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Medical Terminology

ANAEMIA: A decrease in the level of red blood cells or of HAEMOGLOBIN in the blood. The red blood cells carry oxygen around the body. May cause pallor (paleness) of the skin and fatigue. Other symptoms are weakness, fainting, dizziness and breathlessness. Many women can become anemic if they experience heavy blood loss during menstruation – this is because of a depletion of iron in their bodies.

CARDIAC ARREST: This means that the heart has stopped beating due to either the electrical impulses in the heart becoming too rapid or the slowing of the heart. Blood doesn't flow around the body and so doesn't reach the brain and other organs. You may have a cardiac arrest if you lose a large amount of blood, if you lack oxygen, or if your body is very hot or very cold. CPR must be given straight away or the patient runs the risk of permanent damage to the brain and other organs, which may cause death. A defibrillator is used in these situations

OSTEOARTHRITIS: Disease of the joints. The cartilages at the ends of the joints become damaged and wear away. The bone tries to repair itself as bone can grow – BUT it grows abnormally and into the wrong shape. It commonly occurs in the hips, knees and spine. The symptoms are joint aching and soreness, joint swelling and bony enlargements in the middle joints of the fingers.

EMPHYSEMA: Main cause is smoking. Long-term disease of the lungs. The air that we breathe in goes into our lungs and travels into the small air sacs in our lungs. The blood then goes into the blood vessels and feeds our body oxygen. When you have emphysema, the air sacs become thin and less elastic. It makes it harder for the oxygen to get into the blood and for the carbon dioxide to leave your body. You cough and feel short of breath.

HIGH CHOLESTEROL: Cholesterol is a fat in the body – we need good cholesterol for energy. Bad cholesterol is found in butter, cream, cakes, biscuits, take away food. If you have too much bad cholesterol it forms fatty deposits on the inside wall of your blood vessels, which makes them narrower. It is harder for the blood to flow through and you are at more risk of heart disease.

PROSTATE AND CANCER: The cells in the prostate start growing out of control and too quickly. The prostate sits under the bladder and against the rectum (that is why Dr's examine the rectum to feel the gland) – it produces fluid, which carries the sperm to the penis. Sometimes an enlarged prostate can make it hard to urinate.



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HUMAN IMMUNODEFICIENCY VIRUS (HIV): A virus that infects the human immune system, impeding its operation. Without a strong immune system, the body has trouble fighting diseases. HIV destroys the white blood cells in the body and so the body is prone to infection. You can get HIV from contact with infected blood, semen or vaginal fluids. HIV does not mean that you have AIDS. (Unprotected sex, sharing needles, mothers can pass on to babies during pregnancy). Symptoms are fevers sore throat, headaches, muscle aches, swollen glands and skin rashes.

DIABETES: Most of what we eat is broken down into glucose. Glucose is a form of sugar in the blood - When our food is digested the glucose makes its way into our bloodstream. Our cells use the glucose for energy and growth. However, glucose cannot enter our cells without insulin being present - insulin makes it possible for our cells to take in the glucose. Insulin is a hormone that is produced by the pancreas. After eating, the pancreas automatically releases an adequate quantity of insulin to move the glucose present in our blood into the cells, and lowers the blood sugar level. A person with diabetes has a condition in which the quantity of glucose in the blood is too elevated (hyperglycemia). This is because the body does not produce enough insulin, produces no insulin, or has cells that do not respond properly to the insulin the pancreas produces. This results in too much glucose building up in the blood. This excess blood glucose eventually passes out of the body in urine. So, even though the blood has plenty of glucose, the cells are not getting it for their essential energy and growth requirements.

COLONOSCOPY: The doctor will insert a long thin tube into your rectum and colon. It allows the Dr to see the colon. Air or water is put into the colon so that the Dr can get a better view. The doctor will remove any unusual polyps or growths that he may see. You will be sedated through out the procedure. The colon is also known as the large intestine and is the last part of the digestive tract. The rectum is at the very end of the large intestine.

STOMACH ULCER: A stomach ulcer is a small hole in the gastrointestinal tract. It mostly commonly occurs in the first 12 inches of the small intestine beyond the stomach. The intestine lining is destroyed by hydrochloric acid, which is normally present in stomach juices. The main symptom is a burning feeling in the stomach area, lasting anywhere from 30 minutes to 3 hours. Pain usually occurs in the upper abdomen, but sometimes occurs below the breastbone. It sometimes wakes people up in the middle of the night. Other symptoms are recurrent vomiting, black stools or blood in the stools.