Thesaurus of Simpler Terms and Phrases for Writing and Speaking in Plain Language

**Note:** At times, we offer alternatives that represent slightly different concepts. Be sure you think carefully about the meaning of your original concept. For example, “apply” can mean “rub on” or “sign up for.” Watch for those small differences as you choose the appropriate words.

Also keep in mind that you may need to change the tense or the part of speech of some words to make them fit into your sentence or document.

**How to Use this Thesaurus**
Click on a letter below to jump to that area of the alphabet OR

A B C D E F G H I J K L
M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

A

abscess
sore, wound, infection

abdomen
stomach, stomach area, belly, tummy, abdominal

ability
skill, are able, can

abolish
end, do away with, get rid of

abrasion
cut, scratch, scrape

absence of
no, none

absenteeism
missing work or school, how often you miss work or school

absorption
take in, soak up

accelerate
hurry, speed up, make worse, make more severe
accessible
available, on hand, understandable, usable (handicapped)

accommodate
let stay with, give shelter, adjust, adapt

accompany
go with, take with (medicine)

accomplish
do, finish

accordance (with)
agree with, follows

according to our records
our records show

accordingly
so

accumulate
add up, gather, collect

accurate
true, right, correct

acellular vaccine
a vaccine that only contains part of the virus

achieve
do, make

acknowledge
thank for

acquaint
get to know, meet

acquire
get, buy

Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome-AIDS
a disease that makes it hard for your body to fight diseases

active immunity
being able to fight off a specific disease once you have had that disease

actual
real
**acute**
sudden start, short term, quick

**addendum**
more information/facts/news

**additional**
extra, added, more

**adequate**
enough, the right amount

**adhere**
stick, follow

**adjacent**
beside, next to, near, touching

**adjuvant**
something added to a vaccine to make it work better

**administer**
give, manage, take care of

**admission**
let you enter or join (the plan), put in

**advanced (stages)**
late stage, far along

**advantageous**
helpful, better, useful

**advantages**
good points, the things that make _____ better

**adverse event**
something bad that happens, bad reaction, unexpected or unwanted results

**adverse health effect**
bad side effect, bad reaction

**adverse**
bad, dangerous, hurtful, harmful

**adversely affect**
hurt, make worse

**advise**
tell, warn, say
advocacy
support, fighting on behalf of, arguing for support

advocate
fight for, support, support person

aerobic exercise
exercise; exercise that gets your heart pumping like walking, running, biking, or swimming, etc.; exercise that helps your heart stay healthy and work better; exercise that makes you breathe faster

aerobic
needs oxygen

aerosol
spray, mist

affix
stick, join, attach, add, fasten

afford an opportunity
let, allow, give a chance

affordable
at a price you can pay, low cost, at a good price

affording
giving, making

agency
an office or program, other groups, partner

aggravate
make worse, harm, anger, hurt

aggregate
taken together, looked at all together, total, sum, combined

aggressive
pushy, dangerous, gets worse fast, fast-growing

airways
windpipe, breathing, tubes that take air in from the nose and mouth to the lungs, pathway from nose and mouth to lungs, air tubes

alienate
push away, put by itself, turn away from, set apart

allergen
something like pollen that causes the body to react by sneezing or forming a rash, something that causes an allergic reaction
**allergic**
the body’s reaction to something, like pollen, resulting in sneezing, sniffling, a rash, etc.

**allergic reaction**
bad reaction, possibly deadly reaction, allergy, problem

**allergist**
allergy doctor

**allergy**
reaction, itch, rash, hives, breathing problem

**alleviate**
lessen, ease, soften, improve, make better

**allocate**
give, divide, share

**alopecia**
hair loss, balding, loss of hair

**alteration**
change, shift, adjustment

**alternate**
take turns, one and then the other, rotate

**alternative**
option, another choice, other, different way, another option, different, another way

**alveoli**
tiny air sacs in the lungs

**amalgam or amalgam fillings**
silver-colored fillings; mixture of mercury, silver, tin, copper and sometimes other metals used to fill cavities in teeth

**amalgamate**
put together, join, combine, unite

**ambulate**
walk, move around

**ambulatory**
can walk, mobile, able to move about, walking, able to walk

**ambulatory services**
medical services you get at a clinic instead of as a patient in a hospital, medical care for people who are not sick enough to be put in the hospital

**ameliorate**
make better, improve, lessen, ease
amend
change, change later on, adjust, fix

amnesia
forgetfulness, memory loss, not being able to remember, can’t remember

amniocentesis
test for a baby’s health before it’s born

amniotic fluid
water, fluid surrounding unborn baby in womb

amyotrophic lateral sclerosis
ALS, Lou Gehrig's Disease, motor neuron disease

anaerobic exercise
fast and hard exercise you can only do briefly before you run out of air, fast-burst exercise, muscle-building exercise like weight lifting

anaerobic
without oxygen

analgesic
pain reliever, aspirin, Advil, or Tylenol

anaphylaxis
an allergic reaction that could kill someone, a sudden and very bad allergic reaction

anemia
low iron, a low blood count, tired

anesthesia
numbing drug, drug that puts you to sleep or puts you under

angina
chest pain

announce
call, call out, tell (everyone)

annual
yearly, every year, once every year, once a year, each year

annually
yearly, every year, once every year, once a year, each year

anomaly
defect, change, difference, unusual, exception

anorexia
eating disorder, too thin, not hungry
anterior teeth
front teeth

antibiotic
drug, medicine, drug that fights bacteria, infection-fighting medicine, medicine that fights infection

antibody
your body’s way to fight off infections, infection-fighting cells, cells that fight infection

anticipate
expect, think

antifungal agent
drug to treat fungus infections

antigen
germs, bacteria, virus, poison, something in your body that your body tries to fight off, something that helps your body fight disease

anti-inflammatory
a drug to reduce swelling; something that reduces swelling and pain, like aspirin or cortisone; a drug that brings down the swelling

antiphospholipid
antibody test, a test to see if you’re at risk for blood clots

antiviral
something that fights viruses

anti-virus medicine
a medicine or drug that fights viruses like the flu

anxiety
fear, worry

apparent
clear, plain, easy to see

apparently
it seems, we think, it looks like

appellant
name, name of the person, you, person making an appeal

aphasic
not able to talk or understand words

applicant
your name, name of the person, person who is applying
apply
use, put on, rub onto, sign up for

appreciable
many, much, large

appreciate
thank, be grateful

appropriate
a good fit, proper, right, take, take over

approximate/approximately
about, guess, around, near, close, estimate, bring together

aptitude
ability, skill, gift, talent

aqueous
watery

arguably
maybe, perhaps, possibly, could be

arrhythmia
skipped heartbeat, irregular heartbeat, heart problem

arthralgia
pain, pain in your joints

arthritis
pain in joints; disease of the joints that causes swelling, pain, heat, and a sense of stiffness

as a consequence of
because

ascertain
find, find out, learn, make certain

asphyxiate
choke, smother, suffocate

aspiration
choke, breathe in a fluid, take out fluid or tissue to test

assess
review, sum up, evaluate, to determine value, find

assist/assistance
help, aid
association
group, relation, organization

asthma
disease, breathing disease, long term disease of swelling of the airways, lung disease where you have trouble breathing, disease of lungs or respiratory system

asymptomatic infection
when you’re sick but you don’t feel bad, an infection with no signs

asymptomatic
someone who is sick but does not feel or look sick

at the present time
now, right now

ataxic
not able to move normally

atherosclerosis
clogged (or hardening of the) arteries, clogged blood vessels

attached herewith
here is

attack
violent start, suddenly overcome by a disease, begin to harm

attempt
try, effort

attending physician
doctor in charge, the doctor who teaches new doctors called residents

attenuated vaccine
vaccine, vaccine that has a weakened form of the virus in it

attire
clothes, clothing, to dress, wear

attorney
lawyer

authentic
original, real, true, actual

authority
trusted source, trusted person, official, power

authorization
consent, permission, approval, OK
authorize
allow, approve, give the power to, let, agree to, give an OK

autism
brain disorder that makes it hard for someone to talk to other people

autoimmune disease
disease that makes your body attack itself

autoimmunity
body fighting itself, rejecting problem with your immune system

autonomous
free, by itself, independent

avail
help, aid

available
on hand, at hand, ready, nearby, handy

avian flu
bird flu

avoid
do not, shun

axilla
armpit

B

bacteria
germs

be in the position to
can

become more familiar
learn more about

benefit
help, a good result

benign
harmless, not cancer

bereavement
grief after death, loss, sadness, mourning
**beverage**
drink, fluids, liquids

