

Some Common Medical Suffixes

Suffixes that change a root word to a noun

Suffix	Meaning	Example	Definition
-agogue	leading, inducing	galactagogue galacta + agogue	agent that promotes flow of milk
-ance	quality or act of	resonance re + son + ance	quality or act of resounding
-cide	killer	germicide germ + i + cide	killer of germs
-ectasia -ectasis	dilation or expansion	telangiectasis tel + angio + ectesis	dilation of capillaries
-form	structure, shape	ossiform ossi + form	resembling the form of bone
-gen	production of	carcinogenesis carcino + gen + sis	production of cancer
-ician -ist	one charged with or skilled in	pediatrician ped + i + atrician	specialist in treating children's diseases
-ion	act of, state of, result of	incision in + cis + ion	act of cutting or result of cutting
-meter	measure	thermometer therm + o + meter	measurer of heat
-ology	science of	dermatology dermat + o + logy	science of skin and its diseases
-or	that which, one who	receptor, inventor re + cept + or	that which receives, one who invents
-phylaxis	protection	prophylaxis pro + phylaxis	for protection
-poiesis	production, formation of	hematopoiesis hemet + o + poiesis	production of blood cells
-sthenia	strength	asthenia a + sthen + ia	loss of strength
-ure	act or the result of action	closure clos + ure	result of a closing action

Table 2: Suffixes that change a root word to an adjective

Suffix	Meaning	Example	Definition
-ac	pertaining to	celiac celi + ac	pertaining to the abdominal region
-acy	that which is, pertaining to	fallacy fall + acy	that which is false
-ad	toward, in the direction of	cephalad cephal + ad	toward the head
-al	pertaining to	digital digit + al	pertaining to finger or toe
-an	pertaining to, related to, belonging to	ovarian ovari + an	pertaining to the ovary
-ar	of or related to	valvular valvul + ar	related to a valve
-ary	related to, pertaining to	biliary bili + ary	pertaining to bile
-ate	that which is acted on	separate separ + ate	to keep apart
-facient	making or causing to become	febrifacient febri + facient	causing a fever
-fugal	driving or travelling	centrifugal centri + fugal	moving away from the center
-ic	pertaining to	colonic colon + ic	pertaining to the colon
-ile	having the qualities of or the capability for	febrile febr + ile	feverish
-ious	capable of, causing	infectious in + fect + ious	capable of being transmitted
-ive	that which performs or tends toward	tardive disease tard + ive	disease with late-appearing symptoms
-oid	like	ameboid ameob + oid	ameobalike
-ory	process of, pertaining to, function of	sensory sens + ory	pertaining to the senses
-ose	full of, having the qualities of, sugar	comatose coma + t + ose lactose, fructose, sucrose, galactose	having the qualities of a coma
-ous	pertaining to	venous ven + ous	pertaining to a vein
-some	tendency, like	tiresome tire + some	tiring
-trophic	related to nutrition, growth, development	dystrophic dys + troph + ic	faulty nutrition
-tropic	turning toward,	hydrotropic	turned toward water

	changing, acting on	hydr + o + trop + ic gonadotropic gonad + o + trop + ic	acting on the gonads
-y	having the nature or quality of	gouty gout + y	goutlike

Table 3: Suffixes that denote a state or condition

Suffix	Meaning	Example	Definition
-agra	severe pain, seizure	podagra pod + agra	severe pain in the foot
-algia	pain	neuralgia neur + alg + ia	nerve pain
-atresia	abnormal closure	proctatresia procto + atres + ia	closed anus
-cele	swelling, tumor	cystocele cyst + o + cele	hernia of urinary bladder
-chezia, -chesia	discharge of foreign substance	hematochezia hemat + o + chez + ia	passage of bloody stool
-cyst	bladderlike sac	hydrocyst hydr + o + cyst	cyst containing water
-dom	state of being	martyrdom martyr + dom	state of being a martyr
-dynia	pain	pleurodynia pleur + o + dyn + ia	pain on the side of the chest
-ema	swelling, distension	emphysema emphys + em + a	distension of airsacs in lungs
-ful	full of, characterized by	stressful stress + ful	causing stress
-hood	state, quality, condition of	childhood child + hood	state of being a child
-ia	a diseased condition	anuria an + ur + ia	condition of lack of urine
-iasis	a diseased condition	cholelithiasis chole + lith + ia + sis	condition of bile stones
-id	condition	flaccid flacc + id	condition of softness
-ism	condition, act of, process of	dwarfism dwarf + ism	a condition of being a dwarf
-itis	inflammation	phlebitis phleb + it is	inflammation of a vein

