

# GLOSSARY

## A

**ABLATION** To remove or destroy tissue or a body part, such as by burning or cutting.

**ABORTIFACIENT** An agent that induces abortion.

**ABRASION** Also called a scrape. The rubbing away of the skin surface by friction against another rough surface.

**ABSCESS** A localized collection of pus in the skin or other body tissue caused by infection.

**ABSORPTION SPECTROMETRY** A scientific procedure to determine the chemical composition of an unknown substance.

**ABSTINENCE** The act of doing without something, such as sex, voluntarily.

**ACANTHOSIS NIGRICANS** A skin condition characterized by darkly pigmented areas of velvety wart-like growths. Acanthosis nigricans usually affects the skin of the armpits, neck, and groin.

**ACCOMMODATION** The ability of the lens to change its focus from distant to near objects and vice versa. It is achieved through the action of the ciliary muscles that change the shape of the lens.

**ACETALDEHYDE** An intermediate product in the breakdown pathway of ethanol. Acetaldehyde is believed to cause hangover.

**ACETYLCHOLINE** The ability of the lens to change its focus from distant to near objects and vice versa. It is achieved through the action of the ciliary muscles that change the shape of the lens.

**ACHENE** Any small, dry, hard seed case or fruit that does not split open at maturity to discharge the seed. Dandelion seeds are held inside achenes.

**ACONITINE** A toxic alkaloid contained in aconite. As little as 2 mg taken internally may be fatal.

**ACOUSTIC NEUROMA** A benign tumor that grows on the nerve leading from the inner ear to the brain. As the

tumor grows, it exerts pressure on the inner ear and causes severe vertigo.

**ACRODERMATITIS ENTEROPATHICA** Hereditary metabolic problem characterized by dermatitis, diarrhea, and poor immune status. Oral treatment with zinc is curative.

**ACTIN** A protein that functions in muscular contraction by combining with myosin.

**ACUPOINT** A point or site on the body where qi tends to accumulate. Acupoints are pressed or manipulated in Chinese massage in order to activate or redirect the patient's qi.

**ACUPRESSURE** An ancient form of Asian healing massage that involves applying pressure to special points or areas on the body in order to maintain good health, cure disease, and restore vitality.

**ACUPUNCTURE** Healing technique in traditional Chinese medicine utilizing the insertion of thin needles and other methods.

**ACUTE PRESCRIBING** Homeopathic treatment for self-limiting illnesses with abrupt onset.

**ACUTE RETROVIRAL SYNDROME** A group of symptoms resembling mononucleosis that often are the first sign of HIV infection.

**ACUTE** Refers to a disease or symptom that has a sudden onset and lasts a relatively short period of time.

**ACYCLOVIR** An antiviral drug that is available under the trade name Zovirax, in oral, intravenous, and topical forms. The drug prevents the varicella zoster virus from replicating.

**ADAMS TEST** A screening test in which a child being examined for scoliosis is asked to bend forward with the feet together and the knees straight.

**ADAPTOGEN** A substance that improves the body's ability to adapt to stress.

**ADDICTION** The state of being both physically and psychologically dependent on a substance.

**ADENOCARCINOMA** A cancerous tumor derived from epithelial (surface) cells or a gland-like tumor.

**ADENOID** A collection of lymph tissue located in the nasopharynx.

**ADENOVIRUS** A type of virus that can cause upper respiratory tract infections.

**ADHESIONS** Web-like scar tissue that may develop as a result of endometriosis and bind organs to one another.

**ADHESIVE CAPSULITIS** Adhesions and inflammation in the shoulder capsule that restrict movement.

**ADIPOSE TISSUE** Fat tissue.

**ADJUNCTIVE** Refers to a form of treatment that is not strictly necessary to a therapy regimen but is helpful. Music therapy is an example of an adjunctive form of treatment.

**ADJUSTMENT DISORDER** A psychiatric disorder marked by inappropriate or inadequate responses to a change in life circumstances.

