



EUROPEAN MEDICINES AGENCY
SCIENCE MEDICINES HEALTH

EMA medical terms simplifier

Plain-language description of medical
terms related to medicines use



EMA Medical Terms Simplifier

Plain-language description of medical terms related to medicines use

This compilation gives plain-language descriptions of medical terms commonly used in information about medicines. Communication specialists at EMA use these descriptions for materials prepared for the public.

In our documents, we often adjust the description wordings to fit the context so that the writing flows smoothly without distorting the meaning. Since the main purpose of these descriptions is to serve our own writing needs, some also include alternative or optional wording to use as needed; we use '<>' for this purpose.

Our list concentrates on side effects and similar terms in summaries of product characteristics and public assessments of medicines but omits terms that are used only rarely. It does not include descriptions of most disease states or those that relate to specialties such as regulation, statistics and complementary medicine or, indeed, broader fields of medicine such as anatomy, microbiology, pathology and physiology.

This resource is continually reviewed and updated internally, and we will publish updates periodically.

If you have comments or suggestions, you may contact us by filling in this [form](#).



¹ This revision includes terms used in cancer clinical trials, a change to seizure-related entries to avoid the use of *fit*, as well as several new and revised terms.

A

abdomen

belly

ablation

procedure to burn or remove parts of <tissue> <an organ>

ablation, radiofrequency

destroying cancer cells with heat generated from radio waves

abrasions

grazes

abscess

a swollen area where pus has collected

absence seizure

[see](#) seizure, absence

acetylcholine

[see](#) neurotransmitter

acetylsalicylic acid

also known as aspirin

acid regurgitation

stomach acid flowing up into the mouth

acneiform

resembling acne

acromegaly

excessive growth particularly of the bones of the hands, feet and face caused by too much growth hormone <from the pituitary gland>

actinic keratoses

<precancerous,> abnormal skin growths caused by too much sunlight

active immunity

[see](#) immunity, active

acute	<short-lived> <sudden> <short-term>
acute coronary syndrome	<heart> conditions such as heart attack and unstable angina <(a type of severe chest pain)> <caused by blocked blood supply to parts of the heart>
acute systemic hypersensitivity reaction	see hypersensitivity reaction, acute systemic
adipocytes	fat cells
adjunct	add-on
adjuvant (vaccines)	a substance <such as aluminium> that increases the effect of the vaccine
administer / administration	do not use; use simple verbs such as 'give' or 'take'
advanced (cancer)	consider has <started to> spread; check definition for each cancer type carefully as this description may not always apply
aggregate	stick together
agonist	a substance that attaches to a receptor (target) and triggers an effect
agranulocytosis	very low level of a type of white blood cell <called granulocytes><, which are important for fighting off infection>
akathisia	a constant urge to move
alcohol intoxication	do not use; explain in text e.g. excessive alcohol consumption
alkaloids	substances that are naturally found in plants

allergen	a substance that causes an allergy
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allergen challenge	a test to measure a patient's reaction to a defined dose of an allergen (the substance that they are allergic to)
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allergic rhinitis	<i>see</i> rhinitis, allergic
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allotransplantation	when a patient receives cells, tissues or organs from a donor
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alopecia	<i>substitute with</i> hair loss
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alveolitis, allergic	<i>see</i> pneumonitis, hypersensitivity
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ambulatory	<i>avoid term where possible or use</i> able to walk
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amnesia	<i>substitute with</i> memory loss
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anaemia	<low levels of red blood cells> <low levels of haemoglobin> <which can cause tiredness and pale skin>
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anaemia, aplastic	when bone marrow stops producing new blood cells <causing tiredness, lower ability to fight infection and uncontrolled bleeding>
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anaemia, haemolytic	excessive breakdown of red blood cells <causing tiredness and pale skin>
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anaesthetic	a medicine <which blocks sensation> used to prevent pain and discomfort <during surgery and medical procedures>
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anaesthetic block	<i>see</i> nerve block
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anaesthetic, general	a medicine that can be used to prevent pain by making the patient unconscious
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anaesthetic, local	a medicine that blocks out sensation used to prevent pain in a part of the body <during surgery or other medical procedure>
anaesthetist	a doctor specialised in anaesthesia
analgesic	painkiller
analgesic, intraspinal	painkilling medicine injected into the spine
anaphylactic reaction (shock)	<i>see</i> anaphylaxis
anaphylactoid reaction	sudden, severe allergic reaction <with breathing difficulty, swelling, lightheadedness, fast heartbeat, sweating and loss of consciousness>
anaphylaxis	sudden, severe allergic reaction <with breathing difficulty, swelling, lightheadedness, fast heartbeat, sweating and loss of consciousness>
androgen	male sex hormone like testosterone
aneurysm	bulging and weakening of blood vessel <wall>
angina	<i>see</i> angina pectoris
angina attacks	sudden pains to the chest, jaw and back, brought on by physical effort and due to problems with the blood flow to the heart
angina pectoris	pains to the chest, jaw and back, brought on by physical effort and due to problems with the blood flow to the heart
angina, unstable	chest pain caused by interruptions in the heart's blood supply, that can occur at rest <or without an obvious trigger>
angioedema	rapid swelling under the skin <in areas such as the face, throat, arms and legs> <which can be life threatening if throat swelling blocks the airway>

angiogenesis growth of new blood vessels

angiography X-rays of blood vessels

angioplasty a procedure to unblock a narrowed blood vessel <in the heart>

anorexia *substitute with* loss of appetite

anovulation when ovaries fail to produce eggs

antagonist a substance that blocks a receptor (target) and stops other substances attaching to it and triggering an effect

EXPLAINER

What does antibiotic resistance mean?

Antibiotics fight off bacteria. Typically, they interfere with processes that are important for the bacteria to survive or multiply.

But bacteria can evolve to neutralise the effects of antibiotics. For example, they may develop enzymes that break down the antibiotic or they may develop a mechanism to keep the antibiotic from entering the bacteria. The antibiotic can therefore no longer fight off the bacteria and the bacteria are considered antibiotic resistant.

The instructions for building the proteins (such as enzymes) that make bacteria antibiotic resistant are contained in their genes. Worryingly, these genes can be passed on to other types of bacteria, sometimes to bacteria of different species. This can cause antibiotic resistance to spread quickly even among unrelated species of bacteria.

antibody a protein in the blood that helps the body's defences by identifying and attaching to specific foreign substances including germs
side effect a protein the body produces that attaches to the medicine <and can affect how well treatment works>

anticoagulant a substance that prevents the blood from clotting

antiemetic	a substance that <prevents> <and> <treats> nausea and vomiting
antigen	a specific structure that the body can recognise as 'foreign' and against which it can produce an antibody
antihistamine	a <medicine> <substance> that prevents symptoms of allergy <i>alternatively</i> an allergy medicine
antihypertensive	blood pressure lowering
antioxidant	a substance that can prevent damage from highly reactive molecules called 'free radicals'
antiplatelet medicines	medicines that prevent platelets in the blood from clumping and blocking arteries
antipyretic	a medicine for treating fever
antiretroviral	<i>use</i> HIV medicine
anuria	a condition in which a patient cannot make or pass urine
aortic stenosis	<i>see</i> stenosis, aortic
apathy	lack of interest or energy
aphasia	problems with use of language <including speech, understanding and reading> <because of brain damage>
apheresis	a procedure where blood is passed through an external device that removes <X> before returning the blood to the body
apnoea	interruption of breathing; <i>see also sleep apnoea and obstructive sleep apnoea</i>

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apnoea, obstructive sleep	repeated interruption of breathing during sleep due to airways becoming blocked
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apnoea, sleep	frequent interruption of breathing during sleep
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aqueous humour	the watery fluid in the eye
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arachnoid	one of the membranes protecting the spine and the brain
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arrhythmia	abnormal or irregular heartbeat
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artery disease, peripheral	reduced blood flow in arteries of the legs and arms
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arthralgia	<i>substitute with</i> joint pain
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arthritis	pain and inflammation in the joints
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arthropathy	damage to the joints
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ascites	a build-up of fluid in the abdomen
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aspergillosis	an infection caused by a fungus called Aspergillus
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asthenia	<i>substitute with</i> weakness
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asymptomatic	showing no symptoms <effects>
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ataxia	inability to coordinate muscle movements
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atelectasis	collapse of the whole or part of a lung
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atherosclerosis	a disease in which fatty deposits build up in the walls of the arteries <i>alternatively</i> fatty deposits in arteries <which can cause blockage>
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atherothrombotic events	problems caused by blood clots and hardening of the arteries
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atonic seizure	<i>see</i> seizure, atonic
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atony	lack of normal muscle <strength> <movement> <function>
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atopic	linked to an allergy
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atopic dermatitis	<i>see</i> eczema, atopic
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atrial fibrillation	<i>see</i> fibrillation, atrial
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atrial flutter	<i>see</i> flutter, atrial
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atrioventricular (AV) block	a type of heart rhythm disorder
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atrophy	wasting away of body tissue or organ
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atrophy, muscular	muscle wasting
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attenuated	weakened
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atypical absence seizure	<i>see</i> seizure, atypical absence
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aura	unusual visual or other sensory experiences
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autograft

healthy <tissue> <specific tissue: bone, skin, ...> taken from one part of the patient's body and grafted in another

autoimmune disease

a disease caused by the body's own defence system attacking normal tissue

EXPLAINER

What does autoimmune disease mean?

An autoimmune disease occurs when the immune (defence) system treats healthy parts of the body as if they were foreign and attacks them. Autoimmune disease can take many forms, depending on which body cells or tissues are targeted by the immune system.

Well-known autoimmune diseases include:

- rheumatoid arthritis, a condition of joints and nearby tissues
- psoriasis, a skin condition
- ulcerative colitis, a bowel disease
- type 1 diabetes, in which insulin-producing cells are destroyed
- multiple sclerosis, in which the protective covering of nerves is destroyed

Some autoimmune diseases can run in families.

Treatment of autoimmune diseases generally involves relieving the symptoms (especially during flare-ups) and calming down the immune system ('immunosuppressive and immunomodulatory therapy'). Medicines that tackle the underlying autoimmunity in rheumatoid arthritis are sometimes called disease-modifying antirheumatic drugs (DMARDs) or, more generally, disease-modifying drugs.

