

Glossary

A

abstinence syndrome: symptoms that occur if a drug causing physical or psychological dependence is suddenly discontinued

achalasia: failure to relax; usually referring to the smooth muscle fibers of the gastrointestinal tract, especially failure of the lower esophagus to relax when swallowing causing difficulty swallowing and a feeling of fullness in the sternal region

active immunity: type of immunity that occurs when the person is exposed to a disease and develops the disease, and the body makes antibodies to provide future protection against the disease

addiction: a compulsive desire or craving to use a drug or chemical with a resultant physical dependence

adrenergic drug: a drug that acts like or mimics the actions of the sympathetic nervous system

aerobic: organisms that require oxygen to live

afferent nerve fiber: a sensory nerve that carries an impulse toward the brain

agonist: drug that binds with a receptor to produce a therapeutic response

agonist-antagonist: drug with both agonist and antagonist properties

agranulocytosis: a decrease or lack of granulocytes (a type of white blood cell)

akathisia: extreme restlessness and increased motor activity

aldosterone: hormone secreted by the adrenal cortex and contributing to a rise in blood pressure

alopecia: abnormal loss of hair; baldness

amenorrhea: absence or suppression of menstruation

anabolism: tissue-building process

anaerobic: organisms that do not require oxygen to live

analgesic: a drug that relieves pain

anaphylactic reaction: a sudden, severe hypersensitivity reaction with symptoms that progress rapidly and may result in death if not treated

anemia: a decrease in the number of red blood cells and hemoglobin value below normal

androgens: testosterone and its derivatives

angina pectoris (angina): acute pain in the chest resulting from decreased blood supply to the heart muscle

angioedema: localized wheals or swellings in subcutaneous tissues or mucous membranes, which may be due to an allergic response; also called angioneurotic edema

anorexia: loss of appetite

anorexiant: a drug used to suppress the appetite

antagonist: drugs that join with a receptor to prevent the action of an agonist

anthelmintic: a drug used to treat helminthiasis (worms)

antibacterial: active against bacteria

antibody: molecule with the ability to bind with a specific antigen responsible for the immune response

antiemetic: drug that is used to treat or prevent nausea

antiflatulent: drug that works against flatus (gas)

antigen: substance that is capable of inducing a specific immune response

anti-infective: a drug used to treat infection

antipsoriatics: drugs used to treat psoriasis

antipyretic: a drug that lowers an elevated body temperature

antiseptic: an agent that stops or slows, or prevents the growth of microorganisms

anxiolytics: term used to describe the antianxiety drugs

aplastic anemia: a blood disorder caused by damage to the bone marrow resulting in a marked reduction in the number of red blood cells and some white blood cells

arrhythmia: abnormal heart rate or rhythm; also called dysrhythmia

assessment: the collection of subjective and objective data

asthenia: weakness; loss of strength

ataxia: unsteady gait; muscular incoordination

atherosclerosis: a disease characterized by deposits of fatty plaques on the inner walls of arteries

atrial fibrillation: quivering of the atria of the heart

attenuate: weaken

aura: sense preceding a sudden attack, as in the aura that occurs before a convulsion

auscultation: the process of listening for sounds within the body

autonomic nervous system: a division of the peripheral nervous system concerned with functions essential to the life of the organism and not consciously controlled (ie, blood pressure, heart rate, gastrointestinal activity)

azotemia: retention of excessive amounts of nitrogenous compounds in the blood caused by failure of the kidney to remove urea from the blood

B

bactericidal: a drug or agent that destroys or kills bacteria

bacteriostatic: a drug or agent that slows or retards the multiplication of bacteria

bigeminy: an irregular pulse rate consisting of two beats followed by a pause before the next two paired beats

biliary colic: pain caused by the pressure of passing gallstones

blepharospasm: a twitching or spasm of the eyelid

blood–brain barrier: ability of the nervous system to prohibit large and potentially harmful molecules from crossing into the brain

bone marrow suppression: a decreased production of all blood cells

booster: an immunogen injected following a specified interval; often after the primary immunization to stimulate and sustain the immune response

brachial plexus: a network of spinal nerves affecting the arm, forearm, and the hand

bradycardia: slow heart rate, usually at a rate below 60 beats per minute

bronchospasm: spasm or constriction of the bronchi resulting in difficulty breathing

bullae: blister or skin vesicle filled with fluid

bursa: pad-like sac found in connecting tissue usually located in the joint area

C

candidiasis: infection of the skin or mucous membrane with the species *Candida*

cardiac output: amount of blood discharged from the left or right ventricle per minute

