



## APPENDIX A

# Definitions of Selected Drug Categories

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### A

**Abortifacient:** an agent that will induce an abortion.

**Abradant:** an agent that removes an external layer, such as dental plaque (pumice).

**Absorbent:** a drug that takes up other chemicals into its substance; it is used to reduce the free availability of toxic chemicals (polycarbophil, gastrointestinal absorbent).

**ACE Inhibitor:** see Angiotensin-Converting Enzyme Inhibitor.

**Acidifier, Systemic:** a drug that lowers the internal body pH; it is useful in restoring normal pH in patients with systemic alkalosis (ammonium chloride).

**Acidifier, Urinary:** a drug that lowers the pH of the renal filtrate and urine (sodium dihydrogen phosphate).

**Adrenergic:** a drug that activates organs innervated by the sympathetic nervous system; a sympathomimetic drug (epinephrine, norepinephrine).

**Adrenocorticosteroid, Anti-Inflammatory:** an adrenal cortex hormone that regulates organic metabolism and inhibits inflammatory response; a glucocorticoid (prednisolone, prednisone).

**Adrenocorticosteroid, Salt-Regulating:** an adrenal cortex hormone that regulates sodium/potassium balance in the body; a mineralocorticoid (desoxycorticosterone acetate).

**Adrenocorticotropin Hormone:** a hormone that stimulates the adrenal cortex to produce glucocorticoids (corticotropin).

**Adsorbent:** a drug that binds other chemicals onto its surface; it is used to reduce the free availability of toxic chemicals (kaolin, gastrointestinal adsorbent).

**Agonist:** a drug that reacts with and activates physiological receptors and induces the associated biologic response (morphine, opioid receptor agonist; isoproterenol, beta-adrenergic receptor agonist).

**Alcohol-Abuse Deterrent:** a drug that alters physiology so that unpleasant symptoms follow ingestion of ethanol-containing products (disulfiram).

**Aldehyde Dehydrogenase Inhibitor:** a drug that blocks the conversion of acetaldehyde to acetic acid by aldehyde dehydrogenase (disulfiram).

**Alkalinizer, Systemic:** a drug that raises the internal body pH; it is useful in restoring normal pH in patients with systemic acidosis (sodium bicarbonate).

**Alkylating Agent:** an antineoplastic drug that attacks malignant cells by reacting covalently with their DNA (chlorambucil).

**Alpha Glucosidase Inhibitor:** a drug that blocks the digestion of carbohydrates into simple sugars that will increase blood sugar levels (oral diabetic drugs).

**Alpha Receptor Agonist:** a drug that activates sympathetic nervous system alpha receptors, for example, to induce vasoconstriction (norepinephrine).

**Alpha Receptor Antagonist:** a drug that reacts asymptotically with sympathetic nervous system alpha receptors and prevents their endogenous activation, for example, to induce vasodilation (phentolamine).

**Alpha Reductase Inhibitor:** a drug that decreases the levels of available 5 $\alpha$ -reductase prior to testosterone's binding with the enzyme, reducing levels of dihydrotestosterone.

**Amebicide:** an agent used to treat amoebic infections (metronidazole).

**Anabolic Steroid:** an androgen analogue with relatively greater anabolic activity; it is used to treat catabolic disorders (methandrostenolone).

**Analeptic:** a central nervous system stimulant, sometimes used to stimulate respiration during severe central nervous system depression (doxapram, modafinil).

**Analgesic:** a drug that suppresses pain perception (nociception) without inducing unconsciousness (morphine sulfate, opioid analgesic; aspirin, nonopioid analgesic).

**Androgen:** a hormone that stimulates and maintains male reproductive function and sex characteristics (testosterone).

**Anesthetic, General:** a drug that eliminates pain perception by inducing unconsciousness (ether, inhalation anesthetic; thiopental sodium, intravenous anesthetic; midazolam).

**Anesthetic, Local:** a drug that eliminates pain perception in a limited body area by local action on sensory nerves (procaine, lidocaine).