Autologous

<tissue> <cells> from the patient's own body

avascular necrosis

death of bone tissue due to interruption of blood supply

B

B cells

cells in the immune system

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B lymphocytes

use B cells *unless it is necessary to introduce the term lymphocyte, in which case say* B lymphocytes (B cells) *the first time and then use B cells*

bacteraemia

bacteria present in the blood

bacteriostatic

stops bacteria from multiplying

Bell's palsy

weakness in the face muscles

benign prostatic hyperplasia
(BPH)

enlarged prostate gland<that is not cancerous>

bile

a fluid produced in the liver that helps to break down fats

biliary cirrhosis

see cirrhosis, biliary

bilirubin

a breakdown product of red blood cells

bilirubin (elevated)

see hyperbilirubinaemia

EXPLAINER

What does bioequivalence mean?

Bioequivalence testing tells us if medicines that contain the same active substance behave in the same way in the body. Bioequivalence means that the active ingredient in different medicines is absorbed into the body at the same speed and to the same extent.

Testing for bioequivalence typically involves giving volunteers a medicine and then measuring the amount of the active ingredient in their blood regularly (say, every 2 hours) until very little of the ingredient remains in the blood. If the pattern of rise and fall of the active ingredient in the blood is identical then the medicines are bioequivalent.

Three measures are important for confirming bioequivalence:

- The maximum concentration of the active ingredients in the blood
- The time to reach the maximum concentration after taking the medicine
- The extent to which the active ingredients are absorbed.

bioequivalent	two medicines are bioequivalent when they produce the same levels of the active substance in the body. <i>if greater precision is needed, consider</i> medicines with the same active substance are bioequivalent if the active substances from both medicines are absorbed in the body at the same rate and to the same extent.
biological medicine	a medicine made by cells <grown in a laboratory>
biopsy	examination of tissue removed from the body <to check for disease>
biowaiver	an exemption from having to show bioequivalence between the medicine and its reference product
blepharitis	inflammation of the eyelid(s)
blood pressure, diastolic	blood pressure when the heart is between beats < (lower one of the two readings)>
blood pressure, systolic	blood pressure when the heart beats < (higher one of the two readings)>

blood urea nitrogen (BUN)	a marker for liver and kidney problems
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BMI	body mass index <a measure of body weight in relation to height>
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body surface area	<i>use</i> calculated using the <patient / child>'s height and weight
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bolus injection	full dose injected in one go <over a few seconds>
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bone (mineral) density	a measure of how strong the bones are
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bone marrow	spongy tissue inside the large bones <where blood cells are produced>
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bone marrow transplantation	<i>see also</i> haematopoietic (blood) stem cell transplantation. a procedure where the patient's bone marrow is cleared of cells and replaced with healthy bone marrow cells from a donor
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bradycardia	slow heart rate
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breakthrough pain	flare-up of pain despite ongoing treatment with painkillers
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bronchi	airways in the lungs
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bronchiectasis	when airways have become weakened and scarred
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bronchitis	inflammation of the airways in the lungs
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bronchoconstriction	narrowing of the airways <causing breathing difficulty and wheezing>
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bronchodilator	a medicine that widens the airways in the lungs
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bronchospasm	excessive <and prolonged> contraction of the airway muscles causing breathing difficulty
bruxism	<involuntary> teeth grinding
bulimia nervosa	an eating disorder
bullae	large blister(s) with pus
bullous	blistered
bullous eruption	blisters

C	
TERMS USED IN CANCER CLINICAL TRIALS	
complete response	no sign of cancer after treatment
event-free survival	how long patients live without <a complication or sign of disease occurring or coming back> <their disease coming back>
overall response rate	percentage of patients who have either no sign of cancer or <shrinkage of the tumour><a decrease in the extent of the cancer> after treatment
overall survival	how long patients live
partial response	<shrinkage of the tumour><decrease in the extent of the cancer> after treatment
patient-reported outcome	report directly from the patient of how well they are doing

progression (disease)	getting worse
progression-free survival	how long patients live without their disease getting worse
relapse-free survival	how long patients live without their disease coming back
response rate	do not use; write percentage of patients who improve <on treatment>
survival rate, overall	percentage of patients who live for a specific period <after diagnosis or treatment>
survival, overall	how long patients live
time to (disease) progression	do not use. Explain as: the time until the disease started worsening <again>
time to treatment failure	do not use. Explain as: the time until the treatment stopped working
cachexia	muscle wasting with significant weight loss
calcitonin	a hormone <produced by the thyroid gland> that helps to control the amount of calcium and phosphorus in the blood
candidiasis	thrush, a fungal infection <caused by Candida>
cannula	a thin tube inserted into <the body><a vein>
cannula, indwelling intravenous	a thin tube permanently inserted into a vein
capillary leak syndrome	leakage of fluid from blood vessels causing tissue swelling and a drop in blood pressure
capsid	shell (of a virus)

carcinoid syndrome	symptoms caused by <cancerous> tumours that release substances into the blood <that act on different organs>
carcinoid tumour	a tumour of the endocrine system that produces hormones
carcinoma	a type of cancer
cardiac	heart
cardiac arrest	heart stops beating
cardiac arrhythmia	<i>see</i> arrhythmia
cardiomyopathy	damage to the heart muscle
cardiotoxicity	harm to the heart
cardiovascular	affecting the heart and blood circulation
cardiovascular system	heart and blood vessels
cardioversion	a process that restores the heart's normal rhythm
cartilage	tough, flexible tissue in joints and other areas such as the nose and ears
castration	surgical or chemical prevention of the effects of male hormones <released by the testes>
catalyse	help

cataplexy	sudden muscle weakness and collapse caused by a strong emotion or laughter <in patients with narcolepsy>
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cataract	clouding of the lens
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catheter	a flexible tube inserted into the body
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CD4 T-cells	white blood cells that are important in helping to fight infections
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cellulitis	inflammation of the deep skin tissue
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central nervous system	brain and spinal cord
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central venous catheter	see central venous line
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central venous line	a tube through the skin into a large vein <used for giving medicines and fluids>
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cerebral	of <cerebrum, a part of> the brain
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cerebral oedema	see oedema, cerebral
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cerebrospinal fluid	fluid that surrounds the brain and the spinal cord
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cerebrovascular accident	stroke
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cerebrovascular disease	disease of the blood vessels supplying the brain
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cervical cancer	cancer of the cervix
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cervical dystonia	twisting and pulling of the neck and head caused by abnormal tightening of neck muscles
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cervix	the neck of the womb
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CHD	<i>see</i> coronary heart disease
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chelate	<i>do not translate but explain in text, e.g.</i> 'attaches to another chemical to form a 'chelate' that can be removed from the body in the stools'
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cholestasis	reduced flow of bile from the liver <because of a blockage>
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cholestatic hepatitis	<i>see</i> hepatitis, cholestatic
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choroid	the layer below the retina that contains blood vessels
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chromatopsia	changes in colour perception
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chromosomal translocation	when parts of genes are rearranged between two chromosomes
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chromosome	genetic material
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chronic	long term
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chronic renal failure	<i>see</i> renal failure, chronic
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chronic stable angina pectoris	<i>see</i> angina pectoris
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circumoral	<i>do not use; substitute with</i> around the mouth
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cirrhosis <scarring of the liver> <a type of liver disease>

cirrhosis, biliary liver damage caused by build-up of bile

coagulation clotting

coagulopathy problems with blood clotting

cognitive ability to think, learn and remember

colitis inflammation in the large bowel <causing pain and diarrhoea>

colloidal solid particles evenly spread in a liquid

colon lower part of the gut

colonoscopy a procedure to examine the large bowel through a tube with a camera

colorectal cancer a cancer that starts in the large bowel and involves the rectum (the lowest part of the gut)

community-acquired infection infection has been caught outside of hospital

compensated liver disease *see* liver disease, compensated

compliance the ability of patients to stick to their treatment; *avoid term, explain what is meant*

complicated flu *see* flu, complicated

complicated infection *see* infection, complicated

congenital present at birth

congestive heart failure *see* heart failure, congestive

conjunctiva the membrane that lines the white of the eye and the inside of the eyelid

conjunctivitis redness and discomfort in the eye

connective tissue the tissue that binds and supports the skin and internal organs

constriction narrowing

contraception prevention of pregnancy

contrast agent a compound that helps make internal body structures easier to see during imaging and medical procedures

contusion bruising

convulsion an episode of spasm(s) and reduced consciousness

cornea the transparent layer in front of the eye that covers the pupil and iris

corneal opacity clouding of the cornea

coronary arteries blood vessels that supply the heart muscle

coronary artery disease *see* coronary heart disease

coronary heart disease heart disease caused by narrowing or blockage of blood vessels supplying the heart muscle

corpora cavernosa the spongy tissue of the penis

corpuscular volume size of the red blood cells

C-reactive protein a marker of inflammation

creatine kinase an enzyme released into the blood when muscle is damaged

creatine phosphokinase (CPK) *see* creatine kinase

creatinine a breakdown product of muscle <removed by the kidneys>

creatinine (elevated) a sign of <worsening> kidney problems

creatinine clearance a measure of how well the kidneys are working

crepitation unusual crackling sound

Crohn's disease an inflammatory disease affecting the gut

cryotherapy freezing

crystalluria <crystal> particles in the urine

cutaneous small vessel vasculitis	inflammation of blood vessels in the skin <which may result in a rash or bruising>
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Cushing's syndrome	disorder with signs such as weight gain, fat build-up on the face and bruising caused by too much of <a type of steroid> <corticosteroid> hormone
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cyanosis	skin and lips turning blue <because of a lack of oxygen>
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cystitis	<inflammation> <infection> in the bladder <which can cause pain and discomfort when passing urine>
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cytokine release syndrome	<life-threatening> condition causing fever, vomiting, shortness of breath, headache and low blood pressure
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cytomegalovirus (CMV) retinitis	a viral infection of the retina, which can cause loss of vision
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cytopenia	low number of cells in the blood <or tissue>
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cytotoxic	cell-killing or able to kill <dividing> cells <such as cancer cells>
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D

