

Instructional Terminology

MEDICAL ASSISTING SERVICES 51.0801.00



A

Abdomen – The part of the body between the thorax and the pelvis; the cavity of this part of the trunk containing the chief viscera

Abdominal Thrust – Method of attempting to remove an object from the airway of someone who is choking

Abduction – Moving a body part away from the midline of the body

Abrasion – Wound caused by scraping or rubbing off of skin; superficial

Absorption – The digestive process in which digestive juices and enzymes break down food into materials the body can use

Accuracy – Each individual medical record MUST be correct

Active listening skills – Engaged and attentive listening to someone else

Active Motion – Moving using physical effort and action

Acute – A disease that is brief severe and quickly comes to a crisis

Adduction – Moving a body part toward the midline of the body

Adherence -"Sticking to" or "Being faithful to"

ADL - Activities of Daily Living; personal daily care tasks including bathing, dressing, mouth care, hair care, toileting, and eating and drinking

Advanced Beneficiary Notice (ABN) - Written notice that insurance will not cover a procedure/service

Adverse Reaction – Abnormal reaction of the immune system to a substance

Afebrile – Having no fever

Affected Side – The side that is involved by disease or injury

AIDS – Auto Immune Deficiency Syndrome a disease of the immune system caused by infection with the retrovirus HIV

Ailment – A minor illness or disease

Airborne – Carried by floating particles

Allergic Reaction – The immune system’s abnormal reaction to foreign substances (allergens) breathed into the lungs, swallowed, or injected

Allowable – The amount a contracted insurance company considers “reasonable and necessary” for a specific CPT code charge; this is the most a contracted physician can collect from a patient

Alzheimer’s – A progressive degenerative and irreversible disease that is a form of dementia; there is no cure

Ambu Bag – Bag valve mask manual resuscitator or self-inflating bag hand held device used to provide positive pressure ventilation to someone not breathing

Ambulation – The act of walking

Amputations – Surgical removal of part of a limb or digit of the body

Anaphylaxis – Severe allergic reaction that can cause death

Anger – A strong feeling of grievance and displeasure

Angina – Condition in which lack of blood to the heart causes severe chest pains

Antecubital Space – Depression of the anterior elbow commonly used for venipuncture

Anterior – Situated at or near the front of the body or of a body part

Antibacterial – Anything that destroys bacteria or suppresses their growth and their ability to reproduce

Antibiotics – A naturally produced substance that kills or inactivates bacteria

Anxiety – Uneasiness or fear often about a situation or condition

Aphasia – Partial or total inability to produce and understand speech as a result of brain damage caused by injury or disease

Apical – Pulse heard by listening directly over the apex of the heart with a stethoscope

Apnea – A temporary suspension or absence of breathing

Apply payments – To post a payment to a service charge on a patient's account

Arrhythmia – Any disturbance in the rhythm of the heartbeat

Arteries – Vessels that carries blood away from the heart

Arteriosclerosis – Degenerative change in the arteries characterized by thickening of vessel walls and accumulation of calcium with

consequent loss of elasticity and lessened blood flow

Arthritis – A medical condition affecting a joint causing pain swelling and stiffness

Artifact (in EKG) – An alteration on an ECG that is unrelated to heart activity (i.e. movement of patient)

Asepsis – Absence of microorganisms (germs)

Aseptic – Free of disease causing microorganism

Aspiration – The inhalation of food or drink into the lungs; can cause pneumonia or death

Assistive Device – Special equipment that helps a person who is ill or disabled perform ADLs; also called adaptive devices

Asthma – Chronic episodic lung disease that inflames and narrows the airways

Atria – The upper chambers of the heart

Atrophy – The wasting away decreasing in size and weakening of muscles from lack of use

Audiometry – Using an audiometer (an electronic instrument) to measure hearing ability

Autoclave – Machine creating steam or a type of gas that kills all microorganisms

Autoimmune - Immune system attacks healthy/normal cells

Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) – Equipment used to electrically stimulate the heart in hopes of returning to a regular rhythm

Axillary – Of or relating to the armpit

B

Bacteria - Type of cell, can be pathogenic or non-pathogenic

Bargaining – To negotiate the terms of an agreement with somebody for something in return

Benign – A mass of cells that lacks the ability to invade neighboring tissue or metastasize

Bevel – Tip of needle that is slanted

Bile – Greenish-brown excretion from the gallbladder and produced by liver that breaks down fat

Biohazard – Something that may cause harm to people or the environment especially a poisonous chemical or an infectious disease

Bladder – A membranous sac that serves as receptacle of a liquid or contains gas

Bleeding – To lose blood from the body through a wound or because of illness

Blister – Pocket of skin that fills with serous fluid

Blood Borne Pathogen (BBP) – Disease causing germs that live in the human blood

Blood Pressure (BP) – Pressure exerted by the blood against the walls of the blood vessels

