

ABBREVIATIONS

Applies to all orders and all medication-related documentation that is handwritten (including free-text computer entry) or on pre-printed forms

Approved Abbreviations

UVA Health team members are encouraged to avoid abbreviations when documenting in the patient health record. Team members should work with their UVA Health Epic builder on smart phrases, templates, etc. instead. If a user should desire to utilize an abbreviation that is not on the Unapproved Abbreviations list, the abbreviation must be spelled out in its entirety followed by the abbreviation in parentheses initially in the document along with the source. In addition the abbreviation must be nationally recognized.

Unapproved Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Potential Problem	Preferred Term
U, u (unit)	Mistaken for “0” (zero), the number “4” (four) or “cc”	Write “unit”
IU (International Unit)	Mistaken for IV (intravenous) or the number “10” (ten)	Write “International unit”
Q.D., QD, q.d., qd (daily)	Mistaken for each other	Write “daily”
Q.O.D., QOD, q.o.d., qod (every other day)	Period after the Q mistaken for “I” and the “O” mistaken for “I	Write “every other day”
Trailing Zero (X.0 mg)*	Decimal point is missed	Write X mg
Lack of leading zero (.X mg)		Write 0.X mg
MS	Can mean morphine sulfate or magnesium sulfate	Write “morphine sulfate” or “magnesium sulfate”
MSO ₄ and MgSO ₄	Confused for one another	

***Exception:** A “trailing zero” may be used only where required to demonstrate the level of precision of the value being reported, such as for laboratory results, imaging studies that report size of lesions, or catheter/tube sizes. It may not be used in medication orders or other medication-related documentation.