

# GLOSSARY

## Medical Terms Common to Hepatology

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**Abdomen (AB-doh-men):** The area between the chest and the hips. Contains the stomach, small intestine, large intestine, liver, gallbladder, pancreas and spleen.

**Absorption (ub-SORP-shun):** The way nutrients from food move from the small intestine into the cells in the body.

**Acetaminophen (uh-seat-uh-MIN-oh-fin):** An active ingredient in some over-the-counter fever reducers and pain relievers, including Tylenol.

**Acute (uh-CUTE):** A disorder that has a sudden onset.

**Alagille Syndrome (al-uh-GEEL sin-droh-m):** A condition when the liver has less than the normal number of bile ducts. It is associated with other characteristics such as particular facies, abnormal pulmonary artery and abnormal vertebral bodies.

**Alanine Aminotransferase or ALT (AL-ah-noon uh-meen-oh-TRANZ-fur-ayz):** An enzyme produced by hepatocytes, the major cell types in the liver. As cells are damaged, ALT leaks out into the bloodstream. ALT levels above normal may indicate liver damage.

**Albumin (al-BYEW-min):** A protein that is synthesized by the liver and secreted into the blood. Low levels of albumin in the blood may indicate poor liver function.

**Alimentary Canal (al-uh-MEN-tree kuh-NAL):** See Gastrointestinal (GI) Tract.

**Alkaline Phosphatase (AL-kuh-leen FOSS-fuh-tayz):** Proteins or enzymes produced by the liver when bile ducts are blocked.

**Allergy (AL-ur-jee):** A condition in which the body is not able to tolerate or has a reaction to certain foods, animals, plants, or other substances.

**Amino Acids (uh-MEE-noh ASS-udz):** The basic building blocks of proteins. The body makes many amino acids. Others come from food and the body breaks them down for use by cells. See also Protein.

Anemia (uh-NEE-mee-uh): Not enough red blood cells, or hemoglobin (HEE-muh-gloh-bin) in the body. Hemoglobin is a protein in the blood that contains iron.

Angiodysplasia (AN-jee-oh-dis-PLAYZ-ya): Abnormal or enlarged blood vessels.

Angiography (AN-jee-AW-gruh-fee): An x-ray that uses dye to look at blood vessels. It can be used to detect bleeding in the gastrointestinal tract.

Antacids (ant-ASS-idz): Medicines that balance acids and gas in the stomach. Examples are Maalox, Mylanta and Di-Gel.

Antibody (AN-tih-bah-dee): An immune protein molecule that is produced when a foreign body, such as bacteria or a virus, enters the body. A specific antibody is produced to combat each foreign body and its job is to fight infection.

Anti-HBc or Hepatitis B Core Antibody: This antibody forms in response to the hepatitis B core antigen, a protein inside the hepatitis B virus.

Anti-HBe or Hepatitis B e Antibody: This antibody forms in response to the hepatitis B e antigen that forms in some people infected with the hepatitis B virus.

Anti-HBs or Hepatitis B Surface Antibody: This antibody forms in response to the surface protein of the hepatitis B surface antigen (HBsAg).

Anti-HCV or Hepatitis C Antibody: This antibody forms when the hepatitis C virus enters the body. Its presence indicates the person has been or is now infected with the hepatitis C virus, but it doesn't fight the infection.

Antidiarrheals (AN-tee-dy-uh-REE-ulz): Medicines that help control diarrhea. An example is loperamide or Imodium.

Antigen (AN-tih-gin): A substance that the body recognizes as foreign and potentially harmful. A virus protein is considered an antigen.

Antiviral (an-tee-VY-rul): A drug that is capable of killing or stopping the replication of viruses.

Anus (AY-nus): The opening at the end of the digestive tract where bowel contents leave the body.

Ascending Colon (uh-SEND-ing KOH-lun): The part of the colon on the right side of the abdomen.

Ascites (uh-SY-teez): A buildup of fluid in the abdomen.

Aspartate Aminotransferase or AST (uh-SPAR-tayt uh-meen-oh-TRANZ-fur-ayz): An enzyme similar to ALT (see above) but less specific for liver disease. Elevated levels may be an indication of liver damage.

Assay (ASS-ay): A test or analysis.

Asymptomatic (ay-sim-toh-MAT-ik): The condition of having a disease, but without any symptoms of it.

