

# English for Nurses and Medical Professionals



Patients come in all different shapes and sizes. They also speak many different languages. Whether you are working abroad or at home, there will come a time when you will need to rely on English to communicate. These pages can help nurses, doctors, pharmacists, paramedics, receptionists, specialists or even those who volunteer. They will help you learn some basic English expressions and vocabulary related to the medical field. By studying and practising Medical English, you will be able to make your patients feel more comfortable, and have a better understanding of their needs. You will also learn how to talk to their loved ones and communicate with other medical staff who speak English. Do the exercises and take the quizzes to test your knowledge and understanding.

## Vocabulary

<b>Word</b> <i>part of speech</i>	<b>Meaning</b>	<b>Example sentence</b>
<b>abnormal</b> <i>adj</i>	not normal for the human body	This amount of weight loss is <b>abnormal</b> for women your age.
<b>ache</b> <i>noun/verb</i>	pain that won't go away	I can't sleep because my knees <b>ache</b> in the night.
<b>acute</b> <i>adj</i>	quick to become severe/bad	We knew the baby was coming right away because the woman's labour pains were <b>acute</b> .
<b>allergy</b> <i>noun</i> <b>allergic</b> <i>adj</i>	a body's abnormal reaction to certain foods or environmental substances (eg causes a rash)	Your son is extremely <b>allergic</b> to peanuts.

<b>ambulance</b> <i>noun</i>	emergency vehicle that rushes people to a hospital	We called the <b>ambulance</b> when Josh stopped breathing.
<b>amnesia</b> <i>noun</i>	a condition that causes people to lose their memory	I can't remember the accident because I had <b>amnesia</b> .
<b>amputation</b> <i>noun</i> <b>amputate</b> <i>verb</i>	permanent removal of a limb	We had to <b>amputate</b> his leg because the infection spread so quickly.
<b>anaemia</b> <i>noun</i> <b>anaemic</b> <i>adj</i>	occurs when the body doesn't have enough red blood cells	I have low energy because I am <b>anaemic</b> .
<b>antibiotics</b> <i>noun</i>	medication that kills bacteria and cures infections	My throat infection went away after I started the <b>antibiotics</b> .
<b>anti-depressant</b> <i>noun</i>	medication that helps relieve anxiety and sadness	The <b>anti-depressants</b> helped me get on with life after Lucy died.
<b>appointment</b> <i>noun</i>	a scheduled meeting with a medical professional	I've made you an <b>appointment</b> with a specialist in three week's time.
<b>arthritis</b> <i>noun</i>	a disease that causes the joints to become swollen and crippled	My grandmother can't knit anymore because the <b>arthritis</b> in her hands is so bad.
<b>asthma (attack)</b> <i>noun</i>	a condition that causes a blockage of the airway and makes it difficult for a person to breathe	I carry an inhaler when I run because I have <b>asthma</b> .
<b>bacteria</b> <i>noun</i>	a disease-causing organism	To prevent the spread of <b>bacteria</b> it is important that nurses wash their hands often.
<b>bedsore</b>	wounds that develop on a	If you don't get up and take

<i>noun</i>	patient's body from lying in one place for too long	a walk, you will develop painful <b>bedsores</b> .
<b>benign</b> <i>adj</i>	not harmful (not cancerous)	We're hoping that the tests will show that the lump in your breast is <b>benign</b> .
<b>biopsy</b> <i>noun</i>	removal of human tissue in order to conduct certain medical tests	The <b>biopsy</b> ruled out a number of illnesses.
<b>blood count</b> <i>noun</i>	the amount of red and white blood cells a person has	You will be happy to know that your <b>blood count</b> is almost back to normal.
<b>blood donor</b> <i>noun</i>	a person who gives blood to a blood bank or other person	<b>Blood donors</b> have to answer questions about their medical history.
<b>blood pressure</b> <i>noun</i>	the rate at which blood flows through the body (high/low)	High <b>blood pressure</b> puts you at risk of having a heart attack.
<b>brace</b> <i>noun</i>	a device that holds injured body parts in place	You will probably always have to wear a <b>brace</b> on your ankle when you jog.
<b>breech</b> <i>adj</i>	position of an unborn baby in which the feet are down and the head is up	We thought it was going to be a <b>breech</b> birth, but the baby turned himself around.
<b>broken</b> <i>adj</i>	a bone that is divided in two or more pieces as a result of an injury	We thought it was just a sprain, but it turned out his leg was <b>broken</b> .
<b>bruise</b> <i>noun</i> <b>bruised</b> <i>adj</i>	injured body tissue that is visible underneath the skin	The woman was badly <b>bruised</b> when she came into the emergency room.
<b>Caesarean section, C-section</b> <i>noun</i>	procedure that involves removing a baby from its mother through an incision in the woman's lower abdomen	The baby was so large that we had to perform a <b>Caesarean section</b> .