catabolism: tissue-depleting process

catalyst: substance that accelerates a chemical reaction without itself undergoing a change

central nervous system: one of two main divisions of the nervous system consisting of the brain and spinal cord

cervical mucorrhea: increased cervical discharge

chelating agent: a substance that selectively and chemically binds the ion of a metal to itself, thus aiding in the elimination of the metallic ion from the body

cheilosis: cracking of the edges of the lips

chemoreceptor trigger zone: a group of nerve fibers located on the surface of the fourth ventricle of the brain that, when stimulated, results in vomiting

chemotherapy: drug therapy with a chemical, often used when referring to treatment with an antineoplastic drug

cholesterol: a fat-like substance produced mostly in the liver of animals

chorea: continuous rapid, jerky, involuntary movements

choreiform movements: involuntary muscular twitching of the limbs or facial muscles

chylomicrons: small particles of fat in the blood

cinchonism: quinidine toxicity or poisoning

conjunctivitis: inflammation of the conjunctiva (mucous membrane lining the inner surfaces of the eye)

convulsions: paroxysm (occurring suddenly) of involuntary muscular contractions and relaxations

Crohn's disease: inflammation of the terminal portion of the ileum

cross-allergenicity: allergy to drugs in the same or related groups

cross-sensitivity: see cross allergenicity

crystalluria: formation of crystals in the urine

cumulative drug effect: occurs when the body is unable to metabolize and excrete one dose of a drug before the next dose is given

Cushing's syndrome: a disease caused by the overproduction of endogenous glucocorticoids

cyanosis: bluish, grayish, or dark purple discoloration of the skin due to abnormal amounts of reduced hemoglobin in the blood

cycloplegia: paralysis of the ciliary muscle resulting in an inability to focus the eye

cytomegalovirus (CMV): any of a group of herpes viruses infecting man, monkeys, or rodents; the human CMV is found in the salivary glands and causes cytomegalic inclusion disease

cystinuria: the presence of cystine, an amino acid, in the urine

D

debridement: removal of all foreign material and dead or damaged tissue from a wound or infected lesion

decaliter: 10 liters or 10,000 mL

delirium tremens: signs and symptoms of withdrawal from a drug or chemical including tremors, weakness, anxiety, restlessness, excessive perspiration, nausea, and vomiting

dermis: a layer of skin immediately below the epidermis

diabetes insipidus: a disease resulting in the failure of the pituitary to secrete vasopressin or from the surgical removal of the pituitary gland

diaphoresis: increased sweating or perspiration

digitalization: administration of digitalis at intervals to produce and maintain a therapeutic blood level

diluent: a fluid that dilutes

dioplopia: double vision

diuretic drug: drug that produces urine secretion

dyscrasia: disease or disorder

dyskinesia: impairment of voluntary movement

dyspnea: labored or difficult breathing

dystonia: prolonged muscle contractions that may cause twisting and repetitive movements of abnormal posture

dysuria: painful or difficult urination

E

efferent: carrying away from a central organ or section

edema: accumulation of excess water in the body

emetic: drug that induces vomiting

endogenous: normally occurring within the organism or in the community

endorphins: naturally occurring analgesic produced by the body in response to certain stimulus (ie, exercise)

enkephalins: neurotransmitter within the brain involved with pain perception, mood, movement, and behavior

epidermis: outermost layer of the skin

epidural: outside or above the dura mater

epilepsy: a permanent, recurring seizure disorder

epiphysis: a center of ossification (conversion of tissue to bone) at each extremity of long bone

epistaxis: nosebleed

erythrocytes: red blood cells; one of several formed elements in the blood

***Escherichia coli*:** a nonpathogenic colon bacillus; when found outside of the colon may cause infection

estrogens: female hormones

euthyroid: normal thyroid function

evaluation: a decision-making process determining the effectiveness of nursing action or intervention

exacerbation: increase in severity

exfoliative dermatitis: reddish rash in which scaling occurs following the erythema

exogenous: normally occurring outside of the organism or community

expectorant: drug that aids in raising thick, tenacious mucus from the respiratory tract

extrapulmonary: occurring outside of the respiratory systems (ie, lungs)

extrapyramidal effects: a group of adverse reactions occurring on the extrapyramidal portion of the nervous system causing abnormal muscle movements, especially akathisia and dystonia

extravasation: escape of fluid from a blood vessel into surrounding tissue

F

fat soluble: dissolves in fat

febrile: related to fever (elevated body temperature)

fibrolytic: term used to describe a drug that dissolves clots already formed within the vessel walls

