

MedlinePlus: Understanding Medical Words Reference

From the National Library of Medicine



Introduction:

This is a handy reference to the information covered in the [MedlinePlus Understanding Medical Words tutorial](#).

In this MedlinePlus Understanding Medical Words reference we have:

- [Word Roots for Body Parts](#)
- [Word Roots for Head Parts](#)
- [Heart and Circulatory Terms](#)
- [Internal Organs](#)
- [Beginnings and Endings](#)
- [Medical Words and Meanings](#)

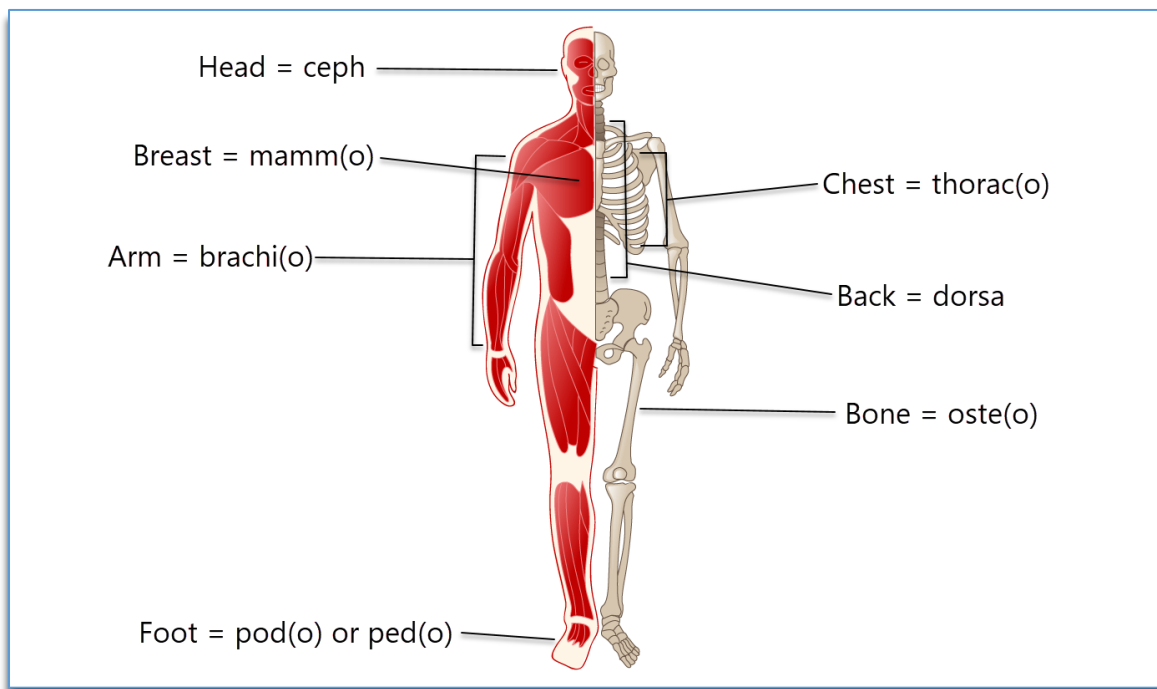
You also have available these other MedlinePlus resources to help you with your understanding of medical words and health related information:

- [MedlinePlus website](https://medlineplus.gov/) [https://medlineplus.gov/]
- [MedlinePlus: Health Topics](https://medlineplus.gov/healthtopics.html) [https://medlineplus.gov/healthtopics.html]
- [MedlinePlus: Word Parts](https://medlineplus.gov/appendixa.html) [https://medlineplus.gov/appendixa.html]
- [MedlinePlus: Abbreviations](https://medlineplus.gov/appendixb.html) [https://medlineplus.gov/appendixb.html]