**ADJUSTMENT** In chiropractic treatment, a very specific type of manipulation of the spine designed to return it to proper structural and functional form.

**ADJUVANT THERAPY** Treatment involving radiation, chemotherapy (drug treatment), or hormone therapy, or a combination of all three.

**ADJUVANT** Auxiliary or supplementary. An adjuvant treatment is one given to aid or assist the effects of other forms of therapy.

**ADRENAL GLANDS** A pair of endocrine organs near the kidneys that produce steroids such as sex hormones, hormones associated with metabolic functions, and epinephrine.

**ADRENAL HORMONE** The adrenocortical hormones are cortisol and cortisone. They are anti-inflammatory substances that aid in the function of a number of body systems, including the central nervous system, the cardiovascular system, the musculoskeletal system, and the gastrointestinal system.

**ADRENALINE** Also known as the **EMERGENCY HORMONE**, adrenaline is produced by the body during times of stress. Excess adrenaline levels can increase blood pressure and heart rate, leading to heart disease.

**ADSORPTION** A process in which an extremely thin layer of one substance (liquid, gas, or solid) forms on the surface of another substance. French green clay works as a cosmetic treatment by adsorbing toxic substances from the skin.

**ADULTERANT** A substance that makes something impure or inferior.

**AEROBIC EXERCISE** Exercise training that is geared to provide a sufficient cardiovascular overload to stimulate increases in cardiac output.

**AEROBICS** Any of various forms of sustained vigorous exercise, such as jogging, calisthenics, or jazz dancing, intended to stimulate and strengthen the heart and respiratory system.

**AESCINATE** A chemical found in horse chestnut that is effective in relieving the tissue swelling associated with varicose veins.

**AFFECTIVE DISORDER** An emotional disorder involving abnormal highs and/or lows in mood. Now termed mood disorder.

**AFFECTIVE FLATTENING** A loss or lack of emotional expressiveness. It is sometimes called blunted or restricted affect.

**AFFERENT** Sensory signals that go from the sensory cells at the periphery of the body back to the brain and spinal cord.

**AGE-RELATED MACULAR DEGENERATION (AMD, ARMD)** Macular degeneration that accompanies aging. The most common form of MD.

**AGGRAVATION** In homeopathy, a temporary worsening or intensification of the patient's symptoms prior to improvement and healing.

**AGNI** Ayurvedic term for strength of digestion.

**AGNUSIDE** The active ingredient in chasteberry.

**AGONIST** A drug or other chemical that produces a predictable response by means of a specific cellular affinity.

**AGORAPHOBIA** Abnormal anxiety regarding public places or situations from which the person may wish to flee or in which he or she would be helpless in the event of a panic attack.

**AIDS DEMENTIA COMPLEX** A type of brain dysfunction caused by HIV infection that causes difficulty thinking, confusion, and loss of muscular coordination.

**AIDS** Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome; a disease in which the immune response is impaired. The disease is caused by the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) which is spread by direct contact with infected body fluids such as blood and semen.

**AIKIDO** A Japanese martial art developed during the early twentieth century by Morihei Ueshiba. Literally translated, aikido means "the way of harmony with universal energy" or "the way of a loving spirit."

**AKA** In Huna (an esoteric Polynesian psychology), the shadow body of the low self. The aka forms threads or

cords between the low self and other persons, objects, or the High Self. These aka threads serve as energy channels.

**AKATHISIA** Agitated or restless movement, usually affecting the legs and accompanied by a sense of discomfort. It is a common side effect of neuroleptic medications.

**AKINESIA** (an esoteric Polynesian psychology)

**ALBUMINURIA** The presence of high levels of the protein albumin in the urine.

**ALDOSTERONE** A hormone produced by the adrenal gland, instrumental in the regulation of sodium and potassium resorption by the kidney.

**ALENDRONATE** A nonhormonal drug used to treat osteoporosis in postmenopausal women.

**ALEXANDER TECHNIQUE** A technique developed by Frederick Alexander that focuses on the variations in body posture, muscles, and breathing. Defects in these functions can lead to stress, nervous tension, or possible loss of function.