<b>cancer</b> <i>noun</i>	disease caused by the uncontrollable growth of cells	There are many different options when it comes to treating <b>cancer</b> .
<b>cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR)</b> <i>noun</i>	restoring a person's breath and circulation	You saved your brother's life by performing <b>CPR</b> .
<b>cast</b> <i>noun</i>	a hard bandage that is wrapped around a broken bone to keep it in place	My leg was in a <b>cast</b> for graduation.
<b>chapel, chapeline</b> <i>noun</i>	a place where loved ones can go to pray for a patient's recovery; a priest who visits patients in the hospital	If you want a place to pray, the <b>chapel</b> is on the third floor.
<b>chemotherapy</b> <i>noun</i>	type of treatment used on cancer patients	My mother has already had three rounds of <b>chemotherapy</b> .
<b>chickenpox</b> <i>noun</i>	a virus commonly contracted by children, characterized by itchy spots all over the body	It is best to get <b>chickenpox</b> as a child so that you don't get it worse as an adult.
<b>coroner</b> <i>noun</i>	a person who determines the cause of death after a person dies	We only call the <b>coroner</b> if we think a death is suspicious.
<b>critical condition</b> <i>noun</i>	requiring immediate and constant medical attention	You can't see her right now; she's in <b>critical condition</b> .
<b>crutches</b> <i>noun</i>	objects that people with injured legs or feet use to help them walk	I'd rather hop on one foot than use <b>crutches</b> .
<b>cyst</b> <i>noun</i>	a sac in the body-tissue filled with fluid (sometimes diseased)	We're going to remove the <b>cysts</b> just to be on the safe side.
<b>deaf</b> <i>adj</i>	unable to hear	The accident left the patient both <b>deaf</b> and blind.

<b>deficiency</b> <i>noun</i>	a lack of something necessary for one's health	The tests show that you have an iron <b>deficiency</b> .
<b>dehydrated</b> <i>adj</i>	in need of water	It is easy for the elderly to become <b>dehydrated</b> in this heat.
<b>dementia</b> <i>noun</i>	loss of mental capacity	It is hard to watch a loved one suffering with <b>dementia</b> .
<b>diabetes</b> <i>noun</i>	type of disease typically involving insulin deficiency	People with <b>diabetes</b> have to constantly check their blood sugar levels.
<b>diagnosis</b> <i>noun</i>	medical explanation of an illness or condition	The doctor would prefer to share the <b>diagnosis</b> with the patient himself.
<b>discomfort</b> <i>noun</i>	experiencing pain	This pain medication should relieve some of your <b>discomfort</b> .
<b>disease</b> <i>noun</i>	a medical disorder that is harmful to a person's health	I understand that this <b>disease</b> runs in your family.
<b>dislocated</b> <i>adj</i>	when a bone is temporarily separated from its joint	You will have to wear a sling because of your <b>dislocated</b> shoulder.
<b>emergency</b> <i>noun</i>	a medical problem that needs immediate attention	It is important that children know which number to dial in case of an <b>emergency</b> .
<b>ER (emergency room)</b> <i>noun</i>	the hospital room used for treating patients with immediate and life-threatening injuries	The child was rushed into the <b>ER</b> after he had a severe allergic reaction to a bee sting.
<b>external</b> <i>adj</i>	on the outside	This cream is for <b>external</b> use only. Do not get it near your ears, eyes, or mouth.

