When Galen in the second century carried out autopsies, he found that the second portion of the small intestine was usually empty, and called this part of the gut the jejunum, meaning empty, dry.

We have a few English words with the same root:

- jejun: insipid, from Webster's Second
- jejunation: fasting, from Webster's Second
- jejunator: one who fasts, from Webster's Second
- jejunium propheticum: prophetic fast by tribal priests and shamans to induce visions, from Encyclopaedia Britannica

But the great majority of jejun- words relate to the jejunum, a word of logologic interest for its double J, and therefore for the letter patterns that can be made from its compound forms. But how many such words are there?

Webster's Second and Third Editions allow but 16. Three major medical dictionaries permit 25 more. But, a review of the Index Medicus for the past 20 years or so, under the headings Jejunum and Jejunal Diseases, shows 49 more, in the titles of articles written in English and many more in the translations of the titles of foreign-language articles. I estimate more than 200 different English jejun-words are to be found in respectable medical sources.

The rules for making up medical words on the spot are so clear in many cases that authors and editors never question them. There is no doubt, for example, that if anyone cared to refer to the region anatomically behind the jejunum, it would be retrojejunal, though I lack a citation. Numbers of words are multiplied by equivalent roots for medical terms: esophago-/oesophago, hepatico-/hepato-, pancreatico-/pancreato-. The placement of hyphens is variable, and in the list below I have retained the hyphen only where I have not come across a non-hyphenated form of the word. For the word postjejunoileal, you may choose between two locations for the hyphen. Many of the nouns ending in -stomy or -tomy are, in fact, turned to verbs in medical parlance, although finding examples in medical writings is a bit difficult; two examples are included.

vide more jejun-words. The translations to English of foreign-language summaries are not included except to note wireungojejunostomies, perhaps the most remarkable of all.

aortojejunals
appendico-jejunals
cardiojejunopexy
cholangiojejunostomy
cholecystojejunoocholecystostomy
D
choledochoojejunals
choledochoojejunostomy
colo-jejunal

cystojejunostomy
23B
duodenojejunals
duodeno-jejunelectomy
duodenojejunoileitis
2 BDS
duodenojejunostomy
esophagojejunoduodenal
D
esophagojejunogastrostomosis
D
esophagojejunogastrostomy
D
esophagojejunoplasty
BD
esophagojejunostomy
23B
gastrojejunals
BS
gastrojejunocolic
gastrojejunocutaneous
D
gastrojejunoesophagostomy
23BDS
gastrostomy-jejunal
D
hepaticcholangiojejunostomy
hepaticcholedochojejunostomy
hepaticojejunals
hepaticojejunoduodenostomy
BD
hepaticojejunostomy
hepaticoportojejunostomy
S
hepatocholangiojejunostomy
B
hepatojejunals
hepatojejunejnostomy
ileojejunals
S
ileojejunitis
ileum-jejenum
inter-jejunal
intrahepatoductojejunostomy
intrajejunal
B
jejunals
23BDS
jejunals
jejunals-ileal
jejunals-loop
jejunectomized
23BDS
jejunectomy
Editor's Note: Admittedly, few people are interested in obscure medical terms relating to the jejunum. However, this article should instead be viewed as an illustration of the fact that dictionaries not only differ in their opinion of what words to include, but leave out a considerable number of words in actual use.