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# Positions on the pig's body

You will no doubt have heard terms relating to positions on the pig's body. This Pighealth Bytes explains these in more detail and provides some examples

Let us start by looking at a pig standing up. Put an imaginary plane vertically downwards through its midline. Everything either side of this plane can be described as lateral to it and it can be described as being medial to them. Rotate this plane 90° so it is parallel to the floor and anything above it can be described as dorsal or superior to it and anything below it can be described as ventral or inferior to it.

Let us now put our imaginary plane vertical again, but this time cutting the pig in half from side to side. Anything in front of this plane can be described as anterior or cranial and anything behind it can be described as posterior or caudal.

Here are some examples to illustrate how these words are used:
- The ears are on the lateral dorsal or dorso-lateral aspects of the head.
- The sow had a nasty gash on her side that ran from an anterior dorsal point to a posterior ventral one.
- The lungs are anterior to the diaphragm, which in turn is anterior to the stomach and liver.
- The word plantar refers to the underside of the foot, which also has a medial clef with two lateral claws.

If we now look at our pig from above and move posteriorly from the head, we move though the following regions: cranial (head), cervical (neck), thoracic (chest), lumbar (abdomen or back), sacral and caudal (tail). These words are used to describe the different vertebrae in the spinal column. We also talk of the anterior and posterior gut or intestines.

Veterinarians use these words to give precision in post mortem reports. Here are just two more examples:
- The lungs contained early lesions typical of enzootic in the ventral parts of their anterior lobes.
- The liver contained a tumour on its caudal edge.