**ALGAE** A group of primarily aquatic plants that have chlorophyll or other pigments and carry on photosynthesis. They range from single-cell to large multicellular organisms.

**ALKALOID** A type of chemical commonly found in plants and often having medicinal properties.

**ALLERGEN** A substance that provokes an allergic response.

**ALLERGIC REACTION** An immune system reaction to a substance in the environment; symptoms include rash, inflammation, sneezing, itchy watery eyes, and runny nose.

**ALLERGIC RHINITIS** Inflammation of the mucous membranes of the nose and eyes in response to an allergen.

**ALLOPATHIC** An immune system reaction to a substance in the environment; symptoms include rash, inflammation, sneezing, itchy watery eyes, and runny nose.

**ALLOPATHY** Conventional medical treatment of disease symptoms that uses substances or techniques to oppose or suppress the symptoms.

**ALLOPURINOL** A drug that corrects hyperuricemia by inhibiting urate production.

**ALOE CONCENTRATE** Aloe gel from which the water has been removed.

**ALOE GEL** Thick, undiluted substance from the central portion of the aloe leaf.

**ALOE JUICE** A product for oral use, which is composed of at least 50% aloe gel.

**ALOE LATEX** Bitter yellow sap from the middle leaf layer of the aloe plant.

**ALPHA-<sub>2</sub> AGONIST** A class of drugs that bind to and stimulate alpha-<sub>2</sub>-adrenergic receptors, causing responses similar to those of adrenaline and noradrenaline, by inhibiting aqueous humor production.

**ALPHA-FETOPROTEIN** A substance produced by a fetus' liver that can be found in the amniotic fluid and in the mother's blood. Abnormally high levels of this substance suggest there may be defects in the fetal neural tube, a structure that will include the brain and spinal cord when completely developed. Abnormally low levels suggest the possibility of Down's syndrome.

**ALPHA-TOCOPHEROL** An antioxidant derivative of vitamin E that stabilizes cell membranes.

**ALTERATIVE** A medicinal substance that acts gradually to nourish and improve the system.

**ALVEOLI** The tiny air sacs clustered at the ends of the bronchioles in the lungs in which oxygen-carbon dioxide exchange takes place.

**ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE** A degenerative brain disease caused by physiological changes inside the brain. As a result, there is impaired memory and thought processes.

**AMARGOGENTIN** An extremely bitter substance found in gentian that makes it an effective digestive stimulant.

**AMBIENT** Surrounding.

**AMEBIASIS** An infection caused by an amoeba, which is a type of protozoan, especially by *Entamoeba histolytica*.

**AMENORRHEA** The absence or abnormal stoppage of menstrual periods.

**AMINO ACID DECARBOXYLATE (AADC) INHIBITORS** Drugs, such as carbidopa and benserazide, that block the enzyme AADC, which breaks down levodopa in the blood.

**AMINO ACID** An organic compound composed of both an amino group and an acidic carboxyl group. Amino acids are the basic building blocks of proteins. There are 20 types of amino acids (eight are essential amino acids which the body cannot make and must therefore be obtained from food).

**AMPHETAMINES** A group of drugs that stimulate the central nervous system. They are used medically to counteract depression, but are often used illegally as stimulants.

**AMPULLA OF VATER** The widened portion of the duct through which the bile and pancreatic juices enter the intestine. *Ampulla* is a Latin word describing a bottle with a narrow neck that opens into a wide body.

**AMPUTATION** The surgical removal of a part of the body.

**AMSLER GRID** A checkerboard pattern with a dot in the center that is used to diagnose MD.

**AN MO** A form of Chinese massage that treats the whole body and emphasizes balancing yin and yang techniques in the treatment. Its name means “press and stroke” in Chinese.

**ANABOLIC STEROIDS** A group of mostly synthetic hormones sometimes taken by athletes to temporarily increase muscle size.

