

Correct pronunciation builds professional credibility and reduces miscommunication. Stress marks: **bold syllable** = primary stress. Phonetic respelling is shown in parentheses.

## Pronunciation Rules for Common Letter Combinations

Letter / Pattern	Pronunciation Rule	Example
ae, oe	Pronounced 'ee'	anaemia → ah-NEE-mee-ah
c before e, i, y	Soft 'S' sound	cecum → SEE-kum
c before a, o, u	Hard 'K' sound	cardiac → KAR-dee-ak
ch	Usually 'K'	cholesterol → koh-LES-ter-ol
g before e, i, y	Soft 'J' sound	gingivitis → jin-jih-VY-tis
g before a, o, u	Hard 'G' sound	gastric → GAS-trik
gn (beginning)	Silent 'G'; say 'N'	gnathic → NAY-thik
mn (beginning)	Silent 'M'; say 'N'	mnemonics → nee-MON-iks
pn (beginning)	Silent 'P'; say 'N'	pneumonia → noo-MOH-nee-ah
ps (beginning)	Silent 'P'; say 'S'	psychology → sy-KOL-oh-jee
pt (beginning)	Silent 'P'; say 'T'	ptosis → TOH-sis
rh (beginning)	Silent 'H'; say 'R'	rhinitis → ry-NY-tis
x (beginning)	Pronounced 'Z'	xanthoma → zan-THO-mah
eu	'Yoo' sound	eupnea → YOOP-nee-ah
ph	Pronounced 'F'	pharynx → FAIR-inks
i (end of plural)	Pronounced 'eye'	bronchi → BRON-ky
es (end of plural)	Pronounced 'eez'	nares → NAIR-eez
ices (end of plural)	Pronounced 'ih-seez'	apices → AY-pih-seez
-itis	Pronounced 'EYE-tis'	appendicitis → ah-pen-dih-SY-tis
-osis	Pronounced 'OH-sis'	fibrosis → fy-BROH-sis
-ology	Pronounced 'OL-oh-jee'	cardiology → kar-dee-OL-oh-jee

## Commonly Mispronounced Medical Terms

Term	Incorrect	Correct Pronunciation	Meaning
Auscultation	aw-skul-TAY-shun ✗	aw-skul-TAY-shun ✓	Listening (with stethoscope)
Dysphagia	dis-FAY-jah ✗	dis-FAY-jee-ah ✓	Difficulty swallowing
Dyspnea	DISP-nee-ah ✗	DISP-nee-ah / disp-NEE-ah ✓	Difficulty breathing
Eczema	EK-zee-mah ✗	EK-zeh-mah ✓	Inflammatory skin condition
Epistaxis	ep-ih-STAKS ✗	ep-ih-STAK-sis ✓	Nosebleed
Hemorrhage	HEM-or-ij ✗	HEM-or-ij ✓ (both ok)	Bleeding / blood loss
Homeostasis	hoh-mee-oh-STA-sis ✗	hoh-mee-oh-STAY-sis ✓	Physiological balance

Term	Incorrect	Correct Pronunciation	Meaning
Hypertrophy	hy-PER-troh-fee ✗	hy-PER-troh-fee ✓	Organ/tissue enlargement
Ischemia	is-KEEM-ee-ah ✗	is-KEE-mee-ah ✓	Inadequate blood supply
Myocardial	my-oh-KAR-dee-ul ✗	my-oh-KAR-dee-al ✓	Pertaining to heart muscle
Ophthalmology	op-THAL-mol-oh-jee ✗	op-thal-MOL-oh-jee ✓	Study of the eye
Orthopnea	or-THOP-nee-ah ✗	or-THOP-nee-ah ✓	Breathing difficulty lying flat
Phlebotomy	fleh-BOT-oh-mee ✗	fleh-BOT-oh-mee ✓	Drawing blood from a vein
Psoriasis	psor-EE-ah-sis ✗	soh-RY-ah-sis ✓	Chronic skin condition
Ptosis	TOH-sis ✗ (extra syllable)	TOH-sis ✓	Drooping of the eyelid
Sciatica	SY-ah-tik-ah ✗	sy-AT-ih-kah ✓	Sciatic nerve pain
Trachea	TRA-chee-ah ✗	TRAY-kee-ah ✓	Windpipe
Xiphoid	ZY-foyd ✓	ZI-foyd (also accepted)	Lowest portion of sternum

## Plural Forms — How to Say Them

Singular Ending	Plural Ending	Example Singular → Plural
-a	-ae	vertebra → VER-teh-bree
-ax	-aces	thorax → thoraces (THOR-ah-seez)
-ex, -ix	-ices	apex → apices (AY-pih-seez)
-is	-es	diagnosis → diagnoses (dy-ag-NOH-seez)
-itis	-itides	arthritis → arthritides (ar-THRIT-ih-deez)
-ma	-mata or -mas	carcinoma → carcinomata
-nx	-nges	pharynx → pharynges (fah-RIN-jeez)
-on	-a	criterion → criteria
-um	-a	bacterium → bacteria (bak-TEER-ee-ah)
-us	-i	bronchus → bronchi (BRON-ky)
-x	-ges or -ces	appendix → appendices
-y	-ies	deformity → deformities

## Tips for Mastering Pronunciation

1. Say the word slowly syllable-by-syllable, then speed up gradually.
2. Use flashcards with phonetic spelling on the back.
3. Listen to medical podcasts or videos — hearing terms in context is invaluable.
4. Practice with a partner: one reads the term, the other spells it.
5. Record yourself and compare to audio dictionaries (Merriam-Webster Medical, MedlinePlus).
6. Focus on roots — if you know 'cardi/o' sounds like KAR-dee-oh, most cardio- terms follow.
7. Remember: Latin/Greek loan words often have silent opening letters (pt-, pn-, ps-, mn-).