

List of medical roots, suffixes and prefixes

This is a **list of roots, suffixes, and prefixes** used in medical terminology, their meanings, and their etymology. There are a few rules when using medical roots. Firstly, prefixes and suffixes, primarily in Greek, but also in Latin, have a droppable *-o-*. As a general rule, this *-o-* almost always acts as a joint-stem to connect two consonantal roots, e.g. *arthr-* + *-o-* + *logy* = *arthrology*. But generally, the *-o-* is dropped when connecting to a vowel-stem; e.g. *arthr-* + *itis* = *arthritis*, instead of *arthr-o-itis*. Secondly, medical roots generally go together according to language: Greek prefixes go with Greek suffixes and Latin prefixes with Latin suffixes. Although international scientific vocabulary is not stringent about segregating combining forms of different languages, it is advisable when coining new words not to mix different lingual roots.

Prefixes and suffixes

The following is an alphabetical list of medical prefixes and suffixes, along with their meanings, origin, and an English example.

A

Prefix or suffix	Meaning	Origin language and etymology	Example(s)
a-, an-	Denotes an absence of, without	Ancient Greek ἀ-/ἀν- (a-/an-), without, not	Apathy, Analgia
ab-	away from	Latin	Abduction
abdomin(o)-	Of or relating to the abdomen	Latin (abdōmen), abdomen, fat around the belly	Abdomen
-ac, -acal	pertaining to	Greek -ακός (-akos)	cardiac, hydrophobic, pharmacomaniacal
acanth(o)-	thorn or spine	Ancient Greek ἄκανθα (akantha), thorn	acanthion, acanthocyte, acanthoma, acanthulus
acous(io)-	Of or relating to hearing	Greek ἀκουστικός (acoustikos), of or for hearing	acoumeter, acoustician
acr(o)-	extremity, topmost	Greek ἄκρον (akron), highest or farthest point	Acrocary, acromegaly, acroosteolysis, acroposthia
-acusis	hearing	Greek ἀκουστικός (acoustikos), of or for hearing	paracusis
-ad	toward, in the direction of		dorsad
ad-	increase, adherence, motion toward, very	Latin	Adduction
aden(o)-, aden(i)-	Of or relating to a gland	Ancient Greek ἀδής, ἀδέν- (adēn, aden-), an acorn; a gland	Adenocarcinoma, adenology, adenotome, adenotyphus
adip(o)-	Of or relating to fat or fatty tissue	Latin (adeps, adip-), fat	Adipocyte
adren(o)-	Of or relating to adrenal glands	Latin	adrenal artery
-aemia (BrE)	blood condition	Greek ἀναμία, without blood	Anaemia
aer(o)-	air, gas	Greek αἴρ, ἀέρος	Aerosinusitis
aesthesio- (BrE)	sensation	Greek αἰσθησις	Anesthesia
-al	pertaining to	Latin -alis	abdominal
alb-	Denoting a white or pale color	Latin <i>albus</i> , white	Albino