G

germicide: an agent that kills bacteria

gingival hyperplasia: overgrowth of gum tissue

gingivitis: inflammation of the gums

glaucoma: a group of diseases of the eye characterized by increased intraocular pressure; results in changes within the eye, visual field defects, and eventually blindness (if left untreated)

globulin: proteins that are insoluble in water and present in the plasma

glossitis: inflammation of the tongue

glucagon: hormone secreted by the alpha cells of the pancreas that increase the concentration of glucose in the blood

goiter: enlargement of the thyroid gland causing a swelling in the front part of the neck, usually caused by a lack of iodine in the diet

gonadotropin: hormone that stimulates the sex glands (gonads)

gonad: glands responsible for sexual activity and characteristics

granulocytopenia: a reduction or decrease in the number of granulocytes (a type of white blood cell)

gynecomastia: breast enlargement in the male

H

habituation: a desire to continually use a drug or chemical for the desired effect with no physical dependence but some psychological dependence

hallucinogen: drug capable of producing a state of delirium characterized by visual or sensory disturbances

helminthiasis: invasion by helminths (worms)

hemolytic anemia: disorder characterized by chronic premature destruction of red blood cells

herb: plant used in medicine or as seasoning

high-density lipoproteins (HDL): macromolecules that carry cholesterol from the body cells to the liver to be excreted

hirsutism: excessive growth of hair or hair growth in unusual places, usually in women

histamine: a substance found in various parts of the body (ie, liver, lungs, intestines, skin) and produced in excess in response to a substance to which the body is sensitive

humoral immunity: antibody-mediated immune response of the body

hyperglycemia: high blood glucose (sugar) level

hyperinsulinism: elevated levels of insulin in the body

hyperkalemia: increase in potassium levels in the blood

hyperlipidemia: an increase in the lipids in the blood

hypersensitivity reaction: allergic reaction to a drug or other substance

hypertension: high blood pressure

hypnotic: drug that induces sleep

hypoglycemia: low blood glucose (sugar) level

hypoinsulinism: low levels of insulin in the body

hypokalemia: low blood potassium level

hyponatremia: low blood sodium level

hypotension: abnormally low blood pressure

hypotension, orthostatic: a decrease in blood pressure occurring after standing in one place for an extended period

hypotension, postural: a decrease in blood pressure after a sudden change in body position

hypoxia: inadequate oxygen at the cellular level

I

idiosyncrasy: unusual or abnormal drug response

immunocompromised: having an immune system incapable of fighting an infection

implementation: the carrying out of a plan of action

infiltration: the collection of fluid into tissue

inotropic: affecting the force of muscular contractions

intraocular pressure: the pressure within the eye

intrinsic factor: substance produced by the cells in the stomach and necessary for the absorption of vitamin B₁₂

iritis: inflammation of the iris of the eye

J

jaundice: yellow discoloration of the skin

K

keratolyte: an agent that removes excessive growth of the epidermis (top layer of skin)

ketoacidosis: a type of metabolic acidosis caused by an accumulation of ketone bodies in the blood

ketonuria: presence of ketones in the blood

L

laryngospasm: spasm of the larynx resulting in dyspnea and noisy respirations

lethargic: sluggish, difficult to rouse

leukopenia: a decrease in the number of leukocytes (white blood cells)

lipids: a group of fats or fat-like substances

lipodystrophy: atrophy of subcutaneous fat

lipoproteins: a macromolecule consisting of a lipid (fat) and protein; the method by which fats are transported in the blood

low-density lipoproteins (LDL): macromolecules that carry cholesterol from the liver to the body cells

lumen: inside diameter, the space or opening within an artery

lupus erythematosus: A chronic inflammatory connective tissue disease affecting the skin, joints, kidneys, nervous system, and mucous membranes. A butterfly rash or erythema may be seen on the face, particularly across the nose

M

malaise: discomfort, uneasiness

megacolon: dilatation and hypertrophy of the colon

megaloblastic anemia: anemia characterized by the presence of large, abnormal, immature erythrocytes circulating in the blood

melasma: discoloration of the skin

melena: blood in the stools

merozoites: cells formed as the result of asexual reproduction

methemoglobinemia: clinical condition in which more than 1% of hemoglobin in the blood has been oxidized to the ferric form

micturition: voiding of urine

miosis: constriction of the pupils

mucolytic: drug that loosens and thins respiratory secretions (lessens the viscosity of the secretions)

myasthenia gravis: condition characterized by weakness and fatigability of the muscles

mycotic: pertaining to a fungus or fungal infection

mydriasis: dilation of the pupil

myocardial infarction: heart attack

myopia: nearsightedness

myxedema: condition caused by hypothyroidism or deficiency of thyroxine and characterized by swelling of the face, periorbital tissues, hands, and feet.

