headache, and chest pain occur. The rash appears 1 or 2 days later, often beginning on the limbs. Some patients become severely ill. It occurs in people who were given the old killed-virus measles vaccine between 1963 and 1967, which did not provide complete immunity, or in those who received improperly stored (weakened) live virus vaccine after 1967.

measles, mumps, rubella vaccine See *MMR*.

measles encephalitis Inflammation of the brain during recovery from measles infection. Measles encephalitis occurs in approximately 1 in 1,000 to 2,000 cases of measles, starting up to 3 weeks after onset of the rash and causing high fever, convulsions, and coma. It carries a 10-20 percent mortality rate and may lead to permanent central nervous system impairment.

measles immunization A vaccine for measles only. Single-virus vaccines are sometimes used in children with known or suspected brain disorders or compromised immune systems, and they are generally given after 1 year of age. For other children, the measles vaccine is usually administered as a multivirus vaccine (MMR or MMRV) along with vaccines for mumps, rubella, and varicella in the case of the MMRV. See also *MMR; MMRV*.

measly tapeworm See *Taenia solium*.

meatus An opening or a passageway. For example, the meatus of the ear is the opening to the ear canal.

meatus, female urethral The meatus (opening) of the female urethra, the transport tube that leads from the bladder to discharge urine outside the body. The female urethral meatus is above the vaginal opening.

Meckel diverticulum See *diverticulum, Meckel*.

meconium Dark, sticky material that is normally present in the intestine at birth and passed in the feces after birth, after trypsin and other enzymes

from the pancreas have acted on it. The passage of meconium before birth can be a sign of fetal distress.

meconium ileus Obstruction of the intestine (ileus) due to overly thick meconium. Meconium ileus results from a deficiency of trypsin and other digestive enzymes from the pancreas, as in cystic fibrosis.

MEDEVAC See *MEDVAC*.

medial The side of the body or the side of a body part that is nearest to the middle or center (median) of the body. For example, when referring to the knee, medial would mean the side of the knee that is closest to the other knee. The opposite of medial is lateral. See also Appendix B, "Anatomic Orientation Terms."

medial collateral ligament of the knee The ligament that straps the inner side of the knee joint, providing stability and strength. See also *knee*.

medial meniscus of the knee A thickened, crescent-shaped cartilage pad in the inner portion of the joint formed by the femur (the thigh bone) and the tibia (the shin bone). The medial meniscus is in the inner side, whereas the lateral meniscus is in the outer side of this knee joint. The meniscus acts as a smooth surface for the joint to move on, serves to evenly load the surface during weight-bearing, and aids in disbursing joint fluid for joint lubrication. See also *knee*.

median The middle, as in the median strip in a highway. For example, the median nerve is the nerve that runs through the middle of the wrist.

mediastinoscopy A procedure in which the physician inserts a tube into the chest to view the organs in the mediastinum. The tube is inserted through an incision above the breastbone.

mediastinotomy The surgical opening of the mediastinum. See also *mediastinum*; *mediastinoscopy*.

mediastinum The area between the lungs. The organs in the mediastinum include the heart and its large veins and arteries, the trachea, the esophagus, the bronchi, and lymph nodes.

Medicaid A number of US programs of public assistance for persons whose income is insufficient to pay for health care, regardless of age. Medicaid is administered on a state level, with the federal government providing matching funds to state Medicaid

programs. Services and options can vary from state to state. Disabled persons who receive Social Security income (SSI), among others, are automatically eligible for Medicaid. To apply for Medicaid, one should contact the local Social Security, public health, or disability services office.

Medical College Admissions Test A test that is required of all applicants to medical school in the US and Canada, which assesses applicants' science knowledge, reasoning, and communication and writing skills. It is given under the aegis of the Association of American Medical Colleges. Abbreviated MCAT.

medical directive, advance See *advance directive*.

medical examiner A physician (pathologist) who performs an autopsy when the cause of death is suspicious, including cases when death is accidental or violent. The physician may also serve in some jurisdictions as the coroner.

Medical Literature Analysis and Retrieval System See *MEDLARS*.

medical symbol See *Aesculapius*.

Medicare The US government's national health insurance program for people aged 65 and older who have worked for at least 10 years in Medicare-covered employment, and who are citizens or permanent residents of the US. Medicare Part A covers inpatient hospital stays, and Medicare Part B covers physician and outpatient services.

medication **1** A drug that is used to medicate, a medicine, or a medicament or medical substance. Although the terms medication and drug are sometimes used interchangeably, the term medication is not used to speak of a recreational substance. **2** The administration of a drug or medicine.

medicine, occupational See *occupational medicine*.

medicine, transfusion See *transfusion medicine*.

MedicineNet.com A premier online health and medical information website. MedicineNet.com provides easy-to-read, in-depth, authoritative medical information for consumers. Since 1996, MedicineNet.com has become nationally recognized for providing quality information that is produced by a network of board-certified physicians from across the US.

Medigap An insurance policy sold by private insurance companies in the US that supplements Medicare benefits, presumably filling the gaps in health care coverage.

meditation A typically self-directed practice for relaxing the body and calming the mind. Most meditative techniques have come to the West from Eastern religious practices, particularly India, China, and Japan, but can be found in many cultures of the world. Until recently, the primary purpose of meditation has been religious, although its health benefits have long been recognized. During the past several decades, meditation has been further explored as a way of reducing stress on both the mind and body.

Mediterranean anemia See *thalassemia major*.

Mediterranean fever See *familial Mediterranean fever*.

MEDLARS Medical Literature Analysis and Retrieval System, a computer system of the US National Library of Medicine (NLM) that allows rapid access to NLM's store of biomedical information. MEDLARS search services are available around the world without charge. See also *MEDLINE*.

MEDLINE The best-known bibliographic database of the US National Library of Medicine (NLM), which lets anyone with computer access query the NLM's store of journal references on specific topics. The MEDLINE database covers the fields of medicine, nursing, dentistry, veterinary medicine, the health care system, and the preclinical sciences. MEDLINE is part of the MEDLARS system. See also *MEDLARS*.

medulla The innermost part. For example, the adrenal medulla is the innermost part of the adrenal gland, the renal medulla is the inner part of the kidney, and the spinal medulla is the part of the spinal cord that is lodged deep within the vertebral canal.

medulla, adrenal The innermost portion of the adrenal gland, which makes epinephrine (adrenaline) and norepinephrine (noradrenaline). These hormones cause the breakdown of the storage product glycogen to the sugar glucose in the liver, facilitate the release of fatty acids from adipose (fat) tissue, cause narrowing (constriction) of most blood vessels in the body, and increase the output of the heart.

medulla oblongata The base of the brain, which is formed by the enlarged top of the spinal cord. The medulla oblongata directly controls breathing, blood flow, and other essential functions.

medulloblastoma A type of brain tumor that tends to occur in children, arise in the cerebellum (in the lower part of the brain), and spread along the spine. Medulloblastoma is the most common type of primary brain tumor in childhood. Medulloblastomas occasionally metastasize outside the central nervous system, usually to bone. Treatment involves surgery, radiotherapy, and chemotherapy.

MEDVAC Acronym for medical evacuation. MEDVAC typically refers to a team that has the skills necessary for proper medical evacuation in emergency situations. Also known as MEDEVAC.

mega- Prefix meaning abnormally large, as in megalcephaly (an overly large head) and megacardia (an enlarged heart).

megacolon An abnormally enlarged colon. Megacolon can arise as a serious congenital problem in the newborn, caused by abnormal innervation of the colon and frequently requiring surgery.

megakaryocyte A giant cell in the bone marrow that is the ancestor of blood platelets, which are essential to normal blood clotting.

megavitamin therapy The use of massive doses of vitamins to treat disease. Because overuse of vitamins can cause disease, most physicians consider megavitamin therapy controversial. See also Appendix C, "Vitamins"; *orthomolecular medicine; vitamin therapy*.

Meibomian cyst See *cyst, Meibomian*.

Meibomian gland See *gland, Meibomian*.

meibomianitis Inflammation of the little glands in the tarsus of the eyelids. Chronic inflammation of these glands can lead to a lump in the eyelid known as a chalazion. Also known as meibomitis.

meibomitis See *meibomianitis*.

meiosis The process chromosomes undertake during germ-cell formation to halve the chromosome number from 46 to 23. In meiosis, the 46 chromosomes in the cell divide to make two new cells with 23 chromosomes each. Before meiosis is complete, however, chromosomes pair with their corresponding chromosomes and exchange bits of

genetic material. In women, X chromosomes pair; in men, the X and Y chromosomes pair. After the exchange, the chromosomes separate, and meiosis continues.

meiotic Pertaining to meiosis.

meiotic nondisjunction Failure of two members of a chromosome pair to separate from one another during meiosis, causing both chromosomes to go to a single daughter cell. Meiotic nondisjunction is responsible for the extra chromosome 21 in trisomy 21 (Down syndrome) and for extra and missing chromosomes that cause other birth defects and many miscarriages.

melan- Prefix meaning dark or black, as in melancholia (a dark and gloomy mood) and melanin (a dark pigment).

melancholia An old term for depression.

melanin The pigment that gives human skin, hair, and eyes their color. Dark-skinned people have more melanin in their skin than light-skinned people have. Melanin is produced by cells called melanocytes. It provides some protection against skin damage from the sun, and the melanocytes increase their production of melanin in response to sun exposure. Freckles, which occur in people of all races, are small, concentrated areas of increased melanin production.

melanocyte A cell in the skin that produces and contains the pigment melanin.

melanoma The most dangerous form of skin cancer, a malignancy of melanocytes, the cells that produce pigment in the skin. Melanoma is most common in people with fair skin, but it can occur in people with all skin colors. Most melanomas present as dark, mole-like spots that spread and, unlike moles, have irregular borders. The tendency toward melanoma may be inherited, and the risk increases with overexposure to the sun and sunburn. The use of sunscreens can decrease the risk of developing melanoma and other skin cancers. Malignant melanoma is classified into four clinical types: acral lentiginous melanoma, superficial spreading melanoma, nodular melanoma, and lentigo maligna melanoma. Anyone who has concern about an unusual mole-like spot should see a physician. Melanoma is highly curable when detected early.

melanoma, acral-lentiginous A type of malignant melanoma that is uncommon in white people but the most common type in nonwhite people. Acral-lentiginous melanoma starts as an irregular

enlarging black flat spot (macule), most often on the palm of the hand and the sole of the foot, less often on a mucosal surface, such as the vulva or vagina.

melanoma, amelanotic A colorless melanoma that is detectable only on close examination of the skin.

melanoma, choroidal See *melanoma, ocular*.

melanoma, lentigo maligna One of the four clinical types of malignant melanoma and the slowest growing type. Lentigo maligna melanoma typically begins as a patch of mottled pigmentation that is dark brown, tan, or black on sun-exposed skin, such as on the face.

melanoma, nodular One of the four clinical types of malignant melanoma, which typically presents as a raised, distinct, bluish-black tumor that may be encircled by particularly pale skin, most often in middle-aged or older adults.

melanoma, ocular A rare type of malignant melanoma that arises from a structure within the eye. The most common sites for ocular melanoma are the choroid, the ciliary body, and the iris. The tumor may metastasize (spread), most often to the liver. Ocular melanoma tends to occur after age 40.

melanoma, superficial spreading One of the four clinical types of malignant melanoma, the most common type in white people, which typically presents as a raised, irregular, colored area that starts in a mole-like shape and spreads across the skin.

melanosis coli A benign, reversible condition that is usually, but not always, associated with long-term use of laxatives in which pigment deposition in the lamina propria of the large intestine results in a brown to black discoloration of the mucosa (lining) of the large intestine. Melanosis coli is sometimes called pseudomelanosis coli because the pigment deposited is lipofuscin and not melanin, as the name implies. Melanosis coli produces no symptoms.

MELAS syndrome Mitochondrial encephalopathy, lactic acidosis, and stroke-like episodes syndrome, a rare form of dementia caused by mutations in the genetic material (DNA) in the mitochondria. Most DNA is in the chromosomes in the cell nucleus, but another important cell structure that carries DNA is the mitochondrion. Much of the DNA in the mitochondrion is used to manufacture proteins that help to produce energy. As a result of

the disturbed function of their cells' mitochondria, patients with MELAS syndrome develop brain dysfunction (encephalopathy), with seizures and headaches, as well as muscle disease, with a buildup of lactic acid in the blood (lactic acidosis), temporary local paralysis (stroke-like episodes), and abnormal thinking (dementia). MELAS syndrome is diagnosed via muscle biopsy that shows characteristic ragged red fibers. Brain biopsy shows stroke-like changes. MELAS syndrome can affect people at different times of life, but most patients show symptoms before age 20. Patients are treated according to which areas of the body are affected at a particular time. There is no known cure for MELAS, which is progressive and fatal.

melasma Pigmentation of the cheeks of the face (malar area). When it occurs during pregnancy it is referred to as chloasma or the mask of pregnancy. Melasma darkens with sun exposure.

melatonin A hormone that is produced by the pineal gland and is intimately involved in regulating the sleeping and waking cycles, among other processes. Some people who have chronic insomnia use melatonin supplements. However, melatonin is not recommended for all patients with sleep problems, so one should consult a physician before taking it.

melena Stool or vomit that is stained black by blood pigment or dark blood products.

melorheostosis A rare bone condition that usually begins in childhood and is characterized by thickening of the bones (sclerosis) of a limb. Pain is frequent in the involved limb, and the affected bone can have the appearance of dripping candle wax on an X-ray.

membrane A very thin layer of tissue that covers a surface.

membrane attack complex An abnormal activation of the complement (protein) portion of the blood that forms a cascade reaction and brings blood proteins together, binds them to the cell wall, and then inserts them through the cell membrane. Abbreviated MAC. MAC allows water, ions, and other small molecules to move freely into and out of a cell, and it quickly results in cell death.

membranous gingivitis, acute See *acute membranous gingivitis*.

membranous glomerulonephritis A disease affecting the glomerulus, the tiny structure in the kidney composed of capillary blood vessels that is

actively involved in the filtration of the blood to form urine. The main sign of the disease is marked proteinuria. The majority of cases are primary, meaning the cause is not known. The remaining cases are secondary to conditions such as cancer, infection, and drug side effects. Membranous glomerulonephritis is a glomerular immune-complex disease, in which immune deposits form in the glomerular basement membrane, causing a membrane-like thickening. Also known as membranous nephropathy.

memory The ability to recollect information about past events or knowledge, and/or the process of doing so. Memory is often divided into short-term (also known as working, or recent, memory) and long-term memory: Short-term memory recovers memories of recent events, and long-term memory is concerned with the more distant past. Some medical disorders, such as Alzheimer's disease, damage the cognitive systems that control memory. Usually, long-term memory is retained and short-term memory is lost; conversely, memories may become jumbled, leading to mistakes in recognizing people or places that should be familiar. See also *memory, anterograde; memory, long-term; memory, short-term*.

memory, anterograde Memory for things following an event or brain injury. The opposite of retrograde memory.

memory, long-term The ability to permanently store, manage, and retrieve information for later use. Items of information stored as long-term memory may be available for a lifetime.

memory, recent See *memory, short-term*.

memory, retrograde Memory for things prior to an event or brain injury. The opposite of anterograde memory.

memory, short-term The ability to temporarily store and manage information that is required to carry out complex cognitive tasks such as learning, reasoning, and comprehension. Short-term memory is involved in the selection, initiation, and termination of information-processing functions, such as encoding, storing, and retrieving data. One test of short-term memory is memory span: the number of items, usually words or numbers, that a person can retain and recall. Also known as recent or working memory. See also *memory; memory span*.

memory, working See *memory, short-term*.

memory B cells Secondary immune-system components that have an affinity for a particular antigen. Like other B cells, memory B cells originate from lymphocytes that develop and are activated in the bone marrow.

memory span The number of items, usually words or numbers, that a person can retain and recall. Memory span is a test of working memory (short-term memory). In a typical test of memory span, an examiner reads a list of random numbers aloud at about the rate of one number per second. At the end of a sequence, the person being tested is asked to recall the items, in order. The average memory span for normal adults is seven.

menarche The time in a girl's life when menstruation first begins. During the menarche period, menstruation may be irregular and unpredictable. Also known as female puberty.

Mendel, Gregor The father of genetics, the Moravian/Bohemian biologist who in the 19th century set forth the basic laws that constitute the foundation of classical genetics. Mendel's controlled experiments with breeding peas in the monastery garden led him to conclude that the heritable units (now called genes) were not blends of parental traits, but rather were separate physical entities passed individually from one generation to the next.

Mendelian Referring to Gregor Mendel or his theories.

Mendelian inheritance The manner by which genes and traits are passed from parents to their children. The modes of Mendelian inheritance are autosomal dominant, autosomal recessive, X-linked dominant, and X-linked recessive. Also known as classical or simple genetics.

Ménière's disease A condition that is characterized by recurrent vertigo accompanied by ringing in the ears (tinnitus) and deafness. Symptoms include vertigo, dizziness, nausea, vomiting, loss of hearing in the affected ear, and abnormal eye movements. Ménière's disease is due to dysfunction of the semi-circular canals (endolymphatic sac) in the inner ear. Treatment usually includes use of medications, such as anticholinergic drugs or antihistamines, to relieve the vertigo. Diuretics may also be used to lower the pressure in the endolymphatic sac. Also known as recurrent aural vertigo. See also *vertigo*.

meningeal Pertaining to the meninges.

meningeal carcinoma See *meningitis, neoplastic*.

meningeal metastases See *meningitis, neoplastic*.

meninges The three membranes that cover the brain and spinal cord (singular: meninx). The outside meninx is called the dura mater, and is the most resilient of the three meninges. The center layer is the pia mater, and the thin innermost layer is the arachnoid. Inflammation of the meninges (meningitis) can occur due to infection. See also *meningitis*.

meningioma A common type of slow-growing, usually benign brain tumor that arises from the dura, one of the meninges, the membranes covering the brain and spinal cord. A meningioma may occur wherever there is dura (the outermost of the three meninges), but the most common sites are over the cerebral hemispheres of the brain. Meningiomas are the only brain tumors that are more common in women than in men. They tend to occur in people between ages 40 and 60 but can occur at any age. A person may have several meningiomas. Very rarely do meningiomas become malignant. The symptoms depend on the location of the tumor. Treatment ranges from observation to neurosurgical resection.

meningitis Inflammation of the meninges, the three membranes that envelop the brain and the spinal cord. Meningitis can be caused by infection by bacteria, viruses, and protozoa. Other causes include cancer (metastasis to the meninges), inflammatory diseases, and drugs. In some cases the cause of meningitis cannot be determined. The treatment depends on the cause of the meningitis.

meningitis, aseptic See *meningitis, viral*.

meningitis, bacterial Inflammation of the meninges due to a bacterial infection. *Haemophilus influenzae* type B (HIB) was formerly the leading cause of bacterial meningitis before the 1990s, but childhood vaccinations have reduced the occurrence of meningitis due to *H. influenzae*. *Streptococcus pneumoniae* and *Neisseria meningitidis* are the leading causes of bacterial meningitis. High fever, headache, and stiff neck are common symptoms of bacterial meningitis in anyone over the age of 2 years. In newborns and small infants, the classic symptoms of fever, headache, and neck stiffness may be absent and the infant may only appear to be inactive, irritable, vomiting, or feeding poorly. A sample of spinal fluid obtained via lumbar puncture can be examined to confirm the diagnosis and fully identify the bacteria involved and their antibiotic sensitivity. Treatment is started as early as possible, in the hospital. Appropriate antibiotic treatment has reduced the risk of death from most common types of bacterial meningitis to below

15 percent, although the risk is higher among the elderly.

meningitis, benign recurrent aseptic See *meningitis, Mollaret*.

meningitis, cryptococcal Inflammation of the meninges due to infection with the fungal organism *Cryptococcus neoformans*, which is found mainly in dirt and bird droppings. Most people have been exposed to this organism at some time, but normally it causes no problems. Often associated with AIDS, cryptococcal meningitis is considered an opportunistic infection: a disease that emerges most often when the immune system is compromised in some way. Diagnosis is made via observation of symptoms, lumbar puncture, and cryptococcal titre. Treatment takes place in the hospital and usually consists of intravenous doses of the antibiotic amphotericin B. After the infection is under control, patients usually remain on a maintenance dose of fluconazole (brand name: Diflucan) to prevent reinfection.

meningitis, infectious Inflammation of the meninges due to bacterial, viral, or protozoan infection. Most of the agents known to cause meningitis are infectious, but very few people exposed to them develop meningitis. Those at greatest risk for infectious meningitis include people with AIDS, infants, transplant patients, and others whose immune systems may be compromised. For this reason, infectious meningitis patients are almost always isolated until the risk of spreading the illness to others has passed.

meningitis, Kernig sign of See *Kernig sign*.

meningitis, meningococcal Inflammation of the meninges due to infection with the bacterium *Neisseria meningitidis*. Meningococcal meningitis typically starts like the flu, with the sudden onset of an intense headache, fever, sore throat, nausea, vomiting, and malaise. But, unlike with the flu, a stiff neck and intolerance of lights are frequent symptoms of meningococcal meningitis. Within hours of the first symptoms, the disease can progress to delirium, coma, or convulsions and invade the bloodstream, setting off a bodywide infection that attacks organs and can cause circulatory collapse, a hemorrhagic rash, and gangrene. Meningococcal meningitis is a medical emergency. Diagnosis is made through examination of the CSF obtained via lumbar puncture. Treatment includes use of appropriate antibiotics, usually in the hospital. The disease is highly contagious; it is spread by contact with an affected individual's respiratory secretions, such as by coughing or kissing. Meningococcal meningitis has a high fatality rate if not recognized and treated properly. Vaccines against four types of

meningococcal disease are available and are recommended for at-risk persons, including college freshmen living in dormitories.

meningitis, Mollaret A rare form of aseptic meningitis characterized by a recurrent pattern with symptom-free intervals between episodes. Symptoms of Mollaret meningitis, which last from 1 to 7 days, include headache, neck ache, fever, and neck stiffness. With this type of meningitis, there is usually rapid onset of symptoms and resolution without residual damage to the nervous system. Symptom-free periods may last from weeks to years. The herpes simplex virus is now believed to play a role in the causation of Mollaret meningitis. The long-term outcome for a patient with Mollaret meningitis is excellent. Also known as benign recurrent aseptic meningitis.

meningitis, neoplastic Inflammation of the meninges due to cancer that has spread from the original (primary) tumor to the meninges. The name neoplastic meningitis is a misnomer because the condition is not inflammatory. It is more properly called meningeal carcinomatosis or meningeal metastases.

meningitis, viral Inflammation of the meninges that is due to a virus, such as mumps virus or coxsackievirus, that is shed in the feces, sputum (spit), and nasal discharges. Viral meningitis is contagious, and it occurs most frequently in children. It can be a complication of common childhood diseases, including chickenpox. Symptoms include fever, headache, stiff neck, nausea, vomiting, drowsiness, and confusion. Babies with viral meningitis may be irritable and difficult to awaken, and they may feed poorly. Most patients with viral meningitis recover completely. Treatment, if warranted, involves use of antiviral drugs. Viral meningitis can often be prevented by improved hygiene. Also known as aseptic meningitis.

meningocele Protrusion of the membranes of the spinal cord or brain through a defect in the vertebral column or skull.

meningococcal meningitis See *meningitis, meningococcal*.

meningomyelocele Protrusion of the spinal cord and the membranes covering it through a defect in the vertebral column. The defect is due to failure of the neural tube to close during fetal development. The infant has a hole in the lumbar spine through which a skin-covered sac containing the meninges and part of the spinal cord bulge. It may be suspected prenatally if the mother's serum alpha-fetoprotein (AFP) is elevated, and it can be

confirmed via ultrasound. Surgery is done to repair the defect and, if needed, a shunt is inserted to treat hydrocephalus, which may also be present. Folic acid intake during the childbearing years lowers the risk of bearing a child with meningomyelocele. Also known as myelomeningocele. See also *alpha-fetoprotein*; *meninges*; *neural tube defect*; *spina bifida cystica*.

meniscus, lateral knee See *lateral meniscus of the knee*.

meniscus, medial knee See *medial meniscus of the knee*.

Menkes syndrome A genetic disorder that is characterized by fragile, twisted hair, growth delay, and progressive deterioration of the brain. Menkes syndrome is due to an error in copper transport that results in copper deficiency. The gene responsible for the syndrome is called ATP7A, on the X chromosome. Females are carriers of Menkes syndrome, and their sons who have the gene have the disease. If the disorder is recognized early, injections of copper have been sometimes beneficial. Also known as kinky hair syndrome and copper transport disease.

meno- Prefix meaning pertaining to the menses.

menometrorrhagia Excessive uterine bleeding, both at the usual time of menstrual periods and at other irregular intervals. Menometrorrhagia can be a sign of a number of different disorders, including hormone imbalance, endometriosis, benign fibroid tumors in the uterus, and cancer. Anemia may result from the excessive uterine bleeding. Treatment depends on the cause: If there does not appear to be a dangerous cause, such as cancer, then hormone supplementation or the therapeutic use of birth control pills to better control the menstrual cycle may be recommended. See also *menorrhagia*; *metrorrhagia*.

menopause The time for a woman, usually in middle age, when menstrual periods end. Menopause is defined as the absence of menstrual periods for 12 consecutive months. Natural menopause occurs when the ovaries begin decreasing their production of the sex hormones estrogen and progesterone, and the timing of menopause varies, with an average age of 51 in the Western world. Changes associated with approaching menopause may include night sweats, mood swings, vaginal dryness, fluctuations in sexual desire (libido), forgetfulness, trouble sleeping, and fatigue (probably due to the loss of sleep). Hormone therapy (HT) is sometimes prescribed to relieve the

symptoms of menopause. Also known as change of life. See also *estrogen replacement therapy*; *hormone replacement therapy*; *menopause transition*; *menopause, induced*.

menopause, chemical Menopause that is induced by chemotherapy or by other chemicals or medications. See also *menopause*; *menopause, induced*.

menopause, induced Menopause that is caused by surgical removal of the ovaries, or grave damage to the ovaries by radiation, chemotherapy, or medication. Because of the abrupt cutoff of ovarian hormones, induced menopause may cause the sudden onset of hot flashes and other menopause-related symptoms, such as vaginal dryness and a decline in sex drive. See also *menopause*; *menopause, chemical*.

menopause, natural Menopause that occurs when the ovaries naturally decrease their production of the sex hormones estrogen and progesterone. See also *menopause*.

menopause, radiation See *menopause, induced*.

menopause, surgical See *menopause, induced*.

menopause transition Changes in female hormone production that may begin a number of years before the natural menopause. The levels of hormones produced by the aging ovaries fluctuate, leading to irregularity in the length of menstrual periods, the time between periods, and the level of period flow, as well as to hot flashes. Other changes associated with the menopause transition include night sweats, mood swings, vaginal dryness, fluctuations in sexual desire (libido), forgetfulness, trouble sleeping, and fatigue (probably due to loss of sleep). Hormone therapy (HT) may be considered if the symptoms accompanying menopause transition are particularly severe. Also known as perimenopause. See also *menopause*.

menorrhagia Excessive uterine bleeding or menstruation at the expected intervals of menstruation but that lasts longer than usual. Menorrhagia can cause significant anemia. It may also be a sign of underlying disease, such as hormone disorder, uterine fibroids, or cancer of the uterus. See also *menometrorrhagia*; *metrorrhagia*.

menorrhea See *menstruation*.

menstrual cramps Cramping in the lower abdomen, usually in the first or second day of the menstrual cycle, that is caused by contractions of the uterus as it expels its unneeded contents and by the passage of clotted blood through the cervix. Ibuprofen or other pain relievers can reduce the severity of menstrual cramps, and some women report that exercise is also helpful. Severe menstrual cramps, particularly if paired with excessive bleeding or passage of large blood clots, can occasionally be a sign of endometriosis or other disorders of the female reproductive tract. Also known as dysmenorrhea.

menstrual cycle The monthly cycle of changes in the ovaries and the lining of the uterus (endometrium), starting with the preparation of an egg for fertilization. When the follicle of the prepared egg in the ovary breaks, it is released for fertilization, and ovulation occurs. Unless pregnancy occurs, the cycle ends with the shedding of part of the endometrium (menstruation). Although it is actually the end of the physical cycle, the first day of menstrual bleeding is designated as "day 1" of the menstrual cycle in medical parlance.

menstrual irregularity Abnormality in the normal menstrual cycle, which is about 28 days long. Girls and teenagers may have menstrual irregularity for a time following the onset of menstrual periods. Some adult women also have irregular cycles. This can be a benign condition, but it can also be due to problems in the uterus or ovaries, including cancer. Adults with menstrual irregularity should see a physician to rule out disease or other problems. In some cases, medication, such as birth control pills, can be used to regulate a chronically irregular cycle.

menstrual spotting The presence of apparent menstrual blood during the times of the menstrual cycle when bleeding is not expected. Some women have a tendency to bleed around the time of ovulation, which occurs at about the 14th day after the first day of menstrual bleeding. In other women, spotting can be a sign of internal problems, including fibroid tumors of the uterus. Although spotting is usually benign, its onset is always a reason to see a physician to rule out serious causes of the bleeding.

menstrual synchronization A phenomenon that occurs when two or more menstruating women live or otherwise spend a lot of time together, in which the menstrual cycles of the women gradually become synchronized. The mechanism and reason for this effect is unknown, although research suggests that it may be due to the effects of female pheromones on other women's ovulation cycles.

menstruation Bleeding that occurs each month if pregnancy does not occur. Also known as menorrhoea and menses. See also *menstrual cycle*.

menstruation, anovular Menstruation that occurs without ovulation. Usually in anovular menstruation the egg that remains in the ovary simply disintegrates, but in some circumstances it is fertilized and a life-threatening ovarian pregnancy results.

menstruation, cessation of The ending of a woman's menstrual cycles. Menstruation ends naturally in middle age with the onset of menopause. It can also end suddenly as a result of induced menopause. Cessation of menstruation in non-menopausal women may be due to pregnancy, illness, disorders of the hypothalamus or pituitary gland, medication, stress, overexercise, or malnutrition, among other causes. In particular, it can be a symptom of anorexia, signaling potentially dangerous changes in the body's hormonal system. Cessation of menstruation in women who have established a regular menstrual cycle, or in girls or teens who show other signs of anorexia, is a cause for medical concern. Also known as amenorrhea.

menstruation, retrograde Menstruation in which blood flows from the uterus into the Fallopian tubes, and potentially into the abdomen. This condition may play a role in the development of endometriosis. See also *endometriosis*.

mental 1 Pertaining to the mind. 2 Pertaining to the chin.

mental child injury See *child abuse*.

mental illness Any disease that affects the central nervous system, causing disturbances of thought or behavior. Mental illnesses can be caused by genetic, metabolic, structural, infectious, or environmental causes. The term mental illness is also used to describe emotional disturbances caused by traumatic or distressing events or by poor adjustment to normal life stresses. Treatment depends on the root cause of the illness and may include use of medication, surgery (as in the case of brain tumors and some types of epilepsy), and various forms of therapy to help rebuild life skills.

mental retardation The condition of having an IQ measured as below 70 to 75 and significant delays or lacks in at least two areas of adaptive skills. Mental retardation is present from childhood. Between 2 and 3 percent of the general population meet the criteria for mental retardation. Causes of

mental retardation include fetal alcohol syndrome and fetal alcohol effect; brain damage caused by the use of prescription or illegal drugs during pregnancy; brain injury and disease; and genetic disorders, such as Down syndrome and fragile X syndrome. Treatment of mental retardation depends on the underlying cause. In some cases, such as phenylketonuria and congenital hypothyroidism, special diets or medical treatments can help. In all cases, special education starting as early in infancy as possible can help people with mental retardation maximize their abilities.

mental retardation, aphasia, shuffling gait, and adducted thumbs syndrome See *MASA syndrome*.

mercury poisoning Disease resulting from exposure to the metallic element mercury. Mercury is toxic to humans, and poisoning can occur in both acute and chronic forms. Acute mercury poisoning (less common) is associated with ulcerations of the stomach and intestine and with toxic changes in the kidney. Chronic mercury poisoning can cause diarrhea, slowed reflexes, poor coordination, ataxia (wobbliness), tremor, impaired vision, and emotional instability. Mercury is discharged into the air by such sources as coal-burning power plants, incinerators, and mining. It eventually contaminates waterways where it is converted by bacteria into methyl mercury. This molecule collects in the fatty tissues of fish and the animals that eat fish. Fish are the major dietary source of mercury poisoning, but it can also enter the body in other ways.

mesentery In general, a fold of tissue that attaches organs to the body wall. The word mesentery usually refers to the small bowel mesentery, which anchors the small intestines to the back of the abdominal wall. Blood vessels, nerves, and lymphatics branch through the mesentery to supply the intestine. Other mesenteries exist to support the sigmoid colon, appendix, transverse colon, and portions of the ascending and descending colon.

mesoderm The middle of the three primary germ cell layers (the other two being the ectoderm and endoderm) that make up a very young embryo. The mesoderm differentiates (specializes) to give rise to a number of tissues and structures, including bone, muscle, connective tissue, and the middle layer of the skin. See also *differentiation; ectoderm; embryo; endoderm*.

mesodermal Pertaining to the mesoderm or to tissues derived from the mesoderm.

mesothelioma A malignant tumor of the mesothelium, the thin lining of the surface of the body cavities and the organs that are contained within them. Most mesotheliomas begin as one or more nodules that progressively grow to form a solid coating of tumor surrounding the lung, abdominal organs, or heart. Mesothelioma occurs most commonly in the chest cavity and is associated with exposure to asbestos in up to 90 percent of cases. The risk of mesothelioma increases with the intensity and duration of exposure to asbestos. Family members and others living with asbestos workers may also have an increased risk of developing mesothelioma and possibly other asbestos-related diseases. This risk may be the result of exposure to asbestos dust brought home on the clothing and hair of asbestos workers. Mesothelioma is currently difficult to treat in most cases, and carries a poor prognosis.

messenger RNA The key intermediary in gene expression, which translates the DNA's genetic code into the amino acids that make up proteins. Abbreviated mRNA.

metabolic disease A metabolism disorder, such as albinism, cystinuria, phenylketonuria (PKU), and some forms of gout, sun sensitivity, and thyroid disease. There are hundreds of known metabolic diseases. Advances in the diagnosis and treatment of metabolic diseases have improved the outlook for many of these conditions so that early diagnosis, if possible in infancy, can be helpful. Many metabolic diseases cause infants to have symptoms such as sluggishness (lethargy), poor feeding, apnea (stopping breathing) or tachypnea (fast breathing), and recurrent vomiting. Laboratory testing for metabolic disorders might include specific blood tests for known conditions or general tests that indicate metabolic problems. General indicators include hypoglycemia (low blood sugar), which is the predominant finding in a number of metabolic diseases, and jaundice (yellowing) or other evidence of liver disease. Specific patterns of birth defects characterize yet another group of inherited metabolic disorders. Also known as inborn error of metabolism.

metabolic rate, basal See *basal metabolic rate*.

metabolism The whole range of biochemical processes that occur within a living organism. Metabolism consists of anabolism (the buildup of substances) and catabolism (the breakdown of substances). The term metabolism is commonly used to refer specifically to the breakdown of food and its transformation into energy.

metabolism, inborn error of See *metabolic disease*.

metacarpal One of the five cylindrical bones that extend from the wrist to the fingers.

metaphase chromosome A chromosome in the stage of its cell life in which it is most condensed and easiest to see separately. Because metaphase chromosomes are easier to study than others, they are often chosen for karyotyping and chromosome analysis.

metastases, meningeal See *meningitis, neoplastic*.

metastasis 1 The spread of cancerous cells from one part of the body to another. The cells may be carried by the lymphatic system or in the blood. Cells that have metastasized are like those in the original (primary) tumor. For example, if the cancer begins in the stomach and spreads to the lung, the cancer cells in the lung are metastatic stomach cancer cells. 2 A collection of tumor cells that has spread. The plural of metastasis is metastases.

metastasize The process cancer cells go through in spreading from one part of the body to another. See also *metastasis*.

metatarsal One of the five cylindrical bones that extend from the heel to the toes.

methadone A synthetic opiate. The most common medical use for methadone is as a legal substitute for heroin in treatment programs for drug addiction.

methemoglobin A form of hemoglobin that is incapable of carrying oxygen, sometimes found in the blood after certain poisonings, such as with aniline, nitrates, and other compounds.

methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* *Staphylococcus aureus* (a type of staph bacteria) resistant to the antibiotic methicillin. Abbreviated MRSA. MRSA first appeared among people in hospitals and other health facilities, especially among the elderly, the very sick, and those with an open wound, an IV catheter, or a urinary catheter. MRSA has since been found to cause illness in the community outside of hospitals and other health facilities. Community-associated MRSA infections typically cause skin lesions (such as boils), but can also cause severe illness. The transmission of MRSA is largely from people with active MRSA skin infections. MRSA is almost always spread by direct physical contact, and not through the air. Just as *S. aureus* can be carried on the skin or in the nose

without causing any disease, MRSA can be carried in this way as well, a process known as colonization. MRSA infections are usually mild superficial infections of the skin that can be treated successfully with proper skin care and antibiotics. However, MRSA can be difficult to treat and can progress to life-threatening blood or bone infections because there are fewer effective antibiotics available for treatment.

methimazole An antithyroid medication (brand name: Tapazol) that is prescribed to treat hyperthyroidism. Also known as thiamazole.

methotrexate An immune-suppressing drug (brand names: Rheumatrex, Trexall) that is used to treat rheumatoid arthritis, severe psoriasis, reactive arthritis, and severe asthma. In high doses it is also used as a part of cancer chemotherapy programs. Methotrexate is an effective but potentially dangerous medication. People taking methotrexate must have their lung, liver, and kidney function monitored regularly, and they need blood testing to be done frequently as well. Methotrexate interacts dangerously, and potentially fatally, with many other medications, including prescription and over-the-counter nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, even aspirin and ibuprofen. Folic acid supplements are sometimes used to counteract side effects of methotrexate. Methotrexate should be taken on an empty stomach.

metrorrhagia Uterine bleeding at irregular intervals, particularly between periods. Metrorrhagia can cause significant anemia. It may also be a sign of underlying disease, such as hormone disorder, uterine fibroids, or cancer of the uterus. See also *menometrorrhagia; menorrhagia*.

MHC Major histocompatibility complex.

MI Myocardial infarction. See *heart attack*.

micro- Prefix meaning small, as in microcephaly (small head) and microsoma (small body). The opposite of micro- is macro-.

microangiopathy A disease of the capillaries (very small blood vessels), in which the capillary walls become so thick and weak that they bleed, leak protein, and slow the flow of blood. For example, diabetes predisposes to the development of microangiopathy in many areas, including the eye.

microbe A minute organism typically visible under a microscope. Microbes include bacteria, fungi, and protozoan parasites.

microcephaly An abnormally small head due to failure of brain growth. Microcephaly is an ominous sign because it is almost always associated with developmental delay and mental retardation. Many factors can impair the growth of the brain, including intrauterine infections (such as rubella, cytomegalovirus, and toxoplasmosis), intrauterine chemical exposure (such as in fetal alcohol syndrome), excessive radiation exposure (as in an atomic bomb explosion), chromosome abnormalities (such as trisomy 13 and trisomy 18), and genetic syndromes (such as Fanconi syndrome and Williams syndrome). The opposite of microcephaly is macrocephaly.

microcystic corneal dystrophy See *Cogan corneal dystrophy*.

microcytic Literally, referring to any abnormally small cell; in practice, referring to an abnormally small red blood cell. For example, microcytic anemia is characterized by small red blood cells. The opposite of microcytic is macrocytic.

microdeletion Loss of a tiny piece—a piece that may be too small to be seen readily through a microscope—from a chromosome. Microdeletions can be detected via high-resolution chromosome banding, molecular chromosome analysis (with FISH), or DNA analysis. Disorders caused by microdeletions include Angelman, DiGeorge, Prader-Willi, and Williams syndromes.

microhematuria See *blood in the urine*.

microorchidism Abnormally small testes. To determine if the testes are too small, a device called an orchidometer is used that permits a testis to be compared to a series of plastic ovals (like miniature American footballs) of differing sizes. Microorchidism is a diagnostic feature, for example, of Prader-Willi syndrome and certain other multiple malformation syndromes. Microorchidism may also result from shrinkage (atrophy) of the testis due to damage, as from mumps. The opposite of microorchidism is macroorchidism. See also *micropenis*.

micropenis An abnormally small penis. In medical practice, the dimension of the penis that is measured is the length. The measurement is taken along the upper surface of the shaft of the penis to the tip, using a measuring tape or, preferably, a ruler. The ruler is pressed firmly into the soft tissue over the pubic bone (the symphysis pubis) because in obese boys and men, a seemingly small penis may

be partly engulfed by the fat pad at its base and actually be normal in length. Normal standards are available for penis length. True micropenis may reflect failure of normal hormonal stimulation or failure of normal development (a birth defect). See also *microorchidism*.

microphallus See *micropenis*.

microphthalmia An abnormally small eye. Microphthalmia is a congenital malformation of the globe, a birth defect of the eye. A related term, anophthalmia, indicates that there is no eye at all. Also known as microphthalmos.

microscope An optical instrument that augments the power of the eye to see small objects. Most optical microscopes today are compound microscopes.

microscope, compound A microscope that consists of two microscopes in series, the first serving as the ocular lens (close to the eye), and the second serving as the objective lens (close to the object to be viewed).

microscope, electron A microscope in which an electron beam replaces light to form the image. Electron microscopy (EM) has both pluses (greater magnification and resolution than optical microscopes) and minuses (the observer is not really “seeing” objects, but rather their electron densities, so artifacts may be present).

microscope, fluorescent A microscope that is equipped to examine material that fluoresces under ultraviolet (UV) light.

microscope, simple A microscope that has a single converging lens.

microscopic Too small to be seen without the aid of a microscope, as opposed to macroscopic. For example, a microscopic tumor is too small to be seen without a microscope.

microscopic anatomy See *anatomy, microscopic*.

microsomia A body that is too small. A child with microsomia has significant undergrowth.

micturate To urinate.

micturition Urination; the act of urinating.

micturition syncope The temporary loss of consciousness upon urinating. See also *syncope; vasovagal reaction*.

middle ear See *ear; middle*.

middle ear infection See *ear infection*.

midwife A trained person who assists women during childbirth. Many midwives also provide prenatal care for pregnant women, birth education for women and their partners, and care for mothers and newborn babies after the birth. Depending on local law, midwives may deliver babies in the mother's home, in a birthing center or clinic, or in a hospital. Most midwives specialize in normal, uncomplicated deliveries, referring women with health problems that could require hospitalization during birth to a hospital-based obstetrician. Others work with physicians as part of a team. Legal qualifications required to practice midwifery differ among the US states and various countries.

midwife, certified nurse A person with an associate's, bachelor's, or master's degree in nursing who has also completed specialized training in midwifery. Abbreviated CNM. In the US, CNMs must earn certification from the American College of Nurse Midwives.

midwife, certified professional A midwife who has completed a degree in midwifery at a credentialed educational institution. Abbreviated CPM.

midwife, licensed A midwife who has been licensed to practice midwifery by a US state.

midwife assistant A person who assists a midwife with prenatal care, childbirth education, delivery, and postnatal care. Also known as labor assistant.

migraine Usually, periodic attacks of headaches on one or both sides of the head that may be accompanied by nausea, vomiting, increased sensitivity of the eyes to light (photophobia), increased sensitivity to sound (phonophobia), dizziness, blurred vision, cognitive disturbances, and other symptoms. Some migraines do not include headache, and migraines may or may not be preceded by auras. See also *migraine aura; migraine headache*.

migraine, abdominal An attack of abdominal pain that may be preceded by a migraine aura and accompanied by nausea, vomiting, and cognitive disturbance.

migraine, classic A migraine with an aura. Such migraines account for no more than 20 percent of migraines. See also *migraine*.

migraine, common A migraine without an aura. This is the most frequent type of migraine, accounting for about 80 to 85 percent of migraines. See also *migraine*.

migraine, ocular A migraine involving the eyes that results in distortion of visual images, accompanied or followed by headache. An ocular migraine usually affects only one eye at a time. Image distortion generally begins in the center of the image and then moves to one side. Images "gray out" or look wavy, and sight may be lost temporarily. Also known as retinal migraine.

migraine, ophthalmoplegic A rare condition observed most commonly in children and young adults characterized by headache of relatively long duration (up to one week) and paralysis or weakness of the muscles that control eye movement. Rather than a true migraine, the condition is believed to represent a cranial neuralgia (nerve problem).

migraine aura A sensory phenomenon that may occur before a migraine. Visual auras may include flashing lights, geometric patterns, or distorted vision. Some people may have aural auras that involve hearing sounds (usually buzzing) that are not actually present, olfactory auras that involve smelling odors that are not actually present, or tactile auras that appear as premonitory physical sensations. Auras are caused by unusual activity in the brain. The auras experienced by migraine sufferers are similar to those associated with epilepsy.

migraine headache The most common type of vascular headache, thought to be caused by abnormal sensitivity of arteries in the brain to various triggers that result in arterial spasms. Other arteries in the brain and scalp then open, and throbbing pain is perceived in the head. The tendency to migraine is inherited and appears to involve serotonin. This brain chemical (neurotransmitter) is involved in the transmission of nerve impulses that trigger the release of substances in the blood vessels. These nerve impulses cause the flashing lights and other sensory phenomena, known as auras, which may accompany migraines. Not all severe headaches are migraines and not all migraines are severe. Factors known to make migraines worse in some patients include stress, food sensitivities, menstruation, and the onset of menopause. Most patients feel better if they lie down and avoid bright lights. Preventive

measures can include medications and avoiding any known migraine triggers. Medication that can ease the pain of a current migraine is also available. See also *headache; headache, vascular*.

migrainous neuralgia See *cluster headache*.

miliary aneurysm A tiny aneurysm. Miliary aneurysms tend to affect minute arteries in the brain or in the retina of the eye. They can bleed and lead to impaired function of the brain or eye. See also *aneurysm*.

miliary tuberculosis The presence of numerous sites of tuberculosis infection, each of which is minute, due to dissemination of infected material through the bloodstream in a process somewhat like the metastasis of a malignancy.

milk teeth See *primary teeth*.

mineralocorticoid A group of hormones that regulate the balance of water and electrolytes (ions such as sodium and potassium) in the body. The mineralocorticoid hormones act on the tubules of the kidney. The most important mineralocorticoid hormone is aldosterone.

minimally invasive surgery A type of surgery that is done through small incisions through which instruments and imaging devices are passed; sometimes called laparoscopic surgery. Minimally invasive surgery is performed in many different surgical specialties. For patients, minimally invasive surgery has the advantages of a lower rate of blood loss and other complications, smaller surgical scars, and a reduced need for pain medication. Patients can usually leave the hospital and resume normal activity sooner after minimally invasive surgery than with conventional open surgery.

mini-stroke See *transient ischemic attack*.

minor In general, something that is less than something else. For example, the teres minor muscle is smaller than the teres major muscle.

minor salivary gland A small gland that produces saliva. The mouth and palate contain numerous minor salivary glands.

minoxidil A medication (brand names: Loniten, Rogaine) that was originally developed to treat high blood pressure as an oral medication and is now also used in topical form to promote hair growth.

miosis Contraction of the pupil. The opposite of miosis is mydriasis.

miscarriage Inadvertent loss of a pregnancy before the fetus is viable. A considerable proportion of pregnancies end in miscarriage. Also known as spontaneous abortion.

miscarriages, multiple More than one miscarriage for a woman. In multiple miscarriages, there is about a 5 percent chance that one member of the couple is carrying a chromosome translocation that is responsible for the miscarriages. Other causes of multiple miscarriage include Rh incompatibility, exposure to toxic substances that harmed the embryo, and physical problems in the mother that make it difficult for her to carry a fetus to term, such as antiphospholipid syndrome.

missense mutation A genetic change that results in the substitution of one amino acid in protein for another. A missense mutation is responsible for sickle hemoglobin, the molecular basis of sickle cell trait and sickle cell anemia.

mite-borne typhus See *typhus, scrub*.

mitochondria Structures located in the cell's cytoplasm outside the nucleus. Mitochondria are responsible for energy production. Each consists of two sets of membranes: a smooth, continuous outer coat and an inner membrane arranged in tubules or in folds that form plate-like double membranes (cristae). The mitochondria are the principal energy source of the cell. They not only convert nutrients into energy but also perform many other specialized tasks. Each mitochondrion has a chromosome that is made of DNA but is otherwise quite different from the better-known chromosomes in the nucleus. The mitochondrial chromosome is much smaller than other chromosomes. It is round, whereas the chromosomes in the nucleus are shaped like rods. There are many copies of the mitochondrial chromosome in every cell, whereas there is normally only one set of chromosomes in the nucleus. All mitochondrial chromosomes are inherited from the mother.

mitochondrial Referring to mitochondria.

mitochondrial disease A mutation in the mitochondrial chromosome that is responsible for a disease. Known mitochondrial diseases include the eye disease Leber hereditary optic atrophy; myoclonus epilepsy with ragged red fibers (MERRF); and mitochondrial encephalopathy, lactic acidosis, and stroke-like episodes syndrome (MELAS syndrome).

mitochondrial DNA The DNA of the mitochondria. Abbreviated mtDNA. There are 2 to 10 copies of the mtDNA genome in each mitochondrion. The

mtDNA molecule is double-stranded and circular. It is very small compared to the chromosomes in the nucleus, and so it contains only a limited number of genes. It is specialized in the information it carries, and it encodes a number of the subunits in the mitochondrial respiratory-chain complex that the cell needs in order to respire. It also contains genes for some ribosomal RNAs and transfer RNAs. Mutations in mtDNA can cause disease. These mutations often impair the function of oxidative-phosphorylation enzymes in the respiratory chain. This is especially manifest in tissues with a high energy expenditure, such as those of the brain and muscle. All mtDNA comes from the oocyte at fertilization. Therefore, inherited mtDNA mutations are transmitted from the mother to both male and female offspring.

mitochondrial encephalopathy, lactic acidosis, and stroke-like episodes See *MELAS syndrome*.

mitochondrial encephalopathy, MELAS See *MELAS syndrome*.

mitochondrial genome See *genome, mitochondrial*.

mitochondrial inheritance See *inheritance, mitochondrial*.

mitochondrial myopathy A form of mitochondrial disease that leads to progressive muscle weakness. More than 25 types of enzyme abnormalities have been defined that fall into this category. They result in a disease of cell metabolism and are defined via a biopsy of muscle tissue that shows ragged red fibers under microscopic examination. See also *mitochondrial disease*.

mitochondrion Singular of mitochondria.

mitosis The ordinary division of a body cell (a somatic cell) to form two daughter cells, each with the same chromosome complement as the parent cell.

mitotic Pertaining to mitosis.

mitotic nondisjunction The failure in mitosis for the two members of a chromosome pair to separate (to disjoin) normally so that both chromosomes go to one daughter cell while none go to the other daughter cell. See also *mitosis*.

mitral insufficiency A malfunction of the mitral valve that permits the backflow of blood (regurgitation) from the left ventricle into the left atrium. Most mitral insufficiency is mild and requires no treat-

ment. When severe, however, treatment with medications and sometimes surgery is necessary.

mitral prolapse See *mitral valve prolapse*.

mitral regurgitation Backflow of blood from the left ventricle to the left atrium due to mitral valve insufficiency.

mitral valve A valve in the heart that is situated between the left atrium and the left ventricle. The mitral valve permits blood to flow from the left atrium into the left ventricle, but not in the reverse direction. The mitral valve has two flaps (cusps). It is so named because it looks like a bishop's miter (headdress). Also known as bicuspid valve.

mitral valve, aorta, skeleton, and skin syndrome See *MASS syndrome*.

mitral valve prolapse A common heart valve anomaly affecting 5–10 percent of people that involves prolapse (flopping backwards) of the mitral valve leaflets into the left atrium during contraction of the heart's ventricles. This sometimes allows leakage of blood through the valve opening (mitral regurgitation). Most people with mitral valve prolapse have no symptoms, however, those who do commonly complain of symptoms such as fatigue, palpitations, chest pain, anxiety, and migraine headaches.

mittelschmerz Pain due to ovulation that usually occurs at the midpoint between the menstrual periods. From the German *mittel*, meaning "middle," and *schmerz*, meaning "pain."

mixed connective tissue disease A mixture of three diseases of connective tissue (the framework for the cells of the body): systemic lupus erythematosus, scleroderma, and polymyositis. Patients with mixed connective tissue disease typically have features of each of these three component diseases. They also typically have very high blood levels of antinuclear antibodies (ANAs) and antibodies to ribonucleoprotein (anti-RNP). The symptoms often eventually become dominated by features of one of the three component illnesses, most commonly scleroderma. The treatment for mixed connective tissue disease depends on which features are causing symptoms. Treatment is often directed at suppressing the inflammation in the tissues by using anti-inflammatory and immunosuppressive medications. These medications include nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, corticosteroids (such as prednisone), and cytotoxic drugs (such as methotrexate, azathioprine, and cyclophosphamide).

Organ damage, such as to the kidneys, can require additional specific treatment.

mixed mania A state of mind that is characterized by symptoms of both mania and depression and is seen in bipolar disorders. Mixed mania is more common in bipolar children and women than in men. A person experiencing mixed mania may feel agitated, angry, irritable, and depressed all at once. Because it combines a high activity level with depression, mixed mania poses a particular danger of suicide or self-injury. Treatment involves use of mood-stabilizing medication, sometimes accompanied by antidepressant or neuroleptic medication. Also known as agitated depression. See also *bipolar disorder; depression; mania*.

MMR Measles, mumps, rubella vaccine, a combination vaccine.

MMRV A combination vaccine against measles, mumps, rubella, and varicella.

MND Motor neuron disease.

modifier, biological response See *biological response modifier*.

Mohs surgery A type of surgery that is used for the treatment of skin cancer, especially basal cell or squamous cell carcinoma of the skin. Mohs surgery is designed to remove all the cancerous tissue while removing as little of the healthy tissue as possible. This type of surgery is especially helpful when the physician is not sure of the shape and depth of a tumor. In addition, this method is used to remove large tumors, tumors in hard-to-treat places, and cancers that have recurred. Mohs surgery is microscopically controlled. The area of skin is removed under local anesthetic and is then carefully oriented and serially examined under a microscope to ensure that all of the tumor has been removed. If the tumor has not all been removed, the procedure is repeated until the entire tumor is removed.

molar 1 One of the large teeth at the back of the mouth. The molars are well adapted to grinding. 2 Relating to or associated with a mass within the uterus that is formed by degeneration of partly developed products of conception.

molar pregnancy See *hydatidiform mole*.

mold One of a large group of fungi that can proliferate on food or in moist areas. Household mold is a common trigger for allergies.

mole 1 A pigmented spot on the skin. A type of nevus. 2 A mass within the uterus that is formed by partly developed products of conception.

mole, hydatidiform See *hydatidiform mole*.

molecule The smallest unit of a substance that can exist alone and retain the character of that substance.

molecules, recombinant DNA A combination of DNA molecules of different origin that are joined by using recombinant DNA technology.

Mollaret meningitis See *meningitis, Mollaret*.

mongolism See *Down syndrome*.

monilia A yeast-like fungus that is now known as Candida. See also *Candida albicans; candidiasis*.

monitor, Holter See *Holter monitor*.

mono 1 Abbreviation for infectious mononucleosis. See *mononucleosis*. 2 Prefix meaning one or single, as in monochromatic (one color) and monoclonal (derived from a single cell).

monoamine oxidase See *MAO*.

monoarticular Involving just one joint, as opposed to polyarticular.

monochromat A person with one of the many forms of colorblindness. See also *colorblindness*.

monochromatism 1 Total inability to perceive color due to the lack of or damage to the cones of the eye that perceive color, or the inability of the nerves to translate information received from the cones. A person with true monochromatism perceives only black, white, and shades of gray. Complete monochromatism is usually an inherited condition. 2 One of the many types of colorblindness that affects perception of certain colors only. See also *colorblindness*.

monoclonal Derived from a single cell and cells identical to that cell.

monoclonal antibody An antibody produced by a single clone of cells. A monoclonal antibody is therefore a single pure type of antibody. Monoclonal antibodies can be made in large quantities in the laboratory and are a cornerstone of immunology. Monoclonal antibodies are increasingly coming into use as therapeutic agents.

monocyte A white blood cell that has a single nucleus and can take in (ingest) foreign material.

mononeuritis Inflammation of a single nerve. The many causes of mononeuritis include diabetes mellitus, carpal tunnel syndrome, rheumatoid arthritis, and Lyme disease. The treatment for mononeuritis depends on the underlying cause. See also *mononeuritis multiplex*.

mononeuritis multiplex Inflammation of two or more nerves, typically in unrelated parts of the body. Mononeuritis multiplex causes a loss of function in the muscle tissue that is innervated by the affected nerves. For example, sudden loss of the ability to lift the foot normally while walking (foot drop) can be caused by mononeuritis multiplex, when it is accompanied by loss of nerve function elsewhere in the body. There are many causes of mononeuritis multiplex, including diabetes mellitus; infections, such as AIDS, Lyme disease, and leprosy; sarcoidosis; and connective tissue diseases, such as rheumatoid arthritis, systemic lupus erythematosus, vasculitis, Churg-Strauss syndrome, cryoglobulinemia, and Sjogren syndrome. The treatment for mononeuritis multiplex depends on the underlying cause.

mononucleosis A condition resulting from infection with the Epstein-Barr virus (EBV, human herpesvirus 4 [HHV-4]) in which there is an increase of white blood cells that have a single nucleus (monocytes). The infection can be spread by saliva. Its incubation period is 4 to 8 weeks. Symptoms include fever, fatigue, sore throat, and swollen lymph glands. Mononucleosis can cause liver inflammation (hepatitis) and spleen enlargement; a person with mononucleosis should avoid vigorous contact sports to prevent spleen rupture. It is less severe in young children than in others. Most people exposed to EBV do not develop mononucleosis; most adults carry an antibody against EBV in their blood, which means they have been infected with EBV at some time. Treatment includes rest, pain medication, and in some cases antiviral medication. Also known as mono and the kissing disease. See also *Epstein-Barr virus*.

monosomy Missing one chromosome from a pair. For example, if a female has one X chromosome (X monosomy) rather than two, she has Turner syndrome.

monostotic fibrous dysplasia Excessive growth in a single bone of hard-fibrous tissue that replaces the normal bone tissue. Symptoms of monostotic fibrous dysplasia may include pain and fracture of the bone. Most cases are diagnosed in adolescence or young adulthood and remain

unchanged throughout life. The outlook is usually very good. Monostotic fibrous dysplasia appears to be a different disorder from polyostotic fibrous dysplasia.

monozygous twins Identical twins. They are called monozygous because they originate from a single fertilized egg (zygote).

morbidity Illness, disease.

morbilli See *measles*.

morgue A place where dead bodies are kept before autopsy, funeral, or burial.

morning sickness The common phenomenon of nausea between the 6th and 12th weeks of pregnancy. Symptoms include nausea and vomiting. Morning sickness is believed to be caused by hormonal changes and metabolic changes that involve carbohydrate digestion. Suggested treatment includes eating crackers or other high-carbohydrate foods first thing in the morning (even before getting out of bed); eating small, frequent meals; drinking extra fluids between meals; and avoiding fatty foods. If morning sickness is extreme enough to lead to weight loss during pregnancy, the condition is termed hyperemesis gravidarum, and it requires immediate medical treatment. See also *hyperemesis gravidarum*.

morning-after pill See *contraceptive, emergency*.

morphea Skin changes that are localized to one or more patchy areas of skin that become hardened, dry, smooth, and slightly pigmented. Morphea is called "localized scleroderma" but it rarely, if ever, evolves into full-fledged scleroderma, an autoimmune disease of the connective tissue.

morphine A powerful narcotic agent that has strong analgesic (pain relief) action and other significant effects on the central nervous system. It is dangerously addicting. Morphine is a naturally occurring member of a large chemical class of compounds called alkaloids. The name, which derives from Morpheus (the mythologic god of dreams) was coined in 1805 by German apothecary Adolf Serturner to designate the main alkaloid in opium. Opium comes from the poppy plant.

morphology 1 Literally, the study of form (structure). 2 A form itself.

Morquio syndrome A form of mucopolysaccharidosis that is characterized by an inability to break down keratan sulfate, which leads to abnormal

accumulation of keratan sulfate in muscle and skeletal tissues. This in turn can lead to abnormalities of the skeleton, muscles, skin, teeth, and muscular organs. Diagnosis is made by examining leukocytes and cultured skin fibroblasts or by checking urine for high levels of keratan sulfate. There is currently no treatment for Morquio syndrome, but physical therapy, medication, and sometimes surgery can reduce discomfort and enhance the patient's ability to move. Morquio syndrome is inherited in an autosomal recessive manner. Also known as mucopolysaccharidosis type IV (MPS4). See also *mucopolysaccharidosis*.

mortality 1 The condition of being mortal, of eventually having to die. The opposite of mortality is immortality. 2 The rate of death.

mortality rate, fetal See *fetal mortality rate*.

mortality rate, infant See *infant mortality rate*.

mortality rate, maternal See *maternal mortality rate*.

mortality rate, neonatal See *neonatal mortality rate*.

mosaic A person or a tissue that contains two or more types of genetically different cells. All females are mosaics because of X-chromosome inactivation (lyonization). Mosaic patterns can affect the way genetic disorders are expressed. For example, about 5 percent of people with Down syndrome have a mosaic variant in which only some cells have an extra chromosome 21. Compared to others with Down syndrome, these individuals have fewer clinical symptoms, are more likely to have a normal IQ, and are less likely to have heart and other problems that can be associated with Down syndrome.

mother 1 The female parent. 2 To produce offspring as a female. 3 A cell or another structure from which similar cells or structures are formed. Such a cell might be referred to as the mother cell. 4 To provide maternal protection, guidance, and nurturing to a child or children.

motility study, antro-duodenal A study for detecting and recording the contractions of the muscles of the stomach and the first part of the small intestine (the duodenum). An antro-duodenal motility study is performed to diagnose problems in the way the muscles of the stomach and small intestine are working. To conduct the study, a tube is passed through the nose, throat, esophagus, and

stomach until the tip of the tube lies in the small intestine. The tube senses when the muscles of the stomach and small intestine contract and squeeze the tube tightly. The contractions are recorded for analysis by a computer. Also known as antroduodenal manometry.

motion, range of See *range of motion*.

motion sickness A disorder of the sense of balance and equilibrium and, hence, the sense of spatial orientation that is caused by repeated motion such as from the swell of the sea, the movement of a car, or the motion of a plane in turbulent air. Motion sickness is due to irritation of a portion of the inner ear called the labyrinth. The symptoms of motion sickness include nausea, vomiting, and vertigo. Other common signs of motion sickness are sweating and a general feeling of discomfort and not feeling well (malaise). Symptoms usually stop when the motion that causes it ceases. However, some people suffer symptoms for even a few days after the trip is over.

motor Something that produces or refers to motion. For example, a motor neuron is a nerve cell that conveys an impulse to a muscle for contraction, which then moves a joint.

motor neuron disease A group of related diseases of the nervous system that are characterized by steadily progressive deterioration of the motor neurons in the brain, brainstem, and spinal cord. Abbreviated MND. Motor neurons are the nerve cells along which the brain sends instructions, in the form of electrical impulses, to the muscles. The degeneration of motor neurons leads to weakness and wasting of muscles. MND usually first affects the arms or legs. Then shoulders and other muscles may be affected. Weakness and wasting in the muscles of the face and throat may cause problems with speech, chewing, and swallowing. MND does not affect touch, taste, sight, smell, or hearing, nor does it directly affect bladder, bowel, or sexual function. In the vast majority of cases, the intellect remains unchanged. Subtypes of MND are distinguished by the major site of degeneration of the motor neurons—for example, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (Lou Gehrig's disease), progressive spinal muscular atrophy, progressive bulbar palsy, and primary lateral sclerosis. The prognosis is dependent upon the type of MND.

mountain sickness See *altitude sickness*.

mouth, trench See *acute membranous gingivitis*.

movement, fetal See *fetal movement*.

MPH Master of public health, a degree designating successful training in analyzing past, present, and future public health issues.

MPS 1 Mucopolysaccharidosis. 2 Myofascial pain syndrome.

MPS1 Mucopolysaccharidosis type I. See *Hurler syndrome*.

MPS2 Mucopolysaccharidosis type II. See *Hunter syndrome*.

MPS3 Mucopolysaccharidosis type III. See *Sanfilippo syndrome*.

MPS4 Mucopolysaccharidosis type IV. See *Morquio syndrome*.

MRC 1 Medical Research Council. 2 Medical Reserve Corps.

MRI Magnetic resonance imaging.

mRNA Messenger RNA.

MRSA Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*.

MS Multiple sclerosis.

MS AFP Maternal serum alpha-fetoprotein.

MSUD Maple syrup urine disease.

mtDNA Mitochondrial DNA.

mucocele A swelling consisting of an accumulation of mucus. See also *mucus*.

mucocutaneous lymph node syndrome See *Kawasaki disease*.

mucolipidosis One of a group of storage diseases in which both lipids and substances called mucopolysaccharides accumulate in the tissues of the body. Four different mucolipidoses have been identified, numbered I through IV. All four are lysosomal disorders—that is, the lysomes are organelles within the cell that contain enzymes that can digest (lyse) substances—and all are inherited in an autosomal recessive manner.

mucolipidosis I A type of mucolipidosis that is characterized by deficiency of the enzyme neuraminidase (sialidase). There are two forms of the disease. One form is characterized by cherry red spots in the eyes, gradual loss of vision, progressive debilitating myoclonus (muscle spasms), and normal intelligence. The other form of the disease, in

addition to featuring the symptoms of the first form, causes a coarse face, bony abnormalities, and sometimes early death. Also known as sialidosis.

mucolipidosis II See *I-cell disease*.

mucolipidosis III A type of mucolipidosis that is characterized by deficiency of the enzyme N-acetylglucosamine-1-phosphotransferase and features of Hurler syndrome, but with much slower progression. Also known as pseudo-Hurler polydystrophy.

mucolipidosis IV A type of mucolipidosis that is due to mutation in the gene that encoded mucolipin-1. Most patients with mucolipidosis IV have developmental delay, mental retardation, clouding of the cornea of the eye, and severe visual impairment.

mucopolysaccharidosis One of several inherited metabolic disorders that affect carbohydrate use by the body. Abbreviated MPS. Substances derived from carbohydrates that are called mucopolysaccharides, or glycosaminoglycans (GAGs), accumulate in body tissues because the body lacks the specific enzymes needed to metabolize or digest them. This accumulation damages and distorts tissues, stunts growth, limits muscle and joint movement, and may cause mental retardation. MPS is believed to occur in about 1 in every 25,000 births. It usually becomes obvious in early childhood and leads to death before middle age. There are currently no treatments available for any form of MPS, although enzyme replacement therapies are being researched and bone-marrow transplants have been tried on patients with MPS type I (Hurler syndrome) with some limited success. See also *Hunter syndrome*; *Hurler syndrome*; *Maroteaux-Lamy syndrome*; *Morquio syndrome*; *Sanfilippo syndrome*.

mucopolysaccharidosis type I Also known as Hurler syndrome, Scheie syndrome, and Hurler-Scheie syndrome. See also *Hurler syndrome*.

mucopolysaccharidosis type II See *Hunter syndrome*.

mucopolysaccharidosis type III See *Sanfilippo syndrome*.

mucopolysaccharidosis type IV See *Morquio syndrome*.

mucopolysaccharidosis type VI See *Maroteaux-Lamy syndrome*.

mucosa A moist tissue membrane that lines some body cavities and organs. Also known as mucous

membrane. For example, the oral mucosa is the mucous membrane that lines the mouth and throat.

mucositis Inflammation of the mucous membranes lining the digestive tract from the mouth to the anus. Mucositis is a common side effect of chemotherapy and of radiotherapy that involves any part of the digestive tract. Mucositis affects the rapidly dividing mucosal cells that line the mouth, throat, stomach, and intestines, which normally have a short lifespan. If a therapy destroys these cells, they may not be replaced right away, in which case mucositis results. A person with mucositis may have raw sores (ulcers) in the mouth and throat and feel like he or she has a sunburn in the throat.

mucous Pertaining to mucus, a thick fluid produced by the lining of some tissues of the body.

mucoviscidosis See *cystic fibrosis*.

mucus A thick fluid that is produced by the lining of some organs of the body.

multifactorial In medicine, referring to multiple factors in heredity or disease. For example, traits and conditions that are caused by more than one gene occurring together are multifactorial, and diseases that are caused by more than one factor interacting (for example, heredity and diet in diabetes) are multifactorial.

multifactorial inheritance A hereditary pattern seen when more than one genetic factor is involved in the causation of a condition. Many common traits and many common diseases are inherited in a multifactorial manner.

multi-infarct dementia Dementia that is brought on by a series of strokes.

multipara A woman who has had two or more pregnancies resulting in potentially viable offspring. The term para refers to births. A para III has had three such pregnancies; a para VI or more is also known as a grand multipara.

multiparous 1 Having two or more offspring at one birth. 2 Related to a multipara. See also *uniparous*.

multiple chemical sensitivity A syndrome in which multiple symptoms reportedly occur with low-level exposure to many common chemicals. Abbreviated MCS. MCS is a controversial issue and has been rejected by numerous medical societies as an established organic disease. Proposed theories to explain MCS include allergic reactions, dysfunction of the immune system, neurobiological sensitization,

and various psychological theories, but there is insufficient scientific evidence to confirm a relationship between any of these possible causes and the occurrence of symptoms.

multiple enchondromatosis A condition characterized by benign masses of cartilage, called enchondromas, growing within bones. The enchondromas tend to be in the bones of the hands and feet and the long bones of the arms and legs. They can cause pain, deform and shorten a limb, and predispose a person to fractures. Surgery can help to correct limb-length inequality if it occurs. Also known as Ollier's disease.

multiple gestation A pregnancy in which two or more fetuses are present in the womb.

multiple myeloma A bone marrow cancer that involves a type of white blood cell called a plasma (or myeloma) cell. The tumor cells in myeloma can form a single collection (plasmacytoma) or many tumors (multiple myeloma). Plasma cells are normally part of the immune system; they make antibodies. Because myeloma patients have an excess of identical plasma cells, they have too much of one type of antibody. As myeloma cells increase in number, they damage and weaken the bones, causing pain and often fractures. When bones are damaged, too much calcium is released into the blood, leading to loss of appetite, nausea, thirst, fatigue, muscle weakness, restlessness, and confusion. Myeloma cells prevent the bone marrow from forming normal plasma cells and other white blood cells that are important to the immune system, so patients with multiple myeloma may not be able to fight infections. Myeloma cells can also prevent the growth of new red blood cells in the marrow, causing anemia. Excess antibody proteins and calcium may prevent the kidneys from filtering and cleaning the blood properly. Chemotherapy and bone marrow transplant are the primary treatments. Also known as plasma cell myeloma and myeloma.

multiple personality disorder See *dissociative disorder*.

multiple sclerosis A disease that is characterized by loss of myelin (demyelination). Abbreviated MS. Myelin, the coating of nerve fibers, is composed of lipids (fats) and protein. It serves as insulation and permits efficient nerve fiber conduction. In MS, demyelination usually affects white matter in the brain, but sometimes it extends into the gray matter. When myelin is damaged, nerve fiber conduction is faulty or absent, and nerve cell death may occur. Impaired bodily functions or altered sensations associated with those demyelinated nerve fibers give rise to the symptoms of MS, which range from

numbness to paralysis and blindness. People with MS experience attacks of symptoms that may last days, months, or longer. For many patients, the disease is progressive and leads to disablement, although some cases enter long, perhaps even permanent, remission. The cause of MS is unknown, although viral activity is suspected. Most patients are diagnosed between the ages of 20 and 40. Until recently, treatment had focused on preventing attacks. Steroids, interferon, and medications to treat specific symptoms (such as fatigue, depression, and vertigo) are standard, along with lifestyle changes to avoid stress and other triggers. New treatment options involve immune system modulation or support.

multiple symmetric lipomatosis See *lipomatosis, familial benign cervical*.

mumps An acute viral illness that is caused by a paramyxovirus and that usually presents with inflammation of the salivary glands, particularly the parotid glands. A child with mumps often looks like a chipmunk with a full mouth due to the swelling of the salivary glands near the ears. Mumps can also cause inflammation of other tissues, most frequently the covering and substance of the central nervous system (meningoencephalitis), the pancreas (pancreatitis), and, especially after adolescence, the ovaries (oophoritis) or the testes (orchitis). The mature testes are particularly susceptible to damage from mumps, which can lead to infertility. Mumps spreads easily through airborne particles of human saliva. Treatment involves rest and use of nonaspirin pain relievers to ease pain in swollen areas. Rarely, mumps can cause a form of meningitis, in which case hospitalization may be necessary. Mumps can be prevented via a vaccine. See also *meningitis; MMR; mumps immunization*.

mumps immunization A vaccination for mumps. Mumps immunization may be given individually, or together with the measles and rubella vaccines, in the MMR immunization, or with the MMR vaccine modified to include a vaccine against varicella (MMRV). See also *MMR; MMRV*.

mumps in pregnancy Mumps contracted in pregnancy, which can cause early miscarriage or birth defects. The most common birth defect associated with mumps is congenital deafness. Mumps vaccination is not recommended during or shortly before pregnancy because it is a live attenuated vaccine, so carries a risk of causing mumps infection.

Munchhausen by proxy A form of Munchhausen syndrome in which a parent feigns illness in a child. In some cases the parent is simply overanxious or poorly informed. In others, a misdirected desire for

attention or psychiatric illness is the cause. In a very few cases, the parent actually causes the child's illness, as by injecting toxic substances. See also *Munchausen syndrome*.

Munchhausen syndrome Recurrent feigning of catastrophic illnesses. Some patients with Munchhausen syndrome actually cause their own illness, as by secretly drinking or injecting substances. Munchhausen syndrome may be caused by a misdirected desire for attention, although in some cases it arises in actual psychiatric illness. It is named for the fictitious Baron Munchhausen, who told tall tales. See also *body dysmorphic disorder; hypochondria; Munchhausen by proxy*.

murine typhus See *typhus, murine*.

murmur, heart See *heart murmur*.

muscle The tissue of the body that functions primarily as a source of power. There are three types of muscle in the body: Muscle that is responsible for moving extremities and external areas of the body is called skeletal muscle, heart muscle is called cardiac muscle, and muscle in the walls of arteries and the bowel is called smooth muscle. See also *cardiac muscle; skeletal muscle; smooth muscle*.

muscle, abdominal See *abdominal muscle*.

muscle, abductor Any muscle that pushes away from the midline of the body. For example, the abductor muscles of the arms allow the arms to be raised from one's sides. Abductor muscles are opposed by adductor muscles. To keep these similar-sounding terms straight, medical students learn to speak of "A B dactors" versus "A D dactors."

muscle, adductor Any muscle that pulls inward toward the midline of the body. For example, the adductor muscles of the leg serve to pull the legs together. Adductor muscles are opposed by abductor muscles. To keep these similar-sounding terms straight, medical students learn to speak of "A D dactors" versus "A B dactors."

muscle, central core disease of See *central core disease of muscle*.

muscle, infraspinatus See *infraspinatus muscle*.

muscle, papillary A small muscle within the heart that anchors the heart valves. The anchor ropes are the chordae tendineae, thread-like bands of fibrous tissue that attach on one end to the edges of the tricuspid and mitral valves of the heart and on the other end to the papillary muscles.

muscle, piriformis A muscle that begins at the front surface of the sacrum (the V-shaped bone between the buttocks, at the base of the spine) and passes through the greater sciatic notch to attach to the top of the thighbone (femur) at its bony prominence (the greater trochanter). The gluteus maximus muscle covers the piriformis muscle in the buttocks.

muscle, subscapularis A muscle that moves the arm by turning it inward (internal rotation). The tendon of the subscapularis muscle is one of four tendons that stabilize the shoulder joint and constitute the rotator cuff.

muscle, supraspinatus A muscle that is responsible for elevating the arm and moving it away from the body. The tendon of the supraspinatus muscle is one of four tendons that stabilize the shoulder joint and constitute the rotator cuff.

muscle, teres minor A muscle that assists in the lifting of the arm during outward turning (external rotation) of the arm. The tendon of the teres minor muscle is one of four tendons that stabilize the shoulder joint and constitute the rotator cuff.

muscular Having to do with muscles or endowed with above-average muscle development. For example, the muscular system is all the muscles of the body, collectively.

muscular atrophy, post-polio Muscle wasting that occurs after the initial acute polio illness.

muscular dystrophy One of a group of genetic diseases characterized by progressive weakness and degeneration of the skeletal or voluntary muscles that control movement. Abbreviated MD. The muscles of the heart and some other involuntary muscles are also affected in some forms of MD, and a few forms involve other organs as well. The major forms of MD include Duchenne MD, Becker MD, limb-girdle MD, facioscapulohumeral MD, congenital MD, oculopharyngeal MD, distal MD, Emery-Dreifuss MD, and myotonic dystrophy. MD can affect people of all ages. Although some forms first become apparent in infancy or childhood, others may not appear until middle age or later. Duchenne MD is the most common kind of MD that affects children. Myotonic dystrophy is the most common kind of MD in adults. There is no specific treatment for any of the forms of MD. Physical therapy to prevent contractures (a condition in which shortened muscles around joints cause abnormal and sometimes painful positioning of the joints), use of orthoses (orthopedic appliances used for support), and corrective orthopedic surgery may be needed to improve the quality of life in some cases. The prog-

nosis with MD depends on the type of MD. Some cases may be mild and very slowly progressive, giving the patient a normal life-span, and other cases may have more marked progression of muscle weakness, functional disability, and loss of ambulation. Life expectancy depends on the degree of progression and late respiratory deficit. In Duchenne MD, death usually occurs in the late teens to early 20s. See also *myotonic dystrophy*.

muscular dystrophy, Becker A form of muscular dystrophy (MD) that is similar to Duchenne MD but milder. Patients with Becker MD produce a little of the key protein, dystrophin, whereas those with Duchenne make none. Progression of Becker MD is slower and symptoms tend to appear later than progression of Duchenne MD. Both Becker and Duchenne MD result from mutations in the gene on the X chromosome that encodes dystrophin.

muscular dystrophy, congenital A form of muscular dystrophy (MD) that is present at birth. Various types of congenital MD have been identified, each caused by a different genetic error. Congenital MD can affect males or females. Diagnosis is initially made via observation of general muscle weakness (hypotonia). See also *dystrophy, myotonic*.

muscular dystrophy, distal A rare type of muscular dystrophy (MD) that typically begins in adulthood and involves the muscles that are most distant from the midline, such as those of the hands and feet. Distal MD is inherited in an autosomal dominant manner and affects males and females. Also known as distal myopathy and distal hereditary myopathy.

muscular dystrophy, Duchenne The best-known form of muscular dystrophy, which is due to mutation in a gene on the X chromosome that prevents the production of dystrophin, a normal protein in muscle. Abbreviated DMD. DMD affects boys and, very rarely, girls. DMD typically appears after two years of age with weakness in the pelvis and upper limbs, resulting in clumsiness, frequent falling, an unusual gait, and general weakness. Some patients also have mild mental retardation. As DMD progresses, the patient may need a wheelchair. Most patients with DMD die in their 20s because of muscle-based breathing and heart problems. There is no cure for DMD. Current treatment is directed toward symptoms, such as assisting with mobility, preventing scoliosis, and providing pulmonary therapy.

muscular dystrophy, Emery-Dreifuss A form of muscular dystrophy (MD) that begins in childhood or the teen years. It is a slowly progressing disorder that begins in the upper arms or upper

legs. Contractures of the limbs are common, as are serious heart problems. Emery-Dreifuss MD is caused by mutation in the gene that encodes emerin on the X chromosome. Although only males have the muscle problems associated with Emery-Dreifuss MD, females may have the heart problems. Therefore, female relatives of males with this disorder should have regular heart checkups.

muscular dystrophy, facioscapulohumeral A form of muscular dystrophy that begins before age 20, with slowly progressive weakness of the muscles of the face, shoulders, and feet. The severity of the disease is variable. Abbreviated FSMD. Although most people with FSMD retain the ability to walk, about 20 percent of affected individuals require wheelchairs. Life expectancy for FSMD is not shortened. The diagnosis can be confirmed with a DNA test. FSMD is inherited in an autosomal dominant manner.

muscular dystrophy, limb-girdle A form of muscular dystrophy (MD) that may begin in childhood or any time later, with slowly progressive weakness and wasting of the muscles in the hips or shoulders. Limb-girdle MD is caused by a number of genetic defects and can affect both males and females.

muscular dystrophy, myotonic See *dystrophy, myotonic*.

muscular dystrophy, oculopharyngeal A form of muscular dystrophy (MD) that begins in the muscles of the eyes and throat. It usually appears between the ages of 40 and 60, and it progresses slowly. Oculopharyngeal MD is inherited in an autosomal dominant manner and affects both males and females. One cause of oculopharyngeal MD is mutation in the PABP2 gene on chromosome 14, which encodes poly(A)-binding protein-2.

muscular dystrophy, tibial A form of muscular dystrophy (MD) in which weakness is usually confined to the anterior compartment (the front part) of the lower leg and, in particular, to the tibialis anterior muscle. The weakness usually starts at age 35 to 45, or even much later. Tibial MD is inherited in an autosomal dominant manner.

mutagen Something that is capable of mutating DNA. Among the known mutagens are radiation, certain chemicals, and some viruses.

mutant An individual with a mutant (changed) gene.

mutation A change in a gene. Mutations can be caused by many factors, including random chance

and environmental insult. See also *missense mutation; point mutation*.

mute 1 A person who does not speak, either because of an inability to speak or an unwillingness to speak. The term is specifically applied to a person who, due to profound congenital or early deafness, is unable to use articulate language and so is deaf-mute. 2 The condition of not speaking. See also *apraxia of speech; autism; elective mutism; selective mutism*. 3 In speech, a letter that is silent, or an element of speech that is formed by a position of the mouth that stops the passage of the breath, such as the letters p, b, d, k, and t.

mutism The inability or unwillingness to speak. See also *apraxia of speech; autism; elective mutism; selective mutism*.

mutism, akinetic A state in which a person is unable to speak (mute) or move (akinetic). Akinetic mutism is often due to damage to the frontal lobes of the brain.

myalgia Pain in the muscles or within muscle tissue.

myalgia, epidemic See *Bornholm disease*.

myasthenia gravis An autoimmune neuromuscular disorder that is characterized by fatigue and exhaustion of muscles. Abbreviated MG. MG is caused by a mistaken immune response to the body's own nicotinic acetylcholine receptors, which are found in junctions between muscles and the nervous system. The body produces antibodies that attack these receptors, preventing signals from reaching the muscles. A number of treatments are available that help, including steroids and other immunosuppressive medications and anticholinergic medications.

mycobacterium avium complex A serious opportunistic infection that is caused by two similar bacteria, *Mycobacterium avium* and *Mycobacterium intercellulare*, which are found in the soil and in dust particles. Abbreviated MAC. In persons with suppressed immune systems, such as people with AIDS, MAC can spread through the bloodstream to infect lymph nodes, bone marrow, the liver, the spleen, spinal fluid, the lungs, and the intestinal tract. Typical symptoms of MAC include night sweats, weight loss, fever, fatigue, diarrhea, and enlarged spleen. Antibiotics are commonly used in MAC prevention (for persons with suppressed immune systems) and treatment.

mycoplasma A large group of bacteria, with more than 100 types identified. Mycoplasma are

very simple one-celled organisms without outer membranes. They penetrate and infect individual cells. Mycoplasma hominis and Mycoplasma pneumoniae are examples of mycoplasma bacteria that occur in humans.

mycoplasma hominis A common inhabitant of the vagina that can cause infections of the female and male genital tracts. Treatment involves use of antibiotics, including tetracycline and erythromycin.

mycoplasma pneumoniae A mycoplasma that can infect the upper respiratory tract and the lungs. Mycoplasma pneumoniae is a major cause of respiratory infection in children of school age and young adults. It is also a common cause of pneumonia in persons with HIV. Treatment involves use of antibiotics, including tetracycline and erythromycin.

mycosis fungoides A type of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma that first appears on the skin. Also known as cutaneous T-cell lymphoma.

mydriasis Dilation of the pupil. The opposite of mydriasis is miosis.

myelin The fatty substance that covers and protects nerves. Myelin is a layered tissue that surrounds the nerve fibers (axons). This sheath around the axons acts like a conduit in an electrical system, ensuring that messages sent by axons are not lost en route.

myelination The formation of the myelin sheath around a nerve fiber. Also known as myelinization. See also *myelin*.

myelitis Inflammation of the spinal cord, such as from infection or immune inflammation.

myelodysplastic syndrome One of a group of disorders characterized by abnormal development of one or more of the cell lines that are normally found in the bone marrow. Patients can develop a variety of symptoms related to anemia, low or high white blood cell count, infections, and bleeding problems. Myelodysplastic syndrome may progress and become acute leukemia. The well-recognized myelodysplastic syndromes include refractory anemia, refractory anemia with ringed sideroblasts, refractory anemia with excess blasts, refractory anemia with excess blasts in transformation, chronic myelomonocytic leukemia, chronic myelomonocytic leukemia in transformation, and unclassified myelodysplastic syndrome. Also known as preleukemia or smoldering leukemia.

myeloencephalitis See *encephalomyelitis*.

myelofibrosis Spontaneous scarring (fibrosis) of the bone marrow that disrupts the normal production of blood cells, leading to severe anemia and enlargement of the spleen and liver. Myelofibrosis usually begins slowly and worsens over time. It can be associated with a variety of diseases, primarily myeloproliferative (preleukemic) disorders. Also known as agnogenic myeloid metaplasia.

myelogenous See *myeloid*.

myelogram An X-ray test of the spinal cord and the bones of the spine. A myelogram is used to detect impingement of the spinal cord by bone, disc, or other tissues.

myeloid Referring to myelocytes, a type of white blood cell. Also known as myelogenous.

myeloma See *multiple myeloma*.

myelomeningocele See *meningomyelocele*.

myeloproliferative disorder One of the malignant diseases leading to overproduction of certain bone marrow cells, including those that give rise to the red blood cells, the granulocytes, and the blood platelets. The myeloproliferative disorders include chronic myelogenous leukemia, chronic idiopathic myelofibrosis, essential thrombocythemia, chronic neutrophilic leukemia, chronic eosinophilic leukemia, and polycythemia vera.

myocardial infarction See *heart attack*.

myocardial infarction, acute See *acute myocardial infarction*.

myocarditis Inflammation of the heart muscle. Inflammation of heart muscle can be caused by viruses, medications, parasites, or underlying diseases. Treatment depends on the cause.

myocardium The heart muscle.

myoclonic twitch A rapid, involuntary muscle contraction, particularly near the eye. Myoclonic twitches resemble and may be mistaken for tics. Like tics, they tend to occur more often when the person is under stress; unlike tics, they are not preceded by any sensation and they cannot be delayed.

myoclonus The shock-like, involuntary contraction of a muscle. See also *myoclonic twitch*.

myofascial pain syndrome A condition that is characterized by chronic pain in the muscle tissues and is similar to fibromyalgia. Abbreviated MPS. MPS is sometimes the aftermath of injury. Pain medication,

anti-inflammatory medication, and therapies aimed at relaxing the muscle tissues (such as massage, chiropractic, and some forms of acupuncture) have been reported as beneficial. See also *fibromyalgia*.

myoglobin The pigment in muscle that carries oxygen.

myoma A tumor of muscle. Myoma can refer specifically to a benign tumor of uterine muscle, also called a leiomyoma or a fibroid.

myomectomy Surgery to remove a fibroid from the uterus.

myometrium The muscular outer layer of the uterus.

myopathic pseudo-obstruction See *pseudo-obstruction, myopathic*.

myopathy Any and all diseases of muscle.

myopathy, mitochondrial See *MELAS syndrome*.

myopia Nearsightedness, the inability to see distant objects well. Myopia can be caused by either a

longer-than-normal eyeball or a condition that prevents light rays from focusing on the retina. Most forms of myopia can be managed with corrective lenses. Surgery is available to permanently correct some forms of myopia.

myositis Inflammation of muscle tissue. There are many causes of myositis, including injury, medications, and diseases, such as dermatomyositis. Myositis may require no treatment, stopping medications, or treatment of an underlying disease, if present.

myotonic dystrophy See *dystrophy, myotonic*.

myringotomy A tiny surgical incision in the eardrum. A myringotomy can be used to drain any fluid behind the eardrum and to remove thickened secretions. A tiny tube (tympanostomy tube) is often inserted into the eardrum to keep the middle ear aerated for a prolonged period of time. See also *ear tube*.

myxoma A benign tumor derived from connective tissue that has a gelatinous appearance. A myxoma is the most common type of primary tumor of the heart.