dander	shed skin and hair
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decompensated heart failure	<i>see</i> heart failure, decompensated
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decompensated liver disease	<i>see</i> liver disease, decompensated
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deep vein thrombosis (DVT)	blood clot in a deep vein, usually in the leg
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delirium	confusion
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deltoid muscle	muscle covering the shoulder joint
delusion	false beliefs
dementia	loss of intellectual function
demyelinating polyneuropathy	a neurological disorder characterised by progressive weakness and loss of sensation in the legs and arms
demyelination	breakdown of the covering around nerve fibres <which can affect brain activity, muscle control and sensations>
depot injection	a type of injection where the medicine is prepared so that it is absorbed by the body very slowly
dermatitis	inflammation of the skin
dermatitis, atopic	<i>see</i> eczema, atopic
dermatology	the treatment of skin conditions
desquamation	shedding of the upper layers of the skin
diabetic foot infection	<i>consider</i> infection that occurs in the feet of patients with diabetes
diabetic ketoacidosis	a serious complication of diabetes with high levels of ketones in the blood <i>add relevant symptoms if needed</i>
diabetic peripheral neuropathy	damage to the nerves in the extremities that can occur in patients with diabetes
diabetic precoma	a dangerous condition that can occur in diabetes; <i>combine with</i> ketoacidosis <i>if necessary</i>

dialysis	technique for removing unwanted substances and excess fluid from the blood <when the kidneys do not work well enough>
dialysis, peritoneal	type of dialysis <involving circulating fluid into the abdomen and then allowing the fluid to flow out>
diaphoresis	excessive sweating
diaphragm	the main breathing muscle under the lungs
diastolic blood pressure	<i>see</i> blood pressure, diastolic
digital ulcers	<i>see</i> ulcers, digital
dilate	<i>substitute with</i> widen <i>or</i> expand
diplopia	double vision
disease-modifying (drugs or therapy)	treatment that changes the progress of a <long-term> disease
dissociation (psychiatry)	feeling disconnected from emotions and physical surroundings
distension	swelling
diuretic	a medicine that increases urine production <and reduces build-up of water in the body> <and lowers blood pressure>
diverticulitis	a disease affecting the gut
DNA	genetic material

dopamine

neurotransmitter *Parkinson's disease only*: a messenger substance in the parts of the brain that control movement and coordination

dormant

inactive

DRESS (drug rash with eosinophilia and systemic symptoms)

a severe reaction affecting the skin, blood and internal organs

ductus arteriosus, patent

a condition where the blood vessel that allows blood to bypass the baby's lungs before birth fails to close after birth. This causes heart and lung problems in the baby

duodenitis

inflammation of the duodenum, the part of the gut leading out of the stomach

duodenum

the part of the gut leading out of the stomach

dysaesthesia

unpleasant and abnormal feeling when touched

dysarthria

difficulty speaking

dysgeusia

taste disturbance

dyskinesia

difficulty controlling movement

dyslipidaemia

abnormal levels of fat in the blood

dysmenorrhoea

period pains

dyspepsia

indigestion

dysphagia

difficulty swallowing

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dysphonia changes in the sound or tone of the voice

dysplasia presence of abnormal cells <which may become cancerous>

dyspnoea difficulty breathing

dystonia involuntary muscle contractions

dysuria painful urination

E

echocardiography a diagnostic test where an image of the heart is obtained using ultrasound

ectopia lentis a disorder where the lens of the eye is in the wrong position

ectopic pregnancy pregnancy developing outside the womb

eczema itchy, red and dry skin

eczema, atopic itchy, red and dry skin in people prone to allergies

efficacy **avoid; if absolutely necessary, use** 'how well <medicine> works as measured in clinical studies'

ejection fraction how much blood is pumped out of the heart in one beat

electrocardiogram
(ECG) a test of the heart's <electrical> activity

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electrolytes	salts such as sodium, potassium, calcium, chloride and bicarbonate <in blood and other fluids in the body>
embolisation	a procedure to block a blood vessel <to stop bleeding or to block the flow of blood to a tumour or abnormal cells>
embolism	obstruction of a blood vessel <by a clot>
embolism, air/gas	air or gas bubbles in the blood that obstruct a blood vessel
emetogenic	triggering nausea and vomiting
emotional lability	mood swings
empirical treatment	treatment started on current knowledge until better information is available
encephalitis	inflammation of the brain
encephalopathy	brain disorder caused by a harmful substance or infection
encephalopathy, hepatic	brain damage caused by liver problems
encephalopathy, hyperammonaemic	brain damage caused by high levels of ammonia
endocarditis	infection of the sac around the heart <which can lead to serious heart complications>
endocrine	related to <glands that produce> hormones in the body <i>in some circumstances, particularly where 'endocrine' is an adjective, using 'hormonal' might be enough</i>
endometrium	the lining of the womb

endophthalmitis	inflammation of the inside the eye <often caused by infections>
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endoscope	a flexible device used to look inside body cavities
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endoscopy	a procedure that uses a tube with a camera to look inside the body
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engraftment	consider when the cells start growing <and producing normal blood cells>
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enzyme	general a protein that helps specific chemical processes in the body; more specific a protein that <explain role of enzyme, e.g., converts X to Y>
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enzyme replacement therapy	therapy in which the patient is provided the enzyme that is lacking
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eosinophil	a type of white blood cell
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eosinophilia	an excess of eosinophils, a type of white blood cell
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epidemic	when a disease spreads to a large number of people in a community, region or country
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epidemiological studies	studies of the causes and distribution of diseases in the population
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epidermis	outer layer of the skin
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epigastralgia	pain around the upper part of the stomach
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epigastric (region)	upper and middle part of the belly
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epiphyses	the growing ends of long bones <which become part of the main bone when growth finishes>
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epistaxis *substitute with* nosebleed

erectile dysfunction inability to get or keep an erection; impotence

erosion ulcer

eructation belching

erythema reddening of the skin

erythropoietin hormone that stimulates the production of red blood cells <by the bone marrow>

exacerbation flare-up

exercise capacity the ability to carry out physical activity

exfoliative flaky

extracorporeal
membrane
oxygenation (ECMO) a technique to oxygenate the blood outside the body using a device similar to a heart-lung machine

extrapyramidal side
effects/symptoms effects on a part of the brain that regulates movement <which may result in tremor, muscle spasms or movement disorders>

extravasation when a medicine that is normally injected into a vein leaks or is accidentally injected into the tissue surrounding the vein, where it can cause serious damage

F

faecal urgency urgent need to open the bowels

familial	runs in the family
familial adenomatous polyposis	formation of numerous growths mainly in the large intestine
familial hypercholesterolaemia	high blood cholesterol levels that run in the family
fatigue	<i>substitute with</i> tiredness
febrile	feverish
febrile neutropenia	<i>see</i> neutropenia, febrile
fibrillation	uncoordinated twitching of muscle <fibres>
fibrillation, atrial	irregular and uncoordinated contractions of the upper chambers of the heart <caused by problems in the flow of electrical impulses> <which may cause <palpitations> <fast heartbeat>>
fibrillation, ventricular	dangerous, irregular and uncoordinated contractions of the lower chambers of the heart <caused by problems in the flow of electrical impulses> <which can stop the heart working>
fibroids	non-cancerous growths in the womb
fibrosis	tissue scarring and thickening
fibrosis, pulmonary	lung damage with tissue scarring and thickening
ferritin	a protein that stores iron in the body
FEV1 (forced expiratory volume in 1 second)	the most air a person can breathe out in 1 second

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fibrinolytic dissolves blood clots made out of a substance called fibrin

fissure tear or crack

fistula abnormal passageway <between the gut and other organs>

flare worsening of disease

flatulence gas

flu, complicated serious effects of flu generally requiring hospital care

flushing reddening of the skin

flutter, atrial rapid contractions of the upper chambers of the heart <caused by problems in the flow of electrical impulses> <which causes strain on the heart because the upper and lower chambers are beating at different speeds>

follicles small sacs <in the ovary> that hold the eggs

folliculitis inflammation of hair follicles

forced expiratory volume the most air a person can breathe out <in one second>

forced vital capacity a measure of how much air the lungs can hold

formication a sensation of something crawling on or under the skin

FVC *see* forced vital capacity

G

gangrene	decay and death of tissue
gastric retention	when the stomach does not empty properly
gastritis	inflammation of the stomach lining
gastroenteritis	diarrhoea and vomiting
gastrointestinal	stomach and gut
gastro-oesophageal reflux disease	disease where stomach acid rises up into the oesophagus
gastro-resistant	<tablets> <capsules> that can pass through the stomach intact
gastrostomy	inserting a tube through the skin into the stomach; <i>see also</i> PEG
general anaesthetic	<i>see</i> anaesthetic, general
generalised anxiety disorder	long-term anxiety or nervousness about everyday matters
generalised seizure	<i>see</i> seizure, generalised

EXPLAINER

What are genes?

Our genes determine our makeup and we inherit them from our parents. A gene is a set of precise instructions for making a specific protein in a cell. We have a bank of between 20,000 and 25,000 different genes. Each gene forms a small section of the long strands of DNA (chromosomes), present in the nucleus of the cell.

Cells make copies of the DNA when they divide. The copies can develop mistakes but these are usually repaired and there is no effect on the genes. For many of the remaining mistakes, the consequences are minor and go unnoticed. But, rarely, mistakes lead to an alteration (mutation) of a gene and affect the production of an important protein and so cause disease. Cystic fibrosis, a disease affecting the lungs and the digestive system, is an example of a disease caused by faulty genes.

