

A List of Misunderstood Words Identified in the Literature

These are some of the words identified in the literature on literacy and health that patients have misunderstood.

A

a day
a.m.
abdomen
abdominal
abnormal
abortion
abscess
absorption
accumulate
acetaminophen
active tuberculosis
activities
acute
adenoids
adhesive
adulterate
aerobic
albumin
alimentary canal
allergic
allergy
ambulate
amniotic
analgesic
anemia
anesthetic
angina
anticoagulant
antidote
antiemetics
antiseptic
antitoxin
anxiety

aorta
appendectomy
appendicitis
arrested disease
artery
artificial respiration
assimilation
associated
asthma
astigmatism
auditory
auricle
autopsy
avoid
awareness

B

bacilli
bacillus
bacteria
balanced diet
barrier method [birth control]
baseline visit
benefits
bicarbonate
BID
bilious
biopsy
bladder
blood clot
BM
body tissue
bowel (s)

breathing
bronchial tubes
bronchitis
bunion
buttocks

C

caffeine
callous
calorie
capacities
capillary
carbohydrate
carbon dioxide
carbon monoxide
carcinogen
cardiac
cardiac arrest
cartilage
case-finding
catarrh
cathartic
cauterize
cavity
cc
cell
cerebral
chromosomes
chronic
chronic bronchitis
cigarettes
circulation
clinic
clot
coagulate
cocaine
collapse the lung

collapse therapy
colon
colostomy
communicable
competent
complex
complications
component
concerns
concomitant
concurrent
congestion
constipation
consult
consultation
consumption
contact
contain
contaminate
contraceptive
contracted lung
convalescence
convulsion
corpuscle
critical stage
culture [take a culture]
curable

D

deficient
deformity
delirium
diabetes
diabetics
diagnose
diagnosis
diagnostic clinics

diarrhea
diet
digest
digestion
dilate
disability
disabled
discard
discharge
discomfort
discovered
disinfect
disinfection
dislocation
disposal
dissipate
double-blind [study design]
dysentery
dyspepsia

E

edema
efficacy
efficiency
electrocardiogram
elimination
emaciation
embryo
emesis
emetic
endemic
enema
especially
essence
essential
eustachian tubes
ex-patients

exertion
experiencing
expired
exposure

F

facilities
fatal
fatigue
FDA
fermentation
flare-up
flatten
flatus
fluid
formula
fracture
fumigate

G

gangrene
gargle
gastric juice
gastrointestinal
germ
germicide
goitre
grippe
groin

H

haemoglobin
haemorrhoids
hemorrhage
heredity

high blood pressure
hoarseness
hollowed
hookworm
humidity
hydrophobia
hypersensitivity
hypertension
hypodermic

I

immediate
immune
immune system
immunity
immunization
impurities
incision
increases
indigestible
individualistic
infant
infantile paralysis
infection
infectious
inflammation
influenza
inhaled
inherited
injurious
inoculate
insomnia
Institutional Review Board
intake and output
intern
intestine
intravenous

invalid
investigator
irritable
isolate
isolation

J

jar

K**L**

laboratory
lactating
larynx
lesion
ligament
living organism
lymph
lymph canals
lymph node

M

machine
malaise
malignant
malnutrition
mass tuberculin testing
mass x-ray surveys
mastectomy
mastoid
mean [average]
medication
meds

metabolite
microbe
microscopic parasites
minimal disease
mole
mucous
mucous membrane
mucus

N

narcotic
nasal
nausea
nauseated
negative
negative sputum
nerve
nervousness
neuralgia
neutral
nicotine
non-pulmonary B
normal
NPO
nucleus
nutrients
nutrition

O

occult blood test
oculist
offspring
ointment
open TB
opium
orally

organs
oxygen

P

palpitation
pancreas
paralysis
pasteurization
pasteurize
pathogenic
patient medicine
pelvis
perforation
perform
periodic
peristalsis
persistent
perspiration
pharmacy
pharynx
physic
physical
physically
pituitary
placebo
placenta
p.m.
pneumonia
pneumothorax
pollution
positive reaction
positive sputum
positive test result
positive tuberculin test
post-sanatorium care
posture
precaution

pregnant
prescription
pressure
professional
prolonged exposure
prone
prorated
prosthesis
prostration
protein
protocol
protoplasm
pruritis
ptomaine
pulmonary TB
pulse
pyorrhea

Q

QID
quarantine
quitting

R

radiate
radiation
radiology
randomly
reaction
reactivation
recovered
recovery
recurrence
refrigeration
regimen
rehabilitation

reinfection
relapse
remarkable
renal
replication
represents
reproductively active
resident
resistance
respiration
respiratory
response
revitalizing
rheumatism
rickets
roentgenologically
roughage
routine

S

safeguards
saliva
sanatoria
satisfying
scalded
scurvy
secretion
sedative
sedimentation tests
sensible
sensitive
sequelae
serum
significantly
sinus
sodium
spasms

specific
specimen
splint
sponsor
sprain
sputum
stagnant
starchy
sterile
sterilization
stethoscope
stimulant
stimulus
stitch
stool
strenuous
streptococcus
stroke
strychnine
suffocate
supply
sutures
swab
symptom
systemically

T

taper
tapeworm
TB of the bone
TB of the bone and joints
teaspoon
tendon
terminal
therapy
thoracoplasty
three fourths

thus
thyroid
tic
TID
tissue
titrate
tolerability
tonsillitis
topical
tourniquet
toxic
toxin
transient
tubercle
tubercle bacilli
tuberculin test
tuberculosis
typhoid

U

ulcer
unpleasant
urinary tracts
urinate
urine
uterus
utmost

V

vaccination
vaccine
valve
vehicle preparation
venipuncture
ventricle
vermin

vertebra

virus

vision

visual

vitality

vitals

vitamins

void

vomit

W

waive

washout period

well-balanced meals

X

Y

yeast

Z