

## Common Abbreviations\*

Abbreviation	Meaning	Abbreviation	Meaning
A & P	anatomy and physiology	ASHD	arteriosclerotic or atherosclerotic heart disease
ā	before	AV, A-V	atrioventricular, arteriovenous
āā	of each (used in writing prescriptions)	BBB	bundle branch block
abd	abdomen	bid	twice daily
ABG	arterial blood gas	BKA	below the knee amputation
ac	before meals	BM	bowel movement
ACLS	advanced cardiac life support	BP	blood pressure
ADL	activity of daily living	BS	blood sugar, breath sounds, bowel sounds, bachelor of science (degree)
ad lib	as much as desired	BSA	body surface area
AED	automated external defibrillator	BVM	bag-valve-mask (ventilation device)
AF	atrial fibrillation	bx	biopsy
AIDS	acquired immunodeficiency syndrome	ċ	with
AK	above the knee	°C	degrees Celsius (centigrade)
AKA	above the knee amputation	Ca	calcium
A-line	arterial line	CA	cancer, cardiac arrest, chronological age, coronary artery, cold agglutinin
AMA	against medical advice	CABG	coronary artery bypass graft
amb	ambulatory	CAD	coronary artery disease
AMI	acute myocardial infarction	CBC	complete blood count
AMS	altered mental status	cc	cubic centimeter
ant	anterior	CC or C/C	chief complaint
AO × 4	alert and oriented to person, place, time, and self	CCU	coronary care unit
AP	anteroposterior, front-to-back, action potential, angina pectoris, anterior pituitary, arterial pressure	CHF	congestive heart failure
APC	atrial premature complex, activated protein C, aspirin-phenacetin-caffeine	Cl <sup>-</sup>	chloride
Aq	water	cm	centimeter
ARDS	adult respiratory distress syndrome	cm <sup>3</sup>	cubic centimeter
ASA	aspirin (acetylsalicylic acid)	CNS	central nervous system
ASAP	as soon as possible		

\*Sometimes abbreviations are written with periods (for example, abd. and a.c.), and sometimes different capitalization might be used and might convey a different meaning. Not all possible meanings for the abbreviations in this table are given here. Unless you are certain about the meaning, ask the person who used the abbreviation.

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## Common Abbreviations—cont'd

Abbreviation	Meaning	Abbreviation	Meaning
c/o	complaining of	DVT	deep venous thrombosis
CO	cardiac output, carbon monoxide	D <sub>5</sub> W	dextrose 5% in water
CO <sub>2</sub>	carbon dioxide	Dx	diagnosis
COLD	chronic obstructive lung disease	ECG	electrocardiogram
COPD	chronic obstructive pulmonary disease	ED	emergency department
CP	chest pain, chemically pure, cerebral palsy	EDC	estimated date of confinement
CPR	cardiopulmonary resuscitation	EEG	electroencephalogram
CRNA	certified registered nurse anesthetist	eg	for example
CRT	capillary refill time, cathode-ray tube	EKG	electrocardiogram
CSF	cerebrospinal fluid	ENT	ears, nose, and throat
CSM	carotid sinus massage, cerebrospinal meningitis	ER	emergency room
CVA	cerebrovascular accident	ET	endotracheal tube, endotracheal
CVP	central venous pressure	ETA	estimated time of arrival
CXR	chest x-ray	ETOH	ethyl alcohol
D & C	dilatation and curettage	ETT	endotracheal tube
D/C	discontinue	°F	degrees Fahrenheit
diff	differential	FiO <sub>2</sub>	fraction of inspired oxygen
dig	digoxin	FBS	fasting blood sugar
DM	diabetes mellitus	Fe	iron
DOA	dead on arrival	FHR	fetal heart rate
DOE	dyspnea on exertion	FHT	fetal heart tones
DON	director of nursing	FHx	family history
DOS	dead on scene	fL	femtoliter
DPT	diphtheria and tetanus toxoids and pertussis vaccine	fl or fld	fluid
DSD	dry sterile dressing	FSH	follicle-stimulating hormone
DtaP	diphtheria and tetanus toxoids and acellular pertussis vaccine	fx	fracture
DTP	diphtheria and tetanus toxoids and pertussis vaccine	g	gram
DTs	delirium tremens	GB	gallbladder
		GI	gastrointestinal
		gm	gram

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## Common Abbreviations—cont'd

Abbreviation	Meaning	Abbreviation	Meaning
gr	grain	IO	intraosseous
GSW	gunshot wound	IPPB	intermittent positive pressure breathing
gtt	drop(s)	IUD	intrauterine (contraceptive) device
GTT	glucose tolerance test	IV	intravenous
GU	genitourinary	JVD	jugular venous distention
gyn	gynecology	K <sup>+</sup>	potassium
h	hour	KCL	potassium chloride
H, (H)	hypodermic	kg	kilogram
H & H	hemoglobin and hematocrit	KUB	kidneys, ureters, and bladder
H & P	history and physical	KVO	keep vein open
H/A	headache	L	liter
Hb, Hgb	hemoglobin	LAC	laceration, laparoscopic-assisted colectomy
Hct	hematocrit	lb	pound
Hg	mercury	LE	lower extremity, left eye, lupus erythematosus
HH	hiatal hernia	LLL	left lower lobe of the lung
HIV	human immunodeficiency virus	LLQ	left lower quadrant of the abdomen
H <sub>2</sub> O	water	L/M	liters per minute
H <sub>2</sub> O <sub>2</sub>	hydrogen peroxide	LMP	last menstrual period
HPI	history of present illness	LOC	level of consciousness, loss of consciousness
hr	hour	LPM	liters per minute
hs	at bedtime	LPN	licensed practical nurse
HTN	hypertension	LR	lactated Ringer's
Hx	history	LSD	lysergic acid diethylamide
Hz	hertz	LUL	left upper lobe of the lung
I & O	intake and output	LUQ	left upper quadrant of the abdomen
IC	intracardiac, inspiratory capacity, irritable colon	LVN	licensed vocational nurse
ICP	intracranial pressure	m	meter
ICU	intensive care unit	MAE	moves all extremities
IDDM	insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus	MAEW	moves all extremities well
IM	intramuscular		