<b>false negative</b> <i>noun</i> <i>adj</i>	a test that incorrectly comes back negative	We had two <b>false negative</b> pregnancy tests, so we didn't know we were having a baby.
<b>family history</b> <i>noun</i>	medical background of a person's family members	The doctor was concerned about my <b>family history</b> of skin cancer.
<b>fatal</b> <i>adj</i>	causing death	The doctor made a <b>fatal</b> error when he wrote the wrong prescription.
<b>fever</b> <i>noun</i> <b>feverish</b> <i>adj</i>	higher than normal body temperature	He is very <b>feverish</b> , and his temperature is near danger point.
<b>flu (influenza)</b> <i>noun</i>	many types of respiratory or intestinal infections passed on through a virus	People who have the <b>flu</b> should not visit hospital patients.
<b>fracture</b> <i>noun</i> <b>fractured</b> <i>adj</i>	broken or cracked bone	Your wrist is <b>fractured</b> and needs a cast.
<b>germ</b> <i>noun</i>	a micro-organism, especially one that causes disease	Flowers are not allowed in the ward to avoid the risk of <b>germs</b> being brought in.
<b>genetic</b> <i>adj</i>	a medical condition or physical feature that is passed on in the family	The disease is part <b>genetic</b> and part environmental.
<b>growth</b> <i>noun</i>	a ball of tissue that grows bigger than normal, either on or under the skin	That <b>growth</b> on your shoulder is starting to worry me.
<b>heart attack</b> <i>noun</i>	instance in which blood stops pumping through the heart	People who smoke are at greater risk of having a <b>heart attack</b> .
<b>HIV</b> <i>noun</i>	the virus that infects the human T-cells and leads to AIDS	<b>HIV</b> can be passed down from the mother to her fetus.

<b>hives</b> <i>noun</i>	bumps that appear on the surface of the skin during an allergic reaction	I broke out in <b>hives</b> after I ate that potato casserole.
<b>illness</b> <i>noun</i> <b>ill</b> <i>adj</i>	general term for any condition that makes a person feel sick for a certain period of time	Her <b>illness</b> went away when she started eating better.
<b>immune system</b> <i>noun</i>	the parts of the body that fight diseases, infections, and viruses	You can't have visitors because your <b>immune system</b> is low.
<b>immunization</b> <i>noun</i> <b>immunize</b> <i>verb</i>	an injection that protects against a specific disease	Babies are <b>immunized</b> three times in their first year.
<b>incision</b> <i>noun</i>	cut in the body made during surgery	I had to have stitches to close the <b>incision</b> .
<b>inconclusive</b> <i>adj</i>	unclear	We have to do more x-rays because the first ones were <b>inconclusive</b> .
<b>infant</b> <i>noun</i>	young baby	The nurse will demonstrate how to bathe an <b>infant</b> .
<b>infection</b> <i>noun</i> <b>infected</b> <i>adj</i>	diseased area of the body (viral or bacterial)	The wound should be covered when you swim to prevent it from becoming <b>infected</b> .
<b>inflamed</b> <i>adj</i>	appearance (red and swollen) of an injured body part	My right ankle was so <b>inflamed</b> it was twice the size of my left one.
<b>injury</b> <i>noun</i>	damage to the body	Her <b>injuries</b> were minor; just a few cuts and bruises.
<b>intensive care unit (ICU)</b> <i>noun</i>	section of the hospital where patients get constant attention and doctors rely on specialized equipment	She will remain in the ICU until she can breathe on her own.
<b>internal</b>	under the skin, inside the	The doctors will be

<i>adj</i>	organs	monitoring her for any <b>internal</b> bleeding.
<b>itchy</b> <i>adj</i>	feeling discomfort on the skin's surface	If you are allergic to this medication your skin will get red and <b>itchy</b> .
<b>IV</b> <i>noun</i>	a tube that pumps liquids and medication into a patient's body	The toddler was so dehydrated that the doctor decided to get him on an <b>IV</b> .
<b>lab results</b> <i>noun</i>	tests that come back from a laboratory and help doctors make a diagnosis	The <b>lab results</b> have come in and you are free to go home.
<b>lab (laboratory)</b> <i>noun</i>	place where samples of blood/urine etc. are taken for testing	I'll take these samples down to the <b>lab</b> on my way out.
<b>life support</b> <i>noun</i>	a machine that keeps patients alive by helping them breathe	The woman has severe brain damage and is currently on <b>life support</b> .
<b>life-threatening</b> <i>adj</i>	when injuries and conditions are extremely serious	The victim was shot in two places but the bullet wounds are not <b>life-threatening</b> .
<b>light-headed</b> <i>adj</i>	feeling of dizziness and being off-balance, caused by lack of oxygen in the brain	If you are feeling <b>light-headed</b> again, lie down and call me.
<b>malignant</b> <i>adj</i>	expected to grow and get much worse (especially related to cancerous cells)	I'm afraid at least one of the tumours is <b>malignant</b> .
<b>medical school (med. school)</b> <i>noun</i>	place where someone trains to be a doctor	After eight years of <b>medical school</b> I can finally practice medicine.
<b>newborn</b> <i>noun</i>	an infant that is less than three months old	You have to support her neck because she is still a <b>newborn</b> .