Nn

Na The chemical symbol for sodium. The symbol for sodium chloride (table salt) is NaCl. See also *sodium*.

nadir The lowest point. The nadir may refer, for example, to the lowest blood count after chemotherapy or the lowest concentration of a drug in the body.

nail 1 A piece of metal that is used to hold two or more pieces of bone together (for example, after a fracture). 2 The horny plate on the end of the finger (fingernail) or toe (toenail). Each nail has a body, lateral nail folds on its sides, a lunula (the little moon-shaped feature at the base), and a proximal skin fold at its base. See also *fingernail*; *nail care*; *toenail*.

nail care Care of the fingernails and toenails. Many nail problems are due to poor nail care. Recommendations for maintaining nail health include keeping nails clean and dry to keep bacteria and other infectious organisms from collecting under the nails, cutting nails straight across with only slight rounding at the tip, using a fine-textured file to keep nails shaped and free of snags, and avoiding nail-biting. It is a good idea to soak toenails that are thick and difficult to cut in warm salt water (1 tsp. salt to 1 pint of water) for 5 to 10 minutes, and apply a 10 percent urea cream (available at drugstores, without a prescription) before trimming. One should not "dig out" ingrown toenails, especially if they are sore; instead, a physician should provide treatment. Nail changes, swelling, and pain can signal serious problems that should be reported to a physician.

nail fungus See *onychomycosis*.

nail furrows Transverse lines or grooves across the fingernails; transverse depressions in the nail plate caused by temporary cessation of cell division in the proximal nail matrix. The condition may be caused by local disease of the nail fold, physical trauma to it, or a systemic insult, such as an illness or a drug as, for example, chemotherapy. Also known as Beau's lines.

nail-patella syndrome A hereditary condition that is characterized by abnormally formed or absent nails and underdeveloped or absent kneecaps. Abbreviated NPS. Other features of NPS include iliac horns; elbow abnormalities that interfere with full range of motion (pronation and supination); glaucoma; and kidney disease that resembles glomerulonephritis, which can be progressive and lead to kidney failure. NPS is inherited as an autosomal dominant trait. NPS is caused by mutations in a gene LMX1B (the LIM homeobox transcription factor 1, beta gene) on chromosome 9. Also known as hereditary osteo-onychodysplasia, Fong disease, and Turner-Kieser syndrome.

nails, jogger's See *jogger's nails*.

nails, ringworm of the See *onychomycosis*.

nails, white spots on the See *jogger's nails*.

nanism See *dwarfism*.

narcolepsy A neurological disorder that is marked by the recurrent, sudden, uncontrollable compulsion to sleep. Narcolepsy is often associated with cataplexy (a sudden loss of muscle tone and paralysis of voluntary muscles associated with a strong emotion), sleep paralysis (immobility of the body that occurs in the transition from sleep to wakefulness), hypnagogic hallucinations (presleep dreams), and automatic behaviors (such as doing something "automatically" and not remembering afterward how one did it). The causes of narcolepsy are unknown. Narcolepsy is not a fatal disorder in itself, but it can lead to fatalities. For example, affected persons may fall asleep while driving. Also known as excessive daytime sleepiness, hypnolepsy, sleeping disease, paroxysmal sleep, and Gelineau syndrome.

narcotic 1 A drug that causes insensibility or stupor. A narcotic induces narcosis, from the Greek "narke" for "numbness or torpor." 2 A drug such as marijuana which is subject to regulatory restrictions comparable to those for addictive narcotics.

nares The nostrils.

nasal Having to do with the nose.

nasal decongestant A drug that shrinks the swollen membranes in the nose, making it easier to breathe. Decongestants can be taken orally or as nasal drops or spray. Nasal decongestants should not be used for more than 5 days in a row without a physician's consent. When nasal decongestants are used for a long time and then discontinued, symptoms often worsen (a rebound effect) because the tissues become dependent on the medication.

nasal passage A channel for airflow through the nose. The walls of the nasal passages are coated with respiratory mucous membranes, which contain innumerable tiny hair-like cells that move waves of mucus toward the throat. Dust, bacteria, and other particles inhaled from the air are trapped by the mucus in the nose, carried back, swallowed, and dropped into the gastric juices so that any potential harm they might do is nullified. The organs of smell are made up of patches of tissue called olfactory membranes. The olfactory membranes are about the size of a postage stamp and are located in a pair of clefts just under the bridge of the nose. Most air breathed in normally flows through the nose, but only a small part reaches the olfactory clefts to get a response to an odor. When a person sniffs to detect a smell, air moves faster through the nose, increasing the flow to the olfactory clefts and carrying more odor to these sensory organs.

nasal polyp A growth or protrusion of tissue in the nose or sinuses. Nasal polyps may produce no symptoms or may lead to obstruction of the nasal passages, sinus infection, and a decreased sense of smell. Nasal polyps are almost always benign. Treatment can involve medications or surgery.

nasal septum The dividing wall that runs down the middle of the nose, separating the two nasal cavities, each of which ends in a nostril. The nasal septum is composed of bone, cartilage, and membranes.

nasal septum, deviated Failure of the nasal septum to be in the center of the nose and divide the nasal passages evenly. Deviation of the nasal septum may be congenital (present at birth) or acquired (occur later). The major problem it causes is airway obstruction. A deviated septum can be corrected with surgery.

nasal septum, perforated A condition in which the dividing wall between the two main nasal passages has been eroded away, resulting in a communication between the passages. Perforated nasal septum can be caused by a number of conditions, including repeated inhalation of cocaine and other harmful drugs. It can usually be repaired with surgery.

naso- Prefix referring to the nose, as in nasogastric tube (a tube that is passed through the nose and to the stomach).

nasogastric Referring to the passage from the nose to the stomach. Abbreviated NG.

nasogastric tube A tube that is passed through the nose and down through the nasopharynx and

esophagus into the stomach. Abbreviated NG tube. It is a flexible tube made of rubber or plastic, and it has bidirectional potential. It can be used to remove the contents of the stomach, including air, to decompress the stomach, or to remove small solid objects and fluid, such as poison, from the stomach. An NG tube can also be used to put substances into the stomach, and so it may be used to place nutrients directly into the stomach when a patient cannot take food or drink by mouth.

nasopharynx The area of the upper throat that lies behind the nose. See also *oropharynx*.

National Academy of Sciences A nonprofit, self-perpetuating society of distinguished scholars engaged in scientific and engineering research, dedicated to the furtherance of science and technology, and to their use for the general welfare. Abbreviated NAS. The US Congress granted the NAS a charter in 1863 with the authority that requires it to advise the federal government on scientific and technical matters.

national board exam In medicine, the United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE), an exam sponsored by the Federation of State Medical Boards (FSMB) of the US and the National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME). It has replaced the examinations previously used to fulfill examination requirements for medical licensure. The national board exam provides a common evaluation system for all applicants for medical licensure. Results of the exam are reported to medical licensing authorities in the US for use in granting licenses to practice medicine.

National Institutes of Health An important US agency that is devoted to medical research. Abbreviated NIH. Administered by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the NIH consists of separate institutes and centers that represent the NIH's program activities:

- **Center for Information Technology (CIT)** As the NIH's computing technology arm, the CIT seeks to develop, promote, and spread the use of high-tech tools in biomedical science.
- **Center for Scientific Review (CSR)** The CSR provides staff and procedural support to the director of the NIH for running the grant approval process. It handles scientific review of most NIH grant applications, proposals, fellowships, and projects. Formerly known as the Division of Research Grants.

- **Fogarty International Center (FIC)** The FIC serves as NIH's coordinating body for international medical research and cooperation. It supports research partnerships between US biomedical scientists and their counterparts around the world to reduce disparities in global health.
- **National Cancer Institute (NCI)** The NCI's mission is to lead a national effort against cancer. The NCI conducts basic and clinical biomedical research, trains practitioners, and conducts and supports programs to prevent, detect, diagnose, treat, and control cancer. It also provides practitioners, patients, and the public with information about cancer detection and treatment.
- **National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM)** NCCAM is dedicated to exploring complementary and alternative medical (CAM) practices in the context of rigorous science.
- **National Center for Research Resources (NCRR)** NCRR provides laboratory scientists and clinical researchers with the environments and tools they need to understand, detect, treat, and prevent a wide range of diseases.
- **National Center on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NCMHD)** The mission of NCMHD is to promote minority health and to lead, coordinate, support, and assess the NIH effort to reduce and ultimately eliminate health disparities.
- **National Eye Institute (NEI)** The NEI conducts and supports research, training, and other programs related to eye diseases, visual disorders, mechanisms of visual function, preservation of sight, blindness, and the health problems and special needs of the visually impaired.
- **National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI)** The NHLBI leads a national research program that deals with diseases of the heart, blood vessels, lungs, and blood. It also supports basic clinical, population-based, and health-education research in the area of transfusion medicine.
- **National Human Genome Research Institute (NHGRI)** The NHGRI led the role of NIH in the Human Genome Project.

The NHGRI also develops and implements technology for understanding, diagnosing, and treating genetic diseases.

- **National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID)** The NIAID's specialty is research into and research training about infectious, immune system, and allergic diseases.
- **National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases (NIAMS)** The NIAMS specializes in research into the normal structure and function of bones, muscles, and skin, as well as diseases that affect these tissues.
- **National Institute of Biomedical Imaging and Bioengineering (NIBIB)** NIBIB improves health by promoting fundamental discoveries, design and development, and translation and assessment of technological capabilities in biomedical imaging and bioengineering, enabled by relevant areas of information science, physics, chemistry, mathematics, materials science, and computer sciences
- **National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD)** The NICHD supports and conducts research on fertility, pregnancy, child growth and development, and medical rehabilitation for children affected by disease or disability.
- **National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research (NIDCR)** NIDCR provides leadership for a national research program designed to understand, treat, and ultimately prevent infectious and inherited craniofacial-oral-dental diseases.
- **National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK)** The NIDDK conducts national programs in diabetes, endocrinology, and metabolic diseases; digestive diseases and nutrition; and kidney, urologic, and hematologic diseases.
- **National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS)** The NIEHS conducts research into interactions between environmental exposure, genetic susceptibility, and age that can cause disease or disability.
- **National Institute of General Medical Sciences (NIGMS)** NIGMS supports basic biomedical research that is not targeted to specific diseases.

NIGMS funds studies on genes, proteins, and cells, as well as on fundamental processes like communication within and between cells, how our bodies use energy, and how we respond to medicines. The results of this research increase our understanding of life and lay the foundation for advances in disease diagnosis, treatment, and prevention.

- **National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH)** The NIMH leads a national program of research into the causes, treatment, and prevention of mental illness. It conducts basic research on the brain and behavior, as well as clinical, epidemiological, and services research.
- **National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS)** The NINDS supports and conducts research and research training on the normal structure and function of the nervous system, and on the causes, prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of neurological disorders.
- **National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR)** The NINR supports research into clinical patient care aimed at understanding and mitigating the effects of acute and chronic illness and disability, promoting healthy behaviors, preventing the onset or worsening of disease, and improving the clinical environment.
- **National Institute on Aging (NIA)** The NIA leads a national program of research on the biomedical, social, and behavioral aspects of the aging process; the prevention of age-related diseases and disabilities; and health promotion for older Americans.
- **National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA)** The NIAAA conducts research into improving the treatment and prevention of alcoholism and alcohol-related problems.
- **National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD)** The NIDCD conducts and supports biomedical research and research training on normal mechanisms as well as diseases and disorders of hearing, balance, smell, taste, voice, speech, and language.
- **National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)** The NIDA conducts and supports research on the causes, prevention, and treatment of drug abuse and addiction.

• **National Library of Medicine (NLM)** The world's largest medical library, the NLM collects, organizes, and makes available biomedical science information to investigators, educators, and practitioners. It also carries out programs to strengthen medical library services in the US. Its electronic databases, including MEDLINE, are used extensively throughout the world.

- **NIH Clinical Center** As the clinical research facility of NIH, this center provides the patient care, services, and facilities to support human subjects research by the NIH. Also known as the National Institutes of Health Clinical Center (NIHCC).

natriuresis The excretion of an excessively large amount of sodium in the urine. Natriuresis is similar to diuresis (the excretion of an unusually large quantity of urine), except that in natriuresis the urine has an exceptionally high salt concentration. Natriuresis occurs with some diuretics and diseases (as of the adrenal gland) and can lead to the salt-losing syndrome characterized by dehydration, vomiting, low blood pressure, and the risk of sudden death. See also *diuresis*.

natriuretic An agent or disease that promotes natriuresis. For example, a diuretic with natriuretic action could be helpful for someone retaining water and salt. See also *diuretic*.

natural family planning Birth control without the use of contraceptive medications or barrier methods. There are several natural family planning methods. The most common natural family planning method is the use of basal temperature to detect ovulation, accompanied by abstention from intercourse during and after ovulation. Because a sperm may live in the female's reproductive tract for up to 7 days and the egg remains fertile for about 24 hours, a woman can get pregnant within a substantial window of time. Also known as the basal temperature method, fertility awareness, periodic abstinence, and the rhythm method. See also *birth control*.

natural killer cell A cell that can react against and destroy another cell without prior sensitization to it. Abbreviated NK cell. NK cells are part of our first line of defense against cancer cells and virus-infected cells. NK cells are small lymphocytes that originate in the bone marrow and develop without the influence of the thymus. An NK cell attaches to a target cell, releases chemicals that breach its cell wall, and causes it to lyse (break up).

natural menopause See *menopause*.

naturopath A person who practices naturopathy. A naturopathic doctor (ND) has been trained to care for well and ailing patients by using naturopathic methods. In some US states, NDs must complete a program equivalent to the training received by MDs, and they are therefore licensed to practice medicine. In other states, the term ND is neither defined nor regulated. See also *naturopathy*.

naturopathic Pertaining to naturopathy.

naturopathy A system of therapy that is based on preventive care and on the use of physical forces such as heat, water, light, air, and massage as primary therapies for disease. Some naturopaths use no medications, either pharmaceutical or herbal. Some recommend herbal remedies only. A few who are licensed to prescribe may recommend pharmaceuticals in cases in which they feel their use is warranted.

nausea Stomach queasiness, the urge to vomit. Nausea can be brought on by many causes, including systemic illnesses (such as influenza), medications, pain, and inner ear disease.

navel See *bellybutton*.

NCI National Cancer Institute. See *National Institutes of Health*.

ND Naturopathic doctor. See *naturopath*.

nearsightedness See *myopia*.

nebulization The conversion of a medication into an aerosol or a spray to deliver the medication, for example, to the lungs.

nebulization, heated Administration of medication via fine spray that has been heated to increase its water content.

nebulizer A device for administering a medication by spraying a fine mist. Also known as atomizer.

Necator americanus The American hookworm, the cause of hookworm disease in people. See also *bookworm*.

neck, stiff See *torticollis*.

necropsy See *autopsy*.

necrosis The death of living cells or tissues. Necrosis can be due, for example, to lack of blood flow (ischemia). From the Greek *nekros*, meaning “dead body.”

necrosis, coagulation Tissue death that is due to clots in the bloodstream blocking the flow of blood to the affected area.

necrosis, gangrenous Tissue death that is due to the combined effects of blood-flow stoppage and bacterial infection.

necrotic Dead. For example, necrotic tissue is dead tissue.

necrotizing fasciitis Severe bacterial infection of the fascia, the tissues that line and separate muscles, that causes extensive tissue death. Necrotizing fasciitis can be caused by several different types of bacteria, particularly by virulent strains of streptococcus and staphylococcus. The rapid spread and destruction of tissue occurs because of substances produced by the bacteria. Treatment involves the use of high-dose antibiotics and surgical removal of dead and infected tissue to help control the infection. Also known as flesh-eating bacteria.

needle aspiration, fine See *fine needle aspiration*.

needle biopsy See *biopsy, needle*.

needle biopsy, stereotactic See *biopsy, stereotactic needle*.

negative, false See *false negative*.

neglect, child See *child abuse*.

Neisseria A group of bacteria that includes the bacterium that causes gonorrhea.

nematode A parasitic roundworm.

neo- Prefix meaning new, as in neonate (a newborn baby) and neoplasm (an abnormal new growth, a tumor).

neonatal Pertaining to the newborn period, specifically the first 4 weeks after birth.

neonatal jaundice See *jaundice, neonatal*.

neonatal mortality rate The number of children under 28 days of age who die, divided by the number of live births in that year.

neonatal sepsis A bacterial infection of the blood in a neonate, an infant younger than 4 weeks of age. Babies with sepsis may be listless, overly sleepy, floppy, weak, and very pale. Neonatal sepsis is life-threatening.

neonate A newborn baby, specifically a baby in the first 4 weeks after birth. After a month, a baby is no longer considered a neonate.

neonatologist A physician specializing in the care of newborns.

neonatology The art and science of medical care for newborns.

neoplasia Abnormal new growth of cells.

neoplasm A tumor.

neoplastic Pertaining to a tumor or the process of tumor formation.

nephrectomy Surgery to remove all or part of the kidney, for example, because of cancer.

nephrectomy, partial Removal of part of a kidney, but not the entire kidney.

nephrectomy, radical Surgery to remove the kidney, the adrenal gland, the nearby lymph nodes, and other surrounding tissue.

nephrectomy, simple Surgery to remove only the kidney that is diseased.

nephritis Inflammation of the kidney, which causes impaired kidney function. Nephritis can be due to a variety of causes, including kidney disease, autoimmune disease, and infection. Treatment depends on the cause.

nephritis, acute Sudden kidney inflammation. Diagnosis is usually made by finding protein or urine in the blood.

nephritis, infective tubulointerstitial Inflammation of the kidney that is due to infection. Symptoms include nausea, pain in the kidney area, fever, and chills. Early diagnosis is essential to save the kidneys. Treatment involves use of antibiotics or antiviral medications.

nephritis, interstitial Nephritis that is due to disorders of the connective tissue within the kidney, exposure to toxic substances, transplant rejection, urinary blockage, or other factors. Symptoms include fever, pain in the kidney area, blood or protein in the urine, and eventually kidney failure. Treatment depends on the cause.

nephro- Having to do with the kidney, as in nephrology (the art and science of the care of the kidneys) and nephropathy (any kidney disease).

nephrolith A kidney stone.

nephrolithiasis The process of forming a stone in the kidney or lower down in the urinary tract. Also known as urolithiasis. See also *kidney stones*.

nephrolithotripsy, percutaneous See *percutaneous nephrolithotripsy*.

nephrologist A physician specializing in treating diseases of the kidneys.

nephrology The art and science of the care of the kidneys.

nephron A key unit of the kidney, a tiny funnel-like structure that filters wastes as they enter and progress through the kidney.

nephropathy Any kidney disease.

nephropathy, diabetic See *diabetic nephropathy*.

nephrosclerosis A progressive disease of the kidneys that results from sclerosis (hardening) of the small blood vessels in the kidneys. Nephrosclerosis is most commonly associated with hypertension or diabetes and can lead to kidney failure.

nephrosis Any degenerative disease of the kidney tubules, the tiny canals that make up much of the substance of the kidney. Nephrosis can be caused by kidney disease, or it may be a complication of another disorder, particularly diabetes. Diagnosis is made via urine testing for the presence of protein, blood testing for lower-than-normal levels of protein, and observation of edema. Treatment usually involves use of cortisone-like drugs. Also known as nephrotic syndrome.

nephrotic syndrome See *nephrosis*.

nephrotomogram A series of X-rays of the kidneys that are taken from different angles to clearly show the kidneys, without the shadows of the organs around them.

nephrotoxic Poisonous to the kidney.

nerve A bundle of fibers that uses electrical and chemical signals to transmit sensory and motor information from one body part to another. The fibrous portions of a nerve are covered by a sheath called myelin and/or a membrane called neurilemma. (Note that entries for specific nerves can be found under the names of the particular nerves. For example, the optic nerve is not under "nerve, optic" but rather under "optic nerve.")

nerve, afferent See *afferent nerve*.

nerve, efferent See *efferent nerve*.

nerve, pinched A compressed nerve, as between two vertebrae or within a joint, causing discomfort, pain, or impairment of sensation. Treatment involves physical therapy and sometimes surgery. See also *nerve compression*.

nerve cell See *neuron*.

nerve compression "Pinching" of a nerve that is due to too much pressure on it. For example, a woman's sciatic nerve may be painfully compressed by the weight and position of the fetus during the latter part of pregnancy.

nerve growth factor A naturally occurring substance that enhances the growth and survival of cholinergic nerves.

nerves, cranial See *cranial nerves*.

nervous colon syndrome See *irritable bowel syndrome*.

nervous system The sum total of the tissues that use electrical and chemical means to record and distribute information within a body. The nervous system has two distinct parts: central and peripheral. The central part is made up of the brain and spinal cord; together they are the central nervous system (CNS). The peripheral part of the nervous system is said to be peripheral because it is outside the CNS. The function of the peripheral nervous system is to transmit information back and forth between the CNS and the rest of the body. The human nervous system contains approximately 10 billion nerve cells (neurons). These neurons are the basic building blocks of the nervous system. A neuron consists of the nerve cell body and various extensions, or processes, from the cell body. These extensions are the dendrites (branches off the cell that receive electrical impulses), the axon (the electrical wiring and conduit tube that conducts impulses), and specialized endings (terminal areas to transfer impulses to receivers on other nerves or muscles). See also *central nervous system*; *peripheral nervous system*.

nervous system, autonomic See *autonomic nervous system*.

nervous system, central See *central nervous system*.

nervous system, parasympathetic See *parasympathetic nervous system*.

nervous system, peripheral See *peripheral nervous system*.

nervous system, sympathetic See *sympathetic nervous system*.

neural Having to do with nerve cells (neurons).

neural tube defect A major birth defect caused by abnormal development of the neural tube, the structure that is present during embryonic life that gives rise to the central nervous system. Abbreviated NTD. NTDs are among the most common birth defects resulting in infant death and serious disability. There are a number of different types of NTDs, including anencephaly, spina bifida, and encephalocele. In anencephaly there is absence of the cranial vault (the skull) and absence of most or all of the cerebral hemispheres of the brain. Encephalocele is a hernia of part of the brain, and the membranes covering it (meninges), through a skull defect. Spina bifida is an opening in the vertebral column encasing the spinal cord. Through this opening, the spinal cord and the meninges may herniate to create a meningomyelocele. All pregnancies are at risk for NTDs. Factors that increase the risk include a prior NTD in the family and type 1 diabetes in the mother. More than half of NTDs can be prevented if women consume supplements that contain folic acid before and during the early weeks of pregnancy in addition to getting folate in their diets. Because the risk for NTDs is not totally eliminated by folic acid use, routine prenatal screening for NTDs is still advisable.

neuralgia Pain along the course of a nerve; for example, with and after shingles. See also *neuralgia, postherpetic*.

neuralgia, facial Severe pain that usually occurs in bursts along the path of the trigeminal nerve, the chief sensory nerve of the face.

neuralgia, postherpetic The most common complication of shingles, persistence of the pain associated with shingles beyond 1 month, even after the rash is gone. The pain can be severe and debilitating, and it occurs primarily in persons over age 50. The pain of postherpetic neuralgia can be reduced by certain medications including tricyclic antidepressant medications and some antiseizure medications. Capsaicin cream, a derivative of hot chili peppers, or lidocaine patches can be applied on the area after all the blisters have healed, to reduce pain. Acupuncture and electric nerve stimulation through the skin can be helpful for some patients.

neurectomy The surgical removal of part or all of a nerve.

neuritis Inflammation of nerves. There are many causes of neuritis, including various viruses and local irritation of a nerve by adjacent tissues.

neuroblastoma A childhood form of cancer that arises in the adrenal gland or in tissue in the nervous system that is related to the adrenal gland. Neuroblastoma is the most common solid tumor outside the brain in infants and children. It is often present at birth but may not be detected until later in infancy or childhood. The most common symptoms are the result of pressure by the tumor or bone pain from metastases. Protruding eyes and dark circles around the eyes are common and are caused by cancer that has spread to the area behind the eye. Neuroblastomas may compress the spinal cord, causing paralysis. Up to 70 percent of all children with neuroblastoma have metastases by the time the disease is diagnosed. Treatment may involve surgery, chemotherapy, radiation therapy, and stem cell transplant. It can be cured when diagnosed at an early stage. Screening infants for neuroblastoma is not warranted because it does not decrease the morbidity (illness) or mortality rate.

neurodermatitis Scaly patches of skin on the head, lower legs, wrists, or forearms that are caused by a chronic itching and scratching. Also known as lichen simplex.

neuroendocrinology A branch of medicine concerned with the interactions between the nervous system and the endocrine system. The nervous and endocrine systems often act together to regulate the physiologic processes of the human body.

neurofibromatosis A genetic disorder of the nervous system that primarily affects the development and growth of neural (nerve) cell tissues, causes tumors to grow on nerves, and may produce other abnormalities. Neurofibromatosis consists of two very different disorders: neurofibromatosis type 1 (NF1) and neurofibromatosis type 2 (NF2).

neurofibromatosis type 1 A genetic disorder that is characterized by a number of skin characteristics, including multiple café au lait (coffee with milk) spots, multiple benign tumors called neurofibromas on the skin, plexiform neurofibromas (thick and misshapen nerves due to the abnormal growth of cells and tissues that cover the nerve), and freckles in the armpit and groin. Abbreviated NF1. The café au lait spots increase in number and size with age. The skin neurofibromas appear later, usually in the second decade of life. Patients with NF1 have an increased risk of scoliosis, optic gliomas (benign tumors on the optic nerve), epilepsy, and learning disabilities. The risk of malignant degeneration of neurofibromas is lower than

5 percent. NF1 is inherited in an autosomal dominant manner and is due to mutation of the NF1 gene on chromosome 17 that encodes a protein called neurofibromin. Half of cases are due to new mutations in the NF1 gene. Prenatal testing is available. Also known as von Recklinghausen disease.

neurofibromatosis type 2 A genetic disorder that is characterized by the growth of benign tumors of both acoustic nerves (the nerves to the ears). These tumors, called acoustic neuromas, cause tinnitus (ringing in the ears), hearing loss, and problems with balance. Abbreviated NF2. Other findings in NF2 include similar benign tumors of other nerves, meningiomas, and juvenile cataracts. NF2 is inherited in an autosomal dominant manner and is due to mutation in the NF2 gene on chromosome 22. About half of people with NF2 have a new gene mutation. Prenatal testing is available. Also known as bilateral acoustic neurofibromatosis and central neurofibromatosis.

neurogenic Giving rise to or arising from the nerves or the nervous system. For example, neurogenic pain is pain that originates in the nerves, as opposed to muscle pain, bone pain, etc.

neurological Having to do with the nerves or the nervous system as, for example, a neurological exam.

neurologist A physician who specializes in the diagnosis and treatment of disorders of the nervous system.

neurology The medical specialty concerned with the diagnosis and treatment of disorders of the nervous system, which includes the brain, the spinal cord, and the nerves.

neuroma A benign tumor that arises from a nerve as, for example, an acoustic glioma or optic glioma.

neuroma, acoustic A benign tumor of the hearing and balance nerves near the inner ear. Aside from hearing and balance, these tumors can impinge on the facial nerve, causing facial paralysis, and press on nearby brain structures and be life-threatening. Acoustic neuromas may be removed by surgery or shrunk by radiosurgery. Bilateral acoustic neuromas are associated with neurofibromatosis type 2 (NF2).

neuron A nerve cell that receives and sends electrical signals over long distances within the body. A neuron receives electrical input signals from sensory cells (called sensory neurons) and from other

neurons. The neuron sends electrical output signals to muscle neurons (called motoneurons or motor neurons) and to other neurons. A neuron that simply signals another neuron is called an interneuron.

neuron-specific enolase test A test for an enzyme that has been detected in the blood of patients with certain tumors, including neuroblastomas, small-cell lung cancers, and other tumors. Abbreviated NSE test. Measurement of NSE levels as a tumor marker in patients with these types of tumors can provide information about the extent of the disease and the patient's prognosis and response to treatment.

neuropathic pseudo-obstruction See *pseudo-obstruction, neuropathic*.

neuropathy Any disease or malfunction of the nerves.

neuropathy, accessory See *accessory neuropathy*.

neuropathy, diabetic See *diabetic neuropathy*.

neuropathy, hypoglossal See *hypoglossal neuropathy*.

neuropsychologist A psychologist who has completed special training in the neurobiological causes of brain disorders and who specializes in diagnosing and treating these illnesses by using a predominantly medical (as opposed to psychoanalytical) approach.

neurosurgeon A physician who specializes in surgery on the brain and other parts of the nervous system.

neurosyphilis Neurological complications in the third (tertiary) and final phase of syphilis, which involve the central nervous system and can include psychosis, pain, and loss of physical control over a variety of bodily functions. See also *syphilis*.

neurosyphilis, tabes The slowly progressive degeneration of the spinal cord that occurs in the tertiary phase of syphilis, a decade or more after a person contracts the infection. Among the features of tabes neurosyphilis are sharp, lightning-like pain; wobbliness (ataxia); deterioration of the optic nerve, leading to blindness; urinary incontinence; loss of the sense of position; and degeneration of the joints. Also known as tabes dorsalis. See also *syphilis*.

neurotoxic Poisonous to nerves or nerve tissue.

neurotoxin Any substance that is capable of causing damage to nerves or nerve tissue. For example, arsenic and lead are neurotoxins.

neurotransmitter A chemical that is released from a nerve cell which thereby transmits an impulse from a nerve cell to another nerve, muscle, organ, or other tissue. A neurotransmitter is a messenger of neurologic information from one cell to another.

neutropenia A marked decrease in the number of neutrophils, neutrophils being a type of white blood cell (specifically a form of granulocyte) filled with neutrally-staining granules, tiny sacs of enzymes that help the cell to kill and digest microorganisms it has engulfed by phagocytosis. The mature neutrophil has a segmented nucleus (it is called a seg or poly) while the immature neutrophil has a band-shape nucleus (it is called a band). The neutrophil has a lifespan of about 3 days. Neutropenia may be seen with viral infections and after radiotherapy and chemotherapy. Neutropenia lowers the immunologic barrier to bacterial and fungal infection. See also *agranulocytosis; agranulocytosis, infantile genetic; granulocytopenia; severe congenital neutropenia*.

neutropenia, severe congenital See *severe congenital neutropenia*.

neutrophil A type of white blood cell, a granulocyte that is filled with microscopic granules, little sacs containing enzymes that digest microorganisms. Also known as polymorphonuclear leukocyte or poly.

neutrophilia Too many neutrophils in the blood. Neutrophilia may be due merely to a shift of neutrophils into the circulating blood as occurs, for example, with vigorous exercise and with cortisone medications. A true increase in neutrophil production often reflects infection, particularly bacterial infection. See also *neutrophil; neutropenia*.

nevus A pigmented spot on the skin, such as a mole. The plural of nevus is nevi.

nevus araneus See *spider vein*.

new variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease A human disease that is thought to be due to the same infectious agent as bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), or mad cow disease. Abbreviated nvCJD, this disease represents a new variant of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease. Both the human and bovine disorders are invariably fatal brain diseases with unusually long incubation periods and are due to an unconventional transmissible agent, a prion. Deposition of

amyloid (a glassy-looking substance) in the brain causes the breakdown of brain tissue, leaving the brain with a “spongy” (spongiform) appearance. See also *Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease; prion; mad cow disease*.

newborn screening Testing of newborns to screen for serious treatable diseases, many of which are genetic. Which newborn screening tests are done in the US are determined on a state-by-state basis. The most common newborn screening tests in the US are for hypothyroidism, phenylketonuria (PKU), galactosemia, and sickle cell disease. Testing for hypothyroidism and PKU is required in virtually all states, and testing for galactosemia and sickle cell disease is required in most states. Some states mandate tests for other conditions, including deafness, maple syrup urine disease, homocystinuria, congenital adrenal hyperplasia, tyrosinemia, cystic fibrosis, and toxoplasmosis. See also *cystic fibrosis; galactosemia; homocystinuria; hypothyroidism, congenital; maple syrup urine disease; phenylketonuria; sickle cell disease; toxoplasmosis; tyrosinemia*.

NF1 Neurofibromatosis type 1.

NF2 Neurofibromatosis type 2.

NG tube See *nasogastric tube*.

NHL Non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma. See *lymphoma, non-Hodgkin’s*.

niacin Nicotinic acid, one of the water-soluble B vitamins. See also Appendix C, “Vitamins.”

niacin deficiency See *pellagra*.

nicotine An alkaloid (a nitrogen-containing chemical) made by the tobacco plant or produced synthetically. Nicotine has powerful pharmacologic effects (including increased heart rate, heart stroke volume, and oxygen consumption by the heart muscle), as well as powerful psychodynamic effects (such as euphoria, increased alertness, and a sense of relaxation). Nicotine is also powerfully addictive.

nicotinic acid See *niacin*.

nictitate To wink. For example, nictitating spasm is spasm of the eyelid with continuous winking.

nidus In medicine, any structure that resembles a nest in appearance or function. From the Latin for “nest.” A nidus is a breeding place where bacteria, parasites, and other agents of a disease lodge and develop. For example, a nidus of infection is a focus of infection. A nidus is also the nucleus or origin of a nerve. The nidus avis cerebelli is a deep sulcus

(groove) on each side of the inferior vermis (a wormlike structure in the brain), separating it from the adjacent lobes of the cerebral hemispheres.

Niemann-Pick disease A group of inherited biochemical disorders in which lipid (fat) accumulates in the spleen, liver, lungs, bone marrow, and the brain. Symptoms may include lack of muscle coordination, brain degeneration, learning problems, loss of muscle tone, increased sensitivity to touch, spasticity, feeding and swallowing difficulties, slurred speech, and an enlarged liver and spleen. Niemann-Pick disease is inherited in an autosomal recessive manner. The classical form of the disease has its onset in very early infancy, and death usually occurs before age 3. Growth is retarded. Other features are jaundice, hepatic (liver) failure, and ascites (fluid in the abdomen). Eye hallmarks include a “cherry red spot” in the macula in the center of the retina and cloudy cornea. In the classic form, accumulation of a substance called sphingomyelin is due to deficiency of the enzyme sphingomyelinase.

night blindness See *nyctanopia*.

night eating syndrome An eating disorder estimated to affect between 1 percent and 2 percent of adults in which at least 50 percent of the daily food intake is consumed after dinner. Abbreviated NES. The causes of NES have not been understood, but an impaired circadian rhythm of food intake is believed to play a role. Stress can worsen the condition.

night sweats Severe hot flashes that occur at night and result in a drenching sweat. Night sweats can have many different causes, including medications, infections, and cancers.

NIH National Institutes of Health.

Nipah virus A member of the paramyxovirus family isolated from samples from an outbreak of encephalitis and respiratory illness among adult men in Malaysia and Singapore in 1999 that causes a sometimes fatal form of viral encephalitis. The humans were infected by close contact with infected pigs. Symptoms include high fever and aches, coma, and sometimes death.

nipple The pigmented projection on the surface of the chest in the male and the breast in the female. In the mature female, ducts that conduct milk from the mammary glands to the surface of the breast exit through the nipple. The surrounding flat area of pigmentation is the areola.

nipple absence See *athelia*.

nipple, supernumerary An extra nipple. Supernumerary nipples are usually smaller than normal and vestigial (nonfunctional, without accompanying mammary glands). They tend to occur along a roughly curved line that extends from near the armpit, through the center of the normal breast, and down to the lower abdomen. This distribution is very similar to the location of nipples on mammals that have multiple nipples along the underbelly. Supernumerary nipples do not cause problems and do not need to be removed.

nitrogen narcosis A condition similar to intoxication with alcohol characterized by euphoria, loss of balance and manual dexterity, disorientation, and impaired reasoning. It can occur in scuba divers below 30 meters (100 feet) who breathe compressed air, because of the high nitrogen content of air. Nitrogen narcosis is reversed as the gas pressure decreases and the diver returns toward the surface.

nitrogenous base A molecule that contains nitrogen and has the chemical properties of a base. The nitrogenous bases in DNA are adenine (A), guanine (G), thymine (T), and cytosine (C). The nitrogenous bases in RNA are the same, with one exception: adenine (A), guanine (G), uracil (U), and cytosine (C).

nitroglycerin A medication used to dilate blood vessels and improve blood flow. Nitroglycerin has a rapid effect and is used to treat angina pectoris by increasing blood flow to the heart. Nitroglycerin tablets are taken sublingually (under the tongue). Also known as nitro, NTG.

nitrosourea One of a group of anticancer drugs that can cross the blood–brain barrier.

nitrous oxide A gas that can cause general anesthesia and that should be administered with other anesthetic agents. Nitrous oxide is not used alone today because the concentration of nitrous oxide needed to produce anesthesia is close to the concentration that seriously lowers the blood oxygen level, creating a hazardous hypoxic state. Nitrous oxide is used sometimes as a recreational drug for its euphoric effect. Also known as laughing gas and nitrous.

nits Lice eggs. Nits are hard to see, and they are often confused with dandruff or hair-spray droplets. Nits firmly attach to the hair shaft with a glue-like substance. They are oval and range in color from yellow to white. Nits take about a week to hatch. All nits must be removed to prevent reinfestation with lice. They can be removed with a special comb or with the fingers. Topical preparations are available

that loosen their attachment to hair, making removal easier. See also *head lice*.

NK cell Natural killer cell.

NMR Nuclear magnetic resonance, an imaging technique that does not use radiation, but instead employs large magnetic forces to produce detailed images of body tissues.

nocardiosis Infection with *Nocardia*, filamentous bacteria found in soil worldwide. Infection tends to strike the lungs, brain, and skin, particularly in people with an impaired immune system. The inhalation of *Nocardia* spores usually initiates nocardiosis in the lung. The skin form of nocardiosis is contracted through soil contamination of wounds. There is no evidence for person-to-person transmission of *Nocardia*. Treatment is long-term antibiotic therapy.

nocturia Excessive urinating at night. Nocturia can be normal and more common with aging. Nocturia can also be a sign of an underlying condition, such as diabetes or urinary infection.

nocturnal amblyopia See *nyctanopia*.

nocturnal enuresis See *bedwetting*.

node A knot, a collection of tissue. For example, a lymph node is a collection of lymphoid tissue. See also *nodule*.

node, atrioventricular See *atrioventricular node*.

node, AV See *atrioventricular node*.

node, Heberden's See *Heberden's node*.

node, Osler See *Osler node*.

node, SA See *sinoatrial node*.

node, sentinel lymph See *lymph node, sentinel*.

node, sinoatrial See *sinoatrial node*.

node, sinus See *sinoatrial node*.

nodular Bumpy.

nodular hyperplasia of the prostate See *benign prostatic hyperplasia*.

nodular melanoma See *melanoma, nodular*.

nodule A small collection of tissue that is palpable (can be felt) at any level of the skin (in the epidermis,

dermis, or subcutis) or in another tissue of the body. Nodules characteristically range in size from 1 to 2 cm in diameter.

noncompliance Failure or refusal to comply. In medicine, the term noncompliance is commonly used in regard to a patient who does not take a prescribed medication or follow a prescribed course of treatment. A person who demonstrates noncompliance is said to be noncompliant.

nondisjunction Failure of paired chromosomes to separate (to disjoin) during cell division, so that both chromosomes go to one daughter cell and none go to the other. Nondisjunction causes errors in chromosome number, such as trisomy 21 (Down syndrome) and monosomy X (Turner syndrome). It is also a common cause of early spontaneous abortions.

nongonococcal urethritis An inflammation of the urethra due to infections other than gonorrhea. Abbreviated NGU. NGU is far more common in men than in women and is transmitted by sexual intercourse. Chlamydia trachomatis is the organism most commonly responsible for NGU, but a number of different organisms can be the cause of NGU.

non-Hodgkin's lymphoma See *lymphoma, non-Hodgkin's*.

nonmelanoma skin cancer Skin cancer that does not involve melanocytes. Basal cell cancer and squamous cell cancer are examples of non-melanoma skin cancers.

Nooxynol-9 A potent spermicide (sperm-killing agent) used as a contraceptive.

nonpathogenic Incapable of causing disease. For example, nonpathogenic *E. coli* are *E. coli* bacteria that do not cause disease, but instead live naturally in the large intestine.

non-rapid eye movement sleep See *NREM sleep*.

nonseminoma A type of testicular cancer that arises in specialized sex cells called germ cells that give rise to sperm. Nonseminomas include embryonal carcinoma, teratoma, choriocarcinoma, and yolk sac tumor.

non-small-cell lung cancer Cancer of the lung that is not small cell carcinoma. It may be bronchogenic carcinoma, squamous cell carcinoma, adenocarcinoma, or large cell carcinoma of the lung. The distinction between small and non-small-cell

lung cancers is made under the microscope. Knowing which type a patient has is important for proper therapy. The treatment options for non-small-cell lung cancer are generally different than those for small cell lung cancer.

nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug See *NSAID*.

nonsyndromic Not part of a syndrome. Hearing loss, for instance, can be syndromic or nonsyndromic. See also *syndrome*.

Noonan syndrome A congenital malformation syndrome that is characterized by mildly short stature, a congenital heart defect, a broad or webbed neck, an unusual chest shape (prominent above and caved in below), low-set nipples, a characteristic facial appearance, and, in boys, testes that do not descend normally into the scrotum (cryptorchidism). Abbreviated NS. Although NS was once called Turner-like syndrome, it is a distinctive entity that affects both males and females and carries an elevated risk of developmental and language delay, learning disabilities, hearing loss, and mild mental retardation. NS is inherited in an autosomal dominant manner. It is relatively common, with an estimated incidence of 1 in 1,000–2,500 live births. Mutations in multiple genes, including the KRAS and PTPN11 genes, can cause Noonan syndrome.

normal pressure hydrocephalus See *hydrocephalus, normal pressure*.

normal range Characteristic of 95 percent of values from a normal population. The remaining normal results fall outside the normal range, as do any truly abnormal results. The normal range for a particular test result, condition, symptom, or behavior may differ, based on the patient's age, size, sex, ethnicity, or culture.

norovirus One of a group of viruses that cause the "stomach flu," or gastroenteritis. The term norovirus was approved as the official name for this group of viruses. Several other names have been used for noroviruses, including Norwalk-like viruses, caliciviruses (because they belong to the virus family *Caliciviridae*), and small round structured viruses. The virus is spread primarily from one infected person to another by the fecal-oral route. The characteristic symptoms are nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and abdominal cramping that develop 1 or 2 days after contaminated food or water is consumed. Symptoms typically last for 24 to 60 hours. Illness severe enough to require hospitalization is unusual. Fever, if present, is low-grade.

North Asian tick-borne rickettsiosis See *rickettsiosis, North Asian tick-borne*.

Norwalk virus The prototype virus of the genus Norovirus. See *norovirus*.

nose The external midline projection from the face. The purpose of the nose is to warm, clean, and humidify the air that a person breathes. In addition, it helps a person to smell and taste. The nose is divided into two passageways by a partition called the septum. Opening to these passageways are the nostrils. Bony projections, called turbinates, protrude into each breathing passage; they help to increase the surface area of the inside of the nose. There are three turbinates on each side of the nose (the inferior, middle, and superior turbinates). The sinuses are four paired air-filled chambers that empty into the nasal cavity.

nose, runny The production of extra mucus by the nose. Rhinorrhea is the medical term for this common problem. The nose makes extra mucus whenever something that is in the nose, such as pollen or dust, needs to be removed. Mucus formation is also part of the histamine reaction to allergies and of the body's defenses during respiratory infections.

nose job See *rhinoplasty*.

nose picking Using the finger to remove debris from within the nose. Compulsive nose picking, known medically as rhinotillexomania, is common among children.

nosebleed Bleeding from the blood vessels of the nose. The nose is rich in blood vessels and is situated in a vulnerable position on the face. As a result, any trauma to the face can cause bleeding, which may be profuse. Nosebleeds can also occur spontaneously when the nasal membranes dry out, crust, and crack, as is common in dry climates or during winter months, when the air is dry and warm from household heaters. People have increased susceptibility to nosebleeds if they are taking medications that prevent normal blood clotting, such as warfarin (brand name: Coumadin), aspirin, or any anti-inflammatory medication. Other predisposing factors include infection, trauma, allergic and nonallergic rhinitis, hypertension, alcohol abuse, and inherited bleeding problems. Also known as epistaxis.

nosebleed, treatment of To stop a nosebleed, a person should pinch all the soft parts of the nose together between the thumb and index finger, and press firmly toward the face, compressing the pinched parts of the nose against the bones of the

face. The person should hold the nose for at least 5 minutes and repeat as necessary until the nose has stopped bleeding, sitting quietly and keeping the head higher than the level of the heart (sitting up or lying with the head elevated). The person may also apply ice (crushed, in a plastic bag or washcloth) to the nose and cheeks.

nosocomial Hospital-acquired. For example, a nosocomial infection is one that is caught in a hospital. Since antibiotics have come into common usage, bacteria that are resistant to them have also become common, especially in hospitals. As a result, there are now many nosocomial infections.

nostril The external opening of the nose. The nostrils are also called the nares.

nostrum 1 Formerly, a medicine of secret composition that was recommended by the person who concocted it, but with no scientific proof of its effectiveness. A patent medicine was a nostrum. 2 A worthless remedy. 3 In common usage, any questionable remedy or scheme for improving matters, a pet plan for accomplishing things, or a panacea.

NP Nurse practitioner.

NPH Normal pressure hydrocephalus.

NREM sleep Non-rapid eye movement sleep, dreamless sleep. During NREM sleep, the brain waves seen on an electroencephalogram (EEG) are typically slow and of high voltage, the breathing and heart rate are slow and regular, the blood pressure is low, and the sleeper is relatively still. NREM sleep is divided into four stages of increasing depth, and the fourth and deepest stage eventually leads to REM sleep. About 80 percent of sleep is NREM sleep. See also *REM sleep; sleep*.

NS Noonan syndrome.

NSAID Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug, a medication that is commonly prescribed or purchased over the counter to treat the inflammation associated with conditions such as arthritis, tendonitis, and bursitis. Examples of NSAIDs include aspirin, indomethacin (brand name: Indocin), ibuprofen (brand name: Motrin), naproxen (brand name: Naprosyn), piroxicam (brand name: Feldene), and nabumetone (brand name: Relafen). People who take certain NSAIDs may have a higher risk of having a heart attack or a stroke than people who do not take these medications. This risk may be higher for people who take NSAIDs for a long time. Other major side effects of NSAIDs are gastrointestinal problems. Some 10 to 50 percent of patients are unable to tolerate NSAID treatment because of these

side effects, which include abdominal pain, diarrhea, bloating, heartburn, and upset stomach.

NSE test Neuron-specific enolase test.

NTD Neural tube defect.

nuchal Referring to the back of the neck (nape). For example, nuchal rigidity is a stiff neck, sometimes a symptom of meningitis.

nuchal fold scan A prenatal ultrasound test that is done to screen for chromosome disorders such as Down syndrome and Turner syndrome. The scan measures the size of the space behind the neck of the fetus between 10 and 14 weeks of pregnancy and provides an index of the amount of fluid that has accumulated under the skin of the fetus. Also known as nuchal translucency test.

nuclear medicine The branch of medicine concerned with the use of radioisotopes in the diagnosis, management, and treatment of disease.

nucleic acid One of the family of large molecules that includes deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) and ribonucleic acid (RNA). Nucleic acids were so named because they were first found in the nucleus of cells, but they have since been discovered to also exist outside the nucleus. See also *DNA; RNA*.

nucleosome A structure that is responsible in part for the compactness of a chromosome. Each nucleosome consists of a sequence of DNA wrapped around a core of histone, which is a type of protein.

nucleotide A subunit of DNA or RNA that consists of a nitrogenous base (A, G, T, or C in DNA; A, G, U, or C in RNA), a phosphate molecule, and a sugar molecule (deoxyribose in DNA, and ribose in RNA). Thousands of nucleotides are linked to form a DNA or an RNA molecule.

nucleus **1** In cell biology, the structure that houses the chromosomes. **2** In neuroanatomy, a group of nerve cells.

nullipara A woman who has not given birth to a viable child.

nummular eczema Coin-shaped patches of irritated skin that most commonly appear on the arms, back, buttocks, and lower legs and may be crusted, scaling, and extremely itchy.

nurse **1** A person who is trained, licensed, or skilled in nursing. **2** To breastfeed an infant.

nurse, licensed practical A nurse who has completed a 1- or 2-year training program in health

care and has earned a state license. Abbreviated LPN. LPNs provide direct patient care for people with chronic illness, in nursing homes, hospitals, and home health care settings. They assist RNs in caring for acutely ill patients.

nurse, registered A nurse who has completed a 2- to 4-year degree program in nursing. Abbreviated RN. RNs provide direct patient care for acutely or chronically ill patients. RNs may further specialize in a particular area. For example, psychiatric nurses are RNs with special training in working with mentally ill patients, and trauma nurses work with physicians and surgeons to help patients in the emergency room of a hospital. Some RNs also work in health research.

nurse assistant A person who has completed a brief health care training program and who provides support services for RNs and LPNs. Also known as an orderly or, when certified by a state agency, a certified nurse aide (CNA).

nurse practitioner A registered nurse (RN) who has completed an advanced training program in a medical specialty, such as pediatric care. Abbreviated NP. An NP may be a primary, direct health care provider, and can prescribe medications. Some NPs work in research rather than in direct patient care.

nursing **1** A profession concerned with the provision of services that are essential to the maintenance and restoration of health. Nurses attend to the needs of sick people. Some nurses are licensed to directly diagnose and treat disease, and others work in medical research. **2** Breastfeeding.

nursing home A residential facility for people with chronic illness or disability, particularly older people who have mobility and eating problems. Also known as a convalescent home and long-term care facility.

nutraceutical A food or part of a food that allegedly provides medicinal or health benefits, including the prevention and treatment of disease. A nutraceutical may be a naturally nutrient-rich or medicinally active food, such as garlic or soybeans, or it may be a specific component of a food, such as the omega-3 fish oil that can be derived from salmon and other cold-water fish.

nutrition **1** The science or practice of taking in and utilizing foods. **2** A nourishing substance, such as nutritional solutions delivered to hospitalized patients via an intravenous (IV) or nasogastric (NG) tube.

nutritionist **1** In a hospital or nursing home, a person who plans and/or formulates special meals for patients. The term can also be a euphemism for a cook who works in a medical facility but who does not have extensive training in special nutritional needs. **2** In clinical practice, a specialist in nutrition. Nutritionists can help patients with special needs, allergies, health problems, or a desire for increased energy or weight change devise healthy diets. Some nutritionists in private practice are well trained, have degrees, and are licensed. Depending on state law, however, a person who uses the title might not be trained or licensed at all.

nvCJD New variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease.

nyctanopia Impaired vision in dim light and in the dark, due to impaired function of the rods in the

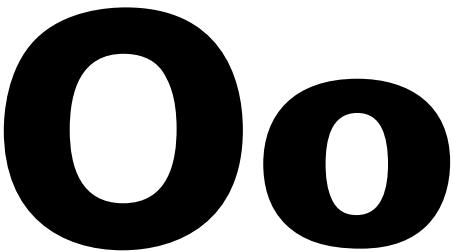
retina. Nyctanopia is a classic finding with vitamin A deficiency. Also known as day sight, nocturnal amblyopia, and nyctalopia.

nyctophobia Pathological fear of the dark.

nymph A stage in the life cycle of certain arthropods, such as ticks and lice. The nymph stage is between the nit and the adult louse stages. A nymph louse looks like an adult but is smaller. Nymphs mature into adults about 7 days after hatching. To live, the nymph must feed on blood.

nystagmus Rapid, rhythmic, repetitious, and involuntary eye movements. Nystagmus can be horizontal, vertical, or rotary. Whatever form it takes, nystagmus is an abnormal eye finding and a sign of disease within the eye or the nervous system.

<http://www.rashidiislamiccenter.com>



oat-cell lung cancer See *small-cell lung cancer*.

Oath of Hippocrates See *Hippocratic Oath*.

Oath of Maimonides See *Daily Prayer of a Physician*.

OB 1 Obstetrician. 2 Obstetrics.

obesity The state of being well above one's normal weight. A person has traditionally been considered to be obese if they are more than 20 percent over their ideal weight. Obesity has been more precisely defined as having a body mass index (BMI) of 30 and above. The cause of obesity is often multifactorial, based on both genetic and behavioral factors. Accordingly, treatment of obesity usually requires more than just dietary changes. Exercise, counseling and support, and sometimes medication can supplement diet to help patients conquer weight problems. Extreme diets, on the other hand, can actually contribute to increased obesity. Obesity is a significant contributor to health problems. See also *bariatrics*; *body mass index*; *obesity-related disease*.

obesity, gynecoid A state of being overweight with fat distribution in a pattern that is generally characteristic of a woman, with the largest amount around the hips and thighs.

obesity-related disease A disease for which obesity is a significant risk factor. Obesity increases the risk of developing a number of diseases, and it can be a diagnostic marker for others. Diseases related to obesity include type 2 diabetes; high blood pressure (hypertension); stroke (cerebrovascular accident); heart attack (myocardial infarction); heart failure (congestive heart failure); certain forms of cancer, such as prostate and colon cancer; gallstones and gall bladder disease (cholecystitis); gout and gouty arthritis; osteoarthritis (degenerative arthritis) of the knees, hips, and lower back; sleep apnea; and Pickwickian syndrome.

OB/GYN 1 Obstetrician/gynecologist. 2 Obstetrics and Gynecology

objective lens See *lens, objective*.

observer variation Failure by the observer in a study or test to measure accurately, resulting in error. Inter-observer variation is the amount of variation between the results obtained by two or more observers examining the same material. Intra-observer variation is the amount of variation one observer experiences when observing the same material more than once.

obsessive-compulsive disorder An anxiety disorder that is characterized by obsessive thoughts and compulsive actions. Abbreviated OCD. The obsessive thoughts are unwanted ideas or impulses that repeatedly well up in the mind of the person with OCD. These thoughts are intrusive and unpleasant, and they produce a high degree of anxiety. In response to their obsessions, most people with OCD resort to repetitive behaviors called compulsions. The most common of these are washing and checking. Other compulsive behaviors include counting and endlessly rearranging objects in an effort to keep them in precise alignment with each other. Treatment includes behavioral therapy and medications of the selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor (SSRI) class. OCD is different from obsessive-compulsive personality disorder, which is a personality disorder rather than an anxiety disorder.

obsessive-compulsive personality disorder A personality disorder that is characterized by pervasive preoccupation with orderliness, perfectionism, and interpersonal control. Abbreviated OCPD. OCPD may feature a preoccupation with details, rules, lists, order, organization, or schedules; perfectionism; excessive devotion to work to the exclusion of leisure activities and friendships; inability to discard worthless objects of no sentimental value; reluctance to delegate tasks or work with others unless everything is done a certain way; miserliness; rigidity; and stubbornness. OCPD is different from obsessive-compulsive disorder, which is a type of anxiety disorder. OCPD may require no treatment or may benefit from counseling.

obstetrical forceps An instrument that has two blades and a handle and is designed to aid in the vaginal delivery of a baby.

obstetrician A physician who specializes in obstetrics.

obstetrician/gynecologist An obstetrician who also specializes in treating diseases of the female reproductive organs. Abbreviated OB/GYN. Some OB/GYNs also provide general health care for women.

obstetrics The art and science of managing pregnancy, labor, and the puerperium (the time after delivery).

obstruction, airway See *airway obstruction*.

obstructive sleep apnea See *sleep apnea, obstructive*.

obtunded Mentally dulled. Head trauma may obtund a person.

occipital bone The bone that forms the rear and rear bottom of the skull.

occiput The back of the head.

occlude 1 To close, obstruct, or prevent passage. For example, to occlude an artery is to block the flow of blood. 2 To bring together. For example, to occlude the teeth is to oppose the upper with the lower teeth, as for chewing.

occult Hidden. For example, occult blood in the stool is hidden from the eye but can be detected by chemical tests.

occupational disease A disease that is due to a factor in a person's work. For example, an occupational disease for coal miners is lung disease.

occupational medicine The field of medicine that encompasses occupational diseases. Occupational medicine was founded in 1700 by the Italian physician Bernardino Ramazzini, who recognized the relationship between lead and antimony and the symptoms of poisoning in painters and other artisans exposed to them. Ramazzini also first recognized miners' lung disease.

Occupational Safety and Health Administration An agency of the US government under the Department of Labor with the responsibility of ensuring safety at work and a healthful work environment. Abbreviated OSHA. OSHA's mission is to prevent work-related injuries, illnesses, and deaths.

occupational therapist A person who is trained and licensed to design and deliver occupational therapy services. Abbreviated OT. See also *occupational therapy*.

occupational therapy Therapy designed to help patients gain or relearn skills needed for activities of daily living, including self-care, handwriting and other school-related skills, and work-related skills. In occupational therapy, patients may do exercises, manipulate items to help develop normal hand motion, or learn to use assistive devices, among other activities. Abbreviated OT.

OCD 1 Obsessive-compulsive disorder. 2 Osteochondritis dissecans.

OCP Oral contraceptive pill.

OPCD Obsessive-compulsive personality disorder.

ocular Having to do with the eye.

ocular lens See *lens, ocular*.

oculomotor nerve The third cranial nerve. The oculomotor nerve is responsible for the nerve supply to muscles around the eye, including the upper eyelid muscle, which raises the eyelid; the extraocular muscle, which moves the eye inward; and the pupillary muscle, which constricts the pupil. Paralysis of the oculomotor nerve results in a drooping eyelid (ptosis), deviation of the eyeball outward (and therefore double vision), and a dilated (wide-open) pupil.

oculoplasty A branch of ophthalmology that is concerned with treatment of abnormalities of the structures around the eye, including the lids and tear drainage system, with the goals of improving function, comfort, or appearance.

OD 1 Osteochondritis dissecans. 2 Overdose. 3 The right eye (oculus dexter), as opposed to OS (left eye).

off-label use The practice of prescribing approved medications for conditions other than those indicated on the official medication label. In the US, the regulations of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) permit physicians to prescribe medications for off-label use.

offspring The progeny, or young, born to a person. In a larger sense, the offspring are collectively all the descendants, the brood, or the family. For example, the offspring of someone with a genetic (inherited) condition, such as Huntington's disease, are themselves at risk for the disease.

Ohtahara syndrome A seizure disorder that occurs within the first month of life. Ohtahara syndrome patients may have many different types of seizures. The patient's development is slowed, and the child can become progressively more impaired. Ohtahara syndrome is due to underdevelopment of part of the brain or to a metabolic problem. Diagnosis is made via observation and electroencephalogram (EEG). Treatment includes use of anti-spasmodic medication and educational and physical services aimed at enhancing development. Also known as early infantile epileptic encephalopathy.

ointment An oil-based preparation that is applied to the skin. Whereas an ointment has an oil base, a cream is water soluble.

olecranon The bony tip of the elbow. The olecranon is the near end of the ulna, the bone in the forearm, and it forms the pointed portion of the elbow. The triceps muscle tendon of the back of the arm attaches to the olecranon. Disease can affect the olecranon. For example, inflammation of the tiny fluid-filled sac (bursa) at the tip of the elbow can occur; this is referred to as olecranon bursitis. A firm nodule can form at the tip of the elbow; it is referred to as an olecranon nodule and is sometimes found in gout or rheumatoid arthritis. Also known as the olecranon process of the ulna.

olfaction The sense of smell.

olfactory apparatus The whole system that is needed to have a sense of smell, including the nose and affiliated nerves.

olfactory nerve The nerve that carries impulses for the sense of smell from the nose to the brain. The olfactory nerve is the first cranial nerve.

oligo- Prefix meaning just a few, or scanty, as in oligodactyly (having fewer than 10 fingers or 10 toes) and oliguria (less urination than normal).

oligodactyly Having fewer than the normal number of fingers or toes. Oligodactyly is the opposite of polydactyly.

oligodendrocyte A type of cell in the central nervous system. The oligodendrocytes surround and insulate the long fibers (axons) through which the nerves send electrical messages.

oligodendrogloma A rare, slow-growing brain tumor that begins in cells called oligodendrocytes, which provide support and nourishment for cells that transmit nerve impulses. Also known as oligodendroglial tumor.

oligohydramnios Too little amniotic fluid. The opposite of polyhydramnios: Too much amniotic fluid.

oligomenorrhea Less menstrual blood flow than usual.

oligonucleotide A short DNA molecule that is composed of relatively few nucleotide bases.

oligonucleotide probe A short sequence of nucleotides that are synthesized to match a specific region of DNA or RNA then used as a molecular probe to detect the specific DNA or RNA sequence.

oligopeptide A molecule that is composed of a few amino acids linked to one another.

oligosaccharidosis One of a group of inherited metabolic disorders that are similar to the mucopolysaccharidoses. These conditions include aspartylglycosaminuria (AGU), fucosidosis, mannosidosis, and multiple sulfatase deficiency. Symptoms generally include deterioration of the nervous system. No treatment is available.

oligospermia Fewer sperm than usual. Azospermia, by contrast, means absolutely no sperm at all.

oliguria Less urination than normal.

Ollier's disease See *multiple enchondromatosis*.

omega-3 fatty acids A class of fatty acids found in fish oils, especially salmon and other cold-water fish, that acts to lower the levels of total cholesterol and LDL cholesterol in the blood. Omega-3 fish oil is considered a neutraceutical, a food that provides health benefits. Eating fish has been reported to protect against age-related macular degeneration, a common eye disease.

omentum A sheet of fat that is covered by peritoneum. The greater omentum is attached to the bottom edge of the stomach and hangs down in front of the intestines. Its other edge is attached to the transverse colon. The lesser omentum is attached to the top edge of the stomach and extends to the undersurface of the liver.

Ommaya reservoir A device that is implanted under the scalp to deliver anticancer drugs to the fluid surrounding the brain and spinal cord.

omphalo- Prefix indicating a relationship to the umbilicus (the navel). From the Greek word for the decorative boss protruding from the center of a Greek warrior's shield.

omphalocele A birth defect in which part of the intestine, covered only by a thin transparent membrane, protrudes outside the abdomen at the umbilicus. An omphalocele occurs due to a failure during embryonic development for a section of the intestines (the midgut) to return from outside the abdomen and reenter the abdomen as it should. The opening in the abdominal wall cannot close because to do so would pinch off part of the intestines. An omphalocele must be repaired with surgery.

omphalomesenteric duct A narrow tube that is present in the early embryo that connects the midgut of the embryo to the yolk sac outside the embryo through the umbilical opening. Later in development, it is usually obliterated, but a remnant

of it may persist, most commonly as a finger-like protrusion from the small intestine that is known as Meckel diverticulum. Also known as yolk stalk, umbilical duct, and vitelline duct. See also *diverticulum, Meckel*.

onchocerciasis See *river blindness*.

oncogene A gene that contributes to the transformation of normal cells into cancerous cells. Many oncogenes are genes that had a normal role in the cell (proto-oncogenes) and were altered by mutation to become oncogenes. See also *proto-oncogene*.

oncologist A physician who specializes in the diagnosis and treatment of cancer. After a cancer diagnosis is made, it is the oncologist's role to explain the cancer diagnosis and the meaning of the disease stage to the patient; discuss various treatment options; recommend the best course of treatment; deliver optimal care; and improve quality of life both through curative therapy and palliative care with pain and symptom management.

oncology The field of medicine that is devoted to cancer. Clinical oncology consists of three primary disciplines: medical oncology (the treatment of cancer with medicine, including chemotherapy), surgical oncology (the surgical aspects of cancer including biopsy, staging, and surgical resection of tumors), and radiation oncology (the treatment of cancer with therapeutic radiation).

Ondine's curse Failure of the central nervous system to control breathing while a person is asleep. People with Ondine's curse usually have no problem breathing while awake. With Ondine's curse, the voluntary control of ventilation that operates during waking hours is generally intact, but the involuntary (autonomic) control of respiration is impaired. Also known as congenital central hypoventilation syndrome (CCHS), CCHS with Hirschsprung's disease, congenital failure of autonomic control, idiopathic central alveolar hypoventilation, and central sleep apnea with severe hypoventilation. In Greek mythology, Ondine (Undine) was a water sprite who was condemned to stay awake in order to breathe.

oneiric Relating to dreams, dream-like. From the Greek *oneiros*, meaning "dream."

oneirophrenia A hallucinatory (dream-like) state that is caused by such conditions as prolonged sleep deprivation, sensory isolation, and drug use.

onycho- Prefix having to do with the nails, as in onychodystrophy (abnormal growth and development of nails).

onychodystrophy Malformation of the nails.

onycholysis Loosening of a nail from the nail bed, usually starting at the border of the nail. The nail tends to turn whitish or yellowish, reflecting the presence of air under it. The treatment is to trim the nail short, not to clean under the nail, and to be patient.

onychomycosis Fungus infection of the nail bed under the fingernails or toenails. Onychomycosis makes the nails look white and opaque, thickened, and brittle. It usually produces no symptoms other than a cosmetic problem. Treatment includes avoiding artificial nails, using safer application techniques and only new artificial nails, and using topical and oral antifungal medications. Also known as nail fungus and tinea unguium.

onychomycosis, proximal white subungual The rarest form of fungus infection of the fingernail or toenail. The proximal white subungual onychomycosis infection begins in the nail fold, the portion of the nail opposite the tip of the finger. Proximal white subungual onychomycosis is treated with antifungal medications taken by mouth. Also known as proximal subungual onychomycosis.

onychoosteodysplasia See *nail-patella syndrome*.

oo- Prefix meaning egg or egg-related, as in oocyte (a female germ cell—an egg—in the process of development) and oophoritis (inflammation of the egg sac).

oocyte A female germ cell in the process of development. The oocyte is produced in the ovary by an ancestral cell called an oogonium and gives rise to the ovum (the egg), which can be fertilized.

oocyte donation The use of donor female gametes (oocytes) during assisted reproductive technologies such as in-vitro fertilization (IVF) in the treatment of infertility. Also known as egg donation. See also *IVF; oocyte*.

oogonium An ancestral cell that gives rise to an oocyte.

oophorectomy The removal of one or both ovaries by surgery.

oophoritis Inflammation of the ovary, or egg sac.

open fracture See *fracture, compound*.

open reading frame A portion of DNA that occurs between a start codon and a termination codon which can potentially be translated into a protein Abbreviated ORF.

open wound An injury that is exposed because of broken skin. An open wound is at high risk for infection.

open-angle glaucoma Glaucoma in which the aqueous (fluid) that flows through the pupil into the anterior (front) chamber of the eye cannot get through a filtration system called the trabecular meshwork into the drainage canals, causing pressure to build up within the eye which can damage the optic nerve and impair vision. Open-angle glaucoma is the most common form of glaucoma. It is in contrast to angle-closure glaucoma, in which the drainage canals themselves are blocked when the angular area between the iris and the cornea is not open. See also *glaucoma*.

opening, vaginal The opening to the muscular canal that extends from the cervix to the outside of the body. In medicine, the vaginal opening is called the vestibule of the vagina.

operating room A facility that is equipped for performing surgery. Abbreviated OR.

operation In medicine, a surgical procedure. Many operations are named after persons. They range from A to Z, from the Abbe operation (on the lip) to the Ziegler operation (on the eye).

operation, Blalock-Taussig See *Blalock-Taussig operation*.

operation, Macewen See *Macewen operation*.

ophthalmia Severe inflammation of the eye. Also known as ophthalmitis.

ophthalmia, sympathetic See *sympathetic ophthalmia*.

ophthalmic Pertaining to the eye. For example, an ophthalmic ointment is designed for the eye.

ophthalmic artery The artery that supplies blood to the eye and adjacent structures of the face. It arises from the internal carotid artery, which courses up from deep within the front of the neck. See also *artery*.

ophthalmic vein One of the paired veins that drain the orbital cavity that contains the eye. The superior ophthalmic vein arises at the inner angle of the orbit and follows the course of the ophthalmic artery into the cavernous sinus, a large channel of venous blood. The inferior ophthalmic vein arises from a venous network at the forepart of orbit and divides into two branches, one of which also ends in the cavernous sinus. See also *cavernous sinus; vein*.

ophthalmitis See *ophthalmia*.

ophthalmologist A physician who practices ophthalmology.

ophthalmology The art and science of eye medicine.

ophthalmopathy Any eye disease.

ophthalmoplegic migraine See *migraine, ophthalmoplegic*.

ophthalmoscope A lighted instrument that is used to examine the inside of the eye, including the retina and the optic nerve.

ophthalmoscopy Examination of the interior of the eye, including the lens, retina, and optic nerve, using an ophthalmoscope. Ophthalmoscopy can be indirect or direct. Indirect ophthalmoscopy, which is generally performed by an ophthalmologist, employs a headlamp device to shine a very bright light into the eye. Direct ophthalmoscopy is in more common usage by many health practitioners. The examiner uses a device the size of a flashlight to examine the eye that consists of a concave mirror and a battery-powered light. The operator looks through a single monocular eyepiece into the patient's eye. The ophthalmoscope is equipped with a rotating disc of lenses to permit the eye to be examined at different depths and magnifications. The ophthalmoscope operator can better see into the eye by using one of a number of drugs to dilate the patient's pupil and enlarge the opening into the structures within the eye.

opiate A medication or an illegal drug that is derived from the opium poppy or that mimics the effect of an opiate (a synthetic opiate). Opiate drugs are narcotic sedatives that depress activity of the central nervous system, reduce pain, and induce sleep. Side effects may include oversedation, nausea, and constipation. Long-term use of opiates can produce addiction, and overuse can cause overdose and potentially death.

opioid 1 A synthetic narcotic that resembles the naturally occurring opiates. 2 Any substance that binds to or otherwise affects the opiate receptors on the surface of the cell. Opiate receptors are the cell-surface proteins to which opiates and opioids bind in order to cause their effects.

opisthotonus A great rigid spasm of the body, with the back fully arched and the heels and head bent back. Opisthotonus occurs in meningitis, especially in infants, due to irritation of the membranes surrounding the brain and spinal cord. It also occurs

with depressed brain function and injury to the brain. Opisthotonus is an ominous neurologic sign.

opium An addictive narcotic drug that is derived from the unripe seedpods of the opium poppy. Preparations of opium were called laudanum. Derivatives of opium include paregoric (a drug used to treat diarrhea), morphine, and heroin. For centuries, opium was used as a painkiller in the Middle East and Asia. It gained great popularity in Europe and the European colonies in the 18th century and became a main ingredient in patent medicines that patients could easily obtain without prescriptions. Many people became addicted to opium. Wounded Civil War soldiers who were in pain often received morphine. By 1900, it is estimated that more than 200,000 people in the US were addicted to opium and its derivatives. In 1909, the US Congress passed a law prohibiting the manufacture and sale of opium.

opportunistic condition A condition that occurs especially or exclusively in persons with weak immune systems due, for example, to AIDS, cancer, or immunosuppressive drugs, such as corticosteroids or chemotherapy. An opportunistic condition may be an infection, such as toxoplasmosis or cytomegalovirus (CMV), or a tumor, such as Kaposi sarcoma in AIDS. See also *opportunistic infection; opportunistic microorganism*.

opportunistic infection An infection that is not typically seen in healthy people, but occurs because a person's immune system is weakened. Opportunistic infections are a particular danger for people with immunodeficiency, such as AIDS, or for those receiving immunosuppressive drugs such as chemotherapy for cancer. The HIV virus itself does not cause death, but the opportunistic infections that occur because of the effect of the virus on the immune system can be lethal. See also *opportunistic condition; opportunistic microorganism*.

opportunistic microorganism A bacterium, virus, or fungus that takes advantage of certain opportunities to cause disease (opportunistic conditions). Opportunistic microorganisms are often ones that can lie dormant in body tissues for many years, such as the human herpesviruses, or that are extremely common but usually cause no symptoms of illness. When the immune system cannot raise an adequate response, these microorganisms are activated, begin to multiply, and soon overwhelm the body's weakened defenses. See also *opportunistic condition; opportunistic infection*.

oppositional defiant disorder A behavior disorder of children and teens characterized by an

ongoing pattern (for at least 6 months) of uncooperative, defiant, and hostile behavior toward authority figures that seriously disrupts normal day-to-day functioning. Symptoms include anger, defiance, temper tantrums, revenge-seeking behaviors, and hateful or mean talking. Abbreviated ODD. The cause of ODD is unknown. Treatment may include individual and family therapy.

optic Having to do with vision.

optic glioma See *glioma, optic*.

optic nerve The second cranial nerve, which connects the eye to the brain. The optic nerve carries the impulses that are formed by the retina—the nerve layer that lines the back of the eye, senses light, and creates impulses. These impulses are dispatched through the optic nerve to the brain, which interprets them as images. Using an ophthalmoscope, one can easily see the head of the optic nerve. It is the only anatomic extension of the brain, and it is a part of the central nervous system rather than a peripheral nerve.

optic nerve pathways The course of the chemical and electrical impulse from light stimulating the retina as it passes from the optic nerve to the vision center of the brain. The left and right branches of the optic nerves join behind the eyes, just in front of the pituitary gland, to form a cross-shaped structure called the optic chiasma. Within the optic chiasma, some of the nerve fibers cross. The fibers from the nasal (inside) half of each retina cross over, but those from the temporal (outside) half do not. Specifically, the fibers from the nasal half of the left eye and the temporal half of the right eye form the right optic tract; and the fibers from the nasal half of the right eye and the temporal half of the left form the left optic tract. The nerve fibers then continue along in the optic tracts. Just before they reach the thalamus of the brain, a few of the nerve fibers leave to enter nerve nuclei that function in visual reflexes. Most of the nerve fibers enter the thalamus, forming a junction (synapse) in the back of the thalamus. From there the visual impulses enter nerve pathways called the optic radiations, which lead to the visual (sight) cortex of the occipital (back) lobes of the brain.

optic neuroma A rare benign tumor of the optic nerve.

optician A specialist in fitting eyeglasses and making lenses to correct vision problems. An optometrist performs eye examinations and writes prescriptions for corrective lenses; an optician fills that prescription.

optometrist A practitioner who provides primary eye and vision care, performs eye examinations to detect vision problems, and prescribes corrective lenses to correct those problems. Some optometrists also make and fit eyeglasses, but many leave that job to opticians. An optometrist is a doctor of optometry (OD), not an MD. When an optometrist detects eye disease, the patient may be referred instead to an ophthalmologist, a physician who specializes in evaluating and treating diseases of the eye.

OPV Oral polio vaccine. See *polio vaccine, oral*.

OR Operating room.

oral Having to do with the mouth. For example, an oral solution is a solution that is given by mouth.

oral cancer Cancer within the mouth. Oral cancer is associated with smoking cigarettes and cigars as well as chewing tobacco. It is generally noticed as a painless growth on the inner cheek, gum, or tongue. Treatment options include surgical resection, radiation, and/or chemotherapy.

oral contraceptive A birth control pill taken by mouth. Most oral contraceptives include both estrogen and progestogen. When given in certain amounts and at certain times in the menstrual cycle, these hormones prevent the ovary from releasing an egg for fertilization. Colloquially known as "the pill." See also *birth control; contraceptive*.

oral polio vaccine See *polio vaccine, oral*.

oral rehydration solution A specially designed liquid that contains water, glucose, and electrolytes and is given to treat dehydration. Abbreviated ORS.

oral rehydration therapy The administration of special fluids by mouth to treat dehydration. Abbreviated ORT. See also *oral rehydration solution*.

oral surgeon A dentist who has special training in surgery to correct problems of the mouth and jaw.

oral-motor Relating to the muscles of the mouth and/or to movements of the mouth.

oral-motor apraxia of speech See *apraxia of speech*.

orbit In medicine, the bony cavity in which the eyeball sits.

orbital In anatomy, pertaining to the orbit, the bony cavity that contains the eyeball.

orbital ridge The bony ridge beneath the eyebrow.

orchidectomy The surgical removal of one or both testes.

orchiectiony Orchidectomy.

orchioopathy Any and all diseases of the testes.

orchiopexy Surgery to bring an undescended testicle down into the scrotum.

orchitis Inflammation of the testis. Causes of orchitis include mumps and other infections; diseases, such as polyarteritis nodosa; and injury.

organ A relatively independent part of the body that carries out one or more special functions. Examples of organs include the eyes, ears, heart, lungs, and liver.

organic 1 A chemical compound that contains carbon. 2 Related to an organ. 3 Grown or prepared without the use of chemicals or pesticides, as in organic food.

organic brain syndrome Psychiatric or neurological symptoms that arise from damage to or disease in the brain. Also known as organic mental disorder.

organotherapy The use of extracts of animal glands or organs to treat disease. Pituitary extracts from pigs, for example, were used for many years to treat hormone disorders.

organs of reproduction, female See *female organs of reproduction*.

organs of reproduction, male See *male organs of reproduction*.

orgasm A series of muscle contractions in the genital region that is accompanied by sudden release of endorphins. Orgasm normally accompanies male ejaculation as a result of sexual stimulation, and it also occurs in females as a result of sexual stimulation.

orifice An opening. For example, the mouth is an orifice.

oromandibular dystonia A condition characterized by forceful contractions of the muscles of the jaw, lips, and tongue. The jaw may be pulled open or shut, and speech and swallowing can be difficult. Local injections of botulinum toxin (Brand name: Botox) have been used as a treatment.

oropharynx The part of the throat that is at the back of the mouth, in contrast to the nasopharynx (the part of the throat that is behind the nose).

orphan disease A disease that has not been “adopted” by the pharmaceutical industry because it provides little financial incentive for the private sector to make and market new medications to treat or prevent it. An orphan disease may be a rare disease (according to US criteria, a disease that affects fewer than 200,000 people) or a common disease that has been ignored (such as tuberculosis, cholera, typhoid, and malaria) because it is far more prevalent in developing countries than in the developed world.

orphan drug A drug that is designed to treat or prevent an orphan disease. See also *orphan disease*.

ORS Oral rehydration solution.

ORT Oral rehydration therapy.

ortho- Prefix meaning straight or erect, as in orthodontics (the straightening of the teeth) and orthostatic (in an upright posture).

orthodontic treatment The use of devices, such as dental braces, to move teeth or adjust underlying bone. Teeth can be moved with removable appliances or with fixed braces.

orthodontics The dental specialty that is concerned with the diagnosis and treatment of dental deformities as well as irregularity in the relationship of the lower to the upper jaw.

orthomolecular medicine 1 A type of medicine that, according to biochemist Linus Pauling, is concerned with “the preservation of good health and the treatment of disease by varying the concentration in the human body of substances that are normally present in the body.” The treatment of diabetes with the injection of insulin and the prevention of goiter with iodine are examples of orthomolecular medicine. 2 A form of alternative medicine in which practitioners try to prevent and cure disease by using specific doses of vitamins, amino acids, fatty acids, trace minerals, electrolytes, and other natural substances.

orthopaedics See *orthopedics*.

orthopaedist See *orthopedist*.

orthopedics The branch of surgery that is broadly concerned with the skeletal system. Sometimes spelled orthopaedics.

orthopedist An orthopedic surgeon, a physician who corrects congenital or functional abnormalities of the bones with surgery, casting, and bracing. Orthopedists also treat injuries to the bones. Sometimes spelled orthopaedist.

orthopnea The inability to breathe easily except when sitting up straight or standing erect.

orthopod Slang term for an orthopedist.

orthoscopic Having correct vision, producing correct vision, free from optical distortion, or designed to correct distorted vision.

orthostatic hypotension See *hypotension, orthostatic*.

orthotic A support, brace, or splint used to support, align, prevent, or correct the function of movable parts of the body. Shoe inserts are orthotics that are intended to correct an abnormal or irregular walking pattern, by altering slightly the angles at which the foot strikes a walking or running surface. Other orthotics include neck braces, lumbosacral supports, knee braces, and wrist supports.

OS The left eye (oculus sinister), as opposed to the right eye (oculus dexter).

os sacrum The large, heavy bone at the base of the spine. The os sacrum is symmetrical and roughly triangular in shape. The female sacrum is wider and less curved than the male sacrum, to permit easier childbearing.

Osgood-Schlatter disease An inflammation of the patellar tendon and surrounding soft tissues at the point where the tendon attaches to the tibia in children. Osgood-Schlatter disease is caused by repetitive stress or tension on a part of the growth area of the upper tibia (the apophysis). The disease may also be associated with an avulsion injury, in which the tendon is stretched so much that it tears away from the tibia and takes a fragment of bone with it. Osgood-Schlatter disease most commonly affects active young people, particularly boys between the ages of 10 and 15, who play games or sports that include frequent running and jumping. Treatment includes rest, casting if necessary, and rarely surgery. See also *osteochondrosis*.

OSHA Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

Osler node A small, tender, transient nodule that develops in the pads of fingers and toes and on the palms and soles. Osler nodes are a highly diagnostic sign of bacterial infection of the heart (subacute bacterial endocarditis).

Osler-Rendu-Weber syndrome See *hereditary hemorrhagic telangiectasia*.

osmolarity The concentration of osmotically active particles in solution, which may be quantitatively expressed in osmoles of solute per liter of solution.

osmolarity, plasma The osmolarity of blood plasma, which is a measure of the hydration status of the body. The plasma osmolarity is sensitive to changes in hydration status during dehydration and rehydration.

osseous Having to do with bone, consisting of bone, or resembling bone.

ossicle Any small bone, such as the tiny bones within the human ear.

ossification 1 The normal process of bone growth. 2 Hardening, becoming bone-like.

ossify To harden.

osteitis Inflammation of the bone.

osteitis deformans See *Paget's disease*.

osteitis fibrosa cystica A condition that is associated with excessive parathyroid hormone production (hyperparathyroidism), in which bone tissue becomes soft and deformed. Treatment is directed toward the underlying parathyroid condition and relieving any bone pain.

oste- Prefix meaning bone, as in osteogenesis (the production of bone) and osteosarcoma (cancer arising in the bone).

osteoarthritis See *arthritis, degenerative*.

osteoarthropathy Any disease of the bones and joints. From *oste-*, bone + *-arthro-*, joint, + *pathy*, disease.

osteoblast A cell that makes bone. It does so by producing a matrix that then becomes mineralized. Bone mass is maintained by a balance between the activity of osteoblasts that form bone and other cells called osteoclasts that break it down.

osteoblastoma A noncancerous tumor in bone tissue. Osteoblastomas are small and are seen most frequently in children and young adults. Symptoms include pain and bone-mass reduction. Treatment includes surgery, sometimes followed by chemotherapy.

osteochondritis dissecans A condition in which a fragment of bone in a joint is deprived of blood and separates from the rest of the bone, causing soreness

and making the joint give way. Diagnosis is made via X-ray. Treatment usually involves casting, although if the fragment has detached completely, arthroscopic surgery may be necessary. Abbreviated OCD and OD.

osteochondroma An abnormal, solitary, benign growth of bone and cartilage, typically at the end of a long bone. Osteochondromas are usually discovered in persons 15 to 25 years of age and are the most common benign bone tumor. An osteochondroma is typically detected when the area around it is injured or when it becomes large.

osteochondromatosis A condition that is characterized by multiple benign tumors of cartilage, called osteochondromas, projecting from bone, most often from near the ends of long bones. In a small proportion of cases, an osteochondroma may become malignant. Also known as multiple exostoses. The condition can be hereditary, in which case it is called hereditary multiple exostoses (HMS).

osteochondrosis Any disease that affects the progress of bone growth by killing bone tissue. Osteochondrosis is seen only in children and teens whose bones are still growing.

osteoclasia Destruction and reabsorption of bone tissue, as occurs when broken bones heal.

osteoclasis The surgical destruction of bone tissue. Osteoclasis is performed to reconstruct a bone that is malformed, often a broken bone that healed improperly. The bone is broken and then reshaped with the aid of metal pins, casting, and bracing.

osteoclast A type of large bone cell that plays a role in the growth and repair of bones. Osteoclasts may also appear abnormally. See also *osteoclastoma*.

osteoclastoma A tumor of bone characterized by massive destruction of the end (epiphysis) of a long bone. The site most commonly struck by this tumor is the knee — the far end of the femur and the near end of the tibia. The tumor is often coated by new bony growth and may grow aggressively. It may cause pain and restricts movement. Treatment is by surgery. Also known as giant cell tumor of bone.

osteocyte A bone cell.

osteodystrophy A bone disorder that adversely affects bone growth and development. Osteodystrophy is most commonly caused by chronic kidney failure, but it can be inherited, such as in Albright hereditary osteodystrophy. Osteodystrophy can require treatment with vitamin D. See also *osteodystrophy, renal*.

osteodystrophy, renal A bone disorder that adversely affects bone growth and is caused by chronic kidney failure (renal disease). Osteodystrophy can require treatment with vitamin D. Also known as kidney osteodystrophy.

osteogenesis The production of bone.

osteogenesis imperfecta A group of inherited connective tissue diseases, all of which result from mutations that affect collagen in connective tissue in the body, and all of which result in fragile bones. The best known types of osteogenesis imperfecta are types I and II. Also known as brittle bone disease.

osteogenesis imperfecta congenita See *osteogenesis imperfecta type II*.

osteogenesis imperfecta tarda See *osteogenesis imperfecta type I*.

osteogenesis imperfecta type I A type of osteogenesis imperfecta that features bone fragility and blue sclerae (bluish whites of the eyes). Osteogenesis imperfecta type I is the classic, mild form of brittle bone disease. It is inherited as an autosomal dominant trait. It is characterized by fragile bones that are predisposed to fracture, the onset after birth of growth deficiency, abnormal teeth that look as if they have been sandblasted, thin skin, blue sclerae, and overly extensible joints. Common problems include the development of bowed legs, curvature of the spine (scoliosis and kyphosis), umbilical and inguinal hernias, and mild mitral valve prolapse. Hearing impairment begins in the third decade of life, due to otosclerosis, a disorder of the bones of the middle ear. Also known as osteogenesis imperfecta tarda and Lobstein disease.

osteogenesis imperfecta type II A type of osteogenesis imperfecta that features very severe bone fragility. Osteogenesis imperfecta type II is the lethal form of brittle bone disease. The disease is characterized by short-limb dwarfism, thin skin, a soft skull, unusually large fontanels (soft spots), blue sclerae (bluish whites of the eyes), small nose, low nasal bridge, inguinal hernia, and numerous bone fractures at birth. The limbs are bowed due to multiple fractures. Children with osteogenesis imperfecta type II are usually stillborn or die in early infancy. Also known as osteogenesis imperfecta congenita and Vrolik disease.

osteogenesis imperfecta with blue sclerae See *osteogenesis imperfecta type II*.

osteogenic sarcoma See *osteosarcoma*.

osteoid osteoma A benign tumor of bone tissue. Osteoid osteoma emerges most often in a person's teens or 20s and is found most frequently in the femur and in males. Symptoms include pain, mostly at night. Diagnosis is made via X-ray. Most cases do not require invasive treatment, but just the use of analgesics to treat pain.

osteomalacia Softening of the bone. Osteomalacia may be caused by poor diet, lack of vitamin D, or inadequate absorption of calcium and other minerals needed to harden bones. Treatment includes dietary change and sometimes vitamin and mineral supplements. See also *osteoporosis*.

osteomyelitis Inflammation of the bone due to infection, for example, by the bacteria salmonella or staphylococcus. Osteomyelitis is sometimes a complication of surgery or injury, although infection can also reach bone tissue through the bloodstream. Both the bone and the bone marrow may be infected. Symptoms include deep pain and muscle spasms in the area of inflammation, as well as fever. Treatment includes bed rest, use of antibiotics, and sometimes surgery to remove dead bone tissue.

osteonecrosis See *avascular necrosis*.

osteopath An osteopathic physician; a Doctor of Osteopathy (DO). In most US states, osteopaths complete a course of study equivalent to that of an MD and are licensed to practice medicine. They may prescribe medication and perform surgery, and they often use techniques similar to those used in chiropractic and physical therapy.

osteopathy A system of therapy founded in the 19th century that is based on the concept that the body can formulate its own remedies against diseases when its parts are in a normal structural relationship, it has a normal environment, and it enjoys good nutrition. Although osteopathy takes a holistic approach to medical care, it also embraces modern medical knowledge, including use of medication, surgery, radiation, and chemotherapy when warranted. Osteopathy is particularly concerned with maintaining correct relationships between bones, muscles, and connective tissues. The practice of osteopathy often includes chiropractic-like adjustments of skeletal structures. Craniosacral therapy, a practice in which the bones and tissues of the head and neck are manipulated, also arose in osteopathy.

osteopenia Mild thinning of the bone mass. Osteopenia represents a low bone mass and is not as severe as osteoporosis. Osteopenia results when formation of new bone (osteoid synthesis) is not sufficient to offset normal bone loss (osteoid lysis).

osteopetrosis A genetic disease that is characterized by abnormally dense thick bone. A severe autosomal recessive form of osteopetrosis can occur in infants and children, and a milder autosomal dominant form can occur in teens and adults. In the recessive form, the thickened bone obliterates the marrow cavity, causing anemia, and narrows the openings of the skull, causing compression of nerves to the ears and eyes, ultimately resulting in deafness and blindness. Fractures are common in both forms. Also known as marble bone disease.

osteoporosis Thinning of the bones, with reduction in bone mass, due to depletion of calcium and bone protein. Osteoporosis predisposes a person to fractures, which are often slow to heal and heal poorly. It is most common in older adults, particularly postmenopausal women, and in patients who take steroids or steroid drugs. Unchecked osteoporosis can lead to changes in posture, physical abnormality (particularly the form of hunched back known colloquially as dowager's hump), and decreased mobility. Treatment of osteoporosis includes exercise (especially weight-bearing exercise that builds bone density), ensuring that the diet contains adequate calcium and other minerals needed to promote new bone growth, use of medications to improve bone density, and sometimes for postmenopausal women, use of hormone therapy.

osteosarcoma A cancer of the bone that is most common in adolescents and young adults. Treatment involves surgery, usually followed by chemotherapy or radiation. The site of the tumor is the most important prognostic factor, because it determines whether the tumor can be surgically removed. Also known as osteogenic sarcoma.

osteotomy Taking out part or all of a bone, or cutting into or through bone.

osteotomy, block Surgical removal of a section of bone.

osteotomy, cuneiform Surgical removal of a triangular piece of bone.

osteotomy, displacement Surgical reconfiguration of a bone by changing its physical relationship to other bones.

ostomy An operation to create an opening from an area inside the body to the outside. An ostomy may be used to permit drainage of feces (colostomy) or urine (cystostomy) from the body when the normal route is missing or blocked. It can be permanent or temporary. See also *colostomy; enterostomy*.

OT 1 Occupational therapist. 2 Occupational therapy.

otalgia Ear pain; earache. Otolgia can originate within the ear, the ear canal, or the external ear.