Genetic diseases are challenging to treat. Treatment focuses on relieving symptoms of the disease and, where possible, replacing the missing or abnormal protein resulting from the faulty gene. For some diseases, advanced medicines may be able to introduce genes into body cells and so correct the underlying genetic abnormality, possibly permanently.

genotoxic substance	a substance that is harmful to the DNA, the genetic material in cells
glaucoma	damage to the nerve in the eye <usually caused by high pressure in the eye>
glaucoma, angle-closure	damage to the nerve in the eye caused by pressure inside the eye rising rapidly because fluid cannot drain out
glaucoma, narrow-angle	see glaucoma, angle-closure
glaucoma, open-angle	damage to the nerves in the eye caused by high pressure due to clogging of fluid drainage canals
glioma	a type of brain tumour that begins in 'glial' cells (the cells that surround and support nerve cells)
glossodynia	burning or tingling sensation in or around the mouth

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glucose

sugar

gluteal region

buttocks

glycosylated
haemoglobin (HbA1c)

the proportion of haemoglobin in the blood that has glucose attached. HbA1c indicates how well blood glucose is controlled

gout

high levels of uric acid in the blood causing symptoms especially painful inflammation in the joints

graft versus host
disease

when transplanted cells attack the body <because the transplanted tissue or organ regards the patient's tissue as 'foreign' and attacks the body>

granulation

wound healing

granulation,
hypertrophic

excessive production of tissue during wound healing

granulocytes

a type of white blood cell

Guillain-Barré
syndrome

an immune system disorder that causes nerve inflammation <and can result in pain, numbness, muscle weakness and difficulty walking>

gynaecomastia

abnormal breast enlargement

H

5-hydroxytryptamine

also known as serotonin – [see](#) neurotransmitter

haemagglutination

clumping of red blood cells

haemagglutinins <virus> proteins that make red blood cells clump together

haematological <of> <related to> blood

haematoma a collection of blood under the skin

haematopoietic (blood) stem cell transplantation a procedure where the patient's bone marrow is <cleared of cells and> replaced <by stem cells> <from a donor> <with the patient's own stem cells> to form new bone marrow <that produces healthy cells>

haematopoietic progenitor cells *see* stem cells

EXPLAINER

What is haematopoietic stem cell transplantation?

Haematopoietic stem cell transplantation (HSCT) involves a patient receiving stem cells to help the bone marrow produce healthy blood cells. Stem cells are unspecialised cells that can develop to become different types of specialised cells. HSCT is used to treat serious diseases of the blood and immune system. A stem cell transplant in which the patient receives cells from a matched donor is called an allogeneic transplant. Before receiving the transplant, treatment is given to clear cells from the patient's own bone marrow. The patient then receives the donor cells, which multiply and develop into healthy specialised blood and immune cells.

haematuria *substitute with* blood in the urine

haemodialysis procedure for removing waste products from the blood <used in patients with kidney disease> <using a blood filtration machine>

haemoglobin the protein in red blood cells that carries oxygen around the body

haemolytic anaemia *see* anaemia, haemolytic

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haemophilia A an inherited bleeding disorder caused by lack of factor VIII

haemophilia B an inherited bleeding disorder caused by lack of factor IX

haemoptysis coughing blood

haemorrhage *substitute with* bleeding

haemorrhagic stroke *see* stroke, haemorrhagic

haemostasis stopping bleeding

hallucination seeing, hearing or feeling things that are not there

hand foot syndrome rash and numbness on the palms and soles

hay fever inflammation of the nasal passages caused by an allergy to pollen; *do not define unless absolutely necessary*

EXPLAINER

What does HbA1c say about diabetes control?

HbA1c is a substance in the blood, with the full name glycosylated (or glycated) haemoglobin. As blood sugar rises, the amount of glycosylated haemoglobin increases. HbA1c is measured in people with diabetes and tells us about a person’s average blood glucose (sugar) control over the previous 2 to 3 months.

HbA1c is measured as a proportion of haemoglobin in the blood, either as a percentage or in ‘mmol/mol’. Generally, in people who don’t have diabetes the HbA1c is below 6% (42 mmol/mol) and in people with diabetes it is over 6.5% (48 mmol/mol).

Taking diabetes medicines regularly lowers HbA1c levels. HbA1c is often used to measure the effectiveness of diabetes medicines. Because HbA1c tells us about long-term control of blood glucose it may be a better measure than the level of blood glucose itself, which fluctuates and can change within a few minutes of eating or taking a diabetes medicine. The aim of diabetes treatment is to achieve reliable long-term control of blood glucose and prevent complications of the disease.

heart failure	when the heart does not pump blood as well as it should <with shortness of breath, tiredness and ankle swelling>
heart failure, congestive	when the heart does not pump blood as well as it should <with build-up of fluid around the heart> <causing shortness of breath, tiredness and ankle swelling>
heart failure, decompensated	when the heart is working less and less well
hepatic	liver
hepatic encephalopathy	<i>see</i> encephalopathy, hepatic
hepatitis	inflammation of the liver
hepatitis, cholestatic	build-up of bile leading to inflammation of the liver
hepatomegaly	enlarged liver

HER2	a protein involved in the growth of certain types of breast cancer
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herpes simplex	viral infection of the mouth (such as cold sores) or the genitals
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herpes zoster	see shingles
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hirsutism	excessive hair <in parts where there is usually very little or no hair>
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histamine	a substance in the body that causes allergic symptoms
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HMG-CoA reductase	an enzyme in the liver that is needed to make cholesterol
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Hodgkin's lymphoma	see lymphoma
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hormone	a substance <released by a gland> that circulates in the blood and helps body organs to work in specific ways
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hormone treatment	treatment that blocks or increases the effects of specific hormones
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hyperaemia	increased blood flow
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hyperaemia, ocular	red eye
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hyperammonaemia	high blood levels of ammonia
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hyperammonaemic encephalopathy	see encephalopathy, hyperammonaemic
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hyperbilirubinaemia	high blood levels of bilirubin<, a breakdown product of red blood cells, which can cause yellowing of the skin and eyes> <, indicating liver problems>
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hypercalcaemia

high blood calcium levels

hypercalciuria

high calcium levels in the urine

hyperchloraemic
acidosis

excess acid in the blood caused by too much chloride

hypercholesteraemia

high blood cholesterol levels

hypercholesterolaemia,
primary

high blood cholesterol levels that have no identifiable cause

hyperglycaemia

high blood glucose levels

hyperglycaemic coma

coma caused by too much blood glucose

hyperhidrosis

excessive sweating

hyperkalaemia

high blood potassium levels <which can cause tiredness, muscle weakness, feeling sick and heart rhythm disturbances>

hyperlactataemia

high blood lactic acid levels

hyperlipidaemia

high blood levels fat in the blood

hypernatraemia

high blood sodium levels <which can cause thirst, tiredness, confusion and seizures>

hyperparathyroidism

when the parathyroid glands produce too much parathyroid hormone, which raises calcium levels in the blood <and can lead to bone and muscle pain, dehydration, and fragile bones>

hyperphosphataemia

high blood phosphate levels

hyperplasia	enlargement of an organ or body tissue <caused by increased cell division>
hypersensitive	allergic
hypersensitivity	allergic reactions
hypersensitivity reaction, acute systemic	allergic reaction with widespread effects such as shortness of breath, skin rashes and low blood pressure
hypertension	high blood pressure
hypertension, ocular	raised pressure in the eye
hypertensive crisis	sudden, dangerously high blood pressure
hyperthermia	high body temperature
hyperthyroidism	an overactive thyroid gland <which can cause hyperactivity, sweating, weight loss and thirst>
hypertonia	muscle tension
hypertriglyceridaemia	high blood levels of triglycerides, a type of fat
hypertrophic granulation	<i>see</i> granulation, hypertrophic
hypertrophy	excessive growth <i>or</i> increase in the number or size of cells
hyperuricaemia	high blood levels of uric acid

hypervolaemic	when the amount of water in the body is higher than normal
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hypoacusis	hearing loss
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hypoesthesia	reduced sensation to touch, pain and temperature
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hypoalbuminaemia	low levels of albumin, a blood protein
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hypocalcaemia	low blood calcium levels
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hypoglycaemia	low blood glucose levels
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hypokalaemia	low blood potassium levels <which can cause weakness, muscle cramps, tingling and heart rhythm disturbance>
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hypomagnesaemia	low blood magnesium levels
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hypomania	feeling excited and overactive
-----------	--------------------------------

hyponatraemia	low blood sodium levels <which can cause headache, tiredness, seizures and coma>
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hypophosphataemia	low blood levels of phosphates
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hypoplasia	incomplete development of an organ or tissue
------------	--

hypoproteinaemia	low blood protein levels
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hypotension	low blood pressure
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hypotension, orthostatic	<i>see</i> hypotension, postural
hypotension, postural	feeling dizzy or lightheaded on standing or sitting up because of a drop in blood pressure
hypothalamus	a region of the brain
hypothyroidism	an underactive thyroid gland <with tiredness, weight gain, and skin and hair changes>
hypotonia	reduced muscle strength or tone
hypoxia	lack of oxygen in body tissues
I	
icterus	<i>see</i> jaundice
idiopathic	the cause of the disease is unknown
idiopathic thrombocytopenic purpura (ITP)	a disease in which people do not have enough platelets and are at high risk of bleeding
ileum (ileal)	last part of the small intestine
ileus	loss of movement in bowel muscles
immediate-release tablet	<i>only needs definition when comparing with other types of tablet</i> a tablet that releases the active substance immediately
immune reactivation syndrome	<i>see</i> immune reconstitution syndrome

immune reconstitution syndrome	when the recovering immune system starts fighting off hidden infection, causing inflammation and damage to healthy tissue <such as the liver and thyroid gland>
immune reconstitution inflammatory syndrome (IRIS)	<i>see</i> immune reconstitution syndrome
immune system	the body's natural defences
immunity	protection
immunocompetent person	person with an immune system that works normally
immunocompromised person	person with a weakened immune system
immunodeficiency disorder, primary	when body defences are reduced from birth
immunogenicity	<i>general</i> the ability to make the immune system respond to the <viruses/bacteria etc.>;
	<i>for studies</i> the ability of X to trigger the production of antibodies
immunoglobulins	antibodies; <i>see</i> antibody
	<i>as active substance</i> blood proteins that have been extracted from donor plasma
immunological response	triggering of the body's defences against <an organism or a foreign substance>
immunomodulator	a substance that changes the activity of the body's defences
immunosuppressant medicine	a medicine that reduces the activity of the immune system

