

UNAPPROVED ABBREVIATIONS

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

Reviewed/Revised: 6/2012, 1/2014, 5/2017, 7/2019

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.