OTC Over-the-counter.

otitis Inflammation of the ear. See also *ear infection*.

otitis externa See *ear infection, external*.

oto- Prefix meaning ear, as in otology (the study and medical care of the ear) and otoplasty (plastic surgery to reshape the outer ear).

otolaryngologist See *ENT*.

otology The study and medical care of the ear.

otopharyngeal tube See *Eustachian tube*.

otoplasty Plastic surgery to reshape the outer ear.

otosclerosis The abnormal formation of new bone in the middle ear that gradually immobilizes the stapes (stirrup bone) and prevents it from vibrating in response to sound, causing progressive loss of hearing. Otosclerosis usually affects both ears.

otoscope An instrument for looking in the ear.

ounce 1 A measure of weight equal to 28.4 grams or 1/16 pound. Abbreviated oz. 2 A measure of volume equal to 5 milliliters, 2 tablespoons, or 1/8 cups.

outer ear See *ear, outer*.

outpatient A patient who is not hospitalized, but instead comes to a physician's office, clinic, or day surgery office for treatment.

outpatient care See *ambulatory care*.

output, cardiac See *cardiac output*.

ova Plural of ovum.

ovarian cancer See *cancer, ovarian*.

ovarian carcinoma See *cancer, ovarian*.

ovarian cyst See *cyst, ovarian*.

ovarian disease, polycystic See *Stein-Leventhal syndrome*.

ovarian teratoma An ovarian tumor that is usually benign and typically contains a diversity of tissues. An ovarian teratoma develops from a totipotential germ cell—a primary oocyte—that is retained within the ovary. Totipotential cells can give rise to all orders of cells that are necessary to form mature tissues and often recognizable structures, such as hair, bone, and sebaceous (oily) material, neural tissue, and teeth. Any of these tissues may be found in an ovarian teratoma. Such cysts may occur at any age, but the prime age of detection is in the childbearing years. Treatment involves surgical removal, which can be done via laparotomy (open surgery) or laparoscopy (with a scope). Also known as dermoid cyst of the ovary or simply dermoid. See also *cyst, ovarian; parthenogenesis*.

ovary The female gonad, one of a pair of reproductive glands in women. The ovaries are located in the pelvis, one on each side of the uterus. Each ovary is about the size and shape of an almond. The ovaries produce eggs (ova) and female hormones. During each monthly menstrual cycle, an egg is released from one ovary. The egg travels from the ovary through a fallopian tube to the uterus. The ovaries are the main source of female hormones, which control the development of female body characteristics, such as the breasts, body shape, and body hair. They also regulate the menstrual cycle and pregnancy.

ovary, dermoid cyst of the See *ovarian teratoma*.

ovary cyst, follicular See *cyst of the ovary, follicular*.

overgrowth Excessive growth. Also sometimes called gigantism.

overgrowth syndrome A condition with multiple features, most notably excessive growth. A number of overgrowth syndromes affect children, such as fragile X syndrome. Excessive growth of specific body parts is also a feature of a number of disorders, such as Beckwith-Wiedemann syndrome, in which there is macroglossia (a large tongue due to overgrowth of the tongue). Overactivity of the pituitary gland with overproduction of growth hormone causes overgrowth before adolescence and a distinctive pattern of overgrowth called acromegaly. See also *acromegaly; fragile X syndrome*.

overload, iron See *excess iron*.

over-the-counter drug A drug that is available without a prescription, in contrast to prescription drugs that require a physician's order. Abbreviated OTC.

overweight Weighing more than is healthy for a particular body type and build. Overweight is often defined as having a body mass index (BMI) from 25 up to 30. See also *body mass index; obese*.

ovulation The release of the ripe egg (ovum) from the ovary. The egg is released when the cavity surrounding it (the follicle) breaks open in response to a hormonal signal. Ovulation occurs around 14 or 15 days from the first day of the woman's last menstrual cycle. When ovulation occurs, the ovum moves into the Fallopian tube and becomes available for fertilization.

ovum An egg within the ovary of the female. An ovum can combine with sperm to form a zygote.

oximetry The process of determining the level of oxygenation in arterial blood, an important measure of whether the heart and lungs are working properly. Oximetry may be done continuously during certain medical treatments or surgery, or it may be done sporadically to monitor a patient's health.

oximetry catheter See *catheter, oximetry*.

oxygen The odorless gas that is present in the air and necessary to maintain life. Oxygen may be given in a medical setting, either to reduce the volume of other gases in the blood or as a vehicle for delivering anesthetics in gas form. It can be delivered via nasal tubes, an oxygen mask, or an oxygen tent. Patients with lung disease or damage may need to use portable oxygen devices on a temporary or permanent basis.

oxygen chamber, hyperbaric See *hyperbaric oxygen chamber*.

oxygen mask A mask that covers the mouth and nose and is hooked up to an oxygen tank. It delivers oxygen directly to the patient.

oxygen tent A tent-like device that is used in a medical setting to deliver high levels of oxygen to a bedridden patient. The tent covers the entire head and upper body, and oxygen is pumped in from a tank.

oxygenation 1 The process of treating a patient with oxygen. 2 The process of combining a medication or another substance with oxygen.

oxymetholone A synthetic male steroid hormone that is sometimes used to treat wasting in patients with HIV disease. Since it promotes large gains in body mass, it has sometimes been used illegally by bodybuilders and athletes. It has also been used in the treatment of anemia.

oxytocin A hormone made in the brain that plays a role in childbirth and lactation by causing muscles to contract in the uterus and in the mammary glands. Oxytocin is secreted by the hypothalamus and transported to the posterior lobe of the pituitary gland at the base of the brain. See also *pituitary*, *posterior*.

oxyuris A group of intestinal worms that includes pinworm.

oz. Abbreviation for ounce.

<http://www.rashidiislamiccenter.com>

Pp

p **1** In biochemistry, protein. For example, p53 is a protein that has a mass of 53 kilodaltons. **2** In population genetics, the frequency of the more common of two different alternative (allelic) versions of a gene. (The frequency of the less common allele is q.) **3** In statistics, probability.

p arm of a chromosome The short arm of a chromosome. Each human chromosome has two arms—a short arm and a long arm. By international convention, the short arm is termed p, and the long arm is termed q. For example, if a gene is on 4p12, that gene is on the short arm of chromosome 4, in region 12. See also *chromosome*.

PA **1** Physician assistant. **2** Posteroanterior.

PA X-ray An X-ray picture in which the beams pass from back to front (posteroanterior), as opposed to an AP (anteroposterior) film, in which the rays pass through the body from front to back.

pacemaker A device or system that sends electrical impulses to the heart in order to set the heart rhythm. A pacemaker can be the natural pacemaker of the heart (the sinoatrial node) or it can be an electronic device that serves as an artificial pacemaker. See also *pacemaker, artificial; pacemaker, implantable; sinoatrial node*.

pacemaker, artificial An electronic device that uses electrical impulses to regulate the heart rhythm. A pacemaker may be external (located outside the body) or internal (implanted in the body). Although there are many different types of pacemakers, all are designed to treat bradycardia, a too-slow heart rate. Pacemakers may function continuously and stimulate the heart at a fixed rate or at an increased rate during exercise. A pacemaker can also be programmed to detect too long a pause between heartbeats and then stimulate the heart. See also *pacemaker, implantable*.

pacemaker, implantable A pacemaker in which the electrodes to the heart, the electronic circuitry, and the power supply are all implanted internally within the body.

pacemaker, internal See *pacemaker, implantable*.

pacemaker, natural See *sinoatrial node*.

pachyonychia congenita An inherited condition that is characterized by abnormally thick, curved nails; thickening of the skin of the palms, soles, knees, and elbows; and white plaques in the mouth. Abbreviated PC. There are two distinct syndromes of PC. The basic abnormality in both is a mutation in one of the genes for keratin, which is a primary constituent of nails, hair, and skin.

Paget's disease A chronic bone disorder that typically results in enlarged, deformed bones due to excessive breakdown and formation of bone tissue that can cause bones to weaken and may result in bone pain, arthritis, bony deformities, and fractures. Paget's disease generally occurs in persons over the age of 40 years. Men and women are affected equally. Paget's disease can be diagnosed by using one or more of the following tests: X-rays, because bone in Paget's disease has a characteristic appearance; alkaline phosphatase tests, because an elevated level of alkaline phosphatase in the blood can be suggestive of Paget's disease; and bone scans. The bisphosphonate drugs, which slow the rate of bone breakdown and turnover, are the first line of treatment. Treatment can control Paget's disease and lessen symptoms, but there is no cure. Also known as osteitis deformans.

Paget's disease of the breast See *breast, Paget's disease of*.

Pagon syndrome Congenital anemia with spinocerebellar ataxia (wobbliness) that becomes apparent by age 1. The anemia is characterized by sideroblasts (iron-rich precursors of red blood cells) seen on a blood smear. The syndrome is inherited in an X-linked recessive manner and is due to mutation in the ABC gene that encodes a protein that localizes to the mitochondrial inner membrane and is involved in iron homeostasis. Also known as "anemia, sideroblastic, and spinocerebellar ataxia," or ASAT. See also *anemia*.

pain A sensation that can range from mild, localized discomfort to agony. Pain has both physical and emotional components. The physical part of pain results from nerve stimulation. Pain may be contained to a discrete area, as in an injury, or it may be more diffuse, as in disorders such as fibromyalgia. Pain is mediated by specific nerve fibers that carry the pain impulses to the brain. See also *pain management*.

pain, abdominal See *abdominal pain*.

pain, back Pain in any part of the back. Pain in the back can relate to the bony spine, discs between the vertebrae, ligaments around the spine and discs, spinal cord and nerves, muscles of the back, internal organs, or skin covering the back. Causes of back pain can include injury, overstress, or disease.

pain, chest See *chest pain*.

pain, knee Pain in the knee. Causes of knee pain include injury, degeneration, arthritis, infection (infrequently), and, rarely, bone tumors.

pain, phantom limb Pain perceived to be located in the distribution of a previously removed extremity. See also *phantom limb syndrome*.

pain, phantom tooth See *phantom tooth pain*.

pain, shingles See *shingles*.

pain management The process of providing medical care that alleviates or reduces pain. Mild to moderate pain can usually be treated with analgesic medications, such as aspirin. For chronic or severe pain, opiates and other narcotics may be used, sometimes in concert with analgesics; with steroids or nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs when the pain is related to inflammation; or with antidepressants, which can potentiate some pain medications without raising the actual dose of the drug and which affect the brain's perception of pain. Narcotics carry with them the potential for side effects and addiction. However, the risk of addiction is not normally a concern in the care of terminal patients. For hospitalized patients with severe pain, devices for self-administration of narcotics are frequently used. Other procedures can also be useful in pain management programs. For bedridden patients, simply changing position regularly or using pillows to support a more comfortable posture can be effective. Massage, acupuncture, acupressure, and biofeedback have also shown some validity for increased pain control in some patients.

pains, growing See *growing pains*.

palate The roof of the mouth. The bony front portion is the hard palate, and the muscular back portion is the soft palate. See also *cleft palate*.

palate, cleft See *cleft palate*.

paleostriatum See *globus pallidus*.

palilalia A speech disorder that is characterized by the repetition of words or phrases. Palilphrasia is encountered in autistic spectrum disorders and Tourette's syndrome. Also known as palinphrasia.

palindromic rheumatism A form of arthritis characterized by attacks of fleeting inflammation in and around the joints lasting hours to a few days. The fingers and knees are the most common targets. While the attacks may be painful, they typically leave no permanent joint damage. Approximately one third of affected patients develop classical rheumatoid arthritis.

palinphrasia See *palilalia*.

palladium See *globus pallidus*.

palliate To treat a disease partially and insofar as possible, but not cure it completely. See also *palliative care*.

palliation See *palliative care*.

palliative care 1 Medical or comfort care that reduces the severity of a disease or slows its progress rather than providing a cure. For incurable diseases, in cases where the cure is not recommended due to other health concerns, and when the patient does not want to pursue a cure, palliative care is the focus of treatment. For example, if surgery cannot be performed to remove a tumor, radiation treatment might be tried to reduce the tumor's rate of growth, and pain management could help the patient manage physical symptoms. 2 In a negative sense, provision of only perfunctory health care when a cure is possible.

palmar surface The palm or grasping side of the hand.

palpable Something that can be felt. For example, a palpable growth is one that can be detected by touch.

palpate To touch or feel. For example, a physician may palpate the liver's edge when examining the abdomen.

palpebra Medical term for eyelid. The plural is *palpebrae*.

palpebral fissure The opening for the eyes between the eyelids.

palpebral gland See *gland, Meibomian*.

palpitations Unpleasant sensations of irregular and/or forceful beating of the heart. In some patients with palpitations, no heart disease or abnormal heart rhythms can be found. In others, palpitations result from abnormal heart rhythms (arrhythmias).

palsy Paralysis, generally partial, whereby a local body area is incapable of voluntary movement. For example, Bell's palsy is localized paralysis of the muscles on one side of the face.

palsy, Bell's See *Bell's palsy*.

palsy, cerebral See *cerebral palsy*.

palsy, laryngeal See *laryngeal palsy*.

paludism See *malaria*.

panacea A universal remedy, a cure-all. The ancients sought—but never found—a panacea that would cure all disease.

pancolitis See *colitis, ulcerative*.

pancreas A spongy, tube-shaped organ that is about 6 inches long and is located in the back of the abdomen, behind the stomach. The head of the pancreas is on the right side of the abdomen. It is connected to the upper end of the small intestine. The narrow end of the pancreas, called the tail, extends to the left side of the body. The pancreas makes pancreatic juices and hormones, including insulin and secretin. Pancreatic juices contain enzymes that help digest food in the small intestine. Both pancreatic enzymes and hormones are needed to keep the body working correctly. As pancreatic juices are made, they flow into the main pancreatic duct, which joins to the common bile duct, which connects the pancreas to the liver and the gallbladder and carries bile to the small intestine near the stomach. The pancreas is thus a compound gland in the sense that it is composed of both exocrine and endocrine tissues. The exocrine function of the pancreas involves the synthesis and secretion of pancreatic juices. The endocrine function resides in the million or so cellular islands (the islets of Langerhans) that are embedded between the exocrine units of the pancreas. Beta cells of the islets of Langerhans secrete insulin, which helps control carbohydrate metabolism. Alpha cells of the islets of Langerhans secrete glucagon, which counters the action of insulin.

pancreas, annular An abnormal ring of pancreatic tissue that encircles the duodenum and often causes intestinal obstruction.

pancreatectomy A surgical procedure in which part or all of the pancreas is removed.

pancreatic Having to do with the pancreas.

pancreatic alpha cell See *alpha cell, pancreatic*.

pancreatic beta cell See *beta cell, pancreatic*.

pancreatic cancer See *cancer, pancreatic*.

pancreatic delta cell See *delta cell, pancreatic*.

pancreatic insufficiency Having not enough of the digestive enzymes that are normally secreted by the pancreas into the intestine. Pancreatic insufficiency is a hallmark of cystic fibrosis. See also *cystic fibrosis*.

pancreatic juice Fluids made by the pancreas that contain digestive enzymes.

pancreatitis Inflammation of the pancreas. Of the many causes of pancreatitis, the most common are alcohol consumption and gallstones. Other causes include medications (azathioprine, estrogen, thiazides, metronidazole, valproic acid, and tetracycline), trauma, abdominal surgery, abnormalities of the pancreas and intestine, and infections such as mumps. Acute pancreatitis usually begins with pain in the upper abdomen that may last for a few days. The pain may be sudden and intense, or it may begin as a mild pain that is aggravated by eating and slowly grows worse. The abdomen may be very tender. Other symptoms may include nausea, vomiting, and fever. The patient often feels and looks very sick. Chronic pancreatitis usually follows many years of alcohol abuse and may cause pain; malabsorption of food, leading to weight loss; and diabetes, if the insulin-producing cells of the pancreas (islet cells) are damaged.

pancytopenia A shortage of all types of blood cells. Pancytopenia can be caused by a side effect of many medications (such as azathioprine, methotrexate, and others) or diseases (such as lupus and bone marrow disorders). Treatment is directed toward the underlying cause and may be supplemented by medications that stimulate the bone marrow.

pancytopenia, Fanconi See *anemia, Fanconi*.

PANDAS Pediatric autoimmune disorders associated with streptococcus, the sudden onset of symptoms such as those of obsessive-compulsive disorder or Tourette's syndrome following infection with streptococcus bacteria. PANDAS is caused by an autoimmune reaction that affects the basal ganglia in the brain. Diagnosis is primarily made through observation. Treatment involves cognitive behavioral therapy and medication for specific symptoms. See also *obsessive-compulsive disorder; streptococcus; Tourette's syndrome*.

pandemic 1 An epidemic of disease that is very widespread, affecting a whole region, a continent, or the world. 2 Widely epidemic. For example, AIDS is currently pandemic in Africa.

pandiculation The act of stretching and yawning.

panencephalitis, subacute sclerosing See *subacute sclerosing panencephalitis*.

panic A sudden strong feeling of fear that prevents reasonable thought or action. The word comes from the name of the Greek woodland god Pan, who was a frightening figure—part human, part goat—and whose pet caprice was to terrify people who ventured into rural areas.

panic attack A sudden attack of fear or panic, often accompanied by physical symptoms such as tachycardia (rapid heartbeat), chest pressure or pain, shortness of breath, dizziness, tingling, and anxiety. Hyperventilation, agitation, and withdrawal are common results. See also *panic disorder*.

panic disorder An anxiety disorder that is characterized by sudden attacks of fear and panic. Panic attacks may occur without a known reason, but more frequently they are triggered by fear-producing events or thoughts, such as taking an elevator or driving. Symptoms of panic attacks include rapid heartbeat, strange chest sensations, shortness of breath, dizziness, tingling, and anxiousness. Hyperventilation, agitation, and withdrawal are common results. Panic disorder is believed to be due to an abnormal activation of the body's hormonal system, causing a sudden "fight or flight" response. Treatment involves cognitive behavioral therapy, using exposure to effect symptom reduction, and use of medication.

panciclectomy A surgical procedure that removes excess, loose skin and fat from the lower abdomen, typically performed after massive weight loss. It may be performed in conjunction with other abdominal surgeries. A pannicilectomy is one type of body-contouring surgery.

panniculitis The inflammation of fatty tissue beneath the skin. It is associated with a number of different medical conditions. Some cases are associated with an inflammation of the blood vessels and/or connective tissue.

pantothenic acid Vitamin B5. See also Appendix C, "Vitamins."

Pap test A screening test for cervical cancer that involves the microscopic examination of cells collected from the cervix, smeared on a slide, and specially stained. A Pap test can reveal premalignant and malignant changes in the cells, as well as changes that are due to noncancerous conditions, such as inflammation. Named after the physician George Papanicolaou, who developed the test. Also known as Pap smear.

papilla, fungiform See *fungiform papillae*.

papillary muscle See *muscle, papillary*.

papillary tumor A tumor that is shaped like a small mushroom, with its "stem" attached to an organ, such as the inner lining of the bladder.

papilledema Swelling of the head of the optic nerve, a sign of increased pressure within the skull. The optic nerve head is the area where the optic nerve (the nerve that carries information from the retina to the brain) enters the eyeball. Papilledema is diagnosed through use of an ophthalmoscope. The optic nerve head is abnormally elevated in papilledema, almost always in both eyes. The causes of papilledema include swelling of the brain (as from encephalitis or trauma), tumors and other lesions that occupy space within the skull, increased production of cerebrospinal fluid (CSF), decreased resorption of CSF (due to meningitis, venous sinus thrombosis, or subarachnoid hemorrhage), obstruction of the ventricular system within the brain, hydrocephalus, craniosynostosis (premature closure of the sutures of the skull), and pseudotumor cerebri (increased pressure within the brain in the absence of a tumor). When papilledema is found, the patient requires immediate further evaluation and, if needed, intervention. Also known as a choked disk. See also *brain cancer; cerebrospinal fluid; craniosynostosis; encephalitis; hydrocephalus; meningitis; pseudotumor cerebri; ventricle, cerebral*.

papilloma A small solid benign tumor with a clear-cut border that projects above the surrounding tissue. A raised wart is an example of a papilloma.

papilloma, intraductal See *intraductal papilloma*.

papillomatosis A disorder that is characterized by the growth of numerous papillomas (warts). For example, laryngeal papillomatosis is the presence of multiple papillomas on the vocal cords.

papillomatosis, laryngeal See *laryngeal papillomatosis*.

papillomatosis, recurrent respiratory See *laryngeal papillomatosis*.

papillomavirus, human See *human papillomavirus*.

papular Referring to papules.

papule A solid, rounded growth that is elevated from the skin. A papule is usually less than 1 cm (0.5 in.) across. Papules may open when scratched and become crusty and infected.

para Any woman who has given birth once or more. A woman who is para I (a primipara) has given birth once, a woman who is para II has given birth twice, and so on. Technically, for a pregnancy to count as a birth, it must last for at least 20 weeks (the midpoint of a full-term pregnancy) or yield an infant who weighs at least 500 grams, regardless of whether the infant is liveborn.

para- A prefix with many meanings, including alongside, beside, near, resembling, beyond, apart from, and abnormal, as in parathyroid glands (glands that are adjacent to the thyroid) and paraumbilical (alongside the umbilicus).

paracentesis The removal of fluid from a body cavity via a needle, a trocar, a cannula, or another hollow instrument. A paracentesis may be used for diagnosis or treatment, as, for example, in ascites, where there is free fluid in the abdominal (peritoneal) cavity. If the cause of the ascites is uncertain, diagnostic paracentesis is done in order to obtain fluid that can be examined. Therapeutic paracentesis may then be done to remove more fluid, as part of the plan of treatment. Paracentesis of the chest cavity is called a thoracentesis.

paracentric chromosome inversion See *chromosome inversion, pericentric*.

paracetamol See *acetaminophen*.

paradoxical embolism See *embolism, paradoxical*.

paraffin dip A treatment for the symptoms of joint and muscle conditions, such as arthritis, that involves applying melted mineral wax derived from petroleum to a body area. Paraffin dips can be especially helpful in relieving the pain and stiffness of arthritis involving the small joints of the hands. The hands are repeatedly dipped into the melted, warm wax, and the wax is allowed to cool and harden around the sore joints. The paraffin is then peeled off and can be remelted in the bath for repeated use. Also known as wax dip.

paragonimiasis Infection with the trematode (parasitic worm) *Paragonimus*, most commonly with *Paragonimus westermani*, the oriental lung fluke. Human infection with *P. westermani* occurs by eating inadequately cooked or pickled crab or crayfish that harbor the parasite. The parasites penetrate through the intestinal wall into the peritoneal cavity, then through the abdominal wall and diaphragm into the lungs, where they become encapsulated and develop into adults. The worms can also reach other organs and tissues, such as the

brain and muscles. Extrapulmonary locations of the adult worms result in more severe manifestations, especially when the brain is involved. Treatment with Praziquantel cures the majority of lung infections.

parainfluenza A disease due to an acute respiratory infection caused by a parainfluenza virus. Parainfluenza usually occurs in children. The clinical picture can range from a relatively mild influenza-like illness to bronchitis, croup, and pneumonia.

paralysis Loss of voluntary movement (motor function). Paralysis that affects only one muscle or limb is partial paralysis, also known as palsy; paralysis of all muscles is total paralysis, as may occur in cases of botulism.

paralysis, infantile See *polio*.

paralysis, laryngeal nerve See *laryngeal palsy*.

paralysis, stomach See *gastroparesis*.

paralysis agitans See *Parkinson's disease*.

paralytic ileus See *ileus*.

paramyxovirus One of a group of RNA viruses that are predominantly responsible for acute respiratory diseases and are usually transmitted by airborne droplets. The paramyxoviruses include the agents of mumps, measles (rubeola), RSV (respiratory syncytial virus), Newcastle disease, and parainfluenza.

paraneoplastic syndrome A group of signs and symptoms caused by a substance that is produced by a tumor or in reaction to a tumor. Paraneoplastic syndrome can be due to a number of causes, including hormones or other biologically active products made by the tumor, blockade of the effect of a normal hormone, autoimmunity, immune-complex production, and immunosuppression. By definition, paraneoplastic syndrome is not produced by the primary tumor itself or by its metastases, nor is it caused by compression, infection, nutritional deficiency, or treatment of the tumor.

paraphilia One of several complex psychiatric disorders that are manifested as deviant sexual behavior. For example, in men, the most common forms are pedophilia (sexual behavior or attraction toward children) and exhibitionism (exposing one's body in a public setting). Other paraphilic behaviors include compulsive sexual behavior (nymphomania), sadism, masochism, fetishism, bestiality (zoophilia), and necrophilia. Treatment may include cognitive

behavioral therapy, psychotherapy, behavior modification, use of antidepressant medications, and use of medications that alter hormone production, particularly of testosterone. However, the cause and treatment of paraphilia are poorly understood, and treatment is rarely effective. In addition, many professionals prefer not to pathologize sexual behavior that involves only willing adults, even if the behavior might be deemed deviant in mainstream society. In cases where the behavior is potentially criminal, as in pedophilia, treatment is usually delivered within the penal system.

paraphimosis An emergency condition in which the foreskin of the penis, once retracted, cannot return to its original location. The foreskin remains trapped behind the groove of the coronal sulcus, between the shaft and the glans. This causes blood to pool in the veins behind the entrapment, leading to swelling and severe pain. Treatment involves reduction of the foreskin using anesthetics and pain medications, and surgery may be required.

paraplegia Paralysis of the lower part of the body, including the legs.

paraquat lung Lung disease caused by the contact herbicide paraquat, which selectively accumulates in the lungs and is highly toxic. The prognosis depends upon the severity of exposure. Paraquat lung is rare because the herbicide must be directly inhaled to cause the disease. Paraquat lung emerged as a health concern in the 1970s, when the US government sprayed paraquat aerially over some illegal marijuana fields. Some of the sprayed plants survived and were sold, causing paraquat lung in purchasers who smoked the product.

parasite A plant or an animal organism that lives in or on another and takes its nourishment from that other organism. Parasitic diseases include infections that are due to protozoa, helminths, or arthropods. For example, malaria is caused by Plasmodium, a parasitic protozoa.

parasitemia The presence of parasites in the blood. In malaria, a measure called the parasitemia index reflects the severity of the disease.

parasitic Having to do with a parasite, as in a parasitic infection; or acting like a parasite by taking nourishment from another.

parasomnia A sleep disorder in which odd or dangerous events occur that intrude on sleep. The parasomnias include sleep talking, sleepwalking (somnambulism), sleep terrors, REM behavior disorder, and nocturnal dissociative disorder.

parasympathetic nervous system The part of the involuntary nervous system that serves to slow the heart rate, increase intestinal and glandular activity, and relax the sphincter muscles. The parasympathetic nervous system, together with the sympathetic nervous system, constitutes the autonomic nervous system.

parathormone A hormone that is made by the parathyroid glands and is critical to maintaining calcium and phosphorus balance. Deficiency of parathormone results in abnormally low calcium in the blood (hypocalcemia). Excessive parathormone leads to elevated calcium levels in the blood and calcium deposition in cartilage. Also known as parathyroid hormone and parathyrin.

parathyrin See *parathormone*.

parathyroid gland The gland that regulates calcium metabolism. The parathyroid gland is located behind the thyroid gland in the neck. It secretes a hormone called parathormone that is critical to the metabolism of calcium and phosphorus. Although the number of parathyroid glands can vary, most people have four. The parathyroid glands appear as a pair, one above the other, on each side of the thyroid gland, and they are plastered against the back of the thyroid gland. These glands are therefore at risk for being accidentally removed during thyroidectomy. See also *parathormone*.

parathyroid hormone See *parathormone*.

parathyroids, hypoplasia of the thymus and See *Digeorge syndrome*.

parenchyma The key elements of an organ essential to its functioning, as distinct from the capsule that encompasses it and other supporting structures.

parenteral Not delivered via the intestinal tract. For example, parenteral nutrition is feeding that is delivered intravenously.

parenteral nutrition Intravenous feeding. Also known as parenteral alimentation.

paresis Incomplete paralysis or slight paralysis.

paresis, general See *general paresis*.

paresthesia An abnormal sensation of the body, such as numbness, tingling, or burning.

parietal bone The bone on the side of the upper skull.

parietal lobes A pair of lobes in the cerebral hemisphere of the brain that are involved in sensation, perception, memory, and integrating sensory input, primarily visual input.

parietal pericardium The outer layer of the pericardium. See also *pericardium*.

Parkinson's disease A slowly progressive neurologic disease that is characterized by a fixed inexpressive face, tremor at rest, slowing of voluntary movements, gait with short accelerating steps, peculiar posture and muscle weakness (caused by degeneration of an area of the brain called the basal ganglia), and low production of the neurotransmitter dopamine. Most patients are over 50, but at least 10 percent are under 40. Treatment involves use of medication, such as levodopa (brand name: Larodopa) and carbidopa (brand name: Sinemet). A surgical procedure known as deep brain stimulation, in which externally controlled electrodes are implanted into the brain, has also been shown to be helpful. There are no blood or laboratory tests to diagnose the condition. Although it is a chronic and progressive disease, the degree of disability varies among affected persons. Also known as paralysis agitans and shaking palsy.

paronychia Inflammation of the folds of tissue surrounding the nail due to infection. The infection may be bacterial (most commonly, *Staphylococcus aureus* or *Streptococcus*) or fungal.

parotid gland One of the largest of the three major salivary glands. The parotid glands are located on the sides of the face in front of the ear, below the level of the ear, and behind the jawbone. See also *parotitis*.

parotitis Inflammation of the parotid glands, a classic feature of mumps.

paroxysmal atrial tachycardia Bouts of rapid, regular heart beating that originate in the upper chamber of the heart (atrium). Abbreviated PAT. PAT is caused by abnormalities in the atrioventricular (AV) node that lead to rapid firing of electrical impulses from the atrium that bypass the AV node under certain conditions, including excess alcohol consumption, stress, caffeine use, overactive thyroid or excessive thyroid hormone intake, and use of certain drugs. PAT is an example of an arrhythmia in which the abnormality is in the electrical system of the heart, while the heart muscle and valves may be normal. Also known as paroxysmal supraventricular tachycardia.

parrot fever See *psittacosis*.

Parry disease See *goiter; toxic multinodular*.

parthenogenesis Development of a germ cell without fertilization. A form of nonsexual reproduction.

partial hysterectomy See *hysterectomy, partial*.

partial syndactyly See *syndactyly, partial*.

parturition See *labor*.

Parvovirus B19 The virus responsible for the disease known as fifth disease. See also *fifth disease*.

passage, nasal See *nasal passage*.

passive immunity Immunity produced by the transfer to one person of antibodies that were produced by another person. Protection from passive immunity diminishes in a relatively short time, usually a few weeks or months. For example, antibodies passed from the mother to the baby before birth confer passive immunity to the baby for the first 4-6 months of life.

passive smoking Inhalation of smoke that comes from someone else smoking. Passive smoking is associated with the same array of diseases as actual smoking, with an elevated risk of lung cancer and other diseases.

Pasteur, Louis A French chemist and biologist who invented pasteurization, developed the germ theory, founded the field of bacteriology, and created the first vaccines against anthrax and rabies.

pasteurization A method of treating food by heating it to a certain point to kill disease-causing organisms but keep the flavor or quality of the food intact. Pasteurization is used with beer, milk, fruit juice, cheese, and egg products.

PAT Paroxysmal atrial tachycardia.

Patau syndrome See *trisomy 13 syndrome*.

patella See *kneecap*.

patellar Pertaining to the patella (kneecap).

patellectomy An operation to remove a shattered patella.

patellofemoral joint The joint formed by the kneecap (patella) and the femur. See also *knee*.

patellofemoral syndrome A common cause of chronic knee pain, which characteristically results in vague discomfort of the inner knee area that is

aggravated by activity. Abbreviated PFS. PFS is caused by an abnormality in the way the kneecap slides over the lower end of the femur. Normally, the quadricep muscle pulls the kneecap over the end of the femur in a straight line. In PFS, the kneecap is pulled toward the outer side of the femur. This off-kilter path permits the underside of the kneecap to grate along the femur, leading to chronic inflammation and pain. Treatment involves pain management, and rehabilitation is designed to create a straighter pathway for the patella to follow during quadriceps contraction. Also known as chondromalacia patella.

patent 1 A legal device that gives exclusive control and possession of a device, an invention, or a procedure to an individual or a corporation. Health-related items that may be patented include medical devices, surgical procedures, medications, and even cell lines. 2 Open, unobstructed, or affording free passage. For example, the bowel can be patent, as opposed to obstructed.

patent ductus arteriosus See *ductus arteriosus*.

patho- A prefix meaning suffering or disease, as in pathogen (a disease agent) and pathology (the study of disease).

pathobiology The biology of disease.

pathogen An agent of disease. For example, *Bacillus anthracis* is the pathogen that causes anthrax.

pathogenesis The development of a disease and the chain of events leading to that disease.

pathogenetic Pertaining to genetic cause of a disease or condition. For example, BRCA 1 and BRCA2 are genes that, when mutated, are responsible for many cases of cancer of the breast. Therefore, these genes are pathogenetic.

pathogenic Capable of causing disease. For example, pathogenic *E. coli* are *Escherichia coli* bacteria that can make a person ill.

pathognomonic A sign or symptom that is so characteristic of a disease that it can be used to make a diagnosis. For example, Koplik spots in the mouth opposite the first and second upper molars are pathognomonic of measles.

pathologist A physician who identifies diseases and conditions by studying abnormal cells and tissues.

pathology 1 The study of disease. 2 Incorrectly (but commonly), disease. For example, “The physician found no pathology” would mean the physician found no evidence of disease.

pathophysiology Deranged function in an individual or an organ due to a disease. For example, a pathophysiologic alteration is a change in function as distinguished from a structural defect.

-pathy Suffix indicating suffering or disease, as in neuropathy (disease of the nervous system).

Pavlovian conditioning A method to cause a reflex response or behavior by training with repetitive action. The Russian physiologist Ivan Petrovich Pavlov conditioned dogs to respond in what proved to be a predictable manner. For example, when he customarily rang a bell before feeding them, the dogs would begin to salivate whenever the bell rang. The principles of Pavlovian conditioning form the basis of much modern behavioral science.

PBC Primary biliary cirrhosis. See *cirrhosis, primary biliary*.

p.c. *Post cibum*. Abbreviation meaning after meals. See also Appendix A, “Prescription Abbreviations.”

PCL Posterior cruciate ligament.

PCM Protein-calorie malnutrition. See *kwashiorkor*.

PCP *Pneumocystis carinii pneumonia*.

PCR Polymerase chain reaction.

PDA Patent ductus arteriosus. See *ductus arteriosus*.

PDR 1 Physicians’ Desk Reference. 2 Postdelivery room, used as a staging room for the mother after delivering her baby in the delivery room.

peak flow meter A hand-held device that measures air flow (how fast air is blown out of the lungs during forced expiration). Patients can use peak flow meters at home to measure their own air flow regularly.

pecs See *pectoral muscle*.

pectoral muscle One of the muscles of the front of the upper chest. The pectoral muscles are familiarly known as the pecs and are the muscles underneath the breasts. Pectoral muscles are used by the upper extremities to push objects in front of the body. For example, these are the muscles that are exercised in doing the bench press exercise.

pectoralis muscle absence with syndactyly
See *Poland syndrome*.

pectus carinatum See *pigeon breast*.

pectus excavatum See *funnel chest*.

pediatric Pertaining to children.

pediatric arthritis See *arthritis in children*.

pediatric autoimmune disorders associated with streptococcus See *PANDAS*.

pediatric rheumatologist See *rheumatologist, pediatric*.

pediatrics The field of medicine that is concerned with the health of infants, children, and adolescents; their growth and development; and their opportunity to achieve full potential as adults.

pediculosis See *head lice*.

pediculus humanus capitidis See *head lice*.

pedigree In medicine, a family health history that is diagrammed with a set of international symbols to indicate the individuals in the family, their gender, their relationships to one another, those with diseases, and other data. A pedigree is a basic tool of clinical genetics that is used to determine that a disease is genetic, track the transmission of the disease, and estimate risks to the patient, other family members, and the unborn from a genetic disease.

pedodontics Children's dentistry.

pedophilia Adult sexual fondness for and activity with children. Pedophilia is a form of paraphilia (deviant sexual behavior). If acted out, pedophilia is legally defined as sexual child abuse. Pedophilia includes fondling a child's genitals, intercourse, incest, rape, sodomy, exhibitionism, and commercial exploitation of children through prostitution or the production of pornographic materials. Pedophiles who have sexually abused children require intense psychological and pharmacological therapy prior to release into the community because of the high rate of repeat offenders. Treatment is rarely effective because the disorder is not yet well understood. The incidence of pedophilia has been markedly underestimated. It is essential that pedophilia be reported so that appropriate steps can be taken to protect the children involved and all other children.

peer review The process used by medical journals to screen articles that are submitted for publication. Peer-reviewed articles are scrutinized by members of the biomedical community before publication.

PEG Percutaneous endoscopic gastrostomy. See *gastrostomy, percutaneous endoscopic*.

pellagra Extreme niacin deficiency, characterized by a rash (dermatitis) on areas of the skin that are exposed to light, trauma and ulcerations within the mouth, diarrhea, mental disorientation (dementia), confusion, delusions, and depression. Pellagra can be fatal if untreated. Proper intake of niacin, a readily available B vitamin, both prevents and cures pellagra. See also *niacin*.

pelvic 1 Having to do with the pelvis. 2 Colloquially, a pelvic exam.

pelvic exam An examination of the organs of the female reproductive system. During a typical pelvic exam, a speculum is used to open the vagina so that the physician can see the uterine cervix. A sample of cells may be taken from the surface of the cervix for a Pap test, or a sample may be obtained for laboratory culture. During a pelvic exam, a physician feels the uterus (womb) and ovaries with the fingers to detect swellings or other abnormalities.

pelvic inflammatory disease Ascending infection of the upper female genital tract, usually caused by bacteria migrating upward from the urethra and cervix into the upper genital tract. Abbreviated PID. Many different organisms can cause PID, but most cases are associated with gonorrhea and chlamydial infections, two very common sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). Symptoms include fever, foul-smelling discharge, extreme pain, pain during intercourse, and bleeding. PID can scar the fallopian tubes, which can lead to infertility. Treatment involves use of antibiotics for the patient as well as all known sexual partners of the patient.

pelvis The lower part of the abdomen, located between the hip bones. Structures in the female pelvis include the uterus, vagina, ovaries, fallopian tubes, bladder, and rectum. Structures in the male pelvis include the bladder, rectum, prostate, testicles, and penis.

pelvis, android See *male pelvis*.

pelvis, female See *female pelvis*.

pelvis, gynecoid See *female pelvis*.

pelvis, male See *male pelvis*.

Pendred syndrome A genetic disease that is characterized by congenital deafness, abnormalities of the inner ear, and goiter. Pendred syndrome is inherited in an autosomal recessive manner and

is caused by mutations in the gene known as SLC26A4 (also referred to as the PDS gene) on chromosome 7. Also known as deafness with goiter, goiter-deafness syndrome, and thyroid hormone organification defect IIb.

penetrance The likelihood that a given gene will result in disease.

penicillin Historically the most famous of antibiotics, which kills many bacteria and some other microorganisms by attacking and destroying their cell walls. Penicillin is not effective against viruses, however, and specific penicillin types may be needed for certain bacteria. The different varieties of penicillin include amoxicillin, ampicillin, bacampicillin, carbenicillin, cloxicillin, dicloxacillin, nafcillin, oxacillin, penicillin G, and penicillin V. See also *antibiotic*.

penicillin-resistant bacterium A bacterium that is unaffected by penicillin. The rise of penicillin-resistant bacteria is due to overuse of penicillin drugs, including their ineffective but nonetheless frequent use against colds and viral infections.

penile Of or pertaining to the penis.

penis The external male sex organ. The penis contains two chambers, the corpora cavernosa, which run the length of the organ. These chambers are filled with spongy tissue and surrounded by a membrane called the tunica albuginea. The spongy tissue contains smooth muscles, fibrous tissues, spaces, veins, and arteries. The urethra, which is the channel for urine and ejaculate, runs along the underside of the corpora cavernosa. The urethra emerges at the glans, the rounded tip of the penis.

penis, cancer of the See *cancer, penis*.

penis, erection of the See *erection, penile*.

penis, hypospadias of the See *hypospadias*.

penis, inflammation of the foreskin and glans
See *balanoposthitis*.

penis, inflammation of the head of the See *balanitis*.

penis, small See *micropenis*.

peptic ulcer See *ulcer, peptic*.

percentile The percentage of individuals in a group who have achieved a certain quantity—such as height, weight, or head circumference—or a developmental milestone. For example, the fiftieth percentile for walking well is 12 months of age.

percutaneous Through the skin. For example, a percutaneous biopsy is a biopsy that is obtained by putting a needle through the skin in order to obtain tissue within the body for examination.

percutaneous endoscopic gastrostomy See *gastrostomy, percutaneous endoscopic*.

percutaneous nephrolithotripsy A technique for removing large, dense, and staghorn kidney stones. Abbreviated PNL. PNL is done via a port created by puncturing through the skin and into the kidney. The urologist then inserts instruments into the kidney via the access port to break up the stone and to remove most of the debris from the stone.

percutaneous transluminal coronary angioplasty The use of a balloon-tipped catheter to enlarge a narrowed coronary artery. Abbreviated PTCA.

percutaneous umbilical blood sampling A procedure in which a needle is inserted through the mother's abdominal wall and then through the uterine wall. Abbreviated PUBS. In PUBS, blood can be withdrawn from the umbilical vein at the point where the umbilical cord inserts into the placenta. Also known as umbilical vein sampling, cordocentesis, and fetal blood sampling.

peri- Prefix meaning around or about, as in *pericardial* (around the heart) and *periaortic lymph nodes* (lymph nodes around the aorta).

perianal Located around the anus, the opening of the rectum to the outside of the body.

perianal abscess A local accumulation of pus that forms next to the anus, causing tender swelling in that area and pain on defecation.

periaortic Around the aorta. For example, periaortic lymph nodes are lymph nodes around the aorta.

pericardial Referring to the pericardium, the sac of fibrous tissue that surrounds the heart.

pericardial effusion Too much fluid within the pericardium, which normally contains a small amount of serous, pale yellow fluid.

pericardial sac See *pericardium*.

pericardial tamponade See *tamponade, cardiac*.

pericarditis Inflammation of the lining around the heart (the pericardium) that causes chest pain

and accumulation of fluid around the heart (pericardial effusion). There are many causes of pericarditis, including infections, injury, radiation treatment, and chronic diseases.

pericardium The conical sac of fibrous tissue that surrounds the heart and the roots of the great blood vessels. The pericardium consists of an outer coat (the parietal pericardium) attached to the central part of the diaphragm and the back of the breastbone and a double inner coat (the visceral pericardium, or epicardium), with one layer closely adherent to the heart and the other lining the inner surface of the outer coat. The intervening space between these layers is filled with pericardial fluid. This small amount of fluid acts as a lubricant to allow normal heart movement within the chest. Also known as pericardial sac. See also *pericarditis*.

pericardium, parietal The tough, thickened outer layer of the pericardium. The parietal pericardium loosely cloaks the heart and is attached to the central part of the diaphragm and the back of the breastbone.

pericardium, visceral The double inner layer of the pericardium. One layer of the visceral pericardium closely adheres to the heart, and the other lines the inner surface of the outer (parietal) pericardium. The intervening space is filled with pericardial fluid. Also known as epicardium.

pericentric chromosome inversion See *chromosome inversion, pericentric*.

perichondrial Having to do with the perichondrium, the membrane that surrounds cartilage.

perichondritis Inflammation of the perichondrium.

perichondrium A dense membrane that is composed of fibrous connective tissue that closely wraps all cartilage except the cartilage in joints, which is covered by a synovial membrane.

perichondroma A benign tumor that arises from the perichondrium.

perimenopause See *menopause transition*.

perinatal Pertaining to the period immediately before and after birth. The perinatal period is defined in diverse ways. Depending on the definition, it starts at the 20th to 28th week of gestation and ends 1 to 4 weeks after birth.

perinatal transmission See *vertical transmission*.

perinatalogist An obstetrical subspecialist who is concerned with the care of the mother and fetus when there is a higher-than-normal risk of complications. Most perinatalogists are obstetricians. A high-risk baby is often cared for by a perinatalogist before birth and by a neonatologist after birth.

perinatology A subspecialty of obstetrics that is concerned with the care of the mother and fetus when there is a higher-than-normal risk for complications.

perineal Pertaining to the perineum.

perineal prostatectomy An operation to remove the prostate gland through an incision made between the scrotum and the anus.

perineum The area between the anus and the scrotum in the male and between the anus and the vulva in the female. See also *episiotomy*.

periodontal Having to do with the gums and supporting structures of the teeth.

periodontal disease A bacterial infection that destroys the attachment fibers and supporting bones that hold the teeth in the mouth. Left untreated, periodontal disease can lead to tooth loss. The main cause of periodontal disease is bacterial plaque, a sticky, colorless film that constantly forms on teeth.

periodontics The branch of dentistry that is concerned with prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of diseases that affect the gums and supporting structures of the teeth.

periodontitis Gum disease with inflammation of the gums. See also *periodontal disease*.

perioperative Literally, around (the time of) surgery. More specifically, the period of time extending from when the patient goes into the hospital, clinic, or doctor's office for surgery until the time the patient is discharged home.

periosteal Pertaining to the periosteum.

periosteoma A benign tumor that arises from the periosteum. Also known as *periostoma*.

periosteum A dense membrane composed of fibrous connective tissue that closely wraps all bone except that of the articulating surfaces in joints, which is covered by a synovial membrane.

periostitis Inflammation of the periosteum.

periostoma See *periosteoma*.

peripheral Situated away from the center or being at or near the periphery, as opposed to central. For example, peripheral vision is the type of vision that allows a person to see objects that are not in the center of his or her visual field.

peripheral blood stem cell transplantation

See *stem cell harvest, peripheral blood*.

peripheral nervous system The portion of the nervous system that is outside the brain and spinal cord. Abbreviated PNS. The nerves in the PNS connect the central nervous system (CNS) to sensory organs, such as the eye and ear, and to other organs of the body, muscles, blood vessels, and glands. The peripheral nerves include the 12 cranial nerves, the spinal nerves and roots, and the autonomic nerves. The autonomic nerves are concerned with automatic functions of the body, specifically with the regulation of the heart muscle, the tiny muscles that line the walls of blood vessels, and glands.

peripheral neuropathy A problem with the functioning of the nerves outside the spinal cord. Symptoms of peripheral neuropathy may include numbness, weakness, burning pain (especially at night), and loss of reflexes.

peripheral T cells See *T cell, peripheral*.

peripheral vascular disease Atherosclerosis of the arteries of the extremities. Peripheral vascular disease can lead to pain in the legs when walking (claudication) that is relieved by resting. See also *atherosclerosis*.

periphery 1 The outside or surface of a structure or the portion outside the central region. 2 The circumference of a circle or another geometric figure.

peristalsis The rippling motion of muscles in the digestive tract. In the stomach, this motion mixes food with gastric juices, turning it into a thin liquid.

peritoneal Having to do with the peritoneum.

peritoneal dialysis A dialysis technique that uses the patient's own body tissues inside the abdominal cavity as a filter. A plastic tube called a dialysis catheter is surgically placed through the abdominal wall, into the abdominal cavity. A special fluid is then flushed into the abdominal cavity and washed around the intestines. The intestinal walls act as a filter between this fluid and the bloodstream. By using different types of solutions, waste products and excess water can be removed from the body. This form of dialysis can be done either manually or by machine at home, thereby avoiding

hospitalization or receiving dialysis treatment at a dialysis center.

peritoneum The membrane that lines the abdominal cavity and covers most of the abdominal organs.

peritonitis Inflammation of the peritoneum, the membrane that lines the inner wall of the abdomen and pelvis. Peritonitis can result from infection, as by bacteria or parasites; injury and bleeding; or diseases, such as systemic lupus erythematosus. See also *peritonitis, acute; peritonitis, chronic*.

peritonitis, acute Sudden inflammation of the peritoneum that results in abrupt abdominal pain (acute abdomen). The most serious causes of acute peritonitis include perforation of the esophagus, stomach, duodenum, gallbladder, bile duct, bowel, appendix, colon, rectum, and bladder; trauma; intestinal obstruction; pancreatitis; vascular catastrophes (mesenteric thrombosis or embolism); and as an infectious complication of peritoneal dialysis and pelvic inflammatory disease.

peritonitis, chronic Longstanding inflammation of the peritoneum. Causes of chronic peritonitis include repeated attacks of infection such as from pelvic inflammatory disease, foreign substances such as talc, and chronic infections within the abdomen such as tuberculosis.

peritonsillar abscess A collection of pus behind the tonsils that pushes one of the tonsils toward the uvula. A peritonsillar abscess is generally very painful and is usually associated with a decreased ability to open the mouth. If left untreated, the infection can spread deep in the neck, causing airway obstruction and life-threatening complications.

pernicious anemia See *anemia, pernicious*.

pernicious vomiting of pregnancy See *hyperemesis gravidarum*.

personality disorder A disorder characterized by the long-standing use of mechanisms of coping in an inappropriate, stereotyped, and maladaptive manner. Personality disorders are enduring and persistent styles of behavior and thought, not atypical episodes. The personality disorders encompass a group of behavioral disorders that are different and distinct from the psychotic and neurotic disorders. The official psychiatric manual, the DSM-IV, defines a personality disorder as an enduring pattern of inner experience and behavior that differs markedly from the expectations of the individual's culture, is pervasive and inflexible, has an onset in

adolescence or early adulthood, is stable over time, and leads to distress or impairment.

perspiration 1 The secretion of fluid by the sweat (sudoriferous) glands. These small, tubular glands are situated within the skin and in the subcutaneous tissue under it. They discharge fluid through tiny openings in the surface of the skin. Perspiration serves at least two purposes: It removes waste products such as urea and ammonia, and it cools the body as sweat evaporates. 2 The transparent, colorless, acidic fluid that is secreted by the sweat glands. Perspiration contains some fatty acids and mineral matter. Also known as sweat.

Perthes disease See *Legg-Calvé-Perthes disease*.

pertussis A communicable, potentially deadly illness that is characterized by fits of coughing followed by a noisy, "whooping" in drawn breath. Pertussis is caused by the bacterium *Bordetella pertussis*. The illness is most likely to affect young children, but it sometimes appears in teenagers and adults, even those who have been previously immunized. When teenagers and adults get pertussis, it appears first as coughing spasms and then as a stubborn dry cough that lasts up to 8 weeks. Treatment is supportive. Young infants need hospitalization if the coughing becomes severe. Immunization with diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis (DTP) vaccine provides protection against pertussis, although that immunity may wear off with age. Also known as whooping cough. See also *DTP immunization*; *DTaP immunization*.

pervasive developmental disorder Abbreviated PDD, one of a group of disorders characterized by delays in the development of multiple basic functions including socialization and communication. Parents may note symptoms as early as infancy and typically onset is prior to 3 years of age. Symptoms may include communication problems such as using and understanding language; difficulty relating to people, objects, and events; unusual play with toys and other objects; difficulty with changes in routine or familiar surroundings, and repetitive body movements or behavior patterns. Examples of PDD include autism, Asperger's syndrome, Rett's syndrome, and childhood disintegrative disorder. Children with PDD vary widely in abilities, intelligence, and behaviors. See also *autism*; *Asperger's syndrome*; *Rett's syndrome*; *childhood disintegrative disorder*.

pes Latin word meaning foot.

pes cavus A foot with an arch that is too high.

pes planus Flatfoot.

pest See *plague*.

pestilence 1 Originally, bubonic plague. See also *plague*. 2 Any epidemic disease that is highly contagious, infectious, virulent, and devastating.

pestis See *plague*.

PET scan Positron emission tomography scan, a highly specialized imaging technique that uses short-lived radioactive substances. This technique produces three-dimensional colored images. Unlike computerized tomography (CT) and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), which look at anatomy or body form, PET studies metabolic activity or body function. PET scanning has been used primarily to evaluate problems of the heart and nervous system and to demonstrate the spread of cancer. The radioisotope used in a PET scan is short-lived, and the amount of radiation exposure the patient receives is very low. Because the radiopharmaceutical contains a chemical that is commonly used by the body, PET scanning enables the physician to see the location of the metabolic process. For example, glucose combined with a radioisotope shows where glucose is being used in the brain, the heart muscle, or a growing tumor, etc.

petechiae Tiny red spots in the skin or mucous membranes that do not blanch when pressed upon and that result from blood leaking from capillaries. The causes of petechiae include use of aspirin or other medications, allergic reactions, autoimmune disease, viral infection, thrombocytopenia (an abnormally high platelet level), idiopathic thrombocytopenic purpura (ITP), leukemia and other bone marrow malignancies that can lower the number of platelets, chemotherapy and radiotherapy, and sepsis (bloodstream infection). Petechiae are often seen right after birth in newborns and after violent vomiting or coughing. A person with petechiae should see a physician because they may be of major consequence.

petit mal See *seizure, absence; seizure disorder*.

Peutz-Jeghers syndrome A genetic condition that predisposes to an increased risk of developing cancer. The syndrome is characterized by freckle-like spots on the lips, mouth, and fingers and benign polyps in the intestines. Patients with Peutz-Jeghers syndrome are at increased risk for cancer of the esophagus, stomach, colon, rectum, breast, ovary, testis, and pancreas. The polyps may occur in any part of the gastrointestinal tract, but polyps in the jejunum (the middle portion of the small intestine) are a consistent feature of the disease. Peutz-Jeghers

syndrome is inherited in an autosomal dominant manner and is due to mutation in a gene on chromosome 19 called STK11 (serine/threonine-protein kinase 11). Half of patients with Peutz-Jeghers syndrome have affected parents and the other half have new mutations in the STK11 gene. Also known as polyps-and-spots syndrome.

p53 A specific protein with a mass of 53 kilodaltons that is produced by a tumor-suppressor gene. Like other tumor-suppressor genes, the p53 gene normally controls cell growth. If p53 is physically lost or functionally inactivated, cells can grow without restraint. Many human tumors have mutations in the gene coding for the p53 protein.

PFS Patellofemoral syndrome.

PFT Pulmonary function test.

Ph See *Philadelphia chromosome*.

pH The symbol for the measure of the acidity or alkalinity of a solution. The pH number is from a scale where a pH of 7 is neutral, numbers less than a pH of 7 are increasingly more acidic, and numbers greater than a pH of 7 are increasingly more alkaline.

phacoemulsification A type of cataract surgery in which the lens with the cataract is broken up by ultrasound, irrigated, and suctioned out.

phage See *bacteriophage*.

phagocyte A cell that can engulf particles, such as bacteria and other microorganisms or foreign matter. The principal phagocytes include the neutrophils and monocytes, both of which are types of white blood cells.

phalanges The bones of the fingers and of the toes. There are generally three phalanges (distal, middle, proximal) for each digit except the thumbs and large toes. The singular of phalanges is phalanx.

phalanx See *phalanges*.

phantom limb syndrome The perception of sensations, often including pain, in an arm or leg long after the limb has been amputated. Phantom limb syndrome is relatively common in amputees, especially in the early months and years after limb loss.

phantom sensation A phenomenon that involves any of the senses that mimic the presence of sensory abilities that are no longer available. Phantom sensations are probably caused by abnormal firing of

nerve impulses, although the mechanism for these sensations is not understood. For example, people who have lost much of their vision often experience visual phantoms. See also *phantom limb syndrome*; *phantom tooth pain*.

phantom tooth pain Persistent pain in an area from which a tooth has been extracted. Phantom tooth pain may last for months and can spread beyond the extraction site to other areas of the mouth.

phantom vision A phenomenon that involves seeing images after loss of eyesight.

pharmacist A professional who fills prescriptions and, in the case of a compounding pharmacist, makes them. Pharmacists are very familiar with medication ingredients, interactions, and cautions.

pharmacogenetics The convergence of pharmacology and genetics, which deals with genetically determined responses to drugs. Pharmacogenetics is also concerned with the differences in the metabolism of medications among children, adults, and senior citizens; men and women; and people with various medical conditions.

pharmacologist A specialist in the science of medications. A pharmacologist is usually especially knowledgeable about new and obscure medications that may be needed for hard-to-treat or rare illnesses and about drug interactions and how to prevent them. Pharmacologists usually act as consultants to primary care physicians or specialists.

pharmacology 1 The study of concocting and using medications. 2 The study of drugs, their sources, their nature, and their properties.

pharmacopeia An official authoritative listing of medications. Some countries, such as the UK, establish official pharmacopeias, as do some medical groups and health maintenance organizations (HMOs).

pharmacy A location where prescription medications are sold. A pharmacy is constantly supervised by a licensed pharmacist.

pharmacy, compounding A place that both makes and sells prescription medications. A compounding pharmacy can often concoct drug formulas that are specially tailored to patients (for example, liquid versions of medications that are normally available only in pill form for patients who cannot swallow pills).

pharyngeal Having to do with the pharynx (throat).

pharyngitis Inflammation of the pharynx. Pharyngitis is a common cause of sore throat.

pharynx The hollow tube that is about 5 inches long and starts behind the nose and ends at the top of the trachea (windpipe) and esophagus. The pharynx serves as a vestibule or entryway for the trachea and esophagus.

phase, resting See *interphase*.

PhD Doctor of Philosophy. PhDs are involved in clinical care, biomedical research, health administration, teaching, and other areas of medicine.

Phe Phenylalanine.

phenocopy 1 An environmental condition that imitates a condition that is produced by a gene. 2 A person who has an environmental condition that mimics a condition that is produced by a gene.

phenomenon, Babinski See *Babinski reflex*.

phenomenon, phantom limb See *phantom limb syndrome*.

phenomenon, Raynaud's See *Raynaud's phenomenon*.

phenotype An appearance or characteristic of an individual, which results from the interaction of the person's genetic makeup and his or her environment. By contrast, the genotype is merely the genetic constitution (genome) of an individual.

phenylalanine An essential amino acid that is required in the human diet. Abbreviated phe. Most of the phe that is ingested is transformed (hydroxylated) to form tyrosine, which is used in protein synthesis. Too little phe does not permit normal physical and intellectual growth. Too much phe (as in PKU) is highly toxic to the brain. See also *phenylalanine hydroxylase deficiency; PKU; PKU, maternal*.

phenylalanine hydroxylase deficiency The inherited inability to normally process the amino acid phenylalanine, due to partial or complete deficiency of the enzyme phenylalanine hydroxylase. This deficiency is caused by mutation in the PAH gene on chromosome 12. Phenylalanine hydroxylase deficiency causes a spectrum of disorders, including classic phenylketonuria (PKU), variant PKU, and non-PKU elevation of phenylalanine in the blood (non-PKU HPA). See also *PKU; PKU, maternal*.

phenylketonuria See *PKU*.

phenylketonuria, maternal See *PKU, maternal*.

pheresis A procedure in which the blood is filtered and separated, and a portion is retained, with the remainder being returned to the individual. There are various types of pheresis. For example, in leukapheresis, the leukocytes (white blood cells) are removed; in plateletpheresis, the thrombocytes (blood platelets) are removed; and in plasmapheresis, the liquid part of the blood (the plasma) is removed. See also *plasmapheresis*.

pheromone An agent secreted by an individual that produces a change in the sexual or social behavior of another individual of the same species; a volatile hormone that acts as a behavior-altering agent.

Philadelphia chromosome Abbreviated Ph, the hallmark of chronic myeloid leukemia (CML), a small chromosome 22 that was shortened in a reciprocal exchange of material with chromosome 9. This translocation occurs in a cell in the bone marrow and causes CML. It is also found in a form of acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL). On a molecular level the Philadelphia chromosome translocation results in the production of a fusion protein. A large portion of a proto-oncogene, called ABL, on chromosome 9 is translocated to the BCR gene on chromosome 22. The two gene segments are fused and ultimately produce a chimeric protein that is larger than the normal ABL protein. Understanding this process led to the development of the drug imatinib mesylate (brand name: Gleevec), the first in a new class of genetically targeted agents against leukemia.

philtrum The area from below the nose to the upper lip. Normally the philtrum is grooved. In fetal alcohol syndrome, the philtrum is flat.

phimosis A condition in which the foreskin of the penis is too tight to be pulled back to reveal the glans. This usually causes no problems and nothing needs be done. If phimosis causes obstruction of the urinary stream, meaturia (blood in the urine), or pain, this can require surgery to relieve the phimosis. Circumcision prevents phimosis.

phlebitis Inflammation of a vein. With phlebitis, there is infiltration of the walls of the vein and, usually, the formation of a clot (thrombus) in the vein (thrombophlebitis). Phlebitis in a leg, for example, causes the leg to swell with fluid (edema). Phlebitis can be superficial and not very serious, or it can be deep and carry the potential for dislodging blood clots to the lungs.

phlebo- Prefix meaning vein, as in phlebitis (inflammation of the veins) and phlebotomist (a person who draws blood from veins).

phlebotomist A person who draws blood for diagnostic tests or to remove blood for treatment purposes.

phlebotomy The field of obtaining blood from a vein. Phlebotomy is done by puncturing a vein with a needle. Phlebotomy may be done in order to obtain blood for diagnostic tests or to remove blood for treatment purposes (for example, to relieve iron overload in hemochromatosis).

phobia An unreasonable sort of fear that can cause avoidance and panic. Phobias are a relatively common type of anxiety disorder. Phobias can be treated with cognitive behavioral therapy, using exposure and fear-reduction techniques. In many cases, antianxiety or antidepressant medication proves helpful, especially during the early stages of therapy.

phobia, social See *social phobia*.

phocomelia A birth defect in which the hands and feet are attached to abbreviated arms and legs. The term comes from phoco (meaning “seal”) and melia (meaning “limb”), to indicate that a limb is like a seal’s flipper, as in exposure of the developing fetus to thalidomide. Phocomelia may also, in some cases, be genetic.

phosphatase, acid See *acid phosphatase*.

phosphatase, alkaline See *alkaline phosphatase*.

phosphate A form of phosphoric acid that may bind to other organic chemicals to form a variety of compounds. For example, calcium phosphate makes bones and teeth hard. See also *phosphorylation*.

phosphorus An essential element in the diet and a major component of bone.

phosphorylation A biochemical process that involves the addition of phosphate to an organic compound. Examples include the addition of phosphate to glucose to produce glucose monophosphate and the addition of phosphate to adenosine diphosphate (ADP) to form adenosine triphosphate (ATP). Phosphorylation is carried out through the action of enzymes known as phosphotransferases or kinases.

photochemotherapy See *photodynamic therapy*.

photodynamic therapy A form of treatment that uses a photosensitizing agent, administered by mouth or intravenously, which concentrates selectively in certain cells, followed by exposure of the involved tissue to a special light (such as laser or ultraviolet light), in order to destroy as much of the abnormal tissue as possible. For example, photodynamic therapy is used to treat some forms of cancer and psoriasis. Also known as photochemotherapy.

photophobia Painful oversensitivity to light. For example, photophobia is often seen in measles and iritis. Keeping lights dim and rooms darkened is helpful when a patient has photophobia. Sunglasses may also help.

photorefractive keratectomy A kind of laser eye surgery that is designed to correct vision by changing the shape of the cornea, potentially eliminating or reducing the need for glasses or contact lenses. Abbreviated PRK. A laser is used to remove the outer layer of the cornea and flatten the cornea. PRK is done in a physician’s office, with anesthesia via numbing eyedrops.

photosensitivity Oversensitivity of skin to light. Photosensitivity can be a side effect of medications or result from diseases, such as lupus. Treatment depends on the severity of the reaction and the cause. Photosensitivity can be prevented by avoiding skin exposure to ultraviolet light.

phototherapy Treatment with light. For example, a newborn with jaundice may be put under special lights to help reduce the amount of bilirubin pigment in the skin.

phototoxicity An exaggerated response to ultraviolet radiation (sunlight) characterized by rapidly developing or severe sunburn. Phototoxicity may be associated with certain medications, including the antibiotic tetracycline.

phrenology The study of variations in the size, shape, and proportion of the cranium. Phrenology was a pseudoscience of the 18th and 19th centuries, based on the belief that a person’s character could be learned by looking with care at the shape of the person’s head and noting each and every bump and depression in the skull. The individual mental faculties were believed to be contained in neat compartments in the cerebral cortex, and the sizes of these faculties were supposed to be reflected by the configuration of the skull.

PHS Public Health Service. See *United States Public Health Service*.

physiatrist A physician who specializes in physical medicine and rehabilitation. Psychiatrists specialize in restoring optimal function to people with injuries to the muscles, bones, tissues, or nervous system, such as stroke victims.

physical child abuse See *child abuse*.

physical map A map of the locations of identifiable landmarks on chromosomes. Physical distance between landmarks is measured in base pairs. The physical map differs from the genetic map, which is based purely on genetic linkage data. In the human genome, the lowest-resolution physical map is the banding patterns of the 24 different chromosomes. The highest-resolution physical map is the complete nucleotide sequence of all chromosomes.

physical therapist A person who is trained and certified by a state or accrediting body to design and implement physical therapy programs. Abbreviated PT. PTs may work in hospitals or clinics, in schools that provide assistance to special education students, or as independent practitioners.

physical therapy A branch of rehabilitative health that uses specially designed exercises and equipment to help patients regain or improve their physical abilities. Abbreviated PT. PT is appropriate for many types of patients, from infants born with musculoskeletal birth defects, to adults suffering from sciatica or the after effects of injury or surgery, to elderly poststroke patients.

physician A person who is trained in the art of healing. In the UK, a physician is a specialist in internal or general medicine, whereas in the US a physician is any doctor of medicine. The term generally refers to a person who has earned a Doctor of Medicine (MD), Doctor of Osteopathy (DO), or Doctor of Naturopathy (ND) degree and who is accepted as a practitioner of medicine under the laws of the state, province, and/or nation in which he or she practices.

physician assistant A midlevel practitioner who is able to practice medicine under the auspices of a licensed physician (MD or DO). Abbreviated PA. Although the physician need not be present during the time the PA performs his or her duties, there must be a method of contact between the supervising physician and the PA at all times. The PA must be competent in the duties he or she is performing, and the physician for whom the PA is working must also be licensed and trained to perform the relevant duties. All US states require physician assistants to complete an accredited education program and to pass a national licensing exam.

physician-assisted suicide The provision of equipment, medication, or information to a patient by a physician for the purpose of assisting the patient in ending his or her own life.

Physicians' Desk Reference A book that provides a guide to all the prescription drugs available in the US. Abbreviated PDR. PDR is a key reference to the US pharmacopeia and is published annually.

physiologic Something that is normal, that is due neither to anything pathologic nor significant in terms of causing illness. For example, physiologic jaundice is jaundice that is within normal limits.

physiologic amenorrhea See *amenorrhea, physiologic*.

physiologic jaundice Jaundice that is within normal limits. A newborn may have physiologic jaundice due to the release of the pigment bilirubin (from red blood cells) that the immature liver cannot process for excretion in the urine. Physiologic jaundice causes no illness and clears up in a few days.

physiology The study of how living organisms function, including such processes as nutrition, movement, and reproduction.

phytanic acid storage disease See *Refsum disease*.

phytochemical A plant compound that is thought to have health-protecting qualities. Also known as phytonutrient.

phytonutrient See *phytochemical*.

pia mater One of the meninges, the delicate innermost membrane that envelopes the brain and spinal cord. Known informally as the pia. See also *meninges*.

pianist's cramp A dystonia that affects the muscles of the hand and sometimes the forearm, and that only occurs when one plays the piano or another keyboard instrument. Similar focal dystonias have also been called writer's cramp, typist's cramp, musician's cramp, and golfer's cramp.

pica A craving for something that is not normally regarded as nutritive, such as dirt, clay, paper, or chalk. Pica is a classic clue to iron deficiency in children, and it may also occur with zinc deficiency. Pica is also seen as a symptom in several neurobiological disorders, including autism and Tourette's syndrome, and it is sometimes seen during pregnancy.

Pick disease A form of dementia that is characterized by a slowly progressive deterioration of social skills and changes in personality, along with impairment of intellect, memory, and language. The common symptoms include loss of memory, lack of spontaneity, difficulty in thinking or concentrating, and disturbances of speech. Other symptoms can include gradual emotional dullness, loss of moral judgment, and progressive dementia. The age of onset may range from 20 to 80 but is often between 40 and 60. Pick disease is of unknown origin. The course ranges in duration from less than 2 years to more than 10 years. There is no treatment. Death is usually caused by infection that overwhelms the emaciated body. See also *dementia*. Also known as frontotemporal dementia.

Pickwickian syndrome A syndrome that is characterized by obesity, sleepiness, hypoventilation, and a reddened face. It occurs because of reduced blood oxygen levels due to breathing insufficiency. The syndrome is named for the “fat and red-faced boy in a state of somnolency” whom Charles Dickens described in his novel *The Pickwick Papers*. Also known as obesity hypoventilation syndrome (OHS).

PID Pelvic inflammatory disease.

pigeon breast Having a prominent breastbone and chest. Also known as pectus carinatum.

pigment A substance that gives color to tissue. Pigments are responsible for the colors of skin, eyes, and hair.

pigmentation The coloring of the skin, hair, mucous membranes, and retina of the eye. Pigmentation is due to the deposition of the pigment melanin, which is produced by specialized cells called melanocytes. Other pigment-related terms include hyperpigmentation (too much pigment), hypopigmentation and underpigmentation (too little pigment), and depigmentation (loss of pigment).

piles See *hemorrhoids*.

pill, the See *oral contraceptive*.

piloerection Erection of the hair of the skin due to contraction of the tiny arrectores pilorum muscles that elevate the hair follicles above the rest of the skin and move the hair vertically, so the hair seems to “stand on end.”

pilonidal cyst An abscess that occurs in the cleft between the buttocks at the base of the tailbone (coccyx). Pilonidal cysts are common in adolescence, often after long trips that involve sitting.

pimple An inflamed area of the skin with pus formation that results from an oil gland being infected with bacteria. Pimples are due to overactivity of the oil glands located at the base of the hair follicles, especially on the face, back, chest, and shoulders.

pineal gland A small gland that is located near the center of the brain. This gland secretes melatonin, and it may therefore be part of the body’s sleep-regulation apparatus. Also known as pineal body.

pineal region tumor A brain tumor on or near the pineal gland. There are multiple types of pineal gland tumors, most of which are not cancerous but can nonetheless cause extreme distress. Diagnosis is made via biopsy of affected tissue. Benign pineal tumors are treated with surgery; malignant tumors may be treated with surgery, radiation therapy, and/or chemotherapy.

pinealoblastoma See *pineoblastoma*.

pinealocytoma See *pinealoma*.

pinealoma An uncommon slow-growing tumor of the pineal gland. Also known as a pinealocytoma and pineocytoma.

pineoblastoma A fast-growing brain tumor in the pineal gland that originates in neuroepithelial cells. This malignancy is considered by many to be one of the primitive neuroectodermal tumors (PNETs). Also known as pinealoblastoma.

pineocytoma See *pinealoma*.

pinguecula A yellow spot on the conjunctiva (the membrane that lines the sclera—the “white” of the eye—and the eyelids) usually toward the inside of the eye, that is believed to be related to ultraviolet light exposure or other irritants. A pinguecula looks fatty and is due to an accumulation of connective tissue. Also known as pinguicula.

pinguicula See *pinguecula*.

pinkeye See *conjunctivitis*.

pinna 1 The ear. 2 The part of the ear that projects like a wing from the head.

pinworm infestation An infestation of the intestinal tract by small, white pinworms (*Enterobius vermicularis*). Pinworms are about the length of a staple, and they live for the most part within the human rectum. While a pinworm-infested person is asleep, female pinworms leave the intestines through the anus and deposit eggs on the skin around the anus. Most symptoms of pinworms are

mild, such as anal itching, disturbed sleep, and irritability. Pinworm is the most common worm infection in the US. School-age children have the highest rates of pinworm infestation, followed in frequency by preschoolers. Pinworms spread easily in daycare centers, schools, and homes. Within a few hours of being deposited on the skin around the anus, pinworm eggs become capable of infesting another person. They can survive up to 2 weeks on clothing, bedding, or other objects. If pinworms are suspected, transparent adhesive tape or a pinworm paddle supplied by a health care provider is applied to the anal region. The eggs adhere to the sticky tape or paddle and are identified via examination under a microscope. Also known as enterobiasis. Treatment requires antibiotics.

piriformis muscle See *muscle, piriformis*.

piriformis syndrome Irritation of the sciatic nerve that is caused by compression of the nerve within the buttock by the piriformis muscle. Typically, the pain of piriformis syndrome is increased by contraction of the piriformis muscle, prolonged sitting, or direct pressure applied to the muscle. Buttock pain is common. Piriformis syndrome can cause difficulty walking due to pain in the buttock and lower extremity. Piriformis syndrome is one of the causes of sciatica. Piriformis syndrome is treated with rest and measures to reduce inflammation of the muscle and its tendon. With persistent symptoms, further treatment can include local injection of anesthetic and cortisone medication. Rarely, surgery is performed to relieve the pressure.

pit, ear See *ear pit*.

pit, preauricular See *ear pit*.

pituitary 1 Pertaining to the pituitary gland or its hormonal secretions. 2 The pituitary gland.

pituitary, anterior The front portion of the pituitary gland. Hormones secreted by the anterior pituitary influence growth, sexual development, skin pigmentation, thyroid function, and adrenocortical function. These influences are exerted through the effects of pituitary hormones on other endocrine glands, except in the case of growth hormone, which acts directly on cells. The effects of underfunction of the anterior pituitary include dwarfism in childhood and disruption of the other endocrine gland functions that are normally under the control of the anterior pituitary. The results of overfunction of the anterior pituitary include gigantism in children and acromegaly in adults. See also *acromegaly; dwarfism; pituitary; gigantism; pituitary*. Also known as adenohypophysis.

pituitary, posterior The back portion of the pituitary gland. The posterior pituitary secretes the hormone oxytocin, which increases uterine contractions and antidiuretic hormone (ADH), which increases reabsorption of water by the tubules of the kidney. Underproduction of ADH results in diabetes insipidus, which is characterized by inability to concentrate the urine and, consequently, excess urination, leading potentially to dehydration. See also *antidiuretic hormone; diabetes insipidus; oxytocin*. Also known as neurohypophysis.

pituitary adenoma A benign tumor of the pituitary gland, the master gland that controls other glands and influences numerous body functions, including growth. Although a pituitary adenoma itself is not cancerous, it may affect pituitary function and therefore may need to be removed. See also *pituitary gland; gigantism, pituitary*.

pituitary dwarfism See *dwarfism, pituitary*.

pituitary gigantism See *gigantism, pituitary*.

pituitary gland An endocrine gland situated at the base of the brain, which produces hormones that control other glands and many body functions, including growth. The pituitary is really two glands: the anterior pituitary and the posterior pituitary. Also known as simply the pituitary or hypophysis. See also *pituitary, anterior; pituitary, posterior*.

pityriasis rosea A common mild rash of unknown origin that may last from several weeks to several months, often beginning with a "herald" patch, a large single pink patch on the chest or back and, within a week or so, more pink patches on the torso, arms, and legs. There may be itching, especially when overheated. Treatment may include medications for the itching and soothing lotions or skin lubricants.

PKD Polycystic kidney disease.

PKU Phenylketonuria, a metabolic disease that is due to the inherited inability to process the essential amino acid phenylalanine. The biochemical basis of PKU is complete or near-complete deficiency of the enzyme phenylalanine hydroxylase. Newborns in many countries are now routinely screened for PKU via a blood test. Treatment of PKU involves a special diet that is low in phenylalanine. The goal is to normalize the levels of phenylalanine and tyrosine in the blood to prevent brain damage. Failure or lack of treatment results in profound irreversible mental retardation, microcephaly, epilepsy, and behavior problems. If an appropriate diet is not followed closely, especially during childhood, some impairment is inevitable. PKU is inherited in an autosomal

recessive manner, as are lesser degrees of phenylalanine hydroxylase deficiency. See also *Guthrie test; phenylalanine hydroxylase deficiency; PKU, maternal*.

PKU, maternal The disease phenylketonuria (PKU) in a pregnant woman whose high blood levels of phenylalanine are dangerous to a developing fetus. High phe can damage a baby before birth. If the mother's PKU is not controlled, the fetus (which may not have PKU) is at high risk for congenital heart disease, growth retardation, microcephaly, and mental retardation. See also *phenylalanine hydroxylase deficiency; PKU*.

PKU, variant A form of phenylalanine hydroxylase deficiency that is more mild than classic PKU and typically causes less intellectual impairment.

placebo A sugar pill or any other inactive substance that is given instead of medication. In a controlled clinical trial, one group may be given a medication and another group a placebo, to learn whether a difference in treatment response is due to the medication, the power of suggestion, or other factors. See also *placebo response*.

placebo response A positive medical response to taking a placebo, as if it were an active medication.

placenta A temporary organ that joins the mother and fetus, transferring oxygen and nutrients from the mother to the fetus and permitting the release of carbon dioxide and waste products from the fetus. The placenta is roughly disk-shaped, and at full term it measures about 7 inches in diameter and slightly less than 2 inches thick. The upper surface of the placenta is smooth, and the under surface is rough. The placenta is rich in blood vessels. The placenta is expelled with the fetal membranes during the birth process; together, these structures form the afterbirth.

placenta, accessory A condition in which there is an extra placenta that is separate from the main placenta. Also known as a succenturiate or supernumerary placenta.

placenta, low See *placenta previa*.

placenta, succenturiate See *placenta, accessory*.

placenta, supernumerary See *placenta, accessory*.

placenta accreta The abnormal adherence of the chorion of the placenta to the myometrium of the uterus. Normally there is tissue intervening between the chorionic villi and the myometrium, but in

placenta accreta, the vascular processes of the chorion grow directly in the myometrium. Placenta accreta can progress into placenta percreta.

placenta percreta A condition in which the placenta invades the uterine wall. In placenta percreta, the vascular processes of the chorion (chorionic villi), a fetal membrane that enters into the formation of the placenta, can invade the full thickness of the myometrium. This can cause an incomplete rupture of the uterus. The chorionic villi can go right on through both the myometrium and the outside covering of the uterus (serosa), causing complete and catastrophic rupture of the uterus.

placenta previa A condition in which the placenta is implanted near the outlet of the uterus, so that at the time of delivery the placenta precedes the baby. Placenta previa can cause painless bleeding in the last trimester of pregnancy, and it may be a reason to perform a C-section. Also known as low placenta.

placental chorioangioma A benign vascular (blood vessel) tumor of the placenta. Large chorioangiomas can cause complications, including excess amniotic fluid (polyhydramnios), maternal and fetal clotting problems (coagulopathies), premature delivery, toxemia, fetal heart failure, and hydrops (excess fluid) that affect the fetus.

placental dystocia Difficulty in delivering the placenta. A number of techniques may be tried to overcome placental dystocia, including changing position, massage, nursing the newborn baby to induce uterine contractions, and in some cases using medications that induce uterine contractions.

placental stage of labor The part of labor that lasts from the birth of the baby until the placenta and fetal membranes are delivered. Also known as third stage of labor.

plague An infectious disease that is caused by the bacterium *Yersinia pestis*, which mainly infects rats and other rodents. Fleas function as the prime vectors for carrying *Y. pestis* from one species to another. Transmission of the plague to people can also occur if people eat infected animals, such as squirrels. When someone has the plague, he or she can transmit it to another person via aerosol droplets. The plague has been responsible for devastating epidemics. The disease occurs at a consistent but low level in many countries, including the US. *Yersinia pestis* infection can be easily treated with antibiotics when detected early. Also known as pest and pestis. See also *bubonic plague; plague, bubonic; plague, black*.

plague, bubonic See *bubonic plague*.

Plague, Great See *Great Plague*.

plague, sylvatic A type of plague that is spread by ground squirrels and other wild rodents. Sylvatic plague is sometimes seen in the western portion of the US.

plantar Having to do with the sole of the foot.

plantar fasciitis See *fasciitis, plantar*.

plantar response See *Babinski reflex*.

plantar wart See *wart, plantar*.

plaque 1 The white, semihardened substance that forms on the teeth as a result of bacterial action on food particles and provides an ideal environment for dental caries (cavities). 2 A semihardened accumulation of substances, including cholesterol, on the inner walls of blood vessels that can lead to blood clot formation, heart attacks, and strokes. 3 In dermatology, a small area of skin that appears different from the surrounding skin and is raised.

plaque, skin A broad, raised area on the skin. A skin plaque is broader than it is high.

plasma The liquid part of the blood and lymphatic fluid, which makes up about half of the volume of blood. Plasma is devoid of cells and, unlike serum, has not clotted. Blood plasma contains antibodies and other proteins. It is taken from donors and made into medications for a variety of blood-related conditions.

plasma cell A type of white blood cell that produces and secretes antibodies. A plasma cell is a fully differentiated, mature lymphocyte in the B cell lineage. As with most cell types, plasma cells can mutate to give rise to cancer. Plasma cell malignancies include plasmacytoma, multiple myeloma, Waldenstrom macroglobulinemia, and plasma cell leukemia. Also known as plasmacyte.

plasma donation The donation or sale of blood plasma for use in medical or other products. Unlike blood donors, most plasma donors in the US are paid. The procedure is done in a walk-in facility, where whole blood is taken through an IV needle and separated into plasma and blood cells. The blood cells are then returned to the donor intravenously.

plasmacyte See *plasma cell*.

plasmacytoma Cancer of the plasma cells (white blood cells that produce antibodies) that may turn into multiple myeloma.

plasmapheresis A procedure in which whole blood is taken from a person and separated into plasma and blood cells; the plasma is removed and replaced with another solution, such as saline solution, albumin, or specially prepared donor plasma; and the reconstituted solution is then returned to the patient. Plasmapheresis is used in the treatment of many different conditions, including autoimmune disorders. When the plasma is removed, it takes with it the antibodies that have been developed against self-tissue in an attempt to reduce the attack on the patient's own body. Plasmapheresis carries with it the same risks as any intravenous procedure but is otherwise generally safe.

Plasmodium The genus of the class of Sporozoa that includes the parasite that causes malaria. Plasmodium is a type of protozoa, a single-celled organism that is able to divide only within a host cell. The main types of Plasmodium are *P. falciparum*, the species that causes falciparum malaria, the most dangerous type of malaria; *P. malariae*, the species that causes quartan malaria; *P. ovale*, a species found primarily in east and central Africa that causes ovale malaria; and *P. vivax*, the species that causes vivax malaria, which tends to be milder than falciparum malaria.

plastic surgeon A surgeon who specializes in reducing scarring or disfigurement that may occur as a result of accidents, birth defects, or treatment for diseases, such as melanoma. Many plastic surgeons also perform cosmetic surgery that is unrelated to medical conditions.

plastic surgery A surgical specialty that is dedicated to reconstruction of facial and body defects due to birth disorders, trauma, burns, and disease. Plastic surgery is also involved with the enhancement of the appearance of a person through cosmetic surgery.

plasticity, brain See *brain plasticity*.

platelet An irregular, disc-shaped element of blood that assists in blood clotting. During normal blood clotting, platelets group together (aggregate). Although platelets are often classified as blood cells, they are actually fragments of large cells called megakaryocytes. Also known as thrombocyte. See also *blood cell*.

platelet count The calculated number of platelets in a volume of blood, usually expressed as platelets per cubic millimeter (cmm) of whole blood. Platelets are the smallest cell-like structures in the blood and are important for blood clotting and plugging damaged blood vessels. Platelet

pleiotropic

counts are usually done by laboratory machines that also count other blood elements such as white and red cells. Platelets can also be counted with the help of a microscope. Normal platelet counts are in the range of 150,000 to 400,000 per microliter. These values may vary slightly among different laboratories. See also *CBC*.

pleiotropic Producing or having multiple effects from a single gene. For example, the Marfan gene is pleiotropic, potentially causing such diverse effects as long fingers and toes (arachnodactyly), dislocation of the lens of the eye, and dissecting aneurysm of the aorta.

pleomorphic Many-formed. For example, a pleomorphic tumor would be a growth that is composed of different types of tissues. Also known as protean.

plethoric Florid, red-faced. Persons with polycythemia vera commonly have a plethoric facial appearance.

pleura One of the two membranes around the lungs. These two membranes are called the visceral and parietal pleurae. The visceral pleura envelops the lung, and the parietal pleura lines the inner chest wall. There is normally a small quantity (about 3 to 4 teaspoons) of fluid that is spread thinly between the visceral and parietal pleurae. The pleural fluid acts as a lubricant between the two membranes.

pleural effusion See *effusion, pleural*.

pleural space The tiny area between the two pleurae, which is normally filled with a small amount of fluid. See also *effusion, pleural*.

pleurisy Inflammation of the pleurae, the membranes surrounding the lungs. Symptoms include pain in the chest, chest tenderness, cough, and shortness of breath. The chest pain is sharp and aggravated by breathing. A physician can often hear with a stethoscope the friction generated by the rubbing of the two inflamed layers of pleurae with each breath. The causes of pleurisy include lung infections, collagen vascular diseases such as lupus and rheumatoid arthritis, cancer of the lung or pleura, heart failure, pulmonary embolism (blood clot in the lungs), obstruction of lymph channels, trauma such as rib fractures, drugs such as Dilantin, pancreatitis, and cirrhosis of the liver. Removal of pleural fluid, when present, with a needle and syringe is key in diagnosing the cause of pleurisy and can also relieve the pain and shortness of breath associated with pleurisy. If the fluid is infected, treatment involves use of antibiotics and drainage of the fluid.

In severe cases, in which there are large amounts of pus and scar tissue (adhesions), there may be a need for decortication (opening the pleural space and removing portions of one or two ribs in order to clear scar tissue and remove pus and debris). Also known as pleuritis.

pleuritis See *pleurisy*.

pleurodesis A procedure that causes the membranes around the lungs to stick together and prevents the buildup of fluid in the space between the membranes (pleural space). Pleurodesis is done in cases of severe recurrent pleural effusions (outpourings of fluid around the lungs) to prevent the reaccumulation of the fluid. During pleurodesis, an irritant is instilled inside the pleural space in order to create inflammation that tucks the two pleura together. This procedure thereby permanently obliterates the space between the pleura and prevents the reaccumulation of fluid.

pleurodynia See *Bornholm disease*.

plumbism See *lead poisoning*.

Plummer disease See *goiter, toxic multinodular*.

Plummer-Vinson syndrome The combination of iron deficiency anemia, esophageal webs, and dysphagia (difficulty swallowing). The iron deficiency is typically chronic and severe. It triggers the growth of web-like membranes in the throat which cause dysphagia. The syndrome is more common in women. Treatment is iron supplementation and, if needed, dilation of the web to permit normal swallowing and the passage of food. Also known as Paterson-Kelly syndrome; sideropenic dysphagia.

PMDD Premenstrual dysphoric disorder.

PMR Polymyalgia rheumatica.

PMS Premenstrual syndrome.

pneumatic larynx A device that uses air to produce sound, helping a person whose larynx has been removed to talk.

pneumo- Prefix pertaining to breathing, respiration, the lungs, pneumonia, or air, as in pneumonectomy (an operation to remove an entire lung or part of a lung) and pneumonia (inflammation of one or both lungs).

pneumococcal immunization A vaccine that prevents one of the most common and severe forms of pneumonia, the form that is caused by *Streptococcus pneumoniae* (*pneumococcus* bacterium).

pneumococcus See *Streptococcus pneumoniae*.

pneumoconiosis Inflammation and irritation caused by deposition of dust or other particulate matter in the lungs. Pneumoconiosis usually occurs in workers in certain occupations and in people who live in areas that have a great deal of particulate matter in the air. Types of pneumoconiosis range from nearly harmless forms to destructive or fatal conditions, such as asbestosis and silicosis.

pneumoconiosis, coal miner's See *black lung disease*.

pneumocystis carinii pneumonia A parasitic infection of the lungs that is particularly common and life-threatening in premature or malnourished infants and in immunosuppressed persons. Abbreviated PCP. PCP causes fever, cough, shortness of breath, and bluish extremities. Untreated, it leads to dense areas of lung inflammation, low blood oxygen levels, and death. Preventive treatment is available to prevent PCP in persons who are at increased risk.

pneumomediastinum Free air in the space between the lungs (mediastinum), which may give rise to pneumothorax or pneumopericardium and compromise the lungs or heart.

pneumonectomy An operation to remove an entire lung or part of a lung.

pneumonia Inflammation of one or both lungs, with dense areas of lung inflammation. Pneumonia is frequently but not always due to infection. The infection may be bacterial, viral, fungal, or parasitic. Symptoms may include fever, chills, cough with sputum production, chest pain, and shortness of breath. Pneumonia is suggested by the symptoms and confirmed by chest X-ray testing. Treatment includes antibiotics.

pneumonia, aspiration Inflammation of the lungs due to the sucking in of food particles or fluids into the lungs (aspiration).

pneumonia, bilateral See *pneumonia, double*.

pneumonia, double Pneumonia in both lungs. Also known as bilateral pneumonia.

pneumonia, giant cell A deadly but fortunately rare complication of measles that tends to strike children who are immunodeficient from leukemia or AIDS. The lung tissue shows multinucleated giant cells lining the alveoli (air sacs) of the lungs. Also known as Hecht's pneumonia.

pneumonitis, radiation Inflammation of the lungs that results from radiation. Radiation pneumonitis typically occurs after radiation treatments for cancer within the chest or breast. Radiation pneumonitis usually manifests itself 2 weeks to 6 months after completion of radiation therapy. Symptoms include shortness of breath upon activity, cough, and fever. If radiation pneumonitis persists, it can lead to scarring of the lungs, referred to as radiation fibrosis. See also *fibrosis, radiation*.

pneumopericardium Air or other gas in the sac surrounding the heart (pericardium).

pneumothorax Free air in the chest outside the lung. Pneumothorax can occur spontaneously, follow a fractured rib or other trauma, occur in the wake of chest surgery, or be deliberately induced in order to collapse the lung.

PNL Percutaneous nephrolithotripsy.

PNS Peripheral nervous system.

p.o. Per os. Abbreviation meaning by mouth, orally. See also Appendix A, "Prescription Abbreviations."

podiatrist A specialist in the diagnosis and care of foot disorders, including their medical and surgical treatment.

poikiloderma Extra pigmentation of the skin that demonstrates a variety of shades and is associated with widened capillaries (telangiectasia) in the affected area.

poikiloderma congenita See *Rothemund-Thomson syndrome*.

point, McBurney See *McBurney point*.

point mutation A single nucleotide base change in DNA. For example, a point mutation is the cause of sickle cell disease.

poison Any substance that can cause severe organ damage or death if ingested, breathed in, or absorbed through the skin. Many substances that normally cause no problems, including water and most vitamins, can be poisonous if taken in excessive quantity. Poison treatment depends on the substance.

poison control center A special information center set up to inform people about how to respond to potential poisoning. These centers maintain databases of poisons and appropriate emergency treatment. Local poison control centers

should be listed with other community-service numbers in the front of the telephone book, and they can also be reached immediately through any telephone operator.

poison ivy Skin inflammation that results from contact with the poison ivy vine. Chemicals produced by this vine cause an immune reaction, producing redness, itching, and blistering of the skin. Treatment involves use of topical medications.

poison oak Skin inflammation that results from contact with the poison oak plant. Chemicals produced by this plant cause an immune reaction, producing redness, itching, and blistering of the skin. Treatment involves use of topical medication.

poisoning Taking a substance that is injurious to health or can cause death. See also *poison*; *Poison control center*.

poisoning, silver See *argyria*.