<b>numb</b> <i>adj</i>	no feeling in a certain body part	The needle will make your lower body feel <b>numb</b> .
<b>OR (operating room)</b> <i>noun</i>	the place where major surgeries and operations take place	You must wear a face mask and gloves while you are in the <b>OR</b> .
<b>operation</b> <i>noun</i> <b>operate on</b> <i>verb</i>	a medical procedure that involves going inside a person's body in an attempt to fix a problem	The <b>operation</b> lasted seven hours, but it was successful.
<b>pain</b> <i>noun</i>	strong discomfort in certain areas of the body	We gave your husband some medicine to relieve some of the <b>pain</b> .
<b>pain killer, pain reliever</b> <i>noun</i>	type of medicine that takes away some or all of the discomfort of an illness or injury	You can take two <b>pain killers</b> every four hours.
<b>paralyzed</b> <i>adj</i>	unable to move certain areas of the body	We thought her legs were <b>paralyzed</b> for life, but she is learning how to walk.
<b>patient</b> <i>noun</i>	a person staying in a hospital or medical facility	The <b>patients</b> in Room 4 are not getting along.
<b>pharmacist</b> <i>noun</i>	a person who fills a doctor's prescription and gives people advice about medication	Ask the <b>pharmacist</b> if there is a generic brand of this medication.
<b>pharmacy, drugstore</b> <i>noun</i>	a place where people go to buy medication and other medical supplies	You should be able to buy a bandage at the <b>pharmacy</b> .
<b>physician</b> <i>noun</i>	doctor	Ask your family <b>physician</b> to refer you to a specialist.
<b>poison</b> <i>noun</i> <b>poisonous</b> <i>adj</i>	a substance that is very dangerous if it enters the human body	The child was bitten by a <b>poisonous</b> snake.
<b>prenatal</b>	of the time period leading up	The woman was well

<i>adj</i>	to giving birth	prepared for labour because she took the <b>prenatal</b> classes.
<b>prescription</b> <i>noun</i> <b>prescribe</b> <i>verb</i>	the correct amount and type of medication needed to cure an illness or relieve symptoms	You will need to visit your doctor to get another <b>prescription</b> .
<b>privacy</b> <i>noun</i> <b>private</b> <i>adj</i>	being alone; personal (eg test results)	You will have to pay for a <b>private</b> hospital room if you don't want a room-mate.
<b>radiation</b> <i>noun</i>	high energy X-rays that destroy cancer cells	If the <b>radiation</b> doesn't kill all of the abnormal cells, the cancer will come back.
<b>residency</b> <b>resident</b> <i>noun</i>	part of a doctor's training that takes place in the hospital; a student working under a doctor	John is a <b>resident</b> under Dr Brown.
<b>routine check-up</b> <i>noun</i>	a doctor's appointment to check a person's general health	I'd like to see you a year from now for a <b>routine check-up</b> .
<b>scrubs</b> <i>noun</i>	plain uniform (usually green, white, or blue) worn by medical professionals	I have some extra <b>scrubs</b> in my locker.
<b>scrub up</b> <i>verb</i>	carefully wash hands before and after seeing a patient	I have to <b>scrub up</b> and get ready for surgery.
<b>second opinion</b> <i>noun</i>	input from a second doctor about an illness or symptom	I went to another doctor to get a <b>second opinion</b> about these headaches.
<b>seizure</b> <i>noun</i>	sudden violent movements or unconsciousness caused by electrical signal malfunction in the brain	People who suffer from epilepsy are prone to <b>seizures</b> .
<b>shock</b> <i>noun</i>	body not getting enough blood flow	The woman was in <b>shock</b> after being pulled from the

