

Underwriting Glossary

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

A

ACUTE: sharp, sudden, intense for a short period of time.

ADENOCARCINOMA: cancerous tumor of glandular cells.

ADENOMA: tumor of glandular cells. This is a benign (non-cancerous) tumor.

ALBUMINURIA: protein in the urine (an abnormal condition).

ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE: a progressive disease with specific brain abnormalities marked by memory loss and progressive inability to function normally at even the simplest tasks.

ANALYSIS: breaking apart of a substance to understand its contents.

ANEMIA: condition of less than normal numbers of red blood cells or amount of hemoglobin inside the red blood cells. Literally, anemia means lacking (AN-) in blood (-EMIA).

ANEURYSM: a balloonlike swelling in the wall of an artery.

ANGINA: sharp pain in the chest resulting from a decrease in blood supply to the heart muscle; also call angina pectoris (chest).

ANGIOGRAPHY: process of recording (by x-ray) blood vessels after a dye is injected.

ANGIOPLASTY: surgical repair of a blood vessel. This term is most often used to describe a procedure in which a tube (catheter) is placed in a clogged artery and a balloon in the end of the tube is inflated to flatten the clogged material against the wall of the artery. This opens the blood vessel so that more blood can pass through.

AORTA: largest artery; it leads from the lower left chamber of the heart to arteries all over the body.

APNEA: not (A-) able to breathe (PNEA).

ARRHYTHMIA: abnormal heart rhythm.

ARTERIOSCLEROSIS: hardening of arteries. The most common form of arteriosclerosis is atherosclerosis, which is hardening of arteries caused by a collection of fatty, cholesterol-like deposits (plaque) in arteries.

ARTHROGRAM: x-ray record of a joint.

ARTHROSCOPE: an instrument to examine the inside of a joint.

ASTHMA: difficult breathing caused by spasms of the bronchial tubes or swelling of their mucous membrane lining.

ATELECTASIS: collapsed lung (ATEL= "incomplete"; -ECTASIS = "dilation").

ATHEROSCLEROSIS: See Arteriosclerosis.

ATRIUM: upper chamber of the heart (pl. atria).

ATROPHY: decrease in size of an organ.

AUTOPSY: examination of a dead body to discover the actual cause of death; also called a post mortem exam or necropsy. Literally, the term means to see (-OPSY) with one's own (AUTO-) eyes.

AZT: an antiviral drug (zidovudine) prescribed for the treatment of AIDS.

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B

BARIUM ENEMA: an x-ray picture of the lower digestive tract after injecting a solution of barium into the rectum.

BENIGN: not cancerous; a tumor that does not spread and is limited in growth.

BIOPSY: process of viewing living tissue. A sample of tissue is removed from an organ and then prepared for viewing under the microscope.

BLADDER: see Urinary Bladder.

BLOOD PRESSURE: a measure of how well blood circulates through your arteries, listen in the format of the systolic pressure over the diastolic pressure. Normal blood pressure is about 120/80.

BONE MARROW: soft, sponge-like material in the inner part of bones. It is the place where blood cells are made.

BP: abbreviation for blood pressure.

BRADYCARDIA: condition of slow heartbeat.

BRADYCARDIC: a slowing of the heart rate to less than 50 beats per minute.

BRONCHITIS: inflammation of the bronchial tubes.

BRONCHOSCOPY: visual examination of the bronchial tubes by passing an endoscope (brochoscope) through the trachea (windpipe) into the bronchi.

BUN: abbreviation for blood urea nitrogen

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C

C-SECTION: shorthand for cesarean section, which is surgical delivery of a baby through the abdominal wall.

CARCINOMA: cancerous tumor. Carcinomas form from epithelial cells, which line the internal organs as well as cover the outside of the body.

CARDIAC: pertaining to the heart.

CARDIOLOGIST: specialist in the study of the heart and heart disorders.

CARDIOMEGALY: enlargement of the heart.

CARDIOMYOPATHY: disease of heart muscle.

CAT SCAN: computerized axial tomography

CBC: abbreviation for complete blood count, which is an all-purpose blood test.

CELLULITIS: inflammation of soft tissue under the skin; marked by swelling, redness, and pain and caused by bacterial infection.

CEREBELLAR: pertaining to the cerebellum; the lower, back part of the brain.