Bodily Fluids – Tears, saliva, sputum, urine, feces, semen, vaginal secretions, and pus or other wound drainage

Body Alignment – Body positioning that promotes proper body functioning; posture

Body Language – All of the conscious or unconscious messages your body sends as you communicate such as facial expressions shrugging your shoulders and wringing your hands

Body Mass Index – A measure of body fat according to the patient's weight and height

Body Mechanics – The way the parts of the body work together when you move

Brachial – Relating to the upper arm

Brachial artery – The artery located in the antecubital space of the elbow, commonly used for taking blood pressure; also between the biceps and triceps muscles in pediatric and thinner adult patients

Bradycardia – Heart rate that is below normal

Bradypnea – Slow breathing – less than 12 breaths per minute

Breach of duty – Failure to perform an act required by law; the performance of an act in an unlawful way

Breathing – The process of taking air into the lungs and pushing it out again

Buccal – Of or relating to the cheek

Burns – Exposure to fire heat extreme cold or chemicals that cause damage to skin and underlying tissues

C

CAB – Circulation, Airway, Breathing

Calibrate – To use a known standard to measure the accuracy of equipment

Cancer – A general term used to describe a disease in which abnormal cells grow in an uncontrolled way

Cane – A stick used to assist one in walking

Capillaries – Smallest blood vessels where exchange occurs between blood and tissues

Cardiac Arrest – Medical term for the stopping of the heart

Cardiac Cycle – The events and time period from the start of atrial contraction to ventricular relaxation

Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) – Technique used when someone is in cardiac arrest or not breathing

Cardiovascular System – Continuous circulation body system that includes the heart and the vascular structures (blood vessels such as arteries capillaries and veins)

Carotid – Two main arteries one on each side of the neck which supplies blood to the head

Cast – A stiff plaster of Paris or fiberglass casing that holds a broken bone in place while it is healing

Center for Disease Control (CDC) – A federal agency whose main goal is to protect public health and safety through the control and prevention of disease injury and disability

Centers for Medical Services (CMS) – Also known as Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services: a federal agency within the United States Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) that administers the Medicare program and works in partnership with state governments to administer Medicaid

Central Nervous System – Part of the nervous system made up of the brain and spinal cord

Cerebral – Relating to the brain

Cerebral Vascular Incident (CVA) – A condition caused when blood supply to the brain is cut off suddenly by a clot or a ruptured blood vessel; also called a stroke

Chief Complaint – The reason/symptom(s) a patient is seeking medical care

Choking – Have severe difficulty in breathing because of a constricted or obstructed throat or a lack of air

Cholecystitis – Inflammation of the gallbladder

Chronic – A disease or injury that is persistent and habitual

Chronological – According to time

Circulation – The continuous movement of blood through all parts of the body

Circulatory System – Bodily system consisting of the heart, blood vessels, blood and structure that make up the lymphatic system

Circumference (pediatrics) – Head and chest measurements used in infants to analyze development

Clean Catch – A method of collecting a urine sample so it is not contaminated by anything outside the patient's body

Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA) – Enacted by Congress to regulate all laboratories that test human specimens to help ensure accurate patient test results

Co-insurance – Agreement between insurance and policyholder for percentage of costs each will pay for covered services

Co-Payment – Fixed amount patient will pay to the medical provider prior to receiving services

Cognitively Impaired – Reduced ability to perform mental task such as focus memory self-awareness and judgment

Cold Application – Using ice bag or cool cloth on injured body part Used to stop bleeding prevent swelling and reduce pain

Collection Method – The method in which blood is extracted from a patient for testing purposes. Ex: capillary puncture, venipuncture

Communication – Exchange of information between people may be verbal or non – verbal

Completeness – All documentation, including that from the clinics,

hospital and urgent care, must be included in a medical record

Compressions – Flatten by pressure; squeeze; press; the act of applying pressure to someone's chest in order to help blood flow through the heart in an emergency

Conciseness – Using minimal words

Confidentiality – Medical records are confidential and protected by authority of the Privacy Act of 1974, its amendment and HIPAA

Congestive – To fill to excess; overcrowd

Congestive heart failure – A condition in which the heart muscle is damaged and does not pump effectively; blood backs up into the heart instead of circulating: can occur on one or both sides of the heart

Consent – Agreement or permission to do or allow something

Constrict – Make something narrower

Contact Isolation – Protection when infection may be spread by touching contaminated items such as linen equipment or supplies

Contamination – Soiled unclean; having disease - causing organisms or infectious material on it

Contraction – Shortening of tissues

Contraindication – Reason why a medication should not be administered to a patient because it may cause harm

Contusion – (Bruise hematoma) Caused when blood vessels are damaged or broken as the result of a blow to the skin

