Medical Microbiology and Infection

University Medicine · Vocabulary in context

Word	Example
medical microbiology and infection	**Medical microbiology and infection** studies germs and the diseases they cause.
incubation period	The **incubation period** is the time between catching a germ and feeling ill.
Gram stain	The **Gram stain** sorts bacteria into two groups by their cell walls.
peptidoglycan /ˈpeptɪdɒglɪkən/	Most bacteria have a cell wall made of **peptidoglycan**, not cellulose.
teichoic acid	**Teichoic acid** helps hold together the thick wall of Gram-positive bacteria.
PCR /ˌpiː siː ˈɑː/	**PCR** can find a germ's DNA in one or two hours. DNA
lipopolysaccharide	**Lipopolysaccharide** on the outside of Gram-negative bacteria can cause fever.
capsule /ˈkæpsjuːl/	A **capsule** helps bacteria escape being eaten by white blood cells.
exotoxin	An **exotoxin** is a poison that bacteria release.
generation time	A **generation time** of 20 minutes means the bacteria double every 20 minutes. 20 minutes 20 minutes
capsid /ˈkæpsɪd/	The **capsid** is the protein coat around a virus's DNA or RNA. DNA RNA

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envelope /ˈenvələʊp/	Some viruses, such as flu, have an outer **envelope** made of membrane.
antigenic drift	**Antigenic drift** means the flu virus changes a little every year.
antigenic shift	**Antigenic shift** is a big, sudden change in the flu virus that can cause a pandemic.
dimorphic fungus	A **dimorphic fungus** grows as a mould when cool and as a yeast in the body.
sporozoites	Malaria **sporozoites** enter the blood when a mosquito bites.
merozoites	Malaria **merozoites** get into red blood cells.
gametocytes	Malaria **gametocytes** pass back into a mosquito when it bites.
chain of infection	Washing hands breaks the **chain of infection**.
basic reproduction number	If the **basic reproduction number** is above 1, the disease spreads. 1
attack rate	An **attack rate** of 45% means 45 of every 100 people got ill. 45% 100 45
selective toxicity	**Selective toxicity** means a drug harms germs but not human cells.
horizontal gene transfer	**Horizontal gene transfer** passes resistance genes between bacteria.

Word	Example
standard precautions	**Standard precautions**, such as gloves, are used with every patient.
sterilisation	**Sterilisation** kills all germs, even spores.

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