

Medical Terminology

Flashcard Study Guide

Chapter 51: Pharmacology

25 terms

Each card contains:


Term | Syllables | *Pronunciation* | Definition |  *Memory trick*

Chapter 51 — Pharmacology

Adverse effect

ad · verse ef · fect *ad-VERS eh-FEKT*

A harmful, unintended reaction to a medication taken at a normal therapeutic dose. Different from side effects in that adverse effects are generally more serious or unexpected.

 *'Adverse' = against/harmful. An adverse effect is when a drug turns against you — causes harm at a normal dose.*

Bioequivalent

bi · o · e · quiv · a · lent *bye-oh-eh-KWIV-uh-lent*

Refers to drugs that contain the same active ingredient in the same amount and are absorbed at the same rate. Generic drugs must be bioequivalent to their brand-name counterparts.

 *'Bio' = biological + 'equivalent' = equal. Bioequivalent = biologically the same. Generic = same drug, different wrapper.*

Brand name

brand name *brand naym*

The proprietary trade name given to a drug by its manufacturer. Brand name drugs are typically more expensive than their generic equivalents.

 *Brand name = the fancy marketing name (like Tylenol vs. acetaminophen). Brand = advertised name with a capital letter.*

Broad-spectrum

broad-spec · trum *brawd SPEK-trum*

A term describing an antibiotic that is effective against a wide range of bacteria (both gram-positive and gram-negative). Used when the specific pathogen is unknown.

 *Broad = wide. Broad-spectrum antibiotics attack a wide spectrum of bacteria — like a shotgun vs. a sniper rifle.*

Contraindicated

con · tra · in · di · cat · ed *kon-truh-IN-dih-kay-ted*

A situation in which a drug or treatment should NOT be used because it may be harmful to the patient. Contraindications include allergies, pregnancy, or existing conditions.

💡 *'Contra' = against. Contraindicated = the drug is indicated AGAINST (forbidden) in that situation. Do NOT give it.*

Drug abuse

drug a · buse *drug uh-BYOOS*

The use of a drug for non-medical purposes or in excessive amounts, leading to harm. Includes misuse of prescription medications, illicit drugs, and over-the-counter substances.

💡 *Abuse = misuse/overuse. Drug abuse = using drugs in a way they were never intended — more, more often, or for the wrong reason.*

Drug dependency

drug de · pen · den · cy *drug deh-PEN-den-see*

A state in which a person requires a drug to function normally, and stopping causes withdrawal symptoms. Can be physical, psychological, or both.

💡 *Dependency = needing it to function. Drug dependency = the body depends on the drug to feel normal without it.*

Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)

Drug En · force · ment Ad · min · is · tra · tion *drug en-FORS-ment ad-min-ih-STRAY-shun*

The federal law enforcement agency that enforces controlled substances laws and regulations in the United States. Medical providers must have a DEA number to prescribe controlled substances.

💡 *DEA = the drug police. They control who can prescribe, dispense, and possess controlled substances like narcotics.*

Drug tolerance

drug tol · er · ance *drug TOL-er-ance*

The need for progressively larger doses of a drug to achieve the same effect, as the body adapts to its presence. A sign of developing physical dependence.

💡 *Tolerance = getting used to something. The body becomes TOLERANT of the drug — needs more to feel the same effect.*

Generic name

ge · ner · ic name *jeh-NAIR-ik naym*

The official, non-proprietary name of a drug, assigned by the United States Adopted Names (USAN) Council. Written in lowercase; always the same regardless of manufacturer.

💡 *Generic = common/official. Generic name = the drug's legal first name (like acetaminophen vs. Tylenol). Always lowercase.*

Habituation

hab · it · u · a · tion *hab-ich-oo-AY-shun*

A psychological dependence on a drug where a person relies on its effects for comfort or routine, without physical addiction. The person uses the drug out of habit.

💡 *Habituation = habit. The drug becomes a habit — not physically addictive, but the person keeps using it psychologically.*

Idiosyncratic

id · i · o · syn · crat · ic *id-ee-oh-sin-KRAT-ik*

An unusual or unexpected reaction to a drug that is unique to an individual, not explainable by known pharmacology. Idiosyncratic reactions are unpredictable and unrelated to dose.

