

WORD	MEANING	EXAMPLE:
abnormal <i>adj</i>	not normal for the human body	This amount of weight loss is abnormal for women your age.
ache <i>noun/verb</i>	pain that won't go away	I can't sleep because my knees aches the night.
acute <i>adj</i>	quick to become severe/bad	We knew the baby was coming right away because the woman's labour pains were acute.
allergy <i>noun</i> allergic <i>adj</i>	a body's abnormal reaction to certain foods or environmental substances (eg causes a rash)	Your son is extremely allergic to peanuts.
ambulance <i>noun</i>	emergency vehicle that rushes people to a hospital	We called the ambulance when Josh stopped breathing.
amnesia <i>noun</i>	a condition that causes people to lose their memory	I can't remember the accident because I had amnesia.
amputation <i>noun</i> amputate <i>verb</i>	permanent removal of a limb	We had to amputate his leg because the infection spread so quickly.
anemia <i>noun</i> anemic <i>adj</i>	occurs when the body doesn't have enough red blood cells	I have low energy because I am anemic.
antibiotics <i>noun</i>	medication that kills bacteria and cures infections	My throat infection went away after I started the antibiotics.
anti-depressant <i>noun</i>	medication that helps relieve anxiety and sadness	The anti-depressants helped me get on with life after Lucy died.
appointment <i>noun</i>	a scheduled meeting with a medical professional	I've made you an appointment with a specialist in three week's time.
arthritis <i>noun</i>	a disease that causes the joints to become swollen and crippled	My grandmother can't knit anymore because the arthritis in her hands is so bad.
asthma <i>noun</i>	(attack) a condition that causes a blockage of the airway and makes it difficult for a person to breathe	I carry an inhaler when I run because I have asthma.
bacteria <i>noun</i>	a disease-causing organism	To prevent the spread of bacteria it is important that nurses wash their hands often.
bedsore <i>noun</i>	wounds that develop on a patient's body from lying in one place for too long	If you don't get up and take a walk, you will develop painful bedsores.
benign <i>adj</i>	not harmful (not cancerous)	We're hoping that the tests will show that the lump in your breast is benign.
biopsy <i>noun</i>	removal of human tissue in order to conduct certain medical tests	The biopsy ruled out a number of illnesses.
blood <i>noun</i>	count the amount of red and white blood cells a person has	You will be happy to know that your blood count is almost back to normal.
blood <i>noun</i>	donor a person who gives blood to a blood bank or other person	Blood donors have to answer questions about their medical history.
blood <i>noun</i>	pressure the rate at which blood flows through the body (high/low)	High blood pressure puts you at risk of having a heart attack.
brace	a device that holds injured body parts in place	You will probably always have to wear a brace on

