

Abbreviations and Symbols

Services or Units in a Health Care Facility

ABBREVIATION	DEFINITION
A & D	admitting and discharge
CS	central service (or supply)
OR	operating room, surgery (MOR, minor surgery)
RR	recovery room
PT & OT	physical therapy and occupational therapy (also PM & R [physical medicine and rehabilitation])
X-ray	radiology
Lab	medical laboratory
MR	medical records
Peds	pediatrics
Med-Surg	ward for medical and surgical patients (may be combined or separate)
OB	obstetrics (includes labor and delivery rooms, postpartum ward, and newborn nursery for healthy babies)
ICN (or NICU)	intensive care nursery (or newborn intensive care unit) for premature or unhealthy babies
OPD	outpatient department
ER	emergency room (also ED [emergency department])
ENT	ear, nose, and throat
GU	genitourinary
NP	neuropsychiatric
SS	social service
CCU or ICU	coronary care unit or intensive care unit
DOU	definitive observation unit (less than intensive care, but more than floor care)
Dietary (FS)	food service
Housekeeping	janitorial service
Pharmacy	drugstore
Morgue	unit for autopsies/holding the deceased
Pathology (path)	laboratory for study of diseased tissues, including blood

S-2 Abbreviations and Symbols**Frequencies**

ABBREVIATION	DEFINITION
q	every
Qd	once a day
Qod	every other day
q x h	every x hours (insert number of hours)
bid	twice a day
tid	three times a day
qid	four times a day
Hs	at bedtime (hour of sleep)
Ac	before meals
Pc	after meals
Prn	when needed
ad lib	as desired
Stat	immediately

Units

ABBREVIATION	DEFINITION
tabs	tablets, pills
g or gm	grams
Gr	grains
Cc	cubic centimeters
mL or ml	milliliters
L	liter (1000 cc or ml)
MEq	milliequivalent
U	units
gtts	drops
Oz	ounces
dr	drams

Means of Administering Substances into the Body

ABBREVIATION	DEFINITION
po	by mouth (per os)
IV	intravenously (into a vein; usually a peripheral vein)
IM	intramuscularly (into a muscle)
H	hypodermically (with a needle)
subcu, subq	subcutaneously (through the skin, into the fatty tissue)
subling	sublingually (under the tongue)

ABBREVIATION	DEFINITION
R	rectally (by rectum)
parenteral	a solution given intravenously
enteral	tube feeding (into stomach or small intestine)
D5W	5% glucose in distilled water used IV
caps	capsules
Supp	suppository
1/2	one-half
Mg	milligrams
N.S.	normal saline solution: isotonic solution
clysis	fluids given by needle, under skin (not in vein)
TKO	to keep open (vein)
KVO	keep vein open

Diet Orders

ABBREVIATION	DEFINITION
npo	nothing <i>per os</i> (nothing to eat or drink orally)
I & O	intake and output (measured)
cl liq	clear liquids only (e.g., ginger ale, tea, broth, Jell-O, 7-Up, coffee)
f liq	full liquid (addition of milk and milk products); liquid at body temperature
lo salt, low Na, salt free	restricted in sodium (ordered by mg or g of sodium desired, i.e., 2 g Na, 500 mg Na)
NAS	no added salt; usually 4–6 g Na (mild restriction)
reg	regular diet (house or normal sometimes used). A balanced diet without restrictions as to the type of food texture, seasoning, or preparation method
mech soft	mechanical soft; a regular diet with alteration in texture only; sometimes called edentulous
med soft	medical soft; alterations in texture, preparation methods, and seasonings
bland	a medical soft diet further altered to omit acid-producing beverages, and restrict seasonings; altered feeding intervals
lo res	low residue; alteration in texture, and a limited food selection to yield little intestinal residue
high fiber	a regular diet with increased amounts of foods containing dietary fiber
FF or PF	force or push fluids; increasing the liquid intake by addition of extra fluids
int fdg or int nour	interval feeding; supplemental nourishment served between meals
DAT	diet as tolerated
ADA diet	American Dietetic Association diet; refers to calculated diet plans used primarily for diabetics
AHA diet	American Heart Association diet; refers to calculated diet plans used primarily to reduce risk of heart disease

