

Name of Child: _____ Date: _____

What does that mean?

Medical terms you may hear or see

When doctors and nurses talk to you, they should explain all the medical terms they use in words you understand. If they forget and use words you do not understand, stop them, and ask what the word means. (If you do not, you may not understand the rest of what they are saying.)

You have the right to have health care providers explain things in words you understand.

However, sometimes you may overhear two doctors talking, or see a sign on the wall, or hear or see a new word or abbreviation. Here is a list of some of the terms we often use around the hospital.

If Phoenix Children's Hospital has a handout that explains the term in more detail, you will see the handout number after the definition. If you want to learn more, ask your nurse or doctor for that handout.

Apnea monitor A machine that can tell when breathing or heart rate slows or stops. It measures this by a belt that is placed around the chest. Usually used with babies.

Art line Arterial line. An IV that goes into an artery. It monitors blood pressure and can be used for blood draws.

Barium swallow study A test used to see how the patient swallows food and liquids.

BID	Two times a day.
Bilirubin or bili	Made from the breakdown of red blood cells.
Bronchopulmonary dysplasia or BPD	Changes in a baby's lungs after severe respiratory distress in premature infants who have been treated with oxygen and mechanical ventilation.
Continuous Positive Airway Pressure or CPAP	Low pressure helps keep the air sacs in the lungs open and makes it easier to breathe. The breathing is done by the patient only.
Central line	An IV that goes into a large blood vessel near the heart.
Chest physiotherapy or CPT	Done by a respiratory therapist. A way to loosen mucus from the lungs by clapping on the chest wall.
Culture	A sample of blood or other body fluids tested for germs. Results usually take 1 to 4 days.
CT scan	Computerized tomography. A special x-ray test. #93
Echo	Echocardiogram. A test that uses sound waves to see the heart and its big arteries and veins. #513
EEG	Electroencephalogram. A test to see the patterns of the electrical waves in the brain. #297
EKG	Electrocardiogram. A test to see the electrical patterns of the heart. #511
Endotracheal tube or ET tube	A plastic tube that helps with breathing. The tube is put into the airway. The tube can be used to put oxygen into the lungs, to remove fluid and mucus from the lungs, or to help with breathing. When this tube is in, your child will not be able to speak or make noise.

GI or GI Tract	Gastrointestinal tract. The tube in the body that runs from the mouth, down the esophagus, to the stomach, small intestine, large intestine, and rectum.
Heparin lock or Heplock	The medicine heparin is put into it to keep the blood from clotting in the tube, so the IV can be used again.
HS	Hour of sleep. At bedtime.
Hyperal	Hyperalimentation. Nutrition given by IV. Food through the vein. Also called TPN (Total Parenteral Nutrition).
I & O	Intake and output. The measure of the fluid that goes into the body, and the fluid that comes out.
Incubator or Isolette	A type of enclosed bed for an infant who cannot maintain his or her temperature in an open bed.
IV	Intravenous, which means into a vein. A small plastic tube that goes into the vein. It can be connected to tubing that lets fluid run into the bloodstream. #107
IV pump	The machine that measures and controls the amount of fluid that goes through an IV. Also called an infusion pump or syringe pump.
Jaundice	A yellow color of the skin caused by too much bilirubin in the blood.
LP	Lumbar puncture or spinal tap. A test where a little fluid is taken from around the spine to check for disease. #178
Modified barium swallow study	A test used to see how the patient swallows food and liquids. #1043
Magnetic resonance imaging or MRI	A test that uses magnetic waves to see inside the body. #94