**biannual**
twice a year, two times every year

**biennial**
lasting two years, happens every other year, every two years

**bilateral**
with both sides, on both sides, two-sided, when both sides get a say, even, balanced

**biological agent**
disease, poison, germs, bacteria, viruses, fungi

**biofilms (plaque)**
sticky film with germs on teeth

**biopsy**
take tissue (usually for testing)

**bioterrorism**
spreading virus or disease to cause fear or hurt

**biota**
plants and animals

**BMI**
body mass index, a measure of body fat based on height and weight, a measure of body fat

**bona fide**
real, true

**bone density test**
bone strength test, a test of how solid and how strong your bones are, test for osteoporosis, x-ray test for brittle bones

**bone marrow**
the space inside your bones where blood cells are made

**booster shot**
shot you get months or years after your first vaccine shot, another shot to keep you safe from disease

**brachial neuritis**
swelling of the nerves in your arms

**bradycardia**
slow heartbeat
breach
break

**breakthrough infection**
getting a disease even though you’ve been protected against it

**breastfeeding**
nursing/feeding a baby with milk from the breast

**breech birth**
baby born feet or rear-end first

**brochure**
flyer, hand out, booklet, folder

**bronchial tubes**
the tubes letting air in and out of the lungs

**bronchodilator**
medicine or drug that helps you breathe easier

**bruxism**
clenching and/or grinding teeth

**buccal**
side of mouth, inside cheek

**bursitis**
swollen, painful joints; disease that causes joint pain

**by means of**
by, using, with

**by which time**
by then, when

**C**

**calculus**
hard crusty deposit on teeth

**capability**
what you can do

**capacity**
size, amount something holds, ability, space, number open
carcinogen
cancer-causing

carcinoma
cancer starting in the skin or organ lining

cardiologist
heart doctor

cardiology
medical department that treats heart problems

cardiovascular
having to do with the heart and blood vessels

caries (dental)
cavities, tooth decay, holes in teeth

carrier
someone who is sick and can get other people sick, animal that is sick and can make other animals sick

cartilage
the smooth covering on the end of bones

case fatality ratio
how many people die from a disease

CAT scan (CT scan)
test that shows inside body parts, scan, special x-ray, test

cataracts
a clouding of the eye that makes it hard for people to see, cloudy eyesight, cloudy vision, eye disease

catheter
a tube (often put into a person’s bladder)

catastrophe
disaster, tragedy

causal association
causes, leads to, causes your body to react

cauterize
burn the skin, burn tissue (to stop bleeding)

cease
end, stop, quit

censure
blame, punish, limit
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
CDC

central nervous system
brain and spinal cord

cerebral hemorrhage
stroke, bleeding in the brain

cerebrovascular disease
stroke

certification
license, permit

cerumen
earwax

cervix
lower part of the womb

Cesarean delivery
C-section, baby born through surgery, cut abdomen area to get baby out

cessation
stopping, quitting, ending

characteristic
mark, trait, feature

characterize
tell about, describe, define

chemotherapy
cancer drug, cancer medicine, cancer treatment

chronic
constant, never ending, does not go away, long term, lasting a long time, long-lasting

chronic disease
long-lasting disease, disease that lasts for years

chronic health condition
constant health problem, something that effects your health for a long period of time

chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
lung disease, such as asthma or emphysema

circulation
blood flow, flow of blood through the body
circumstance
event, situation, facts

clade
group of animals that can all get the same disease

clavicle
collar bone

cleft lip and/or palate
harelip, birth defect(s) that affect the upper lip and roof of the mouth

client
you, name of person, customer

clinical
work or studies in a medical setting that involves patients

clinical
medical, work or studies in a medical setting that involves patients

clinical trial
research study, medical research study

clinically ill
sick, diseased

close proximity
near, near by, close, close to

coagulate
clot, set, clump together

coerce
force, make, press

cognizant
aware, know about, think of, have learned

colic
stomach pain that causes a fussy or upset baby

collaborate
work together, team up, help each other

colonoscopy
check your colon, check your intestines, look inside your intestine, check for colon cancer

comatose
in a coma
**combination**
mix, mixture

**combination vaccine**
a vaccine that helps stop more than one type of disease

**commence**
start, begin

**committed**
pledged, promised, devoted

**communicable**
catching, can be spread, can be passed to other people, can make other people sick

**communicate**
tell, say, call, write, talk to

**communication skills**
able to talk and understand

**community immunity**
group protection from a disease

**comparable**
like, similar, almost the same as, equal to

**compensate**
pay, reward, make up for

**competent**
skillful, able, well-trained

**complete**
finish, fill out, end

**completion**
end, finish, no more

**complimentary**
free

**comply (with)**
do, follow, give in, obey, go along with

**component**
part, section

**composite or composite filling**
tooth-colored filling
comprehensive
complete, covers everything, thorough, all

compress
squeeze, press down on

comprise
be made up of, include,

compromised
weakened

compulsion
want, urge, desire, drive

conceive
imagine, think up, create, become pregnant

concentration
strength, focus

concept
idea

concerning
about, for, on

conclude
end, finish, judge, deem

conclusive
definite, final, last

concur
agree, feel the same way

condition
a medical problem, a disease, an illness

conditioning
physical training, training your body, fitness

conduct
do, carry on, run, lead

confer
give or award, talk about, discuss

confinement
kept in one place, limited
confirm, confirmation
support, look at to be sure, make sure

congenital
born with, inborn, there at birth

conjugate vaccine
a specific type of vaccine

conjunctivitis
eye infection, pink eye, swelling and redness around your eyes

conscientious
careful, thoughtful, alert

consent
accept, permit, let

consequently
so, which means that, as a result

consider
think about

consistent
stays the same

conspicuous
plain to see, obvious, easy to see

constitute
made of, form, make up

construct
make, build

consult
talk with, ask, talk to, see, meet, opinion, discuss

consume
eat, drink, use up

contact
talk to, call, write, talk with, get in touch with, touch

contagious disease
illness that spreads to others, disease that you can give to other people, disease that can make other people sick

contagious
catching, spreading, able to make others sick, spreadable, a disease that can be spread from one person to another, someone who is sick and might make you sick too
**contain**
have, keep together, hold

