

Glossary

Grasp the subject, the words will follow.

Cato the Elder

TERM	DEFINITION
Abnormal/atypical	Deviating from the typical expectation.
Anatomy	The study of the structure and organization of living organisms, including their systems, organs, tissues, and how they relate to one another.
Ankle-foot orthosis (AFO)	A type of <i>orthosis</i> (brace or splint) that controls the ankle and foot.
Ankle valgus	A condition in which the ankle turns inward and the foot turns outward leading to overpronation.
Ankle varus	A condition in which the ankle turns outward and the foot turns inward leading to oversupination.
Anterior	Near the front, or front side.
Apnea	Temporary pauses in breathing.
Assistive technology	Products and services designed to enhance the functional capabilities and independence of individuals with disabilities to allow them to participate.
Attention	In relation to neuropsychological conditions, the ability to focus on something specific with minimizing extraneous distractions.
Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)	A condition characterized by an ongoing pattern of inattention, hyperactivity, or impulsivity impacting everyday functioning.

Autonomy	The ability to make independent decisions and manage oneself.
Botulinum toxin	A medicine used to help muscles relax.
Bowel	The small intestine, the large intestine (colon), the rectum, and the anus.
Bowel cleanout	A procedure used to clear all the stool from the <i>bowel</i> to prepare for a medical test or surgery, or to treat severe constipation and impacted stool.
Bowel program	A structured regimen used to maintain regular bowel movements that occur when desired, at a socially acceptable time, avoiding bowel accidents.
Brain stem	The area at the bottom part of the brain that connects the <i>cerebrum</i> to the <i>spinal cord</i> and <i>cerebellum</i> . It is responsible for vital functions such as breathing, consciousness, blood pressure, heart rate, and sleep.
Calcaneovalgus	A foot condition characterized by the foot flexing up toward the tibia.
Cartilage	Smooth, rubbery tissue that covers the ends of bones within a joint, acting as a cushion and allowing bones to glide over each other with minimal friction.
Casting	A process of putting a joint in a plaster or a fiberglass cast (e.g., a below-knee cast to stretch the tight calf muscles) to immobilize and hold part of the body in place.
Cauda equina	A bundle of nerves in the <i>spinal cord</i> below the <i>conus medullaris</i> that communicate signals to the legs and pelvic organs, including the <i>bowel</i> and bladder. Sometimes referred to as the horse's tail.
Cause	A factor (characteristic, behavior, event, etc.) that directly influences the occurrence of disease.
Cavovarus	A foot condition characterized by a high arch and supination of the forefoot (inward turning heel).
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)	The national public health institute in the US.

Cerebellar tonsils	Small, round structures on the bottom (underside) of the <i>cerebellum</i> responsible for storing and forming emotional responses and the sense of smell (not to be confused with the tonsils that are in the throat).
Cerebellum	The part of the brain at the back, just below the <i>cerebrum</i> and behind the <i>brain stem</i> , where the base of the skull meets the neck. It is responsible for muscle tone, posture, balance, and coordination. Also known as the hindbrain.
Cerebrospinal fluid (CSF)	A fluid that surrounds the <i>spinal cord</i> and brain providing protection, nourishment, and waste removal.
Cerebrum	The largest part of the brain, divided into two halves (right and left hemispheres). Each hemisphere is further divided into four lobes—frontal, parietal, temporal, and occipital lobes—each with different functions.
Cognition	The mental action or process of acquiring knowledge and understanding through thought, experience, and the senses.
Cognitive impairment	Refers to significant difficulties relative to peers in any area of brain function.
Congenital	A condition that is present at birth.
Contracture	A limitation of the <i>range of motion</i> of a joint.
Conus medullaris	A cone-shaped structure at the end of the <i>spinal cord</i> .
Corpus callosum	A structure in the brain located between the right and left hemispheres. It connects the hemispheres to each other and allows communication between them.
Dysfluency	Repetitions of sounds, syllables, or words; prolonged sounds; or pauses that interrupt the natural flow of speech.
Dysphagia	Refers to difficulty or discomfort in swallowing.
Dyspraxia	A condition in which the individual has difficulty coordinating physical movements. Also known as developmental coordination disorder (DCD).

