

Definitions of pharmacological terms

Various terms relating medical and pharmacological studies have been widely used while explaining the actions and uses of drugs. The definitions or explanations of these terms are given below in system wise.

Digestive system

1. **Sialagogue:** Drugs that increase secretion or flow of saliva. E.g.: Pilocarpine, Physostigmine, and Bitters like gentian, alcohol and arecoline.
2. **Antisialics:** Drugs that diminish or reduce the secretion of saliva. E.g.: Atropine, Potassium chlorate, and Borax etc.
3. **Stomachics:** Agents that increase or stimulate flow of gastric juice and promote appetite and digestion. E.g.: Condiments like mustard, ginger, and Ammonium carbonate.
4. **Digestive adjuvant:** which compensate defective gastric secretions. E.g.: dilute Hcl, Pepsin, etc.
5. **Demulcents:** Drugs that protects, soothes and relieves irritation especially of mucous membrane. These are usually mucilaginous in nature. E.g.: syrups, honey, gruel, and gums.
6. **Emetics:** Agents that produce vomiting in animals capable of vomition. E.g.: Emetine. Ipecac, Aomorphine, Zinc sulphate.
7. **Antiemetics / Gastric sedatives:** Agents that relieve gastric pain and control vomiting. E.g.: Bismuth preparations, kaolin.
8. **Carminatives / antispasmodics:** Agents that assist in expulsion of gases from stomach and intestines by regulating the action of musculature of stomach and intestines, lessening spasm and relaxing sphincters. E.g.: aromatic oils, spirits, chloroform, and camphor.
9. **Antacids:** Agents that neutralize excess acidity and continue to exert that action. E.g.: aluminum hydroxide, magnesium trisilicate, and sodium bicarbonate.
10. **Purgatives:** Agents, which increase evacuation of bowel contents.
 - a) **Laxative:** Agents, which produce almost normal stools without griping. E.g.: liquid paraffin, Cascara segrada etc.
 - b) **Simple purgatives:** produce frequent and abundant stools with out much griping. E.g.: castor oil, senna, and Magnesium sulphate in moderate dose.
 - c) **Drastic purgative / Cathartic:** Agents causing active movement of bowels and cause energetic and frequent evacuation accompanied by straining and griping. E.g.: croton oil, Aloe, high doses of senna.
 - d) **Hydrogague purgatives:** agents that cause profuse and frequent watery stools. E.g.: large doses of magnesium sulphate.
11. **Internal astringent:** agents which limit the action of bowels and correct excessive fluidity of intestinal contents, causes contraction of tissues, arrest secretions or the control of bleeding. E.g.: Kaolin, Bismuth preparations, creata, catechu, alum.

12. **Antizymotics:** drugs that control the excessive fermentation in the stomach and intestines. E.g.: Oleum terebinthine, formaldehyde, Asafoetida.
13. **Cholagogues:** Agents that increase the flow of bile into alimentary tract.
- a. **Direct cholagogues / Cholaretics:** - Agents that stimulates the hepatocytes of liver to increase output of bile. E.g.: Purified ox bile, dihydrocholic acid.
 - b. **Indirect cholagogues:** increase the flow of the bile by increasing intestinal action, thus reflex stimulating the gall bladder and bile duct to contract. E.g.: saline purgatives, calomel etc.
14. **Adsorbent:** a substance with the property of attaching other substances to its surface without any chemical action. E.g.: Kaolin, wood charcoal.
15. **Vermicides:** Drugs, which kill the parasite without necessarily expelling them. E.g.: Oleum chenopodium, Tetrachloroethylene.
16. **Vermifuges:** drugs, which expel the parasite without necessarily killing them. E.g.: Arecoline.
17. **Ruminatoric:** an agent, which causes stimulation and improvement in general functioning of rumen. E.g.: Arecoline, Potassium antimony chloride.
18. **Orexigens:** Agents, which increases appetite.