**contaminant**
pollutant, poison, harmful ingredient, harmful chemical

**contaminate**
spoil, infect, dirty, poison, pollute, taint, get dirty

**contemplate**
think about, consider, ponder

**continue to**
keep on, still, remain

**continuity**
unending, goes on, continues, series

**contraceptive**
birth control

**contract**
a written agreement, arrange, agree, make smaller and shorter

**contraindication**
dangerous to give, not good for, when a drug or procedure may be harmful, wrong, opposite

**contribute**
help, give, volunteer

**control**
manage, have power over, take care of

**contusion**
bruise

**convenience**
ease, comforts, handiness

**convenient**
easy-to-use, on hand, handy, useful

**conversation**
talk

**convulsion**
seizure, spasm, shaking

**co-operate**
help, work together, assist
**coordinate**
work together

**copayment**
your share of the cost, what you pay when you use services

**COPD**
Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease, emphysema, a lung disease that makes breathing hard

**coronary heart disease**
heart disease

**coronary thrombosis**
heart attack, blood clot in a blood vessel in the heart

**correct**
right

**correspond**
agree with, match, write, email, go with

**corroborate**
confirm, agree with

**corticosteroids**
asthma drug, asthma medicine

**cot death**
SIDS, sudden infant death syndrome

**cough etiquette**
how to cough or sneeze

**countermeasures**
drugs to help fight sickness, flu shots, vaccines

**crib death**
SIDS, sudden infant death syndrome

**criterion**
sign, standard

**Crohn’s Disease**
digestion disease, problem with bowels

**crossbite**
upper teeth are biting inside the lower teeth

**crown (gold, porcelain or stainless steel)**
cap that covers tooth (stainless steel most often used on "baby teeth")
cure
heal, fix, make better, make completely better

current residence
where you live, home address

currently
now, at this moment, right now

cushingoid
signs of high doses of medicine or drug

cutaneous
skin related, about the skin, on the surface, skin

cyst
pus under your skin, boil, cancer cells, lump

cystitis
bladder infection, pain when you pee

D

dangerous
unsafe, not safe

dander
flakes of skin, cradle cap

deceased
dead, passed away, died

deem
think

deciduous tooth
baby tooth

decompose
decay, rot, break down

dehcontaminate
clean, kill germs, disinfect, purify, sterilize

decrease
take less, cut back, drop, lower, fall, lessen, make less

deficiency
lack, not enough
deficient
lacking, not enough, poor

deformity
a change from the normal shape, not normal, not a normal shape, oddly-shaped

degenerative
weaken, worsen, decline, decay, droop

dehydrate
need water, water loss, remove water

delete
drop, cut, leave out, skip

deltoid
arm muscle, muscle in upper arm

dementia
memory loss that gets worse over time, Alzheimer’s

demonstrate
prove, show

demyelinating disorder
nerve disease

dental caries
cavities, tooth decay, holes in teeth

dental implant
fake tooth drilled into jaw bone

dental sealant (pit and fissure sealant)
thin layer of plastic painted onto teeth to prevent decay

dentin
main bone-like part of a tooth

deoxygenated
no oxygen, without oxygen

depart
leave, go

deplete
empty, take all of, reduce, sap, lessen

dermal
related to the skin, skin-related
dermatologist
skin doctor

dermatology
study of the skin, skin doctor’s office

designate
call, label, name

desire
wish, what you want

detailed
complete, with all the facts, covers everything

detect
find, discover

deteriorate
get worse, fall apart, become unusable

determine
figure out, decide, find out, test

detrimental
bad, harmful, dangerous

develop
create, change, grow

developmental disability
physical or mental disability, challenged, learning problem

deviate
stray, change, take a different path

diabetes
disease with too much sugar in the blood, problem with making food into energy

diabetic
person with diabetes

diagnose
test, find out, figure out, learn cause, name

diagnosis
finding out the cause of an illness, condition, or disease; a medical answer

diarrhea
loose and watery poop
difficulties
problems, trouble

dilate
become wider, become larger, become bigger, open

dilator
something used to make something become larger, wider, or bigger

dilute
weaken, make weaker, add liquid, make less strong

dimension
size, width, height or length

diminish
make smaller, become less, take less, ebb

diminutive
small, tiny, very little, petite

diplopia
double vision

directed to
told

directive
guide, aim, apply, plan, steps to follow

discharge
going home, leaving

disclose
show, tell, uncover

discoid
shaped like a disk, round and flat

discoloration
change in color, not the color it normally is, odd color

discontinue
stop, end, quit

discreetly
carefully, privately, wisely

discrimination
difference between, contrast, treating someone differently based on a group they belong to
discuss
talk about, talk with, talk over

disease
illness, sickness

disguise
hide

disturbance
problem, change, something unusual

distal
back of

distinguish
tell apart, set apart

distribute
hand out, give, spread, mail

document
records, papers, proof

documentary

DNA
gen

donation
gift, present

don't be alarmed
don't worry

dosage
amount, how much, measure
dose
amount of medicine, chemical, or radiation; amount, size

drowsy
sleepy

due to the fact that
because, due to

during that time
during, while

dust
fine, dry earth; powdery dirt

dwelling
home, house

dysarthria
slurred speech

dyspepsia
indigestion, heartburn

dysphagia
swallowing disorder, swallowing problem

E

early childhood caries (ECC)
baby bottle tooth decay, tooth decay in infants

economical
cheap, low cost, low-priced

edema
swelling

edentulous
no teeth

educate
teach, tell, show

effect
result, cause

effective
works well, good, strong
efficacy rate (efficacy)
how well something works

e.g.
for example

EHR (Electronic Health Record)
EMR (Electronic Medical Record), chart or medical records kept on a computer, a medical record in computer format

EKG
heart test, test of your heart

elect
choose, name, pick

electrocardiogram (EKG or ECG)
heart test, EKG

electrolytes
blood salts, a type of necessary salt found in blood

elevate
raise, lift, make higher

eligible to enroll
can sign up, can join

eliminate
stop, end, drop, get rid of

emaciated
very thin, starving

embolism
blood clot

embryo
unborn baby (up to 12 weeks)

emergency
urgent, threat, disaster, crisis

emphasize
stress, point out, highlight

emphysema
a lung disease, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)

employ
use, hire
**EMR (Electronic Medical Record)**
chart or medical records kept on a computer; medical record in computer format

**enamel**
hard covering on outside of tooth

**encephalitis**
swollen brain, brain swelling, swelling of the brain

**encephalopathy**
brain dysfunction

**enclosed**
inside, with this __, included

**encounter**
meet

**encourage**
urge, support

**endeavor**
try, attempt

**endocrine**
hormone system

**endodontic**
treatment of root canal for diseased nerve in tooth

**enhance**
add to, improve

**enroll**
join, become a member

**ensure**
make sure

**entire duration**
during the whole time, for the whole time, all along

**enumerate**
count, list

**environment**
all the things around you in your daily life, at home and at work; world around you; your home

**environmental control**
removing harmful things from your home and work; doing something to improve the
space you live in and the air you breathe

