

Mutations

Welsh words can change at the beginning under certain circumstances, and in different ways. For example, **cath** 'cat' can appear as **gath**, **chath** and **nghath**. This change is called mutation, and there are three types in Welsh—*soft*, *nasal*, and *aspirate*. Some letters can be affected by all three (for example **c**, **p** and **t**), others by only soft and nasal (for example **g**, **b** and **d**), and others by only soft (for example **ll**, **rh** and **m**).

Vowels are not affected by any of these mutations, and consonants not included in the following tables are similarly immune.

■ Soft mutation

The soft mutation, indicated ° in this dictionary, has the following effects:

B- > °F-	bara > °fara
C- > °G-	cath > °gath
D- > °DD-	darn > °ddarn
G > °(disappears)	gardd > °ardd
LL- > °L-	llawr > °lawr
M- > °F-	merch > °ferch
P- > °B-	pysgod > °bysgod
RH- > °R-	rhosyn > °rosyn
T- > °D-	tegan > °degan

This mutation is by far the most commonly occurring in Welsh, and the only one of the three that is consistently applied over all Welsh-speaking regions. It occurs in the following situations:

1. after the grammatical or notional subject of the sentence:

fe °welodd Sioned °gath =

Sioned saw a cat

(Sioned is the actual subject of the sentence)

rhaid i Dafydd °fynd =

Dafydd has to go

(Dafydd is the notional, though not grammatical, subject of the sentence)

2. after a feminine singular noun, or after the feminine singular definite article:

merch °fach = a little girl

(but **merched bach** = little girls)

y °ferch °fach = the little girl

(but **y merched bach** = the little girls)

3. after most monosyllabic prepositions, e.g.:

bwrdd = table

ar °fwrdd = on a table

Caerdydd = Cardiff

i °Gaerdydd = to Cardiff

Lloegr = England

o °Lloegr = from England

4. after the following miscellaneous words, many of them very common:

dau° = two *masculine*

dwy° = two *feminine*

dacw° = there is ...

dyma° = here is ...

dyna° = there is ...

dy° = your *singular*

ei° = his

fe° = *affirmative particle*

go° = fairly, quite

mi° = *affirmative particle*

mor° = so (+ *adjective*)

(does not mutate **ll-** or **rh-**)

neu° = or

pa° = which

pan° = when

pur° = very

pwyr° = which (*South*)

rhy° = too

un° = one *feminine*

y° = the *feminine singular*

yn° = before nouns and adjectives
(does not mutate **ll-** or **rh-**)

5. on verbs with personal endings generally in the spoken language:

(**tal** = pay) **°dales i** = I paid

6. on adverbs of time saying when something happened:

(**blwyddyn** = a year)

°flwyddyn yn ôl = a year ago

(**dydd Llun** = Monday)

°ddydd Llun = on Monday

7. on the second of two words joined together as a compound:

prif = main + **dinas** = city

prifddinas = capital

8. after prefixes, eg:

ym- + **golchi**

af- + **llwyddiannus**

di- + **gwaith**

gwrth + **taro**

ymolchi

aflwyddiannus

diwaith

gwrthdaro

■ Nasal mutation

The nasal mutation, indicated ° in this dictionary, affects six letters:

B- > °M-	bara > °mara
C- > °NGH-	cath > °nghath
D- > °N-	darn > °narn
G- > °NG-	gardd > °ngardd
P- > °MH-	pysgod > °mhysgod
T- > °NH-	tegan > °nhegan

This mutation is used only in certain regions in speech, but is the norm in writing. It is found in only two circumstances:

1. on nouns to indicate 'my...' sometimes with a preceding 'y...', or (mostly in the written language) **fy...**:
plant = children

°mhlant (i) = my children

(written: **fy mhlant**)

car = car

°nghar (i) = my car

(written: **fy nghar**)

2. after the preposition **yn** 'in', with some spelling changes (see entry in Welsh-English section):

Dolgellau yn °Nolgellau
Cymru yng °Nghymru

■ Aspirate mutation

The aspirate mutation, indicated ^h in this dictionary, affects only three letters:

C > °CH	cath > °chath
P > °PH	pysgod > °physgod
T > °TH	tegan > °thegan

Of these, only the change C > °CH is applied with any consistency in the modern spoken language, though all three are the norm in writing.

This mutation occurs in the following circumstances:

1. after the following miscellaneous words:

a^h = and

â^h = with

chwe^h = six

ei^h = her *possessive*

gyda^h = with

tri^h = three *masculine*

tua^h = about, towards

2. in some regions only, on a negative verb with personal endings:

(**colli** = lose)

°cholles i °ddim = I didn't lose

(**tal** = pay)

°thala i °ddim = I won't pay