Cardiovascular system

1. **Cardiac stimulant:** Agents, which increase either the rate or force of contraction of heart or both. E.g.: Adrenaline, Caffeine etc.
2. **Cardiac tonics:** Agents, which increase the efficiency of heart in a sustained manner and generally indicated in cardiac irregularities or diseases like congestive heart failure. E.g.: Digitalis, strophanthus etc.
3. **Cardiac depressants:** Drugs that depress hearts function by slowing down the rate or force of contraction or both E.g.: Physostigmine, narcotics, and depressants.
4. **Vasoconstrictors:** Agents that dilate blood vessels chiefly arterioles, resulting in fall of blood pressure. E.g.: Adrenaline, noradrenaline.
5. **Vasodilators:** Agents that dilate blood vessels chiefly arterioles, resulting in fall of blood pressure. E.g.: Nitrates, narcotics etc.
6. **Anticoagulants:** An agent that prevents coagulation. E.g.: sodium nitrate, Oxalic acid.
7. **Coagulants:** An agent that causes stimulates or accelerates coagulation of blood.
8. **Haemostatic:** An agent that arrests the flow of blood within the vessel or arrests the hemorrhage. E.g.: Adrenaline locally.

9. **Hypertensive:** Agents that produces an increase in blood pressure. E.g.: All vasoconstrictors and cardiac stimulants.
10. **Hypotensives:** An agent causing reduction in blood pressure. E.g.: Reserpin, all vasodilators and cardiac depressants.
11. **Styptic:** An agent having an astringent or haemostatic effect.
12. **Haemostyptic:** An astringent haemostatic agent used topically to stop bleeding. E.g.: Ferric perchloride, Alum.

Respiratory system

1. **Expectorants:** Agents that cause either an increase of bronchial secretions or render the secretion more fluid thus facilitating expulsion. The action being confined to the mucous membrane lining of trachea, bronchi and bronchioles. E.g.: Ammonium carbonate, Iodides, and Volatile oils etc.
2. **Respiratory stimulants / Analeptics:** Agents, which augment the rate and depth of respirations, indicated in respirations indicated in respiratory failure. E.g.: Leptazole, Nikethamide, Camphor-in-oil subcutaneously, Ammonia vapor inhalation.
3. **Antitussives / Respiratory sedatives / Cough sedatives:** agents, which lessen the irritability of the cough center either by a selective action on the cough center (E.g.: codeine, morphine) or by a local demulcent action on pharynx (E.g.: Glycerin, Simple syrup). These are beneficial when coughing is painful, non productive and distressing.
4. **Broncho dilator / Bronchial relaxants / Bronchial antispasmodics:** Agents that overcome spasm if bronchial musculature causing relaxation of bronchioles and increase in caliber of bronchial tube. Indicated in bronchial constriction. E.g.: atropine, nitrites, adrenaline, and ephedrine.
5. **Bronchoconstrictors:** Agents that cause constriction of bronchioles and causing a reduction in caliber of a bronchus or bronchial tube. E.g.: Physostigmine, Barium chloride, Pilocarpine.

Urogenital system

1. **Diuretics:** Agents that increase the secretion and floe of urine. E.g.: potassium nitrate, mannital, furosimide.
2. **Vesicle sedatives / Urinary sedatives:** Agents that relieve irritability of bladder and urethra. E.g.: Belladone, Barley water.
3. **Lithonotryptics / Lithotryptics:** Agents, which are supposed to prevent deposition of solid from urine and affect the dissolution of a calculus. E.g.: Lithum citrate, adequate fluid intake.
4. **Aphrodisiaca:** Agents that stimulate the sexual activity and desire. E.g.: Hromones like androgens (Testosterone) and Estrogens (Stilbestral), yohimbine Hcl.

