

# Glossary Of Medical Terms

**Acute:** An illness or symptom of sudden onset, which generally has a short duration.

**Anaerobic:** Of, relating to, or being activity in which the body incurs an oxygen debt (for example weight training or resistive exercises) and does not immediately burn off a lot of calories and fat.

**Antiseptic:** Inhibiting growth of infectious organisms.

**Bacteria:** Microscopic germs. Some bacteria are "harmful" and can cause disease, while other "friendly" bacteria protect the body from harmful invading organisms.

**Cancer:** Refers to the various types of malignant neoplasms that contain cells growing out of control and invading adjacent tissues, which may metastasize to distant tissues.

**Candidiasis:** Infection of the skin or mucous membrane with any species of candida, usually *Candida albicans*. The infection is usually localized to the skin, nails, mouth, vagina, bronchi, or lungs, but may invade the bloodstream. It is a common inhabitant of the GI tract, only becoming a problem when it multiplies excessively and invades local tissues. Growth is encouraged by a weakened immune system, as in AIDS, or with the prolonged administration of antibiotics. Vaginal **symptoms** include itching in the genital area, pain when urinating, and a thick odorless vaginal discharge.

**Chemotherapy:** A treatment of disease by any chemicals. Used most often to refer to the chemical treatments used to combat cancer cells.

**Chronic:** Usually Chronic illness: Illness extending over a long period of time.

**Crohn's Disease:** Chronic inflammatory disease of the gastrointestinal tract. The most common symptoms are abdominal pain, often in the lower right area, and diarrhea. Rectal bleeding, weight loss, and fever may also occur. Bleeding may be serious and persistent, leading to anemia.

**Enzymes:** Specific protein catalysts produced by the cells that are crucial in chemical reactions and in building up or synthesizing most compounds in the body. Each enzyme performs a specific function without itself being consumed. For example, the digestive enzyme amylase acts on carbohydrates in foods to break them down.

**Free Radical:** A free radical is an atom or group of atoms that has at least one unpaired electron. Because another element can easily pick up this free electron and cause a chemical reaction, these free radicals can effect dramatic and destructive changes in the body. Free radicals are activated in heated and rancid oils and by radiation in the atmosphere, among other things.

**H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>:** Hydrogen Peroxide.

**Hemoglobin:** The oxygen-carrying protein of the blood found in red blood cells.

**Immune System:** A complex that protects the body from disease organisms and other foreign bodies. The system includes the humoral immune response and the cell-mediated response. The immune system also protects the body from invasion by making local barriers and inflammation.

**Interferon:** A protein formed by the cells of the immune system in the presence of a virus, etc. It prevents viral reproduction, and is capable of protecting noninfected cells from viral infection. Several kinds of interferon exist including alpha, beta, and gamma.

**Lymph Glands:** Located in the lymph vessels of the body, these glands trap foreign material and produce lymphocytes. These glands act as filters in the lymph system, and contain and form lymphocytes and permit lymphatic cells to destroy certain foreign agents.

**Metabolism:** The chemical processes of living cells in which energy is produced in order to replace and repair tissues and maintain a healthy body. Responsible for the production of energy, biosynthesis of important substances, and degradation of various compounds.

**Nausea:** Symptoms resulting from an inclination to vomit.

**Necrosis:** Death of one or more cells, or of a portion of a tissue or organ.

**Over-The-Counter:** A drug or medication that can legally be bought without a doctor's prescription being required.

**Parasite:** An organism living in or on another organism.

**Peroxides:** Free radicals that are by-products formed in our bodies when molecules of fat react with oxygen.

**Red Blood Cell:** Any of the hemoglobin-containing cells that carry oxygen to the tissues and are responsible for the red color of blood.

**Stomach:** A hollow, muscular, J-shaped pouch located in the upper part of the abdomen to the left of the midline. The upper end (fundus) is large and dome-shaped; the area just below the fundus is called the body of the stomach. The fundus and the body are often referred to as the cardiac portion of the stomach. The lower (pyloric) portion curves downward and to the right and includes the antrum and the pylorus. The function of the stomach is to begin digestion by physically breaking down food received from the esophagus. The tissues of the stomach wall are composed of three types of muscle fibers: circular, longitudinal and oblique. These fibers create structural elasticity and contractibility, both of which are needed for digestion. The stomach mucosa contains cells which secrete hydrochloric acid and this in turn activates the other gastric enzymes pepsin and rennin. To protect itself from being destroyed by its own enzymes, the stomach's mucous lining must constantly regenerate itself.

**Stroke:** A sudden loss of brain function caused by a blockage or rupture of a blood vessel that supplies the brain, characterized by loss of muscular control, complete or partial loss of sensation or consciousness, dizziness, slurred speech, or other symptoms that vary with the extent and severity of the damage to the brain. The most common manifestation is some degree of paralysis, but small strokes may occur without symptoms. Usually caused by arteriosclerosis, it often results in brain damage.

**TID:** Three times a day.

**Topical:** Most commonly 'topical application': Administration to the skin.

**Ulcer:** Lesion on the skin or mucous membrane.

**Ulcerative Colitis:** (Colitis ulcerosa): Ulceration of the colon and rectum, usually long-term and characterized by rectal bleeding or blood in the stool, frequent urgent diarrhea/bowel movements each day, abdominal pain.

**White Blood Cell:** (WBC): A blood cell that does not contain hemoglobin: a blood corpuscle responsible for maintaining the body's immune surveillance system against invasion by foreign substances such as viruses or bacteria. White cells become specifically programmed against foreign invaders and work to inactivate and rid the body of a foreign substance. Also known as a leukocyte.

**Yeast:** A single-cell organism that may cause infection in the mouth, vagina, gastrointestinal tract, and any or all bodily parts. Common yeast infections include candidiasis and thrush.