CEREBRAL: pertaining to the cerebrum, the largest part of the brain.

CEREBROVASCULAR ACCIDENT: a disorder of blood vessels within the cerebrum. A CVA results from poor blood supply to the brain. Also called a stroke.

CERVICAL: pertaining to the neck of the body or the neck of the uterus (cervix).

CERVIX: the lower, neck-like portion of the uterus (womb) that opens into the vagina.

CHEMOTHERAPY: treatment with drugs; most often used to refer to drug treatment for cancer.

CHF: abbreviation for congestive heart failure. See pulmonary edema.

CHOLECYSTECTOMY: removal of the gallbladder.

CHOLEDOCHOTOMY: incision of the common bile duct.

CHOLELITHIASIS: abnormal condition of gallstones.

CHRONIC: lasting over a long period of time (CHRON/O).

CIRCULATORY SYSTEM: the organs (heart and blood vessels) that carry blood throughout the body. This system also includes the vessels that carry lymph (a clear fluid containing white blood cells) within the body.

CIRRHOSIS: liver disease with deterioration of liver cells; often caused by alcoholism and poor nutrition.

CLINICAL: pertaining to the bedside or clinic. Clinical work involves patient care.

COLITIS: inflammation of the colon (large intestine).

COLON: large intestine (bowel).

COLONOSCOPY: visual examination of the colon.

CONGENITAL: pertaining to conditions that are present at birth, regardless of their causes.

CONNECTIVE TISSUE: fibrous tissue that supports and connects internal organs, bones, and walls of blood vessels.

CORONARY: pertaining to the heart. Coronary arteries branch from the aorta (largest artery) to bring oxygen-rich blood to the heart muscle.

CRANIAL CAVITY: the space surrounded by the skull which contains the brain and other organs.

CREATININE: nitrogen-containing waste that is removed from the blood by the kidney and excreted in urine.

CVA: abbreviation for cerebrovascular accident, i.e. stroke.

CYSTITIS: inflammation of the urinary bladder.

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D

DEEP VEIN THROMBOSIS: a blood clot in a deep vein.

DEFIBRILLATION: the cessation of fibrillation

DELUSIONAL: having an irrational belief that cannot be changed by a rational argument, often found in schizophrenia and manic-depressive psychosis.

DERMATITIS: inflammation of the skin.

DERMATOLOGIST: specialist in treatment of the skin and skin diseases.

DIABETES MELLITUS: abnormal condition marked by deficient insulin (hormone from the pancreas) in the blood. This deficiency causes sugar to remain in the blood instead of entering the cells of the body. Called diabetes, from a Greek word meaning a "siphon," through which water passes easily; one symptom of diabetes is frequent urination.

DIABETIC KETOACIDOSIS: depletion of the body's alkali reserves due to diabetes, causing a major disruption in the body's acid-base balance. The breath smells fruity and the patient is usually comatose.

DIAGNOSIS: determining what's wrong with a patient by using the patient's symptoms, signs, test results, medical background, and other factors.

DIALYSIS: the procedure to filter blood for patients with kidney failure, also used to remove absorbed toxins from overdosing and poisoning.

DIASTOLIC: pressure during the relaxing of the heart.

DIGESTIVE SYSTEM: the organs that bring food into the body and break it down so that it can enter the bloodstream. Food that cannot be broken down is removed from the body through the rectum and anus (end of the digestive system).

DILATION: widening, dilatation.

DIURETIC: drug used to increase diuresis, i.e. lasix

DIVERTICULITIS: inflammation of the colon.

DYSPNEA: shortness of breath.

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E

ECG: electrocardiogram. Measures heart activity.

EEG: electroencephalogram. Measures brain activity.

EKG: see ECG.

EDEMA: excessive accumulation of fluid.

ELECTROCARDIOGRAM: record of the electricity in the heart.

ELECTROENCEPHALOGRAM: record of the electricity in the brain.

ELECTROENCEPHALOGRAPHY: process of recording the electricity in the brain.

ENCEPHALITIS: inflammation of the brain.

ENDOCARDITIS: inflammation of cardiac tissue, usually caused by bacterial infection.

ENDOCRINE GLANDS: organs that produce hormones. Hormones enter the blood and travel to other organs and glands, causing an increase or decrease in their ability to function.

ENDOSCOPE: a long flexible tube with its own special lighting.