Autoimmune Hepatitis (AW-toh-im-YOON heh-puh-TY-tis): A liver disease caused when the body's immune system destroys liver cells for no known reason.

Barium (BAIR-ee-um): A chalky liquid used to coat the inside of organs so that they will show up on an x-ray.

Barium Enema X-Ray (BAIR-ee-um EN-uh-muh EKS-ray): See Lower GI Series.

Barium (BAIR-ee-um) Meal: See Upper GI Series.

bDNA or Branched DNA Assay: A test that may detect minute quantities of DNA or RNA in the bloodstream.

Bile (BY-ul): Fluid made by the liver and stored in the gallbladder. Bile helps break down fats and gets rid of wastes from the liver.

Bile Acids (BY-ul ASS-idz): Acids made by the liver that work to break down fats.

Bile Ducts (BY-ul dukts): Tubes that carry bile from the liver to the gallbladder for storage and to the small intestine for use in digestion.

Biliary Stricture (BILL-ee-air-ee STRIK-sheer): A narrowing of the biliary tract from scar tissue. The scar tissue may result from injury, disease, pancreatitis, infection or gallstones. See also Stricture.

**Biliary (BILL-ee-air-ee) Tract or System or Tree:** The gallbladder and the bile ducts. Also called biliary system or biliary tree.

**Bilirubin (BILL-ee-ROO-bin):** The substance formed when hemoglobin breaks down. Bilirubin gives bile its color. Bilirubin is normally passed in stool. Too much bilirubin causes jaundice.

**Biochemicals (BUY-oh-KEM-ih-kuls):** Chemicals from which living organisms are made.

**Bioengineering (BUY-oh-in-gin-EAR-ing):** Creating chemicals or drugs that do not naturally occur. Also known as genetic engineering.

**Biopsy (BUY-ohp-see):** A procedure where a small piece of body tissue is removed and examined under a microscope to diagnose a disease or stage of infection.

**Bloodborne (BLUD-born):** Anything in and carried by the blood throughout the body.

**Body Fluids (BAW-dee FLEW-ids):** Liquids from the body such as tears, saliva, blood, breast milk, vaginal fluids or semen.

**Bowel (BAH-wul):** Another word for the small and large intestines.

**Calculi (KAL-kyoo-ly):** Stones or solid lumps such as gallstones.

**Carbohydrates (kar-boh-HY-drayts):** One of the three main classes of food and a source of energy. Carbohydrates are the sugars and starches found in breads, cereals, fruits, and vegetables. During digestion, carbohydrates are changed into a simple sugar called glucose. Glucose is stored in the liver until cells need it for energy.

**Carcinoma (kar-sih-NO-mah):** A tumor involving epithelial cells encased in connective tissue. Carcinomas can occur in almost any tissue.

**Carrier (KEHR-ee-ur):** An individual infected with a virus or organism who is capable of infecting and causing disease in others.

**Catheter (KATH-uh-tur):** A thin, flexible tube that carries fluids into or out of the body.

**Cecum (SEEK-um):** The beginning of the large intestine. The cecum is connected to the lower part of the small intestine, called the ileum.

National Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, or CDC: A United States federal government organization that works to prevent and control communicable diseases, conduct research and provide information about public health issues.

Cholestasis (KOH-lee-STAY-sis): Blocked bile ducts.

Chronic (KRAW-nik): A term that refers to disorders that last a long time, often for years.

Chronic Persistent Hepatitis (KRAW-nik pur-SIS-tint hep-uh-TY-tiss): An individual is chronically infected with a form of hepatitis but remains asymptomatic. However, they are still capable of infecting others.

Cirrhosis (suh-ROH-sis): A chronic liver condition caused by scar tissue and cell damage.

Clinical Trials (KLIN-ih-kul TRY-ulz): Studies conducted on humans to determine the safety and effectiveness of new drugs and treatments.

Colon (KOH-lun): See Large Intestine.

Common Bile Duct (KAH-mun BY-ul dukt): The tube that carries bile from the liver to the small intestine.

Computed Tomography Scan (kom-PYOO-ted tuh-MAW-gruh-fee): Also called a CT scan, this is an x-ray that produces three-dimensional pictures of the body. Also known as computed axial tomography or CAT scan.

Cytokines (SIGH-toh-kens): Hormone-like proteins secreted by various types of cells. They regulate the strength and length of immune responses.