Poland syndrome An uncommon, unique pattern of one-sided malformations that is characterized by a defect of the chest muscle (pectoralis) on one side of the body and webbing and shortening of the fingers (cutaneous syndactyly) on the hand on the same side. Its cause is uncertain, and it does not appear to run in families. Treatment may include reconstructive surgery. Also known as absence of the pectoralis muscle with syndactyly.

polio An acute and sometimes devastating viral disease that affects the nervous system. Humans are the only natural hosts for poliovirus. The virus enters the mouth and multiplies in lymphoid tissues in the pharynx and intestine. Small numbers of virus particles enter the blood and go to other sites, where the virus multiplies more extensively. Another round of virus in the bloodstream leads to invasion of the spinal cord and brain, the target sites struck by the virus. When the central nervous system (CNS) is inflamed, the anterior horn cells of the spinal cord and the brainstem are especially affected. Polio is a minor illness in 80 to 90 percent of clinical infections; this is termed the abortive type of polio. Abortive polio appears chiefly in young children and does not involve the CNS. Symptoms are slight fever, malaise, headache, sore throat, and vomiting 3 to 5 days after exposure. Recovery occurs in 24 to 72 hours. As a major illness, polio may or may not cause paralysis. Symptoms usually appear without prior illness, particularly in older children and adults, 7 to 14 days after exposure. Symptoms are fever, severe headache, stiff neck and back, deep muscle pain, and sometimes areas of increased or altered sensation. There may be no further progression from this type of illness, which

is similar to viral meningitis, or there may be loss of tendon reflexes and weakness or paralysis of muscle groups. Recovery is complete with the abortive and nonparalytic forms of polio, although a set of symptoms known as postpolio syndrome may appear many years later. In paralytic polio, about 50 percent of patients recover, with no residual paralysis; about 25 percent are left with mild disabilities, and the remaining 25 percent of patients have severe permanent disability. The ideal strategy with polio is clearly to prevent it by immunizing against poliovirus. Also known as infantile paralysis and poliomyelitis. See also *postpolio syndrome*.

polio, abortive A minor form of infection with poliovirus that accounts for 80 to 90 percent of clinically apparent cases of polio in the US, chiefly in young children. The usual symptoms—slight fever, malaise, headache, sore throat, and vomiting—emerge 3 to 5 days after exposure to the virus. Full recovery occurs in 24 to 72 hours. Abortive polio does not involve the nervous system or cause permanent disabilities of any kind.

polio immunization One of the two polio vaccines that are available: oral polio vaccine (OPV) and inactivated polio vaccine (IPV). OPV was formerly recommended for children in the US but was shown to actually cause polio in extremely rare cases and is no longer recommended. IPV is given as a shot in the arm or leg.

polio vaccine, inactivated A vaccine that is made from a suspension of poliovirus types that are inactivated (killed) with formalin. Abbreviated IPV. IPV is given by injection.

polio vaccine, killed See *polio vaccine, inactivated*.

polio vaccine, live See *polio vaccine, oral*.

polio vaccine, oral A vaccine that contains live attenuated (weakened) poliovirus. Abbreviated OPV.

polio vaccine, Sabin See *polio vaccine, oral*.

polio vaccine, Salk See *polio vaccine, inactivated*.

poliomyelitis See *polio*.

pollen Small, light, dry protein particles from trees, grasses, flowers, and weeds that may be spread by the wind. Pollen particles are usually the male sex cells of a plant, and they are smaller than the tip of a pin. Pollen is a potent stimulator of allergic responses. It lodges in the mucous membranes

that line the nose and in other parts of the respiratory tract, causing irritation and histamine reactions.

pollex The thumb.

poly A short form for polymorphonuclear leukocyte, a type of white blood cell.

poly- Prefix meaning much or many, as in poly-cystic (characterized by many cysts).

polyarteritis nodosa An autoimmune disease that is characterized by spontaneous inflammation of the arteries (arteritis) and can affect any organ of the body. Polyarteritis nodosa most commonly affects muscles, joints, intestines, nerves, kidneys, and skin. Inflammation of the arteries can lead to inadequate blood supply and permanent damage to organs. Typically, polyarteritis nodosa is treated with medications that suppress the immune system, such as prednisone and cyclophosphamide.

Polyarticular Involving many joints, as opposed to monoarticular (affecting just one joint).

polycystic kidney disease An inherited disorder that is characterized by the development of innumerable cysts in the kidneys that are filled with fluid and replace much of the mass of the kidneys. The cysts eventually reduce kidney function, leading to kidney failure. Abbreviated PKD. PKD can be diagnosed via ultrasound imaging and via CAT or MRI scan. Treatment involves managing pain and treating infections, high blood pressure, and kidney failure. There are two major forms of PKD—autosomal dominant and autosomal recessive—that differ in many respects. See also *polycystic kidney disease, autosomal dominant; polycystic kidney disease, autosomal recessive*.

polycystic kidney disease, adult See *polycystic kidney disease, autosomal dominant*.

polycystic kidney disease, autosomal dominant The most common form of polycystic kidney disease characterized by the progressive development of innumerable cysts in the kidneys, causing hypertension, renal pain, and renal insufficiency (kidney failure). Other features of the disease can be cysts in other organs, such as the liver and pancreas, intracranial aneurysms, dilatation (widening) and dissection of the aorta, and abnormalities in the heart valves. The disease is due to mutations in the PKD1 gene on chromosome 16 or, less often, in the PKD2 gene on chromosome 4. Also known as adult polycystic kidney disease.

polycystic kidney disease, autosomal recessive An early-onset disorder that is characterized

by the presence of innumerable cysts in the kidneys and enlarged kidneys that can usually be detected via ultrasound before birth or in the neonatal period. Some cases are diagnosed later in childhood. The gene for the disease is on chromosome 6. Also known as infantile polycystic kidney disease.

polycystic kidney disease, infantile See *polycystic kidney disease, autosomal recessive*.

polycystic ovarian disease See *polycystic ovarian syndrome*.

polycystic ovarian syndrome A hormonal problem, also known as polycystic ovarian disease, that causes women to have symptoms that include irregular or no menstruation, acne, obesity, and excess hair growth. Abbreviated PCOS. Women with PCOS do not ovulate (release an egg for fertilization) every month. They are at an increased risk for high blood pressure, diabetes, heart disease, and cancer of the uterus (endometrial cancer). Much of this risk can be reversed with exercise and weight loss. Medication is generally prescribed to induce regular menstruation, thereby reducing the cancer risk. For acne and excess hair growth, the diuretic medication spironolactone (brand name: Aldactazide) can help. Clomiphene (brand name: Clomid) can be used to induce ovulation if pregnancy is desired. Surgical procedures involving the removal or destruction of a piece of the ovary seem to help some women. The cause of PCOS is unknown, but the ovaries of affected women contain a number of small cysts. Also known as Stein-Leventhal syndrome.

polycythemia Too many red blood cells. The opposite of polycythemia is anemia. Polycythemia exists when the hemoglobin, red blood cell (RBC) count, and total RBC volume are all above normal. Polycythemia can lead to heart failure, stroke, and other medical problems when severe. Treatment can involve bloodletting. See also *polycythemia vera*.

polycythemia vera A disorder of the bone marrow that leads to overproduction of all three blood cell lines: white blood cells, red blood cells, and platelets. Its cause is unknown. Abbreviated PV. PV progresses slowly but may evolve into acute leukemia or myelofibrosis, in which the marrow is replaced by scar tissue. For a diagnosis of PV, there must be polycythemia. See also *polycythemia*.

polydactyly More than the normal number of fingers or toes. The opposite of polydactyly is oligodactyly. See also *hexadactyly*.

polydipsia Constant, excessive drinking as a result of thirst. Polydipsia occurs in untreated or poorly controlled diabetes mellitus.

polygenes Many genes. For example, eye color is polygenically controlled because many genes are involved in the determination of eye color.

polygenic disease A genetic disorder that is caused by the combined action of more than one gene. Examples of polygenic conditions include hypertension, coronary heart disease, and diabetes. Because such disorders depend on the simultaneous presence of several genes, they are not inherited as simply as are single-gene diseases.

polyhydramnios Too much amniotic fluid. The opposite of polyhydramnios is oligohydramnios.

polymerase, DNA See *DNA polymerase*.

polymerase, RNA See *RNA polymerase*.

polymerase chain reaction A key technique in molecular genetics that permits the analysis of any short sequence of DNA or RNA without having to clone it. Abbreviated PCR. PCR is used to amplify selected sections of DNA in only a few hours. The PCR technique has innumerable uses, from diagnosing genetic diseases to DNA fingerprinting. PCR has become an essential tool for biologists, forensics labs, and scientists who want to study genetic material.

polymorphonuclear leukocyte See *leukocyte, polymorphonuclear*.

polymyalgia rheumatica A disorder of the muscles and joints that is characterized by pain and stiffness that affect both sides of the body and involves the shoulders, arms, neck, and buttock areas. Abbreviated PMR. PMR generally affects persons who are over the age of 50 years. Blood testing in a person with PMR usually shows a significantly elevated sedimentation rate. PMR is characteristically very responsive to treatment with low doses of cortisone-related medications, such as prednisone.

polymyositis An autoimmune inflammatory disease of muscle that begins when white blood cells spontaneously invade muscles, especially those closest to the trunk or torso. This immune activity results in muscle pain, tenderness, and weakness. Blood testing in a person with polymyositis shows significantly elevated creatinine phosphokinase levels. The diagnosis is further suggested by electromyogram testing and confirmed with muscle biopsy. Treatment of polymyositis requires high doses of cortisone-related medications, such as prednisone, and immune suppression with medications, such as methotrexate and cyclophosphamide.

polyneuritis, acute idiopathic See *Guillain-Barre syndrome*.

polyostotic fibrous dysplasia A disorder that features the replacement of multiple areas of bone by fibrous tissue, which may cause fractures and deformity of the legs, arms, and skull. A genetic disorder that is characterized by polyostotic fibrous dysplasia along with skin pigmentation and hormonal problems, with premature sexual development, is known as McCune-Albright's syndrome. The flat areas of increased skin pigment are called *café au lait* spots. The hormonal problems that can be related to polyostotic fibrous dysplasia include early puberty (with premature menstrual bleeding and development of breasts and pubic hair), thyroid abnormalities, and an increased rate of growth. Also known as McCune-Albright syndrome.

polyp A mass of tissue that develops on the inside wall of a hollow organ, such as the colon.

polypapilloma tropicum See *yaws*.

polypectomy The surgical removal of a polyp. See also *polyp*.

polyploid Having three or more full sets of chromosomes. For example, a polyploid brain tumor cell might have 69 or 92 chromosomes.

polyps-and-spots syndrome See *Peutz-Jeghers syndrome*.

polypsis of the colon See *familial adenomatous polyposis*.

polysomnography Electronic monitoring of a sleeping patient to look for abnormalities in sleep patterns and/or brain waves. Polysomnography correlates electroencephalogram readings with observation of the patient. Usually, respiration, oxygen saturation, body position, and other factors are also measured during polysomnography. See also *sleep apnea; sleep apnea, central; sleep apnea, obstructive; sleep disorders*.

polysomy Y syndrome See *XYY syndrome*.

Pompe disease An inherited deficiency of the enzyme alpha-glucosidase which helps the body break down glycogen, a complex carbohydrate that is converted to glucose for energy. Without the enzyme, glycogen builds up in the heart and other muscles, causing extensive damage. There are several different forms of Pompe disease which vary in severity. Pompe disease is inherited in an autosomal recessive manner. Also known as type 2 glycogen storage disease.

popliteal Referring to the back of the knee. For example, the popliteal fossa is the hollow behind the knee.

popliteal fossa The hollow behind the knee.

popliteal pterygium syndrome An inherited condition that is characterized by a web (pterygium) behind the knee. Facial abnormalities in popliteal pterygium syndrome are cleft palate (with or without cleft lip), pits in the lower lip, and fibrous bands in the mouth. Genital abnormalities in popliteal pterygium syndrome are underdevelopment of the labia majora, malformation of the scrotum, and failure of the testes to descend into the scrotum. Patients have an extensive web running from behind the knee down to the heel, malformed toenails, and webbed toes. The disorder is inherited in an autosomal dominant manner and is due to mutation of the interferon regulatory factor 6 gene. Also known as facio-genito-popliteal syndrome.

pork tapeworm See *Taenia solium*.

porphyria One of a variety of hereditary diseases that are characterized by abnormalities in the reactions needed for the production of heme, an essential substance for the body, resulting in increased formation and excretion of chemicals called porphyrins. Most porphyrias affect the skin or the nervous system. Attacks may range from mild to severe. Besides having abdominal and nerve pain, the patient may suffer rapid heartbeat, mania, muscle cramps, muscle weakness, breathing problems, hallucinations, and coma. Acute attacks are often precipitated by the use of certain drugs, such as barbiturates, sulphonamides, and birth control pills; alcohol use; hormonal changes during menstruation or pregnancy; dieting or fasting; and infections. One type of porphyria, acute intermittent porphyria, may have affected members of the House of Hanover in England, including "Mad" King George, who may have suffered attacks of porphyria instead of being "mad."

portal hypertension An elevated pressure in the veins of the portal circulation. Normally, the veins from the stomach, intestine, spleen, and pancreas merge into the portal vein, which then branches into smaller vessels and travels through the liver. If the vessels in the liver are blocked, it is hard for the blood to flow, causing high pressure in the portal system. It can cause gastrointestinal bleeding, ascites, and symptoms related to decreasing function of the liver.

portal vein A large vein formed by the union of the splenic and superior mesenteric veins. The portal

vein conveys venous blood to the liver for detoxification before the blood is returned to circulation via the hepatic veins.

port-wine stain A mark on the skin whose rich, ruby-red color resembles that of port wine. Due to an abnormal aggregation of capillaries, a port-wine stain is a type of hemangioma. It can occur on the face as a sign of Sturge-Weber syndrome. See also *Sturge-Weber syndrome*.

positive, false See *false positive*.

positron emission tomography See *PET scan*.

post- Prefix meaning after.

posterior The back. The opposite of posterior is anterior. See also Appendix B, "Anatomic Orientation Terms."

posterior cruciate ligament The cross-shaped ligament that crosses behind the anterior cruciate ligament and within the knee joint. Abbreviated PCL. See also *knee*.

posterior pituitary See *pituitary, posterior*.

posteroanterior In anatomy, from back to front. Abbreviated PA. For example, a chest X-ray taken with the chest against the film plate and the X-ray machine behind the patient is a PA view. The opposite of posteroanterior is anteroposterior (AP). See also Appendix B, "Anatomic Orientation Terms."

postherpetic neuralgia See *neuralgia, postherpetic*.

posthitis Inflammation of the foreskin of the penis. In an uncircumcised male, posthitis usually occurs together with balanitis, inflammation of the glans, as balanoposthitis. See also *balanitis; balanoposthitis*.

postmature infant A baby born 14 days or more after the usual 40 weeks of gestation. See also *post-term infant*.

postmenopausal After menopause, the period of time after a woman has experienced 12 consecutive months without menstruation.

postnasal drip Mucous accumulation in the back of the nose and throat that leads to or gives the sensation of mucus dripping down from the back of the nose. Postnasal drip is one of the most common consequences of sinusitis, nasal allergies, and the common cold.

postop Short for postoperative; after a surgical operation. The opposite of postop is preop.

postpartum The period just after delivery, as with postpartum depression. Postpartum refers to the mother, and postnatal to the baby.

postpartum depression A form of severe depression after delivery that interferes with daily functioning and requires treatment. It can occur a few days, weeks, or even months after childbirth. A woman with postpartum depression may have feelings of sadness, despair, anxiety, and irritability to a severe degree. Treatment involves counseling and/or medications.

postpolio muscular atrophy Muscle wasting that occurs years after the acute polio episode has resolved as part of postpolio syndrome. Abbreviated PPMA. See also *postpolio syndrome*.

postpolio syndrome A constellation of symptoms and signs that appear years after an initial polio infection. Abbreviated PPS. PPS is characterized by new muscle weakening in muscles that were previously affected by polio or in muscles that were not previously affected. Other symptoms include fatigue, joint pain, and slowly progressive muscle weakness. PPS symptoms can be mild or severe. The exact cause is unknown. Diagnosis is made via history, via clinical findings, and by ruling out other diseases that may mimic PPS. Musculoskeletal problems can sometimes be helped with anti-inflammatory or pain medications, with or without surgical procedures. See also *polio*.

postprandial After mealtime. A postprandial rise in the blood glucose level is one that occurs after eating.

postremission therapy Chemotherapy given to kill cancer cells that survive after remission-induction therapy.

post-term infant A baby born 14 days or more after the usual 40 weeks of gestation, as calculated from the mother's last menstrual period. This is an important calculation because if delivery is delayed 3 weeks beyond term, the possibility of infant mortality increases dramatically.

post-traumatic stress disorder A psychological disorder that develops in some individuals who have had major traumatic experiences, such as those who have experienced serious accidents, survived or witnessed violent crimes, or been through wars. Abbreviated PTSD. Typically a person with PTSD is emotionally numb at first but later has symptoms that may include depression, excessive

irritability, guilt for having survived if others were injured or died, recurrent nightmares, flashbacks to the traumatic scene, and overreactions to sudden noises. PTSD was known as shell shock during World War I and battle fatigue during World War II.

postulates, Koch See *Koch postulates*.

postural Pertaining to the posture or position of the body, the attitude or carriage of the body as a whole, or the position of the limbs (the arms and legs). See also *hypotension, orthostatic*.

postural hypotension See *hypotension, orthostatic*.

potassium The major positive ion (cation) found inside cells. The chemical notation for potassium is K+. The proper level of potassium is essential for normal cell function. An abnormal increase in potassium (hyperkalemia) or decrease in potassium (hypokalemia) can profoundly affect the nervous system and heart, and when extreme, can be fatal. The normal blood potassium level is 3.5–5.0 milliequivalents/liter (mEq/L), or 3.5 international units.

Pott's disease See *tuberculous diskitis*.

pouch of Douglas An extension of the peritoneal cavity between the rectum and the back wall of the uterus. Also known as the rectouterine pouch.

pouch, rectouterine See *pouch of Douglas*.

pound A measure of weight that is equal to 16 ounces or, metrically, 453.6 grams. Abbreviated lb.

power of attorney, durable See *durable power of attorney*.

PPMA Postpolio muscular atrophy.

PPS Postpolio syndrome.

Prader-Willi syndrome An uncommon genetic syndrome that is characterized by severe hypotonia (floppiness), poor sucking and feeding problems in early infancy, and, later in infancy, excessive eating that, if unchecked, leads gradually to marked obesity. Abbreviated PWS. Other symptoms include developmental delay, mild to moderate mental retardation with multiple learning disabilities, and small gonads. The basic cause of PWS is due to absence of the paternally contributed region 11–13 on the long arm of chromosome 15. The child can have two copies of chromosome region 15q11–15q13, but if both are from the mother (a phenomenon called maternal disomy), the child still has PWS because of

lack of the region from the father. When the same region of the maternally contributed chromosome is missing, the result is a different disease, called Angelman syndrome. There is currently no specific treatment or cure for PWS.

Prayer of Maimonides See *Daily Prayer of a Physician*.

pre- Prefix meaning before.

preauricular tag See *ear tag*.

preauricular pit See *ear pit*.

precancerous Pertaining to something that is not yet cancerous but has the potential to develop into a cancer. See also *premalignant*.

preclinical study A study to test a drug, a procedure, or another medical treatment in animals. The aim of a preclinical study is to collect data in support of the safety of the new treatment. Preclinical studies are required before clinical trials in humans can be started.

precocious Unusually early development of intellectual powers, speech, physical traits, and so on.

precocious puberty The onset of secondary sexual characteristics, such as breast buds in girls, growth of the penis and thinning of the scrotum in boys, and the appearance of pubic hair in both sexes, before the normal age of puberty.

preconceptual Referring to before conception. For example, preconceptual counseling is the interchange of information prior to pregnancy.

preconceptual counseling The interchange of information prior to pregnancy. Preconceptual counseling usually occurs for pregnancy planning and care, but sometimes it takes the form of genetic counseling. See also *genetic counseling*.

prediabetes A state in which blood glucose levels are higher than normal but not elevated enough to warrant a diagnosis of diabetes. Many people have prediabetes before they develop type 2 diabetes. People with prediabetes can prevent the development of diabetes in many cases by losing weight, following good nutritional practices, and getting regular exercise.

preeclampsia A condition that is characterized by a sharp rise in blood pressure during the third trimester of pregnancy. Hypertension may be accompanied by swollen ankles, irritability, and kidney problems, as evidenced by protein in the urine.

Although preeclampsia is relatively common, occurring in about 5 percent of all pregnancies and more frequently in first pregnancies than in others, it can be a sign of serious problems. It may indicate that the placenta is detaching from the uterus, for example. In some cases, untreated preeclampsia can progress to eclampsia, a life-threatening situation for both the mother and the fetus. Treatment involves bed rest and sometimes medication. If treatment is ineffective, induced birth or a C-section may have to be considered. See also *eclampsia; HELLP syndrome*.

preemie See *premature baby*.

pregnancy The state of carrying a developing embryo or fetus within the female body. Pregnancy can be indicated by positive results on an over-the-counter urine test and confirmed through a blood test, an ultrasound, or detection of a fetal heartbeat. Pregnancy lasts for about 40 weeks, measured from the date of the woman's last menstrual period. It is conventionally divided into three trimesters, each roughly 3 months long. The most important tasks of basic fetal cell differentiation occur during the first trimester, so any harm done to the fetus during this period is most likely to result in miscarriage or serious disability. There is little to no chance that a first-trimester fetus can survive outside the womb, even with the best hospital care; its systems are simply too undeveloped. In the first trimester, some women experience morning sickness. During the second trimester, the physical parts of the fetus become fully distinct and at least somewhat operational. With the best medical care, a second-trimester fetus born prematurely has at least some chance of survival, although developmental delays and other problems may emerge later. In the third trimester, the fetus enters the final stage of preparation for birth. It increases rapidly in weight, as does the mother. Swelling of the ankles, back pain, and balance problems are sometimes experienced during this time. Pregnancy ends when the birth process begins. See also *acute fatty liver of pregnancy; birth; birth defect; conception; eclampsia; ectopic pregnancy; fetal alcohol effect; fetal alcohol syndrome; HELLP syndrome; hyperemesis gravidarum; preeclampsia; pregnancy; tubal; prenatal care; prenatal development; teratogen*.

pregnancy, acute fatty liver of See *acute fatty liver of pregnancy*.

pregnancy, alcohol during See *fetal alcohol syndrome; fetal alcohol effect; fetal alcohol spectrum disorders*.

pregnancy, drugs during See *teratogen*.

pregnancy, ectopic See *ectopic pregnancy*.

pregnancy, extrauterine See *ectopic pregnancy*.

pregnancy, molar See *hydatidiform mole*.

pregnancy, pernicious vomiting of See *hyperemesis gravidarum*.

pregnancy, tubal An ectopic pregnancy that takes place in a fallopian tube. Tubal pregnancies are due to the inability of the fertilized egg to make its way through the fallopian tube into the uterus. Tubal pregnancies account for 95 percent of all ectopic pregnancies. See also *ectopic pregnancy*.

pregnancy planning Planning that addresses issues that may affect a woman's ability to carry a child to term, such as nutrition, vitamins, body weight, exercise, potentially harmful medications and illnesses, immunizations, and genetic counseling. See also *birth control; family planning*.

prehypertension A precursor state to high blood pressure (hypertension) in which the systolic pressure is between 120 and 139 mm Hg or the diastolic pressure is between 80 and 89 mm Hg. Lifestyle changes are recommended for anyone with prehypertension. See also *high blood pressure*.

preleukemia See *myelodysplastic syndrome*.

premalignant Pertaining to tissue that is not yet malignant but is poised to become malignant. Appropriate clinical and laboratory studies are designed to detect premalignant tissue while it is still in a premalignant stage. A battery of techniques are available to remove or kill the tissue, thereby preventing the development of cancer. The proper treatment method depends on the particular premalignant tissue involved. Examples of premalignant growths include polyps in the colon, actinic keratosis of the skin, dysplasia of the cervix, metaplasia of the lung, and leukoplakia (white patches in the mouth).

premature aging disorder A condition that causes a person to appear far older than their actual age. See *progeria; Werner syndrome*.

premature baby A baby who is born before 37 weeks of gestation have passed since the mother's last menstrual period. A premature baby who is born very close to its due date may suffer few, if any, consequences. The earlier in development that birth takes place, the greater the likelihood that life-support systems will be needed and the greater the risk for birth defects and death. Colloquially known as a preemie. See also *pregnancy; premature birth*.

premature birth Birth before 37 weeks of gestation have passed. Premature birth carries increased risks the farther it occurs from the 37-week goal. Many procedures are available to prevent premature birth, from bed rest to medications. If premature birth is medically necessary or inevitable, however, it may be accomplished via C-section to limit stress on the fetus. See also *pregnancy; premature baby*.

premature contraction of the heart A single heartbeat that occurs earlier than normal. This phenomenon can be within normal limits, or it may represent a medically significant arrhythmia.

premature ejaculation Ejecting semen from the penis, usually accompanied by orgasm, occurring sooner than a man wants during sexual activity. Premature ejaculation is characterized by a lack of voluntary control over ejaculation that interferes with optimal sexual or psychological well-being in either partner.

premature ventricular contraction Contraction of the lower chambers of the heart, the ventricles, that occurs earlier than usual because of abnormal electrical activity of the ventricles. Abbreviated PVC. The premature contraction is followed by a pause as the heart's electrical system resets itself; the contraction following the pause is usually more forceful than normal. These more forceful contractions are frequently perceived as palpitations.

premenstrual dysphoric disorder An unusually severe form of premenstrual syndrome characterized by drastic mood swings, anger, depression, irritability, tension, sleep and appetite changes, fatigue, and physical problems such as pain or bloating. Abbreviated PMDD. Symptoms generally begin the week before menstruation and end a few days after menstruation has begun. Treatment can involve the use of antidepressant medications of the SSRI (selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor) type.

premenstrual syndrome A combination of physical and mood disturbances that occur in the last half of a woman's menstrual cycle, after ovulation, and normally end with the onset of the menstrual flow. Abbreviated PMS. Physical features of PMS include breast tenderness and bloating. Psychological changes can include anger, mood changes, and depression. The most helpful diagnostic tool for PMS is a menstrual diary. Treatment of PMS includes exercise, dietary changes, emotional support of family and friends, and medications, including diuretics, pain killers, oral contraceptives, drugs that suppress ovarian function, and anti-depressants.

prenatal care Health care that a pregnant woman receives from an obstetrician or a midwife. Services needed include dietary and lifestyle advice, weighing to ensure proper weight gain, and examination for problems of pregnancy such as edema and preeclampsia.

prenatal development The process of growth and development within the womb, in which a single-cell zygote (the cell formed by the combination of a sperm and an egg) becomes an embryo, a fetus, and then a baby. The first 2 weeks of development involve simple cell multiplication. This tiny mass of cells then adheres to the inside wall of the uterus. The next 3 weeks see intense cell differentiation, as the cell mass divides into separate primitive systems. At the end of 8 weeks, the embryo takes on a roughly human shape and is called a fetus. For the next 20 weeks the fetus's primitive circulatory, nervous, pulmonary, and other systems become more mature, and the fetus begins to move its limbs. At 28 weeks, fat begins to accumulate under the skin, toenails and fingernails appear, and downy hair sprouts on the body and scalp. The fetus may open its eyes periodically. For the remaining weeks of development, the fetus continues to gain weight, and its internal systems reach full development.

prenatal diagnosis Diagnosis before birth. Methods for prenatal diagnosis include ultrasound of the uterus, placenta, and/or developing fetus; chorionic villus sampling (CVS) to obtain tissue for chromosome or biochemical analysis; and amniocentesis to obtain amniotic fluid for the analysis of chromosomes, enzymes, or DNA. A growing number of birth defects and diseases can be diagnosed prenatally and in some cases treated before birth. Also known as antenatal diagnosis.

preop Short for preoperative; before a surgical operation. The opposite of preop is postop.

prepuce See *foreskin*.

prepuce, inflammation of the See *posthitis*.

presbyopia The loss of the eye's ability to change focus to see near objects due to advancing age. Presbyopia is said to be due to the lens becoming less elastic with age. The first sign of presbyopia is often the need to hold reading material farther away. See *eye*.

prescription A physician's order for the preparation and administration of a drug or device for a patient. A prescription has several parts, including the superscription, or heading, with the symbol R or Rx, which stands for the word "recipe" (Latin for

"to take"); the inscription, which contains the names and quantities of the ingredients; the subscription, or directions for compounding the drug; and the signature, often preceded by the sign s., which stands for "signa" (Latin for "mark"), giving the directions to be marked on the container. See also Appendix A, "Prescription Abbreviations."

prescription drug A drug requiring a prescription, as opposed to an over-the-counter (OTC) drug, which can be purchased without a prescription. See also *prescription*.

presentation, breech See *breech birth*.

presentation, footling See *footling birth*.

presentation, vertex See *vertex birth*.

pressure, high blood See *hypertension*.

pressure, intraocular See *intraocular pressure*.

pressure, low blood See *hypotension*.

prevalence The proportion of individuals in a population having a disease or characteristic. Prevalence is a statistical concept referring to the number of cases of a disease that are present in a particular population at a given time, whereas incidence refers to the number of new cases that develop in a given period of time.

preventive medicine Medical practices that are designed to avert and avoid disease. For example, screening for hypertension and treating it before it causes disease is good preventive medicine. Preventive medicine takes a proactive approach to patient care.

priapism Abnormally persistent erection of the penis in the absence of desire. Treatments include medications, anesthesia, and drainage of blood from the penis.

primary amenorrhea See *amenorrhea*.

primary biliary cirrhosis See *cirrhosis, primary biliary*.

primary care A patient's main source for regular medical care, ideally providing continuity and integration of health care services. All family physicians, and many pediatricians and internists, practice primary care. The aims of primary care are to provide the patient with a broad spectrum of preventive and curative care over a period of time and to coordinate all the care that the patient receives.

primary care provider In insurance parlance, a physician who is chosen by or assigned to a patient and both provides primary care and acts as a gatekeeper to control access to other medical services.

primary dentition See *primary teeth*.

primary HIV infection See *HIV infection, primary*.

primary sclerosing cholangitis A chronic disorder of the liver of uncertain cause in which the bile ducts within and outside of the liver become inflamed, thickened, scarred (sclerotic), and obstructed. This progressive process can in time destroy the bile ducts and lead to cirrhosis. Abbreviated PSC. PSC can occur by itself or in association with other diseases, including inflammatory bowel disease. PSC often triggers jaundice (yellowing), pruritus (generalized itching all over the body), upper abdominal pain, and infection. Later on, PSC progresses to cirrhosis of the liver and liver failure, creating a need for liver transplantation. Diagnosis is made via clinical observation and routine laboratory tests and is confirmed through demonstration of thickened bile ducts, using special radiologic tests called cholangiography. Treatment includes cholestyramine to diminish itching, antibiotics for infection, vitamin D and calcium to prevent bone loss (osteoporosis), sometimes balloon dilatation or surgery for obstructed ducts, and liver transplantation when necessary and possible. The prognosis depends on the age of the person, the degree of jaundice, the stage of PSC found via liver biopsy, and the size of the spleen. Most patients die within 10 years of diagnosis unless a liver transplant is performed. Also known as idiopathic sclerosing cholangitis.

primary teeth The first 20 teeth, which are shed and replaced by permanent teeth. The first primary tooth comes in (erupts) at about 6 months of age, and the last erupts at around 2½ years. Replacement with permanent teeth usually begins at about age 6. Also known as baby teeth, milk teeth, primary dentition, temporary teeth, and deciduous teeth.

primum non nocere See *first do no harm*.

principal joints of the body See *joints of the body, principal*.

Prinzmetal angina See *angina, Prinzmetal*.

prion A small proteinaceous infectious disease-causing agent that is believed to be the smallest infectious particle. A prion is neither bacterial nor fungal nor viral and contains no genetic material. Prions have been held responsible for a number of

degenerative brain diseases, including mad cow disease, Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, fatal familial insomnia, kuru, and an unusual form of hereditary dementia known as Gertsmann-Sträussler-Scheinker disease.

private mutation A rare gene mutation that is usually found only in a single family or a small population. A private mutation occurs and is passed to a few family members, but not to future generations.

PRK Photorefractive keratectomy.

p.r.n. Pro re nata. Abbreviation meaning as needed. See also Appendix A, "Prescription Abbreviations."

pro **1** Professional. **2** Prothrombin.

pro- A prefix (from both Greek and Latin) with many meanings, including before, in front of, preceding, on behalf of, in place of, and the same as.

pro time Prothrombin time.

probability The likelihood that something will happen. For example, a probability of less than .05 indicates that the likelihood of something occurring by chance alone is less than 5 in 100, or 5 percent. This level of probability is usually taken as the level of biologic significance, so a higher incidence may be considered meaningful. Abbreviated p.

proband The family member through whom a family's medical history comes to attention. For example, a proband might be a baby with Down syndrome. The proband may also be called the index case, propositus (if male), or proposita (if female).

probe **1** In surgery, a slender, flexible rod with a blunt end that is used to explore. **2** In molecular genetics, a labeled bit of DNA or RNA that is used to find its complementary sequence or to locate a particular clone.

probiotic A substance that appears to replenish or support the growth of helpful bacteria in the intestinal tract. The most common probiotic is acidophilus, which is present in yogurt, in acidophilus milk, and in supplements. As the name indicates, probiotics have been developed to counter one unfortunate effect of treatment with antibiotics: the decimation of helpful intestinal bacteria along with disease-causing bacteria. See also *acidophilus*.

process In anatomy, a projection from a structure. For example, the process of the mandible is the part of the lower jaw that projects forward.

proclivity An inclination or a predisposition toward something, especially a strong inherent inclination toward something objectionable. For example, a patient might be said to have a proclivity toward alcohol.

proctitis Inflammation of the rectum. Proctitis may be due to a considerable number of causes, including infectious agents and ulcerative colitis. Infectious proctitis is often due to agents such as Chlamydia trachomatis, Neisseria gonorrhoeae, and herpes simplex virus, all of which can be acquired during anoreceptive intercourse. Proctitis is also a hallmark of ulcerative colitis, in which case it may be accompanied by intermittent rectal bleeding, crampy abdominal pain, and diarrhea.

proctitis, ulcerative Ulcerative colitis that is limited to the rectum. See also *colitis, ulcerative; proctitis*.

proctology A medical specialty that deals with disorders of the rectum and anus.

proctosigmoidoscopy An examination of the rectum and the lower part of the colon, using a thin, lighted instrument called a sigmoidoscope.

product, gene See *gene product*.

progeria One of a group of rare genetic disorders that causes premature aging in children. The classic type of progeria is Hutchinson-Gilford progeria syndrome, which is characterized by dwarfism, baldness, pinched nose, small face and small jaw relative to the head size, delayed tooth formation, aged-looking skin, stiffness of joints, hip dislocations, arteriosclerosis, and heart disease. These children begin to display signs of accelerated aging as early as 18 months of age and have a drastically shortened lifespan. There is no cure or specific treatment. Progeria is due to a mutation in the gene for Lamin A protein. Werner syndrome has a later onset and is sometimes called progeria of the adult. See also *Werner syndrome*.

progesterone A female hormone, the principal hormone that prepares the uterus to receive and sustain fertilized eggs.

progesterone receptor test A lab test that is used to determine whether breast cancer cells have progesterone receptors. If the cells have progesterone receptors, they may depend on progesterone for growth and usually respond to hormone therapy. Breast cancer cells that do not have progesterone receptors do not need the hormone progesterone to grow and usually do not respond to hormone therapy.

progestin Any one of a group of steroid hormones that have the effect of progesterone. See also *progesterone*.

prognathism An overly prominent jaw. Prognathism may cause no problems or be associated with dental problems. Prognathism is characteristic of some diseases, such as acromegaly.

prognosis The forecast of the probable outcome or course of a disease; the patient's chance of recovery.

prognostic Pertaining to the prognosis, the outlook for the patient.

progressive Increasing in scope or severity, advancing, or going forward. For example, a disease that is progressive is worsening.

prokaryote An organism whose cells lack a discrete nucleus and other special subcellular compartments. Bacteria and viruses are prokaryotes. Humans are not prokaryotes, but rather eukaryotes.

prolactin A hormone secreted by the pituitary gland that stimulates lactation (milk production). It also has many other functions, including essential roles in the maintenance of the immune system. Abnormally high prolactin can delay puberty, interfere with ovulation in women, decrease libido in men, and decrease fertility. Elevated prolactin (hyperprolactinemia) may be due to a benign tumor in the pituitary gland called a prolactinoma.

prolactinoma A benign tumor (called an adenoma) of the pituitary gland. Prolactinomas produce an excessive amount of the hormone prolactin. Prolactinomas are the most common type of pituitary tumor. Symptoms of prolactinoma are caused by pressure of the tumor on surrounding tissues or by excessive prolactin in the blood (hyperprolactinemia). Treatment may involve medications and/or surgery. See also *prolactin*.

prolapsed uterus See *uterus, prolapsed*.

prominent vertebra The seventh cervical (neck) vertebra, which has a long spinous process that projects out from the back of its vertebral body.

promoter In molecular biology, a site on DNA to which the enzyme RNA polymerase can bind to initiate the transcription of DNA into RNA.

pronation 1 Rotation of the arm or leg inward. In the case of the arm, the palm of the hand faces posteriorly when it is pronated. 2 The corresponding motion in the foot with the sole down. See also Appendix B, "Anatomic Orientation Terms."

pronator foot type A type of foot that rolls far inward during the weight-bearing phase of the stride. This type of foot is characterized by a very low or flat arch. Heavier people often have feet of this type.

prone With the front or ventral surface downward (lying face down), as opposed to supine. See also Appendix B, "Anatomic Orientation Terms."

pronucleus A cell nucleus with a haploid (halved) set of chromosomes—23 chromosomes in humans—that results from division (meiosis) of a germ cell. The male pronucleus is the sperm nucleus after it has entered the ovum at fertilization but before fusion with the female pronucleus. Similarly, the female pronucleus is the nucleus of the ovum before fusion with the male pronucleus.

prophylactic 1 A medication or treatment given to prevent development of disease. 2 A drug or device for preventing pregnancy, particularly a condom.

prophylactic cranial irradiation Radiation therapy to the head that is intended to prevent cancer from spreading to the brain.

prophylaxis The prevention of disease.

propositus See *proband*.

proprioception The ability to sense stimuli arising within the body regarding position, motion, and equilibrium. Even if a person is blindfolded, he or she knows through proprioception if an arm is above the head or hanging by the side of the body. The sense of proprioception is disturbed in many neurological disorders. It can sometimes be improved through the use of sensory integration therapy, a type of specialized occupational therapy.

prospective study A study in which the subjects are first identified and then followed forward as time passes.

prostaglandin A hormone-like substance that participates in a wide range of body functions such as the contraction and relaxation of smooth muscle, the dilation and constriction of blood vessels, control of blood pressure, modulation of inflammation, and production of the normal protective mucus lining of the stomach. Prostaglandins are derived from a chemical called arachidonic acid.

prostate See *prostate gland*.

prostate, nodular hyperplasia of the See *benign prostatic hyperplasia*.

prostate acid phosphatase An enzyme that is produced by the prostate gland that is elevated in some patients with prostate cancer.

prostate cancer See *cancer, prostate*.

prostate enlargement Overgrowth of the prostate gland, usually due to a common, benign, and very treatable condition known as benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH). Far fewer cases of prostate enlargement are due to prostate cancer. See also *digital rectal exam; prostate cancer; prostate gland; prostate specific antigen test; prostatic hyperplasia, benign*.

prostate gland A gland in the male reproductive system that is located just below the bladder. It surrounds part of the urethra, the canal that empties the bladder. The prostate gland helps to control urination, and it forms part of the content of semen. Also known as simply the prostate.

prostate specific antigen test A blood test that is used to screen for cancer of the prostate and to monitor treatment. Prostate specific antigen (PSA) is a protein that is produced by the prostate gland. If elevated levels of PSA are detected in the blood, additional testing is needed if it is being used as a screening measure. An elevated level of PSA is not specific to prostate cancer. Other diseases can cause elevated PSA, including benign prostatic hypertrophy (BPH), an increase in the size of the prostate that typically occurs with aging. Infection of the prostate gland (prostatitis) is another relatively common cause of elevated PSA. Many early cancers do not produce enough PSA to cause a significantly abnormal blood level. It is therefore important not to rely only on blood PSA testing. The most useful additional test is a physical prostate exam known as the digital rectal exam. See also *digital rectal exam; prostate cancer; prostate gland; prostatic hyperplasia, benign*.

prostatectomy Surgical removal of the prostate gland. Prostatectomy can be done through an incision in the abdomen or through the urethra (transurethral resection).

prostatectomy, retropubic Surgical removal of the prostate gland through an incision in the abdomen. Retropubic prostatectomy is a treatment option for some forms of prostate cancer.

prostatic hyperplasia, benign See *benign prostatic hyperplasia*.

prostatic hypertrophy, benign See *benign prostatic hyperplasia*.

prostatitis Inflammation of the prostate gland. Prostatitis can result from infection or certain diseases, such as reactive arthritis.

prostatitis, bacterial Inflammation of the prostate gland due to bacterial infection. Symptoms of bacterial prostatitis include chills, fever, pain in the lower back and genital area, body aches, testicular pain, burning or painful urination, and the frequent and urgent need to urinate. In bacterial prostatitis, the urinary tract is infected, as evidenced by the presence of white blood cells and bacteria in the urine. Acute bacterial prostatitis is treated with antibiotics. In chronic bacterial prostatitis, a defect in the prostate gland is the focal point for the persistent infection. Effective treatment of chronic bacterial prostatitis requires identification and correction of this defect before antibiotics can be effective.

prosthesis An artificial replacement of a part of the body, such as a tooth, a facial bone, the palate, or a joint. A prosthesis may be removable, as in the case of most prosthetic legs or a prosthetic breast form used after mastectomy. Other types of prosthetic devices, such as artificial hips or teeth, are permanently implanted. With advances in medical science, a few experimental prostheses have been integrated with body tissues, including the nervous system. These highly advanced devices can respond to commands from the central nervous system, more closely approximating normal movement and utility than older prostheses.

prosthetics The art and science of developing artificial replacements for body parts. Depending on the type of prosthesis, prosthetics may be built and fitted/implanted in a hospital (as in the case of an artificial knee joint) or by an outside specialist.

prosthodontist A dentist with special training in making replacements for missing teeth or other structures of the oral cavity, to restore the patient's appearance, comfort, and/or health.

protease An enzyme that can split a protein into the peptides from which it was originally created.

protease inhibitor An agent that can keep a protease from splitting a protein into peptides. Examples of protease inhibitors are saquinavir (brand name: Invirase) and ritonavir (brand name: Norvir), and they are used primarily in HIV/AIDS treatment. They are taken as part of a multi-drug cocktail and have been shown to be capable of significantly reducing the level of HIV virus in the blood. Side effects associated with protease inhibitors include lipodystrophy syndrome, in

which the face, arms, and legs become thin due to loss of subcutaneous fat; the skin becomes dry; weight loss occurs; and abnormal deposits of fat occur. Some strains of HIV may be resistant to protease inhibitors.

protein One of the three nutrients used as energy sources (calories) by the body. Proteins are essential components of the muscle, skin, and bones. Proteins and carbohydrates each provide 4 calories of energy per gram, whereas fats provide 9 calories per gram.

protein, C-reactive See *C-reactive protein*.

protein, G See *G protein*.

protein C A vitamin K-dependent protein in plasma that enters into the cascade of biochemical events leading to the formation of blood clots.

protein C deficiency A deficiency of the anticoagulant protein C, that results in thrombotic (clotting) disease and excess platelets, and recurrent inflammation of the vein that occurs when a clot forms (thrombophlebitis). The clot can break loose and travel through the bloodstream, causing damage to organs including stroke and heart attack. Protein C deficiency is due to one of numerous mutations in the protein C gene on chromosome 2.

protein-calorie malnutrition See *kwashiorkor*.

protein-losing enteropathy A condition in which plasma protein is lost excessively to the gastrointestinal tract. Protein-losing enteropathy can be due to diverse causes, including gluten enteropathy, extensive ulceration of the intestine, intestinal lymphatic blockage, or infiltration of leukemic cells into the intestinal wall. Treatment can involve special diets and vitamin supplementation.

protein malnutrition See *kwashiorkor*.

proteins, acute-phase See *acute-phase protein*.

proteinuria See *albuminuria*.

proteomics The study of the proteome, the complete set of proteins expressed by an organism, tissue, or cell. It includes the study of changes in protein expression patterns as related to diseases and environmental conditions.

Proteus syndrome A disturbance of cell growth that causes overgrowth, asymmetry, and gigantism of bones, limbs, skin, and other organs. Its symptoms also include vascular malformations; raised, rough skin; and overgrowth of fat. John Merrick, the

19th-century Englishman known as the “elephant man,” is thought to have had Proteus syndrome. No specific treatment is available.

prothrombin A coagulation (clotting) factor that is needed for the normal clotting of blood. A cascade of biochemical events leads to the formation of the final clot. In this cascade, prothrombin is a precursor to thrombin. Also known as thrombinogen and simply pro. See also *prothrombin time*.

prothrombin time A test that is done to gauge the integrity of part of the blood clotting process. Prothrombin time is commonly used to screen for bleeding disorders as well as to monitor the accuracy of blood-thinning treatment (anticoagulation) with drugs such as warfarin (brand names: Coumadin, Panwarfin, Sofarin). It measures the time needed for clot formation after thromboplastin and calcium are added to plasma. Familiarly known as pro time.

proto-oncogene A normal gene that, when altered by mutation, becomes an oncogene that can contribute to cancer. See *oncogene*.

protozoa A parasitic single-celled organism that can divide only within a host organism. For example, malaria is caused by the protozoa Plasmodium.

proximal Toward the beginning, the nearer (or nearest) distant of two (or more) items. For example, the proximal end of the femur is part of the hip joint, and the shoulder is proximal to the elbow. The opposite of proximal is distal. See also Appendix B, “Anatomic Orientation Terms.”

proximal white subungual onychomycosis See *onychomycosis, proximal white subungual*.

proxy, health care See *health care proxy*.

pruritic Itchy. For example, a scab may be pruritic.

pruritus See *itching*.

pruritus ani See *anal itching*.

PSA Prostate specific antigen. See *prostate specific antigen test*.

PSC Primary sclerosing cholangitis.

pseudo- Prefix indicating a medical condition that resembles another condition but appears to have different causes, as in pseudoseizure (a seizure-like episode that may not show up as unusual electrical activity in the brain).

pseudodementia A severe form of depression that results from a progressive brain disorder in which cognitive changes mimic those of dementia.

pseudogout Inflammation of the joints that is caused by deposits of calcium pyrophosphate crystals, resulting in arthritis, most commonly of the knees, wrists, shoulders, hips, and ankles. Pseudogout usually affects only one or a few joints at a time. True gout is due to a different type of crystal, which is formed by the precipitation of uric acid.

pseudo-Hurler polydystrophy See *mucolipidoses III*.

pseudomelanosis coli See *melanosis coli*.

pseudomembranous colitis See *colitis, pseudomembranous*.

pseudo-obstruction, intestinal See *intestinal pseudo-obstruction*.

pseudo-obstruction, myopathic Intestinal pseudo-obstruction that is caused by damage to muscle cells in the walls of the bowel.

pseudo-obstruction, neuropathic Intestinal pseudo-obstruction that is caused by damage to nerve cells in the walls of the bowel.

pseudoparalysis, spastic See *Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease*.

pseudotumor cerebri Increased pressure within the brain in the absence of a tumor. Pseudotumor cerebri can cause headache, ringing in the ears, double vision, loss of visual accuracy, and even complete blindness. It is most common in obese woman of childbearing age. Although its cause is usually not known, pseudotumor cerebri is sometimes linked to use of tetracycline, nalidixic acid, nitrofurantoin, phenytoin, lithium, or amiodarone, or overuse of vitamin A. Diagnosis is made via brain imaging and lumbar puncture. Drugs to reduce cerebrospinal fluid production or hyperosmotic drugs may be used to reduce fluid buildup. Excess cerebrospinal fluid may be removed with repeated spinal taps, shunting, or a type of surgery called optic nerve sheath fenestration that allows the excess fluid to escape. Steroids may be prescribed to reduce swelling of brain tissue. Also known as benign intracranial hypertension, idiopathic intracranial hypertension (IIH).

pseudoxanthoma elasticum A disorder that is characterized by deposition of calcium and other minerals in elastic fibers. It can affect elastic fibers

in the skin, eyes, and blood vessels, and less frequently other areas. Abbreviated PXE. PXE is inherited in an autosomal recessive manner and is due to mutations in the ABCC6 gene on chromosome 16. Symptoms include small yellow-white raised areas in the skin folds on the neck, armpits, and other areas. A physician may see abnormalities in the back of the eye called angiod streaks, tiny breaks in the elastin-filled tissue that can lead to blindness. Impairment of blood vessels in the legs can lead to pains in the legs while walking (claudication).

psilocybin An hallucinogenic compound obtained from certain mushrooms.

psittacosis An infectious disease that is due to a bacterium (*Chlamydia psittaci*) contracted from psittacine birds, especially caged birds such as parrots, parakeets, and lovebirds. It is also seen in turkey-processing plants. *C. psittaci* enters the human body by inhalation of air containing dried secretions from infected birds. Signs and symptoms include fever and chills, ill feeling (malaise), loss of appetite, cough, and shortness of breath. Diagnosis is made by finding the bacterium in the patient's blood or sputum. Treatment involves use of antibiotics, such as tetracycline. To avoid psittacosis, one should avoid dust from bird feathers and cage contents and not handle sick birds. Also known as parrot fever.

psoas Two muscles of the lower back. There are two psoas muscles on each side of the back. The larger of the two is called the psoas major and the smaller the psoas minor. The psoas major originates at the spine, around the bottom of the rib cage, and runs down to the thighbone (the femur). The psoas major acts to flex the hip. The psoas minor also originates at the spine, around the bottom of the rib cage, but it runs down to the bony pelvis. The psoas minor acts to flex the lower (lumbar) spine.

psoriasis A reddish, scaly, plaque-like rash that is often located over the surfaces of the elbows, knees, and scalp, and around or in the ears, navel, genitals, or buttocks. Approximately 10 to 15 percent of patients with psoriasis develop joint inflammation (inflammatory arthritis). Psoriasis is caused by the body making too many skin cells as the result of an immune system disturbance in which the body's T lymphocytes attack healthy skin cells. Treatment options include use of topical steroid creams, use of tar soap preparations, and exposure to ultraviolet light. See also *psoriasis, guttate; psoriasis, pustular; psoriatic arthritis*.

psoriasis, guttate An uncommon type of psoriasis that is characterized by small, red-pink drops on

the skin that are finer than the typical plaque-like rash of psoriasis. The condition may be triggered by an infection, often by Streptococcus bacteria. See *psoriasis*.

psoriasis, pustular An uncommon type of recurring psoriasis that is characterized by the appearance of pus-filled pimples and sores in clusters. Pustular psoriasis can be intensely painful, and hospitalization may be necessary.

psoriatic arthritis Joint inflammation that is associated with psoriasis. Psoriatic arthritis is a potentially destructive and deforming form of arthritis that affects approximately 10 percent of persons with psoriasis.

psyche The mind.

psychiatrist A physician who specializes in the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of mental illness. A psychiatrist must receive additional training and serve a supervised residency in his or her specialty. He or she may also have additional training in a psychiatric specialty, such as child psychiatry or neuropsychiatry. Psychiatrists can prescribe medication, which psychologists cannot do.

psychiatry The medical specialty that is concerned with the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of mental illness.

psychogenic Caused by the mind or emotions.

psychological child abuse See *child abuse*.

psychological imprinting See *imprinting, psychological*.

psychologist A professional who specializes in the diagnosis and treatment of diseases of the brain, emotional disturbance, and behavior problems. Psychologists use talk therapy as treatment; a person must see a psychiatrist or another medical doctor to be treated with medication. A psychologist may have a master's degree (MA) or doctorate (PhD) in psychology. Psychologists may also have other qualifications, including board certification and additional training in a type of therapy.

psychosis A thought disorder in which perception of reality is grossly impaired. Symptoms can include seeing, hearing, smelling, or tasting things that are not there; paranoia; and delusional thoughts. Depending on the condition underlying the psychotic symptoms, symptoms may be constant or they may come and go. Psychosis can occur as a result of brain injury or disease, and it is seen particularly in schizophrenia and bipolar disorder.

Psychotic symptoms can occur as a result of drug use, but that is not true psychosis. Diagnosis is made via observation and interview. Treatment involves use of medication such as risperidone (brand name: Risperdal) or haloperidol (brand name: Haldol).

psychosis, ICU See *ICU psychosis*.

psychosomatic illness A situation in which the mind influences the body to create or complicate an illness.

psychotherapy The treatment of a behavior disorder, mental illness, or any other condition by psychological means. Psychotherapy may utilize insight, persuasion, suggestion, reassurance, and instruction so that patients may see themselves and their problems more realistically and have the desire to cope effectively with them. There are many different types of psychotherapy, including cognitive therapy, family therapy, interpersonal therapy, and psychodynamic therapy.

psychotropic drug Any drug capable of affecting the mind, emotions, and behavior. Some legal drugs, such as lithium for bipolar disorder, are psychotropic. Many illicit drugs, such as cocaine, are also psychotropic. Also known as psychodynamic drug.

PTCA Percutaneous transluminal coronary angioplasty.

pterygium A wing-like triangular membrane. Although a pterygium can be anywhere, including behind the knee, it commonly refers to a winglet of the conjunctiva. This pterygium may extend across the white of the eye, toward the inner corner of the eye. It is caused by prolonged exposure of the eyes to wind and weather, or it can be an inherited disorder caused by a single gene. A pterygium can be removed with surgical procedures including laser treatment.

ptosis Downward displacement. For example, ptosis of the eyelids is drooping of the eyelids.

ptosis of the eyelids, congenital See *congenital ptosis of the eyelids*.

P-24 antibody An antibody that is created by B cells in the immune system to fight the P-24 antigen of the HIV virus. The P-24 antibody attaches to the foreign protein and sends a signal to T-4 cells to attack it. See also *HIV; P-24 antigen*.

P-24 antigen A structural protein that is found only in the HIV virus. Tests for the level of P-24 antigen may be done to detect early HIV infection and to

screen donated blood for the presence of HIV. P-24 antigen is only detectable during a limited period of time; after the infection has established itself and antibodies have been produced, levels of P-24 antigen usually are not detectable. See also *HIV; HS test; P-24 antibody*.

pubarche The onset of puberty, often measured by the first development of pubic hair.

puberty Adolescence, the period in which the human body first becomes capable of reproduction. The timing of the development of puberty is variable and involves many factors including genetic, nutritional, environmental, and social factors.

pubic lice Parasitic insects found in the genital area of humans. Pubic lice are usually spread through sexual contact. Rarely, infestation can be spread through contact with an infested person's bed linens, towels, or clothes. Pubic lice are generally found in the genital area on pubic hair but may occasionally be found on other coarse body hair, such as hair on the legs, armpit, mustache, beard, eyebrows, and eyelashes. Lice found on the head are not pubic lice; they are head lice. Animals do not get or spread pubic lice. The key symptom of pubic lice is itching in the genital area. Nits (lice eggs) or crawling lice may be seen. Pubic lice are treated with topical medications such as permethrin or Lindane. Also known as crabs.

pubic symphysis The joint between the pubic bones at the front of the pelvis.

pubis The front center portion of the pelvis.

public health 1 Medicine that is concerned with the health of the community as a whole. Community health. 2 In common usage, a facility or a government agency that provides low-income or free health care.

Public Health Service, United States See *United States Public Health Service*.

PUBS Percutaneous umbilical blood sampling.

puerperal fever See *childbed fever*.

puerperium The time immediately after the delivery of a baby.

pulmonary Having to do with the lungs.

pulmonary artery One of the two vessels which are formed as terminal branches of the pulmonary trunk and convey un-aerated blood to the lungs. The two pulmonary arteries differ in length and anatomy. The right pulmonary artery is the longer of

the two. It passes transversely across the midline in the upper chest and passes below the aortic arch to enter the hilum of the right lung as part of its root. The left pulmonary artery is the shorter of the two terminal branches of the pulmonary trunk. It pierces the pericardium (the sac around the heart) and enters the hilum of the left lung.

pulmonary edema Fluid in the lungs.

pulmonary embolism Sudden closure of a pulmonary artery or one of its branches, caused by a blood-borne clot or foreign material that plugs the vessel.

pulmonary embolus A blood clot or foreign material that has been carried through the blood into the pulmonary artery or one of its branches, plugging the vessel.

pulmonary fibrosis Scarring throughout the lungs that can be caused by many conditions, such as sarcoidosis, hypersensitivity pneumonitis, asbestos, and certain medications. Pulmonary fibrosis can also occur without an identifiable cause, in which case it is referred to as idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis. Symptoms include shortness of breath, coughing, and diminished exercise tolerance. Treatment involves use of corticosteroids (such as prednisone) and/or other medications that suppress the body's immune system. The goal of treatment is to decrease lung inflammation and subsequent scarring. Responses to treatment vary. Toxicity and side effects of treatment can be serious. Therefore, patients with pulmonary fibrosis are generally cared for by lung specialists.

pulmonary function test A test that is designed to measure how well the lungs are working. Abbreviated PFT. PFTs gauge how the lungs are expanding and contracting (when a person inhales and exhales) and measure the efficiency of the exchange of oxygen and carbon dioxide between the blood and the air within the lungs.

pulmonary hypertension See *hypertension, pulmonary*.

pulmonary insufficiency A condition in which the valve between the right ventricle of the heart and the pulmonary artery is incompetent in its performance, allowing blood to slosh back from the pulmonary artery into the right ventricle.

pulmonary stenosis A condition in which the pulmonary valve is too tight, so that the flow of blood from the right ventricle of the heart into the pulmonary artery is impeded. This means that the right ventricle must pump harder than normal to

overcome the obstruction. Treatment is necessary if the pressure in the right ventricle is higher than normal. Treatment involves eliminating the obstruction by a procedure called balloon valvuloplasty or by surgery.

pulmonary syndrome, hantavirus See *hantavirus pulmonary syndrome*.

pulmonary valve One of the four valves in the heart, which stands at the opening from the right ventricle in the pulmonary artery trunk. The pulmonary valve moves blood toward the lungs and keeps it from sloshing back from the pulmonary artery into the heart.

pulmonary vein One of four vessels that carry aerated blood from the lungs to the left atrium of the heart. The pulmonary veins are the only veins that carry bright-red oxygenated blood.

pulmonology The study and science of the anatomy, physiology, and pathology of the lungs.

pulse The rhythmic dilation of an artery that results from beating of the heart. Pulse is often measured by feeling the arteries of the wrist or neck.

pulse, Corrigan See *Corrigan pulse*.

pulse, water-hammer See *Corrigan pulse*.

pulse rate A measure of the number of pulsations in an artery each minute. Pulse rate is usually taken at the wrist or neck.

pump-oxygenator See *heart-lung machine*.

punch biopsy A biopsy that is performed by using a punch, an instrument for cutting and removing a disk of tissue. For example, a punch biopsy of the skin may be done to make a diagnosis of skin cancer.

puncture, ear See *ear puncture*.

puncture, lumbar See *lumbar puncture*.

puncture wound An injury that is caused by a pointed object that pierces or penetrates the skin. Puncture wounds carry a danger of tetanus.

pupil The opening of the iris. The pupil may appear to open (dilate) and close (constrict), but it is really the iris that is the prime mover; the pupil is merely the absence of iris. The pupil determines how much light is let into the eye. Both pupils are usually of equal size. If they are not, the condition is called anisocoria.

purified protein derivative (PPD) The material used in the skin test for exposure to tuberculosis infection.

purine One of the two classes of bases in DNA and RNA. The purine bases are guanine (G) and adenine (A). Uric acid, the offending substance in gout, is a purine end product. See also *pyrimidine*.

purpura Hemorrhage (bleeding) into the surface of the skin. The area of skin with purpura is greater than 3 millimeters in diameter. The appearance of an individual area of purpura varies with the duration of the lesions. Early purpura is red and becomes darker, then purple, and brown-yellow as it fades.

purpura, acute thrombocytopenic See *acute thrombocytopenic purpura*.

purpura, anaphylactoid See *anaphylactoid purpura*.

purpura, Henoch-Schonlein See *anaphylactoid purpura*.

purpura, thrombotic thrombocytopenic See *thrombotic thrombocytopenic purpura*.

purulent Pertaining to pus. Containing or composed of pus. See also *pus*.

pus A thick, whitish-yellow fluid that results from the accumulation of white blood cells, liquefied tissue, and cellular debris. Pus is commonly a sign of infection or foreign material in the body.

pustulosis A highly inflammatory skin condition that results in large, fluid-filled, blister-like areas (pustules). Pustulosis typically occurs on the palms of the hands and/or the soles of the feet. The skin of these areas peels and flakes (exfoliates).

PV Polycythemia vera.

PVC Premature ventricular contraction.

PWS Prader-Willi syndrome.

PXE Pseudoxanthoma elasticum.

pyarthrosis See *arthritis, septic*.

pycnodysostosis An inherited disorder of bone that causes short stature and abnormally dense brittle bones. Pycnodysostosis can be due to a defect in the enzyme cathepsin K. Sometimes spelled pyknodysostosis. The French artist Toulouse-Lautrec is thought to have had this disease. No specific treatment is available.

pyelo See *pyelonephritis*.

pyelogram An X-ray study of the kidneys, especially showing the pelvis (urine-collecting basin), and the ureter.

pyelonephritis Bacterial infection of the kidneys. Pyelonephritis can be acute or chronic, and it is most often due to the ascent of bacteria from the bladder up the ureters to infect the kidneys. Symptoms include flank (side) pain, fever, shaking chills, sometimes foul-smelling urine, frequent and urgent need to urinate, and general malaise. Tenderness is elicited by gently tapping over the kidney with a fist (percussion). Diagnosis is made via urinalysis, which reveals white blood cells and bacteria in the urine. Usually there is also an increase in circulating white cells in the blood. Treatment involves use of appropriate antibiotics. Often called simply pyelo.

pyloric stenosis Narrowing (stenosis) of the outlet of the stomach so that food cannot pass easily from it into the duodenum. Pyloric stenosis results in feeding problems and projectile vomiting in infants. The obstruction can be corrected with a relatively simple surgical procedure.

pylorus The outlet of the stomach.

pyoderma gangrenosum An ulcerating condition of skin that results in heaped borders with a typical appearance. Pyoderma gangrenosum appears to be mediated by the immune system, but the exact cause is unknown. The lesion usually begins as a soft nodule on the skin that then ulcerates. The ulcer enlarges, and the skin at the edge is purple-red. The ulcers can become quite large. Pyoderma gangrenosum is associated with several other diseases, including ulcerative colitis, Crohn's disease, rheumatoid arthritis, leukemia, and cryoglobulinemia. Pyoderma gangrenosum is usually responsive to corticosteroids.

pyogenic arthritis Purulent arthritis with pus as a result of infection within the joint. See *arthritis, septic*.

pyrexia See *fever*.

pyrimidine One of the two classes of bases in DNA and RNA. The pyrimidine bases in DNA are thymine (T) and cytosine (C), and the pyrimidine bases in RNA are thymine (T) and uracil (U). See also *purine*.

pyuria Pus in the urine. Pyuria is a sign of inflammation, often related to infection.

Qq

q arm of a chromosome The long arm of a chromosome. All human chromosomes have 2 arms—a short arm and a long arm. By international convention, the short arm is termed p, and the long arm of the chromosome is termed q. For example, if a gene is on 3q12, that gene is on chromosome 3, on its long arm, in region 12.

Q fever An infectious disease due to the bacterium Coxiella burnetii whose symptoms include fever, headache, malaise, and pneumonia (interstitial pneumonitis), but not rash. The Q stands for query because the cause of the disease was long a question mark. Q fever is a zoonotic disease and is contracted from cattle, sheep, and goats. Chronic Q fever (infection that persists for more than 6 months) may develop years after the initial infection and can lead to serious complications including endocarditis. Transplant recipients, patients with cancer, and patients with chronic kidney disease are at increased risk of developing chronic Q fever.

q.d. Seen on a prescription, one per day. Also known as quotidian. See also Appendix A, "Prescription Abbreviations."

q.h. On a prescription, every hour. See also Appendix A, "Prescription Abbreviations."

q.i.d. On a prescription, four times daily. See also Appendix A, "Prescription Abbreviations."

q.n.s. On a lab report, insufficient quantity of sample.

QRS complex The deflections in an electrocardiogram (EKG) tracing that represent the ventricular activity of the heart.

q.s. On a prescription, as needed. See also Appendix A, "Prescription Abbreviations."

q.3h. On a prescription, every 3 hours. See also Appendix A, "Prescription Abbreviations."

QT syndrome, long See *long QT syndrome*.

q.2h. On a prescription, every 2 hours. See also Appendix A, "Prescription Abbreviations."

quack **1** A practitioner who suggests for prevention or treatment of disease substances or devices that are known to be ineffective. **2** Someone who pretends to be able to diagnose or heal people but is unqualified and incompetent.

quackery Deliberate misrepresentation of the ability of a substance, a device, or a person to prevent or treat disease.

quadrant A quarter of an area. For example, the liver is in the right upper quadrant of the abdomen.

quadriceps **1** Any four-headed muscle. **2** The large muscle of the thigh that comes down the bone of the upper leg (femur) and over the kneecap (patella), and then anchors into the top of the large bone in the lower leg (tibia). The function of the quadriceps is to straighten (extend) the leg. Also known as *musculus quadriceps femoris* and *quad*.

quadripareisis Weakness of all four limbs, both arms and both legs, as from muscular dystrophy.

quadriplegia Paralysis of all four limbs, both arms and both legs, as from a high spinal cord accident or stroke.

qualitative Having to do with quality, in contrast to quantitative, which pertains strictly to quantity. See also *quantitative*.

quality of life The patient's ability to enjoy normal life activities. Quality of life is an important consideration in medical care. Some medical treatments can seriously impair quality of life without providing appreciable benefit, whereas others greatly enhance quality of life.

quantitative Having to do with quantity or with the amount. See also *qualitative*.

quarantine A period of isolation decreed to control the spread of infectious disease. Before the era of antibiotics and other medications, quarantine was one of the few available means for halting the spread of infectious diseases.

quasi- Prefix meaning seemingly, as in *quasidominant* (seemingly dominant).

Queensland tick typhus See *typhus*, *Queensland tick*.

quickening The moment during pregnancy when the baby is first felt to move.

quiescent Inactive, resting. For example, tuberculosis can be a quiescent (inactive) infection.

quinacrine **1** A drug that has been used to treat malaria as well as giardiasis. **2** In cytogenetics, a

fluorescent dye used to stain chromosomes. See also *malaria; plasmodium*.

quinidine A medication (brand name: Cardioquin, Quinaglute, Quinalan, Quinidex, Quinora) that is prescribed to treat abnormal heart rhythms. Quinidine is derived from the same botanical source as quinine. Quinidine interacts with a number of other medications, particularly over-the-counter cold and cough remedies. See also *quinine*.

quinine An antimalarial agent. Quinine takes its name from the Peruvian Indian word for “bark of the tree,” referring to the cinchona tree from which quinine was obtained. Until World War I, quinine

was the only effective treatment for malaria. In fact, quinine was the first chemical compound to be successfully used to treat an infectious disease. See also *malaria; plasmodium*.

quinsy See *peritonsillar abscess*.

Quintan fever See *trench fever*.

quotid See *q.d.*

quotidian Recurring each day, as in a fever that returns every day.

quotient The result of mathematical division.

Rr

R **1** Respiration. For example, a medical chart note of “R20” is shorthand for 20 respirations (breaths) per minute. **2** Right. A medical chart note of a burn on the “R digit 5” places the burn on the right little finger or toe. **3** Roentgen. **4** In chemistry, a radical. **5** On a prescription, *recipe*, which is Latin for “to take.” Also known as Rx.

rabies A potentially fatal viral infection that attacks the central nervous system. Rabies is carried by wild animals (particularly bats and raccoons) and finds its way to humans by many routes. Most cases of rabies can be traced to animal bites, but cases have been documented in which the virus was inhaled in bat caves, contracted in lab accidents, or received from transplanted donor tissue. Symptoms include fever, aching muscles, and headache, potentially progressing to inflammation of the brain, confusion, seizures, paralysis, coma, and death. There is no cure for rabies after it has settled in the brain, so immediate emergency care for any suspicious animal contact is imperative. Rabies immunoglobulin shots, antibiotics, and rabies vaccine may be used immediately after contact with a suspected rabies carrier. To prevent rabies, pets should be vaccinated against the virus, and people should avoid contact with wild or unknown animals. A human rabies vaccine is available, but it is recommended only for those in high-risk occupations (such as game wardens, zookeepers, and animal control officers).

racemose A descriptive term for something that is in a cluster or bunch. For example, a racemose aneurysm is an aneurysm that looks like a bunch of grapes.

rad Radiation absorbed dose, a measurement for a dose of ionizing radiation.

radial **1** Pertaining to the radius, the smaller bone in the forearm. The radial artery is so named because of its proximity to the radius. **2** Pertaining to the radius of a circle. **3** Spreading from a central point. A radial keratotomy, for instance, is an eye operation in which incisions are made in the cornea that resemble the spokes in a wheel.

radial aplasia-thrombocytopenia syndrome
See *TAR syndrome*.

radial artery A major artery that emerges through the neck of the radius in the crook of the elbow and sends out 12 branches to various areas of the forearm, wrist, and hand.

radiate To spread out from a central area. For example, sciatic pain may radiate outward from the lower back.

radiation **1** Rays of energy. Gamma rays and X-rays are two types of radiation that are often used in medicine. **2** The use of energy waves to diagnose or treat disease.

radiation, seed See *radiation therapy, interstitial*.

radiation fibrosis See *fibrosis, radiation*.

radiation menopause See *menopause, induced*.

radiation oncologist A physician whose specialty is the use of radiation therapy as a treatment for cancer.

radiation oncology The medical specialty that is involved in the use of radiation (X-rays, gamma rays, or electrons) to treat cancer.

radiation pneumonitis See *pneumonitis, radiation*.

radiation therapy The use of high-energy rays to damage cancer cells, stopping them from growing and dividing. Like surgery, radiation therapy is a local treatment that affects cancer cells only in the treated area. Radiation can come from a machine (external radiation) or from a small container of radioactive material implanted directly into or near a tumor (internal radiation). External radiation therapy is usually given on an outpatient basis in a hospital or clinic. Patients are not radioactive during or after external radiation therapy. For internal radiation therapy, the patient stays in the hospital for a few days. The implant may be temporary or permanent. After an implant is removed, there is no radioactivity in the body. The amount of radiation in a permanent implant goes down to a safe level before the patient leaves the hospital. Side effects of radiation therapy depend on the treatment dose and the part of the body treated. The most common side effects of radiation are fatigue, skin reactions (such as a rash or redness) in the treated area, and loss of appetite. Radiation therapy can cause inflammation of tissues and organs in and around the body site that is irradiated. Radiation therapy can also cause a decrease in the number of white blood cells. Although the side effects of radiation therapy can be unpleasant, they can usually be treated or controlled. Furthermore, in most cases, they are not permanent.

radiation therapy, external Radiation therapy in which the source of radiation is a machine outside the body.

radiation therapy, internal Radiation therapy in which a small container of radioactive material is implanted in the body, in or near the cancerous tumor.

radiation therapy, interstitial A form of radiotherapy in which tiny radioactive “seeds” are implanted directly in the affected tissue with a needle-like instrument. Interstitial radiation therapy has been used in the treatment of prostate and other cancers.

radiation therapy, stereotactic The use of a number of precisely aimed beams of ionizing radiation, each coming from a different direction and meeting at a specific point, to deliver radiation treatment to that spot.

radical, free See *free radical*.

radical dissection Surgical removal of not only affected tissue, but also nearby tissue that may be covertly affected.

radical mastectomy See *mastectomy, radical*.

radical neck dissection Often called a “radical neck,” a surgical procedure that involves the removal of a tumor from the neck with an additional margin of seemingly normal tissue of at least 2 cm together with the removal of the lymph nodes from the neck.

radiculitis See *radiculopathy*.

radiculopathy Any disease of the spinal nerve roots and spinal nerves. Radiculopathy is characterized by pain that seems to radiate from the spine, extending outward to cause symptoms away from the source of the spinal nerve root irritation. Causes of radiculopathy include deformities of the discs between the vertebrae. Patients with diabetes can be affected by a form of radiculopathy that may be caused by inadequate blood supply to the spinal nerve roots. Also known as radiculitis.

radioactive Emitting energy waves due to decaying atomic nuclei. Radioactive substances are used in medicine as tracers for diagnosis and in treatment to kill cancerous cells.

radioactive iodine A version (isotope) of the chemical element iodine that is radioactive.

Abbreviated RAI. RAI is used in diagnostic tests as well as in radiotherapy of the thyroid. It may be used in the treatment of hyperthyroidism and cancers of the thyroid. It directly radiates thyroid tissues, thereby destroying them. RAI should not be used during pregnancy and breastfeeding. See also *Graves disease*.

radioactive tracer A radioactive molecule that can be sent through the body's circulatory or urinary system, with its progress followed by a radiation-sensitive machine.

radioallergosorbent test See *RAST*.

radiograph In medicine, an X-ray or a film produced through X-ray.

radiography The process of obtaining film records (radiographs) of internal structures of the body. Radiography is made possible by X-rays passing through the body to act on a specially sensitized film.

radioimmunoassay A very sensitive, specific laboratory test (assay) that uses radiolabeled and unlabeled substances in an immunological (anti-body-antigen) reaction.

radioinsensitive Not sensitive to X-rays and other forms of radiant energy. For example, if a tumor is radioinsensitive, it cannot be successfully attacked by using radiation therapy. The opposite of radioinsensitive is radiosensitive.

radioisotope A version of a chemical element that has an unstable nucleus and emits radiation during its decay to a stable form. Radioisotopes have important uses in medical diagnosis, treatment, and research.

radiologic Having to do with radiology.

radiologist A physician who specializes in radiology, the branch of medicine that uses radiation for the diagnosis and treatment of disease. A radiologist can subspecialize and become, for example, a radiation oncologist or an interventional radiologist. See also *radiation oncologist; radiologist, interventional*.

radiologist, interventional A radiologic specialist who uses fluoroscopy, computerized axial tomography (CT), and ultrasound to guide wires and catheters for performing procedures such as biopsies, draining fluids, inserting catheters, and dilating or stenting narrowed ducts or vessels. See also *radiology, interventional*.

radiology The medical specialty concerned with radiation for the diagnosis and treatment of disease, including both ionizing radiation such as X-rays and nonionizing radiation such as ultrasound. Also known as roentgenology.

radiology, interventional The use of image guidance methods to gain access to the deepest interior of most organs and organ systems. Interventional radiology includes the use of balloons, catheters, microcatheters, stents, therapeutic embolization (deliberately clogging up a blood vessel), and more. The specialty of interventional radiology overlaps with other surgical arenas, including interventional cardiology, vascular surgery, endoscopy, laparoscopy, and other minimally invasive techniques, such as biopsies. Specialists performing interventional radiology procedures today include not only radiologists but also other types of physicians, such as general surgeons, vascular surgeons, cardiologists, gastroenterologists, gynecologists, and urologists.

radiolucent Permeable to one or another form of radiation, such as X-rays. Radiolucent objects do not block radiation but let it pass. Plastic is usually radiolucent. The opposite of radiolucent is radiopaque.

radionuclide scan An exam that produces pictures (scans) of internal parts of the body based upon the presence of radioactive material. The patient is administered a small amount of radioactive material. A machine called a scanner then measures the radioactivity in certain organs.

radiopaque Opaque to one or another form of radiation, such as X-rays. Radiopaque objects block radiation rather than allow it to pass through. Metal, for instance, is radiopaque, so metal objects that a patient may have swallowed are visible on X-rays. Radiopaque dyes are used in radiology to enhance X-ray pictures of internal anatomic structures. The opposite of radiopaque is radiolucent.

radiosensitive Sensitive to X-rays and other forms of radiant energy. For example, if a tumor is radiosensitive, it is potentially treatable with radiation therapy. The opposite of radiosensitive is radioinsensitive.

radiotherapy See *radiation therapy*.

radium The radioactive element discovered by Marie and Pierre Curie in 1898. Since the discovery of radium, many radioactive isotopes have been used for both the diagnosis and the treatment of diseases.

radius The smaller of the two bones of the forearm, located on the thumb's side. (The larger bone in the forearm is the ulna.)

radon A radioactive element that is formed, as a gas, during the breakdown of radium. Radon exposure is the second leading cause of lung cancer deaths in the United States, after smoking. Radon gas continuously seeps into the air from uranium- and radium-bearing soil and rock. Well water can be contaminated with radon and may carry radon into a house through the water pipes. There are several radon testing devices on the market.

Raeder syndrome See *cluster headache*.

ragweed Any of several weedy composite herbs that produce a pollen to which many people are allergic. Of all allergy sufferers in the US, 75 percent are allergic to ragweed.

RAI Radioactive iodine.

rale An abnormal lung sound that can be heard through a stethoscope. Rales may be sibilant (whistling), dry (crackling), or wet (sloshy), depending on the amount and density of fluid refluxing back and forth in the air passages.

Ramsey Hunt syndrome A herpesvirus (specifically, by the varizella-zoster virus or VZV) infection of the geniculate nerve ganglion, which causes paralysis of the facial muscles on the same side of the face as the infection. It is usually associated with an unusual rash (composed of vesicles, or tiny fluid-filled bumps, in the skin) in or around the ear and sometimes on the roof of the mouth. Ramsey Hunt syndrome is commonly more painful and more debilitating than Bell's palsy. Treatment with steroids and antiviral agents, such as acyclovir (brand name: Zovirax) may improve recovery and lessen pain.

ramus In anatomy, a branch, such as a branch of a blood vessel or nerve. For example, the ramus acetabularis arteriae circumflexae femoris medialis is the branch of an artery that goes to the socket of the hip joint. The plural of ramus is rami.

ramus of the mandible One of the two prominent, projecting back parts of the horseshoe-shaped lower jaw bone.

random Determined solely by chance.

random mating Totally haphazard mating, with no regard to the genetic makeup (genotype) of the mate, so that any sperm has an equal chance of fertilizing any egg. Random mating rarely, if ever,

occurs, but the concept is important in population genetics. Also known as panmixis.

random sample A test group that is selected solely by chance.

range In medicine and statistics, the difference between the lowest and highest numeric values. For example, if five premature infants are born, weighing 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 pounds, respectively, the range of their birth weights is 2 to 6 pounds.

range, normal See *normal range*.

range of motion The full movement potential of a joint, usually its range of flexion and extension. For example, a knee might lack 10 degrees of full extension due to an injury.

rapid eye movement sleep See *REM sleep*.

rash Breaking out (eruption) of the skin. A rash can be caused by an underlying medical condition, hormonal cycles, allergies, or contact with irritating substances. Treatment depends on the underlying cause of the rash. Medically, a rash is referred to as an exanthem.

Rasmussen syndrome A rare brain disorder that is caused by inflammation of brain cells in one hemisphere. Rasmussen syndrome, whose cause is unknown, features seizures that can be difficult or impossible to control with medication, and it eventually results in brain shrinkage (atrophy). Treatment is surgery, if possible. The inflammation seems to stop of its own accord eventually, but the damage done is irreversible.

RAST Radioallergosorbent test, an allergy test that is done on a sample of blood. RAST is used to check for allergic sensitivity to specific substances.

rat-flea typhus See *typhus, murine*.

rattlesnake bite A poisonous bite from a member of the pit viper family. All rattlesnakes are venomous and secrete poisonous venom, and they are the main culprit in deaths from snakebites in the US. Emergency treatment is essential: With proper care, rattlesnake bites are rarely fatal. The affected body part should be kept immobile and below the level of the heart, and the bite victim should be taken to the nearest hospital. A tourniquet or bandage should not be used, and no one should attempt to suction out the wound by mouth. Treatment includes use of antivenom and care for the puncture wound itself and any symptoms that emerge, such as respiratory distress. See also *snakebite*.

Raynaud's disease A condition that results in discoloration of the skin on the fingers and/or toes when a person is exposed to changes in temperature or to emotional events. Raynaud's disease, also known as primary Raynaud's phenomenon, can accompany other diseases; when it does, it is called Raynaud's phenomenon or secondary Raynaud's phenomenon. The skin discoloration occurs because an abnormal spasm of the blood vessels causes a diminished blood supply. Initially, the digits involved turn white because of diminished blood supply, and then they turn blue because of prolonged lack of oxygen. Finally, the blood vessels reopen, causing flushing that turns the digits red.

Raynaud's phenomenon A condition that results in discoloration of fingers and/or toes when a person is exposed to changes in temperature or emotional events and that occurs with a number of conditions, including rheumatic diseases such as scleroderma, rheumatoid arthritis, and systemic lupus erythematosus; hormone imbalance, including hypothyroidism and carcinoid imbalances; trauma, such as from frostbite or the use of vibrating tools; medications, particularly propranolol (brand name: Inderal), estrogens, nicotine, and bleomycin; and, uncommonly, cancer. When the discoloration occurs alone, it is called Raynaud's disease. See also *Raynaud's disease*.

reabsorption Being absorbed again. For example, the kidney selectively reabsorbs substances it has already secreted into the renal tubules, such as glucose, protein, and sodium. These reabsorbed substances are returned to the blood.

reaction kinetics The rate of change in a biochemical (or other) reaction.

reactive airway disease A term used to refer to several lung conditions that are characterized by transient narrowing (spasm) of the airways in the lungs, for example, asthma. The narrowing limits the ability of air to be expelled from the lungs through the airways and leads to wheezing. See also *asthma*.

reactive arthritis A chronic form of inflammatory arthritis that features arthritis, inflammation of the eyes (conjunctivitis), and inflammation of the genital, urinary, or gastrointestinal systems. Reactive arthritis is the preferred name for what was formerly called Reiter syndrome. Reactive arthritis seems to involve an immune system that is "reacting" to the presence of a bacterial infection in the genital, urinary, or gastrointestinal system. Accordingly, certain people's immune systems are genetically primed to react aberrantly when these areas are exposed to particular bacteria. The aberrant reaction of the

immune system leads to inflammation in the joints, eyes, and genital, urinary or gastrointestinal system. See also *arthritis; arthritis, Reiter syndrome; keratoderma blennorrhagicum*.

reading frame One of the three possible ways to read a nucleotide sequence in DNA, depending on whether reading starts with the first, second, or third base in a triplet.

reading frame, open See *open reading frame*.

reading retardation Impaired ability to read. Reading retardation may reflect mental disability, cultural deprivation, or learning disability. See also *dyslexia*.

reagent A substance that is used to produce a chemical reaction that allows researchers to detect, measure, produce, or change other substances.

rebound The reversal of response upon withdrawal of a stimulus.

rebound effect The production of increased negative symptoms when the effect of a drug has passed or the patient no longer responds to the drug. If a drug produces a rebound effect, the condition it was used to treat may come back even stronger when the drug is discontinued or loses effectiveness.

recalcitrant Stubborn. For example, a recalcitrant case of pneumonia stubbornly resists treatment.

recent memory See *memory, short-term*.

receptor **1** In cell biology, a structure on the surface of a cell or inside a cell that selectively receives and binds a specific substance. For example, there are insulin receptors and low-density lipoprotein (LDL) receptors. **2** In neurology, the terminal of a sensory nerve that receives and responds to stimuli.

receptor, chemokine See *chemokine receptor*.

receptor, visual The layer of rods and cones, the visual cells, of the retina.

recessive A genetic trait that appears only in individuals who have received two copies of a mutant gene, one copy from each parent. The individuals with a double dose of the mutated gene are called homozygotes. Their parents, each with a single dose of the mutated gene, appear normal and are called heterozygotes, or gene carriers. There are two types of recessive diseases—autosomal recessive and X-linked recessive—that describe different patterns of inheritance. The opposite of recessive is dominant.

See also *autosomal recessive trait; dominant; X-linked recessive*.

recessive, autosomal See *autosomal recessive trait*.

recessive, X-linked See *X-linked recessive*.

recipient In medicine, someone who is given something, such as a blood transfusion or an organ transplant, that is derived from another person (the donor).

recombinant A person with a new combination of genes, a combination not present in either parent, due to parental recombination of those genes.

recombinant clone A clone that contains recombinant DNA.

recombinant DNA molecules A combination of DNA molecules of different origin that are joined using recombinant DNA technology.

recombinant DNA technology A series of procedures that are used to join together (recombine) DNA segments. A recombinant DNA molecule is constructed from segments of two or more different DNA molecules. Under certain conditions, a recombinant DNA molecule can enter a cell and replicate there, either on its own or after it has been integrated into a chromosome.

recombination The trading of fragments of genetic material between chromosomes before the egg and sperm cells are created. Key features of recombination include the point-to-point association of paired chromosomes (synapsis), followed by the visible exchange of segments (crossing over) at X-shaped crosspoints (chiasmata). Recombination is the principal way of creating genetic diversity between generations. Recombination ensures that children receive a different genetic makeup than their parents.

Recombivax-HB A vaccine that stimulates the body's immune system to produce antibodies against the hepatitis B virus. See also *hepatitis B; hepatitis B immunization*.

recrudescence Reappearance, as of a rash or arthritis.

rectal **1** Having to do with the rectum. **2** Informally, digital rectal exam.

rectal cancer See *cancer, rectal*.

rectal exam, digital See *digital rectal exam*.

rectouterine pouch See *pouch of Douglas*.

rectum The last 6 to 8 inches of the large intestine. The rectum stores solid waste until it leaves the body through the anus.

rectus See *rectus abdominis*.

rectus abdominis A large muscle in the front of the abdomen that assists in regular breathing movements, supports the muscles of the spine while a person lifts something, and keeps the intestines and other abdominal organs in place.

recuperate To recover health and strength. Also known as convalesce.

recur To occur again; to return. For example, a symptom, sign, or disease can recur.

recurrence The return of a sign, symptom, or disease after a remission. The reappearance of cancer cells at the same site or in another location is a form of recurrence.

recurrence risk The chance that a disease will strike again. In medical genetics, the chance that an inherited disease that is present in a family will recur in that family, affecting another person or persons.

recurrent Appearing or occurring again. For example, a recurrent fever is a fever that has returned after an intermission, a recrudescence fever.

recurrent aural vertigo See *Ménière's disease*.

recurrent laryngeal nerve See *laryngeal nerve, recurrent*.

recurrent respiratory papillomatosis See *laryngeal papillomatosis*.

red blood cell See *erythrocyte*.

red cell See *erythrocyte*.

red cell count The number of red blood cells in a volume of blood. The normal range varies slightly between laboratories, but is generally in the range of 4.2–5.9 million cells/cmm. Red cell count can be expressed in international units as $(4.2\text{--}5.9) \times 1,012$ cells per liter. Also known as erythrocyte count. See also *CBC*.

red cell distribution width See *CBC*.

red-green colorblindness A form of colorblindness in which red and green are perceived as being identical. Red-green colorblindness is the

most common type of colorblindness. It is inherited in an X-linked recessive manner and affects 6–8 percent of males in the US. Also known as deutan colorblindness, deuteranopia, and Daltonism. See also *colorblindness*.

reduction division The first cell division in meiosis, the process by which germ cells are formed. In reduction division, the chromosome number is reduced from diploid (46 chromosomes) to haploid (23 chromosomes). Also known as first meiotic division and first meiosis.

Reed-Sternberg cell A type of cell that is seen microscopically in the affected tissues of patients with Hodgkin's disease and is a hallmark of Hodgkin's disease. See also *Hodgkin's disease*.

referral The recommendation of a medical or paramedical professional. If one gets a referral to ophthalmology, for example, the person is being sent to the eye doctor. In health maintenance organizations (HMOs) and other managed-care schemes, a referral is usually necessary in order to see any practitioner or specialist other than the primary care physician (PCP) and have the service covered. The referral is obtained from the PCP, who may require a telephone or office consultation first. The term referral can pertain both to the act of sending a patient to another physician or therapist and to the actual paper authorizing the visit.

referred pain Pain felt at a site other than where the cause is situated. An example is the pain from the pancreas, which is felt in the back. Pain in internal organs is often referred to sites distant from them.

reflex An involuntary reaction. For example, the corneal reflex is the blink that occurs upon irritation of the eye.

reflex, Babinski See *Babinski reflex*.

reflex sympathetic dystrophy syndrome A condition that features a group of typical symptoms, including pain (often perceived as burning pain), tenderness, and swelling of an extremity. Reflex sympathetic dystrophy syndrome is associated with varying degrees of sweating, warmth and/or coolness, flushing, discoloration, and shiny skin. Its exact cause is unknown. Also known as Complex regional pain syndrome (CRPS).

reflux See *gastroesophageal reflux disease*.

reflux laryngitis See *laryngitis, reflux*.

refraction In ophthalmology, the bending of light that takes place within the human eye. Refractive errors include nearsightedness (myopia), farsightedness (hyperopia), and astigmatism. Lenses can be used to control the amount of refraction and correct those errors.

refractory Not yielding, or not yielding readily, to treatment.

refractory anemia See *anemia, refractory*.

Refsum disease A genetic disorder that affects the metabolism of the fatty acid phytanic acid. When phytanic acid accumulates, it causes a number of progressive problems, including inflammation of numerous nerves (polyneuritis), diminishing vision due to retinitis pigmentosa, and wobbliness (ataxia) caused by damage to the cerebellar portion of the brain. Refsum disease is caused by mutations in the PAHX gene on chromosome 10 that encodes the enzyme phytanoyl-CoA hydroxylase (PAHX). Also known as phytanic acid storage disease.

regenerate To reproduce or renew something that was lost. For example, after an injury, the liver has the capacity to regenerate.

regimen A plan or a regulated course, such as a diet, exercise, or treatment, that is designed to give a good result. A low-salt diet is one type of dietary regimen.

regional enteritis See *Crohn's disease*.

regional lymphadenitis See *cat scratch fever*.

registry A collection of information. A registry is usually organized so that the data in it can be analyzed. For example, analysis of data in a tumor registry maintained at a hospital may show a rise in lung cancer among women.

regress To return or go back, particularly to return to a pattern of behavior or level of skill characteristic of a younger age. For example, if a 3-year-old child begins to regress by losing the ability to control his bowels or speak, that is a cause for medical concern.

regulatory gene A gene that regulates the expression of other genes.

regurgitation A backward flowing. For example, vomiting is a regurgitation of food from the stomach, and the sloshing of blood back into the heart when a heart valve is incompetent is a regurgitation of blood.

rehab An abbreviation for rehabilitation.

rehabilitation The process of helping a person who has suffered an illness or injury restore lost skills and so regain maximum self-sufficiency. For example, rehabilitation work after a stroke may help the patient walk and speak clearly again.

rehydrate To restore lost water to the body tissues and fluids. Prompt rehydration is imperative whenever dehydration occurs, whether from diarrhea, exposure, lack of drinking water, or medication use. Rehydration can occur orally or via IV administration of fluids.

Reiter syndrome See *reactive arthritis*.

rejection In transplantation biology, when the body's immune system attacks transplanted cells, tissues, or organs. For example, a transplanted kidney may be rejected.

relapse The return of signs and symptoms of a disease after a remission.

relaxant Something that relaxes, relieves, or reduces tension. For example, a muscle relaxant is often administered during abdominal surgery to relax the diaphragm and keep it from moving during the surgery.

relaxin A hormone that is produced during pregnancy that facilitates the birth process by causing a softening and lengthening of the cervix and the pubic symphysis (the place where the pubic bones come together). Relaxin also inhibits contractions of the uterus and may play a role in determining the timing of delivery.

release, carpal tunnel See *carpal tunnel release*.

rem In radiation, an international unit of X-ray or gamma-ray radiation adjusted for the atomic makeup of the human body.

REM Rapid eye movement of the eyes during sleep. During REM sleep, the eyeballs appear to flick around under the closed eyelids. See *REM sleep*.

