

Creating medical terms

How does it work?



Word Root

A word root is the basic foundation of a word, to which component parts are added. By adding other word elements to the root, the meaning of the word changes. A word root is also called the stem of a word or the base of a word, and usually has a Greek or Latin origin. All medical words have at least one word root. Some have multiple roots that are joined by a vowel called a combining vowel.

Example: In the word *cardiologist*, the word root is *cardi*, which means “heart.” When you see *cardi* (or *card*) as part of a word, you know that the meaning will have something to do with the heart. Another example can be found in *dermatologist*. The root is *dermat*, which means “skin.” Anytime you see *dermat* (or *derm*) as part of a word, the meaning will have something to do with the skin.

Word roots keep their same meaning throughout. Adding prefixes and suffixes to the roots, however, changes the meaning of the word. Look at the following words (which contain either the root *cardi*, *card*, *dermat*, or *derm*) and see how the meaning changes by adding word parts. In each word, the root is in color.

| Word | Meaning |
|---|---|
| cardi ologist (car-dee-ALL-oh-jist) | One who specializes in the study of diseases and disorders of the heart; <i>-logist</i> (one who specializes) is a suffix; <i>o</i> is the combining vowel. |
| cardi ology (car-dee-ALL-oh-gee) | The study of the heart; <i>-logy</i> (the study of) is a suffix; <i>o</i> is the combining vowel. |
| carditis (car-DYE-tis) | Inflammation of the heart; <i>-itis</i> (inflammation) is a suffix. |
| cardiac (CAR-dee-ak) | Pertaining to the heart; <i>-ac</i> (pertaining to) is a suffix. |
| dermat ologist (der-mah-TALL-oh-jist) | One who specializes in the study of diseases and disorders of the skin; <i>-logist</i> (one who specializes) is a suffix; <i>o</i> is the combining vowel. |
| dermat ology (der-mah-TALL-oh-gee) | The study of the skin; <i>-logy</i> (the study of) is a suffix; <i>o</i> is the combining vowel. |
| dermatitis (der-mah-TYE-tis) | Inflammation of the skin; <i>-itis</i> (inflammation) is a suffix. |
| dermatosis (der-mah-TOH-sis) | Any condition of the skin; <i>-osis</i> (condition) is a suffix. |
| acro dermatitis (ack-roh-der-mah-TYE-tis) | Inflammation of the skin of the extremities; <i>-itis</i> (inflammation) is a suffix; <i>dermat</i> is a word root; <i>acr</i> (extremities) is a word root; <i>o</i> is the combining vowel. |
| hypo dermic (high-poh-DER-mik) | Pertaining to under the skin; <i>-ic</i> (pertaining to) is a suffix; <i>hypo</i> (under) is a prefix. |

Word-formation principles in medical terminology

1) Derivation

a) Prefix: **hypo**dermalis (=below)

b) Suffix: card**itis** (inflammation)

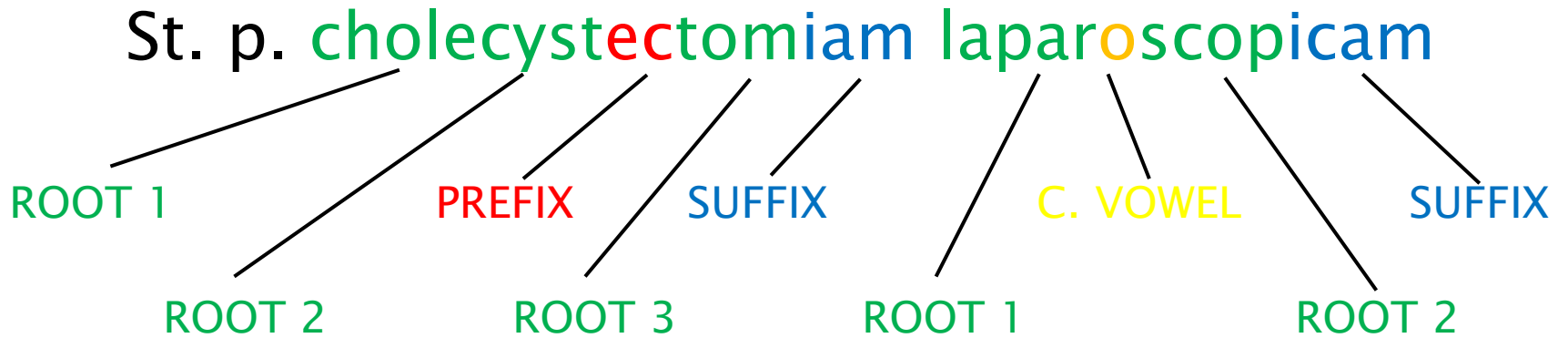
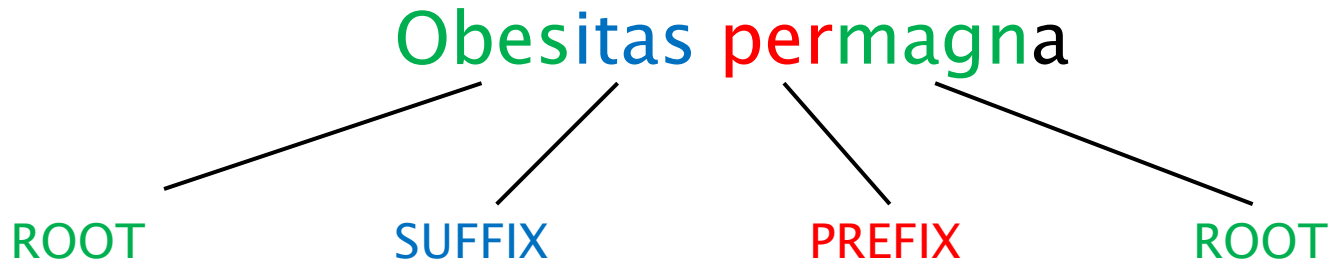
c) Prefix + suffix: **cardiologia** (=heart; study of sth)