**epidemic**
disease that most people get, widespread sickness

**epidemiology**
the study of disease

**epidermis**
skin

**episode**
event, set amount of time, attack, brief time

**epizootic**
widespread disease in animals

**equilibrium**
balance

**equitable**
fair

**equivalent of**
equal to

**erosions**
small pits, small holes in teeth or bones

**erythematous**
red rash on the face

**escalate**
worsen, make worse, get worse, increase, grow, rise

**ESR**
a blood test

**establish**
set, set up, prove, show, start

**estrogen**
female hormone, woman’s hormone

**etiology**
the cause of

**evaluate**
test, check, rate, decide, think about

**evident**
plain to see, visible, seen
exacerbate
worsen, make worse

examine
look at, check, test

exceed
pass, top, go beyond

excess rate
how many people become seriously sick during a pandemic

excessive
too much, more than needed

excise
cut out, cut off

exclusions
services not covered by the plan, services your insurance does not pay for

exclusively
only

exert
work hard, push, struggle, exercise

exertion
effort, work

exhale
breathe out

exhibit
show, display

expectorate
spit, cough, spit out

expedite
hurry, speed up, make faster, rush, lose no time

expeditiously
fast soon, right away, quickly

expend
pay out, give, spend

expense
fee, cost, charge, price
**experience**
feel, have, go through

**expertise**
knowledge, skill, know-how, training

**explain**
tell, show

**exposure**
around, been around, contact, come in contact with

**expressive language**
speaking, saying words or sentences, what you can express vs. what you understand

**extend**
make longer

**extremely**
very

**extensive**
complete, full, goes on for a long time, large, long, major

**facilitate**
make easier, help

**facilities**
clinics, offices, buildings

**factor**
cause, reason, a part of

**failed to**
did not

**family history**
health information about your close relatives

**fallacy**
error, myth, not true

**fast**
go without any food or drink, not eat or drink anything

**fatigue**
tired, weak feeling of the whole body, feeling tired all over
feasible
possible, doable, workable, can be done, can do

febrile
caused by a fever, feverish, has a fever

fertile
able to have a baby

fertility
ability to have a baby

fetus
unborn baby (12 weeks to birth)

finalize
complete, end, finish, settle

flare
a period of time when symptoms of a disease are worse, when your disease hurts more than normal

flexible
moving easily, stretch easily, bend and stretch without hurting, bendable, able to bend

fluctuate
change, rise and fall, go back and forth from high to low, not steady

following
after

for further instructions
to find what to do next

for the purpose of
for

for the reason that
because, since

forfeit
give up, lose

forward
send, give

fracture
break

frequently
often, commonly, normally, regularly, many times
function
work, act, do, serve, role

fundamental
basic, real

furnish
give, send

G

gamete
sex cell, egg or sperm

general anesthesia
put to "sleep"

generation time
time needed for disease to spread from one person to another

genetics
family traits, science or study of family traits, study of blood relatives

genital area
“privates,” [name specific reproductive body parts]

Genital Herpes Simplex
Herpes (sores) in the genital area

gestation
pregnancy

gingiva
gums

gingivectomy
gum surgery, remove or reshape gums to remove space between teeth and gums

gingivitis
inflammation of the gums

give consideration to
think about, consider

glaucoma
eye disease, increased eye pressure, an eye disease that can lead to blindness

glucose
sugar, energy, blood sugar
gradually
slowly, over time

grant
give

gravid
pregnant

grievance
complaint, protest, you don’t agree

guidelines
rules, steps to follow, directions

Guillain-Barre Syndrome
GBS; a disease that makes it hard to move

H

H5N1
bird flu virus

Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib)
a lung disease

hallucinate
see things that are not there

hand hygiene
hand washing

has the capability
can

hazard
harmful, danger

hazardous
harmful, bad, dangerous, risky

hazardous waste
harmful trash like used needles, bloody tissues, etc.

hematocrit (hct)
amount of red blood cells in the blood

hematocrit test
a blood test that counts your red blood cells
**hematological**
related to blood, related to the blood and blood-forming organs

**hematuria**
blood in the urine

**hemodialysis**
use of a machine to clean your blood

**hemoglobin A1C**
a test to show your blood sugar levels over the last 3 months

**henceforth**
from now on, from today

**hepatic**
related to the liver

**hepatitis A**
disease that you get from drinking bad water or eating bad food, impaired liver

**hepatitis B**
liver disease that you get from someone else’s blood or from unsafe sex, impaired liver

**hepatitis C**
liver disease that you get from someone else’s blood or unsafe sex, impaired liver

**hepatitis D**
virus that can only be found in your blood if you also have hepatitis B, impaired liver

**hepatitis E**
disease that you get from drinking bad water or from eating bad food, a disease not found in the United States; impaired liver

**herein**
here

**hereafter**
after this

**herd immunity**
group protection from disease, community immunity

**herpes simplex**
cold sores, virus

**herpes zoster**
shingles, a disease that causes painful sores on your skin

**high risk**
dangerous, good chance something bad will happen
highly
very probably, very likely, most likely, will probably happen

hives
rash; red, itchy swellings on your skin

Hodgkin’s disease
lymph node cancer

hold in abeyance
wait, postpone, do later

homologous
similar, like, alike

hormone
chemical; natural or man-made chemical that effects your growth; chemicals that help different parts of your body know how they should work

hospitalization
time in the hospital

host
person, animal

however
but

HPAI
a dangerous bird flu

HPV
a virus that may cause cervical and/or oral cancer

humidify
to moisten air, to make moist

hyperglycemia
high blood sugar

hyperlipidemia
high cholesterol

hypertensive heart disease
high blood pressure

hypersensitivity
strong reaction

hypertension
high blood pressure
hypoglycemia
low blood sugar

hyposensitivity
weak reaction

hypotension
low blood pressure

hysterectomy
surgery to remove the womb

I

identical
same, exactly the same, alike

identify
name, find, show

i.e.
that is, that is to say

if you require assistance
if you need help

illness rate or clinical attack rate
number of sick people, (Use a ratio like “3 in every 10 New Yorkers are sick” or a percentage like “30 percent of all Floridians are sick.”)

illustrate
show, draw, show a picture

immediately
at once, right away, right now

immerse
put completely in, put all the way in, completely cover

immune globulin
something in your blood that helps fight disease

immune
protected from, resistant to

immunity
protection from disease, ability to fight off an illness

immunization
a vaccine (shot), vaccination
immunize
to protect against disease, usually by a shot

immunological
related to the immune system

immunosuppression
when your body can’t fight disease

immunotherapy
medical treatment that helps your body fight off diseases

impacted
changed

impaction
teeth pressing together, teeth not visible above gum line, pressed very tightly together, tightly packed

impaired
not normal, something is wrong, not working right

impede
get in the way, slow, slow down

imperative
important, pressing, urgent, key

imperceptible
hard to see, hidden, can’t be seen

implement
start, begin, put into action, carry out

inability
can’t, not able to

in accordance with
by, under

in an effort to
to

inasmuch as
since, because

incapable
unable, unfit, helpless, cannot do, can’t do

inception
start, beginning
in conjunction with
with, along with

incorporate
join, put together, combine, bring into

incorrect
wrong

increase
make or get bigger, more

increasingly
more often, more and more

incumbent upon
must, required

indicate
show, list, write down, mark, check off

ineligible
cannot be accepted, do not meet the standards

in excess of
more than

inevitable
will happen no matter what, sure to come, sure to happen, can’t be avoided

insert
put, put into

institute
start, begin, set up

instructed
told, taught

in the absence of
without

in the course of
during, in

in the event of
if

in the majority of cases
usually, most often, most of the time
in the near future
soon

in utero
in the womb, in the uterus

in view of, in view of the fact
since, so, because

in vitro
out of the body, outside the body, laboratory grown, in a test tube

in vivo
within the body, inside the body, grown inside a person or animal

inaccuracy
error, mistake, chance that there is a mistake

inactive vaccine
a vaccine that uses germs that have been killed

inadvertently
without meaning to, didn’t mean to

inadvisable
risky, not smart, may be dangerous

inapparent infection
when you are sick but you don’t feel bad

incidence
how many people get sick, number of sick people

incident of national significance
national emergency

incipient
beginning, starting

incise
cut

incision
cut, opening

incisors
front teeth, front “biting” teeth, fangs

inclement
harsh, extreme, dangerous
incorrect
wrong, not true, false

increase
add to, raise

incubation period
the length of time a disease is in someone’s body before they feel or look sick

