

Culture Advantage
Anatomy and Medical Terminology for Interpreters

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NERVOUS SYSTEM TERMINOLOGY

Alzheimer's disease (AD)	A brain disorder that seriously affects a person's short term memory and judgement.	Electroencephalogram (EEG)	System for recording the electrical activity of the brain.
Aneurysm	A bulge or "ballooning" in the wall of an artery	Apoplexy	an old Latin term for stroke
Bell's palsy	A form of facial paralysis resulting from damage or trauma to one of the facial nerves.	Dementia	Loss of memory and other intellectual functions that develop over time.
Carpal tunnel syndrome	Occurs when the median nerve, which runs from the forearm into the hand, becomes pressed or squeezed at the wrist.	Contracture	permanent shortening of the muscles and tendons adjacent to a joint
Cataract	A clouding of the lens in your eye	Cerebral atrophy	The shrinking of the brain or brain cells.
CVA Cerebrovascular Accident	Stroke, brain attack	Dopamine	A neurotransmitter involved in several functions such as movement, walking
Continence	Ability to control bowel and bladder	Lordosis	an exaggerated forward curve of the lower part of the back, sometimes called sway-back.
Coma	Sometimes also called persistent vegetative state, is a profound or	Clonic seizure	Generalized seizure characterized by jerking movements on both

	deep state of unconsciousness.		sides of the body
Concussion	A type of brain injury. Usually refers to minor brain injury.	Delirium	Abnormal mental state characterized by disorientation, inattention, confusion usually related to a metabolic condition
Epilepsy	Brain disorder in which clusters of nerve cells fire abnormally causing seizures	Muscular dystrophy (MD)	Progressive weakness and degeneration of skeletal muscles.
Fainting or syncope	Temporary loss of consciousness	Myasthenia gravis	A neuromuscular disease with varying degrees of weakness of the skeletal (voluntary) muscles of the body
Glaucoma	When the fluid pressure inside the eyes slowly rises, damaging the optic nerve	Paralysis	Inability to move a part of the body.
Cognitive impairment	A deficiency in a person's short or long term memory, orientation as to place, person and time, thinking and judgment	Paresthesia	Burning or prickling sensation felt on the surface of the skin
Huntington's chorea	An inherited disease that causes certain nerve cells in the brain to waste away	Peripheral neuropathy	Symptoms due to damage to the peripheral nervous system
Embolic stroke	A stroke caused by an embolus or a blood clot from another part of the body.	NIHL	Noise-induced hearing loss
Embolus	embolus –a clot of the blood that travels in the bloodstream	Otitis media	Ear infection that affects the middle ear
Embolism	–blockage of a blood vessel by an embolus	Insomnia	difficulty with falling asleep or staying asleep

LDL	Low Density Lipoprotein –“bad cholesterol”	Scleritis	Scleritis is an inflammation of the sclera (the white outer wall of the eye).
Tremor	unintentional, muscle movement involving to-and-fro movements of parts of the body	Seizures	sudden, abnormal electrical activity in the brain
Tinnitus	“Ringing” in the ears	Sleep apnea	sleep disorder characterized by brief interruptions of breathing during sleep
Transient Ischemic Attack or mini stroke	a stroke that comes and goes quickly	Spina bifida	literally means “cleft spine,” is characterized by the incomplete development of the brain, spinal cord, and/or meninges
anticoagulant	“blood thinner” prevents blood clots	hemorrhagic stroke	Stroke due to bleeding into or around the brain.
myopia	nearsightedness	Ischemic stroke	Stroke due to blockage of a blood vessel supplying the brain
aura	A sensation that may signal a seizure	Multiple sclerosis (MS)	is a nervous system disease that damages the myelin of the brain and spinal cord
"clipping	surgical procedure for treatment of brain aneurysms, involving clamping an aneurysm from a blood vesse	heparin	An injectable type of anticoagulant Warfarin – a form of oral anticoagulant
NCT or Nerve Conduction Study	method of diagnosing the type and location of nerve injury using application of electrical stimulation to the nerve	Lumbar puncture	procedure in which a needle is inserted into the lumbar subarachnoid space for measurement of cerebrospinal fluid

