

## **TOPIC—Importance of Medical Terminology**

### **OBJECTIVES—**

- 1) Define medical terminology.
- 2) Describe the importance of medical terminology to a career in healthcare.
- 3) Introduce students to the process of learning medical terminology

### **CONTENT—**

*What is a terminology?* It is a set of terms, expressions, designations, or symbols used to represent concepts that are specific to a particular science, discipline, or specialized subject area.

Medical terminology is the language of medicine. The road to success in virtually any healthcare career begins with a solid understanding of medical terminology. It is used by healthcare professionals to communicate with each other and with their patients. Anyone who works in a healthcare setting benefits by the ability to read and interpret the medical terms used in reports and health records.

It is similar to studying a foreign language, that is, there are rules which must be applied and memorization plays a significant part in its mastery. Pronunciation and spelling must also be learned.

A significant number of medical terms can be defined by breaking the term into its component parts – roots, suffixes and prefixes.

All of you have had some exposure to medical terms even if you have never worked in healthcare.

Consider the following terms—

- Appendectomy
- Mastectomy
- Thyroidectomy

What do these terms have in common?

Answer – They all end in the suffix – ectomy which means excision or surgical removal. This allows us to define each of the terms—

- Appendectomy – surgical removal of the appendix
- Mastectomy – surgical removal of breast (mast- and mamm- are the root words which mean breast)
- Thyroidectomy – surgical removal of the thyroid gland

If you take the same root words, we can make additional medical terms—

- Appendicitis
- Mastitis
- Thyroiditis

This time the words all end in the suffix –itis which means inflammation.

So, can you define these terms?

Answer – inflammation of the appendix, inflammation of the breast, and inflammation of the thyroid gland.

As you study medical terminology, it will become clear to you that many medical terms are made up of word parts – roots, suffixes and prefixes. Once you learn these, the meaning of many words becomes accessible to you. Learning any new language is challenging, but an understanding of the basic rules of word building helps to simplify the process.

## **RESOURCES—**

### Medical Dictionary

*Mosby's Medical Dictionary.* Elsevier, Mosby/Saunders.

*Taber's Medical Dictionary.* F. A. Davis Company.

### Medical Terminology Textbooks

Chabner, Davi-Ellen. *Language of Medicine.* Elsevier, Mosby/Saunders.

Jones, Betty Davis. *Comprehensive Medical Terminology.* Thomson-Delmar

### Learning

### Websites

<http://www.online-medical-dictionary.org/> Free online medical dictionary.