<i>noun</i>		your ankle when you jog.
breech <i>adj</i>	position of an unborn baby in which the feet are down and the head is up	We thought it was going to be a breech birth, but the baby turned himself around.
broken <i>adj</i>	a bone that is divided in two or more pieces as a result of an injury	We thought it was just a sprain, but it turned out his leg was broken.
bruise <i>noun</i> bruised <i>adj</i>	injured body tissue that is visible underneath the skin	The woman was badly bruised when she came into the emergency room.
Caesarean section, C-section <i>noun</i>	procedure that involves removing a baby from its mother through an incision in the woman's lower abdomen	The baby was so large that we had to perform a Caesarean section.
cancer <i>noun</i>	disease caused by the uncontrollable growth of cells	There are many different options when it comes to treating cancer.
cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) <i>noun</i>	restoring a person's breath and circulation	You saved your brother's life by performing CPR.
cast <i>noun</i>	a hard bandage that is wrapped around a broken bone to keep it in place	My leg was in a cast for graduation.
chapel, <i>noun</i>	chapeline a place where loved ones can go to pray for a patient's recovery; a priest who visits patients in the hospital	If you want a place to pray, the chapel is on the third floor.
chemotherapy <i>noun</i>	type of treatment used on cancer patients	My mother has already had three rounds of chemotherapy.
chickenpox <i>noun</i>	a virus commonly contracted by children, characterized by itchy spots all over the body	It is best to get chickenpox as a child so that you don't get it worse as an adult.
coroner <i>noun</i>	a person who determines the cause of death after a person dies	We only call the coroner if we think a death is suspicious.
critical <i>noun</i>	condition requiring immediate and constant medical attention	You can't see her right now; she's in critical condition.
crutches <i>noun</i>	objects that people with injured legs or feet use to help them walk	I'd rather hop on one foot than use crutches.
cyst <i>noun</i>	a sac in the body-tissue filled with fluid (sometimes diseased)	We're going to remove the cysts just to be on the safe side.
deaf <i>adj</i>	unable to hear	The accident left the patient both deaf and blind.
deficiency <i>noun</i>	a lack of something necessary for one's health	The tests show that you have an iron deficiency.
dehydrated <i>adj</i>	in need of water	It is easy for the elderly to become dehydrated in this heat.
dementia <i>noun</i>	loss of mental capacity	It is hard to watch a loved one suffering with dementia.
diabetes <i>noun</i>	type of disease typically involving insulin deficiency	People with diabetes have to constantly check their blood sugar levels.
diagnosis	medical explanation of an illness or condition	The doctor would prefer to share the diagnosis with

<i>noun</i>		the patient himself.
discomfort <i>noun</i>	experiencing pain	This pain medication should relieve some of your discomfort.
disease <i>noun</i>	a medical disorder that is harmful to a person's health	I understand that this disease runs in your family.
dislocated <i>adj</i>	when a bone is temporarily separated from its joint	You will have to wear a sling because of your dislocated shoulder.
emergency <i>noun</i>	a medical problem that needs immediate attention	It is important that children know which number to dial in case of an emergency.
ER (emergency room) <i>noun</i>	the hospital room used for treating patients with immediate and life-threatening injuries	The child was rushed into the ER after he had a severe allergic reaction to a bee sting.
external <i>adj</i>	on the outside	This cream is for external use only. Do not get it near your ears, eyes, or mouth.
false <i>noun</i> <i>adj</i>	negative a test that incorrectly comes back negative	We had two false negative pregnancy tests, so we didn't know we were having a baby.
family <i>noun</i>	history medical background of a person's family members	The doctor was concerned about my family history of skin cancer.
fatal <i>adj</i>	causing death	The doctor made a fatal error when he wrote the wrong prescription.
fever <i>noun</i> feverish <i>adj</i>	higher than normal body temperature	He is very feverish, and his temperature is near danger point.
flu <i>noun</i>	(influenza) many types of respiratory or intestinal infections passed on through a virus	People who have the flu should not visit hospital patients.
fracture <i>noun</i> fractured <i>adj</i>	broken or cracked bone	Your wrist is fractured and needs a cast.
germ <i>noun</i>	a micro-organism, especially one that causes disease	Flowers are not allowed in the ward to avoid the risk of germs being brought in.
genetic <i>adj</i>	a medical condition or physical feature that is passed on in the family	The disease is part genetic and part environmental.
growth <i>noun</i>	a ball of tissue that grows bigger than normal, either on or under the skin	That growth on your shoulder is starting to worry me.
heart <i>noun</i>	attack instance in which blood stops pumping through the heart	People who smoke are at greater risk of having a heart attack.
HIV <i>noun</i>	the virus that infects the human T-cells and leads to AIDS	HIV can be passed down from the mother to her fetus.
hives <i>noun</i>	bumps that appear on the surface of the skin during an allergic reaction	I broke out in hives after I ate that potato casserole.
illness <i>noun</i> ill <i>adj</i>	general term for any condition that makes a person feel sick for a certain period of time	Her illness went away when she started eating better.
immune <i>noun</i>	system the parts of the body that fight diseases, infections, and viruses	You can't have visitors because your immune system is low.

