

GLOSSARY OF COMMON MEDICAL TERMS

PROCEDURES

craniotomy: making a surgical incision through the cranium (the part of the skull that encloses the brain); usually done to relieve pressure around the brain.

craniectomy: removing part of the skull bone to give the brain more room to swell. This type of surgery may also be done when a clot is removed. The skull bone is replaced when the patient is better (usually several months later).

gastrostomy: surgery to make an opening into the stomach to place a feeding tube. This surgery is often done at the bedside. The feeding tube is usually temporary. The doctor may remove it when the patient is able to eat food.

jejunostomy: surgery to make an opening in the small intestine to place a feeding tube. The feeding tube is often temporary. The doctor may remove it when the patient is able to eat food.

laparotomy: surgery that opens the abdomen so doctors can examine and treat organs, blood vessels or arteries.

suction: a procedure to remove secretions from the mouth and lungs. Doctors also use suction to remove fluid during surgery.

thoracotomy: surgery to open the chest.

tracheostomy: surgery that makes an incision in the throat area just above the windpipe (trachea) to insert a breathing tube. When it is complete, the breathing tube in the mouth will be taken out. This surgery is often done at the bedside. The tracheostomy tube may be removed when the patient can breathe on his or her own and can cough up secretions.

EQUIPMENT

ambu bag: a device used to help patients breathe.

blood pressure cuff: a wrap that goes around the arm or leg and is attached to the heart monitor. The cuff lightly squeezes the arm or leg to measure blood pressure.

cervical collar (C-collar): a hard plastic collar placed around the neck to keep it from moving. Most patients have a C-collar until the doctor can be sure that there is no spine injury. If there is no injury, the doctor will remove the collar.

continuous passive motion (CPM): a machine that gives constant movement to selected joints. It is often used in the hospital after surgery to reduce problems and help recovery.

ECG/EKG (electrocardiogram): a painless tracing of the electrical activity of the heart. The ECG gives important information about heart rhythms and heart damage.

endotracheal tube: a tube that is put in the patient's mouth and down into the lungs to help with breathing. The patient cannot talk while it is in place because the tube passes through the vocal cords. When it is taken out, the patient can speak but may have a sore throat.

Foley catheter: a tube placed in the bladder to collect urine.

halo: A device used to keep the neck from moving when there is a cervical spine injury. When used, a C-collar is not needed.

intracranial pressure (ICP) monitor: a tube placed in the brain to measure pressure on the brain caused by excess fluid.

IV fluid: fluid put in the vein to give the patient drugs and nutrition (food).

IV pump: a machine that gives a precise rate of fluids and/or drugs into the vein.

nasogastric (NG) tube: a tube put into the patient's nose to give drugs and nutrition (food) directly into the stomach. It can also be used to get rid of excess fluids from the stomach.

orthotic: a device, such as a splint, that keeps a part of the body from moving around.

prosthetic: a device that replaces a missing body part, such as a leg, arm or eye.

pulmonary artery catheter: a line placed into a shoulder or neck vein to measure heart pressure and to tell how well the heart is working.

pulse oximeter: an electronic device placed on the finger, toe or ear lobe to check oxygen levels.

triple lumen catheter: a line placed into a shoulder or neck vein to give IV fluids and drugs.

tube feeding pump: a machine to give fluids and nutrition (food) in the stomach or small intestine using a nasogastric (NG) tube.

ventilator: a breathing machine, sometimes called a respirator, that helps patients breathe and gives oxygen to the lungs.

ANATOMY

Bones, Skeletal

acetabulum: the hip socket.

carpals: the eight bones of the wrist joint.

clavicle (collarbone): a bone curved like the letter F that moves with the breastbone (sternum) and the shoulder blade (scapula).

femur: the thigh bone, which runs from the hip to the knee and is the longest and strongest bone in the skeleton

fibula: the outer and smaller bone of the leg from the ankle to the knee; it is one of the longest and thinnest bones of the body.

humerus: the upper bone of the arm from the shoulder joint to the elbow.