ENTERITIS: inflammation of the small intestine.

ESOPHAGITIS: inflammation of the esophagus.

ESOPHAGUS: tube that carries food from the throat to the stomach.

ETA: abbreviation for Estimated Time of Arrival.

EXOCRINE GLANDS: glands that produce (secrete) chemicals that leave the body

through tubes or ducts. Examples of exocrine glands are tear, sweat, and salivary glands.

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F

FEMALE REPRODUCTIVE SYSTEM: organs that produce and transport egg cells and secrete female hormones, such as estrogen and progesterone. The system also contains an organ (uterus) that permits the growth of the embryo and fetus.

FIBROIDS: benign growths of muscle tissue in the uterus.

FIBRILLATION: an uncoordinated, quivering of the heart muscle resulting in a completely irregular pulse.

FIRST-DEGREE BURN: a burn affecting only the epidermis. The color of the burn is red, capillary refill is present, the skin texture is normal, and the burn heals in five to ten days with no scarring.

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G

GALLBLADDER: sac below the liver that stores bile and delivers it to the small intestine.

GASTRECTOMY: excision (removal) of the stomach

GASTRITIS: inflammation of the stomach.

GASTROENTERITIS: inflammation of the stomach and the intestines.

GASTROSCOPY: visual examination of the stomach with an endoscope.

GERIATRICIAN: specialist in the treatment of diseases of old age.

GERIATRICS: treatment of disorders of old age.

GLAND: a group of cells that secrete (send) chemicals to the outside of the body (exocrine glands) or directly into the bloodstream (endocrine glands).

GLYSOCURIA: abnormal condition of sugar in the urine.

GRAVES' DISEASE: see hyperthyroidism.

GYNECOLOGY: study of female disorders.

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H

HEART: hollow, muscular organ in the chest that pumps blood throughout the body.

HEART/LUNG BYPASS: using a machine to breathe and circulate blood for a patient for any number of clinical or surgical reasons, like to use to rewarm the blood of severely hypothermic patient.

HEIMLICH MANEUVER: a first-aid measure used to dislodge something caught in a person's throat that is obstructing breathing.

HEMATOCRIT: the proportion, by volume, of red blood cells in a CBC.

HEMATOLOGIST: specialist in blood and blood disorders.

HEMATOMA: mass or collection of blood under the skin; commonly called a bruise or black-and-blue mark.

HEMATURIA: abnormal condition of blood in the urine.

HEMIPARESIS: paralysis or weakness on one side of the body.

HEMODIALYSIS: use of a kidney machine to filter blood to remove waste materials, such as urea. Blood leaves the body, enters the machine, and is carried back to the body through a catheter (tube).

HEMOGLOBIN: protein found in red blood cells. Hemoglobin combines with oxygen and carries it in the blood.

HEMORRHAGE: the dramatic and sudden loss of blood.

HEPATIC: pertaining to the liver.

HEPATITIS: inflammation of the liver.

HEPATOMA: tumor of the liver.

HEPATOMEGALY: enlargement of the liver.

HODGKIN'S DISEASE: malignant (cancerous) tumor of lymph nodes.

HORMONE: chemical made by a gland, sent directly into the bloodstream and not to the outside of the body. Glands that produce hormones are call endocrine glands.

HYPERGLYCEMIA: higher than normal levels of sugar in the blood.

HYPERLIPIDEMIA: excessive fat in the blood.

HYPERPARATHYROIDISM: higher than normal levels of parathyroid hormone in the blood.

HYPERTENSION: high blood pressure.

HYPERTHYROIDISM: excessive activity of the thyroid gland. Also known as Graves' disease.

HYPERTROPHY: enlargement or overgrowth of an organ or part due to an increase in

size of individual cells.

HYPOGLYCEMIA: lower than normal levels of sugar in the blood.

HYPOPITUITARISM: decrease or stoppage of function of the pituitary gland.

HYPOTENSION: abnormally low blood pressure.

HYPOTENSIVE: pertaining to low blood pressure, or to a person with abnormally low blood pressure.

HYPOTHERMIA: when the body temperature reaches significantly below normal body temperatures (usually below 95 degrees).

HYPOTHYROIDISM: lower than normal activity of the thyroid gland.