💡 'Idio' = individual/unique (like idiosyncrasies = personal quirks). An idiosyncratic reaction = YOUR body's weird, unique response to a drug.

Inscription

in · scrip · tion *in-SKRIP-shun*

The main body of a prescription that lists the medication name, strength, and dosage form. It is the central information telling the pharmacist what drug to dispense.

💡 Inscription = the main written part. Like an inscription on a monument — the most important text. On a Rx, it's the drug info.

Lethal

le · thal *LEE-thul*

Capable of causing death. A lethal dose (LD) is the amount of a substance that kills. Lethal doses vary by drug, patient weight, and individual factors.

💡 Lethal = death (from Lethe, the river of death in Greek mythology). Lethal dose = a dose that kills.

Over-the-counter

o · ver-the-coun · ter *OH-ver-thuh-KOWN-ter*

Medications that can be purchased without a prescription directly from a pharmacy or store. Deemed safe for self-medication when used as directed.

💡 OTC = you can get it Over the store Counter without asking a doctor. No prescription needed — grab it off the shelf.

Pharmacists

phar · ma · cists *FAR-muh-sists*

Licensed healthcare professionals who dispense medications, counsel patients on drug use, and review prescriptions for accuracy, interactions, and appropriateness.

💡 Pharmacists = drug experts. They are the last safety check before a patient gets medication. 'Pharma' = drug (Greek pharmakeia).

Pharmacology

phar · ma · col · o · gy *far-muh-KOL-oh-jee*

The science that studies drugs — their origin, composition, actions, uses, and effects on the body. The foundation of safe medication practice.

💡 'Pharma' = drug + 'logy' = study of. Pharmacology = the study of drugs. Same root as pharmacy.

Prophylactically

pro · phy · lac · ti · cal · ly *proh-fih-LAK-tik-lee*

Given or done to prevent disease rather than treat it. A medication given prophylactically is a preventive measure, like antibiotics before surgery.

💡 'Prophylactic' = preventive (like a prophylactic condom). Prophylactically = giving a drug to PREVENT illness, not treat it.

Proprietary name

pro · pri · e · tar · y name *proh-PRY-eh-tair-ee naym*

Another term for brand name — the trademarked commercial name of a drug owned by a specific manufacturer. Written with a capital letter and the ® symbol.

💡 'Proprietary' = owned. The proprietary name is the name the company OWNS — their trademark. Same as brand name.

Side effects

side ef · fects *syd eh-FEKTS*

Secondary, usually undesirable effects of a drug that occur at therapeutic doses. Unlike adverse effects, side effects are predictable and may be tolerated for therapeutic benefit.

💡 Side effects = secondary effects that come along for the ride. Predictable but often unwanted — like nausea with antibiotics.

Signa (sig.)

sig · na *SIG-nuh*

Latin for 'directions' — the part of a prescription that tells the patient how, when, and how much of the medication to take. The instructions printed on the medication label.

💡 Sig = signal/instructions. The sig tells the patient what to DO with the drug. Sig. on a prescription = the patient's directions.

Subscription

sub · scrip · tion *sub-SKRIP-shun*

The part of a prescription that gives the pharmacist instructions for compounding or preparing the medication, and specifies the number of doses to dispense.

💡 Subscription = under (sub) the inscription. The subscription is below the main drug info — it tells the pharmacist what to do.

Superscription

su · per · scrip · tion *soo-per-SKRIP-shun*

The heading of a prescription — traditionally the Rx symbol (℞), which stands for the Latin 'recipe' meaning 'take thou.' Identifies the document as a prescription.

💡 Super = above/top. The superscription is at the TOP of the prescription — the Rx symbol that starts every prescription.

Synthetic

syn · thet · ic *sin-THET-ik*

A drug that is artificially manufactured in a laboratory rather than derived from natural sources. Synthetic drugs are designed to mimic or improve upon natural substances.

💡 Synthetic = man-made (like synthetic fabric = artificial fabric). Synthetic drugs = made in a lab, not from plants or animals.

Toxic

tox · ic *TOK-sik*

Harmful, poisonous, or capable of causing injury or death. Toxicity refers to the degree to which a substance can harm an organism; every drug has a toxic dose.

💡 Toxic = poison. 'Toxin' and 'toxic' come from the Greek 'toxikon' = poison for arrows. A toxic dose of any drug can kill.