Cytotoxic Substances (SIGH-toh-TOHX-ick SUB-stun-sez): Substances that are destructive to cells.

Dietitian (DY-uh-TISH-un): An expert in nutrition who helps people choose what and how much food to eat.

**Digestive System (dy-JES-tuv SIS-tum):** The organs in the body that break down and absorb food. Organs that make up the digestive system are the mouth, esophagus, stomach, small intestine, large intestine, rectum and anus. Organs that help with digestion but are not part of the digestive tract are the tongue, glands in the mouth that make saliva, pancreas, liver and gallbladder.

**Digestive Tract (dy-JES-tuv trakt):** See Gastrointestinal (GI) Tract.

**Distention (dis-TEN-shun):** Bloating of any internal organ.

**Enzyme-Linked Immunosorbent Assay or ELISA or EIA Test (IN-zime leenkd EM-u-no-ZOR-bint ASS-ay):** A test that can detect the presence or amount of antibodies in the bloodstream. Sometimes used as the first test to detect HCV antibodies indicating infection.

**Endoscope (EN-doh-skohp):** A small, flexible tube with a light and a lens on the end. It is used to look into the esophagus, stomach, duodenum, colon, or rectum. It can also be used to take tissue from the body for testing or to take color photographs of the inside of the body. Colonoscopes and sigmoidoscopes are types of endoscopes.

**Enzyme (IN-zime):** Chemical substances produced by the body to help speed up chemical reactions.

**Epidemiology (EP-ih-DEEM-ee-OL-oh-gee):** The study of the interrelationship between host, agent and environment in the cause of a disease.

**Epitopes (EP-ih-taupes):** A region on the surface of an antigen that antibody molecules can identify and bind to.

**Esophageal Varices (eh-saw-fuh-JEE-ul VAIR-uh-seez):** Stretched veins in the esophagus that occur when the liver is cirrhotic. If the veins burst, the bleeding can cause death.

**Esophagus (eh-SAW-fuh-gus):** The organ that connects the mouth to the stomach. Also called gullet.

**Extrahepatic Biliary Tree (ek-strah-heh-PAH-tik BILL-ee-air-ee tree):** The bile ducts located outside the liver.

**False Positive (fahls PAH-zi-tiv):** A positive test result that is actually negative.

**Fats:** One of the three main classes of food and a source of energy in the body. Bile dissolves fats, and enzymes break them down. This process moves fats into cells.

**Fatty Liver (FAH-tee LIH-vur):** The buildup of fat in liver cells. The most common cause is alcoholism. Other causes include obesity, diabetes, and pregnancy. Also called steatosis.

**Fiber (FY-bur):** A substance in foods that comes from plants. Fiber helps with digestion by keeping stool soft so that it moves smoothly through the colon. Soluble (SAWL-yoo-buhl) fiber dissolves in water. Soluble fiber is found in beans, fruit and oat products. Insoluble (IN-sawl-yoo-buhl) fiber does not dissolve in water. Insoluble fiber is found in whole-grain products and vegetables.

**Fibrosis (fy-BRO-sis):** Scar-like tissue on the liver.

**Fistula (FIST-yoo-luh):** An abnormal passage between two organs or between an organ and the outside of the body. Caused when damaged tissues come into contact with each other and join together while healing.

**Flavivirus (FLEH-vi-vy-rus):** A collection of related viruses including the hepatitis C virus and yellow fever.

**Food and Drug Administration, or FDA:** A United States federal government agency that works to protect public health. It creates safety and effectiveness guidelines and rules for the production of drugs and other health products.

**Fulminant Hepatic Failure or FHF (FOOL-muh-nunt heh-PAT- ik FAYL-yoor):** Liver failure that occurs suddenly in a previously healthy person. The most common causes of FHF are acute hepatitis, acetaminophen overdose and liver damage from prescription drugs.

**Gallbladder (GAWL-blah-dur):** The organ that stores the bile made in the liver. Connected to the liver by bile ducts. The gallbladder can store about one cup of bile. Eating signals the gallbladder to empty the bile through the bile ducts to help digest fats.

**Gallstones (GAWL-stonz):** The solid masses or stones made of cholesterol or bilirubin that form in the gallbladder or bile ducts.