immunization <i>noun</i> immunize <i>verb</i>	an injection that protects against a specific disease	Babies are immunized three times in their first year.
incision <i>noun</i>	cut in the body made during surgery	I had to have stitches to close the incision.
inconclusive <i>adj</i>	unclear	We have to do more x-rays because the first ones were inconclusive.
infant <i>noun</i>	young baby	The nurse will demonstrate how to bathe an infant.
infection <i>noun</i> infected <i>adj</i>	diseased area of the body (viral or bacterial)	The wound should be covered when you swim to prevent it from becoming infected.
inflamed <i>adj</i>	appearance (red and swollen) of an injured body part	My right ankle was so inflamed it was twice the size of my left one.
injury <i>noun</i>	damage to the body	Her injuries were minor; just a few cuts and bruises.
intensive care unit (ICU) <i>noun</i>	section of the hospital where patients get constant attention and doctors rely on specialized equipment	She will remain in the ICU until she can breathe on her own.
internal <i>adj</i>	under the skin, inside the organs	The doctors will be monitoring her for any internal bleeding.
itchy <i>adj</i>	feeling discomfort on the skin's surface	If you are allergic to this medication your skin will get red and itchy.
IV <i>noun</i>	a tube that pumps liquids and medication into a patient's body	The toddler was so dehydrated that the doctor decided to get him on an IV.
lab <i>noun</i>	results tests that come back from a laboratory and help doctors make a diagnosis	The lab results have come in and you are free to go home.
lab <i>noun</i>	(laboratory) place where samples of blood/urine etc. are taken for testing	I'll take these samples down to the lab on my way out.
life <i>noun</i>	support a machine that keeps patients alive by helping them breathe	The woman has severe brain damage and is currently on life support.
life-threatening <i>adj</i>	when injuries and conditions are extremely serious	The victim was shot in two places but the bullet wounds are not life-threatening.
light-headed <i>adj</i>	feeling of dizziness and being off-balance, caused by lack of oxygen in the brain	If you are feeling light-headed again, lie down and call me.
malignant <i>adj</i>	expected to grow and get much worse (especially related to cancerous cells)	I'm afraid at least one of the tumours is malignant.
medical school <i>noun</i>	(med. school) place where someone trains to be a doctor	After eight years of medical school I can finally practice medicine.
newborn <i>noun</i>	an infant that is less than three months old	You have to support her neck because she is still a newborn.
numb <i>adj</i>	no feeling in a certain body part	The needle will make your lower body feel numb.
OR <i>noun</i>	(operating room) the place where major surgeries and operations take place	You must wear a face mask and gloves while you are in the OR.

