

Medical Glossary

Allergy (Allergies)

Hypersensitivity caused by exposure to a particular antigen (allergen), resulting in an increased reactivity to that antigen on subsequent exposure, sometimes with harmful immunologic consequences.

Analgesic

Agent which relieves pain without causing loss of consciousness.

Antacid (Antacids)

Neutralizes acid in the stomach, esophagus, or first part of the duodenum.

Antagonist (Antagonists)

A chemical substance that interferes with the uptake, assimilation and/or physiological action of another, especially by combining with and blocking its nerve receptor.

Anti-inflammatory

Reducing inflammation by acting on body mechanisms, without directly acting on the cause of inflammation, e.g., glucocorticoids, aspirin.

Antioxidant

A chemical compound that slows or prevents oxygen from reacting with other compounds. Some antioxidants have been shown to have cancer-protecting potential because they neutralize free radicals. Examples include vitamins C and E, beta carotene, the minerals selenium and germanium, superoxide dismutase (SOD), coenzyme Q10, catalase, and some amino acids.

Arthritis (Arthritic)

Inflammation of a joint, usually accompanied by pain, swelling, and stiffness, and resulting from infection, trauma, degenerative changes, metabolic disturbances, or other causes. It occurs in various forms,
www.healthoracle.org

such as bacterial arthritis, osteoarthritis, or rheumatoid arthritis. Osteoarthritis, the most common form, is characterized by a gradual loss of cartilage and often an overgrowth of bone at the joints.

Autoimmune Disease (Autoimmune, Autoimmunity)

One of a large group of diseases in which the immune system turns against the body's own cells, tissues and organs, leading to chronic and often deadly conditions. Examples include multiple sclerosis, rheumatoid arthritis, systemic lupus, Bright's disease and diabetes.

Bell's Palsy

One-sided facial paralysis of sudden onset and unknown cause. The mechanism is presumed to involve swelling of the nerve due to immune or viral disease, with ischemia and compression of the facial nerve in the narrow confines of its course through the temporal bone.

Carpal Tunnel Syndrome

A common, painful defect of the wrist and hand. It is caused by pressure on the middle nerve in the carpal tunnel. The syndrome is seen more often in women, especially in pregnant and in menopausal women. Symptoms may result from a blow, swelling, a tumor, rheumatoid arthritis, or a small carpal tunnel that squeezes the nerve. Pain may be infrequent or constant and is often most intense at night.

Cataract (Cataracts)

A steadily worsening disease of the eye in which the lens becomes cloudy as a result of the precipitation of proteins. Most cataracts are caused by the functions of the body breaking down. Eye trauma, such as from a puncture wound, may also result in cataracts.

Chronic (Chronicity)

Usually referring to chronic illness: Illness extending over a long period of time.

Collagen

The primary protein within white fibers of connective tissue and the organic substance found in tendons, ligaments, cartilage, skin, teeth and bone.

Conjunctiva (Conjunctivitis)

Mucous membrane covering the posterior surface of the eyelids and the anterior surface of the eyeball. Conjunctivitis: An inflammation of the conjunctiva, either from environmental irritation, allergies, viral or bacterial infections.

Cramp (Cramping, Cramps)

A sudden, involuntary, painful muscular contraction.

Fibromyalgia (FMS)

Originally named fibrositis, it is a mysteriously debilitating syndrome that attacks women more often than men. It is not physically damaging to the body in any way, but is characterized by the constant presence of widespread pain that often moves about the body. Fibromyalgia can be so severe that it is often incapacitating.

Giardiasis (Giardia)

An intestinal tract infection caused by *Giardia lamblia*, a flagellate protozoa now common to much of the world. It is not normally a very serious infection, but nevertheless unpleasant.

Gout

A disease characterized by an increased blood uric acid level and sudden onset of episodes of acute arthritis.

Gram (gm, gms, Gramme, Grammes, Grams)

A metric unit of weight, there being approximately 28 grams in one ounce.

Histamine

A chemical in the body tissues, produced by the breakdown of
www.healthoracle.org

histidine. It is released in allergic reactions and causes widening of capillaries, decreased blood pressure, increased release of gastric juice, fluid leakage forming itchy skin and hives, and tightening of smooth muscles of the bronchial tube and uterus. Histamine is the chemical that drives the initial acute allergic reaction, causing itching, swelling and congestion.

Immune System (Immune Response, Immunity)

A complex that protects the body from disease organisms and other foreign bodies. The system includes the humoral immune response and the cell-mediated response. The immune system also protects the body from invasion by making local barriers and inflammation. The process may involve acquired immunity (the ability to learn and remember a specific infectious agent), or innate immunity (the genetically programmed system of responses that attack, digest, remove, and initiate inflammation and tissue healing).

Milligram (mg, Milligrams)

0.001 or a thousandth of a gram.

Mucus (Mucous)

The viscous, slippery substance that consists chiefly of mucin, water, cells, and inorganic salts and is secreted as a protective lubricant coating by cells and glands of the mucous membranes.

Osteoarthritis (Osteoarthritic)

A condition involving degeneration of cartilage and supporting joint tissue, which results in pain, swelling and reduced mobility, as the cartilage wears away and allows bone to rub against bone.

Parasite (Parasites, Parasitic, Parasitical)

An organism living in or on another organism.

Protein (Proteins)

Compounds composed of hydrogen, oxygen, and nitrogen present in the body and in foods that form complex combinations of amino

acids. Protein is essential for life and is used for growth and repair. Foods that supply the body with protein include animal products, grains, legumes, and vegetables. Proteins from animal sources contain the essential amino acids. Proteins are changed to amino acids in the body.

Rheumatism (Rheumatoid)

General term applied to conditions of pain, or inability to articulate, various elements of the musculoskeletal system.

Rheumatoid Arthritis

A long-term, destructive connective tissue disease that results from the body rejecting its own tissue cells (autoimmune reaction).

Scar Tissue

Fibrous tissue replacing normal tissues destroyed by injury or disease.

Tendonitis

Inflammation of the tendons (structures that attach muscles to bones).

Thiamine (B1, B-1, Thiamin, Vitamin B1)

A B-complex vitamin that acts as a coenzyme necessary for the conversion of carbohydrates into glucose, which is burned in the body for energy. It is essential for the functioning of the nervous system.

Trichomonas

Also known as *Trichomonas vaginalis* or “Trich”, this is one of the most common sexually-transmitted diseases. It is caused by a parasite that thrives in the vaginal environment, usually transmitted by sexual contact but also in warm moist environments such as hot tubs.

Trichomonas may affect not only the vagina but also the urinary tract of both women and men. Signs include: Vaginal irritation; a fishy odor; a greenish/yellow vaginal discharge; pain with intercourse and/or with urination. Some women may have no symptoms at all.