indicate
suggest, point to, show

indication
sign, signal, symptom

indigenous
local to, comes from, native

individual
person, you, man, woman, one

inexpensive
cheap, low cost, low-priced

infant
baby

infect
disease spread by germ or virus, to get sick, to make someone sick, to spread a disease

infection
disease, illness, sickness, virus, bug, illness caused by germs, a sickness you get from germs

infection control
stopping sickness

infectious agent
virus, germs, something that makes you sick, disease, flu, parasite

infectious
something that can spread disease

infertile
sterile, unable to have a baby, unable to become pregnant

inflame
make hot, red, or swollen

inflamed
swollen, irritated
inflammation
swelling, injury, sore

inflammatory bowel disease
digestive system disease, intestinal problems

influenza
flu, a virus

inform
tell

information
news, facts, what you need to know

information (for more information)
to learn more

infusion
put fluids or drugs directly into your blood

ingestion
eating, drinking, swallowing

inhalation
breathing, breathing in

inhale
breathe in, take a breath

inhaler
breathing medicine/drug, asthma medicine, device that helps get medicine into the breathing tubes

inherent
natural, built in, native

inherit
acquire, get, obtain, be left; get from your family members

inheritance
things that pass from parent to child

inhibit
check, bar, forbid, stop, slow

initial
first, earliest, basic

inject
give a shot
**injection**  
shot, to give medicine by needle, booster

**innocuous**  
safe, harmless

**inquire**  
ask

**instrument**  
tool, device

**insufficient**  
not enough, too little, failing, poor

**insulin**  
a hormone to treat high blood sugar

**integrate**  
combine with, make part of, mix

**intention**  
goal, aim, desire, end, plan, purpose

**internal organs**  
inside parts of your body (heart, lungs, stomach, kidneys, etc.)

**interrupt**  
stop, break

**intervention**  
care

**intrauterine device** (also called an IUD)  
a form of birth control that goes into the uterus

**intravenous (IV)**  
into your vein, into your blood stream, putting drugs or fluids directly into your blood

**investigational vaccine**  
vaccine still being tested

**irrefutable**  
certain, final, obvious, proven

**irregular**  
even, not usual, not normal

**irreversible**  
cannot be changed, cannot be fixed
irritable
sensitive, complaining, grouchy, testy

irritant
something that bothers, pest, problem

isolate
a specific type of virus, a specific type of flu

isolation of ill people
staying away from people who are sick, keeping sick people at home

it is requested that
please

itemized
listed, recorded

J

jaundice
skin and eyes turn yellow

jeopardize
put in danger

joint
where bones come together, bone connection

justify
prove, show

K

kidney
organ that filters blood

L

lacerate
to cut or tear unevenly

laceration
a ragged cut or tear

large numbers of
many, most (or state the number)
lesion  
cut, injury, wound, sore

ligament  
a tough band of tissue that connects bone to bone, joint tissue

limitations  
limits, things you can’t do

limited number  
few

lingual  
on the tongue

live vaccine  
a vaccine that has a weakened form of the virus in it

local anesthesia  
drug that causes numbing only in the area of the body where the drug is put by spreading it or with a shot

locality, locale  
place, area

localized  
in a small area, only in one place

locate  
find, place, settle, turn up

location  
place, spot

long-term  
for a long time, over a long period of time

lower respiratory infection  
pneumonia

lucid  
clear, thinking clearly

lung function  
measure of how strong your lungs are

lungs  
breathing organs

lymph  
a clear fluid that flows through our bodies and carries white blood cells
lymphatic
related to the lymph system

lymphocytes
white blood cells, lymph cells

lymphoma
cancer of the lymph system

M

macrophage
disease-fighting cell

macular
a spot on your cornea, eye disease, blindness

magnitude
extent, size, how serious

maintain
take care of, keep, keep up

majority
most, greatest, more than half

mammogram
breast X-ray, breast check, breast health test

malignant
cancer

malignant tumor
tumor or mass that is cancerous

malocclusion
crowded teeth, misaligned teeth, crossbite, overbite, underbite, open bite

manage
control, direct, be in charge of, take care of, watch

mandatory (it is)
(you) must

mandible
lower jaw

manifest
clear, plain, evident, show
mask
hide

mastectomy
breast cancer surgery, surgery to remove your breast

maxilla
upper jaw

maximum
the largest possible, the most

medication
drug, pill, medicine

medicine
drug, pill, shot

melanoma
skin cancer

memory cell
a cell that helps your body quickly fight diseases that you’ve gotten before

menopause
women’s “change of life,” “the change,” the time in a woman’s life when her periods stop, no longer have periods

menstruation
period, the “curse,” your “monthly” time

mental health condition
mental disorder, mental illness

mentality
frame of mind, outlook, feeling

mentioned
told, said, listed, talked about

mesial
front of

metabolism
process of getting energy from food, converting food into energy

mg
milligram

microbes
very tiny fungi, sometimes viruses, that are too small too see; bacteria, protozoa
might qualify
might get

migrate
move, travel

migration
moving, transfer, traveling

mild
gentle, not severe, slight, small

mildew
fungus that grow in damp warm areas

minimal
least, small, smallest

minimize
make smaller, make less, lessen, reduce

miniscule
very small, tiny

miscarriage
lose the baby, miscarry, have the baby before it is old enough to live

mites
very tiny, spider-like, animals that cause allergies and skin rashes

mitigate
make less harmful, soften, lessen, reduce

mobility
ability to move

moderate
medium, mild, controllable

modify/modification
change

molars
back teeth, back “grinding” teeth

mold
growth on food and damp surfaces

monitor
watch, check on, watch for changes, device that measures changes
morbidity
diseased, sick, ill

moreover
and, also, too

mortality
death

mortality rate
number of deaths

motor vehicle accident
car crash

MRSA
a certain bacteria that resists antibiotics, a certain bacteria that antibiotics can’t kill easily

mucosal (mucus) membranes
soft, moist areas just inside the openings to your body

mucus
phlegm, nose fluid, mouth fluid, throat coating

multiple sclerosis
central nervous system disease, MS

muscle contraction
muscle twitch, movement, when your muscle gets tight

mutagen
cause

mutation
change over time, change, difference, different

myocardial infarction
heart attack

narcotic
addictive pain medicine or drug

nebulizer
asthma medicine mister

necessary
needed
necessitate
cause, make, have to, need to, must

negligent
careless, lax, not careful

negligible
very small, tiny

neonatal death
infant death, death in the first month of life

neonatal
newborn, baby in the first month of life

neonatologist
baby doctor, baby doctor for preemies, a doctor who cares for babies born early

nephrology
study of kidney problems

neuraminidase
enzyme on the surface of the virus

neuritis
swelling of a nerve

neurologic
relating to the nervous system, brain or spinal cord

neurological
related to the brain and nervous system

neurology
study of the nervous system

neuropathy
disease of the nervous system

neutralize
cancel, stop, offset

nevertheless
even so, in spite of, still, however

nominal
small, not important, token, cheap, not costly

nonpharmaceutical intervention
ways to stop the spread of illness without drugs, such as hand washing, covering sneezes, closing schools, etc.
nonprescription
not ordered by your doctor, can be bought without the doctor’s order, over-the-counter