operation <i>noun</i> operate on <i>verb</i>	a medical procedure that involves going inside a person's body in an attempt to fix a problem	The operation lasted seven hours, but it was successful.
pain <i>noun</i>	strong discomfort in certain areas of the body	We gave your husband some medicine to relieve some of the pain.
pain killer, pain reliever <i>noun</i>	type of medicine that takes away some or all of the discomfort of an illness or injury	You can take two pain killers every four hours.
paralyzed <i>adj</i>	unable to move certain areas of the body	We thought her legs were paralyzed for life, but she is learning how to walk.
patient <i>noun</i>	a person staying in a hospital or medical facility	The patients in Room 4 are not getting along.
pharmacist <i>noun</i>	a person who fills a doctor's prescription and gives people advice about medication	Ask the pharmacist if there is a generic brand of this medication.
pharmacy, drugstore <i>noun</i>	a place where people go to buy medication and other medical supplies	You should be able to buy a bandage at the pharmacy.
physician <i>noun</i>	doctor	Ask your family physician to refer you to a specialist.
poison <i>noun</i> poisonous <i>adj</i>	a substance that is very dangerous if it enters the human body	The child was bitten by a poisonous snake.
prenatal <i>adj</i>	of the time period leading up to giving birth	The woman was well prepared for labour because she took the prenatal classes.
prescription <i>noun</i> prescribe <i>verb</i>	the correct amount and type of medication needed to cure an illness or relieve symptoms	You will need to visit your doctor to get another prescription.
privacy <i>noun</i> private <i>adj</i>	being alone; personal (eg test results)	You will have to pay for a private hospital room if you don't want a room-mate.
radiation <i>noun</i>	high energy X-rays that destroy cancer cells	If the radiation doesn't kill all of the abnormal cells, the cancer will come back.
residency resident <i>noun</i>	part of a doctor's training that takes place in the hospital; a student working under a doctor	John is a resident under Dr Brown.
routine <i>noun</i>	check-up a doctor's appointment to check a person's general health	I'd like to see you a year from now for a routine check-up.
scrubs <i>noun</i>	plain uniform (usually green, white, or blue) worn by medical professionals	I have some extra scrubs in my locker.
scrub <i>verb</i>	up carefully wash hands before and after seeing a patient	I have to scrub up and get ready for surgery.
second <i>noun</i>	opinion input from a second doctor about an illness or symptom	I went to another doctor to get a second opinion about these headaches.
seizure <i>noun</i>	sudden violent movements or unconsciousness caused by electrical signal malfunction in the brain	People who suffer from epilepsy are prone to seizures.
shock <i>noun</i>	body not getting enough blood flow	The woman was in shock after being pulled from the river.
side <i>noun</i>	effects other symptoms that might occur as a result of a certain medication or procedure	One of the side effects of antidepressants is a loss of appetite.

sore <i>adj</i>		painful	I have a sore throat and a runny nose.
spasm <i>noun</i>		the uncontrollable tightening of a muscle	Ever since I injured my leg I've been having muscle spasms in my upper thigh.
specialist <i>noun</i>		a doctor that is an expert in a certain kind of medicine	My family doctor is sending me to a specialist.
sprain <i>noun/verb</i>		an injury (less serious than a break) to a joint (ankle, wrist, knee etc)	I sprained my knee playing soccer.
stable <i>noun</i>	condition	a patient is stable if their medical condition is no longer changing rapidly	You can see your husband now; he is in a stable condition.
sting <i>noun/verb</i>		sharp, temporary pain	It may sting when I insert the needle.
stress <i>noun</i> stressed <i>adj</i>		worry that causes muscles to tighten and blood pressure to rise	You need to take some time off work and relieve some of your stress.
swelling <i>noun</i> swollen <i>adj</i>		ligaments (parts that hold the joints together) growing bigger and rounder after an injury to a joint	I knew my ankle was sprained because it was so swollen.
symptoms <i>noun</i>		pain or physical changes that occur because of an illness or disease	You have all of the symptoms of a diabetic.
temperature <i>noun</i>		amount of heat measured in a body; higher than normal temperature	We brought Jesse to emergency because he was running a (high)temperature.
tender <i>adj</i>		painful when touched or used	The incision was tender after the surgery.
test <i>noun</i>	results	medical information that helps doctors understand a patient's condition or body	The test results came back negative. You aren't pregnant.
therapy <i>noun</i>		treatment aimed at improving a person's mental or physical condition	I was able to go back to work a few weeks after starting the therapy.
transplant <i>noun</i>		moving of an organ from one human to another	The heart transplant saved your life.
ultrasound <i>noun</i>		a test that examines the body's internal organs and processes using sound waves (often used during pregnancies)	The ultrasound shows that we are expecting a baby boy.
umbilical <i>noun</i>	cord	the lifeline from the mother to the fetus (when cut at birth this forms the belly button)	I had an emergency C-section because the umbilical cord was wrapped around the baby's neck.
unconscious <i>adj</i>		alive, but appearing to be asleep and unaware of the surroundings	I hit my head on the steering wheel and was still unconscious when the ambulance arrived.
urine <i>noun</i>	sample	a small amount of the body's liquid waste that is tested for different medical reasons	The urine sample tells us how much alcohol is in your blood.
vein <i>noun</i>		the thin tubes that transport blood around the body and back to the heart	I'm just looking for the best vein in which to insert the needle.
virus <i>noun</i>		a dangerous organism that causes the spread of minor and major diseases	The virus is contractable through the exchange of bodily fluids.
visiting <i>noun</i>	hours	time of day when friends and family are allowed to visit patients in hospital	I'm afraid you'll have to come back during visiting hours.