S-4 Abbreviations and Symbols**Patient Movements**

ABBREVIATION	DEFINITION
CBR	complete bed rest; ABR (absolute bed rest)
dangle	sit at edge of bed, legs over side
ambulate	walk
OOB	out of bed
BRP	bathroom privileges; may be up to bathroom only
commode	bedside toilet

Laboratory/X-Ray Studies and Pulmonary Function

ABBREVIATION	DEFINITION
AP and lat	routine X-ray picture of chest (front to back and side view)
up	upright X-ray picture
decub	decubitus (lying) position
IVP	intravenous pyelogram (kidney)
BE	barium enema (colon)
2GI series	upper (barium swallow): X-ray of stomach/duodenum; lower (same as BE): X-ray of lower bowel/colon
GB series	gallbladder X-ray picture
MRI	magnetic resonance imaging; noninvasive procedure using a magnetic field that yields images for dx
RAI, RAIU	radioactive iodine (uptake) for diagnosing thyroid function
SCAN	CT, CAT: computed tomography, computerized axial tomography
CBC	complete blood count
UA	urinalysis
VC	vital capacity (lungs)

Medical and Laboratory Diagnosis

ABBREVIATION	DEFINITION
A & P	auscultation and percussion
ASHD	arteriosclerotic heart disease
CA	carcinoma (cancer)
CBS	chronic brain syndrome
CC	chief complaint
CHD	coronary heart disease; congenital heart disease
CHF	congestive heart failure
c/o	complains of
COPD/COLD	chronic obstructive pulmonary (lung) disease

ABBREVIATION	DEFINITION
CP	cerebral palsy
CVD	cardiovascular disease
CVA	cerebrovascular accident (stroke)
DJD	degenerative joint disease (osteoarthritis)
FH	family history
FUO	fever of undetermined origin
GC	gonorrhea
HEENT	head, eyes, ears, nose, throat
Hx	history
(S)LE	(systemic) lupus erythematosus
MD	muscular dystrophy
MI	myocardial infarction
MS	multiple sclerosis
m	murmur
P & A	percussion and auscultation
PE	physical exam
PERRLA	pupils equal, round, react to light and accommodation (eyes)
PI	present illness
PID	pelvic inflammatory disease
PH	past history
RA	rheumatoid arthritis
R/O	rule out
Rx	recipe, take, prescription
SOB	short of breath
SR or ROS	systemic review or review of systems
Sx	symptoms
T & A	tonsillectomy and adenoidectomy
TIA	transient ischemic attack
TPR	temperature, pulse, respiration
URI	upper respiratory infection
UTI	urinary tract infection

Miscellaneous

ABBREVIATION	DEFINITION
qns	quantity not sufficient (lab requires a larger specimen); also refers to insufficient food/liquid intake
Dc	discontinue
TLC	tender loving care
stat	immediately (also ASAP; as soon as possible)
EUA	examination under anesthesia
DOA	dead on arrival
OD	overdose; also means right eye (refer to context where used)
Prep	prepare
v/s	vital signs
ECG, EKG	electrocardiogram
EEG	electroencephalogram
Dx	diagnosis
Tx	treatment
Rx	prescription
Sx	symptoms
Na+	sodium: sodium (chemical symbol for)
K+	potassium (chemical symbol for)
Ca+	calcium (chemical symbol for)
P+	phosphorus (chemical symbol for)
Cl-	chloride (chemical symbol for)
I	iodine (chemical symbol for)
Fe	iron (chemical symbol for)
Hg	mercury (chemical symbol for)

Adapted from: P.S. Stanfield, Y.H. Hui, N. Cross, eds. Essential Medical Terminology, 3rd ed. (Sudbury, MA: Jones & Bartlett; 2008).