		river.
<b>side effects</b> <i>noun</i>	other symptoms that might occur as a result of a certain medication or procedure	One of the <b>side effects</b> of antidepressants is a loss of appetite.
<b>sore</b> <i>adj</i>	painful	I have a <b>sore</b> throat and a runny nose.
<b>spasm</b> <i>noun</i>	the uncontrollable tightening of a muscle	Ever since I injured my leg I've been having muscle <b>spasms</b> in my upper thigh.
<b>specialist</b> <i>noun</i>	a doctor that is an expert in a certain kind of medicine	My family doctor is sending me to a <b>specialist</b> .
<b>sprain</b> <i>noun/verb</i>	an injury (less serious than a break) to a joint (ankle, wrist, knee etc)	I <b>sprained</b> my knee playing soccer.
<b>stable condition</b> <i>noun</i>	a patient is stable if their medical condition is no longer changing rapidly	You can see your husband now; he is in a <b>stable condition</b> .
<b>sting</b> <i>noun/verb</i>	sharp, temporary pain	It may <b>sting</b> when I insert the needle.
<b>stress</b> <i>noun</i> <b>stressed</b> <i>adj</i>	worry that causes muscles to tighten and blood pressure to rise	You need to take some time off work and relieve some of your <b>stress</b> .
<b>swelling</b> <i>noun</i> <b>swollen</b> <i>adj</i>	ligaments (parts that hold the joints together) growing bigger and rounder after an injury to a joint	I knew my ankle was sprained because it was so <b>swollen</b> .
<b>symptoms</b> <i>noun</i>	pain or physical changes that occur because of an illness or disease	You have all of the <b>symptoms</b> of a diabetic.
<b>temperature</b> <i>noun</i>	amount of heat measured in a body; higher than normal temperature	We brought Jesse to emergency because he was running a (high) <b>temperature</b> .

<b>tender</b> <i>adj</i>	painful when touched or used	The incision was <b>tender</b> after the surgery.
<b>test results</b> <i>noun</i>	medical information that helps doctors understand a patient's condition or body	The <b>test results</b> came back negative. You aren't pregnant.
<b>therapy</b> <i>noun</i>	treatment aimed at improving a person's mental or physical condition	I was able to go back to work a few weeks after starting the <b>therapy</b> .
<b>transplant</b> <i>noun</i>	moving of an organ from one human to another	The heart <b>transplant</b> saved your life.
<b>ultrasound</b> <i>noun</i>	a test that examines the body's internal organs and processes using sound waves (often used during pregnancies)	The <b>ultrasound</b> shows that we are expecting a baby boy.
<b>umbilical cord</b> <i>noun</i>	the lifeline from the mother to the fetus (when cut at birth this forms the belly button)	I had an emergency C-section because the <b>umbilical cord</b> was wrapped around the baby's neck.
<b>unconscious</b> <i>adj</i>	alive, but appearing to be asleep and unaware of the surroundings	I hit my head on the steering wheel and was still <b>unconscious</b> when the ambulance arrived.
<b>urine sample</b> <i>noun</i>	a small amount of the body's liquid waste that is tested for different medical reasons	The <b>urine sample</b> tells us how much alcohol is in your blood.
<b>vein</b> <i>noun</i>	the thin tubes that transport blood around the body and back to the heart	I'm just looking for the best <b>vein</b> in which to insert the needle.
<b>virus</b> <i>noun</i>	a dangerous organism that causes the spread of minor and major diseases	The <b>virus</b> is contractable through the exchange of bodily fluids.
<b>visiting hours</b> <i>noun</i>	time of day when friends and family are allowed to visit	I'm afraid you'll have to come back during <b>visiting</b>

	patients in hospital	<b>hours.</b>
<b>vomit</b> <i>noun/verb</i>	discharge of a person stomach contents through the mouth	The pregnant woman can't stop <b>vomiting</b> .
<b>ward</b> <i>noun</i>	a section of a hospital or health facility where patients stay	I should warn you that we're entering the mental health <b>ward</b> .
<b>wheelchair</b> <i>noun</i>	a chair on wheels used for transporting patients from place to place	If you get in the <b>wheelchair</b> I'll take you down to see the garden.
<b>wound</b> <i>noun</i> <b>wounded</b> <i>adj</i>	injury to body ("flesh wound" means not deep)	The <b>wounded</b> soldiers are being airlifted to the hospital.
<b>x-ray</b> <i>noun/verb</i>	a photograph of a person's bones and organs	The technician took <b>x-rays</b> of my shoulder to make sure it wasn't broken.