HYSTERECTOMY: excision (removal) of the uterus, either through the abdominal wall (abdominal hysterectomy) or through the vagina (vaginal hysterectomy). A total hysterectomy is removal of the entire uterus, including the cervix.

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I

ILEUM: third part of the small intestine.

INFARCTION: area of dead tissue caused by decreased blood flow to that part of the body.

INFECTIOUS DISEASE SPECIALIST: specialist in treating disorders that are caused and spread by microorganisms such as bacteria and viruses.

INFILTRATE: material that accumulates in an organ; often used to describe a solid material and fluid collection in the lung.

INSULIN: endocrine hormone produced by the pancreas and released into the bloodstream. Insulin allows sugar to leave the blood and enter body cells.

INTERNAL MEDICINE: branch of medicine specializing in the diagnosis of disorders and treatment with drugs.

INTRACEREBRAL: inside the brain.

INTRAVENOUS: pertaining to within a vein.

INTRAVENOUS PYELOGRAM: x-ray record of the kidney after dye is injected into a vein. PYEL/O means "renal pelvis," the central section of the kidney.

IRRITABLE BOWEL SYNDROME: a chronic and unpleasant gastrointestinal condition marked by abdominal cramping, and diarrhea or constipation.

ISCHEMIA: deficiency of blood flow to a part of the body, caused by narrowing or obstruction of a blood vessel.

IV: abbreviation for intravenous, meaning through the vein.

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J

JAUNDICE: orange-yellow coloration of the skin and other tissues. This symptom may be caused by accumulation of a pigment (bilirubin) in the blood when the diseased liver is not able to remove bile (containing bilirubin) from the body.

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K

KIDNEY: organ behind the abdomen that makes urine by filtering wastes from the blood.

KUB: shorthand for kidney, ureter, and bladder tests.

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L

LAPAROSCOPY: visual examination of the abdomen (LAPAR/O). A small incision is made near the navel, and an instrument is inserted to view abdominal organs.

LAPAROTOMY: incision of the abdomen. A large incision is made across the abdomen, and the abdomen is opened to examine its organs.

LARGE INTESTINE: part of the intestine that receives undigested material from the small intestine and transports it to the outside of the body; colon.

LARYNGEAL: pertaining to the larynx (voice box).

LARYNGETOMY: removal of the larynx (voice box).

LARYNX: voice box; located at the top of the trachea (windpipe) and containing the vocal cords.

LESION: any damage to a part of the body, caused by disease or trauma.

LEUKEMIA: malignant (cancerous) condition of excess numbers of white blood cells (leukocytes) in the blood and bone marrow.

LFT: abbreviation for liver function test.

LITHOTRIPSY: process of crushing (-TRIPSY) a stone in the urinary tract using ultrasonic vibrations.

LIVER: organ in the upper right region of the abdomen that makes bile, stores sugar and produces proteins to help blood clot.

LUNG: one of the two paired organs in the chest through which oxygen enters and carbon dioxide leaves the body.

LUNG CAPILLARIES: tiny blood vessels surrounding lung tissue and through which gases pass into and out of the bloodstream.

LYMPH: clear fluid that is found in lymph vessels and produced from fluid surrounding cells. Lymph contains white blood cells (lymphocytes) that fight disease.

LYMPH NODE: stationary collection of lymph cells. Lymph nodes are found all over the body.

LYMPHADENOPATHY: disease of lymph nodes.

LYMPHANGIOGRAM: x-ray record of lymph vessels after dye is injected into soft tissue of the foot.

LYMPHOCYTE: white blood cell that is found within lymph and lymph nodes

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M

MAGNETIC RESONANCE IMAGING: picture of the body using magnetic waves. Organs can be seen in three plane: frontal (front to back), sagittal (side to side), and transverse (cross-section).

MALE REPRODUCTIVE SYSTEM: organs that produce sperm cells and male hormones, such as testosterone.

MALIGNANT: tending to become progressively worse; used to describe cancerous tumors that invade and spread to distant organs.

MAMMARY: pertaining to the breast.

MAMMOGRAM: x-ray record of the breast.

MAMMOPLASTY: surgical repair (reconstruction) of the breast.

MASTECTOMY: removal (excision) of the breast.

MEDS: short for medications, or drugs

MENINGITIS: inflammation of the meninges (the membranes around the brain and spinal cord).