**ANAEROBIC** An organism that grows and thrives in an oxygen-free environment.

**ANALGESIC** A pain-relieving substance.

**ANAPHRODISIAC** A substance or medication that suppresses sexual desire.

**ANAPHYLACTIC SHOCK** A severe allergic reaction that causes blood pressure drop, racing heart, swelling of the airway, rash, and possibly convulsions.

**ANAPHYLAXIS** Also called anaphylactic shock; a severe allergic reaction characterized by airway constriction, tissue swelling, and lowered blood pressure.

**ANDROGENS** Hormones (specifically testosterone) responsible for male sex characteristics.

**ANDROPAUSE** Midlife hormonal changes in men.

**ANEMIA** A condition in which the level of hemoglobin falls below normal values due to a shortage of mature red blood cells. Common symptoms include paleness, fatigue, and shortness of breath.

**ANESTHESIA** treatment with medicine that causes a loss of feeling, especially pain. Local anesthesia numbs only part of the body; general anesthesia causes loss of consciousness.

**ANEURYSM** A weakened area in the wall of a blood vessel which causes an outpouching or bulge. Aneurysms may be fatal if these weak areas burst, resulting in uncontrollable bleeding.

**ANGINA** Angina pectoris, or chest pain, caused by an insufficient supply of oxygen and decreased blood flow to the heart muscle. Angina is frequently the first sign of coronary artery disease.

**ANGIOEDEMA** Patches of circumscribed swelling involving the skin and its subcutaneous layers, the mucous membranes, and sometimes the organs frequently caused by an allergic reaction to drugs or food. Also called angioneurotic edema, giant urticaria, Quincke’s disease, or Quincke’s edema.

**ANGIOGENESIS** Patches of circumscribed swelling involving the skin and its subcutaneous layers, the mucous membranes, and sometimes the organs frequently caused by an allergic reaction to drugs or food. Also called angioneurotic edema, giant urticaria, Quincke’s disease, or Quincke’s edema.

**ANGIOGRAPHY** The procedure that enables blood vessels to be seen on film after the vessels have been filled with a contrast medium (a substance that shows up opaque on x rays).

**ANGIOPLASTY** Surgery to dilate the narrowed or blocked part of a blood vessel.

**ANISOMETROPIA** An eye condition in which there is an inequality of vision between the two eyes. There may be unequal amounts of nearsightedness, farsightedness, or astigmatism, so that one eye will be in focus while the other will not.

**ANKYLOSING SPONDYLITIS** A type of arthritis that causes gradual loss of flexibility in the spinal column. It occurs most commonly in males between the ages of 16 and 35, and may be initiated by a food allergy component, such as an allergy to wheat.

**ANKYLOSING** Refers to fusion, stiffness, or rigidity of a joint.

**ANNUAL** A plant that grows every year.

**ANNULUS FIBROSIS** The peripheral ring of fibrous tissue in an intervertebral disk.

**ANODYNE** A medicinal herb that relieves distress or soothes pain.

**ANOREXIA NERVOSA** An eating disorder marked by an unrealistic fear of weight gain, self-starvation, and distortion of body image. It most commonly occurs in adolescent females.

**ANOREXIA** Lack or loss of appetite.

**ANTACID** Common medication that neutralizes stomach acid for the short-term treatment of heartburn.

**ANTHELMINTIC** A medication that destroys or expels parasitic worms from the digestive tract.

**ANTHOCYANOSIDES** Flavonoid antioxidants from plant pigments that are particularly active in the eye.

**ANTHRAQUINONES** A group of chemicals contained in the latex of the Aloe plant and having strong laxative properties.

**ANTHRAX** A bacterial infection, primarily of livestock, that can be spread to humans. In humans it affects the skin, intestines, or lungs.

**ANTHROPOLOGY** The study of the origin and physical, social, and cultural development and behavior of groups of people.

