


Medical Terminology



Porterville College





Breaking Down Medical Terms

Important Word parts:

- **Root:** gives the essential *meaning* of the term
 - **Suffix:** is the word *ending*
 - **Prefix:** is a small part added to the *beginning* of a term
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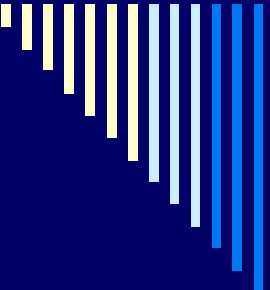
Continued...

- **Combining vowel:** *connects* roots to suffixes and roots to other roots
 - **Combining form:** is the combination of the *root* and *combining vowel*
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Start with the suffix...

- When you analyze a medical term, begin at the *end* of the word. The ending is called a **suffix**.
 - All medical terms contain suffixes.
 - The suffix in HEMATOLOGY is –LOGY, which means “study of”.
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Next, read the beginning of the word..

- Now look at the *beginning* of the term. HEMAT is the word **root**.
 - The root gives the essential meaning of the term.
 - The root HEMAT- means “blood.”
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Combining vowel (s)...

- The third part of this term, which is the letter O, has no meaning of its own but is an important connector between the root (HEMAT) and the suffix (LOGY).
 - It is called a **combining vowel**.
 - The letter O is the combining vowel usually found in medical terms.
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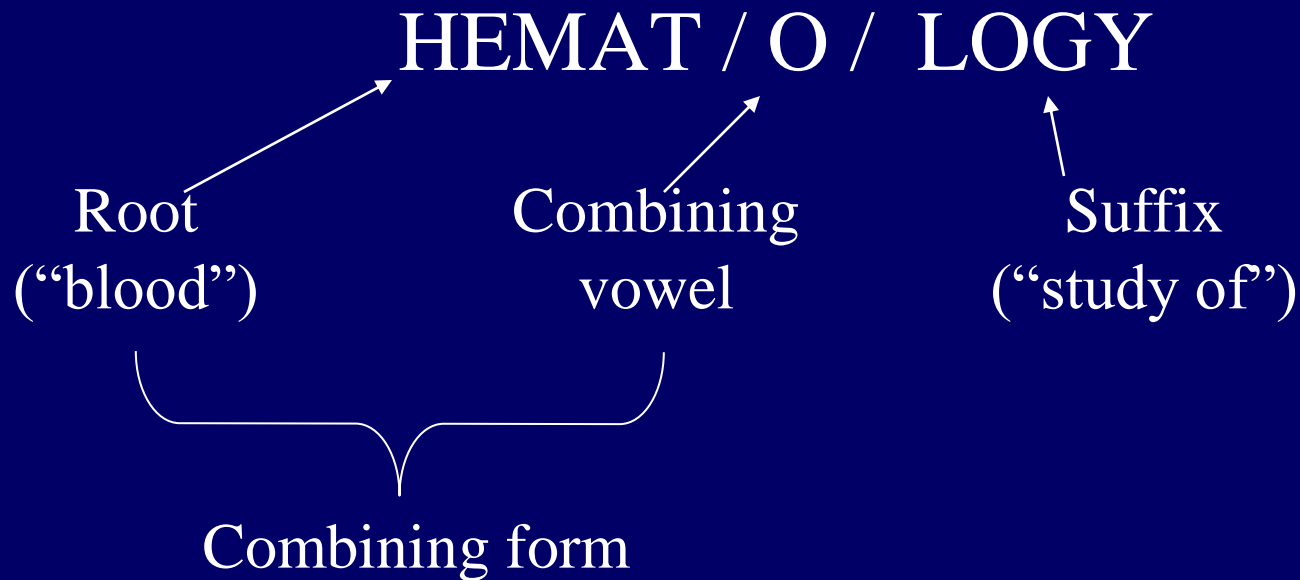


Putting it together...