COPD – Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease makes it hard for you to breathe. The two main types are chronic bronchitis and emphysema, usually from smoking

Coping Mechanisms – An adaptation to environmental stress that is based on conscious or unconscious choice and that enhances control over behavior or gives psychological comfort

Coronary Artery Disease (CAD) – The narrowing or blockage of the coronary arteries usually caused by atherosclerosis

Crutches – A mobility aid that transfers weight from the legs to the upper body; often used for people who cannot use their legs to support their weight

Culture – The variety of people living and working together in the world

Current Procedural Terminology (CPT) manual – Code book for procedures and services performed by providers

Cyanosis/Cyanotic – Blue or pale skin and/or mucous membranes due to decreased oxygen in the blood

D

DEA # - Identification number for health care providers that allows them to prescribe

Debridement – Removing debris (i.e. foreign substance, dead tissue) from a wound

Decubitus Ulcer – A serious wound resulting from skin breakdown also known as pressure sore or bed sore

Deductible – Set amount of money paid by policyholder before insurance will pay its portion

Dehydration – A condition that occurs when a person does not have enough fluid in the body

Deep – Away from the surface

Delusions – A belief in something that is not true or is out of touch with reality

Dementia – A serious progressive loss of mental abilities such as thinking remembering reasoning and communicating

Denial – Refusal to recognize or acknowledge

Deposition – Testimony given in a court case

Depression – An illness that causes social withdrawal lack of energy and loss of interest in activities as well as other symptoms

Dereliction of duty – Failure to act or give care that is expected/obligated to perform

Diabetes Mellitus – A condition in which the pancreas does not produce insulin or does not produce enough insulin; causes problems with circulation and can damage vital organs

Diagnosis – The identification of the nature of an illness or other problem by examination of the symptoms

Diameter – The length of a straight line passing through the center of a circle and connecting opposite points on its circumference; e.g. cranial diameter, pelvic diameter

Diarrhea – Frequent elimination of liquid or semi - liquid feces

Diastolic – Phase when the heart muscle relaxes

Digestion – The process of breaking down food so it can be absorbed into the cells

Direct Contact – An individual known to have been sufficiently near an infected person to have been exposed to the transfer of disease

Disease – Abnormal condition illness

Disinfection – A measure used to decrease the spread of pathogens and disease by destroying as many pathogens as possible and slowing growth and activity of those that cannot be destroyed

Disorientated – Confusion about person place or time; may be permanent or temporary

Distal – Away from the trunk or point of attachment

Dizziness – To feel lightheaded faint and shaky

Documentation – Process of providing written details or information

Doff – Removal of PPE

Don – Putting on of PPE

Dorsal Recumbent position – Position of patient on the back with lower limbs flexed and rotated outward; used in vaginal examination

Dorsiflexion – Flexion or bending in a dorsal direction as of the hand or foot

Dosage – Amount of medication given at one time

Drainage – Excretion or removal of bodily fluids

Drape – Fabric or paper that provides modesty or a sterile environment

Draping – Using sheets to protect patient privacy and modesty and keep the patient warm

Dressing – Sterile covering placed directly over a wound to absorb blood and other body fluids, prevent contamination, and protect the wound from further trauma

Droplets – A very small drop of liquid expelled by talking singing sneezing laughing or coughing; can travel up to three feet after be spewed from a person's mouth or nose

Dyspnea – Difficulty breathing/labored breathing

E

Ear Lavage – To wash out or irrigate the ear

Edema – Swelling in body tissues caused by excess fluid

EHR – An electronic health record is a standardized and shareable collection of medical records

Electrocardiogram (EKG/ECG) – Tracing or recording of electrical activity as it moves through the heart

Electrode – Sticker/pad placed on patient and connected to leads during ECG

Electronic Medical Record (EMR) – Digital patient medical record

Elevate/Elevation – Raise or lift (something) up to a higher position

Elimination – The physical process of releasing or emptying the body of waste products

Embryo – Generally considered to be between the first and the eighth week of development after fertilization

Emphysema – Progressive respiratory system disease in which the tissues necessary to support the physical shape and function of the lung are destroyed, causing shortness of breath and other symptoms

Endocrine System – System of glands that secrete hormones directly into the circulatory system to be carried to a target organ

Epi-pen – A self-administering epinephrine pen for patients with possibility of anaphylaxis

Epilepsy – A central nervous system disorder in which the nerve cell activity in your brain is disturbed causing a seizure (experience abnormal behavior symptoms and sensations including loss of consciousness)

Epinephrine – A heart stimulant, to constrict the blood vessels, and to relax the bronchi in asthma. Used when someone is experiencing anaphylaxis (allergic reaction)

Ergonomics – The scientific discipline concerned with the understanding of interactions among humans and other elements of a system and the profession that applies theory principles data and methods to design in order to optimize human well-being and overall system performance