Word Roots for Body Parts

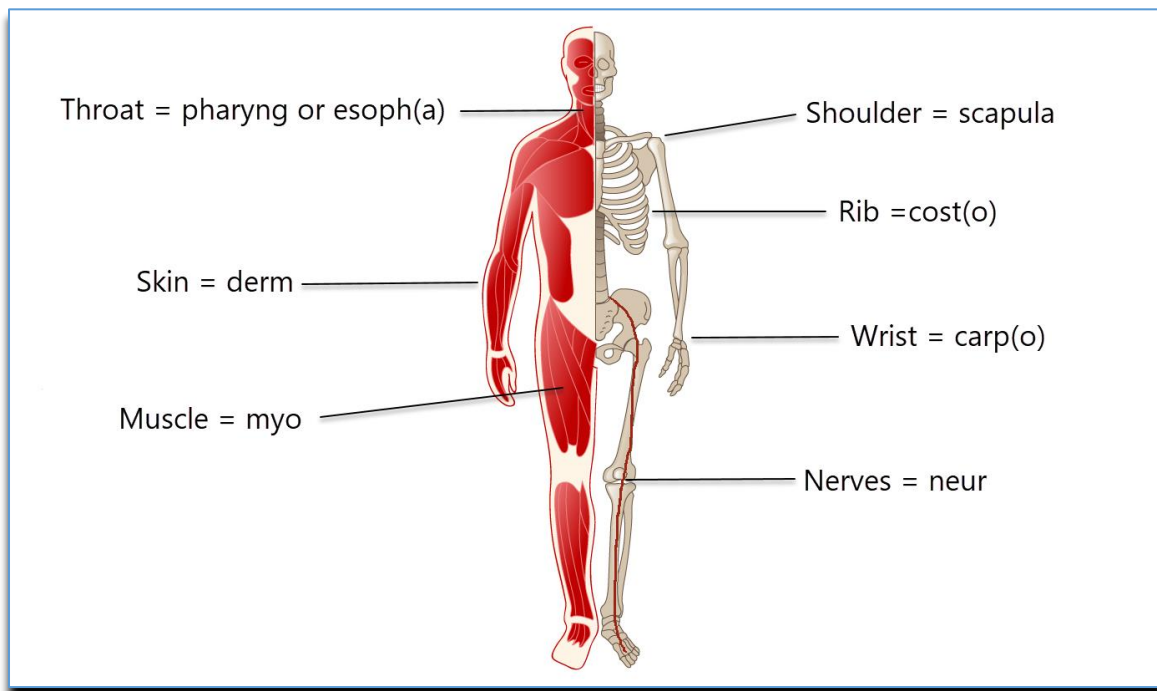
Part 1 of 2 for Body Parts

Body Part	=	Medical Word
Arm	=	Brachi or Brachio
Back	=	Dorsa
Breast	=	Mamm or Mammo
Bone	=	Oste or Osteo
Chest	=	Thorac or Thoraco
Foot	=	Pod or Podo or Ped or Pedo
Head	=	Brachi or Brachio