- Putting together the meaning of the suffix and the root, the term HEMATOLOGY means:
“the study of the blood”
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HEMATOLOGY





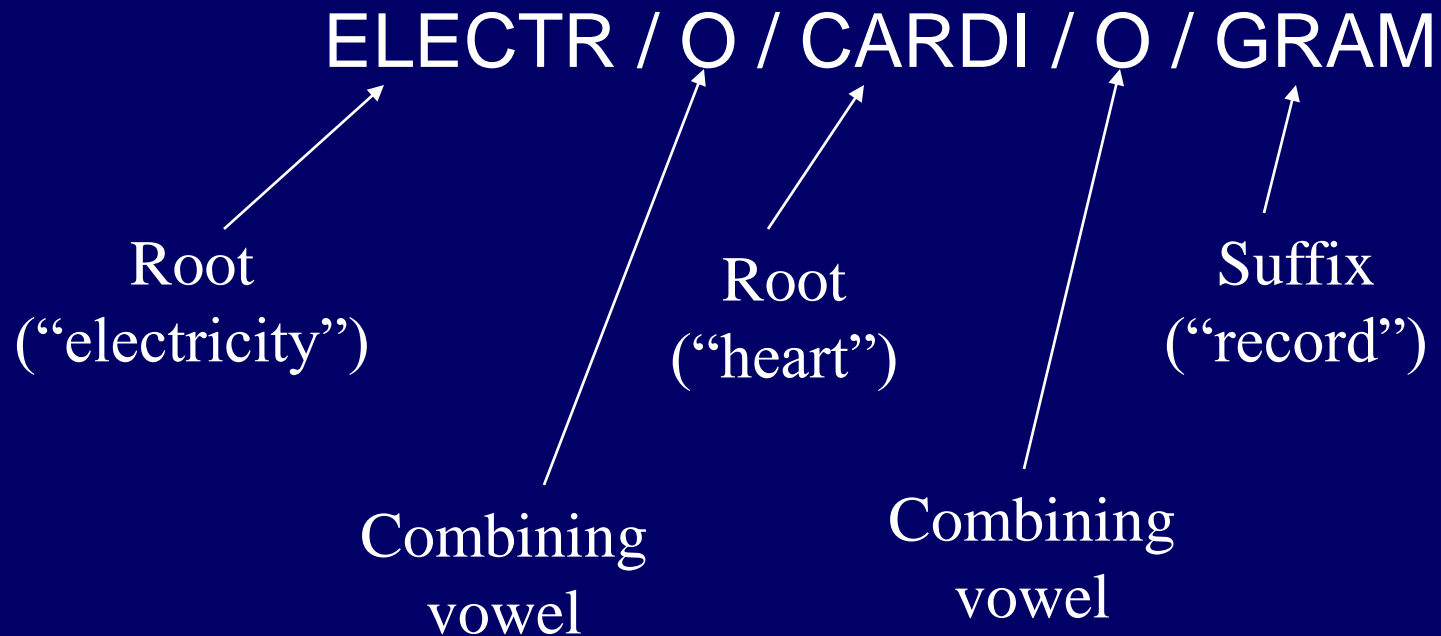
Words with two roots...

- Each word root uses a combining vowel
- Remember combining vowels connect roots to suffixes and roots to other roots.
- The combining vowel plus the root is called a combining form.
- How many *combining forms* are there in the word:

ELECTROCARDIOGRAM ?