**ANTI-ANDROGEN DRUGS** Drugs that block the activity of the male hormone.

**ANTIANDROGEN** A substance that blocks the action of androgens, the hormones responsible for male characteristics.

**ANTIBIOTIC** An agent able to kill or interfere with the development of bacteria and other micro-organisms.

**ANTIBODY** A bacterial infection, primarily of livestock, that can be spread to humans. In humans it affects the skin, intestines, or lungs.

**ANTICHOLINERGIC** A medication or other substance that blocks the action of the neurotransmitter acetylcholine. They are used to lessen muscle spasms in the intestines, lungs, bladder, and eye muscles.

**ANTICOAGULANT** A medication used to prevent clot formation or to prevent a clot that has formed from enlarging. Anticoagulant drugs inhibit clot formation by blocking the action of clotting factors or platelets. They fall into three groups: inhibitors of clotting factor synthesis, inhibitors of thrombin, and antiplatelet drugs.

**ANTICONVULSANT** A medication used to prevent convulsions or seizures. They often are prescribed in the treatment of epilepsy.

**ANTIDEPRESSANT** A type of medication that is used to treat depression; it is also sometimes used to treat autism.

**ANTIDIURETIC** A substance that diminishes the formation of urine.

**ANTIDOTE** A remedy to counteract a poison or injury. Also refers to a substance which cancels the effect of homeopathic remedies.

**ANTIEMETIC** A medication that helps control nausea; also called an antinausea drug.

**ANTIFUNGAL** A drug or compound effective in treating fungal infections.

**ANTIGEN** A substance (usually a protein) identified as foreign by the body's immune system, triggering the release of antibodies as part of the body's immune response.

**ANTIHYPERTENSIVE** A medication given to lower blood pressure.

**ANTI-INFLAMMATORY** A medication or substance that reduces the symptoms of fever and inflammation.

**ANTIMALARIAL** Any substance that reduces the effects of the tropical disease malaria.

**ANTIMICROBIAL** A substance that acts to inhibit the growth of harmful microorganisms, or acts to destroy them.

**ANTI-MOTILITY MEDICATIONS** Medications such as loperamide (Imodium), diphenoxylate (Lomotil), or medications containing codeine or narcotics that decrease the ability of the intestine to contract. These can worsen the condition of a patient with dysentery or colitis.

**ANTIOXIDANT** An enzyme or other organic substance that is able to counteract the damaging effects of oxidation in living tissue.

**ANTIPRURITIC** A type of medication applied to the skin to stop itching.

**ANTIPSORIC** A homeopathic remedy that is an effective constitutional treatment for the psoric miasm.

**CALCAREA CARBONICA** is one of three major antipsoric remedies.

**ANTIPSYCHOTIC DRUG** A class of drugs used to control psychotic symptoms in patients with psychotic disorders such as schizophrenia and delusional disorder. Antipsychotics include risperidone (Risperdal), haloperidol (Haldol), and chlorpromazine (Thorazine).

**ANTIPYRETIC** A substance or medication that combats fever with cooling properties.

**ANTISCORBUTIC** An agent that is effective against scurvy, like the vitamin C found in cramp bark.

**ANTISEPTIC** A substance that checks the growth or action of microorganisms especially in or on living tissue.

**ANTISPASMODIC** A substance that relieves muscle spasms or cramping.

**ANTITOXIN** An antibody against an exotoxin, usually derived from horse serum.

**ANTITUSSIVE** A drug used to suppress coughing.

**ANTIVENIN** An antitoxin to a specific animal venom. Antivenin is extracted from the blood serum of horses (or other animals) that have been immunized against the toxin.

**ANUS** The opening at the lower end of the rectum. The anus and rectum are both part of the large intestine, a digestive system organ.

**ANXIETY DISORDER** A mental disorder characterized by prolonged, excessive worry about circumstances in one's life. Anxiety disorders include agoraphobia and other phobias, obsessive-compulsive disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, and panic disorder.