**Gastric (GAH-strik):** Related to the stomach.

Gastric Juices (GAH-strik JOO-suz): Liquids produced in the stomach to help break down food and kill bacteria.

Gastritis (gah-STRY-tis): An inflammation of the stomach lining.

Gastroenterologist (GAH-stroh-en-tuh-RAW-luh-jist): A doctor who specializes in digestive diseases.

Gastroenterology (GAH-stroh-en-tuh-RAW-luh-jee): The field of medicine concerned with the function and disorders of the digestive system.

Gastrointestinal or GI (GAH-stroh-in-TES-tuh-nul): Related to the gastrointestinal tract.

Gastrointestinal Tract (GAH-stroh-in-TES-tuh-nul trakt): The large, muscular tube that extends from the mouth to the anus, where the movement of muscles and release of hormones and enzymes digest food. Also called the alimentary canal or digestive tract.

Genotype (JEN-oh-type): Genetic information unique to a virus or organism.

GI: See Gastrointestinal.

Gilbert Syndrome (GIL-burt SIN-droh): A buildup of unconjugated or indirect bilirubin in the blood. Caused by lack of a liver enzyme needed to break down bilirubin. See also Bilirubin.

Globulin (GLOB-u-lyn): Large globular proteins in the blood that transport hormones, cholesterol, lipids, iron and vitamins.

Glucose (GLOO-kohss): A simple sugar that comes from carbohydrates in the diet. Glucose is the body's main source of energy. See also Carbohydrates.

Glycogen (GLY-koh-jen): A sugar stored in the liver and muscles. It releases glucose into the blood when cells need it for energy. Glycogen is the chief source of stored fuel in the body.

Gullet (GUH-let): See Esophagus.

Gut (GUT): See Intestines.



**HBcAg or Hepatitis B Core Antigen:** One of the proteins that form the inside of the hepatitis B virus.

**HBeAg or Hepatitis B e Antigen:** A hepatitis B antigen. Presence of this in the blood may indicate a more active infection – the virus may be replicating at a greater rate and the individual may be more infectious.

**HBsAg or Hepatitis B Surface Antigen:** A protein on the outer surface of the hepatitis B virus. Detection of this antigen in the blood indicates a hepatitis B infection.

**HBV DNA or Hepatitis B Virus Deoxyribonucleic Acid:** Pieces of the genetic code of the hepatitis B virus. When found in the bloodstream, it indicates the virus is replicating and can infect other cells in the body or other people.

**HCV RNA or Hepatitis C Virus Ribonucleic Acid:** Pieces of the genetic code of the hepatitis C virus. When found in the bloodstream, it indicates the virus is replicating and can infect cells in the body or other people.

**Hemochromatosis (HEE-moh-kroh-muh-toh-sis):** A disease that occurs when the body absorbs too much iron. The body stores the excess iron in the liver, pancreas and other organs. May cause cirrhosis of the liver. Also called iron overload disease.

**Hepadnaviruses (heh-PAD-nuh-VY-rus-ez):** The viruses that damage the liver.

**Hepatic (heh-PAT-ik):** Related to the liver.

**Hepatic Coma (heh-PAT-ik KOH-muh):** See Hepatic Encephalopathy.

**Hepatic Encephalopathy (heh-PAT-ik en-SEF-uh-LAWP-uh-thee):** A condition that may cause loss of consciousness and coma. It is usually the result of advanced liver disease. Also called hepatic coma.

**Hepatitis (heh-puh-TY-tis):** Inflammation of the liver that sometimes causes permanent damage. Hepatitis may be caused by viruses, medicines or alcohol.

**Hepatitis A Virus or HAV (heh-puh-TY-tis AY VY-rus):** This virus, which causes hepatitis A, is often spread by contaminated food and water and close personal contact with infected people.

**Hepatitis B Core Antigen:** See HBcAg.

Hepatitis B e Antigen: See HBeAg.

Hepatitis B Surface Antigen: See HBsAg.

Hepatitis B Virus Deoxyribonucleic Acid: See HBV DNA.

Hepatitis B Virus or HBV (heh-puh-TY-tis bee VY-rus): A bloodborne virus, which causes hepatitis B, that is commonly spread through sexual intercourse, from mother to newborn at birth or by contaminated medical equipment in developing countries. Injecting drug users also spread the disease when shared needles are contaminated by the blood of an infected person. Hepatitis B is more common and much more easily spread than the AIDS virus and may lead to cirrhosis and liver cancer.