Estrogen – Primary female sex hormone and is responsible for development and regulation of the female reproductive organs

Ethics – The knowledge of what is right and wrong; standards of conduct

Explanation of Benefits – Summary of a medical insurance claim including cost and payment

Exposure Incident – Exposure to fire heat extreme cold or chemicals that cause damage to skin and underlying tissues

Extension – The stretching out of a limb after it has been bent

Extremity – The distal or terminal portion of elongated or pointed structures (limbs)

F

Fallopian Tubes – One of a pair of long, slender ducts in the female abdomen that transport ova from the ovary to the uterus

Fatigue – A subjective feeling of tiredness

Feces – Waste matter eliminated from the bowels

Fee Schedule – A fee schedule is a list of the plan's maximum payment amounts for specific services or supplies. Preferred providers have agreed to accept these fees as payment in full for services to enrollees. See "Allowed Amount, Medical Services" for more details

Fetus – Stage of human gestation after 8 weeks to birth

First Aid – Is the provision of initial care for an illness or injury

Flexed/Flexion – To bend a body part

Forced Vital Capacity (FVC) – Amount of air forcefully exhaled

Fowler's Position – Position used to promote oxygenation via maximum chest expansion- implemented during events of respiratory distress

Fractures – A broken bone

Fungus – Any member of a large group of eukaryotic organisms that includes microorganisms such as yeasts and molds

G

Gait Belt – A device used to transfer people from one position to another, from one thing to another or while ambulating people that have problems with balance

Gallbladder – Small hollow organ that sits just beneath the right lobe of the liver where bile is stored before it is released into the small intestine

Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease – (GERD) is a condition in which the stomach contents leak backwards from the stomach into the esophagus

Gastrointestinal System – The chain of organs of the gastrointestinal tract, from the oral cavity to the anus

Gestational – The period of time between conception and birth

Glands – A cell, group of cells, or organ producing a secretion

Gloves – Covering for the hand to prevent transmission of germs and disease

Gonads – A sexual gland in which gametes are produced; an ovary or testis

Good Samaritan Law – Legal protection for people who give reasonable aid to those who are injured ill in peril or otherwise incapacitated

Gown – Replacement for clothing to provide modesty for patient but allow for an evaluation or procedure

Grief – A multifaceted response to loss

Group Number – An alpha or string of numerals used to identify the group of people belonging to a common community (typically as employees of a company)

H

Hand Washing – Hand hygiene with either plain or antiseptic soap and water

HBV (Hepatitis B Virus) – Disease most commonly contracted by healthcare professionals; there is a vaccine

HCG – Gonadotropic hormone; any hormone having a stimulating effect on the gonads

HCV (Hepatitis C Virus) – Serious infection of the liver, no vaccine

Health Maintenance Organization – Type of medical insurance that is basic and usually requires patients to only use approved network providers

Heart Muscle – Involuntary muscle found only in the heart; also called cardiac muscles

Heat Application – Applying heat to a certain area or body part for comfort or to promote vasodilation

Height – Distance between the lowest and highest point of a person’s body

Hemiplegia – Total or partial inability to move one side of the body

Hemorrhage – Bleeding or the abnormal flow of blood

Hepatitis B – Inflammation of the liver caused by disease

Hernias – Protrusion of an organ or the fascia of an organ through the wall of the cavity that normally contains it

Herpes Simplex Virus – Contagious disease that form watery blisters in the skin or mucous membranes of the mouth lips or genitals

High Fowler’s – Patient in supine position with head elevated about 90 degrees

HIPAA – Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act; law to protect privacy of health information

HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) – Autoimmune virus that leads to AIDS

Homeostasis – The body’s ability to maintain a constant internal environment in response to environmental changes

Hormone – A chemical substance produced by a gland that has a specific target tissue and action

Hot/warm Compress – Used to relieve pain from muscle fatigue, old injuries, rheumatic pain, menstrual cramps, boils, and toothache

Hub – Attaches to a double-sided needle, thereby connecting a needle and a vacutainer tube in the process of performing venipuncture

Human Papillomavirus (HPV) – Most commonly sexually transmitted virus in the United States

Hydrochloric Acid – Fluid in the stomach that aids in digestion

Hyperglycemia – A life threatening complication of diabetes that can result from undiagnosed diabetes not enough insulin eating too much not getting enough exercise and stress; also known as diabetic ketoacidosis

Hypertension – A condition in which the blood pressure is elevated

Hyperthyroidism – High functioning thyroid gland, causing weight loss, bulging eyes

Hyperventilation – Excessively rapid and deep breathing

Hypoglycemia – A life threatening complication of diabetes that can result from too much insulin or too little food; also known as insulin reaction and insulin shock

Hypothyroidism – Low functioning thyroid gland, causing weight gain, depression, low libido