immunosuppressive	reduces the activity of the immune system
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immunotherapy	medicines that stimulate the immune system <to kill the cancer cells>
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impetigo	a skin infection causing crusting scabs
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inactivated (vaccine)	<i>see</i> vaccine, inactivated
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incidence	the number of people who get the <disease/condition/illness> every <year>
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incontinence	lack of control over passing <urine><stools>
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incontinence, stress	accidental leaks of urine caused by sudden pressure on the bladder <brought on, for example, by coughing, laughing, lifting and exercising>
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incontinence, urge	<i>see</i> urinary urgency
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indolent	slow-growing (cancer)
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induration	hardening <at the injection site>
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indwelling intravenous cannula	<i>see</i> cannula, indwelling intravenous
--------------------------------	--

infection, complicated	infection that is difficult to treat because it has spread within the body or the patient has other conditions
------------------------	--

infection, upper respiratory tract	nose and throat infection
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infection, urinary tract	infection of the parts of the body that collect and pass out urine
--------------------------	--

influenza

flu

infusion

drip

insomnia

difficulty sleeping; *consider* difficulty falling and staying asleep, and poor quality of sleep

insomnia, primary

insomnia with no identified cause <including medical, mental or environmental causes>

interstitial lung disease

see lung disease, interstitial

intra-abdominal infections

use infections within the abdomen (belly)

intracranial

within the skull <in or around the brain>

intra-dermal

<within><into> the skin

intramuscular

into a muscle

intraocular

into the eye

intra-spinal analgesia

see analgesic, intra-spinal

intra-thecal

into the spinal canal <into the fluid surrounding the spinal cord>

intravenous<ly>

into a vein

intra-vitreous

inserted into the vitreous humour, the jelly-like fluid in the eye

intubation	insertion of a breathing tube through the nose or the mouth
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intussusception	when part of the bowel becomes enfolded within another part of the bowel, leading to a blockage
-----------------	---

invasive disease	disease <that has spread> <capable of spreading> to other parts of the body
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invasive procedure	<i>avoid if possible; consider</i> a medical procedure that may involve piercing or cutting into the body or inserting instruments
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ions	charged particles
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iron overload	an excess of iron in the body
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ischaemia	reduced blood supply
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ischaemic heart disease	<i>see</i> coronary heart disease
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ischaemic stroke	<i>see</i> stroke, ischaemic
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J

jaundice	yellowing of the skin and eyes
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K

Kaposi's sarcoma	a type of cancer affecting the skin
------------------	-------------------------------------

keratitis	inflammation of the cornea
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keratoconjunctivitis
sicca

dry eyes

keratopathy

damage to the cornea, the transparent layer of the eye

ketoacidosis

a dangerous condition with high blood levels of ketones <that can make blood more acidic>

L

lacerations

cuts

lacrimation

watery eyes

lactate dehydrogenase

a marker for tissue damage

lactic acidosis

a build-up of lactic acid in the body

larynx

voice box

laxatives

medicines that treat constipation

lean body mass

body weight excluding fat

lesion

consider injury or abnormality

lethargy

lack of energy

leucocytes

white blood cells

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leucocytosis	high levels of white blood cells
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leucopenia	low levels of white blood cells
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leukaemia	cancer of the white blood cells
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limb	arm or leg
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lipids	fats
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lipoatrophy	loss of fat below the skin <that can change body shape>
-------------	---

lipodystrophy (syndrome)	changes in the distribution of body fat
-----------------------------	---

liver disease, compensated	when the liver is damaged but is still able to work <adequately>
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liver disease, decompensated	when the liver is damaged and can no longer work adequately
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EXPLAINER

What does a liver function test involve?

Liver function testing involves a blood test to show how well the liver is working. It is not the same as a biopsy, where a small part of liver tissue is removed via a minor surgical procedure and examined.

Several substances in the blood are measured to indicate the liver's health. They include enzymes produced by liver cells, bilirubin (a breakdown product of red blood cells) and albumin (a protein that circulates in the blood). Liver function tests are helpful for guiding more investigations or for changing treatment.

The liver usually recovers quickly from damaging effects and often the tests may be abnormal for only a short time. Also, sometimes the test may be abnormal as a result of disorders elsewhere in the body.

A rise in the levels of the following liver enzymes indicates that the liver is under stress and may lead to liver problems:

- alanine aminotransferase (ALT)
- aspartate aminotransferase (AST)
- alkaline phosphatase (ALP)
- gamma glutamyl transferase (GGT)

Increase in the levels of ALT and AST depends on the degree of inflammation whereas increase in ALP and GGT can suggest a blockage of the bile duct (the tube that carries bilirubin from the gall bladder to the intestine).

A build-up of bilirubin in the liver increases the level of this yellow-coloured substance in the blood and can cause jaundice (yellowish appearance of the skin and the whites of the eyes).

The liver makes albumin, an important protein that helps to control blood pressure and to transport various substances round the body. Albumin level in the blood can drop if the liver is damaged.

Tests to check how long it takes blood to clot can also show up problems with the liver. This is because the liver makes many of the proteins that help the blood to clot. If the liver can't make enough of these proteins, the blood may not clot fast enough.

liver impairment

problems with the liver

local anaesthetic	<i>see</i> anaesthetic, local
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long QT syndrome	<i>see</i> QT<c> prolongation
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low density lipoprotein (LDL)-cholesterol	'bad' cholesterol
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lower respiratory tract infection	infection of the lungs such as bronchitis or pneumonia
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lumbar puncture	inserting a needle into the lower spine <to test for or treat conditions affecting the spinal cord and brain>
-----------------	---

lumbar vertebra	one of the bones in the lower part of the spine
-----------------	---

lung disease, interstitial	disorders causing scarring in the lungs
----------------------------	---

luteinising hormone (LH)	the hormone that triggers the release of eggs during the menstrual cycle
--------------------------	--

lymphadenopathy	enlarged lymph nodes, or 'swollen glands'
-----------------	---

lymphatic system	<i>consider</i> a network of vessels that transport fluid from tissues through the lymph nodes and into the bloodstream
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lymphocele	collection of lymph fluid usually in the lower belly
------------	--

lymphocytes	a type of white blood cell
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lymphoma	cancer of lymphocytes, white blood cells involved in the body's defences
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lymphopenia	low levels of lymphocytes, a type of white blood cell
-------------	---

manic episodes	periods of extremely high mood
melanoma	a type of skin cancer affecting cells called melanocytes
meningitis	inflammation of the membranes that surround the brain and spinal cord
metabolites	breakdown products in the body or the substances that <a food> <a medicine> <a chemical> is broken down into
metastasis	cancer that has spread from another part of the body
metastatic	has spread to other parts of the body
methaemoglobinaemia	too much of an abnormal haemoglobin that cannot carry oxygen effectively
minimal residual disease	when very few cancer cells remain in the body after treatment
mitochondria	the energy-producing components within cells
modified-release	<i>for layered tablets containing two active substances</i> the two active substances are released at different rates from the tablet <over a few hours> <i>for other modified release preparations, do not give a general definition of modified release but give a description restricted to the medicine</i>
monoclonal antibody	an antibody (a type of protein) designed to recognise and attach to <named antigen> <a specific target> <i>see Explainer 'What are monoclonal antibodies?'</i>

EXPLAINER

What are monoclonal antibodies?

Antibodies are proteins made by the body’s immune (defence) system. Typically, an antibody attaches to a target on an invading organism like a bacterium or virus (the ‘antigen’). Antibodies can also attach to some harmful substances or poisons. This is the first step in the body’s immune response (natural defence) against the invading organism or harmful substance. Monoclonal antibodies are made in the laboratory, but they act in the same way as natural antibodies. ‘Monoclonal antibody’ means that the antibody is produced from exact copies (clones) of a particular cell and therefore the antibodies, too, are all exactly the same. In this way it is possible to control precisely what the antibodies will target.

Monoclonal antibodies can be used as medicines. For example, monoclonal antibodies can be designed to attach to specific targets on cancer cells. Once attached to cancer cells, the monoclonal antibodies can make use of the body’s immune system to destroy the cancer cells. Some monoclonal antibody medicines target particular proteins or other toxic substances in the body and stop them working, to reduce the harmful effects of these substances.

monotherapy	used on its own
mortality	<i>do not use, but say</i> death rate
mucopurulent	containing mucus and pus
mucosa	<i>see</i> mucous membranes
mucositis	inflammation of the moist body surfaces
mucositis, oral	inflammation of the lining in the mouth <ranging from soreness and redness to severe ulceration>
mucous membranes	moist body surfaces, such as the lining of the mouth
mucus	<i>if an explanation is considered necessary, consider</i> a thick bodily fluid for lubrication and protection

multiple myeloma	a cancer of the bone marrow
------------------	-----------------------------

multiple sclerosis (MS)	a disease of the brain and spinal cord in which inflammation destroys the protective covering around nerves and damages the nerves
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multiple sclerosis, primary progressive	gradual start of multiple sclerosis with steady worsening of the disease
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multiple sclerosis, relapsing-remitting	when the disease causes multiple sclerosis attacks (relapses) followed by periods with milder symptoms (remission)
---	--

multiple sclerosis, secondary progressive	when relapsing-remitting multiple sclerosis steadily worsens without any improvement
---	--

muscle relaxants	medicines used to relax muscles <including muscles that help the patient to breathe>
------------------	--

muscular atrophy	<i>see</i> atrophy, muscular
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musculoskeletal	relating to the muscles and bones
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mutated	changed
---------	---------

myalgia	<i>substitute with</i> muscle pain
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myasthenia gravis	a disease, causing muscle weakness
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myelin	protective covering of nerves
--------	-------------------------------

myeloablative therapy	treatments that destroy the bone marrow
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myelodysplastic syndromes	when the bone marrow does not make enough healthy blood cells or platelets
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myeloid	<of> <in> bone marrow
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myeloproliferative diseases	<a slow-growing cancer with> production of too many blood cells of a particular type <that can cause blockages>
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myelosuppression	a condition in which the bone marrow cannot make enough blood cells
------------------	---

myocardial infarction	heart attack <because of blockage in blood supply to a part of the heart>
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myocarditis	inflammation of heart muscle
-------------	------------------------------

myoclonic seizure	<i>see</i> seizure, myoclonic
-------------------	-------------------------------

myopathy	muscle disease causing weakness
----------	---------------------------------

myopia	nearsightedness or short-sightedness
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myositis ossificans	abnormal bone growth in the muscle
---------------------	------------------------------------