5. **Anaphrodisiacs:** Agents that diminish sexual desire. E.g.: Central sedatives like bromides, purgatives, castration, testosterone antagonists, and estrogen antagonists.
6. **Ecbolics / Oxytocics:** Agents that stimulate or promote contraction of uterine musculature chiefly of gravid or recently gravid uterus thus facilitating expulsion of uterine contents. E.g.: Ergot, Posterior pituitary extracts.
7. **Tocolytics:** Agents, which relax the uterine smooth muscle and reduce the contraction of uterine musculature prevents abortion. E.g.: Salbutamol.
8. **Abortifacient:** Agents that produce abortion. E.g.: aloes, Ergot.
9. **Emmenagogue:** An agent that induces or increases menstrual flow. E.g.: Aloe, Myrrha.
10. **Galactagogue:** Agents that promote secretion and flow of milk. E.g.: Yohimbine, Stilbestrol.
11. **Antigalactogogues:** Agents that decrease stimulation or flow of milk. E.g.: Saline purgatives, Alum, withdrawal of milking.

Nervous system

1. **Cerebral stimulants:** Agents that stimulate sensory areas of cerebral cortex. E.g.: Caffeine, cocaine etc.
2. **Cerebral depressants:** Agents that depress the functional activity of the central nervous system.
3. **Anesthetics:** Agents, which reversibly produce a condition of insensibility to pain associated with loss of consciousness. E.g.: chloroform, ether, and barbiturates.
4. **Narcotics:** Agents that induce profound sleep and also marked depression of circulatory and respiratory mechanisms with a property of addiction. E.g.:
5. **Hyponotics / Soporofics:** Agents, which induce sleep. E.g.: chloral hydrate, bromide, and morphine in moderate dose.
6. **Analgesic:** An agent that relieves pain by altering perception of nociceptive stimuli without producing anesthesia or loss of consciousness. E.g.: Aspirin, Paracetamol.
7. **Anodyne:** A compound less potent than an anesthetic or a narcotic but capable of relieving pain. E.g.: Acetanilide, Belladonna.
8. **Tranquilizers:** Drugs that reduces mental tension relieve anxiety and result in a more calm out look, without causing any sedation or altering the level of consciousness. E.g.: Chlorpromazine, Diazepam.
9. **Local anesthetics:** An agent that produces the loss of sensation in a small area or a region. E.g.: Procaine, cocaine.
10. **Spinal stimulants:** Agents in medicinal doses increase the conductivity and reflex excitability indicated in paralysis. E.g.: Strychnine.

11. **Modularly stimulants / analeptics:** Agents that cause a revival of the dying (although temporary) by stimulating both respiratory and vasomotor centers. E.g.: PicROTOXIN, NikETHAMIDE, LePTAZOL.
12. **Mydriatics:** Agents that dilates the pupil. E.g.: Atropine, Homatropine.
13. **Miotics:** Drugs that causes constriction of pupil. E.g.: Physostigmine, Pilocarpine.
14. **Nervine tonics:** Drugs that are used to increase the tonus of nervous system. E.g.: Nuxvomica, Glycerophosphate, Arsenical preparations.
15. **Febrifuge / Antipyretic:** Drugs that lower abnormal temperature. E.g.: Salicylates, Phenacetin etc.
16. **Nootropic drugs:** Agents that increase memory.

