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Week 7: Medical Terminology

Module 4: Medical Terminology 6: Medical Prefixes

Lesson: How Do Word Beginnings Tell You What's Happening in the Body?

Lesson Overview

Students learn how prefixes change the meaning of medical terms. They use evidence from the module to compare conditions, interpret medical terminology, and explain how a change in a prefix can lead to a different condition or response.

Learning Targets

Identify what a prefix tells me about a condition.

Classify prefixes by what they describe (amount, location, speed).

Use prefix meaning and evidence to decide what is happening and what action is needed.

Vocabulary

Prefix
the beginning of a word that changes meaning

Hyper- / Hypo-
too much / too little

Intra- / Extra-
inside / outside

Brady- / Tachy-
slow / fast

Materials

Module
Student response sheets
Whiteboard or chart paper

Instructional Notes

This lesson builds on students' previous work with medical suffixes. Students now examine how prefixes change the meaning of medical terms and how small changes at the beginning of a word can result in very different conditions. The lesson extends students' understanding that medical terminology is built from meaningful word parts. The conceptual focus is that prefixes communicate information about amount, location, direction, timing, or speed. Students move from identifying medical word parts to recognizing how prefixes alter the meaning of an entire term. The key shift is understanding that changing a prefix can significantly change what is happening in the body. Students may believe prefixes are less important than roots or suffixes, or they may focus only on memorizing terms. Through the module, students discover that prefixes provide critical information that helps explain and compare conditions.



Learning Experience

8 min	Opening	Display the following pairs of everyday words: Overcooked / Undercooked, Preview / Review, and Indoor / Outdoor. Ask, "What do you notice about these word pairs?" Then ask, "How does changing the beginning of the word change its meaning?" Allow students to discuss observations with a partner. Next, display the medical terms: Hypoglycemia and Hyperglycemia. Ask, "If changing the beginning of an everyday word changes its meaning, what might happen when the beginning of a medical word changes?" Students examine familiar word pairs and identify how the beginnings of words affect meaning. They discuss observations with a partner, predict how prefixes might affect the meaning of medical terms, and share ideas with the class.
15 min	Module	Focus: How prefixes change the meaning of medical terms and how opposite prefixes create opposite conditions. Guiding Questions: • What does a prefix tell us? • What types of meaning do prefixes show? • How do opposite prefixes change conditions? Quick Checks: • What does hyper- mean? • What does hypo- mean? • What does intra- mean? • What does extra- mean? • Which prefixes are opposites?
15 min	Application	Display the following patient situations based on conditions discussed in the module. Patient A: A patient has low blood sugar, feels weak, shaky, and lightheaded. Term: Hypoglycemia. Patient B: A patient has high blood sugar and is experiencing symptoms related to excess sugar in the bloodstream. Term: Hyperglycemia. Patient C: A patient has a very slow heart rate and is feeling dizzy. Term: Bradycardia. Patient D: A patient has a very fast heart rate and is experiencing chest discomfort and dizziness. Term: Tachycardia. Tell students they will use evidence from the module to compare the conditions and determine what each prefix reveals about the situation. Students begin by decoding the prefix. They identify the prefix in each term, use evidence from the module to determine what the prefix means, and explain how the prefix changes the meaning of the term. Next, students classify the prefix. They determine whether the prefix describes amount, location, or speed and use evidence from the module to support their classification. Students then compare opposites. They compare Hypoglycemia and Hyperglycemia and compare Bradycardia and Tachycardia. They explain how the prefixes change the meaning of each pair.



		Finally, students evaluate and decide. They determine which patient in each pair may need more immediate attention, use the prefix meaning and symptom evidence to justify their reasoning, and compare their thinking with a partner and revise if new evidence changes their claim. Sentence Frames: “The prefix _____ means _____.” “This prefix describes _____.” “The difference between _____ and _____ is _____.” “My decision is _____ because the prefix shows _____ and the symptoms show _____.”
2 min	Reflection	How do prefixes help you understand health problems and make decisions?
2 min	Career Connections	Health science professionals use prefixes to quickly understand medical conditions and communicate important information. A single prefix can reveal whether something is above, below, inside, outside, fast, or slow. Understanding prefixes helps health science workers compare conditions, evaluate patient information, and make informed decisions about care.