

# TERMINOLOGY

CN 12

1. Color the four body planes in quiet, pastel colors.
2. Color the anatomical directions (arrows) in bright or dark colors for emphasis.
3. The body itself is not to be colored.

A precise set of terms and planes have evolved to describe positions, relationships, and directions within the human body. To avoid confusion, they must always be related to the standard *anatomical position*: standing erect, palms of the hands forward.

*Planes* are fixed lines of reference along which the body is often divided (sectioned) to facilitate the viewing of structure. By studying a region from sagittal, transverse, and frontal planes of reference, a 3-dimensional perspective can be obtained.

Terms of *position* and *direction* describe the position of one organ relative to another, usually along one of the three major body planes.

## BODY PLANES\*

### MEDIAN<sup>a</sup>

The midline plane dividing the body into left/right halves.

### SAGITTAL<sup>b</sup>

The plane dividing the body into unequal left and right parts and parallel to the median plane. The terms *medial* and *lateral* relate to this plane.

### CORONAL, FRONTAL<sup>c</sup>

The plane dividing the body into equal/unequal front and back parts. The terms *anterior/posterior* relate to this plane.

### TRANSVERSE, CROSS HORIZONTAL<sup>d</sup>

The horizontal plane divides the body into upper (cranial) and lower (caudal) parts. Cross/transverse sections are perpendicular to the long axis of the body or other structure and may not be horizontal.

## ANATOMICAL DIRECTIONS/POSITIONS\*

### CRANIAL, SUPERIOR<sup>e</sup>

These terms refer to a structure being closer to the head or higher than another structure in the body.

### CAUDAL, INFERIOR<sup>f</sup>

These terms refer to a structure being closer to the feet or lower than another structure in the body.

### ANTERIOR, VENTRAL<sup>g</sup>

These terms refer to a structure being more in front than another structure in the body.

### POSTERIOR, DORSAL<sup>h</sup>

These terms refer to a structure being more in back than another structure in the body.

### MEDIAL<sup>i</sup>

This term refers to a structure being closer to the median plane than another structure in the body.

### LATERAL<sup>j</sup>

This term refers to a structure being further away from the median plane than another structure in the body.

### PROXIMAL<sup>k</sup>

Employed with reference to the limbs only, this term refers to a structure being closer to the median plane or root of the limb than another structure in the limb. Such a structure would ordinarily be superior to the other.

### DISTAL<sup>l</sup>

Employed with reference to the limbs only, this term refers to a structure being further away from the median plane or root of the limb than another structure in that limb. Such a structure would ordinarily be inferior to the other.