Hysterosalpingo Oophorectomy – Surgical removal of the ovaries, fallopian tubes and the uterus

I

Immune – Resistance to infection by a specific pathogen

Incision – Surgical cut into tissue

Indemnity Insurance – Managed care; a type of health insurance in which a patient can choose the hospital and provider and the insurer reimburses the patient or provider for a set percentage of the cost minus deductibles and co-payments

Indication – Reason to use a medication or provide a treatment

Indirect Contact – Achieved through some intervening medium as prolongation of a communicable disease through the air or by means of fomites

Infection Control – Set of methods used to prevent spreading diseases

Infection/Infectious – The state resulting from pathogens invading and growing within the human body

Inflammatory Phase – First phase of wound healing, when a clot is formed

Influenza – Flu virus

Inhalation – Breathing in

Instillation – Liquid medication given by drops

Insulin – Produced naturally by the pancreas to process sugar in the body. Diabetics who do not produce insulin must take daily injections of insulin

Integumentary System – Skin nails hair oil/sweat glands subcutaneous tissue and nerve endings

International Classification of Diseases (ICD) – International coding systems for diagnoses

Intradermal – Directly under the first layer of the skin; intradermal injection is given directly under the first layer of the skin

Intramuscular – Into the muscle tissue; an intramuscular (IM) injection is given into the muscle tissue at a 90-degree angle

Irrigation – Using steady flow of saline or water to clean an open wound

Isolation Precautions – Good hand washing and wearing of personal protective equipment

J

K

Kidneys – Organs of the urinary system responsible for filtering blood, maintain fluid and electrolyte balance, and producing urine

Knee chest – A prone posture resting on the knees and upper part of the chest, assumed for gynecologic or rectal examination

L

Lab requisition – Form needed for specimen processing, patient identification and insurance billing

Laceration – A deep cut or tear in skin or flesh

Large intestine – End part of the digestive system (colon)

Lateral – Away from the midline

Laxatives – Food or drug that stimulates evacuation of the bowels

Libel/Liability – A published false statement that is damaging to a person's reputation; a written defamation

Lithotomy – Position in which the patient is on their back with the hips and knees flexed and the thighs apart. The position is often used for vaginal examinations and childbirth. Also known as dorsal lithotomy position

Liver – Large gland in the body that has a rich blood supply, secretes bile, and helps in storing some nutrients and in forming some body wastes

Long Term – Occurring over or involving a relatively long period of time

Low Fowler's – Head of bed elevated 15 to 30 degrees

Lymphedema – The accumulation of lymph in soft tissue with accompanying swelling, often of the extremities

Lymphoma – A group of blood cancers that develop in the lymphatic system

M

Malignant – Tending to be severe and become progressively worse

Malpractice – Failure of a professional person as a physician or medical provider to render proper services through reprehensible ignorance or negligence

Mask – Facial protection from germs used in health care facility

Maturation phase – The remodeling of tissue phase in inflammation

Mayo Stand – Movable medical instrument tray

Medical Necessity – Insurance term for medical treatment/procedures that are justifiably performed

Medical Negligence – Incorrect treatment or lack of treatment by a health care provider that cause injury or death

Medical Record – Documentation of care given a resident or patient in a healthcare facility

Medicare – Federal insurance program for which persons aged 65 and over and others with special conditions

Medications – Prescribed or over the counter drugs taken to relieve pain and suffering

Member ID number – A numeral or string of numerals that is used for identification

Menopause – The period of permanent cessation of menstruation, usually occurring between the ages of 45 and 55

Menses – The periodic flow of blood and mucosal tissue from the uterus; menstrual flow

Mental Health – Refers to the normal function of emotional and intellectual abilities

Metastasis – The spread of a cancer from one organ to another MI - Myocardial infarction commonly called a heart attack

Microorganisms – A tiny living thing not visible to the eye without a microscope; also called a microbe

MRSA – Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus infection caused by a strain of staph bacteria resistant to antibiotics

Mucous Membrane – A US government program financed by federal state and local funds of hospitalization and medical insurance for persons of all ages within certain income level Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System

Muscle Atrophy – A decrease in the mass of the muscle

Muscle Spasms – Sudden twitching or tensing of the muscles

Musculoskeletal – Composed of muscles bones joints tendons and ligaments Gives the body shape and structure and allows body to move and support itself

Myocardial infarction – Tightness in the chest; when blood flow stops to a part of the heart causing damage to the heart muscle

N

Nasal – Refers to the Nose

Nausea – Uneasiness of the stomach that often comes before vomiting

Necrotic – Cell death

Negligence – Failure to behave with the level of care that someone of ordinary prudence would have exercised under the same circumstances

Nervous System – Organ system composed of the brain, spinal cord, and nerves which act together to serve as the communicating and coordinating system of the body, carrying information to the brain and relaying instructions from the brain; two main systems are the central nervous system and the peripheral nervous system