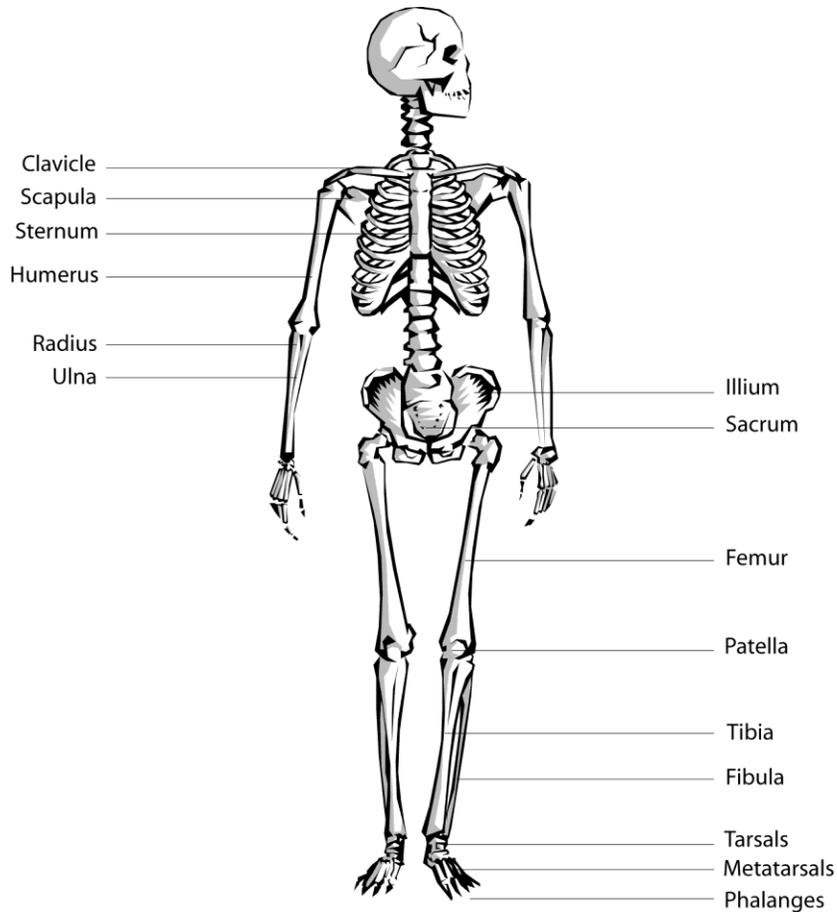
ileum: one of the bones of the pelvis; it is the upper and widest part and supports the flank (outer side of the thigh, hip and buttock).

ischium: the lower and back part of the hip bone.

metacarpals: the bones in the hand that make up the area known as the palm.

metatarsals: the bones in the foot that make up the area known as the arch.

patella: the lens-shaped bone in front of the knee.



pelvis: three bones (ilium, ischium and pubis) that form the girdle of the body and support the vertebral column (spine); the pelvis is connected by ligaments and includes the hip socket (the acetabulum).

phalanges: any one of the bones of the fingers or toes.

pubis: the bone at the front of the pelvis.

radius: the outer and shorter bone in the forearm; it extends from the elbow to the wrist.

sacrum: five joined vertebrae at the base of the vertebral column (spine).

scapula (shoulder blade): the large, flat, triangular bone that forms the back part of the shoulder.

sternum (breastbone): the narrow, flat bone in the middle line of the chest.

tarsals: the seven bones of the ankle, heel and mid-foot.

tibia: the inner and larger bone of the leg between the knee and ankle.

ulna: the inner and larger bone of the forearm, between the wrist and the elbow, on the side opposite the thumb.

Bones, Skull and Face

frontal bone: forehead bone.

mandible: the horseshoe-shaped bone forming the lower jaw.

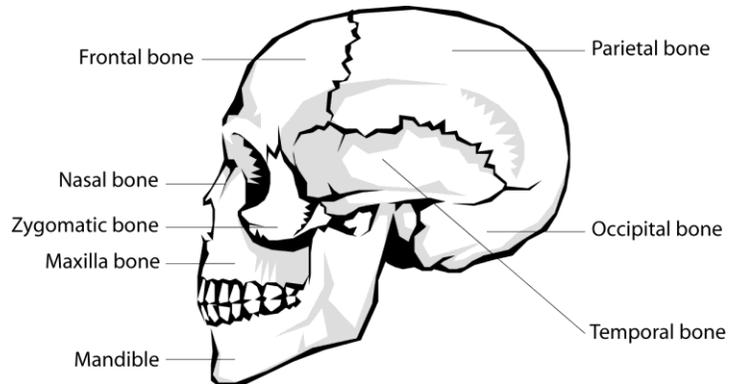
maxilla: the jawbone; it is the base of most of the upper face, roof of the mouth, sides of the nasal cavity and floor of the eye socket.

nasal bone: either of the two small bones that form the arch of the nose.

parietal bone: one of two bones that together form the roof and sides of the skull.

temporal bone: a bone on both sides of the skull at its base.

zygomatic bone: the bone on either side of the face below the eye.