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ANATOMY-RELATED TERMINOLOGY

tympanic membrane	ear drum	Sciatic nerves	Supply nerve impulses to the buttocks, and legs
cephalic	relating to the head	Cervical nerves	Nerves coming from the neck region of the spine
carotid artery	an artery, located on either side of the neck, that supplies the brain with blood.	Left hemisphere	Controls the right side of the body, and the right hemisphere controls the left side of the body
cerebrospinal fluid (CSF)	Cerebrospinal fluid (CSF)- clear fluid that surrounds the brain and spinal cord.	Brain stem	Regulates breathing, heart rate, body temperature.
Cerebellum	Located in the back of the brain involved in regulation of movement, such as basic movement, balance, and posture;	Temporal lobe	Located on the sides of the brain, involved in perception and recognition of auditory stimuli and memory.
Cerebral cortex-	The outer covering of the cerebral hemispheres involved in functions such as thought, voluntary movement, language.	Parietal lobe	Located behind the frontal cortex involved in perception of stimuli related to touch, pressure, temperature, and pain.
ESI-Epidural Steroid injection	Nerve block	Occipital lobe	The posterior lobe of the brain; involved with vision. Visual cortex
cranial nerves	nerve supply to the eyes, mouth, ears, and parts of the head and face	peripheral nerves-	Supply the arms, hands
meninges	membranes that enclose and protect the central nervous system	autonomic nerves	Supply the lungs, heart, stomach, intestines, bladder and sex organs
neuroma	tumor composed of nerve tissue	Auditory/acoustic	hearing
Gustatory	Refers to sense of taste	Olfactory	Sense of smell
Meninges	Membranes that enclose and protect the central nervous system	Microcephaly	A baby born with a small head because the brain has stopped developing

PREFIX, ROOT WORDS, SUFFIX

anhidrosis	An -without	Hidro -water	Inability to produce sweat
apnea	a- without	Pnea -breathing	Cessation of breathing
aphasia	a- without	Phasia -speech	Inability to speak or understand speech
bradykinesia	Brady -slow	Kinesia -movement	slowed movement due to nervous dysfunction
bruxism	Brux -grinding	Ism -condition	grinding one's teeth while asleep
cephalgia	Cepha - head	Algia - pain	Head pain or headache
diplopia	Diplo -double	Plopia - vision	double vision
dyslexia	Dys -difficulty	Lexis -speech	disorder that limits the ability to read
hydrocephalus	Hydro –water	Cephalus – pertains to the head/brain	literally "water in the brain;" excessive CSF in the brain
insomnia	Somni -sleep	ia-condition	difficulty with falling asleep or staying asleep
narcolepsy	Narco – to numb or to sleep	Lepsy -seizure	sleep disorder characterized by excessive daytime sleepiness
narcotic	Narco -sleep	Tic - condition	Drugs that induce sleep.
paraplegia	Para –alongside, or abnormal	Plegia -paralysis	paralysis of both legs
hemiplegia	Hemi –one half	Plegia - paralysis	Paralysis of one side of the body
hemiparesis	Hemi –one half	Paresis- weakness	reduced ability to activate motor neurons; weakness of half of the body

post-herpetic neuralgia	Post –after or behind Neuro - nerves	Algia -pain	Persistent pain after herpes zoster (shingles) infection
quadriplegia (tetraplegia)	Quad -four	Plegia -paralysis	paralysis of all four extremities
radiculopathy	Radic –nerve (nerve root)	Pathy –disease or disorder	Back pain related to nerve root problem
tonic-clonic seizure (grand mal seizure)	Tonic – increased stiffening of muscles Clonic - contraction	(ic)	Severe and violent muscle contractions during a seizure

What is the meaning of the following terms?

Aneurysm	EEG
Cataract	CSF
Glaucoma	Apnea
CVA	Neuroma
Embolus	Otitis media
Hemiplegia	Paraplegia
Hemiparesis	Tinnitus
Narcotic	Encephalitis
Hydrocephalus	Meningitis
Microcephalus	Radiculopathy

RESOURCES

Medical Dictionary http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/mplusdictionary.html
Medical Encyclopedia http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/encyclopedia.html
Medline Plus Word Parts http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/appendixa.html
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