Pharmacology and general medical terminology.

- **Absorption:** The first stage of pharmacokinetics: medications enter the body and travel from site of administration into the body's circulation.
- **Absorption rate** – The time it takes a drug to enter the bloodstream after it is administered
- **AC** – (prescription) – ante cibum - Before a meal
- **Admixture** – Two or more drugs blended or mixed to create a desired substance or solution.
- **Adverse reaction** – An undesired or negative response to a medication or drug-drug interaction.
- **Agonist** – A drug that triggers a receptor to produce a physiologic response.
- **Ampule** – A small sealed glass vial that is to be broken open for use. It usually contains injection solution
- **Analgesic** – Drugs used to reduce or suppress pain. Some of the drugs in this class include acetaminophen, aspirin, ibuprofen and morphine.
- **Antibiotic/antibacterial** – Sometimes used interchangeably because they are used for similar purposes.
- **Aqueous** – When something is or is to be water based
- **Anaphylactic shock/anaphylaxis** – A patient's extreme reaction to something he or she is severely allergic to

Anesthetic – A drug that causes anesthesia. Anesthesia is a short-term and reversible loss of consciousness.

Adverse Effect: An unintended and potentially dangerous pharmacological effect that occurs when a medication is administered correctly.

Affinity: The strength of binding between drug and receptor.

Agonist: A drug that binds to a "receptor" and produces an effect.

Antagonist: A molecule that prevents the action of other molecules, often by competing for a cellular receptor; opposite of agonist.

BID – (prescription) – Twice a day

Bioavailability: The presence of a drug in the blood stream after it is administered.

Blood-Brain Barrier: A nearly impenetrable barricade that is built from a tightly woven mesh of capillaries cemented together to protect the brain from potentially dangerous substances such as poisons or viruses.

Distribution: The second stage of pharmacokinetics; the process by which medication is distributed throughout the body.

Dose/dosage – The specified amount and quantity of the drug to be taken at one time.

Dose-Response: As the dose of a drug increases, the response should also increase. The slope of the curve is characteristic of the particular drug-receptor interaction.

Duration: The length of time that a medication is producing its desired therapeutic effect.

Elimination – Occurs when the body removes waste. In pharmacokinetics, this is the last step in the study process.

Elixir – A solution that is taken orally and contains one or more active drugs. It is usually alcoholic and sweetened.

Efficacy: The maximum effect of which the drug is capable.

Excretion: The final stage of pharmacokinetics; the process whereby drug byproducts and metabolites are eliminated from the body.

First Pass Effect: The inactivation of orally or enterally administered drugs in the liver and intestines.

Half-life – The amount of time it takes for half of the drug to be eliminated from the body.

Hypnotics – Drugs that slow the central nervous system to reduce anxiety and induce sleep.

IM – (prescription) – Intramuscular.

Inert ingredients – Filler or non-drug ingredients in medication which are inactive.

IV – (prescription) – Intravenous.

Laxative – Normally prescribed for mild constipation, it is a substance that promotes bowel movement

Narcotics – Drugs that induce various stages of narcosis to dull the senses. They are typically used to treat pain

NS – Normal saline, a solution of 0.9% concentration of sodium chloride in sterile water

Parenteral – Drugs administered directly, and not through the intestinal tract

PC – (prescription) – After a meal

Placebo – Commonly referred to as a sugar pill. A placebo contains no medicine, but the patient thinks it does, and results may occur because of this belief. Placebos are mostly used in clinical trials to experiment with groups of people in double-blind studies.

Prescription – An order, usually from a doctor, for the preparation and administration of a medicine

Psychotropic – Drugs that have a psychological effect.

Mechanism of Action: How a medication works at a cellular level within the body.

Metabolism: The breakdown of a drug molecule via enzymes in the liver (primarily) or intestines (secondarily).

Onset: When a medication first begins to work and exerts a therapeutic effect.

Peak: When the maximum concentration of a drug is in the bloodstream.

Pharmacodynamics: The study of how drugs act at target sites of action in the body.

Pharmacogenetics: The study of how a person's genetic make-up affects their response to medicines.

Pharmacokinetics: The study of how the body absorbs, distributes, metabolizes, and eliminates drugs.

Pharmacology: The science dealing with actions of drugs on the body.

Pharmacy: The science of the preparation of drugs.

Potency: The drug dose required to produce a specific intensity of effect.

Selectivity: A "selective" drug binds to a primary and predictable site creating one desired effect. A "non-selective" drug can bind to many different and unpredictable receptor sites with potential side effects.

Side Effect: Effect of a drug, other than the desired effect, sometimes in an organ other than the target organ.

Therapeutic Index: A quantitative measurement of the relative safety of a drug that compares the amount of drug that produces a therapeutic effect versus the amount of drug that produces a toxic effect. Medication with a large therapeutic index is safer than a medication with a small therapeutic index.

Therapeutic Window: The dosing window in which the safest and most effective treatment will occur.

Anticoagulant – Drugs used to decrease or prevent the formation of blood clots.

Anticonvulsant – Drugs used to help prevent seizures or to lessen the severity of a seizure.

Antiemetic – Drugs used to prevent, alleviate or suppress nausea and vomiting.

Antihistamine – Drugs used to counteract the immune system's histamine reaction to allergy or respiratory illness.

Antineoplastic – Drugs prescribed to slow the growth of malignant tumors.

Antipyretic – Drugs used to prevent or reduce fever

Antispasmodic – Drugs used to relieve or prevent muscle spasms.

Antitussive – Drugs used to suppress or relieve coughing