N

naevus/nevus	<mole> <visible area of skin damage>
--------------	--------------------------------------

naïve patients	<i>do not use, but say</i> patients who have not been treated before
----------------	--

nanobody	a small antibody
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narcolepsy	a sleep disorder that causes a person to fall asleep suddenly and unexpectedly
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narrow-angle glaucoma *see* glaucoma, angle-closure

nasal congestion a blocked nose

nasal polyps growths in the lining of the nose

nasogastric tube a tube through the nose to the stomach

nasopharyngitis inflammation of the nose and throat

nausea feeling sick

nebuliser device to produce a mist <of the medicine> for the patient to breathe in <through a mask or mouthpiece>

necrosis death of cells or tissue

neoadjuvant treatment preliminary treatment to shrink the <cancer> <tumour>

neonate newborn baby
preferably substitute newborn baby *for* neonate

neonatologist doctor specialising in treating newborn babies

neoplasm cancerous or non-cancerous growths

nephritis kidney inflammation

nephrolithiasis kidney stones

nerve block	procedure to block sensation to a part of the body
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neuralgia	<i>substitute with</i> nerve pain
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neuralgia, post-herpetic	long-lasting nerve burning pain that may occur after shingles
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neuroleptic malignant syndrome	a dangerous reaction with fever, rigid muscles, changing blood pressure and coma, usually caused by antipsychotic medicines
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neurological	relating to the brain or nerves
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neuropathic pain	<i>see</i> pain, neuropathic
------------------	------------------------------

neuropathic ulcers	<i>see</i> ulcer, neuropathic
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neuropathy	nerve damage
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neuropathy, peripheral	nerve damage in arms and legs <causing pain or numbness, burning and tingling>
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neuropathy, peripheral motor	nerve damage causing difficulty with movement
------------------------------	---

neuropathy, sensory	nerve damage affecting sensation of pain, temperature and touch
---------------------	---

neuropsychiatric disorders	disorders of the brain and nerves resulting in altered thinking or behaviour
----------------------------	--

neurosurgery	surgery on the nervous system, including the brain
--------------	--

neurotransmitter	a substance that nerve cells use to communicate with neighbouring cells; <i>also consider</i> a substance that relays signals from a nerve cell to another cell
------------------	--

EXPLAINER

What are neurotransmitters?

Cells, typically nerve cells, communicate by releasing chemicals which attach to a neighbouring cell. These chemicals are called neurotransmitters. There are many different neurotransmitters – some well-known ones include acetylcholine, dopamine, noradrenaline and serotonin (also called 5-hydroxytryptamine). If enough of these neurotransmitters reach the neighbouring cell, they provoke an effect on the cell, most often by increasing or decreasing the cell's activity, for example muscle contraction.

neutropenia low levels of neutrophils, a type of white blood cell <that fights infection>

neutropenia, febrile low levels of white blood cells with fever <due to infection>

neutropenic with low levels of neutrophils, a type of white blood cell

neutropenic fever *see* neutropenia, febrile

neutrophil a type of white blood cell <that fights infection>

nocturia need to pass urine at night

nonclinical studies *use* laboratory studies

non-Hodgkin's lymphoma *see* lymphoma

nosocomial <infection> <disease> picked up in hospital

O

obesity being very overweight

observational studies studies looking at the effects of medicines as they are used by patients in a real-life setting

obstructive sleep apnoea (syndrome) *see* apnoea, obstructive sleep

ocular of eye

ocular hyperaemia *see* hyperaemia, ocular

ocular hypertension *see* hypertension, ocular

oedema swelling; *consider* fluid retention

oedema, cerebral swelling in the brain

oedema, macular swelling in the macula, the central part of the retina at the back of the eye

oedema, periorbital puffy eyes

oedema, peripheral swelling especially of the ankles and feet <due to fluid retention>

oesophageal relating to the <gullet> <foodpipe> <tube that leads from the mouth to the stomach>

oesophageal stenosis *see* stenosis

oesophagitis inflammation of the <foodpipe> <tube that leads from the mouth to the stomach>

oesophagus the tube that leads from the mouth to the stomach

oestrogen a female sex hormone

oestrogen-receptor
negative tumour where the cancer cells do not have receptors for the hormone oestrogen on their surface

oestrogen-receptor
positive where the cancer cells have receptors for the hormone oestrogen on their surface

oligo-ovulatory rarely produces eggs

oliguria low urine output

oncologist cancer specialist

opacity *substitute with* clouding

open-angle glaucoma *see* glaucoma, open-angle

ophthalmologist eye specialist

opioid a <painkiller><medicine> that is related to morphine

opportunistic
infections infections seen in patients with a weakened immune system

optic nerve the nerve that sends signals from the eye to the brain

oral mucositis *see* mucositis, oral

orodispersible that dissolves in the mouth

oropharynx
(oropharyngeal) mouth and throat

orphan medicine a medicine used in rare diseases

orthopaedic relating to the bones

orthostatic on standing or sitting up

orthostatic
hypotension *see* hypotension, postural

ossification bone formation

osteoarthritis swelling and pain in the joints

osteoblasts bone-forming cells

osteoclasts cells that are involved in breaking down the bone tissue

osteomalacia a condition in which bones become soft and deformed

osteomyelitis bone infection

osteonecrosis death of bone tissue

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osteopenia reduction in bone strength

osteoporosis a disease that makes bones fragile

otitis media infection of the middle ear

ovalbumin a protein in egg white

ovarian cysts sacs of fluid within the ovaries

ovarian hyperstimulation syndrome when the ovaries over-respond to treatment <causing nausea, weight gain and diarrhoea>

ovarian stimulation fertility treatment where the ovaries are stimulated to release more eggs

ovulation the release of eggs <during the menstrual cycle>

oxygen saturation a measure of oxygen levels in the blood

P

paediatrician doctor specialised in the treatment of children

Paget's disease a disease involving bone destruction and regrowth, which causes deformity

pain, neuropathic pain due to nerve damage

palliative relieving symptoms

palliative care treatment of the symptoms of a disease that is not intended to lead to cure

palmar-plantar erythrodysesthesia syndrome *see* hand foot syndrome

palpitations a forceful heartbeat that may be rapid or irregular

palsy paralysis with weakness and shaking

pancreatitis inflammation of the pancreas <causing severe pain in the belly and back>

pancytopenia <low levels of blood cells> *or* <low levels of all types of blood cells <including platelets>>

pandemic when a disease spreads to a large number of people in many countries worldwide

papillomaviruses viruses that cause warts and abnormal tissue growth

paraesthesia sensations like numbness, tingling, pins and needles

parathyroid glands glands that secrete the hormone that controls blood calcium levels

Parkinson's disease a progressive brain disease that causes shaking and muscle stiffness and slows movement

parkinsonism effects similar to Parkinson's disease such as shaking, muscle stiffness and slow movement

paronychia nail bed infection

partial<-onset> seizure <with <or without> *see* seizure, partial<-onset> <with <or without> secondary generalisation>

secondary
generalisation>

patent ductus
arteriosus *see* ductus arteriosus, patent

patient-year the equivalent of one patient taking the medicine for one year

peak expiratory flow the maximum speed a person can breathe out

pedal arteries *avoid; say* 'arteries that supply blood to the feet'

PEG (percutaneous
endoscopic
gastrostomy) a feeding tube inserted through the skin into the stomach; *see also* gastrostomy

pegylated attached to a chemical called polyethylene glycol

pegylated liposomes tiny fatty spheres that are <coated with> <attached to> a chemical called polyethylene glycol

pelvic lower abdominal

pelvic inflammatory
disease a type of infection of the upper part of the female genital tract

peptic ulcer disease ulcers in the stomach or the duodenum

peptide a short chain of amino acids

percutaneous coronary
intervention a procedure that unblocks blood vessels of the heart to restore its blood supply

percutaneous endoscopic gastrostomy	<i>see</i> PEG
-------------------------------------	----------------

percutaneous transluminal coronary angiography (PTCA)	surgical procedure that is used to unblock narrowed coronary arteries
---	---

perennial	occurs throughout the year
-----------	----------------------------

performance status	a rating of how well a patient is (<i>adapt as necessary</i>)
--------------------	---

perfusion	blood circulation <through an organ>
-----------	--------------------------------------

pericardial disease	disease of the membrane around the heart
---------------------	--

pericarditis	inflammation of the membrane around the heart
--------------	---

periocular infections	infections around the eyes
-----------------------	----------------------------

periorbital oedema	<i>see</i> oedema, periorbital
--------------------	--------------------------------

peripheral neuropathy	<i>see</i> neuropathy, peripheral
-----------------------	-----------------------------------

peripheral arterial disease	<i>see</i> artery disease, peripheral
-----------------------------	---------------------------------------

peripheral motor neuropathy	<i>see</i> neuropathy, peripheral motor
-----------------------------	---

peripheral oedema	<i>see</i> oedema, peripheral
-------------------	-------------------------------

peritoneal cavity	The area of the belly that contains the intestines
-------------------	--

peritoneal dialysis	<i>see</i> dialysis, peritoneal
---------------------	---------------------------------

peritoneum	the membrane that forms the lining of the abdominal (belly) cavity
------------	--

pertussis	whooping cough
-----------	----------------

petechiae	tiny blood spots under the skin
-----------	---------------------------------

phaeochromocytoma	a tumour of the adrenal gland
-------------------	-------------------------------

phagocytes	specialised 'scavenger' cells of the immune system
------------	--

pharmacodynamics	a medicine's effects in the body
------------------	----------------------------------

pharmacokinetics	how a medicine is absorbed, modified and removed from the body
------------------	--

pharyngitis	sore throat
-------------	-------------

Philadelphia chromosome positive (Ph+)	this means that some of the patient's genes have rearranged themselves to form a special chromosome called the Philadelphia chromosome. This chromosome produces an enzyme that leads to the development of leukaemia
--	---