Skin and soft tissues

1. **Diaphoretics:** Drugs that increase cutaneous secretions (sweating). E.g.: Potassium acetate, Ephedrine.
2. **Sudorifics:** Agents, which cause sweating powerfully. E.g.: Pilocarpine, Physostigmine.
3. **Anhydrotics / Adiaphoretics:** Agents, which lessen secretion of sweat. E.g.: Atropine, Formaline.
4. **Counter irritants:** Term used to indicate agents, which are used to counteract against an existing irritation. Often the agents used are irritants by themselves and are used either to promote or convert a chronic inflammatory process into an acute one or to facilitate resolution.
 - a. **Rubifacients:** These cause redness of skin by vasodilatation. E.g.: Liniments containing ammonia preparations and turpentine.
 - b. **Vesicants:** Agents that cause formation of vesicles or blisters on skin. E.g.: Mustard paste, cantharidin preparations.
 - c. **Pustulants or suppurants:** Agents, which cause inflammation of deep routed structures also causing pustules. E.g.: Bisiodide of mercury, croton oil etc.
 - d. **Caustics / corrosives:** Agents that destroy living tissue with which they come into contact (effect resembling burn). E.g.: Silver nitrate, sulphuric acid.
 - e. **Escharotics:** Agents that cause extensive destruction of tissue. E.g.: Nitric acid, Antimony trichloride.
5. **Local astringents:** Agents which when applied to wounds cause contraction of capillaries, coagulate albumin, lessen discharges and cheek formation of exuberant granulation. E.g.: Zinc sulphate, alum, and lead acetate.
6. **Emollient:** An agent that soften and allay irritation of skin and have asoothing effect on skin. E.g.: soft paraffin, olive oil, fixed oils.
7. **Parasiticide:** Agents that destroys parasites, generally refers to ectoparasites on skin like mange, mites, ringworm.

- a) **Acaricides:** Those that act against mänge. E.g.: Sulphar, gammacin etc.
- b) **Fungicides:** Those used for fungus infections. E.g.: ketaconazole, iodine preparations.
- c) **Insecticides:** Agents used against insects like flies, mosquitoes etc. E.g.: DDT, Pyrethrium, Gammagin.
8. **Atipruritics:** Drugs used to prevent itching and local irritation. E.g.: Phenol, menthol etc.
9. **Keratolytics:** Agents that dissolve scales on the surface of skin, there by separates or loosens the scales or horney tissue of epidermis. E.g.: salicylic acid, resorcinol. E.g.: Salicylic acid, resorcinol.
10. **Deodorants:** Agents that absorb gases and neutralize or destroy odours especially disagreeable types. E.g.:
11. **Depilatories:** Agents used to rebove or causes falling out of superficial hair. E.g.: Barium sulphide, thallium acetate.
12. **Antiseptics:** Agents, which inhibit or arrest the growth of microorganisms. E.g.: Acriflavine, boric acid.
13. **Disinfectants:** An agent that destroys the germs of putrefaction or disease or spores. E.g.: Lysol, Bleaching powder, and carbolic acid.
14. **Detergent:** Agents used for cleansing effect on skin and tissues. E.g.: soaps, cetrimide etc.
15. **Alterative:** A drug that modifies the disordered functions of the body or metabolism. E.g.: atropine, tannic acid.
16. **Anti-inflammatory agents:** reducing the inflammation by acting on tissue inflammatory mechanisms without directly antagonizing the causative agent. E.g.: sodium salicylate.
17. **Antineoplastic agents:** A drug that prevents the development, maturation or spread of neoplastic cells. E.g.: Colloidal lead phosphate, vinca rosea.
18. **Antirheumatic:** a drug that is used as preventive or curative of rheumatism. E.g: salol, methyl salicylate.
19. **Chelating agent:** A substance, which has the property of binding divalent metal ions to form stable and soluble Complexes, which are noneionized and so virtually lacking in the toxicity to the metal concerned. E.g.: EDTA.
20. **Desiccants:** Agents, which absorb moisture and keep a wound dry. E.g.: creata, starch, chalk, talcum.
21. **Preservative:** A substance that is added to food products or to organic solutions to prevent chemical change or bacterial action. E.g.: sodium benzoate, chlorocresol.
22. **Sclerosing agent:** A compound, which causes hardening of tissues. E.g.: sodium salicylate.
23. **Tonic:** A compound that restores enfeebled function and promotes vigour and a sense of well-being. It is qualified to the organ or system on

which it acts (cardiac, uterine, nervine etc.). E.g.: Nuxvomica - nervine tonic.

 Digitalis - cardiac tonic

 Liver extract (B-complex vitamins) - liver tonic

- 24. Vehicle:** An inert substance, usually without therapeutic action used as a medium to give bulk for the administration of medicines. E.g.: starch, oxymal.