Enema	A procedure in which liquid (tap water, saline solution, or medication) is administered into the rectum to help with the removal of stool.
Epilepsy	A neurological condition often characterized by recurrent, unprovoked seizures.
Equinus	Tightness and lack of mobility in the ankle joint when trying to dorsiflex the foot.
Executive function	High-order cognitive skills including planning, organization, working memory, mood and behavioral regulation, flexible thinking, making goal-oriented choices, self-initiation, and self-monitoring toward independence task completion.
Expressive language	The ability to communicate thoughts, wants, needs, and feelings through words, gestures, signs, and symbols.
Femoral torsion	A condition in which the femur becomes “twisted” or rotated a greater degree than is typical.
Filum terminale	A structure that anchors the <i>spinal cord</i> to the <i>spinal column</i> to prevent it from moving excessively.
Fine motor function	Refers to the smaller movements in the wrists, hands, fingers, and toes. Examples include picking up objects between the thumb and forefinger, and writing. Also called fine motor skills, hand skills, fine motor coordination, or dexterity.
Folate	A naturally occurring compound found in fruits and green leafy vegetables. Also called vitamin B9.
Folate deficiency	Having an inadequate amount of <i>folate</i> , which increases the risk of <i>neural tube defects</i> .
Folate supplementation	Refers to taking the synthetic form of <i>folate</i> , folic acid, as a supplement to ensure adequate levels for the individual.
Folic acid fortification	A process in which folic acid is added to food, such as wheat flour, rice, or cereals, to ensure adequate levels in the population.
Gait	A person’s manner of walking.

Gastrulation	A process of continual cell division that causes the embryo to become a multidimensional structure, termed a gastrula, with three separate germ layers. Gastrulation occurs during the third week of gestation.
Genu valgus	A condition in which the knees angle inward and the ankles remain apart while standing. Also known as knock-knee.
Genu varus	A condition in which the knees angle outward while standing. Also known as bowlegged.
Gestational age	The estimated age of an embryo or fetus based on the time elapsed since the first day of the mother's last menstrual period. A full pregnancy typically lasts 280 days, or 40 weeks.
Gross motor function	The ability to make large, general movement of the arms, legs, and other large body parts, such as sitting, crawling, standing, running, jumping, swimming, throwing, catching, and kicking. Also called gross motor skills.
Growth hormone	A hormone secreted by a gland at the base of the brain; contributes to growth in multiple areas of the body.
Hip dislocation	A condition in which the ball of the hip joint has moved completely out of the hip socket.
Hip dysplasia	A condition in which the hip socket doesn't develop correctly and becomes shallow. It may lead to <i>hip subluxation</i> or <i>hip dislocation</i> .
Hip subluxation	A condition in which the ball of the hip joint is partially out of the hip socket but is still in contact with it—the ball is still partially covered by the socket.
Hydrocephalus	<i>Ventriculomegaly</i> that results in increased <i>intracranial pressure</i> .
Independence	The state of being self-sufficient.
Intelligence	Overall mental capacity to understand complex ideas, adapt to the environment, learn from experience, engage in reasoning, and overcome obstacles.