nosocomial
an infection you catch in the hospital

notification
notice

notify
tell, let us know, call

notwithstanding
still, even if, yet

noxious
dangerous, poisonous

numerous
many (or give number)

nutrition
food, meal, diet, healthy food

nutritious
wholesome, food that is good for you, healthy eating, healthy food

0

obesity
dangerously overweight, too heavy

objective
goal, end

obscure
hidden, unclear, blur, confuse

observation
close look, watching, sighting, remark, comment

observe
look closely, watch, see, detect, find, notice, see

obstetrician
pregnancy doctor

obstruct
block, stop
obstruction
barrier, block, hurdle

obtain
get

obvious
clear, plain, easy to see

occasionally
sometimes, not often, once in a while

occlusal
chewing or grinding surface of back teeth

occupation
job, work

occupational therapist
someone who helps people who are sick or injured learn or relearn activities of daily life

occupational therapy
therapy that helps you relearn everyday activities

occur
happen, take place, result

occurrence
event

on a monthly basis
monthly, every month, once a month

on an empty stomach
without eating or drinking for two hours before and two hours after

on behalf of
for

on receipt
when you get

on request
if you ask, when you ask, only if you ask

on numerous occasions
often, a lot of the time, several times

on the basis of
because, since
on the grounds that
because

open bite
upper and lower front teeth do not touch even when mouth is closed and/or back teeth are touching

operate (as in function)
run, work

operate (as in surgery)
do the surgery

operational
working

opportunistic infection
infection you get because you’re already weak

opportunity
chance, opening, break

optic neuritis
eye disease, disease of the eyes

optimal/optimum
best, best way

option
choice, way

optional
by choice, you don’t have to, you can say “no”

oral
mouth and jaw

oral consent
you say out loud that it is OK for the doctor to do a test or procedure, you give your permission verbally and not in writing

oral medication
medicine you swallow

oral surgery
mouth operation, mouth surgery, teeth operation

orchitis
side effect of mumps

originate
start, begin, create
orthodontic
braces, teeth straightening

orthopedic surgeon
bone and joint doctor

orthopedics
bone and joint doctor’s office

orthotic
support or brace

ossification
bone formation, when bones get hard and stiff

osteonecrosis
bone death

osteoporosis
brittle bones

otherwise
or

otitis media
middle ear infection

outbreak
sudden beginning, start, or onset of a disease or conflict

outermost
farthest (away), top

outpatient
when the patient does not stay in the hospital

outstanding (as in quality of something)
very good, super, excellent

outstanding (as with a bill)
unpaid

ova/ovum
egg/eggs, a woman’s egg/eggs

overabundance
too much, excess

overbite
front upper teeth overlap lower teeth, "bucktoothed"
palatable
pleasing, tasty, good

palate
roof of mouth

pandemic flu
deadly flu, fast and wide-spread flu

pandemic vaccine
pandemic flu vaccine

panzootic
a flu pandemic in animals, a deadly flu pandemic in animals, fast and wide-spread flu in animals

papule
small red dot on your skin, skin rash

paralysis
can't move

parameter
limit, factor, value

paramount
most important

parasite
animal or plant living off another animal or plant

partially
partly

participate
take part, join, share

participating (providers)
doctors, clinics, etc. that have joined (a health plan, HMO, etc.)

passive immunity
temporary disease protection from mother, disease protection from vaccine

pathogen
germs or virus that causes a disease, disease-causing agent

pathogenic
disease causing
peak flow meter
small tool used to measure how fast you can blow out air

peak flow
the fastest you can blow out air

d jianician
baby doctor; children’s doctor

pedodontic (pediatric dentistry)
children's dentistry

pending
coming, until, waiting on something or someone

perforation
hole

perform
do, carry out, act

pericarditis
heart inflammation, swelling of the tissue covering the heart

perinatal
near the time of birth

perinatal death
death around birth, stillborn

perinatologist
high-risk pregnancy doctor, doctor for pregnancy at risk

periodontal disease (periodontitis)
gum disease

periodontic
treatment of gum disease and related bone loss

periphery
edge, boundary, outside

peritoneum
lining of your stomach, belly, tummy

permanent
lasting, long term, forever

permissible
allowed, you can
permit
allow, let

permutation
change

persevere
hold on, keep at, last, keep trying, not give up

persistent
there all the time, constant, doesn’t go away, not giving up

personal protective equipment (PPE)
gowns, face shields, gloves, face masks, and respirators, hearing protection, protective clothing

personnel
people, staff

perspire
sweat

persuade
convince, talk into, win over, urge

pertaining to
about, on, of

pertinent
fitting, related to

petechiae
tiny red or purple spot on your skin

pharmacist
druggist, drug dispenser

photosensitive
sun-sensitive, sensitive to the sun

physical/physically
body, bodily, real

physical activity
of the body, exercise, movement

physical examination
check-up, doctor’s appointment

physical therapist
someone who treats pain and weakness by exercise
**physical therapy**
treatment of pain and weakness through exercise

**physician**
doctor

**physician-prescribed treatment**
care, medicine or therapy your doctor ordered (or wants you to have)

**pica**
craving, dirt or clay eating, unusual appetite; eating materials that are not food

**pictographs**
symbols (examples below)
**PID**
Pelvic inflammatory disease

**pigmentation**
color

**pit and fissure sealant (dental sealant)**
thin layer of plastic painted onto teeth to prevent decay

**placebo**
sugar pill, drug with no active ingredient and will cause no effect
placed
put

placenta
organ that attaches umbilical cord to the inside of the womb

plaque
sticky film with germs on teeth

platelet
blood clotting cell

pleurisy
lung inflammation

pneumonia
lung infection

PO
taken by mouth, eat or drink

podiatry
treating feet problems, medical care for feet, foot doctor

poliomyelitis
polio; a disease that can make you unable to move

pollute
dirty, poison, taint, spoil

polysaccharide vaccines
sugar vaccines

polyurethane
plastic

portion
piece, amount, part, serving

position
job, rank, class, grade

possess
have, own

possibility
chance

posterior teeth
back teeth
**post-exposure prophylaxis**
drug given to someone who has been near someone sick, prevention drug, drugs to prevent the spread of disease

**post-partum depression**
“baby blues,” overwhelmed, depressed, unexplained sadness after having baby

**postpone**
put off, wait, delay

**potency**
strength, force, power, level, dose

**precaution**
safeguard, caution, guard, care

**preclude**
prevent, stop, get in the way of

**predicament**
problem, bad situation, plight, difficulty

**predominant**
main

**preference**
choice, wish, desire, option

**pregnancy**
pregnant, expecting a baby

**preliminary**
early, not final, initial

**premises**
building, office

**premium**
money you pay every month to have insurance, monthly payment to your health plan or health insurance company

**pre-pandemic vaccine**
pandemic flu or deadly flu vaccine or shot

**prepared**
ready

**preparedness**
readiness, alertness, to be ready, to prepare, be prepared, planned

**prepuce**
foreskin
prerogative
right, choice

prescribed
ordered, given

prescriber
doctor, nurse, any medical person who is licensed to write prescriptions

prescription
doctors’ orders, medicine, drug order

present
give, send, now, show, here

prevalence
number of sick people, spread, disease spread, number, figure

prevent
stop, keep from happening, forbid, bar, keep

preventive
(i.e.; preventive services) practices that help keep you well

prevention
stop, bar, not permitted, not allowed, to avoid ill effects

previous
before, past

primary
main, key, first

primary care physician
the main doctor who cares for you

primary teeth
baby teeth, first teeth

principal
main, first, head, chief, most important

prior to
before

prioritize
rank, decide what is most important

probability
chance, likelihood
**proximal**
near to, close, area closer to the center of the body