Hepatitis C Virus or HCV (heh-puh-TY-tis see VY-rus): A bloodborne virus that in the past was spread by transfusion with infected blood and possibly by sexual intercourse. Today it is most commonly transmitted by infected injecting drug users who share needles. Hepatitis C may lead to cirrhosis and liver cancer. Hepatitis C was once called non-A, non-B hepatitis.

Hepatitis C Virus Ribonucleic Acid: See HCV RNA.

Hepatitis D Virus or HDV (heh-puh-TY-tis dee VY-rus): This virus primarily infects people who take illegal injecting drugs and share contaminated needles with infected people. Only people who already have HBV infections can get hepatitis D. The hepatitis D virus requires the outer protein coat of the hepatitis B virus to reproduce in liver cells.

Hepatitis E Virus or HEV (heh-puh-TY-tis EE VY-rus): This virus is spread mostly through water contaminated with the feces of infected people. This type of viral hepatitis is common in developing countries.

Hepatitis B Immunoglobulin or HBIG (heh-puh-TY-tis bee im-YOON-oh-GLAWB-yoo-lun): A shot that contains hepatitis B antibodies and provides short-term protection from infection by the hepatitis B virus.

Hepatitis A Vaccine (heh-puh-TY-tis a vak-SEEN): A vaccination that prevents hepatitis A infection. The vaccine instructs the body to make its own protection (antibodies) against the virus.

**Hepatitis B Vaccine** (heh-puh-TY-tis bee vak-SEEN): A vaccination that prevents hepatitis B infection. The vaccine instructs the body to make its own protection (antibodies) against the virus.

**Hepatocellular Carcinoma or HCC** (heh-PAT-oh-SEL-yoo-lur kar-sin-OH-muh): A malignant tumor of the liver.

**Hepatocyte** (heh-PAT-oh-syt): A type of liver cell.

**Hepatologist** (HEH-puh-TAW-luh-jist): A doctor who specializes in liver diseases.

**Hepatology** (HEH-puh-TAW-luh-jee): The field of medicine concerned with the functions and disorders of the liver.

**Hepatotoxicity** (heh-PAT-oh-tawk-SIS-uh-tee): How much damage a medicine or other substance does to the liver.

**Histology** (hiss-TALL-oh-jee): Also called microscopic anatomy, it relates to the relationship of the minute structures of cells, tissue and organs to their functions.

**Hormone** (HOR-moan): A substance in the body that regulates certain organs. Hormones such as gastrin help in breaking down food. Some hormones come from cells in the stomach and small intestine.

**Hydrochloric Acid** (hy-droh-KLOR-ik ASS-id): An acid made in the stomach. Hydrochloric acid works with pepsin and other enzymes to break down proteins.

**Hyperbilirubinemia** (HY-pur-bil-ee-roo-buh-NEE-mee-uh): Too much bilirubin in the blood. Symptoms include jaundice. This condition occurs when the liver does not work normally. See also Jaundice.

**Ibuprofen** (eye-byoo-PRO-fin): An active ingredient in some over-the-counter medications that reduce swelling, pain and fever.

**Ileum** (IL-ee-um): The lower end of the small intestine.

**Immune Globulin Class G Antibodies or IgG** (im-YOON-oh-GLAWB-yoo-lun klass gee AN-tih-bawd-eez): IgG is the most abundant of the circulating antibodies. They can cross walls of blood vessels and enter tissue fluids. They can also cross the placenta and confer passive immunity from mother to fetus. IgG protects against bacteria, viruses and toxins circulating in the blood.

**Immune Globulin Class M Antibodies** (im-YOON-oh-GLAWB-yoo-lun klass em AN-tih-bawd-eez): The first wave of circulating antibodies that appear to fight an infection. The level of these antibodies quickly declines, so they are helpful in diagnosing a new infection.

**Immune System** (im-MYOON SIS-tum): The body's system of defense against foreign substances including viruses, parasites and bacteria.

**Infection** (in-FECK-shun): What happens when harmful microorganisms enter the body.

**Injection** (in-JECK-shun): Introducing drugs or other substances into the body with a needle. Intramuscular injections are made into muscle tissue, intravenous injections are made into a vein, and subcutaneous injections are made beneath the skin.