N

narcolepsy: a chronic disorder that results in recurrent attacks of drowsiness and sleep during daytime

necrosis: death of tissue (as adjective, necrotic)

nephrotoxic: harmful to the kidney

nephrotoxicity: damage to the kidneys by a toxic substance

neurohypophysis: posterior lobe of the pituitary gland

neuroleptic: drug that causes an altered state of consciousness (ie, antipsychotic)

neuromuscular blockade: acute muscle paralysis and apnea

neurotoxicity: damage to the nervous system of a toxic substance

neurotransmitter: chemical substances released at the nerve ending that facilitate the transmission of nerve impulses

neutropenia: abnormally small number of neutrophil cells (type of white blood cell)

nonsteroidal: not a steroid

nursing process: a framework for nursing action, consisting of a series of problem-solving steps, that helps members of the health care team provide effective and consistent patient care

nystagmus: an involuntary and constant movement of the eyeball

O

objective data: information obtained by means of a physical assessment or physical examination

oliguria: a decrease in urinary output

ophthalmic: pertaining to the eye

opportunistic infection: infection resulting from microorganisms commonly found in the environment, which normally do not cause an infection unless there is an impaired immune system

orthostatic hypotension: see hypotension, orthostatic

osteomalacia: a softening of the bones

osteoporosis: a loss of calcium from the bones, resulting in a decrease in bone density

otic: pertaining to the ear

ototoxic: harmful to the ear

ototoxicity: damage to the organs of hearing by a toxic substance

overt: not hidden, clearly evident

oxytocic: agent that stimulates contractions of the uterus resulting in labor

P

palliative: therapy designed to treat symptoms, not to produce a cure

pancytopenia: a reduction in all cellular elements of the blood

paralytic ileus: paralysis of the bowel resulting in lack of movement of the bowel contents

parasite: an organism living in or on another organism (the host) without contributing to the survival or well-being of the host

parasympathetic nervous system: part of the autonomic nervous system concerned with conserving body energy (ie, slowing the heart rate, digesting food, and eliminating waste)

parenteral: administration of a substance, such as a drug, by any route other than the oral route

paresthesia: an abnormal sensation such as numbness, tingling, prickling, or heightened sensitivity

parkinsonism: referring to the symptoms of Parkinson's disease (ie, fine tremors, slowing of the voluntary movements, and muscular weakness)

passive immunity: a type of immunity occurring from the administration of ready-made antibodies from another individual or animal

pathogenic: disease producing

peripheral: pertaining to the outward surface; away from the center

petechiae: tiny purple or red spots that appear on the skin as a result of pinpoint hemorrhages within the outer layers of the skin

phenochromocytoma: tumor of the adrenal medulla characterized by hypersecretion of epinephrine and norepinephrine

phlebitis: inflammation of a vein

phenylketonuria (PKU): a congenital disease due to a defect in the metabolism of phenylalanine (an amino acid); results from the lack of an enzyme necessary for the conversion of phenylalanine into tyrosine; untreated, the condition leads to mental retardation

photophobia: an aversion to or intolerance of light

photosensitivity: exaggerated sunburn reaction when the skin is exposed to sunlight or ultraviolet light

physical dependence: compulsive need to use a substance repeatedly to avoid withdrawal symptoms

plasma expanders: intravenous solutions used to expand plasma volume with shock due to burns, hemorrhage, or other trauma

polydipsia: excessive thirst

polyphagia: eating large amounts of food

polypharmacy: taking a large number of drugs (may be prescribed or over-the-counter drugs)

polyposis: numerous polyps

postural hypotension: see hypotension, postural

prepubertal: before puberty

progesterone: a female hormone produced by the corpus luteum that works in the uterus (along with estrogen) to prepare the uterus for possible conception

progestins: natural and synthetic progesterones

prophylaxis: prevention

prostaglandins: a fatty acid derivative found in almost every tissue of the body and body fluid that affects the uterus and other smooth muscles; also thought to increase the sensation of peripheral pain receptors to painful stimuli

prostatic hypertrophy: abnormal enlargement of the prostate gland

protein substrates: amino acids essential to life

pruritus: itching

pseudomembranous colitis: a severe, life-threatening form of diarrhea

psychological dependence: compulsion to use a substance to obtain a pleasurable experience

ptosis: drooping of the upper eyelid

purpura: condition characterized by various degrees of hemorrhaging into the skin and/or mucous membranes producing ecchymoses (bruises) and petechiae (small red patches) on the skin