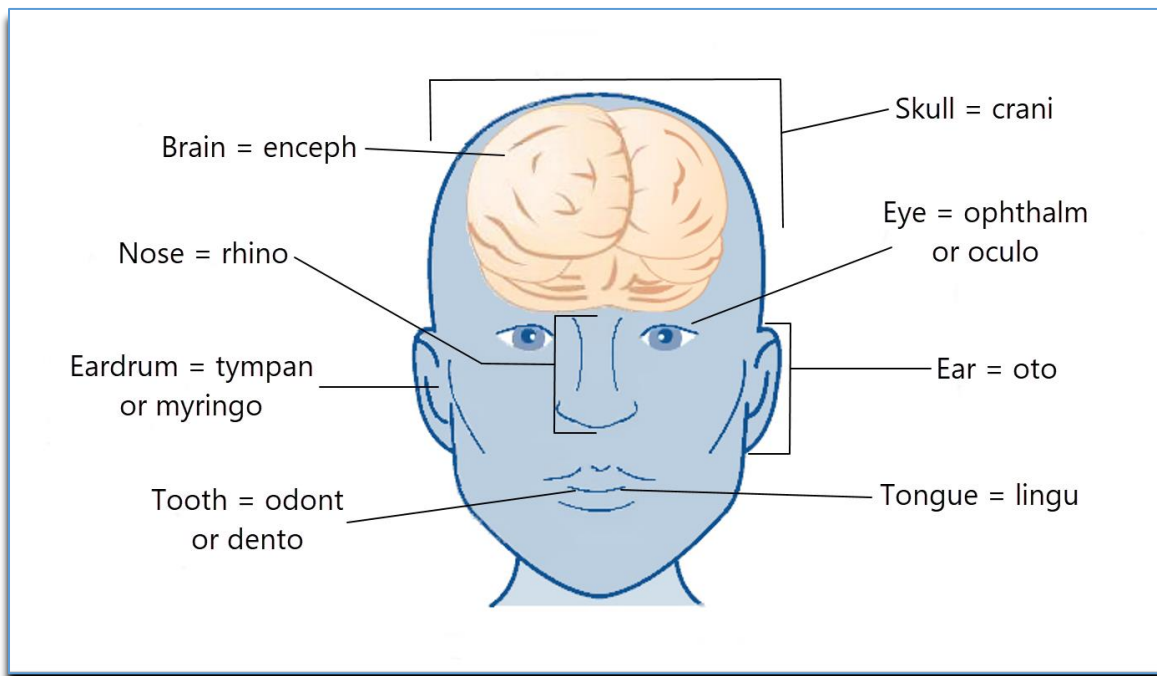
Part 2 of 2 for Body Parts

Body Part	=	Medical Word
Muscle	=	Ceph
Nerves	=	Myo
Rib	=	Neur
Skin	=	Cost or Costo
Shoulder	=	Derm
Throat	=	Scapula
Wrist	=	Pharyng or Esoph or Esopha



