

Current medical knowledge and technology make it possible to cure, control, or prevent hundreds of diseases. Illnesses, such as tetanus and polio, that once disabled or killed people now can be prevented by vaccination. New methods of diagnosing illness, such as computerized x-rays and sound-wave pictures of different parts of the body, permit early detection of disease. The efforts of laboratory scientists and doctors lead daily to possible cures for serious illnesses.

The words in this lesson will help you to understand the medical advances that are reported in newspapers and magazines and on television. These words may also help you to appreciate the combination of art and science that enables us to lead longer and healthier lives.

## WORD LIST

capillary  
 enervate  
 epidemic  
 epidermis  
 infirmity  
 malady  
 nutrient  
 pallor  
 susceptible  
 virulent

## DEFINITIONS

After you have studied the definitions and example for each vocabulary word, write the word on the line to the right.

1. **capillary** (kăp'ə-lēr'ē) *noun* Any of the tiny blood vessels that connect the smallest arteries to the smallest veins. *adjective* Of or like a capillary. (From the Latin word *capillus*, meaning "hair")

**Example** When you cut your finger, the walls of the *capillaries* contract to help stop the bleeding.

2. **enervate** (ĕn'ər-vāt') *trans. verb* To deprive someone of strength or vitality; weaken; sap. (From the Latin *ex-*, meaning "out," and *nerous*, meaning "nerve" or "muscle")

**Related Word** *enervation noun*

**Example** The hot weather *enervated* us, so we decided to take a nap.

3. **epidemic** (ĕp'ĭ-dĕm'ĭk) *noun* **a.** An outbreak of a contagious disease that spreads rapidly. **b.** A rapid spread, growth, or development: *an epidemic of new dance steps.* *adjective* **a.** Spreading rapidly and widely by infection among many individuals in an area. **b.** Widespread. (From the Greek *epi-*, meaning "on," and *dēmos*, meaning "people")

**Related Word** *epidemiology noun*

**Example** *Epidemics* of the Black Plague killed almost one quarter of the population of Europe during the 1300s.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

USAGE NOTE: *Pandemic*, a closely related word, means "an epidemic over an especially wide geographic area."

4. **epidermis** (ĕp'ĭ-dŭr'mĭs) *noun* a. The outer protective layer of skin. b. The outer layer of cells or the protective covering of a plant. (From the Greek *epi-*, meaning "on," and *derma*, meaning "skin")

**Related Word** *epidermal adjective*

**Example** Too much exposure to the sun causes damage to the *epidermis* in the form of sunburn.

5. **infirmity** (ĭn-fŭr'mĭ-tē) *noun* a. A physical disability. b. A lack of power; frailty. (From the Latin *in-*, meaning "not," and *firmus*, meaning "strong")

**Related Words** *infirm adjective; infirmary noun*

**Example** Loss of mobility is an *infirmity* sometimes suffered by accident victims.

6. **malady** (măl'ə-dē) *noun* a. A disease, ailment, or disorder. b. An unwholesome condition: *the malady of discontent*. (From the Latin phrase *male habitus*, meaning "in poor condition")

**Example** Malaria is a *malady* caused by the bite of an infected anopheles mosquito.

7. **nutrient** (nŭo'trē-ənt, nyŭo'trē-ənt) *noun* Something that nourishes, especially an ingredient in food. (From the Latin word *nutrire*, meaning "to feed")

**Related Words** *nutrition noun; nutritious adjective*

**Example** Whole-grain products, such as cereal and bread, provide many important *nutrients*.

8. **pallor** (păl'ər) *noun* Extreme or unnatural paleness. (From the Latin word *pallere*, meaning "to be pale")

**Related Word** *pallid adjective*

**Example** Anemia, a condition that occurs because of a lack of red blood cells, often produces *pallor*.

9. **susceptible** (sə-sĕp'tə-bəl) *adjective* a. Likely to be stricken or infected with or by: *susceptible to illness*. b. Easily influenced or affected; sensitive: *susceptible to flattery*. (From the Latin word *suscipere*, meaning "to receive")

**Related Word** *susceptibility noun*

**Example** Young children and the elderly were particularly *susceptible* to the new virus.

10. **virulent** (vĭr'yə-lənt, vĭr'ə-lənt) *adjective* a. Having a strong tendency to cause harm; very severe; poisonous. b. Intensely irritating, hostile, obnoxious, or harsh: *virulent criticism*. (From the Latin word *virus*, meaning "poison")

**Related Words** *virulence noun; virulently adverb*

**Example** Children are often vaccinated to prevent *virulent* diseases.

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_  
See *malady*.

6. \_\_\_\_\_  
USAGE NOTE: A *malady* is an illness or disorder. An *infirmity* is a physical disability.

7. \_\_\_\_\_

8. \_\_\_\_\_

9. \_\_\_\_\_

10. \_\_\_\_\_