phlebitis	inflammation of a vein
-----------	------------------------

phlebotomy	removal of some of the blood from the body
------------	--

phosphenes (luminous phenomena)	a temporary brightness in the field of vision
---------------------------------	---

photodynamic therapy	treatment in which a medicine is 'switched on' by <a special type of> light
----------------------	---

photophobia	abnormal sensitivity of the eyes to light
-------------	---

photopsia	flashes of light in the field of vision
-----------	---

photosensitising agent	a medicine 'switched on' by <a special type of> light <and used for photodynamic therapy>
------------------------	---

photosensitivity reactions	sunburn-like reactions (following exposure to light)
----------------------------	--

pigmentation	colouring of the skin, hair and eyes
--------------	--------------------------------------

pituitary gland	a gland <at the base of the brain> that controls many other hormone-producing glands in the body
-----------------	--

placebo	dummy treatment
---------	-----------------

plaque psoriasis	see psoriasis
------------------	-------------------------------

plasma	the liquid part of the blood or the part of the blood left when the blood cells are removed
--------	--

plasma exchange	a procedure to remove <unwanted> <substances> <antibodies> from plasma (the liquid part of the blood) <by replacing the patient's plasma with plasma from a donor>
-----------------	--

plasmapheresis	see plasma exchange
----------------	-------------------------------------

plasmin	an enzyme that breaks up clots <and helps restore the normal blood flow to the heart>
---------	---

platelet aggregation	platelets clumping together <which can lead to a blood clot>
----------------------	--

platelets	components that help the blood to clot
-----------	--

pleural effusion fluid around the lungs

pleuritic pain a type of chest pain

pneumonia infection of the lungs

pneumonitis inflammation in the lungs <causing shortness of breath and cough>

pneumonitis,
hypersensitivity inflammation in the lungs due to an allergy <causing shortness of breath and cough>

poliomyelitis *use* polio

pollakiuria abnormally frequent urination

polyuria increase in urine production

porphyria an inability to break down chemicals called porphyrins

portal vein vein leading to the liver

posterior reversible
encephalopathy
syndrome brain swelling with <usually temporary effects such as> headache, changes in vision, reduced consciousness and seizures

post-herpetic neuralgia
(PHN) *see* neuralgia, post-herpetic

postmenopausal
women women who have been through the menopause

postpartum after childbirth

postural hypotension *see* hypotension, postural

precancerous lesions abnormal cells that could develop into cancer

preclinical studies *use* laboratory studies

preprandially *substitute with* before meals

PRES *see* posterior reversible encephalopathy syndrome

preterm *substitute with* premature

prevalence the number of people with the disease

primary hypercholesterolaemia *see* hypercholesterolaemia, primary

primary immunodeficiency syndrome *see* immunodeficiency disorder, primary

primary insomnia *see* insomnia, primary

proctalgia anal pain

prodrug a medicine that is converted to an active form in the body

progression (disease) getting worse

progressive multifocal leukoencephalopathy (PML) a rare but serious <viral> brain infection <with symptoms similar to those of a multiple sclerosis attack>

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prolonged release	the active substance is released slowly <from the tablet> over a few <weeks/ days/hours> <after being injected>
prophylaxis	prevention
prostate	gland that produces fluid which nourishes and carries sperm
proteasome	a system within cells that breaks down proteins when they are no longer needed
proteinuria	excess protein in the urine
pruritus	<i>substitute with</i> itching
psoriasis	<a> <an inflammatory> disease causing red, scaly patches on the skin
psoriatic arthritis	a disease causing inflammation in the joints in combination with psoriasis
psychomotor hyperactivity	restlessness
psychosis	altered sense of reality
pulmonary (arterial) hypertension	high blood pressure in the arteries of the lungs; <i>consider</i> (for brevity and if appropriate) high blood pressure in the lungs
pulmonary artery	the blood vessel that leads from the heart to the lungs
pulmonary embolism (PE)	clot in a blood vessel in the lungs <which can cause chest pain, breathlessness and fainting>
pulmonary fibrosis	<i>see</i> fibrosis, pulmonary

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pulmonary nodule a small <area of damage> <lump> in the lungs

punctate keratitis spots of inflammation in the cornea

pure red cell aplasia a condition in which no red blood cells are produced

purpura purple patches like bruising

pustulation blisters

pyelonephritis kidney infection

pyrexia *substitute with* fever

Q

QT interval A measure of the heart's electrical activity

QT<c> prolongation abnormal electrical activity of the heart that affects its rhythm

R

radiofrequency ablation *see* ablation, radiofrequency

radiolabelling where a radioactive tag is attached to a substance

radiotherapy treatment with radiation

Raynaud's disease
(phenomenon, syndrome) severe narrowing of blood vessels in the cold <with skin turning white or blue>

receptor *when used in mechanism of action consider saying* receptor (target)

EXPLAINER

What are receptors, agonists and antagonists?

A receptor is a part of a cell that attaches to a specific substance and this attachment triggers a particular change ('response'), such as the release of messenger substances or making a protein. The substance that attaches to the receptor to bring about the change is called an agonist. The shape of agonists makes them just the right fit for their receptors – a 'lock and key' mechanism because each key will fit just one lock.

Agonists are mostly substances made in the body and include neurotransmitters (released by nerves), hormones (released by special glands), and cytokines (released by cells such as those involved in inflammation). But agonists can also be substances introduced into the body and many medicines work by acting as agonists which attach to specific receptors to trigger a response.

Some substances can attach to the receptor without triggering a response. By sitting in the receptor, they block the agonist from attaching to the receptor and having an effect. These substances are called antagonists or blockers. Many medicines have been developed to be antagonists at particular receptors and they prevent harmful overactivity at those receptors.

rectum the lowest part of the gut <that stores faeces>

recurrence when <symptoms/the disease> come(s) back <after treatment>

recurrent <has come back/keeps coming back> <after previous treatment>

refractory when treatment does not work

registry (patient or disease) ongoing collection of information about <a specific group of> patients affected by a particular condition

relapse when <symptoms/the disease> come(s) back <after treatment>

relapsing-remitting
multiple sclerosis *see* multiple sclerosis, relapsing-remitting

remission a period without disease symptoms after treatment

renal *do not use; write* kidney

renal failure inability of the kidneys to work properly

renal failure, chronic long-term, progressive decrease in the kidneys' ability to work properly

renal impairment reduced kidney function

resistant (treatment) when treatment does not work

respiratory depression when breathing is too slow and shallow

respiratory failure inability of the lungs <to work properly><to take in oxygen and get rid of carbon dioxide properly>

respiratory
insufficiency difficulty breathing

respiratory system lungs and airways

respiratory tract
congestion blocked airways

respiratory tract
infection Infection of the airways

response	improvement related to treatment
----------	----------------------------------

restless legs syndrome	a disorder where the patient has uncontrollable urges to move the legs to stop uncomfortable, painful or odd sensations, usually at night
------------------------	---

reticulocytopenia	low levels of reticulocytes, a type of immature red blood cell
-------------------	--

retina	the light sensitive membrane at the back of the eye
--------	---

retinopathy	damage to the retina
-------------	----------------------

revascularisation	restoration of blood flow
-------------------	---------------------------

reverse transcriptase	an enzyme produced by <virus> that allows it to infect cells in the body and make more viruses
-----------------------	--

rhabdomyolysis	breakdown of muscles often leading to kidney damage
----------------	---

rheumatoid arthritis	a disease with painful swelling and damage of joints <caused by the immune system mistakenly attacking healthy cells>
----------------------	---

rhinitis	stuffy and runny nose
----------	-----------------------

rhinitis, allergic	stuffy and runny nose <with inflammation> caused by an allergy <e.g. hay fever or dust-mite allergy>
--------------------	--

rhinorrhoea	<i>substitute with</i> runny nose
-------------	-----------------------------------

ribosomes	the parts of the cell that produce proteins
-----------	---

rigors	shaking chills
--------	----------------

RNA genetic material <instructions for producing proteins>

rotavirus a virus that causes gastroenteritis

rubella German measles

S

saccadic (eye movements) rapid eye movements

scleroderma hardening of the skin and connective tissue around internal organs

sclerosis, systemic *see* scleroderma

seasonal allergic conjunctivitis inflammation of the eyes caused by pollen in patients with hay fever

seasonal allergic rhinitis hay fever

secondary progressive multiple sclerosis *see* multiple sclerosis, secondary progressive

sedation <calming effect> <induce sleepiness>

seizure *use* seizure; *do not use* fit

seizure, absence a type of seizure during which a person has a blank stare but is partly aware of surroundings

seizure, atonic a type of seizure with very brief loss of muscle control and reduced consciousness

seizure, atypical absence a type of seizure during which a person has a blank stare <possibly losing awareness of surroundings>

seizure, generalised seizure affecting most or all of the brain

seizure, myoclonic	short, shock-like jerks of a muscle or group of muscles
--------------------	---

seizure, partial<-onset> <with <or without> secondary generalisation>	epileptic seizure starting in one specific part of the brain <secondary generalisation is when the seizure then spreads to the whole brain>
--	---

seizure, tonic	brief seizure with muscle contraction
----------------	---------------------------------------

seizure, tonic-atonic	a type of seizure that often involves the patient falling to the floor
-----------------------	--

seizure, tonic-clonic	major seizure, including loss of consciousness
-----------------------	--

sensitivity (of disease)	when a condition is treatable by a <medicine> <group of medicines>
--------------------------	--

sensitivity (test)	a measure of how well a test can detect those who have a <disease> <condition>
--------------------	--

sensory neuropathy	<i>see</i> neuropathy, sensory
--------------------	--------------------------------

sepsis	<when bacteria and their toxins circulate in the blood leading to organ damage><blood poisoning>
--------	--

septic shock	a dangerous drop in blood pressure caused by severe infection
--------------	---

septicaemia	blood poisoning
-------------	-----------------

seroconversion	development of antibodies <(proteins in the body's defence system)> against a specific target
----------------	---

serum sickness	allergic reaction to injected proteins <and blood products> <with fever, rash, joint pain, digestive system problems and headache>
----------------	--

