

Introduction to Medical Terminology

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1. Introduction

- Medical terminology is the standardised language used by healthcare professionals to describe the body, conditions, and procedures.
- It promotes precise, consistent communication and reduces errors.

2. Word Structure

- **Root:** the core meaning of a word, usually referring to a body part, such as cardi for heart.
- **Prefix:** added to the front to modify meaning, such as hyper meaning excessive.
- **Suffix:** added to the end, often indicating a condition or procedure, such as itis meaning inflammation.

3. Building and Analysing Terms

- Combining vowels, usually "o", link roots to suffixes for easier pronunciation.
- Terms are decoded by reading the suffix first, then the prefix, then the root.

4. Why It Matters

- Ensures accurate documentation and safe patient care.
- Enables clear communication across the healthcare team and disciplines.

5. Common Pitfalls

- Similar-sounding terms can have very different meanings.
- Misplaced prefixes or suffixes change clinical meaning significantly.

6. Summary

- Understanding roots, prefixes, and suffixes unlocks most medical terms.
- A systematic approach makes complex vocabulary manageable.