-ity	quality of, state of	obesity obes + ity	state of being obese
-less	without, not capable of	odorless odor + less	without odor
-malacia	softening	osteomalacia osteo + malac + ia	softening of bone
-ness	quality of state of	illness ill + ness	state of being ill
-oma	tumor	carcinoma carcin + om + a	malignant tumor
-osis	action, state, process, condition	halitosis halit + o + sis	condition of having bad breath
-pathy	suffering, disease	cardiopathy cardi + o + path + y	heart disease
-penia	deficiency, lack	leukopenia leuk + o + pen + ia	lack of white blood cells
-philia	love of	hemophilia hem + o + phil + ia	love of blood, a blood disease
-phobia	fear of	claustrophobia claustr + o + phob + ia	fear of confinement
-ptosis	dropping, downward displacement	carpopptosis carpo + ptosis	wrist-drop
-rrhage, -rrhagia	bursting forth	hemorrhage hemo + rrhage	bursting forth of blood
-rrhea	flow, discharge	galactorrhea galact + o + rrhea	excessive flow of milk
-rrhexis	rupture	splenorrhaxis splen + o + rrhexis	rupture of the spleen
-ship	state of, quality of	hardship hard + ship	state of being difficult to endure
-stasis	state of being at a standstill	hemostasis hemo + stasis	stagnation of blood
-staxis	hemorrhage	epistaxis epi + staxis	hemorrhage from the nose, nosebleed
-tion	act of, result of, process of	elongation e + long + ate + ion	process of making longer
-tonia	stretching, putting under tension	hypertonia hyper + ton + ia	excessive tension
-vert	turn	divert di + vert	turn aside

Table 4: Suffixes that indicate a surgical or diagnostic procedure

Suffix	Meaning	Example	Definition
-centesis	puncture of a cavity	paracentesis para + centesis	puncture of a space around an organ or within a cavity to remove fluid
-cis	cut	excise ex + cise	cut out
-clasis, -clasia	breaking up	bacterioclasis bacterio + clasis	breaking up of bacteria
-cleisis	closure	colpocleisis colpo + cleisis	operation for closure of vagina
-desis	binding, fusion	tenodesis ten + o + desis	fixation of loose tendon
-ectomy	excision, cutting out	laryngectomy laryng + ectom + y	removal of larynx
-gram, -graphy	act or method of recording	radiography radio + graph + y	process of taking an x-ray
-lysis	setting free, dissolution	adipolysis adip + o + lysis	decomposition of fats
-ostomy	creation of a mouth or opening	colostomy col + so + tom + y	creating a new opening between bowel and abdominal wall
-otomy	cutting into	tracheotomy trache + o + tom + y	cut into the windpipe
-pexy	fixation	sigmoidoscopy sigm + oid + scop + y	fixation of the large intestine
-plasty	molding or shaping	osteoplasty osteo + plast + y	plastic surgery on bone
-rrhaphy	closure of by suturing, repair	cystorrhaphy cyst + rrhaph + y	suture of bladder
-scope, -scopy	looking at, examining	bronchoscope broncho + scope	instrument used to view inside the breathing tubes
-sect	cut	disect di + sect	cut into parts
-tome	instrument for cutting	craniotome cranio + tome	instrument for cutting into the skull
-tripsy	rubbing, crushing	neurotripsy neur + o + trips + y	surgical crushing of a nerve

Table 5: Diminutive suffixes that indicate smallness

Suffix	Meaning	Example	Definition
-cle	small, little	caruncle	small fleshy growth
-cule	small, little	molecule	smallest part of an atom
-culum	small, little	tuberculum	small nodule or knot
-culus	small, little	calculus	small stone
-et	small, little	facet	small plane surface
-ium	small, little	bronchium	small bronchial tube
-ole	small, little	arteriole	minute artery
-olum	small, little	mesenterolum	small mesentery
-olus	small, little	bronchiolus	smallest subdivision of bronchus

Table 6: Chemical compounds indicated by a word ending

Suffix	Meaning	Chemical Example
-ase	enzyme	lipase
-ate	salt made from acid	sulfate
-ene	unsaturated compound	benzene
-ide	binary compound	oxide
-in, -ine	halogen, alkaloid, or nitrogen base	quinine
-ol	oil	cholesterol
-ose	carbohydrate	fructose
-yl	matter, substance, radical	ethyl

Table 7: Word endings that form plurals

Singular	Plural	Example
-a	-ae	lamina, laminae
-en	-ina	lumen, lumina
-ex	-ices	index, indices
-ies	-ietes	paries, parietes
-is	-es	psychosis, psychoses
-is	-ides	epididymis, epididymides
-ma	-mata	trauma, traumata
-nx	-nges	phalanx, phalanges
-on	-a	criterion, criteria
-s	-tes	pons, pontes
-u	-ua	comu, comua
-um	-a	diverticulum, diverticula
-us	-i	bacillus, bacilli
-us	-era	viscus, viscera
-us	-ora	corpus, corpora
-x	-ces	calyx, calyces

Table 8: Plural of nouns

Singular	Plural	Example
-e	-a or -ae	aperture, apertura venule, venulae
-os or -us	-i	locus, loci focus, foci
-on or -um	-es or -a	bacterium, bacteria chalazion, chalazia