vomit <i>noun/verb</i>	discharge of a person stomach contents through the mouth	The pregnant woman can't stop vomiting.
ward <i>noun</i>	a section of a hospital or health facility where patients stay	I should warn you that we're entering the mental health ward.
wheelchair <i>noun</i>	a chair on wheels used for transporting patients from place to place	If you get in the wheelchair I'll take you down to see the garden.
wound <i>noun</i> wounded <i>adj</i>	injury to body ("flesh wound" means not deep)	The wounded soldiers are being airlifted to the hospital.
x-ray <i>noun/verb</i>	a photograph of a person's bones and organs	The technician took x-rays of my shoulder to make sure it wasn't broken.

VOCABULARY QUIZ

- 1 You shouldn't drive because this medicine might make you feel _____.
- 2 The children's _____ is located on the fourth floor of the hospital.
- 3 Discontinue using this cream immediately if it makes you feel _____.
- 4 Your blood count is abnormal, so you may have _____.

5 The doctor wrote me a _____ for a new type of pain reliever.

6 _____ from this medication include nausea and depression.

7 The _____ suggests that your wife is seventeen weeks pregnant.

8 The patient has asked for some _____ while her family is visiting.

9 The physician will be monitoring your _____ to make sure it isn't cancerous.

10 You couldn't have inherited the disease because it is not _____.

Human Body

One of the first things you need to know when working in English is the parts of the body. You will need to learn the names of the internal (inside the skin) and external body parts. You will also need to learn the words for the functions of each of these body parts. Here are the basics to get you started.

Head

Inside the head is the brain, which is responsible for thinking. The top of a person's scalp is covered with hair. Beneath the hairline at the front of the face is the forehead. Underneath the forehead are the eyes for seeing, the nose for smelling, and the mouth for eating. On the outside of the mouth are the lips, and on the inside of the mouth are the teeth for biting and the tongue for tasting. Food is swallowed down the throat. At the sides of the face are the cheeks and at the sides of the head are the ears for hearing. At the bottom of a person's face is the chin. The jaw is located on the inside of the cheeks and chin. The neck is what attaches the head to the upper body.



Upper Body

At the top and front of the upper body, just below the neck is the collar bone. On the front side of the upper body is the chest, which in women includes the breasts. Babies suck on the nipples of their mother's breasts. Beneath the ribcage are the stomach and the waist. The navel, more commonly referred to as the belly button, is located here as well. On the inside of the upper body are the heart for pumping blood and the lungs for breathing. The rear side of the upper body is called the back, inside which the spine connects the upper body to the lower body.



Upper

Limbs

(arms)

The arms are attached to the shoulders. Beneath this area is called the armpit or underarm. The upper arms have the muscles known as triceps and biceps. The joint halfway down the arm is called the elbow. Between the elbow and the next joint, the wrist, is the forearm. Below the wrist is the hand with four fingers and one thumb. Beside the thumb is the index finger. Beside the index finger is the middle finger, followed by the ring finger and the little finger. At the ends of the fingers are fingernails.



Lower Body

Below the waist, on left and right, are the hips. Between the hips are the reproductive organs, the penis (male) or the vagina (female). At the back of the lower body are the buttocks for sitting on. They are also commonly referred to as the rear end or the bum (especially with children). The internal organs in the lower body include the intestines for digesting food, the bladder for holding liquid waste, as well as the liver and the kidneys. This area also contains the woman's uterus, which holds a baby when a woman is pregnant.



Lower

Limbs

(legs)

The top of the leg is called the thigh, and the joint in the middle of the leg is the knee. The front of the lower leg is the shin and the back of the lower leg is the calf. The ankle connects the foot to the leg. Each foot has five toes. The smallest toe is often called the little toe while the large one is called the big toe. At the ends of the toes are toenails.