Neuropathy – Damage to the peripheral nervous system

NKDA – No known drug allergies

Non Sterile – Not free from germs or microorganisms

Non-Verbal – Wordless communication (i.e. body language)

Nonverbal Communication – Communication without words such as gestures and facial expression

Nosocomial – An infection acquired in a hospital

NPI – National Provider Identifier; unique identification number for specific health care providers used for insurance billing

NSAID – Non-Steroidal Anti-inflammatory Drug

Nutrition – The taking in and using of food by the body to maintain health

O

Objective/Objective symptom – Measurable symptom felt by the patient and apparent to observers; factual information collected using the senses of sight hearing smell and touch; also called signs

Occlusion – Complete obstruction of the passage

Operative Note - Dictated and signed within 24 hours of operation/procedure

Ophthalmic – Of or relating to the eye and its diseases

Oral – Of or relating to the mouth

Orientation – Process of becoming adjusted or aligned to surroundings or circumstances

Orthopedic – The branch of medicine concerned with conditions involving the musculoskeletal system

Orthopnea – Shortness of breath when lying down that is relieved by sitting up

OSHA - Occupational Safety and Health Administration – Federal agency charged with the enforcement of safety and health legislation in the workplace

Osteoarthritis – A type of arthritis that usually affect weight-bearing joints especially the hips and knees; also called degenerative joint disease

Osteoporosis – A condition in which the bones become brittle and weak; may be due to age lack of hormones not enough calcium in bones or lack of exercise

Ovaries – The female gonad or reproductive gland, in which the ova and the hormones that regulate female secondary sex characteristics develop

Oxygen – Colorless odorless gas that makes up 21% of the air we breathe

P

Pain scale – Scale for patient to rate their pain

Pain – Physical suffering/discomfort caused by illness/injury

Palpate – Examine by touch

Pancreas – A gland with digestive and endocrine functions (insulin production and secretion)

PAP – Peroxidase antiperoxidase complex; the Pap test is a procedure in which a physician scrapes cells from the cervix or vagina to check for cervical cancer, vaginal cancer, or abnormal changes that could lead to cancer. It often is called a "Pap smear"

Paralysis – The loss of the ability to move and sometimes to feel

Parenteral – Technique used to give medication or nutrition through use of needle or IV

Parkinson's Disease – Progressive disease that causes a portion of the brain to degenerate; causes rigid muscles, shuffling gait, pill – rolling, mask-like face, and tremors

Passive Motion – Movement caused by an external force rather than by voluntary muscular effort

Pathogens – Microorganisms that cause disease

Patient – Any recipient of health care services

PCP – Primary Care Physician - primary care giver in regards to insurance specifically HMOs

PDR – A trademark for Physicians' Desk Reference, a group of reference books containing drug listings, especially one for prescription drugs

Peak flow test – A test that measures how fast a person can exhale (breathe out). This test checks lung functioning, and is often used by patients who have asthma

Peristalsis – Muscular contractions that push food through the gastrointestinal tract

Physician – A professional who practices medicine who is concerned with promoting maintaining or restoring human health through the study diagnosis and treatment of illness/disease

Pituitary – “Master Gland” of the body; controls all other endocrine glands

Plaque – A sticky deposit on teeth in which bacteria proliferate

Pneumonia – An inflammatory condition of the lung affecting primarily the alveoli usually caused by infection with viruses or bacteria

Post-Operative Note – Written immediately following surgery

PPD Skin Test – Stands for purified protein derivative; test for latent tuberculosis, also known as Mantoux test

PQRST Wave – The waves and intervals of a heart beat on an ECG

Preauthorization – Requirement to obtain prior approval for surgery and other procedures from the insurance carrier in order to receive reimbursement

Preferred Provider Organization (PPO) – Type of insurance plan that gives patient more options of choice when selecting providers as long as on the contracted network

Prescription Narcotics – Prescribed pain relievers that can also induce sleep and decrease respirations and are addictive

Pressure Ulcers – A serious wound resulting from skin breakdown; also known as decubitus ulcer or bed sore

Primary ailment – The “chief complaint” that the patient is being seen for; the symptoms or condition that the patient expresses as the concern for the visit

Problem Orientated Medical Record – Type of medical record documentation that all notes are completed according to the problem/ailment

Progesterone – Female hormone important for the regulation of ovulation and menstruation

Proliferation Phase – The rebuilding phase of inflammation

Prone – Lying flat, especially face downward

Protocol – A system of rules that explain the correct conduct and procedures to be followed in formal situations

Proximal – Closer to the trunk or point of attachment

Puberty – The period or age at which a person is first capable of sexual reproduction

Pulse – Heartbeats as felt at one of the arterial pathways; the difference between the systolic and the diastolic blood pressure

