



The Digestive System

Basic Glossary of Terms for Healthcare Interpreters

| | English | Definition | Spanish |
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| 1. | Adhesion | The formation of scar tissue between organs and abdominal tissues, which causes them to fuse together. | Adherencia |
| 2. | Anastomosis | Connecting two parts of the intestine, or other tubes or channels, after the removal of a piece of one of the structures. | Anastomosis |
| 3. | Aphagia | The inability to swallow; also, a refusal to swallow foods or liquids. | Afagia |
| 4. | Appendectomy | This is the surgical removal of the appendix, the tube-like structure at the end of the large intestine. | Apendectomía |
| 5. | Appendicitis | Inflammation of the appendix, which is usually accompanied by severe pain. | Apendicitis |
| 6. | Ascites | Buildup of fluid in the cavity that surrounds the abdominal organs, leading to swelling. | Ascitis |
| 7. | Barium enema | An x-ray exam of the abdominal cavity after the injection of barium contrast dye into the rectum; used to look for abnormalities in the large intestine. | Enema de bario |
| 8. | Bile | Also known as gall, this is a dark green fluid made by the liver that helps with digestion. It is mostly composed of water, bile salts, bilirubin, and cholesterol. | Bilis |
| 9. | Bilirubin | This a brownish yellow substance that forms during the normal breakdown of red blood cells in the body. This waste product is then carried in the plasma to the liver where it is excreted in the bile. | Bilirrubina |
| 10. | Cholecystectomy | A surgical operation to remove the gallbladder, the organ located just under the liver. | Colecistectomía |
| 11. | Cholelithiasis | The formation or presence of gallstones, which may block the bile duct and the removal of bile from the system, putting an individual at risk for infection. | Colelitiasis |
| 12. | Cirrhosis | Liver disease marked by cell degeneration, thickening of liver tissues, and inflammation; typically, it is the result of hepatitis or chronic alcoholism. | Cirrosis |
| 13. | Colon | Commonly known as the large intestine, its primary function is to remove wastes from the body. It is composed of four parts: the descending, ascending, transverse, and sigmoid colon. | Colon |
| 14. | Colonoscopy | A noninvasive procedure involving insertion of a tube into the rectum with a camera at the end of it to look for any abnormalities in the large intestine. | Colonoscopia |
| 15. | Colostomy | A surgical procedure that creates an opening in the abdominal wall to divert a piece of healthy colon to bypass a damaged portion of the colon so that fecal matter does not leak into the bloodstream. | Colostomía |
| 16. | Crohn's disease | This is a form of inflammatory bowel disease marked by digestive tract inflammation, severe abdominal pain, fatigue, diarrhea, malnutrition, and weight loss. | Enfermedad de Crohn |
| 17. | Diverticulosis | A condition marked by multiple small pouches, or diverticula, in the intestine, without any inflammation. | Diverticulosis |