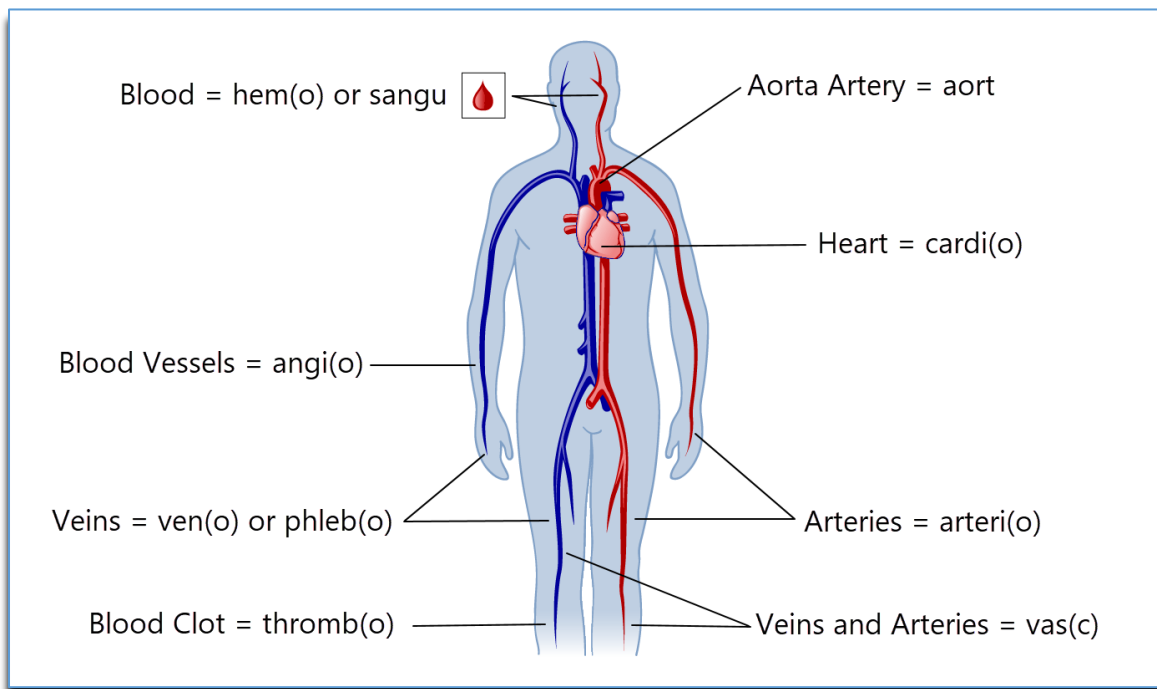
Word Roots for Head Parts

Body Part	=	Medical Word
Brain	=	Enceph
Ear	=	Oto
Eardrum	=	Tympan or Myringo
Eye	=	Ophthalm or Oculo
Nose	=	Rhino
Skull	=	Crani
Tongue	=	Lingu
Tooth	=	Odont or Dento



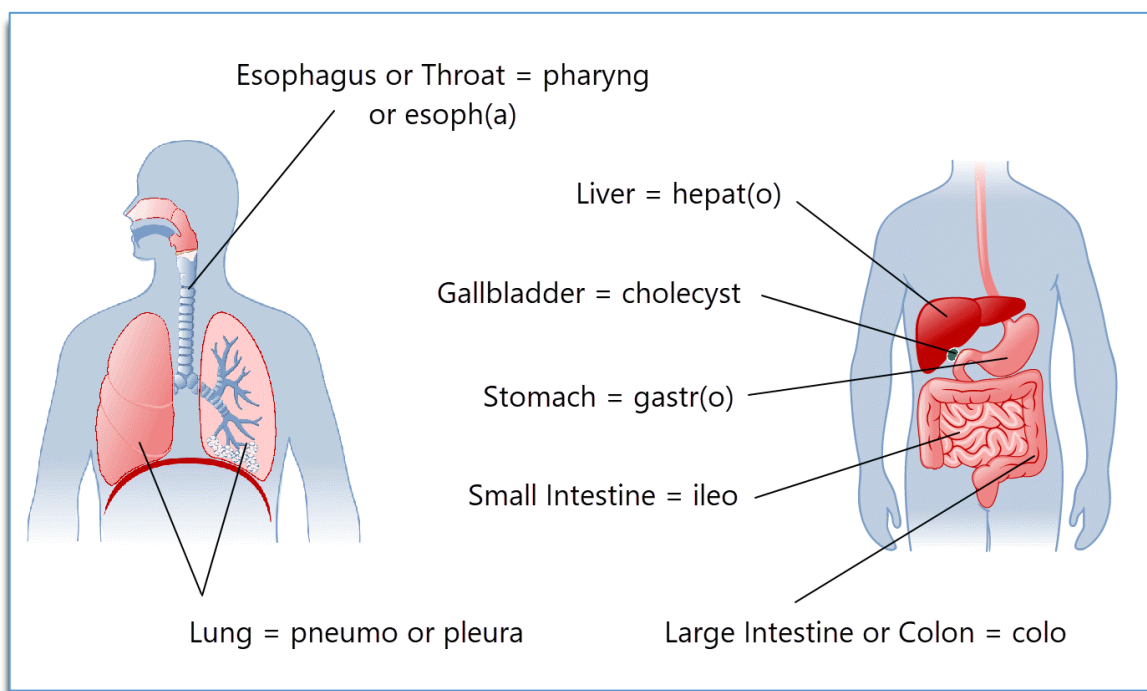
Heart and Circulatory Terms

Body Part	=	Medical Word
Aorta Artery	=	Aort
Arteries	=	Arteri or Arterio
Blood	=	Hem or Hemo or Sangu
Blood Clot	=	Thromb or Thrombo
Blood Vessels	=	Angi or Angio
Heart	=	Cardio or Cardio
Viens	=	Ven or Veno or Phleb or Phlebo
Viens and Arteries	=	Vas or Vasc



Internal Organs

Body Part	=	Medical Word
Esophagus or Throat	=	Pharyng or Esoph or Esopha
Gallbladder	=	Cholecyst
Kidney	=	Neph or Nephro
Large Intestine or Colon	=	Colo
Liver	=	Hepat or Hepato
Lung	=	Pneumo or Pleura
Small Intestine	=	Ileo
Stomach	=	Gastr or Gastro



Beginnings and Endings

A dash after the word part to show it's a beginning.