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## Common Abbreviations—cont'd

Abbreviation	Meaning	Abbreviation	Meaning
MAP	mean arterial pressure	NSR	normal sinus rhythm
mcg	microgram	NTG	nitroglycerin
MCL	midclavicular line, modified chest lead	N/V	nausea and vomiting
mEq	milliequivalent	N/V/D	nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea
mg	milligram (mgm is a former symbol)	NVD	neck vein distention
MI	myocardial infarction	O <sub>2</sub>	oxygen
MICU	mobile intensive care unit; medical intensive care unit	OB	obstetrics
min	minute	OBS	organic brain syndrome
mL	milliliter	OD	overdose, right eye, optical density, outside diameter, doctor of optometry
mm	millimeter	OP	outpatient
mm Hg	millimeters of mercury	OPA	oropharyngeal airway
MRI	magnetic resonance imaging	OR	operating room
MS	morphine sulfate, multiple sclerosis	OS	left eye
MSO <sub>4</sub>	morphine sulfate	OU	both eyes
MVA	motor vehicle accident	oz	ounce
MVC	motor vehicle crash	ō	after
MVP	mitral valve prolapse	pc	after meals
Na	sodium	pCO <sub>2</sub>	partial pressure of carbon dioxide
NA, N/A	not applicable	PDR	Physician's Desk Reference
NaCl	sodium chloride	PE	pulmonary embolism, physical examination
NAD	no apparent distress, no appreciable disease	PEA	pulseless electrical activity
NaHCO <sub>3</sub>	sodium bicarbonate	PEARL or PERL	pupils equal and reactive to light
NC	nasal cannula	ped or peds	Pediatric
NG	nasogastric	PEEP	positive end-expiratory pressure
NICU	neonatal intensive care unit	PERRL	pupils equal, round, and reactive to light
NIDDM	non-insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus	pH	hydrogen ion concentration
NKA	no known allergies	PID	pelvic inflammatory disease
NKDA	no known drug allergies	PND	paroxysmal nocturnal dyspnea
NPA	nasopharyngeal airway	po	per os (by mouth)
NPO	nil per os (nothing by mouth)	PO	postoperative, "post op"
NS	normal saline	pO <sub>2</sub>	partial pressure of oxygen

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## Common Abbreviations—cont'd

Abbreviation	Meaning	Abbreviation	Meaning
PRN	pro re nata (as needed)	SIDS	sudden infant death syndrome
psi	pounds per square inch	SL	sublingual
PSVT	paroxysmal supraventricular tachycardia	SOB	shortness of breath
pt	patient	SQ	subcutaneous
PT	physical therapy	ss	half
PTA	prior to admission, plasma thromboplastin antecedent	S/S	signs and symptoms
PTT	partial thromboplastin time	stat	immediately
PVC	premature ventricular complex, polyvinyl chloride	STD	sexually transmitted disease
PVD	peripheral vascular disease	Sub Q	subcutaneous
q	every	SVT	supraventricular tachycardia
qd	every day	sym or Sx	symptoms
qh	every hour	tab	tablet
qid	four times a day	TB	tuberculosis
qod	every other day	TBA	to be admitted, to be announced
RA	rheumatoid arthritis, right atrium	tbsp	tablespoon
RAD	reactive airway disease, right axis deviation	tech	technician, technologist
RBC	red blood cell	TIA	transient ischemic attack
Rh	Rhesus blood factor, rhodium	tid	three times a day
RHD	rheumatic heart disease	TKO	to keep open
RL	Ringer's lactate	TPR	temperature, pulse, respiration
RLL	right lower lobe of the lung	tsp	teaspoon
RLQ	right lower quadrant of the abdomen	Tx	treatment
RN	registered nurse	U	unit
R/O	rule out	UA	urinalysis
ROM	range of motion, rupture of membranes	UE	upper extremity
RUL	right upper lobe of the lung	URI	upper respiratory infection
RUQ	right upper quadrant of the abdomen	USP	United States Pharmacopeia
Rx	prescription	UTI	urinary tract infection
š	without	VD	venereal disease
SC	subcutaneous, secretory component	vol	volume
SICU	surgical intensive care unit	VS	vital signs
		W/	with

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## Common Abbreviations—cont'd

Abbreviation	Meaning	Abbreviation	Meaning
WBC	white blood cell	$\beta$	beta
WNL	within normal limits	$\approx$	approximately
wt	weight	o	normal
yo	year old	$\times 2$	times two
$\bar{x}$	except	/	per
1°	first, first degree, primary	$\neq$	not equal
2°	secondary, second degree	>	greater than
$\uparrow$	increased	<	less than
$\downarrow$	decreased	?	questionable, possible
$\emptyset$	none	$\Delta$	change
®	right	-	negative
Ⓛ	left	♀	female
$\mu$	micro	♂	male
$\alpha$	alpha		