MENORRHAGIA: excessive bleeding from the uterus during the time of menstruation.

MENORRHEA: normal discharge of blood and tissue from the uterine lining during menstruation.

METASTASIS: spread of a cancerous tumor to a distant organ or location; literally means beyond (meta-) control (-stasis).

MI: abbreviation for myocardial infarction.

MIGRAINE: attacks of headache, usually on one side of the head, caused by changes in blood vessel size and accompanied by nausea, vomiting and sensitivity to light (photophobia). From the French word migraine, meaning "severe head pain."

MRI: see Magnetic Resonance Imaging.

MUSCULOSKELETAL SYSTEM: organs that support the body and allow it to move. These include muscles, bones, joints, and connective tissues such as tendons and ligaments.

MVA: abbreviation used in ERs for a motor vehicle accident.

MYELOGRAM: x-ray record of the spinal cord.

MYOCARDIAL: pertaining to the muscle of the heart.

MYOCARDIAL INFARCTION: area of dead tissue in heart muscle; also known as a heart attack or an MI.

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N

NECROSIS: death of cells

NEONATAL: pertaining to new birth; the period of first four weeks after birth.

NEOPLASM: any new growth of tissue; a tumor.

NEPHRECTOMY: removal (excision) of a kidney.

NEPHRITIS: inflammation of the kidneys.

NEPHROLOGIST: specialist in diagnosis and treatment of kidney diseases.

NEPHROLOGY: study of the kidney and its diseases.

NEPHROPATHY: disease of the kidney

NEPHROSIS: abnormal condition of the kidney. This condition is often associated with a deterioration of kidney tubules.

NEPHROSTOMY: opening from the kidney to the outside of the body.

NERVOUS SYSTEM: organs (brain, spinal cord, and nerves) that transmit electrical messages throughout the body.

NEURAL: pertaining to nerves.

NEURITIS: inflammation of a nerve.

NEUROLOGIST: specialist in the diagnosis and treatment of nerve disorders.

NEUROLOGY: study of the nervous system and nerve disorders.

NORMAL SINUS RHYTHM: a normal heart rate, which is between 60 and 80 beats per minute in an adult

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O

O NEG: type O, Rhesus negative blood; also called universal donor blood since any human can receive O negative blood without complication.

OBSTETRIC: pertaining to pregnancy, labor, and the delivery of an infant.

OBSTETRICIAN: specialist in the delivery of a baby and care of the mother during pregnancy and labor.

OBSTETRICS: branch of surgery that deals with pregnancy, labor, and delivery of an infant. The Latin word obstetrix means "midwife."

ONCOLOGICAL: pertaining to the study of tumors.

ONCOLOGIST: medical doctor who specializes in the study and treatment of tumors.

ONCOLOGY: study of tumors

OPHTHALMOLOGIST: specialist in the study of the eye and treatment of eye disorders.

ORCHIDECTOMY: removal (excision) of a testicle; orchiectomy.

ORGAN: an independent part of the body, composed of different tissues working together to do a specific job.

ORTHOPEDIST: specialist in surgical correction of musculoskeletal (muscles, bones, and joints) disorders. This doctor was originally concerned with straightening (ORTH/O) bones in the legs of deformed children (PED).

OSTEITIS: inflammation of a bone.

OSTEOARTHRITIS: inflammation of bone and joints. This is a disease of older people, marked by stiffness and pain and degeneration of joints.

OSTEOMA: tumor (benign) of bone.

OSTEOMYELITIS: inflammation of bone and bone marrow (myel-). This condition is caused by a bacterial infection.

OTITIS: inflammation of the ear.

OVARIAN: pertaining to an ovary or ovaries.

OVARY: one of two organs in the female abdomen that produces egg cells and female hormones.

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P

PANCREAS: gland that produces digestive juices that work on food in the small intestine, and the hormone insulin.

PANCREATECTOMY: removal (excision) of the pancreas.

PANCREATITIS: inflammation of the pancreas.

PARALYSIS: loss or impairment of movement in a part of the body.

PARATHYROID GLANDS: four endocrine glands behind the thyroid gland. These glands are concerned with maintaining the proper levels of calcium in the blood and bones.

PATHOLOGIST: specialist in the study of disease, by examination of tissues and cells. A pathologist examines biopsy samples and performs autopsies.