A dash before the word part to show it's an ending.

Example: **Brady-cardia** is a slower than normal heart rate.

Part 1 of 2

Medical Word Part	=	Meaning
Brady-	=	Slow
Chloro-	=	Green
Cyan-	=	Blue
Dys-	=	Not working correctly
-Eal	=	Pertaining to
Echo-	=	Using ultrasonic waves
-Ectomy	=	Using electricity
Electro-	=	Using electricity
-Emia	=	Blood condition
Endo-	=	Within or inside
Eryth-	=	Red
Hyper-	=	Above normal
Hypo-	=	Below normal
-Iatrist	=	A person providing specific treatment
Inter-	=	Between
-Itis	=	Inflammation
Gram-	=	A picture

Beginnings and Endings

A dash after the word part to show it's a beginning.

A dash before the word part to show it's an ending.

Part 2 of 2

Medical Word Part	=	Meaning
-Graph or -Graphy	=	The process of making a picture
-Latory	=	A medical treatment
Leuk-	=	White
Macro-	=	Vary large
Mal-	=	Bad
Megalo- or Megaly-	=	Large
Micro-	=	Small
-Ology	=	The study of a part of the body
-Ologist	=	A person working with a specific part of the body or a specific disease
-Osis	=	Condition or disease
-Otomy	=	Making a cut in
-Pathy	=	Disease
Peri-	=	Around
-Scopy	=	Use of instrument for viewing
-Stomy	=	Create an opening
Tachy-	=	Fast
Trans-	=	Across

Medical Words and Meanings

Part 1 of 3

Medical Word	=	Beginning (Prefix)	+	Middle (Root)	+	End (Suffix)
Appendectomy	=			Append	+	Ectomy
				Appendix		Removal of
Colostomy	=			Colo	+	Stomy
				Colon		Creating an opening
Dermatitis	=			Derma	+	Itis
				Skin		Inflammation
Carditis	=			Cardi	+	Itis
				Heart		Inflammation
Cardiology	=			Cardi	+	Ology
				Heart		Study of
Cardiomyopathy	=			Cardio + Myo	+	Pathy
				Heart + Muscle		Disease
Colectomy	=			Col	+	Ectomy
				Colon		Removal of
Colitis	=			Col	+	Itis
				Colon		Inflammation
Colonoscopy	=			Colon	+	Scopy
				Large intestine		Instrument view

Medical Words and Meanings

Part 2 of 3

Medical Word	=	Beginning (Prefix)	+	Middle (Root)	+	End (Suffix)
Echocardiography	=	Echo	+	Cardio	+	Graphy
		Using ultrasonic waves		Heart		Making a picture
Echocardiogram	=	Echo	+	Cardio	+	Gram
		Using ultrasonic waves		Heart		A picture
Encephalitis	=			Encephal	+	Itis
				Brain		Inflammation
Gastritis	=			Gastr	+	Itis
				Stomach		Inflammation
Gastrectomy	=			Gastr	+	Ectomy
				Stomach		Removal of
Hepatitis	=			Hepat	+	Itis
				Liver		Inflammation
Nephrectomy	=			Nephr(o)	+	Ectomy
				Kidney		Removal of
Otitis	=			Oto	+	Itis
				Ear		Inflammation
Pericarditis	=	Peri	+	Card	+	Itis
		Around		Heart		Inflammation

Medical Words and Meanings

Part 3 of 3

Medical Word	=	Beginning (Prefix)	+	Middle (Root)	+	End (Suffix)
Pharyngitis	=			Pharyng	+	Itis
				Throat		Inflammation
Pneumonitis	=			Pneumo	+	Itis
				Lung		Inflammation
Tonsillectomy	=			Tonsill	+	Ectomy
				Tonsils in the throat		Removal of
Transesophageal	=	Trans	+	Esophag	+	Eal
		Across		Esophagus or throat		Pertaining to



[Medlineplus: Word Parts](#) or [MedlinePlus: HealthTopics](#)