Nasogastric tube or NG tube	A small plastic tube that goes through the nose and into the stomach. It can be used to give liquid foods or to take out extra fluids or air. #62
NIPPV	Non-invasive positive pressure ventilation.
Necrotizing enterocolitis or NEC	A serious illness that affects the bowel wall.
NPO	Nothing by mouth. (Not allowed to eat or drink.)
O₂	Oxygen
Oscillator ventilator	A highly specialized breathing machine.
Patent ductus arteriosus or PDA	A heart condition where the blood vessel that connects the aorta (the main artery of the body) and the pulmonary artery (the artery that brings blood to the lungs) does not close as it should after birth.
Pneumonia	An infection of the lungs. It makes fluid or pus collect in the lungs. May be caused by bacteria, viruses, chemicals, food or fluids. #170
Pneumothorax	Air between the outer lining of the lung and the chest wall which causes the lung to collapse.
Premature infant	An infant born before the 37th week of pregnancy.
PO	By mouth.
PRN	As needed.
Pulse oximeter or pulse ox	A machine that measures the amount of oxygen in the blood from the skin.

QD	Every day.
QID	Four times a day.
Radiant warmer	An open bed with an overhead warmer that helps keep a baby warm.
Retinopathy of Prematurity or ROP	A disease that causes abnormal blood vessel growth in the retina the eye. Can lead to blindness.
Respiratory distress syndrome or RDS	A condition in a newborn that causes breathing problems. It is caused by a low supply of a chemical in the lungs (surfactant) that helps open the small air sacs in the lungs.
Sepsis	An infection in the blood or through the body. It can be caused by many different germs. #350
Spinal tap	Spinal tap or lumbar puncture. A test where a little fluid is taken from around the spine, to check for disease. Also called lumbar puncture. #178
STAT	Now, right away, urgent.
Small volume nebulizer or SVN	A machine that turns liquid medicine into a fine mist, so you can breathe it into the lungs. #31
TID	Three times a day.
Total Parenteral or TPN	Nutrition given by IV. Food through the vein. Also called Hyperalimentation.
Tracheostomy or trach	A small hole placed into a child's neck, by surgery, to help breathing. It can also make it easier to take extra fluids from the lungs. A tracheostomy tube or trach tube is placed in the patient's tracheostomy hole. #829

Transcutaneous monitor or TCM	A monitoring device placed on the skin to record blood oxygen levels.
Tachypnea	Fast breathing.
UGI	Upper gastrointestinal radiography. A test that uses x-rays to see how the GI tract is working. #12
Ultrasound or US	A test that uses sound waves to see inside the body.
Umbilical line	A thin, plastic tube placed in the vein or artery in the belly button. It is used to check blood samples, monitor blood pressure, and give medicines.
Vital signs	Measurements of temperature, heart rate, breathing rate, and blood pressure.
Ventilator	A life support machine that helps a child breathe by putting oxygen into the lungs. It is attached to an endotracheal tube (ET). It is used to help breathing or do all the breathing for your child.

If you see or hear other words you don't understand, write them down. Then ask your nurse or doctor what they mean, and write the meanings next to them.



If you have any questions or concerns,
☐ call your child's doctor or ☐ call _____

If you want to know more about child health and illness,
visit our library at The Emily Center at Phoenix Children's Hospital
1919 East Thomas Road
Phoenix, AZ 85016
602-933-1400
866-933-6459
www.phoenixchildrens.org
www.theemilycenter.org
Facebook: facebook.com/theemilycenter
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Disclaimer

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June 1, 2016 • DRAFT in family review
#563 • Written by The Parents' Advisory Council

What does that mean?

Medical terms you may hear or see

Name of Health Care Provider: _____

Date returned: _____ ☐ db

Family Review of Handout

Health care providers: Please teach families with this handout.

Families: Please let us know what you think of this handout.

Would you say this handout is hard to read? ☐ Yes ☐ No

easy to read? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Please circle the parts of the handout that were hard to understand.

Would you say this handout is interesting to read? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Why or why not?

Would you do anything differently after reading
this handout? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, what?

After reading this handout, do you have any
questions about the subject? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, what?

Is there anything you don't like about the drawings?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, what?

What changes would you make in this handout to make it better or easier to understand?

Please return your review of this handout to your nurse or doctor or send it to the address below.

The Emily Center
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Phoenix Children's Hospital
1919 East Thomas Road
Phoenix, AZ 85016-7710

602-933-1395

Thank you for helping us!