Pulse oximetry (SP02) – Measure of blood oxygen saturation

Puncture – Open wound caused by a penetrating object

Purulent – Pus; sign of infection

Q

Quadrant – Imaginary division of abdomen into four parts used to describe bowel sounds or other diagnostic assessments described at right upper left upper right lower and left lower

Quadriplegia – Loss of function of legs trunk and arms

R

Radial - Inside of the wrist proximal to the thumb where the radial artery runs just beneath the skin. Most common area to take a pulse

Range of Motion - Exercises that put a joint through its full arc of motion

Record Retention – Management of the patient medical record including creation, utilization, maintenance, and destruction

Rectal – Pertaining to the rectum

Referral – Written order by a PCP for specialized care from another health care provider

Relevance – It is important that medical records contain only information relevant to the patient's healthcare

Respirations – Rate of breathing

Respirations – The process of inhaling air into the lungs (inspiration) and exhaling air out of the lungs (expiration)

Respiratory System – Composed of nose nasal cavity pharynx larynx and lungs

Route – The method by which a medication enters the body

S

SA Node – Generates electrical impulses of the heart in the right atria

Safety Data Sheet (SDS) – Information sheet provided for all potentially hazardous materials

Safety Hazard – A condition/risk that could cause damage or harm on something or someone

Sanitization – To clean by removing all bacteria

SBAR – Type of communication model that stands for: Situation, Background, Assessment, Recommendation

Schedule drugs – A classification system established by the DEA that categorizes drugs by their addictive properties. Schedule 1 drugs are the most addicting, Schedule 5 are the least

Scope of practice – The legally allowed procedures, treatments, and care a healthcare provider can administer/provide

Sebaceous cyst – Abscess on the skin caused by infection of the sebaceous glands; a closed sac under the skin filled with a cheese-like or oily material

Secondary Insurance – When a patient has an additional health insurance that is billed after the primary

Seizure – Involuntary, often violent contractions of muscles that occur from an episode of abnormal electrical activity in the brain

Semi-Fowler's – Head of bed elevated 30 to 45 degrees

Sensory System – Body system of sense organs includes eyes ears nose mouth and skin

Serum – Related to Blood

Serous – Clear or yellow-like discharge

Sharps Container – Containers that hold sharp objects such as needles and scalpels

Shearing of Skin – Rubbing resulting from the skin moving one way and the bone underneath it remaining fixed or moving in the opposite direction

Shingles – A painful viral infection caused by the chickenpox (varicella zoster) virus characterized by a rash cluster of fluid filled blisters

Shock – A life-threatening condition that occurs when the body is not getting enough blood flow

Shortness of Breath (SOB) – Known medically as dyspnea; air hunger is the subjective symptom of breathlessness

Sickle cell anemia – A disease passed down through families

(primarily in African American families); red blood cells which are normally shaped like a disc take on a sickle or crescent shape. Sickle cell crises often affect the bones, lungs, abdomen, and joints

Sigmoidoscopy – A procedure by which a doctor inserts either a short and rigid or slightly longer and flexible fiber-optic tube into the rectum to examine the lower portion of the large intestine (or bowel)

Sim's position – Position in which the patient lies on one side with the under arm behind the back and the upper thigh flexed; used to facilitate enemas

Sitz Bath – A warm soak of the perineal area to cleanse wounds and reduce inflammation and pain

Skin Staples – Type of wound closure that uses metal staples to close the wound

Skin – Soft covering of the body. It is the largest organ of the body and protects the body from microbes and the elements. Helps regulate body temperature and permits the sensation of touch, heat, and cold

Small intestine – Portion of the intestine that runs between the stomach and the large intestine; the duodenum, jejunum, and ileum collectively; approximately 22 feet in length

Snellen Chart – A chart that measures visual distance acuity; the largest symbols are on the top line of the chart, and each line thereafter is of decreasing size

SOAP Notes – Type of medical documentation formatting (Acronym: Subjective, Objective, Assessment, Plan)

Specialist – Medical doctors who treat specific body systems or provide specific treatments/procedures

Specimen – A sample such as of tissue, blood, urine, stool, or sputum used for analysis and diagnosis

Sphygmomanometer – Medical tool used to measure blood pressure

Spirometry – Device used to measure how well the lungs are working

Spleen – An organ of the immune system that filters blood

Sputum – Mucus coughed up from the lungs

Standard Precautions – A method of infection control in which all blood, body fluids, non - intact skin (like abrasions pimples or open sores) and mucous membranes (lining of the mouth, nose, eyes, rectum, or genitals) are treated as if they were infected with a disease

STD – An infection contracted through sexual activity

Sterile – Free from bacteria or other living microorganisms; totally clean

Sterile Technique – Used for procedures with an increased risk of infection by eliminating all microorganisms in the field