REM sleep The portion of sleep during which rapid eye movements (REMs) occur. Dreams occur during REM sleep, and people typically have three to five periods of REM sleep per night. These periods occur at intervals of 1 to 2 hours and can vary in length from 5 minutes to over an hour. REM sleep is also characterized by rapid, low-voltage brain waves that are detectable on an electroencephalogram (EEG) recording; irregular breathing and heart rate; and involuntary muscle jerks. See also *NREM sleep*.

remedy Something that consistently helps treat or cure a disease.

remission Disappearance of the signs and symptoms of cancer or other disease. A remission can be temporary or permanent.

remission induction chemotherapy See *induction therapy*.

remote telesurgery A surgical procedure that is carried out from a great distance using computer and robotic technology.

renal Having to do with the kidney. For example, renal cancer is cancer of the kidneys.

renal aneurysm An aneurysm that involves the renal artery, the main artery to the kidney.

renal artery stenosis Narrowing of the major artery to the kidney that can lead to seriously elevated blood pressure. Common causes of renal artery stenosis include atherosclerosis and thickening of the muscular wall (fibromuscular dysplasia) of the renal artery.

renal calculus See *kidney stones*.

renal cancer See *cancer, kidney*.

renal capsule The fibrous connective tissue that surrounds each kidney.

renal cell carcinoma See *cancer, renal cell*.

renal osteodystrophy See *osteodystrophy, renal*.

renal pelvis The area at the center of the kidney. Urine collects in the renal pelvis and is funneled into the ureter.

renal stone See *kidney stones*.

renal transplant See *kidney transplant*.

renal tubule A small structure in the kidney that filters blood and produces urine.

renal vein thrombosis A blood clot in the major vein that drains blood from the kidney.

Rendu-Osler-Weber syndrome See *hereditary hemorrhagic telangiectasia*.

rep 1 Slang for a pharmaceutical company representative. 2 Roentgen equivalent physical, a unit of absorbed radiation approximately equivalent to one roentgen.

repair, DNA See *DNA repair*.

reperfusion The restoration of blood flow to an organ or to tissue. After a heart attack, an immediate goal is to quickly open blocked arteries and reperfuse the heart muscles. Early reperfusion minimizes the extent of heart muscle damage and preserves the pumping function of the heart.

repetitive stress injury An injury that occurs due to recurrent overuse or improper use. One of the best-known repetitive stress injuries is carpal tunnel syndrome, which often results from the trauma of highly repetitive work such as that of supermarket checkers, assembly-line workers, typists, word processors, accountants, and writers.

replacement therapy, estrogen See *estrogen replacement therapy*.

replacement therapy, hormone See *hormone therapy*.

replication A turning back, repetition, duplication, or reproduction. See also *DNA replication*.

replication, DNA See *DNA replication*.

reportable disease A disease that must be reported to federal, state, or local health officials when diagnosed.

reproduction The production of offspring. Reproduction need not be sexual; for example, yeast can reproduce by budding.

reproductive cell An egg or a sperm cell. Each mature reproductive cell is haploid, meaning that it has a single set of 23 chromosomes and so contains half the usual amount of DNA.

reproductive cloning Cloning designed to create new individuals, in contrast to the goal of therapeutic cloning. This idea has stirred great controversy and has met with almost uniform disapproval. See also *therapeutic cloning*.

reproductive system In women, the organs that are directly involved in producing eggs and in conceiving and carrying babies; in men, the organs directly involved in creating, storing, and delivering sperm to fertilize an egg.

research, controlled A study that compares results from a treated group and a control group. The control group may receive no treatment, a placebo, or a different treatment. See also *blinded study*; *double-blinded study*.

resection Surgical removal of part of an organ.

reservoir, Ommaya See *Ommaya reservoir*.

resident In medicine, a physician who has finished medical school and is receiving training in a specialized area, such as surgery, internal medicine, pathology, or radiology. Board certification in all medical and surgical specialties requires the satisfactory completion of a residency program and successful completion of a specialty board examination.

residual disease A disease that has not been fully eradicated.

resin, bile acid See *bile acid resin*.

resistance Opposition to something, or the ability to withstand something. For example, some forms of the staphylococcus bacterium are resistant to treatment with antibiotics.

resistance, antibiotic See *antibiotic resistance*.

resistance, pulmonary Opposition of the respiratory system to air flow.

resistance, vascular Opposition to the flow of blood by a blood vessel.

resolution In genetics, the degree of molecular detail on a physical map of DNA. Resolution may range from low to high.

resorb To absorb again, to lose substance. For example, some of a tooth may be resorbed.

resorption The process of losing substance. For example, when bone is surgically reshaped, it undergoes both new formation and resorption.

respiration The act of inhaling and exhaling air in order to exchange oxygen for carbon dioxide.

respiratory Having to do with respiration.

respiratory distress syndrome, acute See *acute respiratory distress syndrome*.

respiratory failure Inability of the lungs to perform their basic task of gas exchange, the transfer of oxygen from inhaled air into the blood and the transfer of carbon dioxide from the blood into exhaled air. Respiratory failure occurs because of the failure of the exchange of oxygen and carbon dioxide in tiny air sacs in the lung (alveoli), failure of the brain centers that control breathing, or failure of the muscles required to expand the lungs that can cause respiratory failure. Many different medical conditions can lead to respiratory failure, including asthma, emphysema, chronic obstructive

lung disease, surgery (on the abdomen, heart, or lungs), overdose of sleeping pills or other depressant drugs, premature birth, multiple physical injuries (as in auto accidents), extensive burns, muscle disease, nerve disease, profuse bleeding, near drowning, heart failure, severe infection, and extreme obesity.

respiratory papillomatosis, recurrent See *laryngeal papillomatosis*.

respiratory rate The number of breaths per minute or, more formally, the number of movements indicative of inspiration and expiration per unit time. In practice, the respiratory rate is usually determined by counting the number of times the chest rises or falls per minute. The aim of measuring respiratory rate is to determine whether the respirations are normal, abnormally fast (tachypnea), abnormally slow (bradypnea), or nonexistent (apnea).

respiratory syncytial virus A virus that causes mild respiratory infections, colds, and coughs in adults and can produce severe respiratory problems, including bronchitis and pneumonia, in young children and anyone with compromised immune, cardiac, or pulmonary systems. Abbreviated RSV. RSV is spread via respiratory secretions and is highly contagious. Infections usually occur during annual community outbreaks, often lasting 4 to 6 months, during the late fall, winter, or early spring. RSV typically features fever, prominent nasal secretions, and congestion coupled with wheezing for 1 to 2 weeks. Having immunity against RSV requires having a continuous, solid level of antibodies against the virus. There is particular concern about RSV occurring in premature babies, because their immune systems lack maturity and antibodies. There is no RSV vaccine.

respiratory system The organs that are involved in breathing, including the nose, throat, larynx, trachea, bronchi, and lungs. Also known as the respiratory tree.

respiratory therapy Exercises and treatments that help patients recover lung function, such as after surgery.

resting phase See *interphase*.

restless leg syndrome An uncomfortable (creeping, crawling, tingling, pulling, twitching, tearing, aching, throbbing, prickling, or grabbing) sensation in the calves that occurs while sitting or while lying down. The result is an uncontrollable urge to relieve the uncomfortable sensation by moving the legs. Restless leg syndrome is a common

cause of painful legs. The leg pain typically eases with motion of the legs and becomes more noticeable at rest, worsens during the early evening or later at night, and may cause insomnia.

retardation, mental See *mental retardation*.

retardation, reading See *reading retardation*.

reticulocyte An immature red blood cell.

reticulocyte count The number of reticulocytes (young red blood cells) circulating in blood, usually less than 1 percent of the total number of red blood cells. Elevation of the reticulocyte count above 1 percent (reticulocytosis) is a sign of rapid red blood cell production.

retina The nerve layer that lines the back of the eye, senses light, and creates impulses that travel through the optic nerve to the brain. A small area called the macula in the retina contains special light-sensitive cells that allow clear perception and central vision. The retina is filled with tiny blood vessels. See also *eye*.

retinal detachment A separation of the retina from its connection at the back of the eye. The separation usually results from a tear (that is, a rent or rip, not a tear drop) in the retina, which often occurs when the vitreous gel pulls loose or separates from its attachment to the retina. Once the retina has torn, the vitreous liquid can pass through the tear and accumulate behind the retina. The build-up of fluid behind the retina is what separates (detaches) the retina from the back of the eye. Vision loss occurs if the detached retina is not repaired.

retinal vasculitis Inflammation of the tiny blood vessels of the retina. Retinal vasculitis ranges in severity from mild to severe. Damage to the blood vessels of the retina can cause minimal, partial, or even complete blindness. Retinal vasculitis by itself is painless, but many of the diseases that cause it can also cause painful inflammation elsewhere, such as in the joints. Signs of retinal vasculitis can be observed by a physician using an ophthalmoscope. Further definition of the blood vessel condition can be determined with a special X-ray dye test (angiogram) of the retina. Diseases that cause retinal vasculitis include Behcet's syndrome, systemic lupus erythematosus, antiphospholipid antibody syndrome, systemic necrotizing vasculitis, Wegener's granulomatosis, Takayasu's vasculitis, and giant cell arteritis. Treatment typically involves use of high doses of cortisone-related medications, such as prednisone. In addition, some related diseases require immunosuppression with

medication, such as cyclosporine, chlorambucil, and cyclophosphamide.

retinitis pigmentosa A group of inherited disorders in which abnormalities of the photoreceptors (the rods and cones) of the retina lead to progressive visual loss. Abbreviated RP. People with RP first experience defective dark adaptation (night blindness), then constriction of the visual field (tunnel vision), and eventually, late in the course of the disease, loss of central vision. RP may be inherited in an autosomal dominant, autosomal recessive, or X-linked recessive manner or as a mitochondrial disorder. RP can occur alone or as part of a syndrome involving other abnormalities. More than 30 different genes are known to cause nonsyndromic RP (RP alone). Usher syndrome, which is RP and deafness, is a form of syndromic RP.

retinitis pigmentosa and deafness See *Usher syndrome*.

retinoblastoma A malignant eye tumor usually seen in children, that arises in cells in the developing retina that contain cancer-predisposing mutations in both copies of the gene RB1. Abbreviated RB. The most common sign of RB is a white pupillary reflex to light (leukocoria). There are two forms of RB: hereditary and sporadic. The inherited form of RB is usually present at birth as multiple tumors in both eyes. It is due to the transmission of an RB1 germline mutation followed by an acquired somatic RB1 mutation. The sporadic form of retinoblastoma has later onset and typically leads to a single tumor in only one eye. It is due to acquired mutations in both RB1 genes. Patients with hereditary RB are at increased risk of developing tumors outside the eye, including pinealomas (in the pineal gland of the brain), osteosarcomas, soft tissue sarcomas, and melanomas. When RB is detected at an early stage, it can sometimes be treated locally but often requires removal of the eye (enucleation). Early diagnosis and treatment of RB and RB-related tumors reduces morbidity and increases longevity.

retinoic acid syndrome A disorder due to the cancer treatment retinoic acid characterized by fever, difficulty breathing, chest pain, lung infiltrates, fluid around the lungs and heart, and hypoxia (lack of oxygen) that develops in some patients receiving retinoic acid therapy. It usually develops within 30 days of treatment. Steroids and chemotherapy can be used to treat retinoic acid syndrome.

retinol Vitamin A. See also Appendix C, "Vitamins."

retinopathy Any disease of the retina, the light-sensitive membrane at the back of the eye. The type

of retinopathy is often specified, such as arteriosclerotic retinopathy, diabetic retinopathy, or hypertensive retinopathy.

retrograde intrarenal surgery A procedure for performing surgery within the kidney by using a viewing tube called a fiber-optic endoscope. Abbreviated RIRS. In RIRS, the scope is placed through the urethra into the bladder and then through the ureter, into the urine-collecting part of the kidney. RIRS may be done to remove a stone. The stone can be seen through the scope, manipulated or crushed by an ultrasound probe, evaporated by a laser probe, or grabbed with small forceps. RIRS is performed by a specialist, a urologist with special expertise in RIRS (endourologist). The procedure is usually done under general or spinal anesthesia. The advantages of RIRS over open surgery include a quicker solution of the problem, the elimination of prolonged pain after surgery, and much faster recovery. Also known as kidney scoping.

retropubic prostatectomy Surgical removal of the prostate through an incision in the abdomen.

retrosternal Behind the sternum (breastbone).

retrovirus A virus that is composed not of DNA but of RNA. Retroviruses have an enzyme, called reverse transcriptase, that gives them the unique property of transcribing their RNA into DNA after entering a cell. The retroviral DNA can then integrate into the chromosomal DNA of the host cell, to be expressed there. HIV is a retrovirus.

Rett syndrome A neurological disease that affects girls only and is one of the most common causes of mental retardation in females. Girls with the syndrome show normal development during the first 6 to 18 months of life, followed first by a period of stagnation and then by rapid regression in motor and language skills. The hallmark of Rett syndrome is the loss of purposeful hand use and its replacement with stereotyped hand wringing. Other symptoms include slowed brain and head growth, seizures, and gait abnormalities. Rett syndrome is an X-linked dominant trait and is due to mutation in the MECP2 gene on the X chromosome. The vast majority of cases are sporadic and result from a new mutation in the girl with Rett syndrome. Males with MECP2 mutation suffer severe brain disease and die shortly after birth. See also *X-linked dominant*.

reversal of organs, total Complete transposition of the thoracic and abdominal organs from right to left, placing the heart in the right side of the chest, and so on. Organs appear as if in mirror image when examined or X-rayed. Total reversal of

organs has been estimated to occur in about 1 in 6,000 to 8,000 births. It also occurs in a rare, abnormal congenital condition called Kartagener syndrome. Also known as situs inversus totalis. See also *dextrocardia; Kartagener syndrome*.

reverse genetics In molecular genetics, identifying genes purely on the basis of their position in the genome, with no knowledge whatsoever of the gene product. In classic genetics, the traditional approach was to find a gene product and then try to identify the gene itself. Also known as positional cloning.

reverse transcriptase An enzyme that permits DNA to be made, using RNA as the template. A retrovirus, such as the HIV virus, can propagate itself by converting its RNA into DNA with reverse transcriptase.

Reye's syndrome A sudden and sometimes fatal disease of the brain (encephalopathy) that is accompanied by degeneration of the liver. Reye's syndrome usually occurs in children between the ages of 4 and 12, comes after infection with chickenpox (varicella) or an influenza-type illness, and is associated with taking medications that contain aspirin. A child with Reye's syndrome first tends to be unusually quiet, lethargic (stuporous), and sleepy. Vomiting may occur. In the second stage, the lethargy deepens, and the child becomes confused, combative, and delirious. This stage is followed by decreasing consciousness, coma, seizures, and eventually death. Early diagnosis and control of the increased intracranial pressure can prevent death or brain damage. Preventing Reye's syndrome is the reason why physicians no longer recommend giving children aspirin for fever or for any other reason.

RF Rheumatoid factor.

Rh factor An antigen found in the red blood cells of most people. Those who have Rh factor are said to be Rh positive (Rh+), and those who do not are Rh negative (Rh-). Blood used in transfusions must match donors for Rh status as well as for ABO blood group because Rh- patients will develop anemia if given R+ blood. Rh typing is also important during abortion, miscarriage, pregnancy, and birth, as mother and fetus may not be Rh compatible. Rh stands for rhesus monkeys, in whose blood this antigen was first found. See also *Rh incompatibility; RhoGAM*.

Rh incompatibility A difference in Rh blood group types between an Rh- mother and her Rh+ baby that leads to hemolytic disease of the newborn. See also *hemolytic disease of the newborn*.

rhabdomyolysis A condition in which skeletal muscle is broken down, releasing muscle enzymes and electrolytes from inside the muscle cells. Risks of rhabdomyolysis include muscle breakdown and kidney failure because the cellular component myoglobin is toxic to the kidneys. Rhabdomyolysis is relatively uncommon, but it most often occurs as the result of extensive muscle damage as, for example, in crush injury or electrical shock. Drugs or toxins may also cause this disorder. Underlying diseases that can also lead to rhabdomyolysis include collagen vascular diseases, such as systemic lupus erythematosus.

rhabdomyosarcoma A fast-growing malignancy of muscle that mainly affects children (more than 60 percent of cases are diagnosed before age 10) but can occur at any age. Treatment includes surgery, radiotherapy, chemotherapy, and, most often, a combination of these modes of treatment. The outlook depends on a number of factors, including the original location of the tumor.

rhabdomyosarcoma, embryonal See *sarcoma botryoides*.

rheumatic fever An illness that occurs in the wake of a streptococcus infection (strep throat, or related condition) or scarlet fever, primarily in children. Symptoms include fever, pain in the joints, nausea, stomach cramps, and vomiting. Rheumatic fever can cause long-lasting effects in the joints, heart, brain, and skin. Rheumatic fever may be followed by Sydenham's chorea and by symptoms characteristic of obsessive-compulsive disorder or a tic disorder. Treatment usually involves use of prophylactic antibiotics, as reoccurrence is common and can cause further damage to body tissues. See also *Sydenham's chorea*.

rheumatic heart disease Heart damage caused by rheumatic fever. Treatment involves prevention of reinfection with streptococcus and use of medications to treat any heart complications, as needed.

rheumatism An older term used to describe a number of painful conditions of muscles, tendons, joints, and bones. Rheumatic conditions have been classified as localized (confined to a specific location, such as bursitis and tendonitis), regional (in a larger region, such as chest wall pain), or generalized (affecting many and diverse parts of the body, as in fibromyalgia). Rheumatic diseases and conditions are characterized by symptoms involving the musculoskeletal system; many also feature immune system abnormalities.

rheumatism, psychogenic Rheumatism in which the patient reports inconsistent pains of muscles and joints that do not correspond to true

anatomy and physiology. The patient is felt to have underlying psychological causes for these symptoms.

rheumatism, regional Rheumatism in a larger region, such as chest wall pain, temporomandibular joint pain, and myofascial pain syndrome pain.

rheumatoid arthritis See *arthritis, rheumatoid*.

rheumatoid arthritis, systemic-onset juvenile See *arthritis, systemic-onset juvenile rheumatoid*.

rheumatoid factor An antibody that is measurable in the blood and is used to diagnose rheumatoid arthritis. Rheumatoid factor is present in about 80 percent of adults, and a much lower proportion of children, who have rheumatoid arthritis. It is also present in patients with other connective-tissue diseases, such as systemic lupus erythematosus, and in some patients with infectious diseases, such as infectious hepatitis.

rheumatoid nodule A firm lump in the skin of a patient with rheumatoid arthritis. Rheumatoid nodules usually occur at pressure points of the body, most commonly the elbows.

rheumatologist A physician specialist in the treatment of rheumatic illnesses, especially forms of arthritis. There is a subspecialty board for rheumatology certification, the American College of Rheumatology, which can offer board certification to approved rheumatologists. See also *rheumatologist, pediatric; rheumatology*.

rheumatologist, pediatric A rheumatologist who specializes in caring for children with rheumatic diseases. Pediatric rheumatologists are pediatricians who have completed an additional 2 to 3 years of specialized training in pediatric rheumatology and are usually board certified in pediatric rheumatology. They have special interests in unexplained rash, fever, arthritis, anemia, weakness, weight loss, fatigue, muscle pain, autoimmune disease, and anorexia.

rheumatology A subspecialty of internal medicine that involves the nonsurgical evaluation and treatment of rheumatic diseases and conditions.

rhinitis Irritation of the nose.

rhinitis, acute Inflammation of the nose that occurs for only a few days. Typically, acute rhinitis is caused by a virus (a cold).

rhinitis, allergic See *allergic rhinitis*.

rhinitis, allergic, perennial See *allergic rhinitis, perennial*.

rhinitis, allergic, seasonal See *allergic rhinitis, seasonal*.

rhinitis, chronic Inflammation of the nose that lasts for weeks to months. Chronic rhinitis may be caused by bacterial infection, allergy, nasal irritants, structural issues, or physiological problems.

rhinitis, vasomotor Inflammation of the nose due to abnormal neuronal (nerve) control of the blood vessels in the nose. Vasomotor rhinitis is not an allergic reaction as is allergic rhinitis. It is brought on by irritation of the nose, frequently by cool temperatures.

rhinophyma A condition characterized by a bulbous, enlarged red nose and puffy cheeks. There may also be thick bumps on the lower half of the nose and the nearby cheek areas. Rhinophyma occurs mainly in men, and it is a complication of the common skin disease rosacea. See also *rosacea*.

rhinoplasty Plastic surgery on the nose, known familiarly as a nose job. Rhinoplasty is a facial cosmetic procedure that is usually performed to enhance the appearance of the nose. During this type of rhinoplasty, the nasal cartilage and bones are modified, or tissue is added. Rhinoplasty is also performed to repair nasal fractures and other structural problems. In these cases, the goal is to restore preinjury appearance or to create a normal appearance.

rhinorrhea See *nose, runny*.

RhoGAM RhO(D) immune globulin, an injectable drug that is used to protect an Rh+ fetus from antibodies in an Rh- mother's blood and to prevent Rh allergy in the mother.

rhythm method See *natural family planning*.

rib One of the 12 paired arches of bone that form the skeletal structure of the chest wall (the rib cage). The ribs attach to the vertebrae of the spine in the back. The 12 pairs of ribs consist of 7 pairs of ribs that attach to the sternum in the front and are known as true, or sternal, ribs; and 5 pairs of lower ribs that do not connect directly to the sternum and are known as false ribs. The upper 3 false ribs connect to the costal cartilages of the ribs just above them. The last 2 false ribs usually have no anchor in front and are known as floating, fluctuating, or vertebral ribs.

rib, cervical An extra rib that arises from the seventh cervical vertebra. It is located above the normal first rib. A cervical rib is present in only about 1 in 200 people. It may cause pinching of nearby nerves or arteries, in which case it sometimes is removed surgically.

rib, false See *false rib*.

rib, floating See *false rib*.

rib, fluctuating See *false rib*.

rib, sternal See *true rib*.

rib, true See *true rib*.

rib, vertebral See *false rib*.

ribonucleic acid A nucleic acid that is similar to DNA but contains ribose rather than deoxyribose. Abbreviated RNA. RNA, in fact, can form upon a DNA template. The several classes of RNA molecules play important roles in protein synthesis and other cell activities. See also *messenger RNA; RNA, ribosomal; RNA, transfer*.

ribosome A tiny structure in the cytoplasm of a cell (outside the nucleus) that functions as the protein factory for the cell.

ribozyme An RNA molecule that has enzymatic activity. See also *ribonucleic acid*.

rickets A disease of infants and children that disturbs normal bone formation (ossification), leading to failure to mineralize bone. Rickets softens bone, producing osteomalacia, and permits marked bending and distortion of bones. Other features of rickets include softness of the infant's skull (craniotabes), enlargement of the front end of the ribs (creating the "rachitic rosary"), thickening of the wrists and ankles, lateral curving of the spine (scoliosis), abnormal forward-backward curving of the spine (kyphosis and lumbar lordosis), and deforming and narrowing of the pelvis. As the child begins to walk, the weight on the soft shafts of the legs results in knock-knees or, more often, bowlegs. Until the first third of the 20th century, rickets was usually due to lack of direct exposure to sunlight or to lack of vitamin D, calcium, and phosphorus, but nutritional rickets has become relatively rare in industrialized nations. In developing countries, vitamin D-deficiency rickets continues to be a problem. Rickets in developed countries is usually now due to other causes, such as disorders that create vitamin D deficiency by interfering with the absorption of vitamin D through the intestines; diseases of the liver, kidney, or other organs that impair the normal metabolic conversion and activation of vitamin D; and conditions that disrupt the normal balance in the body between calcium and phosphorus.

rickets, celiac Rickets caused by failure of the intestines to absorb calcium and fat from foods. See also *celiac sprue*.

rickets, hypophosphatemic A rare genetic form of rickets that is characterized by low blood phosphate level (hypophosphatemia), defective intestinal absorption of phosphate, and unresponsiveness to vitamin D. The basic problem in hypophosphatemic rickets is decreased resorption of phosphate by the tubules in the kidney. Females typically have less severe disease than males. The condition is inherited in an X-linked dominant manner. Also known as vitamin D-resistant rickets. See also *rickets*.

rickets, renal Rickets-like bone malformations that are caused by prolonged inflammation of the kidneys.

rickets, vitamin D-resistant See *rickets, hypophosphatemic*.

Rickettsia A member of genus *Rickettsia*, a family of microorganisms that, like viruses, require other living cells for growth, but also resemble bacteria in that they use oxygen, have metabolic enzymes and cell walls, and are susceptible to antibiotics. *Rickettsiae* cause a series of diseases, including Rocky Mountain spotted fever, typhus, and trench fever. *Rickettsiae* generally have an animal host and are transmitted to humans by an insect (usually arthropod) vector. See also *rickettsial diseases*.

rickettsial diseases Infectious diseases caused by *Rickettsiae*. See also *Rickettsia*.

rickettsialpox A mild infectious disease first observed in New York City that is caused by *Rickettsia akari* and is transmitted from its mouse host by chigger or adult mite bites. Features include fever, a dark spot that becomes a small ulcer at the site of the bite, swollen glands (satellite lymphadenopathy) near the site of the bite, and a raised, blistering (vesicular) rash. Treatment is with antibiotics.

rickettsiosis Infection with *Rickettsia*. See also *Rickettsia*.

rickettsiosis, North Asian tick-borne One of the tick-borne rickettsial diseases of the eastern hemisphere, similar to but less severe than Rocky Mountain spotted fever. Symptoms include fever, a small ulcer (eschar) at the site of the tick bite, swollen glands near the site of the bite (satellite lymphadenopathy), and a red, raised (maculopapular) rash.

right heart See *heart, right*.

right ventricle See *ventricle, right*.

ring, intrastromal corneal See *intrastromal corneal ring*.

ring chromosome A structurally abnormal chromosome in which the end of each chromosome arm has been lost and the broken arms have been reunited to form a ring. A ring chromosome is denoted by the symbol r.

ringworm A fungal infection of the skin previously thought to be due to a parasite (worm). The medical term for ringworm is tinea. The skin infections are sometimes characterized by round lesions in the upper layers of the skin. Fungi that cause ringworm are known as dermatophytes. See also *tinea barbae; tinea capitis; tinea corporis*.

ringworm of the nails See *onychomycosis*.

RIRS Retrograde intrarenal surgery.

risk, obesity-related See *obesity-related disease*.

risk factor Something that increases a person's chances of developing a disease. For example, cigarette smoking is a risk factor for lung cancer, and obesity is a risk factor for heart disease.

risk of recurrence See *recurrence risk*.

ritonavir A medication (brand name: Norvir) in the protease inhibitor family that is used to treat HIV infection (AIDS). See also *protease inhibitor*.

Ritter disease See *staphylococcal scalded skin syndrome*.

river blindness A disease caused by a parasitic worm (*Onchocerca volvulus*) that is transmitted by biting blackflies that breed in fast-flowing rivers. The adult worms can live for up to 15 years in nodules beneath the skin and in the muscles of infected persons, where they produce millions of worm embryos (microfilariae) that invade the skin and other tissues, including the eyes, causing blindness. The drug ivermectin (brand name: Stromectol), taken in a single oral dose administered once a year, prevents the accumulation of microfilariae in persons at risk. Treatment is with antibiotics that can kill the adult worms in the body. Also known as onchocerciasis.

RLL Right lower lobe, the lower-right lobe of the lung.

RLQ Right lower quadrant, the lower-right quarter of the abdomen.

RML Right middle lobe, the middle-right lobe of the lung.

RMSF Rocky Mountain spotted fever.

RN Registered nurse. See *nurse, registered*.

RNA Ribonucleic acid.

RNA, messenger See *messenger RNA*.

RNA, ribosomal A component of ribosomes that functions as a nonspecific site for making polypeptides. Abbreviated rRNA. See also *ribosome*.

RNA, transfer The form of the biochemical ribonucleic acid that brings (transfers) activated amino acids into position along the messenger RNA template. Abbreviated tRNA.

RNA editing The process by which messenger RNA (mRNA) is modified (edited) after it is synthesized before it is translated into protein.

RNA interference The process by which the introduction of double-stranded RNA into a cell interferes with the expression of genes. Abbreviated RNai.

RNA polymerase The enzyme that makes the very large molecule RNA, by joining together many smaller molecules, using DNA as a template.

RNAi RNA interference.

robotic surgery Surgery performed using a high-tech robotic system to perform the actual operation. Robotic surgery is most commonly used for prostate surgery, hysterectomy, heart valve and blood vessel repair, pediatric surgery, and urologic surgery.

Rochalimaea quintana See *Bartonella quintana*.

rocker bottom feet A type of congenital anomaly of the feet in which the bottom of the foot is rounded, resembling the bottom of a rocking chair, and the calcaneus (heel bone) is unusually prominent. This anomaly usually occurs with other congenital defects and suggests the presence of a chromosomal abnormality.

Rocky Mountain spotted fever An acute febrile (feverish) disease that was initially recognized in the Rocky Mountain states. Abbreviated RMSF. RMSF is caused by Rickettsia rickettsii, transmitted by hard-shelled (ixodid) ticks, and occurs only in the

Western hemisphere. Anyone frequenting tick-infested areas is at risk for RMSE. Onset of symptoms is abrupt, with headache, high fever, chills, muscle pain, and then a rash. The rickettsiae grow within damaged cells lining blood vessels, which may become blocked by clots. Blood vessel inflammation (vasculitis) is widespread in a person with RMSF. Early recognition of RMSF and prompt antibiotic treatment is important to prevent death. Also known as spotted fever, tick fever, and tick typhus.

rod A specialized light-sensitive cell (photoreceptor) in the retina that provides side vision and the ability to see objects in dim light (night vision). See also *cone cell*.

roentgen An international unit of X-ray or gamma-ray radiation.

roentgenology See *radiology*.

Rohypnol The trade name for flunitrazepam, which has been abused as a "date rape" drug. Rohypnol produces sedative-hypnotic effects including muscle relaxation and amnesia. It can produce physical and psychological dependence and can be lethal when mixed with alcohol and/or other depressants.

rooting reflex A reflex that is seen in normal newborn babies, who automatically turn the face toward the stimulus and make sucking (rooting) motions with the mouth when the cheek or lip is touched. The rooting reflex helps to ensure successful breastfeeding.

Rorschach test A common psychological test that involves using inkblots that show enigmatic and highly ambiguous shapes. Ten standardized blots are shown, one at a time, to a person, and the person's responses are recorded, to determine what the person perceives about the inkblots.

rosacea A chronic skin disease that causes persistent redness over the areas of the face and nose that normally blush: mainly the forehead, the chin, and the lower half of the nose. The tiny blood vessels in these areas enlarge (dilate) and become more visible through the skin, appearing like tiny red lines (telangiectasias). Pimples that look like teenage acne can occur. Rosacea occurs most often between the ages of 30 and 60, especially in people with fair skin. It affects both sexes. Although it tends to occur more in women than in men, it is often worse in men. In most people the symptoms come and go, although it tends to worsen with time. Rosacea can be treated but not cured. Topical

antibiotics such as metronidazole, and oral antibiotics such as tetracycline, are often used. Short-term topical cortisone (steroid) preparations of the right strength may also be used to reduce local inflammation. Avoiding smoking, food and drink that cause flushing (such as spicy food, hot beverages, and alcoholic drinks), and other triggers such as temperature extremes helps to minimize symptoms.

roseola See *measles*.

rotator cuff A group of four tendons that stabilize the shoulder joint. Each of these tendons attaches to a muscle that moves the shoulder in a specific direction. The four muscles whose tendons form the rotator cuff are the subscapularis muscle, which moves the arm by turning it inward (internal rotation); the supraspinatus muscle, which is responsible for elevating the arm and moving it away from the body; the infraspinatus muscle, which assists the lifting of the arm during outward turning (external rotation) of the arm; and the teres minor muscle, which also helps in the outward turning (external rotation) of the arm. Damage to the rotator cuff is one of the most common causes of shoulder pain.

rotator cuff disease Damage to the rotator cuff that can be due to trauma, as from falling and injuring the shoulder; overuse in sports, particularly those that involve repetitive overhead motions; inflammation, as from tendonitis, bursitis, or arthritis of the shoulder; or degeneration, as from aging. The main symptom of rotator cuff disease is shoulder pain of gradual or sudden onset, typically located to the front and side of the shoulder and increasing when the shoulder is moved away from the body. A person with torn rotator cuff tendons may not be able to hold the arm up because of pain. With very severe tears, the arm falls because of weakness; this is called the positive drop sign. Diagnosis is made via observation and can be confirmed with X-rays showing bony injuries; an arthrogram in which contrast dye is injected into the shoulder joint to detect leakage out of the injured rotator cuff; or a magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scan, which can provide more information than either an X-ray or an arthrogram. Treatment depends on severity. Mild rotator cuff disease is treated with application of ice, rest, and use of anti-inflammatory medications, such as ibuprofen. A patient with persistent pain and motion limitation may benefit from a cortisone injection in the rotator cuff and from doing exercises that are specifically designed to strengthen the rotator cuff. More severe rotator cuff disease may require arthroscopic or open surgical repair. Without treatment, including exercise, the outlook is not very good. Scarring around the shoulder (adhesive capsulitis) can lead

to marked limitation of range of shoulder motion, a condition called a frozen shoulder. Some patients never recover full use of the shoulder joint.

rotavirus A virus that is a leading cause of severe diarrhea and dehydration in young children. Abbreviated RV. Almost everyone catches RV before entering school, but, with rehydration and good nutrition, nearly all recover fully. Aside from causing acute infantile gastroenteritis and diarrhea in young children, RV is typically accompanied by low-grade fever. Immunization of infants with a vaccine against RV was halted in 1999 because of reports of deaths due to bowel obstruction (from intussusception of the bowel) following vaccination, but a newer vaccine was made available in 2006.

Rothmund-Thomson syndrome A hereditary disease that is characterized by progressive effects on multiple areas of the body, including the skin, hair, eyelashes, teeth, musculoskeletal system, blood, and eyes. Patients have an increased risk for developing cancer, especially osteosarcoma and skin cancer. Abbreviated RTS. RTS is inherited as an autosomal recessive trait and is caused by mutations in the RECQL4 gene on chromosome 8. This gene encodes a DNA helicase, an enzyme that promotes DNA unwinding, which permits many basic cellular processes to take place. Also known as poikiloderma congenita and poikiloderma atrophicans with cataract.

roundworm A type of parasitic worm that hatches in the intestines and lives there. The eggs of the roundworm usually enter the body through contaminated water or food or on fingers placed in the mouth after the hands have touched a contaminated object. Symptoms of roundworm infections include fatigue, weight loss, irritability, poor appetite, abdominal pain, and diarrhea. Treatment with medication results in a cure in about a week. Without treatment, anemia and malnutrition can develop. An example of a roundworm is *Trichuris trichiura*, also known as the human whipworm. This worm is found worldwide, but infections are most frequent in areas with tropical weather and poor sanitation practices, and among children. Infection with *T. trichiura* is not foreign to the US; it occurs in the southern US.

RPR test Rapid plasma reagin test. See *syphilis test, RPR*.

rRNA Ribosomal RNA. See *RNA, ribosomal*.

RSV 1 Respiratory syncytial virus. 2 Rous sarcoma virus, a virus that is the cause of a serious form of soft tissue cancer called sarcoma.

RTS Rothmund-Thomson syndrome.

RU-486 The non-surgical abortion pill, which has been used in combination with another drug called misoprostol to terminate pregnancy at an early stage. A woman using RU-486 can be no more than 7 weeks pregnant. The drug has 95 percent effectiveness. About 5 percent of women using RU-486 in early pregnancy need additional medical intervention due to incomplete abortion. Also known as mifepristone.

rubella German measles, a contagious viral disease whose symptoms include upper respiratory tract infection, fever, swollen lymph nodes, and a rash with small spots. Exposure of a pregnant woman to rubella can infect and damage the baby. Prevention of fetal rubella syndrome is the main reason for rubella immunization. See also *rubella syndrome, fetal*.

rubella immunization See *MMR*.

rubella syndrome, fetal A constellation of abnormalities caused by infection of a mother with the rubella (German measles) virus before the birth of her baby. The syndrome is characterized by mental retardation and multiple birth defects, including abnormally small head, cataracts, glaucoma, abnormally small eyes, and cardiovascular

malformations. Deafness is common. The risk of congenital defects in the fetus is greatest when the mother is infected with the virus during the first 16 weeks of pregnancy. Also known as congenital rubella syndrome.

rubeola See *measles*.

rubor Redness.

RUL Right upper lobe, the upper-right lobe of the lung.

runny nose See *nose, runny*.

rupture, uterine See *uterine rupture*.

ruptured spleen See *spleen, ruptured*.

RUQ Right upper quadrant, the upper-right quarter of the abdomen.

RV Rotavirus.

Rx 1 On a prescription, abbreviation for *recipe* (Latin for “to take”). See also Appendix A, “Prescription Abbreviations.” 2 In a pharmacological catalog, an indicator that one will need a prescription to buy a listed item.

<http://www.rashidiislamiccenter.com>

Ss

SA node Sinoatrial node.

Sabin vaccine See *polio vaccine, oral*.

sac, egg See *ovary*.

sac, pericardial See *pericardium*.

saccular Being like a small pouch. For example, the alveolar saccules are little air pouches within the lungs.

saccular aneurysm See *aneurysm, saccular*.

sacral Referring to the sacrum. For example, sacral agenesis is absence of all or part of the sacrum.

sacral agenesis Absence of all or part of the sacrum. See also *caudal regression syndrome; sacrum*.

sacral vertebrae The five vertebral bones situated between the lumbar vertebrae and the coccyx (tailbone). By adulthood, the sacral vertebrae are normally fused to form the sacrum. The sacral vertebrae are represented by the symbols S1 through S5. See also *vertebra; vertebral column*.

sacrum The large heavy bone at the base of the spine that is made up of the fused sacral vertebrae. In the vertebral column, the sacrum is situated between the lumbar vertebrae and the coccyx (tailbone). It is triangular in shape and forms the back wall of the pelvis. The female sacrum is wider and less curved than the male sacrum. From the Latin *os sacrum*, meaning “sacred bone” because it was used in sacrifice. See also *pelvis; sacral vertebrae; vertebral column*.

SAD Seasonal affective disorder.

safe sex Sexual practices that do not involve the exchange of bodily fluids, including blood, sperm, vaginal secretions, and saliva, to avoid AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. The term safe sex is generally used to mean sex without penetration or sex using condoms or other barrier measures with consistency.

sagittal A vertical plane passing through the standing body from front to back. The median plane that splits the body into left and right halves. See also Appendix B, “Anatomic Orientation Terms.”

sagittal sinus A large vein that runs on the top of the skull from front to back and then splits to carry blood from the brain toward the heart.

saline 1 Relating to salt (sodium chloride). 2 Salty, containing salt. 3 A salt solution, often adjusted to the normal salinity of the human body. Saline solutions are commonly used in medicine as fluid replacements to treat or prevent dehydration. Certain concentrations of both sodium and chloride in the blood are essential for normal body functions.

salivary gland A gland in the mouth that produces saliva. The salivary glands can become inflamed, as in Sjogren's syndrome and mumps.

Salk vaccine See *polio vaccine, inactivated*.

salmon patch A small flat patch of pink or red (salmon-colored) skin, most commonly found on the forehead between the eyebrows (called an angel's kiss), on the eyelids, or on the nape of the neck (called a stork bite). Salmon patches are seen in 30 to 40 percent of newborns and are usually most noticeable when the baby cries. A salmon patch is a collection of capillaries. Salmon patches are of no consequence and tend to disappear in time. Also known as nevus simplex, stork bite.

Salmonella A group of bacteria that causes typhoid fever and other illnesses, including food poisoning, gastroenteritis, and enteric fever from contaminated food products. See also *food poisoning; Salmonellosis*.

salmonellosis Infection with bacteria belonging to the genus *Salmonella*. *Salmonellosis* is particularly dangerous for people with immunodeficiency diseases and sickle cell disease. Symptoms usually begin within 12 to 24 hours after exposure and may include stomach cramps, diarrhea, fever, and sometimes vomiting. Diagnosis can be confirmed via examination of a stool sample for *Salmonella* bacteria. Most people exposed to *Salmonella* feel fine within a few days and do not require treatment other than extra fluids. Some need antibiotics, and a few need hospitalization. See also *food poisoning*.

salpingo-oophorectomy Surgical removal of the fallopian tubes and ovaries. See also *hysterectomy*.

salt 1 Sodium chloride. Table salt. Certain concentrations of both sodium and chloride in the blood are essential for normal body functions. Sodium ingestion can elevate the blood pressure, aggravate heart failure, or cause fluid retention in

persons who are so inclined. 2 An ionic crystalline compound.

Salter-Harris fracture See *fracture, Salter-Harris*.

salvage therapy A final treatment for people who are not responsive to or cannot tolerate other available therapies for a particular condition.

sample, random See *random sample*.

Sandhoff disease A genetic disorder with symptoms that are very similar to those of Tay-Sachs disease (TSD) and that is characterized by accumulation of fatty material called GM2 ganglioside in the nerve cells of the brain. Symptoms begin around 6 months of age, with motor weakness, and progress to include difficulties with swallowing and breathing. Death usually occurs by age 3. Sandhoff disease is an autosomal recessive disorder caused by a mutation in the gene for the beta subunit of hexosaminidase on chromosome 5. Unlike TSD, it is most common in the non-Jewish population. See also *Tay-Sachs disease*.

Sanfilippo syndrome The most common disorder of mucopolysaccharide metabolism, a syndrome in which the onset of clinical abnormalities occurs between ages 2 and 6, with mild coarsening of the facial features (but normal clear corneas), mild stiffening of the joints, slowing of growth, and intellectual deterioration that results in severe mental retardation. On a biochemical level, Sanfilippo syndrome is characterized by the excess excretion of heparan sulfate in the urine and the accumulation of mucopolysaccharides in the central nervous system and other tissues. On the genetic level, there are four types of Sanfilippo syndrome (types A, B, C, and D), each due to deficiency of a different enzyme. All four types are inherited in an autosomal recessive manner and result in identical clinical syndromes. Also known as mucopolysaccharidosis type III (MPS III).

sanguine 1 Having a ruddy (reddish) complexion. 2 Cheerful, hopeful, confident, optimistic, or impulsive.

saphenous vein One of the two saphenous veins—the great and the small saphenous veins—that serve as the principal veins running near the surface of the leg. The saphenous veins carry deoxygenated blood from the feet and legs toward the heart. See also *saphenous vein, great; saphenous vein, small*.

saphenous vein, great The larger of the two saphenous veins, which runs from the foot all the way up to the saphenous opening, an oval aperture

in the broad fascia of the thigh. The great saphenous vein passes through this fibrous membrane. Also known as large saphenous vein.

saphenous vein, large See *saphenous vein, great*.

saphenous vein, small The smaller of the two saphenous veins, which runs behind the outer malleolus (the protuberance on the outside of the ankle joint), comes up the back of the leg, and joins the popliteal vein in the space behind the knee (popliteal space). See also *saphenous vein*.

SAPHO syndrome Synovitis, acne, pustulosis, hyperostosis, and osteitis syndrome, which involves symptoms including warmth, tenderness, pain, swelling, and stiffness of involved joints (arthritis); fluid-filled blister-like areas (pustules), typically on the palms of the hands and/or the soles of the feet, and peeling and flaking of skin in those areas; abnormal, excessive growth of bone, frequently at the points of the bone where tendons attach; and inflammation of the sacroiliac joints (sacroilitis), as well as inflammation of the spine (spondylitis), leading to stiffness and pain of the neck and back. SAPHO syndrome is thought to be related to other arthritic conditions that typically affect the spine, including ankylosing spondylitis and reactive arthritis.

Sapphism See *lesbianism*.

sarcoidosis A disease of unknown origin that causes small lumps (granulomas) due to chronic inflammation in body tissues. Sarcoidosis can appear in almost any body organ, but it most often starts in the lungs or lymph nodes. It can also affect the eyes, liver, and skin; and less often it affects the spleen, bones, joints, skeletal muscles, heart, and central nervous system. In the majority of cases, the granulomas clear up with or without treatment. In cases where the granulomas do not heal and disappear, the tissues tend to remain inflamed and become scarred.

sarcoma One of a group of malignant tumors that arise from connective tissue. Many types are named after the type of cell, tissue, or structure involved. See also *angiosarcoma; chondrosarcoma; fibrosarcoma; liposarcoma; osteosarcoma; rhabdomyosarcoma; sarcoma botryoides; sarcoma, Ewing; Kaposi sarcoma; sarcoma, soft-tissue; sarcoma, synovial*.

sarcoma, Ewing A malignant tumor that arises in a primitive nerve cell within bone or soft tissue and affects children and adolescents, especially between ages 10 and 20. Ewing sarcoma usually appears in

the large bones of the arms and legs and the flat bones of the pelvis, spine, and ribs. Treatments include chemotherapy, surgery, and radiation therapy. The primitive nerve cell from which Ewing sarcoma arises also gives rise to a number of tumors, known as the Ewing family of tumors, which include Ewing sarcoma of bone, extraskeletal (nonbone) Ewing sarcoma, primitive neuroectodermal tumor (PNET), and Askin tumor (PNET of the chest wall). Most Ewing family tumors have a translocation between chromosomes 11 and 22 that results in the fusion of the EWS gene on chromosome 22 with the transcription factor gene FLI1 on chromosome 11, leading to the production of a chimeric (fusion) protein. The remaining tumors in the Ewing family engage the EWS gene in other translocations that lead to formation of chimeric proteins. In all cases the chimeric protein is oncogenic; that is, it is responsible for the malignancy.

sarcoma, Kaposi See *Kaposi sarcoma*.

sarcoma, osteogenic See *osteosarcoma*.

sarcoma, soft-tissue A sarcoma that begins in the muscle, fat, fibrous tissue, blood vessels, or other supporting tissue of the body. See also *sarcoma*.

sarcoma, synovial A malignant tumor of soft tissue that arises near, but not in, a joint. Synovial sarcomas most often occur in adolescents or young adults, are typically slow-growing, and may escape notice until they become painful. They occur mainly in the arms and legs, near large joints, especially the knees. Although the tumor is called synovial sarcoma, it has never been shown to arise from synovial cells (the cells that line a joint), and the cell of origin is not known. The diagnosis of synovial sarcoma can be suspected via X-ray or imaging, made via biopsy, and confirmed via cytogenetic studies that show a translocation (an exchange of material) between the X chromosome and chromosome 18 in the tumor cells. The key treatment is surgery to remove the entire tumor, nearby muscle, and lymph nodes. Radiation, chemotherapy, or a combination of treatment methods may follow surgery. The tumor tends to recur locally and to involve local lymph nodes. Distant spread (metastasis) occurs in half of cases, sometimes many years after the initial diagnosis. Also known as synoviosarcoma.

sarcoma botryoides A malignancy of the cervix, vagina, or bladder in infants and young children that arises from embryonal rhabdomyoblasts (ancestral muscle cells). The tumor resembles a bunch of grapes. It has a generally good prognosis. Treatment includes conservative surgery followed by

chemotherapy. Also known as embryonal rhabdomyosarcoma. See also *rhabdomyosarcoma; sarcoma; sarcoma, soft-tissue*.

SARS See *severe acute respiratory syndrome*.

sartorius muscle The long band of muscle that stretches from the calf to the pelvis. It moves the thigh and, by extension, the leg.

saturated fat A fat that contains only saturated fatty acids, is solid at room temperature, and comes chiefly from animal food products. Some examples of saturated fat are butter, lard, meat fat, solid shortening, palm oil, and coconut oil. Saturated fat tends to raise the level of cholesterol in the blood.

sawbones Slang for a physician, especially a surgeon, and in particular an orthopedic surgeon.

scabicide A medication that is used to treat scabies. Examples include permethrin cream, lindane, or crotamiton lotion and cream. Sulfur in petrolatum (10 percent) is one of few effective scabicidal treatments that may be used safely without fear of toxicity in very small children and in pregnant women. See also *scabies; scabies, keratotic*.

scabies Infestation of the skin by the human itch mite Sarcoptes scabei. The initial symptom of scabies are red, raised bumps that are intensely itchy. A magnifying glass reveals short, wavy lines of red skin, which are the burrows made by the mites. Treatment involves use of several scabicide medications. See also *scabicide*.

scabies, keratotic A severe form of scabies that is caused by delaying treatment of the initial infestation. Keratotic scabies is characterized by mite-filled lesions covered with scabs. These lesions often become infected with bacteria such as staphylococcus. Keratotic scabies is most common in people with immune-system problems, including AIDS, diabetes, and lupus. Also known as crusted scabies.

scalded skin syndrome See *staphylococcal scalded skin syndrome*.

scan 1 Data or an image obtained from the examination of organs or regions of the body by gathering information with a sensing device. 2 To examine or view with a sensing instrument or imaging machine.

scapula The flat triangular bone at the back of the shoulder. Also known as shoulder blade and wingbone. See also *subscapular; subscapularis muscle*.

scarlatina See *scarlet fever*.

scarlet fever A skin condition that is due to a streptococcal sore throat or any other streptococcal infection. The group A streptococcal bacteria produce a toxin that causes a scarlet rash that initially appears on the neck and chest, then spreads over the body, and lasts around 3 days. As the rash fades, desquamation (peeling) may occur around the fingertips, toes, and groin area. Scarlet fever is usually not a serious illness when treated promptly with antibiotics such as penicillin. However, untreated streptococcal infection can cause kidney inflammation (glomerulonephritis) and rheumatic fever. Also known as scarlatina.

SCFE Slipped capital femoral epiphysis.

Scheuermann's disease A skeletal disease that usually begins in adolescence in which the vertebrae grow unevenly, resulting in wedge-shaped vertebrae and a hunched back. Treatment with casting and a back brace is successful if undertaken early. Also known as juvenile kyphosis and curvature of the spine.

schistosomiasis See *bilharzia*.

schizoaffective disorder A mood disorder that is coupled with some symptoms that resemble those of schizophrenia, particularly loss of personality (flat affect) and social withdrawal.

schizoid Having symptoms similar to those of schizophrenia.

schizophrenia One of several brain diseases whose symptoms may include loss of personality (flat affect), agitation, catatonia, confusion, psychosis, unusual behavior, and social withdrawal. The illness usually begins in early adulthood. The cause of schizophrenia is not known, but there appear to be both genetic (inherited) and environmental components to the disease. Schizophrenia is not caused by abuse or poor parenting practices. Treatment involves use of neuroleptic medication and supportive interpersonal therapy. The prognosis is fairly good, with two-thirds of those diagnosed recovering significantly.

schizophrenia, childhood The onset of schizophrenia before adulthood. This condition is very rare in young children, but it occurs with more frequency in the teenage years. Autism was once known as childhood schizophrenia, but it is a completely different disorder. See also *autism; childhood disintegrative disorder; developmental disorder; schizophrenia*.

schizotypal personality disorder A personality type that is characterized by unusual patterns of speech and behavior and by social withdrawal. See also *Asperger syndrome*.

Schmorl's node An upward and downward protrusion (pushing into) of a spinal disk's soft tissue into the bony tissue of the adjacent vertebrae. Schmorl's nodes, which are common, especially with minor degeneration of the aging spine, are detectable via X-ray as spine abnormalities. Schmorl's nodes are most common in the middle and lower spine. Schmorl's nodes usually cause no symptoms, but they reflect that "wear and tear" of the spine has occurred over time.

Schwann cell An insulating cell found in the peripheral nervous system that surrounds nerve fibers (axons). Schwann cells form the myelin sheath that facilitates the conduction of impulses along the nerve. See also *myelin; peripheral nervous system*.

schwannoma A tumor that arises in the Schwann cells, or myelin sheath, of the peripheral nerves. Schwannomas are usually benign. Acoustic neuroomas of the eighth cranial nerve are the most common schwannomas. Also known as neurilemmoma.

sciatic nerve The largest nerve in the body, which begins from nerve roots in the lumbar spinal cord in the low back (sacrum) and extends through the buttock area, sending nerve endings down through the legs and knees. See also *sciatica*.

sciatica Pain that results from irritation of the sciatic nerve and typically radiates from the buttock to the back of the thigh. Although sciatica can result from a herniated disc pressing directly on the nerve, any cause of irritation or inflammation of this nerve can reproduce the painful symptoms of sciatica. Diagnosis is made via observation of symptoms, physical examination and nerve tests, and sometimes X-ray or magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), if a herniated disk is suspected. Treatment options include avoiding movements that further irritate the condition, use of medication, physical therapy, and sometimes surgery.

science, cognitive See *cognitive science*.

scintigraphy A diagnostic test in which a two-dimensional picture of a body radiation source is obtained through the use of radioisotopes. For example, scintigraphy of the biliary system (cholescintigraphy) is done to diagnose obstruction of the bile ducts by a gallstone, a tumor, or another problem; disease of the gallbladder; and bile leaks. For cholescintigraphy, a radioactive chemical is

injected intravenously into the patient. The chemical is removed from the blood by the liver and secreted into the bile that the liver makes. The chemical then goes everywhere that the bile goes: into the bile ducts, the gallbladder, and the intestine. By placing over the abdomen a camera that senses radioactivity, a picture of the liver, bile ducts, and gallbladder can be obtained that corresponds to the location of the radioactivity.

scintimammography A scintigraphic imaging technique sometimes used as a supplemental test in the detection of breast cancer. Scintimammography can sometimes work better than standard mammography in situations where there is considerable uncertainty, as in women who have especially dense breast tissue. See also *scintigraphy*.

sclera The tough white outer coat that covers the surface of the eyeball. The sclera covers the back five-sixths of the eyeball. The sclera is continuous in the front of the eye with the cornea and in the back of the eye with the external sheath of the optic nerve. The plural is *sclerae*. See also *scleritis*.

sclerencephaly Scarring and shrinkage of the substance of the brain. Sclerencephaly occurs because of chronic inflammation of the brain matter.

scleritis Inflammation of the sclera. Scleritis causes local pain and can cause vision loss. Scleritis can occur with diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis, Wegener's granulomatosis, and lupus. Treatment may include use of anti-inflammatory and cortisone medications taken by mouth, intravenously, or injected into the eye.

sclerodactyly Localized thickening and tightness of the skin of the fingers or toes. Sclerodactyly is commonly associated with atrophy of the underlying soft tissues. Sclerodactyly is a characteristic feature of scleroderma.

scleroderma A disease of connective tissue that causes scar tissue (fibrosis) to form in the skin and sometimes also in other organs of the body. Scleroderma is classified into diffuse and limited forms. Diffuse scleroderma affects many internal and external areas of the body, including the skin of the entire body, the bowels, and the lungs. Limited scleroderma affects only certain body sections. The CREST syndrome is the most common limited form of scleroderma. CREST stands for

- **C** Calcinosis (the formation of tiny deposits of calcium in the skin)
- **R** Raynaud phenomenon (spasms of the tiny arteries that supply blood to the fingers, toes, nose, tongue, or ears)

- **E** Esophagus (esophageal involvement by the scleroderma)
- **S** Sclerodactyly (localized thickening and tightness of the skin of the fingers or toes)
- **T** Telangiectasias (dilated capillaries that form tiny red areas, frequently on the face, on the hands, and in the mouth, behind the lips)

The cause of scleroderma is unknown. There is some evidence that genes play at least a partial role in causing the disease. The immune system plays a central role in the disease process. It is not unusual to find other autoimmune diseases in families of scleroderma patients. The treatment of scleroderma is directed toward the particular organ system that is causing symptoms. The disease occurs more frequently in females than in males.

sclerosing cholangitis See *primary sclerosing cholangitis*.

sclerosing panencephalitis, subacute See *subacute sclerosing panencephalitis*.

sclerosis Localized hardening of skin. Sclerosis is generally caused by underlying diseases, such as diabetes and scleroderma. Treatment is directed toward the cause.

sclerosis, multiple See *multiple sclerosis*.

sclerotherapy The injection of a chemical irritant into a vein to sclerose ("harden") it. The chemical irritates the lining of the vein, causing it to swell and the blood to clot. The vein turns into scar tissue that fades from view. Blood flow shifts to nearby healthy blood vessels. Sclerotherapy may be done to treat varicose veins, spider veins, hemorrhoids, and esophageal varices.

scoliosis Lateral (sideways) curving of the spine. The degree of scoliosis may range from mild to severe. Of every 1,000 children, 3 to 5 develop spinal curvature that is considered severe enough to need treatment. Adolescent idiopathic (of unknown cause) scoliosis is the most common type and appears after the age of 10, commonly in teens. Girls are more likely than boys to have this type of scoliosis. Scoliosis can run in families, so a child who has a parent, brother, or sister with idiopathic scoliosis should be checked regularly for this condition. Severe scoliosis may require treatment that includes bracing, casting, surgical correction, and/or physical therapy.

scoliosis, acquired Lateral (sideways) curving of the spine that is neither present at birth nor results from a condition that is present at birth.

scoliosis, congenital Lateral (sideways) curving of the spine that is present at birth or is due to a condition that is present at birth. The condition may, for example, be a neuromuscular abnormality or be due to a malformation of the vertebral column.

scoliosis, functional Lateral (sideways) curving in a structurally normal spine. For example, functional scoliosis can be caused by pain on one side of the back that results in splinting. Also known as non-structural scoliosis. See also *scoliosis, structural*.

scoliosis, idiopathic Lateral (sideways) curving of the spine whose cause is unknown.

scoliosis, structural A fixed lateral (sideways) curve of the spine. The causes of structural scoliosis include cerebral palsy, polio, muscular dystrophy, Marfan syndrome, infections of the spine, and tumors of the spine. Structural scoliosis is different from functional scoliosis, in which the spine appears to have a lateral curve (scoliosis) but is structurally normal.

score, Apgar See *Apgar score*.

scrape An abrasion or cut that is caused by something rubbing roughly against the skin. Redness, swelling, increased pain, and pus indicate infection that requires professional care.

scratch test for allergy See *allergy skin test*.

scrofula Tuberculosis of the lymph nodes in the neck. Also known in the past as the King's evil. See also *tuberculosis*.

scrotum The pouch of skin that contains the testes, epididymides, and lower portions of the spermatic cords.

scrub typhus See *typhus, scrub*.

scurvy A disorder that is caused by lack of vitamin C. Symptoms include anemia; soft, bleeding gums; and bumps under the skin near muscles. Scurvy in early childhood can cause musculoskeletal problems. Treatment involves including foods that are high in vitamin C in the diet and taking vitamin C supplements if necessary.

seasonal affective disorder Depression that tends to occur (and recur) during a particular time of year, most often as the days grow shorter in the fall and winter. Abbreviated SAD. Affected persons

may react adversely to decreasing amounts of light or colder temperatures, which affect the production of neurotransmitters in the brain. Also known as winter blues, winter depression, and hibernation reaction.

sebaceous cyst See *cyst, sebaceous*.

sebaceous gland See *gland, sebaceous*.

seborrhea See *dandruff*.

seborrheic keratosis See *keratosis, seborrheic*.

sebum An oily secretion of the sebaceous glands that helps to preserve the flexibility of the hair and retain moisture in the skin. Sebum is also secreted by the Meibomian glands of the eyes. See also *gland, Meibomian*.

Seckel syndrome A rare inherited form of dwarfism and growth delay. Other symptoms and features associated with Seckel syndrome include an abnormally small head (microcephaly); varying degrees of mental retardation; and/or unusual characteristic facial features including "beak-like" protrusion of the nose. The syndrome is inherited in an autosomal recessive manner and can be due to mutations in several different genes. Also known as bird-headed dwarfism, microcephalic primordial dwarfism, nanocephalic dwarfism, and Seckel-type dwarfism. See also *dwarfism*.

second cranial nerve See *optic nerve*.

second stage of labor The part of labor that lasts from the full dilatation of the cervix until the baby is completely out of the birth canal. Also known as the stage of expulsion. See also *labor*.

secondary amenorrhea See *amenorrhea, secondary*.

secondhand smoke Smoke that comes from the burning end of a cigarette or that is exhaled by smokers. Inhalation of secondhand smoke is called involuntary or passive smoking. It can cause the same illnesses, including lung cancer, that actually smoking cigarettes causes. Also known as environmental tobacco smoke (ETS).

secretin A hormone that is made by glands in the small intestine whose primary function is the stimulation of pancreatic secretion. Secretin is often administered as part of the endoscopy process. Commercially available secretin is either porcine (from pigs) or a synthesized form of human secretin.

section **1** In anatomy, a slice of tissue. A biopsy obtained via surgery is usually sectioned (sliced), and these sections are inspected under a microscope. **2** In obstetrics, short for caesarean section. **3** In surgery, the division of tissue during an operation.

section, caesarean See *caesarean section*.

section, cross See *cross-section*.

section, longitudinal See *longitudinal section*.

section, lower segment caesarean See *caesarean section, lower segment*.

sedative A drug that calms a patient, easing agitation and permitting sleep. Sedatives generally work by modulating signals within the central nervous system. If sedatives are misused or accidentally combined, as in the case of combining prescription sedatives with alcohol, they can dangerously depress important signals that are needed to maintain heart and lung function. Most sedatives also have addictive potential. For these reasons, sedatives should be used under supervision and only as necessary.

sedimentation rate A blood test that detects and monitors inflammation in the body. Abbreviated sed rate. The sed rate measures the rate at which red blood cells in a test tube separate from blood serum over time, becoming sediment at the bottom of the test tube. The sed rate increases as inflammation increases. The sed rate can also become elevated in diseases that feature the production of abnormal proteins, such as multiple myeloma. Also known as erythrocyte sedimentation rate, or ESR.

Segawa dystonia See *dopa-responsive dystonia*.

seizure Uncontrolled electrical activity in the brain that may produce a physical convulsion, minor physical signs, thought disturbances, or a combination of symptoms. The type of symptoms and seizures experienced depend on where the abnormal electrical activity takes place in the brain, what its root cause is, and such factors as the patient's age and general state of health. Seizures can be caused by head injuries, brain tumors, lead poisoning, maldevelopment of the brain, genetic and infectious illnesses, and fevers. In half of patients with seizures, no cause can yet be found. See also *epilepsy; seizure disorder*.

seizure, absence A seizure that takes the form of a staring spell: The person suddenly seems to be "absent." There is a brief loss of awareness, which can be accompanied by blinking or mouth twitching. Absence seizures have a very characteristic

appearance on an EEG. Also known as petit mal seizure.

seizure, atonic A seizure in which the person suddenly loses muscle tone and cannot sit or stand upright. Also known as drop attack and drop seizure.

seizure, complex partial A form of partial seizure during which the person loses awareness. The patient does not actually become unconscious, and he or she may carry out actions as complex as walking, talking, or driving. The patient may have physical, sensory, and thought disturbances. When the seizure ends, the patient has no memory of those actions. See also *seizure, partial; fugue state*.

seizure, drop See *seizure, atonic*.

seizure, febrile A convulsion that occurs in association with a fever. Febrile seizures are common in infants and young children and are usually of no lasting importance.

seizure, focal See *seizure, partial*.

seizure, grand mal See *seizure, tonic-clonic*.

seizure, Jacksonian A form of seizure that involves brief alterations in movement, sensation, or nerve function that is caused by abnormal electrical activity in a localized area of the brain. Jacksonian seizures typically cause no change in awareness or alertness. They are transient, fleeting, and ephemeral.

seizure, local See *seizure, partial*.

seizure, myoclonic A seizure that is characterized by jerking (myoclonic) movements of a muscle or muscle group, without loss of consciousness.

seizure, partial A seizure that affects only one part of the brain. Symptoms depend on which part of the brain is affected: One part of the body, or multiple body parts confined to one side of the body, may start to twitch uncontrollably. Partial seizures may involve head turning, eye movements, lip smacking, mouth movements, drooling, rhythmic muscle contractions in a part of the body, apparently purposeful movements, abnormal numbness, tingling, and a crawling sensation over the skin. Partial seizures can also include sensory disturbances, such as smelling or hearing things that are not there or having a sudden flood of emotions. Although the patient may feel confused, consciousness is not lost. Also known as focal seizure and local seizure. See also *seizure, complex partial*.

seizure, petit mal See *seizure, absence*.

seizure, tonic-clonic The most obvious type of seizure, which has two parts: the tonic phase (in which the body becomes rigid) and the clonic phase (in which there is uncontrolled jerking). Tonic-clonic seizures may or may not be preceded by auras, and they are often followed by headache, confusion, and sleep. They may last for mere seconds or continue for several minutes. If a tonic-clonic seizure does not resolve or if such seizures follow each other in rapid succession, the patient needs emergency help. The patient could be in a life-threatening state known as status epilepticus. Also known as grand mal seizure. See also *status epilepticus*.

seizure disorder One of a great many medical conditions that are characterized by episodes of uncontrolled electrical activity in the brain (seizures). Some seizure disorders are hereditary, and others are caused by birth defects or environmental hazards, such as lead poisoning. Seizure disorders are more likely to develop in patients who have other neurological disorders, psychiatric conditions, or immune system problems than in others. In some cases, uncontrolled seizures can cause brain damage, lowered intelligence, and permanent mental and physical impairment. Diagnosis is made via observation, neurological examination, electroencephalogram (EEG), and in some cases, more advanced brain-imaging techniques. Treatment usually involves use of medication, although in difficult cases a special diet (ketogenic diet) or brain surgery may be tried. See also *epilepsy; seizure*.

selective estrogen-receptor modulator A designer estrogen that can have the ability to both block and stimulate the actions of estrogen, having different effects on different body tissues. For example, raloxifene (brand name: Evista) prevents bone loss and lowers serum cholesterol as estrogen does, but it has been used, like tamoxifen, to block the action of estrogen on breast cells and is given to prevent breast cancer in some high-risk populations. Abbreviated SERM. See also *designer estrogen*.

selective mutism An inability to speak in certain situations. See also *apraxia; autism; elective mutism; mutism; social phobia*.

selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor See *SSRI*.

selenium An essential mineral that is a component of an antioxidant enzyme, glutathione reductase, that is key in tissue respiration. Food sources of selenium include seafoods; some meats, such as kidney and liver; and some grains and seeds. Too

much selenium may cause reversible balding and changes in the nails, give a garlic odor to the breath, and cause intestinal distress, weakness, and slowed mental functioning. Deficiency of selenium causes Keshan disease.

selenium deficiency See *deficiency, selenium*.

sella turcica A depression in the base of the skull where the pituitary gland is situated. It was called the sella turcica (the Turkish saddle) because of its resemblance to a saddle used by the Turks which had supports in the front and back.

semen The fluid that is released through the penis during orgasm. Semen is made up of fluid and sperm. The fluid comes from the prostate, seminal vesicles, and other sex glands. The sperm are manufactured in the testicles. The seminal fluid helps transport the sperm during orgasm. Seminal fluid contains sugar as an energy source for sperm.

semen analysis A laboratory test that measures the amount of semen a man produces and determines the number and quality of sperm in the semen sample. A semen analysis is usually one of the first tests done to help determine whether a man has a problem fathering a child (infertility).

seminal vesicle One of two structures that are about 5 cm long and are located behind the bladder and above the prostate gland. The seminal vesicles contribute fluid to the ejaculate.

senile keratosis See *keratosis, actinic*.

sensory Relating to sensation, to the perception of a stimulus, to the voyage made by incoming nerve impulses from the sense organs to the nerve centers or to the senses themselves.

sensory integration dysfunction A neurological disorder in which there is impaired perception or processing of sensory input to the brain. In sensory integration dysfunction, the processing of information from a number of different senses may be impaired, such as sight, hearing, touch, smell, taste, the sense of movement (vestibular system), and/or the positional sense (proprioception). Symptoms range from very mild to debilitating and may involve apparent over- or undersensitivity to sensory input. It is most commonly diagnosed in children. Treatment is a form of occupational therapy in which special exercises are used, for example, to strengthen the patient's sense of touch (tactile), sense of balance (vestibular), or sense of where the body and its parts are situated in space (proprioceptive). Also known as sensory processing disorder.

sentinel lymph node See *lymph node, sentinel*.

sentinel lymph node biopsy See *biopsy, sentinel lymph node*.

sepsis The presence of bacteria (bacteremia), other infectious organisms, or toxins created by infectious organisms in the bloodstream with spread throughout the body. Sepsis may be associated with clinical symptoms of systemic illness, such as fever, chills, malaise, low blood pressure, and mental-status changes. Sepsis can be a serious situation, a life-threatening condition that requires urgent and comprehensive care. Treatment depends on the type of infection but usually begins with antibiotics or similar medications. Also known as blood poisoning and septicemia.

sepsis, neonatal A serious blood bacterial infection in an infant less than 4 weeks of age. Babies with sepsis may be listless, overly sleepy, floppy, weak, and very pale. Treatment involves urgent administration of antibiotics and intravenous fluids.

septal defect, atrial See *atrial septal defect*.

septal defect, ventricular See *ventricular septal defect*.

septate Divided. For example, a septate uterus is one that is divided.

septate vagina See *vagina, septate*.

septic Infected, or denoting infection. For example, septic shock is shock that is caused by infection.

septic arthritis See *arthritis, septic*.

septic bursitis See *bursitis, septic*.

septicemia See *sepsis*.

septorhinoplasty A surgical procedure that is done on the nose and the nasal septum to remove any internal obstructions that may be blocking breathing through the nose. See also *rhinoplasty*.

septum A dividing wall or enclosure. For example, the septum of the nose is the thin cartilage that divides the left and right chambers of the nose from each other.

septum, atrial The wall between the right and left atria (the upper chambers) of the heart. Also known as interatrial septum.

septum, cardiac The dividing wall between the right and left sides of the heart. The portion of the

septum that separates the right and left atria of the heart is termed the atrial (or interatrial) septum. The portion of the septum that lies between the right and left ventricles of the heart is called the ventricular (or interventricular) septum. Also known as heart septum.

septum, heart See *septum, cardiac*.

septum, interatrial See *septum, atrial*.

septum, interventricular See *septum, ventricular*.

septum, nasal The dividing wall that runs down the middle of the nose, creating two nasal passages, each ending in a nostril.

septum, ventricular The wall between the two lower chambers (ventricles) of the heart. Also known as interventricular septum.

sequencing Determining the order of nucleotides (base sequences) in a DNA or RNA molecule, or determining the order of amino acids in a protein.

SERM Selective estrogen-receptor modulator.

seroconversion The development of detectable antibodies in the blood that are directed against an infectious agent. Antibodies do not usually develop until some time after the initial exposure to the agent. Following seroconversion, a person tests positive for the antibody when given tests that are based on the presence of antibodies, such as ELISA.

serositis Inflammation of the serous tissues of the body (the tissues that line the lungs, heart, abdomen, and inner abdominal organs).

serotonin A neurotransmitter that is involved in the transmission of nerve impulses. Serotonin can trigger the release of substances in the blood vessels of the brain that in turn cause the pain of migraine. Serotonin is also key to mood regulation; pain perception; gastrointestinal function, including perception of hunger and satiety; and other physical functions.

serotype A subdivision of a particular species of microorganism characterized by identification of recognizable antigens on its surface.

serous membrane The tissue that lines the cavities containing the lungs (pleural cavity) and heart (pericardial cavity), the cavity containing most of the abdominal organs (peritoneal cavity), and that covers the surfaces of many internal organs. Serous membranes act as a protective lining by providing a

lubricating fluid that reduces friction forces between internal organs. Also known as serosa.

serum 1 The clear liquid that can be separated from clotted blood. Serum differs from plasma, the liquid portion of normal unclotted blood, which contains the red cells, white cells, and platelets. The clot makes the difference between serum and plasma. 2 Any normal or pathological fluid that resembles serum, as, for example, the fluid in a blister.

serum glutamic oxaloacetic transaminase See *aspartate aminotransferase*.

serum glutamic pyruvic transaminase See *alanine aminotransferase*.

serum hepatitis See *hepatitis B*.

sesamoid bone A little bone that is embedded in a joint capsule or tendon. For example, the kneecap (patella) is a sesamoid bone.

seven-day measles See *measles*.

seventh cranial nerve See *facial nerve*.

seventh cranial nerve paralysis See *Bell's palsy*.

Sever condition See *apophysitis calcaneus*.

severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) A serious, sometimes fatal, form of pneumonia due to a novel coronavirus. SARS first appeared in an outbreak late in 2002.

severe congenital neutropenia One of several genetic disorders of the bone marrow that is evident at birth and characterized by a lack of neutrophils (a type of white blood cells that are important in fighting infection). Children with severe congenital neutropenia suffer from frequent bacterial (but not viral or fungal) infections. They are also at increased risk for acute myelogenous leukemia (AML) and myelodysplasia. Autosomal dominant and sporadic forms of severe congenital neutropenia are most frequently caused by mutation in the neutrophil elastase gene (ELA2) on chromosome 19. There is an X-linked recessive form of severe congenital neutropenia in males that is caused by mutation in the WAS gene (which is also mutated in Wiskott-Aldrich syndrome). Kostmann disease is a form of severe congenital neutropenia that is inherited in an autosomal recessive manner. Treatment of severe congenital neutropenia involves use of recombinant human granulocyte colony-stimulating factor (GCSF). GCSF elevates the neutrophil count, helps

resolve preexisting infections, diminishes the number of new infections, and results in significant improvements in survival and quality of life. Patients treated with GCSF may nonetheless develop leukemia or myelodysplastic syndrome. Also known as infantile genetic agranulocytosis.

sex chromosome See *chromosome, sex*.

sexual addiction Having an unusually intense sex drive or obsession with sex that is disruptive and dominates the addict's thinking and daily life. Associated behaviors may include voyeurism, compulsive masturbation, unsafe sex practices, and having multiple or anonymous partners. Sexual addiction can be associated with risk-taking behaviors. For some, the addiction involves illegal activities, such as exhibitionism (exposing oneself in public), making obscene phone calls, or molestation. However, sex addicts do not necessarily become sex offenders. The addict may gain little satisfaction from the sexual activity and often forms no emotional bonds with sex partners.

sexually transmitted disease Any disease that is transmitted via sexual contact; is caused by microorganisms that survive on the skin or mucous membranes of the genital area; or is transmitted via semen, vaginal secretions, or blood during intercourse. Abbreviated STD. Because the genital area provides a moist, warm environment that is especially conducive to the proliferation of bacteria, viruses, and yeasts, a great many diseases can be transmitted sexually. STDs include AIDS, chlamydia, genital herpes, genital warts, gonorrhea, syphilis, yeast infections, human papillomavirus, and some forms of hepatitis. Also known as a venereal disease. See also *sexually transmitted disease in men*; *sexually transmitted disease in women*.

sexually transmitted disease in men Sexually transmitted disease (STD) as it affects men. Men can contract all the known STDs but may have no symptoms or have different symptoms than women do. For example, most men who have chlamydia have no symptoms at all but can easily pass the infection on to their sexual partners.

sexually transmitted disease in women Sexually transmitted disease (STD) as it affects women. Women can contract all the known STDs but may have no symptoms or have different symptoms than men do. For example, women infected with gonorrhea may not have any symptoms but may have a severe pelvic infection later, and they can pass the disease on to their sexual partners. Women can transmit STDs to their babies before, during, or after birth.

SGA Small for gestational age.

SGOT Serum glutamic oxaloacetic transaminase. See *aspartate aminotransferase*.

SGPT Serum glutamic pyruvic transaminase. See *alanine aminotransferase*.

shaken baby syndrome Characteristic injuries caused by violently shaking an infant. Shaken baby syndrome has distinctive features, including hemorrhage (bleeding) into the retina, hemorrhage and swelling of the brain, and patterned bruising and fractures (breaks) of the child's ribs or bones where they have been twisted from the shaking. Shaken baby syndrome is the most common cause of infant death due to head injuries and one of the most serious kinds of child abuse.

shaking palsy See *Parkinson's disease*.

sharp Medical slang for a needle or a similar pointed object.

shell shock See *post-traumatic stress disorder*.

shigella A group of bacteria that can cause infantile gastroenteritis, summer diarrhea of childhood (a common cause of death for children in the mid-19th century), and various forms of dysentery, including epidemic and opportunistic bacillary dysentery.

shigellosis Epidemic and opportunistic (causes disease when the immune system is suppressed) dysentery that is due to infection with shigella bacteria. Shigellosis causes intestinal pain and diarrhea, with mucus and blood in the stool. It is especially common in tropical countries but frequently occurs elsewhere. It is a particular hazard for people with AIDS or other immunodeficiency states. Treatment is with antibiotics against the shigella bacteria.

shin splint An inflammatory condition of the front part of the tibia (the big bone in the lower leg) that results from overuse, as, for example, from running too much on hard roads or sidewalks. Shin splints are due to injury to the posterior peroneal tendon, ligaments, and adjacent tissues in the front (anterior) of the leg. The pain from shin splints is usually noticed early in exercise, then it lessens, and then it reappears later, during running or other activity. Characteristically, the pain is dull at first but intensifies with continuing trauma. Treatment involves a multifaceted approach of "relative rest" and stretching exercises to restore the person to a pain-free state.

shinbone See *tibia*.

shinbone fever See *trench fever*.

shingles An acute infection characterized by often severe pain and a blistering rash that is caused by the varicella (herpes zoster) virus, which also causes chickenpox. Shingles usually emerges in adulthood after exposure to chickenpox or reactivation of the chickenpox virus, which can remain latent in body tissues for years, until the immune system is weakened. The rash appears along the path of the affected nerves. Treatment involves use of antiviral medication and pain medication. When the pain persists beyond 1 month, it is referred to as postherpetic neuralgia. The pain of postherpetic neuralgia can be reduced by a number of medications including tricyclic antidepressant medications such as amitriptyline (brand name: Elavil) and anti-seizure medications such as gabapentin (brand name: Neurontin). A vaccine is available that can prevent shingles. See also *neuralgia, postherpetic*.

shock In medicine, a critical condition that is brought on by a sudden drop in blood flow through the body. The circulatory system fails to maintain adequate blood flow, sharply curtailing the delivery of oxygen and nutrients to vital organs. It also compromises the kidneys and so restricts the removal of wastes from the body. Shock can be due to a number of different mechanisms, including not enough blood volume and not enough output of blood by the heart. The signs and symptoms of shock include low blood pressure (hypotension); overbreathing (hyperventilation); a weak, rapid pulse; cold, clammy, grayish-bluish (cyanotic) skin; decreased urine flow (oliguria); and a sense of great anxiety and foreboding, confusion, and sometimes combativeness. Shock, which is a major medical emergency, is common after serious injury. Emergency care for shock involves keeping the patient warm, giving fluids by mouth or, if necessary, intravenously, and frequently the administration of drugs that act to improve cardiac and circulatory function.

shock, anaphylactic See *anaphylactic shock*.

shock, cardiogenic Shock due to low blood output by the heart, most often seen in conjunction with heart failure or heart attack (myocardial infarction). In cardiogenic shock, the heart fails to pump blood effectively. For example, a heart attack (myocardial infarction) can cause an abnormal, ineffectual heartbeat (arrhythmia) with very slow, rapid, or irregular contractions of the heart, impairing the heart's ability to pump blood and lowering the volume of blood going to vital organs. Cardiogenic shock can also be due to drugs that

reduce heart function or an abnormally low level of oxygen in the blood (hypoxemia) that may be caused, for instance, by lung disease. Whatever the cause of cardiogenic shock, the blood vessels constrict, and adrenaline-like substances are secreted into the bloodstream, increasing the heart rate. Treatment of cardiogenic shock is aimed at improving the heart's function. Cardiogenic shock is extremely serious. The mortality rate is over 80 percent.

shock, diabetic See *diabetic shock*.

shock, electric See *electric shock*.

shock, hemorrhagic Shock due to serious loss of blood. Symptoms include dizziness and loss of consciousness. Treatment includes intravenous fluids and blood transfusion. See also *shock, hypovolemic*.

shock, hypovolemic Shock due to a decrease in blood volume from bleeding, loss of blood plasma through severe burns, or dehydration. Symptoms include dizziness and loss of consciousness. This is the most frequent cause of shock. The primary treatment for hypovolemic shock is prompt intravenous administration of fluid and blood transfusion if necessary.

shock, insulin See *insulin shock*.

shock, psychological See *post-traumatic stress disorder*.

shock, septic Shock caused by bloodstream infection. Symptoms include dizziness and loss of consciousness. Treatment includes intravenous fluids and antibiotics. See also *sepsis*.

shock, shell See *post-traumatic stress disorder*.

shock, spinal Shock caused by injury to the spinal cord. Symptoms include numbness, tingling, loss of feeling sensation, dizziness, and loss of consciousness.

shock, vasogenic Shock caused by widening of the blood vessels, usually from medication. Symptoms include dizziness and loss of consciousness. Treatment includes lying supine, discontinuing the offending medication (if present), and fluid administration.

shock treatment See *electroconvulsive therapy*.

short arm of a chromosome See *p arm of a chromosome*.

short-term memory See *memory, short-term*.

shot, allergy See *allergy desensitization*.

shot, flu See *influenza vaccine*.

shoulder A structure that is made up of two main bones: the scapula (shoulder blade) and the humerus (the long bone of the upper arm). The end of the scapula, called the glenoid, is a socket into which the head of the humerus fits, forming a flexible ball-and-socket joint. The scapula is an unusually shaped bone. It extends up and around the shoulder joint at the rear to create a roof called the acromion, and it extends around the shoulder joint at the front to constitute the coracoid process. See also *shoulder joint*.

shoulder, frozen See *frozen shoulder*.

shoulder blade See *scapula*.

shoulder bursitis See *bursitis, shoulder*.

shoulder joint The flexible ball-and-socket joint that is formed by the junction of the humerus and the scapula. The shoulder joint is cushioned by cartilage that covers the face of the glenoid socket and the head of the humerus. The joint is stabilized by a ring of fibrous cartilage (labrum) around the glenoid socket. Ligaments connect the bones of the shoulder, and tendons join these bones to surrounding muscles. The biceps tendon attaches the biceps muscle to the shoulder and helps stabilize the joint. Four short muscles that originate on the scapula pass around the shoulder, where their tendons fuse together to form the rotator cuff. See also *shoulder*.

show, bloody See *bloody show*.

Shulman syndrome See *eosinophilic fasciitis*.

shunt 1 To move a body fluid, such as cerebrospinal fluid, from one place to another. 2 A vessel (tube) that is used as a passageway to transport fluid from one body area to another. For example, a spinal shunt carries cerebrospinal fluid from a ventricle in the brain to another area of the body. A shunt may be placed to relieve pressure due to hydrocephalus, for example.

shunt, ventriculoatrial A shunt that is used to drain fluid from the cerebral ventricle into the right atrium of the heart.

shunt, ventriculoperitoneal A shunt that is used to drain fluid from the cerebral ventricle into the abdomen.

shunt, ventriculopleural A shunt that is used to drain fluid from the cerebral ventricle into the chest cavity.

Shy-Drager syndrome A progressive disorder of the central and sympathetic nervous systems, also called multiple system atrophy with postural hypotension (an excessive drop in blood pressure when the patient stands up, causing dizziness or momentary blackouts). Symptoms of autonomic nervous system failure, such as constipation, impotence in men, and urinary incontinence, usually predominate early in the course of the disease. Later symptoms can include impaired speech, difficulties with breathing and swallowing, and inability to sweat (anhidrosis). Shy-Drager syndrome usually ends in death within 7–10 years of the diagnosis.

Siamese twins Identical (monozygotic) twins that do not separate fully from one another but remain partially united due to the incomplete division of one fertilized ovum. Such twins are known medically as conjoined twins. Conjoined twins are popularly known as Siamese twins after Chang and Eng, the celebrated conjoined Chinese twins born in Siam (Thailand) in the early 19th century. Depending on the anatomy of the union, surgical procedures can be done that separate conjoined twins.

sibling A brother or sister.

sibship The relationship between the children born to a set of parents.

sicca syndrome See *Sjögren syndrome*.

sick sinus syndrome A condition that features symptoms including dizziness, confusion, fainting, and heart failure that is due to a problem with the sinoatrial node (SA node) of the heart, which acts as the body's natural pacemaker. If the SA node is not functioning normally, the patient usually has an abnormally slow heart rate (bradycardia), but other rhythm disturbances, including rapid heart rate (tachycardia) and an alternating fast and slow heart rate (bradycardia-tachycardia syndrome) can also occur. These disturbances can cause poor pumping by the heart, which can impair the circulation. Diagnosis is usually made via electrocardiogram (EKG). Treatment includes use of medications, such as calcium antagonists.

sickle cell anemia See *anemia, sickle cell*.

sickle cell disease See *anemia, sickle cell*.

sickle cell trait The condition in which a person has only one copy of the gene for sickle cell (and is called a sickle heterozygote) but does not have

sickle cell disease (which requires two copies of the sickle cell gene). If two people with sickle cell trait mate and have children together, each of their children has a 25 percent chance of having sickle cell disease.

sickle hemoglobin See *hemoglobin S*.

sickness, altitude See *altitude sickness*.

sickness, motion See *motion sickness*.

sickness, mountain See *altitude sickness*.

side effect **1** Problems that occur when treatment goes beyond the desired effect. An example is hemorrhage due to the use of too much anticoagulant (blood thinning medication). **2** Problems that occur in addition to the desired therapeutic effect. For example, the common side effects of cancer treatment include fatigue, nausea, vomiting, decreased blood cell counts, hair loss, and mouth sores.

SIDS Sudden infant death syndrome.

sig Signature.

sight, day See *nyctanopia*.

sigmoid In human anatomy, the lower colon (the lower portion of the large bowel). Sigmoid is short for sigmoid colon. From the Greek letter sigma, which is shaped like a C. Sigmoid also means curved in two directions like the letter S. For example, a sigmoid curve is an S-shaped curve.

sigmoidoscope A lighted instrument that is used to view the inside of the lower colon.

sigmoidoscopy A procedure in which a physician inserts a viewing tube (sigmoidoscope) into the rectum for the purpose of inspecting the lower colon and rectum. If an abnormal area is detected, a biopsy can be performed.

sign Any objective evidence of disease, as opposed to a symptom, which is, by nature, subjective. For example, gross blood in the stool is a sign of disease; it is evidence that can be recognized by the patient, physician, nurse, or someone else. Abdominal pain is a symptom; it is something only the patient can perceive.

signature **1** The part of the prescription that contains the physician's directions to the patient. For example, the signature might say "take twice daily with food." Also known as sig. **2** The outward appearance of a natural object, which was once

taken as a token of its special properties. For example, this ancient doctrine of signatures led some to conclude that the walnut, which looks something like a tiny brain, could be used to heal brain problems; the liverwort plant, which has a three-lobed liver-like leaf, was useful in treating liver disease; and so on.

SIL Squamous intraepithelial lesion.

silver A metal that is used in some medications and in many natural remedies. Used in the past in silver amalgam for filling cavities in teeth. Silver has antibiotic properties. However, overuse of silver or use of products containing silver by people with certain health conditions can result in silver poisoning (*argyria*). See also *argyria*.

silver poisoning See *argyria*.

Simian crease A single transverse crease in the palm, a minor variation associated with Down syndrome (trisomy 21) and a number of chromosomal and other abnormalities. Also called a four-finger crease; single palmar flexion crease; single upper palm crease.

single gene disease See *disease, single gene*.

singultus See *hiccup*.

sinoatrial node The heart's natural pacemaker, one of the major elements in the cardiac conduction system, the system that controls the heart rate. Abbreviated SA node. The SA node consists of a cluster of cells that are situated in the upper part of the wall of the heart's right atrium, where the electrical impulses are generated. An electrical signal generated by the SA node moves from cell to cell, down through the heart, until it reaches the atrioventricular (AV) node, a cluster of cells situated in the center of the heart, between the atria and ventricles. The AV node serves as a gate, slowing the electrical current before the signal is permitted to pass down to the ventricles. This delay ensures that the atria have a chance to fully contract before the ventricles are stimulated. After passing the AV node, the electrical current travels to the ventricles along special fibers embedded in the walls of the lower part of the heart. The autonomic nervous system controls the firing of the SA node to trigger the start of this cardiac cycle. The autonomic nervous system can transmit a message quickly to the SA node, so it in turn can increase the heart rate to twice the normal rate within only 3 to 5 seconds. This rapid response is important during exercise, when the heart has to increase its beating speed to keep up with the body's heightened demand for oxygen. Also known as sinus node.

sinus **1** An air-filled cavity in a dense portion of a skull bone. The sinuses decrease the weight of the skull. The sinuses are formed in four right-left pairs. The frontal sinuses are positioned behind the forehead, while the maxillary sinuses are behind the cheeks. The sphenoid and ethmoid sinuses are deeper in the skull behind the eyes and maxillary sinuses. The sinuses are lined by mucous-secreting cells. Air enters the sinuses through small openings in the bone called ostia. If an ostium is blocked, air cannot pass into the sinus, and likewise, mucous cannot drain out. See also *sinusitis*. **2** A channel permitting the passage of blood or lymph fluid that is not a blood or lymphatic vessel, such as the sinuses of the placenta. **3** A tract or fistula leading to a cavity which may be filled with pus.

sinus, cavernous See *cavernous sinus*.

sinus barotrauma See *aerosinusitis*.

sinus headache See *headache, sinus*.

sinus node See *sinoatrial node*.

sinus rhythm The normal regular rhythm of the heart that is set by the sinoatrial (or sinus) node, which is located in the wall of the right atrium (the right upper chamber of the heart). Normal electrical impulses of the heart start there and are transmitted to the atria and down to the ventricles (the lower chambers of the heart). The lack of normal sinus rhythm is an arrhythmia (abnormal heart rhythm). Sinus arrhythmia refers to the normal increase in heart rate that occurs during inspiration (breathing in). It is a normal response and is more accentuated in children than in adults. See also *sinus tachycardia*.

sinus tachycardia Fast heartbeat (tachycardia) that occurs because of overly rapid firing by the sinoatrial node. Sinus tachycardia is usually a rapid contraction of a normal heart in response to a condition, drug, or disease, such as pain, fever, excessive thyroid hormone, exertion, excitement, low blood oxygen level (hypoxia), or stimulant drugs, such as caffeine, cocaine, and amphetamines. However, in some cases sinus tachycardia can be a sign of heart failure, heart valve disease, or other illness.

sinusitis Inflammation of the lining membrane in any of the hollow areas (sinuses) of the skull around the nose. Sinusitis may be caused by anything that interferes with air flow into the sinuses and the drainage of mucous out of the sinuses. The sinus openings, called ostia, may be obstructed by swelling of the tissue lining the ostia and adjacent nasal passage tissue; for example, from colds, allergies, and

tissue irritants (nasal sprays, cocaine, cigarette smoke). Less commonly, sinuses can become obstructed by tumors or growths. Stagnated mucous then provides a perfect environment for bacterial infection. The common symptoms of sinusitis include headache; facial tenderness or pain; fever; cloudy, discolored nasal drainage; a feeling of nasal stuffiness; sore throat; and cough. Acute sinusitis is usually treated with antibiotic therapy. Chronic forms of sinusitis require long courses of antibiotics and may require a sinus drainage procedure.

situational syncope See *syncope, situational*.

situs inversus totalis See *reversal of organs, total*.

sixth cranial nerve See *abducens nerve*.

sixth disease See *measles*.