International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF)	A universal framework for considering any health condition. It helps show the impact of a health condition at different levels and how those levels are interconnected.
Intracranial pressure (ICP)	The pressure exerted within the skull by the combined volume of the brain, <i>cerebrospinal fluid</i> , and blood.
Kyphosis	An outward curvature of the spine, rounding away from the center of the body.
Language	Words and symbols and their use in a system of communication.
Lateral	Away from the midline (or middle of the body), referring to the side.
Latex allergy	A reaction to proteins found in natural rubber latex.
Learning disorder	A condition that affects an individual's ability to acquire and use academic skills, including reading, writing, math, and <i>language</i> .
Lesion	The <i>atypical</i> opening in the spine that occurs in spina bifida.
Ligament	Tough bands of tissue that connect bones to other bones, helping to stabilize and support the joint.
Lordosis	An inward curvature of the spine, arching toward the center of the body.
Lymphatic system	A network of vessels and organs that helps protect the body by removing waste, toxins, and excess fluids, and by supporting the immune system in fighting infections.
Lymphedema	A condition in which excess fluid builds up in body tissues, leading to swelling.
Memory	The retention of information over time to retrieve it and act on it later.
Meninges	Tough protective layers around the <i>spinal cord</i> (spinal meninges) and brain (cranial meninges) that nourish and help keep the cord and fluids in the appropriate place. The three layers are the dura mater, arachnoid mater, and pia mater.

Motor coordination	The ability to smoothly and accurately control body movements.
Muscle tone	The resting tension in a person's muscles. Tone is considered <i>abnormal</i> when it falls outside the range of normal or typical; either too low (hypotonia) or too high (hypertonia).
Musculoskeletal	Refers to both the muscles and the skeleton; includes muscles, bones, joints, and their related structures (e.g., <i>ligaments</i> , and <i>tendons</i>).
Neural tube	A structure that forms early in the development of an embryo and eventually becomes the central nervous system.
Neural tube defect	A <i>congenital</i> condition that occurs when the <i>neural tube</i> fails to close properly, resulting in a <i>lesion</i> . In closed neural tube defects (<i>occulta</i>), the <i>lesion</i> is covered by <i>vertebrae</i> and skin, protecting the neural tissues and structures from the external environment. In open neural tube defects (<i>aperta</i>), the <i>lesion</i> is not covered by <i>vertebrae</i> and skin, exposing the neural tissues and structures to the external environment.
Neurogenic	Refers to the alteration of typical nerve function that causes impaired motor and sensory function.
Neuromuscular	A condition that affects the nervous system and muscles and the communication between them.
Neuromuscular clubfoot	A rigid and severe foot deformity in which one or both feet take on the following characteristics: the ankle points downward, the toes pull in toward the inner leg, the foot has an abnormally high arch, and the bottom of the foot faces inward instead of downward.
Neuropathic pain	Pain that originates from damage to the nervous system.
Neurulation	The developmental process, occurring after <i>gastrulation</i> , in which the <i>neural tube</i> forms and closes. Neurulation occurs in two stages: primary and secondary.
Nociceptive pain	Pain that originates from damage to body tissues such as skin, muscles, joints, or internal organs.

Nociplastic pain	Pain that originates from a change in how the central nervous system processes pain signals.
Noncommunicable disease (NCD)	A medical condition not caused by an infectious agent.
Nystagmus	A condition in which involuntary eye movements occur rapidly and repeatedly.
Occupational therapy	A type of therapy based on engaging in everyday activities (occupations) to promote health, well-being, and independence.
Oral feeding	Food and drink taken by mouth.
Orthopedic surgery	Specialty that involves surgical management of disorders affecting the <i>musculoskeletal</i> system.
Orthosis	A device designed to hold specific body parts in position to modify their structure or function; also called a brace or splint.
Orthotics	The branch of medicine concerned with the design, manufacture, and management of orthoses. See <i>orthosis</i> .
Osteoporosis	A medical condition where the bones are weak and brittle, with low density.
Papilledema	The swelling of the optic disc (part of the optic nerve).
Pelvic obliquity	A condition in which one hip is positioned higher than the other.
Percentile	A variable (such as a person's height by age) that divides the distribution of the variable into 100 groups. The 50th percentile is always the median (the midpoint that separates lower and higher values into two groups).
Pes cavus	A condition in which the arch of the foot is atypically high.
Pes planovalgus	A condition where <i>pes planus</i> occurs along with <i>ankle valgus</i> . Also known as flatfoot.
Pes planus	A condition in which the arch of the foot is atypically low or flat.

