

# Unit One - Terms and Tech

## Medical Terms and Abbreviations - Lecture Notes

### A Whole New Language

- Health care workers use medical terminology and abbreviations in their work every day.
- It is the professional language that helps them communicate effectively and quickly.
- Abbreviations save time and save space on medical documents.

### Medical Abbreviations

- Shortened forms of words.
- An efficient way of communicating quickly and concisely with other health care workers.
- Always use standard abbreviations.
- Never use an abbreviation if you are unsure about its meaning.
- Patients will not often understand medical abbreviations.
- There is a growing trend toward eliminating periods from most abbreviations.
- Work with your health care facility to learn their policy regarding abbreviations and terminology.
- Sometimes abbreviations are used by themselves, other times they are combined together or with terms to give orders or directions.

### Medical Symbols

#### Some examples:

- > greater than
- < less than
- ↑ higher, elevate, up
- ↓ lower, down
- # pound or number
- ' foot, minute
- " inch, second
- ° degree
- F female
- M male

### Medical Terminology

- It is easiest to learn medical terms by breaking the words into parts:
  - **Prefix** – a syllable or word placed at the beginning of a word.
  - **Suffix** – a syllable or word placed at the end of a word.
    - The meaning of the suffix is usually placed first when the word is defined.
  - **Word Root** – main words or parts to which prefixes and suffixes can be added.

## Health Occupations Professional Essentials

- When prefixes, suffixes, and/or word roots are joined together, vowels are frequently added.
  - Examples: a, e, i, ia, io, o, and u.
  - Combining vowels make it easier to pronounce the term.
- There is always at least one word root, and sometimes more than one.

### How to Use Medical Terminology

- A patient's complaint of "pain in the stomach" can mean many different things.
- After making a diagnosis, health care workers must be able to understand exactly what the problem is.
- What are some of the conditions (using proper medical terminology) that could correspond to a "pain in the stomach"?
  - Gastritis
  - Hepatitis
  - Appendicitis
  - Pancreatitis
  - Gastralgia
  - Ileitis
  - Colitis
  - Diverticulitis

### Pronunciation

- Hints:
  - ch sounds like k.
    - Chyme, Cholecystectomy, Chronic
  - ps sounds like s.
    - Psychiatric, Psychology, Psoriasis
  - pn sounds like n.
    - Pneumonia, Pneumatic
  - c sounds like a soft s when it comes before e, i, and y.
    - Cycle, Cytoplasm, Centrifuge
  - g sounds like j when it comes before e, i, and y.
    - Giant, Gestation, Generic, Gyration
  - i sounds like "eye" when added to the end of a word to form a plural.
    - Glomeruli, Villi, Alveoli, Bacilli

### Medical Terminology

- When you learn the common prefixes, suffixes, and word roots, you have the tools to combine hundreds of medical terms.