Sjogren's syndrome An autoimmune disease that classically combines dry eyes, dry mouth, and another disease of the connective tissues, commonly rheumatoid arthritis, but sometimes lupus, scleroderma, polymyositis, or another autoimmune condition. Sjogren's syndrome is an inflammatory disease of glands and other tissues of the body. Inflammation of the glands that produce tears (lacrimal glands) leads to decreased tears and dry eyes. Inflammation of the glands that produce saliva in the mouth (salivary glands, including the parotid glands) leads to dry mouth. Sjogren's syndrome can consequently be complicated by infections of the eyes, breathing passages, and mouth. About 90 percent of Sjogren's syndrome patients are female, usually middle aged or older. Diagnostic clues include the presence of antibodies that are directed against a variety of body tissues (autoantibodies). Diagnosis can be made via biopsy of an affected gland. Treatment is directed toward the particular areas of the body involved and to complications, such as infection. Also known as keratoconjunctivitis sicca and sicca syndrome.

skeletal Pertaining to the skeleton, the bones of the body that collectively provide the frame for the body.

skeletal dysplasia One of a large contingent of genetic diseases in which the bony skeleton forms abnormally during fetal development. Achondroplasia is one form of skeletal dysplasia.

skeletal muscle Along with smooth and cardiac muscle, one of the types of muscle tissue in the body. Skeletal muscle represents the majority of muscle tissue. It is the type of muscle that powers movement of the skeleton, as in walking and lifting.

skeleton The framework of the body, which is composed of 206 bones. See also *bones of the arm, wrist, and hand; bones of the head; bones of the leg, ankle, and foot; bones of the trunk*.

skin The body's outer covering, which protects against heat and light, injury, and infection. Skin regulates body temperature and stores water, fat, and vitamin D. The skin, which weighs about 6 pounds, is the body's largest organ. It is made up of two main layers: the epidermis and the dermis. The outer layer of the skin (epidermis) is mostly made up of flat, scale-like cells called squamous cells. Under the squamous cells are round cells called basal cells. The deepest part of the epidermis also contains melanocytes, cells that produce melanin, which gives the skin its color. The inner layer of skin (dermis) contains blood and lymph vessels, hair follicles, and glands that produce sweat, which helps regulate body temperature, and sebum, an oily substance that helps keep the skin from drying out. Sweat and sebum reach the skin's surface through tiny openings called pores.

skin, scalded, syndrome See *staphylococcal scalded skin syndrome*.

skin biopsy Removal of a piece of skin for the purpose of diagnostic examination. Skin biopsy is most frequently done to diagnose skin growths, such as moles, or skin conditions, such as rashes. Different skin biopsy techniques are used in different situations. A shave biopsy takes a thin slice and can be used to remove superficial lesions. A punch biopsy takes a core and can be used to remove small lesions and to diagnose rashes and other conditions. Excisional biopsies are generally larger and deeper than shave and punch biopsies, and they are used to completely remove an abnormal area of skin (lesion), such as a skin cancer.

skin cancer See *cancer, skin*.

skin graft Skin used to cover an area where the patient's skin has been lost due to a burn, an injury, or surgery. The most effective skin grafts involve moving the patient's own skin from one part of the body to another. The second most effective type are skin grafts between identical twins. Beyond these two procedures, there is a strong chance that the body will reject the new skin, although the graft may protect the body and give the body time to grow new skin of its own.

skin graft, allogenic A graft using skin from another person (not an identical twin). Also known as skin allograft.

skin graft, autologous A graft using the patient's own skin. Also known as autogenic skin graft.

skin graft, composite A graft technique in which both the patient's own skin and donor skin are used together.

skin graft, full-thickness A graft technique in which sheets of skin containing both the epidermis and the dermis are used. For example, a full-thickness skin graft might be used to repair a severe burn wound.

skin graft, mesh A graft technique in which multiple pieces of skin are carefully arranged to cover an area. This technique is used most frequently when a large area needs to be protected, as after a severe burn over a large area.

skin graft, pedicle A graft technique in which a piece of skin from a nearby area remains attached at one of its corners, while the main part of the piece is reattached over the area that needs to be covered.

skin graft, pinch A graft technique in which very small squares of skin are attached to the area that needs to be covered, in hopes that they will start to grow and cover the area.

skin graft, porcine A skin graft in which pig skin is used. Like grafts from human donors, porcine grafts are usually just a short-term protective measure.

skin graft, split-thickness A graft technique in which sheets of skin containing the epidermis and part of the dermis are used. This graft might be used when only portions of the skin have been injured, such as after a scraping injury.

skin plaque See *plaque, skin*.

skin tag A small tag of skin that may be squat (sessile) or on a stalk (a peduncle). Skin tags commonly occur on the eyelids, neck, armpits, upper chest, and groin. This tiny benign tumor of the skin usually causes no symptoms unless it is repeatedly irritated as, for example, by a collar. Treatment may involve freezing the skin tag with liquid nitrogen or cutting off the skin tag with a scalpel or scissors if the skin tag is irritating or cosmetically unwanted. Also known as acrochordon.

skin test for allergy See *allergy skin test*.

skin test for immunity A method of evaluating whether a person has developed an immune

response to a certain infection. A substance is injected into the deep layer of the skin (dermis) and causes a reaction if the immune system recognizes it. One of the most common skin tests is the tuberculin test, which reveals whether a person has been exposed to tuberculosis. The injection is placed on the inside of the forearm, and a positive reaction results in a raised, firm area of skin at the injection site within 2 days.

skull A collection of bones that encase the brain and give form to the head and face. These bones include the frontal, parietal, occipital, temporal, sphenoid, ethmoid, zygomatic, maxilla, nasal, vomer, palatine, inferior concha, and mandible. See also *bones of the head*.

slanted ear See *ear; slanted*.

SLE Systemic lupus erythematosis. See *lupus erythematosis, systemic*.

sleep The body's rest cycle. Sleep is triggered by a complex group of hormones that respond to cues from the body itself and the environment. About 80 percent of sleep is dreamless and is known as non-rapid eye movement (NREM) sleep. During NREM sleep, the breathing and heart rate are slow and regular, the blood pressure is low, and the sleeper is relatively still. NREM sleep is divided into four stages of increasing depth of sleep: Level 1 sleep is a transition period between sleep and wakefulness; Level 2 sleep features significant slowing of heartbeat and breathing and makes up about 50 percent of all sleep; and Levels 3 and 4 (delta) sleep are marked by very slow respiration and heartbeat. Level 4 sleep leads to rapid eye movement (REM) sleep, also known as Level 5 sleep. Dreams occur during three to five periods of REM sleep each night. REM sleep occurs at intervals of 1 to 2 hours and is variable in length. REM sleep is characterized by irregular breathing and heart rate and involuntary muscle jerks. Most adults need around 8 hours of sleep on a regular schedule to function well, although some require less and others more. Children, particularly teenagers, often need 9 or 10 hours for optimal functioning. See also *NREM sleep; REM sleep*.

sleep, non-rapid eye movement See *NREM sleep*.

sleep, NREM See *NREM sleep*.

sleep, rapid eye movement See *REM sleep*.

sleep, REM See *REM sleep*.

sleep apnea Temporary stoppage of breathing during sleep, often resulting in daytime sleepiness.

Treatment depends on the type of sleep apnea present. Sleep apnea is classified as obstructive or central. Sleep apnea that is associated with air passage obstruction may require losing excessive weight, avoiding alcohol and sedatives, sleeping on one side, medications to relieve nasal congestion, a breathing device, or surgical procedures. Central sleep apnea is uncommon and caused by problems in the brain that impair the signals to breathe and can require mechanical ventilation. See also *sleep apnea, central; sleep apnea, obstructive; sleep disorder*.

sleep apnea, central Brief interruptions of breathing during sleep caused by failure of the brain to send the appropriate signals to the breathing muscles to initiate respiration. Central sleep apnea is less common than obstructive sleep apnea and can require mechanical ventilation. See also *sleep apnea, obstructive*.

sleep apnea, obstructive Brief interruptions of breathing during sleep caused by physical obstruction to the flow of air. The air cannot flow through the nose or mouth, although efforts to breathe are made. The basic problem may be blockage in the mouth or nose. Sleep apnea that is associated with air passage obstruction may require losing excessive weight, avoiding alcohol and sedatives, sleeping on one side, medications to relieve nasal congestion, a breathing device, or surgical procedures. See also *sleep apnea, central*.

sleep disorder Any disorder that affects, disrupts, or involves sleep. The most common sleep disorder is snoring, although it is usually not medically significant. Insomnia, sleep apnea, restless legs syndrome, and sleepwalking are also sleep disorders. Many large medical centers have diagnostic and treatment facilities dedicated to diagnosing and treating sleep disorders. See also *sleep apnea; sleepwalking; snoring*.

sleepwalking Purposeful moving, usually but not always including walking, while in a deep stage of sleep. Sleepwalking occurs most frequently in children, particularly boys. Sedatives tend to exacerbate rather than cure sleepwalking. The best measures are preventive: Ensure that the sleep-walker is in a safe room for walking and cannot accidentally fall through an open window or down stairs. Some types of sleepwalking are related to seizure disorders, bipolar disorders, and other neurological conditions, but most cases are transitory and due to unknown causes. Also known as somnambulism.

slipped capital femoral epiphysis A condition in which the growth plate of the femur is pushed out

of position, causing hip pain, stiff gait, and sometimes knee pain. Abbreviated SCFE. SCFE is most common in overweight teenagers. Treatment involves orthopedic surgery to bring the bone back into alignment.

slipped disk See *herniated disk*.

slow virus A virus that has a long incubation period before the onset of a very gradual progressive disease. Typically, the diseases caused by slow viruses affect the central nervous system and are associated with a variety of nervous system symptoms while having a characteristically protracted, progressive clinical course.

sludge, biliary See *biliary sludge*.

small for gestational age In a full-term infant, weighing 2,500 g or less at birth. Abbreviated SGA. Infants who are SGA are considered to have intrauterine growth retardation, given their gestational age. By contrast, an infant may weigh 2,500 g or less simply because of prematurity.

small intestine See *intestine, small*.

small-cell lung cancer An aggressive type of lung cancer in which the cancerous cells appear smaller under a microscope than those in the other common forms of lung cancer (non-small-cell lung cancer) and have a characteristic microscopic appearance. Treatment options for small cell cancer may be different than for other types of lung cancers (non-small cell lung cancers). Small-cell lung cancer cells have been described as resembling oats when examined under the microscope. Also known as oat-cell lung cancer. See also *non-small-cell lung cancer*.

smallpox A highly contagious and frequently fatal viral disease that is characterized by a biphasic fever and a distinctive skin rash that leaves pock marks in its wake. Because of its high case-fatality rates and transmissibility and because people haven't been vaccinated against it in years, smallpox now represents a serious bioterrorist threat. The disease is caused by the variola virus. The incubation period is about 12 days (range: 7–17 days) following exposure. Initial symptoms include high fever, fatigue, headaches, and backaches. A characteristic rash, most prominent on the face, arms, and legs, follows in 2 to 3 days. The rash starts with flat red lesions that evolve in 2 to 3 days. Lesions become pus-filled and begin to crust early in the second week. Scabs develop and then separate and fall off after about 3 to 4 weeks. The majority of patients with smallpox recover, but death occurs in up to 30 percent of cases. Smallpox is spread from one person to

another via infected saliva droplets as occurs during face to face contact. Persons with smallpox are most infectious during the first week of illness because that is when the largest amount of virus is present in saliva. However, some risk of transmission lasts until all scabs have fallen off. Also known as variola.

smallpox vaccine A vaccine that contains a live virus called vaccinia that is used to prevent smallpox. The vaccine does not contain the variola virus that causes smallpox, but exposes the immune system to proteins that look like the virus so that an immune response occurs. Through the use of the vaccine, smallpox was eliminated from causing human infection in the world in 1977. Routine vaccination against smallpox ended in 1972. The level of immunity among persons who were vaccinated before 1972 is uncertain. In people exposed to smallpox who are not immune to the disease, the vaccine can lessen the severity of or even prevent the illness if given within 4 days of exposure.

smear, Pap See *Pap test*.

smell The sense that provides information about an object's scent, often giving clues to the palatability of food, the safety of air, and other matters. The organs of smell are made up of patches of tissue called the olfactory membranes that are each about the size of a postage stamp. These membranes are located in a pair of clefts just under the bridge of the nose. Most air breathed in normally flows through the nose, but only a small part reaches the olfactory clefts—just enough to get a response to an odor. When a person sniffs to detect a smell, air moves faster through the nose, increasing the flow to the olfactory clefts and carrying more odor to these sensory organs.

smoldering leukemia See *leukemia, smoldering*.

smooth muscle Along with skeletal and cardiac muscle, one of the types of muscle tissue in the body. Smooth muscle generally forms the supporting tissue of blood vessels and hollow internal organs, such as the stomach, intestine, and bladder. It is considered smooth because it does not have the microscopic lines (the striations) seen in the other two types of muscle.

snake stick See *Aesculapius*.

snakebite The bite of a snake, whether poisonous or not. Most snakes are not poisonous, but their bites can nonetheless cause painful puncture wounds that require treatment. If a snakebite victim knows a snake was poisonous, or if the person did not see or recognize the snake, he or she should immediately seek emergency treatment. The

affected part should be kept immobile and below the level of the heart, and the bite victim should be taken to the nearest hospital. A tourniquet or bandage should not be used on a snakebite, and no one should attempt to suction out the wound by mouth. Treatment involves use of antivenom and care for the puncture wound itself and any symptoms that emerge, such as respiratory distress. See also *rattlesnake bite*.

Snellen chart See *chart, Snellen*.

snoring A sound created by vibrations of the uvula and soft palate during sleep. During normal breathing, air passing through the throat en route to the lungs travels by the tongue, soft palate, uvula, and tonsils. When a person is awake, the muscles in the back of the throat tighten to hold these structures in place and prevent them from collapsing and vibrating in the airway. Sometimes snoring can be a sign of obstructive sleep apnea or have repairable physical causes, in which case treatment may be necessary. Otherwise, patients who snore may want to try different sleep positions, nose clips, or similar steps to prevent unwanted snoring. See also *sleep apnea, obstructive; somnoplasty*.

social phobia A paralyzing fear of interacting with others. Symptoms include excessive blushing, sweating, trembling, rapid heartbeat, muscle tension, nausea, and extreme anxiety. Social phobia can occur in very young children or emerge at a later age. It can be disabling to a person's work and social and family relationships. Many people with social phobia have trouble reaching their educational and professional goals or even maintaining employment. They may depend on others financially and try to relieve anxiety by using alcohol and drugs. In extreme cases, a person with social phobia may begin to avoid all social situations and become housebound. Treatment options include using medications and cognitive-behavioral therapy, which employs exposure and response prevention. Medications for social phobias include antidepressants called selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) and monoamine oxidase inhibitors (MAOIs), as well as high-potency benzodiazepenes. People with the specific form of social phobia called performance phobia may be helped with drugs called beta blockers.

social worker A health professional who assists individuals and families with social or emotional issues. Within the medical system, a social worker might help uninsured families who need medical care find help; work with grieving parents, spouses, or other family members; provide individual therapy; or help patients find resources to meet their needs for personal and community support. A social

worker may have a BA or a master's in social work (MSW).

socialization The learning process a child goes through as he or she learns how to interact appropriately with other people.

socialized medicine A medical system like that of a socialist country, in which medical facilities and payments are under government, rather than private, control. Most industrialized nations, including the US, have medical systems under some combination of state and private control. For examples, socialized medicine is practiced in Canada and Britain.

sodium The major positive ion (cation) in the fluid surrounding cells in the body. The chemical notation for sodium is Na+. When sodium is combined with chloride, the resulting substance is a crystal called table salt. Excess dietary sodium is largely excreted in the urine, but too much salt in the diet tends to increase the blood pressure. Too much or too little sodium in the blood (called hypernatremia or hyponatremia respectively) can cause cells to malfunction, and extremes can be fatal. Normal blood sodium level is 135–145 milliequivalents/liter (mEq/L) or 135–145 millimoles/liter (mmol/L) in international units.

soft palate The muscular part of the roof of the mouth. The soft palate is directly behind the hard palate, and it lacks bone.

soft tissue All tissues within the body that serve to support, insulate, or connect the internal structures of the body in addition to their other functions. Examples of soft tissue are muscles, nerves, fat, tendons, blood and lymph vessels, and synovial tissues.

solar keratosis See *keratosis, actinic*.

somatic Relating to the body, or pertaining to the body as distinguished from the mind (the psyche).

somatization The normal, unconscious process by which psychological distress is expressed as physical symptoms. For example, a person with clinical depression may complain of stomach pains that prove to have no physical cause. Counseling can be helpful to overcome somatization.

somatostatin A hormone that is widely distributed throughout the body, especially in the hypothalamus and pancreas, that acts as an important regulator of endocrine and nervous system function by inhibiting the secretion of several other hormones such as growth hormone, insulin, and gastrin.

somatotropin A growth hormone that is produced by the anterior pituitary (the front part of the pituitary gland). Somatotropin acts by stimulating the release of another hormone called somatomedin by the liver, thereby causing growth to occur. Somatotropin is given to children with pituitary dwarfism (short stature due to underfunction of the anterior pituitary) to help them grow. Also known as somatotropin, growth hormone.

somatotropin See *somatotropin*.

somnambulism See *sleepwalking*.

somnolent Sleepy or tending to cause sleep. From the Latin word somnus, meaning "sleep."

somnoplasty A surgical treatment for snoring in which heat energy is used to remove tissues of the uvula and soft palate. Somnoplasty is usually done as an office procedure with local anesthesia. See also *snoring*.

S1–S5 Symbols that represent the five sacral vertebrae.

space, pleural See *pleural space*.

span, memory See *memory span*.

spasm A brief, automatic jerking movement. A muscle spasm can be quite painful, with the muscle clenching tightly. A spasm of the coronary artery can cause the pain of angina. Spasms in various types of tissue may be caused by stress, medication, and overexercise.

spasm, coronary artery See *coronary artery spasm*.

spasmodic dysphonia See *dysphonia, spasmodic*.

spastic colitis See *irritable bowel syndrome*.

spastic dysphonia See *dystonia, laryngeal*.

spasticity See *hypertonia*.

specific developmental disorder See *developmental disorder, specific*.

specific-pathogen free A term that is applied to animals reared for use in laboratory experiments which indicates that the animals are known to be free of germs that can cause disease. Abbreviated SPF.

speckled iris See *Brushfield spot*.

SPECT scan Single photon emission computed tomography scan, a nuclear medicine procedure in which a gamma camera rotates around the patient to produce images from many angles, which a computer then uses to form a tomographic (cross-sectional) image.

speculum An instrument that is used to widen the opening of the vagina so that the cervix is more easily visible.

speech, apraxia of See *apraxia of speech*.

speech disorder A disorder of the ability to produce normal speech. Speech disorders may affect articulation (phonetic or phonological disorders), fluency (stuttering or cluttering), and/or voice (tone, pitch, volume, or speed). Most speech disorders have their roots in oral-motor abnormalities, although some involve language-processing problems. A speech pathologist can diagnose speech disorders by testing the individual. See also *aphasia; apraxia of speech; articulation disorder; cluttering; stuttering*.

speech dyspraxia See *dyspraxia of speech*.

speech therapist See *speech-language pathologist*.

speech therapy The treatment of speech and communication disorders. The approach used depends on the disorder. Speech therapy may include physical exercises to strengthen the muscles used in speech (oral-motor work), speech drills to improve clarity, or sound production practice to improve articulation. See also *communication disorder; speech disorder; speech-language pathologist*.

speech-language pathologist A specialist who evaluates and treats people with communication and swallowing problems. Abbreviated SLP. An SLP has an MA or doctorate in a specialty, as well as a Certificate of Clinical Competence (CCC) earned by working under supervision. In some states a state license is also required. Formerly known as speech therapist. See also *speech therapy*.

sperm The male sex cell (gamete). The sperm has an oval head that contains its genetic matter, and it is propelled by a flagellating tail. A sperm is carried into the female reproductive tract within the semen (ejaculate). If the sperm is able to travel up into a fallopian tube, it must then break through the cell wall of the egg (the female gamete, or ovum) to fertilize the egg and form a zygote. This formation process is called fertilization. See also *fertilization; ovulation; ovum*.

spermatic cord A group of structures that go through the inguinal canal to the testis. These structures include the vas deferens, arteries, veins, lymphatic vessels, and nerves.

SPF 1 Sun protection factor. 2 Specific-pathogen free.

sphenoid bone A prominent, irregular, wedge-shaped bone at the base of the skull. The sphenoid bone has been called the “keystone” of the cranial floor because it is in contact with all of the other cranial bones.

spherocytosis, hereditary A genetic disorder of the red blood cell membrane that is characterized by anemia, jaundice, and enlargement of the spleen (splenomegaly). Abbreviated HS. In HS, the red cells are smaller, rounder, and more fragile than normal. They have a spherical shape rather than the biconcave-disk shape of normal red cells. These fragile red cells (spherocytes) tend to get trapped in narrow blood passages, particularly in the spleen. If this occurs, they break up (hemolyze) where they have lodged, leading to hemolytic anemia. The clogging of the spleen with red cells almost invariably causes splenomegaly. The breakup of the red cells releases hemoglobin, and the heme part gives rise to bilirubin, the pigment of jaundice. Often patients with HS also have iron overload due to the excess destruction of iron-rich red cells. HS often appears in infancy or early childhood, causing anemia and jaundice. Four different abnormalities in red cell membrane proteins have been identified in patients with HS, including deficiencies in the blood cell membrane proteins known as spectrin and ankyrin. Depending upon the specific form, HS may be inherited as an autosomal dominant or recessive trait. Diagnosis is made via laboratory study of the blood. HS is most common in people of northern European descent. Treatment involves removing the spleen (splenectomy). Although the red cell defect persists after splenectomy, the hemolysis ceases and the prognosis after splenectomy is for a normal life expectancy. Also known as congenital hemolytic jaundice, severe atypical spherocytosis, spherocytosis type II, ankyrin deficiency, erythrocyte ankyrin deficiency, ankyrin-R deficiency, and ankyrin1 deficiency.

sphincter A muscle that surrounds and, by its contraction, closes a normal opening such as that from the intestinal tract or the urinary tract. Damage to the anal and urethral sphincters can cause fecal and urinary incontinence, respectively. Sphincters tend to be ring-like and, when contracted, to constrict the opening. From the Greek for “that which constricts.”

sphingolipidosis One of a group of hereditary diseases that involve overproduction or accumulation of fatty substances called sphingolipids in the brain and nervous system. See also *Anderson-Fabry disease; Gaucher disease; GM1-gangliosidosis, histiocytosis, lipid; Krabbe disease; leukodystrophy; Tay-Sachs disease; Sandhoff disease*.

sphingomyelinosis See *histiocytosis, lipid*.

sphygmomanometer Blood pressure cuff, an instrument for measuring blood pressure, particularly in arteries. Digital and manual models are available. The two basic types of manual sphygmomanometers are the mercury column and the gauge with a dial face. The manual sphygmomanometer in most frequent use today consists of a gauge attached to a rubber cuff that is wrapped around the upper arm and is inflated to constrict the arteries. A blood pressure reading consists of two numbers: systolic and diastolic. Systolic refers to systole, the phase when the heart pumps blood out into the aorta. Diastolic refers to diastole, the resting period when the heart refills with blood. At each heartbeat, the blood pressure is raised to the systolic level, and, between beats, it drops to the diastolic level. With the cuff inflated with air, a stethoscope is placed over an artery (the brachial artery) in the crook of the arm. As the air in the cuff is released, the pressure reading when the first sound is heard through the stethoscope marks the systolic pressure. As the release of air from the cuff continues, a point is reached when the sound diminishes and then is no longer heard. The pressure at which the last sound is heard marks the diastolic pressure. The blood pressure reading might show the systolic and diastolic pressures to be, for example, 120 and 78mm of mercury (Hg), respectively. This is usually written 120/78 and said to be "120 over 78." Blood pressure readings vary depending on age and many other factors. Children and adults with smaller- or larger-than-average-sized arms may need specialized pressure cuffs. See also *blood pressure; hypertension; hypotension*.

spider bite A bite from a spider. Bites from most spiders are irritating but not poisonous. Localized reddening and swelling are not unusual and should pass within a few days. A few spiders are poisonous, notably the black widow and brown recluse (brown fiddler) in the US. Bites from these spiders require emergency treatment, especially for children.

spider telangiectasia See *spider vein*.

spider vein A group of widened veins that can be seen through the surface of the skin. The wheel-and-spokes shape of the veins resembles a spider. Also known as *spider telangiectasia*.

spina bifida A major birth defect and a type of neural tube defect that involves an opening in the vertebral column caused by the failure of the neural tube to close properly during embryonic development. (The neural tube is the structure in the developing embryo that gives rise to the brain and spinal cord.) Because of the defect in the spine, part of the spinal cord is exposed and protrudes as a meningomyelocele. People with spina bifida often have neurological deficits below the level of the lesion and can suffer from bladder and bowel incontinence, limited mobility (due to paralysis of the legs), and learning problems. The risk of spina bifida varies according to country, ethnic group, and socioeconomic status. In the US as a whole, spina bifida occurs in 1 in every 1,000 to 2,000 births. The risk of spina bifida and other neural tube defects, such as anencephaly, can be significantly decreased if women take ample folic acid before conception and during pregnancy.

spina bifida cystica See *meningomyelocele*.

spina bifida occulta A bony defect in the vertebral column that causes a cleft in that column. The cleft remains covered by skin. Treatment is usually not required.

spinal column See *vertebral column*.

spinal cord The major column of nerve tissue that is connected to the brain and lies within the vertebral canal and from which the spinal nerves emerge. Thirty-one pairs of spinal nerves originate in the spinal cord: 8 cervical, 12 thoracic, 5 lumbar, 5 sacral, and 1 coccygeal. The spinal cord and the brain constitute the central nervous system. The spinal cord consists of nerve fibers that transmit impulses to and from the brain. Like the brain, the spinal cord is covered by three connective-tissue envelopes called the meninges. The space between the outer and middle envelopes is filled with cerebrospinal fluid (CSF), a clear colorless fluid that cushions the spinal cord against jarring shock. Also known simply as the cord.

spinal fusion A surgical procedure in which two or more of the vertebrae in the spine are united together so that motion no longer occurs between them. Spinal fusion may be done to treat a number of conditions, including scoliosis, deformity, fracture, and disc disease. Bone grafts are usually placed around the section of the spine to be fused. The body then heals the grafts over several months, which joins the vertebrae together. The bone for the graft may be taken from another bone in the patient (autograft) or from a bone bank (allograft). Metal rods, plates, screws, and cages may also be used as

an internal splint to hold the vertebrae together while the bone grafts heal and the spine fuses.

spinal nerve One of the nerves that originates in the spinal cord. There are 31 pairs of spinal nerves: 8 cervical nerves, 12 thoracic nerves, 5 lumbar nerves, 5 sacral nerves, and 1 coccygeal nerve.

spinal stenosis Narrowing of the spinal canal. Spinal stenosis is most commonly caused by degeneration of the discs between the vertebrae. The result is compression of the nerve roots or spinal cord by bony spurs or soft tissues, such as discs, in the spinal canal. This most commonly occurs in the low back (lumbar spine) but can also occur in the neck (cervical spine) and less frequently in the upper back (thoracic spine). The symptoms of spinal stenosis vary depending on the location on the nerve tissues being irritated and the degree of irritation. The neck being affected can result in unusual sensations in the arms and/or poor leg function and incontinence. When the low back is affected, the classic symptom is pain that radiates down both legs while walking and is relieved by resting (pseudoclaudication). If symptoms of spinal stenosis are mild, conservative measures designed to relieve the nerve irritation are taken, such as using medications to relieve inflammation, using mechanical supports, and doing back exercises. When symptoms are severe, persistent, and intolerable, surgical resection of the bone and soft tissues that are impinging on the nerves and/or spinal cord can be helpful.

spinal tap See *lumbar puncture*.

spine 1 The column of bone known as the vertebral column that surrounds and protects the spinal cord. The spine can be categorized according to the level of the body: cervical spine (neck), thoracic spine (upper and middle back), and lumbar spine (lower back). See also *vertebral column*. 2 Any short prominence of bone. For example, the spines of the vertebrae protrude at the base of the back of the neck and in the middle of the back. These spines protect the spinal cord from injury from behind.

spiral CAT scan A specialized computerized axial tomography (CAT) scan technique that involves continuous movement of the patient through the scanner with the ability to scan faster and with high definition of internal structures. Spiral CAT scanning permits greater visualization of blood vessels and internal tissues, such as those within the chest cavity, than regular CAT scanning. This form of scanning is particularly helpful in the rapid evaluation of severe trauma injuries, such as those sustained in automobile accidents. Also known as helical CAT scan. See also *CAT scan*.

spiral fracture See *fracture, torsion*.

spirochete A microscopic bacterial organism in the Spirochaeta family that has a worm-like, spiral-shaped form and wiggles vigorously when viewed under a microscope. *Treponema pallidum*, the cause of syphilis, is a particularly well-known spirochete.

spleen An organ that is located in the upper-left part of the abdomen, not far from the stomach, that produces lymphocytes, which are important elements in the immune system. The spleen is the largest lymphatic organ in the body. The spleen also filters blood, serves as a major reservoir for blood, and destroys blood cells that are aged (or abnormal, as in the case of sickle cells).

spleen, ruptured Rupture of the capsule of the spleen that is a potential catastrophe and requires immediate medical and surgical attention. Splenic rupture permits large amounts of blood to leak into the abdominal cavity, and it is severely painful and life threatening. Shock, and ultimately death, can result. Patients typically require immediate surgery. Rupture of a normal spleen can be caused by trauma, such as an accident. If an individual's spleen is enlarged, as is frequent in mononucleosis, most physicians will not allow participation in major contact sports or other activities because injury to the abdomen could be catastrophic.

splenectomy An operation to remove the spleen.

splenic artery A large and critically important artery within the abdomen that arises from a branch off the aorta called the celiac trunk. The splenic artery supplies blood not only to the spleen but also to the esophagus, stomach, duodenum, liver, and pancreas. See also *aorta; artery*.

splenic fever See *anthrax*.

splenomegaly Abnormal enlargement of the spleen. Splenomegaly is a sign of an underlying condition, such as severe liver disease, leukemia, or mononucleosis. Patients with splenomegaly should avoid activities that risk trauma to the abdomen, including contact sports, because of risk of bleeding from the injured spleen.

split personality See *dissociation; dissociative disorder*.

spondylitis Inflammation of one or more of the vertebrae of the spine. Diffuse inflammation of the spine is seen, for example, in the disease ankylosing spondylitis. Localized spondylitis is seen with infections of a certain area of the spine, such as in Pott's disease (tuberculosis of the spine).

spondylitis, ankylosing See *ankylosing spondylitis*.

spondylolisthesis Forward movement of one vertebra in relationship to an adjacent vertebra.

spondylosis The breaking down (dissolution) of a portion of a vertebra. The affected portion of the vertebra is a bone segment called the pars interarticularis, which can separate. Spondylosis can be a cause of abnormal movement of the spine (spondylolisthesis) and lead to localized back pain.

spondylosis Degeneration of the disc spaces between the vertebrae. Spondylosis is common with aging and affects virtually everyone to some degree after the age of 60 years. When severe, it can cause local pain and decreased range of motion of the spine, requiring pain and/or anti-inflammatory medications.

spongiform encephalopathy One of a number of progressive neurodegenerative disorders in animals and humans caused by transmissible agents, called prions, that produce spongiform changes in the brain. Specific examples of transmissible spongiform encephalopathies affecting humans include kuru, Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, and variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (vCJD or "mad cow" disease).

spongy degeneration of the central nervous system See *Canavan disease*.

spontaneous abortion See *miscarriage*.

sporadic Occurring upon occasion or in a scattered, isolated, or seemingly random way.

sporotrichosis An infection caused by the fungus *Sporothrix schenckii*, typically involving the skin. Persons handling thorny plants, sphagnum moss, or baled hay are at increased risk of developing sporotrichosis. The first sign is usually a small painless bump resembling an insect bite. The bump can be red, pink, or purple in color, and it usually appears on the finger, hand, or arm, where the fungus first entered through a break on the skin. This is followed by one or more additional bumps that open and may look like boils. Eventually, the bumps turn into open hollowed-out sores (ulcerations) that are very slow to heal. The infection can also spread to other areas of the body. Treatment is with antibiotics.

sports medicine An interdisciplinary medical specialty concerned with the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of injuries arising from participation in sports or exercise.

spot, Brushfield See *Brushfield spot*.

spots, Koplik See *Koplik spots*.

spots in front of the eyes See *floaters*.

sprain An injury to a ligament that results from overuse or trauma. The treatment of a sprain involves applying ice packs, resting and elevating the involved joint, and using anti-inflammatory medications. Depending on the severity and location of the sprain, support bracing can help. Local cortisone injections are sometimes given for persistent inflammation. Activity may be resumed gradually. Ice application after activity can reduce or prevent recurrent inflammation. In severe sprains, orthopedic surgical repair is performed.

spreading melanoma, superficial See *melanoma, superficial spreading*.

sprue, nontropical See *celiac sprue*.

spur, heel See *calcaneal spur*.

sputum Mucous material from the lungs that is produced (brought up) by coughing.

squamous cell One type of epithelial, or lining, cell that has a flat appearance resembling a fish scale when viewed microscopically. Squamous cells make up most of the outer layer of the skin (epidermis). They are also found in the oral cavity, esophagus, vagina, and uterine cervix.

squamous cell carcinoma See *carcinoma, squamous cell*.

squamous cell carcinoma in situ See *carcinoma in situ, squamous cell*.

squamous intraepithelial lesion An abnormal growth of the squamous cells that normally are found on the uterine cervix. Abbreviated SIL. The changes are described as low grade (LGSIL) or high grade (HGSIL), depending upon how abnormal the cells look. Squamous intraepithelial lesions can be a precursor of cervical cancer; treatment of high grade SIL is by removal of the affected tissue.

SSPE Subacute sclerosing panencephalitis.

SSRI Selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor, one of a family of antidepressant medications (brand names: Celexa, Luvox, Paxil, Prozac, Zoloft) that affect the neurotransmitter serotonin.

St. Anthony's fire One of several conditions characterized by intense inflammation of the skin,

such as from erysipelas or ergotism. Erysipelas is a type of spreading hot, bright-red strep skin infection. Ergotism is an intensely painful burning sensation in the limbs and extremities caused by ergotamines from a fungus (*Claviceps purpurea*) that can contaminate rye and wheat. The fungus produces the ergotamines, which constrict blood vessels and cause the muscle of the uterus to contract. In excess, ergotamines are highly toxic and cause symptoms such as hallucinations, severe gastrointestinal upset, and a type of dry gangrene. Chronic ergot poisoning (ergotism) was rife during the Middle Ages due to the consumption of contaminated rye.

St. John's wort A flowering plant, *Hypericum perforatum*, also known as Perforate St. John's wort, that has long been believed to have medicinal qualities. There is some evidence that St. John's wort may be useful in diminishing depression, but it is not a proven remedy for depression. Sun sensitivity, fatigue, stomach upset, and allergic reactions are among the side effects that have been reported in people taking St. John's wort. This herb should be avoided in combination with other medications that can affect sun sensitivity, such as tetracycline (brand name: Achromycin), sulfa-containing medications, and piroxicam (brand name: Feldene). St. John's wort can also cause headaches, sweating, and agitation when used in combination with serotonin reuptake inhibitor medications, such as fluoxetine (brand name: Prozac) and paroxetine (brand name: Paxil).

staff of Aesculapius See *Aesculapius*.

stage 1 A distinct phase in the course of a disease (or any biological process). 2 The extent of a cancer, and especially whether the disease has spread from the original site to other parts of the body. See also *staging*.

stage of dilation See *first stage of labor*.

stage of expulsion See *second stage of labor*.

staging Doing exams and tests to learn the extent of a cancer, especially whether it has spread from its original site to other parts of the body. The following stage numbers are typically used in staging:

- **Stage I** Cancer cells are found only on the surface of the affected organ or area.
- **Stage II** Cancer cells are found in the deeper tissues of the organ or area and have spread.
- **Stage III** Cancer cells are found in even deeper tissues and have spread to nearby lymph nodes or other nearby areas.

- **Stage IV** Cancer cells are found throughout the organ or area and in nearby lymph nodes and/or have spread to other parts of the body.

staph See *staphylococcus*.

staph infection See *staphylococcal infection*.

staphylococcal infection Infection with one of the staphylococcus bacteria. Staphylococcal infection can cause pus-filled abscesses on the skin or internal organs and can migrate through the blood to infect the heart, meninges, and other areas. Treatment involves use of antibiotics and drainage of abscesses, as necessary. Also known as staph infection. See also *staphylococcal scalded skin syndrome; staphylococcus*.

staphylococcal scalded skin syndrome An infection of the skin with group II *Staphylococcus aureus* bacteria. The bacteria release toxins, causing inflamed, scaling skin that looks as though it has been burned. Abbreviated SSSS. SSSS is more common in children than in adults, but it is more likely to cause death when it does occur in adults. Rehydration and use of intravenous antibiotics are the most common treatments. Steroids worsen the condition and should not be used. See also *staphylococcus*.

staphylococcus A group of bacteria that cause a multitude of diseases. Under a microscope, staphylococcus bacteria are round and bunched together. They can cause illness directly by infection or indirectly through products they make, such as the toxins responsible for food poisoning and toxic shock syndrome. The best-known member of the staphylococcus family is *Staphylococcus aureus*. Staphylococci are the main culprits in hospital-acquired infections, and they cause thousands of deaths every year. Also known as staph.

staphylococcus, antibiotic-resistant A form of staphylococcus bacteria that is unaffected by certain antibiotics. Antibiotic-resistant staphylococcus is a growing problem, particularly in hospitals, where staph infections can run rampant. Treatment involves using “super-antibiotics” when possible, although this type of infection can prove to be untreatable and deadly.

startle disease See *hyperexplexia*.

startle reflex A reflex seen in normal infants in response to a loud noise. The infant makes a sudden body movement, bringing the legs and arms toward the chest.

stasis A stoppage or slowdown in the flow of blood or other body fluid, such as lymph. For example, a stasis ulcer is an ulcer that develops in an area in which the circulation is sluggish and the venous return (the return of venous blood toward the heart) is poor. A common location for stasis ulcers is the ankle.

STAT A common medical abbreviation for urgent or rush. From the Latin word *statum*, meaning "immediately."

state, hypercoagulable See *hypercoagulable state*.

statin A class of drugs that lower blood cholesterol. The major effect of the statins is that they lower LDL cholesterol levels; in fact, they lower LDL cholesterol more than any other type of drugs. Statins inhibit an enzyme, HMG-CoA reductase, that controls the rate of cholesterol production in the body. This slows the production of cholesterol. They also increase the liver's ability to remove the LDL cholesterol already in the blood. Studies have reported 20 to 60 percent lower LDL cholesterol levels in patients on these drugs, as well as modest increases in HDL cholesterol and reduced triglyceride levels. Such reductions should prevent many heart attacks and deaths due to heart disease. Statins are usually given in a single dose at the evening meal or at bedtime, taking advantage of the fact that the body makes more cholesterol at night than during the day. Results should be seen after several weeks, with a maximum effect in 4 to 6 weeks. Serious side effects are rare, but a few patients experience upset stomach, gas, constipation, and abdominal pain or cramps. Rarely, patients on statins develop liver blood test abnormalities or muscle soreness, pain, and weakness as side effects of muscle problems.

status epilepticus An epileptic seizure that lasts more than 30 minutes or a constant or near-constant state of having seizures. Status epilepticus is a health crisis and requires immediate treatment with antiseizure medications. See also *epilepsy; seizure disorder*.

STD Sexually transmitted disease.

STDs in men See *sexually transmitted disease in men*.

STDs in women See *sexually transmitted disease in women*.

Stein-Leventhal syndrome See *polycystic ovarian syndrome*.

stem cell One of the human body's master cells, with the ability to grow into any one of the body's more than 200 cell types. Stem cells are unspecialized (undifferentiated) cells that are characteristic of the same family type (lineage). They retain the ability to divide throughout life and give rise to cells that can become highly specialized and take the place of cells that die or are lost. Stem cells contribute to the body's ability to renew and repair its tissues. Unlike mature cells, which are permanently committed to their fate, stem cells can both renew themselves and create new cells of whatever tissue they belong to (and other tissues). Bone marrow stem cells, for example, are the most primitive cells in the marrow. From them all the various types of blood cells are descended. Bone marrow stem cell transfusions (or transplants) were originally given to replace various types of blood cells.

stem cell harvest Obtaining stem cells for use in cancer or other treatment. Usually the cells are removed from the patient's own bone marrow. Stem cells can be harvested from the blood or bone marrow. Umbilical cords have been saved as a future source of stem cells for the baby.

stem cell harvest, peripheral blood A technique for obtaining stem cells from the patient's blood for use in bone marrow transplantation. The stem cells are lured out of the bone marrow with a special regimen of drugs. The blood is then filtered through a machine, and the stem cells are skimmed off. They can be used right away or stored in liquid nitrogen until needed. Also known as apheresis. See also *stem cell transplantation*.

stem cell transplantation The use of stem cells as a treatment for cancer or other illness. The stem cells are removed (or obtained from a donor) first. Before the transplant is done, the patient receives high-dose chemotherapy and/or radiation therapy to destroy diseased cells. Then the stem cells are returned to the patient, where they can produce new blood and immune cells and replace the cells destroyed by the treatment. The stem cell preparation is infused into a vein and, once in the bloodstream, the stem cells migrate to the bone marrow space.

stenosis A narrowing. For example, aortic stenosis is a narrowing of the aortic valve in the heart.

stenosis, pulmonary See *pulmonary stenosis*.

stent A tube designed to be inserted into a vessel or passageway to keep it open. Stents are inserted into narrowed coronary arteries to help keep them open after balloon angioplasty. The stent then allows the normal flow of blood and oxygen to the heart.

Stents placed in narrowed carotid arteries (the vessels in the front of the neck that supply blood to the brain) appear useful in treating patients at elevated risk for stroke. Stents are also used in other structures such as the esophagus to treat a constriction, the ureters to maintain the drainage of urine from the kidneys, and the bile duct to keep it open.

stereotactic Referring to precise positioning in three-dimensional space. For example, biopsies, surgery, or radiation therapy can be done stereotactically.

stereotactic needle biopsy See *biopsy, stereotactic needle*.

stereotactic radiation therapy See *radiation therapy, stereotactic*.

stereotactic radiotherapy See *radiation therapy, stereotactic*.

stereotactic surgery Surgery in which a system of three-dimensional coordinates is used to locate the site to be operated on.

stereotaxis Use of a computer and scanning devices to create three-dimensional pictures. Stereotaxis can be used to direct a biopsy, external radiation, or the insertion of radiation implants.

sternal rib See *rib, true*.

sternotomy A surgical incision made through the breastbone (sternum), for example, as performed for access to the heart during surgery.

sternum The long flat bone in the upper middle of the front of the chest. The sternum articulates (comes together) with the cartilages of the first seven ribs and with the clavicle (collarbone) on either side. The sternum consists of three parts: the manubrium (the upper segment of the sternum, a flattened, roughly triangular bone), the corpus (body) of the sternum, and the xiphoid process (the little tail of the sternum that points down). These sections of the sternum arise as separate bones, and they may fuse partially or completely with one another. Also known as breastbone.

steroid One of a large group of chemical substances classified by a specific carbon structure. Steroids include drugs used to relieve swelling and inflammation, such as prednisone and cortisone; vitamin D; and some sex hormones, such as testosterone and estradiol.

steroid abuse Use of substances containing steroids to increase muscle mass. Steroids can have

many side effects when misused, including psychiatric problems, liver tumors, reduction in the size of male genitals, sterility, and heart damage.

stethoscope An instrument that is used to transmit low-volume sounds such as a heartbeat (or intestinal, venous, or fetal sounds) to the ear of the listener. A stethoscope may consist of two ear pieces connected by means of flexible tubing to a diaphragm that is placed against the skin of the patient. The stethoscope has become one of the symbols of the medical profession. The origins of the stethoscope can be traced back to the French physician Laënnec, who in 1819 invented a crude model that consisted of a wooden box that served to help physicians hear the sounds within the chest cavity. It has undergone many modifications since then.

Stevens-Johnson syndrome A serious systemic (bodywide) allergic reaction with a characteristic rash involving the skin and mucous membranes, including the buccal mucosa (inside of the mouth), conjunctiva, and genital areas. Abbreviated SJS. The disease is due to a hypersensitive (allergic) reaction to one of a number of immunologic stimuli including drugs and infectious agents. Complications can include hepatitis, nephritis, gastrointestinal bleeding, pneumonia, arthritis, arthralgia, fever, and myalgia. The diagnosis of SJS is usually made when the characteristic rash appears 1 to 3 weeks after exposure to a known stimulus and it cannot be explained by another diagnosis. The treatment depends, in part, on the suspected precipitating cause. Also known as erythema multiforme.

stiff baby syndrome See *hyperexplexia*.

stillbirth The birth of a dead baby, the delivery of a fetus that has died before birth for which there is no possibility of resuscitation. The distinction between a stillbirth and a miscarriage is arbitrary. The dividing line has variously set at 20 to 24 weeks of gestation or at a specific weight, such as 500g. Before that time it is a miscarriage, and after that time it is a stillbirth.

Still's disease See *arthritis, systemic-onset juvenile rheumatoid*.

sting, Africanized bee See *bee sting, Africanized*.

sting, bee See *bee sting*.

sting, insect See *insect sting*.

stoma An opening into the body from the outside that is created by a surgeon.

stomach The digestive organ that is located in the upper abdomen, under the ribs. The upper part of the stomach connects to the esophagus, and the lower part leads into the small intestine. When food enters the stomach, muscles in the stomach wall create a rippling motion (peristalsis) that mixes and mashes the food. At the same time, juices made by glands in the lining of the stomach help digest the food. After about 3 hours, the food becomes a liquid and moves into the small intestine, where digestion continues.

stomach cancer See *cancer, gastric*.

stomach emptying study See *gastric emptying study*.

stomach flu See *flu, stomach*.

stomach paralysis See *gastroparesis*.

stomatitis An inflammatory disease of the mucous lining of the mouth that can be a complication of chemotherapy for cancer. Other causes include vitamin deficiency, infection, or trauma.

stomatitis, Vincent See *acute membranous gingivitis*.

stone, cystine kidney See *cystine kidney stones*.

stone, kidney See *kidney stone*.

stone, renal See *kidney stone*.

stone, tonsil See *tonsillolith*.

stool The solid matter that is discharged in a bowel movement.

stool test See *fecal occult blood test*.

storm supplies kit See *disaster supplies*.

strabismus A condition in which the visual axes of the eyes are not parallel and the eyes appear to be looking in different directions. In divergent strabismus, or exotropia, the visual axes diverge. In convergent strabismus or esotropia, the visual axes converge. The danger with strabismus is that the brain may come to rely more on input from one eye than the other, and the part of the brain circuitry that is connected to the less-favored eye may fail to develop properly, leading to amblyopia (weakened vision) in that eye. The classic treatment for mild to moderate strabismus is to cover the stronger eye with a patch, forcing the weaker eye to do enough work to catch up. Atropine eyedrops can also be

effective in correcting moderate lazy eye. Severe strabismus may require surgery. Also known as lazy eye.

strain 1 An injury to a ligament, tendon, or muscle that results from overuse or trauma. 2 A hereditary tendency that originates from a common ancestor. 3 To exert maximum effort. 4 To filter.

strawberry hemangioma or strawberry mark See *hemangioma, capillary*.

strep See *streptococcus*.

strep throat An infection caused by group A streptococcus bacteria that can lead to serious complications if not adequately treated. Treatment usually involves use of antibiotics. See *streptococcus*.

streptococcus A group of bacteria that causes a multitude of diseases. Under a microscope, streptococcus bacteria look like a twisted bunch of round berries. Illnesses caused by streptococcus include strep throat, strep pneumonia, scarlet fever, rheumatic fever (and rheumatic heart valve damage), glomerulonephritis, the skin disorder erysipelas, and PANDAS. Familiarly known as strep.

streptococcus, group A See *Streptococcus pyogenes*.

streptococcus, group B A major cause of infections, including those involving pregnant women and newborn infants. Group B strep can infect the mother's uterus, placenta, and urinary tract; in fact, it is present in the vagina of around 10 to 25 percent of all pregnant women. Group B strep can be transferred between heterosexual couples via oral sex. Infants develop the infection in utero or at the time of delivery from women who have vaginal group B strep. Of infants who acquire the infection, about 1-2% develop the clinical disease. Neonatal sepsis from group B streptococci is more common in premature infants and in the setting of prolonged rupture of the membranes. Infections in the infant can be localized, or it may involve the entire body. In babies, strep infections are divided into early-onset and late-onset disease. Early-onset disease presents within the first 6 days of life, with breathing difficulty, shock, pneumonia, and occasionally infection of the spinal fluid and brain (meningitis). Late-onset disease presents between the seventh day and the third month of age, with a bloodstream infection (bacteremia) or meningitis. The bacteria can also infect an area of bone; a joint, such as the knee or hip; or the skin. Group B strep infection in a newborn is a serious and potentially life-threatening event, particularly because fever and warning signs are often minimal or absent and because the newborn's immune system is not mature. Early signs

of infection can be as subtle as poor feeding, lethargy, and poor temperature control. Antibiotic treatment can be considered for culture-positive women before delivery. Group B strep infection of the newborn is treated aggressively with antibiotics, usually in a neonatal intensive care unit, but the disease still carries a significant mortality rate. Prevention and early detection are critically important.

Streptococcus faecalis An old name for Enterococcus faecalis.

Streptococcus haemolyticus See *Streptococcus pyogenes*.

Streptococcus pneumoniae The most common cause of bacterial pneumonia and middle ear infection (otitis media) and the third most frequent cause of bacterial meningitis. Also known as pneumococcus.

Streptococcus pyogenes The bacterial cause of strep throat (streptococcal pharyngitis), impetigo, rheumatic fever, scarlet fever, glomerulonephritis, invasive fasciitis, strep skin infections, and rheumatic fever. Also known as Streptococcus haemolyticus and group A streptococcus. See also *PANDAS; rheumatic fever; strep throat; streptococcus; Sydenham chorea*.

stricture 1 An abnormal narrowing of a body passage, especially a tube or a canal. A stricture may be due, for example, to scar tissue or a tumor. 2 The process of narrowing a body passage.

stricture of the esophagus, acute See *esophageal stricture, acute*.

stricture of the esophagus, chronic See *esophageal stricture, chronic*.

stroke The sudden death of brain cells due to lack of oxygen, caused by blockage of blood flow or rupture of an artery to the brain. Sudden loss of speech, weakness, or paralysis of one side of the body can be symptoms. A suspected stroke can be confirmed by scanning the brain with special X-ray tests, such as CAT scans. The death rate and level of disability resulting from strokes can be dramatically reduced by immediate and appropriate medical care. Prevention involves minimizing risk factors, such as controlling high blood pressure and diabetes. Abbreviated CVA. Also known as cerebrovascular accident.

stroke prevention Methods of preventing the occurrence of a cerebrovascular accident. If a person has a transient ischemic attack (TIA), a neurological event with the symptoms of a stroke, the

symptoms go away within a short period of time. TIAs are often caused by narrowing or ulceration of the carotid arteries, however, and if that is not treated, there is a high risk of major stroke in the future. A person who suspects that he or she has had a TIA should seek medical attention right away. An operation called a carotid endarterectomy can clean out the carotid artery and restore normal blood flow through the artery, markedly reducing the incidence of a subsequent stroke. In other cases, when a person has a narrowed carotid artery but no symptoms, the risk of stroke can be reduced with medications such as aspirin and ticlopidine (brand name: Ticlid). These medications act by partially blocking the blood-clotting function of the platelets in the patient's blood. Controlling other factors that contribute to strokes, such as high blood pressure and diabetes, is also important for stroke prevention.

stroke volume The amount of blood pumped by the left ventricle of the heart in one contraction. The stroke volume is not all the blood contained in the left ventricle; normally, only about two-thirds of the blood in the ventricle is expelled with each beat. Together with the heart rate, the stroke volume determines the output of blood by the heart per minute (cardiac output).

study 1 A procedure or an examination. 2 A research project.

Sturge-Weber syndrome A congenital, but not inherited, disorder that affects the skin, the neurological system, and sometimes the eyes and internal organs. The main sign of Sturge-Weber syndrome is a port-wine stain birthmark. Neurological symptoms of Sturge-Weber syndrome may include seizures and developmental delay. See also *port-wine stain*.

stuttering A speech disorder characterized by repetition of the sound of a word. Stuttering can usually be eliminated or significantly modified with speech therapy. See also *cluttering; communication disorder; speech disorder*.

sty See *stye*.

stye A red, tender bump on the eyelid that is caused by an acute infection of the oil glands of the eyelid. The medical term for a stye is hordeolum.

subacute Rather recent onset or somewhat rapid change. In contrast, acute indicates very sudden onset or rapid change, and chronic indicates indefinite duration or virtually no change.

subacute sclerosing panencephalitis A chronic brain disease of children and adolescents that occurs months to often years after an attack of measles and causes convulsions, motor abnormalities, mental retardation, and usually death. Abbreviated SSPE.

subaortic stenosis Narrowing of the left ventricle of the heart, just below the aortic valve, through which blood must pass on its way up into the aorta. The narrowing restricts the flow of blood. Subaortic stenosis may be present at birth (congenital) or acquired as part of a specific form of heart disease known as idiopathic hypertrophic subaortic stenosis (IHSS). Treatment options include use of drugs and surgery. See also *idiopathic hypertrophic subaortic stenosis*.

subarachnoid Literally, beneath the arachnoid, the middle of three membranes that cover the central nervous system. In practice, subarachnoid usually refers to the space between the arachnoid and the pia mater, the innermost membrane surrounding the central nervous system. It normally contains cerebrospinal fluid. See also *cerebrospinal fluid*.

subarachnoid hemorrhage A bleeding into the subarachnoid, the space between the arachnoid and the pia mater, the innermost membrane surrounding the central nervous system. Subarachnoid hemorrhage typically occurs when an artery breaks open in the brain, such as from a ruptured aneurysm. This can require emergency neurosurgical procedures.

subclinical disease An illness that is staying below the surface of clinical detection. A subclinical disease has no recognizable clinical findings. It is distinct from a clinical disease, which has signs and symptoms that can be recognized. Many diseases, including diabetes, hypothyroidism, and rheumatoid arthritis, are frequently subclinical before they surface as clinical diseases.

subcu See *subcutaneous*.

subcutaneous Under the skin. For example, a subcutaneous injection is an injection in which a needle is inserted just under the skin. Also known as subcu. Abbreviated subq.

subcutaneous hematoma See *hematoma, subcutaneous*.

subcutaneous injection An injection in which a needle is inserted just under the skin. A drug can then be delivered into the tissues below the skin. After the injection, the drug moves into small blood vessels and the bloodstream. Subcutaneous injection

is used with many protein and polypeptide drugs, such as insulin, that, if given by mouth, would be broken down and digested in the intestinal tract.

subdural hematoma See *hematoma, subdural*.

subglottis The lower part of the larynx, the area from just below the vocal cords down to the top of the trachea.

sublingual Underneath the tongue. For example, a sublingual medication is a type of lozenge that is dissolved under the tongue.

sublingual gland A salivary gland that is located under the floor of the mouth, close to the midline. The sublingual gland is the smallest of the three major salivary glands (the parotid, submandibular, and sublingual glands).

subluxation Partial dislocation of a joint. A complete dislocation is a luxation.

submandibular gland A salivary gland that is located deep under the mandible (jawbone). The submandibular gland is the second largest of the three major salivary glands (the parotid, submandibular, and sublingual glands). Also known as submaxillary gland.

submaxillary gland See *submandibular gland*.

subq See *subcutaneous*.

subscapular Under the scapula. For example, the subscapularis muscle originates beneath the scapula.

subscapularis muscle A muscle that moves the arm by turning it inward (internal rotation). The tendon of the subscapularis muscle is one of four tendons that stabilize the shoulder joint and constitute the rotator cuff. Each of these four tendons connects to a muscle that moves the shoulder in a specific direction. See also *scapula*.

subtotal hysterectomy See *hysterectomy, partial*.

subungual onychomycosis, proximal white See *onychomycosis, proximal white subungual*.

succenturiate Substituting for or accessory to an organ. For example, a succenturiate spleen is an accessory spleen, one that is in addition to the primary spleen.

succenturiate placenta See *placenta, accessory*.

suction-assisted lipectomy See *liposuction*.

sudden infant death syndrome The sudden and unexpected death of a baby with no known illness, typically affecting sleeping infants between the ages of 2 weeks and 6 months. Abbreviated SIDS. Infants whose mothers used heroin, methadone, or cocaine during pregnancy; infants born weighing less than 2,000 grams (4.4 pounds); babies with an abnormal breathing pattern that includes long periods without taking a breath (apnea); and babies who sleep on their stomachs are at elevated risk for SIDS. Because babies who sleep on their stomachs are at least three times more likely to die of SIDS than babies who sleep on their backs, children's health authorities recommend always placing infants on their backs to sleep. Sometimes referred to as crib death.

sudoriferous gland A small, tubular structure situated within and under the skin that discharges sweat through a tiny opening in the surface of the skin. Also known as sweat gland. See also *perspiration*.

sulcus A groove, furrow, or trench. The plural is sulci. In anatomy, there are many sulci; an example is the superior pulmonary sulcus.

sulfa drug See *sulfonamide*.

sulfonamide One of the sulfa-related group of antibiotics, which are used to treat bacterial infection and some fungal infections. The sulfonamide family includes sulfadiazine, sulfamethizole (brand names: Thiosulfil Forte), sulfamethoxazole (brand name: Gantanol), sulfasalazine (brand name: Azulfidine), sulfisoxazole (brand name: Gantrisin), and various high-strength combinations of sulfonamides. Sulfa drugs kill bacteria and fungi by interfering with cell metabolism. Because sulfa drugs concentrate in the urine before being excreted, treatment of urinary tract infections is one of their most common uses. Sulfa drugs can have a number of potentially dangerous interactions with prescription and over-the-counter drugs (including PABA sunscreens), and they are not appropriate for patients with some health conditions. Sulfa drug allergy is one of the more common allergies to medications. Also known as sulfa drug.

sulfonylurea A class of oral hypoglycemic agents (medications that lower the level of blood glucose) taken by people with type 2 diabetes. The sulfonylureas increase the secretion of insulin by the pancreas. There are two generations of sulfonylureas. The main difference between the first- and second-generation sulfonylureas is in the way they are eliminated from the body. As a consequence, second-generation sulfonylureas are usually taken less

frequently each day than first-generation sulfonylureas and generally are preferred when there is poor function of the kidneys. Examples of first-generation sulfonylureas are chlorpropamide (Diabinese) and tolbutamide (Orinase). The second-generation sulfonylureas include glipizide (Glucotrol and Glucotrol XL), glyburide (Diabeta, Micronase, and Glynnase PresTab), and glimepiride (Amaryl). These drugs are effective in rapidly lowering blood sugar but run the risk of causing hypoglycemia.

summer cold See *hay fever*.

sun protection factor A measurement of a sunscreen's potency, expressed on a scale from two upward. Abbreviated SPF. Sunscreens with an SPF of 15 or higher provide the best protection from the sun's harmful rays. See also *ultraviolet radiation*.

sunscreen A substance that blocks the effect of the sun's harmful rays. Using lotions that contain sunscreen can reduce the risk of skin cancer, including melanoma. See also *ultraviolet radiation*.

superaspirin See *cox-2 inhibitor*.

superficial On the surface or shallow, as opposed to deep. For example, the skin is superficial to the muscles, and the cornea is on the superficial surface of the eye. See also Appendix B, "Anatomic Orientation Terms."

superficial spreading melanoma See *melanoma, superficial spreading*.

superior Above, as opposed to inferior. For example, the heart is superior to the stomach, and the superior surface of the tongue rests against the palate. See also Appendix B, "Anatomic Orientation Terms."

superior vena cava syndrome A condition in which the large vein that carries blood down to the heart (superior vena cava) is compressed. This compression may be caused by disease of any of the structures or lymph nodes surrounding this vein. Superior vena cava syndrome is characterized by swelling of the face, neck, and/or arms, with visible widening (dilation) of the veins of the neck. Patients often have a persistent cough and shortness of breath. Causes of superior vena cava syndrome include cancer and several benign conditions including infections, benign tumors, aortic aneurysm, pericarditis, sarcoidosis, irradiation treatment to the chest, air in the chest (pneumothorax), and complications of central line catheters and heart surgery. Diagnosis is made via observation of typical findings and is supported by identifying a

cause for superior vena cava syndrome, which often requires X-ray imaging, computerized axial tomography (CAT), or magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scanning. Treatment is directed toward the underlying cause. See also *vena cava, superior*.

supernumerary Beyond the normal number, extra. For example, a supernumerary chromosome is an extra one beyond the usual number of 46, and a supernumerary digit is an extra finger or toe.

supernumerary digit See *digit, supernumerary*.

supernumerary nipple See *nipple, supernumerary*.

supernumerary placenta See *placenta, accessory*.

supertaster A person who has an unusually large density of taste buds, each surrounded by pain fibers. As a result, the person has an exquisite ability to taste accurately.

supination Rotation of the arm or leg outward. In the case of supination of the arm, the palm of the hand faces forward.

supinator foot type A type of foot that restricts the impact of the stride largely to the outer edges of the foot. This type of foot often has a very high, rigid arch.

supine With the back or dorsal surface downward; lying face up, as opposed to prone. See also Appendix B, "Anatomic Orientation Terms."

supportive care Treatment given to prevent, control, or relieve complications and side effects and to improve the patient's comfort and quality of life.

suppressant, cough See *cough suppressant*.

suppressor T cell See *T-suppressor cell*.

suppurative arthritis See *arthritis, septic*.

supraglottis The upper part of the larynx, including the epiglottis; the area above the vocal cords.

suprarenal gland See *adrenal gland*.

supraspinatus muscle The muscle that elevates the arm and moves it away from the body. The tendon of the supraspinatus muscle is one of four tendons that stabilize the shoulder joint and constitute the rotator cuff.

suprasternal notch The V-shaped notch at the top of the breastbone (sternum).

surfactant 1 A surface-active agent. 2 A chemical that is secreted by the cells of the alveoli (the tiny air sacs in the lungs) and serves to reduce the surface tension of pulmonary fluids. Surfactant contributes to the elasticity of lung tissue.

surgeon A physician who treats disease, injury, or deformity via operative or manual methods to physically change body tissues. The definition of surgeon has begun to blur in recent years as surgeons have begun to minimize the cutting, employing new technologies that are minimally invasive (such as using scopes and lasers). In England, a surgeon was once a practitioner without an MD degree but with the license of the Royal College of Surgeons.

surgery The branch of medicine that employs operations in the treatment of disease or injury. Surgery can involve cutting, abrading, suturing, or otherwise physically changing body tissues and organs.

surgery, cataract See *cataract surgery*.

surgery, fetal The surgical treatment of a fetus before birth. Fetal surgery is usually done when the fetus is not expected to survive to delivery or to live long after birth unless fetal surgery is performed. Also known as prenatal or antenatal surgery.

surgery, retrograde intrarenal See *retrograde intrarenal surgery*.

surgery, stereotactic See *stereotactic surgery*.

surgical menopause See *menopause, induced*.

surrogate 1 A substitute or stand-in. 2 In obstetrics, a woman who carries a child to be reared by another individual or couple, generally accomplished by a) direct insemination with the sperm of a man who is not her partner, or b) the transfer of embryos obtained by IVF. See also *in vitro fertilization*.

susceptibility gene, breast cancer See *breast cancer susceptibility gene*.

suture 1 A type of bone joint in which two bones are held tightly together by fibrous tissue, as in the skull. 2 Thread-like material used to sew tissue. 3 To stitch a wound closed.

swallowing syncope The temporary loss of consciousness upon swallowing. See also *syncope, situational; vasovagal reaction*.

Swan-Ganz catheter See *catheter; Swan-Ganz*.

sweat See *perspiration*.

sweat chloride test See *sweat test*.

sweat gland See *sudoriferous gland*.

sweat gland tumor See *syringoma*.

sweat test A simple test that is used to evaluate a patient who is suspected of having cystic fibrosis (CF). The goal of the test is to painlessly stimulate the patient's skin to produce a certain amount of sweat, which may then be absorbed by a special filter paper and analyzed for chloride content. In a technique called iontophoresis, a minute, painless electric current is applied to the forearm or back, allowing penetration of a medication that maximizes sweat stimulation. Elevated chloride values are characteristic of cystic fibrosis. A few rare conditions that produce a false positive test include diseases of adrenal, thyroid, or pituitary glands; rare lipid storage diseases; and infection of the pancreas. Also known as sweat chloride test. See also *cystic fibrosis*.

sweating The act of secreting fluid from the skin by the sudoriferous (sweat) glands. See also *perspiration; sudoriferous gland*.

sweating, gustatory Sweating on the forehead, face, scalp, and neck that occurs soon after ingesting food. Some gustatory sweating is normal after eating hot, spicy foods. Otherwise, gustatory sweating is most commonly a result of damage to a nerve that goes to the parotid gland, the large salivary gland in the cheek. In this condition, called Frey syndrome, the sweating is usually on one side of the head. Gustatory sweating is also a rare complication of diabetes mellitus. Treatment may involve topical or oral medications. See also *Frey syndrome; diabetes mellitus*.

sweats, night See *night sweats*.

swimmer's ear See *ear infection, external*.

swimming pool granuloma See *granuloma, fishbowl*.

Sydenham's chorea A disorder that emerges after a bout of rheumatic fever and is most frequently seen in children. The choreiform movements associated with the disease are twisting. Sydenham's chorea can be treated with medication. See also *PANDAS; rheumatic fever*.

sylvatic plague See *plague, sylvatic*.

Sylvius, aqueduct of See *aqueduct of Sylvius*.

symmetric lipomatosis, multiple See *cephalothoracic lipodystrophy*.

sympathetic nervous system A part of the nervous system that serves to accelerate the heart rate, constrict blood vessels, and raise blood pressure. The sympathetic nervous system and the parasympathetic nervous system constitute the autonomic nervous system.

sympathetic ophthalmia Inflammation of the uveal tract of the uninjured eye (sympathizing eye) some weeks after a wound involving the uveal tract of the other eye (exciting eye). Also known as transferred ophthalmia.

symphiotomy A surgical procedure that has been used to effect an immediate dramatic increase in the size of the pelvic outlet to permit delivery of a baby. The cartilage of the area where the pubic bones come together (symphysis pubis) is surgically divided.

symphysis pubis The area in the front of the pelvis where the pubic bones meet.

symptom Any subjective evidence of disease. In contrast, a sign is objective. Blood coming out a nostril is a sign; it is apparent to the patient, physician, and others. Anxiety, low back pain, and fatigue are all symptoms; only the patient can perceive them.

synapse A specialized junction at which a neural cell (neuron) communicates with a target cell. At a synapse, a neuron releases a chemical transmitter that diffuses across a small gap and activates special sites called receptors on the target cell. The target cell may be another neuron or a specialized region of a muscle or secretory cell. Neurons can also communicate through direct electrical connections (electrical synapses).

synchronic study A study that is done at a single point in time rather than over the course of a period of time (longitudinally).

syncope Partial or complete loss of consciousness, with interruption of awareness of self and surroundings and spontaneous recovery that is due to a temporary reduction in blood flow and therefore a shortage of oxygen to the brain. This leads to light-headedness or a "blackout" episode (loss of consciousness). Heart conditions that can cause syncope include abnormal heart rhythms, abnormalities of the heart valves, high blood pressure in the arteries supplying the lungs (pulmonary artery

hypertension), tears in the aorta (aortic dissection), and widespread disease of the heart muscle (cardiomyopathy). However, syncope is most commonly caused by conditions that do not directly involve the heart, including postural (orthostatic) hypotension, a drop in blood pressure due to changing body position to a more vertical position after lying or sitting; dehydration, which can cause a decrease in blood volume; blood pressure medications that lead to overly low blood pressure; diseases of the nerves to the legs which can dilate blood vessels in the legs and reduce blood flow to the heart; high altitude; stroke or transient ischemic attack; and migraine attack. Another common form of noncardiac syncope is known as situational syncope because the fainting occurs after certain situations. Triggers for situational syncope include having blood drawn, urinating (micturition syncope), defecating (defecation syncope), swallowing (swallowing syncope), and coughing (cough syncope). In some individuals, one or more of these situations can trigger a reflex of the involuntary nervous system called the vasovagal reaction, which slows the heart, dilates blood vessels in the legs, and causes the person to feel nausea, sweating, or weakness just before fainting. No treatment is needed for many noncardiac causes of syncope, as the person regains consciousness by simply sitting or lying down. Also known as fainting. See also *syncope, situational; vasovagal reaction*.

syncope, coughing The temporary loss of consciousness upon coughing. See also *syncope; syncope, situational; vasovagal reaction*.

syncope, defecation The temporary loss of consciousness upon defecating (having a bowel movement). See also *syncope; syncope, situational; vasovagal reaction*.

syncope, micturition The temporary loss of consciousness upon urinating (micturition). See also *syncope; syncope, situational; vasovagal reaction*.

syncope, situational The temporary loss of consciousness in a particular kind of situation. The situations that trigger this reaction are diverse and include having blood drawn, straining while urinating or defecating, and coughing. The reaction can be caused also by emotional stress, fear, or pain. When experiencing the trigger condition, the person often becomes pale and feels nauseated, sweaty, and weak just before losing consciousness. Situational syncope is caused by a reflex of the involuntary nervous system called the vasovagal reaction that causes the heart to slow down (bradycardia) while at the same time leading the nerves that serve the

blood vessels in the legs to permit those vessels to dilate (widen). The result is that the heart puts out less blood, blood pressure drops, and circulating blood tends to go into the legs rather than to the head. The brain is deprived of oxygen, and the fainting episode occurs. Also known as vasovagal syncope, vasodepressor syncope, and Gower syndrome. See also *syncope; vasovagal reaction*.

syncope, swallowing The temporary loss of consciousness upon swallowing. See also *syncope; syncope, situational; vasovagal reaction*.

syncope, vasodepressor See *syncope, situational*.

syncope, vasovagal See *vasovagal syncope*.

syndactyly A condition in which fingers or toes are joined together. Syndactyly can involve the bones (bony syndactyly) or just the skin (cutaneous syndactyly, or webbing).

syndactyly, bony A condition in which the bones of fingers or toes are joined together.

syndactyly, complete A condition in which fingers or toes are completely joined together, with the connection extending from the base to the tip of the involved digits.

syndactyly, cutaneous A condition in which fingers or toes are joined together and the joining involves only the skin, not the bones.

syndactyly, partial A condition in which fingers or toes are partially joined together. Syndactyly can involve the bones or just the skin. With partial syndactyly, the connection extends from the base only partway up the involved digits.

syndactyly, Poland See *Poland syndrome*.

syndrome A combination of symptoms and signs that together represent a disease process.

syndromic Part of a syndrome. For instance, low-set ears are syndromic of Down syndrome.

synesthesia A condition in which the normal separation between the senses appears to have broken down. In synesthesia, sight may mingle with sound, taste with touch, and so on. Females are more often affected than males. People with synesthesia often report that one or more of their family members also had synesthesia, so it may in some cases be an inherited condition. Synesthesia can be induced by certain hallucinogenic drugs and can also occur in some types of seizure disorders.

synovia See *synovial fluid*.

synovial cyst, popliteal See *Baker cyst*.

synovial fluid The slippery fluid that lubricates joints. Also known as synovia.

synovial lining The lining of the joints, normally only one or two cell layers thick, that is responsible for the production of the joint fluid. Also known as synovium.

synovial osteochondromatosis A disorder of a joint that features a change of the normal synovial lining's cellular structure to form bone-cartilage tissue. Synovial osteochondromatosis is uncommon and typically seen in young to middle-aged adults. Synovial osteochondromatosis leads to pain in the affected joint as well as limitation of the range of motion and often locking. The cause of synovial osteochondromatosis is unknown. Synovial osteochondromatosis generally affects only a single joint. The most common joints involved are the knee, hip, or elbow. Synovial osteochondromatosis can be diagnosed with an imaging test of the joint, such as an X-ray, a computerized axial tomography (CAT) scan, or a magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scan. Treatment of synovial osteochondromatosis typically involves surgical removal of the synovial lining.

synovial sarcoma See *sarcoma, synovial*.

synoviosarcoma See *sarcoma, synovial*.

synovitis Inflammation of the synovial membrane, the lining of the joints.

syphilis A sexually transmitted disease that is caused by *Treponema pallidum*, a spiral-shaped microscopic organism called a spirochete. The organism infects people by burrowing into the moist mucous membranes of the mouth or genitals. From there, the spirochete produces a nonpainful ulcer known as a chancre. There are three stages of syphilis. The first (primary) stage is formation of the chancre, and it can last from 1 to 5 weeks. At this stage, syphilis is highly contagious and is transmitted via any contact with one of the ulcers. Even without treatment, the early infection usually resolves on its own. However, 25 percent proceed to the secondary stage of syphilis, which lasts from 4 to 6 weeks. This phase can include hair loss; a sore throat; white patches in the nose, mouth, and vagina; fever; headaches; and a skin rash. There can be lesions on the genitals that resemble genital warts but are caused by spirochetes. These wart-like lesions, as well as the skin rash, are highly contagious. The rash can occur on the palms of the hands, and the infection can be transmitted via

casual contact. The third (tertiary) stage of the disease involves the brain and heart, and at this point the disease is usually no longer contagious. At this point, however, the infection can cause extensive damage to the internal organs and the brain; it can even lead to death. Diagnosis is made via blood test, either the rapid plasma reagin (RPR) or Venereal Disease Research Laboratory (VDRL) test. Treatment involves use of antibiotics. While syphilis is relatively easily treated with antibiotics in its earlier stages, late stage syphilis can leave permanent brain and nervous system damage despite an extended antibiotic course. See also *chancre*; *spirochete*; *syphilis, congenital*; *syphilis test, RPR*; *VDRL test*.

syphilis, congenital Infection of a fetus or newborn with syphilis. Syphilis in a fetus can cause deformity, particularly of the long bones, or death. Syphilis infection acquired at birth is also dangerous. See also *TORCH screen*.

syphilis test, RPR Rapid plasma reagin syphilis test, a blood test for syphilis that looks for an antibody that is present in the bloodstream when a patient has syphilis. A negative (nonreactive) RPR test is compatible with a person not having syphilis, but in the early stages of the disease, the RPR often gives false negative results. Conversely, a false positive RPR can be encountered in a patient with infectious mononucleosis, lupus, antiphospholipid syndrome, hepatitis A, leprosy, malaria, or, occasionally, pregnancy. See also *syphilis*; *VDRL test*.

syphilis test, VDRL See *VDRL test*.

syringe A medical device that is used to inject fluid into, or withdraw fluid from, the body. A medical syringe consists of a needle attached to a hollow cylinder that is fitted with a sliding plunger. The downward movement of the plunger injects fluid; upward movement withdraws fluid. Medical syringes were once made of metal or glass, and required cleaning and sterilization before they could be used again. Now most syringes used in medicine are plastic and disposable.

syringoma A benign (noncancerous) skin tumor that derives from eccrine cells, specialized cells related to sweat glands. The skin lesions of syringoma usually appear during puberty or adult life, and consist of small bumps 1 to 3 mm in diameter that form under the surface of the skin. The most frequent site is the eyelids and around the eyes, but other areas of the body can also be affected. Syringomas more frequently affect women than men, and they have a hereditary basis in some cases. They are also associated with Down syndrome, Marfan syndrome, and Ehlers-Danlos syndrome.

systemic lupus erythematosis See *lupus erythematosis, systemic*.

systemic therapy Treatment that reaches cells throughout the body by traveling through the bloodstream.

systemic-onset juvenile chronic arthritis See *arthritis, systemic-onset juvenile rheumatoid*.

systemic-onset juvenile rheumatoid arthritis
See *arthritis, systemic-onset juvenile rheumatoid*.

systolic Referring to the time at which ventricular contraction occurs, which is called systole. Systolic pressure is the maximum arterial pressure during contraction of the left ventricle of the heart. In a blood pressure reading, the systolic pressure is typically the first number recorded. For example, in a blood pressure of 120/80 ("120 over 80"), the systolic pressure is 120 (that is, 120 mm Hg [millimeters of mercury]). A systolic murmur is a heart murmur heard during systole. See also *diastolic*.

<http://www.rashidiislamiccenter.com>



t In genetics, translocation.

T Thymine, one member of the adenine-thymine (A-T) base pair in DNA.

T cell A type of white blood cell that is made in the bone marrow and migrates to the thymus gland, where it matures, differentiates into various types of T cells, and becomes active in the immune system. There are several types of mature T cells. Most of the T cells in the body belong to one of two subsets known as T-4 cells and T-8 cells. T-8 cells are cytotoxic T lymphocytes that can produce cytokines, such as the interleukins, which in turn further stimulate the immune response. T-cell activation is measured to assess the health of patients with HIV. Also known as T lymphocyte. See also *natural killer cell; T-4 cell; T lymphocyte, cytotoxic; T-suppressor cell*.

T cell, CD8+ See *T lymphocyte, cytotoxic*.

T cell, CD4+ See *T-4 cell*.

T cell, peripheral A T cell that is found in the peripheral blood rather than in the lymphatic system.

T cell lymphoma A disease in which cells in the lymphoid system called T cells (or T lymphocytes) become malignant. T cell lymphomas account for a minority (about 15 percent) of non-Hodgkin lymphomas in the US, with the remainder comprised of malignancies of B lymphocytes. See also *lymphoma; non-Hodgkin's lymphoma*.

T lymphocyte, cytotoxic A cell that expresses the CD8 transmembrane glycoprotein and is antigen specific. Abbreviated CTL. CTLs are able to search out and kill specific types of infected or abnormal cells. When they find cells carrying the peptide they are looking for, they induce those cells to secrete proteins that attract nearby macrophages (specialized white blood cells). These macrophages then surround and destroy the targeted cells. CTLs are particularly important in the immune response to viruses and cancer. Also known as TC cell. See also *CD8; T cell; T-suppressor cell*.

tabes dorsalis See *neurosyphilis, tabes*.

tablespoon An old-fashioned but convenient household measure of capacity that is equal to about 15 cc of liquid.

TACE Transarterial chemoembolization, a procedure in which the blood supply to a tumor is blocked (embolized) and chemotherapy is administered directly into the tumor. For example, TACE has been used to treat some liver cancers.

tache noire French for "black spot," to describe a small ulcer covered with a black crust at the site of a tick bite. A tache noire is characteristic of several tick-borne rickettsial diseases. See also *rickettsial diseases*.

tachy- Prefix meaning swift or rapid, as in *tachycardia* (rapid heart rate). From the Greek word *tachys*, meaning "swift."

tachycardia A rapid heart rate, usually defined as greater than 100 beats per minute.

tachypnea Abnormally fast breathing.

tactile Having to do with touch. For example, tactile signs of disease are signs that are perceptible by touch, such as roughness of the skin.

taenia 1 In medicine, a genus of large tapeworms, some of which are parasitic in humans. 2 In anatomy, a band or a structural line; specifically, several bands and lines of nervous matter in the brain. Also spelled tenia.

Taenia saginata See *beef tapeworm*.

Taenia solium A tapeworm that can parasitize people and can be contracted from undercooked or infested pork. Also known as the armed tapeworm, the pork tapeworm, and the measly tapeworm.

tag, ear See *ear tag*.

tag, preauricular See *ear tag*.

tag, skin See *skin tag*.

tail 1 A slender appendage, such as the tail of the pancreas. 2 The appendage that protrudes from the backside of an animal. A person can appear to have a tail due to the presence of extra segments of the coccyx.

taint To poison, infect, or spoil.

Takayasu disease A chronic inflammatory disease of the aorta and its branch arteries. The cause is unknown. The disease is most common in young women of Asian descent and usually begins between

talipes

10 and 30 years of age. Symptoms include painful, cool, or blanched extremities, dizziness, headaches, chest and abdominal pain, and low-grade fever. The blood pressure is often high. The sedimentation rate (sed rate) may be elevated, reflecting inflammation. The diagnosis is confirmed by an angiogram of the arteries (arteriogram) showing abnormally narrowed and constricted arteries. The disease is treated with corticosteroids and immunosuppressive drugs when needed. Also known as Takayasu arteritis; Martorell syndrome; pulseless disease; and aortic arch syndrome.

talipes See *clubfoot*.

talipes equinovarus The most common (classic) form of clubfoot. With this talipes equinovarus, the foot is turned in sharply, and the person seems to be walking on the ankle. See *clubfoot*.

talus The ankle bone, or the ankle itself. The ankle joint is formed by the talus and the bottom of the tibia and fibula, which rest upon it.

tamoxifen An antiestrogen that competes with estrogen for binding sites in target tissues such as breast tissue and blocks the effects of estrogen there. Tamoxifen may be used to treat breast cancer, help prevent it in women at high risk, and treat women who have had surgery and radiation therapy for ductal carcinoma in situ, to lower the risk of invasive breast cancer arising from the intraductal carcinoma.

tampon A pack or pad that is used to stop or collect the flow of blood or other fluids. A tampon may be made of cotton, sponge, or another material. Tampons serve in surgery to control bleeding and are used to stop severe nosebleeds. Vaginal tampons collect the flow of menstrual blood.

tamponade, balloon See *balloon tamponade*.

tamponade, cardiac A life-threatening situation in which there is such a large amount of fluid (usually blood) inside the pericardial sac around the heart that it interferes with the performance of the heart. If cardiac tamponade is left untreated, the result is dangerously low blood pressure, shock, and death. The excess fluid in the pericardial sac acts to compress and constrict the heart. Cardiac tamponade can be due to excessive pericardial fluid, a wound to the heart, or rupture of the heart. Also known as pericardial tamponade.

tamponade, chronic A long-standing situation in which an excess of fluid inside the pericardial sac combines with thickening of the pericardial sac to progressively compress the heart and impair its per-

formance.

tap, joint See *arthrocentesis*.

tap, spinal See *lumbar puncture*.

tapeworm A worm that is flat like a tape measure and functions as an intestinal parasite, unable to live freely on its own but able to live within an animal's gut.

tapeworm, beef See *beef tapeworm*.

tapeworm, pork See *Taenia solium*.

TAR syndrome Thrombocytopenia-absent radius syndrome, in which the platelets needed for blood to clot normally are too few in number and the radius (the smaller of the two bones of the forearm) is absent, resulting in phocomelia (a "flipper" limb). The fibula (the smaller bone in the lower leg) is also often absent. The risk of bleeding due to having too few platelets is high in early infancy. In the survivors, the platelet problem lessens with age. TAR syndrome is inherited in an autosomal recessive manner. Also known as tetraphocomelia-thrombocytopenia syndrome.

tardive dyskinesia A neurological syndrome characterized by repetitive, involuntary, purposeless movements caused by the long-term use of certain drugs called neuroleptics used for psychiatric, gastrointestinal, and neurological disorders. Features may include grimacing; tongue protrusion; lip smacking, puckering, and pursing; and rapid eye blinking. Rapid movements of the arms, legs, and trunk may also occur. The incidence of the syndrome rises with the dose and duration of drug treatment. The treatment of tardive dyskinesia is usually to stop or minimize the use of the offending drug if possible. Replacing the offending drug with substitute drugs may help.

tarsal cyst See *cyst, Meibomian*.

tarsal gland See *gland, Meibomian*.

tarsal tunnel syndrome Symptoms caused by compression of the nerve in the ankle and foot, usually from the trauma of repetitive work involving the ankle. Abbreviated TTS. Obesity, pregnancy, hypothyroidism, arthritis, and diabetes predispose a person to TTS. Symptoms include numbness and tingling of the foot and toes, a "pins and needles" feeling at night, and feelings of weakness in the ankle and of poor coordination. The diagnosis of TTS can be suspected by history, made via examination (by finding Tinel's sign), and confirmed with a nerve conduction test. Early TTS is usually treated with modification of

activities, use of a removable ankle brace, and use of anti-inflammatory medicines. Caught early, TTS is reversible. If numbness and pain continue in the foot and toes, a cortisone injection into the tarsal tunnel can help. In advanced TTS, particularly with profound weakness and muscle atrophy (wasting), surgery is done to avoid permanent nerve damage. The surgical procedure, called a tarsal tunnel release, relieves the pressure exerted on the nerve within the tarsal tunnel. TTS is analogous to carpal tunnel syndrome. See also *carpal tunnel syndrome; Tinel's sign*.

tarsus, bony See *bony tarsus*.

tartar The hardened product of minerals from saliva and foods that accumulates in plaque around the teeth. Dental plaque and tartar cause periodontal disease, including inflammation of the bone surrounding the teeth. Tartar can become as hard as rock, becoming removable only by a dentist or dental hygienist with special tools.

taste A perception that results from stimulation of a gustatory nerve. Taste belongs to the chemical sensing system. Tasting begins when molecules stimulate special cells in the mouth or throat. These special cells transmit messages through nerves to the brain, where specific tastes are identified. Gustatory, or taste, cells react to food and beverages. The taste cells are clustered in the taste buds of the mouth and throat. Many of the small bumps that can be seen on the tongue contain taste buds. Smell contributes to the sense of taste, as does another chemosensory mechanism, called the common chemical sense. In this system, thousands of nerve endings—especially on the moist surfaces of the eyes, nose, mouth, and throat—give rise to sensations such as the sting of ammonia, the coolness of menthol, and the irritation of chili peppers. People can commonly identify four basic taste sensations: sweet, sour, bitter, and salty. In the mouth, these tastes, along with texture, temperature, and the sensations from the common chemical sense, combine with odors to produce the perception of flavor. Flavors are recognized mainly through the sense of smell. If a person holds his or her nose while eating chocolate, for example, the person will have trouble identifying the chocolate flavor—even though he or she can distinguish the food's sweetness or bitterness. That is because the familiar flavor of chocolate is sensed largely by odor.

taste bud One of the tiny, barrel-shaped endings of the gustatory nerve located around the base of the papillae (small bumps) on the tongue.

tattoo The permanent insertion of ink below the skin, using a sharp instrument. Humans have done tattooing for cosmetic and ritual purposes since at least the Neolithic era. Today the practice is made relatively safe by the use of nonreactive pigments; sterile, disposable needles; and sterile work conditions. Without these refinements, inks may cause inflammation, and infection is an ever-present danger. Persons who are prone to keloids should be aware that tattoos can trigger these heaped-up disfiguring scars. Ink lines may also spread or change color over the years, a fact of special concern for those interested in so-called "permanent cosmetics" (tattooed lip color, eyebrows, eyeliner, and the like).

tattoo removal Removal of a tattoo, as with the use of lasers to destroy the ink itself. Multiple treatments may be necessary, depending on the size of the piece and the inks used. Some tattoos cannot be completely removed with lasers, and lasers may scar some types of skin.

Tay-Sachs disease A genetic metabolic disorder caused by deficiency of the enzyme hexosaminidase A (hex-A) that results in failure to process GM2 ganglioside, a lipid (fat) that then accumulates in the brain and other tissues. Abbreviated TSD. The classic form of TSD begins in infancy. The child usually develops normally for the first few months, but head control is lost by 6 to 8 months of age; the infant cannot roll over or sit up, spasticity and rigidity develop, and excessive drooling and convulsions become evident. Blindness and head enlargement occur by the second year. The disease worsens as the central nervous system progressively deteriorates. Death generally occurs by age 5, due usually to cachexia (wasting away) or aspiration pneumonia. There are several forms of TSD. With juvenile TSD and adult TSD, the person has somewhat more hex-A and hence a later onset of clinical disease than with infantile TSD. All forms of TSD are inherited in an autosomal recessive manner and are due to mutation of the gene for the alpha subunit of hex-A that is on chromosome 15. The frequency of TSD is relatively high in Ashkenazi Jews (particularly those whose ancestors came from Lithuania and Poland). Knowledge of the biochemical basis of TSD now permits screening for carrier status and prenatal diagnosis. Also known as amaurotic familial idiocy, type 1 GM2-gangliosidosis, B variant GM2-gangliosidosis, hexosaminidase A deficiency, and hex-A deficiency. See also *Sandhoff disease*.

TB Tuberculosis.

Td Adult diphtheria and tetanus toxoids. See *Td vaccine*.

Td vaccine

Td vaccine A vaccine that is given to children over the age of 6 and to adults as a booster for immunity against diphtheria and tetanus.

teaspoon An old-fashioned but convenient household measure that is equal to about 5 cc of liquid.

technology, recombinant DNA See *recombinant DNA technology*.

teeth Plural of tooth.