Physiatry	See <i>physical medicine and rehabilitation</i> .
Physical medicine and rehabilitation (PM&R)	Specialty that aims to enhance and restore functional ability and quality of life among those with physical disabilities. Also termed “physiatry.”
Physical therapy/physiotherapy	A type of therapy to develop, maintain, and restore a person’s maximum movement and functional ability.
Posterior	Near the back, or back side.
Postnatal	After birth.
Pragmatic communication	The ability to interpret social cues, understand nonverbal communication, and engage in appropriate conversational exchanges.
Precocious puberty	A condition in which a child’s body develops into an adult body at an earlier age than is typical; puberty that occurs before age eight in females and before age nine in males is considered precocious.
Prenatal	Before birth.
Prevalence	The proportion of persons in a population who have a particular disease or attribute at a specified point in time or over a specified period of time.
Psychomotor function	The coordination of thinking and physical movement.
Psychotherapy	The practice of working with a trained professional to help an individual understand thoughts, emotions, and behaviors, and to develop appropriate coping strategies.
Range of motion (ROM)	A measure of joint flexibility; the range through which a joint moves, measured in degrees. Also called range of movement.
Receptive language	The understanding of information from sounds, words, symbols, signs, gestures, and movements.
Rectal prolapse	A condition in which tissue from the rectum protrudes outside the anus.

Risk factor	An aspect of personal behavior or lifestyle, an environmental exposure, or an inborn or inherited characteristic that is associated with an increased occurrence of disease or other health-related event or condition.
Sarcopenia	The loss of skeletal muscle mass and strength.
Scoliosis	A three-dimensional rotation and curvature of the spine.
Seizure	Uncontrolled, abnormal electrical activity of the brain that may cause changes in the level of consciousness, behavior, memory, or feelings.
Self-determination	An individual's ability to act as their own primary decision maker.
Self-management	The ability to regulate emotions, behaviors, and actions effectively to achieve goals.
Sexual health	A state of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being in relation to sexuality.
Sleep-related breathing disorders	Conditions that occur during sleep and are characterized by symptoms such as snoring, gasping, or temporary pauses in breathing (<i>apnea</i>).
Spasticity	A condition in which there is an <i>abnormal</i> increase in <i>muscle tone</i> or stiffness of muscle that can interfere with movement and speech, and be associated with discomfort or pain.
Speech and language pathology (SLP)	A type of therapy to support those with speech, language, and communication needs as well as feeding and swallowing difficulties. Also called speech and language therapy.
Spinal canal	Bony tunnel within the <i>vertebrae</i> that houses the <i>spinal cord</i> .
Spinal column	Bony structure made up of <i>vertebrae</i> that protect the <i>spinal cord</i> from injury, give structure for an upright posture, and provide attachment sites for muscles, <i>tendons</i> , and <i>ligaments</i> .

Spinal cord	Cylindrical column of nerves enclosed in the <i>spinal column</i> that form the main communication pathway between the brain and the rest of the body.
Strabismus	The misalignment of the eyes, sometimes appearing as crossed eyes.
Superior	Above or looking down from above.
Syndrome	A group of characteristics and findings that consistently occur together and indicate a specific condition. A genetic syndrome is caused by one or more gene mutations or chromosomal abnormalities.
Tendon	Strong, flexible cords that connect muscles to bones, enabling movement when muscles contract; for example, the Achilles tendon attaches the calf muscle to the bone at the back of the heel.
Tibial torsion	A condition in which the tibia becomes “twisted” or rotated a greater degree than is typical.
Tone	See <i>muscle tone</i> .
Ventricles	Cavities in the brain that make and contain cerebral spinal fluid. They are connected to each other and to the <i>spinal cord</i> (through the central canal).
Ventriculomegaly	Refers to having enlarged <i>ventricles</i> .
Vertebrae	Bones that make up the <i>spinal column</i> and are divided into five regions: cervical, thoracic, lumbar, sacral, and coccygeal.
Visuospatial function	The ability to recognize, interpret, and mentally manipulate visual information and spatial relationships.