PATHOLOGY: study of disease.

PEDIATRICIAN: specialist in the treatment of diseases in children.

PEDIATRICS: branch of medicine specializing in the treatment of diseases in children.

PELVIS: hip bone. The pelvis is composed of the ilium (upper portion), ischium (lower portion), and the pubis (front portion).

PEPTIC ULCER: sore (lesion) of the mucous membrane lining the first part of the small intestine or stomach.

PHARYNGITIS: inflammation of the pharynx (throat).

PHARYNX: the organ behind the mouth that receives swallowed food and delivers it to the esophagus. The pharynx also receives air from the nose and passes it to the trachea (windpipe). Also known as the throat.

PHLEBOTOMY: incision of a vein.

PITUITARY GLAND: organ at the base of the brain that secretes many different hormones. These hormones enter the blood to regulate other organs and endocrine glands. For example, growth hormone from the pituitary gland affects the growth of bones, thyroid-stimulating hormone controls the thyroid gland, and follicle-stimulating hormone affects the ovaries.

PLEURA: double membrane that surrounds the lungs.

PLEURISY: inflammation of the pleura.

PNEUMONIA: abnormal condition of the lungs (pneumon/o), marked by inflammation and collection of material within the air sacs of the lungs.

PNEUMONITIS: inflammation of a lung or lungs.

POLYURIA: excessive (poly-) urination (-uria).

POST MORTEM: after death.

POST PARTUM: after birth.

PROGNOSIS: forecast as to the probably outcome of an illness or treatment; literally, before (pro-) knowledge (-gnosis).

PROLAPSE: falling down, drooping of a part of the body; literally, a sliding (-lapse) forward (pro-).

PROSTATE GLAND: male gland that surrounds the base of the urinary bladder. It produces fluid that leaves the body with sperm cells.

PROSTATECTOMY: removal (excision) of the prostate gland.

PROTEINURIA: abnormal condition of protein in the urine; albuminuria.

PSYCHIATRIST: specialist in treatment of the mind and mental disorders.

PSYCHIATRY: treatment of disorders of the mind.

PSYCHOSIS: abnormal condition of the mind; serious mental disorder that involves loss of normal perception of reality.

PULMONARY: pertaining to the lungs.

PULMONARY EDEMA: abnormal collection of fluid in the lung (within the air sacs of the lung).

PULMONARY EMBOLISM: a blood clot in the lungs.

PULSE: a pulsating artery that gives evidence that the heart is beating, usually about 70 times per minute.

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R

RADIOLOGIST: specialist in the use of x-rays to diagnose illness. A radiologist also uses ultrasound and magnetic resonance imaging techniques.

RADIOLOGY: science of using x-rays in the diagnosis of disease.

REMISSION: lessening of symptoms of a disease.

RENAL: pertaining to the kidney.

RENAL FAILURE: kidneys stop functioning.

RESPIRATORY SYSTEM: organs that control breathing, allowing air to enter and leave the body.

RETINOPATHY: disease of the retina.

RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS: chronic inflammatory disease of joints and connective tissue leading to deformed joints.

RHEUMATOLOGIST: specialist in treatment of diseases of joints and muscles. Rheumat/o comes from the Greek rheuma meaning "that which flows, as a stream or a river." Inflammatory disorders of joints and various forms of arthritis are marked by a collections of fluid in the joint space.

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S

SARCOMA: cancerous tumor of connective (flesh) tissue, such as bone, muscle, fat, or cartilage.

SCHIZOPHRENIA: a mental disorder marked by hallucinations, delusions, and disintegration of the thought processes.

SECOND DEGREE BURN: there are two levels of second degree burn: the first level is a burn in which both the epidermis and the underlying dermis are damaged. The color of the burn is red (and there may be blistering); capillary refill is present; the skin texture is edematous (filled with fluid), and the burn heals in 10 to 21 days with no or minimal scarring. The second level is a damaging, deep partial-thickness burn that is pink or white in color; capillary refill might or might not be present; the skin texture is thick; and the burn heals in 25-60 days with a dense scar.

SEPSIS: a very severe infection.

SEPTIC: pertaining to infection.

SEPTICEMIA: condition of infection in the blood. Septicemia is commonly called blood poisoning and is associated with the presence of bacteria or their poisons in the blood.