T-8 cell See *T-suppressor cell*.

telangiectasia, hereditary hemorrhagic See *hereditary hemorrhagic telangiectasia*.

telemedicine The use of medical information exchanged from one site to another via electronic communications for the health and education of the patient or healthcare provider and for the purpose of improving patient care. Telemedicine includes consultative, diagnostic, and treatment services.

telemetry, cardiac The process of automatic measurement and transmission of data regarding heart rate and rhythm from remote sources. Blood pressure, breathing, level of oxygen in the blood, and body temperature can also be measured. The patient is connected to monitors that record and send the data to a central monitoring area, where trained staff can watch for any problems. A cardiac telemetry unit in a hospital can provide continuous monitoring 24 hours a day for patients at risk for heart problems or who are recovering from a heart attack, heart surgery, or angioplasty.

telomerase The enzyme that is concerned with the formation, maintenance, and renovation of telomeres, the ends of chromosomes.

telomere The end of a chromosome. The ends of chromosomes are specialized structures that are involved in the replication and stability of DNA molecules. A telomere is a length of DNA that is made up of a repeating sequence of six nucleotide bases (TTAGGG). Small numbers of these terminal TTAGGG sequences are lost from the tips of the chromosomes, but the addition of TTAGGG repeats by the enzyme telomerase compensates for this loss.

temperature The specific degree of hotness or coldness of the body. The normal body temperature is generally considered to be 37° C (98.6° F). However, the normal body temperature may range between 36.1 to 37.2° C (97° and 99° F) during the day. The body temperature at the beginning of the

day, when a person first arises, is called the basal temperature. See also *thermometer*.

temple The area just behind and to the side of the forehead and the eye, above the side of the zygomatic arch (cheekbone) and in front of the ear.

temporal 1 Pertaining to the temple region of the head. For example, the temporal lobe of the brain is so named because of its anatomic location beneath the temple. 2 Pertaining to time, limited in time, temporary, or transient.

temporal arteritis See *arteritis, cranial*.

temporal bone A large irregular bone that is situated at the base and side of the skull. The temporal bone is connected with the mandible (the jawbone) via the temporomandibular joint.

temporal lobe The lobe of the cerebral hemisphere on the side of the brain just forward of the occipital lobe. The temporal lobe is located beneath the temple region of the head. The temporal lobe contains the auditory cortex, which is responsible for hearing. It is also the site of the seizure activity that is characteristic of temporal lobe epilepsy. See also *epilepsy, temporal lobe*.

temporary loss of consciousness See *syncope*.

temporary teeth See *primary teeth*.

temporomandibular joint The joint that hinges the lower jaw (mandible) to the temporal bone of the skull. Abbreviated TMJ. The TMJ is one of the most frequently used joints in the entire body, moving whenever a person eats, drinks, or talks. See also *temporomandibular joint syndrome*.

temporomandibular joint syndrome A disorder of the temporomandibular joint (TMJ) that causes pain, usually in front of the ear(s), sometimes in the form of a headache. Pain in the TMJ can be due to trauma, such as a blow to the face; inflammatory or degenerative arthritis; or poor dental work or structural defects that push the mandible back toward the ears whenever the patient chews or swallows. Grinding or clenching the teeth is a frequent cause. Sometimes muscles around the TMJ that are used for chewing can go into spasm, causing head and neck pain, as well as difficulty opening the mouth normally. Treatment depends on the cause and severity of the problem and can range from use of a mouth guard or medication to prevent nighttime tooth grinding to surgery. See *temporomandibular joint*.

tendinitis See *tendonitis*.

tendinopathy Any disorder of a tendon, the soft tissue that attaches muscles to bones.

tendon The soft tissue by which muscle attaches to bone. Tendons are somewhat flexible, but tough. When a tendon becomes inflamed, the condition is referred to as tendonitis.

tendon, Achilles See *Achilles tendon*.

tendonitis Inflammation of a tendon (the tissue by which muscle attaches to bone). Tendonitis most commonly occurs as a result of injury, as to the tendons around the shoulder or elbow. It can also occur as a result of an underlying inflammatory rheumatic disease, such as reactive arthritis or gout. Sometimes spelled tendinitis.

tenesmus Straining to defecate or urinate. Tenesmus refers especially to ineffectual and painful straining for an extended time. Straining to defecate is called rectal tenesmus; straining to urinate is called vesical tenesmus.

tenia See *taenia*.

tennis elbow See *elbow, tennis*.

tension 1 The pressure within a vessel, such as blood pressure (the pressure within the blood vessels). 2 Stress, especially stress that is translated into clenched muscles and bottled-up emotions.

tension, arterial See *arterial tension*.

tension, intraocular See *intraocular pressure*.

tension headache See *headache, tension*.

teratogen An agent that can disturb the development of an embryo or a fetus. A teratogen is capable either of terminating a pregnancy prematurely or, if the pregnancy persists, of damaging the fetus. The major classes of teratogens include radiation, maternal infections, maternal metabolic diseases, chemicals, and drugs. See also *teratogenic drug*.

teratogenic drug A drug that is capable of acting as a teratogen and interrupting a pregnancy or impairing the child. Drugs that are known teratogens include, but are not limited to, ACE inhibitors such as benazepril (brand name: Lotensin), captopril (brand name: Capoten), enalapril (brand name: Vasotec), fosinopril sodium (brand name: Monopril), lisinopril (brand names: Zestril, Prinivil), lisinopril and hydrochlorothiazide (brand names: Zestoretic, Prinzide), quinapril (brand name: Accupril), and ramipril (brand name: Altace); the acne medication isotretinoin (brand

names: Accutane, Retin-A); alcohol, whether ingested chronically or in binges; androgens (male hormones); the antibiotics tetracycline (brand name: Achromycin), doxycycline (brand name: Vibramycin), and streptomycin; blood-thinners, such as warfarin (brand name: Coumadin); seizure medications, including phenytoin (brand name: Dilantin), valproic acid (brand names: Depakene, Depakote, Valproate), trimethadione (brand name: Tridione), paramethadione (brand name: Paradione), and carbamazepine (brand name: Tegretol); the antidepressant/antimanic drug lithium (brand names: Eskalith, Lithotab); antimetabolite/anticancer drugs methotrexate (brand name: Rheumatrex) and aminopterin; the antirheumatic agent and chelator penicillamine (brand names: Ciprimene, Depen); antithyroid drugs, such as thiouracil/proprylthiouracil and carbimazole/methimazole; cocaine; the hormone DES (diethylstilbestrol); and thalidomide (brand name: Thalomid). Alcohol and illegal or unnecessary drugs should never be used by women who are pregnant or who plan to get pregnant. However, sometimes a medication that is necessary for health is also a teratogen: thyroid medication, blood thinners, and lithium are a few examples. Female patients who must take such medications should work carefully with their physicians to determine whether an alternative treatment is possible before and during pregnancy. In some cases the danger of birth defects is limited to a certain part of the pregnancy, and medication can be started again after that period has passed. Other medications can be safely restarted upon the baby's birth.

teratoma A type of germ cell tumor that may contain several different types of tissue and sometimes mature elements such as hair, muscle, and bone. Teratomas occur most often in the ovary, testis, and in the sacrococcygeal region (near the tailbone) in children. A teratoma may be benign or malignant. See also *ovarian teratoma*.

teratoma, ovarian See *ovarian teratoma*.

teres minor muscle A muscle that assists the lifting of the arm during outward turning (external rotation). The tendon of the teres minor muscle is one of four tendons that stabilize the shoulder joint and constitute the rotator cuff.

terminal ileitis See *Crohn's disease*.

test 1 An assay or examination. 2 A significant chemical reaction. 3 A reagent for a specific test. For specific tests, please see their alphabetical listings.

testes Plural of testis.

testicle See *testis*.

testicular cancer See *cancer, testicular*.

testicular feminization syndrome See *complete androgen insensitivity syndrome*.

testicular self-examination A procedure for detecting the early signs of testicular cancer. Monthly, men should check the testes visually for new swelling or other changes on the skin of the scrotum, roll each testicle between thumb and fingers to detect internal growths, and check the cord (epididymis) on the top and back of each testicle for growths. A warm bath or shower relaxes the scrotum, making examination easier. Early detection of testicular cancer greatly improves the likelihood of successful treatment. See also *cancer, testicular*.

testis The male sex gland, located behind the penis in a pouch of skin called the scrotum. The testes produce and store sperm and are also the body's main source of male hormones, such as testosterone. These hormones control the development of the reproductive organs and other male characteristics, such as body and facial hair, low voice, and wide shoulders. Also known as testicle.

testosterone The principal androgenic hormone produced by the testes. Testosterone is made by the testes in response to luteinizing hormone from the pituitary gland. Androgens promote the development of adult male sex characteristics, such as deep voice; they strengthen muscle and bone mass; and they stimulate spermatogenesis, the production of sperm. High levels of testosterone appear to promote good health in men, lowering the risk of high blood pressure and heart attack, for example. High testosterone levels may also correlate with risky behavior, however, including increased aggressiveness and smoking, which may cancel out these health benefits. See also *androgen; testosterone replacement therapy*.

testosterone replacement therapy The practice of using testosterone to treat conditions in which the testes produce a deficient amount due to absence, injury, or disease. Testosterone is available in oral, IV, and patch forms. As with estrogen replacement therapy for women, dosing must be carefully calibrated to gain the greatest benefits and to minimize unwanted side effects. See also *testosterone*.

tetanus An often fatal infectious disease that is caused by the bacterium *Clostridium tetani*, which usually enters the body through a puncture, a cut, or an open wound. Tetanus leads to profound

painful spasms of muscles, including "locking" of the jaw so that the mouth cannot open, and death. The *C. tetani* bacteria releases a toxin that affects the motor nerves, which stimulate the muscles. Prevention involves immediately cleaning and covering any open wound and getting a tetanus vaccination. Regular boosters are necessary to ensure immunity. Unvaccinated people who get puncture wounds or cuts should get tetanus immunoglobulin and a series of tetanus shots immediately; those who have been immunized but are unsure of the date of their last tetanus shot should get boosters. Also known as lockjaw.

tetany A condition that is due usually to low blood calcium (hypocalcemia) and is characterized by spasms of the hands and feet, cramps, spasm of the voice box (larynx), and overactive neurological reflexes. Tetany is generally considered to result from very low calcium levels in the blood. However, tetany can also result from reduction in the ionized fraction of plasma calcium without marked hypocalcemia, as is the case in severe alkalosis (when the blood is highly alkaline).

tetralogy of Fallot A combination of four heart defects that are present at birth and account for about 10 percent of all congenital heart disease:

- **Ventricular septal defect (VSD)** A hole between the two bottom chambers, the ventricles, of the heart that permits oxygen-poor blood from the right ventricle to mix with oxygen-rich blood from the left ventricle.
- **Pulmonary stenosis** Narrowing of the outlet to the pulmonary artery area with an abnormal pulmonary valve impeding blood flow from the right ventricle to the lungs.
- **Right ventricular hypertrophy (RVH)** Thickening and enlargement of the muscle of the right ventricle.
- **Overriding aorta** A case in which the aorta overrides or straddles the wall (the septum) between the ventricles, permitting oxygen-poor blood to flow through the VSD into the aorta.

Open-heart surgery is done on patients with tetralogy of Fallot in infancy or early childhood. Untreated tetralogy of Fallot is usually fatal before age 20. With open-heart surgery, the patient has an excellent chance of survival.

tetraphocomelia–thrombocytopenia syndrome See *TAR syndrome*.

tetraploid Having four full sets of chromosomes: 4 copies of each autosomal chromosome plus 4 sex chromosomes. In humans, tetraploid is equal to 92 chromosomes.

T-4 cell A T cell that expresses the CD4 transmembrane glycoprotein (CD4+ T cell). T-4 cells are active in the body's immune response, helping to turn on this system when it is challenged by an infection or by foreign matter in the body. HIV attacks T-4 cells, knocking out the body's ability to defend itself against infections. T-helper cells fall into two main classes: those that activate other T cells to achieve cellular inflammatory responses; and those that drive B cells to produce antibodies in the humoral immune response. These two classes of response are generally incompatible with one another and require coordination by substances called cytokines to promote one response while dampening the other. Also known as T-helper cell and TH cell. See also *CD4; T cell*.

T-4 count A test that counts the number of T-4 cells in the blood, for example, to assess the immune status of a patient with HIV. Of the various ways to read a T-4 count test, the best indicator of health may be the absolute T-4 count, the actual number of T-cells per unit volume of blood. Also known as T-helper count. See also *helper/suppressor ratio; T cell*.

thalamotomy A procedure that is performed via stereotactic surgery and is designed to destroy part of the thalamus in order to relieve intractable pain, seizures, or involuntary movements, as in Parkinson's disease.

thalamus A large ovoid mass within the midbrain (the interbrain, connected to the cerebral hemisphere) that forms part of the walls of the third ventricle in the brain. The thalamus contains a number of distinct groups of cells, or nuclei, that function as relay centers for sensory and other impulses between the body and the brain and between the cerebellum, the basal ganglia, and the cerebral cortex. Destruction of part of the thalamus is called thalamotomy.

thalassemia A group of genetic disorders that involve underproduction of hemoglobin, the indispensable molecule in red blood cells that transports oxygen and carbon dioxide. All forms of hemoglobin are made up of two molecules: heme and globin. The globin part of hemoglobin is made up of four polypeptide chains. In normal adult hemoglobin (Hb A), the predominant type of hemoglobin after the first year of life, two of the globin chains are identical to each other and are called the alpha chains. The other two chains, which are also identical to each other but are

different from the alpha chains, are called the beta chains. In fetal hemoglobin (Hb F), the predominant hemoglobin during fetal development, there are two alpha chains and two different chains called gamma chains. In thalassemia, there is a mutation (change) in one or both of the alpha or beta globin chains. Depending on which globin chain is affected, the mutation leads to underproduction or absence of that globin chain, a deficiency of hemoglobin, and anemia. The carriers of heterozygous forms of alpha and beta thalassemia have red cell anomalies that range from very mild to severe.

thalassemia, alpha A form of thalassemia that involves the hemoglobin alpha chain. If a fetus inherits two genes for alpha thalassemia, one from each parent, the disorder is lethal before birth: No alpha chains can be made, and without alpha chains, there can be no fetal hemoglobin. If the fetus inherits only one alpha thalassemia gene, it will survive and have no or few symptoms as a child, as there is another gene that is still able to make alpha chains. See also *thalassemia*.

thalassemia, beta See *thalassemia major*.

thalassemia major The most serious form of beta thalassemia, in which there is a mutation in both of the beta globin chains of hemoglobin. This leads to underproduction or absence of beta chains, underproduction of hemoglobin, and profound anemia. Children with thalassemia major seem entirely normal at birth because at birth they still have predominantly fetal hemoglobin, which does not contain beta chains. The anemia emerges in the first few months of life and becomes progressively more severe, leading to pallor, fatigue, failure to thrive, bouts of fever due to infections, and diarrhea. The gene for thalassemia major is relatively frequent in people of Mediterranean origin. Children with thalassemia major inherit one thalassemia gene from each parent. Treatment based on blood transfusions is helpful but not curative. Also known as beta thalassemia, Cooley anemia, and Mediterranean anemia. See also *thalassemia*.

thalassemia minor Also called thalassemia trait, the carrier state for thalassemia major. People who are carriers have just one beta thalassemia gene and are essentially normal, although they can transmit the gene to their offspring. See also *thalassemia*.

thalidomide A drug (brand name: Thalomid) that was used in the 1950s and early 1960s to treat morning sickness in pregnancy. The use of thalidomide had tragic results: When taken during pregnancy, it can cause a syndrome of congenital malformations in the developing fetus. Thalidomide

was then not approved for marketing in the US and it was taken off the market in other countries. However, in 1998 it was approved by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for the treatment of a skin condition that is due to leprosy (erythema nodosum leprosum). Thalidomide appears to modify the reaction of the immune system to the leprosy bacterium and thereby suppresses the skin reaction. It also appears to have other beneficial uses in the treatment of several different types of cancer, HIV-related ulcers, and some autoimmune diseases. Thalidomide is a potent teratogen and should never be taken by women who are or could become pregnant. See also *thalidomide baby; thalidomide syndrome; teratogen*.

thalidomide baby An infant who is affected by prenatal exposure to the drug thalidomide. In 1998, thalidomide again became available to treat certain conditions, and there is concern that babies may be born with the thalidomide syndrome as they were in the 1950s and early 1960s.

thalidomide syndrome A congenital malformation syndrome that is caused by maternal exposure to thalidomide. Although thalidomide syndrome is epitomized by the flipper-like limbs (phocomelia), thalidomide causes a wide range of birth defects, including absence of ears with deafness; defects of the muscles of the eye and of the face; absence or hypoplasia (underdevelopment) of the arms, especially affecting the radius and the thumb; thumbs with three joints; defects of the femur and of the tibia; and malformations of the heart, bowel, uterus, and gallbladder. The pattern of malformations depends on the time of intake of the drug. Thalidomide usually causes no malformations if taken before the 34th day or after the 50th day after the last menstruation. During the sensitive period, taking thalidomide causes the following sequence of malformations:

- 35th–37th day: absent ears and deafness
- 39th–41st day: absent arms
- 43rd–44th day: phocomelia with three fingers
- 46th–48th day: thumbs with three joints

If thalidomide is taken throughout the sensitive period, the baby may have severe defects of the ears, arms, legs, and internal organs, and the baby may die. About 40 percent of thalidomide babies died before their first birthday, but many thalidomide babies have lived into adulthood.

thelarche The time that breast development starts in girls.

T-helper cell See *T-4 cell*.

therapeutic Relating to therapeutics, the branch of medicine that is concerned specifically with the treatment of disease. The therapeutic dose of a drug is the amount needed to treat a disease.

therapeutic abortion An abortion that is brought about intentionally. Also known as induced abortion.

therapeutic cloning Cloning designed as therapy for a disease. In therapeutic cloning, the nucleus of a cell, typically a skin cell, is inserted into a fertilized egg whose nucleus has been removed. The nucleated egg begins to divide repeatedly to form a blastocyst. Scientists then extract stem cells from the blastocyst and use them to grow cells that are a perfect genetic match for the patient. The cells created via therapeutic cloning can then be transplanted into the patient to treat a disease from which the patient suffers. In contrast to the goal of therapeutic cloning, the goal of reproductive cloning is to create a new individual, an idea that has stirred great controversy and met with almost uniform disapproval.

therapy The treatment of disease. Therapy is synonymous with treatment.

thermometer In medicine, a device used to measure the temperature of the human body. There are many types of medical thermometers, including oral thermometers (placed under the tongue), rectal thermometers (placed within the rectum), multipurpose thermometers (placed under the tongue, in the rectum, or under the armpit), eardrum thermometers (placed inside the ear), and basal thermometers (highly sensitive thermometers placed under the tongue or in the rectum to measure slight temperature changes indicating that ovulation has taken place in a woman). See also *fever; temperature*.

thiamine Vitamin B1, which acts as a coenzyme in the metabolism of the body. In its active form, thiamine participates in a range of biochemical reactions, including certain reactions that are important to carbohydrate metabolism. Deficiency of thiamine leads to the disease beriberi. See also Appendix C, "Vitamins."

thigh The thick, muscular portion of the leg that extends from the hip to the knee. The thigh has only one bone, the femur, which is the largest bone in the human body.

thighbone See *femur*.

third and fourth pharyngeal pouch syndrome
See *Digeorge syndrome*.

third stage of labor See *placental stage of labor*.

third ventricle One cavity in a system of four communicating cavities within the brain that are continuous with the central canal that contains the spinal cord. The third ventricle is a median (midline) cavity in the brain and is bounded by the thalamus and hypothalamus on either side. It communicates anteriorly (in front) with the lateral ventricles, and posteriorly (in back) with the aqueduct of the midbrain, also known as the aqueduct of Sylvius. All the ventricles are filled with cerebrospinal fluid, which is formed by choroid plexuses, structures that are located in the walls and roofs of the ventricles.

thoracentesis Removal of fluid from the space between the lungs and the chest wall (the pleural cavity) for diagnostic or therapeutic purposes using a needle inserted between the ribs.

thoracic Pertaining to the chest. For example, the thoracic aorta is the part of the aorta that lies within the chest.

thoracic aneurysm See *aneurysm, thoracic*.

thoracic aorta The part of the aorta that lies within the chest. The thoracic aorta starts after the arch of the aorta and runs down to the diaphragm, the great muscle that separates the chest from the abdomen. The thoracic aorta gives off numerous branches that supply oxygenated blood to the chest cage and the organs within the chest. Also known as aorta thoracica, aorta thoracalis, and pars thoracalis aortae. See also *aorta*.

thoracic duct A vascular structure that recirculates lymph from the lymphatic circulation into the bloodstream. The thoracic duct begins in the abdomen, tracks alongside the aorta and esophagus, and eventually joins with the left brachiocephalic vein.

thoracic outlet syndrome A condition that is due to compromise of blood vessels or nerve fibers between the armpit (axilla) and the base of the neck, because of compression by adjacent tissues. Symptoms include pain, arm weakness, and numbness in the hands and fingers. Thoracic outlet syndrome can be caused by muscle development from some types of manual work or exercise, injury, or malformation. Treatment involves physical therapy and use of anti-inflammatory medication, and sometimes by surgery.

thoracic vertebrae The 12 vertebrae situated between the cervical (neck) vertebrae and the

lumbar vertebrae. The thoracic vertebrae provide attachment for the ribs and make up part of the back of the thorax (chest). The thoracic vertebrae are represented by the symbols T1 through T12. See also *vertebra; vertebral column*.

thoracotomy An operation to open the chest, usually in order to gain access to the lungs or heart.

thorax The area of the body that is located between the abdomen and the neck. Within the thorax are the lungs, the heart, and the first section of the aorta. Also known as chest.

thrive, failure to See *failure to thrive*.

thrombectomy A procedure to remove a clot (thrombus).

thrombi Plural of thrombus.

thrombin An enzyme that presides over the conversion of a substance called fibrinogen to fibrin, which promotes blood clotting.

thrombinogen See *prothrombin*.

thrombocyte See *platelet*.

thrombocytopenia An abnormally high number of platelets in the blood. Also known as thrombocytosis.

thrombocytopenia-absent radius syndrome See *TAR syndrome*.

thrombocytosis See *thrombocytopenia*.

thromboembolism Formation in a blood vessel of a clot (thrombus) that breaks loose and is carried by the blood stream to plug another vessel. The clot may plug a vessel in the lungs (pulmonary embolism), brain (stroke), gastrointestinal tract, kidneys, or leg. Thromboembolism is a significant cause of morbidity (disease) and mortality (death), especially in adults. Treatment may involve anticoagulants (blood thinners), aspirin, or vasodilators (drugs that relax and widen vessels).

thrombolytic agent See *clot-dissolving medication*.

thrombophilia The tendency to form thromboses (blood clots in arteries and veins).

thrombophlebitis Inflammation of a vein that occurs when a blood clot forms.

thrombosis, cavernous sinus See *cavernous sinus thrombosis*.

thrombosis, deep vein See *deep vein thrombosis*.

thrombotic disease due to protein C deficiency See *protein C deficiency*.

thrombotic thrombocytopenic purpura A life-threatening disease that involves embolism and thrombosis (plugging) of the small blood vessels in the brain and elsewhere in the body. Abbreviated TTP. TTP is characterized by the presence of platelet microthrombi (tiny traveling clots composed of platelets, the clotting cells in the blood), thrombocytopenia (lack of platelets), hemolytic anemia (from the breakup of red blood cells), fever, kidney abnormalities, and nervous system abnormalities such as aphasia, blindness, and convulsions. TTP can be triggered by many drugs. Treatment may include plasma exchange with fresh or frozen plasma, dialysis, and corticosteroids.

thrombus A clot in a blood vessel or within the heart.

thrush A yeast infection of the mucous membranes within the throat and mouth. Thrush looks like a light or white coating on the affected tissue, and it may cause irritation. Thrush is seen most often in infants, young children, elderly people (especially those who wear dentures or take medications that lower output of saliva), and people with compromised immune systems. Diagnosis is made via observation, and it can be confirmed by culturing a saliva sample or cheek scraping. Treatment involves use of oral antifungal medications. See also *yeast; yeast infection*.

thymine One member of the base pair A-T (adenine-thymine) in DNA.

thymosis See *yaws*.

thymus An organ that is located in the upper chest behind the breastbone and in front of the lower neck in which the immune cells called T lymphocytes mature and multiply in early life. The thymus begins to shrink after puberty.

thymus and parathyroids, hypoplasia of See *DiGeorge syndrome*.

thyroglobulin A protein that is found primarily in the thyroid gland. Some thyroglobulin can be found in the blood, and this amount may be measured after thyroid surgery to determine whether thyroid cancer has recurred. Abbreviated Tg.

thyroglossal cyst See *cyst, thyroglossal*.

thyroid binding globulin A blood protein that binds with the thyroid hormone thyroxine (T4).

thyroid gland See *gland, thyroid*.

thyroid hormone A chemical substance that is made by the thyroid gland and is essential for the function of every cell in the body. The thyroid gland uses iodine to make thyroid hormones, which help regulate growth and the rate of chemical reactions (metabolism) and are involved in the circadian rhythms that govern sleep, among other essential functions. The two most prominent thyroid hormones are thyroxine (T4) and triiodothyronine (T3). The thyroid gland also makes calcitonin, which is involved in calcium metabolism and bone strength, as well as other substances. Thyroid stimulating hormone (TSH), which is produced by the pituitary gland, acts to stimulate hormone production by the thyroid gland. The hypothalamus gland in the brain stimulates the pituitary gland to make TSH. See also *calcitonin; thyroxine; triiodothyronine*.

thyroid hormone organification defect IIb See *Pendred syndrome*.

thyroid scan An image taken of a patient's thyroid gland after the patient swallows radioactive iodine or technetium. The image shows the thyroid gland in action as it accumulates radioactive material. Thyroid scanning is used to determine how active thyroid tissue is in manufacturing thyroid hormone. This can help a physician determine whether inflammation of the thyroid gland (thyroiditis) is present. It can also show the presence and degree of overactivity of the gland (hyperthyroidism). Thyroid scanning is especially helpful in evaluating thyroid nodules, particularly after a fine-needle aspiration biopsy has failed to provide a diagnosis. A scan can reveal whether a thyroid nodule is functioning. A functioning nodule actively takes up iodine to produce thyroid hormone, and so it produces a localized "hot" area on the image. A nonfunctioning nodule does not take up iodine, and it produces a localized "cold" area. Most nodules, particularly if they are functioning, are not malignant.

thyroid-stimulating hormone A hormone that is produced by the pituitary gland at the base of the brain in response to signals from the hypothalamus gland in the brain. Abbreviated TSH. TSH promotes the growth of the thyroid gland in the neck and stimulates it to produce more thyroid hormones. When the amount of thyroid hormones is excessive, the pituitary gland stops producing TSH, thus reducing thyroid hormone production. This mechanism maintains a relatively constant level of thyroid hormones circulating in the blood. Also known as thyrotropin.

thyroid-stimulating immunoglobulin A form of immunoglobulin G (IgG) that can bind to thyroid stimulating hormone (TSH) receptors on the thyroid gland. Abbreviated TSI. TSIs mimic the action of TSH, causing excess secretion of thyroxine and tri-iodothyronine. The TSI level is abnormally high in persons with hyperthyroidism due to Graves disease.

thyroidectomy Surgery to remove part or all of the thyroid gland. Thyroidectomy might be done to remove a tumor or to treat hyperthyroidism or goiter (enlarged thyroid gland). Complications of the surgery can include vocal cord paralysis and accidental removal of the parathyroid glands, which are located behind the thyroid gland. Because the parathyroid glands regulate calcium metabolism, their removal can result in low calcium levels.

thyroiditis Inflammation of the thyroid gland. The inflamed thyroid gland can release an excess of thyroid hormones into the bloodstream, resulting in a temporary hyperthyroid state. When the thyroid gland is depleted of thyroid hormones, the patient commonly goes through a hypothyroid (low thyroid) phase. This phase can last for 3 to 6 months, until the thyroid gland fully recovers. Thyroiditis can be diagnosed with a thyroid scan or biopsy. For specific types of thyroiditis, please see their alphabetical listings.

thyrolingual cyst See *cyst, thyroglossal*.

thyrotropin See *thyroid stimulating hormone*.

thyroxine A hormone that is made by the thyroid gland and is one of the most important thyroid hormones. Four iodine molecules are attached to the molecular structure of thyroxine. Along with the more powerful thyroid hormone triiodothyronine (T₃), thyroxine affects almost every process in the body, including body temperature, growth, and heart rate. Also known as T₄.

TIA Transient ischemic attack.

tibia The larger of the two long bones in the lower leg. The tibia is familiarly known as the shinbone.

tibia vara A condition that is characterized by disturbance of normal growth in the inner part of the upper tibia. Tibia vara causes a bowlegged gait and can impair the knees significantly. It is most common in children of African descent. Treatment usually involves surgery, although a knee-ankle-foot orthosis brace may be used. Also known as Blount disease.

tibial bowing Improper growth of the tibia in the leg that causes bowlegs or other leg problems. The

tibia may bow anteriorly (in the front) or posteriorly (in the back). See also *tibia vara*.

tic A repetitive movement that is difficult, if not impossible, to control. Tics can affect any group of muscles. The most common are facial tics, such as eye-blinking, nose-twitching, and grimacing. Tics that affect the muscles used to produce speech are known as vocal tics and can range from grunts or whistles to the repetition of complete words or phrases. Complex motor tics involve multiple sequenced movements and can include behaviors such as twirling in place, tapping a certain number of times, or stooping to touch the ground. Tics are believed to arise in differences in or damage to the basal ganglia, a structure deep within the brain that controls automatic movements and that also affects impulsivity. See also *coprolalia; echolalia; palilalia; tic disorder; Tourette's syndrome*.

tic disorder A disorder that is characterized by the presence of tics. If both motor and vocal tics are present for more than 6 months, the diagnosis of Tourette's syndrome may be made. Diagnosis is made via observation. Treatment can involve medications but is not usually recommended for minor tics that are not bothersome to the patient. See also *tic; Tourette's syndrome*.

tick bite A bite from a bloodsucking parasitic insect that punctures the skin with a sharp beak and burrows into the skin with its head. Tick bites can carry serious illness, including Rocky Mountain spotted fever, other forms of tick typhus, and Lyme disease. See also *tick-borne disease*.

tick-borne disease A disease that is carried by or caused by a tick. Examples of tick-borne diseases in the US include babesiosis (a malaria-like infection), ehrlichiosis, Lyme disease, relapsing fever (also called tick fever, most common in the western US), Rocky Mountain spotted fever, tick paralysis, and tularemia (rabbit fever). Anyone working in the outdoors, especially in areas with tall grasses, shrubs, low-hanging branches, or leaf mold, is susceptible to being bitten by a tick. Ticks do not jump, crawl, or fall onto a person. They are picked up when clothing or hair brushes leaves or other objects that they are on. Ticks are generally found within 3 feet of the ground. After a tick is picked up, it crawls until it finds a likely site to feed. Ticks often find spots at the back of the knee, near the hairline, and behind the ears. The best way to prevent tick-borne diseases is to avoid being bitten by ticks.

t.i.d. A prescription abbreviation meaning three times a day. See also Appendix A, "Prescription Abbreviations."

tight foreskin

tight foreskin See *phimosis*.

tilt-table test A test that involves placing a patient on a table with a foot-support, tilting the table upward, and measuring the blood pressure and pulse. Symptoms are recorded with the patient in diverse positions. The tilt-table test is designed to detect postural hypotension (orthostatic hypotension), a condition caused by changing body position from a prone, supine, or sitting position to a more vertical position. Poor tone of the nerves of the legs can cause a disproportionate distribution of blood to the legs, instead of to the brain, so the patient feels lightheaded and may even faint. See also *syncope; syncope, situational; vasovagal reaction*.

time, prothrombin See *prothrombin time*.

tinea barbae A fungal infection (known as ring-worm) of the bearded area of the face and neck, with swelling and marked crusting, often with itching. In the days when men went to the barber daily for a shave, tinea barbae was called barber's itch. Treatment involves antifungal medications.

tinea capitis A fungal infection (known as ring-worm) of the scalp. This disorder occurs most commonly in children, especially those in late childhood and adolescence. It appears as scalp scaling associated with bald spots. Treatment involves antifungal medications.

tinea corporis A fungal infection (known as ringworm) of the skin with characteristic spots that have an "active" outer border as they slowly grow and advance. Many antifungal creams can clear the condition in approximately two weeks.

tinea cruris See *jock itch*.

tinea incognito Tinea corporis that has been modified by the application of high-potency topical steroids in a way that renders it no longer typical in appearance and makes it difficult to diagnose.

tinea unguium See *onychomycosis*.

Tinel's sign The sign that a nerve is irritated. Tinel's sign is positive when lightly banging (percussing) over the nerve elicits a sensation of tingling, or "pins and needles," in the distribution of the nerve. For example, in carpal tunnel syndrome, where the median nerve is compressed at the wrist, the test for Tinel's sign is often positive, eliciting tingling in the thumb, index, and middle fingers.

tinnitus Ringing in the ears. Tinnitus has many causes, including some medications (including

aspirin and other anti-inflammatory drugs), diseases such as Ménière's disease, aging, and ear trauma.

tissue A group or layer of cells that perform specific functions. For example, muscle tissue is a group of muscle cells.

titer The concentration of a substance in a fluid, such as the concentration of an antibody in blood. The titer reflects the amount of the substance in the fluid. Sometimes also spelled titre.

titre See *titer*.

TMA Trimethylaminuria. See *fish-odor syndrome*.

TMJ Temporomandibular joint.

TMJ syndrome Temporomandibular joint syndrome.

tobacco A South American herb (*Nicotiana tabacum*) whose leaves contain 2 to 8 percent nicotine and serve as the source of both smoking and smokeless tobacco and the basis of great health hazards.

toc-, toco- Prefix meaning childbirth, as in tocolysis (the slowing or halting of labor). Sometimes spelled tok- and toko-.

tocolysis The slowing or halting of labor during the birth process.

tocolytic Relating to the inhibition, delaying, or halting of labor. For example, a tocolytic drug is a medication that deters labor.

tocophobia Fear of childbirth.

tocus Labor, childbirth.

toddler's fracture See *fracture, toddler's*.

toe sign See *Babinski reflex*.

toenail A tough, protective plate that is produced by living skin cells in the toe. A toenail consists of several parts, including the nail plate (the visible part of the nail), the nail bed (the skin beneath the nail plate), the cuticle (the tissue that overlaps the plate and rims the base of the nail), the nail folds (the skin that enfolds the frame and supports the nail on three sides), the lunula (the whitish half-moon at the base of the nail), and the matrix (the hidden part of the nail unit under the cuticle). Toenails grow from the matrix. They are composed largely of keratin, a hardened protein that is also

found in fingernails, skin, and hair. As new cells grow in the matrix, the older cells are pushed out and compacted, taking on the flattened, hardened form of the toenail. The average growth rate for toenails is 0.1 mm per day. The exact rate of nail growth depends on numerous factors, including the age and sex of the individual and the time of year. Toenails generally grow fastest in young people, in males, and in the summer. Toenails grow more slowly than fingernails. See also *nail; nail care*.

toenail, ingrown A common disorder, particularly on the big (great) toe, in which the corner of the nail curves down into the skin due to mistrimming of the nail or due to shoes being too tight. An ingrown toenail can be painful and lead to infection. Sometimes simply removing the corner of the nail from the skin is enough to cure this problem, although this might need to be done by a physician, podiatrist, or foot-care specialist. Any infection that is present requires treatment. In some cases the entire nail must be removed. If ingrown toenails are caused by congenital nail malformations, the nail bed can be treated to permanently prevent regrowth.

toes, six See *hexadactyl*.

tok-, toko- See *toc-, toco-*.

T1–T12 Symbols that represent the 12 thoracic vertebrae.

tongue A strong muscle that is anchored to the floor of the mouth. The tongue is covered by the lingual membrane, which has special areas to detect different types of tastes. The tongue muscles are attached to the lower jaw and to the hyoid bone, a small, U-shaped bone that lies deep in the muscles at the back of the tongue and above the larynx. On the top surface of the tongue are small nodules, called papillae, that give the tongue its rough texture. Between the papillae, at the sides and base of the tongue, are the taste buds, which are small bulb-like structures. The muscle fibers of the tongue are heavily supplied with nerves. Babies have more taste buds than adults, and they have them almost everywhere in the mouth, including the cheeks. The tongue aids in the formation of the sounds of speech and aids in swallowing.

tongue tie A minor congenital anomaly in which the flap of mucous membrane under the tongue (known as the frenulum) is unusually short and limits somewhat the mobility of the tongue. The name tongue tie reflects the unfounded folk belief that with this condition, a child cannot feed or speak properly because the tongue is “tied.” The medical term for this condition is ankyloglossia.

tonometry A standard eye test that is done to determine the fluid pressure inside the eye. Increased pressure is a possible sign of glaucoma, a common and potentially very serious problem if not detected and treated promptly. The pressure inside the eye is measured from the outside. In most cases, the pressure can be measured without anything actually touching the eye. The patient looks at an instrument that blows a small puff of air into the eye and then uses a special kind of sensor to detect the amount of indentation that the air puff causes on the surface of the eye. This indentation is normal and lasts only a fraction of a second. If patients need to have their eye pressure measured when this type of machine is not available (as in an emergency room), the pressure can be measured with an instrument that resembles a pen. One end of the instrument is placed on the surface of the eyeball. This feels like having a contact lens put in the eye. Tonometry does not cause significant pain and it is risk free.

tonsil A small mass of lymphoid tissue in the back of the throat (pharynx). There are usually two tonsils, one on either side of the posterior pharynx. Like other lymphatic tissue, the tonsils are part of the immune system and should not be removed without a sufficient reason.

tonsil stone See *tonsillolith*.

tonsillectomy The surgical removal of both tonsils.

tonsillitis Inflammation of one or both tonsils, typically as a result of infection by a virus or bacteria.

tonsillolith A tiny stone (calculus) in the tonsils. Such stones are found within little pockets (crypts) in the tonsils. These pockets typically form in chronic recurrent tonsillitis, and they harbor bacteria. Tonsilloliths are foul smelling because they tend to contain high quantities of sulfur compounds. When crushed, they give off a characteristic rotten-egg smell and can cause bad breath. Tonsilloliths may also give a person the sense that something is caught in the back of the throat. Also known as tonsil stone.

tooth One of the structures within the mouth that allow for biting and chewing. Teeth have different shapes, depending on their purpose. The sharp canine and incisor teeth allow for biting, and the flattened, thick molars in the back of the mouth provide grinding surfaces for masticating food. All teeth have essentially the same structure: a hard crown above the gum line, which is attached to two or four roots by a portion called the neck. The roots are covered with a

very thin layer of bone, and they keep the tooth embedded in the bones of the jaw. The exposed exterior of the tooth is covered with tough enamel. Under the enamel is a thick layer of dentin, and in the center is the pulp, which contains blood vessels and nerves.

tooth, cracked, syndrome See *cracked-tooth syndrome*.

tooth, wisdom One of the large molars in the very back of the jaw. The human jaw has changed in size over the course of evolution, and wisdom teeth are no longer needed, but they continue to erupt in many individuals. If the jaw is too small to accommodate them, they may cause pain or crowd other teeth out of position. The wisdom teeth may need to be surgically removed.

tooth erosion The gradual loss of the normally hard surface of the tooth due to chemical, not bacterial, processes.

tooth pain, phantom See *phantom tooth pain*.

tooth root The lower two-thirds of a tooth. The roots are normally buried in bone, and they serve to anchor the tooth in position. The roots are covered with a thin layer of bone, and they are inserted into sockets in the bone of the jaw.

tooth root sensitivity Sensitivity of the tooth roots to cold, hot, and sour foods when they are no longer protected by healthy gum and bone. Chronic gum disease contributes to toothache due to root sensitivity. Bacterial toxins dissolve the bone around the roots and cause the gum and the bone to recede. Tooth root sensitivity may be so severe that the person avoids many foods. Treatment involves addressing the underlying gum disease and improving oral hygiene.

toothache Pain in the tooth or gum. The most common cause of a toothache is a cavity or an injury to a tooth that exposes the pulp, which is heavily supplied by nerves.

tophaceous gout See *gout, tophaceous*.

tophi Plural of tophus.

tophus A nodular mass of uric acid crystals. Tophi are characteristically deposited in different soft tissue areas of the body in chronic (tophaceous) gout. Even though tophi are most commonly found as hard nodules around the fingers, at the tips of the elbows, and around the big toe, they can appear anywhere in the body. They have been reported in unexpected areas such as in the ears, in the vocal cords, and around the spinal cord.

topical Pertaining to a particular surface area. For example, a topical agent is applied to a certain area of the skin and is intended to affect only the area to which it is applied. Whether its effects are indeed limited to that area depends on whether the agent stays where it is put or is absorbed into the bloodstream. Cortisone creams are topical medications.

TORCH screen A blood test that is designed to screen for a group of infectious agents known by the acronym TORCH, which stands for Toxoplasma gondii, other viruses (HIV, measles, and so on), rubella (German measles), cytomegalovirus, and herpes simplex. All these infectious agents are teratogens (agents that are capable of causing birth defects). The TORCH infectious agents are among the leading causes of neonatal morbidity and mortality.

tornado supplies kit See *disaster supplies*.

torsion dystonia See *dystonia, torsion*.

torsion fracture See *fracture, torsion*.

torticollis The most common of the focal dystonias, a state of excessive or inadequate muscle tone in the muscles in the neck that control the position of the head. Torticollis can cause the head to twist and turn to one side. The head may also be pulled forward or backward. Torticollis can occur at any age, although most individuals first experience symptoms in middle age. It often begins slowly, and it usually reaches a plateau. Also known as spastic torticollis.

torticollis, congenital A deformity of the neck that is present at birth. Congenital torticollis is due to shortening of the neck muscles. Congenital torticollis tilts the head to the side on which the neck muscles are shortened, so that the chin points to the other side. The shortened neck muscles are principally supplied by the spinal accessory nerve. Also known as wryneck.

torticollis, spasmodic See *torticollis*.

torus fracture See *fracture, torus*.

total hysterectomy See *hysterectomy, total*.

total parenteral nutrition Intravenous feeding that provides patients with all the fluid and the essential nutrients they need when they are unable to feed themselves by mouth. Abbreviated TPN.

Tourette's syndrome A genetic disorder that is characterized by the presence of chronic vocal and

motor tics. The tics usually become evident between the ages of 6 and 18. The tics may be minor or debilitating. They may also vary in type and frequency over time. Diagnosis of Tourette's syndrome is made via observation. Although the symptoms can persist for life, most people with the condition notice improvement during the late teen years that continues into adulthood. Medical treatment is not always necessary unless symptoms are severe or debilitating. A variety of medications have been used to treat Tourette's syndrome, and psychotherapy is sometimes helpful. Also known as Gilles de la Tourette's syndrome. See also *tic; tic disorder*.

toxemia See *eclampsia*.

toxic epidermal necrolysis A widespread, life-threatening skin disorder that is most often drug-induced, involving widespread death and destruction of skin and mucous membranes. Abbreviated TEN. TEN is thought to be a variant of the same disease process as Stevens-Johnson syndrome and is believed to arise because of the abnormal death of keratinocytes, the cells that form skin and mucous membranes. Serious complications include infections that develop in damaged tissue and spread to the bloodstream (sepsis), gastrointestinal bleeding, respiratory failure, and fluid loss that can progress to kidney failure. Treatment includes supportive management in an intensive care setting. See also *Stevens-Johnson syndrome*.

toxic multinodular goiter See *goiter; toxic multinodular*.

toxic shock syndrome A life-threatening syndrome that is characterized by the sudden onset of high fever, vomiting, diarrhea, and muscle aches, followed by low blood pressure (hypotension), which can lead to shock and death. Abbreviated TSS. There may be a rash resembling sunburn, with peeling of skin. Toxic shock syndrome was originally described and still occurs especially in menstruating women using tampons. It is caused by a toxin produced by *Staphylococcus aureus* bacteria growing under conditions in which there is little or no oxygen. Toxic shock syndrome is less common in women who do not use tampons and in men. A related infection, streptococcal toxic shock syndrome, or STSS, is caused by streptococcus bacteria, most commonly occurring after streptococcus bacteria have invaded areas of injured skin. See also *staphylococcus*.

toxicity The degree to which a substance (a toxin or poison) can harm humans or animals. Acute toxicity involves harmful effects in an organism through a single or short-term exposure. Subchronic toxicity

is the ability of a toxic substance to cause effects for more than one year but less than the lifetime of the exposed organism. Chronic toxicity is the ability of a substance or mixture of substances to cause harmful effects over an extended period, usually upon repeated or continuous exposure, sometimes lasting for the entire life of the exposed organism.

toxicology The study of the nature, effects, and detection of poisons (toxins) and the treatment of poisoning.

toxin A poison produced by certain animals, plants, or bacteria.

toxo See *toxoplasmosis*.

toxoplasmosis An infection caused by a single-celled parasite called *Toxoplasma gondii* that can invade and damage tissues. Toxoplasmosis can be contracted by touching the hands to the mouth after gardening, cleaning a cat's litter box, or anything that has come into contact with cat feces. Toxoplasmosis can also be contracted by eating contaminated raw or partly cooked meat, especially pork or lamb, or touching the hands to the mouth after contact with contaminated raw or undercooked meat. Of those who are infected, very few have symptoms because a healthy person's immune system prevents illness from developing. Persons with a weakened immune system are at risk for developing severe cases of toxoplasmosis. The symptoms are similar to those of flu: fever, fatigue, headache, swollen lymph glands (lymphadenopathy), and muscle aches and pains (myalgia) that may last for a few days to several weeks. Toxoplasmosis is a well-known teratogen (an agent that can cause birth defects). If a pregnant woman is infected, the parasite can cross the placenta to the baby, with sometimes catastrophic consequences. Children born with toxoplasmosis (congenital toxoplasmosis) can have mental retardation, convulsions (epilepsy), spasticity, cerebral palsy, and partial or complete deafness and blindness. Also known as simply toxo.

TPN Total parenteral nutrition.

trachea A tube-like portion of the respiratory tract that connects the larynx with the bronchial parts of the lungs. Also known as windpipe.

tracheoesophageal fistula An abnormal communication between the trachea and esophagus. Abbreviated TEF. A TEF can be present at birth (congenital) or acquired. Congenital TEF is often associated with other birth defects. Most patients with congenital TEFs are diagnosed immediately following birth or during infancy. Congenital TEFs are

often associated with life-threatening complications and require surgical repair. Acquired TEFs can occur secondary to cancer, trauma, infection, and ruptured diverticula.

tracheoesophageal puncture A small opening that is made by a surgeon between the esophagus and the trachea. A valve is inserted to keep food out of the trachea but allow air into the esophagus to permit tracheoesophageal speech.

tracheostomy Surgery to create an opening (stoma) into the windpipe. The opening itself may also be called a tracheostomy. A tracheostomy may be made as an emergency measure if the airway is blocked.

tracheostomy button A small plastic tube that is placed in the opening (stoma) of a tracheostomy to keep it open.

tracheostomy tube A small metal or plastic tube that keeps the stoma (opening) and the trachea in a tracheostomy open. Also known as a trach (pronounced "trake") tube.

trachoma A chronic inflammatory disease of the eye and the leading cause of blindness. Trachoma is due to infection with the bacterium Chlamydia trachomatis. Transmission occurs mainly among children and from children to women caring for them. Key risk factors include inadequate supplies of water and low socioeconomic status. Trachoma affects millions of people worldwide, primarily in rural communities of the developing world and in the arid areas of tropical and subtropical zones. Australia is the only developed country where trachoma is still a significant health problem. The disease goes by a number of names, such as sandy blight.

traction In medicine, a procedure for manually pulling a part of the body to a beneficial effect. See *traction, orthopedic*.

traction, orthopedic The use of a system of weights and pulleys to gradually change the position of a bone. It may be used in cases of congenital defect or bone and joint injury to prevent scar tissue from building up in ways to limit movement and to prevent contractures in disorders such as cerebral palsy and arthritis.

trait 1 In genetics, a genetically determined characteristic. 2 In medicine, a condition in the heterozygous state of a recessive disorder, as in sickle cell trait. 3 In psychology, a characteristic pattern of behavior.

tranquilizer In pharmacology, a drug that calms and relieves anxiety. The first tranquilizer, chlor diazepoxidehydrochloride (brand name: Librium), received FDA approval in 1960. Tranquilizers range in potency from mild to major, with increasing levels of drowsiness occurring as potency increases. They are prescribed for a wide variety of conditions but are used primarily to treat anxiety and insomnia. Most tranquilizers are potentially addictive, particularly those in the benzodiazepine family.

trans- Prefix meaning across, over, or beyond, as in transplant operation (an operation in which an organ from one person is grafted into another person).

trans fat See *trans fatty acid*.

trans fatty acid An unhealthy substance that is made through the chemical process of hydrogenation of oils. Hydrogenation solidifies liquid oils and increases the shelf life and the flavor stability of oils and foods that contain them. Trans fatty acids are found in vegetable shortening and in some margarine, crackers, cookies, and snack foods. Trans fatty acids are also found in abundance in many deep-fried foods. Trans fatty acids both raise the "bad" (LDL) cholesterol and lower the "good" (HDL) cholesterol levels in blood, markedly increasing the risk of heart disease. Also known as trans fat.

transaminase, serum glutamic oxaloacetic
See *aspartate aminotransferase*.

transaminase, serum glutamic pyruvic See *alanine aminotransferase*.

transcription Making an RNA copy from a sequence of DNA (a gene). Transcription is the first step in gene expression.

transfer RNA See *RNA, transfer*.

transferred ophthalmia See *sympathetic ophthalmia*.

transfusion The transfer of blood or blood products from one person (the donor) into the bloodstream of another person (the recipient). In most situations, transfusion is done as a lifesaving maneuver to replace blood cells or blood products lost through severe bleeding. Transfusion of one's own blood (autologous transfusion) is the safest method, but it requires advanced planning, and not all patients are eligible. Directed donor blood allows the patient to receive blood from known donors. Volunteer donor blood is usually most

readily available and, when properly tested, has a low incidence of adverse events.

transfusion medicine The practice of blood transfusion and blood conservation, complementary activities that ensure the best balance between safety and convenience during emergency care or surgery.

transient ischemic attack An event that affects the central nervous system and has the signs and symptoms of a stroke but that goes away within a short period of time. Abbreviated TIA. A TIA is due to a temporary lack of adequate blood and oxygen (ischemia) to the brain. This is often caused by the narrowing (or, less often, ulceration) of the carotid arteries (the major arteries in the neck that supply blood to the brain). TIAs typically last 2 to 30 minutes and can produce problems with vision, dizziness, weakness, and trouble speaking. If a TIA is not treated, there is a high risk of a stroke in the near future, usually within 90 days. A person who even remotely suspects a TIA should seek medical attention right away. Medication and/or a procedure to clean out the carotid artery and restore normal blood flow through the artery (carotid endarterectomy) can markedly reduce the risk of a subsequent stroke. Also known as mini-stroke.

transition, menopause See *menopause transition*.

transitional cell carcinoma See *carcinoma, transitional cell*.

translation The process by which the genetic code carried by messenger RNA (mRNA) directs the production of proteins from amino acids.

translocation A structural chromosome rearrangement in which chromosome material is transferred from one chromosome to another. Translocation is the result of chromosome breakage.

transmission, perinatal See *vertical transmission*.

transmission, vertical See *vertical transmission*.

transplant The grafting of a tissue from one place to another. The transplanting of tissue can be from one part of a patient to another part (autologous transplantation), as in the case of a skin graft using the patient's own skin; or from one patient to another patient (allogenic transplantation), as in the case of transplanting a donor kidney into a recipient. See also *bone marrow transplant; heart transplant; kidney transplant; lung transplant*.

transsexual A person who desires or has achieved transsexualism.

transsexualism Consistently strong desire to change one's anatomical gender. Some transsexuals were misassigned gender at birth (for example, being anatomically male but raised as female), either on purpose or due to indistinct anatomy. Most, however, are perfectly normal physically. Transsexuals may dress and behave as individuals of the opposite sex, and they may choose to use hormones or surgery to develop desired secondary sex characteristics. Surgery to change the appearance of the external genitals is known as sex reassignment surgery. Surgery and hormonal treatments for gender reassignment are available for both male and female transsexuals. Transsexualism is distinct from transvestitism (cross-dressing), and it does not always indicate a change in the individual's sexual preference.

transudate A fluid that passes through a membrane, which filters out all the cells and much of the protein, yielding a watery solution. A transudate is a filtrate of blood. It is due to increased pressure in the veins and capillaries that forces fluid through the vessel walls or to a low level of protein in blood serum. Transudate accumulates in tissues outside the blood vessels and causes edema (swelling).

transurethral resection Surgery to remove tissue using a special instrument inserted through the urethra. The procedure may be performed, for example, to remove an enlarged prostate that is obstructing the flow of urine. Abbreviated TUR.

transvaginal ultrasound The creation of a picture called a sonogram by sending sound waves out through a probe inserted into the vagina. The waves bounce off the ovaries and other anatomical structures, and a computer uses the echoes to create a visual image. Abbreviated TVS.

transverse A horizontal plane that passes through a standing body, parallel to the ground. See also Appendix B, "Anatomic Orientation Terms."

transverse fracture See *fracture, transverse*.

transvestite A person who dresses in the clothing of the opposite sex. Also known as a cross-dresser.

transvestitism Dressing in the clothing of the opposite sex. Transvestitism is distinct from both transsexualism and homosexuality. Also known as cross-dressing.

trauma A physical or emotional injury.

trauma center A specialized hospital facility that is designed to provide diagnostic and therapeutic services for patients with injuries.

traumatic alopecia See *alopecia, traumatic*.

traumatology The branch of surgery that deals with injured patients, usually on an emergency basis. Patients who have suffered significant physical trauma, as from a car accident, may be cared for in a traumatology unit.

travelers' diarrhea Diarrhea that results from infections acquired while traveling to another country. Among the causes of travelers' diarrhea are enterotoxigenic *Escherichia coli* and a variety of viruses.

treadmill A machine with a moving strip on which one walks without moving forward. A treadmill was originally a wide wheel turned by the weight of people climbing on steps around its edge, used in the past to provide power for machines or as a punishment in prisons. The treadmill today serves as a device to maintain physical fitness. It is also an essential component of the exercise treadmill test, a stress test for heart disease.

treadmill, exercise See *exercise treadmill*.

tremor An abnormal, repetitive shaking movement of the body. Tremors have many causes and can be inherited, related to illnesses (such as thyroid disease), or caused by fever, hypothermia, drugs, or fear.

trench fever A disease borne by body lice that was first recognized in the trenches of World War I, when it is estimated to have affected more than 1 million people. Trench fever is still seen endemically in Mexico, Africa, Eastern Europe, and elsewhere. Urban trench fever occurs among homeless people and street alcoholics, and outbreaks have been documented in US cities. The cause of trench fever is *Bartonella quintana* (previously called *Rochalimaea quintana*), an unusual type of bacteria that multiply in the gut of the body louse. Transmission to people occurs when infected louse feces are rubbed into abraded (scuffed) skin or into the whites of the eyes. The disease is classically a 5-day fever, characterized by the sudden onset of high fever, severe headache, back pain and leg pain, and a fleeting rash. Recovery takes a month or more, and relapses are common. Also known as Wolhynia fever, shinbone fever, quintan fever, five-day fever, Meuse fever, His disease, His-Werner disease, and Werner-His disease. See also *Bartonella quintana*; *rickettsial disease*.

trench foot A painful condition caused by exposure of the foot for several days. Trench foot was common during trench warfare in World War I and World War II, when soldiers stood for days and weeks in wet, muddy ditches without being able to change their footwear; today it is seen most frequently in urban homeless people. The feet become numb, turn red and then blue, develop blisters, and become infected. Gangrene may set in. Untreated trench foot can lead to the need for amputation due to gangrene; it can even lead to death.

trench mouth See *acute membranous gingivitis*.

Treponema pallidum The cause of syphilis, a worm-like, spiral-shaped bacterium called a spirochete that wiggles vigorously when viewed under a microscope.

triage The process of sorting people based on their need for immediate medical treatment as compared to their chance of benefiting from such care. Triage is done in emergency rooms, disasters, and wars, when limited medical resources must be allocated to maximize the number of survivors. Triage in this sense originated in World War I. Wounded soldiers were classified into one of three groups: those who could be expected to live without medical care, those who would likely die even with care, and those who could survive if they received care.

TRICARE See *CHAMPUS*.

triceps The muscle that extends (straightens) the forearm. The triceps can be felt as the tense muscle in the back of the upper arm while one is doing push-ups. The triceps has three heads, or origins. Its full name is the triceps brachii.

Trichinella spiralis The worm that causes trichinosis. *Trichinella spiralis* larvae can infest pigs and wild game. It hibernates in muscle tissue within a protective cyst. When a human or an animal eats meat that contains infective *Trichinella* cysts, the acid in the stomach dissolves the hard covering of the cyst and releases the worms. The worms pass into the small intestine and become mature within 1 or 2 days. After the adult worms mate, the females lay eggs. Eggs develop into immature worms, travel through the arteries, and are transported to muscles. Within the muscles, each worm curls into a ball and encysts (becomes enclosed in a capsule). Infection occurs when these encysted worms are consumed in meat, continuing the cycle. Also known as pork tapeworm. See also *trichinosis*.

trichinellosis See *trichinosis*.

trichinosis A disease that is due to eating raw or undercooked pork or wild game that is infected with *Trichinella spiralis* larvae. Initial symptoms are abdominal discomfort, nausea, diarrhea, vomiting, fatigue, and fever. Next usually come headaches, fevers, chills, cough, eye swelling, aching joints, muscle pains, itchy skin, diarrhea, and constipation. With heavy infection, patients may experience difficulty coordinating movements and have heart and breathing problems. In severe cases, death can occur. The severity of symptoms depends on the number of infectious worms consumed in meat. To avoid trichinosis, pork and wild game meat should be thoroughly cooked (freezing wild game may not effectively kill all worms); all meat that is fed to pigs or other wild animals should be cooked first; meat grinders should be cleaned thoroughly; curing (salting), drying, smoking, and microwaving meat do not consistently kill infective worms. Irradiation of wild game meat can kill the parasites. A person who thinks he or she has trichinosis should seek medical attention. Also known as trichinellosis.

trichobezoar A wad of swallowed hair and food. Trichobezoars can sometimes cause blockage of the digestive system, especially at the exit of the stomach. See also *bezoar*.

trichomonas A single-celled protozoan parasite best known in medicine because one species causes vaginitis (vaginal inflammation). The species of trichomonas responsible for the sexually transmitted disease is *Trichomonas vaginalis*. The vagina is the most common site of infection in women, and the urethra (urine canal) is the most common site of infection in men. See also *trichomoniasis*.

trichomoniasis Infection with the parasite *Trichomonas vaginalis*. The infection is sexually transmitted, and the vagina is the most common site of infection in women, while the urethra (urine canal) is the most common site of infection in men. Most men with trichomoniasis have no signs or symptoms; however, some men may have an irritation inside the penis, mild discharge, or slight burning after urination or ejaculation. Many women have signs or symptoms of infection which include a frothy, yellow-green vaginal discharge with a strong odor. The infection may also cause discomfort during intercourse and urination, as well as irritation and itching of the female genital area. Treatment is usually with the drug metronidazole given by mouth in a single dose. Having trichomoniasis once does not protect a person from getting it again.

trichotillomania Compulsive hair pulling. An impulse control disorder characterized by the repeated urge to pull out scalp hair, eyelashes, eye-

brows, or other body hair. Treatment may include cognitive-behavior therapy and medications.

tricuspid Having three flaps or cusps. For example, the aortic valve and the tricuspid valve in the heart each have three cusps.

tricuspid valve One of the four heart valves, the first one that blood encounters as it enters the heart. The tricuspid valve stands between the right atrium and the right ventricle, and it allows blood to flow only from the atrium into the ventricle.

tricyclic antidepressant One of a family of medications that affect the neurotransmitters norepinephrine, serotonin, and acetylcholine. The tricyclic antidepressants are used to treat clinical depression, fibromyalgia, and other pain conditions.

trigeminal nerve The chief nerve of sensation for the face, which is also the motor nerve that controls the muscles used for chewing. Problems with the sensory part of the trigeminal nerve result in pain or loss of sensation in the face. Problems with the motor root of the trigeminal nerve result in deviation of the jaw toward the affected side and trouble chewing. The trigeminal nerve is the fifth cranial nerve.

trigeminal neuralgia Inflammation of the trigeminal nerve (the fifth cranial nerve) that most commonly causes paroxysms of very intense lightning pain in the areas of the face that the nerve supplies—the lips, eye, nose, scalp, forehead, gums, cheek, and chin—on the involved side of the face. Triggers for attacks can include touching the face, brushing the teeth, putting on makeup, and a soft breeze. Medications that may be effective include anticonvulsants and antidepressants. Neurosurgery may be necessary to relieve pressure on the nerve or to reduce nerve sensitivity. Also known as tic douloureux.

triglyceride The major form of fat, which consists of three molecules of fatty acid combined with one molecule of the alcohol glycerol. Triglycerides serve as the backbone of many types of lipids (fats). Triglycerides come from food and are also produced by the body. See also *triglyceride test*.

triglyceride test A simple blood test to measure the level of triglycerides in the blood. Triglyceride levels are influenced by recent fat and alcohol intake, so a person being tested should fast from food and alcohol for at least 12 hours before being tested. The normal level of triglycerides depends on the age and sex of the individual. Mild to moderate triglyceride increases occur in many conditions,

including alcohol abuse, obstruction of the bile ducts, and diabetes. High levels of triglycerides (greater than 200 mg/dl) are associated with a heightened risk of heart disease. Markedly high triglyceride levels (greater than 500 mg/dl) can cause inflammation of the pancreas (pancreatitis). See also *triglyceride*.

triiodothyronine A hormone that is made by the thyroid gland. Triiodothyronine has three iodine molecules attached to its molecular structure. It is the most powerful thyroid hormone, and it affects almost every process in the body, including body temperature, growth, and heart rate. Also known as T₃ and liothyronine.

trimester In obstetrics, one of the three divisions of three months each during pregnancy, in which different phases of fetal development take place. The first trimester is a time of basic cell differentiation. The second trimester is a period of rapid growth and maturation of body systems. A second-trimester fetus that is born prematurely may be viable, given the best hospital care possible. The third trimester marks the final stage of fetal growth, in which systems are completed, fat accumulates under the soon-to-be-born baby's skin, and the fetus at last moves into position for birth. This trimester ends with birth.

trimethylaminuria See *fish-odor syndrome*.

triple X See *XXX syndrome*.

triploid Having three full sets of chromosomes: 3 copies of each autosomal chromosome plus 3 sex chromosomes. In humans, triploid is equal to 69 chromosomes.

triplo-X See *XXX syndrome*.

trismus pseudocampygodactyly syndrome See *Hecht syndrome*.

trisomy The presence of three copies of a chromosome rather than the normal two. The most common trisomies in newborns are trisomy 13 (Patau syndrome), trisomy 18 (Edwards syndrome), and trisomy 21 (Down syndrome).

trisomy 13 syndrome The presence of three copies of chromosome 13, rather than the normal two. Children with trisomy 13 syndrome are profoundly mentally retarded and have multiple malformations, commonly including scalp defects, hemangiomas (blood vessel malformations) of the face and nape of the neck, cleft lip and palate, malformations of the heart and abdominal organs, and

flexed fingers with extra digits. The majority of trisomy 13 babies die soon after birth or in infancy. Also known as Patau syndrome.

trisomy 18 syndrome The presence of three copies of chromosome 18, rather than the normal two. Children with trisomy 18 syndrome have multiple malformations and mental retardation. They characteristically have low birth weight, small head (microcephaly), small jaw (micrognathia), malformations of the heart and kidneys, clenched fists with abnormal finger positioning, and malformed feet. The mental retardation is profound, and the IQ is too low to even measure. Nineteen out of 20 children with trisomy 18 syndrome die before their first birthday. Also called Edwards syndrome.

trisomy 21 syndrome See *Down syndrome*.

tRNA Transfer RNA.

trochanter One of the bony prominences toward the near end of the thighbone (the femur). There are two trochanters:

- **The greater trochanter** A powerful protrusion located at the proximal (near) and lateral (outside) part of the shaft of the femur. The greater trochanter is also called the major trochanter, the outer trochanter, and the lateral process of the femur.
- **The lesser trochanter** A pyramidal prominence that projects from the proximal (near) and medial (inside) part of the shaft of the femur. The lesser trochanter is also called the minor trochanter, the inner trochanter, and the medial process of the femur.

The trochanters are points at which hip and thigh muscles attach. The greater trochanter gives attachment to a number of muscles (including the gluteus medius and minimus, piriformis, obturator internus and externus, and gemelli muscles), and the lesser trochanter receives the insertion of several muscles (including the psoas major and iliacus muscles).

trochlear nerve The nerve that controls the superior oblique muscle of the eye, one of the muscles that move the eye (extraocular muscles). Paralysis of the trochlear nerve results in rotation of the eyeball upward and outward (and, therefore, in double vision). The trochlear nerve is the fourth cranial nerve, and it is the only cranial nerve that arises from the back of the brain stem. It follows the longest course within the skull of any of the cranial nerves.

trophoblastic tumor, gestational A tumor of women, which develops in the tissues that are formed following conception by the joining of sperm and egg. Gestational trophoblastic tumors start inside the uterus, the hollow, muscular, pear-shaped organ where a baby grows. This type of tumor occurs in women during the years when they are able to have children. There are two types of gestational trophoblastic tumors: hydatidiform mole and choriocarcinoma.

tropical typhus See *typhus, scrub*.

troponin test A sensitive and specific blood test used to determine whether a heart attack or damage to the heart muscle has occurred. Troponin is a complex of proteins found in skeletal and cardiac muscle. Normally, very low levels of troponin are present in the bloodstream. Heart attack and other forms of damage to heart muscle release a certain subtype of troponin into the bloodstream, where it can be detected in the laboratory as a marker of damage to the heart muscle.

true rib See *rib, true*.

trunk bones See *bones of the trunk*.

Trypanosoma cruzi The microorganism that causes Chagas disease. See also *Chagas disease*.

trypanosomiasis, American See *Chagas disease*.

TSH Thyroid stimulating hormone.

TSI Thyroid stimulating immunoglobulin.

T-suppressor cell A T cell that expresses the CD8 transmembrane glycoprotein (CD8+ T cells). T-suppressor cells close down the immune response after invading organisms are destroyed. T-suppressor cells are sensitive to high concentrations of circulating lymphokine hormones, and they release their own lymphokines after an immune response has achieved its goal. This signals all other immune system participants to cease their attack. Some memory B-cells remain after this signal to ward off a repeat attack by the invading organism. Also known as T-8 cell. See also *CD8; T cell; T lymphocyte, cytotoxic*.

T-suppressor count A test that counts the number of T-suppressor (T-8) cells in the bloodstream. See also *helper/suppressor ratio; T-suppressor cell*.

Tsutsugamushi disease See *typhus, scrub*.

TTP Thrombotic thrombocytopenic purpura.

tubal ligation A form of surgical sterilization performed as a contraceptive option in women who never want to become pregnant in the future. It is considered permanent because reversal requires major surgery. The procedure blocks the fallopian tubes by various surgical techniques, usually under general anesthesia.

tubal pregnancy See *pregnancy, tubal*.

tube A long, hollow cylinder. There are many tube-like structures in the human body, such as the Eustachian tube in the ear. For specific types of tubes, see their alphabetical listing.

tuber A lump or bump. For example, the backward protrusion of the heel is called the tuber calcanei or, alternatively, the tuberosity of the calcaneus. Small tubers are a characteristic finding in tuberculosis, and tubers in the brain are seen in tuberous sclerosis.

tubercle A small tuber; a small lump or bump.

tuberculosis A highly contagious infection that is caused by the bacterium *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*. Abbreviated TB. Tubercles (tiny lumps) are a characteristic finding in TB. Diagnosis is made via skin test, which if positive is followed by a chest X-ray to determine the status (active or dormant) of the infection. TB is more common in people with immune system problems, including AIDS, than in others. Treatment of active TB is mandatory by law in the US, and it should be available at no cost to the patient through the public health system. It involves a course of antibiotics and vitamins that lasts about 6 months. It is important to finish the entire treatment, both to prevent reoccurrence and to prevent the development of antibiotic-resistant tuberculosis. Quarantine is not needed for most patients with tuberculosis, but it is sometimes necessary. See also *tuberculosis, active; tuberculosis, antibiotic-resistant; tuberculosis, dormant; tuberculosis, miliary*.

tuberculosis, active The presence of *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* infection with a positive chest X-ray. Treatment of active tuberculosis is mandatory by law in the US. See also *DOT; tuberculosis*.

tuberculosis, antibiotic-resistant A variant of tuberculosis (TB) that is not affected by one or more of the antibiotics normally used to treat it. If the strain of TB is unaffected by more than one medication, it is called multi-drug-resistant (MDR) TB. Extensively drug-resistant tuberculosis (XDR TB) is a rare type of MDR TB that is resistant to almost all drugs used to treat TB. A person with any form of

drug-resistant TB needs care from a specialist who knows how to use stronger medications. These forms of TB are particularly contagious. Family members and other contacts of diagnosed patients may also need to take medications as a preventive measure.

tuberculosis, dormant The presence of *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* infection without a positive chest X-ray. Treatment is not mandatory for dormant tuberculosis (TB), as with active TB, but it is a good idea because the bacterium could become active later. Treatment involves a course of antibiotics and vitamins.

tuberculosis, extensively drug-resistant A rare type of multidrug-resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB) that is resistant to almost all drugs used to treat tuberculosis (TB). Affected patients are left with much less effective treatment options for this type of TB. Abbreviated XDR-TB.

tuberculosis, extrapulmonary TB that occurs outside the lungs. For example, TB can be active in the lymph nodes or kidneys.

tuberculosis, MDR Multi-drug-resistant tuberculosis. See *tuberculosis, antibiotic-resistant*.

tuberculosis, miliary The presence of numerous sites of tuberculosis (TB) infection, each of which is minute. Miliary TB is caused by dissemination of infected material through the bloodstream.

tuberculosis, pulmonary Tuberculosis (TB) in the lungs. Pulmonary TB is the most common form of active tuberculosis. It can be easily transmitted to others when someone who has it coughs.

tuberculosis vaccination A vaccination for tuberculosis (TB). The vaccine, known as BCG (bacille Calmette Guérin), is used in most developing countries to reduce the severe consequences of TB in infants and children. However, BCG vaccine has variable efficacy in preventing adult forms of TB and is, therefore, not routinely recommended for use in the US and other developed countries. See also *BCG*.

tuberculous diskitis A tuberculosis infection of the spine that is seen most often in children. The main symptom is back pain. Untreated tuberculous diskitis can lead to inward or outward curvature of the spine. Imaging of the spine can find abscesses, some of which may have ossified (hardened). Also known as Pott's disease. Treatment involves antibiotics for extended periods.

tuberous sclerosis A genetic disorder that is characterized by abnormalities of the skin, brain, kidney, and heart. Skin abnormalities are present in all cases of tuberous sclerosis. They include tiny benign tumors (angiofibromas) on the face and depigmented areas anywhere on the body. The brain abnormalities of tuberous sclerosis are mainly benign cortical tumors (tubers) that cause seizures, developmental delay, and mental retardation. The kidneys in a person with tuberous sclerosis often contain multiple cysts and benign tumors (angiomyolipomas). The heart problems of tuberous sclerosis include arrhythmias and benign heart muscle tumors (rhabdomyomas). Diagnosis is made via clinical observation, for example, in a child with a seizure disorder who has white spots on the skin that are most easily seen under ultraviolet light. Tuberous sclerosis is inherited in an autosomal dominant manner and results from mutation of either one of two genes: the TSC1 gene on chromosome 9 or the TSC2 gene on chromosome 16. TSC1 and TSC2 encode products called hamartin and tuberin, respectively, which act as tumor suppressors. Two-thirds of cases of tuberous sclerosis are due to new mutations, and the other one-third are inherited from parents.

tubes See *fallopian tube*.

tubule A small tube.

tularemia A bacterial disease that is caused by infection with the bacterium *Francisella tularensis*, which lives in wild and domestic animals, most often rabbits, and can be transmitted to humans via contact with animal tissues, fleas, deerflies, or ticks. Hunters and other people who spend much time outdoors may be exposed by direct contact with an infected animal or carcass or by the bite of an infected flea or tick. Symptoms appear 2 to 10 days after exposure. Most often there is a red spot on the skin that enlarges and ulcerates, together with enlarged lymph nodes (swollen glands) in the armpit or groin. Ingestion of the organism may produce a throat infection, intestinal pain, diarrhea, and vomiting. Inhalation of the organism may produce a fever or a pneumonia-like illness. Treatment involves use of antibiotics. Rubber or latex gloves should be worn when skinning or handling animals, especially rabbits. Wild rabbit and rodent meat should be cooked thoroughly before being eaten. One should try to avoid bites of deerflies and ticks and avoid drinking, bathing, swimming, and working in untreated water. Also known as rabbit fever and deerfly fever.

tumescent Swelling or slightly swollen. For example, tumescent liposuction involves pumping a

solution beneath the skin, swelling it to facilitate suctioning out fat.

tumescent liposuction See *liposuction, tumescent*.

tummy tuck A type of body contouring surgery that flattens the abdomen by removing extra fat and skin, and tightening muscles in the abdominal wall. See also *pannucleotomy*.

tumor An abnormal mass of tissue. Tumors can be benign or malignant (cancerous). There are dozens of different types of tumors. Their names usually reflect the kind of tissue they arise in and may also tell something about their shape or how they grow. For example, a medulloblastoma is a tumor that arises from embryonic cells (a blastoma) in the inner part of the brain (the medulla). Diagnosis depends on the type and location of the tumor. Tumor marker tests and imaging may be used; some tumors can be seen (for example, tumors on the exterior of the skin) or felt (palpated with the hands). Treatment is also specific to the location and type of the tumor. Benign tumors can sometimes simply be ignored, or they may be reduced in size (debulked) or removed entirely via surgery. For cancerous tumors, options include chemotherapy, radiation, and surgery. See also *blastoma; carcinoembryonic antigen test; desmoid tumor; ear tumor; epidermoid carcinoma; epithelial carcinoma; esophageal cancer; fibroid; syringoma; tumor marker*.

tumor, sweat gland See *syringoma*.

tumor debulking Surgically removing as much of a tumor as possible.

tumor marker A substance that can be detected in higher-than-normal amounts in the blood, urine, or body tissues of some patients with certain types of cancer. A tumor marker may be made by a tumor itself, or it may be made by the body as a response to the tumor. Tumor marker tests are not used alone to detect and diagnose cancer because most tumor markers can be elevated in patients who don't have a tumor, because no tumor marker is entirely specific to a particular type of cancer, and because not every cancer patient has an elevated tumor marker level, especially in the early stages of cancer, when tumor marker levels are usually still normal. Although tumor markers are typically imperfect as screening tests to detect occult (hidden) cancers, when a particular tumor has been found with a marker, the marker can be a means of monitoring the success or failure of treatment. The tumor marker level may also reflect the extent (stage) of

the disease, indicate how quickly the cancer is likely to progress, and help determine the outlook. Examples of tumor markers include alpha-fetoprotein (AFP), carcinoembryonic antigen (CEA), human chorionic gonadotropin (HCG), lactate dehydrogenase (LDH), prostate specific antigen (PSA), and neuron-specific enolase (NSE).

tumor marker, CEA See *carcinoembryonic antigen*.

tumor marker, NSE See *neuron-specific enolase test*.

tumor necrosis factor One of multiple proteins capable of inducing necrosis (death) of tumor cells that possess a wide range of proinflammatory actions. Abbreviated TNF. TNF is a multifunctional cytokine with effects on lipid metabolism, coagulation, insulin resistance, and the function of endothelial cells lining blood vessels. Drugs that block the action of TNF have been shown to be beneficial in reducing the inflammation in inflammatory diseases such as Crohn's disease and rheumatoid arthritis.

tumor registry Recorded information about the status of patients with tumors. Although a registry was originally the place where information was collected (in registers), the word registry has also come to mean the collection itself. A tumor registry is organized so that the data can be analyzed. For example, analysis of data in a tumor registry maintained at a hospital may show a rise in lung cancer among women.

tumor suppressor gene A protective gene that normally limits the growth of tumors. When a tumor suppressor gene is mutated (altered), it may fail to keep a cancer from growing. BRCA1, an example of a tumor suppressor gene, was the first breast cancer gene to be identified; mutated forms of this gene are responsible for some cases of inherited breast cancer.

tunica albuginea The whitish membrane within the penis that surrounds the spongy chambers (corpora cavernosa). The tunica albuginea helps to trap the blood in the corpora cavernosa, thereby sustaining erection of the penis.

tunnel Any passageway in the body that traverses solid tissue and is completely enclosed except for the ends, which are open and permit entrance to and exit from the tunnel. An example of a tunnel is the carpal tunnel.

TUR Transurethral resection.

turbinate A bone in the nose that is situated along the side wall of the nose and is covered by mucous membrane.

Turcot syndrome A genetic disease characterized by polyps in the colon (large intestine) in addition to tumors in the brain. The polyps in the colon tend to become malignant. The brain tumors are also malignant. Skin abnormalities can also occur. Turcot syndrome is inherited in an autosomal recessive manner and can result from mutations in either the adenomatous polyposis coli (APC) gene or the mismatch repair genes underlying the syndrome of hereditary nonpolyposis colon cancer (HNPCC).

Turner syndrome The most common sex chromosome disorder in females, characterized by short stature, webbed neck, broad shield-like chest, wide-spaced nipples, increased carrying angle at the elbow (cubitus valgus), short fourth finger, and malformations of the heart and aorta. The intelligence of those with Turner syndrome is usually within the normal range. Girls with Turner syndrome at the time of puberty do not experience the development of secondary sex characteristics such as breast enlargement. As women, they are infertile due to ovarian failure. The ovaries typically contain no follicles and look like streaks of fibrous tissue. The diagnosis of Turner syndrome is confirmed with chromosome analysis (karyotype). Turner syndrome is due to the presence of only one normal X chromosome and no other normal sex chromosome. A second sex chromosome may be present, but it is not structurally and functionally normal. However, the most frequent karyotype in Turner syndrome is 45, X, which is sometimes referred to as XO. The overwhelming majority of pregnancies with Turner syndrome conceptions result in miscarriages.

TVS Transvaginal ultrasound.

twin One of two children produced in the same pregnancy. Twins can develop from one ovum (egg) or from two ova (eggs). Twins who develop from a single ovum are called monozygotic or identical twins. They have identical genomes. Twins who develop from two ova that are fertilized at the same time are called dizygotic or fraternal twins. They are nonidentical and have different genomes.

tympanic membrane The eardrum, a thin membrane that serves as a partition between the external ear and the middle ear and transmits the motion of sound waves to the chain of bones in the middle ear.

tympanites See *tympany*.

tympano- Prefix indicating a relationship to the eardrum (tympanic membrane), as in tympanome-

try (a test that measures the function of the middle ear).

tympanometry A test that measures the function of the middle ear. Tympanometry works by varying the pressure within the ear canal and measuring the movement of the eardrum (tympanic membrane).

tympanoplasty A surgical operation to correct damage to the middle ear and restore the integrity of the eardrum.

tympanostomy tube See *ear tube*.

tympanum The cavity of the middle ear, which is separated from the outer ear by the eardrum.

tympany A hollow drum-like sound that is produced when a gas-containing cavity is tapped sharply. Tympany is heard if the chest contains free air (pneumothorax) or the abdomen is distended with gas. Also known as tympanites.

type I error See *alpha error*.

type 1 GM2-gangliosidosis See *Tay-Sachs disease*.

type II error See *beta error*.

typhoid See *typhoid fever*.

typhoid fever An acute illness characterized by fever caused by infection with the bacterium *Salmonella typhi*. Typhoid fever has an insidious onset, with fever, headache, constipation, malaise, chills, and muscle pain. Diarrhea is uncommon, and vomiting is not usually severe. Confusion, delirium, intestinal perforation, and death may occur in severe cases. The disease is transmitted through contaminated drinking water or food. Large epidemics are most often related to fecal contamination of water supplies or foods sold on the streets. A chronic carrier state—excretion of the organism for more than a year—occurs in approximately 5 percent of cases. Vaccination is recommended for people traveling to high-risk areas, such as the Indian subcontinent and developing countries in Asia, Africa, and Central and South America where there is prolonged exposure to potentially contaminated food and drink. Typhoid vaccination is not 100 percent effective and is not a substitute for careful selection of food and drink.

typhoid Mary A chronic carrier of the agent of typhoid fever, or the chronic carrier of the agent of any other disease. Named for Mary Mallon, an Irish cook who was found to be a healthy typhoid carrier in the US early in the 20th century.

typhus, African tick One of the tick-borne rickettsial diseases of the eastern hemisphere, similar to Rocky Mountain spotted fever but less severe. Symptoms include fever, a small ulcer (*tache noire*) at the site of the tick bite, swollen glands near the site of the tick bite (*satellite lymphadenopathy*), and a red, raised (*maculopapular*) rash. Also known as *fièvre boutonneuse*. See also *rickettsial diseases*.

typhus, classic See *typhus, epidemic*.

typhus, endemic See *typhus, murine*.

typhus, epidemic A severe, acute disease with prolonged high fever up to 40° C (104° F), intractable headache, and a pink-to-red raised rash. The cause is a microorganism called *Rickettsia prowazekii*, which is found worldwide and is transmitted by lice. The lice become infected on typhus patients and transmit illness to other people. The mortality increases with age, and more than half of untreated persons age 50 or older die. Also known as European, classic, or louse-borne typhus and as jail fever. See also *rickettsial diseases*.

typhus, European See *typhus, epidemic*.

typhus, louse-borne See *typhus, epidemic*.

typhus, mite-borne See *typhus, scrub*.

typhus, murine An acute infectious disease characterized by fever, headache, and rash that are similar to, but milder than, those in epidemic typhus. Murine typhus is caused by the microorganism *Rickettsia typhi* (*mooseri*) and transmitted to humans by rat fleas (*Xenopsylla cheopis*). The animal reservoir includes rats, mice, and other rodents. Murine typhus occurs sporadically worldwide but is most prevalent in congested, rat-infested urban areas. Also known as endemic typhus, rat-flea typhus, and urban typhus of Malaya. See also *rickettsial diseases*.

typhus, Queensland tick One of the tick-borne rickettsial diseases of the eastern hemisphere, similar to Rocky Mountain spotted fever but less severe. Symptoms include fever, a small ulcer (*eschar*) at the site of the tick bite, swollen glands near the site of the tick bite (*satellite lymphadenopathy*), and a red, raised (*maculopapular*) rash. See also *rickettsial diseases*.

typhus, scrub A mite-borne infectious disease that is caused by the microorganism *Orientia* (formerly *Rickettsia*) *tsutsugamushi*. Characteristic symptoms include fever, headache, a raised (*macular*) rash, swollen glands (*lymphadenopathy*), and a dark crusted ulcer, called an *eschar* or *tache noire*, at the site of the chigger (mite larva) bite. Scrub typhus occurs in the area bounded by Japan, India, and Australia. Also known as *Tsutsugamushi disease*, mite-borne typhus, and tropical typhus. See also *rickettsial diseases*.

typhus, tick See *Rocky Mountain spotted fever*.

typhus, tropical See *typhus, scrub*.

typhus, urban, of Malaysia See *typhus, murine*.

typist's cramp A dystonia that affects the muscles of the hand and sometimes the forearm and occurs only during handwriting. See also *dystonia, focal*.

tyrosinemia A genetic disorder that involves the metabolism of the amino acid tyrosine and is characterized by abnormally high levels of tyrosine in blood (*hyper tyrosinemia*) and urine (*tyrosinuria*). There are several forms of tyrosinemia. Tyrosinemia type I is due to deficiency of fumarylacetoacetate, the last enzyme in the tyrosine catabolism pathway (the biochemical reactions that break down tyrosine). An acute form surfaces soon after birth, with the odor of cabbage and death from liver failure in infancy. A chronic form is characterized by chronic liver disease, rickets due to hypophosphatemia (low phosphate), and death in childhood. There is an association with liver cancer (hepatocellular carcinoma). Tyrosinemia type II is due to deficiency of the enzyme tyrosine transaminase and is characterized by the crystallization of tyrosine in painful thick areas on the palms and soles and in the cornea and often by mental retardation. Type III tyrosinemia is a rare disorder caused by a deficiency of the enzyme 4-hydroxyphenylpyruvate dioxygenase and is characterized by mild mental retardation and seizures. Tyrosinemia types I, II, and III are inherited in an autosomal recessive manner.

<http://www.rashidiislamiccenter.com>

Uu

U Uracil, one of the nucleotide bases in RNA.

UA Urinalysis.

UAL Ultrasonic-assisted liposuction. See *liposuction, ultrasonic-assisted*.

UBT Urea breath test.

UDP-glucuronosyltransferase A liver enzyme that is essential to the disposal of bilirubin, the chemical that results from the normal breakdown of hemoglobin from red blood cells. An abnormality of UDP-glucuronosyltransferase results in a condition called Gilbert syndrome. See also *Gilbert syndrome*.

ulcer A lesion that is eroding away the skin or mucous membrane. Ulcers can have various causes, depending on their location. Ulcers on the skin are usually due to irritation, as in the case of bedsores, and may become inflamed and/or infected as they grow. Ulcers in the gastrointestinal tract were once attributed to stress, but most are now believed to be due to infection with the bacterium *Helicobacter pylori*. GI ulcers, however, are often made worse by stress, smoking, and other noninfectious factors.

ulcer, aphthous See *canker sore*.

ulcer, duodenal An ulcer in the lining of the duodenum, the first portion of the small intestine. See also *ulcer; ulcer, peptic*.

ulcer, esophageal An ulcer in the lining of the esophagus that is corroded by the acidic digestive juices secreted by the stomach cells. See also *ulcer; ulcer, peptic*.

ulcer, gastric An ulcer in the lining of the stomach that is corroded by the acidic digestive juices secreted by the stomach cells. See also *ulcer; ulcer, peptic*.

ulcer, peptic An ulcer in the lining of the stomach, duodenum, or esophagus. Peptic ulcers affect millions of people in the US yearly. Ulcer formation is related to *Helicobacter pylori* bacteria in the stomach, use of anti-inflammatory medications, and

cigarette smoking. Peptic ulcer pain may not correlate with the presence or severity of ulceration. Complications of peptic ulcers include bleeding, perforation, and blockage of the stomach (gastric obstruction). Diagnosis is made via barium X-ray or endoscopy. Treatment involves use of antibiotics to eradicate *H. pylori*, elimination of risk factors, and prevention of complications.

ulcer, stasis A skin ulcer that develops in an area in which the circulation is sluggish and the return of venous blood toward the heart is poor. A common location for stasis ulcers is on the ankles. Stasis refers to a stoppage or slowdown in the flow of blood (or other body fluid, such as lymph).

ulcer bug See *Helicobacter pylori*.

ulceration The process or fact of being eroded away, as by an ulcer.

ulcerative colitis See *colitis, ulcerative*.

ulcerative gingivitis See *acute membranous gingivitis*.

ulcerative proctitis Ulcerative colitis that is limited to the rectum. See also *colitis, ulcerative*.

ulcerative stomatitis See *acute membranous gingivitis*.

ulna The larger of the two long bones within the forearm. (The smaller one is the radius.) The ulna is on the same side of the arm as the little finger.

ulnar Pertaining to the ulna, the larger bone in the forearm.

ulnar nerve A major nerve in the upper extremity that supplies both sensory and motor innervation to parts of the forearm and hand.

ultrasonic-assisted liposuction See *liposuction, ultrasonic-assisted*.

ultrasound High-frequency sound waves. Ultrasound waves can be bounced off tissues by using special devices. The echoes are then converted into a picture called a sonogram. Ultrasound imaging allows an inside view of soft tissues and body cavities without the use of invasive techniques. Ultrasound is often used to examine a fetus during pregnancy. There is no evidence that any danger occurs from ultrasound during pregnancy.

ultrasound, transvaginal See *transvaginal ultrasound*.

ultraviolet A See *ultraviolet radiation*.

ultraviolet B See *ultraviolet radiation*.

ultraviolet C See *ultraviolet radiation*.

ultraviolet radiation Invisible rays that are part of the energy that comes from the sun. Abbreviated UV. UV radiation is made up of three types of rays: ultraviolet A (UVA), ultraviolet B (UVB), and ultraviolet C (UVC). UVC is the most dangerous type of UV light in its potential to harm life on earth, but it cannot penetrate the earth's protective ozone layer. UVA and UVB do penetrate the ozone layer and reach earth. UVA is weaker than UVB and less likely to cause sunburn, but it passes farther into the skin. Both UVA and UVB cause melanoma and other types of skin cancer; therefore, it is recommended that people use sunscreens that block both UVA and UVB radiation. The light from tanning lamps is like that from the sun and contains both UVA and UVB. Using tanning lights poses a major long-term risk of skin cancer. Electric arc lamps can also generate UV light to enable motion-picture projectors to show movies. Although UV light can damage health, it can also maintain or improve health. When UV light strikes human skin, it triggers the production of vitamin D, which promotes the growth of bones and teeth. See also *basal cell carcinoma*; *cancer*; *skin*; *squamous cell carcinoma*; *melanoma*; *sunscreen*.

umbilical cord The cord that connects the developing fetus with the placenta while the fetus is in the uterus. The umbilical arteries and vein run within this cord. The umbilical cord is clamped and cut at birth, and its residual tip forms the bellybutton.

umbilical duct See *yolk stalk*.

umbilicus See *bellybutton*.

unconscious **1** Interruption of awareness of oneself and one's surroundings; the lack of the ability to notice or respond to stimuli in the environment. A person may become unconscious due to oxygen deprivation, shock, injury, or use of central nervous system depressants such as alcohol and drugs. **2** In psychology, the part of thought and emotion that happens outside everyday awareness.

unconsciousness, temporary A partial or complete loss of consciousness; interruption of awareness of oneself and one's surroundings. When the loss of consciousness is temporary and recovery is spontaneous, it is referred to as syncope or, more commonly, fainting. Temporary unconsciousness may also occur with some types of seizures, from a head injury, or as part of a dissociative state. See also *dissociation*; *seizure*; *syncope*.

undulant fever See *Brucellosis*.

unicornuate Having one horn, or being horn shaped. For example, the uterus is normally unicornuate.

unilateral Having, or relating to, one side. For example, a unilateral rash is one that is only on one side of the body.

uniparous Having one offspring in a birth. See also *multiparous*.

unipolar depression See *depression*.

United Network for Organ Sharing A medical agency in the US that coordinates organ donations, including matching potential donors and recipients. Abbreviated UNOS.

United States Public Health Service The part of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) that is responsible for the public health of the US population. Abbreviated USPHS. USPHS administers a number of important health agencies, including the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

universal colitis See *colitis, ulcerative*.

UNOS United Network for Organ Sharing.

unresectable Unable to be removed (resected) by surgery.

unsaturated fat A fat that is liquid at room temperature and comes from a plant, such as olive, peanut, corn, cottonseed, sunflower, safflower, or soybean oil. Unsaturated fat tends not to raise the level of LDL ("bad") cholesterol in the blood.

unsteadiness Loss of one's equilibrium in respect to the environment, often with a feeling of almost falling and often as a result of bumping into something. There are many causes for unsteadiness, including problems in the cerebral or cerebellar portions of the brain, the spinal cord, vestibular system, or inner ear. See also *dizziness*; *lightheadedness*; *vertigo*.

upper GI series A series of X-rays of the upper part of the gastrointestinal tract (the esophagus, stomach, and small intestine) that are taken after a patient drinks a barium solution. See also *barium solution*; *barium swallow*.

upper leg See *leg, upper*.

urachus A canal that connects the urinary bladder to the umbilicus (bellybutton) during fetal development. The urachus is normally obliterated,

so it is usually a solid cord. Failure for the urachus to fill in leaves it open. The telltale sign of an open urachus is leakage of urine through the umbilicus. An open urachus is a malformation and needs to be surgically corrected.

uracil One of the nucleotide bases in RNA. Uracil takes the place in RNA that thymine occupies in DNA. Abbreviated U.

urate A salt that is derived from uric acid. When the body cannot metabolize uric acid properly, urates can build up in body tissues or crystallize within joints. See also *gout; uric acid*.

urea **1** A substance that contains nitrogen and is normally cleared from the blood by the kidney and excreted via the urine. Diseases that compromise the function of the kidney often lead to increased blood levels of urea, which can be measured by the blood urea nitrogen (BUN) test. See also *uremia*. **2** A synthetic chemical that may be used to remove fluid from body tissues or the skin.

urea breath test A procedure for diagnosing the presence or absence of the bacterium *Helicobacter pylori* in the upper gastrointestinal tract, which causes ulcers. Abbreviated UBT. UBT may be used to demonstrate that *H. pylori* has been eliminated by treatment with antibiotics. UBT is based on the ability of *H. pylori* to break down urea, which is normally produced by the body in the presence of excess nitrogen and is then eliminated in the urine.

uremia The presence of an excessive amount of urea in the blood. Uremia may be a sign of kidney disease or even kidney failure. See also *urea*.

ureter One of the two tubes that carry urine from the kidneys to the bladder. Each ureter arises from a kidney, descends, and ends in the bladder.

urethra The tube that leads from the bladder and transports and discharges urine outside the body. In males, the urethra travels through the penis and carries semen as well as urine. In females, the urethra is shorter than in the male, and it emerges above the vaginal opening.

urethral sphincter A muscular mechanism that controls the retention and release of urine from the bladder. There are two urethral sphincters: the internal and external urinary sphincters. Part of the muscular bladder wall acts as the internal urethral sphincter and prevents urine from leaving the bladder to enter the urethra. This sphincter cannot be willfully controlled but is under involuntary control by the brain. A layer of muscle called the urogenital diaphragm supplies support for the contents of the

pelvis and acts as the external urethral sphincter. It provides a second means of stopping the escape of urine from the body. This sphincter is under voluntary control.

urethritis Inflammation of the urethra, the tube that leads from the bladder to the outside of the body. Urethritis can have a number of causes, including irritation and sexually transmitted diseases such as chlamydia. Urethritis is closely associated with bacterial infection of the bladder (cystitis).

urethroscope A device for examining the inside of the urethra.