shingles	a painful, blistering rash in one part of the body
----------	--

shock	a steep fall in blood pressure
-------	--------------------------------

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sinus node	the 'pacemaker' for the heart that controls the heart contractions and regulates heart rate
------------	---

sinus rhythm	normal heartbeat
--------------	------------------

sinuses	air-filled passageways in the bones around the nose and eyes
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sinusitis	inflammation of the sinuses
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sleep apnoea	see apnoea, sleep
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sleep latency	the length of time taken to fall asleep
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slit lamp	an instrument used by eye specialists to look into the eye
-----------	--

soft tissues	tissues just below the skin
--------------	-----------------------------

somnolence	sleepiness
------------	------------

spasticity	continuously stiffened muscles
------------	--------------------------------

specificity (test)	a measure of how well a test can distinguish people with a condition from those who don't have it
--------------------	---

splenomegaly	enlarged spleen
--------------	-----------------

sputum	phlegm
--------	--------

ST segment elevation	an abnormal reading on the electrocardiogram (ECG)
----------------------	--

stable angina pectoris	see angina pectoris
------------------------	-------------------------------------

standard of care	treatment that medical experts consider most appropriate
------------------	--

statin	the standard type of medicine used to reduce cholesterol
status epilepticus	an epileptic seizure, or series of seizures, lasting longer than 5 minutes
stem cell transplant	<i>see</i> haematopoietic (blood) stem cell transplantation
stem cells (haematopoietic stem cells)	cells that can develop into different types of (blood) cells
stenosis	narrowing of a <body passage> <blood vessel>
stenosis, aortic	narrowing of the aorta
stent	a short tube placed in an artery to prevent it closing up
steroid	<i>preferably use</i> corticosteroid <i>except where glucocorticoid needs to be distinguished from mineralocorticoid, in which case use</i> glucocorticoid
Stevens-Johnson syndrome	life-threatening reaction with flu-like symptoms and painful rash affecting the skin, mouth, eyes and genitals
stomatitis	inflammation of the lining of the mouth
strain	<i>do not translate, but explain by using in context, e.g.</i> 'the strain of flu virus responsible for a pandemic'
stress incontinence	<i>see</i> incontinence, stress
stroke	sudden interruption of blood flow in the brain which can cause paralysis and unconsciousness
stroke, haemorrhagic	stroke <(sudden interruption of blood flow in the brain)> caused by bleeding in a part of the brain
stroke, ischaemic	stroke <(sudden interruption of blood flow in the brain)> caused by blocked blood supply to a part of the brain

subcutaneous injection	<i>substitute with</i> injection under the skin
subcutaneous(ly)	<i>avoid; use</i> under the skin
sublingual tablet	a tablet which is placed under the tongue where it dissolves
sulphonylureas	<i>no definition required, just say</i> other medicines to treat diabetes
supportive care	treatment to prevent or relieve the symptoms of the disease <but not specific treatment against the disease>
surfactant (lung)	a substance lining the airsacs which allows gases to pass easily between the lung and blood
suspension	a liquid with solid particles in it <i>no need to describe when part of pharmaceutical form, e.g. suspension for injection</i>
sutured	stitched
syncope	fainting
systemic (side effects)	side effects that can affect anywhere in the body
systemic treatment	treatment with <a> medicine<s> given <by mouth> <or> <by injection>
systemic lupus erythematosus	a condition in which the body's defence system attacks normal tissue causing symptoms such as swollen joints, tiredness and rashes
systolic blood pressure	<i>see</i> blood pressure, systolic

T

T cells	cells in the immune system
---------	----------------------------

T lymphocytes *use* T cells ***unless it is necessary to introduce the term lymphocyte, in which case say*** T lymphocytes (T cells) ***the first time and then use*** T cells

tachycardia ***substitute with*** rapid heartbeat

tachypnoea rapid breathing

tapering (dose) reducing the dose gradually

tardive dyskinesia uncontrolled movements of the face and jaw

tenosynovitis inflammation of the sheath surrounding a tendon

teratogen a substance that can cause birth defects in the unborn baby

teratogenicity ability to cause birth defects

thrombin a protein involved in blood clotting

thrombocytopenia low levels of blood platelets <which can lead to bleeding and bruising>

thrombocytopenic purpura formation of blood clots in small blood vessels, lowering the level of platelets and causing purple spots on the skin

thromboembolism problems due to the formation of blood clots in the blood vessels

thrombolytic dissolves blood clots

thrombophlebitis inflammation in a vein leading to a blood clot <and blockage>

thrombosis	formation of blood clots in the blood vessels
thrombotic events	problems due to the formation of blood clots in the blood vessels
thymus gland	a gland <in the chest> that prepares <cells> <lymphocytes> to help the body's defences
tibia	shin bone
time to (disease) progression	do not use; explain as the time until the disease started worsening <again>
time to treatment failure	do not use; explain as the time until the treatment stopped working
tinnitus	ringing or buzzing in the ears
tonic-atonic seizure	see seizure, tonic-atonic
tonic-clonic seizure	see seizure, tonic-clonic
tonic seizure	see seizure, tonic
tonsillitis	infection of the tonsils
tophi	deposits of uric acid crystals in joints, skin or cartilage <which can cause damage>
topically	on the skin
torsades de pointes	abnormal electrical activity in the heart with life-threatening rhythm disturbance

torticollis	<i>see</i> cervical dystonia
-------------	------------------------------

toxic epidermal necrolysis	life-threatening reaction with flu-like effects and blistering in the skin, mouth eyes and genitals
----------------------------	---

toxin	a harmful substance produced by infectious organisms
-------	--

toxoid	an inactivated toxin
--------	----------------------

trachea	windpipe
---------	----------

transdermal patch	patch to give <a medicine> <medicines> through the skin
-------------------	---

transplant rejection	when the immune system attacks the transplanted organ
----------------------	---

trauma	<severe> injury
--------	-----------------

treatment-experienced	<i>use</i> <had been> treated for <disease> before
-----------------------	--

treatment-naïve	<i>use</i> <had> never <been> treated for <disease>
-----------------	---

tremor	shaking
--------	---------

triglycerides	a type of fat
---------------	---------------

trismus	contraction of the jaw muscles which holds the mouth shut
---------	---

tumour lysis syndrome	a serious <side effect> <complication> with rapid break down of cancer cells <causing high levels of uric acid, potassium and phosphate>
-----------------------	--

U

ulcer	open sore
ulcer, neuropathic	open sore caused by a nerve problem
ulcers, digital	sores on the fingers and toes
ulcerative colitis	inflammation of the large intestine causing ulceration and bleeding
unresectable	cannot be removed by surgery
unstable bladder	an overactive bladder, when the bladder muscles contract suddenly
upper respiratory tract infection	see infection, upper respiratory tract
urethra	the tube that leads from the bladder to the outside <of the body>
urge incontinence	see urinary urgency
urgency	sudden urge to pass urine
uricaemia	high blood levels of uric acid
urinary retention	inability to completely empty the bladder
urinary tract	structures that carry urine <such as the bladder>

urinary tract infection *see* infection, urinary tract

urinary urgency sudden urge to pass urine <with urine leakage>

uterus womb

urticaria itchy rash

uveitis inflammation of the uvea, the layer beneath the white of the eyeball

V

vaccine, inactivated a vaccine that uses an organism that has been killed

vaccine, live attenuated a vaccine that uses a weakened form of the organism

vaccine, mRNA a vaccine that contains a molecule called mRNA which has instructions for making a foreign protein, triggering an immune response inside the body and protecting from infection

vaccine, viral vector a vaccine that uses a modified version of a <different> virus to deliver instructions for making a foreign protein to cells in the body, triggering an immune response inside the body and protecting from infection. <The modified virus cannot reproduce or cause disease>

EXPLAINER

How do vaccines work?

Many illnesses are caused by harmful organisms such as bacteria and viruses. Vaccines prepare the immune system (the body's natural defences) to fight off these organisms as soon as they enter the body, preventing the illness from getting established.

Vaccines introduce the body to antigens, foreign substances that identify the harmful organism. As a result, the body's immune system produces antibodies that attach to the antigen and certain blood cells (memory B cells) develop the ability to recognise the antigen as a target for attack. In future, if an organism that contains the antigen enters the body, the immune system already has a memory of it and can quickly attack it.

Antigens in vaccines come in many forms such as:

- modified viruses or bacteria – the harmful organisms themselves that have been killed (inactivated) or weakened (attenuated) so they cannot cause disease
- substances that form part of the walls or outer layer of a disease-causing organism – these can be made in the laboratory, so the harmful organism is never present
- a toxoid – a version of a harmful substance (toxin) that some bacteria produce that has been modified so that it doesn't cause harm

It is also possible to use the body's own cells to produce an antigen. In such cases the vaccine contains the genetic instructions for making the protein. These instructions (a section of genetic code in the form of RNA or DNA) are enclosed in a harmless virus or a fatty particle that can enter body cells and deliver the

varicella chickenpox

varices swollen <and knotted> veins

vascular <affecting> <of> blood vessels

vasculitis inflammation of blood vessels

vasoconstrictor a substance that narrows blood vessels

vasodilation	widening of the blood vessels
--------------	-------------------------------

vaso-occlusive crises	when blood vessels become blocked by abnormal red blood cells, restricting the flow of blood to an organ
-----------------------	--

vasopressors	medicines that increase blood pressure
--------------	--

ventilator	a machine that helps a patient to breathe
------------	---

vertebral	avoid; use (of the) spine
-----------	----------------------------------

vertigo	a spinning sensation
---------	----------------------

ventricle (heart)	one of the two lower chambers of the heart <that pumps blood into the circulation>
-------------------	--

ventricular fibrillation	see fibrillation, ventricular
--------------------------	--------------------------------------

vesicle	spot
---------	------

viral load	the amount of virus found in the blood
------------	--

viral vector	a virus that has been altered so that it can carry genetic material into cells
--------------	--

visual acuity	sharpness of vision
---------------	---------------------

vitreous floaters	small, dark shapes moving in the field of vision
-------------------	--

volume depletion	reduced amounts of fluids in the body
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[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](#)

W

X

Y

Z