ELECTROCARDIOGRAM





TWO COMBINING FORMS

Roots: ELECTR/O = electricity

CARDI/O = heart

Suffix: GRAM = record



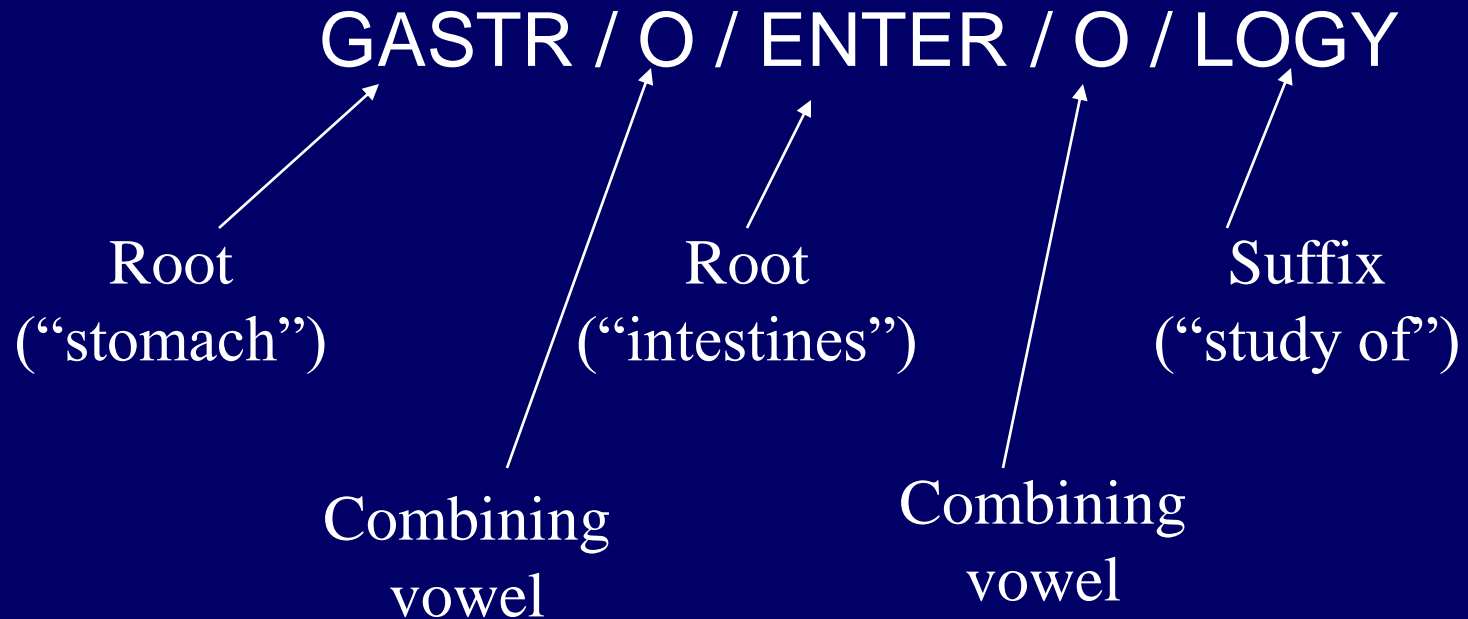
ELECTROCARDIOGRAM

□ Thus the entire term means:

“record of the electricity in the heart”



GASTROENTEROLOGY





GASTROENTEROLOGY

- The two combining forms are GASTR/O and ENTER/O.
 - The entire word (reading from the suffix, back to the beginning of the term, and across) means:
“study of the stomach and the intestines”
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GASTROSCOPE

GASTR / O / SCOPE

Combining form
("stomach")

Suffix
("instrument
to visually
examine")

"Instrument to visually examine the stomach"



GASTRIC



“Pertaining to the stomach”

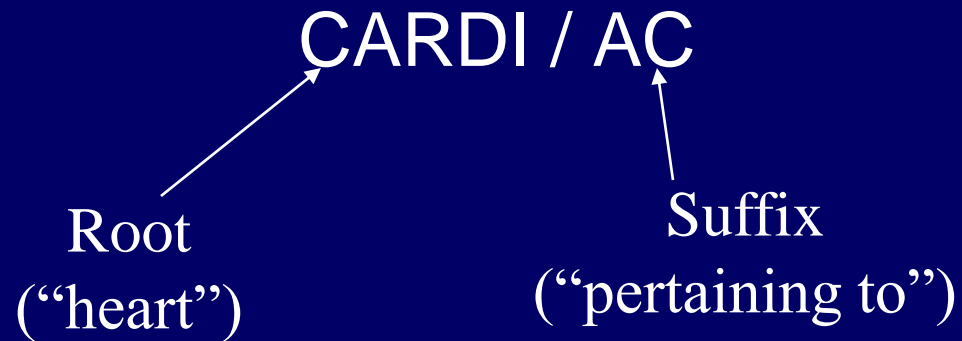


GASTR / IC

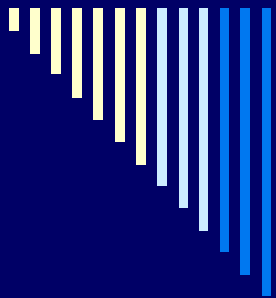
- Notice that the combining vowel is *dropped* when the suffix (-IC) begins with a vowel.
 - Words ending in -IC are adjectives and mean “pertaining to.”
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CARDIAC



“Pertaining to the heart”

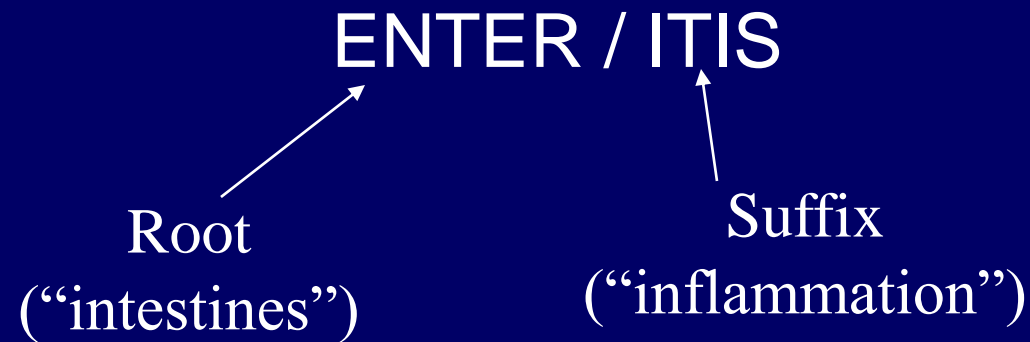


CARDI / AC

- Again, the combining vowel is dropped when the suffix (-AC) begins with a vowel.
- Words ending in -AC are adjectives and mean “pertaining to.”