Bones, Spine

atlas: the first cervical vertebra.

axis: the second cervical vertebra.

cervical vertebrae (C1–C7): the first seven bones of the spinal column; injury to the spinal cord at the C1–C7 level may result in paralysis from the neck down (quadriplegia).

coccyx: a small bone at the base of the spinal column, also known as the tailbone.

intervertebral disk: the shock-absorbing spacers between the bones of the spine (vertebrae).

lumbar vertebrae (L1–L5): the five vertebrae in the lower back; injury to the spinal cord at the lumbar level may affect bowel and bladder function and may or may not involve paralysis below the waist (paraplegia).

sacral vertebrae: the vertebrae that form the sacrum.

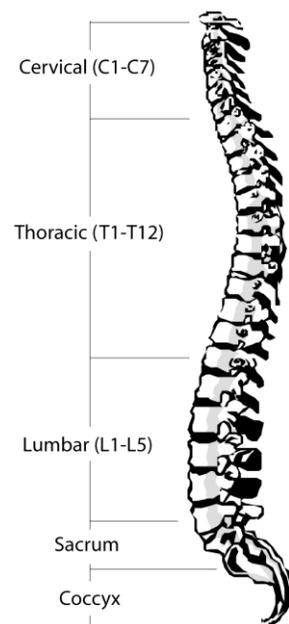
sacrum: five joined vertebrae at the base of the vertebral column (spine).

sciatic nerve: the largest nerve in the body, passing through the pelvis and down the back of the thigh.

spinous process: the small bone that protrudes at the back of each vertebra.

thoracic vertebrae (T1–T12): the 12 vertebrae in the middle of the back that are connected to the ribs; injury to spinal cord at the thoracic level may result in paralysis from the waist down (paraplegia) and may affect other organs such as the liver, stomach and kidneys, and functions such as breathing.

transverse process: the two small bones that protrude from either side of each vertebra.

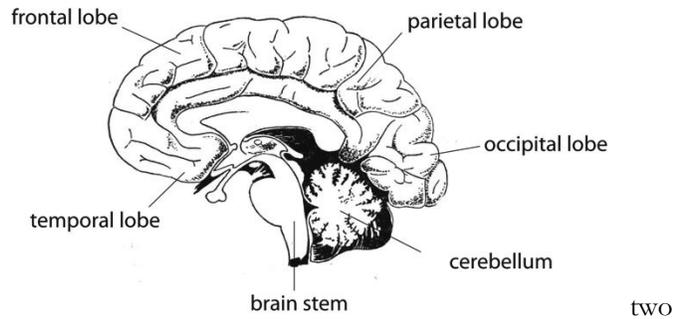


Brain

brain stem: the part of the brain that connects to the spinal cord; it controls blood pressure, breathing and heartbeat.

cerebellum: the second-largest part of the brain; it controls balance, coordination and walking.

cerebrum: the largest part of the brain, with halves known as hemispheres; the right half controls the body's left side and the left half controls the body's right side. Each hemisphere is divided into four lobes:

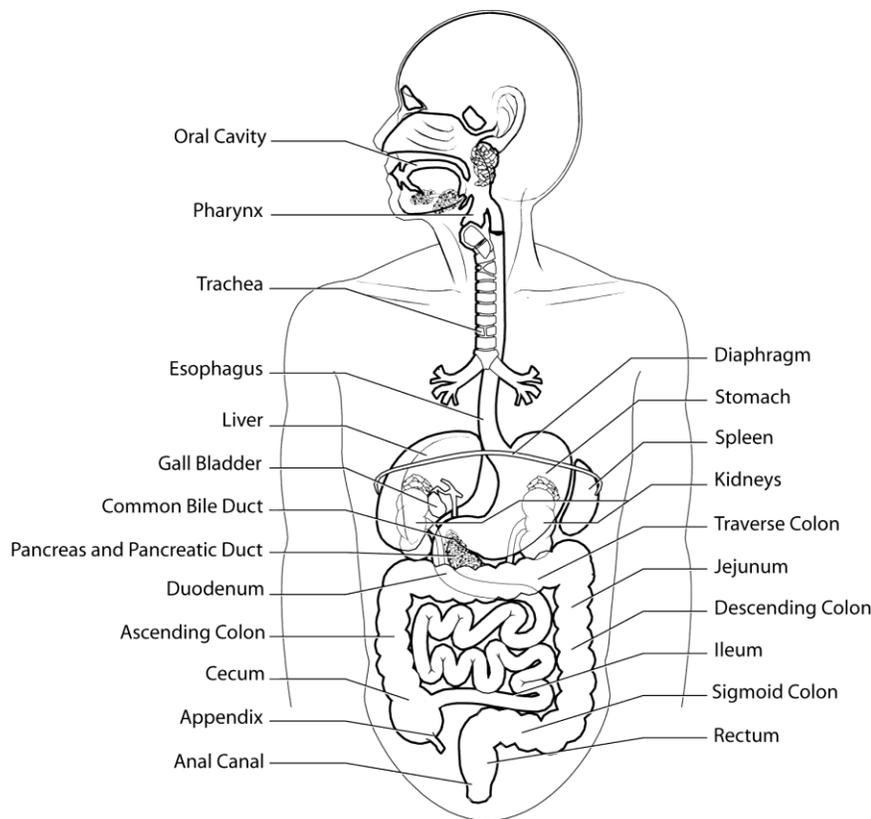


- **frontal lobe:** area behind the forehead that helps control body movement, speech, behavior, memory and thinking.
- **occipital lobe:** area at the back of the brain that controls eyesight.
- **parietal lobe:** top and center part of the brain, located above the ear, helps us understand things like pain, touch, pressure, body-part awareness, hearing, reasoning, memory and orientation in space.
- **temporal lobe:** part of the brain near the temples that controls emotion, memory, and the ability to speak and understand language.

Digestive System and Abdomen

colon: the final section of the large intestine; it mixes the intestinal contents and absorbs any remaining nutrients before the body expels them.

duodenum: the first part of the small intestine; it receives secretions from the liver and pancreas through the common bile duct.



esophagus: the muscular tube, just over nine inches long, that carries swallowed foods and liquids from the mouth to the stomach.

gallbladder: a pear-shaped sac on the underside of the liver that stores bile received from the liver.

ileum: the lower three-fifths of the small intestine.

jejunum: the second part of the small intestine extending from the duodenum to the ileum

kidney: one of a pair of organs at the back of the abdominal cavity that filter waste products and excess water from the blood to produce urine.

large intestine: absorbs nutrients and moves stool out of the body.

liver: organ that filters and stores blood, secretes bile to aid digestion and regulates glucose; due to its large size and location in the upper right portion of the abdomen, the liver is the organ most often injured.

pancreas: gland that produces insulin for energy and secretes digestive enzymes.

pharynx (throat): the passageway or tube for air from the nose to the windpipe and for food from the mouth to the esophagus.

rectum: the lower part of the large intestine between the sigmoid colon and the anus.

sigmoid colon: the S-shaped part of the colon between the descending colon and the rectum.

small intestine: the part of the digestive tract that breaks down and moves food into the large intestine and also absorbs nutrients.

spleen: organ in the upper left part of the abdomen that filters waste, stores blood cells and destroys old blood cells; it is not vital to survival but without it there is a higher risk of infections.

stomach: the large organ that digests food and then sends it to the small intestine.

Respiratory System

diaphragm: dome-shaped skeletal muscle between the chest cavity and the abdomen that contracts when we breathe in and relaxes when we breathe out.

epiglottis: a flap of cartilage behind the tongue that covers the windpipe during swallowing to keep food or liquids from getting into the airway.

larynx (voice box): part of the airway and place in the throat where the vocal chords are located.

lung: one of two organs in the chest that delivers oxygen to the body and removes carbon dioxide from it.

mediastinum: the part of the body between the lungs that contains the heart, windpipe, esophagus, the large air passages that lead to the lungs (bronchi) and lymph nodes.

nasal cavity: a large air-filled space above and behind the nose in the middle of the face where inhaled air is warmed and moistened.

pharynx (throat): the passageway or tube for air from the nose to the windpipe and for food from the mouth to the esophagus.

trachea (windpipe): the main airway that supplies air to both lungs.

vocal cord: either of two thin folds of tissue within the larynx that vibrate air passing between them to produce speech sounds.