**Interferon** (in-tur-FEAR-on): A naturally occurring protein in the body that fights infection.

**Intestines** (in-TES-tinz): See Large Intestine and Small Intestine. Also called gut.

**Intolerance** (in-TAH-luh-runs): Allergy to a food, drug or other substance.

**Investigational Drug** (in-vest-ih-GAY-shun-ul drug): A drug going through clinical trials to determine its safety and efficacy.

**Iron Overload Disease** (EYE-run OH-vur-lohd duh-ZEEZ): See Hemochromatosis.

**Jaundice** (JAWN-dus): A symptom of many disorders. Jaundice causes the skin and eyes to turn yellow from too much bilirubin in the blood. See also Hyperbilirubinemia.

**Jejunum** (juh-JOON-um): The middle section of the small intestine between the duodenum and ileum.

**Kupffer's Cells** (KOOP-furz selz): Cells that line the liver. These cells remove waste such as bacteria from the blood.

Lamivudine (luh-MIH-view-deen): An antiviral drug that interrupts viral replication.

Laparoscope (LAP-uh-ruh-skohp): A thin tube with a tiny video camera attached. Used to look inside the body and see the surface of organs. See also Endoscope.

Laparoscopy (LAP-uh-RAW-skuh-pee): A test that uses a laparoscope to look at and take tissue from the inside of the body.

Large Intestine (larj in-TES-tin): The part of the intestine that goes from the cecum to the rectum. The large intestine absorbs water from stool and changes it from a liquid to a solid form. The large intestine is five feet long and includes the appendix, cecum, colon and rectum. Also called colon.

Liver (LIH-vur): The largest organ in the body. The liver carries out many important functions, such as making bile, changing food into energy, and cleaning alcohol and poisons from the blood.

Liver Enzyme Tests (LIH-vur EN-zym tests): Blood tests that look at how well the liver and biliary system are working by measuring certain compounds that can be produced by the liver.

Liver Function Tests (LIH-vur FUNK-shun tests): Blood tests that look at how well the liver and biliary systems are working by measuring certain compounds related to liver function.

Lymphocyte (LIM-foh-syt): White blood cells that work in the immune system to fight infection.

Magnetic Resonance Imaging or MRI (mag-NEH-tik REH-zuh-nuns IM-uh-jeen): A test that takes pictures of the soft tissues in the body. This procedure does not use radiation.

Medical Complications (KOHM-plih-KAY-shuns): New medical problems that arise from the treatment rendered for an existing medical problem.

Metabolism (muh-TAH-buh-lih-zum): The way cells change food into energy after food is digested and absorbed into the blood.

Motility (moh-TIL-uh-tee): The movement of food through the digestive tract.

Mucosal Lining (myoo-KOH-zul LY-neen): The lining of GI tract organs that makes mucus.

Mucus (MYOO-kus): A viscous fluid made by mucosal membranes including the intestines. Mucus coats and protects tissues in the GI tract.

Natural Killer Cells (NATCH-ur-ul KILL-ur sells): Cells in the immune system that fight and kill virus-infected cells.

Necrosis (nuh-KROH-sis): Dead tissue that surrounds healthy tissue in the body.

Needle-stick (NEE-dul stik): Accidental sticking of someone with a hypodermic needle.

Neonatal Hepatitis (nee-oh-NAY-tul heh-puh-TY-tis): Irritation of the liver with no known cause that occurs in newborn babies. Symptoms include jaundice and liver cell changes.

Non-responders (NOHN-ree-SPON-durz): People who don't respond to treatment within a certain time frame.

Obstruction (ub-STRUK-shun): A blockage in the GI tract that prevents the flow of liquids or solids.

Pancreas (PAN-kree-ahs): A gland that makes enzymes for digestion and the hormone insulin.

Pancreatitis (PAN-kree-uh-TY-tis): Inflammation of the pancreas that can make it stop working. Most often caused by gallstones or alcohol abuse.

Parenteral (PEAR-in-TEAR-ul): Administration by injection or some other method under the skin or into the muscles or veins.

Parietal Cells (puh-RY-uh-tul selz): Cells in the stomach wall that make hydrochloric acid.

Pediatric Gastroenterologist (pee-dee-AT-trik GAH-stroh-en-tuh-RAW-luh-jist): A doctor who treats children with digestive diseases.