Medical Supplies and Tools

Here is a list of some of the most common supplies found in doctor's offices, operating rooms, and medical kits. Study the vocabulary and try the matching exercise.

antiseptic	liquid used to sterilize (clean) the surface of the skin
bandage	a cloth covering that is placed over a wound to prevent bleeding, swelling and infection
bandage scissors	tool used to cut bandages
blood pressure monitor	a tool that measures the force of blood flow through a person's body
dressing	protective covering that is placed over a wound
elastic tape	a thin roll of stretchy material that is sticky on one side
eye chart	a poster of letter, word, and number combinations of various sizes used to test a person's eyesight
forceps	instrument used during operations and medical procedures (assists the doctor in pulling, holding, and retrieving)
gauze	thin, netted material used for dressing wounds

hypodermic needle	sharp pointed metal piece that pricks the skin (attached to a syringe), used for taking blood or administering medicine
IV bag	the pouch that contains liquids to be pumped into a patient's body
medicine cup	small plastic measuring cup
microscope	equipment that makes small things appear larger than they are
otoscope	a device used for looking into a patient's ears
oxygen mask	equipment that fits over the nose and mouth and supplies oxygen
privacy screen	an object that is used to separate the doctor and patient from others in an open room
scales	a device that measures a person's weight
stethoscope	equipment for listening to a person's heart and lungs
syringe	a cylinder-shaped piece that attaches to a needle and can be filled with liquid
table and head-rest paper	paper that is placed on an examining table or head-rest to prevent the spread of germs
test tube	glass cylinder that is filled with blood or other liquids and can be capped and placed in a storage area
thermometer	an instrument used to check a person's body temperature
vial	a small bottle or container used for storing liquids

Matching Exercise

Match the comments with the supplies that are needed:

- | | |
|---|------------------------------------|
| 1 I can't catch my breath. | a <i>table and head-rest paper</i> |
| 2 Prepare the examining table for the next patient. | b <i>thermometer</i> |
| 3 We'll have to get a blood sample. | c <i>oxygen mask</i> |
| 4 I need to sterilize the wound. | d <i>hypodermic needle</i> |
| 5 We'll have to feed him with liquids. | e <i>bandage scissors</i> |
| 6 Let's find out your weight. | f <i>scales</i> |
| 7 I need to examine the patient in private. | g <i>eye chart</i> |
| 8 Let's check your vision. | h <i>antiseptic</i> |

9 Let's see if you are running a fever.

i *IV bag*

10 Can you cut this gauze for me?

j *privacy screen*

Medical Specialists

Medical specialists are experts in certain fields of medicine. They either treat specific parts of the body, such as the back or the brain, or they specialize in certain diseases, such as cancer. Family doctors keep a list of local specialists and can help patients choose the right specialist for each medical issue. In many cases specialists require a **referral** from a family doctor before they will see a patient. Here is a list of the most common types of specialists. Study the list and then check your understanding by taking the quiz.

allergist:	specializes in determining food and environmental allergies
anesthesiologist:	specializes in pain prevention during surgery
cardiologist:	heart specialist
chiropractor:	back specialist
dentist:	tooth specialist
dermatologist:	skin specialist
fertility specialist:	helps people who have difficulty getting pregnant
gynecologist:	specializes in women's needs
massage therapist:	specializes in muscle relaxation
midwife:	helps women deliver babies in a natural way
naturopath:	specializes in natural cures and remedies
neurologist:	brain specialist

obstetrician:	specialist for pregnant women
occupational therapist:	specializes in workplace health
oncologist:	tumour specialist, including cancer
ophthalmologist:	specializes in eye diseases
pediatrician:	specialist for babies and children
physical therapist:	specializes in the body's movement
podiatrist:	foot specialist
psychiatrist:	specialist in mental health
radiologist:	specializes in imaging tests