2) Compounding: **acrodermatitis** (=extremity; skin)

3) Derivation + compounding: **acrodermatitis** (=see above + inflammation)

4) Abbreviating: CT (=computed tomography)

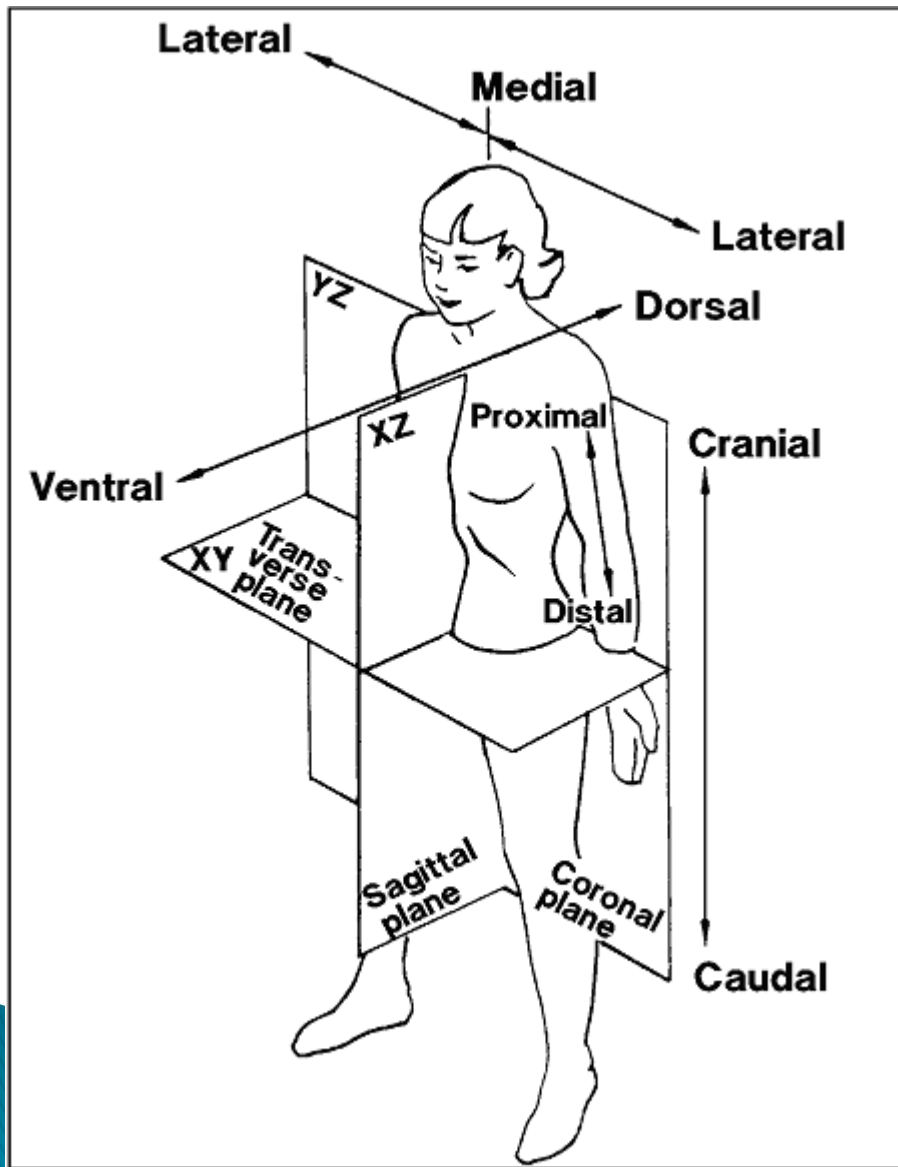
5) Borrowing: shock; stress; missed abortion; bypass; drainage



Analyse the structure of complex medical terms

- ▶ cardiomyopathia
- ▶ megalocardia
- ▶ endocardium
- ▶ pericarditis

Body planes



= imaginary slices/cuts used to divide the body in a particular angle and direction

In Latin with suffix - alis
later**alis**
cran**ialis**
medi**alis**
dors**alis** etc.