Pepsin (PEP-sin): An enzyme made in the stomach that breaks down proteins.

Peptic (PEP-tik): Related to the stomach and the duodenum, where pepsin is present.

Percutaneous (PUR-kyoo-TAY-nee-us): Passing through the skin.

Perforation (PUR-fuh-RAY-shun): A hole in the wall of an organ.

Perinatal Transmission (PEAR-ee-NAY-tul tranz-MISH-un): An infectious disease passing from mother to child in the uterus or during or shortly after birth.

Periportal (pear-ee-PORT-ul): Surrounding the portal vein in the liver.

Peritoneum (PEH-rih-toh-NEE-um): The lining of the abdominal cavity.

Peritonitis (PEH-rih-toh-NY-tis): Inflammation of the peritoneum, usually secondary to infection.

Platelets (PLAYT-lets): Cells from the bone marrow that are necessary for clotting.

Polymerase Chain Reaction or PCR (poll-IHM-ur-ays chayn re-ACK-shun): A method of detecting small amounts of DNA and RNA in the bloodstream.

Polyp (PAH-lip): Tissue bulging from the surface of an organ. Although these growths are not normal, they often are not cause for concern. However, people with polyps in the colon may be at a higher risk for colorectal cancer.

Portal Hypertension (POR-tul hy-pur-TEN-shun): High blood pressure in the portal vein. This vein carries blood into the liver. This is a common complication of cirrhosis.

Portal Vein (POR-tul vayn): The large vein that carries blood from the intestines and spleen to the liver.

Portosystemic Shunt (POR-toh-sih-STEM-ik shunt): An operation to create an opening between the portal vein and other veins around the liver to relieve portal hypertension.

Protein (PROH-teen): One of the three main classes of food. Protein is found in meat, eggs, and beans. The stomach and small intestine break down proteins into amino acids. The blood absorbs amino acids and uses them to build and mend cells. See also Amino Acids.

**Prothrombin Time or PT (pro-THROHM-ben tym):** A lab test that measures blood coagulation. It is prolonged when the blood concentrations of some of the clotting factors made by the liver are low, a possible indication of liver damage.

**Protocol (PRO-tuh-call):** Carefully defined procedure one follows to complete a task, such as clinical trials.

**Quasispecies (KWA-zye-spee-sheez):** The subpopulations or subtypes of a virus in an individual.

**Recombinant DNA (ree-CAHM-bin-int):** DNA that has been changed and combined with new DNA sequences through bioengineering.

**Recombinant Immunoblot Assay or RIBA (ree-CAHM-bin-int im-YOO-noh-blot ASS-ay):** A test that can detect levels of hepatitis C antibodies in the bloodstream.

**Rectum (REK-tum):** The lower end of the large intestine, leading to the anus.

**Relapse (REE-laps):** The return of symptoms after disease symptoms had temporarily disappeared.

**Remission (ree-MISS-shun):** When disease symptoms decline or disappear.

**Retreatment (ree-TREET-mint):** Treating a patient again after he or she failed to respond to a first round of treatment or experienced a return of symptoms.

**Ribavirin (RYE-bah-vye-rin):** An antiviral drug that interrupts viral replication.

**Ribonucleic Acid or RNA (RYE-boh-new-CLAY-ik ASS-id):** Cell molecules that translate the genetic information of DNA into proteins.

**Risk Factors (RISK fak-turs):** Behaviors or events linked to the likelihood of one becoming infected with a form of hepatitis.

**Rupture (RUP-tchur):** A break or tear in any organ or soft tissue.

**Saliva (suh-LY-vuh):** A mixture of water, protein, and salts that makes food easy to swallow and begins the digestive process.



**Secretin** (suh-KREE-tin): A hormone made in the duodenum. Causes the stomach to make pepsin, the liver to make bile, and the pancreas to make a digestive juice.

**Seroconvert** (SAIR-oh-cun-vurt): When a seronegative becomes a seropositive or a seropositive becomes a seronegative.

**Serology** (sur-ALL-oh-jee): Serum testing that focuses on immune factors in serum.

**Seronegative** (sair-oh-NEG-uh-tiv): When the virus doesn't show up in a blood test.

**Seropositive** (sair-oh-PAWZ-uh-tiv): When the virus does show up in a blood test.

**Seroprevalence** (sair-oh-PREH-vah-lents): How many seropositive results are obtained from a group of people.

**Serotype** (SAIR-oh-typ): Determination of subspecies by blood tests.

**Serum** (SAIR-um): The fluid part of blood.

**Sigmoid Colon** (SIG-moyd KOH-lun): The lower part of the colon that empties into the rectum.

**Small Intestine** (small in-TEStin): In this organ, most digestion and food absorption occurs. It measures about 20 feet and includes the duodenum, jejunum and ileum.