**ANXIIOGENIC** Tending to produce anxiety.

**ANXIOLYTIC** A medication that alleviates anxiety.

**APANA** Life-sustaining energy centered in the larger intestine; the fifth of the five airs of Ayurvedic philosophy; the life force governing expulsion activity.

**APHRODISIAC** Any substance that excites sexual desire.

**APIGENIN** A bioflavonoid contained in chamomile that appears to inhibit *H. pylori*.

**APITHERAPY** A form of alternative therapy based on the use of honey and other bee products.

**APLASTIC** Exhibiting incomplete or faulty development.

**APNEA** The temporary absence of breathing.

**APOCRINE** A type of glandular secretion in which the top portion of the secreting cells is released along with the secreted substances.

**APOPTOSIS** Cell death.

**APPETITE SUPPRESSANT** A drug that decreases feelings of hunger. Most work by increasing levels of serotonin or catecholamine, chemicals in the brain that control appetite.

**AQUEOUS HUMOR** A transparent liquid, contained within the eye, that is composed of water, sugars, vitamins, proteins, and other nutrients.

**AREA POSTREMA** A structure of the brain stem that triggers vomiting in response to toxins in the bloodstream and cerebrospinal fluid.

**AROMATHERAPY** The therapeutic use of plant-derived, aromatic essential oils to promote physical and psychological well-being.

**ARRHYTHMIA** An abnormal rate or rhythm of the heartbeat.

**ART THERAPY** The use of art media to assess and treat an individual's development, abilities, personality, interests, concerns, or conflicts.

**ARTEMISINININS** A family of antimalarial products derived from an ancient Chinese herbal remedy. Two of the most popular varieties are artemether and artesunate, used mainly in southeast Asia in combination with mefloquine.

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**ARTERIES** Blood vessels that carry blood to organs and other tissues of the body.

**ARTERIOLE** The tiny extensions of arteries that lead into the capillaries.

**ARTERIOSCLEROSIS** A disease characterized by build-up on the artery walls that can lead to the obstruction of blood flow.

**ARTHRALGIA** Joint pain.

**ARTHRITIS** Inflammation of a joint that may lead to changes in the joint's structure. It causes pain and swelling. Rheumatoid arthritis is a chronic disease that leads to crippling deformities.

**ARTHROGRAPHY** An imaging technique that is sometimes used to evaluate TMJ associated with internal derangement.

**ARTICULAR BONES** Two or more bones which are connected with each other via a joint.

**ASANA** A position or stance in yoga.

**ASANAS** Physical postures associated with the practice of hatha yoga.

**ASCENDING INFECTION** Infection which begins in the urinary bladder and travels through the ureters up to the kidneys.

**ASCOMYCETE** Any class of higher fungi with septate hyphae and spores formed in the asci.

**ASCORBIC ACID** Another name for vitamin C, a nutrient found in fresh fruits and vegetables. Good sources of vitamin C in the diet are citrus fruits like oranges, lemons, limes, and grapefruits, berries, tomatoes, green peppers, cabbage, broccoli, and spinach.

**ASCOSPORES** Any spores contained in the ascus, which is the oval or tubular spore case of an ascomycete.

**ASPERGER SYNDROME** Children who have autistic behavior but no problems with language.

**ASPIRATION BIOPSY** The removal of cells in fluid or tissue from a mass or cyst using a needle for microscopic examination and diagnosis.

**ASPIRATION** Inhalation of food or saliva.

**ASTHMA** A disease in which the air passages of the lungs become inflamed and narrowed, causing wheezing, coughing, and shortness of breath.

**ASTIGMATISM** An eye condition in which the cornea doesn't focus light properly on the retina, resulting in a blurred image.

**ASTRAL** Of or from the stars.

**ASTRINGENT** A substance or compound that causes contraction or constriction of soft tissue.

**ATAXIA** A substance or compound that causes contraction or constriction of soft tissue.

**ATHEROSCLEROSIS** A process in which the walls of the arteries thicken due to the accumulation of plaque in