**procedure**
steps, method, course of action, how-to, way, test

**proceed**
go, move forward

**process**
way, method, step, rule

**prodromal**
signs of disease or attack

**proficiency**
skill

**proficient**
skilled, experienced, able, apt

**progression**
move forward, go on, get worse, advance

**prohibit**
ban, forbid, prevent

**projectile**
 flying object, fast object, thrown object

**proliferate**
grow, spread, reproduce

**prolonged**
stays, lasts, carries on, goes on for a long time, continues

**promptly**
right away, soon

**promulgate**
promote, give out, declare, publish

**prophylactic**
pregnancy prevention drug, sickness prevention drug, birth control, condom

**prophylaxis**
prevention, protection

**propose**
offer, suggest
**prophylaxis (dental, oral)**
basic teeth cleaning

**prostate**
gland in male body that makes semen

**prostatitis**
infection of the prostate

**prosthodontic**
treatment using crowns, bridges, partials and/or dentures

**protocol**
way of doing things, method, standard, step-by-step process, rules, code

**provide**
give, offer, send, supply

**provided that**
if

**provider**
doctor, nurse, or clinic that gives you care, health care professional, insurer

**providing**
giving, supplying

**provision**
plan, agreement

**provoke**
make worse, cause, anger, annoy

**proximal**
near to, close, area closer to the center of the body

**psoriasis**
a dry, scaly, skin rash

**psoriatic arthritis**
joint-swelling disease with skin rash

**psychiatrist**
mental health doctor, doctor who treats mental illness, “shrink”

**psychiatry**
study of mental health and illness

**PSA**
prostate test, prostate check
PTSD
problem with fear after seeing or having a fearful event, flashbacks of negative experience

public health
everyone’s health, our health, health of the community as a whole

puff
a short, gentle burst; a small breath

pulmonary
related to the lungs

pulmonary cancer
cancer of lung, trachea, bronchus

pulmonary care unit
part of a hospital where lung disease is treated

pulmonary fibrosis
lung disease, scarring of lung tissue, shortness of breath

pulmonologist
lung doctor

pulmonology
study of lung disease

pulp
tooth nerve

pulpectomy
remove nerve from tooth

pulpitis
infection of nerve inside tooth

pulpotomy
take out the nerve from a tooth

purchase
buy

pursuant to
under, because of

purulent
pus

pyrexia
fever
qualified
suited, capable; has the education to perform; license to perform

quarantine
isolate, staying away from other people, staying home by yourself

RA
rheumatoid arthritis, disease of joints

radiation
energy, rays, waves, heat

radioisotope
special medicine, drug, or radioactive tracer

radiologist
a doctor who studies x-rays and other images, x-ray specialist, x-ray doctor

radiology
x-ray department

radionuclide
special medicine or drug that is radioactive

rampant
unchecked, raging, uncontrolled

rapid diagnostic test
fast result test, quickly check if someone is sick

rationale
reason, thinking, intent, purpose

Raynaud’s syndrome
circulatory disease

reaction
a response

reason for
why

reassortment
change, new type of virus
receive
get, admit, welcome

receptive language
language that is understood

recipient
person who gets something

recognize
accept, know, see, find

recombinant
new gene combination

recommend
suggest, urge, advise, says

reconsider
think again

recover
get better, feel better, heal

recrudescence
relapse, to get sick again

re recuperate
get better, feel better, get well, recover

recur
come back, get again, happen again

reduce, reduction
lower, cut, trim, dilute

redundant
extra, not needed, excess, surplus, spare

refer
send to

referred to as
called

refers to
talks about, mentions, means

refills
number of times one can get more medicine from the drugstore without going back to the doctor
reflux
spit up, backward flow of body fluid

regarding
about

regardless
no matter what

regimen
diet, plan, program

register/registration
sign up, sign in

regret (to tell you)
sorry to tell you

regular
usual, normal, everyday, common

regulate
control, restrict, watch over, govern

regulation
rule, law

rehabilitate
get better, restore

reject
turn down, deny, refuse

reimburse
pay back, refund

reinforce
make stronger, brace, support

reiterate
repeat, say again

relating to
about, on

relief
feel better, ease, not as bad, less painful, more comfortable

relieve
ease, make better, soothe, rest
remain
stay

remainder
the rest, what is left (over)

remission
when a disease is not active

remuneration
pay, payment

renal
related to the kidney

render
give, make

request
ask for, beg

require
need, ask for

requirements
needs, regulations

rescind
cancel, take away

resemble
look like, take after, match

reside
be in, live in

residence
home, apartment, house

Residual Seizure Disorder
seizures, sudden attack, brain problem

resolve
go away, decide, settle, agree, finish, work out

respiration
breathing, taking in oxygen

respiratory therapist
breathing therapist
respite
rest, relief, quiet time

respond
answer, react to

restoration
filling, fix a tooth, tooth replacement

restore
get back, fix, bring back

restrain
hold back, stop

restrict
limit, stop

restrictions
limitations, changes

resume
go back to, begin again, go on with, come back

retain
keep

retrieve
get, bring back, get back

return
go back

reveal
show, tell

review
go over, check

revised
new, changed

Reye’s Syndrome
brain disease in children

rheumatoid arthritis
disease of joints, joint swelling

rheumatologist
joint, bone, and immune system doctor
**rheumatology**
study of the immune system, joints, and bones

**rigorous**
hard

**risk reduction**
lowering the chances, making less likely

**risk**
chance

**root canal**
remove the nerve from inside the root of a permanent tooth

**root planing and scaling**
deep tooth cleaning

**Rotavirus**
germs causing stomach flu

**Rubella**
German measles

**Rubeola**
measles

**rupture**
break, burst, break open

**S**

**safeguard**
keep safe, protect, save

**sanitary**
clean, germ free, healthful

**sanitize**
clean, wash, clean up, make germ-free, disinfect

**SC**
subcutaneously, shot into fat, injection into fat

**scaling and root planing**
deep tooth cleaning

**Scarlatina**
scarlet fever
schedule
plan, planning a time to do something

scrutinize
look at carefully

sealant (pit and fissure, dental)
thin layer of plastic painted onto teeth to prevent decay

seasonal influenza
common flu; winter flu

second- and third-order effects
things that happen as a result of your actions

sector
group, community, neighborhood

sedentary
inactive, doesn’t exercise, sitting a lot, “couch potato”

segment
part, piece

seizure
fit of uncontrolled movements

select
choose, decide, pick

selection
choice

sensation
feeling

sensitive
easily hurt, easy to damage, sore

seroconversion
becoming immune, reacting against disease, fighting disease

serology
study of blood strength

serosurvey
test to see how likely you are to get a disease

settle (your account)
pay your bill
several
many

severe
strong, serious, harmful, dangerous, very bad

severity
how bad

shift
change

shortness of breath
difficulty catching breath, difficult breathing, can't catch your breath

side effect
reaction, reaction to a medicine

significant
big, serious, important

similar
like

situated
placed, located

Sjogren’s syndrome
dry eyes and mouth

skull
head bones, bones that protect the brain

social distancing
stay at home, keep away from people

socialize
make friends, talk with people, meet people

solely
only

solicit
ask for

soreness
hurt, pain, ache

spasm
sudden, strong muscle tightening; jerk; painful twist
specialist
an expert in a field