R

rales: abnormal lung sounds often described as crackles

REM: (rapid eye movement) the dreaming stage of sleep

remission: periods of partial or complete disappearance of signs and symptoms

retinitis: inflammation of the retina of the eye

Reye's syndrome: acute and potentially fatal disease of childhood; associated with a previous viral infection

rheumatic fever: a disease associated with a delayed response to a prior streptococcal infection in the body and characterized by fever and pain in the joints

rheumatoid arthritis: a type of arthritis marked by inflammation, degeneration, and derangement of the joints and related structures resulting in contractures and deformities of the joints

rhinitis: inflammation of the nasal passages resulting in increased nasal secretions

S

sedative: a drug producing a relaxing, calming effect

somatotropic hormone: growth hormone produced by the anterior pituitary gland

somnolence: prolonged drowsiness; sleepiness

soporific: substance or procedure that causes sleep

sprue: a disease characterized by weakness, anemia, weight loss, and malabsorption of essential nutrients

Standard Precautions: see Universal Precautions

status epilepticus: an emergency situation characterized by continual seizure activity

Stevens-Johnson syndrome: fever, cough, muscular aches and pains, headache, and lesions of the skin, mucous membranes, and eyes. The lesions appear as red wheals or blisters, often starting on the face, in the mouth, or on the lips, neck, and extremities.

stomatitis: inflammation of the mouth

striae: lines or bands elevated above or depressed below surrounding tissue, or differing in color or texture

subjective data: information supplied by the patient or family

sublingual: under the tongue

sulfonylurea: a type of drug used to lower blood sugar in

persons with non-insulin-dependent diabetes

superinfection: an overgrowth of bacterial or fungal microorganism not affected by the antibiotic being administered

sympathomimetic: acting like the sympathetic nervous system

synergistic: a drug interaction occurring when two drugs interact to produce an effect that is greater than the sum of their separate actions

T

tachycardia: heart rate above 100 beats/minute

tardive dyskinesia: rhythmic, involuntary movements of the tongue, face, mouth, jaw, and sometimes the extremities

testosterone: the most prominent male sex hormone that acts to stimulate development of the male reproductive organ and the secondary sex characteristics

tetany: nervous condition characterized by sharp flexion of the wrist and ankle joints, muscle twitching, cramps, and possible convulsions, usually caused by abnormal levels of calcium, vitamin D, and alkalosis

thrombocytopenia: low platelet count

thrombus: a blood clot (pl. thrombi)

thyroid storm: see thyrotoxicosis

thrombocytopenia: low number of the platelets in the blood

thyrotoxicosis: severe hyperthyroidism that is characterized by symptoms such as high fever, extreme tachycardia, and altered mental status (also called thyroid storm)

tinnitus: ringing in the ears

tolerance: decreased response to a drug, usually requiring an increase in the dosage to give the desired effect

tonic-clonic seizure: generalized seizure activity consisting of alternate contraction (tonic) and relaxation of muscles (clonic)

toxicity: poisonous or harmful

toxoid: an attenuated toxin that is capable of stimulating the formation of antitoxins

transient ischemic attack (TIA): temporary interference with blood supply to the brain causing symptoms related to the portion of the brain affected (ie, temporary blindness, aphasia, dizziness, numbness, difficulty swallowing or paresthesias); may last from a few moments to several hours, after which no residual neurologic damage is evident

trigeminy: an irregular pulse rate consisting of three beats followed by a pause before the next three beats

tyramine: substance found in most cheeses and in beer, bean pods, yeast, wine, and chicken liver; individuals taking the antidepressant MAOIs and eating foods containing tyramine may experience severe hypertension

U

Universal Precautions: guidelines set forth by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to control the spread of disease

urticaria: hives; itchy wheals on the skin resulting from contact with or ingestion of an allergic substance or food

uveitis: a nonspecific term for any intraocular inflammatory disorder

V

vaccine: substance with either weakened or killed antigens developed for the purpose of creating resistance to disease

vasodilatation: an increase in the size of the blood vessels, which when widespread results in a rise in blood pressure

venous: pertaining to the veins

vertigo: a feeling of a spinning or rotation-type motion

vitamin: organic substance needed by the body in small amounts for normal growth and nutrition

von Willebrand's disease: a congenital bleeding disorder manifested at an early age by epistaxis and easy bruising; symptoms usually decrease in severity with age

W

water soluble: dissolves in water