Sterilization – The process of killing all microorganisms including spores

Sternum – The flat bone in the center of the chest/pectoral region

Stethoscope – An instrument that amplifies sounds made by the body; used for auscultation

Stool – Feces waste product of the human digestive system

Stress – A mentally or emotionally disruptive or upsetting condition that occurs due to changes in the environment

Stroke – A condition caused when blood supply to the brain is cut off suddenly by a clot or a ruptured blood vessel; also called a cerebral vascular accident

Subjective/Subjective symptom – A physical or mental complaint given by the patient; also called symptoms

Sublingual – Under the tongue

Subpoena – A legal document that requires the office to present information such as the appointment book to the court

Superficial – Towards the surface

Supine – Lying on back, face upward

Suppository – A medication route in which the drug is insertable and is absorbed by the body

Surgical Asepsis – Freedom from infection or infectious material before entering an open surgical wound or contaminate a sterile field during surgery

Suture – A wound closure using a material that resembles string and is sewn into the skin to approximate the wound

Swelling – An abnormal enlargement of a part of the body typically as result of an accumulation of fluid

Syncope – Fainting

Systolic – Phase where the heart is at work contracting and pushing blood out of the left ventricle

T

Tachycardia – A fast heartbeat over 100 beats per minute

Tachypnea – A fast respiratory rate over 20 respirations per minute

TB – see Tuberculosis

Telephone Etiquette – A set of rules that apply when people make calls to others or when receiving a phone call

Temperature – The degree of internal heat of a person's body

Temporal thermometer – A thermometer to measure the temperature of the temporal artery

Tendons – A flexible but inelastic cord of strong fibrous collagen tissue attaching a muscle to a bone

Testosterone – Primary male sex hormone

Thermometers – A device used for measuring the degree of heat or cold; digital electronic oral rectal axillary tympanic

Thymus – Lymphatic and immune system organ found in the mediastinum

Thyroid gland – Endocrine gland in the neck that regulates growth and metabolism

Timeliness – There are specific time requirements for completion of the medical record

Tone – The attitude in which written or spoken words are perceived by the listener/reader

Tonsils – A prominent oval mass of lymphoid tissue on each side of the throat

Topical – Applied to the skin

Tourniquet – Medical device that provides extreme compression to slow or cease blood flow

Transdermal – Administered on and absorbed through the skin

Transient Ischemic Attack (TIA) – Mini Strokes occurs when there is partial blockage of a blood vessel in the brain- lasts only 10 to 15 minutes with stroke like symptoms that do not cause permanent deficits

Trendelenburg – Body is laid flat on the back (supine position) with the feet higher than the head by 15-30 degrees

Triage – Determining treatment order according to significance of injury or illness

Trimester – Three stages of pregnancy divided into approximately 3 months each. Each stage is marked by specific fetal development

Tuberculosis (TB) -- MTB or TB (short for tubercle bacillus) a highly infectious disease caused by Mycobacterium tuberculosis bacteria that mainly affects your lungs

U

Ulcer – An open sore on an external or internal surface of the body caused by a break in the skin or mucous membrane that fails to heal

Unconscious – Without awareness sensation or cognition

Ureters – Tubes connecting kidney to bladder

Urethra – Tube from the bladder to the outside; excretion of urine out of body occurs here

Urinalysis – Urine specimen test

Urinary system /Urinary tract – Organs that produce store and eliminate urine from the body

Urination – The process of emptying the bladder of urine also called micturition or voiding

Urine – Sterile liquid by-product of the body secreted by the kidneys through urination

Uterus – Female reproductive organ responsible for housing the developing fetus

UTI – Urinary tract infection a disorder that causes inflammation of the bladder; also called cystitis

V

Vaccine – A treatment in which biological agents are used to build immunity against a specific pathogen(s)

Vaccine Information Statement (VIS) – Information from the CDC regarding a vaccine

Vacutainer – Vacuum sealed blood collection tube

Vascular System – Body's network of blood vessels

Vein – Blood vessels that carry blood from your body's tissues back to the heart

Venipuncture – The process of withdrawing blood from a vein for examination; also known as phlebotomy

Ventricles – Lower chambers of the heart

Vial – A small medication container

Virus – A small infectious agent that replicates only inside the living cells of other organisms

Visual Acuity – The accuracy in which someone can see

Vitals Signs – Measurements that monitor the function of the vital organs of the body - includes blood pressure pulse respirations temperature and pain

W

Weight – Total amount a patient weighs (pounds/kilograms)

Workman's Compensation – A form of insurance providing wage replacement and medical benefits to employees injured in the course of employment

Wound Culture – A Laboratory test used to determine if a microorganism is present in a wound

X

Y

Z

Zygote - The zygote represents the first stage, lasting about 1 week, in the development of a genetically unique organism, created from 2 different sets of chromosomes