URI Upper respiratory infection. Infection of the air passages of the nose, the throat, and/or bronchial tubes.

uric acid A substance that is produced when proteins are metabolized. In gout, elevated levels of uric acid are commonly found in the blood (hyperuricemia). However, only a small portion of people with hyperuricemia actually develop gout. See also *gout*.

uricaciduria The presence of excess uric acid in the urine, which may be a sign of gout or kidney stones.

urinalysis A test that is done in order to analyze urine. Because toxins and excess fluid are removed from the body in urine, analysis of urine can provide important health clues. Urinalysis can be used to detect certain diseases, such as diabetes, gout, and other metabolic disorders, as well as kidney disease. It can also be used to uncover evidence of drug abuse. Accurate urinalysis may require a "clean catch" of urine. Before a person gives a urine sample, he or she should drink plenty of fluids and wait until 1 or 2 seconds into the flow of urine before catching the urine in the receptacle. For some tests it is important to get the first urine of the day, which contains the highest concentration of toxins and other substances to be analyzed. For other tests, a 24-hour collection of urine may be needed.

urinary Having to do with the function or anatomy of the kidneys, ureters, bladder, or urethra. For example, the urinary tract is the collection of organs of the body that produce, store, and discharge urine.

urinary bladder See *bladder*.

urinary calculus A stone in the urinary tract. A urinary calculus may be a kidney stone or it may be

lower down in the ureter, bladder, or urethra. See also *kidney stones*.

urinary incontinence The unintentional loss of urine due to loss of voluntary control over the urinary sphincters. One cause of urinary incontinence is overactive bladder, in which a sudden involuntary contraction of the muscular wall of the bladder results in urinary urgency, an immediate unstoppable need to urinate. See also *bedwetting; enuresis; urethral sphincter*.

urinary sphincter See *urethral sphincter*.

urinary tract The organs of the body that produce, store, and discharge urine. These organs include the kidneys, ureters, bladder, and urethra.

urinary tract infection An infection of the kidney, ureter, bladder, or urethra. Abbreviated UTI. Not everyone with a UTI has symptoms, but common symptoms include a frequent urge to urinate and pain or burning when urinating. More females than males have UTIs. Underlying conditions that physically obstruct and impair the normal urinary flow, such as the formation of cysts within the urinary tract, can lead to complicated UTIs. Treatment usually involves increased fluid intake and use of antibiotics. In cases where physical obstruction is present, special medications or surgery may be necessary.

urine Liquid waste produced by the kidneys. Urine is a clear, transparent fluid that normally has an amber color. The average amount of urine excreted in 24 hours is between 5 to 8 cups or 40 and 60 ounces. Chemically, urine is mainly a watery solution of salt and substances called urea and uric acid. Normally, it contains about 960 parts water to 40 parts solid matter. Abnormally, it may contain sugar (in diabetes), albumin (a protein, as in some forms of kidney disease), bile pigments (as in jaundice), or abnormal quantities of one or another of its normal components.

urine, blood in the See *hematuria*.

urine pH A measure of the acidity or alkalinity of urine. Checking urine pH is part of the routine urinalysis. Factors that affect urine pH include vomiting, diarrhea, lung disease, hormones, kidney function, and urinary tract infection.

urine test See *urinalysis*.

urogenital Relating to both the urinary system and the genital system (the interior and exterior genitalia).

urography A method for examining the structure and functionality of the urinary system. A special dye is injected, and an X-ray machine records the dye's progress through the urinary tract. Urography is particularly useful for discovering cysts or other internal blockages.

urolithiasis The process of forming stones in the kidney, bladder, and/or urethra. See also *kidney stone*.

urologist A physician who specializes in diseases of the urinary organs in females and the urinary and sex organs in males.

urticaria See *bite*.

USFDA The United States Food and Drug Administration. See *Food and Drug Administration*.

Usher syndrome The most common disease that diminishes both hearing and vision, a group of genetic disorders in which retinitis pigmentosa (an eye disease that causes vision to deteriorate over time) is combined with congenital deafness. The hearing loss in a patient with Usher syndrome occurs in both ears as a result of nerve deafness. Some patients also have balance problems because of lack of vestibular reflexes for balance. More than half of all deaf-blind people have Usher syndrome. The syndrome is inherited in an autosomal recessive manner.

USPHS United States Public Health Service.

ut dict Abbreviation meaning "as directed." See also Appendix A, "Prescription Abbreviations."

uterine cancer See *cancer, uterine*.

uterine fibroid See *fibroid*.

uterine fornix See *fornix uteri*.

uterine retroversion See *uterus, tipped*.

uterine rupture A tear in the uterus. A uterine rupture is a very serious situation. Causes include trauma, labor with an unusually big baby, multiple gestation, and vaginal delivery after a prior C-section (in which the old C-section scar ruptures). Uterine rupture can lead to hysterectomy, urologic injury, the need for blood transfusion, and even the death of the mother and baby.

uterine tube See *fallopian tube*.

uterus A hollow, pear-shaped organ that is located in a woman's lower abdomen, between the bladder and the rectum. The narrow lower portion

of the uterus is the cervix (the neck of the uterus). The broader upper part is the corpus, which is made up of three layers of tissue. In women of childbearing age, the inner layer (endometrium) of the uterus goes through a series of monthly changes known as the menstrual cycle. Each month, endometrial tissue grows and thickens in preparation to receive a fertilized egg. Menstruation occurs when this tissue is not used, disintegrates, and passes out through the vagina. The middle layer (myometrium) of the uterus is muscular tissue that expands during pregnancy to hold the growing fetus and contracts during labor to deliver the child. The outer layer (parametrium) also expands during pregnancy and contracts thereafter.

uterus, prolapsed A uterus that has moved from its normal position in the abdominal cavity into a different position, usually a lower position. Prolapsed uterus may occur because of underlying weak muscles or simply as a result of repeated term pregnancies. It can sometimes interfere with conception, cause difficulties during pregnancy, and contribute to pelvic pain. A prolapsed uterus can be treated by inserting a stabilizing device into the vagina called a pessary. Sometimes surgery is required.

uterus, tipped A slight to dramatic placement of the uterus that orients it toward the back. A tipped uterus is common and usually causes no difficulty. In severe cases, it can affect choice of birth control method and cause pain in the pelvic area, especially during intercourse. Also known as uterine retroversion.

UTI Urinary tract infection.

utility In the analysis of health outcomes, a number between 0 and 1 that is assigned to a state of health or an outcome. Perfect health has a utility value of 1. Death has a utility value of 0.

UV Ultraviolet. See *ultraviolet radiation*.

UVA Ultraviolet A. See *ultraviolet radiation*.

UVB Ultraviolet B. See *ultraviolet radiation*.

UVC Ultraviolet C. See *ultraviolet radiation*.

uvea An inner layer of the eye that includes the iris, the blood vessels that serve the eye (choroid), and the connective tissue between the iris and the choroid (the ciliary body).

uveitis Inflammation of the uvea. Uveitis is a serious form of eye inflammation and requires aggressive treatment with medications to reduce the inflammation that can permanently impair vision. Uveitis can occur by itself or as a feature of an underlying disease, such as Behcet's disease, sarcoidosis, and others.

uvula The anatomic structure that dangles downward at the back of the mouth and is attached to the rear of the soft palate.

uvulitis Inflammation of the uvula. Uvulitis has many causes, including infection with a virus, fungus, or bacteria or the result of a side effect of a medication.

<http://www.rashidiislamiccenter.com>

Vv

vaccination See *immunization*.

vaccination, children's See *children's immunizations*.

vaccine A microbial preparation of killed or modified microorganisms that can stimulate an immune response in the body to prevent future infection with similar microorganisms. Vaccines are usually delivered by intramuscular injection.

VACTERL association A nonrandom association of birth defects. VACTERL is a mnemonic in which the letters each stand for one or more type of malformation:

V = Vertebral anomalies; and

A = Anal atresia (no hole at the bottom end of the intestine);

C = Cardiac defect, most often ventricular septal defect;

TE = TracheoEsophageal fistula (communication between the esophagus and trachea) with esophageal atresia (part of the esophagus is not hollow);

R = Renal (kidney) abnormalities; and

L = Limb abnormalities, most often radial dysplasia (abnormal formation of the thumb or the radius bone in the forearm).

The VACTERL association has been recurrently observed in newborn babies. It is more common in the children of diabetic mothers than in the general population. For some years that was all that was known about the cause of the VACTERL association. The VACTERL association has been linked to inhibition of cholesterol synthesis and down-regulation (the damping down) of a biochemical pathway in the shaping of the embryo that requires cholesterol. Treatment involves surgery to correct the physical defects, as possible.

vagina The muscular canal that extends from the cervix to the outside of the body. It is usually 6 to 7 inches in length, and its walls are lined with mucous membrane. It includes two vaultlike structures: the anterior (front) vaginal fornix and the posterior (rear) vaginal fornix. The cervix protrudes slightly

into the vagina, and through a tiny hole in the cervix (the os), sperm make their way toward the internal reproductive organs. The vagina also includes numerous tiny glands that make vaginal secretions.

vagina, septate A rare condition in which the vagina is divided, usually longitudinally, to create a double vagina. This situation can be easily missed by the patient and even by the physician on exam. If the patient becomes sexually active prior to diagnosis, one of the vaginas stretches and becomes dominant. The other vagina slips slightly upward and flush and can be difficult to enter.

vaginal birth after caesarean section See *caesarean section, vaginal birth after*.

vaginal fornix See *fornix uteri*.

vaginal hysterectomy See *hysterectomy, vaginal*.

vaginal introitus See *vaginal opening*.

vaginal opening The exterior opening to the vagina, the muscular canal that extends from the cervix to the outside of the female body. Also called vaginal introitus and vaginal vestibule.

vaginal vestibule See *vaginal opening*.

vaginismus A sexual dysfunction in women characterized by a painful, involuntary tightening or spasm of the muscles that surround the vaginal entrance that interferes with sexual intercourse. Its cause is unknown, but it may occur in women who fear that penetration will be painful or may develop in response to a previous traumatic or painful experience.

vaginitis Inflammation of the vagina. Vaginitis is a common condition and is often caused by a fungus. Other infectious causes include bacteria and a parasite known as Trichomonas. Symptoms include itching, burning, and discharge. Some factors predispose a woman to develop vaginitis. For example, women who have diabetes have vaginitis more often than other women. Treatment options include anti-fungal intravaginal creams and oral medications. See also *vaginitis, atrophic; yeast; yeast vaginitis, trichomoniasis*.

vaginitis, atrophic Thinning of the lining (epithelium) of the vagina due to decreased production of estrogen. Atrophic vaginitis may occur with menopause.

vaginitis, yeast See *yeast vaginitis*.

vaginosis, bacterial See *bacterial vaginosis*.

vagus nerve A nerve that supplies nerve fibers to the pharynx (throat), larynx (voice box), trachea

(windpipe), lungs, heart, esophagus, and intestinal tract, as far as the transverse portion of the colon. The vagus nerve also brings sensory information back to the brain from the ear, tongue, pharynx, and larynx. The vagus nerve is the tenth cranial nerve. It originates in the medulla oblongata, a part of the brain stem, and extends all the way down from the brain stem to the colon. Complete interruption of the vagus nerve causes a characteristic syndrome in which the soft palate droops on the side where damage occurred, and the gag reflex is also lost on that side. The voice is hoarse and nasal, and the vocal cord on the affected side is immobile. The result is difficulty swallowing (dysphagia) and speaking (dysphonia). The vagus nerve has several important branches, including the recurrent laryngeal nerve.

Valley fever Lung infection with the fungus *Coccidioides immitis*. The fungus is common in the sands of the deserts of the southwest, including the San Joaquin valley in California, after which it was named. Also called coccidiomycosis.

Valsalva maneuver A maneuver in which one tries with force to exhale with the windpipe closed, impeding the return of venous blood to the heart.

valve, heart See *heart valve*.

vanishing twin A twin detected in early pregnancy that is miscarried, frequently by resorption, without clinical signs or symptoms. The surviving twin continues to grow and develop.

VAQTA A vaccine against hepatitis A. See also *hepatitis A; hepatitis A immunization*.

vara, tibia See *tibia vara*.

variant angina See *angina, Prinzmetal*.

varicella See *chickenpox*.

varicella vaccination See *chickenpox immunization*.

varicocele Elongation and enlargement of veins within the network of veins (pampiniform plexus) that leave the testis to form the testicular vein. A varicocele appears bluish through the scrotum, feels like a bag of worms, and can cause pain or discomfort.

varicose vein A vein that has enlarged and twisted, often appearing as a bulging, blue blood vessel that is clearly visible through the skin. Varicose veins are most common in older adults, particularly women, and occur especially on the legs. Varicose veins can cause cramping pain and

movement problems, or they may simply be a cosmetic concern. Treatment includes elevating the affected limb, wearing support hose to increase pressure on the vein, and in some cases surgery.

varicosity 1 An enlarged and tortuous vein, artery, or lymphatic vessel. 2 Specifically, a varicose vein.

variola See *smallpox*.

varix An enlarged and convoluted vein, artery, or lymphatic vessel. Treatment of varices depends on where they are and whether they are causing problems. A varix in the esophagus can be caused by severe liver disease and can lead to bleeding. This form of varix can require treatment to prevent dangerous bleeding.

vas deferens The tube that connects the testes with the urethra. The vas deferens is a coiled duct that conveys sperm from the epididymis to the ejaculatory duct and the urethra.

vasa previa A condition in which blood vessels within the placenta or the umbilical cord are trapped between the fetus and the opening to the birth canal. Vasa previa carries a high risk that the fetus will die from blood loss due to a vessel tearing at the time the fetal membranes rupture or during labor and delivery. Another danger is lack of oxygen to the fetus. Vasa previa tends to occur with a low-lying or unusually formed placenta and multiple gestation. Vasa previa may not be suspected until the fetal vessel ruptures. Vasa previa can be documented via transvaginal ultrasound in combination with color Doppler imaging. When vasa previa is diagnosed, a C-section delivery is done to avoid an emergency.

vascular Relating to blood vessels. For example, the vascular system in the body includes all of the veins and arteries. And, a vascular surgeon is an expert at evaluating and treating problems of the veins and arteries.

vascular bed The vascular system, or a part thereof. For example, the pulmonary vascular bed describes the blood vessels of the lungs.

vascular dementia A common form of dementia in older persons that is due to cerebrovascular disease, usually with stepwise deterioration from a series of small strokes and a patchy distribution of neurologic deficits affecting some functions and not others. Risk factors include high blood pressure and advanced age. Symptoms include confusion, problems with recent memory, wandering or getting lost in familiar places, loss of bladder or bowel

control (incontinence), emotional problems such as laughing or crying inappropriately, difficulty following instructions, and problems handling money. The damage is typically so slight that the change is noticeable only as a series of small steps. However, over time, as more small blood vessels in the brain are blocked, there is noticeable gradual mental decline. Vascular dementia commonly begins between the ages of 60 and 75 and affects men more often than women. Also known as multi-infarct dementia. See also *dementia*.

vascular endothelial growth factor A gene that is responsible for the growth of blood vessels. Abbreviated VEG-F.

vascular headache See *headache, vascular*.

vasculitis A general term for a group of uncommon diseases that feature inflammation of the blood vessels. Each of the vasculitis diseases is defined by characteristic distributions of blood vessel involvement, patterns of organ involvement, and laboratory test abnormalities. The actual causes of these vasculitis diseases are usually not known, but immune system abnormality is a common feature. Examples of vasculitis include Kawasaki disease, Behcet's disease, polyarteritis nodosa, Wegener's granulomatosis, Takayasu's arteritis, Churg-Strauss syndrome, giant cell arteritis (temporal arteritis), and Henoch-Schonlein purpura. Vasculitis can also accompany infections, such as hepatitis B; exposure to chemicals, such as amphetamines and cocaine; cancers, such as lymphomas and multiple myeloma; and rheumatic diseases, such as rheumatoid arthritis and systemic lupus erythematosus. Laboratory testing in a patient with active vasculitis generally indicates inflammation in the body, and depending on the degree of organ involvement, a variety of organ function tests can be abnormal. The ultimate diagnosis for vasculitis is typically established after a biopsy of involved tissue demonstrates the pattern of blood vessel inflammation. Treatment depends on the type and severity of the illness and the organs involved. Treatments are generally directed toward stopping the inflammation and suppressing the immune system. Typically, cortisone-related medications, such as prednisone, are used, as are other immunosuppression drugs, such as cyclophosphamide (brand name: Cytoxan). Also known as angiitis and vasculitides (the plural form of vasculitis).

vasculitis, allergic See *Churg-Strauss syndrome*.

vasectomy A surgical procedure designed to make a man sterile by cutting or blocking both the

right and left vas deferens, the tubes through which sperm pass into the ejaculate.

vasoconstriction Narrowing of the blood vessels that results from contraction of the muscular walls of the vessels. The opposite of vasoconstriction is vasodilation.

vasodepressor syncope See *syncope, situational*.

vasodilation Widening of blood vessels that results from relaxation of the muscular walls of the vessels. What widens in vasodilation is actually the diameter of the interior (lumen) of the vessel. The opposite of vasodilation is vasoconstriction.

vasodilator An agent that acts as a blood vessel dilator, opening blood vessels by relaxing their muscular walls. For example, nitroglycerin is a vasodilator, as are the angiotensin converting enzyme (ACE) inhibitors.

vasomotor Relating to the nerves and muscles that cause blood vessels to constrict or dilate.

vasomotor rhinitis Inflammation of the nose (rhinitis) due to abnormal nerve control of the blood vessels in the nose. Vasomotor rhinitis is not allergic rhinitis. Decongestant medications are used to temporarily reduce swelling of sinus and nasal tissues leading to an improvement of breathing and a decrease in obstruction.

vasopressin See *antidiuretic hormone*.

vasovagal attack See *vasovagal reaction*.

vasovagal reaction A reflex of the involuntary nervous system that causes the heart to slow down and, at the same time, affects the nerves to the blood vessels in the legs, permitting those vessels to dilate (widen). As a result, the heart puts out less blood, the blood pressure drops, and the blood that is circulating tends to go into the legs rather than to the head. The brain is deprived of oxygen, and a fainting episode (syncope) occurs. See also *syncope*.

vasovagal syncope The temporary loss of consciousness in a particular kind of situation (situational syncope, or fainting) due to a vasovagal reaction. See also *syncope*.

VBAC Vaginal birth after caesarean section. See *caesarean section, vaginal birth after*.

VDRL test Venereal Disease Research Laboratory test, a blood test for syphilis. A negative (nonreactive) VDRL test is compatible with a person not having

syphilis. However, a person may have a negative VDRL and still have syphilis because in the early stages of the disease, the VDRL often gives false negative results. The VDRL test is sometimes positive in the absence of syphilis. For example, a false positive VDRL can be encountered in a patient with infectious mononucleosis, lupus, antiphospholipid antibody syndrome, hepatitis A, leprosy, malaria, and, occasionally, pregnancy. See also *syphilis*.

vector In medicine, a carrier of disease or of medication. For example, in malaria a mosquito is the vector that carries and transfers the infectious agent. In molecular biology, a vector may be a virus or a plasmid that carries a piece of foreign DNA to a host cell.

VEG-F Vascular endothelial growth factor.

vein A blood vessel that carries blood that is low in oxygen content from the body back to the heart. The deoxygenated form of hemoglobin (deoxyhemoglobin) in venous blood makes it appear dark. Veins are part of the afferent wing of the circulatory system, which returns blood to the heart. In contrast, an artery is a vessel that carries blood that is high in oxygen away from the heart to the body.

Velpeau hernia See *hernia, Velpeau*.

velvet ant A parasitic wasp that is common in most parts of the world, including the southern and southwestern US. Velvet ant stings can trigger allergic reactions that vary greatly in severity. Avoidance and prompt treatment are essential. In selected cases, allergy injection therapy is highly effective.

vena cava, inferior The large vein that receives blood from the lower extremities, pelvis, and abdomen and then empties that blood into the right atrium of the heart.

vena cava, superior The large vein that returns blood to the right atrium of the heart from the head, neck, and both upper limbs. The superior vena cava is located in the middle of the chest and is surrounded by rigid structures and lymph nodes. Structures bordering the superior vena cava include the trachea, aorta, thymus, right bronchus of the lung, and pulmonary artery. Compression of the superior vena cava by disease of any of the structures or lymph nodes surrounding it can cause superior vena cava syndrome. See also *superior vena cava syndrome*.

vena cava syndrome, superior See *superior vena cava syndrome*.

venereal Having to do with sexual contact. For example, a venereal disease is a sexually transmitted disease.

venereal disease See *sexually transmitted disease*.

venereal warts See *genital warts*.

venlafaxine A unique antidepressant drug (brand name: Effexor) that is prescribed to treat depression. Venlafaxine is believed to affect the neurotransmitters serotonin, norepinephrine, and dopamine, but not monoamine oxidase (MAO). Venlafaxine is not usually indicated for use by people with kidney or liver disease, or by those with high blood pressure. Common side effects include sleepiness, insomnia, dry mouth, nervousness, nausea, and sexual dysfunction.

venom A poison, particularly one secreted by an animal. Examples are bee venom, snake venom, scorpion venom, and spider venom. Snake venom is also called venin.

venous aneurysm A localized widening and bulging of a vein. At the area of a venous aneurysm, the vein wall is weakened and may rupture.

venous catheterization The insertion of a tiny tube (catheter) into a peripheral or central vein to deliver fluids or medication. Venous catheterization is the most frequently used method for administration of IV fluids. The most common complication of venous catheterization is infection at the site of the catheter (catheter sepsis).

vent To air one's feelings by putting problems into words.

ventilation 1 The exchange of air between the lungs and the atmosphere so that oxygen is exchanged for carbon dioxide in the alveoli (the tiny air sacs in the lungs). 2 When a person (or persons) airs out their feelings by putting their problems into words.

ventilator A machine that mechanically assists a patient in the exchange of oxygen and carbon dioxide, a process sometimes referred to as artificial respiration.

ventral Pertaining to the front or anterior of a structure. Something that is ventral is oriented toward the belly, toward the front of the body. For example, the bellybutton (umbilicus) is in the ventral midline. The opposite of ventral is dorsal. See also Appendix B, "Anatomic Orientation Terms."

ventricle A chamber of an organ. For example, the four connected cavities in the central portion of the brain are called ventricles.

ventricle, brain See *brain ventricle*.

ventricle, cerebral See *cerebral ventricle*.

ventricle, fourth See *fourth ventricle*.

ventricle, heart See *heart ventricle*.

ventricle, lateral See *lateral ventricle*.

ventricle, left The chamber of the heart that receives blood from the left atrium and pumps it out under high pressure to the body via the aorta. See also *heart ventricle*.

ventricle, right The chamber of the heart that receives blood from the right atrium and pumps it under low pressure into the lungs via the pulmonary artery. See also *heart ventricle*.

ventricle, third See *third ventricle*.

ventricular arrhythmia An abnormal, rapid heart rhythm (arrhythmia) that originates in the lower chambers of the heart (ventricles). Ventricular arrhythmias include ventricular tachycardia and ventricular fibrillation. Both are life-threatening arrhythmias that are commonly associated with heart attacks and scarring of the heart muscle from previous heart attacks.

ventricular fibrillation See *fibrillation, ventricular*.

ventricular septal defect A hole in the wall (septum) between the lower chambers of the heart (ventricles). Abbreviated VSD. VSDs are the most common birth defect that involves malformation of the heart. At least 1 baby in every 500 is born with a VSD. A VSD shunts blood from the left ventricle, where it is under relatively high pressure, into the right ventricle, which has to do extra work to handle the additional blood. The right ventricle may have trouble keeping up with the load, enlarge, and fail. The lungs also receive too much blood under too great pressure. The small arteries (arterioles) in the lungs thicken up in response, and permanent vascular damage can be done to the lungs. VSDs that are small permit only minimal shunting of blood, so the pressure in the right ventricle remains normal and the heart and lungs function normally. Surgical repair is not recommended for small VSDs since many close on their own over time. With a large VSD there is a significant shunt into the right ventricle, excessive blood flow into the lungs, and

elevated pressure in the arteries to the lungs (pulmonary hypertension). Surgery should be done to close a large VSD. The prognosis for patients with VSD is generally excellent.

ventricular septum The wall between the two lower chambers (ventricles) of the heart.

ventricular tachycardia An abnormal heart rhythm that is rapid and regular and that originates from an area of the lower chamber (ventricle) of the heart. Ventricular tachycardias can be life-threatening arrhythmias that are commonly associated with damage to the heart muscle due to coronary artery disease.

venule A little vein that goes from a capillary to a vein.

vernix A white, cheesy substance that covers and protects the skin of a fetus. Vernix is still all over the skin of a baby at birth. Vernix is composed of sebum (skin oil) and cells that have sloughed off the skin of the fetus. More formally known as vernix caseosa.

vernix caseosa See *vernix*.

verruca See *wart*.

verruga See *wart*.

vertebra One of 33 bony segments that form the human spinal column. Each vertebra has its own name and/or number. For example, the second cervical vertebra is known as the axis, or C2, vertebra. See also *vertebral column*.

vertebral artery One of two key arteries located in the back of the neck that carry blood from the heart to the brain, spine, and neck muscles.

vertebral column The 33 vertebrae that fit together to form a flexible, yet extraordinarily tough, column that serves to support the back through a full range of motion. The vertebral column also protects the spinal cord, which runs from the brain through the hollow space in the middle of the vertebral column. There are 7 cervical (C1–C7), 12 thoracic (T1–T12), 5 lumbar (L1–L5), 5 sacral (S1–S5), and 3 to 5 coccygeal vertebrae in the vertebral column, each separated by intervertebral disks. The first cervical vertebra, known as the atlas, supports the head. It pivots on the odontoid process of the second cervical vertebra, the axis. The cervical vertebrae end at their juncture with the thoracic vertebrae. The seventh cervical vertebra (the prominent vertebra, so named because of its long spiny projection) adjoins the first thoracic vertebra. The thoracic vertebrae provide an attachment site for

the true ribs and make up part of the back of the chest (thorax). This part of the spine is very flexible, to permit bending and twisting. The thoracic vertebrae join the lumbar vertebrae, which are particularly sturdy and large because they support the entire structure. The lumbar vertebrae are nonetheless quite flexible. At the top of the pelvis, the lumbar vertebrae join the sacral vertebrae. By adulthood, the five sacral vertebrae have usually fused to form a triangular bone called the sacrum. At the tip of the sacrum, the final part of the vertebral column projects slightly outward. This is the coccyx, better known as the tailbone. It is made up of 3 to 5 coccygeal vertebrae: small, rudimentary vertebrae that fuse together. Also known as the spinal column.

vertebral compression fracture A fracture that collapses a spinal vertebra as a result of the compression of bone, similarly to the way a sponge collapses under the pressure of one's hand. Although they may occur without pain, such vertebral fractures often cause severe, band-like pain that radiates from the spine around both sides of the body. Over many years, spinal fractures decrease the height of the spine, and the person becomes shorter. Vertebral compression fractures are often linked to osteoporosis. Treatment usually involves use of pain medicine, rest, injury avoidance, and bracing, and in some cases surgery can be used. See also *vertebroplasty*.

vertebral rib See *floating rib*.

vertebroplasty A nonsurgical method for repairing osteoporosis back fractures, such as vertebral compression fractures. Vertebroplasty is performed by a radiologist, without surgery, and involves inserting a glue-like material into the center of the collapsed spinal vertebra to stabilize and strengthen the crushed bone. The material is inserted through anesthetized skin with a needle and syringe, entering the midportion of the vertebra under the guidance of specialized X-ray equipment. Once inserted, the material hardens to form a cast-like structure within the broken bone. Relief of pain comes quickly from this casting effect, and the newly hardened vertebra is then protected from further collapse. In addition to prompt pain relief, another advantage of vertebroplasty is improved mobility. Also referred to as kyphoplasty.

vertex The top of the head. For example, in a vertex presentation at birth, the top of the baby's head emerges first.

vertex birth Birth in which the top of the baby's head emerges first. This is the most common presentation.

vertical Upright, as opposed to horizontal. See also Appendix B, "Anatomic Orientation Terms."

vertical transmission Passage of a disease-causing agent (pathogen) from mother to baby during the period immediately before and after birth. Transmission might occur across the placenta, in the breast milk, or through direct contact during or after birth. For example, HIV can be a vertically transmitted pathogen. Also known as perinatal transmission.

vertigo A feeling that one is turning around or that things are turning about the person. Vertigo is usually due to a problem with the inner ear. See also *dizziness; lightheadedness; unsteadiness*.

vertigo, recurrent aural See *Ménière's disease*.

vesical See *bladder*.

vesicant A substance that causes tissue blistering. Also known as *vesicatory*.

vesicate To blister.

vesicatory See *vesicant*.

vesicle 1 In dermatology, a tiny skin blister.
2 In anatomy, a small pouch.

vesicle, seminal See *seminal vesicle*.

vesicoureteral reflux The abnormal back flow of urine from the bladder into the ureters toward the kidneys. Abbreviated VUR. VUR is most commonly diagnosed during infancy and childhood and can be due to a congenital dysfunction in the valve where the ureter enters the bladder or to an acquired blockage in the urinary tract. VUR does not cause any pain or symptoms directly but is often discovered because VUR leads to urinary tract infections (UTIs). Treatment can involve medications or surgery. If not monitored carefully, ongoing reflux and repeated UTIs can cause serious kidney injury and possibly kidney failure.

vesicular Referring to the presence of one or more vesicles. For example, a vesicular rash features small blisters on the skin.

vesicular rickettsiosis See *rickettsialpox*.

vesiculitis Inflammation of a vesicle, particularly of the seminal vesicles behind the male bladder.

vesiculography The use of special X-ray equipment and a dye to examine the seminal vesicles and related structures. Vesiculography is most often used when prostate disease or cancer is suspected.

vessel A tube in the body that carries fluids. Examples of vessels are blood vessels and lymph vessels.

vessel, afferent See *afferent vessel*.

vessel, efferent See *efferent vessel*.

vestibular 1 Having to do with a structure that is a vestibule (entrance), such as the vestibule of the ear. 2 Having to do with the body's system for maintaining equilibrium.

vestibular apparatus The vestibule and three semicircular canals of the inner ear. Like an internal carpenter's level, these structures work with the brain to sense, maintain, and regain balance and a sense of where the body and its parts are positioned in space. See also *vestibular disease*; *vestibular system*.

vestibular disease A disorder of the vestibular apparatus, which is necessary for the sense of balance. A disease may cause vestibular problems by directly affecting the structure or integrity of the vestibular apparatus in the ear, by interrupting the feedback loop between these structures and the brain, or by affecting the parts of the brain that interpret data from the vestibular apparatus. Conditions known to impair vestibular function include acoustic neuroma, autism, Ménière's disease, multiple sclerosis, infection in the middle ear (otitis media), medications that are toxic to the ear (ototoxic), seizure disorders, syphilis, and trauma. Diagnosis is made via neurological tests, in which the response to movement requests and questions about spatial positioning are observed. Diagnosis of vestibular disease may be confirmed by imaging inner ear structures or testing brain function. Treatment depends on the cause of the disease.

vestibular system A system that is composed of the vestibular apparatus, the vestibulocochlear nerve, and the parts of the brain that interpret and respond to information derived from those structures.

vestibule In medicine and dentistry, a space or cavity at the entrance to a canal, channel, tube, or vessel. For instance, the front of the mouth is a vestibule.

vestibule, vaginal See *vaginal opening*.

vestibule of the ear A cavity in the middle of the bony labyrinth in the inner ear.

vestibulocochlear nerve A nerve that is responsible for the sense of hearing and that is also pertinent to the senses of balance and body position. Problems with the vestibulocochlear nerve may result in deafness, tinnitus (ringing or noise in the ears), dizziness, vertigo, and vomiting. The vestibulocochlear nerve is the eighth cranial nerve.

vestigial Referring to a vestige (remnant) or a primitive structure and no longer believed to be important. For example, the appendix is considered a vestigial organ, and some infants are born with vestigial tails.

VHL syndrome von Hippel-Lindau syndrome.

viable Capable of life. For example, a viable premature baby is one who is able to survive outside the womb.

Vibrio A group of bacteria that includes *Vibrio cholerae*, the agent that causes cholera. Other species are common in salt and fresh water as well as soil. Vibrio move about particularly actively.

Vibrio cholerae One of the *Vibrio* bacteria, the agent that causes cholera. See also *cholera*.

vidian neuralgia See *cluster headache*.

Vincent gingivitis See *acute membranous gingivitis*.

viral Of or pertaining to a virus. For example, if a person has a viral rash, the rash was caused by a virus.

viral hepatitis See *hepatitis, viral*.

viral infection An infection caused by the presence of a virus in the body. Depending on the virus and the person's state of health, various viruses can infect almost any type of body tissue, from the brain to the skin. Viral infections cannot be treated with antibiotics; in fact, in some cases the use of antibiotics makes a viral infection worse. The vast majority of human viral infections can be effectively fought by the body's own immune system, with help from proper diet, hydration, and rest. Treatment of other viral infections depends on the type and location of the virus and may include use of antiviral or other drugs.

viremia The presence of a virus in the blood. Viremia is analogous to bacteremia (the presence of bacteria in the blood) and parasitemia (the presence of a parasite in the blood). Viremia, bacteremia, and parasitemia are all forms of sepsis (bloodstream infection).

virion A virus particle.

virology The study of viruses.

virulence The ability of an agent of infection to produce disease. The virulence of a microorganism is a measure of the severity of the disease it causes.

virulent Extremely noxious, damaging, deleterious, and disease causing (pathogenic); marked by a rapid, severe, and malignant course; poisonous.

virus A microorganism that is smaller than a bacterium that cannot grow or reproduce apart from a living cell. A virus invades living cells and uses their chemical machinery to keep itself alive and to replicate itself. It may reproduce with fidelity or with errors (mutations); this ability to mutate is responsible for the ability of some viruses to change slightly in each infected person, making treatment difficult. Viruses cause many common human infections and are also responsible for a number of rare diseases. Examples of viral illnesses range from the common cold, which can be caused by one of the rhinoviruses, to AIDS, which is caused by HIV. Viruses may contain either DNA or RNA as their genetic material. Herpes simplex virus and the hepatitis B virus are DNA viruses. RNA viruses have an enzyme called reverse transcriptase that permits the usual sequence of DNA-to-RNA to be reversed so that the virus can make a DNA version of itself. RNA viruses include HIV and hepatitis C virus. Researchers have grouped viruses together into several major families, based on their shape, behavior, and other characteristics. These include the herpesviruses, adenoviruses, papovaviruses (including the papillomaviruses), hepadnaviruses, poxviruses, and parvoviruses, among the DNA viruses. On the RNA virus side, major families include the picornaviruses (including the rhinoviruses), calciviruses, paramyxoviruses, orthomyxoviruses, rhabdoviruses, filoviruses, and retroviruses. There are dozens of smaller virus families within these major classifications. Many viruses are host specific, capable of infecting and causing disease in humans or specific animals only.

virus, attenuated A virus that has been weakened. A vaccine against a viral disease can be made from an attenuated, less virulent strain of the virus: a virus that is capable of stimulating an immune response and creating immunity but not of causing illness.

visceral leishmaniasis See *leishmaniasis*.

visceral pericardium The inner layer of the pericardium.

vision, central See *central vision*.

vision, macular See *central vision*.

vision, phantom See *phantom vision*.

vision therapy The use of special eye exercises to address eye defects, such as strabismus. Some vision therapists claim that eye exercises can help people with neurological or learning disabilities. Vision therapy is not proven for the latter use, although some patients do report improvement.

visual acuity The clarity or clearness of vision, a measure of how well a person sees.

visual acuity test See *eye chart test*.

visual field test A test that measures the extent and distribution of the field of vision. A visual field test may be done via a number of methods, including termed confrontation, tangent screen exam, and automated perimetry. These tests are not painful or uncomfortable. Many diseases can adversely affect the visual field, including glaucoma, strokes, high blood pressure (hypertension), diabetes, multiple sclerosis, and overactivity of the thyroid gland (hyperthyroidism). Medications, including the anti-malarial drugs chloroquine (brand name: Atabrine) and hydroxychloroquine (brand name: Plaquenil), can also affect the visual field.

visual nerve See *optic nerve*.

visual nerve pathways See *optic nerve pathways*.

vital Necessary to maintain life. For example, breathing is a vital function.

vitamin An organic substance that naturally occurs in plants or animal tissue that is essential for normal metabolism of the body and to life. Vitamins play a part in dozens of crucial activities in the body: Some are antioxidants, preventing oxidation of cells and potentially preventing cancer; others permit or deny chemical reactions involved in sight, brain function, metabolism, nucleic acid synthesis, and the like. All vitamins are either available in food or can be made within the body. However, many people do not eat a diet that contains the minimum daily requirements of certain vitamins. Nutritionists suggest that the best way to ensure appropriate doses of vitamins is to eat a healthful diet, particularly one that is rich in green, leafy vegetables and carotene compounds. These foods offer many benefits that vitamin supplements cannot, including fiber, and probably include vitamin-like substances that have not yet been isolated. Lack of specific vitamins can

lead to deficiency syndromes, such as rickets, beriberi, and anemia. Overconsumption of certain vitamins can also have consequences, ranging from minor to life threatening. Some vitamins are water soluble, and any excess is simply excreted in the urine. Others are fat-soluble and may build up in the body, potentially reaching dangerous concentrations. Vitamins may also interact with prescription and over-the-counter drugs, making them more or less potent. For these reasons, it is important to consult a physician before adding vitamin supplements to a daily regimen. See also Appendix C, "Vitamins."

vitamin P See *bioflavonoid*.

vitamin therapy The use of vitamins to prevent or cure disease, often as a complementary therapy to accompany medication or other treatments. One variant on this theme, megavitamin therapy, is still rather controversial. It is important to consult a physician before adding vitamin supplements to a health regimen. See also Appendix C, "Vitamins."

vitelline duct See *yolk stalk*.

vitiligo A condition in which the skin turns white due to the loss of pigment from the melanocytes, cells that produce the pigment melanin that gives the skin color. In vitiligo, the melanocytes are destroyed, leaving depigmented patches of skin. The hair that grows in areas affected by vitiligo may also turn white. The skin is not otherwise damaged. People with vitiligo must protect their skin from exposure to the sun. Also known as piebald skin and acquired leukoderma.

vitreous humor A clear, jelly-like substance that fills the middle of the eye.

vocal cord One of the two small bands of muscle that form a V-shape within the larynx. When a person breathes, the vocal cords relax, and air moves through the space between them without making a sound. When a person talks or sings, the vocal cords tighten up and move closer together. Air from the lungs is forced between them, making them vibrate to produce sound, much like the strings of a guitar. The tongue, lips, and teeth form that sound into words. See also *larynx*.

voice box See *larynx*.

void To urinate. The term void is also sometimes used to indicate the elimination of solid waste (defecation).

volar Pertaining to the palm or the sole. For example, the volar surface of the forearm is the

portion of the forearm that is on the same side as the palm of the hand.

volume, stroke See *stroke volume*.

voluntary Done in accordance with the conscious will of the individual. The opposite of voluntary is involuntary. The terms voluntary and involuntary apply to the human nervous system and its control over muscles. The nervous system is divided into two parts: somatic and autonomic. The somatic nervous system operates the skeletal muscles, which are under voluntary control. The autonomic (automatic, or visceral) nervous system regulates individual organ function and is involuntary. For example, opening the mouth is voluntary, and blushing and the beating of the heart are involuntary. See also *autonomic nervous system*.

volvulus Abnormal twisting of a portion of the gastrointestinal tract, usually the intestine, which can impair blood flow. Volvulus can lead to gangrene and death of the involved segment of the gastrointestinal tract, intestinal obstruction, perforation of the intestine, and peritonitis. The stomach, small intestine, cecum, and sigmoid colon are all subject to volvulus. Malrotation of the bowel during fetal development can predispose one to a volvulus, which often has a sudden onset. The symptoms and signs of a volvulus may include abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting, and blood in the stool. The treatment is surgery to free the obstruction and ensure normal blood flow to the bowel. Volvulus is a surgical emergency.

vomit 1 Matter from the stomach that is ejected in tandem with symptoms of nausea. When vomit is reddish or coffee-ground colored, it indicates serious internal bleeding. Also known as vomitus. 2 To expel vomit. Also known as emesis.

vomiting in pregnancy, excess See *hyperemesis gravidarum*.

vomiting in pregnancy, pernicious See *hyperemesis gravidarum*.

vomitus See *vomit*.

von Hippel-Lindau syndrome A genetic disease that is characterized by hemangioblastomas (benign blood vessel tumors) in the brain, spinal cord, and retina; kidney cysts, and kidney cancer (renal cell carcinoma); pheochromocytomas (benign tumors of adrenal-like tissue); and endolymphatic sac tumors (benign tumors of the labyrinth in the inner ear). Abbreviated VHL syndrome. The brain hemangioblastomas in VHL syndrome are usually in the cerebellum and can cause

headache, vomiting, and gait disturbances or ataxia (wobbliness). The hemangioblastomas in the retina can cause vision loss and may be the initial sign of VHL syndrome. The endolymphatic sac tumors can diminish hearing, which is a key symptom of VHL syndrome. VHL syndrome is inherited in an autosomal dominant manner and is caused by a change that affects the VHL gene, a tumor-suppressor gene, on chromosome 3. Molecular genetic testing for the VHL gene confirms the diagnosis of VHL syndrome. Prenatal testing is available. Early recognition of VHL syndrome is important because it permits timely intervention and may be lifesaving. Treatment can involve neurosurgery.

von Recklinghausen disease See *neurofibromatosis*.

von Willebrand disease The most common inherited bleeding disorder, in which a clotting protein called von Willebrand factor is deficient or defective. Von Willebrand factor is made by cells lining the wall of blood vessels. Several types of von Willebrand disease have been described. All types affect both males and females. Symptoms can include easy bruising, nosebleeds, bleeding from the gums after a dental procedure, heavy menstrual bleeding in women, blood in the stool and urine, and excessive bleeding after a cut or other accident or after surgery. Von Willebrand disease is usually mild and often does not require treatment. Treatment may be needed only after surgery, a tooth extraction, or an accident. For those who need treatment, medications such as desamino-8-arginine

vasopressin (DDAVP) can be given to raise the levels of von Willebrand factor, which reduces the tendency toward bleeding. Antihemophilic factor (Alphanate) may be given to decrease bleeding in patients with the disease who must have surgery or other invasive procedures. Blood plasma or certain factor VIII preparations may also be used to decrease bleeding.

Vrolik disease See *osteogenesis imperfecta type II*.

VSD Ventricular septal defect.

vulva The female external genital organs, including the labia, clitoris, and entrance to the vagina.

vulvar pain, chronic See *vulvodynia*.

vulvitis Inflammation of the external genital organs of the female, often caused by the yeast *Candida albicans*. See also *yeast vulvitis*.

vulvodynia Chronic pain in the area of the female vulva. The main symptom is pain, usually a burning irritation or rawness of the genitals. The pain may be constant or intermittent, localized or diffuse. It can last for months or longer, and it can vanish as suddenly as it started. The cause of vulvodynia is unknown. Many women with vulvodynia have a history of treatment for recurrent vaginal fungal infections. Treatments can include the use of drugs, use of nerve blocks to numb the vulvar nerves, and biofeedback therapy to relax pelvic muscles. See also *vulvitis; yeast vulvitis*.

Ww

Waardenburg syndrome A genetic syndrome that features varying degrees of hearing loss and pigmentation changes in the skin and hair. A difference of color between the iris of one eye and the other (heterochromia iridis) is often present. Abbreviated WS. Individuals with WS may also have a white forelock, early graying of the scalp hair before age 30, or a wide space between the inner corners of the eyes. There are many genetic forms of WS.

Waldenstrom macroglobulinemia A rare, chronic low-grade and slow-growing malignancy of plasma cells. These plasma cells multiply out of control, invade the bone marrow, lymph nodes, and spleen, and characteristically produce huge amounts of the antibody macroglobulin (IgM). The excess IgM causes the blood to thicken. Waldenstrom macroglobulinemia can occur in younger people but is usually seen in people over age 65. See also *lymphoma; plasma cell*.

warfarin An anticoagulant medication (brand names: Coumarin, Panwarfin, Sofarin) that is taken to treat blood clots or overly thickened blood. Some patients also take warfarin to reduce their risk of clots, stroke, or heart attack. Warfarin works by suppressing production of some clotting factors. Warfarin can have potentially dangerous interactions with many other drugs, including some vitamins. Warfarin taken by a woman during pregnancy can disturb the development of an embryo and a fetus and lead to birth defects. See also *deep vein thrombosis*.

wart A local growth on the outer layer of the skin that is caused by a papillomavirus. Papillomavirus is transmitted by contact, either with a wart on someone else or a wart on oneself (autoinnoculation). Warts that occur on the hands or feet are called common warts. A wart on the sole of the foot is a plantar wart. Genital (venereal) warts are located on the genitals and are transmitted by sexual contact. Also known as verruca and verruga. See also *genital warts; human papillomavirus*.

wart, genital See *genital warts*.

wart, plantar A wart that grows on the sole of the foot. Plantar warts are different from most other warts. They tend to be flat and cause the buildup of

a callus that has to be peeled away before the plantar wart itself can be seen. Plantar warts may attack blood vessels deep in the skin, and they can be quite painful. Plantar warts are among the conditions caused by the human papillomavirus (HPV). See also *human papillomavirus*.

wart, venereal See *genital warts*.

wasp sting A sting from a wasp, which can trigger allergic reactions that vary greatly in severity. Avoidance and prompt treatment are essential. In some cases, allergy injection therapy is highly effective.

wasting **1** Gradual loss (for example, of weight), deterioration, and emaciation as in a wasting disease. **2** Excessive depletion as in salt wasting; the excessive loss of salt.

water on the brain See *hydrocephalus*.

water-hammer pulse See *Corrigan pulse*.

wax, ear See *earwax*.

wax dip See *paraffin dip*.

WBC White blood cell.

WDWN Abbreviation for “well-developed, well-nourished,” shorthand used by physicians when jotting down the results of a physical examination. For example, a WDWNF would be a well-developed, well-nourished white female.

Weaver's bottom Inflammation of the bursa that separates the gluteus maximus muscle of the buttocks from the underlying bony prominence of the bone that a person sits on (ischial tuberosity). Weaver's bottom is a form of bursitis that is usually caused by prolonged sitting on hard surfaces that press against the bones of the bottom or midbuttocks. Also known as ischial bursitis.

Wegener granulomatosis See *granulomatosis, Wegener*.

welt See *hive*.

Werner syndrome A premature aging disease that begins in adolescence or early adulthood and results in apparent old age by 30–40 years of age. Characteristic features include short stature, premature graying, early baldness, wizened face, beaked nose, cataracts, skin changes reminiscent of those in scleroderma, deposits of calcium beneath the skin, premature arteriosclerosis, and a tendency to diabetes and to tumors (especially osteosarcoma and meningioma). Werner syndrome is inherited in an autosomal recessive manner and is due to mutation in the WRN gene on chromosome 8, which encodes

Werner-His disease

RecQ DNA helicase, an enzyme that catalyzes the unwinding of DNA.

Werner-His disease See *trench fever*.

West Nile virus A febrile disease that is transmitted from birds to mosquitoes and then to people by mosquito bites. The virus is named after the area in which it was first found, in Uganda. West Nile virus occurs in parts of Africa and Asia and, infrequently, in Southern Europe, the Middle East, and the US. West Nile virus had never been seen in birds or people in the Western Hemisphere prior to an outbreak in summer 1999 in New York City. Since that time, it has spread across the US. Most affected people have no symptoms or minor symptoms, but a febrile illness may develop accompanied by drowsiness, headache and nausea due to encephalitis, pain in the abdomen, a rash, and swollen glands (lymphadenopathy). Fatal cases tend to involve infants and small children under age 5, the aged, and people with impaired immune systems. Prevention of mosquito bites can help prevent infection. Also known as West Nile encephalitis. See also *encephalitis*.

Western blot A technique in molecular biology that is used to separate and identify particular proteins.

WF Medical shorthand for white female.

Wharton's jelly A gelatinous substance that provides insulation and protection within the umbilical cord. Stem cells are present in Wharton's jelly, as well as in umbilical cord blood.

wheezing A whistling noise in the chest during breathing. Wheezing occurs when the airways are narrowed or compressed.

whiplash injury A hyperextension and flexion injury to the neck, often a result of being struck from behind, as by a fast-moving vehicle in a car accident. The mechanics of whiplash injury are thought to be as follows: The victim may be first pushed or accelerated forward, pushing the body forward, but the head remains behind momentarily, rocking up and back, and some muscles and ligaments in and around the spine may be stretched or torn. These muscles, in a reflex action, contract to bring the head forward again, to prevent excessive injury. There may be overcompensation when the head is traveling in a forward direction as the vehicle decelerates. This may rock the head violently forward, stretching and tearing more muscles and ligaments.

Whipple disease A form of inability to absorb nutrients from the intestine. It can affect any part of the body, leading to arthritis and then weight loss, cough, fever, diarrhea, hypotension (low blood pressure), abdominal swelling, increased skin pigmentation, and severe anemia. Whipple disease has been discovered to be due to a type of bacteria named *Tropheryma whipplei*. Whipple disease is treated with antibiotics. Some patients relapse and need long-term, even life-long, treatment.

Whipple procedure A type of surgery that is used to treat pancreatic cancer and was devised by the US surgeon Allen Whipple. The head of the pancreas, the duodenum, a portion of the stomach, and other nearby tissues are removed.

whipworm A nematode (roundworm), also called *Trichuris trichiura*, that is the third most common roundworm in humans. The whipworm is found worldwide, and whipworm infections are most frequent among children and in areas with tropical weather and poor sanitation practices. Infection with whipworm most often occurs without symptoms. Heavy infections, especially in small children, can cause gastrointestinal problems (such as abdominal pain, diarrhea, and rectal prolapse) and possibly growth retardation. Treatment involves use of the drugs albendazole or mebendazole.

white blood cell See *CBC; leukocyte*.

white blood cell count The number of white blood cells (WBCs) in the blood. The normal range for the WBC count varies among laboratories but is usually between 4,300 and 10,800 cells per cubic millimeter. It can be expressed in international units as $(4.3\text{--}10.8)\times 10^9$ cells per liter. A low WBC count is called leukopenia. A high WBC count is termed leukocytosis. Also known as leukocyte count.

white coat hypertension A transient increase in blood pressure (hypertension) that is triggered by the sight of medical personnel in white coats (or other attire). Ideally, people so affected should do their best to relax when in the medical office.

white matter The part of the brain that contains myelinated nerve fibers. The white matter is white because it is the color of myelin, the insulation that covers nerve fibers.

white spots on the nails See *jogger's nails*.

white subungual onychomycosis, proximal
See *onychomycosis, proximal white subungual*.

whitehead A familiar term for what is medically called a closed comedo. A comedo, the primary sign of acne, consists of a dilated (widened) hair follicle filled with keratin squamae (skin debris), bacteria, and sebum (oil). A whitehead is a comedo that has an obstructed opening to the skin. A closed comedo may rupture and cause a low-grade skin inflammatory reaction in the area.

WHO World Health Organization.

whooping cough See *pertussis*.

will, living See *living will*.

Willis, circle of See *circle of Willis*.

Wilms tumor A childhood form of kidney cancer with a peak age of occurrence at 3 years of age. It is sometimes associated with abnormalities of the urinary tracts or other birth defects. Some cases are related to defects in one of two genes referred to as Wilms' tumor 1 (WT1) or Wilms' tumor 2 (WT2). Symptoms can include abdominal pain, swelling, and blood in the urine. Diagnosis is made by biopsy, which can classify the tumors as having a favorable histology (microscopic appearance) or an unfavorable histology, which is associated with a worse outcome. The outcome is also reflected by the stage of the tumor (extent of spread) at the time of diagnosis. Treatment involves surgery and chemotherapy; sometimes radiation therapy is also recommended. Wilms tumor has a very high cure rate, particularly when detected as a localized tumor. Also known as nephroblastoma.

Wilson disease An inherited disorder of copper metabolism that results in an abnormal accumulation of copper in the body. Although the accumulation of copper begins at birth, symptoms of the disorder do not appear until later in life, between the ages of 6 and 40. A diagnostic feature of the disease is a Kayser-Fleischer ring, a deep copper-colored ring around the edge of the cornea that represents copper deposits in the eye. The main clinical consequence of Wilson disease for most affected persons is liver disease. In other patients the first symptoms are nervous system or psychiatric symptoms or both and include tremor, rigidity, drooling, difficulty with speech, abrupt personality change, grossly inappropriate behavior and inexplicable deterioration of school or other work, neurosis, and psychosis. Without proper treatment, Wilson disease is always fatal, usually by age 30. If treatment is begun early enough, symptomatic recovery is usually complete, and a life of normal length and quality can be expected. Wilson disease is inherited in an autosomal recessive manner and

is due to mutation of the ATP7B gene on chromosome 13. The ATP7B gene encodes ATPase, a copper-transporting beta polypeptide.

windpipe See *trachea*.

winter depression See *seasonal affective disorder*.

wisdom tooth See *tooth, wisdom*.

withdrawal symptoms Abnormal physical or psychological features that follow the abrupt discontinuation of a drug that has the capability of producing physical dependence. Common withdrawal symptoms include sweating, tremors, vomiting, anxiety, insomnia, and muscle pain.

WM Medical shorthand for white male.

WNL Medical shorthand for within normal limits. For example, a laboratory test result may be WNL.

Wolff-Parkinson-White syndrome A condition that is caused by an abnormality in the electrical system of the heart, which normally tells the heart muscle when to contract. Abbreviated WPW syndrome. In WPW syndrome there is an extra electrical connection inside the heart that acts as a short circuit, causing the heart to beat too rapidly and sometimes in an irregular manner. WPW syndrome can be life threatening, although that is unusual. WPW syndrome can be treated via destruction of the short circuit, using a technique termed radiofrequency catheter ablation, in which the short circuit is destroyed using radiofrequency energy.

Wolhynia fever See *trench fever*.

womb See *uterus*.

word processor's cramp A dystonia that affects the muscles of the hand and sometimes the forearm and that occurs only during typing or use of a computer. Similar focal dystonias have also been called writer's cramp, pianist's cramp, musician's cramp, and golfer's cramp.

working memory See *memory, short-term*.

World Health Organization The subagency of the United Nations (UN) that is concerned with international health. Abbreviated WHO. Also known as Organisation Mondiale de la Santé (OMS).

wormwood The plant whose essence forms the basis of absinthe, a dangerous emerald-green liqueur. See also *absinthe*.

WPW syndrome Wolff-Parkinson-White syndrome.

wrist The part of the hand that is nearest the forearm and consists of the carpal bones and the associated soft tissues. The eight carpal bones are arranged in two rows. One row of carpal bones joins the long bones of the forearm (the radius, and, indirectly, the ulna). Another row of carpal bones meets the hand at the five metacarpal bones that make up the palm.

writer's cramp See *cramp, writer's*.

wryneck See *torticollis, congenital*.

WS Waardenburg syndrome.

Wt Abbreviation for weight. For example, "Wt 80 lbs" means "weight 80 pounds."



X In genetics and medicine, X chromosome.

X chromosome The sex chromosome that is found twice in normal females and singly, along with a Y chromosome, in normal males. The complete chromosome complement consists of 46 chromosomes, including the 2 sex chromosomes, and is thus conventionally written as 46,XX for chromosomally normal females and 46,XY for chromosomally normal males.

xanthelasma Tiny, slightly raised, yellowish plaques on the skin surface of the upper or lower eyelids. Xanthelasma is a harmless growth of tissue caused by tiny deposits of fat in the skin, and it is often associated with abnormal blood fat levels (hyperlipidemia). Xanthelasma is composed of lipid-laden foam cells called histiocytes. Treatment is directed toward any underlying lipid disorder when present. Dermatologists can remove the abnormal plaques. See also *xanthoma*.

xanthinuria A rare metabolic disorder that is caused by lack of an enzyme needed to process xanthine, an alkaloid found in caffeine; theobromine; theophylline; and related substances. Unchecked, xanthinuria can lead to kidney stone formation. Treatment involves avoiding foods and drinks that contain xanthine derivatives, such as coffee, tea, and cola. Classic xanthinuria is inherited in an autosomal recessive manner and involves a defect in the enzyme xanthine dehydrogenase.

xanthoma A firm yellow, orange, or brown nodule deep in the skin (such as around the Achilles tendon, elbows, or knees) or mucous membrane caused by fat deposition. Although xanthomas themselves are harmless, they frequently indicate underlying disease, such as diabetes, lipid disorders (such as elevated blood cholesterol levels), or other conditions. They are composed of lipid-laden foam cells called histiocytes. Treatment is directed toward any underlying disorder when present. The nodules can be resected surgically for cosmetic purposes. Xanthoma is distinguished from xanthelasma by being a large nodule deep in the tissues as opposed to a plaque on the skin surface, but both can occur from lipid disorders. See also *xanthelasma*.

xanthoma, diabetic Xanthoma that is associated with poorly controlled diabetes mellitus. Treating the diabetes causes diabetic xanthomas to disappear.

xanthoma, eruptive Xanthoma that is linked to lipid disorders and is accompanied by a pink-to-red raised rash.

xanthoma, planar A type of xanthoma that is characterized by flat yellow-to-orange patches or pimples that cluster together on the skin.

xanthoma disseminatum A type of xanthoma from chronically elevated blood fats (cholesterol and triglycerides) that is characterized by orange-to-brown nodules on the skin or mucous membranes.

xanthoma tendinosum Xanthoma that clusters around tendons and is associated with lipid disorders, including chronically elevated blood cholesterol levels.

xanthoma tuberosum Xanthoma that clusters near joints and is associated with lipid disorders, cirrhosis of the liver, and thyroid disorders.

xanthomatosis An accumulation of excess lipids in the body that is due to disturbance of lipid metabolism and marked by the formation of xanthomas. See also *xanthoma*.

xanthopsia A form of chromatopsia, a visual abnormality in which objects look as though they have been overpainted with an unnatural color. In xanthopsia, that color is yellow.

xanthosis Yellowing of the skin without yellowing of the eyes, as is seen in *jaundice*.

XDR-TB See *tuberculosis, extensively drug-resistant*.

xenotransplantation Transplantation from one species to another (for example, from a baboon to a human).

xero- Prefix indicating dryness, as in *xeroderma* (dry skin).

xeroderma Abnormally dry skin. Xeroderma can be caused by a deficiency of vitamin A, systemic illness (such as hypothyroidism or Sjogren's syndrome), overexposure to sunlight, and medication. Xeroderma can usually be addressed with the use of over-the-counter topical preparations.

xeroderma pigmentosum A genetic disease that is characterized by such extraordinary sensitivity to sunlight that it results in the development of skin cancer at a very early age. Abbreviated XP. Children

xerophagia

with XP can only play outdoors safely after nightfall. XP is due to defective repair of damage done to DNA by ultraviolet (UV) light. Whereas normal persons can repair UV-induced damage by inserting new bases into the DNA, XP patients cannot. A person with XP develops severe sunburn and eye irritation within minutes of exposure to sunlight. Other features of XP include very dry skin (xeroderma), blisters on the skin, heavy freckling, and dark spots on the skin. XP is inherited in an autosomal recessive manner. Defects in multiple genes have been identified that lead to XP. Avoiding UV light and using the highest level of sunscreen possible when exposure cannot be avoided helps prevent complications.

xerophagia Having a tendency to eat a dry diet.

xerophthalmia Dry eyes. Xerophthalmia can be associated with systemic diseases, such as Sjogren's syndrome, systemic lupus erythematosus, and rheumatoid arthritis; deficiency of vitamin A; and use of some medications. It results from inadequate function of the lacrimal glands, which produce tears. When xerophthalmia is due to vitamin A deficiency, the condition begins with night blindness and conjunctival xerosis (dryness of the eye membranes), progresses to corneal xerosis (dryness of the cornea), and in its late stages develops into keratomalacia (softening of the cornea). Treatment depends on the severity of the condition and ranges from artificial tears and ointments to plugging of the tear ducts. Also known as conjunctivitis arida.

xerosis Abnormal dryness of the skin, mucous membranes, or conjunctiva (xerophthalmia). There are many causes of xerosis, and treatment depends on the particular cause.

xerostomia Dry mouth. Xerostomia can be associated with systemic diseases, such as Sjogren's syndrome, systemic lupus erythematosus, and rheumatoid arthritis; and it can be a side effect of medication and poor dental hygiene. Xerostomia results from inadequate function of the salivary glands, such as the parotid glands. Treatment involves adequate intake of water, use of artificial saliva, and good dental care. Untreated, severe dry mouth can lead to increased levels of tooth decay and thrush.

xiphoid process The lower part of the breastbone. The xiphoid process has no particular function and ranges in size from minuscule to several inches in length.

X-linked A gene on the X chromosome that is located on the X chromosome. An X-linked disorder is associated with or caused by a gene on the X chromosome.

X-linked dominant An X-linked trait that is expressed when one copy of the gene for that trait is present. In the case of an X-linked dominant disease, a single copy of the mutant gene on the X chromosome can cause the disease in a female. An example is a type of hereditary rickets called hypophosphatemic rickets. See also *autosomal dominant trait*; *X-linked recessive*.

X-linked recessive A mode of genetic inheritance characterized by a gene on the X chromosome being expressed only when there is no different gene present at that spot (locus) on a second X chromosome. This means that X-linked traits are expressed in males and in females who are homozygous for the gene (they have a copy of the particular gene on each of their two X chromosomes). For example, Duchenne muscular dystrophy (DMD) is an X-linked recessive disorder. A boy with DMD has the DMD gene on his sole X chromosome. Although it is much rarer, a girl can have the DMD gene on both her X chromosomes and have DMD. See also *autosomal recessive trait*; *X-linked dominant*.

X-ray High-energy radiation with waves shorter than those of visible light. X-ray is used in low doses to make images that help to diagnose diseases and in high doses to treat cancer.

X-ray, AP An X-ray picture in which the beams pass through the patient anteroposteriorly (from front to back).

X-ray, lateral An X-ray picture that is taken from the side.

X-ray, PA An X-ray picture in which the beams pass through the patient posteroanteriorly (from back to front).

X-ray therapy The use of X-ray radiation to treat cancer. X-rays may be used inside or outside the body, depending on the type of tumor involved. See also *radiation therapy*.

XX The sex chromosome complement of a normal human female. See also *X chromosome*.

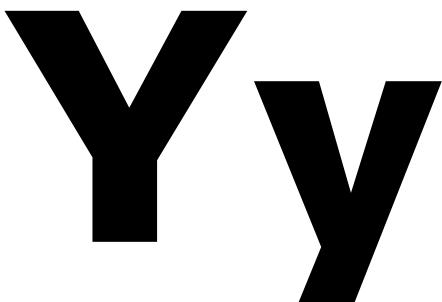
XXX syndrome A chromosome condition that is present in 1 in 1,000 females, due to the presence of three X chromosomes rather than the usual two. The condition is associated with increased height but no malformations. Intelligence ranges from above normal to mild mental retardation. Also known as triple X and triplo-X.

XY The most frequent sex chromosome complement in human males. See also *X chromosome*; *Y chromosome*.

xylitol A sweetener that is found in plants and used as a substitute for sugar. Xylitol is called a nutritive sweetener because it provides calories, just like sugar. However, it is less likely than sugar to contribute to dental caries.

XYY syndrome A chromosomal disorder that affects about 1 in 1,000 males caused by the presence of an extra Y chromosome. Symptoms may include increased height, speech delays, learning disabilities, mild to moderate mental retardation, and behavioral disturbances. Also known as polysomy Y syndrome.

<http://www.rashidiislamiccenter.com>



Y 1 In chemistry, the symbol for the element yttrium, an extremely rare metal that has been used in certain nuclear medicine scans. **2** In genetics, the Y chromosome.

Y chromosome The sex chromosome that is found, together with an X chromosome, in most normal males. The Y chromosome contains the unique male-determining gene and the male fitness genes that are active only in the testis and are responsible for the formation of sperm. Other genes on the Y chromosome have counterparts on the X chromosome, are active in many body tissues, and play crucial “housekeeping” roles with the cell.

Y chromosome sex-determining region The region on the Y chromosome that decides the sex of the individual. Abbreviated SRY. SRY is necessary for male determination. It encodes the testis-determining factor. Mutations in SRY are responsible for XY females with gonadal dysgenesis who appear to be normal females at birth but at puberty do not develop secondary sexual characteristics (such as breasts), do not menstruate, and have scarred (fibrous) gonads without eggs.

Y map The array of genes on the Y chromosome.

yard A measurement of length that is equal to 0.9 meters, 3 feet, or 36 inches.

yawn Involuntary opening of the mouth, accompanied by slowly breathing inward and then outward. Repeated yawning can be a sign of drowsiness, boredom, or depression. The yawn helps to open tiny air sacs (alveoli) in the lungs that can collapse during shallow breathing.

yaws A chronic infectious disease that occurs commonly in the warm, humid regions of the tropics. Yaws is characterized by bumps on the skin of the face, hands, feet, and genital area. Almost all cases of yaws are in children under 15 years of age. The organism that causes yaws is a type of spirochete bacteria, *Treponema pertenue*, which enters the skin at a scraped or cut spot after contact with an infected person. A painless bump (the mother yaw) arises and grows at this spot. Nearby lymph

nodes may become swollen. The mother yaw is followed by recurring (secondary) crops of bumps and more swollen lymph nodes. In its late (tertiary) stage, yaws can destroy and deform areas of the skin, bones, and joints. The palms and soles tend to become thickened and painful (“dry crab yaws”). Diagnosis is confirmed via blood tests and via dark-field examination of the spirochete under a microscope. Treatment involves administration of antibiotics. Also known as granuloma tropicum, polypapilloma tropicum, and thymosis.

yd. Yard.

yeast A group of single-celled fungi that reproduce by budding. Most yeast is harmless, and yeast is commonly present without ill effect on normal human skin and mucous membranes, including the gastrointestinal (GI) tract. In the GI tract, the amount of yeast is usually controlled by helpful bacteria, although this balance can be upset by illness, immune system problems, or antibiotic use. Extreme overproliferation of yeast can cause discomfort and disease. For example, the common yeast *Candida albicans* (once called *Monilia*) causes thrush and rashes, fingernail infections, vaginal infections, and a host of other problems in patients with immune deficiency. See also *Candida albicans*; *candidiasis*; *thrush*; *yeast infection*; *yeast rash*.

yeast diaper rash Infection in the diaper area of a baby that is caused by a yeast called *Candida*. Certain conditions, such as antibiotic use or excessive moisture, can upset the balance of microbes and allow an overgrowth of *Candida*. The infected skin is usually fiery red with areas that may have a raised red border.

yeast infection Overgrowth of yeast that affects the skin (yeast rash), mouth (thrush), digestive tract, esophagus, vagina (vaginitis), or other parts of the body. Yeast infections occur most frequently in moist areas of the body. Although *Candida albicans* and other *Candida* yeasts are the most frequent offenders, other yeast groups are known to cause illness, primarily in immunocompromised patients. Diagnosis is confirmed by culturing a stool or mucosa sample or a scraping from the affected area. Treatment involves use of topical or oral antifungal medications. See also *Candida albicans*; *candidiasis*; *thrush*; *yeast vaginitis*; *yeast rash*.

yeast rash A slightly raised pink-to-red rash that is caused by proliferation of yeast, usually in a moist area such as the groin. Yeast rash is most common in infants, but it can also occur on the skin of older children and adults. Treatment involves keeping the affected area clean and dry and applying topical antifungal medication. Also known as diaper dermatitis and nappy rash.

yeast vaginitis Infection of the vagina by *Candida albicans*, which characteristically causes itching, burning, soreness, pain during intercourse and urination, and vaginal discharge. Yeast vaginitis occurs when new yeast are introduced into the vagina or when the quantity of yeast in the vagina increases relative to the quantity of bacteria. Yeast vaginitis can be exacerbated by injury to the vagina, as from chemotherapy; immune deficiency, as from AIDS or cortisone-type medications; pregnancy or taking birth control pills; antibiotic use; or diabetes. Treatment involves use of topical or oral antifungal medications. See also *Candida albicans*; *yeast; yeast infection; yeast vulvitis*.

yeast vulvitis A yeast infection of the vulva. Yeast vulvitis commonly occurs with yeast vaginitis. Common symptoms include itching, burning, soreness, pain during intercourse and urination, and vaginal discharge. Treatment involves use of topical or oral antifungal medications. See also *Candida albicans*; *yeast; yeast infection; yeast vaginitis*.

yellow fever An acute, systemic viral illness transmitted to humans through the bite of infected mosquitos that may cause a flu-like illness or a more severe illness with high fever, bleeding into the skin, and death of cells (necrosis) in the kidney and liver. The liver damage (hepatitis) causes yellowing of the skin from severe jaundice. Yellow fever occurs in sub-Saharan Africa and tropical South America. Diagnosis is made via observation and, if necessary, culturing or examining blood samples. Yellow fever usually passes within a few weeks. Nonaspirin pain relievers, rest, and rehydration with fluids decrease discomfort. Yellow fever disease can be prevented with a vaccination. See also *yellow fever vaccination*.

yellow fever vaccination A live attenuated (weakened) viral vaccine for yellow fever. Yellow fever vaccination is recommended for people traveling to or living in the tropical areas in the Americas and Africa where yellow fever occurs. Because yellow fever vaccination is a live vaccine, it should not be given to infants or people with immune-system problems.

yellow jacket stings Stings from yellow jackets that can trigger allergic reactions of varying severity. Avoidance and prompt treatment of allergic reactions (including diphenhydramine, brand name:

Benadryl; and epinephrine, brand name: Epi-Pen) are essential. In selected cases, allergy injection therapy is highly effective for prevention.

Yersinia A family of bacteria that includes *Yersinia pestis*, which causes the bubonic, pneumonic, and septicemic plagues; *Y. enterocolitica*, which causes intestinal infections, including mesenteric lymphadenitis, a condition that mimics appendicitis; and *Y. pseudotuberculosis*, which usually adversely affects only animals but can cause illness in immunocompromised patients. Both *Y. enterocolitica* and *Y. pseudotuberculosis* have also been implicated in a viral form of arthritis. Infection with *Yersinia* bacteria can be treated with antibiotics. See also *plague*.

Y-linked A gene on the Y chromosome that is passed from father to son. See also *holandric inheritance*.

Y-linked inheritance See *holandric inheritance*.

yoga A relaxing form of exercise that was developed in India and involves assuming and holding postures that stretch the limbs and muscles, doing breathing exercises, and using meditation techniques to calm the mind. Yoga appears to have benefits for increasing physical flexibility and reducing internal feelings of stress. Yoga may be recommended as an alternative or complementary health-promoting practice.

yogurt Milk that is fermented with a culture of *Lactobacillus* (the milk bacillus) and often with *acidophilus* and other helpful bacteria. See also *probiotic*.

yolk bone See *zygoma*.

yolk sac The membrane outside the human embryo. The yolk sac is connected by a tube, the yolk stalk or omphalomesenteric duct, through the umbilical opening to the embryo's midgut. The yolk sac serves as an early site for the formation of blood, and in time it is incorporated into the primitive gut of the embryo.

yolk stalk See *omphalomesenteric duct*.

youth The time between childhood and maturity.



Z chromosome A sex chromosome in certain animals, such as chickens, turkeys, and moths. In humans, males are XY and females are XX, but in animals with a Z chromosome, males are ZZ and females are WZ.

zebra In medicine, a very unlikely diagnostic possibility. It comes from an old saying used in teaching medical students about how to think logically in regard to the differential diagnosis: "When you hear hoof beats, think of horses, not zebras." For example, when someone develops a mild transient cough, a virus infection is the most logical and likely cause, and tuberculosis is a zebra.

Zellweger syndrome One of a group of related diseases called peroxisome biogenesis disorders (PBD), inherited conditions that damage myelin in the brain and also affect the metabolism of particular substances. Features include enlargement of the liver, high levels of iron and copper in the blood, and vision disturbances. It can be caused by mutations in a number of different genes. There is no cure for Zellweger syndrome. The prognosis is poor, with death usually occurring within 6 months.

Zenker diverticulum The most common type of outpouching in the esophagus, due to increased pressure causing the mucous membrane of the esophagus to herniate through a defect in the wall of esophagus. Zenker diverticuli are usually located in the posterior hypopharyngeal wall. Small Zenker diverticuli may not cause symptoms but larger ones may collect food and obstruct the esophagus.

ZIFT See *zygote intrafallopian transfer*.

zinc A mineral that is essential to the body and is a constituent of many enzymes that permit chemical reactions to proceed at normal rates. Zinc is involved in the manufacture of protein (protein synthesis) and in cell division. Zinc is also a constituent of insulin, and it is involved with the sense of smell. Food sources of zinc include meat, particularly liver and seafood; eggs; nuts; and cereal grains.

zinc acetate A form of zinc that has been used in zinc supplements.

zinc deficiency See *deficiency, zinc*.

zinc excess Too much zinc, which can cause gastrointestinal irritation, interfere with copper absorption to cause copper deficiency and, like too little zinc, cause immune deficiency. See also *zinc*.

zinc ointment A topical preparation that contains zinc and is applied to protect the skin from irritation or sunburn. Zinc ointment is also often the basis for commercial preparations for preventing diaper rash. It should not be used on skin that is already broken or irritated, however.

zinc oxide A form of zinc that has been used in zinc ointments.

zinc sulfate A form of zinc that can be administered in eyedrops. Zinc sulfate is used in some types of eye tests.

Zinsser disease See *Brill-Zinsser disease*.

Zollinger-Ellison syndrome A rare disorder caused by a tumor called a gastrinoma, most often occurring in the pancreas. The tumor secretes the hormone gastrin, which causes increased production of gastric acid leading to severe recurrent ulcers of the esophagus, stomach, and the upper portions of the small intestine. Gastrinomas resulting in the Zollinger-Ellison syndrome may also occur in the stomach, duodenum, spleen, and lymph nodes. Treatment can include the use of H2 antagonist medications, proton pump inhibitors, or surgical removal of the tumor.

zona pellucida The strong membrane that forms around an ovum as it develops in the ovary. The membrane remains in place during the egg's travel through the fallopian tube. To fertilize the egg, a sperm must penetrate the thinning zona pellucida. If fertilization takes place, the zona pellucida disappears, to permit implantation in the uterus.

zoonosis An infection that is known in nature to infect both humans and lower vertebrate animals.

zooparasite A living parasite, such as a worm or protozoa.

zoophilia A sexual disorder (paraphilia) that involves an abnormal desire to have sexual contact with animals. See also *paraphilia*.

zygoma The bone that forms the prominence of the cheek. Also known as zygomatic bone, zygomatic arch, malar bone, and yoke bone.

zygomatic arch See *zygoma*.

zygomatic bone See *zygoma*.

zygomycosis A potentially fatal, dangerous infection that is caused by various fungi from the class Zygomycetes. Zygomycosis is seen most often in

patients who are already ill with diseases that suppress the immune system, such as AIDS, burn patients, patients taking corticosteroids, and those with poorly controlled diabetes. If unchecked, the fungal infection can spread to the lungs and other organs, the blood, the eyes, and the brain. Treatment involves controlling the underlying condition and attacking the infection with antifungal medications.

zygote The cell that is formed by the union of a male sex cell (sperm) and a female sex cell (an ovum). The zygote develops into the embryo, as instructed by the genetic material within the unified cell. The unification of a sperm and an ovum is called fertilization. See also *ovum; sperm*.

zygote intrafallopian transfer An assisted reproductive procedure for the treatment of infertility in which a woman's eggs are removed and fertilized with sperm in the laboratory, and the fertilized egg (zygote) is placed into the fallopian tube using a laparoscopic procedure. Abbreviated ZIFT. Like IVF and GIFT, ZIFT involves stimulation of the ovaries to produce multiple eggs and aspiration of the eggs. See also *GIFT; IVF*.

zygotic lethal gene See *gene, zygotic lethal*.

Appendix A

Prescription Abbreviations

Prescriptions are the traditional means by which a physician permits patients to obtain certain medications and/or supplies from pharmacies. The word prescription is derived from the Latin *prae*, meaning “before,” and *scribere*, meaning “to write.” This reflected the fact that a prescription had to be written before a drug could be prepared and administered to a patient. A number of abbreviations, many derived from Latin terms, are used on prescription forms and medication labels. These include the following:

ad lib Use as much as one desires, or use at one's own discretion. From the Latin term *ad libitum*.

a.c. Before meals. From the Latin term *ante cibum*.

b.i.d. Twice a day. From the Latin term *bis in die*.

cap Capsules.

da or daw Dispense as written.

g, gm, or G Gram.

gtt Drops. From the Latin term *guttae*.

h Hour.

mg Milligram.

ml Milliliter.

p.c. Take after meals. From the Latin term *post cibum*.

p.o. Take by mouth, orally. From the Latin term *per os*.

p.r.n. Take as necessary or when needed. From the Latin term *pro re nata*.

q.d. Take once per day. From the Latin term *quaque die*.

q.h. Take once every hour. From the Latin term *quaque* (every) and the abbreviation for hours.

q.i.d. Take four times per day. From the Latin term *quater in die*.

q.2h Take once every 2 hours.

q.3h Take once every 3 hours.

q.4h Take once every 4 hours.

tabs Tablets

t.i.d. Take three times per day. From the Latin term *ter in die*.

ut dict Take as directed. From the Latin term *ut dictum*.

Drug Caution Codes

Drug caution codes are abbreviations that are applied to medications to indicate caution. Drug caution codes provide valuable warnings to patients and their families. They include both universal codes that apply to all patients and specific caution codes that apply under certain circumstances. In the US, a system of stickers with pictographs may also be used to warn of specific side effects, such as drowsiness. Patients who see one of these codes on their prescriptions should talk to a pharmacist before using the medications.

Universal Caution Codes

D Drowsiness

H Habit forming

I Interaction

X S.O.S. (contains a substance, such as acetaminophen, that could cause problems; consult a pharmacist)

Specific Caution Codes

A ASA (contains acetylsalicylic acid [aspirin])

G Glaucoma

C Caution

S Diabetes

These code letters are cautions for patients with specific medical problems. A person with a medical problem, such as high blood pressure, might see the generic “C” code on a prescription bottle if the medication could raise his or her blood pressure.

Appendix B

Anatomic Orientation Terms

In anatomy, certain terms are used to denote orientation. For example, a structure may be horizontal, as opposed to vertical. Commonly used anatomic orientation terms include the following:

anterior The front, as opposed to posterior. For example, the breastbone is part of the anterior surface of the chest.

anteroposterior From front to back, as opposed to posteroanterior. Abbreviated AP. For example, when a chest X-ray is taken with the patient's back against the film plate and the X-ray machine in front of the patient, it is referred to as an AP view.

ascending Going upward. For example, the ascending aorta is the portion of the aorta that ascends, going upward as it leaves the heart to form the beginning of the arch of the aorta.

caudad Toward the feet (or tail, in embryology), as opposed to cranial.

cranial Toward the head, as opposed to caudad.

deep Away from the exterior surface or farther into the body, as opposed to superficial.

descending Going down. For example, the descending aorta is the portion of the aorta that descends, going downward from the top of the arch of the aorta.

distal Farther from the beginning, as opposed to proximal.

dorsal The back, as opposed to ventral.

external Situated on the outside.

extra Prefix indicating outside of.

horizontal Parallel to the floor; a plane that passes through the standing body parallel to the floor.

inferior Below, as opposed to superior.

internal Situated on the inside.

intra prefix indicating within.

lateral Toward the left or right side of the body, as opposed to medial.

medial In the middle or inside, as opposed to lateral.

midline An imaginary line down the middle of.

posterior The back or behind, as opposed to anterior.

posteroanterior From back to front, as opposed to anteroposterior. Abbreviated PA.

pronation Rotation of the forearm and hand so that the palm is down (or similar movement of the foot and leg, with the sole down), as opposed to supination.

prone With the front or ventral surface downward (lying face down), as opposed to supine.

proximal Toward the beginning, as opposed to distal.

sagittal A vertical plane that passes through the standing body from front to back. For example, the midsagittal, or median, plane splits the body into left and right halves.

superficial On the surface or shallow, as opposed to deep.

superior Above, as opposed to inferior.

supination Rotation of the forearm and hand so that the palm is upward (or similar movement of the foot and leg, with the sole upward), as opposed to pronation.

supine With the back or dorsal surface downward (lying face up), as opposed to prone.

transverse A horizontal plane that passes through the standing body parallel to the ground.

valgus Deformed outward from midline. Opposite of varus.

varus Deformed inward toward midline. Opposite of valgus.

ventral Pertaining to the abdomen, as opposed to dorsal.

vertical Upright, as opposed to horizontal.

Appendix C

Vitamins

The term vitamin was coined in 1911 by the Warsaw-born biochemist Casimir Funk. Working at the Lister Institute in London, Funk isolated a substance that prevented nerve inflammation (neuritis) in chickens raised on a diet deficient in that substance. He named the substance "vitamine" because he believed it was necessary to life and it was a chemical amine. The e at the end was later removed when it was recognized that vitamins need not be amines. Vitamins soon became identified, as they were noted to be associated with vitamin deficiency diseases. The letters (A, B, C, and so on) were assigned to the vitamins in the order of their discovery. The one exception was vitamin K, which was assigned its K (from Koagulation) by the Danish researcher Henrik Dam.

Vitamins are known to play a major role in both health maintenance and the treatment of certain diseases. The classic vitamins are divided into two categories, oil-soluble and water-soluble, based on how they are absorbed with the food we eat. The oil-soluble vitamins are vitamins A, D, E, and K and are absorbed with fats. There are nine water-soluble vitamins, thiamine (vitamin B1), riboflavin (vitamin B2), pyridoxine (vitamin B6), cyanocobalamin (vitamin B12), ascorbic acid (vitamin C), biotin, folic acid, niacin, and pantothenic acid. Other vitamins have more recently been described and are included below. Beta carotene is a plant pigment that is a precursor of vitamin A. Vitamins can be dangerous in overdose. The vitamins include:

ascorbic acid Vitamin C.

beta carotene Not actually a vitamin but a plant pigment that is a precursor of vitamin A. Beta carotene is an antioxidant that protects cells against oxidative damage that may predispose a person to cancer. Beta carotene is converted to the oil-soluble vitamin A, as needed. Food sources include vegetables such as carrots, sweet potatoes, and spinach and other leafy green vegetables; and fruits such as cantaloupes and apricots. Excessive carotene can temporarily yellow the skin, an innocuous condition called carotenemia that is commonly seen in infants who have been fed large amounts of mashed carrots.

bioflavonoid Vitamin P.

biotin Vitamin H.

calciferol Vitamin D2.

cholecalciferol Vitamin D3.

cobalamin Vitamin B12.

folic acid A member of the water-soluble, B vitamin family that is essential for cell growth and proliferation and for the proper utilization of vitamin B12 and vitamin C. Folic acid is an important factor in nucleic acid (RNA and DNA) synthesis. It is found in leafy green vegetables, liver and other organ meats, and whole grains. Deficiency of folic acid can lead to slow growth, diarrhea, oral inflammation, a decrease in all types of blood cells (pancytopenia), and megaloblastic anemia (anemia with abnormally large red blood cells). Inadequate folic acid during pregnancy raises the risk of neural tube defects in the fetus and of miscarriages. Also known as folate. Nonpregnant adults require 200 micrograms of folic acid per day. For pregnant women, typically 1 mg daily is recommended in the form of prenatal multivitamins.

niacin Vitamin B3.

nicotinic acid Vitamin B3.

pantothenic acid Vitamin B5.

pyridoxine Vitamin B6.

retinol Vitamin A.

riboflavin Vitamin B2.

thiamin Vitamin B1.

vitamin A An oil-soluble vitamin that is also known as retinol. Carotene compounds are gradually converted by the body to vitamin A. A form of vitamin A called retinal is responsible for transmitting light sensations in the retina of the eye. Vitamin A is found in egg yolk, butter, cream, leafy green vegetables, yellow fruits and vegetables, cod-liver oil, and similar fish-liver oils. Deficiency of vitamin A leads to night blindness and to diseases that affect the eyes and mucous membranes. Overdose of vitamin A can cause insomnia, joint pain, fatigue, irritability, headache, and other symptoms. The daily adult requirement is 900 micrograms.

vitamin A2 A form of vitamin A that is found only in the flesh of freshwater fish.

vitamin B1 Thiamin, a water-soluble vitamin, which acts as a coenzyme and is essential for a number of reactions in body metabolism. Vitamin B1 is found primarily in liver and yeast, and it is easily destroyed by cooking. Deficiency of vitamin B1 leads to beriberi, a disease of the heart and nervous system. The daily adult requirement is 1.2 milligrams.

vitamin B2 Riboflavin, a water-soluble vitamin, which is a component of two coenzymes in the oxidation-reduction processes that are important to body metabolism. Vitamin B2 is found primarily in liver and yeast, and it is easily destroyed by cooking. Deficiency of vitamin B2 causes inflammation of the lining of the mouth and skin. The daily adult requirement is 1.5 milligrams.

vitamin B3 Niacin, a water-soluble vitamin, which is a component of coenzymes that are important in body metabolism. Vitamin B3 is found primarily in liver and yeast, and it is easily destroyed by cooking. Deficiency of vitamin B3 causes inflammation of the skin, vagina, rectum, and mouth, as well as mental slowing. Also known as nicotinic acid. The daily adult requirement is 16 milligrams.

vitamin B5 Pantothenic acid, a water-soluble, B vitamin that is widely distributed in nature. Pantothenic acid is virtually ubiquitous. It is present in foods as diverse as poultry, soybeans, yogurt, and sweet potatoes. No naturally occurring disease due to a deficiency of vitamin B5 has been identified, due to the ease of obtaining this vitamin. An experimental deficiency of pantothenic acid has, however, been created by administering an antagonist to pantothenic acid. This experiment produced disease, thereby demonstrating that pantothenic acid is essential to humans.

vitamin B6 Pyridoxine, a water-soluble vitamin, which is a cofactor for enzymes. Vitamin B6 is found primarily in liver and yeast, and it is easily destroyed by cooking. Deficiency of vitamin B6 leads to inflammation of the skin and mouth, nausea, vomiting, dizziness, weakness, and anemia. The daily adult requirement is 2 milligrams.

vitamin B12 Cobalamin, a water-soluble vitamin, which is an essential factor in nucleic acid synthesis. Vitamin B12 may affect vitamin C absorption. It is found primarily in liver and yeast, and it is easily destroyed by cooking. Deficiency of vitamin B12 leads to megaloblastic anemia, as can be seen in pernicious anemia. The daily adult requirement is 2 micrograms.

vitamin C Ascorbic acid, a water-soluble vitamin that is important in the synthesis of collagen, the framework protein for tissues of the body. Vitamin C is found in citrus fruits, tomatoes, berries, potatoes, and most vegetables. It may affect vitamin B12 absorption. Minor deficiency can cause gum bleeding, joint pain, nosebleeds, and easy bruising. Extreme deficiency can lead to scurvy, characterized by fragile capillaries, poor wound healing, and bone deformity in children. Overdose is not possible with this water-soluble vitamin, but overuse can cause diarrhea, painful urination, rash, and nausea. The daily adult requirement is 60 milligrams.

vitamin D An oil-soluble steroid vitamin that promotes absorption and metabolism of calcium and phosphorus and that is essential for tooth and bone growth. Under normal conditions of sunlight exposure, no dietary supplementation is necessary because sunlight promotes adequate vitamin D syn-

thesis in the skin. Vitamin D is added to many common dairy products and breads, and it can also be found in saltwater fish and egg yolks. Deficiency can lead to osteomalacia (softening of bone) in adults and bone deformity (rickets) in children. The daily adult requirement is 10 micrograms.

vitamin D2 Calciferol, a synthetic form of vitamin D that is created by treating ergosterol (provitamin D2) with ultraviolet light waves. Vitamin D2 is important in normal bone metabolism. Vitamin D2 is largely supplied by the metabolism of vitamin D in the body.

vitamin D3 Cholecalciferol, a D vitamin that is needed for proper use of phosphorus, calcium, and vitamin A. It plays a steroid-like role in regulating cellular proliferation and differentiation. Vitamin D3 is important in normal bone metabolism. Also known as calcitriol. Vitamin D3 is largely supplied by the metabolism of vitamin D in the body.

vitamin E An oil-soluble vitamin that is vital for muscle, skin, blood vessel, and organ development and function. Dietary sources for vitamin E include nuts, nut and corn oils, wheat germ, liver, sweet potatoes, and green leafy vegetables. Deficiency of vitamin E can lead to anemia. The daily adult requirement is 10 milligrams.

vitamin H Biotin, which is actually considered part of the water-soluble, B vitamin family. It is a coenzyme essential for many enzyme functions. Normally produced by bacteria in the colon, biotin is also found in yeast, organ meats, legumes, egg yolks, whole grains, and nuts. The daily adult requirement is 60 micrograms.

vitamin K An oil-soluble vitamin essential to the normal clotting of blood. Vitamin K is normally made within the body by intestinal bacteria, but it is also found in many foods, including leafy green vegetables, yogurt, egg yolk, and fish-liver oils. Deficiency may occur following the administration of drugs that inhibit the growth of the vitamin-synthesizing bacteria or as a result of disorders affecting the production or flow of bile necessary for the intestinal absorption of vitamin K. In newborn babies, the absence of intestinal bacteria coupled with the absence of body stores of vitamin K may result in hemorrhagic disease of the newborn. This is a dangerous condition because there can be bleeding into critical organs such as the brain. This disorder can be prevented by the administration of vitamin K to the baby shortly after birth or to the mother during labor. Daily adult requirement is 65 micrograms.

vitamin P Bioflavonoids, a group of substances found with and essential to the use of vitamin C. They are essential for building collagen and capillary walls, among other functions.