SHOCK: group of symptoms (pale skin, rapid pulse, shallow breathing) that indicate poor oxygen supply to tissue and insufficient return of blood to the heart.

SONOGRAM: record of sound waves after they bounce off organs in the body; also called ultrasound exam or echogram.

SPLEEN: organ in the upper left abdomen that stores blood cells. It also destroys red blood cells, setting free the hemoglobin that is in the cells, and produces white blood cells, called lymphocytes.

SPLENECTOMY: surgical removal of the spleen.

SPLENOMEGALY: enlargement of the spleen.

STASIS: a slowing or stopping of blood flow

STD: abbreviation for sexually transmitted disease.

STROKE: cerebrovascular accident. Trauma to or blockage of the blood vessels within the brain leads to less blood supply to brain tissue. This caused cells to die and loss of function to the part of the body controlled by those nerve cells.

SUBDURAL HEMATOMA: collection of blood under the dura mater (outermost layer of the membranes surrounding the brain).

SURGERY: branch of medicine that treats disease by manual (hand) or operative methods.

SYNDROME: set of symptoms and signs of disease that occur together to indicate a disease condition.

SYSTEM: group of organs working together to do a job in the body. For example, the digestive system includes the mouth, throat, stomach, and intestines, all of which help to bring food into the body, break it down, and deliver it to the bloodstream.

SYSTOLIC: pressure during the contraction of the heart systolic murmur - a cardiac murmur that occurs between the first and second heart sounds.

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T

TACHYCARDIA: condition of fast, rapid heartbeat.

TETRALOGY OF FALLOT: a surgically correctable congenital heart defect that consists of pulmonary stenosis, hypertrophy (enlargement), of the right ventricle, a ventricular septal defect, and a shift of the aorta to the right.

THIRD DEGREE BURN: a burn that damages (or destroys) the full thickness of the skin and the tissues underneath. The color of the burn is white, black, or brown; capillary refill is absent; the skin texture is leathery; and there is no spontaneous healing.

THORACIC: pertaining to the chest.

THROMBOSIS: abnormal condition of clot formation.

THROMBUS: blood clot.

THYROID GLAND: endocrine gland in the neck that produces hormones that act on cells all over the body. The hormone increases the activity of cells by stimulating the production of energy.

TOMOGRAPHY: series of x-ray pictures that show an organ in depth, as if to see "slices" of an organ.

TOX SCREEN: toxicological analysis of the blood, ordered when a drug overdose is suspected and the drugs need to be identified.

TRAUMA CENTER: an emergency room with a trauma surgeon on duty.

TRIAGE: the system of prioritizing patients in an emergency situation in which there are a great number of injured or ill.

TRICUSPID VALVE: valve on the right side of the heart that separates the upper right chamber (atrium) from the lower right chamber (ventricle). It has three (tri-) cusps or points.

TYPE AND CROSSMATCH: blood typing to identify patient's blood type.

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U

ULCER: sore or defect in the surface of an organ which is produced by destruction of tissue.

ULCERATIVE COLITIS: an inflammatory and ulcerative condition of the colon.

ULTRASOUND: sound waves with greater frequency than can be heard by the human ear. This energy is used to detect abnormalities by beaming the waves into the body and recording the echoes that reflect off tissues.

UNSTABLE ANGINA - ANGINA PECTORIS: in which the cardiac pain has changed in pattern.

URINALYSIS: examination of urine to determine its contents.

URINARY SYSTEM: organs that produce and send urine out of the body. These organs are the kidneys, ureters, bladder, and urethra.

UROLOGIST: specialist in operating on the urinary tract in males and females and the reproductive tract in males.

UROLOGY: a study of the urinary system in males and females and the reproductive tract in males.

UTI: abbreviation for urinary tract infection.

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V

VASCULAR: pertaining to blood vessels.

VASCULITIS: inflammation of blood vessels.

VENIPUNCTURE: the drawing of blood from a vein.

VENTRICLE: one of the two lower chambers of the heart. The right ventricle receives blood from the right atrium (upper chamber) and sends it to the lungs. The left ventricle receives blood from the left atrium and sends it to the body through the aorta.

V-FIB: ventricular fibrillation

V-TACH: ventricular tachycardia

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W

WBC: abbreviation for white blood cell count, used to determine how many white blood cells there are in the body to defend against bacteria.

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