ENTERITIS



“Inflammation of the intestines”

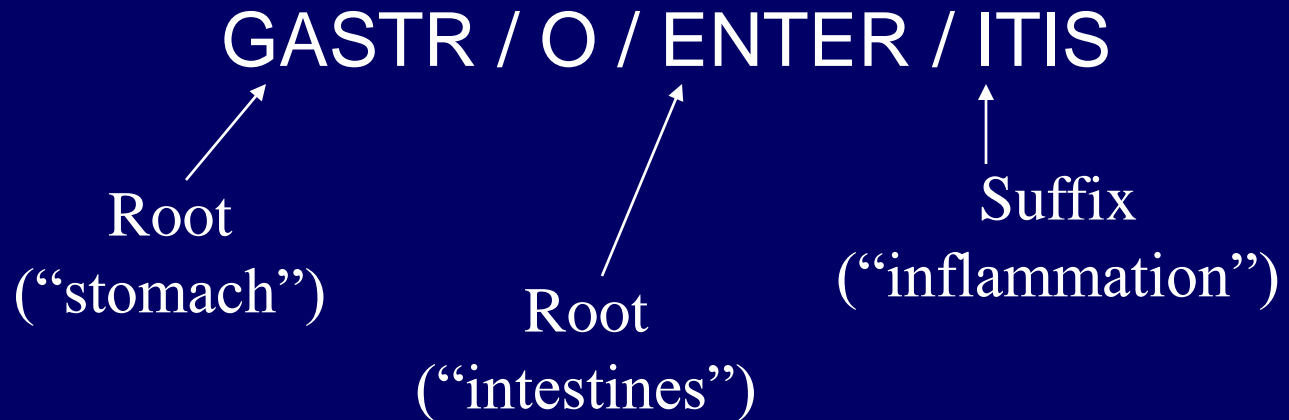


ENTER / ITIS

- Again, the combining vowel is dropped when the suffix (-ITIS) begins with a vowel.
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GASTROENTERITIS



“Inflammation of the stomach and intestines”



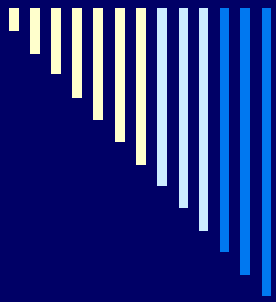
GASTR / O / ENTER / ITIS

- Notice that the combining vowel (O) remains between the two roots even though the second root (ENTER) begins with a vowel.
 - Remember combining vowels connect roots to suffixes and *roots to other roots*.
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Now for the Prefix...

- Many medical terms also have a word part attached to the *beginning* of the term. This is called a **Prefix**.
 - It can change the meaning of a term in important ways
 - For example, watch what happens to the meaning of the following medical terms when the prefix changes...
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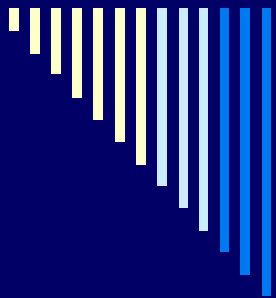


_____ GASTRIC

PREFIX

SUB / gastr / ic = “pertaining to *below*
the stomach”

↑
Prefix
 (“below”)



_____ GASTRIC

PREFIX

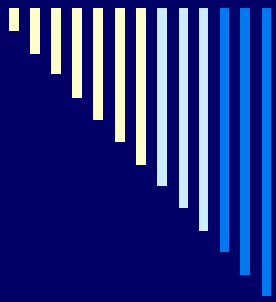
TRANS / gastr / ic = “pertaining to *across*
the stomach”

↑
Prefix
 (“across”)



REVIEW

- **Root:** gives the essential *meaning* of the term
 - **Suffix:** is the word *ending*
 - **Prefix:** is a small part added to the *beginning* of a term
 - **Combining vowel:** *connects* roots to suffixes and roots to other roots
 - **Combining form:** is the combination of the *root* and *combining vowel*
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Important Rules to Remember

Read the meaning of medical words from the suffix to the beginning of the word and then across.