Word for Word

Post- or after?

Post-, which appears frequently in scientific and medical writing, is a prefix indicating after or behind. In other words, post- indicates that one thing follows another in time or space.

Examples
Post-treatment imaging showed a decrease in tumor size. The patient underwent a biopsy of the post-nasal space.

The word post can be used as a noun (e.g., Did you see the new Word for Word blog post?) or a verb (e.g., We post a new blog entry every 2 weeks), but post should not be used as a preposition. Use after instead.

Examples
Incorrect: Patients completed modules on diet and exercise and were interviewed 5 months post-intervention.
Correct: Patients completed modules on diet and exercise and were interviewed 5 months after the intervention.

Avoid the use of status post, which is considered jargon; use after or a similar term instead.

Examples
Incorrect: The study included men status post radical prostatectomy.
Correct: The study included men who had undergone radical prostatectomy.
References

—Stephanie Deming, ELS

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