species
group of plants or animals of the same type

spirometer
breathing test, breath strength machine, breath strength indicator

spontaneous
unplanned, sudden

sprain
muscle injury, muscle tear

stable
okay, no change, constant, even, unchanging

stamina
strength, endurance

state of readiness
ready, now ready, prepared

state
say, tell, condition

statement
bill, charge

status
state, condition

statutory
by law, legal

strategize
plan

sterile
unable to have children, clean

steroid
medicine, drug to lessen swelling, illegal sports drugs

stigma
mark, spot, blemish, embarrassment

stimulate
excite, stir up, activate
strain
type of germ, type of animal, type of plant

stress
physical strain, mental strain, pressure, worry

stringent
strict, tight, controlled

subclinical infection
minor illness

submit
give, hand in, send

subsequent
next, later

subsequently
after that, later, next

subsequent to
after, next

substance
chemical, material, matter, stuff

substantial
large, strong

substantially
a lot, for the most part

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)
crib death; sudden, unexplained death of a baby

suffice
be enough

sufficient
enough, plenty, ample

suffocate
choke, smother, not able to breathe

summon
call for, request

sun protection factor
sunscreen, sun block
superficial
not important, not harmful, slight

supersede
replace, take the place of

supplement
add to, in addition to, additive, vitamins

supplementary
extra, more

supply
give, budget, fund, pool, source, “kitty”

suppress
hold back, stop, slow down

surge capacity
being able to offer more services in an emergency, ability to expand

surgery
operation

surgical mask
face mask, mask used during surgery

surveillance
keep a close eye on, watch closely, monitor

susceptible
in danger of getting, likely to get, more open to

sustain
support, carry, help, save, aid

sutures
stitches

symptom
sign (of disease or sickness), indicator, warning

syndrome
illness, sickness, condition

synthesis
summary, make, take up

synthesize
combine, form, summarize, pull together
**systematic**
planned out, orderly, regular

**Systemic Lupus Erythematosus**
immune system disease

**systemic**
throughout your body, in all parts of your body

**T**

**tablet**
pill, dose

**tallus**
heel

**taper**
reduce, slow, lower, shrink, decrease

**tartar**
crust on teeth, plaque

**telework**
work from home

**temperature**
heat, fever

**temporal association**
when two things happen at the same time but aren’t actually related to each other

**temporary**
short, brief

**teratogenic**
something that can hurt your baby before he is born

**terminal**
deadly, fatal

**terminate**
stop, end

**testosterone**
male hormone

**tetanus**
disease affecting muscles
that being the case
so

therapeutic
healing, improving, getting better

therapy
treatment

thereafter
then, from then on, after that

therefore
so

thimerosal
drug or vaccine preservative

third molars
wisdom teeth, last teeth to come into mouth

this office (hospital, clinic)
we

thrombus
clot

thus
so

time period
time

titer
blood test

titrate
to change the dose/level of a medicine

topical
on the surface, on the skin, on the body

toxicology
study of harmful materials

toxin
poison, pollution

transfer
move, change
transform
change, alter

transmit
send, give

transparent
clear, see-through

transpire
happen, take place

transverse myelitis
of the spine, back disease

traumatic
shocking, upsetting

treat
give care, take care of, cure, heal

treatment
action, medicine, therapy

tremor
shaking, trembling

trigger
cause, start, bring on, lead to

trimester
three months, three month’s time

tuberculosis
TB, lung disease

tumor
growth, lump

U

ulcer
open sore, canker

ulterior
secondary, hidden, alternate, further

ultimate
final, last
ultimately
in the end, finally

umbilicus
belly button, navel

unavailability
lack of

unavailable
not able to get or find, cannot get

underbite
lower teeth extend past upper front teeth

undersigned
I, we, the people who sign this paper

understand
know, to get

undertake
take on, do, agree to do, promise

unfavorable
bad, harmful, damaging, unwanted

unforeseen
unplanned, not expected, sudden

unnecessary
not needed, needless

unusual
strange, not common

upper respiratory system
nose, throat, and windpipe

urgent
cannot wait long, needs attention soon

urinate
pee, use the bathroom

urticaria
hives, itch, rash on your skin

until such time
until
use caution
be careful

uterus
womb

utilize
use, make use of

UVA
UV light, sunlight

UVB
UV light, sunlight

vaccinate
to protect against disease, usually by a shot

Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS)
a way for doctors to make sure that vaccines aren't hurting anyone

Vaccine Safety Datalink Project (VSD)
a way for doctors to learn more about vaccines

vaccine
shot, flu shot, medicine, immunization

vague
unclear, not for sure, not certain

validate
prove, test

validity
truth, proof

variant
version, slightly different

Varicella
chicken pox, herpes zoster

variola
smallpox

vary
change, shift
vehicle
car, truck, bus, automobile

verbatim
exact, word for word

verify
check, find out

vesicular
blisters, small bumps on your skin

via
in, on, through, by

viable
able to live, usable, can be used

vicinity
area, location

viral shedding
coughing and sneezing

viremia
viruses in the blood

virulence
strength, harm, how harmful, how dangerous the disease is

virulent
strong, dangerous

virus
germs

vital
important, crucial, related to life

voluminous
large, bulky

voluntary
your choice, on your own, without being forced

vomit
throw up, “upchuck,” emesis
waning immunity
don’t immune any more, more likely to get sick, lost your disease resistance

warning sign
sign of trouble, problem, alert

warrant
call for

waterfowl
water birds; birds that live on water; ducks, geese, and swans

we are in a position to
we can

wheeze
breathing problem, difficulty breathing, gasp, gag, pant

whenever
when

whereas
while, but

white spot lesion
white spot on tooth, beginning decay

whooping cough
disease of the lungs that is very easily spread to others

with reference to
about

with regard to
about

withdraw
take away, remove, take out

withhold
deny, keep from, hold back, refuse

withstand
take, bear, resist

witness
see, note, observe
x-ray
picture of your bones, picture of your insides

you are obligated to
you must

you are requested to
please

zero-rated (tax)
tax free

zero-rated (risk)
free of risk

zoonoses
diseases that people can get from animals; diseases that are passed between animals and people
Sources and Credits

This thesaurus is the result of combining the CDC thesaurus described below with a health, medical, and medical insurance thesaurus begun in 1994 by Audrey Riffenburgh, the former President of Plain Language Works, LLC. The thesaurus has been included in Ms. Riffenburgh’s workshop handbooks on creating reader-friendly materials since 1994. Ms. Riffenburgh is currently the Senior Health Literacy Specialist at University of New Mexico Hospitals in Albuquerque, NM. She would like to thank Julia Grimes and Marguerite Pacheco at University of New Mexico Hospitals for their help in creating this document. You can contact Audrey Riffenburgh by email at ariffenburgh@salud.unm.edu.

The CDC document is the *Plain Language Thesaurus for Health Communications* (2009 version) by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s National Center for Health Marketing.

Key sources for their document included:
- [www.pandemicflu.gov glossary](http://www.pandemicflu.gov)
- [CDC Community Strategy for Pandemic Influenza Mitigation glossary](http://www.cdc.gov/pandemic/pdf/strategies/glossary.pdf)
- [National Immunization Program Glossary](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/about/immunize/glossary.htm)
- [Simple Words and Phrases thesaurus at plainlanguage.gov](http://www.plainlanguage.gov)
- [Clear Language and Design (CLAD) thesaurus](http://www.eastendliteracy.on.ca/ClearLanguageAndDesign/thesaurus/)
- Harvard’s three *Plain Language Glossaries* (one for asthma, lupus, and arthritis).

For more information on the CDC Thesaurus, please contact Sarah Gregory by email at sgg7@CDC.GOV.