

Anatomical Terms in Medical Terminology

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1. Introduction

- Anatomical terminology provides a standardized way to describe locations and directions in the body.
- It assumes the anatomical position: standing upright, facing forward, palms forward.

2. Directional Terms

- **Superior/inferior:** above versus below.
- **Anterior/posterior:** front versus back.
- **Medial/lateral:** toward versus away from the midline.
- **Proximal/distal:** nearer versus farther from the point of attachment.

3. Body Planes

- **Sagittal plane:** divides the body into left and right.
- **Frontal (coronal) plane:** divides into front and back.
- **Transverse plane:** divides into upper and lower portions.

4. Body Cavities and Regions

- Major cavities include the cranial, thoracic, abdominal, and pelvic cavities.
- Regional terms locate structures, e.g. brachial (arm) and femoral (thigh).

5. Importance

- Precise terms prevent confusion in diagnosis, surgery, and documentation.
- They enable consistent communication among providers worldwide.