**Spasms** (SPAHzumz): Muscle movements such as those in the colon that cause pain, cramps and diarrhea.

**Spleen** (spleen): The organ that cleans blood and makes white blood cells. White blood cells attack bacteria and other foreign cells.

**Squamous Epithelium** (SKWAH-mus eh-pih-THEE-lee-um): Tissue in an organ such as the esophagus. Consists of layers of flat, scaly cells.

**Steatorrhea** (STEE-ah-toh-REE-uh): A condition in which the body cannot absorb fat. Causes a buildup of fat in the stool and loose, greasy and foul bowel movements.

**Steatosis** (stee-ah-TOH-sis): See Fatty Liver.

**Stomach (STUH-muk):** The organ between the esophagus and the small intestine. The stomach is where digestion of protein begins.

**Stool:** Solid wastes that pass through the rectum as bowel movements. Stools are undigested foods, bacteria, mucus, and dead cells. Also called feces.

**Sustained Response (suss-TAYND ree-SPONTS):** Maintaining a response to medical treatment for a lengthy period of time, generally six months or longer.

**T-cells (TEE-sells):** A type of white blood cell that, among other things, helps control the production of antibodies and regulate immunity.

**Teratogenic (teh-rah-toe-JEN-ik):** Able to cause malformations of a developing embryo.

**Transverse Colon (TRANZ-vurs KOH-lun):** The part of the colon that goes across the abdomen from right to left.

**Transaminases (tran-SAM-in-ay-zeez):** Same as ALT or AST.

**Transfusion (tranz-FEW-zhun):** Putting another person's blood or blood components into the bloodstream of an individual.

**Transmission (tranz-MISS-shun):** When a disease or infection passes from one person to another.

**Transplantation (tranz-plan-TAY-shun):** Removing tissue or an organ from one person and putting it into another person.

**Triple-Therapy (TRIH-pul THAIR-uh-pee):** A combination of three medicines used to treat chronic viral hepatitis infection, helicobacter pylori infection and ulcers. Drugs that stop the body from making acid are often added to relieve symptoms.

**Ulcer (UL-sur):** A sore on the skin surface or on the stomach lining.

**Upper GI Endoscopy (UH-pur JEE-eye en-DAW-skuh-pee):** Looking into the esophagus, stomach, and duodenum with an endoscope. See also Endoscopy.

**Upper GI Series (UH-pur JEE-eye SEE-reez):** X-rays of the esophagus, stomach and duodenum. The patient swallows barium first. Barium makes the organs show up on x-rays. Also called barium meal.

**Vaccine (vak-SEEN):** A biological substance put into an individual to cause the creation of antibodies against a particular disease.

**Variceal Bleeding (vair-ih-SEE-ul BLEE-deen):** Bleeding from blood vessels in the esophagus, the tube carrying food from the mouth to the stomach.

**Varices (VAIR-uh-seez):** Stretched veins such as those that form in the esophagus from cirrhosis.

**Vertical Transmission:** The transmission of an infection from mother to child.

**Viral Hepatitis (VY-rul heh-puh-TY-tis):** A type of hepatitis caused by a virus. Five different viruses (A, B, C, D and E) most commonly cause this form of hepatitis. Other rare viruses may also cause hepatitis. See Hepatitis.

**Viral Load (VY-rul loh):** The amount of a virus in the bloodstream.

**Viremia (vuh-REE-mee-uh):** Presence of a virus in the bloodstream.

**Virus (VY-rus):** A microscopic organism that can enter the body and cause disease.

**Western Blot Assay (WES-turn blot ASS-ay):** A test for protein analysis.

**White Blood Cells or WBCs (whyt blud sells):** A group of cells that are a critical part of a body's immune defense.

*This glossary was formed using information created by Parents of Kids with Infectious Diseases (PKIDs), the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, Dr. Donald M. Jensen, Amgen and other sources. Compiled July 2001.*