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| 18. | Diverticulum | A pouch or sac that is formed on the wall of the digestive tract at a weak point of tissue. | Divertículo |
| 19. | Duodenum | This is the first and shortest part of the small intestine, which receives digested food from the stomach and helps prepare those chemicals for absorption. | Duodeno |
| 20. | Dysentery | An intestinal infection marked by severe diarrhea and blood or mucus in the stool. | Disentería |
| 21. | Dyspepsia | Another word for indigestion, which is difficult or painful digestion of food or liquid, leading to heartburn, reflux, vomiting, bloating, or gassiness. | Dispepsia |
| 22. | Dysphagia | Swallowing discomfort or difficulty, usually a symptom of another disease. | Disfagia |
| 23. | Emesis | Vomiting. | Vómito |
| 24. | Endoscopy | A procedure to look inside the body or organ using a surgical instrument called an endoscope. | Endoscopia |
| 25. | Esophagus | The tube used for swallowing, connecting the throat to the stomach. | Esófago |
| 26. | Excise | A term to describe cutting something out completely; for example, excising a hemorrhoid. | Extraer |
| 27. | Gallbladder | A small pouch under the liver that stores the bile that is not directly secreted into the small intestine for later use. | Vesícula biliar |
| 28. | Gallstones | Stones formed by digestive fluids that settle in the gallbladder. | Cálculos biliares |
| 29. | Gingivitis | Swelling or inflammation in the gums. | Gingivitis |
| 30. | Heartburn | A symptom of indigestion marked by a burning sensation in the chest, generally caused by regurgitation of acid. | Agruras |
| 31. | Hemorrhoid | A swollen sac in the rectum or anus area that results from vein swelling. | Hemorroide |
| 32. | Hepatitis | Inflammation of the liver, which comes in many types with various symptoms and causes. | Hepatitis |
| 33. | IBS | This stands for Irritable Bowel Syndrome. It is a chronic condition in the large intestine that causes pain, gas, bloating, diarrhea or constipation, and cramping; there are no changes to the tissues in the digestive tract. | Síndrome de Intestino Irritable |
| 34. | Ileum | This is the third portion of the small intestine, which serves to help absorb vitamin B12, bile salts, and anything else that was not absorbed by the second part of the small intestine, the jejunum. | Íleon |
| 35. | Jejunum | The second or middle part of the small intestine, which serves to absorb most of the nutrients from digested food. | Yeyuno |
| 36. | Laparoscopy | A procedure that inserts a small tubular surgical instrument with a camera at the end of it into an incision to view organs and body parts. | Laparoscopia |
| 37. | Melena | Dark stools caused by the presence of blood from the digestive tract. | Melena |
| 38. | Paracentesis | Removal of fluid in the abdomen through a surgical needle puncture. | Paracentesis |
| 39. | Peptic ulcer | A break in the tissue lining of the stomach, lower esophagus, or first part of the duodenum. | Úlcera péptica |
| 40. | Peritoneal | Pertaining to the peritoneum, a serous membrane that lines the abdominal cavity, covering and cushioning the organs. | Peritoneal |
| 41. | Polyp | A growth from the lining of a mucous membrane; it typically has a stalk. | Pólipo |

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| 42. | Proctology | The study of the rectum and anus. | Proctología |
| 43. | Reflux | This is short for acid reflux, where stomach acids or contents backflow into the esophagus, creating heartburn and pain. | Reflujo |
| 44. | Sigmoidoscopy | A procedure using a flexible tube instrument inserted into the anus to view the lower portion of the large intestine, which is called sigmoid. | Sigmoidoscopia |
| 45. | Soft palate | The flexible and fleshy part on the roof of the mouth, near the back of the throat. | Paladar blando |
| 46. | Sphincter | A ring of muscle that serves as a guard for a tube, opening and closing to make sure no foreign material gets into the tube or opening. | Esfínter |
| 47. | Steatosis | Fatty liver caused by malnutrition, alcoholism, or drug therapy. | Esteatosis |
| 48. | Strictures | Abnormal narrowing of an opening or body cavity. It may be due to inflammation, scar tissue formation, or cancer. | Estrecheces |
| 49. | Ulcerative colitis | This is a type of inflammatory bowel disease marked by chronic ulcers and inflammation in the lining of the lower digestive tract. | Colitis ulcerosa |
| 50. | Upper GI series | A radiographic study using contrast dye to look for any signs of inflammation or abnormalities in the upper GI tract including the esophagus, stomach, and small intestine. | Examen gastrointestinal superior |

Notes:

4. Appendectomy also called appendicectomy.
7. Also possible: enema opaco.
26. Excise: the best translation is **extirpar**, not "extripar" or "estripar." To avoid mispronunciation and confusion, we chose to use the word: *extraer*. Other acceptable translations could be: *sacar o quitar*.
30. Heartburn has nothing to do with the heart but with the stomach. Also correct: *acidez estomacal, ardor de estómago, acidez gástrica, dispepsia o pirosis*
38. Paracentesis also known as abdominocentesis.
45. Soft palate is also known in Spanish as *velo del paladar*. Hard palate is *paladar duro*.
50. The abbreviation **GI** refers to gastroenterology, gastrointestinal or gastroenterologist.

Key Word Parts:

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| cholecyst/o | gallbladder |
| hepat/o | liver |
| gastr/o | stomach |
| -oscopy | exam with lighted instrument |
| -ostomy | an artificial opening into |
| pept- | digest |
| dys- | bad, abnormal, difficult |